

# The Quill

THE NEWSLETTER OF ST. STEPHEN LUTHERAN CHURCH

Williamsburg, Virginia

August 2011



## *What Grace There Is In This!*

When Patty and I were in Ireland last month, we visited a number of sacred places: the ruins of ancient abbeys, priories and churches. We visited two that are on many tourist itineraries – the Rock of Cashel and Clonmacnoise. But, since we wanted to stay away from tourists, we searched out others that are obscure. We stopped to spend contemplative time at places such as Athassel Priory, Hore Abbey, Moore Abbey, Quinn Priory. We would often be alone. Perhaps there would be two or three others.

I would sit on a stone ledge, in stillness. I would begin to sense the spirits of the friars or monks who lived and worshiped in each place. I would look at a surviving stone altar and think about the fact that the Eucharist was celebrated there 900 years ago. I would become aware that I am included in countless generations of people who have passed down the faith, over the sweep of the centuries.

Because there has been little population growth in Ireland, and because there have only been short bursts of prosperity over the centuries, there has been no pressure to destroy these ruins to make way for new development. And, we discovered that these ruins continue to be sacred places. When these buildings ceased to be active worship spaces, the people in the surrounding community began burying their loved ones in and around the crumbling structures! That practice continues to the present day. Again: there is the sweep of the faithful, over the generations and centuries.

I was stuck by how many grave inscriptions refer to the Final Judgment. The person buried in that grave is asleep until that final day. From St. Paul, in First Corinthians 15:

Listen, I will tell you a mystery! We will not all die, but we will all be changed, in a moment,

in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For this perishable body must put on imperishability, and this mortal body puts on immortality. When this perishable body puts on imperishability, and this mortal body puts on immortality, then the saying that is written will be fulfilled:

"Death has been swallowed up in victory."  
"Where, O death, is your victory?  
Where, O death, is your sting?"

The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

I would stand and reflect. Some of those graves are centuries old! I would think: "For hundreds of years, there have been only bones and dust in that grave. How do we sustain such faith in what will happen at that final trumpet?" By believing this, from Psalm 90:

For a thousand years in your sight  
are like yesterday when it is past,  
or like a watch in the night.

All time is God's time. The generations come and they go, until God decides the final day has come. You and I who are alive today are simply included in the sweep of God's history. You know all those things that keep us up at night; all those things we are worrying about? No matter how any of those worries turn out, God's world will keep turning. It is not up to us. It is up to God. What grace there is in that!

This is a significant gift of grace to have received from the Spirit. I pray that I will remain conscious of this. I pray, for you, the same peace. Blessings on your journey –

**Pastor Andy Ballentine**



## *Quill Musings by Doug*

Over the last several months, Pastor Andy and I have been working to modify the Affirmation of Baptism curriculum. One of the basic questions we asked was “what should be taught”? This is a two-year program so each year has a theme. The first year is about gaining understanding and knowledge of the Bible. The essential question for that is “What does it mean to be Christian?” The second year is about understanding Luther’s Small Catechism, and the rite of Affirmation of Baptism. The essential question for that year is “What does it mean to be Lutheran?”

Answering those two questions can be interesting! Besides working with Pastor to identify key ideas to teach as part of the Affirmation of Baptism program, I posed the same questions to a group of Christian Education Committee members as we planned for what themes to teach for the next faith formation year. Both groups came up with similar answers, but there were some differences! I have put the attributes list for both groups below:

|                                   |                                    |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Discipleship                      | Triune God                         |
| Stewardship                       | Life of Jesus                      |
| Worship                           | Sacraments (Baptism and Communion) |
| Evangelism                        | Prayer                             |
| Witness                           | Witnessing                         |
| Prayer                            | Grace                              |
| Exploration of Faith              | Understanding Community            |
| Journey to Adulthood              | Worship                            |
| Exploring Faith Outside of Church | Martin Luther                      |
| Biblical Knowledge                | Catechisms                         |
| Building Relationships            | Servanthood                        |

These two lists are indicative of how differently we understand what we are as Christians and Lutherans, even within the same congregation! While both lists revolve around what we will be teaching to the children (and adults!) of the congregation, it is encouraging that this conversation is still taking place. What makes us these things? Do they come from God, or is it something that must be taught? As a former teacher, I tend to lean towards the latter!

