

Raising faith in

The Backyard

with a passion for generous stewardship

November 2009



A Texan All Saints

I can think of nothing better to post this month than the words Pastor John Bade (Baton Rouge) wrote for his father's funeral, read by his brother Lawrence (St. Paul's Brenham).

A full church and four-part singing witnessed to a life of faith. The cemetery a few miles away was behind a church where Lawrence was ordained. Heinie was a Sager, a descendent of Christoph Adam Sager and the other Sagers that came over from the Chrischona school to found Lutheran Churches in Texas.

On All Saints Sunday we remember all those who have gone before us. We remember those who passed the faith on to us parents, grandparents, Sunday school teachers, youth leaders, mentors, friends. This brought tears to my eyes. I pray it does yours too.

"Let's Return Thanks" Celebration of Hope and Love October 21, 2009, St. Mark Lutheran Church, Cuero, TX

As our friends and family gathered on this day to celebrate the life of Heinie Bade and the promises of life eternal which he now knows in full, I want to include you in on a family ritual that I think is unique to the Bade family. (I haven't heard of it being done anywhere else.) It's a ritual that occurs around the dinner table.

After enjoying a wonderful meal ... of brisket grilled over live oak and mesquite coals and coated with a homemade sauce that Dad concocted with an "add-ingredients-according-to-taste" recipe ... of vegetables harvested just a few hours before the meal from the garden ... of the melt-in-your-mouth flavor of Mom's homemade rolls dripping with homemade strawberry jelly and pure butter (not any of that "I Can't Believe-it's-not-butter" pretender ... because it isn't) ... of the sweet taste of Dad's home-brewed wine extracted from the Bade wine cellar (also known as the crawl space under the house) ... mingled with homemade green grape pie ... (Are you hungry yet?)

After all this, our hunger having been satisfied, our palettes delighted, and our needs and our bellies filled to overflowing ... Dad would say three simple words which would invite us to remember the true source of the meal and all that we had just enjoyed. He would quietly say, "Let's return thanks."

And we all would bow our heads and together pray this prayer: "We give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, and his mercy endures forever."

Today, as we gather as family and friends and with the saints in glory seated at the heavenly feast which never ends, I invite you to join me in this family ritual. As I say, "let's return thanks," would you pray with me, "We give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, and his mercy endures forever."

Let's try it ...

"Let's return thanks."

"We give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, and his mercy endures forever."

We give thanks to the Lord ... for the gift of creation and the joy and calling of being stewards of it.

For beautiful, tended meadows of coastal Bermuda grass, framed by groomed live oak trees ...

For fields of bluebonnets and wild phlox ...

For rows of sweet corn, strawberries, and okra ...

For bouncing baby calves and protective mother cows ...

For bold Brahma bulls and belligerent outlaw steers that refuse to stay in their pens ...

For the precious gift of building clouds and life-giving rain ...

"For the beauty of the earth ...

Lord of all to thee we raise this our hymn of grateful praise," we sing today.

The story is told of a South Texas farmer who was walking one evening in the pasture, having a conversation with the Lord. As the man was marveling at the beauty of the burnt-orange sunset, the multi-colored landscape, and the well-tended fields and crops, God said to him, "Ahh, the work of my hands. Sure is pretty, isn't it?"

The farmer nodded, then looked at his own hands, scarred and calloused from years of hard work on the farm.

He was quiet for a moment, then he said to God, "It's pretty, all right. But you should have seen it before I started working on it."

Like that farmer, Dad delighted in the beauty of creation and he took seriously the privilege and responsibility of being a steward of it. He employed all his strength and wisdom to the care of the land and livestock under his care; and through his work in conservation, through his delight in all things living, through his daily work on the farm, he taught us to do the same.

(Continued on page 4)

Noisy Offering November 15

Our Mission of the Month (Noisy Offering) for this month is the **Mission Builders of the ELCA**. The Mission Builders use their skills to help ELCA congregations, schools, camps and social ministry organizations construct or add-on to their facilities. The Builders build with local members. A typical project includes the Mission Builders, members of the congregation or organization and various other professionals from the community. Mission Builders rough in the building, raising joists, walls, and roof trusses; frame and install windows and doors; and side the building. Plumbing, electrical, and HVAC installation is handled by subcontractor.

Mission Builders are known for the quality of their work. But, the gift most congregations mention first regarding the Builders is the spirit they bring to their work. Says the Rev. Roger Michaelson, pastor of Rushford Lutheran Church, Rushford, Minnesota, "The Mission Builders brought an energy, zeal, and overall positive attitude and joy to ministry that has stirred people to be servants here even more ... You realize that the Mission Builders are a tremendous group of people dedicated to what they're doing. They see themselves as — and they are — servants of Christ."



Carby Chapel, Lutherhill, built with the help of Mission Builders

So, 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 will be passed during the noisy offering.

For information about becoming a Mission Builder: <http://www.elca.org/Growing-In-Faith/Discipleship/Mission-Partners-Founders-Builders/Mission-Builders.aspx>

Random thoughts on credit and other money-related matters:

Credit is what keeps you from knowing how far past broke you are.

Those who think money grows on trees are the ones who have a hard time getting out of the woods.

54, the number of years it takes to pay off an \$8,000 ~ 18% credit card balance with minimal monthly payments.

People who live beyond their means must always be given a lot of credit.

If you think nobody cares you are alive, just miss a couple monthly payments.

Many people have finally realized that money can't buy happiness. Now they're trying credit cards.

Before you borrow money from a friend, decide which you need more.

There are bigger things in life than money — bills.

"I have to have a raise," the man said to his boss. "Three other companies after me." "Is that so?" asked the manager. "What other companies are after you?" "My mortgage company, the electric company, and the telephone company."

