

THE MONITOR

Messiah Evangelical Lutheran Church - Lindsborg, Kansas

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"You are the light of the world.

A city on a hill cannot be hidden." - Matthew 5:14

On January 30th, we embark on a five week journey through Jesus' Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) which contains some of the most beloved and well-known passages in the Bible. As with many other parts of the Bible, the exact purpose or meaning of the Sermon is in dispute. Some have thought it is mostly an interim ethic for the "short" interval between Christ's comings. Some have thought it a second order ethic for which extra holy people might strive and gain some extra points with God. Others argue that it is the kernel of a full-blown social ethic, the blueprint for Utopia. Luther's own thoughts on the Sermon are various, but among them is the idea that the ethic which Jesus describes is so radical that he or she who would strive for it can only despair and be driven to another source of righteousness, *i.e.* be driven to the cross.

One fruitful way which I have tried to look at the Sermon is as an exhortation to embrace the values of God's kingdom. This perspective includes at least the following:

- that there is a **contrast** between Jesus' values and much of what goes on in the world;
- that the Sermon assumes an **eschatological horizon**, *i.e.* that despite appearances, those who adopt the values of the kingdom are really the happy and blessed. It may not appear that God is blessing them, but in fact God is and will; and
- that Jesus is trying to build a **community**, the church, which embodies His values and is a sign for the rest of the world of His presence and grace.

In the Beatitudes (Mt 5:1-12), Jesus tips us off to some of His values and to the eschatological horizon. What He wants His community to value is (a) our relationship with God (*viz.* the kingdom of God [vv 3, 10]), seeing God [v 8], being called the children of God [v 9], Jesus [v 11], being like the prophets and receiving a heavenly reward [v 12]), and (b) our relationship with others (righteousness/justice [v 6], the earth [v 5], being comforted [v 4]).

The fact that we are promised these things in spite of our poverty of spirit, our sadness about the world and its state, our meekness, our persecution and exclusion from a world which

Adult Studies in February

Adult Sunday School

(11-11:45 am Sundays)

- 1. Adult Forum** - During February, Dr. Melody Steed will lead some presentations on "Sacred Music in the World Religions."
- 2. Under-the-Hill Group** - We view and discuss the **Nooma** (by Rod Bell) videos, but will be on hiatus during February. Led by Mary Bridges. Meets in the Family Room.
- 3. Social Statements** - We discuss ELCA social statements, but will be on hiatus during February. Coordinated by Kirsten Bruce. Meets in the basement "pole room."

A Bible study on **Ephesians** is held every other Sunday afternoon at 4:30 pm (see weekly schedule). You are welcome to join us! Venues change from week to week, so for more information **call Ken Sjogren (227-2432) or Bill Carlson (212-6015).**

A Bible study on **Genesis** meets 2nd and 4th Sundays at 6:15 pm for **GenXer's**, i.e. those born 1960-1985 (and others born thereabouts). Our next meeting will be February 13 at the Apels' (231 N. Main). For more information or to register your interest, communicate with Pastor Dean.

Phil Hett leads a Bible study during K.I.C.K. (6:30-7:30 pm) every Wednesday on J. Ellsworth Kalas' ***The Thirteen Apostles***.

Men meet every **Saturday morning** at 8:00 am for a Bible study. We are presently discussing the Gospel of **Luke**.

Women's circles meet the 4th Wednesday of each month

(con't from p. 1)

does not share our values, makes us happy and encourages us ("puts courage in us") to continue in the values of the kingdom. We are blessed (μακάριοι, *makarioi*) purely of God's grace through Jesus to be a part of this "contrast community."

What does all this mean for our community, called Messiah Evangelical Lutheran Church? It means some or all of the following:

- our priority ought to be our **relationship with God** and we prioritize that relationship by receiving God's grace and power in faith;
- part of that prioritizing includes **listening to/learning what God's values** are and being willing to adopt them as our own;
- insofar as our personal values conflict with God's, this will be a painful process. At the very least we may expect **rejection** by other communities ("the world") which have opposing values;
- ironically, the world which embodies other values is precisely that to which we are called. We are **called to witness to the world** another way of thinking and doing humanity and society;
- we will do that witnessing by word and action, but perhaps **primarily by relating to each other in ways that reflect kingdom values**. In our speech with each other, in how we prioritize time and resources, in our motivations to serve each other, we will say "yes" to God's grace and we will show the world the possibilities of God's grace in actual human community.

