

Lord of Life Lutheran Church

"Where There's Life For You!"

Volume 18 No. 8

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May-June 2007

LIFELINE

Lifeline is a Newsletter published by Lord of Life Lutheran Church in Moreno Valley, California.

Our Mission Statement
Inviting all to grow in Christ!



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Decisions

By Pastor Davis

"The cook is the mind, and the ingredients are decisions. The dish is self-confidence, and the one who eats is the heart. "The dish is ruined if not fully cooked, and if the cook puts nothing in the pot, what is there to eat?"

In Exodus 14:1-4, the Jewish People have just left Egypt..."God spoke to Moses, saying, 'Speak to the Jewish People and tell them to turn back and camp before the bay of Chirot, between Migdol and the sea, facing Bal Tzafon. Camp opposite it, near the sea. Pharaoh will then say that the Jewish people are lost in the area and trapped in the desert. I will harden Pharaoh's heart and he will come after them. I will triumph over Pharaoh and his entire army, and Egypt will know that I am God....'" (Exodus 14:1-4)

God tells the Jewish people to fake as if they're lost in the desert. This way, Pharaoh and the Egyptians could convince themselves that the plagues were not the hand of God, but were some kind of magic performance by Moses. This is God's way of giving Pharaoh yet another opportunity to blunder. Pharaoh's blind hatred pushes him toward tragic consequences. On seeing this apparent confusion in the Jewish camp, he immediately jumps to the wrong conclusion (verses 5-9). This is a lesson we could well heed: "Often the path of the child of God appears as a path of fools."

"The king of Egypt received the news that the Jewish People had fled. Pharaoh and his officials changed their minds regarding the people, saying, 'What have we done? How could we have released the Jews from slavery?' Pharaoh harnessed his chariot and summoned his people to go with him. He took 600 chariots with chosen crews, as well as the entire chariot corps of Egypt, with supporting infantry for them all. God hardened the heart of Pharaoh, King of Egypt, and he went after the Jewish People... The Egyptians overtook them while they were encamping by the sea, at the bay of Chirot, opposite Bal Tzafon. All of Pharaoh's chariot horses, cavalry and infantry were there." (Exodus 14:5-9)

This is the climax we've been waiting for. The Jews cooperate with God's request, and place themselves in a compromising position so that the Egyptians would chase them. They only had to wait for God to save them and destroy the Egyptians. They were completely in the hands of God, as they had been all along. With all they had recently seen of God's power, they surely had nothing to fear.

"As Pharaoh came close, the Jewish People looked up. They saw the Egyptians marching at their rear and the people became very frightened. The Jews cried out to God. They said to Moses, 'Weren't there enough graves in Egypt? Why did you have to bring us out here to die in the desert? How could you do such a thing to us, bringing us out of Egypt? Didn't we tell you in Egypt to leave us alone and let us work for the Egyptians? It would have been better to be slaves in Egypt than to die (here) in the desert!'" (Exodus 14:10-12)

What went wrong? In the end, the Jews in fact did fear the approaching Egyptians! How do we understand the Jewish fear when they had agreed to be the bait for Pharaoh's destruction? How could the Jewish people have forgotten the great powers that God had shown them in Egypt? Didn't they remember that they had just been reassured by God that they would be saved? Did they think that God would 'set them up' just to have them killed by the Egyptians? Did they think that God would orchestrate the entire Exodus from Egypt just to have them killed once they left?

This scenario plays out in our own lives as well. It may not be as dramatic as the Jewish People's escape from Egypt. But the experience is the same: In the calm and quiet, we commit to being the cheese in the trap (Who Moved My Cheese?). But when the rat approaches, the cheese begins to crumble. We've all made commitments to (grow this church, evangelize, tithe, attend Bible study more regularly) in the calm of a comfortable arm chair, only to lose our initial enthusiasm when the consequences of those commitments become clear.

