

Living Word
Lutheran Church
LCMS

June 2011 Newsletter



"Communicating the Love of Jesus"

Worship Hours:

Christian Growth Hour: 8:45 a.m.

Worship Service: 10:00 a.m.

Living Word Lutheran Church

Located on the West of Spicer on County Rd 10
in old Prairie Meadows building
PO Box 242, New London, MN 56273
Phone: 320-796-0742
Website: www.livingwordlutheran.net

What we aim to do:
Make disciples for Jesus - as we go, wherever we go.
What we aim to be:
A joyful, caring, Christ-centered family of God.

Question for Pastor...

Can you go to hell for telling a lie? Part II

Last month I highlighted the fact that this question grew out of a healthy "Fear of the Lord" - and the Bible tells us (in Psalm 111:10 and Proverbs 9:10) "*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.*"

This month I promised to deal with the "hell" aspect of the question.

First off, congratulations to the questioner for recognizing that there is indeed a literal hell. "Hell" is not a popular thing to believe in these days. You may have noticed back in April that Franklin Graham (Billy Graham's son) got all sorts of grief for declaring his belief in a literal hell. It seems that many Christians - and Christian churches - have discarded the belief in hell as "outdated."

I sometimes hear people who say they believe in Jesus also say that they don't believe in hell. But you really can't believe in the First without also believing in the second. If you believe in Jesus, you also have to believe in what He said, and Jesus talked many times about there being a literal place of eternal fire and suffering. He talked about it as a real place where real people go. Check out, for example, Matthew 5:22, Matthew 13:36-43, Matthew 25:31-46, Mark 9:42-48. Hell is His idea, not ours.

Just because we might not like the idea that such a place

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exists - and that real people go there for eternity - doesn't mean that 'not believing in it' will make it go away. That's like saying, "I don't believe in tornadoes, because I don't like the idea that tornadoes exist and take people's homes and lives away. My 'not believing' in them, doesn't change the fact they are indeed real and devastating."

I once heard someone describe hell like this:

It's a place where God isn't - a place lacking anything good.

That makes sense. If God isn't present (and He's the source of all good) then it naturally follows that there is nothing good in hell. Nothing. But maybe the best explanation I've heard was from a mom trying to explain it to her young son: "*Hell is a place where all your bad dreams come true.*" I heard that and thought, "Wow! That's it. That sums it up."

The best response to the reality of a devastating tornado is to be prepared and heed the warning signs. We can't escape them by pretending they don't exist. But we can be prepared and take the necessary precautions so they don't destroy us when they come. It's the same thing when it comes to hell.

To answer the question, "Hell is real. And, no. It's not specific sins - like lying - that send people there." That answer definitely needs a bit more explaining, but I've taken up enough space for one month, so the explanation will have to wait until month. Until then, please remember....

...on Good Friday, Jesus did *everything* that ever needed to be done to keep anyone from having to be separated from Him for eternity. He died to forgive *all* sin - including lying. And God promises that everyone who repents of their sin and trusts in Jesus and what He did on Good Friday and Easter Sunday will spend eternity in with Him in heaven. That's the Good News we celebrate every Sunday.

Thanks for asking,
Pastor David

Send your questions to pastor@livingwordlutheran.net

Mentoring Program Update...

At our Mentoring information session on May 22, we had five people who expressed interest in being a mentor for one of the youth in our congregation. We have room for more. If you would like to be a mentor and were not able to make the initial session, please talk to Pastor David about your interest.

The program continues to be in the planning stages as we work out details. A couple new details were added at our May 22 session:

- Participation on the part of the youth will be voluntary for those who have been confirmed. We will attempt to incorporate mentorship into the confirmation experience.
- Background checks will be required of the mentors for liability insurance purposes.
- Mentors will need to be subject to the state's "mandatory reporting laws" - reporting certain things that may be told to them by their youth (e.g. instances of abuse). The youth will be informed of this at the start of their relationship with their mentor.
- People who would like to help out, but can't make the time commitment of full-time mentorship should consider being a mentor for one of our post-high-school youth. This relationship would be more informal - along the lines of the Secret Paul program. It would include praying for the person, dropping an occasional card (or text or note on Facebook) and maybe taking the person out for lunch periodically.

