Ernest Hemingway, the great American author was once challenged to write a short story. His story—For sale: Baby shoes, never worn. He won the bet. This got me thinking, though—What about writing the story of our lives in six words? How would you write the story of your life in six words? It gets you thinking, doesn’t it? What would those six words be?

You see, though, someone has spoken six words over us. Those words were spoken in love, and from those six words, all the other words of our life flow—God had the first words: Child of God; Beloved of God. Out of those six words, rooted in our baptism, all the other words of our life find meaning—growing, loving, family, learning, becoming, living, dying, living again.

In the waters of baptism, we are claimed beloved of God, children of God. This claiming by God follows us wherever we go, for as long as we live, until the day when we are re-born into eternal life. As God’s children, we splash daily in those life-giving waters, we are fed the food of life at God’s table of grace, and we are joined into a family that is larger than we can imagine—one that goes all the way back to the beginning of time and stretches forward into the future that is held in God’s hands. Every day in between we are surrounded both by God’s grace and the communion of saints. The church has set aside a day to celebrate those who have been born into eternal life.

On Sunday, November 1 we will gather to remember the saints who have gone before us. They too are children of God, beloved of God and have been claimed in the life-giving waters of baptism. They have been baptized into eternal life and are celebrating with God the eternal banquet of life. We will remember those beloved in Christ as we celebrate All Saints Day, and we will also celebrate that we are all Children of God, and Beloved of God.

Peace,

—Pastor Lauren

---

**Saints**

Susan Burghardt Lande  
Alice Marion Pflugfelder Punger  
Edward Lloyd Ackerson  
Donald Mack Coley  
Carl Artebury  
Walter Bargers’ mother  
Barbara Barker  
Tobias Andrew Benedict  
Clayton Bruntjen  
Ed Christman  
The Rev. DePayne Middleton  
Kathie Doctor  
Lynn Edwards  
Mary-Ann Helen Frey  
Jerry Galeweczyk  
Dorothy Jean Gepp  
Kenny Giddings  
Vickie Gill’s grandmother  
Shirley Elizabeth Glaunert  
Violet Gordon  
Dr. Frank Griess  
Lisa Hamilton  
Tom Hardin  
John Lewis Hardy  (Lewis Hardy’s father)  
Vince Hunter’s sister  
Cynthia Hurd  
Susie Jackson  
Jerome Jensen  
Andrea Kabourek  
Dick Kilgore  
Joanne Kilgore  
Stan Kine  
Norman Klase  
Ethel Lance  
Riley LaRue  
Eric Moore  
Rosemary Moore  
Donna Nichols  
The Hon. Rev. Clementa Pinckney  
John Powell  
Tywanza Sanders  
The Rev. Daniel Simmons Sr.  
The Rev. Sharonda Coleman Singleton  
George Lewis Sinkoff  
Gunnar Smith  
Jeremy Sprinkle  
Myra Thompson
**EECC “CENTERS” on Learning**

We have such a wonderful opportunity at Epiphany to witness early learning at its best! Epiphany Early Childhood Center uses a “centers” approach in all its classrooms. These centers offer our children an opportunity to explore things through age-appropriate, playful activities. Students learn daily routines such as following directions, cleaning up, waiting to take turns, etc. Children learn to express their wants and needs in a safe environment. Centers offer opportunities to learn to say “please” and “thank you” and how to share. In most of the classrooms, there is a manipulatives center—where children learn shapes and colors and how to make patterns. The children learn to keep trying during difficult tasks as well as how to sort and classify items by traits (like scientists do!). Eye and hand coordination are used in each activity. Manipulatives Centers engage the children in a playful way and encourage curiosity and creativity while learning the basics of mathematics and physics. Be sure to wander down to the classrooms on Sunday mornings and “check out” the centers! Better yet, come visit during the week and see the centers “in action” and witness the exciting learning activities that take place in all the centers!

Thank you for continuing to pray for our EECC staff and students. We give THANKSGIVING for them all!

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**Pennies from Heaven**

We are once again joining in the Samaritan Ministries Annual Penny Campaign. Please give generously of your pennies or other monies. There is a record-breaking need for services for the homeless. There is a donation jar in the entrance way. Let’s fill it up several times over. Also, you can have your own campaign at home, work, or school.

