



The Voice

November 2007

It's Good to Be Home

I have been a Lutheran all my life, and I have never fully understood my church's stance on sexuality.

I remember clearly receiving three different, contradictory answers to the same question from the three people who taught me confirmation (and a fourth from my pastor father), and I don't think I'm alone in this experience. In fact, when I teach confirmation, I teach the unit on marriage and sexuality in stages, so that we can discuss them as presented in the Old Testament, the New Testament, Martin Luther, and the ELCA, and even the opinions within these differing, often contradictory divisions have to be simplified in order to make any sort of coherent sense.

The confirmands are not slow to pick up on these differences, either, nor on the ways that we as a church behave inconsistently. They notice that we expect abstinence from teenagers and then freely perform weddings for adult couples who already live together. They comment on the gap between what we say about marriage and the way things often play out. They wonder whether there really is a difference between their parents watching a racy movie together and the ubiquitous viewing of internet porn.

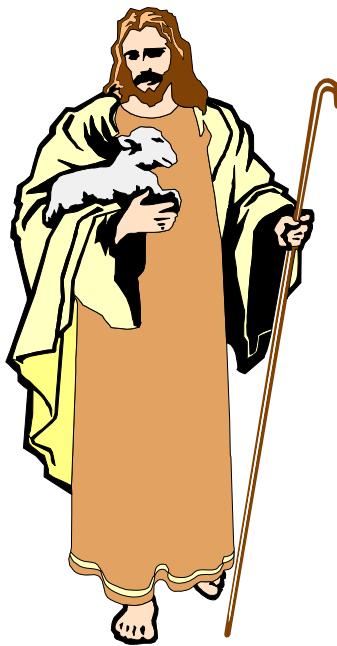
Not that any of this is intended as simple finger-pointing. The issues are complicated, and I would much rather see a well-reasoned attempt at a responsible, biblical ethic than a simple repetition of assumptions. However, I worry that we have not, as a church, made such an attempt.

Some of you may even know that my greatest concern about the "Journey Together Faithfully" series thus far has been that we attempted

to deal with some of the most difficult issues of sexuality within the church (such as the blessing of same-sex unions) before we knew where we stood on the basics (such as sex itself). All of this ends now.

Beginning Sunday, October 28, from 9:30 - 10:30 AM in the

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Tending the flock for 103 years

Advent

Advent begins Wednesday, November 28. Mark your calendar. There will be four Advent meals this year. Each meal begins at 6:00 PM and worship service begins at 7:00 PM. Advent suppers are scheduled for November 28 and December 5, 12, and 19. These meals are good fellowship and also fundraisers to help our youth go to workcamp. The services are required for all confirmands.

All Saints Day

Please remember your loved ones on All Saints Day, November 4. Again this year we will light a candle and ring a bell as we remember those who are with the Lord. There will also be a time in each service to honor those who have made an impact on our lives and are still pilgrims on earth. Please join us and our choirs in these special services. Please fill out the appropriate envelope (***In Memory of*** for the departed or ***In Honor of*** for the living) in the narthex today so that we may prepare the names for our bulletin insert.

Welcome Confirmands

Congratulations to our Confirmands: Dylan Fox, Tony Gomez, Danielle Guy, Kelsey Hischer, Matt Humble, Megan Johnson, Brett Johnson, Dustin Larson, Cory Ness, Tim Welty, and Nick Young.

They will be confirmed on Reformation Sunday, October 28.

Fall Back

Don't forget to set your clocks back on Reformation Sunday, November 4, for Daylight Savings Time or be prepared to meet people from an earlier service.

Pastor Al's Bible Study

Would you like to critique Pastor Al's sermon? Would you like to ask questions his sermon may have raised and left unanswered? Come to the Bible study on the first Sunday of each month at 7:00 PM in the church. Our first Bible study will be the third Sunday in November due to deer hunting. Pastor Al will lead the Bible study and the focus will be on the Scripture readings for that Sunday.

