

LENT

*Father in heaven,
Hold not my sins up against me,
But hold me up against my sins,
So that the thought of them will remind me not of how I have offended Thee,
But of how Thou didst forgive.*

from *The Prayers of Kierkegaard*, music by Samuel Barber

I suppose I have learned many of the prayers I know because they were set to music. Much of the Scripture I remember stays with me because of the music Handel or Bach wrote for it. One particular joy I remember often is the first time I heard *The Prayers of Kierkegaard* by Samuel Barber.

It was in New Haven, many years ago, at a recital a friend of mine was giving to earn his Masters Degree in conducting. The piece requires a large chorus and orchestra, so is rarely performed on conducting recitals because it's too expensive to get so many musicians. I was so grateful to be there when it was performed.

The prayer quoted above forms the final movement of a three movement piece. Its effect on me upon first hearing was so powerful that I remember it still. The prayer by itself is powerful and it is one I say so often that I can still recite it by heart. But when you hear it with the music, it opens a new level of understanding.

I mention this because during Lent, when we seek more devotional time and hope to grow in our faith, it is good to know that there are many ways to do this. It seems to me that most people look for things to read. I often get asked to recommend some books that I have found helpful for this purpose.

But I rarely look for more reading to do during Lent. Instead I plan to spend more time listening, mostly to music. I am not suggesting that this is a better way to do things. I am saying that it is more helpful to me. It may be so for some of you as well if you try it.

I spend time every Lent with my beloved friend, *Messiah*, by Handel. It was the first hearing of this piece when I was a sophomore in college that opened up my appetite for Scripture. I was enthralled by the performance and I remember thinking: where did he get the words?

There are many ways to observe Lent by giving ourselves more time to contemplate our faith. I hope that all of us will avail ourselves of some of them. Remember that each Wednesday evening we will offer a pot luck supper followed by some study time. I will be teaching about our Worship traditions, particularly the Holy Week liturgies, from our new *Evangelical Worship* book.

Henry Morris, Pastor

**ALL ARTICLES FOR THE APRIL VOICE OF FAITH NEED TO BE IN THE OFFICE
BY MARCH 21ST**

Please keep the following people in your prayers:

Barbara Lewis Ed Larson Lucille Brooks
Karen Lamontagne-O'Brien Marlene Nixon Carrie Heuser-Spruill
Ivy Farinella Charlie O'Connell Gracie Peterson



MARCH:

01	Norman Banta	16	Jay Stolzenhaller
02	Kathy Peterson	19	Barry Freeto
04	Keith Sailer	20	Grace Jaworski
10	Nicole Hart	23	Michael Silva
	Gene Johnkoski, Jr.		Tamara Stolzenhaller
11	Stacy Cummings	24	Edwin Carlson
12	Clinton Chu	26	Earl Pellett
14	Alejandro Morales		Eleanor Warren
15	Brian Parkany	27	Robbie Johnkoski
			Carla Stolzenhaller

How to Have a Perfect Pastor

A recent survey has compiled all the qualities that people expect from the perfect pastor:

Results of a computerized survey indicated that the perfect pastor preaches exactly 12 minutes.

He frequently condemns sin but never upsets anyone.

He works from 8 a.m. until midnight and is also a janitor.

He makes \$60 a week, wears good clothes, buys good books, drives a good car, and gives about \$80 a week to the poor.

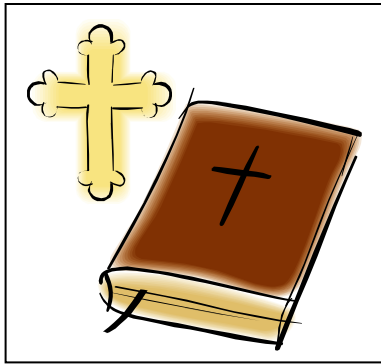
He is 28 years of age, but he's been preaching for 30 years. He is wonderfully gentle and handsome.

He gives himself completely but never gets too close to anyone to avoid criticism.

He speaks boldly on social issues, but must never become politically involved.

He has a burning desire to work with teenagers, but he spends all his time with senior citizens.

He makes 15 daily calls to parish families, visits shut-ins and the hospitalized, spends all his time evangelizing the unchurched, and is always in his office when needed.



