

The Grapevine

FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH

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"We preach Christ and Him Crucified"

When places are small, they often resort to things in an attempt to be big. They try to cater to everyone with the thought that if only they offer enough to their "consumers" then they will get better business. But what is the end result? Too often, it's a sign that the business has lost track of why it is there. And these attempts to cater to consumers are more like panicked reactions that have the opposite effect.

To be sure, the Church is not a business. Yet, sometimes the church gets this mindset, especially when we are "small." We start to get a case of the "if only's". We say things like, "If only we offered this service, then young families would come." "If we only we had a hip and cool music, then we could attract people." What ends up happening is that in trying to cater to everyone, we don't really give anything good at all. We may be trying to give people what they want but fail to give them what they need. The sad truth is that it often ends up looking like a knockoff version of the mega church down the street only not as hip and and not as cool. It's easy to think, if we could only find the formula, then we could be successful. A case of the "if only"s is bad news.

Paul in 1 Corinthians 1 says, "**I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.**" What does Paul say to our "if only"s? You don't need anything. You have it all right now. You have everything you need in the forgiveness, life, and salvation of Jesus. You have Jesus. In fact, Paul says that he

did not come in lofty speech or great human wisdom. I don't often do this but if Paul were speaking today he might say, "I didn't come with rock bands and perfectly polished sermons. I didn't come to you in 5 piece suit with gold cufflinks. I only came to you with Jesus." In Paul's weakness, God's power is made known. In Paul's weakness, he only preaches Jesus.

Jesus, though being God, humbled himself to become one of us. He came not to be served, but to serve. He humbled himself to the point of death, even death on a cross. He has done it all for us. He has done it so that even in the depths of humility, Jesus took care of the root problem of the world, our sin. For it, he was exalted, raised from the dead, and ascended to the right hand of the Father.

Paul had this mind about him so that Jesus might be lifted up above all. Paul's weakness only means that more glory is given to God in Christ Jesus. This is why He was determined to only preach Jesus. In the end, it's all about Jesus. John the Baptist also said, "He must increase, and I must decrease."

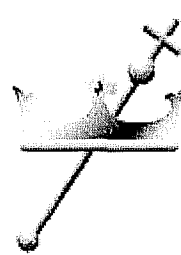
Weakness, in the world's eyes, is the last thing that you want. It's a matter of survival of the fittest. But Paul helps us to see that weakness is actually something that God can and does use to glorify the Son. The less we point to ourselves, the more we point to Jesus. More Jesus is

always a good thing. Jesus is all that we need.

"If only..." is not a part of our vocabulary! Let me tell you, the Devil wants you to say, "if only..." He wants to shut you up in your worries so that all you think about is how to survive. He wants you to spend more time considering the "if only"s so that you never actually share the hope that is within you. He wants you to take your eyes off of Jesus and focus on how small or weak you are. But Paul reminds us that being small is actually the point of our utter dependence on Jesus. Being weak means that we cast all of our worries on Jesus. Being weak means that all of the power is His to work in and through us as we simply care and love the people around us. It means to simply trust that He is faithful to His promises.

We need the Divine Service of God. This is why we should avoid the loaded words that describe worship as "traditional" and "contemporary." We call it the "Divine Service" because it is God's service to us, not our service to Him or about our preferences. Having quality music and beauty is important, but Jesus is the One doing the real stuff of forgiving and granting life. The beauty flows from that. The case of the "if only"s doesn't have a place when we have Jesus. Jesus is everything and more.—

--Pastor Rosebrock



SOCK IT TO ME!

Thanks to everyone who contributed socks for our April 19 LWML Spring Celebration. Pastor Joe Robb, Pacific Southwest District Church Planter from San Diego, was grateful for the amazing number of adult socks that our Zones gathered for him to distribute in his ministry working with the homeless and poor in the CA/Mexico border area. Your act of kindness will help someone learn of Jesus and His love for all.

