

THE GOOD NEWS LETTER

of

Resurrection Lutheran Church & School
Newport News, VA

OCTOBER
2011

From the Pastor's Pen

For Your Sake He Became Poor

"For you know the grace of our LORD Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich." – 2 Corinthians 8:9

We recognize our desperate need for the grace of Jesus Christ when we confess our sins together at worship on Sundays and individually on a regular basis throughout every day of the week.

Do we recognize our desperate need to SPEND TIME re-focusing our lives on the grace of Jesus Christ?

Spending time is important, it is valuable and it really is expensive! Re-focusing our lives on the grace of Jesus Christ requires the study of God's Word – the Bible. We can not be fed by our parents' time in the Word; we can not be strengthened by God's Holy Spirit if we're expecting our church family to give us all our spiritual fuel for the week during one hour of worship every 7 days.

While we recognize the importance of getting our commitments and responsibilities lined up for work, for school, for sports, for town meetings, for local and national politics...do we place a higher premium, a HIGHER VALUE on our commitment to grow in our knowledge of God's Word every day?



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

From the Pastor's Pen	1
Our Lutheran School	4
Church Boards	5
Birthdays and Anniversaries	16

From the Pastor's Pen cont.

If we find ourselves saying "I can't lead a Bible Study...I'm not a scholar, I'm not a pastor or I just don't know the Bible well enough," then we need to spend more time every day in God's Word.

If we find ourselves saying "I can't BE in a Bible Study...I have no free nights, I have no time or I'm just so tired by the time the day is over," then we need to take an honest look at our priorities and our **DESPERATE** need to re-prioritize our lives.

Do we recognize our desperate need to SPEND TIME re-focusing our lives on the grace of Jesus Christ?

This is where the "rubber has to hit the road." This is where we need to hold one another accountable as brothers and sisters in Christ at Resurrection; this is where we need to grow up in our Christian faith!

Stewardship is all about asking the question "Is my heart towards God, is my attitude towards God like Cain? Or is my heart towards God; is my attitude towards God like Abel? Am I living to fulfill commitments I've made at work, school, sports, politics and everything else apart from God's Word OR am I making commitments to these things after I've committed time FIRST to being in God's Word daily with my family & weekly with my Christian family?

As your pastor, this is where "the Rubber hits the road," this is where I am called to hold you accountable. If you have not been in the Bible every day with your family, today is the day to start that commitment & remain faithful to that commitment.

If we are not in a Bible Study with other believers **then we are living an unacceptable life as a Christ-follower.**

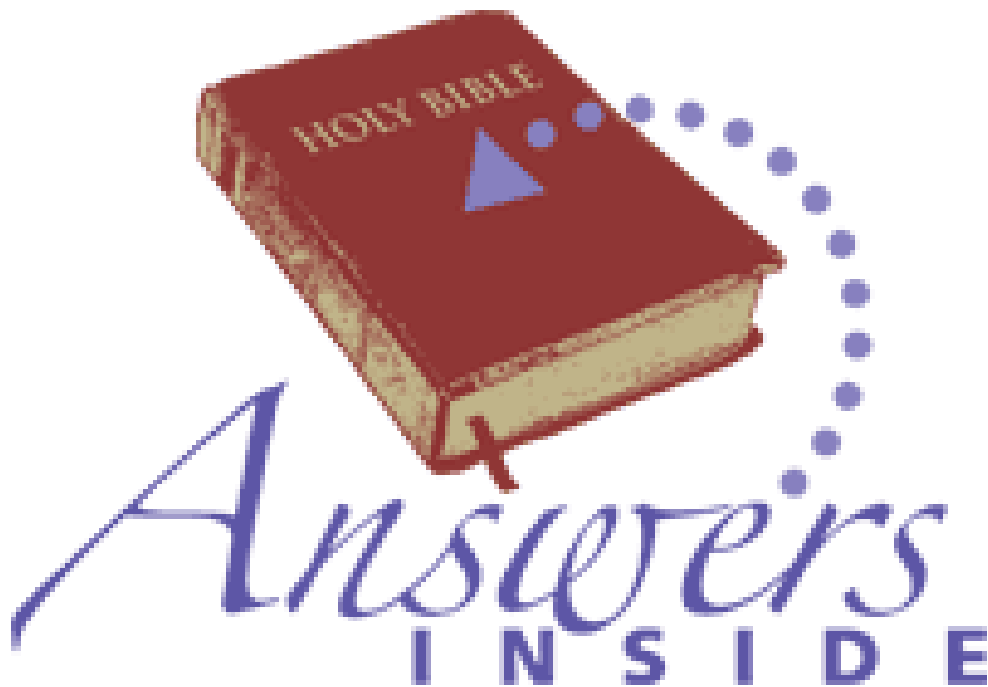
"(Jesus said) For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for soul?" – Matthew 16:26

