



Epistle



S T . J O H N L U T H E R A N C H U R C H

“ F A R E W E L L T O S T . J O H N I N C H E S T E R , I L L I N O I S

Our time here in Chester is near an end. It is amazing how fast our vicarage time here in Chester has passed. It seems like only a few weeks ago that I was preparing my first sermon and now I am only a few weeks from giving my last one here. It has been an exciting and wonderful year for Emma and me.

We have appreciated all of the kind words and deeds and we have made some friends that will never be forgotten. When we first met Pastor Willig and Paula they informed us that by the time our vicarage was done here, we would have done a little bit of everything. I must say that they were not exaggerating. About the only thing I haven't been a part of is a wedding, unless you count the incident outside the Baptist church. (If you don't know, just ask.)

I also want to thank everyone for your patience with me as I was/am learning on the job. I know it is hard getting used to a new vicar each year, each one with different strengths and weaknesses. Here I especially want to thank Pastor Willig, Anne and Kelly our retired and present church secretary, all of the teachers at the school, board of elders and evangelism, adult Bible study group, youth, students and everyone else who took the time to help me to learn about parish ministry. You have all helped in ways too numerous to mention.

Our last Sunday will be July 26th, and we will be moving on Tuesday the 28th. It looks like we will be moving to Waterloo, (We need to stay in the state of Illinois for our adoption) so hopefully we can come back and visit often. We appreciate all of your prayers and ask that you continue to keep us in prayer. Thank you again for helping to make this a wonderful year for Emma and me. God's richest blessings to all of you.

Vicar David and Emma Hoehler

Philippians 1:3 "I thank my God, every time I remember you".

L I B E R T Y !

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

(The declaration of Independence)

Around the world peoples and nations yearn for freedom and liberty. Have we not seen this in the news these past weeks? But what is freedom? But are the others correct – those who define freedom as being without want or discomfort in life? If they are right, then when you have a lot of things you are more free, and when you have less things you are not all that free. Is this what freedom is all about?

But Jesus said something different. *“If you abide in My word, you are truly My disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”* (Jesus – John 8:32) There is a freedom that is given by God, which cannot be taken away by governments or by the circumstances of our lives. It is a freedom that does not increase or decrease with our possessions our finances or even our health. It is a freedom that is not lost even if a Christian is imprisoned. Paul preached, *“through this man [Jesus] forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and by Him everyone who believes is freed . . . ”* (Acts 13:38-39) And even when they were in jail Paul & Silas were there praying and singing hymns. (Acts 16)

Liberty and freedom are natural human yearnings. They are given by God. They are in our souls as part of the image of God. But what is it freedom from? And what is it liberty to?

The Christian is called to walk with God, to know God, and to share in the things of God. That’s why Paul talks about: *“the glory that is to be revealed to us”*; *“the freedom of the glory of the children of God”*; and *“our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.”* (Romans 8) And then he talks about being *“conformed to the image of [God’s] Son, in order that He might be the firstborn among many brothers.”* This is freedom to . . . It is freedom to life, and freedom to glory, and freedom to what is right and true, and freedom to God. It comes to us as we are bound together with Jesus and carried along with Him.

It is also freedom from . . . It is freedom from sin (that we have in Jesus) and freedom from death (through His resurrection). And it is freedom from narcissism and self-absorption as we are carried along by a Lord who said, *“greater love has no one than this that someone lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends . . . ”* (John 15:13-14) And it is freedom from being bound to and limited by the things of this world (no matter how nice and wonderful the possessions of this world are – they are still dust and will return to dust; *“All that is in the world . . . is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.”* (1 John 2:16-17))

Our Lord Jesus calls us to freedom; and it is a freedom that stretches out into all eternity. (Here comes the unpopular part.) It is a freedom from death, but it is a freedom that can only be had by being joined to and carried along by Jesus. If you want freedom it is there to be had, but it is a freedom that is there only in Jesus. And that means turning away from sin, and away from self, and to faith in Jesus Christ, and to love and forgiveness for your neighbor, and to worshiping God.

It involves some denial of self and setting aside some pleasures. Is it worth it? It involves what Paul calls *“the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”* (Philippians 3:14) Are faith and love and forgiveness the things you want the universe to be built around? Or is freedom for you only indulging in the pleasures of this world and not caring about the consequences? What is freedom?

As the people of the world seek freedom and liberty may they come to know the true freedom in Christ. Because without that freedom, in the end all other freedoms will only disappoint.

Pastor Mark

1 Corinthians 2:2

F O C U S O N Y O U : M I K E A N D B A R B W E L G E
B Y : E I L E E N G O R D O N

Our "Focus" subjects this month were gone away from the area for a while, but now they're back "home" in the best sense of the word.

