



# THE EPISTLE

Volume 10 Issue 7

St Paul Lutheran Church

July 2011

## FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

Pentecost Sunday—June 12, 2011

*Why Do Evangelism? Grace or Grave?*

Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Recently the evangelical pastor, Rob Bell wrote a book called *Love Wins: A Book About Heaven, Hell and the Fate of Every Person Who Lived*. In this book, Bell tosses out the notion of hell, that is, he argues that hell simply does not exist. The reaction to his book (even before it was published and released) was fierce. Many church leaders simply did not agree with Bell's position. But why such vehement reaction? After there are many things that church folk can disagree over, but what was it about this argument? Opposition argued that it was clear that Jesus spoke about hell so hell's existence could not be questioned. However it seems that there is something much more fundamental at work here. A seminary professor of mine would routinely remind us that the closer something is to one's identity, the more violent the reaction when it was challenged or in crisis. I wonder if that is what is happening with hell.

For many Christians in the evangelical and holiness camps, hell is a great motivator. We have all seen, I think, the billboards along the road that read something like "Where are you going to spend eternity? Smoking or non-smoking?" Or perhaps you've even been asked point blank, "If you were to die today, where would you be tomorrow?" The great impetus in getting people to join up with the church is by holding up the fires of hell for those who don't believe. No idea is perhaps more American. The great theologian Jonathan Edwards is remembered primarily for his classic sermon "Sinners in the Hand of an Angry God," where he uses the image of us sinners being dangled, like a spider dangling by its silk, above the fires of hell.

Many Christians are taught to evangelize this way. Hell is their bread and butter. So when hell is questioned or discussed, it is too close to their identity. Of course their reaction is going to be vehement.

Now let me be clear, I am not saying I agree with Rob Bell. The biblical witness points to an end for those who are not chosen that is wholly undesirable. However hell is not a motivator that brings people to life with Jesus. Hell is of the law. The law's only function here is to act as the mirror of our existence. Hell is a consequence of sin, the fundamental brokenness in relationships. Hell does not drive us to God. Hell can only kill. It cannot raise us to new life. New life in Christ can only be done by the gospel. It is the proclamation of the gospel, the unmerited love of God in Jesus made known in Christ's death and resurrection through which the Holy Spirit works faith. Avoiding hell is not how faith is worked. Hearing the gospel is. Being offered a choice between heaven or hell is not helpful. But many of us dislike the notion of evangelism because this model is so prevalent in our minds. Offering people a choice between something fantastic and something so distasteful is not the proclamation of the gospel.

Lest we feel too proud of our mainline identities, let me assure you that most mainline denominations and congregations, move in another direction that is not true evangelism. Most of us were brought up in congregations where evangelism was meant to bring people in the pews. Rather than being concerned over someone's ultimate fate, we were mostly concerned with the bottom line. How many people do we need to make sure we meet or exceed our spending plan? Looking out for our own self interest is hardly a motivation for spreading the gospel. As I mentioned last month, how many of us would engage in evangelism if we thought it might benefit other congregations? A few years ago, Lutherans and Episcopalians that were located along I-79 between Morgantown and Clarksburg (the so-called hi-tech corridor) gathered several times to talk about shared mission. Nothing ever came of it. Most likely I suspect because we could not get past thinking that we might help other congregations and receive no or little benefit for ourselves. I have also often told the story of one of my first interviews with a congregation in Ohio. I walked into the room, sat down in front of about fifteen people on their committee, and they asked their first question, "What evangelism programs have you been a part of that have been successful?" As I started to attempt an answer, I realized that I needed to step back, so I stopped and asked a question, "What do you mean by successful?" "Bringing in new members" was the short answer I was given. With that piece of information, I was able to answer more clearly. I said, "I don't define success that way. In evangelism, I count success if we get people talking about their faith, not if members come in." We talked for two more hours that evening, but that interview was pretty much over right then and there. Evangelism was merely a tool to get bodies in the seats, and bolster the spending plan.

