

NATIVITY NEWS – OCTOBER 2013



Pastor's Pondering

My article below was the subject of the Wednesday adult Bible study. We enjoyed a lively discussion and actually learned some things. I offer it to you in the hope that you will consider your opportunity to proclaim the Gospel.

Thinking together about the “E” word

Mention the word evangelism around Lutherans and you’re likely to get a mass exodus. For a variety of reasons we just aren’t real good at it. Part of the problem is that we really don’t know what it is even though we think we do. To help define evangelism let’s name some common misconceptions.

Evangelism is not:

1. Presenting a “sales pitch” about the advantages of accepting Jesus in order to obtain a home in heaven and then pressing for a verbal decision.
2. Inviting somebody to church.
3. Pasting a bumper sticker on your car with your church name on it.
4. Financing a billboard with your church name on it.
5. Creating a radio or television commercial about your church.
6. Good works done in the hope they create curiosity about the gospel.

I could go on but I think you get the point. What we commonly think of as evangelism is more correctly defined as soliciting and marketing. Of course both have advantages in their proper context but they are not evangelism. Hopefully you’ve identified the missing link in all the approaches above. That would be one person announcing the forgiveness of sin because of Jesus to another person. It is first person “I say to you . . .” speech. Thus, evangelism is simply another word for proclamation. Consider the following passage from Romans:

For, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”¹⁴ How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?¹⁵ And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!”

This passage is best read backwards. How is faith created in people? The Holy Spirit using the words of a preacher and I don't mean just people who wear clerical collars and have been to seminary.

Of course you've already identified the supposed loophole in this passage, "how can anyone preach unless they are sent?" Well, you've been sent whether you know it or not. Consider this passage from Matthew:

¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore as you go make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Note the assumption Jesus makes. He doesn't say "if you go" he says "as you go." For some, this going is indeed a vocation as a professional preacher but it isn't confined to that role. Every Christian who has heard the news of the gospel has something to say to those they encounter as they go to work, school, play or wherever they find themselves.

So what is it that we go with? What is it that we have? Consider this passage from John:

²¹ Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." ²² And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

And another from Matthew:

¹⁹ "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

You have the ability to forgive sin. Jesus has authorized you to proclaim the news of the gospel. So taken together what we have so far is the faith in Christ that justifies comes through proclamation and that proclamation is done by Jesus' disciples as they go about life armed with the ability to forgive sin.

Hold on a minute before you run right out and become God's gospel gunslinger. Let's remember who's in charge of all this . . . God. God is a choosing (electing) God. Who he chooses and why he makes his choice is a mystery and frankly none of our concern. We don't decide who the chosen ones are. We proclaim universally trusting that God's will be done. Since God is in charge it is important to remember that we don't create opportunities for proclamation. Our role is to be sensitive to God given opportunities to proclaim and also willing to do the deed. Nothing is more frustrating than to have someone confess they've blown it and need forgiveness only to have a Christian look down at his or her feet and mumble about life being tough or some other nonsense. SPEAK UP!!!! You have the words of eternal life, USE THEM!!!! So if we're not to be rabid fundamentalist who pound on doors and scream at people, how then should we go and proclaim? Consider this passage from I Peter:

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

Note the word priesthood. A priest is one that gives him or herself away on behalf of another. A priest is one that serves. Friend is another word that helps us understand what it means to be a priest. When applied to proclamation, one would proclaim to somebody he or she knows. Proclamation then is in the context of a relationship. Thus, proclamation is genuine and patient. Proclamation is in response to a confession, not the other way around. Law always precedes gospel.

To illustrate, one cannot help an addict until said addict hits “rock bottom.” Likewise, proclamation is for a sinner who has no choice but to confess he or she is a sinner. This confession is created by God using the law.

So pulling all this together, as you go about being a friend in all your various relationships, be a good friend serving, helping, simply being there. If in the midst of a relationship a confession arises, then proclaim your friend’s unconditional forgiveness for Christ’s sake. You might start by being a friend to yourself because, after all, the gospel must be proclaimed over and over again and nobody has a closer relationship to you the sinner than you!



