

Life together

Olsburg-Walsburg Lutheran Parish

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Next newsletter items and articles will be due April 27.

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The Power of the Greatest Story Ever Told

Standing at the bedside of one who is about to die is probably one of the most powerful experiences in the work of a pastoral leader. It is during these times that the shroud of illusion is lifted and truth is revealed. It happens through the person passing on, through the relationships of the family members, and is seen in the response of the community. How all of those people believe about life, death, promise and The Story is revealed. It is Holy Ground where there is a very fine line between the life we experience daily and eternal life. It might be one of the last places in our lives where we truly understand what it means to both fear and love God because this time and space of finality is filled with the opportunity to experience both fear and love in visceral ways. It can be a cataclysmic collusion of fear, grief, hope, hopelessness, loneliness, relief, anger, peace, love...and exhaustion from being caught up in the flow of emotion.

Imagine adding danger, political peril, public humiliation and religious rebellion to that mix listed above. Imagine the person passing on is the one person in whom you have placed all of your hope, trust, faith and future, and now that person has been ripped away from you. The sense of injustice is overwhelming...

But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared. They found the stone

rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in, they did not find the body. Luke 24:1-3

While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, 'Peace be with you.' Luke 24:36

Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, 'Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are my witnesses of these things.' Luke 24:45-48

How does this story change our experience of death? I would never say that this story takes away the grief of death, but it plants hope in the midst of the sorrow. I think that is where the word, "bitter sweet" is fitting. In death, sorrow is undeniable...and the promise is unmistakable. Jesus is risen from the dead so we understand our own deaths differently. Our journey on earth is ending, but our journey of eternal life is just beginning and for that we give thanks and praise.

Better yet, how does this story change our experience of life? How are our lives different when we believe and live in this promise? Maybe the little deaths we experience everyday – the atrophy of our bodies; harsh words exchanged

Continued on next page

in anger; loss of a relationship, job or dream - maybe those little deaths have less sting. Maybe the promise of the risen Savior is revealed even in those smaller yet significant events that feel a little like death. A little truth is revealed in each of these opportunities. In what or in whom do we put our trust? What is our witness when things get rough? Is God's story weaved in and through our stories?

I recently connected with several family members and like most families, we did a lot of storytelling about what we remember about people and events through the past years. As the youngest sibling on both sides of the family, I relish these times. We laugh a lot and then space is available to share the hard parts of the journey: the loss of a husband to cancer, the loss of a son / brother to ALS, the illness of a significant other, and the fear of aging. Inevitably, the promise of God's guidance, courage and hope is acknowledged through one of two phrases: "I couldn't have done it on my own...I don't know how people who don't have faith do it."

I have come to believe that the business of the church is important for the sake of order. We need to have our ducks in a row so that we can gather together and pay attention to the work of faith that matters deeply as a collective witness to the community. There is a passive witness to the local community that is known simply from the glimpses that people outside the gathered community see or hear, and it is acknowledged like this: "I hear the Lutherans are _____." The blank varies depending on the relationships and experiences of the hearer. Skepticism creeps in when the witness is inconsistent with the story of promise. Skepticism breeds comments of truth that reveal the brokenness of the journey: "If that is what it means to be a Christian, you can have it."

I believe that the hardest part of the journey is how it is that I dwell with God's promise and command to love others each and every day. I can will myself to do all sorts of acts of service but that does not involve a whole lot of trust and love. When I think about trusting God in all things and loving people I don't like so much - now, there is the meat

and potatoes of the journey of faith. Our relationships often become our biggest stumbling block to joy. Going to worship every Sunday is actually the easy part. God is in our faces with the command and the promise. In an orderly fashion, we think and experience faith. It is when we come face to face with someone we don't like in the grocery store, restaurant or gas station - what do we do? What is our witness in those situations? Is our story one of the gore of human brokenness, injustice about changes and the heat of the battle? Or is our story one of resurrection victory - courage, hope, faith and love? God is in it all, but who is taking that main stage in the story? Who is the subject - God or us?

