Pastor’s Ponderings

By the end of my “work day” on Sunday, May 3rd, I felt like the Cheshire Cat from *Alice in Wonderland*. (Do you remember him? He disappeared bit by bit until only his grin was left.) We celebrated both baptism and communion at St. John and at St. Stephen, and the joy I felt was almost more than I could contain!

Lutherans are *sacramental* Christians, a church of Word and Sacrament, believing that God is physically and spiritually present in water and word, wine and bread. I’ve been Lutheran most of my life, but I never realized how important the sacraments were to me until I left my first call in Green Bay after ten years as Pastor. In an interview for a position in the United Church of Christ, their committee head reminded me that when I presided at Holy Communion I’d have to say, “This bread is a memorial of Christ’s love” (or words to that effect).

I was amazed at how my entire being recoiled from that thought! Martin Luther taught that when Jesus said “This is my body,” he meant *this IS my body*. I could never serve communion as a “memorial meal.” Somehow the *incarnation*, the *becoming flesh* of Jesus, has become necessary to my faith. And one of my greatest joys is to serve the faith of others with both our sacraments.

This morning’s devotions brought me to Psalm 40, and these words express how I feel: *I waited patiently (or not!) for the Lord; he turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire (of depression and shame); he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand. He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God.*

(continued on next page)
Pastor’s Ponderings (continued)

Many will see and fear the Lord and put their trust in him. . . . I proclaim your saving acts in the great assembly; I do not seal my lips, Lord, as you know. I do not hide your righteousness in my heart; I speak of your faithfulness and your saving help. I do not conceal your love and your faithfulness from the great assembly. . . . May all who seek you rejoice and be glad in you; may those who long for your saving help always say, “The Lord is great!” (Ps 40:1-3, 9-10, 16). –Thanks be to God!

What a WONDERFUL surprise on a Monday morning! Pastor Gail comes over to church on Monday mornings (even though it’s supposed to be her “day off”) with 2 cups of coffee in hand, so she and Rose can do some “catching up” after the weekend & Sunday’s worship. This wonderful bulletin board was in place to greet her on a recent Monday morning.

Thanks Sunday School students and teachers! It was very touching, and much appreciated!

The LAST regular Sunday School class will be a PARTY, on May 17.

The Children’s Bell Choir is planning to play in the service on May 10th as part of our Mother’s Day Celebration. There will be bell practice for grades 3-5 on May 3rd.

There are 3 “Staying Connected” activities planned during the Summer;
Sunday, June 7—Father’s Day project,
Sunday, July 12—Outdoor games & crafts, and
Sunday, August 23—Final session of Summer Sunday School and BACKPACK BLESSING!
Bring your Backpacks and supplies to be blessed for the upcoming school year.

We’ve had the joy of witnessing two recent baptisms:

Ari Rose Baeseman (Parents: Mitchell & Cassandra Baeseman  Sponsors: Mollie & Tyler Berg and Dalton Lehman

Blessings!
A Fond Farewell . . .

We bid farewell to our friend, and brother Lorin “Curly” Schumacker with a celebration of his life and a luncheon together in the Church Fellowship Hall afterwards. Many thanks to all who helped with preparations and serving, as well as to all who joined us for this special time.

Annual Salad Supper
Wednesday, May 13th at 6pm
Honoring St. John’s Sunday School TEACHERS!
ALL are invited to this event. Our Sunday School teachers will be our honored guests for this evening of delicious food, warm fellowship, and fun as we show them our appreciation for their time and dedication in building into the lives of our children.

Invite guests, bring a salad, and join us for this fun evening!

Ecumenical Worship at Oak Street Park
Thursday, May 28 at 6:30pm. GREAT WAY to begin the carnival weekend. JOIN US!

Breakfast in the Park, (Oak Street Park)
May 30th, (During Edgar’s Carnival)
from 7am—11:30am.
Serving: ALL YOU CAN EAT pancakes, eggs with ham, sausage & cheese, applesauce, bars, milk, OJ, and coffee.
Cost: $7 Adults, $3 children 6-12, under 6 FREE! ALSO...There will be a BASKET RAFFLE!
Tickets: 1 ticket, $1 7 tickets, $5
15 tickets, $10 35 tickets, $20
JOIN US, COME HUNGRY!

Three of St. John’s students will be going to camp this Summer at Luther Park Bible Camp! Let’s remember to pray for them; that it might be a safe, fun time of personal/ faith growth and development. They are: Johnathon Nowacki, Garrison Treankler and Nathan Drabek.

Camp dates are: July 12—17th.

From the Church Mouse
Can mice be jealous? I think I’m jealous of Pastor Gail’s birds! She spends a lot of time watching them out her kitchen window. (Don’t ask how I know what she does in her kitchen.) And then she takes all these wonderful things out on her deck to feed the birds—she has all kinds of seeds and SUET, but she never offers anything to me! I feel really unfaired against!

But at least I can still eat at church. Rose and Pastor Gail still leave me crumbs when they have goodies in the office (although we all miss Gerald now that he’s working at the co-op again). I really wish we could have coffee hour again on Sundays!

Ah well, the long summer is coming, with Sunday School ending on May 17th.

Twink and I will get by somehow....
Women of the ELCA News

Women of the ELCA Purpose

As a community of women, created in the image of God, called to discipleship in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to grow in faith, affirm our gifts, support one another in our callings, engage in ministry and action, and promote healing and wholeness in the church, the society, and the world.

Every woman that is a member of St. John is a member of the women’s group. All are WELCOME and encouraged to participate in our activities. Each woman of St. John is assigned to a funeral group and is relied upon to help serve in the time of need.