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Lifeline is a newsletter published bi-monthly
By Lord of Life Lutheran Church
13600 Nason Street, Moreno Valley, California

Volume 18 No. 8

May-June 2007

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How many decisions have we made, only to look back a year or more later and say, 'how I we were'? It's easy to make decisions. But keeping that commitment is difficult – because we are fighting the strength of our heart and emotions. We make decisions with our mind (intellect). Only later do we battle with our heart (emotions). The solution? We have to involve our heart at the beginning. The heart and mind is a partnership. Would you buy a house without the agreement of your spouse? Don't make choices without the agreement of your heart. Don't think this means we should make decisions with the heart alone. The mind has to lead the way. The mind is the best tool for the job. But don't neglect the heart. Get it to agree, by showing it the advantages of your decision.

Remember the Golden Rule: Never break a commitment because of your heart's complaint. If you do, your heart will never take you seriously again. If you always keep your commitments you will gain an inner feeling of self-respect and confidence. Furthermore, when your heart is naturally in on every decision, it 'knows' it's serious. But if you don't follow through on a decision, then the heart says, "Why bother making a fuss now, I'll wait until it gets difficult. Then I will just puff a little, and he will give in." Your heart is the seat of emotions. If your heart thinks you are not serious, if your heart has no confidence in you, then that is the emotion you will feel. In modern lexicon, this is called "low self esteem." If you want your heart to have confidence in your mind, you have to start by following the decisions of your mind. And if you really want to gain self confidence, don't avoid making decisions, look for them. Here are some questions to ponder:

Question 1: What is the most difficult decision Lord of Life Lutheran Church has ever made? Did you ever regret making it?

Question 2: What was the biggest decision Lord of Life Lutheran Church has ever failed to make and now wished they had made? Why didn't they make that decision?

Question 3: Ten years from now, what decision (s) will Lord of Life Lutheran Church regret not having made? What's holding you back from making it?

This, or That?

Submitted by Bob Vernlund

Thank you for the most successful anniversary drive in the 22 year history of this congregation! There were many elements at work as 40 families contributed over \$31,000.00. Some of this came out of savings accounts and some came as gifts of \$22.00. But ALL came as a gift from the heart.

As we reflect back on what made this happen, we cannot help but feel God's presence and the power of the Holy Spirit that filled this family of believers. It is apparent we want to see God's will continue at Lord of Life. The turning point was through the words of Pastor Davis when he gave his unscripted but inspired talk as he held up the bulletin and asked; "***Do you want this, or that?***"

Our year of transition has brought about many changes. It has allowed us a chance to look at who we are and give enough time to find where God wants us to go. This anniversary fundraiser is a testament to knowing that we are doing God's will.

Are we to be continually challenged? Of course! A strong congregation is one where much is expected of each and every member. As we enter the new chapter in the life of our congregation with a new pastor, much will be expected. The calling the Christ used for his disciples was a simple "follow me." If you believe this congregation is really doing God's will, then hold on. The ride is just beginning.



Remember in prayer:

The family of Kathy Finch, Eddie Avila, Penny Nay, Darlene Bueker, Kyle Hudson, Ruby Sonnack, Bev Erck, Jeannine Lester, Frances Fulgenzi, the family of Lynn Friend, Joe Dutched, Colleen Johnson, Maxine Cassem, Roy Johnson, Aaron Boydston, Martha Ellingson, Katherine Ward, Cindy Matheason, Ervin Matheason, John Gerken, Susan Konarzewski, Connie Lowe, Brooke Bedard, Shannon Bedard, Shirley Goosche, Evelyn Furseth, Mary Beth York, Barbara Whiteman, Arnette Lester, Margaret Wang, Randy Taylor, and Richard Weber.

Change?.....Again?

by Jack Pavelich (4/2007)

Sometimes it's just time! Sooner or later, it comes time to fix something that bugs you. When that happens, it's time for a change; and, we hope the change (1) makes sense, and (2) is an improvement.

