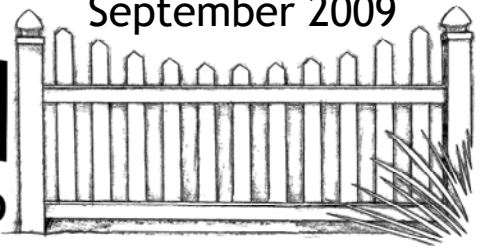


Raising faith in

The Backyard

with a passion for generous stewardship

September 2009



Welcome to the Dance

When I served as a stewardship coach for three years, I had this opening slide presentation which sought to help people get beyond the more typical image and definition of "Stewardship." To begin the presentation, that was the word I put on the first slide. I held it up, big and bold, then simply asked the question, "What is the first thought, the dominant image, that comes to mind when you see this word?" 99% of the time those attending responded with one word, "Money." Is that what you were thinking?

The three questions I used as a follow-up were, "Does that word up on the screen energize you? Or is it draining? Or does it make you want to go to 'St. Mattress of the Spring' when your congregation announces that next week is Stewardship Sunday?" Most people would giggle when they heard the third question. How about you? How would you respond to these follow-up questions?

I continued the slide presentation with a different image of stewardship, one that had everything to do with faith raising and a focus on the basic marks of discipleship. After each presentation, regardless of the setting, I would take the time to talk about their responses. I wanted to

hear from each person, to see if my stab at a different image for stewardship was helpful. In most instances, the energy level in the room went up in a positive way and people became more creative and imaginative. It was like they had heard a new song and couldn't help but tap their feet to keep time with a new beat.

To be a disciple of Jesus is to follow Jesus. The very word "follow" naturally implies movement, to get in step with him, "The Way." Our Lord sings a song of love and grace and hope, words filled with power and new life. Our Lord invites us to his dance and welcomes us always. He doesn't really care how well we keep time or how well we move out on the floor, he simply welcomes each of us to the dance. For me, such an image is what stewardship (discipleship) is all about; staying in step with Jesus, letting his song fill our hearts with joy. As that happens, our feet get to moving along with our hearts. Welcome to the dance!!

- Pastor John

**Our Lord
sings a song
of love
and grace
and hope**

"I've got so much work to do today, I'd better spend two hours in prayer instead of one."
— Martin Luther

Noisy Offering

September 20



In TV game shows like Deal or No Deal, the object is to win \$1 million dollars. But have you ever thought about what \$1 million dollars could do to help people who are hungry?

At the ELCA National Youth Gathering this summer, participants were invited to do just that — raise \$1 million for ELCA World Hunger as part of the Change the World: 2009 Lutheran Youth Challenge.

What difference can change make ????

- 1 quarter = ½ pound of seed to grow food
- 4 quarters = chick to help families start an egg business
- 8 quarters = water jug to help carry clean water
- 40 quarters = week of meals for a child orphaned by AIDS
- 100 quarters = materials or fees for a child to go to school
- 600 quarters = hand water pump
- 1,000 quarters = community fish farm stocked with fish
- 2,000 quarters = loan to help a woman start a business

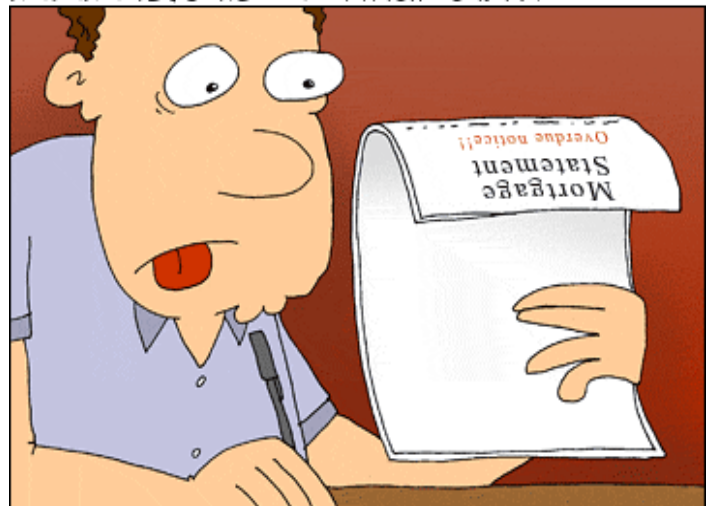
Our September Mission of the Month offering will help the ELCA youth achieve their goal. So, on Sunday, September 20 we are asking you to dig into your pockets and purses and pull out any loose change you may be carrying. Deposit it in the buckets the ushers will be passing during the Noisy Offering. Thank you.



“I have watched hundreds of Christians in my time become financially blessed then develop an acquisitive streak that in turn makes their souls as metallic as the coins they seek.”