At the bedside of one dying, a pastoral leader is merely an instrument through which God's Word proclaims hope, love, faith and promise. This is an experience of standing at the edge of eternity, where hospital and nursing home rooms are turned into prayer chapels. All time is suspended. Nothing in the physical room changes, but the power of God transforms those who are present so that hope is revealed and the promise is proclaimed. Self consciousness fades and the community gathers in a circle to hold hands for prayer, to share the sacraments, to listen, to wait, to cry and to hug, to be present to the Holy Spirit. This is God's Church at its best. This is an experience that shapes a witness of the resurrection. Most people don't come out of these types of experiences without something to say. Maybe this how the women felt when they left the tomb of Jesus to tell others. They didn't dwell on the injustice of death but rather proclaimed the resurrection life that was offered to all. Now, that is worth talking about!

April birthdays and anniversaries

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

Birthdays

- 7 Roger Bohnenblust (W)
Travis Hageman (W)
Jackie Frintrup (O)
- 8 Irene Johnson (O)
Roger Sundgren (W)
- 9 Aneta Hagenmaier (W)
- 10 Jennifer Halsted (W)
- 11 Kelsey Nelson (W)
Christopher Hubbard (O)
- 13 Brian Johnson (O)
- 15 June Johnson (W)

- 17 Tristin Kraemer (W)
- 19 Russell Peterson (W)
- 20 Trenton Hargrave (W)
- 22 Fern Johnson (W)
Alan Peterson (W)
- 25 Haley Arellano (W)
- 26 Doug Kraemer (W)
- 28 Kevin Burklund (O)
Kirby Burklund (O)
Jacob Nelson (O)
Susan Adams (O)
Emma Bohnenblust (W)
Rob Scofield (W)

- 3 Zachary Holt (O)
- 8 Bryon Nelson (O)
Crystal Strauss (W)

Anniversaries:

- 2 Vern and Kim Bulk (W)
- 11 Kevin and Barbara Burklund (O)
- 18 Ray and Jennifer Miller (W)
- 20 Eldon and Beverly Sundgren (W)
- 21 Steve and Peggy Johnson (O)
Gary and Carla Hageman (W)
- 30 Jamie and Kristi Hageman (W)

May 1-7

- 2 Cindy Olson (W)
Jessa Kulp (W)

Members in service this month

Thank you to these members for their service to the parish during April.

Walsburg

Ushers: Kermit Sundgren, Forrest Johnson, Richard Strauss, Kenneth Neilson

Greeters: Kermit and Jessie Sundgren, Ray and Jenny Miller, Richard and Shirley Strauss

Communion Ushers: Gary Hargrave, Christopher Deetjen, Cindy Kulp, Carl Larson, Don Nelson

***Acolytes:** no list received in office

***Lay Assistants:** 4/1 Debbie Hagenmaier; 4/2 Good Friday; 4/4 Jennifer Kulp; 4/11 Gavin Hargrave; 4/28 Melissa Deetjen; 4/25 Doug Kraemer

Flowers for Church: Altar Committee.

Altar Committee: Lynne Berry, Alicia Scofield

Olsburg

Ushers: Brian Clifton, Tom Nelson, Mitch Adams

Communion Assistants: 4/1 Jim Nelson; 4/4 Kirby Burklund; 4/18 Joyce Cantrell

***Acolytes:** 4/1 Jacob Nelson; 4/4 Jonathan Nelson, Madison Vargo, Makayla Vargo; 4/11 Kyle Clifton; 4/18 Monique Sandquist; 4/25 Shane Adams

***Lay Assistants:** 4/1 Kyle Clifton; 4/4 Laura Clifton; 4/11 Lee Cantrell; 4/18 Luellen Kasselmann; 4/25 Monique Sandquist

Altar Committee: Coleen Esping, Joyce Cantrell

***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.**

SAVE THE DATE

Olsburg VBS will happen

June 21-25

6:00 – 8:30 PM

We need all kinds of youth helpers so block that week off of work!

Stay tuned. We might be in the Olsburg Parade!

Remember, there will be a training session before we do VBS so stay tuned for details!

