

Life Together

Olsburg-Walsburg Lutheran Parish

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Next newsletter items and articles will be due March 19.

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From the Desk of Your Pastoral Leader...

New Year's Resolutions?

I'm not a big one for resolutions at the New Year, but I do believe it is a natural time to do a little evaluation and see the possibility of some "new hopes."

A lot of people did make resolutions over the new year – lose weight, exercise more, get organized, keep up with e-mail and family contacts, etc. And then there are the experts over at the Harvard Business Review who are making suggestions about what kinds of resolutions we should be making.

What it really boils down to is this – behind every New Year's Resolution, is a desire to do what matters. And the reality is, for most of us, doing what matters also means that we need to figure out how to *stop* doing the things that don't (matter).

If this is so, here are five purposeful questions we can ask ourselves as a church and as leaders, to help figure out what doesn't matter anymore...

1. Are we (still) having fun doing it?
2. Is it easy to get people to lead and participate in it?
3. Are people's lives being changed by it?
4. Are we being changed in positive ways by doing it?

5. Would anybody miss it if we stopped doing it?

The "experts" suggest that if the answer it NO to **#1 plus ANY of the other questions**, an immediate "stop" is in order. Considering taking a time out from doing it (the program or activity), take a break, give it a rest, and see what happens. After a few weeks or months, reevaluate it and decide whether or not it's worth doing again.

The New Year – a good time for starts and stops, not only in how we do business, but also how we rediscover each day what it means to be the church God created us to be and also, what it means to be people of faith in the 21st century.

Blessings and Hope
Gordy

The Year of Mark

“The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.” Mark 1:1

As of the beginning of Advent (which started right after Thanksgiving last November) we started a new church year. And so, as we look at beginning the Season of Lent, we are almost one quarter of the way through a new year! I hope you enjoyed the rest, the busyness, the memory making and all that goes into Advent and Christmas season, and that you are in the midst of and ready to tackle whatever God brings our way in 2012.

Both Olsburg and Walsburg have been congregations which follow what is called the Revised Common Lectionary of Sunday morning Bible readings. We are now in year “B” (simply called years A, B, & C) which mainly focuses on the Gospel of Mark (and big chunks of John because Mark is so short). As we move into the year, it seems appropriate to give a little background on this book of scripture.

According to most Bible scholars, the Gospel of Mark was the first attempt in the early church to write down an account of the life and ministry of Jesus. (We need to say “most” Bible scholars, because those who devote their lives to such work often come across like economists in that much of what they do is disagree with one another. – not all that different from other professions, I suppose!)

It makes good sense to see Mark as the earliest written gospel. It is the shortest and the tendency of the later works (Matthew and Luke) would be to expand on it, rather than drop what it says. Virtually all of Mark is included in the gospels of Matthew and Luke, so it seems (mostly) obvious that Mark would have been written first.

No one is sure who wrote Mark, exactly when it was written, or exactly who the audience was for whom it was written. The most common traditions suggest it was written sometime around or after the Jewish Civil War of 67-70 CE to a largely Gentile audience, perhaps in Rome, by John Mark, who is mentioned in Acts as a young man that served under Paul (Acts 12:12, 15:27). Like all traditions, some of this might be close to reality

Life together

and some just educated guesses and “fitting pieces together,” because – the writer never tells us these things.

As each of the four gospels were written after the death and resurrection of Jesus, the heart of Mark is responding to the big question, “What do we do with a Messiah who died?”

Mark begins his answer with a short one sentence prologue that sets the context for what is to come. He will be writing about Jesus Christ who he immediately declares to be the Son of God AND that what he says about Jesus will be good news.

We have left behind the chaos of 2011, and as we step into the beginning of Lent, I would ask you to carve out a little time in your schedule to read the Gospel of Mark from beginning to end – preferably in one or two sittings. If along the way some questions are raised, or there is something there to wonder about, bring those questions and wonders with you to church, as we journey into Mark – the shortest of the gospels which bring Good News.

