

Missed the Boat?

(Pat's Pondering from the Pews)

Too Busy? Not hearing or using your listening skills for calls to board? Think you'll take it later? Not believing it will leave without you? You find not all your earthly friends are on board? You question whether it will hold all on board? (Peter and the fish) You wonder whether it will sink into the blackness of the deep? (Ted Dekker' novels of Black, Red, White, and Green) Or fearful that it might leak? (Moses) Is anyone throwing things of value overboard? (Jonah) Do you believe that there will be another ship to take later? Did you miss seeing Jesus in the ship waiting for you to board? How does this ship you're on honor God?

Think there is more time for you? (Noah) What will my neighbors and others think? (Evan Almighty)



What is the kind of boat you want to board? A Cruise ship as in the (Love Boat)? Or a military transport? (Big and

self contained and hold a small city of people) ? A compact and fast boat (catamaran) What is my ship made of? (skin, wood, aluminum, or steel)

Does it have an anchor? Is there a competent captain on board? Is there a navigator or charts to follow? Is it clean? Will my traveling companions be different? Will there be entertainment or things to do? Can it weather the storms?



Boats can be a metaphor for churches. Are churches any different? Some are big, some small and others medium in size. The average number of people in a small church is 50 or less; in a medium size it is 51 to 300 people; and a large church has between 301 to 2000 , with the mega churches having 2000 plus members attending on a regular basis.



On a survey done by George Barna (a researcher of faith groups) , some reasons churches get to a plateau of members and don't seem to go

beyond that is: members expect the pastor to be the main caretaker (being part of everything in church), leaders lack clear mission (answers the why we exist) , vision (answers what we do) , and strategy's (answers how we do ministry)." He also lists that: "True leaders aren't or permitted to lead (not necessarily those that are on councils or boards) , volunteers are not empowered, council's or boards micromanage, too many meetings, too many events and programs that lead nowhere instead of focusing on one or two and do them well."

Consider what Carey Nieuwhof , a Canadian pastor who also studied law, has to say about why churches do not grow; "they are in conflict, people are often in love with the past rather than in love for the future, people are not awesome to be around, as many are fake, judgmental, hypocritical, angry, narrow minded, or unthinking, folks are focused on self, they think the culture is the enemy and expect non-Christians to act Christ like, they fear to take a risk, seem unable to make decisions, they talk more than act, many don't think they are wrong, and they are more focused on growth than on God."

As long as we remember that God is the designer of our ship, keep Jesus at the helm, the Holy Spirit as our navigator and use our Bibles as our guide, we won't miss the boat, unless of course one does not want to board and sail into the deep waters of faith. Let's all pull up the anchor that has kept us moored so long. Here we go!!!!

ALL ABOARD!!!!!!
WITH GOD ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE

POETRY IN MOTION

April is National Poetry Month and at the invitation last month we received several great poems written by members of Grace. A few wished to remain anonymous. I do hope you all enjoy the profound as well as the lighter side of our poets.

Inspired by John 1:1-4, one of our in house poets, Cheryl Johnson writes:

THE WORD NEEDS NO EARS

In the beginning was the Word.
No human ear had ever heard.
Speaking out with voices three,
Our holy, sacred Trinity.

Father, Son and Spirit one,
Separate, but together spun.
Creator, Savior, Giving Life,
Called forth a planet, man and wife.

All living creatures, water and earth,
Came into being, when the heavens gave birth.
The Word needs no ears, but gave them so we might,
Hear it and share it as people of light.



THE SONG OF SPRING

Spring arises with surprises.
Flower petals bloom.
Drapes unfurl and fresh air swirls,
Filling up the room.
Butterflies in big blue skies.
The birdsong softly calls.
Repeats the story of God's glory-
saving grace for all.
cc:: Cheryl Johnson

THE JOKE

*I had to laugh with God today.
We both had shared a joke.
We laughed so hard, I had to say,
It almost made me choke.
With morning dawn still dim,
my day I would begin.
I told Him that I loved Him,
and never more would sin.
-Anon-*

God Is Enough

What seems hopeless
And bare of fulfillment
Stop—and think
God is enough

When weak in the body
And in need of healing
Stop and think
God is enough

When family and friends
Are unable to suffice
Stop and think
God is enough

When fear and worry
Start to take control
Stop—and think
God is enough

When praying to God
In the Spirit of worship
Stop—think
Thank God and know
He is enough
cc: Dorothy Bettencourt



The Calling

The angels were silent in skies above
While the sheep and cattle were lowing below
Watching the child growing up so slow
All of a sudden, there came a great shout

The angels above gave a call to earth's delight
Time had come for the child to work
Where are the ones who wished to be free
Of sin and shame--oh where can they be

Hidden among the rocks and clefts
Waiting for what, was anyone's guess
Then the angels announced the arrival of Him
Who wanted to save all from shame and sin

All trees and mountains shouted with joy
When they heard that the Savior was near as could be
The people then came out by the millions I'm told
With longing and joy they were so bold

Then the angles in the heavens above
Sang with voices uplifted in glee
And all that responded were saved from their fears
Enjoying the love that our Savior showered dear
Anon Member



Family Movie Time April 17 at 2:30pm

with popcorn and snackies to enjoy in the fellowship hall. Invite a neighbor or house guest to this fellowship event.

Shining the Light this month on:

Mr. Scott Telschow balances his mathematical engineering gifts with his creative side by playing piano. He prefers to play classical or jazz music and now includes show tunes in his practice times. He also loves his Tennis game! And is adept on our AV system for 2nd service.



Here we shine our light on Bill Rus caught fly fishing in the Colorado Rockies. He also has a remarkable voice as well as a love of all sports and facilitates a weekly bible study. I want to know where the water is in this pic????