The Women’s group met on Wednesday, May 6th, to make plans for the summer. We discussed the plans for the Appreciation Night for the Sunday School teachers which will be held on Wednesday, May 13th beginning at 6:30. It will be a salad supper. It is open to the whole congregation and guests, but you need to sign up so we know what the attendance will be. The women of the church are asked to bring a salad, the size to feed the number of people you are bringing.

The Women’s group is planning to sponsor a basket for the raffle at the Breakfast in the Park. The theme chosen is “Cleaning Supplies for the Kitchen”. The basket will be located in the narthex of the church and labeled Women of the ELCA. Any donations will be welcomed and appreciated.

There is a bassinet in the narthex which is to collect Baby Care Items for Lutheran World Relief. With all the garage sales now, you can get baby items that are in good condition and clean for the kits. We will be collecting these items through June. A list of items needed was placed in the mailboxes and there is also a list on the north bulletin board.

SAVE THE DATE! On October 17th, the Women will be hosting the Fall Retreat for the Chequamegon Conference. The featured speaker will be Pati Katchel. In the forenoon she will be presenting Katie Luther. There will be registration for this portion of the retreat which will include a luncheon. In the afternoon, Pati will present a program about quilts which will be open to the public with no registration. Please watch the bulletin boards for the information. What a dynamic speaker. She puts herself in character of the person she is presenting. On Friday night she will be presenting a program at Calvary Lutheran in Neillsville. Very moving!

Our next meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 9th. We are looking for more participation from the congregation. The time and date of the meeting was changed so more women could be involved. Please try to attend these meetings. The women do more things than just work in the kitchen. With more members we can do more things.
Reflections

It seems as though Summer days are on their way, just a little bit more of the messiness of Spring...there is certain delight in the mud, sprouting new life, planting and yes, even weeding.

The Bible study group met this past Wednesday. The day of the week was changed due to a funeral that many had wanted to attend. I always look forward to participating in the Bible study, but was unable to this time because of the necessary change in meeting day.

As I glanced through the study, which is found in the “gather” magazine each month, it looked like it was going to be a pertinent, exciting study. The discussion would center around the Church Transforming and Reforming as we look at the Acts, 1 Corinthians, and Romans. The point is made in the study that the Church (and our own personal self) is ALWAYS transforming and reforming.

The summarizing point was that growth in life and faith—even with the guidance of the Holy Spirit—can be affected by many external circumstances. Along with Moses in the Exodus and Paul in the early Christian mission, we are challenged to discern and do God’s will in the messiness of everyday life. We are challenged to go forward in hope, “and hope does not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us” (Romans 5:5).

Yup, life does get messy, and there can be tension along the way, but we can trust that God who is working to transform us, and His Church will work all things together for good and for His glory. We need to remember to extend grace to ourselves and to others (as God does) while the process continues...hmm, under construction—that makes me think of Summertime too, how ‘bout you?

We made an offer that was accepted on a new home for us, but we’re still waiting to find out when closing will be. Still WAITING....

Reminder—Keep bringing in those aluminum cans, let’s fill up the shed! Remember to bring them in PLASTIC BAGS...Thanks!

LAWN MOWING BIDS—St. John is still seeking bids for someone to mow the Cemetery lawn this Summer. If you’re interested, or you know of someone who is, PLEASE contact someone on the Cemetery Board; Gerald Borchardt, Ron Runge, or Leon Werner. Thank you!

A sign-up sheet is posted for volunteers to mow the Church & Parsonage lawns. The times are in 2-week increments, and mowing needs to be done only on an “as needed” basis. Of course the focus would be on Saturdays (before Sunday worship) and Fridays (before a scheduled wedding). The care of the church grounds makes the FIRST impression on all who may visit or even just drive by.
ECUMENICAL

EDGAR COMMUNITY WORSHIP IN THE PARK

Thursday, May 28th at 6:30pm
(During the Annual Edgar Fire Dept. Carnival Days)

Gather together with Family, Neighbors, Friends
And other community Congregations
To
Lift up our voices in praise!

You will find a warm welcome by the congregations of:

St. John Lutheran, ELCA
St. John the Baptist, Catholic
St. Stephen Lutheran, ELCA
Hope Lutheran, LCMC
Peace Lutheran, LCMC/LEPC
BREAKFAST IN THE PARK
ALL YOU CAN EAT
SAT. May 30, 7am—11:30am
OAK STREET PARK, EDGAR
During Edgar Fire Dept. Annual Carnival
Served by: St. John Lutheran Church ELCA
Cost: $7.00 adults, $3 age 6-12yrs, under 6 FREE!

SERVING:
Pancakes, eggs with ham, sausage & cheese, applesauce, bars, milk, OJ, coffee and lots of WARM fellowship and SMILES!

Come Hungry!

Raffle Tickets
1 Ticket: $1
7 Tickets: $5
15 Tickets: $10
35 Tickets: $20
May 2015

HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY!

See Inside for Articles:

Page 1  Pastor’s Ponderings,
Page 2  Pastor’s Ponderings (Concl.), Family News
Page 3  Fond Farewell, Coming Soon
      From the Church Mouse
Page 4  Women of the ELCA
Page 5  Reflections, Reminders
Page 6  Ecumenical Worship in the Park
Page 7  Breakfast in the Park

REMINDER: May calendars were placed in your mailboxes previously!

Please remember to check your bulletin for updates. If you would like to have us e-mail the Newsletter to you, please let us know.

Deadline for June Newsletter is May 24th.