The Season of Lent (and Soup suppers)

Ash Wednesday – Feb 22,

Olsburg @ 7:00 PM

Walsburg @ 8:15 PM

Mid-week services will alternate starting at Walsburg this year.

February 29, 7:00 PM @ Walsburg

March 7, 7:00 PM @ Olsburg

March 14, 7:00 PM @ Walsburg

March 21, 7:00 PM @ Olsburg

March 28, 7:00 PM @ Walsburg

Starting at about 6:00 PM before worship, all are invited for a simple Soup and fellowship time. We need people to sign up for hosting and food preparation. Once again, we will be doing “Holden Evening Prayer” for our worship outline.

Holy week schedule has not yet been finalized. Watch the worship bulletins for continuing information.

February and March birthdays and anniversaries

If you know of a member whose birthday is not listed, please contact the church office.

Birthdays

- 1 Helen Wieters (W)
- 2 Julie Higgins (O)
- 4 Dick Flohr (W)
Lynn Webster (O)
- 5 Dale Larson (W)
Daniel Higgins (O)
- 6 Lynne Berry (W)
- 7 Roseanne Johnson (W)
- 9 Becky Holt (O)
- 10 Phillip Monser (O)
- 12 Shane Adams (O)
- 13 Alicia Scofield (W)
- 14 Vincent Smith (O)

- 15 Wes Esping (O)
- 16 Jessie Sundgren (W)
- 17 R.J. Bokelman (O)
- 23 Loretta Hoerman (W)
- 24 Brad Haller (W)
- 28 Makayla Vargo (O)
Madison Vargo (O)
Valerie Peterson (W)

March

- 1 Katie Burklund (O)
Raymond Nelson (W)
Jared Henry (W)
- 2 Donna Nelson (W)
Brianna Olson (W)
- 4 Marian Smith (O)
Jeanette Pultz (W)
Jennifer Kulp (W)

- 6 Garrett Nelson (O)
- 9 Taellor Howland (O)
- 10 Donald Campbell (W)
- 10 Ruby Andersen (O)
- 11 Tami Howland (O)
Christy Nelson (O)
- 12 Bev Stowell (O)
Mike Hagenmaier (W)
- 14 Janet Neilson (W)
Gary Hageman (W)
- 16 Marla Webster (O)
- 17 Floyd Munson (O)
- 18 Bart Coutermarsh (W)
Cindy Neilson (W)
Andrew Kalmer (W)
- 20 Peggy Johnson (O)
- 21 Richard Gibbs Jr. (O)
- 21 Ashley Cooper (O)
- 23 Jonathan Nelson (O)
- 26 Brennan Bestwick (W)
- 27 Kent Burklund (O)
- 28 Kylie Gibbs (O)
- 29 Timothy Zoeller (O)
Amanda Esping (O)
Stacy Deetjen-Dawes (W)
- 31 Rich Cooper (O)

Members in service this month

Thank you to these members for their service to the parish during February and March.

Walsburg

February Ushers and Greeters:

Roger & Kathy Sundgren, Don & Rita Nelson

March Ushers and Greeters: Carl & Jane Larson; Trenton & Lynn Hargrave

February Communion Ushers: Gary Hargrave; Roger Sundgren

March Communion Ushers: Carl Larson; Vern Bulk

***February Lay Assistants:** 2/22 Brianna Olson; 2/26 Jenny or Cassie Miller

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March Lay Assistants: 3/4 Rita Nelson; 3/11 Jane Larson; 3/18 Jamie Hageman; 3/25 Alicia Scofield