Collection jars, labels and posters are available at the Ministry at 414 E. Northwest Blvd. Collection Day will be Saturday, December 5 from 10 am to 2 pm at two locations: 110 Oakwood (across from Thruway) or at Samaritan’s new building at 414 E. Northwest Blvd. Bring your unrolled coins, dollars and checks to help meet the need this winter. For more information, call 336-724-4086.

**Please give generously!**

There is power in pennies:

$2.10 provides a meal for a homeless person.

---

**Organ Fund**

Uses for any additional funding received for the organ expansion project.

- Purchase an additional small powered speaker for the antiphonal division.
- Build a cabinet to house the electronics in the choir loft.
- Reposition the circulator in the pipe loft.
- Other needs in the console.
- Possible purchase of a few additional digital stops (being determined).

If you would like to contribute towards finishing the organ project, please mark your check for “Organ.” Approximately $1,000 is needed.

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Our next book is TO SET A WATCHMAN by Harper Lee. We will meet on Nov. 19th at 7:00 in the Adult Library. All are welcome.

**January book: THE SILVER STAR by Walls. Date to be determined.**
Congratulations to our new 2016 Council members: Julianne Golden, Bruce Lande, Leann Pace and Marc Shideler. The new members will be invited to attend the next two Council meetings.

Many thanks to our outgoing Council members: Zach Baker, Kathy Knecht, Jeanie Saphar and Carolyn Wiley who will serve through the end of 2015.

PLEASE TURN OUT THE LIGHTS & Lock the Doors!

Just a reminder that it is the responsibility of everyone to make sure the lights are all off and the doors are locked, especially if you are the last one to leave the building (or if you even suspect you might be the last one). We are trying hard to keep our electric cost down and to make sure our building is secure. There is no one person who is designated to do this. It is everyone’s responsibility as a member of Epiphany. Thanks for your help.

Becoming a foster parent requires great commitment and sacrifice. It is truly a special calling for many individuals, but not everyone is meant to be a foster parent. Yet, there are ways everyone can support foster parents, the children in their care, and the foster care workers of Lutheran Services Carolinas.

Please consider partnering with the LSC ministry by providing gifts or cards on holidays and birthdays; hosting a Christmas party or recognition event for foster care families; providing gift cards or gently used clothing for new placements; or inviting foster care workers to speak to your congregation. This is just a small sampling of how your congregation can be involved with LSC’s foster care program. If interested in these ideas or to discuss other opportunities, contact Kelly Scherer with LSC at 704-426-9849 or kscherer@LSCarolinas.net.

It has been an interesting few weeks since I arrived at Lutheran Church of the Epiphany! I have really enjoyed the time we’ve spent together in worship, and getting to know the other members of staff has been a pleasure.

I’d like to extend a special thanks to all of you who have gone out of your way to make me feel so welcome here. I can tell that the Spirit is alive and well in this church! Please do continue to remind me of your names as we encounter one another, and I’ll have all of you stored in long-term memory soon!

Also, many thanks are due to the choir members who stayed after rehearsal on October 7th to help with the installation of approximately 200 organ pipes that had been recently re-voiced. Jim Henricks, Julianne Golden, Nancy Grush, Bruce Lande, Joe Middleton, and Lew Saphar all helped prove the adage that many hands make light work! Thank you all for your help, and if I missed any names, I apologize.

I have also been amazed in my short time here to witness first-hand David Pillsbury’s level of dedication to the organ. It is a rare thing indeed for a congregation to be blessed with their own in-house organ curator! Knowing full well that pipe organs are “living” breathing machines that require continuous care and maintenance, it is difficult for me to imagine what a huge financial savings David’s tireless work has provided to the church over the years.

I look forward to many more Sundays with you when we can all sing God’s praises together. I mentioned in the last newsletter that Karen Brown told me how well this congregation sings. My expectations were fairly high, but you all really surprised me on my first Sunday. What a delight and a privilege to be leading a congregation in such rich and full singing...I must admit I have bragged to several of my Organist colleagues about how wonderfully my new congregation sings.

Please don’t hesitate to contact me if you have any interest in singing with the choir or ringing with the handbells. Both of these groups already have a lot of talented members, and would gladly welcome any newcomers who want to join us in praising God through music. My email address is: music@epiphanyws.org

Let’s all make a joyful noise together!

Patryck
This is in response to a RAKe:

Dear Parish Staff,

Please accept this donation in honor of your co-worker who “paid it forward” and purchased dinner for us at Zoe’s last week. I hope you will use this donation to further your ministry.

