



The United Parish
ECHO



November 2005

Elkton United Parish Church 605-542-7102
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Growing Together in Christ



Pastor's Desktop

“The world would be a lot easier if everyone else would just do it my way.” I bet you have said to yourself at least once. I know I have. It's silly isn't it, but we do it.

What started in a garden continues to be the preferred way of dealing with things going wrong. When something doesn't work out as it should, people look around for someone to blame. “It's the woman you gave me!” “The serpent tricked me!” or more currently: “She didn't do it the way I told her!” “He didn't do what I told him to!” Any way you look at it, it's the same old 'blame game'.

It happens a lot in families, you know. Difficult husbands, cranky wives, rude children – it's all their fault! I'm just trying to do things right! If he/she/they would just...

It doesn't actually work does it?

As Rene Girard keenly noticed, all way back in the Old Testament God made sure that Hebrew worship exposed 'scapegoating' for the sham that it was. What had been done in other cultures to excuse our own role in whatever has gone wrong was to find someone else to blame – perhaps a leader to be overthrown, perhaps a virgin to be sacrificed to 'angry gods'. The Hebrews were told (Leviticus 16:10, 20-22) to use a goat and chase it away – making the excuse quite ridiculous.

But we still do it. We blame leaders when they are not at fault. We blame anyone or anything handy if there is no leader – or if we are the leader.

Jesus took it a step further and made it fully human. Never offending anyone – he was offensive to all. Never violating God's instructions to the Hebrews, the Hebrew leaders blamed him of the worst violation of all: blasphemy. The Roman governor, Pilate, found no fault in Jesus, but sentenced him to death so that Pilate would not be blamed for allowing a riot. In a nutshell – God's Anointed One came and did only the will of our Creator and got blamed for everything.

Yes, we humans are still prone to do that today, too. When all else fails – we blame God. Why did God allow the tsunami, the hurricane, the divorce, the abuse...

Instead of looking to the government for salvation ('Why don't they do something about...'), instead of blaming God for the natural result of our own choices ('But, environmentally friendly products are more ex-

pensive.' or 'But, I have no choice.'), what if we confess our weakness and wrongdoing and earnestly seek God's aid in turning away from it?

The bible tells that if we admit our failure and turn away from it, God is faithful and just and therefore will forgive – in other words, we will not be prosecuted even though we are guilty if we look to Christ's blood and the extreme forgiveness demonstrated by it and trust that God will forgive us and help us turn around, too.

Now recall the parable of the servant who was forgiven a large debt but punished another servant for a small debt (Matthew 18:23-35) and the phrase in the model prayer (Matthew 6:9-13) “and forgive us our debts **as we forgive** our debtors.”

Perhaps that is the reason so many avoid accepting responsibility – doing so means we must seek forgiveness, and seeking forgiveness means we must give it.

In Christ's service,
Pastor Daren

Parish Board Meeting

The United Parish Board met on Oct 12, 2005 at 7:30 p.m. in the church fellowship hall. Officers in attendance were Chairman Ed Timm, Financial Secretary Donna Magnus, Treasurer Dawn Boltjes, Lay Leader Bev Buller, and Secretary LaRee Farnham. Also attending were Gert DeZeeuw, Pastor Darren, Linda Kampmann, Carol Styf, and Virginia Fixsen, The meeting was called to order by Chairman Ed. Pastor Daren gave a prayer.

The minutes of the Sept. meeting were read and approved except Gert DeZeeuw was accidentally missed from the attendance list.

Treasurer Report: Dawn presented the monthly treasurer report. Discussion held on how to record the \$1,051.50 account for landscaping at the parsonage. Noted changes and is reflected below. Report approved.

8/31/05 Balance	\$1,271.19
Sept. Income	4,890.12
	\$ 6,161.31

Sept. Expenses 6,628.22
9/30/05 Ending Balance \$ - 466.91

Landscaping Account \$ 1,051.50

Financial Secretary Report: Donna presented the report, discussion held and approved.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

PPR : Bev reported that the committee will need to meet to discuss the pension plan.

Trustees: Travis Noble is working on getting the roof done at the church. The roof is done at the parsonage but haven't received a bill yet.

Christian Ed: Release time started October 5th with approximately 10-12 children attending.

Worship: Gert reported things are going well. The pew in the back needs to be put back where it belongs.

Mission: Linda reported they are working on the Neighbors in Need project. She received information on the Angel Tree project.

