

Pastor's Ponderings:

I love sports. I enjoy watching them and I enjoy playing them. For that reason I find sports analogies to be helpful and informative. The same is true when it comes to issues of faith. In 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 relates faith to sports. Specifically Paul talks about the training of athletes for the races they run and compares it to the struggles of our life of faith and the “prize” we are all seeking, a life with God. Athletes need to train in order to be able to compete effectively. I am reminded of this every time I compete in a fencing tournament. At some point in nearly every tournament I reach the point where my body is just not able to do what I need it to do, because I have not practiced enough.

I believe faith is very similar to this. I believe that if we do not “work out” spiritually we will find ourselves in situations in our life where our faith is inadequate to the challenges that are before. These times are not instances where God has abandoned us; they are times where we are just not in a place where we can access God. A life of faith takes work. Anyone who has suffered a tragedy in their life knows how hard it is to have faith in the midst of great sorrow. Anyone who has worked with the poor and the needy and seen the plight of those in pain knows how hard it is to have faith in the face of such overwhelming need. On the average Sunday morning it is easy to have faith. Our average Sundays are not the “competitions” of faith and any runner can tell you that once a week is not enough of a work out to truly be in shape.

Our challenge as a congregation, as followers of Christ is to try and be in shape spiritually. I think it is done through working out more than once a week. For that reason you will find several articles in the newsletter that encourage each of us to try and have more regular spiritual practices, such as doing a daily devotional or being a part of a small group. Both of these are ways that we can take our faith life beyond Sunday and seek to grow in faith throughout the week.

Paul seems to imply in his writing that our salvation is at stake in all of this. I do not believe that this is the case. I do believe however that for our faith to be able to make a difference in our lives and to help us in challenging times we need it to be strong, to be developed, to be able to stand the trials of life. We should not be doing devotionals because we are a bad Christian if we do not. We should not be taking part in a small group because we are worried we will go to Hell if we do not. We should be doing these things because without them our faith is will not be strong enough to help us make a difference in the world. Without exercise and growth our faith will not be there when we need it.





I know that what we are asking for takes time. I know what we are asking for takes effort. I believe that being a Christian means those things though. Jesus often challenged his disciples to step up, to face adversity, and to deal with harsh conditions. I believe God is asking us to step up as a congregation as well. God is asking us to seek to grow in our faith so that we can help others as well. The challenge is before each of us.

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Jeff

Glenwood United Parish



February 2012

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1) 9:00 Piecemakers 3:30 Confirmation 4:30 S/P/R	2) 1:30 Circle	3)	4)
5) Communion	6)	7)	8) 9:00 Piecemakers 3:30 Confirm. 5:30 Council Supper 6:00 Council Mtg.	9)	10) 	11)
12)	13)	14) UPW Fellowship	15) 9:00 Piecemakers 3:30 Confirma- tion	16)	17)	18)
19)	20) Noon— Sunday Scripture Study	21)	22) 9:00 Piecemakers 3:30 Confir- mation 5:30 Soup & Bread 6:00 Service	23) 5:00 p.m. Book Study	24)	25)
26) 	27) Noon— Sunday Scripture Study	28)	29) 9:00 Piecemakers 3:30 Confirm. 5:30 Soup 6:00 Video and Conversa- tion			



Sunday Schedule
 9:00 Choir
 9:45 Sunday School
 10:00 Coffee & Fellowship
 10:30 Worship Service

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

4	Anne Snider Johnson
9	Luane Hellen
10	Tyler Wagner
16	Bruce Iverson
16	Anna Jessup
17	Bob Breseman
18	Randy Jessup
19	Rob Simmons
24	Stella Vollrath
26	Bernice Mix

On March 10th at Central Square the St. Olaf Norseman Band will be giving a concert. They need host families for that Saturday night. If you are interested in having one or two students stay at your home that Saturday night please let Kathy Ray know at 634-0400.



Ash Wednesday Service: Our Ash Wednesday (February 22nd) service this year will be held at 6:00 with a soup supper before it at 5:30. The meal will be a chance for us to gather and break bread together a tradition we will continue in the following weeks as well. The worship service will be a chance to worship and prepare our hearts for the journey of Lent as we journey with Christ in his ministry. Ash Wednesday is a chance to repent of our sins and enter into a new life with God. Come and join us for the journey.