One of the issues that has come up is that practicing all of the above areas, and knowing about them is a

life-long journey, one that get progressively deeper into the issues as we grow in faith. That idea, that you don’t just study something once and then say, “Okay, I know it, next topic” is somewhat difficult to follow through on at times. As we grow older and our life experiences teach us new things, we see new ideas and concepts in things we have studied before. This is one of the great things about the three-year lectionary cycle; we are constantly coming back to the same stories and ideas and learning new things about them!

I ask you to look at these lists and think to yourself, what makes us Christians and Lutherans? In our never-ending journey in faith, you might be surprised at your answers. If you would like some help with those questions, come to faith formation! There may not be “right” answers, but there will be lively discussion about what they mean!

**Doug Cummings**  
Ministry Associate



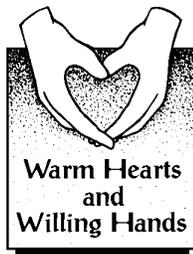
## *Musical notes from Michael*

First, I would like to thank you all for the prayers and good wishes during my recent illness! Thank God, it was not anything serious, (a hiatal hernia pressing on the vagus which mimics heart symptoms), but they discovered that I do have a tiny blockage in the back wall of my heart. They do not wish to intervene surgically, as all of my heart functions are quite good. I do need to lose another 50 pounds of suet, and I’m afraid I need more daily exercise than playing the organ and flying. Please pray for me. I must comment on my thoughts during my brief stay at the hospital, and for sure, it was quite a reminder of “humble” as you lie there knowing you cannot fix the problem. Truly, to have the grace to turn it over to the Lord is a huge blessing, but I will admit I struggled to let go and let God. Pastor was kind enough to take some time out of a very long day and stop by for a pastoral visit, and I thank him for his well placed words and prayers. Praise God, he is in the right job!! Thanks to Patty for stepping in the breach when I was recovering.

Once again, the summer music ministry is going quite well, and I thank all who are participating. You may have noticed the spot on the blue sheet where you can inform me of your favorite hymns. We are beginning a new practice of having a hymn sing in lieu of the prelude now and then, and here is your



**NEEDED:**



## ***Christian Education Faith Formation for Children and Youth***

The Christian Education committee is looking for volunteers to help on Sunday mornings with the children and youth Faith Formation. Youth ages three through 5th grade meet in the Preschool Room between the services and are divided into appropriate age groups for lessons. Volunteers would help with the teaching the Bible story or other Christian education topic through reading the Bible, crafts or other activities, demonstrations, and singing. If you prefer instructing older youth, the middle school and high school youth also meet between the services. Please let **Jim Ivey** know if you have time and talent to share; he can be reached at 757-645-4480 or [jivey@cox.net](mailto:jivey@cox.net). Parents of younger children: Please let **Jim Ivey** know if your child needs a story Bible (ages three through first grade) or a reader's Bible (second through fifth grade).

**Jill Lucy – Christian Education Committee**



## ***Avalon...A Center for Women and Children***

Avalon in Williamsburg provides a safe place for women and children who are victims of abusive behavior and domestic violence – at home, at work, in relationships. Unfortunately, these types of abuse can occur among family members and/or with friends – and often go unreported, because the victim is afraid, or unwilling to admit that the abuse is happening.

Avalon provides a Helpline, 24 hours/day, 7 days/week, with professional staff and trained

volunteers (258-5051). The Avalon shelter provides safe housing for women and children, along with counseling and support groups. Avalon also provides information about legal resources; children's services; career development and training; employment opportunities; transitional housing – and other personal, medical, legal and career assistance services, helping women find employment and a pathway to independence.

Avalon helps women become stronger individuals who can expect to be treated with respect; have personal dignity and freedom to make career choices; have freedom to enjoy a personal life and have friends; have some privacy and space for themselves; and develop a sense of personal identity.