Join us in this grand experiment of being Jesus' people in Lindsborg! - Pastor Dean



First Corinthians 13 is a popular Scripture reading at wedding ceremonies. The so-called "love chapter" provides an extended definition of what Paul calls "the greatest" gift (verse 13)

Which of the following characteristics of love isn't found in 1 Corinthians 13?

- Love is patient.
- Love rejoices in truth.
- Love believes all things.
- Love is childlike.

Please join Harry Sandahl in celebrating his 80th birthday, Sunday, February 13, from 2:00-4:00 pm at the Bethany Home Activity Center, 321 N. Chestnut.

"MESSAGE FROM MARY"

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for justice, for they shall be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God. - Matthew 5:6-9

For many years I thought of these verses as beautiful literature. Tranquil, almost like a poem, pretty words filled with hope. But in 1992 after living, for a month, with the families of Hope Lutheran Church, an Arab congregation on the West Bank, I discovered a new way to look at these old words,

In his book, *We belong to the Land*, Father Elias Chacour, a Palestinian priest, has this to say: "Knowing Aramaic, the language of Jesus, has greatly enriched my understanding of His teachings. Because the Bible as we know it is a translation of a translation, we sometimes get a wrong impression. For example, we are accustomed to hearing the Beatitudes expressed passively.

"BLESSED' is a translation of the word MACARIOI, used in the Greek New Testament. However, when I look further back to Jesus' Aramaic, I find that the original word was ASHRAY, from the verb YASHAR. ASHRAY doesn't have a passive quality to it. Instead, it means 'to set yourself on the right way for the right goal; to turn around, repent; to become straight or righteous.' When I understand Jesus' words in the Aramaic, I translate the Beatitudes like this:

"Get up, go ahead, do something, move, you who are hungry and thirsty for righteousness, for you shall be filled. Get up, go ahead, do something, move, you who are peacemakers, for you shall be called children of God."

To me this reflects Jesus' words and teachings much more accurately. I can hear him saying, "Get your hands dirty to build a human society for human beings; otherwise, others will torture and murder the poor, the voiceless, and the powerless." Christianity is not passive but

active, energetic, alive, going beyond despair as illustrated by this story....

One day two bats fell into a pot of milk. The pessimistic bat said, "What can I do? Will I struggle and sink, and die so very tired? I will not die tired." She sank and drowned immediately. The optimistic bat said, "I will strive to the end, and at least they will say I tried everything." She struggled and struggled, trying to fly, until she fainted. Later she awakened and found herself resting safely on a big roll of butter. This is not giving in to despair, but going beyond despair.

"Get up, go ahead, do something, move," Jesus said to His disciples. Get up, go ahead, do something, move," Jesus says to each of us today. How are you going to use your hands to do God's Work?

**GRACE AND PEACE,
MARY E.**

"Come and Sing!"

The **Bethany Oratorio Society** would like to invite you to come sing in the annual Easter Week performance of Handel's *Messiah* and Bach's *St. Mathew's Passion*. This year marks the 130th year of the *Messiah* performance in Lindsborg, and everyone is encouraged to come be a part of this celebration year. Rehearsals start Sunday, February 13, at 3:00 pm, in Presser Hall at Bethany College. New singers are asked to come at 2:00 pm for a brief meeting with the choir director, Dr. Jeff Wall.

Previous experience or knowledge of the music is not required. Music is available for purchase at the rehearsals. Please contact the *Messiah* Coordinator at Bethany College at 785-227-3311 any weekday afternoon with any questions or needs you may have.

February 2011 Youth Events

Youth events will be held at Messiah Church this semester.

Lenten Devotionals – This year our youth will be writing a Lenten devotional for both congregations. All devotions are due February 6. Check with Joyce if you have questions.