Selwyn Hughes,
English pastor and author

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Thanks to Mikel Rice (See Matthew 6:19-20)

06-27-2008

BUT STORE UP FOR YOURSELVES TREASURES IN HEAVEN, WHERE MOTH AND RUST AND SUB-PRIME MORTGAGE CRISIS DO NOT DESTROY

Glimpses of Grace 2009

Through August 31, 2009:

World Hunger	\$500.00
African Initiative	\$12,775.00
Mission of the Month	\$4,467.05
Mulkey Scholarship Fund Income	\$5,759.00
Benevolence (through July 09)	\$14,526.76
Northwest Assistance Ministries	\$400.00
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

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	\$313.35

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.
Balance on hand:	\$88.21

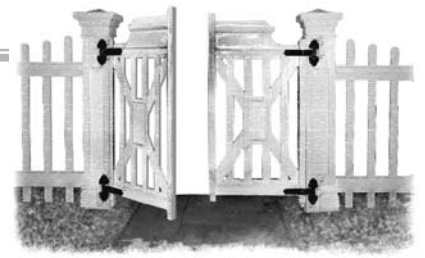
IF YOU WANT TO
FEEL RICH, JUST
COUNT ALL THE
THINGS YOU HAVE
THAT MONEY
CAN'T BUY.

Did you
know

? ... that high-school-age Lutherans raised \$154,488 for the ELCA World Hunger Appeal — recipient of this month's noisy offering — at the recent ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans.

Parting thoughts

Through the Back Gate



God Has Given...

by Dale Bargmann

Tuesday, around 4 AM. Driving to Bush Intercontinental, attempting to catch a Frontier flight to Denver. Flying standby is kind of like walking into a gambling casino with a roll of quarters hoping not to head back home empty-handed.

The gate agent asks, "Where would you like to sit?"

"Window seat?"

Pleasant surprise!!! Don't have to wait for the standby "cattle call" hoping for a seat. I smile broadly and head for seat 16F. Various critters reside on the tails of Frontier's Airbuses, all with names—Larry the Lynx, Griswald the Grizzly Bear, Flip the Dolphin, Dale the Dahl Sheep. In preflight announcements they are mentioned as crew members: "Maya the Jaguar and the rest of this Denver-based crew welcome you..." Maya assures me of a smooth flight this day. God has given...

One of the reasons I flew to Denver this week was for the wedding of my Godchild Stefanie.

Stef, a Korean orphan adopted by long-time friends Ken and Carol Hill was about 2-years-old when she came into our lives. Her birth-date is unknown; one was chosen for her. Now, some 25 years later she is marrying her beloved Michael, an Iraq-war vet. God has given...

There's a glitch. The wedding was to take place at Our Father Lutheran, my church home for 20 years. But, a major reconstruction project was not completed in time. Thus, no occupancy certificate. Some last-minute scrambling moved the ceremony downtown to historic St. Paul Lutheran. Pastor Donald Hinchey used this unplanned change of wedding sites as a metaphor for life. Plan A. Ceremony at Our Father. Plan B. Moved to St. Paul. Life-plan A. Everything ideal. Perfect kids. Fulfilling work. Under control. Life-plan B. Roll with the punches. Adapt to unforeseen change. Trust God. God has given...

Later that evening... wedding reception at the Brown Palace Hotel, the ultimate place for such an occasion. Delicious food. Hugs and warm greetings from dear friends: Jean and Dick, Cathy and Mike, Diane and David, Margaret and Donald, Joanne and Steve, Denny and Ruth. Son Jim dances with wife Angela, then with sister Jenny. Smiles light up their faces. For me, a vision of heaven. God has given...

Another reason for this journey: My 21-month-old grandson Nathan. His name means "God has given" and he sits beside me on the floor, jabbering his little boy speak. God

only knows what he's saying. But, intelligible words are sprinkled throughout his rambling dialog. "Daddy. Daddy. Daddy. Bah. Ma. Ahh. Mommy. Mommy. Mommy. Ga papa. Ga mamma. Kuck" (his version of truck, I'm told). Both of us are having a grand time. The nicety of being Nathan's ga pappa? Everything! God has given...

Later, Nathan, his mommy, daddy and I head for the children's play area at a nearby park. Nathan climbs and swings. He spins himself dizzy, laughs, falls off one apprentice, climbs back on, spins himself dizzy again, laughs... Can't get enough. Not a care in the world. God has given...

In the middle of all this it dawned on me that four generations of my family were present. In the 70s, when Jim was Nathan's age, there were five. We took photos then to capture the moment — great-grandma, grandma, mom, myself and little Jim. Today, another set of photos to preserve this moment — mom, myself, Jim (not so little) and little Nathan. God has given...

Finally, a visit to my friend David Mporampora, founder of Christ Aid, an organization dedicated to improving the lives of the people in Uganda, Africa. He leads group mission trips and ships large containers crammed full of donated computers, bikes, books and other supplies. In his native village of Kicuna he has constructed a school, a library, a water distribution project and a soccer field (soon-to-be a stadium with seats). I manage Christ Aid's website (christaidinc.org). David leads a band, Sifa Sifa Africa, that performs at churches and other organizations to publicize his life's mission and find sponsors for kids orphaned by the Aids epidemic. God has given...

Previous trips to Colorado have been about grand vistas and gorgeous, God-given scenery. This time it was about the God-given people in my life — Nathan and his joy-filled face, Stef and her happiness at marrying Michael, life-long friends who accept me the way I am, and loving, caring, supportive family.

God has given...