UPW: The Chicken Supper was very successful and busy. But they made about \$200 less than last year. Linda thought the difference could be because they didn't have the Country Store this year and with groceries being more expensive. Ingathering in Mitchell went very well. Linda said they are considering painting the church basement. Bev will be having a class at the church Oct. 22nd for making Lefse.

OLD BUSINESS: Ed reported that the Building Committee had their first informative meeting last Sunday. For now they are investigating building sites alternatives. Daren reported that all the pictures

are scanned in for the pictorial directory and should hopefully have the booklets printed before the end of the year.

NEW BUSINESS: Ed received the non-profit report from the Secretary of State. We need to start budget planning. At the Dec. meeting we will need the budget numbers for board approval. Dawn received the following reports: Dakota Annual Conference Apportionments and the United Methodist pledge sheet. Dawn suggested to get a step to help riders get into the church van. Daren said he is using a sturdy step stool but needs to get some type of handle to grab onto. Daren has been looking in to it and will continue searching. Dawn suggested on a permanent basis to ask people receiving the monthly Echo to pay for the postage as a memorial, birthday celebration, etc. Dawn will ask Bonnie to put in the Echo looking for people wishing to take a month paying for the postage expense.

Meeting adjourned. The next board meeting will be on Wed. Nov. 9th at 7:00 p.m.

Sec. LaRee Farnham

UPW

The UPW met on October 5th at 7:30pm in the church dining room.

The evening began with the program “Work for Peace and Reconciliation” given by Patty DeZeeuw. Evelyn Mueller told us about a book she read about how the black people lived in Chicago.

Pres. Linda called the meeting to order and for devotions she read a poem that went with the program (no title).

The purpose was read. 18 members answered the roll call with a favorite holiday recipe. Bev announced that a lesson on making Lefse would be held on October 22nd at 2pm in the church basement.

The secretary's report was read and approved with the addition that Patty helped serve Jenny Wiskur's wedding reception.

The treasurer's report was read and approved. The balance at the end of September was \$3,410.58. Earnings from the Chicken Supper were \$1,814.00 – some of the advertising has not yet been paid.

Correspondence: Marsha Timm and Dawn Boltjes received Certificates of Achievement for the reading program. The UPW received the Mission Today Certificate of Achievement making us a 2 flame unit. We received a thank you and \$100 for serving the Wiskur wedding. We also received a wonderful letter from Karen-Marie.

Get-well cards were sent to Cal Steen, Malinda Bessler, Marlene Bruening and Bob Lundgren and a sympathy card was sent to Linda Kampmann for the loss of her brother.

There were no funerals

Nothing new for missions

The Chicken Supper was successful. We served about 400 people.

On September 30th we served the Wiskur wedding – Nancy had everything ready.

Marsha reported on the District Meeting. As of Friday we will be in the Glacial Lake District with Marsha as president.

Bonnie was nominated for the special recognition pin.

9 members attended the Ingathering in Mitchell on September 24th. Our group donated approximately \$1,500 with the kits, cash, and the quilt (donated by Bev Lytle). Next years Ingathering will be held on September 23rd.

Next month we will be turning in our Thank Offering boxes.

Release Time began today with 10 children attending. If you can help or furnish snacks please sign up.

Get told us that the cutlery we sell is running low and wanted to know if we should order more. It was decided to list what inventory we have in the Echo, get a new price list, and submit an order after the 1st of the year.

Next was the election of officers for 2006. The following candidates were presented by the nominating committee:

President Linda Kampmann
Vice-president Patty DeZeeuw
Secretary Beverly Buller
Treasurer Ann Aaker

For the nominating Committee:

Sherry Bauman 2006
Dawn Boltjes 2007

Kate Brown 2008

A suggestion was made for the Chicken Supper Chair people:

Beverly Buller 2006

Sherry Bauman 2007

Kate Brown 2008

The Funeral Committee will remain the same.

Marsha moved nominations siege, Beth seconded motion, and the motion carried.

Linda brought some paint samples for the basement, we were asked to voice our opinions and make a choice. A work day will be set up to do the painting. Approx. cost of paint \$100 – Gert reported that there was leakage from the rain in the corner by the toys.

A sign up sheet was set out for us to say which month in 2006 we would like to be hostess and/or give a program. Patty needs this information so that she can get the program books ready for 2006.

Happy Birthday was sung for the October birthdays.

Our next meeting will be on November 2nd.

