



THE EPISTLE

Volume 7 Issue 4

St Paul Lutheran Church

April 2008

From the Pastor's Desk

Tuesday of Easter Octave

March 25, 2008

Faith Seeking Understanding

Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

We sit in this first week of Easter (the Sunday of Easter and the following week to the second Sunday of Easter are known as the Easter octave) with the echoes of our Easter celebrations still ringing in our ears, the sweet scent of Easter lilies still wafting into our nostrils. The cry of "Jesus is risen!" will be raised again and again throughout our season. This cry is the joyful proclamation that made all the difference in the lives of the followers of Jesus.

But what does it mean? How do we go from that cry, which awakens faith in us, to understanding its implications for us and our lives? After all, simply knowing the story is not enough. The most hardened atheist can know the story down to the most minute detail and it means nothing. When we approach this story in faith, things change though. We need to have the proclamation of Jesus' resurrection and the story told throughout the bible hang together in a coherent way. This hanging together of Jesus' story and its implications in the world for us believers is the task we undertake when we engage in theology.

It is sadly true that in some areas of the church (yes, even in the ELCA), theology is looked with disdain, as a outdated, purely academic enterprise that provides nothing to the life of believers. Certainly, the enterprise of theology can go down empty and dead end pathways. But most of theology is meant to give life and breath to our faith, as we engage in the practice of what the great theologian Anselm of Canterbury called, "faith seeking understanding." And yes, I do mean "we." Theology is the task of the whole Church, not just a select few. Granted, some members of the Church are called to the specific ministry of theology, and some of us are meant to be interpreters of theology for others, but we all engage in theology when we begin asking what God is up to in the world.

When we begin engaging in theology, we have two parts to consider. The first part is the content of the faith. The content of faith is the basic elements of faith, our building blocks so to speak. We start our youngest members with these blocks when we place them in Sunday School. We learn the basic stories: creation of the world, certain parables, biblical characters, etc. As we grow in years and maturity, we become more specific with terminology. We start to use the words of faith, creating a vocabulary: incarnation, justification, sanctification, resurrection, eschatology, epiphany, sacrifice, etc. But we cannot simply stay there. After all, those building blocks can be arranged in many different ways. What is important is

that those building blocks, that content of the faith, is built up in a way that is stable. After all, my son can build quite interesting towers with his blocks, none of which are all that stable after long.

When we engage in theology, we have to consider exactly HOW all of those building blocks can be arranged and how they hook together. This part of faith is the second and perhaps more difficult task, and certainly theologians spend a great deal of time here. Questions begin to be raised: What does Jesus' birth mean? What does it mean to call Jesus the Son of God? Was it necessary for Jesus to be sinless—or could he have engaged in sinful activity? Do we really need an empty tomb for Christianity to be true? Then we move out to another circle of questions: given those answers, what does it mean for me when I die? What does Jesus being King of kings, and Lord of lords, mean for me? How do I carry my own cross?

These sorts of questions can really become serious for us, especially if we are not careful with our initial questions and answers, and our foundational building blocks. Many structures might be built that weigh us down and threaten to collapse and crush us. These explanations are what we would lead us to believe that our salvation is entirely up to us. Unfortunately, they are never that plainly stated. Too often they are couched in religious and even biblical language that sounds great, but is off the mark theologically. Take for instance all of those emails that get passed around with various stories about God, or miracles, or children saying wise things beyond their years, but at the end there always seems to be a tag line about sending it on to umpteen friends or else disaster will befall you, or else you will be denying Christ (and we know what happens when we do that). If the status of our relationships with God is based upon how many people we forward emails onto, then we are in big trouble. Here's a secret. When I receive those emails, I read them, chuckle or cry or scratch my head because I don't understand what is being said, and then... I hit the delete button. Just to make the point that my relationship with God is based on Christ's actions for me.

Whenever we gather as Christ's body for worship, we should be informed as well as formed to begin thinking about these things in a certain way. We should be able to make connections about God, Jesus, sin, death, discipleship, and the like, while excluding some of the junk out there that sounds good, but when we delve more deeply, we find it to be rotten at the core.