Worship Lessons for March

March 4th – Lent 2

Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18

Psalm 27

Philippians 3:17 – 4:1

Luke 13:31-35

Entrance Hymn 546 When Morning Gilds the Skies

HOD #434 The Son of God, Our Christ

Recessional #535 Holy God, We Praise Your Name

March 11th – Lent 3

Isaiah 55:1-9

Psalm: 63

1 Corinthians 10:1-13

Luke 13:1-9

Entrance Hymn #542 Sing Praise to God, The Highest Good

HOD #760 For the Fruit of All Creation

Recessional #221 Let All Things Now Living

March 18th – Lent 4

Joshua 5:9-12

Psalm 32

2 Corinthians 5:16-21

Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

Entrance #518 Beautiful Savior

HOD #89 How Good Lord to Be Here

Recessional #654 Alleluia, Song of Gladness

March 25th – Lent 5

Isaiah 43:16-21

Psalm 126

Philippians 3:4b-14

John 12:1-8

Entrance #505 A Mighty Fortress Is Our God

HOD #325 I Want Jesus to Walk with Me

**The new *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* book
will be used beginning with Lent this year.**

Hymn numbers will refer to *ELW* beginning with Lent 1

Faith Council Structure:

COUNCIL PRESIDENT

Kent Tedford

DIVISION I VICE PRESIDENT

Hans DePold

DIVISION II VICE PRESIDENT

Annette Bolt

COUNCIL SECRETARY

Barbara Lewis

DIVISION I COMMITTEES

Worship and Music:

Merlin Christianson

Christian Education:

Denise Turner
Ursula Delemos

Youth:

Kent Tedford

Evangelism:

Susan DePold
Joyce Lamontagne

Social Ministry:

Donna Hubbs

Youth Deacons Eric Bolt - Alaina Tobin

DIVISION II COMMITTEES

Stewardship:

Joe Carlson

Finance:

Jim Bevins

Property:

Jay Stolzenhaller

Publicity:

Peter Carlson

At Your Service Schedule – March 2007 – 10:30 AM

<u>DATE</u>	<u>USHERS</u>	<u>GREETERS</u>	<u>LECTOR</u>	<u>COMMUNION ASSISTANTS</u>	<u>ACOLYTES</u>	<u>ALTAR GUILD</u>	<u>TELLERS</u>
March 4th 10:30 AM	Jay & Carla Stolzenhaller	Dennis Hubbs & Adell Kenyon	Kurt Christensen	Craig & Annette Bolt	Eric, John, Megan, David	Keryl Robinson	Jay Stolzenhaller & Brian Godwin
March 11 th 10:30 AM	Melissa Golden & Martha McKerley	Kathryn Neumeister & Kendra Dubiel	Donna Hubbs	Bruce Weston & Brian Godwin	Eric, John, Megan, David	Keryl Robinson	Bruce Weston & Keryl Robinson
March 18 th 10:30 AM	Bruce Weston & Charles Turner	Jennifer Carlson & Peter Carlson	Kent Tedford	Janina Johnkoski & Dennis Hubbs	Eric, John, Megan, David	Frida Nordgren	Kent Tedford & Cathy Kay
March 25 th 10:30 AM	Robbie Johnkoski & Janina Johnkoski	Hans & Susan DePold	Janet Holowczak	Caryn Furbush & Gene Johnkoski	Eric, John, Megan, David	Cathy Kay	Craig Bolt & Chuck Sack

LENTEN FELLOWSHIP AND STUDY AT FAITH

Wednesday evenings at 6 pm from February 28 to March 28

DINNER AT 6 FOLLOWED BY STUDY UNTIL 7:30

STUDY OF THE HOLY WEEK SERVICES LED BY PASTOR MORRIS

The Holy Week Services are unique. Once each year the Liturgies of Holy Week take us on a journey with Christ through the mysteries of redemption. As we enact these liturgies, we experience first hand our own participation in the death and resurrection of Christ.

Although these Services are ancient practices that date back to the very beginning of Christianity as a public religion, and are still observed in the 21st century in Christian churches all over the world, they have not been universally known among American Lutherans.