Fondly,
Jay & Becky Perkinson

We received notes of gratitude for our donations from:
Crisis Control Ministry
Lutheran Services Carolinas

**GIFT OF THE MONTH ITEMS FOR NOVEMBER**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EECC - Cheerios, Napkins, 3 &amp; 5 oz. cups, 100% Fruit Juice, Baby Wipes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRISIS CONTROL MINISTRY - Saltine crackers; sugar or whole wheat flour in two-pound bags</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAMARITAN MINISTRIES - Ground coffee (regular), sugar, disposable razors, hand lotion and soap (sample sizes), high efficiency laundry detergent packs/pods</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RONALD McDonald HOUSE - Single serve meals, snacks, fresh fruit, and breakfast items; milk, creamer; sugar; paper towels; disposable hot and cold cups; Preemie clothes and diapers.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRINITY GLEN - Snacks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IBRAHIM FOOD PANTRY - Shampoo, laundry soap, dish soap (all available at Dollar Tree)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RAKē Teams

Many of you have been asking what's going on with this and how do we get involved? First of all, you need to sign up in the narthex on the large pad of paper we have on an easel. Secondly, you need to pick up a RAKē packet located on the table beside the easel. Then, please pick up a pack (10) of the RAKē cards. When you complete a random act of kindness and you think it appropriate, leave a card for them to see upon their return or if you buy someone a meal, give them a card. There will always be more available at the church.

**How do the teams work?**

There are four teams as of right now. Each team has a captain. IF your team decides to do something as a group - like rake leaves - the captain will be in touch with the team to schedule the event. Feel free to do as many of these events as you'd like. When your team schedules an event, please let Ashley know when and where you'll be so pictures can be taken. The event absolutely doesn't need to be planned by the team captain. If you'd like to get the team together, just text, call, or email them.

**Getting Started**

As you're looking through your RAKē booklet, you will see numerous opportunities to be kind. Some things you already do each and every day. Others are a little more complicated and involved. After you complete an activity, put your initials by it and the date. And you're done. This helps you keep track of what you've done and what you'd like to do! There is plenty of space in the booklet for you to add activities. Just try to keep track of these things as best as you're able.

This is an ongoing thing--don't hesitate to reach out to Ashley with questions or new opportunities to be kind!

Be the Change!

Tuesday, December 8th we will have our Christmas party at 6:30 pm at Jeanie Saphar's home. We will be putting together stockings for Lippard Lodge. Please bring an appetizer or dessert.

Dorothy Circle will be meeting on Tuesday, November 10th at 6:30 in the Campus Ministry room at church. Lisa Nichols, EECC Director, will provide our program. Please bring an appetizer or dessert.

All women are invited to join us, especially members of other Circles. It is a great time for women not involved in a Circle to find out what WELCA circles are all about. Please come and join the fun.
November Servers

Altar Guild

Connie Queen

Congregational Care

Dottie Peoples and Chris Schultz (meals)
Darlene Martin (cards)

Head Usher

Mike Spain and Scott Tredwell

10:00

Assisting Ministers

11/1 Bill Flichman
11/8 Karl Florian
11/15 Jim Henricks
11/22 Arnold Herbison
11/29 Deni Thrasher

Acolytes

11/1 Catherine Wind
11/8 Ellie Maltzahn
11/15 Lauren Maltzahn
11/22 McKenna Maltzahn
11/29 Emily Nicholson

Lector

11/1 Judy Mountjoy
11/8 Clint Moyer
11/15 Leann Pace
11/22 Gretchen Pfitzner
11/29 Jackie Pierson

Communion Assistants

11/1 Phil Golden and Larry Grush
11/8 Mike & Laura Spain and Dave Hinshaw
11/15 Shelley Hood and Elizabeth Horton
11/22 Norm & Kathy Knecht
11/29 Chuck Kraft and Kelly Lichtenhan

Greeters

11/1 Bill & Lillian Flichman
11/8 Paul & Shirley Halvorson
11/15 Dave & Jennie Hinshaw
11/22 Bert & Dot Joines
11/29 Norm & Kathy Knecht

Flowers

11/1 Sue Pester
11/8 Jack & Sue Bowers
11/15 Sarah Lischer
11/22 Open
11/29 Charles & Lisa Snowden

