

BETHEL NEWSLETTER

March 2009

Reaching Out – Praying, Caring, Sharing

Holdrege, Nebraska

"Grow Up" In Lent

Lent begins this year on Ash Wednesday, February 25. I want to reflect on the discipline of this season that hopefully will be a spiritually enriching journey for you. It is a time for each of us to grow in our faith, a time to "grow up" more than "give up." What might that look like?



Lent too often is seen as a time to focus on our guilt, our falling short before our holy God. This is a reality we live with every day of our lives. When the focus is on us, we are burdened with our sin.

We are instead encouraged to look to our Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ. There we see the Son of God in human form showing us grace and mercy. For your sins and mine he went to the cross and suffered and died. His resurrection was the victory that lifts us up to live life more fully.

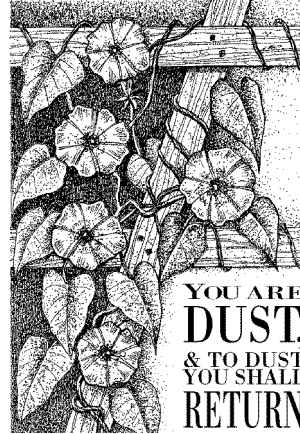
This is the season to grow more fully in that discipline of being a follower of Jesus. It is a time to be more intentional about serving him. Rather than giving up something, how about starting something? Maybe it is getting involved in Bible studies at home or with a group at church. Maybe it is volunteering to assist in one of the ministries at Bethel or volunteer program in the community. Maybe it is making a donation to the food pantry or some other assistance program. Maybe it is making a special effort to visit with someone you know who is hurting for some reason. Whatever it is, it is what Christ would have us to do as his disciples.

There will be opportunities for you to gather for worship with our mid-week Lenten services. Again, we will have a different preacher each of those services. Let us plan on growing together in our Lenten journey to bring life in the midst of the struggles of this world. May your Lenten discipline help you to grow in your faith.

Blessings,
Pastor David Sites

PS. I need your faith stories please.

The journey to Jerusalem has begun. On Ash Wednesday, we were called to: "Remember, that you are dust, and to dust you shall return." There is no other season in our church year when our sinful nature and our mortality are displayed so prominently before us. We do not need to be



reminded of the depth of the sin within us. Each week we confess that, "we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves," (Order for Confession and Forgiveness, ELW p 116).

As we journey with Jesus toward Jerusalem and listen to his message, we become more keenly aware that under God's law we are guilty, and condemned to death.

Often we would prefer not to think about the law. After all, we have the Gospel—the Good News. Isn't it better to focus only on the Jesus' victory over death through the resurrection? Let's just skip the suffering, the anguish, the agony, and move straight to "the good stuff." Sin, guilt, and agony are too depressing! Let's get to the victory celebration! However, when we stop and think about Law and Gospel it becomes apparent that when we ignore the Law, we trivialize the Gospel message. The full impact of God's Good News can only be understood in the context of the Law. It is the Law that allows us to recognize and acknowledge our brokenness, which in turn leads to a deeper understanding of God's redeeming grace.

When we journey with Jesus to Jerusalem we discover we are unable to walk with him. Rather, Jesus picks up our broken lives, hoists us on his shoulders and carries us. Let us spend this time that we are on the journey, listening to Jesus, reflecting on His Word, gratefully acknowledging that it is only through his grace that we are able to arrive safely at our destination.

Intern Margaret Jacobus



GOLD STAR AWARD

Deb Roberts and Linda Hansen serve us faithfully as our Financial Secretaries. They remove the offering from the altar after the worship services. They are responsible for counting, recording, and depositing the offerings in a timely manner. They provide accurate and timely deposit information to the Treasurer. Records are kept for each contribution and quarterly statements are mailed out.

Our thanks to Deb and Linda for their faithful and trustworthy work.

March Ushers

8:30 a.m.

Todd Veal
Franklin Carlson
Robert Drews

11:00 a.m.

Darrin Swanson
Dean Sievers
Eric Titus
Gregg Ericksen

6:30 p.m. Saturday Night Ushers

March 7	Tim Gabriel
March 14	Kent Exstrom
March 21	Phil Hinrichs
March 28	Larry Mattson

Plastic Bags for the S.A.F.E. Center

The S.A.F.E. Center in Kearney in cooperation with Wal-Mart are collecting as many plastic store-grocery bags as possible. By doing this they will be able to get extra funding! There will be boxes placed at some of the entrances to Bethel in which to put your plastic bags. Thank you for helping the S.A.F.E. Center and recycling the plastic bags.