Evangelical Lutheran Worship, our new worship book which we will begin using this Lent, includes this cycle of Holy Week Services. Our Lenten program offers an opportunity to learn about the words and actions of the Services. We will explore where they came from and what they mean. Those who participate will be ready to observe Holy Week this year with a renewed understanding and deeper appreciation for the redemption they convey.

These ancient yet timely gestures and words have helped form the faith of millions of Christians for two thousand years. We will join their great company as we explore them during Lent and enact them during Holy Week.

Henry Morris, Pastor

Some History of Faith

Faith Lutheran Church was formally organized as a congregation on Palm Sunday, April 6, 1952. There were a total of fifty-eight charter members.

At the Annual Meeting in January 1985, the congregation voted to build our own stained glass windows. Fifteen members of Faith took stained glass lessons and laid the groundwork for building our church windows. On May 28, 1989 we dedicated the Revelation window which depicts the Four Horsemen of the apocalypse attacking the Trade Towers where they were struck on 9-11. In February 1990 the twenty-seventh stained glass window, the "Ezekiel" Window, was dedicated. This completed the Sanctuary, Narthex and the two Sacristies after four and the half years of work. A study of that period (1985-1990) done by the ELCA ranked Faith as the fourth fastest growing congregation in the ELCA in Connecticut and the eleventh fastest in New England.

In April 1991 work was begun in the breezeway to build twenty-one stained glass panels called the "Reformation Window". In September the Reformation Window was dedicated. In this 25'X10' stained glass window, three very similar faces of Christ appeared; one as part of a full figure of Christ, twenty-one feet long that resembles the Shroud of Turin. The three faces of Christ were not planned but showed up as a result of how the glass was cut and placed.

This year we plan to build two windows, one for our new entrance and one for our neighboring church, Crossroads Cathedral.

Spanish Flamenco Concert Sunday, March 25th at 4 PM.

Faith Lutheran Church will host the Impossible Dream, which will delight you with a Spanish flamenco community concert on Sunday, March 25, 2007 at 4:00 PM. This special talented guitar and violin duet performs popular and folkloric songs and dances from Mexico and other Latin American countries such as Brazil, Venezuela, Chile, and the Caribbean. A hallmark of their performance is the wonderful audience participation of singing, hand-clapping, and maraca-shaking. The concert is for people in our communities who love world classics such as Malaguena played in an energetic and uplifting musical presentation. Invite your friends. A free will offering to be taken to defray the costs of this community concert.

David Giardina, (Guitar, Mandolin) will play Flamenco guitar. David has a B.A. from St. Anselm College, Longy School of Music, and performs and teaches in the following genres: classical, Latin and standard jazz, blues and flamenco. With roots in folk-rock culture, he studied classical with Sharon Isbin and Philip Defremery, jazz with Sal Salvador and Bob Kobus and flamenco with Mario Escudero and Paco Pena (Spain). He also played in master classes for John Williams, Manuel Barrueco, Ben Verdery and Abel Carlevaro, and Oscar Ghiglia. He has been teaching on the faculties of Trinity, St. Joseph and Manchester Community Colleges, as well as privately. An award recipient member of the CT Commission on Culture and Tourism, Dave has performed extensively throughout the Northeast in schools, band shells, major festivals and clubs as a soloist and with ensembles he has formed such as Fiesta del Norte, Bamboleo, Goza, and the Typsy Gypsys. His compositions are featured on two releases by the CT Classical Guitar Society of which he is a founding, professional member. His latest release, Fiesta Grande, features music of Mexico.

Karina Hernandez, (violin, recorder, and vocalist) will sing and play the violin. Karina began studying the violin and recorder at age 8 at the National Institute of Music in Mexico City. She played in orchestras and sang in choruses throughout her education, including in the Orquesta de la Marina of Mexico for 2 years. After moving to the Washington D.C. area she played with Mariachi de las Americas when they performed for President Clinton. Now residing in Middletown, Karina has been a key member of Fiesta del Norte, and other ensembles in CT and has performed extensively throughout New England. She is an instructor of violin and recorder.

This concert performed by these two accomplished musicians will provide insights into the spirit, mystery and rich culture of our neighbors south of the border. The concert will be followed by a reception with refreshments where you may talk with the musical artists and your invited friends.

So cancel that trip to Mexico now and save a bundle.