Sanctuary Light

11/1 Janice Barnett
11/8 Patti Kaluzne
11/15 Bruce Lande
11/22 Mickey Miller
11/29 Open
November Birthdays

Debra Stewart  11/1
Carole Witte  11/6
Scott Lichtenhan  11/7
Jared Hunter  11/8
Lindsey Finley  11/9
Alyssa Darstein  11/11
Bobbie Martin  11/11
Jeff Voletto  11/11
Griffin Sloop  11/12
Evelyn Williams 11/13
Laura Canrobert 11/14
Troy Pressley 11/15
Jim Glaunert 11/17
Jane Lyerly 11/17
Dan Meckley  11/17
Wanda Rabb  11/17
Mychael Williams 11/21
Jenny Vann 11/25
Joshua Golden  11/26
Charles Snowden 11/26
Diane Deal  11/28
Emily Nicholson 11/28
Jack Bowers 11/29
James Henricks 11/29
Lorna McLeod  11/29
Kylie Stewart  11/29
Larry Grush  11/30
Patrick Mullane 11/30

November Baptisms

Doris Kent  11/1
Ardel Meisinger 11/1
Diana Stindt  11/1
Maxwell Bullers  11/2
Enya DuBois  11/3
Jordan Baker  11/4
Jennifer Henricks 11/5
AJ Bronk  11/6
Connor Forrest 11/8
Lily Forrest  11/8
Katrina Pfitzner 11/8
Emily Matthews 11/12
Brenna McCormick 11/12
Joanna Brubaker 11/14
Julia Nicholson 11/20
Robert Walters 11/22
Catherine Wind 11/25
Christina Kraft 11/26
Don Witte  11/26

Leaders of church & state, especially
Bishop Elizabeth Eaton  President Obama
Bishop Timothy Smith  Governor McCrory
Pastor Laura Wind  Mayor Joines

Our sister congregation and our missionary in Mexico
The people of Munpi Parish, Namibia and Pastor David Brondos

Active duty military personnel
An Bunjang  Randal Middleton
Jay Collette  Annie Schultz
Sam LeVon  David Schultz

Those who rejoice, especially
Jim & Karen Brown at the birth of their granddaughter, Avery Grace.

Family & friends of the congregation in need
Alfred Alson
Carolyn Ballard
Beverly Bartolomei
Wendy Bassinger
Jim Berg
Louis Bryant
Anita Check
Bridget McMinn Chin
Justin Clark
George Conrad
David Dana
Jeff Dimmock
Marvelee Eckard
Joe Friday
Jerry Funk
Destani Garrett
Carolyn Gilden
Derrick Gilmore
Tom Goco
Ellen Golden
Eric Grush
Corrie Haynes
David Henry
Kimberly Herrin
Judy Hester
William Hudson
Michael Killian III
Annie Landis
Beth Layhe
George Lippard
Alexandru Mesa
Crystal Middleton-Spiak
Randy Miller
Bill Mock
Allison Lippard Morris
Sarah Morris
Judy Mullan
Yvette Myers
Kevin Oldland
Robert Peak
Alice Pierson
Lemien Pierson
Carolyn Plater
Alice Seppell
Elle Smith
Lydia Sparrow
Zelda Swanson
Pegge Swicegood
Nicole Williams
Jim Wollweber

Members in need
Zach Baker
Jim Cochrane
Kathleen Fink
Marge Leister
Jim Lippard
Kathleen Malone
Jean Mock
Susan Pester
Carl Schlager
Jane Stribling
Verdell Thomas
Harold Williams
Wiley Yarborough

Our Christian love and sympathy to the family and friends of
Tobias Andrew Benedict
George Lewis Sinkoff
Jerry Galewczyk

Barbara Coley, Forest Heights
Senior Living Community
Mary Helen Fisher, Trinity Elms
William Garris, Independence Village
Frances Lanier, Brighton Gardens
Helen Preston, Homestead Hills
Martee Umberger,
Trinity Elms Health & Rehab

Make a Note

Lindsey Finley:
New Email

Kevin & Anne Forrest:
Address, Phone, Email

Mark & Lisa Lane:
Address, Phone, Email

Michael & Karrie Mabry:
Address, Phone, Email

Kathleen Malone:
Address, Phone, Email

Alex Saphar:
New Address

Martha Stahl:
Address, Phone, Email

Marty Wylie:
Address & Phone

Please call the church office for information.