Devotionals: One of our goals as a congregation is for each of us to work harder on having a personal devotional life. Devotionals are ways that each of us can connect and grow in our relationship to God. Like healthy eating and many other good habits, devotionals are something we know is good for us, but hard to do. I see my job as a pastor to make that easier for all of us. To that end I am compiling a list of suggestions for devotionals as well as working on preparing something for Lent for people to take part in. Many devotionals have a yearly focus, but I am encouraging you to just try doing one for Lent. If it works, great, keep going on it. If it is not working for you maybe you will learn something that way too.

Here are some ideas for devotionals to consider trying:

A Year with C.S. Lewis (for lovers of Narnia)

The Uncommon Life Tony Dungy's book

Upper Room Devotional (daily scripture readings and reflections)

Daily journal of prayers ... where has God blessed you ... where do you need God's blessing

Daily prayer walk (a chance to look for God in your life)

Reading the Psalms in Lent (read through the book of Psalms during the 46 days of Lent)

Try something else ... this list is just the beginning. If you have other ideas that might work for you, feel free to try one of those.

GUP Council Minutes (To Be Approved)
January 11, 2012

Present: Pastor Jeff, Dick Benson, Gene Herdebu, Bryant Anderson, Char Zimmerman, Dave Peterson, Tony Feigum, Rita Benson, Caryl Nelson, JoAnne Peterson, Jason Rupp, Karen Haus.

President Dick Benson called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm. Pastor Jeff led in a prayer.

Motion to approve minutes of the December meeting by JoAnne, second by Rita. Carried.

Motion by Dave, second by Caryl, to approve Agenda. Carried.

The two new members, Bryant and Tony, were welcomed to the Council.

Treasurers report by Gene. Motion to approve treasurer's report by Tony, second by Jason; approved.

OLD BUSINESS:

Roof: Report by Jason. The rubber part of the roof is done. The steel roof is completed on the north side. The cost of the repairs is close to what we received from the insurance.

Goals: Pastor Jeff reminded us of the goals that were set by Council and approved by the congregation. The plan is to re-visit the goals and check on progress throughout the year. Jeff has ordered some devotional booklets that will be available for people to use.

NEW BUSINESS:

Worship Moments: These will be presented by a member of the congregation between the offering and the benediction; different topics.

Financial Software: Pastor Jeff reported on his research; he hopes to have something purchased by next month, costing between \$50.00 and \$150.00.

Long-term Budgeting: A discussion was held concerning the need for long-range planning both for physical needs (repairs to church and parsonage, replacing outdated or worn-out equipment, etc) and spiritual needs (mission giving, etc.) and the need to prioritize needs and plan for the financing of said needs.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Stewardship/Finance: no report

Vice President: no report.

Worship and Music: no report

Building/Grounds: The insurance adjuster will be coming to assess the damage from last Fall's break in. Motion to get an estimate from the adjuster and bring that information back to Council for discussion by Dave, second by JoAnne, carried. Gene stated the need for an inventory to be made of church property to be kept in the safety deposit box. Jeff will talk with Heidi and ask for volunteers to help with this task.

Christian Ed: no report

Youth: no report

Evangelism/ Missions and Social Concerns: Char suggested that the offering received at Sunday morning coffee time be designated for a specific mission project(s). Missions and Social Concerns Committee will organize this. Dave reported on Habitat for Humanity and asked for volunteers. Staff/Parish Relations: Will be meeting soon. Membership/Parish Care: no report

UPW: Char reported that UPW will be meeting every other month at 1:30. On February 14, the speaker will be Jan Arneson, who works with families in need in Pope County. Everyone is invited.

Next meeting will be February 8th supper at 5:30, meeting at 6:00. JoAnne and Dave will be in charge of supper.

Rita moved, Caryl seconded, to adjourn the meeting. Carried . Meeting was adjourned at 7:15 pm. We closed with praying of the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Caryl Nelson, secretary.