Our alleluias ring so loudly right now. Jesus' resurrection means many things, but we must be careful not to turn that resurrection into an empty shell that means less than what God wants it to mean. Jesus' rising from the dead is not just one sign among many that points to a generic position regarding new life in the world (although many images of new life—butterflies emerging from a chrysalis, flowers springing forth from the cold, dead earth, etc.—can indeed point us toward Christ, just not necessarily the other direction). Christ is risen to point to God's activity in the world, redeeming us, and ushering in the Kingdom when all death will be destroyed. God triumphs over death and all other powers in the world through Jesus' death and resurrection and now we may live eternally with God in that Kingdom. Here is one of our main building blocks.

Alleluia! Christ is risen!
He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Grace and Peace,

Pastor Brian

MARK YOUR CALENDARS — On Sunday, April 6th, between the two worship services, Barbara B. Carl, the Regional Gift Planner for the ELCA Foundation, for the West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod, will lead a seminar to discuss the vital aspects of Christian stewardship. The ELCA Foundation helps people to develop estate plans which will provide for family as well as provide for ministries for the church. Regardless of the size of the estate you leave behind at death, you can leave some portion for the ministry of the Gospel. The ELCA Foundation can also help you find ways to make gifts during your lifetime that will enable you to receive payments during your lifetime. Life income agreements such as Charitable Gift Annuities and charitable trusts have benefits for you, the donor, as well as for the ministry of the church. Please plan to attend and learn how you can be a good steward of all the assets God has bestowed upon you.



SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

Many thanks to all who helped make our Holy Saturday event such a fun afternoon. Our Sunday School students and their friends colored eggs, complete a craft for the breakfast tables on Easter, participated in wrapping up Migrant Worker kits and roamed the sanctuary and church grounds in a scavenger and egg hunt. It was a great way to combine some fun and a few Easter lessons along the way. Thank you again for all your help.

Mark your calendars:

May 18th: Learn By Heart wraps up for the year.

Play rehearsal during the Sunday School hour starting at 9:45AM

May 25th: Morning services changed to summer schedule, one 10AM service

Play rehearsal during the Sunday School hour starting at 9AM

June 1st: CELEBRATION SUNDAY 10AM

Play will be performed as part of the service. Participants should arrive by 9:30 for last minute costumes and directions.

July 20th-24th: Vacation Bible School, POWER LAB

The Heroes of Lollipop Park need your help!

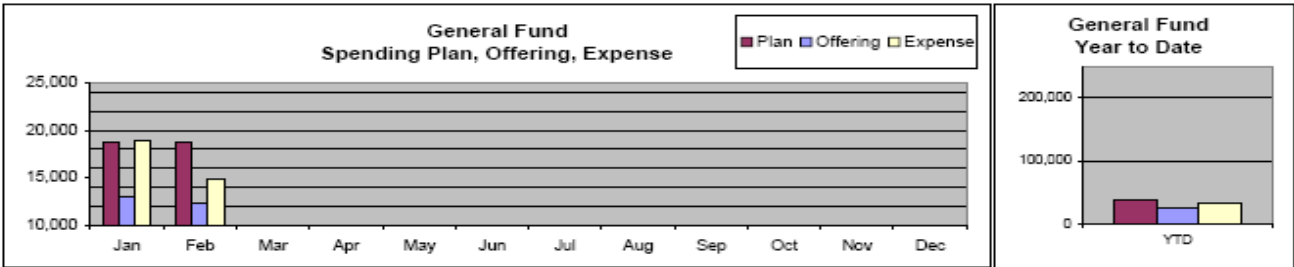
Once again our very own Mary Lynne Bennett will be sharing her talents with us as she wraps up our school year with another great production. The kids have been working on learning the songs during closing but we need YOU! If you haven't visited us in Sunday School for a while, now is a great time to join us. The music is fun, and the costumes are easy! Come see what it's all about. Call the church office or Brenda Stiles, 284-0190 for more information.