Bob Huber
Cole Lippard
Rick Thrasher
Bob Walker

Homebound Members
Kevin & Anne Forrest  11/1
Toney & Greta Roberts  11/14

We wish you many more years of happiness!

On October 11th we were pleased to receive the following new members into our congregation:

Kevin, Anne, Connor & Lily Grace Forrest
Mark & Lisa Lane
Michael, Karrie, Hannah, Mickey & Abby Mabry
Kathleen Malone
Martha Stahl
Marty Wylie

Look for these new members so you can give them a big Epiphany welcome!

Join us for "Tuesday Music Night" every Tuesday evening. The performance time is 6:30-8:00. We will be featuring local musicians performing all styles of music from bluegrass and blues to country, gospel and rock and roll. The 4th Tuesday of the month will feature an extended Gospel Segment with over ten Gospel numbers by various local performers. Join us!

We welcomed our newest confirmants on Reformation Sunday, October 25th:

Emily Grace Matthews
Rachel Rebecca Nicholson
Luke Kenyon Sherman
Tyler Jensen Toborg
Catherine Elizabeth Wind

Congratulations to Jim & Karen Brown on the birth of their granddaughter, Avery Grace.
The Real Connection

Oftentimes, I find myself thinking about God. Thinking about his characteristics, attributes, etc... Sometimes, I even wonder “what is God thinking?” It's an odd thought process that I have on occasion and catch myself being very “heady” about my spirituality. Other times, when I'm deeply connected to God, I find myself almost literally feeling his spirit inside of me. That may come listening to a song, hearing a prayer, or even being in conversation with someone about what's going on in their life. I call this part of my spirituality being “hearty.”

There have been times in my life that I'm deeply committed to making sure that my head and my heart are of one accord. Meaning, I'd like the two to connect. My head knowledge of who God is and how He thinks of me and others around me is vast. My heart knowledge of who God is and how He thinks of me is lacking if I may be honest with you. It's easy for me to sit in a worship service and think in my head about all of the wonderful things happening around me, sing songs about God's love, and hear prayers as we lift up our community into God's loving hands knowing He's going to “break the chains.” What's NOT easy for me is to sit in a worship service and take to my heart the same exact things. To take heed of what the pastor is preaching on and apply it to my daily living. To sing hymns of God's grace and receive it into my heart as it being for me, too! And then, to walk out of the church building – knowing God has a plan and purpose for us all and to listen carefully to what He may be saying to my heart. THAT my friends is the real connection.

Sometimes, as a person who is on staff at a church, I can get wrapped up in the minutia of what I call “day to day-ness.” That is, making sure all of the T's are crossed and I's dotted. How many people attend this? Who's in charge of that? Are the lights bright enough? Is something too loud? When's staff meeting? And the list goes on and on... Those are great things to be aware of and incredibly necessary when it comes right down to it! But, my real connection to God comes when I can slow down for a few moments and be mindful of who God says He is – and how I know him to be – and connect my head and heart for a while.

How do we connect our head and heart? How do we become a passionate follower of Jesus Christ? How can we connect with each other on a deeper level in order to challenge our own faith and spirituality? In my life, I have found that gathering together with smaller groups of people with the same goal in mind helps immensely. Gathering with like-minded individuals who are all seeking the same thing is powerful. So we have some ways for you to do that already here at Epiphany. I'm always trying to come up with new opportunities also.

My challenge to you this month is to connect your head knowledge with your heart knowledge. To take what you know in your head and move it to your heart. To get passionate about God's heart for you. I know it's a huge step - it's mind blowing...and that's a good thing. Let's see if we can get past our mind, and into our heart and hear what God may be saying to us.

Feel free to reach out to me if I can be of assistance!

Sunday, November 1 @ 6:00-8:00 “Sunday Night Live”
Dinner Provided
(FLY, LYFE)

Sunday November 15 @ 7:00 LYFE
“Doughnuts and Devos”
Meet at Krispy Kreme on Stratford
(LYFE)

Saturday, November 21 @ Time TBD “Service Saturday”
Meet at church
(FLY, LYFE)

Sunday November 29 @ 6:00 “5th Sunday Fellowship”
Thanksgiving leftovers feast
(FLY, LYFE)
Bishop Smith’s Reflections—September 29, 2015

“What are you and the North Carolina Synod going to do about the Muslim threat?”
That was one of the very first questions asked of me in a large public (church) gathering my very first week in office. I hadn’t anticipated this question that night, but since then it has come at me from numerous places in our synod, including in some form from people, leaders in this church, whom I admire and respect.

