

Trinity Times

November 2008

From Pastor Crown

Job uttered in the midst of his suffering: "The LORD gives and the LORD takes away; blessed be the name of the LORD." After Job had lost his oxen, sheep, camels, servants, and family, he still blessed the name of the LORD. Even when his health had been compromised, and his wife had turned against his faith, and his friends had little to offer, he would not curse the LORD (Job 1-2). Whether Job abounded in possessions or had nothing, he still blessed God because faith holds onto God regardless of the personal experience with temporal treasures. Faith still cries out to the LORD in the midst of need, trusting that He will respond, not because we deserve anything, and not because God is compelled to hear us, but because faith believes that God has mercy. And thus thanksgiving looks to the Blessor, the one who gives out the gifts, regardless of what kind of gifts or how much of the gifts He gives out. Faith cries to the LORD, and is willing to receive anything from the LORD's hands and lips. And after the gift has been received, joy is produced in the lives of those given to – one returns to thank the Giver.

What happens when the gifts are no longer there, or not as plentiful as before? Will we succumb to the temptation not to bless God, and instead curse God for His supposed lack of caring? If a recession descends upon us, if parents die, if house burns down, if health fails, will we still be thankful? What happens to God in that situation? Has He abandoned us? Has Jesus abdicated His seat at the right hand of the Father and retreated to the tomb? Has He cleared His table or emptied the font of its water? Has the Holy Spirit revoked his guarantee of life and resurrection?

The less often that faith looks outward and gives thanks, the more often faith (becoming then self-sufficiency – faith in myself) looks inward and desires to take credit for what it receives. If we were to remain silent about who gives the blessings to us, would we not say that we have deserved them or earned them? Yet you never hear in Scripture, "Be thankful because you are better or better off than somebody else," but you will read, "Be thankful in every circumstance." Not

because you have enough or more than enough, but because you can do all things through Christ who gives you the strength. And so we see that giving thanks goes hand in hand with praying "give us this day our daily bread." For when we pray, "give us this day our daily bread," we are also praying: "Make my faith sufficient to receive what You give, and enable me to acknowledge Your fatherly goodness."

When the former leper prostrated himself at the Lord Jesus' feet, he teaches us that thanksgiving confesses faith in Jesus and how faith rejoices in the gifts given through Him – healing before God, a new life, access to God through Jesus Christ (Luke 17). Likewise, when Paul related to the Romans his own struggles of the faith, he ended the chapter with "Thanks be to God for He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!" (Romans 7). And thus we respond after being fed at the holy communion, with a bounty far richer than earthly fare and with a food that does not spoil or perish: "O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good." With Job, the Samaritan leper, and Paul we confess our dependence upon the one to whom belongs all glory and honor and might. For the gift of daily bread and for the gift of heavenly bread, we offer our hymns and prayers, service and adoration. He has made us His own, that we may live under His gracious reign and serve Him, and He keeps us in the one true faith, promising to us the resurrection and eternal life. "All which it is our duty to thank and praise, serve and obey Him. This is most certainly true."

A Letter from the Seminarian our Congregation Supports

Thank you for adopting me as your seminarian. My name is Neil Carlson, and I am in my second year. I am originally from Lima, Ohio, which is about an hour and a half from Ft. Wayne Seminary. Location played a large role in picking which seminary to attend. I have a history degree from the University of Toledo (Toledo Ohio).

After undergraduate I got married and entered the work force. While my wife finished her degree in education, we had two children - a daughter who is now five and a son, now two.

Abby, my wife, works at a preschool here in Ft. Wayne. She has many close friends here, mostly other Sem. wives. She is very happy here. It is close enough to home, yet far enough away. Her parents and mine both live in Lima, so we make frequent trips home to visit grandparents.

Beka, my daughter just started kindergarten a few weeks ago. She is going to Our Hope Lutheran Church and School. That is my field church, the church I am assigned to, where I help with the services. Beka likes school very much, but comes home tired.

Matthew, my son, goes to daycare at Our Hope. He is known for two things there - one, being the crier and two, being the hugger. He cries more than any other kid in his class, and he hugs all the parents as they drop off or pick up their kids.

In Christ,
Neil Carlson

A Report from our Hikers

Donn Parker

Vic and I had an unusual hike on Monday, October 5. The usual Monday hikers Ray Weikal and Burt Endsley were busy elsewhere. We drove all the way over to Portola Redwoods State Park. That took about an hour up Page Mill Road from our park-and-ride parking lot starting point, across Skyline Highway, and down the other side where it became Alpine road. The route beyond Skyline is even more tortuously full of curves than Page Mill. We found that we had chosen an unusually fog-free day as we gazed out to see the far off ocean. We passed a large organic vineyard and spotted a fox, or at least his bushy tail, as it dashed across the road ahead of us.

The Park is typical with a gate requiring \$5 for seniors to enter. It has a ranger office containing maps, nature displays, a gift shop, restrooms, and many camp sites nearby. We finally started our hike about 10am from the ranger office with a map with limited details and

no trail names.

We started on the Sequoia Nature trail according to the signs. This took us past both stately old growth and second growth redwood groves and past one burned out tree that was 62 feet in circumference that started growing from a seedling during the time that Jesus Christ walked the other side of the earth. The area had been burned in a fire set by a camper in 1989. The area was totally quiet even muffling our foot falls on the soft, fir-strewn ground that never sees the direct light of the sun and still damp from the rain two days before. It was so quiet that we felt compelled to talk in whispers. We came to a pond fed by the Pescadero Creek and surprised a Great Blue Heron that violated the quiet with the noise of his huge flapping wings.

