

THE EPISTLE



SHARING CHRIST'S
LIGHT AND LOVE

**June-July
2011**

Volume VII

Issue 1V

From the Pastor's Desk ...

You gave us the gift of creation, but we often misuse its resources. Transform us into good stewards.

This was one of the petitions of the Prayers of the Church on the sixth Sunday in Easter. Maybe it's because in early May I was able to have time in northern Michigan and Colorado enjoying the diverse beauty of God's creation; or maybe it's because I've always felt deeply connected to and renewed by nature—a feeling that was made even stronger by the retreat that I attended in Michigan on Celtic spirituality—part of the retreat focused on the Celts deep connection with creation which they believe is as important in revealing God as is scripture; or possibly it's because I recently purchased *The Green Bible* and have been reading some of the 114 introductory pages of thought-provoking essays from ten distinguished contributors that elaborate a very distinct and clear creation theology; or, very likely, it's a result of my back-to-back weeks in Michigan and Colorado with my two granddaughters, Dana, who is 16 mos. old and Isabella, who is 19 mos. old and my pondering of what sort of environment they'll be able to enjoy when they're my age, that has caused me to lament what seems to be happening both weather-wise and otherwise to the gracious and priceless God-given gift of creation of which we've been made caretakers.

As of this writing 151 people have been confirmed dead as a result of the horrific tornado in Joplin, MO on May 22nd. This was the most recent of a record number of tornadoes thus far this spring. These deadly tornadoes were preceded during the winter of 2010-11 by crippling

blizzards in many parts of the U.S., especially the northeastern states; followed by severe flooding along the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers, among others, throughout many Midwestern and southern states this spring; not to mention the continuing melting of the polar ice caps.

Despite these weather extremes, there are many people who continue to deny any connection between humankind's misuse of creation and these destructive storms. They chose to believe that all these violent occurrences are simply part of nature's cycle of climate fluctuations that have been happening since the beginning of time.

But, the accumulating amount of evidence to the contrary suggests otherwise. A significant proportion of the dramatic increase in carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide ("the greenhouse gases") can be traced directly back to human activity. These gases trap heat in our atmosphere, contributing to the frequency and intensity of such weather events as tornadoes, hurricanes and snowstorms.

As faithful followers of God the Father who created heaven and earth and Jesus Christ whose death and resurrection **not only** redeemed humans but also creation, we have a responsibility to be caring stewards of the gift of creation that we've been given. *God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of the cross* (Colossians 1:20).

Calvin B. DeWitt, one of the essayists in the Green Bible, writes that in 1 Timothy 6:6 we learn that, "There is great gain in godliness combined with contentment." DeWitt goes on to say that an Amish saying based on this

passage states that “To desire to be rich is to desire to have more than what we need to be content.”

DeWitt writes, “Being content helps preserve creation’s integrity. All the things we use, all the things we make, everything we manipulate, everything we accumulate derives from creation itself. If we learn to seek godly contentment as our great gain, we will demand less from the land. We will leave room for God’s other creatures. We will be responsible stewards, caretakers, keepers of creation. We will regularly allow creation to heal itself and perpetuate its fruitfulness, to the glory and praise of its Maker.” This is certainly wisdom worth pondering.

Following are a dozen practical tips for helping us to become more faithful stewards of creation:

1. Turn off the water while brushing teeth or shaving.
2. Turn the thermostat up three degrees in summer and down three degrees in winter. In the spring and fall, open the windows as often as possible.
3. Only run the dishwasher when there is a full load. Do not use heat for the drying cycle.
4. Turn off lights, TV, music, and digital entertainment when leaving the room for any length of time.
5. Wash clothes in the coolest water possible.
6. Recycle everything possible; don’t buy over-packaged items.
7. Avoid the use of pesticides and chemicals on your lawn or garden.
8. Clean out closets and donate clothes not worn

in the past year.

9. Clean or replace air filters throughout the house.
10. Hand-wash clothes instead of dry-cleaning them whenever possible.
11. Install low-flow showerheads. Take showers instead of baths (they use less water).
12. Replace lightbulbs with compact energy-efficient ones.

In praise of God the creator and creation,
Pastor Shirley

Bible verse.....

As for you, my flock, thus says the Lord God: *I shall judge between sheep and sheep, between rams and goats: Is it not enough for you to feed on the good pasture, but must you tread down with your feet the rest of your pasture? When you drink of clear water, must you foul the rest with your feet? And must my sheep eat what you have trodden with your feet, and drink what you have fouled with your feet?*



(Ezekiel 34:17-19)

A Thought...