On the Lighter side, this cartoon comes from Diane Pauli—Opps what a play on words here..



The light keeps shining brighter on our men folk. Don Bettencourt not only retired from PG&E but has retained his love of fishing for Stripers. This one comes in about 7 to 8 pounds. Don also is known not to have met a stranger. He is quite gifted at making all at ease.



Here is George James (Bear) Conormon dressed in his Chaplain's regalia for the Elks. Bear is also active in American Legion on behalf of our veterans. He is also excited about his upcoming grandparent status (July & it's a girl) Bear is the 11th child in family or 12 and hails from Kingston, NY.



Heard from ole friends of Grace: Pastor Russ & Jeanne Gordon, both retired now, Jeanne from teaching 6th graders for 33 yrs and Russ from 30 yrs as pastor. Russ is now counseling as a MFCC. Son Christopher returned from China and married last year and now lives in So Calif. Jeremy continues to live and work in San Francisco.

Doug & Joyce Howard, both retired and spending lots of time traveling throughout the country. They have 6 states left on their 'bucket' list to visit, They live in Richmond KY now.



This original poem was written and given to Jerry Hadley by her Sunday School teacher when she was a mere child. It has been printed on a round Myrtle wood plaque and hangs in Jerry's home it is timeless and she asked that it be passed on.

If you can be a girl and glory in it, because it is the place for you to fill. If you can be a lady every minute, yet take all sporting chances with a will, If you can hold your temper when you're ruffled, and force a smile when frowns are hovering near. Or keep the burning tongue of scandal muffled by never telling anything you hear.

If you can follow, styles and wear them sweetly, but let not what you spend outweigh your brain, If you can win some goal you've sought completely, yet know that broader reaches yet remain; If you can look on modern fads and fashions, and find them cool but never play the fool; If you can understand all deep emotions, and yet not put your life beneath their rule;

If you can dream, yet sit not idly longing, or play with ease yet find some work to do. If you can still have faith when doubts are thronging, and be the friend you'd have one be to you; if you can love with all the soul that's in you and let the world no selfish motive see. If nothing less than what is best can win you, You'll be the girl God meant for you to be. *E M Ryainerd*



From the Pen of Diane Pauli comes this jewel.

O God of earth and altar, in mercy hear our cry;
Our earthly rulers falter, our people drift and die;
The walls of gold entomb us, the worlds of scorn divide;
Take not thy Thunder from us, but take away our pride.

From all that terror teaches, from lies of pen and tongue;
from all the easy speeches that satisfy the throng;
from sale and profanation of honor and the word;
from sleep and from damnation, deliver us,
good God!

Nature explodes with newness of life!

Faithgirlz will focus on "Caterpillars to Butterflies" .



Shelia Prax writes: "Butterflies often appear in the spring and summer, and their former state as caterpillars provides great fodder for making heaven real. Caterpillars are sort of like us here on planet earth. Their eyes are not refined enough to process either a butterfly or a human being. Their brains are not big enough to translate that much information. However, that doesn't mean that butterflies and humans don't exist! People who say that death is the end and God doesn't exist are acting like caterpillars – believing the very limited amount that the human eye can see!"

According to their insightful leader, Shelia Prax, Faithgirlz (K through grade 12) will meet the 2nd Fri of April at 5:30pm and enjoy a light supper and lots of fellowship, along with exploring the good news that brings. Contact Shelia if you know of a young lady that is interested in this active group.

OUTREACH SUPPORT GROUPS

Widow's support group to meet in fellowship hall on April 7 at 1:30 pm . If you know of someone who can benefit after the death of a spouse, please contact Sharon Costello (through the office at 462-7795) for additional information.

12 Step group meets the 1st Thursday of each month at 7PM for those who in need of support during recovery. Call church office for contact information at 462-7795

These are closed groups so let us be mindful and respect their space!

You did it again!!! Success reigns !!!!!



Hadley for transporting food to our local food bank

We sent over **140 pounds of food** to the food bank the end of Feb, Let's see what the month of March and April bring---Can we do it? Of course we can-- -Grace abounds at Grace. Let's fill that cart again!!! Thanks to Dennis & Jerry

A Thought to Ponder

A church will start growing when we become outgrown, putting others first regardless of the cost to us.

Call Team

Call team reports they are continuing their pursuit in finding a pastor for Grace. They ask your prayer cover for them individually and collectively.



Your council at work in March

----- Guest, Tony Huerta gave presentation on new NorCal Christian Ministries- council to discuss next month.

--AV System to be upgraded by RespectTek ----

--Volunteers needed to attend synod convention in May

-----this year' council liaisons to be:

Stewardship: Ann Stolpe

Christian Ed: Lynn Edwards

Property: Bill Yoder

Worship & Music 8:30am Ann Stolpe & Joanne Lanz

10:30 am Roger Coate

Fellowship: Holly Conormon

Mutual Ministry: Sharon Costello

Social Action: Carol Mordhorst

--Sunday School teachers needed for Apr.

Carol M will teach 4 Sun in May

--Treasurers : giving down a bit in Feb.

The Lutheran Message

This small booklet comes to our congregation as well as most ELCA & LCMS congregations free of charge. It contains original poems, stories and articles written by and for Lutherans. It is a gem to read and savor.

Easter happenings

The Easter brunch was a complete success and we are so appreciative of the men who cooked, served and cleaned up.

All the children enjoyed their bounty they collected in their baskets and the look of delight on their faces was a joy to behold.

For those who missed this years brunch, we hope to see you all next year.

HE IS RISEN !!! Yes!!! Christ is risen indeed!

Celebrate Jesus, Celebrate, we are an Easter people all year long, every year.