Sign in the store window: Use our easy credit plan — 100% down and 0% monthly payments.

Car sickness is what some adults suffer from every month when they have to make their car payment.

These days it's easy to buy a \$50,000 car, just buy a \$15,000 car with 48 monthly payments!

By the time some people discover that money doesn't grow on trees, they are already way out on a limb.

"Money is a great treasure that only increases as you give it away." — Lord Francis Bacon (1561-1626), English philosopher and scientist

"We can either use our money to serve our God or our god will be our money." — Denny & Leesa Bellesi, from Kingdom Assignment

"I would as soon leave to my son a curse as the almighty dollar." — Andrew Carnegie (1835-1919), American industrialist and philanthropist

"What I possess, God owns." — Howard Dayton, co-founder of Crown Financial Ministries

Did you know



...that your "Coffee Sunday" purchases of Equal Exchange, fairly traded and organic chocolate bars, tea, coffee, cocoa and snacks netted \$1,506 from January to September 2009. This money benefits small farmers in the third-world and the United States.

Equal Exchange has created big change since 1986. The founders envisioned a food system that empowers farmers and consumers, supports small farmer co-ops, and uses sustainable farming methods. They started with fairly traded coffee from Nicaragua and didn't look back.

Today, they continue to find new and powerful ways to build a better food system.

"Everything that is done in the world is done by hope" - Martin Luther

"Faith is a living and unshakable confidence, a belief in the grace of God so assured that a man would die a thousand deaths for its sake." - Martin Luther

Glimpses of Grace 2009

Through October 31, 2009:

World Hunger	\$620.00
African Initiative	\$12,775.00
Mission of the Month	\$5,757.04
Mulkey Scholarship Fund Income	\$5,859.00
Benevolence	\$17,402.39
Northwest Assistance Ministries	\$600.00
Abby Grace Fund	\$1,271.00
Buffalo Hot Wings Fundraiser	\$750.00
Art for the Hungry	\$721.00
Garage Sale	\$5,000.00
Equal Exchange ("Coffee Sunday")	\$1,506.02

Mission of the Month Gifts

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
June—Ron and Heda Christ's Botswana Mission	\$740.81
July—NAM Back-to-School Drive	\$640.64
August—Lutheran Deaconess Association	\$313.65
September—ELCA World Hunger	\$390.00
October—Seafarer's Center	\$900.00

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.
June:	One individual received monetary assistance.
July:	One family received assistance for electricity and gas.
August:	Three families received food pantry items and monetary assistance for gas.
September:	Five Families received food, money for milk, gas, rental and utility assistance.
October:	Four families received food; One received rental assistance.
Balance on hand:	\$208.21

So today, as we give thanks for the gift of creation and the calling of stewardship, let's return thanks:

"We give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, and his mercy endures forever."

We give thanks to the Lord this day for the gift of family ...

69 years of partnership with Mom ...

7 children ... 14 grandchildren ...

19 great-grandchildren ...

Anyone who has children whose birthdays span 18 years ...

18 years of changing diapers,

Countless PTA meetings,

The challenge of raising a teenager 7 times over,

The expense of college tuition for 7 children.

Anyone who has done this in his lifetime must be endowed with a particular kind of parental love and patience.

For the gift of family ...

For the model of a loving parent, grandparent, brother, friend ...

Let's return thanks:

"We give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, And his mercy endures forever."

We give thanks to the Lord today ... for the gift of faith.

As Dad struggled over the past months as his health declined and his pain increased, it became increasingly difficult for him to do his normal daily routine.

He couldn't get comfortable in his chair ...

He had trouble sitting at the table ...

His eyesight wasn't clear ...

His strength was limited.

But one part of his daily routine remained constant. Every day began with daily devotions, with scripture and prayer.

Every Sunday included worship, even if it was participating in the worship service on TV.

Faith ... and the gift of the church ... were central to Dad.

His involvement in the local congregation ...

His service on synodical boards ...

His participation in national church conventions ...

His daily discipline of prayer and the reading of the Word ...

All bore witness to the importance of his faith in his life. It

served as a compass for him in his decisions. It guided his life and his work. It was a touchstone in times of joy. It gave strength when times were tough. It gave him consolation in times of grief and love.

In the last few months, as his strength ebbed, he found it more and more difficult to say good-bye after visits with family.

In one of our farewells a few weeks ago, as Dad took my hand, drew it to his head, and clung to it, I whispered softly to him through my tears, "Hang on to the promises that have sustained you."

Hang on to the promises ... promises of God the creator, who fashioned the world and all that is in it and who said of it, "That's good." who made and claimed Dad and each of us as God's own children, so that we will always know of a loving Father who names us his own, who provides for us a place in his loving embrace, who like the father of the prodigal son waits for us at the end of the road with open arms, and a word of forgiveness, and a place at the banquet table.

Hang on to the promises of God the Savior, who died and who rose from death, so that we don't have to face death alone ... who has gone to prepare a place for us ... who serves as our pilot in the restless sea ... who is the resurrection and the life ... and in whose name you were baptized and in whose life you were confirmed.

Hang on to the promises of God the Comforter ... whose presence sustains us when the journey is difficult who reminds us that we are loved who joins us to others and makes us one family.

Hang on to the promises ...

And so, as we gather today as family and friends, we give thanks.

We give thanks for Dad's life and witness and for the promises that sustained him.

We give thanks for the gifts of creation and the privilege of caring for it.

We give thanks for the gift of family and the joy of loving relationships.

And we give thanks for the gift of faith which guides, comforts and sustains us.

For all these gifts, let's return thanks.

"We give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, and his mercy endures forever."

– Written by John Bade
– Proclaimed/Spoken by Lawrence Bade
In loving memory of their father
Heinie Bade