Walsburg Council Highlights from February 2010 meeting

A special meeting of the Walsburg church council was held immediately following the congregational annual meeting on February 14. The purpose of the meeting was to elect council officers for the coming year. The following officers were elected:

President - Dennis Peterson
Vice President - Doug Kraemer
Secretary - Debbie Hagenmaier

Council also voted to transfer funds into the general account to pay financial obligations that would be due before the next council meeting on March 4, 2010.

Council Highlights

The Olsburg Lutheran Church Council met on Wednesday, February 28, 2010. Council President Jan Cooper called the meeting to order. Pastor Gordon Sandquist led the group in devotion and prayer.

Members present: Jan Cooper, Jim Nelson, Coleen Esping, Joyce Cantrell, Shari Holt, Laura Clifton, Kristi Fronce, Kirby Burkland, and Pastor Gordon Sandquist.

Reports

Secretary's Report: The minutes from the January meeting were reviewed. Pastor Gordy asked that a sentence be added stating he was attending seminary classes during the January meeting. It was also noted that Sonja was teaching confirmation during that meeting. Coleen moved to approve the minutes with the additions. Laura seconded. The minutes were approved.

Treasurer's Report: The treasurer's report was presented. Laura stated that a check for \$1025 was sent to the Haiti Disaster Fund. The money came from donations by church members and the matching donation from the church general fund. Kristi moved to approve. Jim seconded. The report was approved.

Pastor's Report:

- ✠ Pastor Gordy thanked the council for the Haiti monetary gift. He also informed the council that 81 health kits had been put together for Haiti. The Blue Valley schools assisted with assembling these kits. The gift kits will be sent to St. Paul and then on to Haiti.
- ✠ Pastor Gordy gave us an overview of the two by-laws approved by the Walsburg congregation during their annual meeting.

Committee Reports:

Parents as Teachers: The group has begun meeting in the church basement. A First Aid kit was purchased by the church to have available in case of emergency. We discussed purchasing another kit that will hang on the wall.

Property Committee: Kirby bought the wire required for the new speaker system. Glenn Axelton has suggested we perform a trial set-up so the congregation can hear how the system would sound. We discussed what funds would be used to pay for the new system. The quote from Glenn was for \$2,947. This was for the PA system itself. This does not include the cost of cable, which will be approximately \$200. The cost of a speaker will be an additional \$400. Joyce moved that we purchase

the system using money from the Palmer Mellgren fund to pay for it. This fund is designated for church facility improvements and upkeep. Shari seconded this motion. A decision was made to ask Glenn to set-up a trial system on March 21st. We will present it to the congregation for a vote that same day. Jan will talk to someone on the Memorial Committee to see if there are memorial funds available also.

Old Business

Calling Tree: Jan emailed a calling tree to the council members. This list will be used to notify church members when church services are canceled due to inclement weather.

Mower for Cemetery: Donnie Cobler has been asked to look for a new mower. We continued to discuss ways we can raise money for the mowing account. Joyce has prepared a letter to be sent to families who have loved ones buried in the cemetery. She will compile a list of names and addresses. We discussed the cost of a cemetery plot and if it would be reasonable to charge more for the plots. Discussion was held with no decision being made at this time.

New Business

Church Bulletins/Worship Folders: The subject of using a worship folder instead of a bulletin and hymnal was discussed. Pastor passed out sample worship folders. He had also asked the Music and Worship Committee for input. Pros and cons of using the worship folder were discussed. Many like the appearance of the bulletin with thought-provoking pictures and scripture on the front. The council is also concerned that assembling worship folders may cause a good deal of additional work for Shelly. It was decided we would discuss options with Walsburg. Jan will contact council chair, Dennis Peterson, and talk to him about the possibility of sharing a worship folder.

Mentors for Visitors: Discussion was held on having mentors to welcome and assist visitors who are new to our church. We will continue to consider this as a possibility in the future.

Nativity Scene: Kirby and Coleen each helped in taking down the Nativity Scene from in front of the church. We thanked them for their work.

Sunday Activities for Teens: We discussed possible ideas for getting teenage youth more involved on Sunday's. The discussion was tabled until a later date.