Avalon welcomes volunteers, who can help in a variety of ways. **Emily Rossiter** is an Avalon volunteer, and has helped in these ways: answering the phone; greeting people; doing educational displays in the community; maintaining databases of essential information; participating in life skills sessions at the shelter. Emily also has helped to update the directory of community resources for staff, volunteers and residents. She is currently serving on the loan panel for Ways to Work - a new service/program of Avalon that provides low interest car loans and financial mentoring to women and men who have jobs but no transportation, and who cannot qualify for traditional car loans due to poor credit history. The program's goals are to break the cycle that predatory lending institutions perpetuate, and help people better manage their money.

Sarah Meacham, Executive Director of Avalon, met with the Social Ministry Committee recently, and provided an in-depth description of the current activities and programs at Avalon. Sarah mentioned that one especially helpful way to volunteer is to visit Avalon during the early evening hours, to read stories to the children and just talk to the women.

What a wonderful opportunity for us to learn more about Avalon, and to befriend the people who are being sheltered there. If you are interested in finding out about volunteering at Avalon, please call Kimberly Laska, Director of Development and Community Services (258-5022, x1008); email address is: [kimberly@avaloncenter.org](mailto:kimberly@avaloncenter.org).

**Diane Bean, for Social Ministry Committee**



## *A Short Background and History of Parish Nursing*

While having a parish nurse may be a new concept for our congregation, having a person who integrates faith and health is anything but new. The following article has been adapted by **Nelia Heide** from an article by Nancy L. Rago Durbin and Debra Haugen:

The idea originated in Germany; Norway has had parish nurses for about 150 years.

In the United States, parish nursing got its start in the Chicago area in 1983 when Lutheran hospital chaplain, Granger Westberg, got four Lutheran congregations and two Catholic parishes to co-sponsor a parish nurse.

The late Reverend Doctor Granger Westberg was a Lutheran clergyman, who had also been parish pastor and professor of practical theology. He was a visionary, believing that congregations should be places of healing and salvation and that faith and health were deeply connected. He observed first hand that true healing involved body, mind, and spirit.

One of his most significant contributions to congregations and the larger community was the development of the Parish Nurse Movement, which was instrumental in breaking new ground in the areas of religion, medicine, and whole person health. This ecumenical and interfaith movement has become international in scope.

From the inception of the Parish Nursing Movement to the present day health care climate, it could be said that Reverend Westberg was 25 years ahead of his time. He and the many who have followed his lead have been instrumental in the belief that health care has less to do with prescription medication, the latest in technology, treatment of disease, and providing "illness care" but rather—much more about — collaboration, empowerment, teamwork, enhancement of thinking, integration of all that connects body, mind and spirit, disease prevention, modification (even if incremental in nature), healthy and steady adaptation, balance, and believing in patience, hope and healing that is possible even in the light of no cure.

Now, more than a quarter of a century after this pioneering movement began, over 12,000 Parish Nurses/Faith Community Nurses are serving congregations/faith communities throughout the U.S. and across the world, positively impacting health care and bringing Westberg's vision of health and wholeness to people across the globe.

**Compiled by Nelia Heide, Health Ministry**



### *St. Stephen Gives to Mongai Parish*

Thanks for your generous support to provide school scholarships for students in Tanzania this year! As of June 30, our contributions totaled \$6,638, which were sent to Tanzania in mid-July - just in time for the beginning of their school year. These funds will provide school fees for many students through the "Godparents for Tanzania" foundation.



### *Grove Christian Outreach Center invites you to "The Summer of Love"*

Our friends at the Grove Christian Outreach Center (COC) invite all of us to participate in one or more of this summer's projects & celebrations!

- Jeff Fisher, of J. H. Fisher Construction, is leading a team during the summer, to help repair homes throughout the Grove community (at no

cost to residents). As we know, several homes were badly damaged, or destroyed, during the spring tornado. If you would like to help, please contact Jeff (592-5629).

- Volunteer Orientation for Grove will be held on **Wednesday, July 20 (2:00 PM)**. This is a wonderful opportunity to meet our Grove friends, and to learn about ways to volunteer.
- Grove Community Celebration – on **Saturday, August 6** – for the families of Grove and Williamsburg neighbors and volunteers. There will be family activities – and amazing food provided by Custom Culinary Connections. This event will benefit the Grove capital campaign, for their new ministry center (77% of the funds have been raised).
- Back-to-School Fest - **Thursday, September 8** – 100 volunteers are needed to help with arrangements and games that day.