Mike and Barb Welge are both life-long residents of the area and now they reside in a lovely new home on Welge road. The association with their property goes back a long way. Mike's ancestors, from Germany, homesteaded from the U.S. government in 1849, and among their prized possessions from that era is a certificate showing the grant, signed by president Polk. Mike's parents, Harold and Eunice Welge, also lived on the land. When their home was constructed and a basement was dug, their ancestors used the clay to make bricks which were used to build the house. Mike and Barb have saved some of the bricks, as another valued part of their heritage and their ancestors.

Mike was a member of St. John's Lutheran Church at Bremen and attended Chester Schools. Barb, the daughter of Harry and Selma Ebers, has always attended St. John in Chester and was a pupil in the grade school. Both was baptized and confirmed in their respective churches.

St. John in Chester was the setting for their wedding on January 6, 1968. They are among the first couples to have their wedding ceremony preformed by Pastor Arnold Ranta when he came to St. John.

Shortly after the wedding, Mike and Barb left for Arizona where he was stationed, serving the U.S. Army. Two years later, at the completion of Mike's military obligation, the couple moved to the St. Louis area. After a couple of job moves by Mike, they made their home in St. Clair, MO., where they lived for the next 25 years . While living their, Mike and Barb raised their three sons.

Matthew is a Physical Therapist. He and his wife Tracy live in Naperville, IL and are the parents of a daughter, Molly, 9 month old. "At Last!!" said Mike. "A girl in the Welge family. Do you think we might spoil her a bit?" We'll see. Joshua is a Geological Engineer, and he and his wife Julie make their home in Topeka KS. Jason chose to become a Pharmacist. He and his wife Stacy live in Eureka, Mo. They have two sons, Nicholas,4, and Aiden,3.

In 1988, while still living in St. Clair, Mike was offered a position with Spartan Light Metal Products in Sparta. Mike accepted the position , but instead of moving to the area, he decided to commute from St. Clair to Sparta, even though it was 93 miles one way. This decision was made so that Barb did nor have to give up her job as an Office Manager in St. Clair and so the boys would not have to change schools.

Eleven years later, after living away from Chester for 31 years, the Welges decided it was time for him to stop making the long trip each day and for Mike and Barb to move back to the Chester area.

And so the transition was made. Due to their outgoing personalities and their love of life the couple had no problems getting settled into a routine which includes many friends and acquaintances. Both are very active members of St. John, of community organizations, and professional groups. Barb serves as secretary-treasure of the Kaskaskia Zone of the Lutherans Women's Missionary League and also is a member of St. John Cemetery committee. This year she is president of the American Legion Alva Courier Auxiliary Unit 487.

Mike has served as an Elder of the congregation and is now Vice Chairman, and Chairman - Elect. They are members of the Fellowship Club and Thrivent Financial for Lutherans and enjoy the comradely of the get-togethers. Both enjoy traveling and were among the group that went on the Alaskan Cruise lat year. They and a group of friends each year plan a vacation together which they all thoroughly enjoy.

One of Mike's passions is the St. Louis Rams. Avid fan that he is—through thick and thin he attends as many home games as possible. And Barb, the ever supportive spouse, also attends. In fact, they have attended two supper bowl games in which the Rams played, one in New Orleans and one in Atlanta. The Rams won one and lost one of the Bowl games. Mike's loyalty can never be questioned. He's been a season ticket holder every season since 1971! Hang in there, Mike. Things are looking good for the next season!??

Win or lose with the Rams, the people at St. John won when Mike and Barb came back home—two devoted members, two terrific people. You are a Blessing to us all, and we thank God for you.

C O M M U N I T Y B I R T H D A Y C A L E N D A R

The LWML is now taking orders for the Community Birthday Calendar. The price is \$3.00 for a calendar. If you would like to add a name to the calendar the price is 20 cents per name. Please contact Ruth Ann Coffey at 826-3969 by July 10 to add a name or purchase your calendar.