Both approaches are focused on death, the death of the individual and his or her eternal destination, or the feared death of the congregation. Neither approach is rooted in the gospel, because the gospel brings life. So what is the reason behind evangelism? In her book *Unbinding the Gospel*, Martha Grace Reese shares a story told to her by an evangelical pastor who became a mainline pastor. He said,

Ok, so there I was, raised in a fundamentalist church, ordained at 21, served churches until I was 29, and my wife left me. Even though the divorce was not my "fault" according to church order, my denomination removed me from serving a congregation for a minimum of two years. My pastor friends and I had a really hard time staying connected. I didn't fit categories and I threatened them. I was ashamed and a wreck. A friend in my apartment complex was a mainline seminary student. He and his wife and their friends were so loving. They included me, prayed with me, listened to me for hours on end, and finally drew me into a part of the church I had always looked at with suspicion.

Long story short, I became part of a mainline denomination, and you don't find people much more progressive biblically than I am now. I haven't believed or preached that people are going to Hell for 30 years. I wouldn't change theologies at this point. The theological freedom and the grace of this church still amaze me. But I'll tell you there is one thing that was really hard for me to adjust to. I couldn't believe—I STILL can't believe—how the liberal church that knows so much about God's grace doesn't understand the power of what it has to share. And they don't share it!

I grew up with sword drills and living in the Word, praying every day and training to witness to people about God's offer of salvation. I have years of training that pushes me to care enough for people outside the church to lay my life down for them to help them know Christ. Now I live in this wonderful mainline church. I can't believe so many of my friends don't have the drive to share the Gospel. They've shown the Gospel to me, but they don't share it with strangers. It's Gospel constipation!

How is it that we might talk about evangelism to avoid the "grave" issues but not talk about it when we understand and experience the "grace" issues? The central piece of identity for Lutherans is

about being justified by grace through faith. So why do we fail to share it? What difference does being a Christian matter in your life? How could being a Christian matter in someone else’s life? Reese points out “The theology most mainline pastors preach is grace-filled. Where that grace is supported by a vivid sense of relationship with Christ, it is real and rich. This is what we have to share.”

God has given us a great gift in the good news of Jesus, a gift that is meant to be shared so others might come to have a relationship with him... not just in our church... not just for eternal life... but for a renewed and transformed life now.

Grace and Peace, Pastor Brian

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**FROM THE SUMMER INTERN**

Greetings! Over the past several weeks, I have met many of you and had the opportunity to actually get to know some of you quite well. I’d like to thank all of you for your welcoming hospitality, and I look forward to building relationships with many of you.

In hopes of breaking the ice for those of you I *haven’t* met, I thought I’d take the time to introduce myself more fully. My name is Jono Adams (short for Jonathan) and thanks to a grant from Project Connect, I will be spending this summer doing an internship with Pastor Brian. Basically, my summer job is to follow Pastor around and get a feel for what he does on a daily and weekly basis in hopes of seeing whether it might be something I’m interested in doing.

Project Connect is an initiative of the Eastern Cluster of Lutheran Seminaries, consisting of Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia and Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary. The program is designed around helping to identify future church leaders and give them the resources to help discern a vocation, whether to ordained ministry, or something completely different. Across the east coast there are nearly a dozen students spending their summers following around Pastors thanks to the opportunities give to us by Project Connect.

I grew up about 90 minutes north of Morgantown in Delmont, PA, where I am a member of Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church. When I lived at home, I was a member of the chancel choir and bell choir and also sat on the youth & family ministry committee at my home congregation. Currently however, I am a student at WVU and will be starting my senior year this fall, majoring in Geography. I’m very active at the chapel, and so if you choose to come downtown some evening this fall, you will most likely see me helping out in some capacity.

For the past five summers, I have worked at Lutherlyn, a Lutheran summer camp north of Pittsburgh sponsored jointly by the Northwestern PA and Southwestern PA synods. Starting out as a dishwasher, I spent two summers in the kitchen, another two as a fulltime counselor, and this past summer I was one of two head counselors. I’m really grateful for my time spent on staff at camp, and I know it’s a huge part of why I’m here today seriously considering becoming a Pastor.

