

The Master's Notes

August 2009

Lutheran Church of The Master

a Reconciling in Christ congregation

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John Rollefson – Pastor



FROM THE PASTOR

REFULGENCE

I don't pretend to know where it comes from or why, but every once in a while I'll wake up in the morning with an odd word on my mind. Once it was the word "tergiversation," which I don't think I'd ever used before. But there the word was (it means "apostasy" or "desertion of a cause") and I wasn't satisfied until I'd found a way to use it in the essay I was writing for publication on a text from the prophet Ezekiel. While it's a word that almost nobody knows without looking it up, it captured well a dimension of the meaning of the text I'd been struggling to articulate and being a new, odd word I expect, once explained, it's a word people won't quickly forget. Or at least I hope so.

One day last week I woke up to an extraordinarily bright and sunny day that gave even at 6:30 A.M. the promise of being a real scorcher—and indeed the radio soon confirmed that this was going to be a heat alert day. But the word that immediately came into my mind as I awakened was "refulgent," another far from everyday word that nonetheless captured my early morning impression of an extremely "shining," "radiant," "glowing," and even "resplendent" (all synonyms of "refulgent") day.

This newsletter article is my "swan song," meaning my final offering in this space. I don't know why but I'm moved to use this last opportunity to explain and maybe even defend a peculiarity of my preaching you may have wondered about. A crusty old critic of mine at whose death bed I sat in Milwaukee, sent me off to Ann Arbor nearly twenty years ago with a twinkle in his eye and the words, "Well, maybe they'll be able to understand those big words you use over in Ann Arbor." I knew what Wally meant and smiled at his words of farewell.

But, you see, I value words and take with utter seriousness my calling as preacher to preach the Word with the best words I can find. Oh, I know that people's attention spans aren't what they were because of television. I know that people have trouble listening to

the spoken word. I know that people like preachers to pretend they're preaching ad lib, without notes, off the top of their head, conversationally and informally, while strolling down the aisle rather than staying anchored in the pulpit. I know all that.

But for me words matter because the Word matters. I know that other pastors believe this as well and out of their own personality and gifts choose to express this reality in other ways than is my practice. It's one of the reasons I've come to enjoy writing as I do text studies for other pastors (in such books as Feasting on the Word and Homily Service, e.g.) in which I do my best to evoke by means of words fresh ideas and approaches to the Word we pastors are charged with preaching week in and week out, in and out of season.

I think I've quoted it somewhere before, but let me close with the words of the framed prayer that hangs in the east sacristy which I see each week before entering the chancel:

Lord God, Thou hast made me a pastor and teacher in the Church. Thou sees how unfit I am to administer rightly this great and responsible Office; and had I been without Thy aid and counsel I would surely have ruined it all long ago. Therefore do I invoke Thee. How gladly do I desire to yield and consecrate my heart and mouth to this ministry! I desire to teach the congregation. I, too desire ever to learn and to keep Thy Word my constant companion and to meditate there upon earnestly. Use me as Thy instrument in Thy service. Only do not Thou forsake me, for if I am left to myself, I will certainly bring it all to destruction. Amen.

Soli deo gloria! To the utter refulgence of God's Word!

Pastor John

FINANCIAL UPDATE

Regular offerings through the end of July, total \$74,742.72 or only 51.19% of the \$146,000 budgeted for giving in 2009. This is a serious shortfall as we are in these summer months—more than a \$10,423.95 deficit in giving.

Please be as regular and generous as you're able in your giving these months ahead to help us meet our ministry responsibilities.

SIMPLY GIVING LINK

Remember when you are away this summer, contributions may be made to Lutheran Church of The Master with the secure Electronic Giving service of Vanco Services and Thrivent for Lutherans, using the Simply Giving link on the church website. Go to

<http://lutheran.churchofthemaster.org>

and click on the CONTRIBUTE tab.

