



Lifetimes

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Save a Child

By Lynda Thompson

“If you could save a child from dying would you?”, is the tagline for this year’s Feed My Starving Children MobilePack™ event being held May 2 - 5 at Incarnation. Of course I am a little biased when it comes to Feed My Starving Children and reaching out to those in third world countries, so when I think of that tagline, it isn’t just in Haiti, Dominican Republic, Nepal, or any of the other 77 countries that Feed My Starving Children has partners distributing the food that we packed over the last eight events. Kids in our own back yard are also hungry. It could be your son or daughter’s friend who comes over to play after school, or a kid on one of their sports teams.

There are hungry kids all over the world and I personally lose sight of that when I just think of the kids I have seen in Haiti. Kids in developing countries have it a lot worse than our hungry kids do because they often don’t have the support systems like Ralph Reeder or Second Harvest to go to for help. They rely on you and me to package their meals every year, so the distribution partners of Feed My Starving Children can distribute the food, educate them, and hopefully in our lifetime we will be able to end hunger not only in those countries but also at home.

Please sign up for this year’s pack event and let’s do this together. Help end hunger around the world by raising the money to buy the ingredients to pack 750,000 meals to feed 2,055 of God’s kids for one year. We can do this and we must do this. Jesus said to “feed the hungry and the poor,” and that is what we are about at Incarnation.

Sign up to pack on the Incarnation website by clicking the blue box at the bottom of the home page. Each person packs about \$50 worth of food during the MobilePack™ event. Donate money to help buy the food you pack on the website or in the Incarnation Office.

From The Staff

Jeanne Hartfield

Pastor for Adult Learning & Spiritual Formation



Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia! We live in a world where darkness can feel quite powerful. We look at violence in the world, we hear the political rhetoric, we see the demographics changing for how many people and how often people are engaging in church, and we worry that too much of what we hold dear is dying.

Yet, as Rachel Held Evans said in the video *Creating Something New* during Wednesday worship in Lent, “Death is something that empires worry about, it’s not something gardeners worry about; it’s not something resurrection people worry about.”

We are resurrection people! We have hope because Jesus is in the business of beating death. In his ministry and most certainly in his own death and resurrection, and even in our own lives, he shows again and again that with God death does not get the last word. God makes life out of death again and again.

We have hope because there are so many people who hunger for a different and larger story to define their lives. They hunger for belonging and connection. They hunger for meaning and hope and dignity. They hunger for love and acceptance and forgiveness and renewal and resurrection - and not just for themselves, but also for this big broken world. We hunger for these things too. The world promises all sorts of remedies, ways to feed our bodies, minds, and spirits - but those are only temporary fixes. Ultimately, only God can fill the hunger of our hearts and Church, the gathered, worshiping, serving, and in the world body of Christ is how others will experience that same love.

We have hope because there are people in all the generations at Incarnation and elsewhere whose hearts and lives have been touched and transformed by the love of God we experience most clearly in Jesus and they in turn want to share that love with others.

Please join me in praying for God’s whole Church on earth and for Incarnation as one local expression of that church. Pray for clarity on why the church matters to you and why you want to leave a legacy of faith in Jesus to those who come after you. Pray for the Long Range Planning process that is underway here at Incarnation, for the Holy Spirit to give us wisdom, discernment, and clarity of mission. Pray for the courage to let the things die that need to die (in us and in our ways of doing church) and for new life to flourish. Pray fiercely, persistently, open-mindedly for God to work a new thing, for God to show us individually and together as God’s Church how we are called to live out the neighbor narrative in our immediate circles and in the wider world. Pray for the Church on earth to be as Jesus wants us to be.

Lord Jesus, we pray for your whole Church, that it might be made new again and again not for its own sake but for the sake of this world that you love beyond measure. Give us a vibrant imagination for what is possible in and through your Church when we trust the work of your Spirit. Work a new thing in us as your people. Work a new thing in Incarnation as a community. Work a new thing in your whole Church so that all people may hear your truth, be immersed in your grace, and live lives of service shaped by your love. Help us to let die what needs to die so that new life may abound. Give us prayerful and discerning hearts that we might see and embrace the life-giving future that you invite into. Gracious God, hear our prayer. Amen.