We need volunteers:

- Ushers and greeters.
- Contributors of refreshments for the reception.
- Parking guides.

For further information see "Events" at web site: <http://www.faithlutheranct.org/>

Division 1 Evangelism, Worship and Music, Youth Group, and Kitchen Crew

Our Journey together this Holy Week

Holy Week is the Christian week from Palm Sunday through Holy Saturday. While each day has special traditions, the week's most elaborate services are during Triduum. Protestant Churches, as well as the Roman Catholic Church, hold the three days between Good Friday and Easter to be the holiest days of the calendar.

Palm Sunday - Just five days before he was crucified, Jesus was publicly welcomed into Jerusalem and the temple. People hailed him as king of the Jews.

Maundy Thursday - The night before Jesus was betrayed, he gathered all of his disciples together for the Last Supper. Because he loved them all so much and wanted to continue teaching them from God's perspective, he very humbly washed their feet.

On Good Friday, Jesus was betrayed, thrice denied by Peter, publicly tried, abandoned, humiliated, and crucified in agony. He died not for what he had done but to ransom mankind and to conquer death. The word 'tenebrae' is Latin for shadows. The Tenebrae service recreates the emotional aspects of the passion story. At the start, there are as many candles as there are readings, plus a white Christ candle. The readers go up one at a time, read their selections, and one of the candles is extinguished. Lighting is thus gradually reduced throughout the service until only the Christ candle remains. Then the first part of Psalm 22, which Jesus quoted on the cross, is read. Then the Christ candle is extinguished leaving us in near total darkness—and near total devastation. The service ends in abrupt silence, and we all leave without talking. Most people are at first surprised and do not fully understand or appreciate this service until the second time they attend one. If you are prepared for it, it could be the most moving service you will ever experience.

Holy Saturday - On Holy Saturday, together we will contemplate the mystery of the Christ's descent into the place of the dead where Christ defeats death, our ultimate enemy, from within. We will gather together and visit him at the tomb as He sleeps. We will not wait until Easter dawn when the tomb is already empty. No, together we will see the moment when the Light of the world is resurrected. Together we will witness the eternal rebirth of hope and of Christ living on in our hearts. This is of particular interest to us at Faith Lutheran Church because our Reformation Window seems to have Christ depicted at this very moment of resurrection. This Easter Vigil, following sundown on Saturday we begin our celebration of Jesus' resurrection.

Resurrection Sunday (Easter) - We will continue our celebration of joy of the physical resurrection of our Lord. Our worship together will be quite festive and will give each of us the opportunity to offer praise and thanksgiving to our Father who gave his Son so that we might live eternally with Him.

We have never before experienced the entire Holy Week together at Faith Lutheran Church. This is the first time many of us will experience the entire passion story in the emotional roller coaster ride of four days. When we make this journey together and feel the suspense, grief, and relief; Easter will be all the more precious to us. And if we can do it together the bonds of our Faith will be all the stronger.
Division 1 Worship and Music-HD

Kitchen Crew News

There is a lot of excitement in the kitchen these days! If you wonder where your money goes when you contribute to the basket at Coffee And – we'd like to tell you! We began a few years ago by using these donations to buy six round tables, and linen tablecloths for them and for the long tables. Next, we purchased some wonderful restaurant style catering equipment: a round chafing dish and two large rectangular warming pans, along with some large serving spoons and ladles. The German dinner for the choir from Dresden two years ago was the debut of our beautiful new flatware and coffee carafes. For a long time we have noticed that the white dishes, after many years of use, were beginning to show “wear and tear”; chips and cracks were becoming more prevalent! So a few weeks ago, we went down to the outlet stores in Westbrook and purchased 104 place settings of very pretty new dishes. We think you will really like them!

We thank you most sincerely for your generosity. We both consider Coffee And as part of our donation to the church. The money you so kindly contribute goes toward making the dinners, brunches, and special occasions at church more festive and attractive. Our “Kitchen Ministry” is part of the overall evangelism focus that is becoming more prevalent in all aspects of Faith. We both love working in the kitchen with all the cheerful people who help on a regular basis. It is truly a joyful experience! The fellowship and fun that comes from good friends and good food is so important, and truly a gift from Our Lord. We also love to see other individuals and groups taking charge in the kitchen, from the fabulous Youth Group Valentine’s Day Dinner, to the Easter breakfast, to Lenten potlucks, to Senior Lunches, to Men in Aprons. We hope that breaking bread together in the Parish Hall will always be a complementary addition to the spiritual fulfillment and sustenance we all receive through our worship services, Bible studies, and other devotions and ministries at Faith.

Love to all in Christ,
Hilda and Susan

Would you like to do Coffee-And?

The cottage meeting surveys indicated some interest in doing Coffee-And. Coffee-And is done by people who try to offer a reliable service almost every Sunday. People expect that. It falls under the Evangelism Committee in Division 1. The Coffee-And crew buys and donates all the food and refreshments themselves. All the proceeds guests put in the plate go to purchasing church kitchen equipment. Some people volunteer to do Coffee-And and they get to donate any proceeds to the ministry of their choice. Beth and Mike, Thrivent, and Men in Aprons recently did Coffee-And.

When there are concerts and special brunches Kitchen Crew members ask church members to help and to donate food. So if you wish to do Coffee-And or contribute to the March 25 concert reception please let Susan DePold know.

Division 1-HD

Coffee and on March 18th...

On March 18th following our church service, there will be a coffee and...in honor of **Eleanor Warren**. She is celebrating a special birthday on March 26th. We will be away with family that weekend. Please join us on the 18th. **Feel free to ask Eleanor how old she is, as she loves to tell everyone that!**

Thank you and God Bless,
Beth & Mike



SPRING CLEAN-UP

**Saturday, March 31, 2007
8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.**

All members of Faith are encouraged to spend one morning helping to care for our property. For sure we will be doing inside tasks and cleaning. If the weather is favorable we can also work outside. The planned date is the Saturday before Palm Sunday.

A sign-up list and additional details will be posted in the narthex in early March.
You can call Jay Stolzenhaller at 528-0165 if you have questions.

The Fellowship of the Windows of Faith

The next Stained Glass Committee Meeting will be March 25 at 3PM, one hour before the "Impossible Dream" Flamenco Concert. Faith Lutheran Church is where we go to build our impossible dreams like our own pipe organ and our own stained glass windows. And the near impossible happens at Faith like our "Revelation Window" that makes us wonder if the horsemen of the Apocalypse are out riding tonight.

But our "Reformation Window" is far more mysterious because it seems to be infused with the Resurrection. It has a full length image that is about 3.5 times the size of the "Resurrection" image of the Turin icon known as "The Shroud." And if that were not enough it has the same face replicated in two other places in the same window. What is the Holy Spirit trying to tell us? The probability that these two windows are random coincidences is extremely low. The Resurrection images were not seen until months after the panels were installed. The Revelation window was installed twelve years before 911.

We have two windows planned for 2007. One is a design for our Pentecostal neighbors at Crossroads Cathedral and the second is an "Ascension" window design we have yet to make for our new church entrance. At the last meeting on January... 15 people attended and we decided that we would open this project up to anyone who wanted to join our fellowship of the windows. So our next meeting will be two weeks before Easter (Resurrection) and we will invite the public. They can also stay for the concert. We will have on display some the tools we will use to build the new windows. We will also display any designs we have at that time for the two new windows. We will end with a tour where I will explain how the Revelation and Reformation windows were built and how we investigated what they are. I will also show the similarities in the Christ like faces. Then on Holy Saturday Pastor Morris will take us symbolically to the grave where we will experience the moment when the Light of life and Gods living word is resurrected.

NEVER, NEVER, NEVER GIVE UP!

These words will resonate with the people that were in attendance at our Breast Cancer Awareness night on January 31st. Our guest speaker, Dawn Moreau, talked fondly about how this hangs as a magnet on her sister's refrigerator. They were words that her sister, Grace insisted on living by. (Grace, however, lost her battle with breast cancer in October 2006 after a struggle over many years.) We prayed and knotted blankets for 9 women on the journey with breast cancer. Some in treatment, some in remission – also know as survivors. One woman on the journey, Kathy, was present for the evening. Grace was with us too.

And so we urge you to NEVER, NEVER, NEVER GIVE UP! No matter what is facing you – keep the faith, pray for the strength, find a way.