Treasurer's Report

St Paul Lutheran Church Statement of Revenue and Expense with Spending Plan

February 2008	February				Year to Date			Year to Date	
	General Fund	Spending Plan	+/- of Plan Rec'd-Spent	% of Plan Rec'd-Spent	General Fund to Date	Total Plan to Date	% of Plan Rec'd-Spent	Restricted Fund	Total Funds to Date
Support and Revenue									
Contributions	12,302	18,823	(6,521)	65%	27,811	37,646	74%		27,811
Designated/Restricted	2,471	0			0			3,070	3,070
Total Assets	14,773	18,823	(4,050)	78%	27,811	37,646	74%	3,070	30,881
Expenses									
Designated/Restricted	0	205			0	410		13,296	13,296
Congregational Council	(7)	0			(7)	0		0	0
Benevolences	3,104	3,254	(150)	95%	3,104	6,408	48%	0	3,104
Church Mortgage	568	616	(48)	0%	594	1,232	48%	0	594
Committee - Christian Education	190	350	(160)	54%	0	950	0%	0	0
Committee - Fellowship	0	129	(129)	0%	35	363	10%	0	35
Committee - Staff Support	0	0	0	0%	0	30	0%	0	0
Committee - Outreach	168	163	5	103%	722	725	100%	0	722
Committee - Property	20	325	(305)	6%	95	650	15%	0	95
Committee - Resource	0	0	0	0%	578	200	289%	0	578
Committee - Stewardship	0	0	0	0%	0	100	0%	0	0
Committee - Worship & Music	134	485	(351)	28%	2,104	1,576	134%	0	2,104
Insurance	0	272	(272)	0%	760	1,043	73%	0	760
Building Operation	1,223	2,087	(864)	59%	1,972	5,275	37%	0	1,972
Office Operation	578	582	(4)	99%	202	1,154	17%	0	202
Parish Communications	356	185	171	193%	60	420	14%	0	60
Payroll	8,497	9,335	(837)	91%	8,649	18,659	46%	0	8,649
Total Expenses	14,832	17,988	(3,156)	82%	18,868	39,216	48%	13,296	32,170
Excess of Support and Revenue Over Expenses	(55)	835	(893)		8,944	(1,570)		(10,225)	(1,289)



Two Options for Today's Parishioners:

NEW - Electronic Giving Program

Traditional - Parish Envelope Program

A New Way to Give

Our church is embracing a giving option that may be more convenient for many of our parishioners - Electronic Giving. Beginning in January, this new giving option will work in the same manner as mortgages, loans payments, or insurance premiums that are automatically withdrawn from your checking or savings account.

To sign up for this new giving option and have your donations transferred electronically to the church account on a regular basis, please fill out an authorization form and return it to the church office. You choose the donation frequency (weekly or monthly) and the donation amount for each fund you wish to support.

Important Benefits of Electronic Giving

Electronic Giving makes life easier for you and yields very significant benefits for our church.

Benefits for You:

- The satisfaction of giving to God first
- Easier to fulfill stewardship commitments
- Strengthens participation and support in the church

- Allows you to contribute even when you're away
- Easier personal budgeting
- More secure than bringing cash or checks to church

Benefits for our Church:

- Cultivates consistent giving
- More predictable cash flow for better planning
- Less work for office staff
- Secure and easy cash maintenance

Traditional Choices Remain

All registered parishioners will continue to receive envelopes, including envelopes for special collections for a variety of needs. Parish collections will be taken each week as usual. Participants in the Electronic Giving program are asked to mark their envelopes "EFT" and place them in the collection basket.

If you do not currently use envelopes, please consider participating in either our envelope program or the Electronic Giving program. Our parish needs your consistent support.

News from Council

The St. Paul Congregational Council met Thursday, March 13th, and we wish to share some of the highlights with you.

- New officers elected were: Connie Toffle, President, Bill Graham, Vice President, and Misti Bartlett, Secretary.
- Robert Zay reported that the bell has arrived and the services required to install it will be coordinated in the near future.
- On April 6th there will be nine members received into the congregation of St. Paul.
- Chaplain Riegel gave a presentation on the Lutheran Campus Ministry's capital campaign. It was suggested that one person in the congregation take the lead in collecting names of WVU alumni in some way connected to the chapel. Council also discussed ways in which St. Paul could contribute to the campaign.

FROM THE PIECEMAKERS:



We would like to ask all of you that leave material or donations for the Piecemakers account, to leave your name so that we may properly thank you. April 22nd is Earth Day, please watch for a special quilt display for this occasion on Sunday, April 20th. Thanks to so many of you for donating such special material!! We were able to make some very nice quilts honoring Earth Day! Greetings from the Piecemakers!!!!

WOMEN OF THE ELCA NEWS:

We are still collecting migrant kits now through April 27th. Each kit should contain: 1 large bath towel, 1 washcloth, 1 toothbrush, 1 toothpaste, 1 comb & 1 bar of soap. Wrap these items in the bath towel and secure with safety pins or twine. You can put the kits on a table in the narthex and if you have any questions, please see Betty Kidd.