We are still in need of a coordinator for the program. If you have a passion for this kind of ministry, please talk to Pastor David.

Elected to Serve...

At our Spring Voters' Assembly this past week the Voters elected the following officers to serve a two-year term that will begin July 1.

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------|
| • Vice Chairman | - Tim Geer |
| • Treasurer | - Jason Olson |
| • Elders' Team | - Troy Hansen |
| | - Kevin Welsh |

Bryson Wachter was also appointed at the May MMT meeting to serve the remaining year of the vacant Christian Growth - Youth position

Please thank these people for serving the Lord by serving us.

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That for a day: Experience is that thing you have just after you need it.

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On Television...

Lutheran Hour Ministries' 'The Bible on Trial'

Airs on Television Nationally June 18 and July 18

Lutheran Hour Ministries is proud to present The Bible on Trial: Beyond a Reasonable Doubt, a full-length broadcast program for television. On Saturday, June 18 the program will air at 5 p.m. Central, on the Inspiration Network (Channel 259 on Dish Network and Channel 364 on DirecTV; Inspiration is also available on 2,800 other local cable systems). The program can be seen on Monday, July 18 at 8 p.m. Central, through the National Religious Broadcasters Network (Channel 378 on DirecTV, Channel 126 on Sky Angel, as well as online at www.nrbnetwork.tv).

Hosted by attorney Craig Parton, The Bible on Trial lays the overarching question before some of the world's foremost authorities in biblical scholarship and ancient history: "Are the Bible and its claims trustworthy?" A panel of experts including Dr. Paul L. Maier of Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Mich.; Dr. Randall Price of Liberty University, Lynchburg, Va.; Dr. Jeff Kloha of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo. and Joel Lampe of The Bible Museum, Goodyear, Ariz. weighs the evidence from contemporary non-Christian writers and archaeological, bibliographic and eyewitness sources. The balanced testimony from these scholars affirms the reliability of the biblical record. The program concludes with a call to the viewer: "What is your verdict?"

The Bible on Trial began airing in May on AMG TV network stations in Los Angeles, Phoenix, Houston, Nashville, Detroit, Cincinnati, New York, Orlando, Dallas, Seattle and many other cities. More airings are scheduled in the coming months. For broadcast dates and times, visit the Broadcast Guide at www.TheBibleTrial.com. Please check back periodically to get information about additional local airings across the country.

June Discipleship Verse...



But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses... Acts 1:8a



The LINK Update...

News from The Link June 2011
Creating a community where neighbors share the love of God through service to each other.



Thanks for your help! Over the past few months, many different volunteers have served The Link. Some of you have helped at our New London site, some of you worked as a group from your church serving a Tuesday's Table Meal, others helped at our Drop-n-Shop and still others helped move furniture. WOW – we could not do all that we do without you. Check out the current volunteer opportunities to see how else you can help!

One way we build community is to serve each other, thanks for giving back!

TUESDAY'S TABLE

Join us Every Tuesday night at 6pm!

- 1st Tues @ Our Lady of the Lakes, Spicer
- 2nd Tues @ Evangelical Covenant, NL
- 3rd Tues @ Faith Lutheran, Spicer
- 4th Tues @ Peace Lutheran, NL
- 5th Tues @ Hope Presbyterian, Spicer



What I'm interested in seeing you do is sharing your food with the hungry, inviting the homeless poor into your homes, putting clothes on the shivering ill-clad, being available to your own families....

"If you get rid of unfair practices, quit blaming victims; quit gossiping about other people's sins, if you are generous with the hungry and start giving yourselves to the down-and-out, your lives will begin to glow in the darkness, your shadowed lives will be bathed in sunlight....You'll be like a well-watered garden, a gurgling spring that never runs dry."