There is no cost to you for this program. You may donate to the church either in a one-time contribution or in an ongoing arrangement for regular offerings. You may also have your offerings debited directly from your checking or savings account or from your credit card - you choose the donation frequency (weekly or monthly) and the donation amount for each fund you wish to support. This program allows you to contribute even when you have to be away. Register by clicking on the Simply Giving – Give Now to communicate directly and securely with Vanco Services. If you have questions or need assistance, please contact the church office (310) 473-1055.

IN MEMORIAM

We are sad to announce that Lilli Lepp a long time member of Lutheran Church of the Master has passed away and is now at rest. She was 96 years old. The funeral service was held on Tuesday July 14th at Forest Lawn Hollywood Hills in the "Old North Church In lieu of flowers the family is requesting that a donation be made to California Lutheran University, 600 W. Olson Road # 1675, Thousand Oaks, CA 91360. Please put on your check: "Lepp Music Scholarship".

We are also saddened to report the passing of Phyllis Shapiro, Tina Appel's mother and good friend of Lutheran Church of The Master. Phyllis died Saturday, July 25, 2009. The service was held Wednesday at Hillside Memorial Park & Mortuary. The family asks that, in lieu of flowers, contributions be made to either Boy's Town, Omaha, Nebraska or to the World Wildlife Fund.

HELP WANTED

We have an opening for an additional Assisting Minister. The Assisting Ministers help the pastor during worship with the prayers and communion. If you feel that this is something you would be interested in doing, please talk to Pastor Rollefson or Barbara Browning after church.

LUTHERAN CAMPING 2009 UPDATES FROM OUR CAMPERS

From Austin and Jeremy:

Our week at El Camino Pines started out with us arriving to rain and hail at check in on Sunday. Lucky for us it only lasted that first day. The theme for the week was "Love to Serve". Each day they taught us the ways that God is teaching this to us:

Monday was Sent to serve: God sent his son to help us.

Tuesday was Save to serve: Jesus died on the cross to save us from evil.

Wednesday was Made to serve: Jesus and all of us are to serve one another.

Thursday was Help to serve: Jesus wants all people to help others that cannot do things alone. Feeding was a big part of this day in helping in God's way.

Friday was To serve: Work to do what you say you would do to help other people each day.

We spent at week at camp enjoying hiking, swimming, arts and crafts, rock climbing, and much more. The special part of Austin's week was collecting feathers and giving them out to his new friends that he would meet. We would like to thank the church for sending us to camp. We had a great time.

Austin Gackstetter and Jeremy Nickel

From Kaitlyn:

"If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited; but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death even death on a cross" (Philippians 2:1-8). This was the main verse of the 2009 ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans, Louisiana. The gathering theme was "Jesus Justice Jazz." It was all about following the way of weakness and humility that was modeled in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. I have spent the past week in the great big city of New Orleans, Louisiana, also known as the City of the Saints. We spent the whole week; all 37,000 Lutheran Youth and their chaperones and the volunteers learning about Jesus and what he does for us, the Justice that we need to bring to the world and the great music styling's of Jazz.

There were two memorable experiences during my trip to New Orleans and the first one occurred on Wednesday July 22, 2009. My group and I along with other groups from all over went on a 3-hour bus tour of Hurricane Katrina. I have to say that what ticks me off the most was the people that came up to me and questioned me about why I was going to New Orleans to help out after 4 years because they are doing ok. Wrong. Going around with our bus driver George who lost his house in Katrina was the saddest thing ever. Seeing all

(continued)

the houses that are still standing with water damage still in them, houses that have been abandoned, houses in piles that have not been cleaned up, the X's on the houses with the amount of people found in them, and the blue lines that showed where the water level was on the houses. There are so many families that do not have homes that are living in trailers and it is the saddest thing to see. The city of New Orleans still has a way to go but they are slowly getting back to the way they used to be but will not always be perfect again. The second thing that was memorable for me was our service day on Saturday July 25, 2009. My group and I were in the housing group and we got paired up with the East St. Tammy Habitat for Humanity in New Orleans. Being a part of such a fantastic organization was an incredible experience. What we got to do was build houses; well those that were over 18 years old and rest of us got to paint or waterproof the insulation underneath the house. We also got to meet Roger, one of the fellows who was moving into one of the houses. We did his landscaping and heard his story of what happened to him during Katrina. He and his wife were living in a part of New Orleans that got about 10ft of water. Before Katrina hit, his wife got ill and when they had to evacuate, his wife passed away. He moved from New Orleans to Atlanta, Georgia to El Paso, Texas until finally ending up in a trailer in his daughters' backyard. It was so inspiring to be able to help get someone back into their house.