P R A Y E R T H O U G H T S F O R Y O U R ' Q U I T E T I M E ' '

1st	Pray for more CHURCH WORKERS	Hebrews 11:8
2nd	Pray for PEACE in Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, etc.	Isaiah 6:3
3rd	Pray to GIVE sacrificially to the LORD	Deuteronomy 14:22,23
4th	Pray for our NATION that we may look to God first	Matthew 6:34
5th	Pray that our SPEECH is a good witness	Ephesians 5:4
6th	Pray to LIVE A THANKFUL life	Psalms 116:12
7th	Pray for our RELATIONSHIP with Jesus	Romans 8:38
8th	Pray for those WHO HAVE HAD SUDDEN LOSS	John 14:16
9th	Pray to be AWARE OF GOD'S GIFTS to you	Deuteronomy 4:39
10th	Pray for those UNDERGOING TREATMENT for cancer	Psalms 18:6
11th	Pray to TRUST GOD for the FUTURE	Mark 1:15
12th	Pray for THE ELDERLY	Isaiah 46:4
13th	Pray for our DOCTORS, NURSES, DENTISTS, THERAPISTS	Psalms 34:4
14th	Pray for our COLLEGE STUDENTS	Philippians 1:6
15th	Pray for those GRIEVING FOR THE PAST	Genesis 19:26
16th	Pray for BUSINESSES and EMPLOYERS	Psalms 90:16-17
17th	Pray for our SUPREME COURT	Exodus 13:21
18th	Pray for our SCHOOL AND TEACHERS	2 Corinthians 1:4
19th	Pray for our MISSOURI SYNOD LEADERS	Psalms 37:5
20th	Pray for our CHILDREN in hostile situations	Proverbs 15:1
21st	Pray for our STUDENTS away from home	1 Corinthians 13:11
22nd	Pray for those NEGLECTED BY SOCIETY	Hosea 14:5
23rd	Pray for people who are ABUSED	Ephesians 4:32
24th	Pray to DAILY LIVE a God fearing life	Exodus 20:5
25th	Pray for TEENAGERS and their PARENTS	Malachi 1:6
26th	Pray for NEWCOMERS to our church	Hebrews 13:2
27th	Pray for OUR COMMITMENT to Christ	John 21:17
28th	Pray for people STRUGGLING TO WITNESS their faith	2 Corinthians 3:2
29th	Pray for CHURCHES STRUGGLING to remain OPEN	John 17:21
30th	Pray for GUIDANCE to TEACH OTHERS about Christ	Deuteronomy 6:6,7
31st	THANK God for this MONTH	Psalms 103:1-2

Ideas that really Work Introduced at Outreach Workshop

Steve Cohen presented a practical and insightful program Saturday morning, June 13, encouraging his listeners to talk about Jesus. One easy way to begin a conversation is to ask "What do you think of Jesus?" It's a question we can ask anyone, anywhere, anytime, except possibly during working hours. Steve, founder of Apple of His Eye, says when he has asked that question, 8 out of 10 times he's gotten a green light to go ahead and talk about Jesus. Three main points he likes to include are (1) that there is a God, one God, Creator of heaven and earth, and (2) that we are accountable to Him. Of course being accountable to God finds us greatly lacking and we have a problem, which brings us to point #3. God has the solution to our problem, Jesus.

Steve began to recite the Creed and asked us to join in reciting it with him. When we finished, he pointed out that it's not a matter of not knowing what to share. It's a matter of getting it from our hearts to our lips to verbally share the gospel with others.

For the times we may ask "What do you think of Jesus?" and get a red light, Steve told us that does not mean we did anything wrong, only that the person we asked is not ready. We can follow up by asking "How can I pray for you?" We do not fail at evangelism unless we do not try to bring the gospel message. It's important to keep in mind that we only plant seeds. God is the one who makes them grow. Our role is not to push, but help people discover by a series of well-placed questions. Also important to remember is that we are not trying to win a debate against an opponent, rather we are using an opportunity to come along side someone and present the truth. We do not need to prove God exists, only to declare that He does.

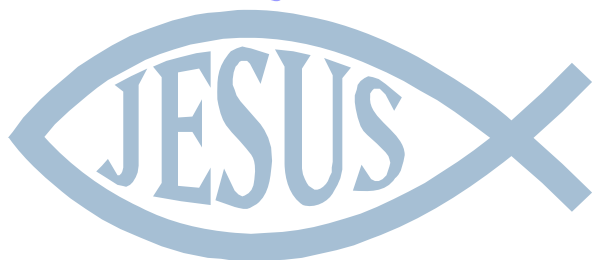
Some tools we all have to use are our smile, a pleasant expression, and a cheerful attitude. These help draw people into a conversation. One barrier we want to overcome is "church talk," the language barrier. Most people do not know basic Bible stories, much less words like redemption, salvation, and sanctification. We need to start with the ABC's of faith. Sin can be described as missing the mark. The mark is perfection.

Regarding driving a car, Steve Cohen asked what the difference was between the first time we got into the driver's seat and the last time. It was PRACTICE. Once we finished driver's training, it wasn't more classes that made it easier to drive, just more practice. And so it is with evangelism. What will make us better and more effective in sharing our faith is practice.

One participant summarized the workshop saying she learned helpful, practical things like how to ask a question to get people talking, and not to preach but to ask questions. She also learned ways to respond pleasantly with a smile.