Isaiah 58:6-11 (The Message)

LINK Volunteer Opportunities

- Plumber or Electrician Handyperson
- Home repair work for a client
- Computer Help
- Internet Set-Up, Web Page for Link
- Wood Cutter Help cut wood/ trees in yard



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Thot for a day: Before entering a battle of wits, check your ammunition.

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Much of the primary financial support for The Link, in its first three years, has come from a grant from Thrivent Financial for Lutherans. We are grateful for the generosity of this organization that helped to get The Link up and running. However, that grant period ends at the end of June. Since January, the Link has provided financial assistance to help meet basic needs to 50 households. In addition, we have served many other households through our Household Item Exchange.

In order for the good work of The Link to continue, we will need additional on-going support from individual community members as well as the area churches. Please consider making a donation to The Link so that together we can create a community where God's love is known and everyone is able to meet their basic needs.

Send donations to
 310 Medayto Dr, Spicer, MN 56288

To Volunteer or for information about the Link and its programs please contact its director, Naomi Mahler at 796-2522 or flc_naomi@tds.net

E-Mail Wisdom... (received via e-mail)

"God Is Already There"

A poem by Linda Felker

If the future is something you're dreading
 Filling your mind with worry and care,
 You don't need to fear for tomorrow,
 Because God is already there.

Only the Lord knows the outcome
 Of things we fret over today,
 And He is there laying the groundwork
 For things to turn out the best way.

So when our lives are filled with confusion,
 And our hearts weighted down in despair
 All we need do is remember
 That God is already there.

Always He waits with His blessings,
 His Love can give comfort and rest.
 So meet with Him first thing each morning
 And then your whole day will be blessed.

Upcoming Events...

Mother-Daughter Salad Luncheon

Saturday, June 11 from 11am to 1pm

Bring your mom, bring your daughter, bring a friend, bring an aunt or niece, bring a grandma or granddaughter. It doesn't matter who you bring, just bring someone and have a fun morning. Tickets are FREE and available at church or from Pam and Violet. Each mother-daughter pair is asked to bring a salad to share. Thanks!

Saturday Worship Opportunity

June 4 Through the End of Summer

A Chance to Worship if You Aren't Able to on Sunday:

In addition to Sunday worship we will offer a more informal worship opportunity late Saturday afternoons at 5:30. It's not an alternative to Sunday worship, but simply an additional chance to worship if you can't on Sunday. We may even worship outdoors behind the school when the weather permits.

Lutheran Day at Valleyfair

Monday, June 27 - Chaperones and drivers still needed.

Talk to Pastor David

June Fellowship Night... You choose the Date !

For our Monthly Fellowship Night/Day in JUNE. We are looking for someone to host a GAME NIGHT this month (Bocce ball, Badminton, Bean Bag toss, etc...) Please talk to Pastor David or a member of the Elders' Team if you or your family would like to plan and host the Fellowship Night/Day in June - You get to choose the date !

From Creation-Science Envir. Learning Center

(at Lutheran Island Camp)

Brian Young (Creation Instruction Association) will be at Lutheran Island Camp for numerous Creation-Science camps and events in June. Be sure to check out the camp website for upcoming events. www.islandcamp.org

PLEASE REMEMBER TO PRAY AT 11:09 EVERYDAY

(inspired by Luke 11:9: "So I say to you, Ask and it will be given to you; Seek and you will find; Knock and the door will be opened to you.")



THE
LUTHERAN CHURCH
MISSOURI SYNOD



URGENT NEED: Joplin Tornado Relief

More than a dozen homes belonging to families of LCMS churches and schools were destroyed in the powerful May 22 tornado that devastated Joplin, Mo. And two children from First Lutheran Church in nearby Neosho, Mo., were among the 146 people killed in the storm.

LCMS Response

- Despite their great losses, members of Immanuel Lutheran Church and Martin Luther School, located a half block from the most damaged area, are reaching out in Christian compassion to its community. The church now acts as a staging area providing: food, water, hot meals, material goods, medical care, pastoral care, and has begun organizing volunteer efforts.
- LCMS World Relief and Human Care (WR-HC) has made \$100,000 in grants available for response efforts.
- WR-HC staff are working alongside Missouri District staff and Immanuel Lutheran leaders in Joplin to assess needs and provide pastoral care.