Check out the Grove website for more information, including details on our summer-long school supply drive and food collection, and how you can help! [www.grovesummeroflove.sigmontaylor.com](http://www.grovesummeroflove.sigmontaylor.com) – or check the Grove COC Facebook page.

**Diane Bean for Social Ministry**

***"Sneaker Smiles"***



It is once again, for our 6th year, time to start providing new school sneakers for the children in Grove. Last year we purchased sneakers for 144 children.

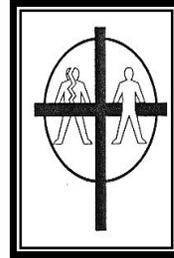
Please take an index card from the bulletin board on the wall in the narthex and purchase the shoe size indicated on the card. DO NOT buy character shoes such as Bratz Girls and no black shoes for girls.

Please tape the index card to the **top** of the shoebox and tape the **gift receipt** only to the inside of the lid. If you don't get a gift receipt, please put the name of the store where the shoes were purchased on the inside lid; this will make it easier to exchange shoes if needed.

Please return all shoes to the containers in the narthex by August 14th--the sooner the better as I have to check all the shoes before I give them to Grove.

Thank you in advance for your help!! The smiles on the faces of the children when they receive their new sneakers are **wonderful** to see!!

Call **Marilyn Johnson (345-0806)** if you have any questions.



***A Journey With (and Without) Stephen Ministry***

We, the congregation, are the eyes and ears of Jesus, looking out for the needs of the church, our home, our work and our community. We can put potential care receivers in touch with the pastor and Stephen Leaders. We can offer ourselves as a bridge to that help—always with the permission of the person in need. Please offer prayers this month that those in need will be encouraged to accept the helping hand we reach out. Surely the arm of the Lord is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear. (Isaiah 59:1)

**Cindy Gibbs  
For Stephen Ministry**



***The Church Mouse  
hears . . . . .***

- Thanks to **Chuck Frey** for getting the church of office computer up and running
- Two weddings of former LSA students were celebrated in July. Both are attending seminary! We are truly blessed
- The mouse is enjoying the relaxed summer! But not the heat



*August Birthdays*



PLEASE **PRAY** FOR:

|    |                      |                    |
|----|----------------------|--------------------|
| 1  | Mary Dickerson       |                    |
| 5  | Heidi Flatin         | Elizabeth Geier    |
| 6  | Forrest Fenstermaker | John Olsen         |
| 7  | Melanie Buckner      | Kristen Carter     |
|    | Gerry Geyer          | Jerry Trone        |
|    | JoAnn Wilkins        |                    |
| 8  | Anthony Buschek      | Pat Fretz          |
|    | Claire White         |                    |
| 11 | Pat Drubel           | Josiah Hallman     |
|    | Thom Recktenwald     |                    |
| 12 | Dave Clark           |                    |
| 13 | Sonja Landvogt       |                    |
| 14 | Norm Fashing         | Dave Joppa         |
| 16 | Patti Harris         |                    |
| 17 | Bethany Brisson      | Luke Sipes         |
| 18 | Nathan Egloff        | Betty Rickerson    |
| 19 | Pam Calleson         |                    |
| 20 | Lana Olson           | Travis Rennich     |
| 22 | Jeane Gillespie      | Rebecca Groman     |
|    | Dianne Harris        | Lisa Thomas        |
| 23 | Carl Strikwerda      |                    |
| 24 | Matthew Bosworth     | Robin Hudson       |
| 26 | Nancy Canny          |                    |
| 27 | Hannah Pierce        |                    |
| 28 | Dick Batman          | Christine Dietrich |
| 29 | Doug Cummings        |                    |
| 31 | Paul Kristiansen     |                    |

Pray to know God's will for healing **Jo Austin, Dick Batman, Carolee Bush, Margaret Krull, Susanna Owens, Billie Purse, Dorothy Reeves, Dan Stimson**

Pray for comfort and peace to **Karen and Gary Chenuault**, on the death of their daughter, **Lea**; to **Chuck Frey** on the death of his brother; and to **Sue Voigt** on the death of her uncle.

Pray for the safety of those working on the expansion and renovation of our building, the house of our church.