Nothing happens without a reason. As Caryn was searching for something red to wear on Friday, February 2 (Women's Heart Health Day) she reminded me by a quick email of this. I realized that I had selected a red shirt for the day without even remembering what the day was. With the Breast Cancer Awareness night and the timely reminder that February was Heart Health month I began to think about how our health is so important to being able to live out the mission that Christ has called each of us to carry out.

And so we humbly offer our health advice to all:

1. NEVER, NEVER, NEVER give up
2. Pray unceasingly for yourself and others
3. STOP SMOKING!
4. Ladies – do your breast checks at home and get your annual screenings. (Gentlemen – do your chest/breast checks as well. The incidence of breast cancer in men is growing!)
5. Attend church on a regular basis.
6. Eat a healthy, well-balanced diet allowing for a stray from the path on Sunday mornings during Coffee And.
7. STOP SMOKING! And get those around you to stop as well. Second hand smoke is so very dangerous.
8. Pray unceasingly!
9. Exercise for at least 30 minutes three or four times a week. Walking is very effective exercise. You just want to push your heart rate a bit – not go from the couch to a marathon in one leap!
10. STOP SMOKING! Your risk of all cancers goes down dramatically as soon as you quit.
11. Study the word of God – Adult Forum is conveniently offered right before church so you can do both in one trip!
12. Get regular check ups with your doctor.
13. Ladies – you can get a cardiac assessment at Saint Francis for no charge. Just call 1-877-STFRANCIS to schedule your appointment. Gentlemen – no excuse – your insurance will cover an assessment! Make sure all of you examine your risk factors as well as lifestyle factors that can affect your risk.
14. Pray unceasingly!
15. NEVER, NEVER, NEVER give up!

Linda Woodrow

Prayer Blanket Ministry

linda@prayerblankets.net

www.prayerblankets.net www.faithlutheranct.org

Linda 281-9074 Caryn 568-2309

What Do You Mean, “My Mother is Missing”?

Even though I knew in my heart of hearts what he meant I asked my brother that question anyway. He had made the phone call none of us ever wanted to receive.

You see, my mother has Alzheimer's disease. My father has done a great job of gauging her abilities and clarity. But Dad always wondered when he would have to take the car keys away. It never occurred to any of us the sign would be so drastic.

But she was gone – had been for hours. The city police, county sheriff and state police were all looking for her. The hours went by. My father, normally a pretty mellow guy, was having a hard time not showing frayed edges. He had two people at the house with him. Extra phones, extra cars, extra support.

My sister, having suffered two strokes already in her young life, was trapped at her home. She is not able to travel on such short notice. My brother rushed to get the train so he could catch a plane right away. And here I was – able to travel but being told by Dad – don't come – not yet.

I reached for the phone and asked for prayers. I talked to lots of people and they talked to lots of people. I talked to Pastor Morris. Someone talked to Pastor Christina. I even tried to call Pastor Joe – hey, power in prayer you know. Pull in all the big guns.

And then I was left to the silence, waiting. So I turned to what I know – fleece. Some pillows were waiting to be made so I began cutting, knotting and stuffing. My prayers poured into the fleece. The feel of the material in my fingers seemed to ground me. I began to feel less frantic – began to feel at peace.

The phone rang just as I finished a pillow. Dad was ecstatic. Mom was home – safe and sound.

Thank you to all who prayed. Thank you to all who made phone calls or sent emails. Thank you to all who have supported the Prayer Blanket Ministry and who, too, believe that fleece can be an instrument of God's work.

(Incidentally the pillow I was making is for Caryn Furbush – but don't tell her I told you. I want to surprise her with it!)

In Christ,

Linda Woodrow

God Loves You No Matter What...

Sermon by Ron Hart on Youth Sunday

God loves you no matter what. "*DEAL WITH IT!*" Well let's see if anyone paid attention last week during Pastor Morris' sermon. Jesus got up and read a passage and sat back down. The passage basically said that Jesus was there to free the oppressed and help the poor. Well this week in part 2 we just heard the passage about Jesus preaching to his hometown of Nazareth, much like I am now.

