



Lifetimes

Faith Milestones

By Pastor Joel Vander Wal

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“If mom says, ‘No!’ Ask grandma.” This sign hung up in my wife’s grandma’s house growing up. It was the mantra that her grandma repeated over and over again. There’s something unique to being a grandparent. Whether that be the first time you become a grandparent, or the fourteenth. It is a significant milestone in a person’s life, and too often our faith community overlooks some of these significant milestones. It can be easy to focus on all of the different developmental and social milestones that children and youth experience, because they happen so frequently. But what if, we also celebrated other milestones, like becoming a grandparent for the first time, or retiring, or paying off your mortgage. Some of these milestones are things that happen to you, others are milestones you have spent years (sometimes decades) working towards.

All throughout the Old Testament we hear stories of God’s people setting up monuments to remind themselves of significant encounters or milestones that they have with God. These monuments were created to serve as reminders to future generations of God’s faithfulness to God’s people. For example, in Joshua 4 the Israelites are instructed to build a monument using 12 stones as they crossed through the Jordan River on dry ground. Joshua explains, “When your children ask their parents in time to come, ‘What do these stones mean?’ then you shall let your children know, ‘Israel crossed over the Jordan here on dry ground.’ For the Lord your God dried up the waters of the Jordan for you until you crossed over . . . so that all the peoples of the earth may know the hand of the Lord is mighty, and so that you may fear the Lord your God forever.” (vv. 21b-24)

What might it look like to have your own personal “monument” filled with stones commemorating all of the significant milestones in your life? While our Stepping Stones ministry focused on the experiences of children and youth, over the next several months we are working to re-imagine new ways to celebrate all the different Faith Milestones one experiences throughout their life. Our new Faith Milestones Ministry will seek to celebrate those momentous occasions we experience: from baptism to receiving your first Bible, from Confirmation to graduating high school, from getting your first job to becoming a parent, from being an empty nester to paying off the mortgage, from becoming a grandparent to whatever other milestones life may bring. All of which can be used to point others to God’s mighty hand throughout your life.

From The Staff

Jeanne Hartfield

Pastor for Adult Learning & Spiritual Formation



Then Moses said, “I must turn aside and look at this great sight, and see why the bush is not burned up.” When the Lord saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, “Moses, Moses!” And he said, “Here I am.” Then he said, “Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.” - Exodus 3:3-5

I’ve always loved the story of Moses and the burning bush. I’ve heard others say they wish God would be so direct with us, and I’ve had that feeling at times too. If only God would give us a flashy sign; if only God would be so clear, “THIS is what I want you to do!” Yet Moses did a couple of things that prepared the way to hear what holy work God had in store for him: he noticed, he let life be interrupted when he turned aside to see, and he took time to listen. What moments of standing on holy ground might we be missing because we don’t allow time and space for those things to happen?

In November 2015, my husband Andrew and I found ourselves on holy ground. It was our first morning in Haiti with the Incarnation group. I knew that first morning would be the hardest part of the whole experience and I knew I had to face it head on. The first morning would be spent at the hospital for sick and dying babies and I was a woman who, like so many, had experienced years and layers of loss around not having children because of singleness, infertility, and cancer. Though we made the decision to be content with our children and grandchildren from Andrew’s first marriage, knowing I would never parent was a deep loss.

As we arrived that morning, Andrew and I both went to the wing with the sickest children. We simply held them. That was our job. I remember the tiny body of the first boy I held, his skin slack with fever and dehydration. He just wanted to be held. They all just wanted to be held. For Andrew it was a little girl in a yellow dress whose name was Esther. She wouldn’t let him put her down. Over the course of a couple hours on holy ground, God cracked open our hearts and made space for a new possibility for our lives together.

A few months after returning from Haiti, Andrew and I decided to enter into the adoption process. It was a decision fueled by a lot of prayer and conversation. We determined that paying attention to the deep hunger to parent together was a way of listening to God, so we would act accordingly and would keep

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Young Adults Discover Financial Peace

By Kristin Bloxham

This summer Pastor Jeanne Hartfield and I offered Dave Ramsey's Financial Peace University for free for young adults, through the generosity of the Incarnation Endowment Fund. I knew how powerful the class could be if taken seriously from my own experience taking the class last winter with my husband, but was surprised by the confidence, questions, conversation and dramatic financial changes that these young people experienced in just nine short weeks.

During our last class, participants filled out a card indicating how much debt they have paid off, how much money they have saved, and information about their charitable giving while they have been in the class. I was blown away by what these cards showed. While we had fifteen individuals and couples regularly attend, we had only six people at our last lesson. These six young adults saved \$14,500, paid off \$2,900 in debt and two people indicated that they are giving substantially more than they were before taking this class. This is good news!