Confirmation Switch Success

By Christianna Shortridge

"I may have been one of those people in opposition to switching Confirmation", says Mike Vinyon, a veteran Confirmation guide for his son. "I thought Confirmation was a lot of commitment going into high school, but I think I was wrong about that." Mike's wife, Laurie, who guided simultaneously for their daughter, believes this change is a step in the right direction. "Ninth graders ask really good questions and can process those questions because they are just that much more mature."

Why did Incarnation change the Confirmation program? Maturity. Kids are more mature and more open for faith formation if Confirmation starts in the fall of 7th grade and they are confirmed in the spring of 9th grade.

Prior to 2011, Confirmation was offered to students in grades six through eight. According to Incarnation's Shawna Berg, Director of Confirmation and Faith Stepping Stones, a conversation started seven years ago. "We consistently heard that the 6th graders were struggling, Confirmation felt too much like graduation, and kids were not involved past Confirmation." After talking with other churches with similar concerns, Incarnation discovered these churches changed Confirmation to 9th grade, which kept their youth more active post-Confirmation.

"This got us going," said Shawna. A group of parents, guides, youth ministry leaders, and interested adults explored making a change. Together they devised IGNITE - a Confirmation program that started a year later and went longer into a restructured 9th grade year.

IGNITE, which began in fall 2011, keeps kids and their guide together in the same group from 7th - 9th grade. The earlier grades focus on Biblical study and a typical weekly Confirmation experience. When the kids hit 9th grade their small group and guide meet once each month, and they are required to attend



FLAME (high school youth group) four times during the year. Since high school schedules are a bit hectic, 9th graders can choose which FLAME nights to attend.

Becky Jones, who has enjoyed her role as Confirmation guide, notes, "9th grade has been a good transition year filled with lovely discussions about belief and watching them mature into adults." This new structure in the 9th grade year helps kids try out different ways of serving and how they can best connect in the church.

In spring 2015 the first group of 9th graders, who went through the whole new program, were Confirmed. Despite having parents and guides who were skeptical about change, Shawna views IGNITE as a success that was years in the making. "Since we would not know the fruits of this decision for almost four years, lots of questions were being asked and people wondered if we made the right decision. We did!" More high school kids now consistently attend FLAME.

They are singing in the choir, teaching Sunday school, ushering, and serving communion.

Megan McGough, who guided for both her son and daughter, noticed the kids became new people in 9th grade and their focus improved. "Maturity from 8th to 9th grade is huge. I think this switch is good," said Megan. "When 9th graders meet up, the dynamic changes . . . monthly meetings are catching up time as well as learning time."

Reflecting upon his experience, Mike Vinyon said, "It's very interesting to see the boys grow from herding cats and being all over the place to watching them mature, to asking thoughtful questions and thinking about their own faith." IGNITE has allowed that extra year of personal growth and maturity. Incarnation's young men and women are now being confirmed with greater confidence in their own faith and are actively living out their promises as members of Incarnation.

Summer Reading from Small Group Ministry

By Denise Floe

A good book, a tall glass of lemonade, and a spot outdoors in the warm sunshine - it sounds great, doesn't it? But what to read? As you put together your summer reading list (or get a jump start on reading this spring), here is a selection of books that small groups have been talking about (and, there are many more!).

We Make the Road By Walking - For every week of the year, this book offers a four or five page essay written by Brian McLaren, based on three Biblical texts. It's a good read as a devotion, to use individually or with a friend, with questions at the end of each essay for personal reflection or conversation. Believe it or not, two small groups have met every week, all year to read and talk about these essays!

Prayer - For those who'd like to dive deeper into prayer or continue growing after the 40 day prayer experiment, Philip Yancey's book, *Prayer*, is an excellent next step. Yancey writes, "Prayer can be frustrating, confusing, and fraught with mystery." He asks common questions like: "Is God listening? Why should God care about me? If God knows everything, what's the point of prayer? Does prayer ever change God?" By asking these questions, Yancey began to see prayer as a "way of being available to get in the stream of what God wants to accomplish here on earth." Just imagine . . . what if all those taking part in the 40-day experiment have jumped into that stream?