For the rest of the summer, aside from a few exceptions, if you see Pastor, I won’t be far behind. I look forward to the opportunity to explore my vocation but also to become a part of the community here at Saint Paul. Please don’t hesitate to say hi, or to pull me aside to talk, as I’d love to make the most of my time here at Saint Paul and get to know as many parishioners as possible.

Peace, Jono



### Information About Project Connect

Project Connect is an initiative of the Eastern Cluster of Lutheran Seminaries (ECLS). The ECLS comprises three seminaries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) – the Lutheran Theological Seminaries at Gettysburg, PA, Philadelphia, PA, and Southern Seminary in Columbia, SC.

Project Connect is made possible by a grant from The Lilly Endowment, Inc.

Project Connect functions in Regions 7, 8 & 9 of the ELCA (the entire East Coast!)

The purpose of Project Connect is to invigorate our leadership networks for identifying young adults who have gifts for public ministry, nurturing those who are open to theologically sound vocational discernment, and sustaining those who are sensing call to public ministry.

Project Connect has been fully functioning since May 1, 2005. During that time, they have made connections with 886 young adults who at one time or another indicated interest in exploring a seminary education.

Of those 886 young adults, 240 have enrolled in seminary or divinity school, 210 of whom chose to attend one of the three ECLS schools.

Average enrollment of young adults in ECLS seminaries has increased by over 17% during the past 6 years, 8% in the other five ELCA seminaries.

**90 young adults have received an Immersion Grant or Competitive Mini-Grant. 39 of them are now in seminary, and 27 are still moving in that direction!**

More information about Project Connect can be found at its website:  
[www.projectconnect.org](http://www.projectconnect.org)

**ATTENTION MARRIED COUPLES:** Fall is the perfect time to fall in love with your spouse all over again! That is what couples overwhelmingly report is the result of attending a Lutheran Marriage Encounter Weekend. Weekends run from Friday at 8 PM to Sunday at 5 PM and are designed to enrich ALL MARRIAGES. There is a \$45 per couple registration fee, plus toward the end of the weekend you will be given an opportunity to make a confidential contribution of whatever amount you wish toward continuation of the program. Two nights lodging, 5 meals for each of you, and all supplies are included. Sign up now while there are still openings for one of the fall Weekends: Sept. 16-18 at the beautiful Olmsted Mansion & Retreat Center in Ludlow, PA, which is located in the Allegheny National Forest, 20 minutes southeast of Warren, PA, or Nov. 4-6 at the Radisson Hotel Sharon, in West Middlesex, PA (currently undergoing extensive renovation and being re-named “Park Inn by Radisson.”) This is an outstanding facility located an hour north of Pittsburgh where all rooms have king beds and in-room hot tubs. To register for either of the Weekends, simply go to the website: [www.GodLovesMarriage.org](http://www.GodLovesMarriage.org) and sign up using your credit card, or for questions, or if you would like a brochure with registration form mailed to you, contact Pennsylvania Directors of Lutheran Marriage Encounter, Fred & Julie Schamber, at 724-325-3166 or email: [fjschamber@comcast.net](mailto:fjschamber@comcast.net).



Women of the ELCA – St. Paul Unit

Wednesday – July 13, 2011

7:00 pm in the Fellowship Hall

\*\*\*\*\* SPECIAL SUMMER MEETING TIME and PLACE \*\*\*\*\*

Theme: Respond

Theme verse: Luke 1: 46-48

The June meeting was held on June 8, 2011 in the church lounge. The theme of our bible study was Renewing, based on Philippians 4:4-9.



### SCHOOL KITS

The July meeting activity will be instructional for all members to learn how to make the school kit backpack. This is a new design from what we previously have used. Please join us in the Fellowship Hall for a **\*\*Working Meeting\*\***.