From the Pastor's Pen cont.

Our daily commitments in our earthly journey are very real and very important. But making these commitments apart from Our Saving God is not healthy spiritually, physically, emotionally or psychologically.

Stewardship begins, continues and matures as our walking in God's Word, **READING** God's Word, **STUDYING** God's Word with other believers and **APPLYING** God's Word to our commitments as parents, spouses, students, athletes, employees, friends **AND** Christ-following world changers.

May we be those who listen when Jesus says "Let them who have ears hear!" May we be like Abel & not like Cain in our hearts toward God – in how we **SPEND TIME** with God, with one another in God's Word, in Jesus' Name, Amen!



Our Lutheran School

Principal's Ponderings:

Resurrection Lutheran School and Child Care began its' 10th year of ministry with an enrollment of 43 students. Phone calls and school tours continue to take place. Open enrollment takes place throughout the school year for Pre-School (ages 2 ½ thru 4), Kindergarten and First and Second Grades. We ask for your continued prayers as we reach out to our community through our Christ-centered, educational program.

This year we celebrate 45 years of teaching ministry with Mrs. Carol Baugham, our First and Second Grade teacher. Mrs. Baugham has been teaching for Resurrection Lutheran School since September 1, 2004. Mrs. Baugham graduated from Concordia College, St. Paul, Minnesota. She holds a B.A. Degree in Elementary Education. She has been in the teaching profession since 1966. She also attended Virginia State University, and VCU where she completed courses of study in the Teaching of Reading, Teaching of Elementary Science and various graduate courses. We rejoice with Carol as she celebrates 45 years of ministry to young children and their families.

The Scholastic Book Fair will be held October 30th through November 7th. The book fair will be held in the Fellowship Hall and will be open on Sundays as well as during regular school hours, Monday through Friday, during this time frame. Books for the holidays, for reading pleasure, entertainment and study will be offered for all age groups.

Watch for details about our family night out at Uno's restaurant on November 13th. Join us as we celebrate 10 years along with our school families.

Blessings!
Ann



Church Boards

Board of Fellowship



Sunday, November 6, 2011 is the date chosen to celebrate our church's 55th Anniversary. Dr. Jon Diefenthaler, our District President will serve as guest preacher in worship. Special music from our Sunday School students will be shared in church. A festive luncheon will follow the late service featuring the photos and stories of how God has moved and worked in and among the members of our church family. You won't want to miss this special celebration! Watch the bulletin in the weeks to come for further information.



Coffee Fellowship Hosts are needed for Sunday Mornings! Please sign up on the poster outside the sanctuary doors. Small groups, families, and individuals are all welcome to volunteer. Directions are provided or contact any Fellowship Board member for a tour of the kitchen.

Board of Youth Ministry

For Your Sake He Became Poor

“For you know the grace of our LORD Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich.” – 2 Corinthians 8:9

We recognize our desperate need for the grace of Jesus Christ when we confess our sins together at worship on Sundays and individually on a regular basis throughout every day of the week.

Do we recognize our desperate need to SPEND TIME re-focusing our lives on the grace of Jesus Christ?

Spending time is important, it is valuable and it really is expensive! Re-focusing our lives on the grace of Jesus Christ requires the study of God’s Word – the Bible. We can not be fed by our parents’ time in the Word; we can not be strengthened by God’s Holy Spirit if we’re expecting our church family to give us all our spiritual fuel for the week during one hour of worship every 7 days.