I have received perhaps dozens of attached email videos and Facebook posts that intentionally stir up the second-most powerful and motivating emotion in the cosmos—fear—supposing some sort of worldwide Muslim takeover plot. Several even suggest that the “supposed” Syrian refugee crisis is actually part of a scheme to infiltrate the world with more Muslims who will eventually brutally rule the western world with Sharia law. The world, Christendom, America, and our families are at extreme and imminent risk, they suggest. Islam, they imply, is evil, ruthless, and insidiously scheming to undo us.

ISIS, from whom so many are fleeing in Syria and elsewhere, is evil in the same way that absolute fundamentalism in any flavor of religion will eventually move toward the extremes: “In order for me to be right, you, therefore, must be wrong; for me to be blessed, you, therefore, must be cursed; for me to be saved, you, therefore, must be damned; and finally, for me to live, you, therefore, must die.”

Christian crusades (and doesn’t Matthew 28’s Great Commission command us to “make disciples of all nations?), Jewish Zionism, Muslim jihadists all live at the extremes. They capitalize on our second-strongest motivator, fear. Do any of us, of any religious flavor, want to be a part of any religion that ultimately has to kill those who disagree with us? Including appeasing our consciences by turning away millions of Syrian refugees, two-thirds of whom are women and children, by demonizing them?

I will leave it to the politicians and military authorities to discern how best to resist jihadism, but I want you to imagine your own five-year-old son, grandson, nephew, or neighbor, face-down on the beach, drowned in a desperate attempt to flee religious extremism. Imagine that boy is Christian, American, and having to flee his own state here in this very country. In your best self, would you not hope that boy and his family had somewhere safe to go, somewhere to build a new life? And if you could help that boy, his mother, his family, with that would you not, in your best self, welcome them?

Fear is so very paralyzing and powerful. But it is not ultimate as a motivator. Love is. Scripturally speaking, hate isn’t the opposite of love, though it is close because hate is what fear evokes. The opposite of love is fear. 1 John 4:18 tells us that “there is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear.” God is love. The freedom of the Gospel is freedom from fear of the ultimate power of sin and death, free to give ourselves, and thus change the world, in love. Long before even Jesus, our forebears in the faith of Israel valued hospitality to and welcoming of strangers as a core value and necessity.

So back to the original question: What am I and the NC Synod going to do about all this? We’re going to advocate for and participate in hands-on, dollars-in ways for the resettlement of Syrian refugees and others displaced by power-hungry jihadists blaspheming their own religion by their acts. I have been in contact with Ted Goins of Lutheran Services Carolinas (LSC), who is working closely with Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS) to help us arrange congregation by congregation, conference by conference, the resettlement of refugee families.

There is much bureaucratic and political red tape to sift through, but we will respond by helping the least of these—the displaced, the homeless, the hungry. I will be encouraging and facilitating you and your congregations during subsequent months and years to work specifically through LSC and LIRS to help with this immense resettlement program. Please refer to these LIRS “talking points” as you address this issue in your congregations.

As Jesus keeps saying during this month’s lectionary readings from Mark, we’ll find ourselves—our rhythm, our purpose, our hope, our life as this church—in losing ourselves for the sake of others. They won’t know we are Christians by our swords, bullets, and bombs. Not by our panic-driven emails and fear-mongering Facebook posts. They’ll know we are Christians by our love. If that’s not who we are, let me out.

Your partner in serving,
Bishop Tim Smith
Bishop Smith’s Reflections - October 13, 2015

It’s not recognized as a liturgical season, but it’s here in most of our congregations nevertheless: “Stewardship Season.” It usually coincides with another important but less visible season known as “Budget Time.” For many, neither is among the more enjoyable or inspiring periods of our church year.

As a young pastor, I truly loathed that season, in part because if I pushed the least little bit about money, people pushed back even harder. “That’s all the church cares about—the Almighty Dollar!” “Do we have to talk about money ALL the time!!??” “Yeah, sure, that little preacher wants us to give more to the church because he thinks he needs and deserves a raise. Well, somebody tell him, in the REAL world….” “Preacher, we really like you, but people are starting to talk. We’re not used to hearing about money from the pulpit, and the Ladies’ Sunday School class has told us to ask you to stop.”