All Saints Day

On the first Sunday in November, we celebrate All Saints Day. It is a time to remember those saints who had such a profound blessing on our lives. As your pastor for 20 years, I had the honor to preside at the funerals of many of your loved ones. Here is a list of those saints: 2007 - Alma Nelson; 2006 - Lena Berg and Mary Schendel; 2004 - Chuck Lindau, Kathryn Allquist; 2003 - Evelyn Carlson, Travis Krantz, Larry Onasch, Henry Anderson; 2002 - Grace Coppini and Jeanette Knutson; 2001 - Erma Harsland, Richard Iverson, Rieger Olson, Martha Borowick; 2000 - Elmer Peterson, Marianne Meyers, Irene Steffen, Nellie Dion; 1999 - David Richardson, Carl Williams, Irene Westlund, Michael Szymanski, Ruth Gregerson, LaVella Anderson, Judy Knapp, Ed Casserly; 1998 - Elvira Younglove, Marion Reed, Helen Bakula, Adelaide Lammert, Ruth Blount, Dora Fladland, Ralph Magnuson, Jon Young, Clayton Johnson, Albert Harmon, Judy Johnson; 1997 - Ray Borowick, John Mohn, Bill Gray, Sean Lundberg, Gloria Nelson, John Froelich, Helen Peterson, Edgar Barott; 1996 - Carol Lausing, Ervin Baltus, Ariless Rutt, Clyde Maxim, Naomi Forrest, Laurance Williams, Tracy Westlund, Justin Nelson, Janice Meyers, Gladys Olson, Charles Kment; 1995 - Mae Bostrom Dahl, Darla Luscian, Armida Waller, Leslie Otterholt, Frank Oberg; 1994 - Harry Rystrom, George Cedergren, Oscar Berg, William Berg, Bill Berge, Clinton Broadbent, Rick Doyle, Russel Koon, Mandy White; 1993 - Josephine Braun, Brody Jones, Kimberly Wells, Alma Baltus, Harriet Szymanski, Jerry Bill Shanahan, Ellen Humble; 1992 - Orval Iverson, Georgia Wright, Irving Johnson, Fred Eastman, Harriet Dixon, James Flagland; 1991 - Jim Sperl, Bonnie Ryhn, Lawrence Sangren, Ray Harris, Ida Rustie, Vera Gillert, Herb Johnson; 1990 - Donald Hass, Hildur Anderson, Mabel Hendricks, Russel Paff, Mary Davis, Keith Allen, Ruby Brigan, Gordy Swanberg,

Irving Berg, Ken Stolz, George Os-
lund, Carmen Marsh; 1989 - Lee
Gray, John Allquist, David Sikkila,
Esther Fogelquist, Dorothy Kelzer;
1988 - Walt Westlund, Art
Swenson; 1987 - Herman White,
Larry Dahl, Lawrence Olson, Jessie
Suerth; 1986 - Perry Malvin, Elmer
Flowers, Esther Kroonblawd, Elsie
Swenson, Wanda Anderson; 1985 -
Elmer Olson, Larry Iverson, Polly &
Tina Boettcher, Virgil Peterson,
Charlotte Patak, Marvin Hischer,
Carl Patak, Tim Allquist, Harold
Anderson, Emma Peterson; 1984 -
Milo Richardson, George Hoover,
Earnest Anderson, Ruth Salsberry.
I will be preaching on All Saints Day
and sharing some of my memories.

Pastor Al

Food for the Poor

Pastor Ronald Dingal will preach for us on December 2 at all three services as a representative of Food for the Poor at all three services. This Christian non-profit organization specializes in helping developing countries address food concerns. They were most helpful to our own U.S. citizens after Katrina.

In order to reduce our financial burden, we are looking for: 1. Transportation to and from the airport on December 1/2; 2. A place for him to shower and sleep on December 1.

There will be a special video at the 9:30 service called "Love One Another." Please help if you can. Contact the office at 462-5115.