You Can Help!

As members of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, you play a critical part in the church's response efforts.

- Mail checks (noting "Tornado Disaster Relief" in the memo line) to LCMS World Relief and Human Care, P.O. Box 66861, St. Louis, MO 63166-6861.
- To donate online, visit: <http://www.lcms.org/disaster/tornado>.
- Call toll-free 888-930-4438.
- Immanuel volunteers regularly update the church website www.immanueljoplin.com with lists of needed donations. No clothing is being accepted at this time.
- Also watch the Immanuel website www.immanueljoplin.com for volunteer opportunities. Currently, Immanuel is unable to house volunteers.

Any funds not needed for this relief effort will be used for other disaster purposes as determined by LCMS World Relief and Human Care. Your gift is tax deductible to the extent permitted by law.

June - Daily Devotionals

June "Summer Reading: Old Testament People

We finish the readings on the enemies Jesus defeated when He died and rose. We begin a "Summer Reading" series with major characters God worked through in the Old Testament. He did powerful things through these people, yet they were human and sinful just like us. Record what you learn from their stories.

May 29 What God Says About ... THE ENEMY (Demons)

May 30 Matthew 12:43-45 _____

May 31 Mark 1:21-28 _____

June 1 Mark 1:29-34 _____

June 2 Luke 10:17-20 _____

June 3 Acts 19:11-20 _____

June 4 James 2:11-19 _____

June 5 Summer Reading: Joshua - Part I

June 6 Exodus 17:8-16 _____

June 7 Exodus 24:12-18, 33:1-11 _____

June 8 Numbers 13-14, 26:63-65 _____

June 9 Deuteronomy 31:1-23 _____

June 10 Deuteronomy 34:1-12 _____

June 11 Joshua 1 _____

June 12 Summer Reading: Joshua - Part II

June 13 Joshua 2 _____

June 14 Joshua 3-4 _____

"What Does God Say About...?"