Scripture, especially the New Testament, encourages each of us to give a portion of all that we have to God. From the early days, God's people gave a tithe (that is, a tenth) of all they raised, grew, or otherwise earned back to Him. God gave us the practice of the tithe so that we would always be reminded to put God first in our lives. Deuteronomy 14:22-23

For example, what we do first with our money shows what we value the most. So, when we set aside a tenth of all we earn to be given to God, we are giving a significant *portion* to do the good work He has commanded us to do.

The New Testament expands this idea further, by teaching us to give as we have been given, or as we have been blessed. I've heard some argue this means we don't need to tithe – if we have little. On the contrary, I believe it means as we are blessed well beyond our needs, even after tithing (a promise made to us in the Book of Malachi), we are expected to give well beyond the tithe, just as God has blessed us!

So, we know what is expected of us. Scripture makes that pretty clear. We are to give generously in all our tithes and offerings.

But... for some reason, when we make out our pledge card, we're never asked what portion of our income we're committing to God's work – but rather, how much money that will be. Scripture tells us the amount is not as important as the portion. We are blessed differently. Some scrape by while others keep making more – most of us are in between those extremes. So how does God view

one person's \$100 bill against another's \$1. Hint: the widow gave more than all the rest.

Change? You bet. We're about to break new ground at Lord of Life. When you see your pledge card on May 13th, it's not going to ask how much – rather it will ask “what portion?” It's time we thought of our giving from a biblical perspective. Portion giving is *First Fruits* giving; and that is God's expectation of us.

So here's what you'll see on May 13th:

As an important part of my walk with Jesus, I plan to give as follows to Lord of Life Lutheran Church:

_____ % of Gross income.

In ADDITION,

\$_____ per month

toward retirement of the mortgage debt.

In order to show the portion God calls you to give, you'll need to know what portion of your gross income you currently give to the General Fund. (Our tithes are our regular giving to the church – these are undesignated gifts used for the whole of ministry.) Then, determine the increased giving from this point on, and show the new portion as the % of Gross Income. Our Church teaches growth of 1% of gross income each year as you strive toward the tithe.

Under that, you'll see a place for you to show your designated gifts which are to be used to pay our mortgage. (these are in addition to your portion/tithe, because we are designating it for a specific use – and we're not used to telling God how He should use our money. Israel never built the temple from tithes – but from special offerings of the people.)

As we grow in our Stewardship, we grow in our understanding of God's expectations of us. Portion giving brings us to a closer relationship with a forgiving God, and sets God apart as most important in our lives.

Amen?

Walk with Jesus

THE GRACE AWAKENING

****An exciting new adult bible study beginning Wednesday, April 18th at 7:00 pm. Hosted by Pastor Kenneth Davis.****

What is it that causes our Lord to stoop and reach out to us in love? Grace. What is it that frees us to be all He means us to be? Grace. What is it that permits others to be who they are, even *very* different from us? Grace. What allows us to disagree, yet stimulates us to press on? Grace. What adds oil to the friction points of a marriage, freeing both partners from pettiness and negativism? Grace. And what gives magnetic charm to a ministry, inviting others to become a part? Again.....grace.

Grace will conquer the things that steal the Christian's motivation: guilt and shame, legalism and negativism, petty fighting and small-minded intolerance, as well as other's expectations and self-imposed restrictions, to name only a few.

The Grace Awakening is not a series for the fainthearted. It is a bold and needed declaration for pastors, for Christian leaders, for missionaries, for young and old believers alike. It is a compelling call to accept the grace that has been freely given, to enthusiastically embrace and carefully protect the freedom it provides, and to experience the joyful and abundant life that God desires for us.

5/16- Isn't Grace Risky?