Mark’s Gospel keeps hammering home that servanthood is what makes us great. How does that apply to our money? Well, money itself has no intrinsic value. It’s only as good as that for which it can be exchanged. What if we thought about money (and time and talent) as “stored servanthood?” What if we looked at our checkbook registers and credit card statements and online banking and asked, “How am I releasing what is entrusted to me as a follower and servant of Christ?” Or not, as the case may be.

Your congregation, the NC Synod, the ELCA, the three expressions of this church, all need money to operate so that they can release what you entrust to them in our common missional service. Even the utility bills, the salaries, the lawn service, and the property insurance serve that end. Just a few more thoughts to ponder:

1. Of all the sayings of Jesus, the top subject is “the kingdom of God,” but clearly in second place is money. Jesus thought how we use it is an important gauge of our spiritual health. When people complain that I’m talking about money, I tell them to take it up with Jesus.

2. Whereas many charities—universities, worthy medical research, and helping organizations, etc.—have an international donor base of hundreds of thousands if not millions of people, only congregational members contribute to their congregation, and only congregations support the synod, and only synods support the ELCA. That is to say, if we don’t make it happen, it isn’t going to happen.

3. Money is neither good nor evil. It’s all about what we do (or don’t do) with it. Money isn’t the root of all evil, but the love of money is. Stuff. The more we get, the more we want.

If you find the Church asking you to share your money offensive, consider this: Almost anywhere you go in this culture, some sort of financial transaction is simply assumed and accepted. Your doctor or your lawyer, your children’s teachers (private schools, or through taxes) require money for their noble services. If you don’t pay, you can expect a threatening call from a collection agency. Though the church is not a “billing” organization, we get thrown under the bus when we ask. Have you complained to anyone lately that you went to the grocery store and loaded your cart, and the clerk had the nerve, focused as she is on the almighty dollar, to ask you for money?

Your government (“Caesar”), your hairdresser, your financial adviser, your favorite restaurant, the department store, the airlines and the gas stations ALL will come after you, “guns blazing,” if you avail yourselves of their services and don’t pay.

Your utility companies will all send you a bill each month. The church won’t. You can make an appointment for counseling and pastoral conversation, you can show up at worship each week, you can participate in numerous educational and artistic programs, and you won’t get a bill.

Your pastor and lay ministers will come see you in the hospital, but you won’t get a bill in the mail or online from them. We will baptize your babies, bury your parents, and go to great lengths to make your place of worship beautiful and comfortable. We’ll also feed the hungry, uplift and shelter the elderly, respond to disasters, and support the ministries of the larger Church. The synod will handle your call process even if you’ve sent nothing our way in years! No bill for any of it! We just say, “We need you. Will you help?”

Sure, the church has bills to pay, like anyone else. With too little money, our mission and service is diminished. But we won’t demand a ticket price to the sanctuary or to the altar. We just ask that you be true to your need to give and support the work of God through the Church in the world.

It’s your responsibility, ultimately, what you give or not. It’s our responsibility to ask you and to lift up the opportunity to share. I’m asking you to share with your congregation and your congregation a call to support financially the ministries for which we are stronger together than we are apart; namely, the synod and the ELCA. We’ll be better off on every level when we share!