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Lenten Service Collections: Coleen moved that we allow Pastor Gordy to use the funds collected during these services at his discretion. Joyce seconded. The motion carried.

Partnership for Missional Church: Pastor Gordy let the group know there will be a gathering on March 18th. There will be further information in the church bulletin.

Camp Tomah Shinga: There will possibly be 10 kids interested in summer church camp. The council discussed supporting those youth interested in attending camp. Laura moved we contribute \$50 per youth to attend with a maximum of \$500 to be donated. Shari seconded. The motion carried.

Westar Donation: Jan received a \$750 donation from Westar Energy to be used at her discretion for the church. Jan would like to use the money toward the Love Gifts so it is kept within the community.

Kirby moved to adjourn the meeting. Kristi seconded. The motion carried. The meeting was adjourned with The Lord's Prayer.

The Walsburg Church Council met on March 4, 2010, at 7 p.m. at the church. Meeting highlights appear below. Minutes will be posted on the bulletin board in the narthex after they have been approved at the April meeting.

Approved January and February meeting minutes as corrected and presented, respectively.

- ✦ Received treasurer's report as presented. There was discussion about funds transferred to meet February financial obligations. These funds came from operating capital.
- ✦ Approved a motion for Walsburg to become a congregational member of Thrivent Choice. Due to changes, congregational membership is necessary in order for Walsburg to be eligible for Thrivent funds. Eligibility does not guarantee funds will be awarded. Beverly Sundgren has applied to be Walsburg's congregational advocate and primary contact, with Jill Reynard as the secondary contact. Future funds from Thrivent will continue to go to the Sunday school.
- ✦ Approved a motion to allow Gary Hargrave to burn the pasture and CRP rental ground.

Reports:

- ✦ **Pastor** – Confirmation is going well and there are plans to go to confirmation camp at Camp Tomah Shinga this summer. Ash Wednesday and midweek Lenten services have been well attended. There was discussion about visits to

shut-ins. The parish directory will be done in about a month.

- ✦ **Fellowship and Outreach Committee** –The committee sponsored a Souper Bowl lunch served to 43 people. They collected \$168 and 59 cans of food for the food pantry in Riley. Valentines were sent to shut-ins and nursing home residents. There will be a sign-up sheet for food for the Kansas Specialty Dog Service graduation in the spring.
- ✦ **Church Property Committee** – Proposal concerning sidewalk replacement has not been received.
- ✦ Discussed council voting procedures and sending the meeting agenda and minutes to council members prior to meetings. Information will be sent electronically to members with e-mail addresses.
- ✦ Discussed reviewing the Walsburg constitution, bylaws and mission statement at monthly council meetings. This exercise will be led by Pastor Gordon Sandquist beginning in April. Debbie Hagenmaier will develop an electronic version of the constitution, adding bylaws adopted at the annual meeting. A copy of these bylaws will be sent to the synod, and a copy of the constitution will be sent to each council member before the April meeting.
- ✦ Elected Jamie Hageman to fill the one-year council vacancy.
- ✦ Voted to send Lenten offerings to Shepherd's Crossing.
- ✦ Discussed benevolence options. The finance committee will meet to come up with recommendations to present to council at the April meeting.
- ✦ Discussed formation of a committee made up of council leaders and Walsburg members in response to a motion approved in January to explore congregational affiliation options. The constitutionality of council spearheading this committee was raised. Pastor Sandquist related that organization of such an effort needed to come from the congregation instead of the council.
- ✦ Discussed using a different Sunday bulletin format. Pastor Sandquist will present a sample at the next meeting.
- ✦ Appointed council representatives to congregational committees and established council committees for this year.
- ✦ Set Saturday, March 27 as the date for spring clean-up. Start time will be 9 a.m. Cleaning and other projects will be done inside and outside the church in preparation for Easter and the Women's Cluster Meeting on April 24.

The next meeting will be Wednesday, April 7, 2010, at 8 p.m. at the church.