Jan Arneson, founder of Pope County Families in Need will present information about this program at Glenwood United Parish on Feb. 14 at 1:30 p.m. All interested persons are invited to hear about how this volunteer organization helps Pope County families. UPW will host this event. Coffee and Valentine treats will be served. Bring a Friend!

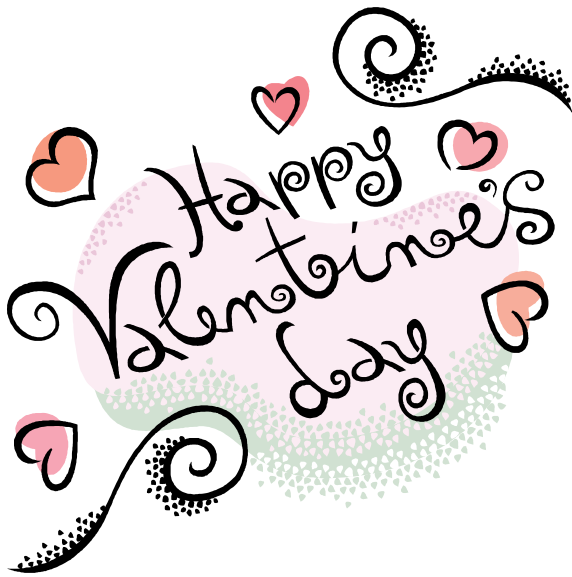
Small Groups: Another of our goals for 2012 is to get people involved in small groups. Like personal devotionals, small groups are a way we grow in faith. Unlike devotionals, in small groups we grow through our community and connections to each other. Small groups are a chance for us to get to know each other and to help each other wrestle with the challenges of life and the mysteries of faith. We set a goal of having 50% of our members participate in a small group during the year. I think we can do better than that. During Lent we will have three opportunities for people to take part in a small group.

Unbinding Your Heart Study: This book can function for both a personal devotional and a small group experience. The book helps us explore our faith and grow more comfortable with how we can talk about it to others. **Meets Thursdays at 5:00 pm starting February 23rd.**

Sunday Scripture Study: Get together on Monday over lunch (noon) and talk about the scripture for the upcoming week. Meet with Pastor Jeff and go in depth in the topics that lie ahead or ask some follow-up questions from the last sermon. This is a great chance to go deeper into the material covered during the sermons. **Meets Mondays at Noon starting February 20th.**

Lenten Soup and Video Discussion: During Lent we will be gathering to have a soup supper, watch a short video and talk about the ideas presented in it. Each week will feature a different topic and a different type of soup. Dinner will be served at 5:30 and the video and conversation will start at 6:00. **Meets Wednesdays at 5:30 starting February 29th.**

Glenwood United Parish
PO Box 70
Glenwood MN 56334



Ways to Get Involved: Want to do more at United Parish? We are always looking for people who want to help in various areas of the church. Here are some places we could use your help

Building and Grounds Committee: We could use a few more people to help monitoring and maintain our property. This year we are working on a list of long-term needs for the church as well as creating a schedule for things that need regular maintenance. If you are willing to help, contact Jason Rupp

Worship Team: Every month or two, a group of us gather to plan and design the special services we have throughout the year. This includes the big ones like Christmas and Easter but also the fun ones like our summer service outdoors (we had it indoors last year). If you want to help plan our worship services and be a part of the group that decides what we do, contact Bev Salonen.

Missions and Social Concerns Team: We have two main missions we focus on as a church, Backpack Attack and Imagine No Malaria. In addition to these we try and support many other causes such as the local Food Shelf. If you are passionate about ways we can make a difference as a church in the community and the world, please consider being a part of the missions and social concerns team. We meet most months to look at upcoming needs and to look for ways we can help our church live out our call in the world. If you want to help too, please contact Cheryl Petek or Pastor Jeff.

Sunday Morning Help: Each week we need ushers, greeters, people to make treats, and someone to help lead the worship service. If enough people do not sign up then our secretary, Heidi, needs to call people to fill the slots. If you are willing to help out, sign up on the clipboard in the fellowship hall or call Heidi and let her know what you would be willing to do. We could use your help!