Gratefully,
Bishop Tim Smith
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sun</th>
<th>Mon</th>
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| 1/1 | All Saints Day  
Daylight Savings Ends  
8:45 am Spiritual Gifts  
8:45 am New Testament  
11:15 am Stewardship Lunch  
1:30-4:30 pm Chinese School  
6:30 pm Sunday Night Live (LYFE & FLY) | 6 | Toy Builders  
11 am Bible Study  
6:15 pm LSM  
6:30 pm Tuesday Music | Staff Meeting  
Noon Communion & Healing  
Noon Threads of Love  
7 pm Choir Rehearsal | Girls Scouts (FH)  
7 pm OWLS at Trinity Glen | 6 | 7 |
| 8 | Pledging at the Altar  
8:45 am Spiritual Gifts  
8:45 am New Testament  
11:15 am Casting Stones  
1:30-4:30 pm Chinese School | 9 | Handbells  
6:30 pm Endowment  
7 pm Exec. Comm. | 10 | Toy Builders  
10 am Mary-Martha Cir.  
11 am Bible Study  
6:15 pm LSM  
7 pm Dorothy Circle (CM)  
6:30 pm Tuesday Music | Veteran's Day  
11 am Staff Meeting  
7 pm Choir Rehearsal | 12 | Nora Deal Cir.  
6 pm Girl Scouts (CM)  
7 pm Finance  
7 pm Esther Circle | 13 | 14 |
| 15 | 8:45 am Spiritual Gifts  
8:45 am New Testament  
11:15 am Casting Stones  
11:15 am Budget Summit  
1:30-4:30 pm Chinese Sch.  
7 pm LYFE "Donuts & Devos" | 16 | Handbells  
6 pm EECC Committee  
7 pm Congregation Council | 17 | Toy Builders  
11 am Bible Study  
6:15 pm LSM  
6:30 pm Tuesday Music | 18 | EECC Chapel  
11 am Staff Meeting  
Noon Threads of Love  
7 pm New Light! Rehearsal | 19 | Girls Scouts (FH)  
7 pm Epiphany Readers | 20 | 21 | Youth Service Saturday  
10 am Quilting Group |
| 22 | NewLight!  
Christ the King  
8:45 am Spiritual Gifts  
8:45 am New Testament  
11:15 am Casting Stones  
1:30-4:30 pm Chinese School | 23 | Handbells  
6 pm TNT! | 24 | Toy Builders  
11 am Bible Study  
6:15 pm LSM  
6:30 pm Tuesday Music | 25 | EECC Chapel  
10 am Staff Meeting  
7 pm Choir Rehearsal | 26 | Thanksgiving  
Office Closed | 27 | Office Closed | 28 | 29 | 1st Sunday of Advent  
No E:Faith  
6 pm 5th Sunday Fellowship (LYFE & FLY) Leftover Thanksgiving Feast & Game Night | 30 | Handbells | 30 | Every Sunday  
8:45 am Encounter:Faith  
10 am Worship |
2015 Congregation Council
Kathy Knecht, President
Zach Baker, Vice President
Marc Shideler, Treasurer
Carolyn Wiley, Secretary
Karl Florian
Dave Hinshaw
Melissa Maltzahn
Gretchen Pfitzner
Cory Phillips
Jim Pierson
Santiago Saldaña
Jeanie Saphar
Charlene Wellborn
Laura Wind, Pastor

UPCOMING WELCA DATES:

November 10th
Mary-Martha Circle
at 10:00am at the Church
Dorothy Circle
at 6:30pm at the Church
(Campus Ministry room)

November 12th
Nora Deal Circle
at 11:30am at the Church
Esther Circle
at 7:00pm at the Church

December 2nd
Senior Advent Luncheon
(hosted by Nora Deal)
at Noon at the Church

December 8th
Mary-Martha Christmas Luncheon
at 11:00am at the Church
Dorothy Christmas Party
at 6:30pm at Jeanie Saphar’s

World Community Day
On the first Friday in November, many communities will celebrate World Community Day, a program of Church Women United. This year, the focus will be on “Our Journey Together.”

As women from different cultural backgrounds come together, we share our stories of faith, all guided by our Lord and Savior. Lifting our voices in prayer, praise and worship demonstrates Christ’s reconciling love to all peoples. As Christians, we are neither foreigners nor strangers, but are fellow members of the household of God.

World Community Day will be celebrated on Friday, November 6, 2015 at Knollwood Baptist Church, 330 Knollwood Street, Winston-Salem, NC. Bible Study/Worship Celebration: 11:30am (Registration: 11:00am). Dr. Bob Setzer will lead the Bible study.

Thankofferings
For more than 100 years, Lutheran women have carried out the tradition of collecting Thankofferings at home and in community to give thanks for blessings in the ordinary and extraordinary moments of life. Your Thankofferings, which support the ongoing work of the churchwide expression of our organization, have long been the backbone of our ministry together. In fiscal 2014, WELCA’s Thankofferings added up to $839,438.

As we prepare to collect our Thankofferings during our November Circle meetings, here is a prayer to use:

Creator God, you call us into relationship with you and with all of creation. In Jesus you gave us mercy beyond our understanding and showed us how to live with grace toward each other. Your blessings are like the dew in the morning and the stars in the heavens, not to be counted but to be received with thanksgiving and generously shared. Keep us moving always towards you and our neighbor, eager to share and receive. In the name of Christ we pray. Amen.

Sisters in Christ,
Carolyn Wiley, President, Epiphany Expression, WELCA