June 15 Joshua 5:13-6:27 _____

June 16 Joshua 10:1-13 _____

June 17 Joshua 23 _____

June 18 Joshua 24: _____

June 19 Summer Reading... The Time of the Judges, Deborah, Gideon

June 20 Judges 2:6-23 _____

June 21 Judges 4 (Deborah) _____

June 22 Judges 5 (Deborah) _____

June 23 Judges 6 (Gideon) _____

June 24 Judges 7 (Gideon) _____

June 25 Judges 8 (Gideon) _____

June 26 Summer Reading ... Judges: Jephthah and Samson

June 27 Judges 10:6-18 (Jephthah) _____

June 28 Judges 11:1-27, 12:1-7 (Jephthah) _____

June 29 Judges 13 (Samson) _____

June 30 Judges 14 (Samson) _____

July 1 Judges 15 (Samson) _____

July 2 Judges 16 (Samson) _____

June 2011 - Living Word Church Calendar of Events

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
May 29 8:45 Growing in Christ Hour - Adult Forum - Sunday School 10:00 Worship 11:15 Fellowship	May 30 MEMORIAL DAY	May 31 6:00 Men's Group	June 1 9:30 Moms' Study Noon Women's Study 7:30 Baccalaureate @ NLS	2 Noon NL-S Ministerial 9:15 Softball - Green	3	4 5:30 Summer Saturday Worship
5 8:45 Growing in Christ Hour - Adult Forum: ELCA & LCMS 10:00 Worship w/ Lord's Supper 11:15 Fellowship	6 7:00 Elders' Team	7 6:00 Men's Group	8 9:30 Moms' Study Noon Women's Study 6:30 LWML	9 6:15 Church League Softball - YELLOW	10	11 11:00 MOTHER- DAUGHTER SPRING LUNCHEON 5:30 Summer Saturday Worship
12 8:45 Growing in Christ Hour - Adult Forum: ELCA & LCMS 10:00 Worship 11:15 Outreach Meeting	13	14	15 9:30 Moms' Study Noon Women's Study 5:30 ADOPT-A-HWY Clean Up	16 9:15 Church League Softball - RED	17	18 4:00 Geer / Johnson Wedding 5:30 Summer Saturday Worship
19 8:45 Growing in Christ Hour - Adult Forum: ELCA & LCMS 10:00 Worship w/ Lord's Supper Anna Sharp Baptism 11:15 Fellowship	20	21 6:00 Men's Group 7:00 Mission & Ministry Team	22 9:30 Moms' Study Noon Women's Study	23 7:15 Church League Softball - GREEN	24	25 5:30 Summer Saturday Worship
26 8:45 Growing in Christ Hour - Adult Forum 10:00 Worship	27 9:00 LUTHERAN DAY @ VALLEYFAIR	28	29 9:30 Moms' Study Noon Women's Study	30 6:15 Church League Softball - BLUE	July 1	July 2 5:30 Summer Saturday Worship

Upcoming Schedules...

Scripture Readers

June 5	Tammy Fuglie
June 12	Lu Kiehm
June 19	Tammy Wachter
June 26	Duane Hansen

July 3	Scott Wachter
July 10	Bryson Wachter
July 17	Wendy Robbin
July 24	Mona Hjelle
July 31	Phil Iverson

Fellowship Servers

June 5	Laurel Iverson / Violet Dauk
June 12	Linda Dilley / Bonnie Hansen
June 19	Marcia Welsh / Pam Johnson
June 26	Wendy Robbin / Stacy Olson

July 3	Nancy Jo Wendt / Tammy Fuglie
July 10	Tammy Wachter / Sarah Miller
July 17	Elaine Abraham / Mona Hjelle
July 24	Laurel Iverson / Violet Dauk
July 31	Linda Dilley / Bonnie Hansen

Children's Church Schedule

June 5	Kasey Nieland
June 12	Joe Johnson
June 19	Mona Hjelle
June 26	Emily Fuglie

July 3	Mikayla Geer
July 10	Carolyn Rossow
July 17	Mariah Welsh
July 24	Kasey Nieland
July 31	Mona Hjelle

Acolyte

June 5	Grace Geer
June 12	Michelle Johnson
June 19	** Acolyte Needed **
June 26	Jacob Beeler

Elders

June 5	Troy Hansen & Wally Abraham
June 19	Jason Miller & Brady Sharp

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That for a day: Forgive your enemies. It messes with their heads.

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July 3	Bryson Wachter & Troy Hansen
July 17	Kevin Welsh & Brady Sharp

Usher & Greeter Schedule

	<u>Ushers</u>	<u>Greeter</u>
June 5	Linda Dilley & Mona Hjelle	Bryson W
June 12	Kevin & Noah Welsh	Laurel I
June 19	Jamie & Phil Iverson	Lu K
June 26	Brady Sharp & Wally Abraham	Bonnie H
July 3	Joe Johnson & Anthony Dauk	Bryson W
July 10	Duane Hansen & Chuck Weflen	Laurel I
July 17	Jason Miller & Bryson Wachter	Bonnie H
July 24	Troy Hansen & Brandon Sharp	Lu K
July 31	Lonnie Robbin & Jason Olson	**

*Fill-in Greeter Bonnie Hansen 796-5805

Living Word Softball...

Check out the new softball shirt logo...



...at one of our upcoming games:

(Thursdays at Swannson Fields in Willmar)

- June 9 - 6:15 Yellow Field
- June 16 - 9:15 Red Field
- June 23 - 7:15 Green Field
- June 30 - 6:15 Blue Field
- July 7 - 7:15 Blue Field

Opportunities for Growth...

The Daily Bible Readings change course with...

A NEW SUMMER READING SERIES

During the summer months our focus will change from reading about topics to reading about people. We'll begin in the Old Testament and get some insight into the lives of people you have (or may not) have learned just a little about way back in Sunday School. This month we begin with Joshua, then read about some of the Judges that God raised up after him - Deborah, Gideon, Jephthah and Samson. Next month we'll read about a couple lesser-known people Ezra and Nehemiah as well as Esther and Samuel.