While we recognize the importance of getting our commitments and responsibilities lined up for work, for school, for sports, for town meetings, for local and national politics...do we place a higher premium, a **HIGHER VALUE** on our commitment to grow in our knowledge of God’s Word every day?

If we find ourselves saying “I can’t lead a Bible Study...I’m not a scholar, I’m not a pastor or I just don’t know the Bible well enough,” then we need to spend more time every day in God’s Word.

If we find ourselves saying “I can’t BE in a Bible Study...I have no free nights, I have no time or I’m just so tired by the time the day is over,” then we need to take an honest look at our priorities and our **DESPERATE** need to re-prioritize our lives.

Do we recognize our desperate need to SPEND TIME re-focusing our lives on the grace of Jesus Christ?

This is where the “rubber has to hit the road.” This is where we need to hold one another accountable as brothers and sisters in Christ at Resurrection; this is where we need to grow up in our Christian faith!

Stewardship is all about asking the question “Is my heart towards God, is my attitude towards God like Cain? Or is my heart towards God; is my attitude towards God like Abel? Am I living to fulfill commitments I’ve made at work, school, sports, politics and everything else apart from God’s Word OR am I making commitments to these things after I’ve committed time FIRST to being in God’s Word daily with my family & weekly with my Christian family?

As your pastor, this is where “the Rubber hits the road,” this is where I am called to hold you accountable. If you have not been in the Bible every day with your family, today is the day to start that commitment & remain faithful to that commitment.

Board of Youth Ministry cont.

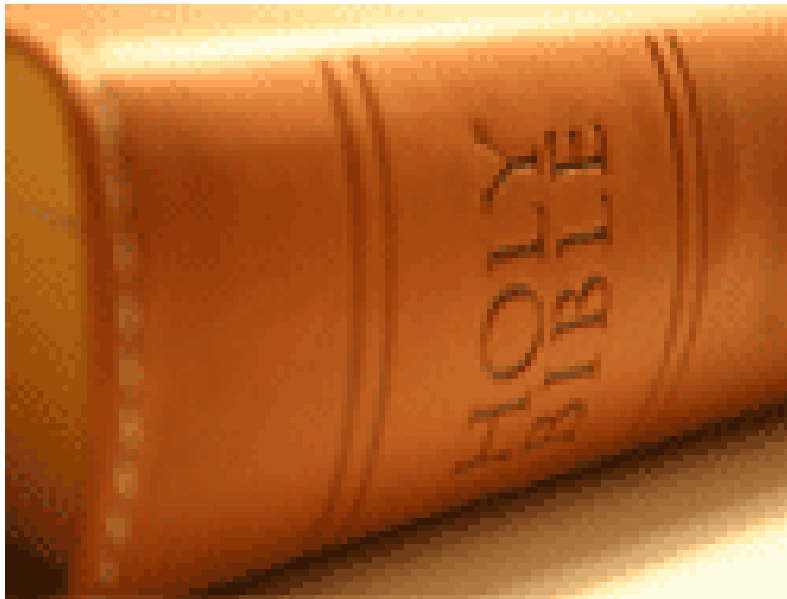
If we are not in a Bible Study with other believers **then we are living an unacceptable life as a Christ-follower.**

“(Jesus said) For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for soul?” – Matthew 16:26

Our daily commitments in our earthly journey are very real and very important. But making these commitments apart from Our Saving God is not healthy spiritually, physically, emotionally or psycologically.

Stewardship begins, continues and matures as our walking in God’s Word, **READING** God’s Word, **STUDYING** God’s Word with other believers and **APPLYING** God’s Word to our commitments as parents, spouses, students, athletes, employees, friends **AND** Christ-following world changers.

May we be those who listen when Jesus says “Let them who have ears hear!” May we be like Abel & not like Cain in our hearts toward God – in how we **SPEND TIME** with God, with one another in God’s Word, in Jesus’ Name, Amen!



Board of Youth Ministry cont.

