

Lifetimes

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May 17, 2015

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Keeping Promises

By Shawna Berg

This spring, 73 of our 9th grade students were confirmed and took part in our three part Affirmation of Baptism process at Incarnation. We, as a community of faith, should be very proud of these students, their parents and this community for supporting them on this very important journey of faith.

The journey for these students and their families didn't just begin three years ago when they signed up for their first Confirmation class. This journey began for many around 15 years ago. This journey began when, with babes in arms, these parents stood before God, their faith community and their family and friends and made some pretty significant promises. Promises to place in their children's hands the Holy Scriptures. Promises to bring them to church. Promises to teach them the Lord's prayer. Promises to make sure they might come to know who God is, and through that knowledge that they may fully know and experience Christ's love in their lives.

We, on behalf of the church, also made promises. We promised to be partners with parents on this journey. We promised because God's children are our children. We promised because we know being a parent is hard, and because we know parents need allies. We promised because we believe this work is important. We promised because we love these children. We continue to make these promises every time there is a Baptism because this is who we are at the core.

In a world where promises are broken, more often than they are kept, the confirmation of these 73 students is something to celebrate. The confirmation of these students represents a lot of families who kept their promises - even when it was hard.

The Celebration of Passage was a beautiful service in which each confirmand had a prayer partner from the congregation. As representatives of this congregation, this was a beautiful reminder to our confirmands and their families that the congregation has kept their promise. The congregation has supported these ministries through gifts of prayer, through financial offerings and by giving their time and talents to teach in these programs. As a congregation and representatives of the church, we have kept our promises.

These confirmands are now embarking on a new journey. A journey where they are making promises. Promises to continue on their faith journey. Promises to have boldly claimed their faith as their own and yet they know that still, they will not be alone. This congregation will continue to love them and pray for them as we know the journey will not always be a smooth one. One thing we know for sure is that they have a great legacy before them of people who have kept their promises - and I have great hope for the journey that they are on. Thank you for being a part of the journey.

From The Staff

Lynda Thompson

Pastor for Missions



When I opened my email last week there was a letter from Pastor Joseph Lwila, one of the pastors of Mkwawa Lutheran Church, one of our ministry partners in Iringa, Tanzania. I wasn't too surprised to hear from him because we had been emailing back and forth with prayer requests, especially things that the people of Mkwawa wanted us to pray for. However, the content of his email just blew me away, here's what he said, "Hallelujah! We keep on praying and preparing ourselves for your trip. We have arranged two people from Mkwawa including me will come to the airport to welcome you in Tanzania." You might think, "What's the big deal? I meet people at the airport all the time." What you don't know is that the airport is 8 hours away from their homes and that coming to meet us means that they have to arrange a ride to Dar es Salaam, arrange for a place to stay overnight in Dar and then spend another day riding the bus back to Iringa. It's a two-day proposition for Joseph, his wife and another person to meet us at the airport. This is a testament to the relationships that have been formed between the people of Incarnation and the people of our global ministry partners.

Over the past 15 years, people from Mkwawa Lutheran Church have stood by the side of the road for hours waiting to greet us. They have cooked feasts that they would never eat otherwise because it is too expensive to serve to someone who is not a guest. They have invited me to their homes to mourn the death of my parents. They have asked for prayers and they have prayed for us, rejoiced with us, and cried with us. It has been an amazing thing to watch relationships between people who have nothing in common except for the love of Jesus. My life and the lives of countless people who have traveled to Iringa have been enriched by the love and friendship we have experienced with our brothers and sisters in Christ in Tanzania.

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How is God Calling Me to Serve in My Community?

By Lynda Thompson

This question is the one I hear most often from those who travel to Tanzania, Guatemala, or Haiti on Incarnation mission trips. When our hearts are opened by working alongside those who live far from us, we want to share that love with those who need our presence within our own community. For four Tuesday nights in June, Pastor Lynda Thompson will explore this question by studying the Old Testament book of Nehemiah. Nehemiah was a Jew, born in Persia during the Babylonian exile. He had relatives in Jerusalem, but the suffering of those Jews who had remained in his ancestral homeland wasn't necessarily his problem. However, when Nehemiah heard that the walls of Jerusalem were broken, the news cracked open something in his own heart. Nehemiah had a position of influence in the court of the Persian King so he asked the king to send him back to Jerusalem to supervise the rebuilding of the wall. The king granted his wish. The book of Nehemiah is the story of the restoration of the Jewish people to their homeland.

This book holds clues for those of us who return from short-term missions around the world and wish to serve within our own communities. Through four sessions, participants will read through the book of Nehemiah and watch DVD accounts of people who felt God calling them to service in their own communities. The basis for the study will be the book *Nehemiah: A Heart That Can Break*. This study will be especially relevant for those who have been on mission trips and for those who are currently serving with Incarnation's local ministry partners. For more information, contact Pastor Lynda Thompson at lthompson@incarnationmn.org or stop by the Incarnation Office to register for this opportunity. Registration deadline is June 2.

From the Staff, continued from pg. 1

We have also come to have this kind of a relationship with the people of Chontala. When I was putting together information about the upcoming October mission trip, I had the opportunity to look through a few photos and I was amazed to realize that I knew the names and faces of almost everyone in the photos. Although we have been in relationship with Chontala only since 2007, that relationship has grown steadily stronger. Last October, we participated with over 300 others in an ecumenical service. We had a day-long retreat with several people from the village and they brought up an issue with the scholarship program. Instead of asking us to "fix it," we sat around a table and together we figured out a solution to the problem. That only happens when those around the table consider all of the others to be equals.

Relationships like this don't happen overnight and sometimes they don't happen at all. They have been lovingly nurtured by the action groups and by all of you who have traveled to visit these partners. I also believe that God has called us into these partnerships. Relationships like those that have been developed with Mkwawa and Chontala can only be sustained when people are willing to visit their partners. One of our global partnerships (New City Parish in Los Angeles) ended because we at Incarnation were not willing to participate in missional opportunities. There is a great danger that this will also happen in Chontala and it makes me very sad. My life would be so different if I had never been to Iringa or to Chontala. My view of Jesus would be smaller and less vibrant if I had never been to Iringa or to Chontala. If God has been calling you to be part of a relational mission trip, do whatever it takes to make it happen - your life will be enriched beyond measure.



Solid Ground Graduation Ceremony

By Cindy Spellman

On February 26, 2015, Incarnation was privileged to host the graduation ceremony and dinner for Solid Ground residents who completed the dialectical behavior therapy program during the past year.

Dialectical behavior therapy (DBT) is a skills-based training program that helps parents overcome trauma, improve relationships, and advocate for themselves and their families in effective ways. All adults at Solid Ground must participate in the DBT program. The 10-12 participants meet frequently during the year in a small group setting to work through the curriculum. This program has been instrumental in helping families become successful in school and work, at home, and in the community.

The graduation ceremony is an important milestone for the graduates and their families, and the evening provides an opportunity to celebrate. Children, sisters and brothers, and other relatives, along with Solid Ground staff and board members, gather in a festive setting to cheer the graduates' completion of the program. It was an evening of smiles and tears, hugs, and a sense of pride and accomplishment. Jazi Foreman, who runs the DBT program at Solid Ground, had individual words of accomplishment and encouragement for each graduate, making them feel special.

Incarnation volunteers worked hard to ensure a festive evening for the graduates. The tables in Grace Hall were decorated with white and blue covers and napkins, vases of flowers, and candles in hurricane lamps. Each table also held a small candle holder with a picture of a graduate for them to take home as a remembrance. We set up the stage, and the graduates walked up individually in cap and gown to receive the diploma and words of encouragement from Jazi.

As soon as the ceremony ended, we served each table bowls of chicken alfredo, green beans, and salad, along with rolls and butter. Dessert was slices of the cake that Solid Ground provided, accompanied by milk and coffee.

Guests remarked at how welcome they felt and able to relax and enjoy the evening. Children were polite and well-behaved, and it was fun to watch the families interacting with each other. They left in a festive mood to get ready for the next day's work and school.

Many thanks to all the Incarnation volunteers who made the evening possible, especially our excellent cook. We look forward to hosting this event again next year as part of our ongoing relationship with Solid Ground.

Goodbye to Barb Stockton



Barb Stockton is retiring at the close of the 2014-15 school year this month. She has been a loving and dedicated part of the teaching staff at Incarnation Preschool for 16 years, beginning in the role of a long term sub in the spring of 1999! Barb has nurtured the growth and development of hundreds of young children over the years, showcasing her artistic and organizational skills along with her genuine love for children.

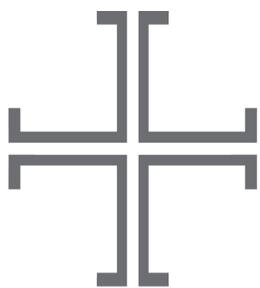
First on Barb's agenda in retirement is a road trip to Florida to spend the summer with her mother! Barb's regular presence in the preschool will be greatly missed. We look forward to her continued role in the Incarnation nursery in the fall and anticipate and hope she may fill in as a substitute in the classrooms on occasion. Thank you, Barb!

Goodbye to Sue Bernlohr



After serving on the Incarnation staff for 23 years, Sue Bernlohr is retiring at the end of August. Sue has been a loving and dedicated part of the staff, serving most recently as Incarnation's Food Coordinator the past five years. Prior to that, she served as the Director of Children's Ministry for 18 years. Sue was instrumental in forming the Incarnation Preschool, along with launching the LOGOS afterschool program, now known as SPARK Kids' Club. Sue has a God-given gift of hospitality which helped her nurture the growth and development of hundreds of people, young and old over the years.

Sue is looking forward to retirement so she can spend more time with her beautiful grandchildren. Sue's presence on the staff will be greatly missed, but she is happy to be assuming her original role at Incarnation, as a member. A big thank you Sue, for serving the community so faithfully!



INCARNATION LUTHERAN CHURCH GENERAL FUND - INCOME & EXPENSE REPORT FOR THE MONTH ENDING MARCH, 2015

REVENUE	YTD ACTUAL	YTD BUDGET	YTD VARIANCE
Member Envelopes/Loose	\$431,040	\$459,943	(\$28,903)
Special Env./Misc.	9,415	15,097	(\$5,682)
Special Appeals	0	1,103	(\$1,103)
Total Offering	\$440,455	\$476,143	(\$35,688)
Other Income	1,455	1,677	(222)
Total Income	\$441,909	\$477,820	(\$35,911)
EXPENSES	YTD ACTUAL	YTD BUDGET	YTD VARIANCE
Missions	\$55,523	\$55,375	\$148
Salaries/Wages	\$335,661	\$338,750	(\$3,089)
Ministries	\$16,152	\$27,288	(\$11,136)
Administration	\$21,885	\$20,500	\$1,385
Building	\$51,025	\$45,338	\$5,687
Total Expenses	\$480,245	\$487,251	(\$7,006)
Net Income (loss)	(\$38,336)	(\$9,431)	(\$28,905)

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

Beginning of the Month balance	\$137,816
Net Income for the month	44,078
Mortgage Payment	(28,540)
Other Capital Expenses	(80)
Monthly Ending Balance	\$153,275

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

Recently Hospitalized: Lisa Alben.

Sympathy to: The family of John Brown on his death; Beth (Perry) Hanson and family on the death of her father; Garry Strating and family on the death of his mother; Lisa Morse and family on the death of her father; Geri Rule and family on the death of her sister; Mary Lunstad, John Savereide and family on the death of their brother; The family of Eilenne Boder on her death; Joe Doncits and family on the death of his father.

Congratulations to: Scott and Julie Schraut on the birth of Alexis Kathryn; Michael and Vivien Tressler on the birth of Charlotte Elizabeth; Ed and Josie Stueve on the birth of Cort Dashel; Greg and Stefanie Straka on the birth of Mallory Joy; Josh and Malene Ford on the birth of George Alfred.

Connect & Grow

Cycling Fellowship Group for Adults

Connect with other cyclists and explore Twin Cities bike trails. This group will cycle on Saturdays, 20-25 miles (average speeds from 13-18 mph). Designed for cyclists who are ages 18 and above, the group will also take part in devotions together. Register: dfloe@incarnationmn.org
When: Five Saturdays, 8:00 - 11:30 a.m., June - August

Summer Small Group: *Love Does*

Explore the humorous and inspirational stories of writer Bob Goff, in a small group. This group meets on five evenings, to watch DVD segments and talk about how to make faith active in the world. No preparation needed. Nursery available for additional cost, with registration by June 1. Register: dfloe@incarnationmn.org
When: Five Wednesdays, 7 - 8:30 p.m., June - August.

Small Group: Casual Biking

Bike at a casual pace, while experiencing creation, and connecting with others who enjoy biking. This small group will take easy to moderate trails around the Twin Cities, meeting at each trailhead. The group will bike for 2-3 hours, up to 20 miles (approximately 8-10 mph). Register: dwiebold@visi.com
When: Five Saturdays, 8:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m., June - September

Nehemiah Book Study in June

How is God Calling Me to Serve in My Community? Pastor Lynda Thompson will explore this question by studying the Old Testament book of Nehemiah during four Tuesday nights in June, beginning June 9. In addition to reading through the book Nehemiah the group will watch DVD accounts of people who felt God calling them to service in their own communities. The basis for the study will be the book Nehemiah: A Heart That Can Break. There is an optional cost of \$15 for those who wish to purchase the book. For more information, contact Pastor Lynda Thompson lthompson@incarnationmn.org or stop by the Incarnation Office to register for this opportunity.
When: Registration deadline is June 2.

Men's August Golf Outing

Men of all ages and skill levels are encouraged to participate in this year's scramble format golf outing at Oneka Ridge Golf Club in White Bear Lake. You can sign up as an individual or as a group. Reservation forms are available on-line and in the Incarnation Office. For more information, contact Jim Fruehling at 651-483-1704 or jcfruehling@iccloud.com
When: Monday, August 24, 12:30 p.m.



Opportunities, cont.

Children, Youth, and Family

Blessing of Graduating Seniors

On Sunday, June 7 during the 10:45 a.m. worship service in Incarnation Hall, there will be a short blessing for all graduating high school seniors. This is a small way for our faith community to celebrate the accomplishment of the 2015 graduates. Invitations have been sent home to all families currently in the database. If you know someone who would like to participate in this special blessing, please have them call the Incarnation Office at 651-484-7213 by Tuesday, May 26.

When: Sunday, June 7, 10:45 a.m.

Volunteer

LifeHaven Meal Donations

There is a sign-up sheet at the Information Center for Sunday meals with menu suggestions and quantities. Thank you to those who have donated.

Offering of Letters

Each May, the Hunger Action Group leads the Incarnation community in an "Offering of Letters", using materials from Bread for the World, a collective Christian voice urging our nation's decision makers to end hunger at home and abroad. A table on May 17 will this year offer you the opportunity to write letters to your members of Congress asking them to retain and increase funding for programs for child and maternal nutrition without cutting other food programs.

When: May 17

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Incarnation Lutheran Church



Congregational Business

Preschool Position Available

Incarnation Preschool is now accepting resumes for Assistant Teacher position for the 2015-16 school year. This role may be filled as one full time school year position, (8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.) or split as two part time positions. Visit the Incarnation website ABOUT tab - employment page for position description and qualifications. Send resume to: mmartin@incarnationmn.org.

2015 Incarnation Photo Directory

There is still time for you to be included in the 2015 Incarnation photo directory if you have not submitted your family photo. Instructions for submitting a digital photo by e-mail are available in the Information Center, the Incarnation website and the Incarnation Office. Anyone who submits a photo will receive a free photo directory which will be available in September.

Incarnation Lutheran Church Office: 651-484-7213

Web Site: www.incarnationmn.org - If registering online, most major debit and credit cards accepted
If payments are made at the Incarnation Office, Visa and Mastercard are accepted for payment.