**Include the following items in each School Kit** (from the LWR website):

- Four 70-sheet notebooks of wide- or college-ruled paper approximately 8" X 10½"; no loose-leaf paper
- One 30-centimeter ruler, or a ruler with centimeters on one side and inches on the other
- One pencil sharpenerOne blunt scissors (safety scissors with embedded steel blades work well)
- Five unsharpened #2 pencils with erasers; secure together with a rubber band
- Five ballpoint pens (no gel ink); secure together with a rubber band
- One box of 16 or 24 crayons (Crayola brand)
- One eraser approximately 2 1/2" long

## YOUTH GROUP

July Meeting: SATURDAY, July 9, Time: **TBA (Watch your email)**

Activity: Complete VBS decorations



LYO Convention, July 15-17, 2011, St. Luke Lutheran Church, Beckley, WV

## News from Council

The St. Paul Congregational Council met Thursday, June 9th and would like to share the following highlights with you:

- Council approved a request from the Parking Committee to grant a \$1000 scholarship to seminarian Jared Lee, using Parking Committee funds.
- In response to suggestions from the Staff Support Committee, the council is developing employee evaluation procedures for all of our paid staff. Evaluations for the pastor were instituted a few years ago, and the committee and council feels it would be a wise idea to do this for all staff.

## Prayer, Praise, and Thanksgiving

The Prayer List for St. Paul

In The Small Catechism, Martin Luther writes: The Second Commandment: You are not to misuse the name of your God. What is this? Answer: We are to fear and love God, so that we do not curse, swear, practice magic, lie, or deceive using God's name, but instead use that very name in every time of need to call on, pray to, praise, and give thanks to God. Following this command to call on God's name in every situation, we list her intercessions to be lifted up in the midst of our congregation's worship.

### Person for whom we intercede:

Marty Ferer  
Ann Cloonan  
Betty Kelso  
Mary Rancier  
Joe Shibley  
Virginia Harris  
Jim Tucker  
Jim Craig  
Barbara Craig  
Louise Paulson  
Charles Ford  
Ford Family  
Abram Billig

### For what we are praying:

Melanoma  
Illness  
Surgery  
Illness  
Heart and lung  
Health concerns  
Parkinson's  
Cancer  
Cancer  
Illness  
Recovery from foot surgery/problems  
Comfort in the midst of grief (Death of Edna)  
Deployed to Afghanistan

## THE GREEN CORNER:

### A Picture is worth a Thousand Words

Sanjayan, a lead scientist for The Nature Conservancy, determined to learn about one of the highest peak regions, the upper Guinean Rainforest in coastal West Africa because it was one of the least-known and least-protected places on Earth. The picture he took of a little West African boy is indeed what he said 'proof positive of why poverty matters to my work.'

Sanjayan was hiking up a remote forest path when rain clouds forced him to take shelter in a little village. The inhabitants, among the poorest in the world, were surrounded by a wealth of biodiversity. What especially caught his attention was a little boy, about 10 yrs. old, who was carefully burning the fur off a dead monkey. The boy wore only dirty shorts and his legs revealed scars from tropical parasites. Holding the monkey in both hands, the boy slowly turned it as the pelt singed and curled into grey ash, a delicate work with the weak flame struggling against the rain soaked wood. Occasionally he would pause and furiously fan the smoky mess with a piece of tin sheet metal—the odor of burning fur hung in the heavy air enough to turn Sanjayan's stomach.

This monkey, Sanjayan realized, was food, soon to be dismembered 'every bit from nose to tail thrown into a pot with some meager vegetables and a few drops of red palm oil—a stew ultimately yielding about two tablespoons of protein for all who eat it. A small monkey in a bit pot.' Sanjayan became so engrossed with the boy's handiwork, he snapped a picture and then left a little guilty but noted that the little boy just 'giggled.' then, later, while camping on the edge of the village away from the dead monkey smell, his attention went away from the monkey to that piece of tin that the little boy used to fan the fire. It was a piece of a signboard—'one of millions that line the roads all over Africa. There are pictorial signs—a tooth depicting a dentist...—descriptive ones put up by governments, churches, and charities.' The locals, illiterate, ignore the ones with words and one that the boy had used to fan flames had a 3 letter background in blue against a white background and it said WFP (World Food Programme).

Later lying in the darkness of his tent, Sanjayan realized, while previewing his photos, especially of the little boy, that conservationists can't hope to succeed by ignoring poor people dependent upon the provisions of wild nature to survive, even if they must exploit the resources that mean life for them. But if conservationists can demonstrate that managing the gifts of life—animals for food, trees for fuel—the local people will not only be able to save their own lives, but will also sustain the wildlife habitat. 'In the end, for the poor, nature often provides when governments and institutions don't suffice.'