Cradle Roll News—All except 3 of the dozen infants have birthdays or baptism dates in May! If you have anything for the cradle roll please see Donna Ford-Werntz.

Scott's Run Settlement House is having their fund raising dinner on April 5th from 4-7 PM at Suncrest Methodist Campus—Drummond Chapel. Tickets are \$10 each or with a donation of 3 cans of food \$9.

Thank you to Kay VandenBosche, Welma Pierce, Donna Ford-Werntz for helping serve the food and cleanup after the Lenten Dinner. The 3 delicious soups were provided by Kay VandenBosche, Helen Goryance and Ann Cloonan.

Our next meeting will be April 9th at 2:00 p.m. The lesson will be from the April issue of Lutheran Women Today.

“The Old Order changeth and giveth way to new”. By our June meeting we should have a new president as I am resigning. It has been a fulfilling job, especially working with Margaret for about 10 or more of those wonderful experiences. Thank you to all of the members of WELCA—Betty Kidd.

St. Paul Youth Group — April Activities

Saturday, April 12 – 10:00am -- 5:00pm

WVU Children's Hospital Kids Fair – Morgantown Mall

Volunteer opportunity at the Monongalia County Solid Waste Authority Booth with Laura Stiller.

Contact Laura at (304) 292-3801 to schedule volunteer time.

Sunday, April 13 5-7 pm

Regular Meeting

Meet at church at 5:00 pm to shop at Sam's Club for Rummage Sale Concession items

Return to church for dinner and meeting; sign-up for Rummage Sale Concession times

Friday, April 25 – 5 pm

Set up Concession Stand

Saturday, April 26 – (8:15 am – 2 pm)

St. Paul Rummage Sale Concession Stand



Power Lab VBS is coming!!!!

Save the dates!

July 20-24, 2008



ANNUAL ALZHEIMER'S WALK DATE APPROACHING

Seven things to find!!!!

1. The GOOD FEELING of a mission well done.
2. A TEAM to walk representing St. Paul at the Alzheimer's Walk—meet at the Blue gate of the coliseum on April 19 between 9 & 10 AM. Bring members of the congregation or anyone else, neighbor, club member, friend. Register at our St. Paul table.
3. Your WALLET with money or check to support the Alzheimer's program—money will be used to give caregiver's financial help, physical respite, and direction for medical services. Put your donation in the envelope in your hymnal on any Sunday through April 13th and put it in the collection plate or bring it to the walk.
4. The MATCHING FUNDS that will come from Thrivent for Lutherans.
5. Maybe another CHAMPION plaque for the team with the largest donation.
6. Good fellowship, door prizes, and free lunch after the WALK is over.
7. Kay VandenBosche for answers to your questions.

St Paul Rummage Sale

Saturday, April 26, 2008 (8:30 AM to 2:30 PM)

In preparations for our second rummage sale, the Social Issues class is looking for your donations of household items:

glassware, furniture, books, collectables, jewelry, decorative items etc
games, sporting equipment and related specialty clothing,
household tools, garden tools,
coats, winter/snow boots, infant clothing (size NB-24 months)

Basically, anything in good, clean, useable condition.

NO children or adult clothing; NO TVs.

Items may be dropped off at the church beginning April 19th and either left in the Narthex or placed on the stage in Fellowship Hall. If you need help unloading or would like to arrange for a pick up, just let us know.

Unsold items will be donated to the Wadestown Community Center or other charity. Proceeds will be used to support local charities and projects for St Paul.

Please search your homes for those unused, forgotten items and add them to our sale. With your help we can make this an even bigger success than last year. **Info: call Glenn at 304-292-1455**

New this year – Piecemaker’s Quilt Raffle

St. Paul Youth Group will have a concession stand.