Junior High Youth

Friday - Sunday, February 4-6, Youth Quake in Wichita for pre-registered youth. Meet at Messiah at 4:00 pm on Friday.

Sunday, February 13, Valentine Coffee at Bethany Home, all youth work from 1:00 - 3:00.

Sunday, February 27, Winter Jam in Wichita
Meet at the Methodist Church parking lot at 2:15 pm.
Bring \$10 for ticket and money for supper and snacks.

Senior High Youth

Friday, February 4, 5th quarter after the game at Salemsborg

Sunday, February 6, No Devotions and Games due to Super Bowl

Sunday, February 13, Valentine Coffee at Bethany Home, 1:00 - 3:00

Sunday, February 20, NYG Information Meetings
Bethany (10:00am) and Messiah (10:30am)

Sunday, February 20 7:00 p.m. - Devotions and Games

Sunday, February 27, Winter Jam in Wichita. Meet at the Methodist Church parking lot at 2:15pm. Bring \$10 for ticket & money for supper & snacks.

LeAnna DeWitt
227-3735
ldsewwhat@sbcglobal.net

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227-2201
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Luther on Mt 5:4, "Daily, whenever they [the Christians] look at the world, they must see and feel in their heart so much wickedness, arrogance, contempt, and blasphemy of God and His Word, so much sorrow and sadness, which the devil causes in both the spiritual and the secular realm."

"The church doesn't have a social strategy; the church is a social strategy... Christianity is an invitation to be part of an alien people who make a difference because they see something that cannot be otherwise seen without Christ." - S. Hauerwas and W. Willimon

"The church exists to set up in the world a new sign which is radically dissimilar to [the world's] own manner and which contradicts it in a way that is full of promise." Karl Barth

Thank yous

January 24, 2011

Greetings from your colleagues at Bethany College, and thank you for your recent gift. The support you provide is a blessing and the warmth with which you welcome and support our students is also much appreciated!

Warmest Regards,
Jayne Norlin

December 28, 2010

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your gift of \$877.25 which celebrates yet another opportunity to experience the love of God.

Yours in Christ,
David Schachle - Executive Director
Oaks Indian Mission, Oaks, OK.

		OT	Psalm	Epistle	Gospel	Gospel Theme
5 post Epiphany	Feb 6	Isaiah 58:1-12	112: 1-9	1 Cor 2:1-16	Matthew 5:13-20	Salt, light and the Law
6 post Epiphany	Feb 13	Deuteronomy 30:15-20	119: 1-8	1 Cor 3:1-9	Matthew 5:21-37	Murder, adultery, divorce
7 post Epiphany	Feb 20	Leviticus 19:1-2, 9-18	119: 33-40	1 Cor 3:10-23	Matthew 5:38-48	Love your enemies
8 post Epiphany	Feb 27	49:8-16a	131	1 Cor 4:1-5	Matthew 6:24-34	Don't worry about food and clothing
Transfiguration	Mar 6	Exodus 24:12-18	2	2 Peter 1:16-21	Matthew 17:1-9	
Ash Wed	Mar 9	Joel 2:1-2, 12-17	51: 1-17	2 Cor 5:20b-6:10	Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21	reformation of spiritual disciplines
1 Lent	Mar 13	Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7	32	Rom 5:12-19	Matthew 4:1-11	Temptations of Christ
2 Lent	Mar 20	Genesis 12:1-4a	121	Rom 4:1-5, 13-17	John 3:1-17	Jesus and Nicodemus
3 Lent	Mar 27	Exodus 17:1-7	95	Rom 5:1-11	John 4:5-42	Jesus and the Samaritan Woman
4 Lent	Apr 3	1 Samuel 16:1-13	23	Eph 5:8-14	John 9:1-41	Jesus and the Blind Man

Agreeing and Disagreeing in Love, Part Two

Over a year ago, our congregation decided to commit itself to being an "Agreeing and Disagreeing in Love" congregation. During the first quarter of 2011, we will review some of them in this column.

Among the principles to which we committed were "Go to the other in a spirit of humility; be quick to listen, be slow to judge and be willing to negotiate." For many "going to the other" is often one of the most difficult aspects of loving others through disagreements. We have a tendency to want to tell others how we might have been hurt by what someone else did or said and be supported in our hurt.