"Thanks a Rock"

We are indeed thankful for the \$747 donation to purchase decorative stone for the archway and the building, donated by Ken Osterdyk. Kerry Olson and his family are making good progress with the archway.

Robes of Righteousness

Over half the money has been donated for the youth choir robes, thanks to the bake sale on October 21. Check out the seven prizes to be awarded after the 10:45 Worship Service on December 9. Chances are \$5.00 each. Thanks for your help.

Reach Work Camp 2008

Work Camp is filling fast. We will go to Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio, July 6-12, 2008 (Jr. & Sr. High). This camp is already full with 523 students and adults. St. John's still has openings for 6 more youth. Qualifications to participate: Must currently be in 6 grade, parents and students are required to participate in fundraisers. Cost is \$300.00 per person with a \$50.00 deposit due November 15, 2007. Monthly payments of \$50 will then be made through April 15, 2008. The actual cost of the trip runs around \$700 per person. Please contact Pastor Ed, Linda Miller or Lyle Johnson if you have any questions about Reach and the activities. Remember we're filling up fast and there are only 6 spots left.

Thank You

Dear brothers and sisters at St. John's Lutheran Church: We fully expected to write a thank-you note for the fundraising efforts on our behalf this past Sunday. We did not expect to be thanking you for such a large amount (nearly a thousand dollars toward the \$1,700 seminary tuition bill), such a fun theme (special thanks to all of those who embodied the 50s, or at least a "Happy Days" version thereof), and such great food (huge thanks to the kitchen staff, who worked so hard). To everybody who volunteered, attended, donated, or helped in any way, we cannot tell you how much your support means to us.

Pastor Chris and Nicky

Movie! Games! Eats!

Calling B.I.G. and Sr. High Youth. Saturday, November 17, is your chance to see a movie, play some games at Aladdin's Castle in Maplewood Mall, and grab a meal (pizza or burgers) all for only \$10.00 or \$5.00 with two canned food items. If more youth go than last month (10 youth needed) Pastor Ed is buying ice cream cones on the way home. Meet at church at 5:30 PM and return at 10:00 PM.

Disney Ice Show

Please sign up for the most popular Disney on Ice Show of all time: **High School Musical on Ice**. The buses will leave the church at 5 PM on Saturday, **December 15**, and return at approximately 9:45 PM. Cost is \$20 per person for Show ticket and transportation for tickets purchased before 11/15/07. After 11/15/07, the event (which is a sell out) will be \$25 per person. Seating is on the club level at the Exel Energy Center.

CRAFT & BAKE SALE

The Stewardship Committee will be sponsoring their annual Craft & Bake Sale on Sunday, Dec. 2. We would appreciate any craft items and baked goodies that you would like to contribute. Pricing your items would also be helpful. For more information, please call Roxanne Berg at 462-1168.

Sunday School Christmas Program

Please join us for the Sunday School Christmas Program, December 9 at 10:45 AM. Our Christmas program will be *All I Want For Christmas Is Jesus!!* Rehearsal will be December 8 at 9:00 AM. Regular services will be held at 8:00 and 9:30

Social Hour

Thanks to all who have already volunteered to make/buy a treat for our Social Hour. It has been a great way to meet other members between services. We will be having coffee & goodies each Sunday after the 8:00 and 9:30 services. Please join us. There is a sign up in the narthex. Questions, please contact the office at 462-5115.

Food Drive in November

The Sunday School is having their 19th annual food drive for our local food shelf. Please give generously so that others who are not as fortunate can enjoy the up-coming holidays. Last year we collected 735 pounds of staples. Thanks!

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fireside room and continuing the last Sunday of every month we still study "Journey Together, Faithfully, Part III." The ELCA will be using congregational feedback to create its social statement in 2009.

It would be hard to overestimate the importance of discussing this topic for our congregation, the church as a whole, and the coming generations. Sex and the church gets a lot of attention from the media these days, and we will not be able to go without a shared understanding for much longer. Your participation at all eight sessions is urgently needed, and we hope to see you there.