If you're too busy to care, you're too busy

***"PONDER ANEW WHAT THE ALMIGHTY
CAN DO!"***

**2011 INDIANA-KENTUCKY SYNOD
ASSEMBLY REPORT**

This was my fifth I-K Synod Assembly and I would strongly encourage anyone who hasn't attended one to think about doing so in the future either as a delegate or volunteer. Three years ago I went as a volunteer and volunteers are always needed. The future dates of the Assemblies will be; 2012-Covington, KY June 7-9; and in 2013-Ft Wayne, IN June 6-8. Each year St. Paul needs to send one male and one female delegate in addition to the pastor. Please prayerfully consider going to a future Assembly; it is a very moving and informative experience.

The 2011 I/K Synod Assembly seemed to go by really fast; we did many things in a short amount of time. There were many enjoyable events like the worship, music, presentations and fellowship: additionally, we also had the business part with the budget and the various resolutions which are a necessary part of any assembly. This was Bishop Bill Gafkjen's first Synod Assembly having been elected Bishop at last year's Assembly. Overall, everything went along smoothly and it was a good experience.

Instead of having a main keynote speaker this year four pastors from the I-K Synod gave presentations based on the assembly theme "Ponder Anew What The Almighty Can Do!" Pastor Libby Mannng talked on the topic of "God is doing a new thing." Her message was based on Isaiah 43 and she took us verse by verse through the passage highlighting the key points of that text. The two verses she primarily

focused on were 18-19a, "Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing." She pointed out that God is always about doing a new thing in our individual and congregational lives. Oftentimes, the coming thing is much better than those things of the past. However, if one is stuck on the old things we may miss the new thing that is coming if we have the wrong view of what God is leading us to.

Pr. Ron Luckey's focus was on the topic "Do you not perceive it?" He continued with Isaiah 43:19, "Now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert." Pr. Luckey said the word "perceive" in Hebrew means "to experience things deep within." Whenever we truly grasp what God wants, it is knowledge deep within us.

He believes that we learn about God's ongoing story and about what God is doing in the world by listening to the stories of the people around us. We need to focus upon listening to each other's stories, because everyone has a story to tell. We experience God's grace in a very special way when someone listens to our story. Also, most of us don't know our story until we start to tell it; therefore, we need to begin listening to each other's stories and sharing our own as we try to see the story behind the story, to PERCEIVE what God did or is doing in our lives.

Furthermore, Pr. Luckey believes that people who aren't in our churches have stories to tell and want to tell them. Therefore, It is up to us to be open to listening to them so that we perceive what is going on--THE new thing God is up to.

Pr. Mark Havel and Pr. Connie Thomson had as their theme "Making a way in the wilderness." They talked about

people who have stories to tell. We also need to focus on this new thing that God is planning for us as opposed to looking at our challenges and allowing them TO hold us back. As Christians today we are called to see Jesus in a new way, with a new lens, and with hope about the future. They talked about how to make Christ known in the world in and through the ministry in our congregations.

Pastors Connie and Mark reminded us that Jesus revealed himself in the breaking of the bread, He never promoted a new program or "widget." Rather, simply being welcomed to the Communion Meal is life-changing and so very different than the ways of the world. Welcoming everyone to the Lord's Table is the best asset that we have for revealing God's grace.

They concluded by challenging us, both as individuals and congregations," to get off the shelf of life" and out into the world to experience the new thing that God is doing, understanding all the while that this new thing or new creation doesn't come from our efforts but from God. Thus, throughout the Assembly from the Bishop's sermon during the opening worship on Friday night and continuing in all the plenary presentations, the theme, "Ponder Anew What the Almighty Can Do!" was repeated over and over.

If anyone would like more info on this Assembly or its speakers, please see me or go to the I-K Synod web site for their summary.

Peace,
Vernon T.

South Central Conference Picnic

Come out for an afternoon of fun and fellowship

“Down by the Riverside Picnic”

Sunday June 26

3–6:30 P.M.

at the American Turners Club
at 3125 River Road

Activities include

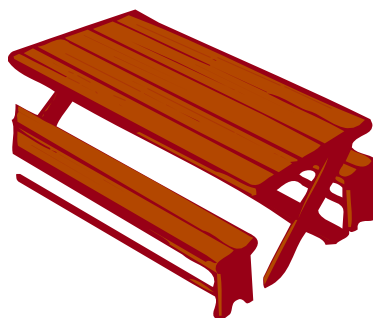
Corn Hole Tournament, Face Painting , a Box Maze, Swimming*,
a Cake Walk, and Bingo.

Dinner at 5 P.M.

Hot dogs, peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, fruit trays, chips,
etc. Bring a 2 liter bottle of your favorite drink

Praising Jesus at 6 P.M.

There will be plenty of parking spaces, a covered picnic area and
restrooms. *The charge for the swimming pool is \$4.00 per per-
son.