Marsha told us that Cheryl McKnight (wife of the pastor in Flaudreau) is in the hospital waiting for a possible lung transplant and that prayers are needed. Bev suggested that she should be a candidate for a Prayer Quilt. Linda will call the family to get permission.

The meeting was closed with the Lord's Prayer and table grace was sung. Hostesses were Ann Aaker and Deanna Lundgren.

Secretary Bev Buller

Fun Team News

This month we really enjoyed a great demonstration of how to make lefse. Bev Buller had prepared a super afternoon where we all found a new appreciation for lefse. We started with instructions how to prepare the dough, roll it out (I never knew you could get something that thin!!) and your equipment. Then it was time for the hands-on learning. We rolled, and rolled,

and rolled,



and rolled,

and rolled.



Finally, it was thin
bake and stack..



enough to



THANK YOU BEV for a really
fun afternoon and passing on the art
of making Lefse.

The Fun Team wants to continue
organizing a fun afternoon once a month but we need YOU!! If you
can find an afternoon or evening and share a skill or project or activity
with us, please contact Bonnie or Sherry so we can plan your event
Everybody knows something worthwhile sharing.

Prayer Quilt Ministry

We are again meeting on Saturday, November 12th, at 2:00 pm.

You don't need to be an experienced quilter to be in ministry, just a willing heart. So, if you want to participate, there is always room.

Please continue to remember both the Prayer Quilt Ministry and the recipients in your prayers.

Release Time

Release Time is well on it's way and we have 11 kids this year. Two weeks ago Patty DeZeeuw brought in pumpkins for all the kids to decorate and they had a wonderful time doing that. They then attached the following story to their pumpkin:

“Christians are like pumpkins.

God picks you from the patch, brings you in, and washes all the dirt off of you which you may have gotten from other pumpkins. Then He cuts off the top and scoops out all the yucky stuff.

He removes the seeds of doubt, hate, greed, unforgiveness, etc.. Then He carves a new smiling face and puts His light inside of you to shine for all the world to see. Are you letting your light shine? Be a jack-o-lantern for Jesus"

Thank you to all who are involved with Release Time and dedicate your time to this program. The parable of the talents come to mind and to all who put their talents to use, the Masters response is : “Well done, good and trustworthy servant, you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things;..” (Mt 25:14-30). I don't want to be the one who did nothing with his one talent out of fear.

Grape Vine

There are still some very lost and lonely pans in the kitchen desperately waiting for their owners. Please take a moment to go downstairs

and see if any are yours. We have put them on the kitchen counter so they are easy for you to locate.

We hope you enjoy your copy of the Echo and we are glad to mail it to you if you are unable to pick it up on Sunday morning. We tend to have it ready on the the last Sunday of each month. In order to help with the expenses getting the Echo out each month, please let us know if you are able to receive your copy per e-mail. If you wish, you can also “sponsor” a months issue in honor of a birthday or memory of someone, or just because you want to. If you are interested in doing so, please call Dawn Boltjes at 548-2051. Thank you.

The Community Thanksgiving Service will be held at the end of November. It was being planned for the Wednesday before Thanksgiving, but at the last minute there was a potential schedule conflict with one of the participants, so we are going to try to move it to Monday. After last year's positive response we also hope again to be able to use the Community Center. As soon as we have final answers on both matters, we will print all the information in the bulletin, the Elkton Record, and hang a poster up at the post office.

The Fun Team is planning another Hay Ride for this year and we are aiming for November. All the details have not yet been finalized, but check your bulletin for date and place. We had a great time last year and look forward to another fun time together.

Just a story, huh

(I received this one via e-mail from a church in Arkansas, their church secretary wrote this and sent it out to as many as possible).

“After a few of the usual Sunday evening hymns, the church's pastor slowly stood up, walked over to the pulpit and, before he gave his sermon for the evening, briefly introduced a guest minister who was in the service that evening.

In the introduction, the pastor told the congregation that the guest minister was one of his dearest childhood friends and that he wanted

him to have a few moments to greet the church and share whatever he felt would be appropriate for the service. With that, an elderly man stepped up to the pulpit and began to speak.

“A father, his son, and a friend of his son were sailing off the Pacific coast,” he began. “When a fast approaching storm blocked any attempt to get back to shore. The waves were so high, that even though the father was an experienced sailor, he could not keep the boat upright and the three were swept into the ocean as the boat capsized..”