Pastor Chris Wheatley

Special Thanks Donna

For several years Donna Lindau has "directed traffic" during difficult times at the church during funerals. Thank you, God, that Donna is a take charge kind of person. Now she is ready to pass the leadership of the Funeral Committee, (which is a Christian Outreach sub-committee) on to someone else. We never know when we will be needed, but it is very important to be ready. Consider volunteering for a year! Please consult with Pastors Al or Ed if you are interested.

Scholastic Bookfair

Please pick out your holiday gifts on Sunday, December 9, in the Old Fellowship Hall. Books may be purchased before or after church services or before or after our day schools' Christmas program at 4:00 PM. Bless our schools and get a good deal yourself.

Bell Choir needs a Hand

Actually two! One more person is needed in order to play the bells well! Please contact one of the directors to volunteer. Vickey Nelson at 462-1709 or Kim Schmidt at 462-4179.

Monthly Healing Service

Several members of the congregation have asked for us to have a monthly healing service. Hear what James 5:13-16 has to say: *Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray. Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise. Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.* In the spirit of that request, there will be a Prayer and Healing service after the 10:45 Worship service on the first Sunday of each month. This will be an anointed time of prayer and intercession. If you are troubled about anything or need to feel the love of God in a special way for your circumstance, please come confess your sins to one another, pray for one another, and be healed in Jesus' name. The service will begin 10 minutes after the conclusion of the last church service in the sanctuary. All Lay Shepherds are encouraged to attend.

Christmas Gifts

Christmas is coming and the Christian Outreach Committee will again be gathering toys and presents for needy families in our area. Look in the Narthex for our Christmas tree decorated with ornaments, which give gift suggestions. Choose one or more of the ornaments, buy the gifts, and bring them (unwrapped) to place under the tree. The Committee will wrap them and get them to the families.

If you know of a family in the area that could use some help with gifts this Christmas, please call Pastor Ed at 462-5115 or 651-248-3469 with the name of the family and their specific gift needs. We'll keep the information confidential and try to make their Christmas extra special this year. Thank you for all your help!

4-F's

4-F's to visit Minnesota Children's Museum on November 18. Bring the whole family for pizza and the Sesame Street Presentation at the MCM. Bus/Van will leave the church at 11:59 am and return at 5 pm. Cost is \$5 per person or \$3 per person with two canned food items for local food shelves. Sign up in the youth table in the narthex.

Reformation Day Holiday

In honor of the Reformation, Confirmation class and Faithweavers class will not be held on October 31. All youth are encouraged to take some of the Harry Potter tracts to hand out to their friends and visitors. Regular class will resume November 7, 2007.

Baptisms

We join with Larry & Bunny Wolf in the joy of baptizing Rachel and Rebekah Wolf; Tom & Amanda Bourgoin in the joy of baptizing Thomas Bourgoin III; Jeremy Boettcher & Michelle Johnson in the joy of baptizing Landon Boettcher; Ryan & Jolene Davis in the joy of baptizing Morgan Davis; Michael and Mallory Merchlewitz in the joy of baptizing Hailey and Alayna Merchlewitz; and Bob LeVasseur in the joy of baptizing Sam and Tate LeVasseur. In Holy Baptism, God claims each of us as a child of His own.

School Christmas Program

Little Angel Preschool and St. John's Academy will have a Christmas program on Sunday, December 9, at 4:00 PM.

What a blessing!

Fourteen different acts were featured in our 9th Annual Variety Show. Performers included: The Stacy Lady Slippers Division of the Minnesota Red Hat Society, Pastor Steve Ford, Captain Kirk Kupka, Jeremy Wolfe, Amber Wolfe, Cheryl Julian and her two granddaughters Jakklyn and Alyssa, Evie Dockham, The Wheatley Family Day Care, Dottie Frenning, Courtney and Valerie Weekes, Taylor Olsen, Ashley Olson, Sister Mary Contrary (Linda Miller), and Mother Selma Nilla (Cindy Erickson). Thanks to all performers.

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