Sr. High Youth 3 Month Calendar

October	2	6-8 pm	Bible Study	1. P. Ben 2. Nicole F.
	9	2:30-5:30 pm	Peninsula Rescue Mission	1. Nicole F. 2. Celia K.
	16	6-8 pm	Bible Study	1. P. Ben 2. Nicole F.
	TBA	Fri or Sat	Corn Maze in place of Hay Maze with Circuit Youth Groups	1. 2.
	TBA	TBA	Busch Gardens Hallowstream	1. 2.
	23		No Youth Group	
	30		No Youth Group	
November	6	6-8 pm	Bible Study	1. P. Ben 2. Nicole F.
	9	7-9 pm	Wednesday – PORT assistance at RLC	1. 2.
	13		No Youth Group	
	20	6-8 pm	Bible Study	1. P. Ben 2. Nicole F.
	27	TBA	Bowling Outing with Emmanuel & Hope	1. 2.
December	4	2:30 – 5:30 pm	Peninsula Rescue Mission	1. 2.
	4	6-8 pm	Bible Study	1. P. Ben 2. Nicole F.
	11	6-8 pm	Christmas Party	1. 2.
	18	6-8 pm	Bible Study	1. P. Ben 2. Nicole F.
	19	6-8 pm	Bible Study	P. Ben & Nicole F.
	25		No Youth Group	

Board of Youth Ministry cont.

Jr. High 3 Month Calendar

October	2	12:30 – 2:30 pm	Confirmation Class # 2	1. P. Ben 2. Retzlaffs 3. C. Kent
	9	2:30 – 5:30	Peninsula Rescue Mission	1. Nicole F. 2. Celia K
	16	12:30 – 2:30 pm	Confirmation Class # 3	1. P. Ben 2. Retzlaffs 3. C. Kent
	23	TBA	Possible Corn Maze replacing Hay Maze Date with Circuit Youth Groups	1. 2.
	30	12:30 – 2:30 pm	Confirmation Class # 4	1. P. Ben 2. Retzlaffs 3. C. Kent
	TBA	TBA	Busch Gardens Hallowscream	1. 2.
November	6	12:30 – 2:30 pm	Confirmation Class # 5	1. P. Ben 2. Retzlaffs 3. C. Kent
	9	7-9 pm	Wednesday – PORT assistance at RLC	1. 2.
	13		No Youth Group	
	20	12:30 – 2:30 pm	Confirmation Class # 6	1. P. Ben 2. Retzlaffs 3. C. Kent
	27	TBA	Bowling Outing with Emmanuel & Hope	1. 2.
December	4	12:30 – 2:30 pm	Confirmation Class # 7	1. P. Ben 2. Retzlaffs 3. C. Kent
	11	12:30 – 2:30 pm	Confirmation Class # 8	1. P. Ben 2. Retzlaffs 3. C. Kent
	18	12:30 – 2:30 pm	Christmas Party	1. 2.
	25		No Youth Group	

Food Bank of Virginia

Several months ago I wrote to you about how the Food Bank works to help people in getting the food they need that they cannot get on their own.

In Saturday's Daily Press there was an article that the Food Bank is seriously low on food in part because of Hurricane Irene and that the US Department of Agriculture's subsidy to the Food Bank which was 22% of their resources has been cut 60-70% due to the economy. The Food Bank supplies 200 agencies to distribute food to those who need it the most.

Their needs right now are canned fruits, vegetables, pasta meals (like Chef Boyardee), and proteins such as meats, beans, hearty soups with meat, canned tuna, cereals, personal and home items. Please do not give refrigerated items; the Food Bank cannot accept them. Whatever you use, they can use.

Whatever you are able to donate will help someone in need.

Thank you and have a Blessed Day.

Carol Burt



P.O.R.T.

People Offering Resources Together (A Ministry of L.I.N.K.)

*Jesus said: "What so ever you do to the least of these my brothers,
you do unto me!"* Matthew 25:30

Resurrection will be hosting its fifth year of P.O.R.T. from the evening of November 9th to the morning of November 16th. Along with six partner churches we will provide dinner, breakfast, and a warm nights lodging for the homeless in Newport News. We have met with our partner churches, and are now planning for the many duties and details for our P.O.R.T. responsibilities.

THERE ARE MANY WAYS FOR VOLUNTEERS TO HELP WITH P.O.R.T. WHEN IT IS AT RESURRECTION November 9th – 16th:

UNLOADING – the truck filled with bedding and supplies on Wednesday morning

GREET / CHECK IN GUESTS – usually between 6:00 PM – 9:00 PM – this includes registering guests, bagging and storing personal belongings, etc.

PREPARE / SERVE THE EVENING MEAL ON November 9th – usually between 6:00-8:30 PM – volunteers are needed to prepare the meals, and volunteers are needed to assist in serving our P.O.R.T. guests, visiting with our guests, and cleaning up the kitchen area

OVERNIGHT STAY (8:30 PM – 6:30 AM) – Volunteers are needed to register late arrival guests, and monitor hallways during the night. There must be **at least one volunteer from Resurrection each night between November 9th – 16th**, along with four volunteers from our partner churches: two volunteers stay awake from 10 PM – 2:00 PM, and two stay awake from 2:00 AM – 6:00 AM. **No volunteer should stay up all night. On November 9th, FOUR volunteers are needed from Resurrection to spend the night!**

PREPARE / SERVE BREAKFAST ON NOVEMBER 10TH (usually between 5 AM – 6:30 AM) – prepare a Breakfast meal and serve to our P.O.R.T. guests – clean up the kitchen area

CHECK OUT / CLEAN UP (usually between 5:30 AM – 8 AM) – Check out guests and return their belongings to them. **Clean up bathrooms and all common areas that were used in preparation for Resurrection School and Child Care.**

RELOADING – the truck with bedding and supplies on Wednesday morning, November 16th.

CLEANING UP AND PUTTING BACK TOGETHER – the church back to normal on Wednesday, November 16th.

Volunteers are greatly needed for our P.O.R.T. MINISTRY in NOVEMBER; a sign-up sheet is provided on the Entrance Way Bulletin Board. So please give prayerful consideration to heeding the call of our Savior.

Who Has Time?

by Walt Seale

"... I (Jesus) in them and you in me. May they (Jesus' disciples) be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have love them even as you have loved me." (John 17:23)

We often hear that people recognize their need to be in good relationships with other Christians in order to live the life Christ effectively in the world. It is clearly the plan of the Lord to gather His people together to work in unity to accomplish His mission of redeeming as many people as possible. It's surely a good thing to do, but so often other things get in the way.

Who has time for a SMALL GROUP? Making a decision to commit to gathering with others is the crucial first step. We have the freedom to choose how we will spend our time and it isn't simply a matter of having "no time" – but of setting priorities. We have time to do everything the Lord is calling us to do!

Another obstacle to forming and participating regularly in a small group is the fear of being accountable to others: accountable for being present, for preparing, for sharing our victories and our defeats. Our enemy warns us that we're not good enough or that we're not that "type" of person. Think about it: the last thing our enemy, the devil, wants us to do is gather together to be more effective in building God's kingdom.

On the verge of His crucifixion, Jesus prayed for the unity of all believers. He gathered His followers in a body of believers. This was not by accident or simple happenstance. Jesus knew that the work we would be asked to do would require us to band together for strength. Small groups offer an excellent format for the kind of groupings that will keep us strong and able in our work!

How well do you know the struggles and victories of your brothers and sisters in Christ at Resurrection? How can YOU be more deeply involved in their lives? Through a Small Group? What about support for your life of discipleship? Through a Small Group?



Small Group
Bible Study

Please Keep Our Confirmands in Your Prayers

The following students are registered and attending Confirmation Classes at Resurrection for the academic year of 2010 – 2011. Please keep these students in your prayers as they study God's Word and learn more about what and why we believe as Lutherans.

8th Graders: Andrew Bender, Ari Bridge, Graham Hawkes, Kaylin Loch, Matthew Uenking, Bella

7th Graders: Taylor Blaha, Jacob Blankinship, Jacob Carlson, Katelynn Cherry, Tamara Dunn, Dantae Erving, Zach Kent, John Retzlaff

6th Graders: Caitlyn Blankinship, Ethan Canstantino, Alisha Cole, Katie Dail, Jacob Durren, Kendall Loch, Kirsten Loch, Jake Malcolm, Kenny Petro

**May God continue to bless and strengthen the
growing and maturing faith in these young saints!**

Please PRAY FERVENTLY for our College Students as they prepare to take exams at the end of this semester (early December – and as they travel home for the Christmas holidays ...

* Lindsey Hammond	* Abby Mason	* Katelyn Bridge
* Mike Titus	* Christine Anzur	* Jenna Napier
* Kassie Schaffer	* Michael Schaffer	* Nicki Davis
* James Brandt	* Will Schaffer	* Drew Hayes
* Kayla Morgan	* Geoff Mason	* Jona Lewis
* Haley Calhoun	* Suzanne Schindler	* Alicia Waldmiller
* Genna Nowicki		

Parents and Students: the Church Office is especially seeking our college students' cell phone numbers (for texting purposes!). The pastors email a weekly devotional to all our college students, and try to stay in contact with them via email and texting. **Please call or email the church office (596.5808 / info@rlcnn.org) with this information as soon as possible.** Also, if we have inadvertently left someone off our college student list, please notify the Church Office as soon as possible: 596.5808. The College Visits to our in-state College Students will begin soon!

Groups

“SING TO THE LORD A NEW SONG, FOR HE HAS DONE MARVELOUS THINGS!” The Sanctuary Choir invites all who wish to lift up their voices to the Lord to be a part of this leading / singing ministry, which adds so much to our worship. Practices will begin in October, and will be announced in the Sunday Announcement Sheet. Plan to come out and be a part of *“singing to the Lord a new song ...”*

The **SR. LYFR (Lutheran Youth Fellowship, Resurrection): ALL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS ARE INVITED TO BE A PART OF THE LUTHERAN YOUTH FELLOWSHIP, RESURRECTION!** Meetings consist of Bible Study on 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month at 6:00 PM with servant outreach events and social events the 2nd and 4th weekends of the month. **This is subject to change month to month; please visit the Resurrection Website www.rlcnn.org regularly to stay up to date!** Contact Pastor Ben Dolby (596.5808) for more information on meetings or Sr. High activities.

The **WOMEN IN GOD’S SERVICE – LWML (WIGS)** meets the **second Monday evening of the month at 7:00 PM in Room 120 (Youth Room).** All the ladies of the congregation are invited to be a part of **WIGS** and in their service to the Lord through Resurrection Church! **Child-Care is provided if requested beforehand – call Marcia Geisert – 310.6721.**

THE OUT-TO-LUNCH BUNCH invites anyone and everyone of the congregation to join this new fellowship luncheon gathering held every **3rd TUESDAY OF THE MONTH at various restaurants.** For more information, please contact Janett Burton (258.5017), or read the Sunday Announcement Sheet inside the Bulletin, and sign up on the Bulletin Board Sign-up Sheet. **You are always invited and welcome . . .**

THE YOUNG ADULTS OF RESURRECTION have begun a whole new schedule of events this Fall. All in their 20’s & early 30’s are welcome! Please join us; we’d love to have you! See Pastor Ben for more information (596.5808)

THE SONGS OF PRAISE WORSHIP TEAM (SOPWT) invites you to be a part of leading our Sunday PRAISE Services! The SOPWT practice each Wednesday evening, beginning at 6:30 PM (for the musicians) and 7:00 PM with the Praise Choir. **CAN YOU PLAY AN INSTRUMENT? Come and join us! DO YOU LIKE SINGING MORE MODERN CHRISTIAN SONGS? Come and join us! WE ARE ALWAYS LOOKING FOR MORE VOICES AND INSTRUMENTALISTS!** Please keep this in your prayers or let us know if you have a candidate we can contact.

The second Saturday of every month at 8:00 AM is set aside for the MEN'S GROUP, RESURRECTION gathering, featuring their traditional breakfast of sausage gravy and biscuits. All the men of the congregation are invited to join in for a great breakfast, fellowship, a Bible or topical study – and the projects accomplished by the **Men's Group, Resurrection members. **Bring a friend – share in good food, fellowship and the Good News on Saturday!** Our next gathering is **Saturday, October 8th at 8:00 am** – our project for the month is **cleaning up the courtyard.****

The **JR. LYFR (Lutheran Youth Fellowship, Resurrection):** Meetings consist of Confirmation Class on the 1st and 3rd Sundays from 12:30 to 2:30 as well as servant outreach events and social events the 2nd and 4th weekends of the month. **This is subject to change month to month; please visit the Resurrection Website www.rlcnn.org regularly** to stay up to date! Contact Pastor Ben Dolby (596.5808) for more information on Confirmation class or Jr. High activities.

The **SR. MOMENTS MINISTRY** is open to any saint who is 55 years old and older who enjoys fellowship, food, and service in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. The **SR. MOMENTS** sponsors socials and fellowships, and service projects, normally meeting on the **Third Sunday of the month.** For more information on meetings or activities, please see or call **Ricki Lindstrom at 826.1457** – **or watch for their activities being announced in the Bulletin Announcement Sheet.**

RESURRECTION SMALL GROUPS meet all over the Peninsula for **fellowship, spiritual growth, discipleship and accountability!** Each group has an **“empty chair”** – waiting for **your** participation! **See or call Pam Mason (357.0828), Pastor Hank or Pastor Ben for more information, OR call the Church Office (596.5808).**

The **FRIDAY SAINTS** cordially invites their Resurrection family to join them **every Friday** or fun, fellowship and service! The **FRIDAY SAINTS** meet on Fridays (of course!!), beginning at **9:00 AM** to put together the Sunday Bulletins, the Newsletter, mass mailings, etc. **You are invited to be a part of the fun and fellowship and service!!** – and help is always needed and appreciated!

BIBLE STUDY GROUPS: 1) every Sunday morning at least two or three **ENRICHMENT AND GROWTH ADULT CLASSES** are offered during the **Sunday Education Hour** (beginning at 9:30 AM) - **be a part of growing in God's Word!** Details on the various classes are in the Sunday Bulletin! 2) the **WEDNESDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY** at 6:30 AM!

Birthdays and Anniversaries

Birthdays:

Brian Holub	10/1
Cathy Reck	10/1
Jacob Durren	10/4
John Romjue	10/4
Michelle Brandt	10/5
Kassie Schaffer	10/6
Jerry Weigel	10/6
Kelsey Bowser	10/7
Timothy Cruz	10/7
John Hermann	10/7
Connie Holub	10/7
Taylor Rumsey	10/7
Bob Krause	10/10
Noble Lach	10/10
Harold Beazley	10/12
Tiffany Holloway	10/14
Jen Bridge	10/15
Gloria Krause	10/16
Paul Napier	10/17
Sara Wahlstrom	10/17
Helen Corbett	10/18
Crystal Cotter	10/18
Ed Hetzler	10/19
Jessica Ausura	10/20
Roxanne Kohlman	10/20
Renee Rountree	10/21
Carol Baugham	10/22
Tom Rummel	10/22
Matthew Uenking	10/24
Dave Ambrose	10/25
Rebecca Uenking	10/26
Wade Palmore	10/29
Kevin Cornwell	10/31

Anniversaries:

Brian & Kim Moody	10/3
Greg & Sue Hawkes	10/5
John & Joyce Hermann	10/11
Geoff & Amanda O'Neill	10/12
Jim & Helen Corbett	10/24
Glen & Betty Titus	10/30



Birthdays &
Anniversaries
This Month!

Birthdays and Anniversaries cont.