February Altar Committee: Janice Johnson

March Altar Committee: Sandy McCool

Olsburg

February Ushers: Alan Hubbard, Marvin Johnson, Nick Cooper, Kevin Burklund

March Ushers: Jacob Nelson, Shane Adams, Jim Nelson, Lee Cantrell

February Communion Assistants: 2/19 Jim Nelson; 2/22 Jan Cooper

March Communion Assistants: 3/4 Woody Kasselmann; 3/18 Laura Clifton

***February Acolytes:** 2/19 MaKenzie Goff; 2/22 Jacob Nelson; 2/26 Monique Sandquist

***March Acolytes:** 3/4 Nathanael Martin; 3/11 Symone Sandquist; 3/18 Bailee Howland; 3/25 Jonathan Nelson

***February Lay Assistants:** 2/19 Kathy Ricketts; 2/22 Kristi Fronce; 2/26 Laura Clifton

***March Lay Assistants:** 3/4 Lee Cantrell; 3/11 Patty Nelson; 3/18 Shane Adams; 3/25 Susan Adams

February Altar Committee: Kristi Fronce, Kathy Monser

March Altar Committee: Shelly Burklund; April Brenner

***If you are unable to be present for your assignment, please find a replacement and contact the church office so the correct name will appear in the bulletin.**

February Anniversaries

Dean and Donna Nelson (W)

March Anniversaries

- 9 William and Janet Neilson (W)
- 13 Larry and Lila Bestwick (W)
- 22 Dan and Shari Holt (O)
- 23 Don and June Campbell (W)

"In the Meantime" Blog

Starting Ash Wednesday, you can subscribe to a new online (and free!) devotional written by David Lose that follows the story of Jesus' Passion in Mark's Gospel. A devotional post a day throughout Lent, as well as occasional other articles and resources on relating faith to everyday life. The site is called "In the Meantime" and the address is www.davidlose.net. There is a link to the blog on Olsburg's website at <http://www.olsburglutheran.org/>.

Stewardship – What and HOW?

For a number of decades, many congregations in all different denominations have had an annual “stewardship” campaign for a few weeks of the year – usually in the fall. Over the last decade, more and more committees, councils, ministry teams and congregations have been attempting to move toward a “year round,” year-long emphasis on stewardship.

In some ways, the Olsburg/Walsburg communities are a few steps ahead of these other congregations. We don’t need to try to change from something we have always done a certain way. We simply get to begin the conversation.

Let me start with three simple words to help us as we begin this journey.

“Talk” – How does the congregation “talk” about money? The gospels suggest that Jesus talked about money a lot – and he wasn’t usually asking for any when he did this. Rather, he talked about the relationship between faith and money. He was trying to get people to see that their faith should impact how they handle their money (or maybe more accurately stated – “God’s money).

Just as important I believe – he was trying to get people to see that how they handle money impacts their faith. Sermons, short talks in worship, adult education time, workshops – these can all be simple ongoing opportunities to help us consider the intersection of faith and finances in our lives.

The next word is **“Thanks.”** There is much planning and energy that goes into “thanking” those who make gifts to Luther Seminary, church camp, college campus, etc. In the congregations I have worked with, some were better than others at recognizing and thanking people for their gifts – gifts of money, time and talent.

Do the Walsburg/Olsburg congregations have a plan for thanking people for what they give and for what they do? How can this plan be implemented so that it isn’t dependant upon one person or committee? Being better as a community in our “thanks” can go a long way toward acknowledging God’s work in our midst. The third word would be “tell.”

Like in many church communities, there tends to be a huge knowledge gap between what leaders

know about the work of the congregation and what the person in the pew knows. Even in small congregations, most often, leaders know lots more and make the mistake of assuming that everyone know as much as they know.

How we intentionally communicate the mission and ministry of the congregation to everyone (even those not a part of the congregation) is important stewardship work. It is also very difficult and sometimes time consuming work. Many times it takes creative, persistent, multi-faceted delivery in order to get people’s attention.

Wouldn’t it be interesting if our focus on stewardship was to talk about money without ever asking for it, thanking people for their giving, and telling people how their giving is making a difference for good through the congregation and world? Wouldn’t it be interesting?

High School

Plan on meeting Sunday evening, February 26. We need to look at plans for this spring and summer, as well as do a little fellowship, learning, eating and maybe even a little laughing. Holy Week is coming and we will need your help. National Youth Gathering is coming and we need to plan the week and fund raising. Check your phones and e-mail for time and place. Sunday Feb. 26 – 4:00 PM @ Olsburg – BE THERE!

