

# BETHEL LUTHERAN CHURCH

A congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
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Websites: (congregation) [www.bethelportvilleny.org](http://www.bethelportvilleny.org); (synod) [www.upstatenysynod.org](http://www.upstatenysynod.org);  
(ELCA) [www.elca.org](http://www.elca.org)

Worship Service - Sundays at 9:00am; Sunday School at 10:30am

The Rev. Ivy Gauvin, Pastor

*God's work. Our hands.*

## JUNE 2014



The prophet Isaiah proclaimed, "For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there until they have watered the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in the thing for which I sent it" (Isaiah 55:10-11) We have certainly experienced plenty of rain! Flooding has been an issue for much of our area. But here, the prophet is not talking about physical rain, but is comparing the work of God's word to the effects of rain on the land. In other words, God is faithful and will do what he said he will do, even when our circumstances seem to declare that God has forgotten about us.

As we look forward to the less hectic pace of summer with sunny days, we find further encouragement in scripture from *The Message* translation. "God's Word vaults across the skies from sunrise to sunset, Melting ice...warming hearts to faith" (Psalm 19:6). In other words, God still wants to work through us, even in the summer.

Lots of exciting things are happening this summer at Bethel. Let's not miss out on God's blessing by taking a vacation from him or from church this summer. June 1-3 is our annual Synod Assembly. Please keep our voting members Caroline Miller, Terri Ploetz and myself in prayer as

we will be electing a bishop. Bishop Jerge is running for another term, but there are others who have put in their names in as well. May God lead and guide each of us in our decision making, that God may be glorified.

July brings us another opportunity to worship together with our Presbyterian and Methodist brothers and sisters. On Sunday, July 27<sup>th</sup>, we will be worshipping together at 10 am at Pioneer Park. Following worship, we will have a picnic and cook-out. Join us for wonderful worship, fellowship and food.

In August, we have again have a cooperative effort among the Portville churches. Wed., Aug. 20-Fri., Aug. 22, 6-8:30 pm, we will be having Vacation Bible School. This will take place at River's Edge United Methodist Church. Much, much more will be going on throughout the summer.

May our Lord bless and keep you as you travel and engage in this summer's activities.

Grace and peace,  
Pastor Ivy

***If you are interested in becoming a member of Bethel, please talk with Pastor Ivy.***

***You are in my prayers.*** Each week I will be focusing on a different member and their family. I will let you know when you are especially being prayed for. Pastor Ivy

***Going on a trip?*** Let Pastor Ivy know so we can bless you on your way.



### ***Pray First!***

Justice means exercising fairness in all our actions. The Old Testament prophets were profoundly emphatic about showing our obedience to God by being just, by being fair, in all our dealings as we live out our lives. The prophet Micah said: "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)

A Christian minister tells of sitting next to a woman in the waiting room of a hospital. He said to his wife later that he could scarcely remain in his seat because she reeked of the acrid smell of tobacco. But, when the woman said to her husband who was sitting on her other side, "I feel so sorry for my mother. She has so little money to live on," the pastor had the following thought: "If she simply quit smoking and gave her mother the money she spent for a pack of cigarettes each day, she could at least help her mother have a meal or two daily." Obviously, the woman had a kind thought regarding her mother's welfare, but apparently she did not consider how she might help relieve her mother's woes.

Perhaps each of us should examine ourselves and consider how we are treating others. Are we concerned about justice for them? Are we kind and thoughtful to them? And do we practice being righteous in our lives to make sure we honor Christ in our everyday lives?

**Prayer:** Lord, enable us to be complete stewards in every way. Help us to be found worthy of living in eternity with you. In your name we pray. **Amen**

- For all service men and women, and their families, especially *Juan Fraustro, Andrew Wright, Casey McCarthy, Mike Copponi, Lee Walden, Josh Canaan, Zachary Russell and Kendra Linn*. For Christ to be made known in our companion synods - *Zimbabwe and Zambia*, and our partner synod - *Central/Southern Illinois Synod*. For the Franciscan community at *Mt. Irenaeus* and the *Burkhart Retreat Center for Life-retreats* in our local area. For our Bishops, Bishop Elizabeth Eaton (ELCA) and Marie Jerge Upstate New York Synod), Assistants to the Bishop Dave Preisinger, Mary Johnson, and Dean Daniel Rumpfelt. For the mission congregations in our synod—*Organic Faith* in Amherst and *Todos los Hijos de Dios* in Amsterdam. For the pastors and congregations in our Southwestern Conference and for our congregation council leaders - President *Gary Murray*, Secretary *Jo Kile*, Treasurer *Doug Ploetz*, and members *Ruth Brewer, Rick Giberson, Linda Scott, Jerry Maerten and Bryan Hatch*. For our sister congregation, *Peace Lutheran* and their ministry in Slidell, LA for the ministry of *ELCMA* - Evangelical Lutheran Coalition for Mission in Appalachia. For area ministries: *Genesis House, Portville Community Food Pantry, and Interfaith Caregivers*.



PLEASE SEE BULLETIN BOARD outside the sanctuary for a COMPLETE SECRETARY'S REPORT.

Council Member

Gary Murray  
Ruth Brewer  
Pastor Ivy  
Jo Kile  
Doug Ploetz  
Jerry Maerten  
Linda Scott  
Bryan Hatch  
Rick Giberson  
Gary Murray

Committee Assignment

Council President  
Vice President  
Worship and Music  
Stewardship  
Treasurer  
Outreach/Evangelism  
Advertising  
Education  
Property  
Fellowship



Choir will be on vacation starting late June and will return in September. Thanks to all of them for the blessing of music they provide each Sunday.

**We NEED people to sign up as worship servants. We are in need of Lectors, Prayer Leaders, Ushers, Communion assistants and Altar Guild for the summer months in particular. There are sign-up sheets on the table in Fellowship Hall. Please sign up for one or more of these positions as you feel led. Thank you.**

***Notice: There will be only a shortened version of the newsletter during the months of July and August. We will resume the normal newsletter in September. Thanks to all of you for your support***

*June*

**SYNOD ASSEMBLY PROJECT - ALUMINUM CAN TAB COLLECTION**

At our June 2013 Synod Assembly, the aluminum can tab collection project was very successful. At a recent meeting of the Synod Assembly Planning Team, it was decided that we would again conduct this collection at the 2014 Synod Assembly. This is a project that every congregation in the Synod can participate in. As we did last year, the collection point will be in the area of the registration table. The proceeds from the collection will benefit two (2) established, Synod supported charities, which have yet to be determined. The Synod Assembly Planning Team will make an announcement as to the charities chosen in the near future.



Start your collection project now and bring the collected tabs to Synod Assembly.



**STOP, CARE, ACT FOR THE HUNGRY**

The 2014 Synod Hunger Campaign invites our congregations to follow the example of the Good Samaritan.

**STOP:** Consider hunger needs at home, across the country and around the world. Use the ELCA Hunger Packets.

**CARE:** Raise awareness in your congregation of the needs of you local food banks and pantries. Learn about the many places our Hunger Dollars make a difference.

**ACT:** Each congregation in the Synod is challenged to raise at least \$400 for the Hunger Campaign and bring it to the assembly.



## Upcoming Events and Notices

### July:

Pastor Ivy will be away for continuing education in Gettysburg, Mon. 7/7-Fri., 7/11. Pastors Marilyn Hale and Clara Wilder will be providing pastoral care. Pastor Marilyn's phone number is 716-933-6426 (church). Pastor Clara's is 716-904-0204.

Sunday, July 27—Church in the Park. First Presbyterian, River's Edge United Methodist and Bethel Lutheran will have a joint worship service at Pioneer Park in Portville. It begins at 10 am. Worship will be followed by a picnic and cookout

The 82<sup>nd</sup> Annual Lutheran Summer Conference at Silver Bay

A Vacation Experience of a Lifetime: bringing family together, refreshing Christian community & renewing spirit on the majestic shores of Lake George, NY  
Saturday, July 12<sup>th</sup> – Friday, July 18<sup>th</sup>, 2014

**Portville Heritage Days** will start July 12<sup>th</sup>. Ruth Brewer will be heading up our Annual Pie Sale to benefit the Portville Food Pantry. All pie bakers please contact Ruth if you are able to help her out. Thank you.

### August

#### **Vacation Bible School**

We will be having VBS this summer! The program is called Blast Off. It will take place the evenings of Wed., Aug 20, Thurs., Aug. 21 and Fri., Aug. 22 at River's Edge United Methodist Church in Portville. This is a cooperative effort of our two churches, with financial help from the Portville Ministerium. If you have any interest in being involved, please see Pastor. You may not want to teach, but may love crafts. We invite all to participate.

### **Chicken Barbecue:**

Not too early to start thinking about this fund raiser scheduled for August 2<sup>nd</sup>. We will have the bazaar and baskets again this year. Please see Caroline Miller for any further questions or information.

### **September :**

**Sunday September 7<sup>th</sup> is a really big day. It is God's Work. Our Hands Sunday and Rally Day.** Following worship, there will be a mentor/parents/confirmands meeting.

God's work. Our hands Sunday is an opportunity for all ELCA churches to spend time in service to their communities. We will be doing this by going to The Pines in Olean to worship with and give communion to the residents. Here is more information about God's Work. Our Hands Sunday:

What is "God's work. Our hands." Sunday?

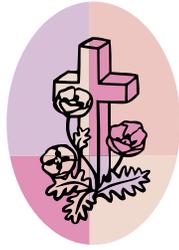
"God's work. Our hands." Sunday is an opportunity to celebrate who we are as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) — one church, freed in Christ to serve and love our neighbor. On Sunday, Sept. 7, 2014, the nearly 10,000 congregations of this church gather to serve communities in ways that share the love of God with all of God's people.

We are a church that rolls up our sleeves and gets to work. Whether it's 30,000 young people doing community volunteer work at an ELCA Youth Gathering, the passionate volunteers of the ELCA homeless ministry network or the devoted members of our congregations who fight for peace and justice in their communities every day, we are a church that boldly does God's work of restoring and reconciling communities.

You work every day to love your neighbors and make your community a better place. Now let's do it together.

The possibilities are endless.

So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation; everything old has passed away; see everything has become new! —2 Corinthians 5:17



## MEMORIALS – MAY 2014

**In Memory of Dick Love**  
by Mark and Cheryl Welles

**In Memory of Art Shavalier**  
by Mark and Cheryl Welles

Clinton Brewer, son of Ron and Trinette Brewer, graduated from Alfred State University on Sunday, May 18th - 55 years after his grandfather, Don Linn graduated from there. It was also Dad's 76th birthday. He graduated with a bachelors' degree in Construction Management Engineering Technology

Congratulations also go out to other college graduates:

Felicia Kile, Skip Giberson, April Silvis and Joelle Brewer.



Congratulations to High School Graduates: Chelsea Shelander and Abby Benson.

We have received a thank you note from Genesis House for our generous donation of \$163.00.

Scholarship application forms are available in the office or from one of the committee members: Shirley Levernier, Terri Ploetz, Doug Ploetz, Kristen Keenan or Pen Yunghans. Applications are due June 15 and the committee will meet after church that day to review and award scholarship scholarships. Previous recipients are welcome to apply for renewal of their scholarships.

# June 2014

## Worship Assistants, Birthdays, and Anniversaries



### Worship Assistants

Acolyte.....*Kassie Lopes, Carly Keenan*  
.....*Dakota Brewer*

Communion Assistants.....*Jerry Maerten*

### Lectors:

June 1<sup>st</sup> .....*Connie Smith-Matteson*

June 8<sup>th</sup> .....*Judy Graves*

June 15<sup>th</sup> .....*Doug Ploetz*

June 22<sup>nd</sup> .....*Dawn Campbell*

June 29<sup>th</sup> .....*Lisa Andrus*

### Prayer Leader:

June 1<sup>st</sup> .....*Lisa Andrus*

June 8<sup>th</sup> .....*Caroline Miller*

June 15<sup>th</sup> .....*Bev Robinson*

June 22<sup>nd</sup> .....*Judy Graves*

June 29<sup>th</sup> .....*June Murray*

Usher/s.....

Altar Guild.....*Dawn Campbell*

Bread Baker.....*Ron Kile*



### Happy Birthday to:

1—Joe Shoff

2—Nedean Knowlton

3—Bryan Hatch, Trinette Brewer

4—Bob Brewer, Chris Linn

8—Deb Wolsky

14—Tom Olson, Carol Parr

17—Jacob Deneka

20—Lindsey Nicholas

21—Rick Giberson

22—Justin Brewer, Emily Linn

23—Jon Wolsky

28—Lisa Andrus

29—Liam Deneka



### HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO:

4—Jon & Amy Giberson

9—Doug & Terri Ploetz

10—Dan & Kerrie Parr

11—Bill & Judy Graves

23—Skip & Bev Robinson

29—Warner & Joan Johnson

**BETHEL LUTHERAN CHURCH CALENDAR - JUNE 2014**

- Sunday, June 1                      **SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER**  
7:45am-Choir rehearsal  
9:00am- Worship with Fellowship following  
10:30am- Sunday school and Confirmation class-Mentor/Parents  
Confirmand Meeting.  
Special training for confirmands—usher training and brush up on  
acolyting .  
11:00am- Adult Bible Study
- Monday, June 2                      Pastor Ivy's Day Off
- Sunday, June 8                      **PENTECOST SUNDAY**  
7:45am- Choir rehearsal  
9:00am - Worship with Fellowship following  
11:00am -Adult Bible Study
- Monday, June 9                      Pastor Ivy's Day Off
- Tuesday, June 10                      3:00pm - Worship and Music Committee
- Thursday, June 12                      7:00pm - Council Meeting
- Sunday, June 15                      **TRINITY SUNDAY**  
7:45am-Choir rehearsal  
9:00am- Worship with Fellowship following  
11:00am - Adult Bible Study
- Monday, June 16                      Pastor Ivy's Day Off
- Tuesday, June 17                      3:00pm - Christian Education meeting
- Thursday, June 19-30                      Pastor Ivy on vacation , Pastor Marie will be covering
- Sunday, June 22                      **SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST**  
7:45am - Choir rehearsal  
9:00am - Worship with Fellowship time following.
- Monday, June 23                      Pastor Ivy's on Vacation
- Sunday, June 29                      **THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST**  
7:45am - Choir rehearsal  
9:00am - Worship with Fellowship time following.
- Monday, June 30                      Pastor Ivy's On Vacation



Once again, we will be singing your favorite hymns in the months of June, July and August. Just fill out this form and return it to Pastor Ivy.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_



# HYMN HISTORY

## It is Well with My Soul

In the late 1860s life was good for Horatio G. Spafford and his wife Anna. They were living in a north side suburb of Chicago with their five children, Annie, Maggie, Bessie, Tanetta and Horatio, Jr. He had a successful law practice in Chicago. The doors of the Spaffords' home were always open as a place for activists to meet during the reform movements of the time. Horatio G. Spafford was quite active in the abolitionist movement. Frances E. Willard, president of the National Women's Christian Temperance Union as well as evangelical leaders like Dwight L. Moody were often guests in their home. Spafford was a Presbyterian church elder and a dedicated Christian. Until now Horatio and Anna Spafford had led a charmed life. They had everything going their way. However, in 1870 their faith was tested by tragedy. Their four year old son, Horatio, Jr., died of scarlet fever. The Spaffords were devastated. In October of 1871 when the Great Chicago Fire broke out Horatio faced another test of his faith. A few months before the Great Chicago Fire, Spafford being a wealthy man, had invested much of his wealth in real estate by the shore of Lake Michigan. Not only did the Great Chicago Fire destroy most of Chicago but most of Spafford's holdings were destroyed. 250 people died in the Great Chicago Fire and 90,000 were left homeless. The Spaffords did not despair. Their home had been spared and they had their family. God had been good. Even though their finances were mostly depleted, Anna and Horatio used what resources they had left to feed the hungry, help the homeless, care for the sick and injured and comfort their grief stricken neighbors. The Great Chicago Fire was a great American tragedy; the Spaffords used it to show the love of the Christ to those in need. In 1873 Anna Spafford's health was failing and hoping to put behind the tragic loss of their son and the fire and to benefit Anna's health, the Spaffords planned a trip to Europe. They would sail on the French steamer Ville du Havre to Europe with their four daughters. Spafford not only wanted to visit Europe but he wanted to assist Evangelists Dwight L. Moody and Ira D. Sankey in a revival they were conducting in England.

Moody and Sankey had met at a convention of the Young Men's Christian Association in Indianapolis in 1870. After hearing Sankey sing, Moody at once invited him to come to Chicago and assist him in his evangelist work there. Ira D. Sankey considered Moody's invitation and after much thought and prayer, decided to accept. Six months later he joined Moody in Chicago.

Dwight L. Moody and Ira Sankey were in the middle of a revival meeting when the Great Chicago Fire broke out in 1871. Moody and Sankey barely escaped Chicago with their lives. It is said that Sankey was on a row boat a long distance out in Lake Michigan where he watched as Chicago burned. With most of Chicago having been destroyed, Moody and Sankey decided to accept an invitation to visit England. In 1873 Moody and Sankey started a work in England. Moody and Sankey made such a profound impression in England their names became household words all over Europe.

The Spaffords planned to leave in November on their voyage to Europe. As sometimes happens, God had other plans for Horatio G. Spafford. The day they were to sail for Europe Spafford had a business emergency and could not leave. Not wanting to disappoint his wife Anna and their daughters he sent them on ahead and planned to follow on another ship in a few days.

Accompanying Anna Spafford were her French governess, Emma Lorriaux, several friends and several ministers.

On November 22, 1873 the steamer Ville du Havre was struck by a British iron sailing ship, the Lockhearn. The steamer Ville du Havre, with Anna Spafford and her daughters aboard, sank within twelve minutes in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean. Only 81 of the 307 passengers and crew members survived this tragic shipwreck.

Even though the Lockhearn was in danger of sinking the unconscious Anna Spafford was picked up from floating debris by the crew of the Lockhearn. An American cargo sailing vessel, the Trimountain, arrived in time to save the survivors of the Ville du Havre and the Lockhearn. Anna Spafford was taken to Cardiff, Wales where she telegraphed her husband Horatio. Anna's cable was brief and heartbreaking, "Saved alone. What shall I do..." Horatio and Anna's four daughters had drowned. As soon as he received Anna's telegram, Horatio left Chicago without delay to bring his wife home. Sailing across the Atlantic Ocean the captain

of the ship called Horatio to the bridge. He informed Horatio that "A careful reckoning has been made and I believe we are now passing the place where the Ville du Havre was wrecked. The water is three miles deep." That night, alone in his cabin Horatio G. Spafford penned the words to his famous hymn, "It Is Well With My Soul." Horatio's faith in God never faltered. He later wrote Anna's half-sister, "On Thursday last we passed over the spot where she went down, in mid-ocean, the waters three miles deep. But I do not think of our dear ones there. They are safe, folded, the dear lambs." In 1876 P.P. Bliss put Horatio Spafford's words to music. This hymn is still sung in Protestant churches today. "It Is Well With My Soul" was first sung in public by P.P. Bliss on November 24, 1876 before an assembly of ministers hosted by Dwight L. Moody in Chicago's Farewell Hall.. It is believed that Horatio took the words "It is well" from the words of the Shunammite woman who lost her only son but was later raised from the dead by Elisha. (II Kings 4:26 )



## **It Is Well With My Soul**

*When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,  
When sorrows like sea billows roll;  
Whatever my lot, Thou has taught me to say,  
It is well, it is well, with my soul.*

*It is well, with my soul,  
It is well, with my soul,  
It is well, it is well, with my soul.*

*Though Satan should buffet, though trials  
should come,  
Let this blest assurance control,  
That Christ has regarded my helpless estate,  
And hath shed His own blood for my soul.  
(refrain)*

*My sin, oh, the bliss of this glorious thought!  
My sin, not in part but the whole,  
Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more,  
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!  
(refrain)*

*And Lord, haste the day when my faith shall  
be sight,  
The clouds be rolled back as a scroll;  
The trump shall resound, and the Lord shall  
descend,  
Even so, it is well with my soul.*

*It is well, with my soul,  
It is well, with my soul,  
It is well, it is well, with my soul.*

# Four Steps to Banish Anxiety

## A scripturally based plan for ridding yourself of worry and fear

*By Norman Vincent Peale*

Of all the thousands of letters I have received, the problem of worry is most frequently presented. The following verses helped many to gain victory over worries. Hence we can confidently say The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid; what can man do to me? (Hebrews 13:6).

Nobody can really hurt you. We do not stand alone in this world for we can turn to God and He will always help us. Fill your mind with thoughts of God; get in harmony with God's will; eliminate from your mind all feelings contrary to love; practice simple trust. God then can help you.

Practice thinking less about your worries and more about God. Instead of thinking how difficult your problem is, think how great and powerful God is. This will change your psychology; but more than that it releases spiritual power into your mind. That will enable you to meet your situation intelligently and creatively. Always repeat this text when you are afraid: "Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God" (Philippians 4:6).

The method outlined in this verse for casting out anxiety is fourfold: prayer, supplication, thanksgiving and just telling God what you want. When you are worried, stop thinking emotionally and talking in an anxious manner, and pray. Ask God to relieve you of your fears and show you how to handle the problem that causes the fear. Then, immediately upon asking Him, give thanks, thus expressing your belief that He is answering your prayer, for He is.

"If you sit down, you will not be afraid; when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet" (Proverbs 3:24). It is important when dealing with worry to go to sleep at night in the right manner. If you retire with a mind filled with fear thoughts you will have only superficial sleep, for beneath the surface, anxieties are disturbing you in the deep subconscious.

Therefore when you lie down to sleep, think of God as being with you and watching over you. Place the cares of the day in His hands. Every night say this verse to yourself before you go to sleep. Then, instead of fears in your subconscious, faith in God's presence will develop a confident approach to your anxiety.



Thanks to Gary Murray and the other men of our church for the dinner they put on for us on May 10<sup>th</sup>. It was wonderful and the menu was great (especially the second baked potatoes). Everyone had a great time.

Thanks also to Shelley Sassaman (Bev Husband's granddaughter) for funding the dinner. Her generosity is greatly appreciated. We also thank Mike Staley for providing uplifting entertainment for us as well.







Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
God's work. Our hands.

# ELCA GLOBAL LINKS

Stay informed. Be inspired. Get involved.

JUNE 2014

## **Syria: ELCA joins call to end the violence**

Citing the 140,000 people killed, including 11,000 children, since the war in Syria began in 2011, ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton has joined U.S. religious leaders in asking the U.S. to develop a “robust” strategy for a political solution to help end the warfare and to protect the rights of the citizens of Syria. See [www.ELCA.org/News-and-Events/blogs/NewsBlog/37](http://www.ELCA.org/News-and-Events/blogs/NewsBlog/37).

## **Namibia: Aid helps buy food during drought**

One of the worst droughts in more than 25 years is causing malnutrition, disease and deaths in Namibia, especially among children. Lutheran Disaster Response is providing cash grants to families to help them survive until crops can be harvested. See [www.ELCA.org/News-and-Events/blogs/ELCALutheranDisasterResponse/249](http://www.ELCA.org/News-and-Events/blogs/ELCALutheranDisasterResponse/249).

## **Uganda: Village health team fights malaria**

"We used to bury so many people due to malaria, especially children," says Onyait Michael. But thanks to the training and support Onyait and his fellow health care volunteers in Katakwi have received through the ELCA Malaria Campaign, that tide is turning. See [www.ELCA.org/News-and-Events/blogs/ELCAMalariaCampaign/220](http://www.ELCA.org/News-and-Events/blogs/ELCAMalariaCampaign/220).

## **South Africa: Helping girls be all they can be**

Abby Henderson, an ELCA Young Adults in Global Mission participant, is making a difference. Through her work with the WOW Movement and the Proudly Female program in Bellville South, where violence against women is a problem, she is helping South African girls realize they are valued and deserve an education. See [www.ELCA.org/News-and-Events/blogs/HandInHand/422](http://www.ELCA.org/News-and-Events/blogs/HandInHand/422).

## **Southern Africa: Support and follow Young Adults in Global Mission!**

Ten young adults are serving for a year in Southern Africa in children and youth ministries, after-school programs, community development, HIV and AIDS ministries and care for the elderly. Learn more about their work and make a gift for their support at <http://search.ELCA.org/Pages/OurWork/South-Africa.aspx>. Request a profile and their blog listings by contacting [globalchurch@elca.org](mailto:globalchurch@elca.org).

## **Egypt: Refugees are role models for peace**

At St. Andrew's United Church of Cairo, refugees from both sides of the tribal war in South Sudan come together to worship, learn and develop friendships. St. Andrew's pastor and ELCA missionary, the Rev. Kirsten Fryer says, "When I ask them what to pray for, they say peace." See [www.ELCA.org/News-and-Events/blogs/HandInHand/421](http://www.ELCA.org/News-and-Events/blogs/HandInHand/421).

## **Mission of the Month: International Leader in Cameroon**

Nathalie Lassang from Cameroon feels called to become a doctor to provide care for the sick in her home country. She's attending medical school with the help of an ELCA International Leaders

scholarship, which she calls "a priceless gift." Share this story with your congregation! For a colorful word document you can print for your congregation's bulletin board or edit for use in your bulletin or PowerPoint presentation, visit [http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Cameroon\\_Nathalie\\_Lassang\\_2014.docx](http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Cameroon_Nathalie_Lassang_2014.docx).

### **June 22: Refugee Sunday**

In this the 75th year that Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service has been aiding refugees and migrants, ELCA congregations are encouraged to recognize the struggles of all those who have or are seeking to escape violence, persecution or economic difficulties. A kit is available to help congregations plan their worship on this special day. See [www.ELCA.org/Living-Lutheran/Seeds/2014/04/140403-Planning-for-Refugee-Sunday](http://www.ELCA.org/Living-Lutheran/Seeds/2014/04/140403-Planning-for-Refugee-Sunday).

### **Mexico: Immersion trip, Sept. 17-22**

Learn how to transform the conflict-filled realities in local and global communities during five days with faith leaders and Christ-centered nonprofits in Mexico City. Faith-based strategies and practical tools to transform conflict will be emphasized. See [www.facebook.com/GlobalLinks](http://www.facebook.com/GlobalLinks).

### **Education multiplies the impact**

International Leaders receive ELCA scholarships to develop their skills and then return home, ready to serve in new leadership roles in their churches and communities. Read more at <http://www.ELCA.org/Our-Work/Global-Church/Global-Church-Sponsorship/Supporting-International-Leaders-and-Scholarships>.

### **Help grow the Lutheran church around the world**

Through ELCA Global Church Sponsorship, the ELCA is working hand in hand with our global companion churches to support their ministries. Your gifts and prayers connect you to faithful, caring Lutherans who are building up the church around the world. Read more at <http://www.ELCA.org/Our-Work/Global-Church/Global-Church-Sponsorship/Supporting-Global-Ministries>.

### **In our prayers**

Remember in your prayers the Rev. John Lunn, an ELCA missionary based in Tanzania. John is the international coordinator of Lutheran Global Health Volunteers, which places short-term volunteers into health care ministries in several countries. (This prayer suggestion for June 25 is available in June along with daily prayers for the global, social and outreach ministries of the ELCA at [www.ELCA.org/Resources/Prayer-Ventures](http://www.ELCA.org/Resources/Prayer-Ventures).)

# A Rich Life Reflected in Her Features

By Marion Bond West, Watkinsville, Georgia

I'd never really liked my face. My mouth was way too small, my nose not dainty enough. In my teens I complained to my mother about every facial flaw I thought I had, especially not having a cute little turned-up nose. She'd say, "Your face is lovely the way God made it."

I'd even asked God to forgive me for being so vain. Yet now, in my seventies, I liked my face even less. Every time I looked in the mirror, I found something else I wanted to cover up. Another age spot. Another line. Another unwanted souvenir of the passage of time.

If I could have erased every sign of aging with makeup, I would have.

My dressing area was littered with all manner of lotions and potions promising to deliver something marvelous for my skin. The clutter drove my husband, Gene, crazy (he's so neat and tidy our friends call him Mr. Clean), but he knew better than to ask me to get rid of my cosmetic arsenal.

I couldn't imagine living without makeup. Lately I'd been toying with taking more drastic measures, having some surgical "refreshing" done like some of my friends. Sometimes I leaned close to the bathroom mirror and pulled my face back with my hands so everything looked firm and taut.

I had to admit, I liked it. Just for fun, I imagined waking up and a beaming plastic surgeon telling me, "You're going to be very pleased, Marion."

One day I was applying a new spray foundation, checking the mirror to make sure the color blended perfectly into my neck, when I noticed a tiny red bump near my chin. Now what? Yet another indignity of aging—senior pimples?

When it didn't go away after two weeks, I went to my dermatologist, Dr. Maffei.

She kept a close watch on me anyway because my reddish hair, fair skin and freckles—like pale polka dots—put me at higher risk for skin cancer. I wore a good sunscreen and tried to avoid direct sunlight. Still, she'd had to remove a squamous cell carcinoma from my leg a few years back.

Dr. Maffei examined my skin carefully. First my face, then my body. She scrutinized the red bump on my chin. She also found something close to my nose, which somehow I'd missed. And there was a freckle on my upper left arm that didn't look like the other freckles.

"I'll biopsy these places on your face—probably basal cell carcinomas—and the one on your arm," she said. "We'll give you a call." I knew basal cell carcinomas are the most common form of skin cancer and rarely spread, so I wasn't concerned.

A few days later, Dr. Maffei's assistant called. "We have your results back, Marion. The first one, on your arm, is a superficial melanoma."

Regardless of the adjective before it, the word *melanoma* scared me so much I had to force myself to concentrate on what she said next.

"The ones on your face are basal cell cancers, as Dr. Maffei suspected. Let's make an appointment for the superficial melanoma first."

The next week Dr. Maffei removed the melanoma. She went to the lab to look at it under a microscope and came back to the exam room. "All margins are clear," she said.

Whew. The worst was over.

I went back the following week to have the first of the skin cancers on my face taken care of, the red bump on my chin. Dr. Maffei explained that she would do Mohs surgery—remove one layer of skin at a time and examine the margins under a microscope for cancer cells.

If the margins were clear, the surgery would be over. If not, she'd repeat the procedure until the margins were clear.

I'd made my appointment for 10:00 a.m., expecting to be done well in time to have lunch with Gene. I ended up being at the dermatologist's office for hours. Both Dr. Maffei and I were surprised.

The skin cancer turned out to be three layers deep, and there was a 45-minute wait between procedures while she biopsied the cells in the lab. Forty-five minutes for me to wait and wonder. To avoid worrying I napped.

Before she stitched me up, I asked, "The area where you removed the skin...is it large?"

"About the size of a half-dollar. Do you want to take a look?" She handed me a mirror.

I had to stifle a gasp. The wound on my chin looked enormous, like a sinkhole!

Finally, at two o'clock, Dr. Maffei was finished. I looked in the mirror again and tried to smile at my reflection. "My mouth doesn't work," I said. "It droops way down!" Only the left side smiled. The right seemed broken.

"That's from the anesthetic I used to numb the area," Dr. Maffei said. "Once it wears off, your mouth should return to normal."

As soon as I got home, I called my daughters and told them the surgery had gone well, although my mouth wasn't working properly. "But the doctor says it should return to normal in a little while."

Both my daughters laughed. Even I had to. We all knew I'd never thought my mouth was normal.

The next time I saw Dr. Maffei, she removed the cancer close to my nose. Mohs surgery again, but it went a lot faster. When I got home, I couldn't resist checking my face in the bathroom mirror. Because of the surgery I didn't have makeup on. It was time for the unvarnished truth.

I stared at my face, the one God had given me, then leaned in close and studied my reflection. The fading reddish scar on my chin. The neat sutures by my nose. Reminders that the skin cancers were gone, that I was fortunate to have Dr. Maffei, her meticulous eye and her skilled hands.

The vertical creases between my brows...they were exactly like the ones my sweet mother developed in her later years, as though I carried a part of her with me. I examined my mouth. No drooping whatsoever. Still tiny, though.

And my unturned-up nose. I'd seen those same features in pictures of my father. He'd died when I was only two, before I had a chance to know him. Yet here was this indelible connection to him.

The stern lines around my mouth, those were from anguishing over my twin sons. At 15, they lost their father, my first husband, to brain cancer. Such a vulnerable age, when they needed a strong male role model.

As adults, my sons had experienced addictions, bipolar disorder, car wrecks, jail time. The important thing was, they'd survived. So had I. These were my survivor lines.



# Engaging your Mission Field

by Bob Crossman



Perhaps there was a time when inspiring worship and great music brought people to church. Today, however, in an increasing number of places, the quality of what is happening *within* the church is not enough to reach those *outside* the church. Those outside the church, including the growing number of those who state their religious preference as “none,” seek more from the church. They demand authenticity. And even those with no connection to the church understand that an authentic church is a serving church. They respect a church that reads Matthew 25 on Sunday and spends their time and money with the “least of these” during the week. They expect engagement with the community.

How can our churches continue to be faithful to the call in Matthew 28 to go make disciples while being increasingly faithful to the call in Matthew 25 to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, welcome the stranger, and visit the prisoner? Where both of these passages come together is in what many today refer to as a church’s “mission field.” Your mission field goes well beyond your membership to include all the people around you whom God has called your particular church to serve. Our call to make disciples and our call to serve come together when we engage our entire community and build positive, incarnational relationships with those we encounter.

## **Listen and Learn**

The best way to learn about the mission field around your church is to listen and learn. While demographic reports from public and private resources offer much data about a community, you cannot discover your mission field exclusively by studying reports. Data must be tested by walking around and spending time with the people who live in your community. Ministries that bless communities in Jesus’ name often arise out of unorganized, crazy, and chaotic conversations where we listen for the hopes and dreams of people within a mission field.

This begins not with big events or large numbers of people. It involves face-to-face conversations sitting in a park, a diner, or a coffee shop. A pastor sat at Venice Beach, California, with a sign that read, “Tell me your story and I will give you a dollar.” A line formed, and she was busy all afternoon!

As you listen, don't let your pre-set ideas or preconceived notions shape the conversation. Rather ask simply what are the challenges, hopes, longings, and dreams of your neighbors. As you observe and listen, determine if there are clusters of themes, dreams, and challenges that face people in your mission field. What ministries might address the brokenness revealed?

You may discover that there are already places within your church where you can build meaningful relationships with members of your community — for example, the participants in your English as a Second Language (ESL) program, the neighborhood youth who play basketball in your parking lot, the households who utilize your food pantry and clothing bank, or the families who receive your annual Thanksgiving baskets. Yet too often these programs operate in ways that inhibit positive relationships and communicate an “us and them” attitude.

### **Turning Missional Gestures into Missional Encounters**

A congregation in southern California discovered that their food and clothing bank was inadvertently communicating, *“You are not worthy to come to worship, but you can come to the back of the church for a handout.”* As a result, very few people were attending their Spanish language worship service. They turned their program upside down so as to incorporate worship, food, clothing, and fellowship into a more unified whole, resulting in exponential growth.

A congregation in Wichita, Kansas, offers a 30-minute worship time after their ESL program each week. About 125 of the 150 ESL participants stay for worship. In central Virginia, a new rural church, working with de-churched people, began as a movement to love and care for neighbors through ministries such as GED classes and a Thrift Store. Only after the community relationships were built did they begin to offer worship. Several churches in the Dallas area have added Bible studies and midweek worship inside their clothing bank for the households that rely on that program. In Dayton, Ohio, a church has added a donut and coffee table to their weekly food and clothing distribution. A church member with the gift of warm hospitality serves as host, inviting each person to stay for the 30-minute Bible study that morning.

These congregations are finding ways to make disciples and serve, fulfilling the Gospel mandates in both Matthew 25 and Matthew 28

## Practicing Generosity

By David Lose



Christians know a secret about generosity. Generosity is not the fruit of success or happiness or security. It is, instead, the source of all these things. Actually, it's not only Christians who know this. Seth Godin, one of my favorite thinkers, puts it this way:

Here's conventional wisdom:

Success makes you happy. Happiness permits you to be generous.

In fact, it actually works like this:

Generosity makes you happy. Happy people are more likely to be successful.

Christians have sometimes named the "conventional" wisdom Godin talks about "worldly" wisdom, as it expresses the sensibilities that governs the world rather than the "kingdom logic" that Jesus announced during his earthly ministry.

Truth be told, however, it's easy for us to forget this. Not that we set out to be miserly or actively believe that we have to be wealthy before we can be generous. But there are so many conventional, worldly messages to this effect that it can be difficult to put into practice Jesus' teaching. Indeed, the primary message of the world is one of scarcity: there is not enough time, money, love, security, and more. Therefore, runs the conventional, worldly wisdom, we need to look out for ourselves first, making sure we have enough before we tend to others.

Jesus saw things differently. Addressing his disciples, Jesus told them not to be concerned about anything because they knew God loved them and would provide for them (see Matthew 6:25ff.). Similarly, the Apostle Paul, caught up in Jesus' kingdom logic, argues against such anxious living by urging his friends in the community of Philippi to, "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice!" (Phil. 4:4). He goes on to tell them the following: "Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God" (4:6).

The interesting thing about Paul's injunction is that he makes it while in prison. That's right, while he's sitting in prison with no sure guarantee of what his future may hold, he instructs his friends to rejoice rather than to worry, trusting that God will provide, and to share with each other and all those in need.

While it's easy for us to assume that Paul must have been some kind of a spiritual giant to offer such counsel, the truth is somewhat different. As Paul himself says, "I have learned to be content with whatever I have. I know what it is to have little, and I know what it is to have plenty. In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being well-fed and of going hungry, of having plenty and of being in need."

Paul's secret, like Jesus' counsel to his disciples, is to trust God. But what I find most interesting about the Apostle's confession is that he had to learn to be content whether he was well-fed or hungry. Paul didn't start out this way, he learned through practice.

We, also, can learn to be more trusting and more generous through practice. What would it be like for a congregation to take time each week to reflect back on the acts of generosity its members had performed, witnessed, or experienced themselves? What if we returned some of our offerings to our youth group and gave them the assignment of finding a worthy charity to give it to and then report back the impact of our collective giving? What if we sought volunteers willing to try to buy less and give away more and surrounded them with prayer and listened to what they learned? What if we made space in our newsletter and Sunday service for people to share stories of generosity? What if ...

The possibilities, of course, are nearly endless. And as we practice generosity we'll move more confidently from the conventional wisdom of the world to the kingdom logic Jesus taught.