Sanjayan thought about bartering with the little boy for his piece of tin fan, as a souvenir for the above insight. But then it occurred to him that he had nothing useful with which to barter. Nothing sustainable. The little boy needed the metal sign for much more immediate use.

p.s. Sanjayan's photo of the little boy is posted on the Green Bulletin Board.



Shake It Up Cafe Vacation Bible School will be held Sunday, July 17th through Thursday, July 21st for children from the age of three up to those who have completed fifth grade. Sessions run from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM each day. On Monday through Thursday nights, a light supper will be provided for kids and families at 5:30. Please be sure to dress in play clothes and safe shoes. To register, visit the church website at [stpaulmorgantown.org](http://stpaulmorgantown.org) and click on the Shake It Up Café link. For more information, contact Tamara Riegel at 296-1915 or [teriegel@yahoo.com](mailto:teriegel@yahoo.com)

**Please help with VBS** — We are in need of the following items for decorations and for crafting. Please bring them to the stage in the fellowship hall. If you wish the item returned to you, please put your name in a prominent place. Thank you so much!!

Ribbons and rick rack (1/4 - 1/2 inch wide)

Decorative contact paper or regular decorative paper, such as scrapbooking paper

Pots and pans

Artificial greenery, flowers, and fruit

A chiminea (if you have one, you know what it is!) And other pottery items – to decorate a “Bible times kitchen”

Fabric – at least 9 inches in size – ice cream colors would be especially nice

Old kitchen utensils, such as pastry blenders, potato mashers, meat tenderizers, cookie cutters – we will be using them to stamp with paint, so anything that would make an interesting shape would be good

Empty cereal boxes

And more paper towel rolls!

Remember that items will be handled and are at risk. Please don't bring in anything irreplaceable!

**From the Piecemakers:** Everything is going very well at the Friday quilt meetings. We are working all through the summer and getting a lot accomplished. Material wise we are still okay. Someone dropped off a nice lot of sheets last week and more are promised. Linda moved to Pt. Marion but she still makes the trip every Friday to sew and hem all the quilts we put together. Dian's husband is having bone marrow transplant and they are in Tennessee for that. We wish them well and miss her a lot. Helen is taking home a lot of sewing and we appreciate Gretchen, Kathryn, Mary & Kay as our faithful knotters. We started out Tuesday evening quilting class and it is a very exciting experience. We have beginners that are doing well and some experienced quilters. Linda Ross & Eva Thomas are our wonderful instructor and we are having a great time. There is some space left if anyone is interested, please see Linda or Renate for more details. I think it would be wonderful to do this as an ongoing basis but I know that the fall gets very busy. Thank God for such a dedicated group of volunteers to make our mission at St. Paul possible.

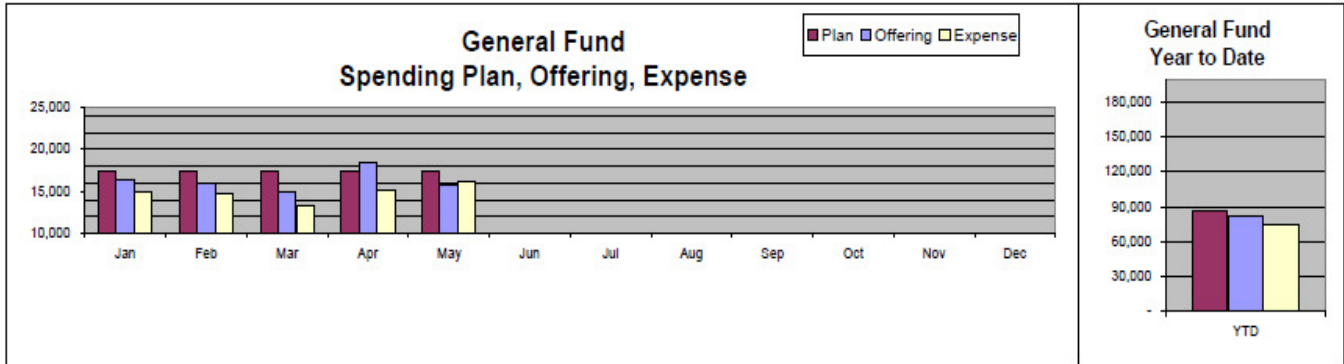
**JULY SOCIAL — JULY 20TH AT 5:30 PM** The July social will be held in conjunction with Vacation Bible School. It would be a great time for the congregation to come out and see what VBS is all about! Feel free to bring any dish that you would like to add to the menu! See you there!