Confirmation

We will continue gathering during Lent each Wednesday night. Please look to the “Lent” schedule for where we will gather.

6 PM – soup supper

6:30 PM – CLASS LESSON

7:00 PM – Holden Worship (each of the confirmation students will have a part)

7:50 PM – head for home...

Confirmation Mission Trip

Because of the busy summer that is shaping up, we are planning this years Confirmation Mission Trip for May 29-31. Mark your calendars – we will be heading into Kansas City for some service and immersion. Learning and discovering how we are called to be disciples in this ever changing world in which we live. Look for more information soon. If you are planning on being confirmed this next Oct, and can’t participate in this date, be sure to contact Gordy. – Thanks

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March 28, 7:00 PM @ Walsburg

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Cottage Meetings

Some thoughts about moving forward with “Cottage Meetings.”

Isn't faith and church life about “transformation” rather than “information?” These are not mutually exclusive – it isn't one over the other – AND, aren't we called to expect a certain movement of (or toward) transformation.

If so, what does “transformation” look like? And how does this transformation affect what we do with worship, service, mission and ministry, church structure? AND, just what does Jesus expect of us (if we choose to accept his call)?

Is our image of church as a river rather than a lake? Think about this one for a moment. Lakes can and will become stagnant! AND, rivers can be dangerous, sometimes very dangerous!

In the next couple months, both congregations will be participating in “Cottage Meetings” which will be first and foremost, a time to listen, this is, for you to listen to each other and for me (Gordy) to listen to you. I would like to do this in groups of 8-12. Both in the church building, and in homes. If any of you would like to volunteer your home for one of these cottage meetings, let me know

so we can get it on the schedule.

We will be having 5-7 meetings for each church and I would like to encourage everyone (no matter how active or connected) to be a participant in one of these gatherings.

Cottage meetings will entail Hopes and Dreams. So start thinking, wondering and praying about “what your vision for the congregation is.” It would also be a time to talk about what my vision for the congregation is as we move closer to my fourth year with you.

What is our mission?

Are we effectively fulfilling our mission?

What would change if we were more focused on transformation (vs. information)?

Are there simple things that are being missed?

What is God up to?

Cottage meeting days –

Because we are already out – After Lent mid-week worship seems like an obvious time!

Feb. 29, 7:50 – Walsburg

March 7, 7:50 – Olsburg

March 14, 7:50 – Walsburg Council (no cottage meeting)

March 21, 7:50 – Olsburg Council (no cottage meeting)

March 28, 7:50 – Walsburg

Sunday Evenings – March 4, Olsburg @ 6:30

March 18, Walsburg @ 6:30

Mid-Week March 13, Olsburg @ 7

March 15, Walsburg @ 7

There will be additional times for sign-up in each church. Watch in the narthex and bulletins for times and dates. If you would like to request a time, please do. If you know of someone who might not attend unless invited, please invite them and attend with them.

I believe God is calling both Olsburg and Walsburg Lutheran Churches to continue to be a witness in the communities they were planted in so many years ago. That witness may not look the same as it did over the past 100+ years. Cottage Meetings are a start, as we journey into the future together.

Thanks

Gordy

An Old Friend, A New Year!

by Rhonda Baer, organist, 785-632-1220

The New Year 2012 is bringing opportunities for a little extra TLC for our 91-year old friend in the Walsburg Church balcony. With faith and vision for the future, the Church Council approved in August 2011, the establishment of a fund to provide for extended repairs and the potential restoration of the organ that was purchased from the Hinners Organ Company in 1921, replacing the organ that was lost when the church burned in 1918. Jeff Combs, husband of Callie (Grater), with Combs Organ Specialists in Newton, continues to provide tuning and repair services for the organ, and was asked by the Council to prepare an estimate for critical repairs, as well as what it would take for a complete restoration.

What's that old saying... "if it ain't broke, don't fix it!" Why would we need to spend money on the organ if it's still playing? Well, yes, it still plays, but did you know that what you hear today only partially represents the full, beautiful tones this wonderful organ is still capable of offering? What would it be like if all the notes played all the time? Or what if those "dead notes" made their full sound instead of partially playing. What would we hear if all the "Stops and Couplers" could actually be used, layering sounds of flutes and strings, incorporating deep, low tones or extending higher ones? And while Jeff continues to do his very best to tune our old friend at the proper times of the year, there are several mechanical issues that prevent the organ from staying in tune after he leaves. Sometimes this is fairly obvious to the ear of the listener, but it becomes even more so if the organist forgets that those particular notes shouldn't be played at the same time as they are no longer in tune with each other. Finally, does anyone remember the last time the organ had a thorough cleaning? And that in no way reflects on Linda's wonderful custodial care and her constant vigil of maintaining the water bucket in the back of the organ during furnace season. This type of cleaning must be done by a professional, as there is a wonderland of "organ stuff" in there. Just come up to the organ sometime and peek inside! It's "*a-maze-ing*"!

Following their visit to analyze the organ's status, Combs Organs Specialists submitted their findings to the Council. I have highlighted as follows:

- ✦ several notes intermittently won't play due to wind (air supply) leaks in some of the extensive lead tubing (pipes)
- ✦ dead notes occur due to worn out leather pouches that open and close the pipe valves; replacement needed particularly for the pedal and low 12 notes of the Swell (upper manual) Viola Diapason
- ✦ several issues causing problems with individual pipes playing at the correct pitch including loose and even some missing tuning slides/pipe stoppers; tracker linkages and coupler mechanisms are out of adjustment; loose linkages due to worn out leather nuts on the linkages
- ✦ some large wind (air supply) lines are cracked and have been temporarily repaired with metal duct tape; contributes to excessive wind noise and intonation (tuning) problems
- ✦ tuning access - some of the lower pipes inside the Swell (upper manual) box are almost impossible to reach when tuning
- ✦ the (internal) organ is very dirty

The degree to which the above problems affect the functioning of the organ vary from one note to the next. Some notes may not play at all and others continue to play correctly at this time. With loose tuning slides and stoppers, some notes will not stay in tune at all, while most are still capable of staying in tune.

Their recommendation for Phase 1 of repair work is to have a crew from Combs Organ Specialists plan to spend two days at Walsburg to repair anything that is currently a critical problem. This would include:

- replacing the worst few of the lead tubes (pipes)
- re-leathering pouches in offset chests which are currently causing dead notes or cyphers
- replacing worn out leather nuts that hold the trackers in their correct adjustment
- more adjusting of tracker linkages and couplers
- replacing or repairing tuning slides which will not stay in place
- replacing wind lines which are leaking excessively

During this time, they would also get a better idea of how hard it will be to reach some parts of the organ, analyze additional repair needs and the amount of time a more extensive rebuilding and cleaning would require. An estimate for Phase 2 of the project would then be offered. It is anticipated this will most likely be a substantial investment.

The Council has accepted the recommendation from Combs Organ Specialists to proceed with making the Phase 1 repairs at a cost of \$1,200, which includes labor. Our first fund raising event, the Walsburg Ice Cream Social held in September 2011, raised around \$1,200 for the organ restoration project. Wow - what a great start! Arrangements will be made with the Combs technicians to have the work completed soon after the first of the year.

Our pipe organ has provided a lot of music ministry since 1921, and we have wonderful memories of those who have shared their God-given talent through their touch on its keys. God continues to use this beautiful instrument to share His love, strengthen our faith, and refresh our souls. I hope you will join me in the excitement and gratitude of these steps being taken to renew and restore our old friend in the balcony. The preservation of this beautiful instrument is not only our investment in the future of the organ, but also an investment in the ministry of our church.

As you have opportunity, please keep this special project in mind. Contributions to the organ restoration fund provide a wonderful way to honor a special life event or a kindness someone has done. Stay tuned for more opportunities to be involved with this project, and if you have any ideas for fund raisers, I'll be glad to take "note". Thank you, everyone, for your prayers and your support of this special project and our continued music ministry!

In faith and fellowship,
Rhonda Baer

Life *together*

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