The new Summer Reading Series schedule of readings is listed on pages 10 & 11

Men's "Bible and Burgers" Study

1st and 3rd Tuesdays @ 6:00 p.m.

Guys: Join us for our study:

NOTE: This month we start our SUMMER SCHEDULE:

1st and 3rd Tuesdays

Wednesday Morning Mom's Study

Wednesdays at 9:30 -

Moms: Join us this week for:

"The Fruit of PEACE"

Wednesday Women's Study

Wednesdays at Noon

Ladies: Join us this week for:

"The Fruit of PEACE"

Sunday Morning Study

Sunday mornings at 8:45

"Differences (and similarities) between the LC-MS and ELCA"

Saturday Worship Opportunity

Beginning THIS Saturday, June 4 Through the End of Summer
A Chance to Worship if You Aren't Able to on Sunday:

In addition to Sunday worship we will offer a more informal worship opportunity late Saturday afternoons at 5:30. It's not an alternative to Sunday worship, but simply an additional chance to worship if you can't on Sunday. We'll worship outdoors behind the school when the weather permits.

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That for a day: I made a mental note, but forgot where I put it.

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Habitat for Humanity...

Habitat for Humanity of West Central Minnesota continues to seek a partner family for a 3-bedroom home in New London. Partner families are selected based on need, ability to pay, and willingness to partner. The selected family will put in 200-500 hours of sweat equity preparing the home and completing home owner classes. Eventually, they will become the owner of home as they will make low monthly payments on a 0% interest, 30-year mortgage.

Pre-application forms are available on our website:

<http://habitatwcm.org/familyselection.html>.

Yes, Purchasing a home is possible!



Habitat for Humanity®
of West Central Minnesota

Habitat is seeking a family to
purchase a home in New London.

Interested families must complete
an application and meet Habitat
guidelines.



HUD%	Family size 1	Family size 2	Family size 3	Family size 4	Family size 5	Family size 6
60%	\$26,580	\$30,260	\$34,140	\$37,920	\$40,980	\$44,040
80%	\$35,400	\$40,000	\$45,500	\$50,550	\$54,600	\$58,650

- Must have a minimum income of \$25,000 but not exceed amounts above. Priority will be given to incomes below 60%. (HUD guidelines are subject to change, most current guideline will be used)
- Must demonstrate a housing need such as poor housing condition, over crowding, or spending more than 30% of income on rent.
- Must live or work in Habitat's 5 county service area.
- Must be willing to partner by attending homeowner classes & completing sweat equity hours.
- Able to afford monthly payments of \$400 - \$600 without exceeding 30% of gross income and demonstrate stable employment. *
- Do not qualify for other homeownership programs.

Additional qualifications included in the application packet.



- 3 bedrooms / 1 bath
- Open floor plan
- Appliances included

- 0% interest mortgage for qualified families.
- Taxes and insurance included with payment *

- The selected applicant will participate in refurbishing this home.

Application process will close when qualified family is selected.
For more information visit www.habitatwcm.org or call 320-231-2704.

Sharing the Love of God In Practical Ways...

Help with Children's Church

The only pre-requisite is a love for Jesus and for His kids. You read a Bible story or Object Lesson, take prayer requests from the kids and lead them in prayer; and do an activity with the kids that reinforces the lesson. Lessons are provided. You simply show up and lead. Please talk to Mona Hjelle if you can help in this way. Thanks!

