

Raising faith in

The Backyard

with a passion for generous stewardship

November 2008



Thanksgiving and Joy

Marlo Petersen offered this writing from Leslie and Edith Brandt and, as I read and thought about it, two things popped for me. The first thought I had is that November is the month we take time out to give thanks. The whole nation takes a day for Thanksgiving. The Brandts set the stage for the grounding of our thanks giving by reminding us of the joy of being disciples, "The greatest joy of our lives, O Lord, is the joy of knowing that we are your children...." The image came to me of the disciples gathered in the upper room after the death of Jesus on the cross, bummed out, depressed, with all of their hopes shattered. Then Christ appeared to them in that upper room. Can you imagine their joy? Can you imagine their level of being thankful? Can you imagine how that moment changed the grounding of their being and how radically it shifted their purpose for living?

The second thought centers on this place, this sense, this "thing" called JOY. It's so much more than a feeling, like saying, "I feel happy today." It's more like the very grounding for our being, something that can never be stripped from us. It is a gift that keeps giving, like an endless stream of fresh water. The fickle things of our lives, like stock markets and recessions, will come and go, but as God's children we announce to the world that this joy, which is grounded in our crucified and risen Lord Jesus, can never be stripped from us. Never!

So, as disciples, we are resurrection people, we are people filled with life, love and joy. And we live that joy out in everything we say and do. The Brandts write it eloquently, I believe, "Let our joy show through, O Lord, and transmit joy to the dull lives of unhappy people in our path." Be thankful...FULL of thanks! And may joy fill you this day and every day!

— Pastor John

The Joy of Serving

*The greatest joy of our lives, O Lord
Is the joy of knowing
that we are your children
and are under your appointment and commission
to carry on your objectives
in our world about us.*

*Thank you, our God, for the joy of serving,
for the joy of knowing that whereas
we differ and even disagree in some areas
of our relationship,
we can discover unity in your love for us
and in sharing your love with one another
and with those around us.*

*And thank you for the grace,
the gifts and talents
that enable us to serve others.*

*Our roles as individuals may not be the same,
but our goal is one: to advance your kingdom,
to communicate your healing touch of love
to those who suffer
and to those who are lonely and lost.*

*Let our joy show through, O Lord,
and transmit joy to the dull lives
of unhappy people in our path.*

-from Growing Together, Leslie and Edith Brandt,
Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis

more angels... this time it's you!

Hurricane Ike broke many tree branches around the church grounds. Finally, Harris County Precinct 4 agreed to pick up the debris. All we had to do was move it near the street. Pastor John asked those at worship September 21 to hang around a little longer and drag the branches, pine boughs and logs into a single pile. Men, women and children, some in their Sunday best, willingly joined in the effort. In about 45 minutes it was done, in a great example of teamwork.

The next day a large truck and crane showed up and carried everything away.

Thanks, all you angels in human form, for giving up a few moments of your day. Thanks, in particular, to Bob McConnell for heading the effort and furnishing the tools and gloves and to Ron Dietzmann for his trailer. And to Bob Lee of Precinct 4... you are another angel.

Did you know

...that our recent noisy offering for Lutheran Disaster Relief was enough to buy 1500 pounds of nails to repair homes?



Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

You are claimed, gathered, and sent for the life of the world, and God works an amazing grace with your hands.

- When your hands lift up in prayer and praise, the Spirit glorifies God and witnesses a liberated life in Jesus.
- When your hands splash water at the Font and share bread at the Table, God pours the life of Jesus into human hearts.
- When your hands offer peace-filled greetings and compassionate embraces, Jesus' healing and reconciliation finds flesh and blood.
- When your hands join with others in rebuilding homes and communities, Christ's Body shines more radiantly in a shadowed world.

In these ways and so many more God is at work in you, enabling you to will and to work for God's good pleasure. You are God's handiwork-blessed and a blessing for the life of the world.

I join with grateful people around the world in giving thanks to God for you and the work of your hands in your daily work, in the life of your congregation, and through the ministries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

In nearly 10,500 congregations and 65 synods, and through hundreds of colleges, seminaries, health care facilities and other agencies, ELCA members join their financial support with yours to put our hands in a common service of God's work.

The work God does through your hands is life for this world. So, I encourage you to continue giving yourself generously in all the labors of your hands, including your deliberation and actions at your congregational meeting. As you make these decisions for the coming year, your partners in the ELCA hold you in prayer, confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ.