The old man hesitated for a moment, making eye contact with two teenagers who were for the first time since the service began, looking somewhat interested in his story.

The aged minister continued with his story, “grabbing a rescue line, the father had to make the most excruciating decision of his life; to which boy would he throw the other end of the life line. He only had seconds to make the decision. The father knew that his son was a Christian and he also knew that his son's friend was not. The agony of his decision could not be matched by the torrent of waves as the father yelled out, “I love you, Son!” He threw out the life line to his son's friend. By the time the father had pulled the friend back to the capsized boat, his son had disappeared beneath the raging swells into the black of night. His body was never recovered.

By this time the two teenagers were sitting up straight in the pew anxiously waiting for the next words to come out of the old minister's mouth.

“The father,” he continued, “knew his son would step into eternity with Jesus and he could not bear the thought of his son's friend stepping into an eternity without Jesus...therefore, he sacrificed his son to save the son's friend. How great is the love of God that he should do the same for us. Our heavenly father sacrificed his only begotten son that we could be saved. I urge you to accept his offer to rescue you and take a hold of the life line he is throwing out to you in this service.”

With that, the old man turned and sat back down in his chair as silence filled the room.

The pastor again walked slowly to the pulpit and delivered a brief

sermon with an invitation at the end. However, no one responded to the appeal. Within minutes after the service ended, the two teenagers were at the old man's side.

“That was a nice story,” politely stated one of them, “but I don't think it was very realistic for a father to give up his only son's life in hopes that the other boy would become a Christian.”

“Well, you've got a point there,” the old man replied glancing down at his worn bible. A big smile broadened his narrow face. He once again looked up at the boys and said, “it sure isn't very realistic, is it? But I'm standing here today to tell you that story gives me a glimpse of what it must have been like for God to give up His son for me. You see.....I was that father and your pastor is my son's friend.”

Prayer Corner

The Bible teaches us a lot about prayer, the importance thereof and power of turning to God in prayer. Several of us took the Bible Study on prayer, the basic principle of Christians. In Ephesians 6:18, Paul emphasizes to pray at all times and in all matters. James 5:16 reminds us to pray for one another and how powerful the prayer of a righteous person is.

Are you interested in a Prayer Corner in the Echo where we list your prayer concerns to help us remember to pray for one another? We should also remember to pray for other things, such as leadership, our national leaders, other national and international affairs.

Let me know what you think. It can be hard at first; we like to keep things “private”, but there is nothing like the feeling of the power of prayers to get you over that hump.

You know the saying: “A family that prays together, stays together.” We at United Parish are a family.

Ok, I start getting way too many things from Arkansas, (my sister lives in Arkansas) but this one was good. I've heard about it before, but maybe appropriate to print it once more.

“Thought you might enjoy this interesting prayer given in Kansas at the opening session of their Senate. It seems prayer still upsets some people.

When Minister Joe Wright was asked to open the new session of the Kansas Senate, everyone was expecting the usual generalities, but this is what they heard:

"Heavenly Father, we come before you today to ask your forgiveness and to seek your direction and guidance. We know Your Word says, 'Woe to those who call evil good,' but that is exactly what we have done. We have lost our spiritual equilibrium and reversed our values. We have exploited the poor and called it the lottery. We have rewarded laziness and called it welfare. We have killed our unborn and called it choice. We have shot abortionists and called it ! justifiable.

We have neglected to discipline our children and called it building self esteem. We have abused power and called it politics. We have coveted our neighbor's possessions and called it ambition. We have polluted the air with profanity and pornography and called it freedom of expression. We have ridiculed the time-honored values of our forefathers and called it enlightenment. Search us, Oh, God, and know our hearts today; cleanse us from every sin and set us free. Amen!"

The response was immediate. A number of legislators walked out during the prayer in protest.

In 6 short weeks, Central Christian Church, where Rev. Wright is pastor, logged more than 5,000 phone calls with only 47 of those calls responding negatively.

The church is now receiving international requests for copies of this prayer from India, Africa and Korea. Commentator Paul Harvey aired this prayer on his radio program, "The Rest of the Story," and received a larger response to this program than any other he has ever aired.

Why do the verses in 2 Timothy 4: 2-4 come to mind?
Verse 3 especially :”For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say *what their itching ears want to hear.*”

I just love Scripture memorisation. There is nothing like Scriptures stored away in your inner being, showing up at just the right moment, when you need the truth the most.'