Except, I think this is East Hartford. He was praised because the people of Nazareth thought he was there to help them escape from the clutches of the Roman Empire. However during the coffee hour, so to say, Jesus told the people how God didn't always work for them. This in turn upset the people and almost led to his murder. Leading to a big question: Why doesn't God always work for us?

I believe I have found the answer. And it lies within 2 words. "Conflicting Prayers." Now having told you my answer let me show you two perfect examples from today's society. One of them, being from a movie none the less. In the movie *Bruce Almighty*, Bruce is granted the power of God for seven days. This works great for him, until the prayers start coming to him. Being lazy however, he decides to answer everyone's prayer with a "yes". Well what do you know, everyone prayed to win the lottery, and everyone won the lottery. "Yes, cool, sweet, I won the lotto. Oh so did everyone else...I guess I'm not going to get the \$40 million dollars. Great I only got about \$12."

A real world example is one we do every Sunday. We pray for our soldiers in the Middle East and around the world. The other people around the world are praying for their soldiers too. Everyday before his patrol, Lt. Smith gets down on his knees and prays to God for safety and protection. Hussein kneels on his prayer rug and prays for safety and protection. During the course of the day, both patrols meet each other in the market place. The most interesting thing about the fight is not the amount of casualties, but that these two men, were looking each straight in the eye. Eye to Eye. Gun barrel to Gun barrel. What does God do? Whose prayer does he answer?

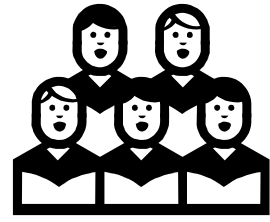
What does God do when someone stops believing in him, because they blame him for a tragedy? Let's look at my friend Justin for example: One day we were playing pool, talking about music and college and careers, while listening to my iPod when it got to *Where were you when the World Stopped Turning*, by Alan Jackson. Where in the song it says "I know Jesus and I talk to God. And I remember this from when I was young. Faith, Hope, and Love are some good things he gave us. And the Greatest is love." Well the conversation turned from Jim Morrison and the Doors to God. I remember Justin asked me "How could God punish the earth the way he did on 9/11?"

I don't know where it came from, but I told him to recall the story of Noah and God. And how God flooded the world to punish it. I then told him that as a promise that God would never punish the earth like that again he showed a rainbow. Then a few minutes later Justin told me realized that even though God doesn't always do things your way it's no reason to stop believing or trusting in him. The next song that came on was Don't Stop Believing, by Journey.

Where was I when my world stopped turning. The date was October 1, 2006; I just got home from a big camping trip. I saw my mother sitting at the table crying and I asked what was the matter. She told me... My grandmother had just passed away. I felt the spirit from the Hammonassetts trip that I was fired up over just vanish. I'd been praying to God for maybe two months at that point to help keep my grandmother strong and hopefully survive.

Although I was very upset with God I think I understood his reasoning for one of the very few times in my life. God answered my prayer, just not the way I wanted him to. I wanted my grandmother out of pain. **But still alive.** Yet instead he ended her time on this earth. It was a very mixed feeling, praising God for answering my prayer, but also a strong disappointment in not being able to save her.

God loves you no matter what. "What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us?" Romans 8: 31



Notes From the Balcony

During our worship service, our congregation and choir sing the psalm selected for that day. The psalms in our lectionary relate to the other lessons. Martin Luther regarded the psalms as a summary of all scripture. They are filled with emotion, covering just about every human need from adoration and praise to lament and deep distress.

Why do we sing them? Some think it is bothersome to have to sing, others find psalm singing another superfluous addition to our liturgy. Why don't we just read those words? It probably wouldn't take as long.

The psalms are poetry. If you examine them, you will find rhythm, ideas, and imagery that express thoughts more powerfully than a mere group of words. They are songs waiting for music to transport them.

Studies have shown that hearing a proclamation in song is more powerful and lasting than a spoken announcement. For example, most people prefer to hear a love song sung than to hear a poem read. Why is that? The music enhances the message. The song affects our emotions directly. The spoken word takes more time to process: our brain has to absorb the message and then decide how to react. With the addition of music, our brain receives additional clues. Music can be joyous or somber; it can depict triumph or sadness. When words and music join forces, they reinforce the Word.

Join us, as we share the Gospel through word and music to grow in faith.

Susan Lionberger