But going to the "offending" person first can resolve a lot of problems. Sometimes we may discover what we heard or observed was not the intention of the other person. Perhaps the word or action had been distorted through its iterations through the mouths of many. We can refine our understanding of what the other person said or did. And we can express our love for the other even if we might disagree with that person. When we hear something "bad" about another person, we can help the situation by encouraging the relevant parties to get together and talk. When that doesn't work there are other steps one can take, including mediation.

Five hundred years ago, Luther wrote this explanation of the 8th commandment, "We should fear and love God that we may not deceitfully belie, betray, slander, or defame our neighbor, but defend him, [think and] speak well of him, and put the best construction on everything."

That's good advice even today. - pastor Dean



Women's News

February 23, 2011 Circle Meetings

Martha Circle - 10:00 am Betty Peterson's

Hannah Circle - 7:00 pm at Gay Lindholm's

Mary-Ruth Circle - 7:00 pm at Marilyn Sjogren's

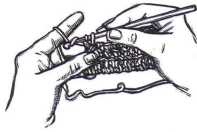
Hannah-Martha



Mary-Ruth Circles

Prayer Shawl Ministry

You are invited to join our prayer shawl ministry. We have a variety of patterns both crocheted and knitted. Joyce Englund is available to help beginners or anyone who might need assistance. We even have yarn you can use. We will be meeting the first and third Mondays of the month from 1:30-3:00 pm at the Swedish Country Inn. If you have questions, please contact Mary Bridges at 227.5747 or marybridges@mlc.kscoxmail.com. Open to all.



SCRAPBOOKING AND CRAFT NIGHT FRIDAY—FEBRUARY 18—6:00 pm to midnight

All women of Messiah and their guests are invited to join us for our monthly Scrapbooking and Craft Night. Our hours are 6:00 pm to midnight. At 6:30 pm we enjoy a light supper. Drinks are provided. You are asked to bring a snack to share. Scrapbooking tools are available for your use, including a Cricut. You simply need to bring your pictures, albums, paper, and embellishments. We have experienced scrapbookers available to help beginners. If you don't scrapbook, feel free to come and bring your mending or your favorite craft to work on.



FEEL FREE TO BRING A FRIEND!!!!

W.I.C.K.

WOMEN IN CHRIST'S KINGDOM

Women who are not currently involved in a circle or study group are invited to join us on Thursday, February 24, to explore ideas for fellowship and study. We will begin at 7:00 pm in the basement. We'll gather around conversation about a new women's group. Bring your ideas and be prepared to share them. Oh, yeah, we'll have a scrumptious dessert bar!!!

If you have questions, please contact:

Kim Hett at 212-6064 or hett_phillip@hotmail.com or

Lisa Youngquist at 212-6080 or jlyoungquist@cox.net

Anyway

People are often unreasonable, illogical and self-centered;
Forgive them anyway.

If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish ulterior motives;
Be kind anyway.

If you are honest, people may cheat you;
Be honest anyway.

If you find serenity and happiness, people may be jealous of you;
Be happy anyway.

The good you do today, people will often forget tomorrow;
Do good anyway.

Give the world the best you have, and it may never be enough;
Give the world the best you've got anyway.

You see, in the final analysis, it is between you and God;

It was never between you and them anyway.
—"The Paradoxical Commandments," Kent M. Keith

MELC's Guiding Principles

Jesus is Lord

Everyone is welcome

Love changes people

Everyone has gifts to offer

God sends us as servants to the world

We commit to grow in faith

Messiah Church Staff

Ministers: All members of Messiah

Office Manager: Sherry Peterson

Maintenance: Kenny Bridges

Main Custodians: Kenny Bridges, Ken Peterson

Assistant Custodian: Barb Malm

Pastor: Dean Apel

Parish Ministry Associate: Mary Bridges

Youth Directors: LeAnna DeWitt, Joyce Peterson

Children's Choirs: Ann Metcalfe

Childrens' Choir Accompanist: Catherine Washut