# Treasurer's Report

May 2011

## St Paul Lutheran Church Plan and Expense (General)

	2010 Year												
	End	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
General	7,224	8,211	9,862	11,644	14,644	14,505	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Restricted													
Regular	17,578	16,650	17,008	16,692	18,304	17,197							
Special	4,155	4,485	4,485	5,818	5,818	5,530							
Standing	38,778	37,512	38,519	39,710	38,747	38,248							
Use of Church	278	655	705	831	957	1,082							
	60,789	59,302	60,718	63,051	63,826	62,058	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bank Balance (Centra)	74,189	67,513	70,580	74,695	78,470	76,562							
Plan	17,314	17,314	17,314	17,314	17,314	17,314							
Offering	16,364	16,066	14,991	14,991	18,369	15,739							
Expense	14,900	14,782	13,338	15,068	16,175								



2011 Average Sunday Offering	3,882	2011 Average Sunday Offering	3,882
2011 Projected Average Sunday Offering (Spending Plan)	4,122	2011 Average Weekly Expense	3,536
	(240)		346
May Offering in excess of Expense	(437)	General Fund Balance	11,644
YTD Offering in excess of Expense	7,266	Average Offering 2004 - 2010	3,631



### CHURCH YARD SALE — SATURDAY, JULY 30 — 8 AM—2 PM

Donations accepted **AFTER** July 21, 2011 (when Vacation Bible School has ended).

**NO** donated Televisions                      **NO** donated Clothes (except sports equipment)

Questions or pick-up requests, call:      Glenn Borrelli    304-292-1455



SERVING ST. PAUL July 2011	LAY ASSISTANTS	LECTORS	ACOLYTE-CRUCIFER	USHERS	NURSERY WORKERS	COUNTERS
<b>3rd</b>  10:00 AM	D. Borrelli	F. Riegel	G. Riegel S. Wertz	P. Smith Kevin Smith Kyle Smith	Carver Family	T. Riegel D. Borrelli
<b>10th</b>  10:00 AM	J. Adams	S. McEwuen	AJ Bartlett S. Bartlett	S. McEwuen B. Graham S. Bartlett	Martin Family	M. Bartlett B. Graham
<b>17th</b>  10:00 AM	J. Borrelli	M Kirkpatrick	L. Cushing A Grosso	L. Springer LA Hartley	Gillen Family	L. Springer S Kirkpatrick
<b>24th</b>  10:00 AM	M. Sampson	S. Leonard	B. Peters S. Peters	E & C Melby F & T Potter	ML Bennett L. Cushing	C. Toffle S. Leonard
<b>31st</b>  10:00 AM	J. Adams	B. Stiles	Emily Stiles Ethan Stiles	K. Powell G & K Kullman	Peters Family	K. Gillen K. Powell



**Deadline for next  
month's newsletter  
is the July 18th!!!**

**If you cannot serve, please find your  
replacement! Thanks!!**

# July 2011

## Monthly Planner

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																																				
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24	25	26	27	28	29	30																																																																																				
<p style="text-align: center;">10:00 AM Service</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Circle of Friends</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">8:00 AM LMM (Shoney's)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">6:00 PM Quilting</p>			<p style="text-align: center;">10:00 AM Piecemakers</p>																																																																																					
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The **Epistle** is a publication from:  
St. Paul Lutheran Church, Morgantown, WV  
Office Hours: Monday-Thursday 9:00–2:00  
Friday 9:00–12:00  
Telephone: (304)599-0620

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