ADOPT-A-BAG IS COMING

It was decided at our March meeting that we would once again sponsor the Adopt-A-Bag food drive for the Sunland-Tujunga Temporary Aid Center, with Mary Luening as our chairman. We will have a list of the Center's most current needs available beginning Sunday, June 2. The food drive will continue until Sunday, June 23 and all collected food items will be delivered to the Center the following week. This project again provides our congregation with a wonderful opportunity to reach out to our local community in a loving and caring way. Thanks, Mary, for your willingness to chair this project once again.

SAVE THE DATE

It may be a long way off, but it's not too early to reserve the date on your calendar for the Zone Fall Gathering Saturday October 19 that will be held here at Faith Lutheran, Tujunga.

Activities will be open to all, and it's an opportunity to serve as hosts here at our home church. As the fall approaches, please speak to our LWML leaders if you find you are able to assist in some way.

FROM AN APRIL 13 NATIONAL LWML MESSAGE

"The LWML is pleased to announce that the 2011-2013 Mission Goal of \$1.825 million was met and has been surpassed. With all praise and thanksgiving to God, the total amount received through faithful mite donations is \$1,834,269.27. All 19 LWML grants chosen by the voters at the 2011 Peoria Convention will be funded. Your offerings have enabled the LWML to continue to reach out and share about our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to those who are hurting and lost around the world."

All faithful mite contributors have made this possible. It will be exciting to learn what Mission Grant projects will be chosen at our upcoming Pittsburgh Convention and what opportunities we will all have to share the Good News in the 2013-2015 biennium!

DISTRICT MITE GOAL UPDATE

Of the total Mites gathered by our District LWML, 25% remains here in the Pacific-Southwest District to fund our own District Mission Grant projects. Here is an update, as of March, on how we are working to meet this goal:

Pacific Southwest District Mission Grants, 2012-2014		March 2013	
Goal: \$130,000		\$ Granted	Disbursed
1. Boys & Girls of Prisoners Summer Camp Fund, San Jacinto, CA		10,000	\$ 10,000
2. Counseling Program for Harvest Home, Santa Monica, CA		10,000	10,000
3. Birth Choice of Temecula Pregnancy Resource & GO Project, Temecula, CA		10,000	10,000
4. Our Redeemer Outreach, Winnetka, CA		10,000	
5. Youth Soccer Program, Friends House Drake Park, Long Beach, CA		4,000	4,000
6. Christ Lutheran Church Food Pantry, Brea, CA		8,700	
7. East County Pregnancy Clinic, El Cajon, CA		10,000	
8. Christ Cares Clinic, Christ Church-Lutheran, Phoenix, AZ		7,400	7,400
9. Transportation Van for Mission in the Border Region, San Diego, CA		10,000	10,000
10. Scholarships for Initial Education, Redeemer Lutheran, Las Vegas, NV		10,000	
11. University Lutheran Chapel Campus Mission, Los Angeles, CA		8,423	
12. Chinese After School Program, Holy Trinity LC, Hacienda Heights, CA		10,000	
13. Trinity Community Ministries Emergency Services, San Diego, CA		10,000	10,000
14. Sharing Jesus with Alpine's Families, Lift High the Cross, Alpine, CA		10,000	
15. Grantparent--Mission Outreach Through Tuition Assistance, PSD, Irvine, CA		738.50	738.50
16. International Friendship House, Tempe, AZ		738.50	
		\$130,000.00	\$62,138.50

MAY MEETING NIGHT

Due to the Memorial holiday, our regular LWML meeting night for May has been changed to Monday, May 20 at 7:00 p.m. in the Conference Room. Our project for this meeting will be to clip and sort cancelled postage stamps for our Pacific Southwest District Stamps for Missions project. If anyone has been saving stamps for us, now is the time to turn them in. You may leave them in the Conference Room or give them to Katherine in the church office. The money earned from the sale of these stamps will go to fund special non-English speaking projects in our District. Need to know which stamps to save? Check the sandwich board in front of church each Sunday for directives from our District Stamps for Missions chairman.