

Devotions - September 2-8, 2007
by Members of Our Saviour, Paynesville

Sunday, September 2
by Cathy Sanborn

Whoever trusts in the Lord is kept safe. Proverbs 29: 25

We have many things to be thankful for. The Lord gives us sight and sounds to use everyday of our lives. Every morning we are blessed, but don't always realize it. How often have I heard a complaint that the birds made too much noise, even before dawn. One complaint that makes no sense to me. When I hear the birds bringing in the mornings dawn, I am grateful that the Lord has brought me safely through the night. We have the idea that we have all the control over our lives. God does so much for us that we can't even begin to realize. He keeps on blessing us, and forgiving us each and every day. I believe in God and thank him. I can only pray for my sisters and brothers. For each family and their households. Peace, love and joy in their homes and lives. You never know when God is going to bless you! Good things happen when you least expect it.

Dear Lord, I thank you for this day. I thank you for being able to see and hear you. I'm blessed because YOU are forgiving and understanding. You do so much for me and keep on blessing me. Forgive me this and every day that was not pleasing to you. Amen.

Monday, September 3

by Sally Ellsworth

“Grandma, I’m really hungry,” my 3 year old granddaughter, Lynae, informed me at 3 o’clock in the morning. She had fallen asleep early and so did not have supper. So we went downstairs and shared cold chicken, milk, and a heart filled conversation. As I tucked her into bed tears filled my eyes. I wondered how many children went to bed hungry in the United States and in the world. According to a “Hunger in America Study,” in 2006, 25 million Americans were fed in food kitchens; 9 million were children and 3 million were senior citizens. I’m sure the number must exceed for those who were unable to go to these food kitchens. I could not imagine my children going hungry. Should we care? They are not our children, but are they? We are all brothers and sisters in Christ. In Matthew 5:32 it reads, “Then Jesus called his disciples unto him, and said, “I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint away.”

Local food pantries are in need of food and supplies and world relief organizations can use our help to feed those who are suffering from malnutrition. ***Do not*** turn your head. Next time you look into your child’s or grandchild’s eyes remember you could be looking into the eyes of a child who has no food. God gave me a valuable lesson that night taught by a child that humbled me.

Dear Heavenly Father give us a giving heart to donate to our local food pantry and to world wide missions. Thank you for the many blessings you give to us so that we may share with each other.” Revelation 7:16-17 gives us hope for the future. “They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light be on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them into living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”

Tuesday, September 4

by Cathy Sanborn

Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest. Mark 6:31

We the women of the WELCA in the next few months are going to see and hear a lot about finding rest. Our theme for the upcoming convention is based on finding some peace and quiet. We know what fatigue, burnout, stress can do to the best kinds of people of our churches. One would think that those who help others in Christian love wouldn't have stress or burnout. There's just too much to do, and not enough time which to do it all! Then there's the lack of money..... Compassion is stretched to the limit until the passion is wrung out of it. It's hard to keep the inner fire burning to go on. Have you felt it? I have, and stress has overcome me. Jesus knows how we feel, and knows what his church faces. Not the structure made of wood or brick, but the structure of the congregation.

Marriages gone bad, teen problems, drugs, alcohol to mention a few, are eroding the numbers of active Christians. Then there is the bickering and fussing over things that don't have anything to do with faith. Jesus went without sleep and food trying to take care of all of his people. He too had to stop, rest, and find a quiet place. He retreated and went to pray. Prayer will refresh us as we face our fatigue. God's compassion will never fail us, and he will always be with us. We can talk to him at anytime, day or night. His constant presence will refresh us to carry on. With his arm on my shoulder, and his love for me, I know that when I feel restored, I can go back into the world with renewed energy.

Dear Lord, give me the rest that I need to be restored to serve you more. Amen

Wednesday, September 5
by Alice Leno

“He has showed you, O man, what is good,
and what does the Lord require of you,
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?” Micah 6:8

When we started to use Evangelical Lutheran Worship (ELW), someone asked me, “Do you like the new hymnal?” My answer was, “I like most new hymnals because I love to learn.” I have been enjoying playing through all the hymns and learning new ones. If you’re looking for devotional material let me suggest you read hymns in our new ELW. Familiar hymns keep us in communion with the saints for they bring back memories of those gone before us whom we dearly loved. New hymns lead us to different paths of service. The ELW has many more categories of hymns in the table of contents than the LBW. The longest new one is the Justice and Peace section. It has twenty-four hymns and while some are familiar, many are new to our hymnal. Number 720 is one of my new favorites. Text and music are by David Haas who also has #728 in the Justice and Peace section; #500 in the Holy Communion section and #581 in the Vocation, Ministry section. I would suggest reading through all of his hymns as a devotion. They are all scripture based and when the music is added to the words, it completes the devotion. Another scripture based new hymn is #622 by Marty Haugen. The choir at First Lutheran (Ewen) is working on learning this new hymn. It has taken many weeks to get the right order of words, but we’re putting the scripture in our memories in the process.