Here's Your Chance to Practice!

What do you think of



A team from St. John, Chester, will be joining with Apple of His Eye, St. Louis, for an outreach event on Saturday, June 27. We will meet at St. John around 7:30 a.m. and carpool to Christ Memorial Lutheran Church. After prayer and some instructions, we will be grouped with experienced members of Apple of His Eye and head to Tower Grove park at 11:00. At 4:30 p.m. we'll return to Christ Memorial for prayers and debriefing. Please call the church office (826-3545) to let us know if you have questions, or if you're interested in participating in this exciting event.



ACOLYTES

Sat July 4 6:30 pm Brent Rains & Lindsay Hammel
 Sun July 5 7:45 am Chelsea Schroeder & Jacob Bradley
 10:00 am Jared Johnson & Courtney Johnson

Sat July 11 6:30 pm Caleb Arbeiter & Jaclyn Colvis
 Sun July 12 7:45 am Joshua Bierman & Dillon Ladendecker
 10:00 am Joseph Marks & Justin Marks

Sat July 18 6:30 pm Erin Baughman & Madison Kueker
 Sun July 19 7:45 am Amber Watkins & Jacob Cowan
 10:00 am Brent Knop & Miranda Mueller

Sat July 25 6:30 pm Teddy Knop & Tyler Knop
 Sun Jul 26 7:45 am Alyse Bollman & Jacob Lochhead
 10:00 am Tyler Redeker & Austin Redeker

GREETERS

Sat July 4 6:30 pm Jane Kipp
 Sun July 5 7:45 am Magre Gentsch
 10:00 am Susan McClure

Sat July 11 6:30 pm Barb Tindall
 Sun July 12 7:45 am Sandra Colvis
 10:00 am Myrna Campbell

Sat July 18 6:30 pm Tammy Crawford
 Sun July 19 7:45 am Marie Hoops
 10:00 am Donna Young

Sat July 25 6:30 pm Mary Webster
 Sun July 26 7:45 am Edna Neislein
 10:00 am Louise Liefer

RADIO

July 5 Richard Janssen
 12 Mardell Granger
 19 Steve Egge
 26 Paul Preusse



ALUMINUM CANS

July 6-11 Ron Sheely
 13-18 Steve Young
 20-25 Steve Egge
 27-1 Larry McDonough



ALTAR GUILD

Tammy Crawford
 Nancy Kollmeyer
 Myra Rubach
 Lori Holcomb
 Sandy Colvis
 Teri Franklin
 Allan & Dorothy Witbart

USHERS TEAMS

Sat July 4 6:30 pm Volunteer
 Sun July 5 7:45 am Don Gentsch
 10:00 am Rick Casten

Sat July 11 6:30 pm Volunteer
 Sun July 12 7:45 am Ron Rathert
 10:00 am Randy Campbell

Sat July 18 6:30 pm Volunteer
 Sun July 19 7:45 am Gary Duensing
 10:00 am Don Stallman

Sat July 25 6:30 pm Volunteer
 Sun July 26 7:45 am Roger Kattenbraker
 10:00 am Gary Eggemeyer

CHURCH E-MAIL

Pastor Willig— pastorwillig@stjohnchester.com
 Vicar David Hoehler— vicar@stjohnchester.com
 Kelly— secretary@stjohnchester.com



HAPPY 4TH
 OF JULY



WWW.STJOHNCHESTER.COM

NEW FACILITY FUND

Thank you to everyone who recently contributed to the New Facility Fund. The current total is \$223,842.46. With faithful donations, St. John Lutheran School will continue to graduate future honor students, competitive athletes, student council officers, successful businessmen and women, qualified military leaders, and honest workers—all rooted with Christian principles.



CHRIST OUR SAVIOR LUTHERAN HIGH SCHOOL

On June 16 I looked at the progress of the school building. Labors for Christ are making excellent headway. Most of the studs are up and they are doing drywall and pulling wire at this time. Our church has the week of July 7-11th as ours to supply food and workers. Contact Anne Ebers or Dorothy Decker to help with food. Contact Randall Campbell if you can work any day that week. Also an individual has made a \$75,000 matching grant to the school. Please help the school by making a donation. As a Thrivent Member do not forget to fill out a gift matching form for the school. With your help this could be another \$150,000. Remember to pray for our school and our principal's wife as she has serious health problems. Thank You Randall Campbell 826-4777



St. John Ev. Lutheran Church
302 W. Holmes Street
Chester, Illinois 62233

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
Chester, Illinois 62233
Permit #76
Car. R. T. Presort

Return Service Requested

JESUS LOVES:

