

Is Church a Place or a People?

by Sara Masters

According to Pastor Steve Bonesho, it is the people. Steve is the pastor of River of Joy, a new faith community in our synod. River of Joy owns no building, but is a church of people. According to Steve, they are a people whose dream it is to “become the faith community that God intends us to be as we engage the world around us as followers of Jesus Christ. We are trying to be a place where we are engaging God differently with the mission as a primary piece of who we are,” says Bonesho. “We want to facilitate the transformation of people’s minds and what it means to be a church in the world and provide opportunities for people to plug in and do it.”

River of Joy came into being through a partnership of three churches: Shepherd of the Lake Lutheran Church in Prior Lake, Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Burnsville, and St. Mary Magdalene Lutheran Church in Savage. The churches provide River of Joy with financial support, people and office space.

No Building, No Problem

In this day and age, being a church without a building is not difficult. There are other ways to do church. Pastor Bonesho says, “It’s exciting to try and figure out what this all looks like. We must think like missionaries.” Without a building, they must be creative on how they stay in touch and be a community. They rely on a close congregational network and send out a weekly e-newsletter. Pastor Bonesho has a blog, and they stay in contact by phone. They also have fellowship dinners at congregant’s homes and a prayer group that uses e-mail to send out prayers to everyone.

In addition to coming together for mission-related projects, they also come together as a community every other Saturday evening for worship at Five Hawks Elementary School in Prior Lake. Starting in December, they will meet every week. Pastor Steve describes their worship as a coffee shop atmosphere. They greet everyone, then rejoice in three or four songs, have prayer and profession of faith. A message for children and the main message follows, then communion, prayers of petition and announcements. After every other worship service, they gather for a meal.

Mission-Based

River of Joy bases its mission on Mathew 25: “For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.” They focused on hunger this past summer by learning about local and global hunger issues and by assisting various agencies in their work to end hunger. They had a food drive, planted a garden on a school campus, and purchased a utility trailer which they converted into a portable food pantry for the community to use in food drives. They also

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Congregations Should Prepare for Armistice/Veteran’s Day

by Amy Blumenshine

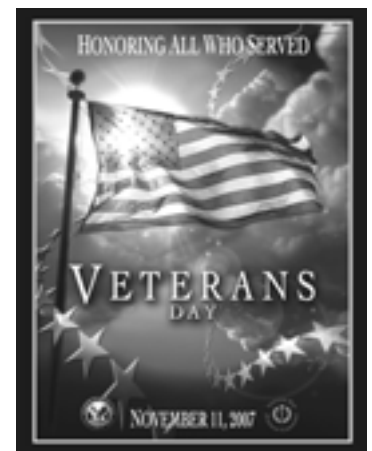
What will your church be doing at 11:00 a.m. on Sunday, November 11, 2007? Materials are available to help you plan how your church chooses to deal with the secular observance of Armistice/Veteran’s Day. Go to the synod Web site, www.mpls-synod.org, and click on “Healing the Wounds of War.”

The November time and date commemorate the end of hostilities in World War I. Traditionally, two minutes of silence and cessation of activity are kept. Often, bells are rung. We ask this year for prayers for the healing and recovery for all who have been touched by war. We also ask for prayers of support for those who care for them.

Congress asked that November 11 be dedicated to the cause of world peace. When Armistice Day was established, World War I was called “the war to end all wars.” In 1954, the name was changed to Veteran’s Day to recognize the great sacrifices of veterans and their families. Increasingly, Americans are becoming aware of the physical, psychological and soul wounding that can be lifelong for those who engage in war. The impact of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and war toxins, such as Agent Orange and depleted uranium, can be multi-generational.

The Joint Minneapolis and St. Paul Areas Synods Peace with Justice Committee has been charged with implementing the synod resolution to educate the church regarding the needs of veterans and their families, and help prepare healing resources. They suggest that the church observances on 11/11/07 be part of the process of healing for veterans and their families as well as for the wider society. They recognize that the domestic community is also torn regarding government decisions about the current wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and also regarding the Vietnam War.

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COMINGS AND GOINGS

NEW TO THE SYNOD:

Rev. Anne Hokenstad, from Southeastern Minnesota Synod to House of Prayer Lutheran Church, Richfield, pastor.

Rev. Kristen J. Jacobson, from Virginia Synod to Central Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, associate pastor – youth/family/community ministries.

WITHIN THE SYNOD:

Rev. Mark Warpmaeker, from Mount Calvary Lutheran Church, Excelsior, to Bethel Evangelical Lutheran Church, (south) Minneapolis, pastor.

GOINGS/RETIREMENTS with Godspeed:

Rev. Gerald M. (Marty) Halvorson, from Fairview CPE Center, to Southwestern Minnesota Synod.

Rev. Stephen J. Olson, from Family of Christ Lutheran Church, Chanhassen, to Northwest Washington Synod.

Rev. Kwanza Yu, from University Lutheran Church of Hope, Minneapolis, to Northwestern Minnesota Synod.

CONGREGATIONS IN TRANSITION:

Advent, Maple Grove, senior – in call process
Christ the King, Bloomington, senior – in interim
Crown of Glory, Chaska, associate – calling
Diamond Lake, Minneapolis, associate – calling
El Milagro/The Miracle Church, Minneapolis, pastor – in interim

Faith-Lilac Way, Robbinsdale, senior – in interim
First of Crystal, senior – in interim
Gethsemane, Hopkins, senior – in call process
Gethsemane, Minneapolis, pastor – in interim
Grace, Bloomington, pastor – in call process

Holy Nativity, New Hope, associate – in call process
Holy Trinity, Minneapolis, senior – in call process
Holy Trinity, New Prague, associate – in call process
Light of Christ, Delano, associate – in call process
Lord of Life, Ramsey, senior – in interim
Minnetonka, Minnetonka, senior – in call process
Mount Olivet, Plymouth, associate – in interim
Salem English, Minneapolis, pastor – calling
Shepherd of the Lake, Prior Lake, senior – in call process
St. James, Crystal, senior – in call process
St. John's Evangelical, Minneapolis, associate – in interim
St. John's Evangelical, Mound, senior – calling
St. John's Evangelical, Shakopee, senior – in call process
St. Paul's Evangelical, Minnetonka, pastor – calling
Trinity, Long Lake, associate – in call process
Zion, Buffalo, senior – in interim

– in interim = in study

– in call process = call committee is formed and active

– calling = a final candidate has been selected

IN MEMORY:

Rev. Timothy R. Maland died September 28, 2007, at the age of 54, following a heart transplant. Born July 19, 1953, in Brookings, S.D., he graduated from St. Olaf College, Northfield, in 1975, and Luther Seminary, St. Paul, in 1979. He was ordained in 1979. He served at St. Matthew Lutheran Church, Fernando, Minn.; Faith Lutheran, Hutchinson, Minn.; and Grace Lutheran, Bloomington, Minn.

Rev. Maland is survived by his wife of 32 years, Elizabeth; children, Erik, Kari, and Micah; mother, Ann; sisters, Katherine (Leif) Andersen; Debra Maland; brothers, Steve, Peter (Michelle), and Daniel (Camey).

InterActs

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Deadline for submission of articles is the second Monday of the month prior to publication.

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The materials on the Web include liturgical options, hymn suggestions, scripture exegesis and a brochure which can be duplicated for distribution. Sample articles for church newsletters and Web sites are also included. Excerpts from the ELCA Social Statement, *For Peace in God's World*, are also included.

No one desires peace more than those who truly know war. The confrontation with war is a spiritual challenge. The church has a special role in helping veterans make meaning of their experience by naming it honestly, while working to prevent unnecessary wars and sacrifices.

For more information, contact ListenToVets@comcast.net.