Help With Support of Heidy

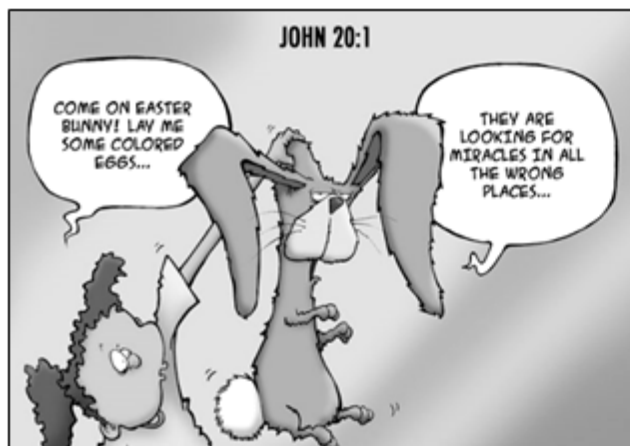
Heidy is the girl from Ecuador that we support through Compassion International. We have committed to \$32/month to help pay for basic needs and Christian education opportunities for Heidy. Donations may be placed in the "Heidy" box on the usher table at church. Thank you!

Make-a-Meal Program

You will notice special "PRAYER and CARE" cards in the worship attendance folders. Please use these cards to give us the names of people you know who could use a meal. (You can also use the cards to give prayer requests for Pastor and/or the Prayer Force prayer chain). The cards can be filled out and placed in the offering plate.

Be a Mentor for a Young Person

We are in need of two more mentors, one male and one female. More details on page 4 of this newsletter



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That for a day: I like long walks, especially when taken by people who annoy me.

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E-Mail Humor...

The youngest of three boys, Gregory, had just started school.

A teacher commented to Gregory that she couldn't believe he was already in first grade and asked what his mother did all day now that the three boys were in school.

"Cartwheels," Gregory answered.

(I'm guessing that's also what the teachers are doing this week.)

23rd Psalm

A pastor was giving a lesson to a group of children on the 23rd Psalm. He noticed that one of the little boys seemed disquieted by the phrase "Surely, goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life..."

"What's wrong with that, Johnny?" the pastor asked.

"Well," answered Johnny, "I understand about having goodness and mercy, for God is good. But I'm not sure I'd like Shirley following me around all the time."

Congratulations!...

- Don and Nancy Jo Wendt
On their 50th Anniversary !
- Jeremy and Alesha Hjelle
On the birth of a Baby Boy: Parker !
- Troy and Ashley Hansen
On the birth of a Baby Girl: KJirsten !
- Becca Johnson
On Graduation from college, May 15 !
- Brent and Alicia Sawatzky
On their 5th Anniversary vow renewal, May 20 !
- Brent and Carrie Miller
On their Marriage, May 21st !
- Joe Johnson and Mariah Welsh
On Graduation from High School, June 5 !

Inspirational Story...

Two men, both seriously ill, occupied the same hospital room. One man was allowed to sit up in his bed for an hour each afternoon to help drain the fluid from his lungs. His bed was next to the room's only window. The other man had to spend all his time flat on his back.

The men talked for hours on end. They spoke of their wives and families, their homes, their jobs, their involvement in the military service, where they had been on vacation. And every afternoon when the man in the bed by the window could sit up, he would pass the time by describing to his roommate all the things he could see outside the window.

The man in the other bed began to live for those one-hour periods where his world would be broadened and enlivened by all the activity and color of the world outside.

The window overlooked a park with a lovely lake. Ducks and swans played on the water while children sailed their model boats. Young lovers walked arm in arm amidst flowers of every color of the rainbow. Grand old trees graced the landscape, and a fine view of the city skyline could be seen in the distance.

As the man by the window described all this in exquisite detail, the man on the other side of the room would close his eyes and imagine the picturesque scene. One warm afternoon the man by the window described a parade passing by. Although the other man couldn't hear the band - he could see it in his mind's eye as the gentleman by the window portrayed it with descriptive words. Days and weeks passed.

One morning, the day nurse arrived to bring water for their baths only to find the lifeless body of the man by the window, who had died peacefully in his sleep. She was saddened and called the hospital attendants to take the body away.

As soon as it seemed appropriate, the other man asked if he could be moved next to the window. The nurse was happy to make the switch, and after making sure he was comfortable, she left him alone. Slowly, painfully, he propped himself up on one elbow to take his first look at the world outside. Finally, he would have the joy of seeing it for himself.

He strained to slowly turn to look out the window beside the bed. It faced a blank wall. The man asked the nurse what could have compelled his deceased roommate who had described

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Thot for a day Live each day like it's your last. One day you'll get it right.

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such wonderful things outside this window.

The nurse responded that the man was blind and could not even see the wall. She said, "Perhaps he just wanted to encourage you."

Epilogue. . . There is tremendous happiness in making others happy, despite our own situations. Shared grief is half the sorrow, but happiness when shared, is doubled. If you want to feel rich, just count all of the things you have that money can't buy. "Today is a gift, that's why it is called the present."

Story Behind The Song...

Amazing Grace

(And the contemporary addition to it "My Chains Are Gone")

With a message that forgiveness and redemption are possible regardless of the sins people commit and that the soul can be delivered from despair through the mercy of God, "Amazing Grace" is one of the most-loved songs in the English-speaking world.

John Newton, the author, wrote the words from personal experience. He grew up without any particular religious conviction but his life's path was formed by a variety of twists and coincidences that were often put into motion by his unruly rebelliousness. He was pressed into the Royal Navy and became a sailor, eventually participating in the slave trade.

Thomas à Kempis' Imitation of Christ - a book he found on board one of the ships - sowed the seeds of his conversion. When a ship nearly foundered in a storm, he gave his life to Christ. Later he was promoted to captain of a slave ship. Commanding a slave vessel seems like a strange place to find a new Christian. But at last the inhuman aspects of the business began to pall on him, and he left the sea for good.

While working as a tide surveyor he studied for the ministry, and for the last 43 years of his life preached the gospel in Olney and London. It was there he also wrote hymns with poet William Cowper. "Amazing Grace" was written to illustrate a sermon on New Year's Day of 1773. It is not known if there was any music accompanying the verses, and it may have been chanted by the congregation without music. It debuted

in print in 1779 in Newton and Cowper's Olney Hymns, but settled into relative obscurity in England. In the United States however, "Amazing Grace" was used extensively during the Second Great Awakening in the early 19th century. It has been associated with more than 20 melodies, but in 1835 it was joined to a tune named "New Britain" to which it is most frequently sung today.

At 82, Newton said, "My memory is nearly gone, but I remember two things, that I am a great sinner, and that Christ is a great Saviour." Evidence that God's "amazing grace" was a personal thing for him.

Newton's tombstone reads, "John Newton, Clerk, once an infidel and libertine, a servant of slaves in Africa, was, by the rich mercy of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, preserved, restored, pardoned, and appointed to preach the faith he had long labored to destroy." His testimony of the power of the grace of God outlives him in the most famous of the hundreds of hymns he wrote:

**Amazing grace, how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me,
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.**

**'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved.
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed.**

**Through many dangers, toils and snares,
I have already come.
'Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.**

Recently, contemporary Christian musician Chris Tomlin added his "My Chains Are Gone" chorus and a fourth verse:

**My chains are gone
I've been set free
My God, my Savior has ransomed me
And like a flood His mercy reigns
Unending love, Amazing grace**

**The earth shall soon dissolve like snow
The sun forbear to shine**

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That for a day: Middle age is when you choose cereal for the fiber, not the toy.

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**But God, Who called me here below
Will be forever mine Will be forever mine
You are forever mine**

Says Tomlin, "I started doing some research on "Amazing Grace," and I was blown away that the last verse - the original last verse by John Newton - "The earth shall soon dissolve like snow...", "this incredible verse that I'd never seen in a hymn book. (The verse "When we've been there 10,000 years bright shining as the sun" was written about 100 years later).

I started thinking about where John Newton came from, the slave ships, and what God had done in his life. We're all made slaves to sin in our life, but God has set us free. He has ransomed us from our slavery. I just wanted to add this idea that I hope brings freshness to the heart of the song.

—Chris Tomlin

THE BACK PEW - Jeff LARSON



Another one of those great moments in the life of Christ that would have played out much differently in Minnesota. Lk 5:14-6