AS A PLACE OF GRACE WE **PRAY** for each other as members and friends of this congregation:

March 1, 2009

Steve & Gayleen Maurer
Garrett, Janessa
Dean & Carie Lynch
Deb Nelson
Dylan

March 8, 2009

John & Kay Siefert
Alan & Julie Meyer
Todd, Sean
Richard & Margaret Lovgren

March 15, 2009

Phil & Kim Hinrichs
Creighton, Jackson
Martha Lindstrom
James & Sue Lindstrom
Jenni, Michelle

March 22, 2009

Cecil & Karen Lindstrom
Dean & Rosie Leopold
Marilyn Lavalleur

March 29, 2009

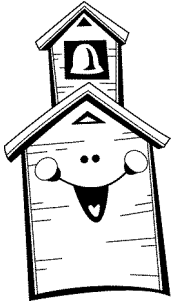
Melvin & Delilah Lauer
James & Margery Lauer
Kyla
Steve & Carolyn Larson



First Quarter Birthday Celebration will be held on Sunday, March 29th following the 10:00 a.m. worship service. **Everyone is invited!!**

Hosting the event are Evangelism, Christian Education and Youth Committees.

TUTORING TOTS PRESCHOOL



The Tutoring Tots Board met on Tuesday, Feb. 17. The following items were discussed:

1. The fire alarm pull station has been installed.
2. Registration forms for 2009-2010 school year are being sent out as requested.

3. A three year-old class will be advertized along with the other classes, with the statement: "A minimum of 10 three year-old students required." This is necessary to justify hiring an additional teacher for three year-olds. If there are not enough three year-olds registered, they will take 15 five year-olds and 15 four year-olds and not have a class for three year-olds.

4. Teri Jorges, Terry Tidyman and Lynn Hasselquist will be attending the "ABCs of Child Care Conference" on Saturday, Feb. 28th. This is sponsored by the UNL Extension.

Teri Jorges
Preschool Director

tuned in such a way that the fundamental and 12th overtone are dominate. The sound from the bell comes out the side of the bell in all directions not out of the opening in the bell.

We are in our fifth year of ringing our beautiful bells. We have 18 regular handbell members that ring on a rotating schedule using 11 ringers at a time. We also have 5 other substitutes that can be used when they are needed. Because of the contributions of many of our Bethel families, we were able to purchase 39 handbells (three octaves plus three) and all the equipment needed to use and care for our handbells properly. We are still in need of a cabinet in which to store the handbells and equipment in order to keep everything safe and damage free. The cost of this cabinet will be about \$2,000. This estimate includes materials and labor to build it. We have some memorial funds designated for this purpose but not near enough. A fund has been started to accept contributions to have this cabinet built. If you wish to contribute, please pick up an envelope labeled "Handbell Cabinet", located on the table at the back of the church and enclose your contribution. Thank You.

Jan Weich
Music Coordinator

Worship & Music BELL TALK



Did you know handbell ringing has its own language? Have you ever heard the term martellato or martellato lift? How about Laissez Viber, Echo or Gyro? Other symbols that you may not recognize that are important in

handbell talk are, R, TD, Pl, Sw and + to name a few. These refer to some of the different techniques used when ringing handbells. Ask one of our bell ringers or come and visit one of our rehearsals if you want to know more about this unique language.

Did you know these interesting facts about our handbells? Our bells are technically English Handbells. This is based upon the history of the bell in England and pertains to the mechanism that holds the clapper. Our English Handbells are made of bell bronze (80% copper and 20% tin). They are

Bethel Foundation

New officers for the Bethel Foundation are:

Kent Hansen, President
Rodale Emken, Vice-President
Liz Mattson, Secretary
Gregg Erickson, Treasurer



Have you visited Bethel's web site? If not, please check it out. It is being updated and kept current by our web master, Sylvia Person. If there is something you would like on the web site, please contact Sylvia at 995-6488.

www.bethel-lutheran-church.com

Community Care Project March

School Kits

- Pads or notebooks of ruled paper approximately 8 ½ X 11" containing 150-200 sheets of paper
- One blunt scissors (safety scissors with imbedded steel blades work well)
- One 30-centimeter ruler, or a ruler with centimeters on one side and inches on the other
- One pencil sharpener
- Six new #2 pencils with erasers
- One eraser approximately 2 ½" long
- 12 sheets of construction paper in assorted colors
- One box of 16, or 24 crayons
- One cloth bag approximately 12: x 14" with cloth handles

(Please note: Only boxes of 16 or 24 crayons and #2 pencils only.)

Thank you for your contributions,
Community Care Committee

Have you heard about Splash? Bethel Lutheran has been sending Splash to families of newly baptized infants since 2005. At baptism, parents commit to raising their child in the Christian faith. Splash is a resource to promote that promise. A three-year subscription of Splash includes monthly Parent Pages and a Sleepy Time CD. The monthly Parent Pages offer ideas for faith-filled play, worship, meals, and prayer together. Hulda Peterson visits each family and welcomes them and their infant into the Bethel family and presents the gift of Splash. By mailing Parent Pages each month, Bethel stays connected to young children and their families.