Just imagine 37,000 Lutheran youth coming together to serve Jesus through service. A pretty amazing trip I would have to say. I am so thankful that I got the opportunity to be a part of this amazing servant hood as one of Jesus' followers. It was a trip of a lifetime and the memories will be with me forever. On Saturday night; for the last mass gathering, the Mayor of New Orleans, C. Ray Nagin, came and thanked us for coming out to help the city of New Orleans get back on their feet. Also, Bishop Mark Hanson, Presiding Bishop for the ELCA, got a letter from President Obama that he read to us thanking us for the great deal of service that we did in and for the city of New Orleans and how we are inspirations for the rest of the nation. We were then told on Sunday morning during Bishop Hanson's sermon that the Mayor of New Orleans said he would have loved to have gotten the whole city of New Orleans to come to the Superdome to come worship with us on Sunday morning. But he couldn't since it was a place of pain and suffering for the people. We actually took the time to bless the Superdome and to take away all of the pain and suffering from the place so that the people of New Orleans did not have to fear anymore. Even though I am back home here in California, the work does not end and neither does the hope. The hope that things will get better and are going to change, but it just takes time and we need to not lose that hope. We need to give hope to all those who are struggling and we need to make a difference. It just takes one person or thousands of people to make a difference and I believe we can with hope. I thank the whole congregation of Lutheran Church of The Master for letting me be able to go on this trip to come back and bring hope that things are going to get better in time like the 37,000 of us who brought hope to the city and people of New Orleans as well as the whole Nation.

Kaitlyn Nickel

WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

On the evening of Tuesday, the 25th of August, at 7:30 p.m., the Women's Bible Study will meet in the Kelton office. We will continue the study, **Mary: A Woman for All Seasons**, by Christa von Zychlin to be found on page 38 of the July/August issue of **Lutheran Woman Today** magazine. This month's study is titled Mary Among the Disciples and is based on John 19:26-27a: "When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, 'Woman, here is your son.' Then he said to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.'" (The Message). All are invited - the study reading also may be obtained in the office.

FLOWER CHART

August 2	Open
August 9	Janet Kaaya, in memory of her mother, Nkanya.
August 16	The Congregation, in honor of Pastor Rollefson's retirement.
August 23	Ron and Robin Nickel, in honor of their anniversary.
August 30	Open

OUR PRAYER LIST

Peggy Anderson
Tina Appel
Bill Ashton (cousin of Emily Jackson-Yano)
The Bernhardt Family (friends of Dave Shelton)
Bill and Marilyn Bierden
Dolores Brown (friend of Peggy Anderson)
Bill Busch (friend of Charles Peruchini)
Lois Bykiewiez (sister of Peggy Anderson)
The Campbell Family (friends of Dave Shelton)
Judith Cowie (aunt of Charles Peruchini)
Donna Crean
Nunya Dyez
Capt. Durwin Ellerman
June Foray Donovan (friend of Dave Shelton)
Phyllis Gibson
Chris Jackson (nephew of Emily Jackson-Yano)
Lois Jackscon (mother of Emily Jackson-Yano)
James King (father of Mary King)
Jonathan Kovac (brother of Deborah Warren)
Janet Peale Lambert (daughter of Billie Peale)
The Family and Friends of Lilli Lepp
Pastor Gary Marshall
Gisela Marx
Billie Peale
Marcy Pine
Alan O'Day (friend of Charles Peruchini)
Ofelia Rodriguez (colleague of Sarah Knickerbocker)
Eddi Rytterager (friend of the Nickel family)
Jackie Savage
The Family and Friends of Phyllis Shapiro
Lori Splinter
Mary Ann Wright (sister of Millie Rojas)
Frances Willms