Baptismal Birthdays:

Heidi Schroeder	10/1
Callie Turner	10/1
Paxtyn Turner	10/1
Bill Ruezinsky	10/2
John Romjue	10/6
Ari Bridge	10/9
Collin Bridge	10/9
Jen Bridge	10/9
Katelyn Bridge	10/9
Pat Kohlman	10/11
Ann Ezell	10/12
LaRona Roe	10/15
Luke Palmore	10/22
Graham Rountree	10/22
Jenny Blankinship	10/23
Ben Durren	10/25
Rhiannon Heckenberger	10/26
Jacob Pollock	10/26
Hunter Price	10/27
Ashlee Bristow	10/29
Tonya Weidenhof	10/29
Gloria Krause	10/30
Cathy Reck	10/30
Caitlyn Blankinship	10/31
Jake Blankinship	10/31
Zach Blankinship	10/31



"What? This Is Stewardship?"

-written by Rev. David P. Gunderlach, with additions by Pr. Hank

It's hard to believe, but we Americans spent eight billion (*that's billion with a "b"*) dollars on cosmetics every year (*please keep reading!*). The warm weather is still very much with us as I write this, but, as they say, autumn isn't far away – and that means "stewardship" in our church.

"Oh yeah – the annual fund drive."

Can't you just see the folks on the Church Council and the Board of Stewardship and Finance tearing their hair out? **"Stewardship"** isn't just about **money!! Stewardship** is also and foremost about how we use the many gifts that God has given us, like our very time, our skills, our thinking brains, our love for those close to us and not so close (*and yes, money is a gift of God, too!*).

Dr. Carl Truman, a British theologian, suggests that we are plagued by "consumerism" – an economy's reliance on people buying things – buying lots of things! He says that it has become "acceptable." I would go further and say it's a normal part of our daily existence, kind of like breathing. While the world's poorest 20% consume only 1.5% of the world's goods, Americans disproportionately consume meat, energy, paper and other goods. The \$8 billion annually we spend on cosmetics is an example.

How has such consumerism affected the body of Christ? Dr. Truman says that a culture that depends for its existence on people buying things, there is a need to instill the notion that, in some sense, the meaning of life is to be found acquiring goods – things. Shopping malls and box stores (Wal-Mart, Target, Kohl's, K-Mart, etc.) become our places of worship. Some results are:

- + It brings out and rewards childish behavior – "I want what I want when I want it!"

- + It makes debt easy, both for individuals, families, and for nations

- + Everyone is a "customer" and "the customer is always right" – respect for others (and indeed, for oneself!) gets pushed aside

In the Church this shows up in some familiar ways:

- + a sense that the church is there SOLELY for my needs and wants – to scratch where I am itching – we even use the term "church shopping"

- + a model of ministry that judges success in terms of numbers, and not faithfulness

- + a culture that too often forgets the past

When the church is just one more product to buy or leave on the shelf, then marketing, not theology, becomes the driving force in her life!

Does this mean that possessions are, in themselves, a problem. Dr. Luke Timothy Johnson would say that they are not. Dr. Johnson focuses on instead on **ownership** and its **mystery**. Ownership of something is not like an equation ($2 + 2 = 4$) that can be calculated or solved. Rather, ownership is intrinsically tied to our very being. What we own, and **how** we own it, is an expression of ourselves.

If God had treated us as if He were a customer, He would have left us on the shelf as damaged goods, marred by sin and self-centeredness. But God chose not to treat us like merchandise. *"God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us"* (Romans 5:8). That's the mystery of love in god's chosen relationship with us. **AND THAT'S WHERE STEWARDSHIP BEGINS!**

Let a man so account of us,
as of the ministers of Christ,
and stewards of the
mysteries of God.



1 Corinthians 4:1

“Time is infinitely more precious than money, and there is nothing common between them. You cannot accumulate time; you cannot borrow time. You can never tell how much time you have left in the Bank of Life. Time is Life.”

- Israel Davidson

There is a time to *hurry* ... time is limited.

There is a time to *slow down* ... time is steady.

There is a time to *get busy* ... time is not recyclable.

There is a time to *work* ... time is the door to success.

There is a time to *enjoy our relationships* ... time is sweet.

There is a time to *listen for the voice of God* ... time is sacred.

“My times are in your hands.”

(Psalm 31:15 NIV)