SIXTEENTH ANNUAL CRAFT FAIR

Local and international artists will celebrate the sixteenth annual Brandon Craft Fair, Saturday, October 5th from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM.

Filling the social hall and spilling out and over the shady grounds, the indoor-outdoor festival features local Mississippi artists. Unique handcrafted items available will include jewelry, frames, wood carving, crosses, copper sculpture, wooden toys, blue jean purses, suncatchers, crochet, dolls, baby items, towels, soaps, scarves, candle holders, and seasonal decorations.

The international section will have a new selection of crafts from artists around the world. Introduced four years ago, these fair trade items have been a highlight of the fair ever since. Gathered by SERRV, each purchase from the international collection enables artisans in developing countries to earn a fair income from their work and build a better life for themselves and their families. All items were selected especially for the Brandon fair by local committee members.

Homemade breads, pies, fudge, cakes, and cookies will fill the well-stocked baked goods area. This popular area often sells out early. In keeping with Nativity’s German, Lutheran heritage, church youth will grill bratwurst for lunch which the men will have carefully parboiled earlier in beer. Sauerkraut and other condiments will be available as toppings.

Admission is free. All proceeds go to benefit community outreach ministries including Harbor House, The Center for Violence Prevention (assistance for abused women and children), Rankin County Human Resource Agency, Mustard Seed, Grace House, Habitat for Humanity, Stewpot, and Lutheran World Relief.

Volunteers are needed to help with all aspects of the fair. Sign up in the narthex.

Don’t forget your baked goods. Despite a lot of church members exercising their culinary skills, this popular area often sells out early so we need all the help you can provide.



Rankin County Human Resource Agency has a continuing need for food pantry items at the end of each month. Many months when we deliver our donations, the pantry is all but empty, so we know our help is needed and appreciated. Please bring your nonperishable supplies to the church this month by Sunday, October 27th.



QUILTING THIS MONTH

This year Lutheran World Relief's goal is 500,000 quilts church-wide. Won't you help by giving up a little time each month toward this effort? The journey of half a million starts with one at a time. Join in this month on Sat., Oct. 19th from ten to noon.



CAMP FUNSHINE

Thanks to Joe Hunt for being the craftmaster at this year's Camp Funshine, the annual weekend camp for young burn victims. Joe shared some of his work and explained the woodcarving process. He also prepared materials so that each child could assemble and paint a small cross to take home. Thanks also to the Peters for supplying the needed plates and plastic tableware for all the meals. And thanks to everyone who donated to our rummage sale. Some funds raised at that event, combined with Thrivent dollars, helped nineteen kids (and some of their parents) have a wonderful time canoeing, swimming, crafting, doing the zip line, playing games, and just being kids

Reformation Sunday

Come help us celebrate Reformation Sunday, October 27th, with a German/American potluck! It was on October 31, 1517, that Martin Luther posted his 95 Theses on the door of the Church in Wittenberg, Germany. The liturgical color for that day is red. Please wear something red in observance of that day.



October & November Birthdays

Lynn Templeton	10/02
Linda Hodges	10/02
Sandy Bettiga	10/05
Carol Bergum	10/10
Dorothy Moore	10/13
Rick Kirby	10/13
Lydia Weisser	10/14
Jan Behringer	10/19
Sue Caldwell	10/24
Savannah Stevens	10/26
Carly Koch	10/30
Katie Kirby	11/01
Alton Lewis	11/07
Robbie Seward	11/07
Wendy Ketchum	11/08
Jennifer Seward	11/10
Mitch Leavell	11/18
Marcia Weaver	11/18
Joyce Stroh	11/20
Keith Anderson	11/21
Linda Tucker	11/22

Anniversaries

Mitch & Dorothy Leavell	10/07
Lauren & Julie Thatch	10/20
Bart & Sandy Bettiga	10/21
Ned & Barb Balsley	10/23
Clyde & Marlyn Hatten	11/03
Alton & Kathy Lewis	11/07

If you wish to participate, please look for the sign-up sheet on the table in the narthex and provide your birthday and/or anniversary **month & day only** by your name so we can **wish you a Happy Day!**

Happy Birthday & Anniversary to All !!!!!