Update on the Fundraising Campaign

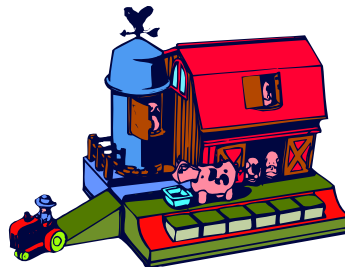
Through the end of May St. Paul has received a total of \$14,461.00 in actual contributions or commitments for contributions. Thanks to the faithfulness of all those who have given so generously through both their regular offerings and this special campaign, we have been meeting our budget and are operating in the black!

With Our Thanks!....

A big thank you to Carol Weissrock and Mary Gregory and their committee for the delicious Easter breakfast that was enjoyed by all. Also, thanks to Carol Russell and Alice Alvey for organizing the Easter egg hunt that provided eggs and candy for the nineteen children who enthusiastically participated.

Lenten Supper Offerings

The offerings from the Lenten suppers totaled \$118.31. This money was designated for projects of ELCA World Hunger, specifically God's Global Barnyard project. Thanks to all for so generously sharing with global families in need.



New Member...

We joyfully welcome Phyllis Bell who joined our congregation on Pentecost Sunday. Phyllis comes to us from Westwood Presbyterian Church and brings a beautiful smile and spirit to our faith community. Welcome, Phyllis!



The thoughts and prayers of the congregation are with Dorothy Thomas and her family upon the death of her sister, Lola Leathers, in April; and with Virginia Johnson upon the death of her brother, Carl Gaslin, who died on May 19th. May God's

love and the hope and promise of the resurrection give you comfort and peace in the days ahead.

FYI....

Pastor Shirley has begun her part-time call and is working all day Sunday, Tuesday and Wednesday. If you have an emergency on the days that she is not working, you may call her at home or on her cell phone. If it's not an emergency, please call the church and leave a message on the answering machine and she will retrieve it the next time she's in the office.

Missing item...

One of the large white linen Communion Table cloths has disappeared. More than likely, someone took it home to launder it and forgot to return it or it was put someplace that we've overlooked. Please check to see if you might have it or know of its whereabouts.

Save the date....

Our annual Fall Festival/Yard Sale will be held on Saturday, September 24th from 9 A.M.—2 P.M. Rain date: Saturday, October 8th.

June Birthdays:

- 1 - Brandon Luttrell
- 5 - Patrick Seng
- 8 - Vernon Jones
- 11 - June Boehm
- 12 - Jennifer (Littriello) Johanningsmeier
- 16 - Chris Alvey
- 19 - Benjamin Fain
Marian Ziebell
- 20 - Carole Miller
Cordell Skillman
- 21 - Michelle (foster) Hammers
Ewan Hammers
- 23 - Virginia Johnson
Forrest Tanner
- 24 - Jean Shindlebower
- 29 - Austin White



July Birthdays:

- 2 - Marcus Edward Hammer
- 5 - Olivia Ford
Denise Weissrock
- 8 - Shalea Luttrell
- 10 - Laura Skillman
- 12 - Joseph James Nevitt
- 14 - Douglas Sulzer
- 16 - Sonja Fowler
David George
Yvonne Sulzer
- 18 - Gene Paulin
- 27 - Rachel Johanningsmeier
- 29 - Kay Huntman
Kelsey MacDonald

Remember in your Prayers

Jan & Chris Alvey
Martha Alvey
Nicholas Andrews
Maggie, Jackie and
Kami Lee Basham
June Boehm
Karen Bradley
Sharon Burkhart
Family of Dixie Byers who died
Kelly Campbell
Dennis Christian
Elizabeth Ann Clemons
Baby Patrick Collins
LaVerne Collins
Jeff Drake
Shirley Dempster
Mary Lou Fenwick
Roger French
Dennis Gahafer, Jr.
Glen Gahafer, Sr.
Ruth Harden's mother
Roger Imhoff
Harry Koltz, Jr.
Karen Lawrence
Dot and Bob Lewis
Morris Longacre
Darrell and Mary McQuilling
Mildred Menchu Johnson
Stefanie Menchu
Jim Michalec
Lily and H.L Moran
Phyllis Morris
Lenora Ott
Dave Outman



continued on next page....

Wayne Patterson
Mike Perkins
The Warren Rainwaters
Michael Rausch
Phyllis Ross
Kim and Molly Russell
April Samuels
Paul Sheffler
Pastor Dave Shugert
Marshall Skillman, Sr.
Maxine Skinner
Phyllis Smith
Wayne Smith & Danielle
Brian & Kathy Spangler
Ann Stoltz
Nellie Sweeney
John Vaught, Sr.
Johnny Ray Vaught
Samuel Vaught
Carol Weissrock
David Weissrock
Belinda Wilson
Brett Zeitz upon his baptism

All those in Alabama, Mississippi, Missouri and Arizona
whose lives have been devastated by tornados, flooding,
and wild fires

Wilma Waltrip and Carmine Voglino on their upcoming marriage

Our congregation to receive a grant to replace the heating system

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