Holy Week

Palm Sunday: March 28

9:00 AM Olsburg

11:00 AM Walsburg

Gather together to take your part in the great drama that unfolds as Jesus enters into Jerusalem for the final time, his pathway covered in palms. All children's are invited to gather at the back and parade around with palms (mom and dad need to go with the little ones so they can find their way).

Following Palm Sunday Worship:

Youth Ministry Drama Practice – 10 AM at Olsburg

Maundy Thursday – April 1

7:00 PM Olsburg

8:15 PM Walsburg

Jesus gathered together with his disciples for the Passover feast and during that meal, transformed the ritual and meaning of the everyday task of foot washing. Please gather for both music and drama to see this part of the story unfold. All who wish to come forward for the optional foot washing are encouraged to wear removable footwear. The community will be able to come forward twice: once for foot washing and once for communion.

Good Friday – April 2

7:00 PM Olsburg

8:15 PM Walsburg

Gather together for a solemn night of remembering the final days of the life of Jesus. Our service will be a service of light that ends in darkness with readings and music. The youth will present a short drama called, "Watch the Lamb."

Easter Sunday – April 4

6:30 and 11:00 AM Walsburg

9:00 AM Olsburg

An early morning sunrise service will happen outside (weather permitting) to celebrate the first rays of sunshine on a new day with a risen savior. Gather together as the people lead this short worship as a community. Then come back later for all the praise and thanksgiving of Easter Sunday with traditional worship with the community.

A special thanks to all people who served

during Holy Week. We appreciate all the ways you help to make worship wonderful during this demanding schedule. A special thanks goes to our tried and true musicians who have sore fingers by the end of the week. You all are amazing!

Adult Education

Olsburg Sunday Morning Bible Study

Olsburg Sunday Morning Bible Study will resume following Easter. We will be looking at another Book of Faith study on Exodus. We will continue the story of Genesis that began with Abraham and has left God's People as slaves in Egypt. Will God's promise prevail? Check it out on Sunday morning. There is always plenty of coffee and cookies!

Olsburg Monday Night Bible Study

The ladies participating in the Beth Moore Bible Study are heading into uncharted waters as they explore different studies. All are welcome to gather in the pastor's office at Olsburg during two Mondays a month. We have coffee and goodies for all people who come directly from work. We will gather on the following Mondays from 4:30 – 6:15 PM:

April 19

April 26

Walsburg S.A.L.T. (Stewards Attending Life Together)

All are welcome to gather during two Mondays a month to explore the book of Exodus in the Book of Faith Series. This continues the story that was started in the Genesis study. Bring your bible and your questions! Meet in memorial Hall from 7:00 – 8:30 PM on the following Monday Nights:

April 5

April 19

Youth Ministry

Save the Date!

All Area 4 Youth Gathering at Camp Tohma Shinga

Saturday, May 8

10:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Gather at camp with the area youth for high ropes, a BBQ, fun and games and worship! It is also Bryon Nelson's 18th (?) birthday so make sure you bring a wonderful (gag) gift for this soon to be adult!

Check in later for more details about a ride!

If there are some of you who want to spend the weekend at Camp Tohma Shinga, let Sonja or Tom know so we can reserve space and get some activities together. It's up to you!

Confirmation

Haiti Health Kits

Thank you to all at Walsburg, Olsburg and Waterville's St. Marks Church who donated money, time, supplies and encouragement! We sent 112 kits to St. Paul to be shipped to Haiti soon!



Confirmation Schedule:

No Confirmation during Holy Week

April Meeting Location: Walsburg

Wednesday, April 7th 7:00 – 8:15 PM

Lord's Prayer:

Forgiveness, Temptation and Trial, Deliverance

Wednesday, April 14th 7:00 – 8:15 PM *Article One*

Wednesday, April 21st 7:00 – 8:15 PM *Article Two*

Wednesday, April 28th 7:00 – 8:15 PM *Article Three*

DID YOU GET YOUR CAMP TOHMA SHINGA FORMS IN? THEY ARE DUE!!!!

CONTACT SONJA IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS!

Confirmation Camp will happen June 27 – July 2.

Life *together*

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