After crossing the creek on a portable aluminum bridge that is removed during the rainy winter season, we started a steep climb (always expected in Vic's hikes) on the well-groomed trail that took us to its termination at the Iverson trail. We turned right expecting that it would return us to the main road and ranger office. The trail went steeply down, and surprise, surprise, we were again at the aluminum bridge. What happened? How did we end up where we started? We retraced our travel back to the Sequoia trail junction and continued on the Iverson trail in the other direction as though we had turned left on to it from the Sequoia trail. This led us very steeply up again and, according to the signs we were headed to Tiptoe Falls and the ancient Iverson cabin site.

Finally our time ran out, and our feet were sore; so we turned back and headed for the ranger office. The office was open, and we talked to the wife of the head ranger who was tending the office and store. After telling her our route, she cleared up the mystery. It was not the same aluminum bridge we had crossed. It was a second one farther down the same Pescadero Creek. We were certain that it was the original bridge in the identical setting as the first one, but we were fooled.

Movie Review of W.

By Donn Parker

Suppose that you and your relatives and friends were the subject of a biographical movie, and the producer, director, writer, actors, and cameraman were antagonistic to Christianity and politically opposite to your positions. Suppose that they found and emphasized in the movie many of the sinful things you have done in your life, the poor decisions that you made in hind sight without sufficient information, and good decisions that had unintended bad consequences, and then ignored most everything else good that you have accomplished in your life. How do you think that you would look to the viewer in such a movie especially when the cameraman filmed with a camera six inches in front of the actors' faces most of the time filling the screen with every little flaw? Of course, you are not a public figure like the president of the United States and fair game for criticism.

However, this is what seemed to happen in a new movie by Oliver Stone called, "W." about President G. W. Bush. The reviewers generally thought it was not up to the quality of his previous movies such as Nixon. It was a little slow and ponderous in the middle, where I fell asleep several times. Admittedly, Stone did include Bush's conversion to Christianity and how this helped him give up his wild lifestyle. But his talks with his pastor were on the edge of being condescending and sarcastic.

If you don't like President Bush, go and see this movie to vindicate your dislike, and you will have an enjoyable time. If you like Bush or have sympathy for the problems that he faced during his 8 years in office, or you like to see balanced and valid depictions of important people, stay away from this movie.

This and That

Pastor Samuel Schuldheisz (vicar at Trinity 2006-2007) wrote an award-winning essay for LCMS World Relief and Human Care. He concentrated on C.F.W. Walther and Wilhelm Lohe in his essay, *History Worth Repeating: C.F.W. Walther and Wilhelm Lohe, on Mercy and the Church*. The essay will appear in *Toward a Theology of Mercy* booklet; the booklet will be

free and also available as a PDF download at www.lcms.org/worldrelief

Ms. Karen Gurske

On September 28, Karen Gurske, the daughter of Bill and Ilona Gurske, was confirmed at Trinity Evangelical Lutheran. She completed her years of catechesis by presenting a thoughtful and well-written essay on the Apostles Creed to the adult Bible class on September 21. The text chosen as a remembrance for her confirmation is 1 Corinthians 1:30,31.

Equipping to Share

On Sunday, November 16th, from 12:30 2:30 p.m. the Board of Missions & Evangelism will host a lunch and a practice session for sharing the Christian faith in a variety of situations. Yes, it is God's Word, His Spirit, and His will, but how do I do it? You will be given a new perspective on witnessing to Christ and prepared through the practice sessions. Come and experience the peace and confidence of being equipped to share.

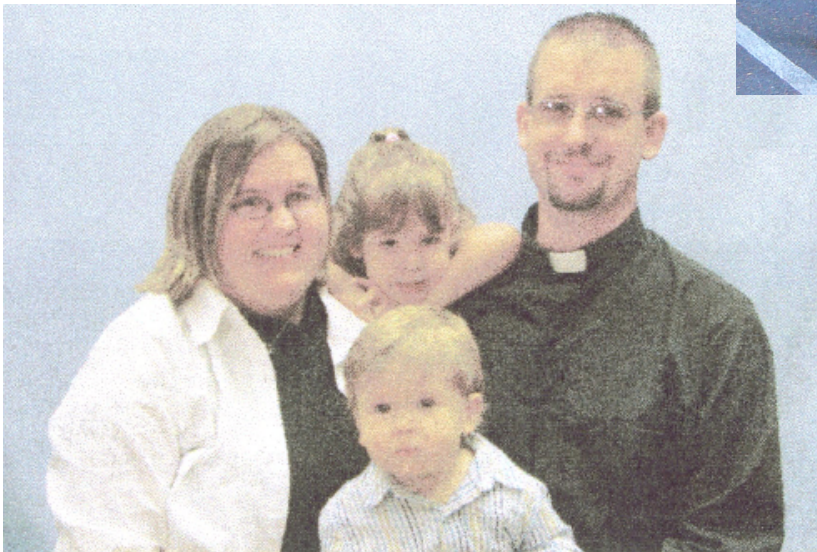
PHOTO ALBUM



Karen Gurskey
Confirmed September 28, 2008



Vic and Donn, the intrepid hikers



The Carlson Family

The Hikers - Vic and Donn