Lori Swanson
Christian Education Coordinator

Bethel's Food Service Groups:

Due to difficulties finding food serving leaders and/or workers, it was decided to combine the seven groups into four. There will be eight (8) serving leaders who will call upon a "pool" of workers. The chairman of the serving event, (usually funerals) will be purchasing the items to prepare a meal. A morning funeral would serve ham, cheesy potatoes or green bean casserole, fruit salad with pudding (or other easy salad), bread and butter. An afternoon funeral would serve cookies or cake.

Each person currently on a serving group are being called with these questions:

1. Do you want to be on a food group?
2. Would you be willing to help serve the food (usually funerals)?
3. Would you be willing to bake a Texas sheet cake, or make cookies for the event?
4. Would you rather send \$7.00 to the food chairman for the cost of food and supplies?

***You will be asked to do just one task if we call you for funerals.

If you have not been contacted, please call Karen Lindstrom at 995-4211, with the above information. If you are new to the Bethel Family and willing to serve in this manner, please contact Karen Lindstrom. This plan is for the 2009-2010 church year.



God's Love Prompts Giving

Why are many Christians unwilling to give larger portions of their incomes for the work of the Lord through their churches? I believe one of the biggest reasons people don't give as generously as they are able is that they don't understand how much God loves them. If people knew the depth of God's love, they wouldn't need to be encouraged to give more. Love makes people give freely and generously. This article is devoted to helping us better understand how much God loves each and every one of us.

In 1 John we read, *"How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!"* (1 John 3:1). God loves us. He knows each of us by name (John 10:3). We are God's children whom He loves deeply. He promises to love us forever. *"I [love] you with an everlasting love"* (Jeremiah 31:3). As sinners, we don't deserve His love, but He loves us out of His nature and character: *"God is love"* (1 John 4:8). We can be certain that God loves us because love is at the heart of Who He is and what He does. *"But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we are still sinners, Christ died for us"* (Romans 5:8).

God expressed His great love for us by giving us His Son to pay the price of our sins. The Cross stands as the greatest witness to God's love for us. On the Cross, He gave us the most indescribable gift, the gift of His own Son. *"For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son. . ."* (John 3:16). The Bible is filled with references of the many things that God does for us because He loves us.

Paul wrote, *"I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God"* (Ephesians 3:17b-19). If we were able to comprehend even dimly the depth of God's love for us, we would

desire to share that love with others. God's love would automatically flow through us into others. The fruit of God's love in our lives would be seen in both our words and deeds. God's love would be seen in us as we reach out to others and as we give faithfully and generously. Grasping the depth of God's love we would give glory to Him *"throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen"* (Ephesians 3:21).

Council Corner

At the February Parish Planning Council meeting, Sylvia Person brought Bethel's website www.bethel-lutheran-church.com to life. She demonstrated how easy it is to navigate. The site is friendly, informative, and orderly with links to other resources. It is a source for members and visitors for Bethel's calendar, news, programs etc. I suggest you put our address in your favorites and visit it soon.

The council also received a report from the Nebraska Synod on the status of the Capital Campaign for Leadership & Youth "Feed the Roots, Grow the Forest" Three Million of the 7.5 Million goal has been reached. Bethel will respond to this campaign during the March PPC meeting.

We are in the Lenten Season of the Church Year. Meaningful worship services, time for contemplation, spiritual food for healing, accepting God's saving grace. Participate as you can, for it is in thankfulness that we receive encouragement to reach out to others.

Parish Planning Council Chair
Russell Edeal

An Irish blessing

May you have
walls to keep out the wind,
a roof to keep out the rain,
warm drinks by the fire,
laughter to cheer you,
those you love near you,
and all that your heart may desire,
including the love of God within.

You are invited to visit our companion synod in Tanzania! As we continue to deepen our relationship with the Northern Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, two Nebraska Synod-sponsored trips to Tanzania are planned for 2010:

Feb. 1-6, 2010

July 13-28, 2010

Estimated costs range from \$3,600 (February trip) to \$4,350 (July trip) which covers all airfare, transportation, meals, safari fees, and visas. The trip includes visits to ministry sites of the Northern Diocese as well as a safari to the Serengeti and Ngorongoro Crater.

These trips flow from the relationship we share with our companion synod in Tanzania. The companion synod program enables the Nebraska Synod to experience the gifts and witness of the Northern Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania.

Interested? Please contact **Pr. Martin Russel** or **Stephanie Lusienski** in the Nebraska Synod office (402-896-5311). Space is limited.

NOTE: LoAnne Ohrt and Sheryl Ohrt took this trip this February.

The Staff of Bethel Lutheran Church works as a Team, with defined roles and responsibilities to support and advance Bethel's Vision and Mission. We work as a cohesive, supportive Team, with an effective communication process that enhances our ability to provide cost effective service, administration and support to (for) the Congregation and its mission.