Romans 6:1-15;14

5/23- Undeserving, Yet Unconditionally Loved

2 Samuel 9

5/30- Squaring Off Against Legalism

Galatians 1-2

6/6- Emancipated? Then Live Like it

Romans 6:1-14

6/13- Guiding Other to Freedom

Romans 6:15-23

6/20- The Grace to Let Others Be

Romans 14

6/27- Graciously Disagreeing and Pressing On

Acts 15:36-41

7/11-Grace: Up Close and Personal

Selected Scripture

7/18-Are You Really a Minister of Grace

Selected Scripture

"The Seven Deadly Sins" sermon series beginning Sunday May 20th.

Seven people set sail on what is scheduled to be a three-hour sight-seeing tour on the charter boat *The Minnow*, get caught in a storm and end up stranded on an uncharted desert island together.

The laughter ensues with the failed attempts at escaping the island and the interaction of the very diverse group. Viewers of the venerable series would be correct to ponder the impossible number of guests who visited the islands, the incredible versatility of the common coconut.

Created by Sherwood Schwartz (of "The Brady Bunch" fame), "Gilligan's Island" became a huge hit, mainly due to the escapades of Gilligan, played by Bob Denver.

Using various scriptures from the Bible and the seven cast members from Gilligan's Island, for eight weeks, beginning Sunday May 20th (excluding May 27th), Pastor Kenneth Davis will be preaching a series on the 7 Deadly sins: Pride, Sloth, Jealousy, Lust, Greed, Anger and Excess.

Which character do you believe represents which sin?



Pride_____

Sloth_____

Jealousy_____

Lust_____

Greed_____

Anger_____

Excess_____

1. Gilligan

2. The Skipper

3. Thurston Howell III

4. The Professor

5. Mary Ann

6. Lovey Howell

7. Ginger

Your Lenten Sacrifice

Health Kits

by Bev Erck

Your response to the LWR Health Kits preparation has been truly wonderful. An indication of your generosity can be witnessed when we observe the impressive numbers of each of the items making up the kit. This includes: 392 nail clippers, 306 wash cloths, 338 bars of soap, 392 combs, 274 toothbrushes, 202 tubes of toothpaste, 123 hand towels, and 174 band aid kits.

THANK YOU! THANK YOU! We will probably wait to complete this drive until summer when we will attempt to even out the numbers. But, as you can see, towels and toothpaste are always needed. Please keep these in mind when you see sales or mark-downs on these items. The "ingathering" is in October, so we'll have a chance to celebrate this year's completed Health Kits and Quilts at that time

Lord of Life Lutheran Church will offer Vascular Screenings

Lord of Life Lutheran Church will host Life Line Screening on Tuesday, August 7th, 2007. Life Line Screening will be screening for blockage in the carotid arteries in the neck (75% of all strokes are linked to carotid artery blockage). They will also be checking the arteries in the legs for Peripheral Arterial Disease, or PAD, which is linked to heart disease. They offer a third screening that tests for aneurysms in the aortic vessel in the abdomen and a fourth screening for early detection of osteoporosis.

Don't delay, the appointments will fill up fast!

This is a preventative program for anyone over the age of 40 and it is worth participating in. Your screening results are sent to you within 21 days after they are reviewed by a board certified physician and you are then able to take those results to your own personal physician. These low cost, non-invasive, completely painless screenings take about 10 minutes each. You must pre-register by calling 800-324-1851 for an appointment. Informational flyers will be available the beginning of June. You can visit the website at www.lifelinescreening.com



Walk with us at the
Moreno Valley Relay For Life
May 19-20, 2007

Valley View High School
A team event to fight cancer
There is still time to join
Lord of Life's Team
"Daisy's Chain"

The American Cancer Society's Relay for Life is much more than a walk around a track- it's an event to remember those lost to cancer, celebrate those who have survived cancer, and pay tribute to caregivers.

- Sign up for a time to walk
- Give Becci your t-shirt size
- Offer to help at the event

Contact Becci Van Hoosier at the church office, or Pat Rupert (951) 300-1223 days, or at (951) 243-1045 evenings.

E-Mail: patricia.rupert@cancer.org or pat.bill.rupe@verizon.net