Come! Live in the Light! Shine with the joy and the love of the Lord! We are called to be light for the kingdom, to live in the freedom of the city of God. We are called to act with justice, we are called to love tenderly, we are called to serve one another, to walk humbly with God. ELW #720.

Thursday, September 6

by Cathy Sanborn

Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances,
for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

People are always looking for the secret to happiness. Some think that it will come as a “windfall” of some kind or in their occupation. Others are looking for the inner joy they think will come from positive thinking alone. True happiness is not found in external possessions or in one's self. It is not even found in the love of other people. True peace and joy comes from the assurance that our Father sent his Son, Jesus Christ into the world to save us. No matter what we may face in this life, God loves us, and has prepared us eternal joy with him for all who believe in him. We can cope with our daily earthly problems through prayer. Stay in communication with our Lord at all times, and that will give us the joy that we truly want.

God of love, in you alone is the happiness I seek. Amen

Friday, September 7

by Kelsi Lakkala

“Above all else, *guard* your hearts for it affects everything you do.” Proverbs 4:23

There are many people who don't understand this verse in the Bible. Better yet, what the verse actually says. This verse has many important words in it. It is trying to tell you to not put anything before what your heart says. Your heart is like playing the piano. You have to lead with your thumb, and your thumb is your heart. If you do not protect or guard your thumb, then you may end up losing your place. When your thumb loses its place, then you have to start all over and think about where you left off and how you lost your place. If you do not know why you lost your place or where you left off, then you're going to have to start over.

It's like life. Most of the time when you make a mistake, you try and clear it up by doing something right, but at the same time, your heart is telling you that you cannot change what happened because once there, it never leaves. When you start over, you may finally realize what you did wrong, and want to go back to where you ended, but you push yourself to start from the beginning and make it through without any mistakes. Your heart allows you to do that. When you guard your heart, you are capable of starting from the beginning and doing better next time.

When people do something wrong, most ask for forgiveness, but me, I ask for my heart to lead me to do the right thing. If I feel that what I did was wrong, I don't listen to what my head is saying, because if I did that then I would be making a lot of mistakes in my future. I listen to what my heart has to say. One example for me would have to be when the court said they were going to terminate my mother's rights. At first, I was like maybe she'll actually realize that what she did was going to affect her. But when my biological father got in contact with me for the first time, I thought twice about it. I asked my heart what I should do. I thought about the things that could happen if I did allow them to terminate my mother's rights. She would lose her rights to ever see me again, I would not be able to see my brother and sisters and I would never get to go home. I spoke what my heart had to say at court, and they listened to me. My mother did not lose her parental rights. If I would not have listened to my heart, then my life could have been damaged.

My heart does affect everything I do, and if it is not guarded then I may end up making decisions that I could regret. Your heart is the number one thing in your life. It comes before everything else. Never take that for granted because you will someday realize that your heart does and always will affect everything you do in life above all else. You may think that you understand, but when you can look at something and realize that you didn't have to ask for forgiveness for something you did, but all you had to do was ask your heart, and it lead you to do the right thing, that is when you finally understand. Forgiveness and praying are not always the best, what is the best is being able to allow your heart to affect everything you do.

Saturday, September 8

by Cathy Sanborn

When Jesus spoke again to the people, He said, "I am the light of the world.
Whoever follows Me will never walk in darkness,
but will have the light of life." John 8:12

No matter how long you may have lived in your house or how often you have walked past the sofa leg in the light, when the lights go out, you will immediately find the sofa leg with your toe! Why does the house become a foreign place? Why do we panic if we can't find the light switch as we feel across the wall?

Once you find the light and turn it on, you suddenly find peace of mind. The darkness is still all around you, but you have that small glimmer of light to guide you safely.

Jesus compared Himself to light. He is the flashlight that reveals our pathway through the obstacles of life. He leads us through sin and darkness of this world to the final light of eternity. Jesus gave us light through his death on the cross one dark Friday. His light shines through us to guide others to the source of all light and life.

Hold Thou Thy cross before my closing eyes,
Shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies;
Heav'n's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.
(Abide with Me, by Henry F. Lyte)

Dear Lord, Shine through the darkness and point me to the light of salvation. Amen