

Raising faith in

The Backyard

with a passion for generous stewardship

June 2009



Reflections on “Forward with Faith”

This past Sunday, we gathered in the fellowship hall for a meal, celebrating the conclusion of the first, and intense, phase of “Forward with Faith.” During the brief program at the meal, we thanked the leadership team for their faithful, tireless labors which they shared over a seven-week span. Then Jeff Hartmann, Darryl Brown and Gary Hellner shared the really good news that we had gone beyond the \$500,000 mark! \$510,000 to be more precise!! There was an instant eruption of applause and “oohs and ahs,” with a few “Wows!” thrown in for good measure. It was a moment I will never forget and each time I remember it I will cherish it.

As I reflect on the events of the past six weeks, the main emotion flowing in my heart and mind is pure, overwhelming gratitude. I thank God, our generous and abundant God, for moving among us in a new and refreshing way. I thank God for the Leadership Team. I don’t know if you know this, but each of them, when originally asked to serve, immediately said “Yes!” Not once did I hear a response such as, “Oh, another ‘campaign.’ Ugh.”

Or, “Uh...can I have some time to think about this?” No. The response was, “Yes. I can do that.” It was beautiful to be a part of the team and to observe the way God pulled us together and empowered us for the task! I also thank God for Pastor George Haynes, for the way God has instilled in him such a passion for raising faith, for proclaiming the Gospel and the mission of the Church. George was truly inspirational, truly a gift to us given at just the right time.

I am grateful to be a part of this mission on Ella Blvd. that calls itself “Hosanna Lutheran Church”; grateful for each of you for your prayers throughout this faith venture and for your deep commitment to move this ministry forward. Looking back on the past six weeks, what I think most about is the way in which God formed us into something new. Yes, we celebrate a “final figure” expressing the gathering of the financial gifts of God’s people, but we celebrate so much more! We truly celebrate how God has moved us Forward with Faith!! I think that’s what the applause, the “oohs and ahs” and the “Wows!!” were all about.

- Pastor John

Noisy Offering

June 21

The Mission of the Month for June is **Ron and Heda Christ's mission in Botswana**. An excerpt from their blog describes their mission:



"We have always felt a calling for overseas mission work. The timing for us is now — to rewire not retire." from: <http://ronandheda.blogspot.com>

The Changing Role of the Missionary

Most missionaries today are ordinary people serving the world through an array of skills and talents — lay people called to serve. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and its members are true to their name — *they are evangelists*. The spirit of the Lord moves within the ranks of the members!

Ron and Heda have a 2 year contract with the Global Mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). Heda, a registered nurse, is working in a Lutheran HIV/AIDS clinic. Botswana is one of the most severely HIV/AIDS affected countries in the world. Thankfully Botswana does have one of the most progressive and comprehensive programs for dealing with this crisis. Ron, a financial trainer, is assisting the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Botswana (ELCB) in financial management.

The Lutheran Church in Botswana was started by missionaries from Germany and Scandinavia. Nationwide membership of the ELCB is 22,000, with 43 congregations and 61 preaching locations. 75% of the people of Botswana are Christian. Ron and Heda will be the first Americans serving from the ELCA.

We are asking you to dig into your pockets and purses and pull out any loose change you may be carrying. Deposit it in the buckets that are passed during the noisy offering. All money we collect on June 21 will support Ron and Heda's mission.

Jesus is the vine,
we are the
branches.

Recently, Jessica Felder, a fairly new member of Hosanna, was engaged in conversation at a Chili's restaurant with a legal counselor who has befriended her and is assisting her. The subject of church came up and Jessica was expounding the merits of Hosanna. Her friend commented, "You seem to have a strong church family," and further asked about "Lutheranism." Jessica's simple explanation, "Oh, we're just laid-back Catholics."

A couple in the nearby booth overheard the conversation. They turned to Jessica and said, "Hey, we're sold! I've been attempting to explain the Lutheran Church to my wife for quite some time now."

The strangers asked where Hosanna is located. "It's across the street from Westfield High School," was Jessica's simple answer.

"We know where that is."

We hope to see the couple soon.

Glimpses of Grace 2009

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| World Hunger | \$300.00 |
| African Initiative | \$12,725.00 |
| Mission of the Month | \$2,771.94 |
| Mulkey Fund Income | \$5,544.00 |
| Benevolence (through June 09) | \$9,128.39 |
| Northwest Assistance Ministries | \$300.00 |
| Abby Grace Fund | \$1,271.00 |
| Buffalo Hot Wings Fundraiser | \$750.00 |
| Equal Exchange Coffee Project | \$490.00 |
| Art for the Hungry | \$721.00 |
| Garage Sale | \$5,000.00 |

Forward With Faith Commitments

As of June 2009 **\$510,000.00**

Mission of the Month Gifts:

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| January—Lutheran Campus Ministry | \$512.84 |
| February—Interfaith Hospitality Network | \$703.50 |
| March—Lutherhill Campership Fund | \$410.20 |
| April—Habitat for Humanity | \$528.40 |
| May—Central Asia Institute | \$617.00 |

Helping Hands Fund

January: Two families received money for rent assistance and Wal-Mart gift cards.

February: One family received rental assistance.

One individual received food pantry items and gift card.

March: Two families received rental assistance and food.

April: Three individuals received monetary assistance.

May: One family received rental assistance

Two families received food pantry items and gift cards.

Balance on hand: **\$509.12**

Jesus...“Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke them. Then he gave them to the disciples to set before the people. They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basket-fuls of broken pieces that were left over.” Luke 9:16-17



Did you know

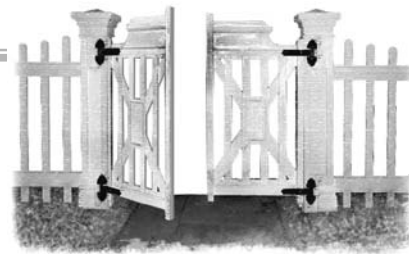


...that our Synod's camp, Lutherhill, is in the midst of a capital fund raiser called "A Place for All People!" and, to date, gifts from individuals and congregations total \$1,470,000 and, Thrivent Financial for Lutherans will match any gifts its members give up to \$100?

Go to "thrivent.com/generosity" for more information on how to multiply any gift you might make to Lutherhill.

A parting thought

Through the Back Gate



A prayer from Pastor Kerry Nelson:

Let us pray: Dear Lord, if following you is about math at all then the only number that counts is 100. Because, just as you invest 100% of yourself in us, we know you care about 100% of us and 100% about our lives. We want to be faithful to you and we need your guidance to light a path of faithfulness for us. In Jesus' name. Amen.