Nativity Prayer List

Please keep in your prayers:

Trieu Lam, Pastor David Mancuso, Ann Schultz, Carol Tucker, Alan Fos, Family of Zella Heineman, Casey Pace, Fay Miller, Richard Schnell, Dr. Brian Johnson and the family of Elsie Van Ridgeway.

OCTOBER CALENDAR OF EVENTS

October 2	12 Noon – Al-non 12 Noon and 7:00 PM Bible Study
October 4	5:00 – 7:00 PM Craft Fair-Bake goods delivery, work night
October 5	9:00 AM – 3:00 PM Craft Fair/Bake Sale
October 6	8:00 & 10:30 AM Services 9:15 AM Sunday School & Adult Bible Study 11:30 AM Service of Healing & Anointing with Oil; Choir practice
October 9	12 Noon – Al-non 12 Noon and 7:00 PM Bible Study
October 13	8:00 & 10:30 AM Services with Holy Communion 9:15 AM Sunday School & Adult Bible Study 11:30 AM choir practice
October 16	12 Noon – Al-non 12 Noon and 7:00 PM Bible Study
October 19	10:00 AM – Noon – LWR Quilting
October 20	8:00 & 10:30 AM Services with Holy Communion 9:15 AM Sunday School & Adult Bible Study 11:30 AM choir practice
October 23	12 Noon – Al-non 12 Noon and 7:00 PM Bible Study
October 26	8:30 AM – Brewed Awakenings at CUPS
October 27	8:00 & 10:30 AM Reformation Sunday Services with Holy Communion 9:15 AM Sunday School & Adult Bible Study 11:30 AM choir practice German Potluck Food Pantry Collection
October 28	11:45 Church Council Meeting

NLC October, 2013 Volunteer List – 10:30 Service

October 6

Greeters – Debi Poole
Ambassador – Joe Hunt
Pew Buddy - Ann Starr
Ushers – Tony Caldwell & Kathy Peters
Lector – Hack Walston
Comm. Asst. – Hack Walston
Nursery – Pamela Kirby & Haley Templeton
Counters – Keith Anderson & Bud Weisser
Acolyte – Fred Braatz
Altar Care – Dorothy Leavell

October 20

Greeters – Templeton Family
Ambassador – Ellen Noble
Pew Buddy - Joe Hunt
Ushers – John Haverson & Hack Walston
Lector – Meade Entrekin
Comm. Asst. – Meade Entrekin
Nursery – Cindy & Fred Braatz
Counters – Mitch Leavell & Linda Tucker
Acolyte – Alex Tucker
Altar Care – Dorothy Leavell

October 13

Greeter – Halverson Family
Ambassador – Ruth Burgess
Pew Buddy – Mitch Leavell
Ushers – Mitch Leavell & Linda Tucker
Lector – Bart Bettiga
Comm. Asst. – Debbie Pruett
Nursery – Sue Caldwell & Olivia Halverson
Counters – Hack Walston & Kathy Peters
Acolyte – Savannah Stevens
Altar Care – Dorothy Leavell

October 27

Greeter – Meade Entrekin
Ambassador – Dorothy Leavell
Pew Buddy - Linda Tucker
Ushers - Tommy Templeton & Keith Anderson
Lector – Bud Weisser
Comm. Asst. – Alex Weisser
Nursery – Ruth Burgess & Savannah Stevens
Counters – Sue Caldwell & Pat Schnell
Acolyte – Eli Bettiga
Altar Care – Dorothy Leavell

If you cannot serve on the dates shown, please try to swap with someone and let the office know of the change. Thanks.

TREASURER'S REPORT AS OF 08-31-2013

Planned YTD Budgeted Tithes & Offerings (excl. special funds)	\$100,591
Received YTD Budgeted Tithes & Offerings (excl. special funds)	<u>\$102,664</u>
Difference	\$ 2,073