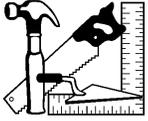
Pray that God will richly bless **Kate Proctor** and **Jon Costa** and **Brett Wilson** and **Evan Davis** who were married before our altar this month.

Pray for those who are physically unable to get to worship: **Bill Dickerson, Elsa Englert, Bernice Fahncke, Bob Groom, Elsie Hall, Willetta Heising, Anna Lou Hobday, Jean Kircheis, Helen Lenox, Warren Melhorn, Christine Pugh, Chuck and Jo Schumacher, John Warner, Dot Wright, Earl and Lois Wysong**

Pray for these loved ones of our congregation: John Accomando, Lynn Anderson, Kae Brown, Bill Bullman, Bob Canny, Joanne Carlson, Jane Cattermole, Donna Cherel, Michael Compton, Rosemarie Cristofolo, Dave Culler, Janice and Walter DeGree, Rosemary Dinges, Bubba Drury, Dianne Drury, Nick Finley, Lonna Gibson, Nancy Gottschalk, Jack Guentz, Eleanor Harms, Carol Horton, Joseph Javier, Katie Johnson, Gloria Kochenour, Joe Mallen, David Martin, John Niemic, Nancy Norton, Jim Ogborn, Sr., Lori Overdorf, Tony Parades, Bill and Joyce Pate, Sue Reeder, Lisa Rivolta, Don Romig, Roland Scheiding, Barbara Schone, Melinda and Bart Schuck, Alexis Smith, Ron Smith, Nancy Spaniol, George Spellman, Connie Testerman, Linda Thies, Lou Vosteen, Shirley White, Peggy Wood

Is your name missing? Is your date wrong? Please let us know immediately!  
Rev. July 22, 2011





## July 2011 Update for the Renovation Project

This has been another eventful month for the renovation project. The majority of the excavation and foundations have been completed and the work is concentrating on preparing the area for the new Narthex walls.

You have no doubt noticed the walls in the Narthex, this will enable the builder to take down the current outside walls in preparation for the framing and new walls that will form the new Narthex area. These are temporary and will allow us to continue to use the facility while the construction is moving along.

Most of the lighting has been received by the distributor and will be available when the point in the construction is reached when they are ready for installation.

Plans for the cabinet work have been reviewed by the Narthex Committee and are being returned to the General Contractor with recommended changes. The plans will then be finalized and sent to the Architect for review.

We did have one setback in that the David Nice Company Site Superintendent, Richard Sacks, has left the company to accept a job up north. We will miss having Richard to discuss the issues with and look forward to the new Site Superintendent who will be onsite shortly

### Upcoming Milestones-

- Install the shoring and remove the Narthex exterior walls and Beams
- Frame exterior walls
- Set the structural columns and posts
- Set Beams & Lintels
- Frame the Narthex roof

**Paul Kristiansen**  
Project Manager

## Remember Food Banks



Those served by FISH and Grove Community Outreach Center need food especially during the summer months when school children do not receive help with breakfast and lunch at school. Especially needed: breakfast items, cereals and cereal bars, peanut butter and jelly, soup, and canned fruit.



## Memorials

### Judie Schrag

Jack and Dianne Harris

### Lea Chenault

Ron and Mary Jane Walker  
Dick and Dorothy Reeves  
Harlan and Anne Schone (Renovation Fund)  
Tom and Sandy Peterkin (Renovation Fund)



## Letters to our members

We don't always understand God's plan for us, but I know he works in mysterious ways. Whenever I am helpless, He hears me.

After a disappointing and costly job by a handyman, I asked Tom Peterkin for advice, not expecting him to do physical work. He and a friend, Bob Debord, spent many hours rebuilding my front entrance. They did a professional and beautiful job.

I am deeply grateful to them and believe God heard my prayers. He sent them when I was desperate.

Thank you Tom and Bob

Ursula Murden



## Letters of thanks

- Housing Partnerships thanked us for our gift of \$1,000 for their program.
- Chaplain Service Prison Ministry of Virginia thanked us for our gift of \$100 through the United Lutheran Appeal.
- Meals on Wheels thanked us for our gift of \$1,000 helping them to sustain their program of hot nutritious meals delivered to many in the community without regard to ability to pay.