Prayer Corner

One of the most important things we can do for others is to pray for them, not just generally, but especially for particular needs and interests that they have. . . "The great intercessors remain the men and women of secret influence in all communities, and to be mentioned in their prayers is incomparably more enriching than to be mentioned in their wills. (W.E. Sangster)

Please pray for those in need. We ask you to include:

Illness

Lois Kleeb
 Rachael Sheets
 Madge Hall
 Pastor Jim Huffman
 Phyllis Henry
 Gary DeMoss
 Bob Walters
 Sarah Bishop
 Bob Snyder
 Sherry Fox
 Barbara Kervaski
 Jane Zay
 Norma Linton
 Kristen Kleeb
 Betty Kelso
 Karen Starkey
 Philip Smith
 Edna Carlson
 Tom Kelso
 Gladys Halyer
 Pauline Harger
 Phyllis Johnson
 Ron Fortney
 Margaret Maurer
 Lynn Beach
 Alana Mears
 Pastor William Carlson

Home Bound

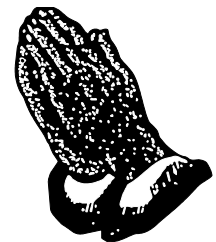
Mary Hutchinson
 James Sharkey
 Virginia Sweitzer
 Rilla Tonon

Grief

Family Concerns

Recuperation Active Duty

Cliff Bishop	Rob Walters
Jeff Meadows	Brian Fox
Sioerra Gabbert	Jason Glass



The Green Corner

A failure of state oversight of mining?

In November 2006 the WV Highlands Conservancy and Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition attorneys warned Hobet Mining that its Boone County, WV operations were dumping too much selenium into tributaries of the Mud River.

The formal notice of intent to sue gave the company 60 days to fix its pollution problems. Federal Law requires citizens to give companies and regulators such notice before filing a Clean Water Act lawsuit.

On January 12, 2007, the 60th day after the Hobet notice, the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) filed its own selenium lawsuit against Hobet Mining. Under the law, if DEP “has commenced and is diligently prosecuting” its own case the citizen groups are prohibited from suing Hobet.

In March 2007, the environmental groups’ attorneys filed more legal notices. This time they targeted six more permits, including four new permits that weren’t part of their initial notices.

By mid-May, the DEP attorney sought to amend his agency’s pending suit in Boone County Circuit Court to add the new permits targeted by the environmentalists.

DEP has done nothing since to move the suit forward toward a court order that would force Hobet to comply with its permit limits for selenium, court records show.

In February 2008 the environmental group attorneys filed their own lawsuit against Hobet. They argue that DEP has dropped the ball, and that a judge should let citizens seek their own injunction against the coal company.

“This...is the logical conclusion of the WVDEP’s general failure to enforce the Clean Water Act against this industry,” wrote the environmental groups attorneys.

(This is an excerpt from a February 10, 2007 Charleston Gazette article by Ken Ward, Jr.)

Calendar of Events:

April 5-9 3rd Annual Mountaintop Removal Week in Washington. For more info contact visit www.iLoveMountains.org

April 18-20 Sustainable Fair, “Green Makes \$en\$e, Davis & Elkins College, Elkins, WV. For more info contact Denise Poole, 304 617-7073

June 28 5th Annual “Lavender & More” Fair, LaPaix Herb Farm, Alum Bridge WV (Lewis County)

SERVING ST. PAUL April 2008	LAY ASSIS- TANTS	LECTORS	ACOLYTE- CRUCIFER	USHERS	NURSERY WORKERS	COUNTERS
6th 8:30 AM	M. Haas	M. Haas	M. Bott- Hansmann	L. Springer P. Smith	The Kullman Family	S. Price
11:00 AM	S. McEwuen	S. Price	AJ Bartlett M. McCulla	E. Graham L & L Paulson	J. Graham S. Rizzo	B. Schreiman
13th 8:30 AM	D. Borrelli	D. Borrelli	J. Borrelli	S. McEwuen S. Lynch	M. L. Bennett	
11:00 AM	S. Woodruff	T. Potter	E. Stiles E. Stiles	C. Henry J & S McCulla	A. Grosso S. Armstrong	E. Hansmann R. Zay
20th 8:30 AM	S. McEwuen	S. McEwuen	P. Cushing	ML Cushing K. Powell	M. Bott- Hansmann Huber Family	
11:00 AM	M. Haas	S. Rizzo	N. Price L. Price	S. Bartlett B & J Schreiman	The Ford- Wertz Family	P. Johnson C. Toffle
27th 8:30 AM	D. Borrelli	E. Melby	K. Smith	E & C Melby	ML Cushing	
11:00 AM	S. Woodruff	G. Grosso	E. Graham A. Grosso	S. Armstrong T & F Potter	McCulla Family	K. Powell LA Hartley

If you are unable to serve please find your own replacement. Thank you!

ST PAUL LUTHERAN
CHURCH

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