Vanishing Grace - Also by Philip Yancey, *Vanishing Grace* asks "what ever happened to the good news?" Starting from the challenging place of recognizing that many have moved away from the church, Yancey calls Christians to rediscover why our faith matters, how it makes a difference for a world in pain, and the critical need to be the good news of grace. "What is the good news that is worth preserving and living out?" Yancey asks. Not always an easy read, but a book worth reading. This book was used by the Congregational Council/staff at their annual retreat in 2016.

Love Does - Energizing, inspiring, joyful - This New York Times bestseller, by Bob Goff, is filled with stories that are uplifting and fun to read. Goff's idea is that love is action-oriented, in other words, love does. And, when love does, "each day turns into a hilarious, whimsical, meaningful chance to make faith simple and real."

Just a few book ideas, based on what others at Incarnation are reading, watching, and talking about. While these books are "good reads," most small groups are using DVD faith studies, based on each book. So most small groups are easy-to-do, with little or no preparation. Check out the Incarnation library (an excellent reading resource) for copies of these books and others too!

Call Committee Appointed

The Congregation Council has appointed a Call Committee as directed by Incarnation's Constitution. The Committee's work is to seek out, interview, and recommend a candidate to the congregation for approval to fill the position made available by Pastor Jackson's acceptance of a call to another congregation. This pastor will have primary responsibility for leading the children, youth and family ministry at Incarnation as well as general pastoral responsibilities. The members appointed to the Call Committee are: Dave Katzke, Kent Kleppe, Tom Jacobsen, Jenny Ogden, Brenda Roloff, Megan Schornstein (Congregation Council Representative), Heather Trettel, and Pastor Gary Medin. Please keep this group in your prayers and feel free to direct questions to any in this group.

2015 Photo Directory Supplement

Photos for a supplement to the 2015 Photo Directory will be collected during April and May. The supplement will include new members as well as others who did not get their photos in the 2015 Directory.

Anyone with photos in the supplement will also receive a copy of the 2015 Directory, and the supplement will be available to those who have a 2015 Directory.

Just as last year, there will be two options for including photos in the supplement. Option 1) sign up for a photo session to be held in Bethany Lounge on Sunday April 24, from 8:15 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Option 2) submit your own photo by e-mail by the end of May.

On Sunday, April 17, there will be an information table in the Atrium and Gathering Space where you will be able to sign up for an April 24 photo session or get information on how to submit your own photos.

INCARNATION LUTHERAN CHURCH GENERAL FUND - INCOME & EXPENSE REPORT FOR THE MONTH ENDING FEBRUARY, 2016

REVENUE	YTD ACTUAL	YTD BUDGET	YTD VARIANCE
Member Envelopes/Loose	\$276,275	\$288,829	(\$12,554)
Special Env./Misc.	4,797	6,818	(\$2,021)
Special Appeals	0	0	\$0
Total Offering	\$281,072	\$295,647	(\$14,575)
Other Income	2,674	985	1,689
Total Income	\$283,747	\$296,632	(\$12,885)
EXPENSES	YTD ACTUAL	YTD BUDGET	YTD VARIANCE
Missions	\$39,177	\$37,433	\$1,744
Salaries/Wages	\$227,152	\$229,167	(\$2,015)
Ministries	\$15,207	\$17,892	(\$2,685)
Administration	\$6,306	\$12,250	(\$5,944)
Building	\$35,221	\$33,092	\$2,129
Total Expenses	\$323,063	\$329,833	(\$6,771)
Net Income (loss)	(\$39,316)	(\$33,201)	(\$6,115)

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

Beginning of the Month balance	\$223,198
Net Income for the month	36,611
Mortgage Payment	(28,540)
Mortgage Principal Prepayment	(50,000)
Other Capital Expenses	(93)
Monthly Ending Balance	\$181,175

Thank you for supporting the ministries, missions, and programs of Incarnation with your continued contributions. Your gifts are greatly appreciated.



Incarnation Lutheran Church

Worship, Prayer & Among the Congregation

Those hospitalized: Randy Erickson.

Sympathy to: Sheryl Senyk and family on the death of her mother; The family of Rollie Sullivan on his death; Melanie Ahlstrom and family on the death of her mother; Barb Stockton and family on the death of her mother; Jill Jurchisin and family on the death of her mother; Mike Scott and family on the death of his mother.

Congratulations to: Jessica and Nick Oeltjen on the birth of Knox Bernard.

Connect & Grow

Summer Small Group for Recently Retired or About to Retire
Connect with others in a similar stage of life. Explore how to live with meaning, joy and a growing faith, in this new life stage. The group is based on, *How to Retire Happy, Wild, and Free*. Due to interest, a second group is now taking registrations. Suggested contribution: \$10. Register: dfloe@incarnationmn.org.
When: Five Tuesdays, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m., June - August

Casual Biking Small Group

Bike at a casual pace, experience creation, and connect with others who enjoy biking. This small group takes easy to moderate trails around the Twin Cities, meeting at each trailhead. The group bikes for 2-3 hours, up to 20 miles (8-12 mph). Men and women are welcome. Register: dfloe@incarnationmn.org.
When: Six Saturdays, 8:30 am - 12:00 p.m., June - September

Cycling Fellowship Group for Adults

Connect with other cyclists and explore Twin Cities bike trails. This group cycles on Saturdays, 20-25 miles (approximately 14 mph). The group also takes part in devotions together, led by the group leaders. It is designed for cyclists who are ages 18 and above. Register at dfloe@incarnationmn.org
When: Five Saturdays, 8:00 - 11:30 a.m., June - August

Growing Through Loss Series

This 6-week series provides an opportunity for individuals to obtain information and support for a variety of loss and grief issues. Each session begins with an educational presentation by a professional from the community, followed by small groups facilitated by leaders who understand the grieving process. Although there is no cost, donations are welcome. Registration takes place each evening before the program. Each session is complete in itself. Attend any or all sessions. Free childcare is available, but please call a week in advance so they are prepared for your children. Call 763-755-5335 or visit www.growingthroughloss.org for more information. The next series will be held at St. Joseph of the Lakes Catholic Church, 171 Elm Street in Lino Lakes.
When: Thursdays, April 7 - May 12; 6:45 - 9:00 p.m.

Primetimers

Presenter Shirley Barber will present six critical factors to consider when transferring personal property inter-generationally. Her research-based program provides important questions to consider when making these important decisions. Lunch will be ham and scalloped potatoes, cranberry apple pecan salad, garlic bread, and bars and ice cream.
When: April 28, 10:30 a.m.

Men's Retreat at Camp Wapo

Join Pastor Gary Medin and other men of faith from Incarnation to laugh together, talk about life together, talk about faith together, pray together, and worship together. Cost: \$128. Register in the Incarnation Office by May 5. A \$50 non-refundable deposit reserves your spot.

When: Friday, May 20 - Sunday, May 22

Serve

Feed My Starving Children Contributions

Do you work for a company that will match your giving to non-profits? If so then you know you could double your donation to Incarnation's Feed My Starving Children MobilePack™. If you're not sure, check with your employer and then ask them to match your contribution to Incarnation's 2016 MobilePack™, May 2-5 and help reach the goal of raising \$165,000 to 2,055 kids for a year. With your help we can make this happen.

When: May 2-5.

Feed My Starving Children Spaces Available

Packing spots are rapidly filling up but there is still space available for you, your friends, and family to join the fun at Incarnation's 2016 FMSC MobilePack™ Event May 2-5 and help us feed 2,055 kids for one year. Each person packs about \$50 worth of food during the event. Your donation will help us buy the food being packed. Sign up to pack or donate by clicking on the FMSC box on the Incarnation home page.

When: May 2 - 5

Congregational Business

Summer Incarnation Office and Building Hours

May 27 through September 2, the Incarnation Office and building will be closed on Fridays at 12:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday, the Incarnation Office will be open from 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. and Sundays 8:15 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.

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