In God's grace,
Mark S. Hanson
Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

"The LORD has done great things for us,
and we are filled with joy." Psalm 126:3

Glimpses of Grace — 2008

World Hunger	\$485.00
African Initiative	\$7950.00
Mission of the Month	\$3102.26
Mulkey Fund Income	\$4470.08
Benevolence	\$9322.59

(Amounts year-to-date)

Mission of the Month Gifts:

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan	\$218.29
Lutherhill Campership Fund	\$259.39
Wholeness Project of Lutheran Social Services	\$145.63
God's Global Barnyard	\$182.88
Lutheran Seminary Scholarship Fund	\$203.45
NAM Back to School	\$582.50
ELCA Disaster Response	\$804.00
ELCA Disaster Response (2nd time after Ike)	\$337.07
Seafarers Project	\$433.05

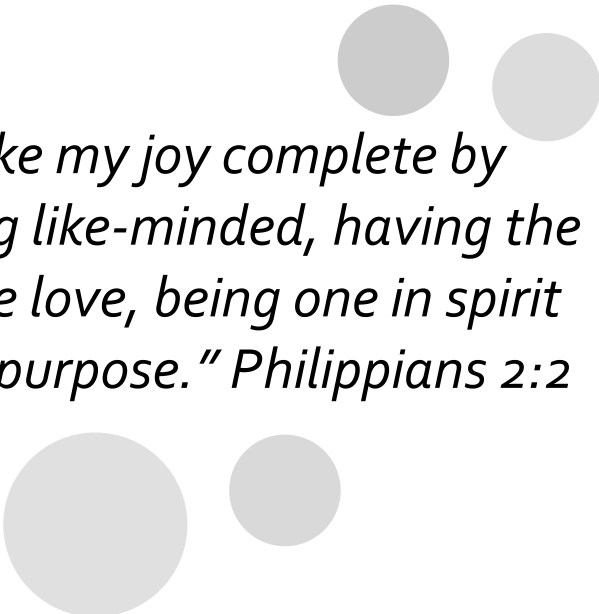
Helping Hands Fund

July: Two families received money for food, gas, assistance and items from the food pantry.

August: Six families received money for food, school supplies, assistance, also items from the food pantry.

September: Four families received money for housing and gas, also items from the food pantry.

October: One family (hurricane Ike evacuees) received aid.



"Make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose." Philippians 2:2

Did you know



...that Hosanna gives out servant awards each quarter to special people who give of their time, talents and other resources to aid the mission of Hosanna?

Did you know, for instance, that several ladies spend a few hours each month preparing Hotline, our monthly newsletter, for mailing?

Did you know that another lady comes in once a week to collate all the worship materials?

Did you know that a gracious lady spends part of at least two days per week folding the bulletins and weekly news, and preparing the "altar books" for Pastor John and the assisting ministers?

It's not just women who willingly go that "extra mile." Men, too, help keep things moving by sweeping the parking lot after windstorms, repairing damage to the property, transporting the disabled to Bible study and worship or taking canned goods to NAM... the list goes on.

Servant Award nomination forms can be found in the workroom, or online at welcometohosanna.com ("Forms, Documents, Policies" link on the home page.)

A parting thought

Through the back gate



The final page of The Backyard is known as the “Backgate” because it is seeking to offer the image of leaving the backyard through the back gate and, as we are “leaving” we want to offer some final thoughts, something to challenge us or to “chew on” for a while. Because this publication is about raising faith with a passion for growing generous stewards, I offer to you two books to read that have been delightful to me when it comes to expressing what it means to be a disciple.

They are both written by Michael Foss and can be ordered from Augsburg Publishing. You can also find these books, I’m sure, at Amazon.com at a much reduced cost. The first is PoWeR SuRGe, and in this book Foss writes about the six “marks” of discipleship: Prayer, Worship, Reading scripture daily, Serving, Relating to others, and Giving.

The second book is the sequel to the first, Real Faith for Real Life: Living the Six Marks of Discipleship. The Sunday morning adult study recently finished digging into this book. They found it very helpful and Foss’s writing stimulated quite a bit of dialog in the group.

Both books are easy to read and very practical in their approaches to discipleship, so I offer the invitation to read one or both of them. I also offer the invitation to borrow them from me or from one of the people from the Sunday morning adult study. Several copies are floating around Hosanna. Give it a read

Did you know



...that God’s math doesn’t add up – it multiplies?



... you won’t be disappointed!