Here is what some of the class participants have said:

"FPU gave us the tools and instruction as we start paying for loans, prepare to buy a house/start a family/retire, and give like we would love to give. It was a great lesson, seemingly for anyone at any point in their life." - Ayla Jurchisin

"When I first started this class I was not too excited, but I'm so excited that I committed to the nine weeks. I feel like I was given empowerment over my money and where it goes. I was equipped for life and I now have a better understanding of what giving means." - Samantha Christiansen

"I am looking forward to when I get my first 'big kid' job and implementing the strategies and tools I learned in this class. He (Dave) broke down and explained major components of finances easily so that anyone can understand them." - Barb Schornstein

"I felt incredible shame for every purchase I made prior to this class, because in my mind, it was money I 'should' be using for 'this, that and the other thing', yet through this class, I've gained freedom and peace. I can actually smile and be present in the experience of a meal out with friends because I know it won't affect my life negatively, since finding out how to manage money, and allocate it correctly I get to say a lot of yeses. Yes to saving, to my health, to my future kids, and house and yes to education, friends and splurge money!! It's been super helpful and I know I sound cheesy, but the freedom from the shame has been incredible!"

- Liliya Hulse

"I love the focus the class had on giving. It has given me a new perspective on the purpose of money and how God calls us to manage and share it. I will be going into the rest of my life with this understanding and will have the ability to make better financial decisions that will allow me to live the life God is calling me to live." - Rachel Miller

If you, or someone you know could benefit from Dave Ramsey's Financial Peace University, sign up for the upcoming class here at Incarnation facilitated by Pastor Jeanne. Class starts October 8. Cost is \$89 for an individual or couple, includes course materials and access to online resources. Scholarships are available. Childcare is available at no cost for children through age 8. For more information, contact Pastor Jeanne Hartfield at jhartfield@incarnationmn.org.

Through Prison Bars

I was very much surprised by the letter from a prisoner that was put into my mailbox at First Lutheran Church, White Bear Lake. The letter was from Russell Simon, at Oak Park Heights Prison. He was half way through a year's time in solitary. Russell was at the bottom of life at this time, with no purpose for living and no reason to even think about forgiveness.

I was going to retire from being the visitation pastor in a few months. God had a plan for my life that included men in prison. I visited Russell during his time in solitary. He found purpose for living during the months that followed. Above all, I helped him find a God that loves him and forgives him. Russell began to share his faith with me and sent me the names of a number of other men who needed someone to walk in faith with them. I ended up writing to 15 men in Minnesota State prisons, and one in Wisconsin.

I was surprised to see what a difference a few letters can make and thought about this letter writing becoming a ministry. Russell and I came up with a name, "Through Prison Bars". I found a logo of two hands hanging on for dear life, and TPB was in business, so to speak. How many people in prison are waiting for someone to write to them and give them a purpose for living? The Lord only knows. - *retired Pastor Carl Buettemeier*

It surprised me when I visited an inmate in the Anoka County workhouse a few years ago who told me, "Hey, you should be in prison ministry - there's a real need." Working in parish caring ministry presented few opportunities to visit those who were incarcerated and usually for short terms, almost exclusively in county jail settings. By the time I found out about a couple of cases of inmates sent up to Minnesota Department of Corrections custody and eventually got permission to visit them, they were released or transferred to county jail custody just prior to release.

Later when I went onto the retired Deacon roster, I went to visit Bishop Patricia Lull to see what I might do in retirement. She mentioned retired Pastor Carl Buettemeier, who had been urging her to encourage the St Paul Area Synod to promote a way for congregations to connect and minister to inmates in prisons and jails in some way. She seized on my experiences and sent me to see Pastor Carl with the idea that we would form a Work Group to be the fourth part of her Committee of Public Witness, assuming we could find at least one other person to help out and come up with at least one measurable goal for the coming year.

So the rest is history. Pastor Carl and I have met (over coffee, of course) deciding that his effort over the past four or so years called "Through Prison Bars", a letter writing ministry with inmates, primarily at Oak Park Heights in Stillwater, a level five high security prison of the Minnesota Department of Corrections, would be the low hanging fruit we could work with most easily. We floundered around a bit seeking a pilot church for our project, but settled on Incarnation itself. We held an information day on June 18, providing us an opportunity to speak to people after worship about the potential for such a ministry, and identified the expertise of Terry Carlson, a recently retired Department of Corrections Officer. Her expertise has been vital in bringing us to the place we are now. Preparing for the next steps: introduce the program to the congregation in September and provide training for those who choose to participate. We are excited about the coming year and this ministry we hope God will continue to bless going into the future. - *Former Deacon of Living Waters Lutheran Church, Jerry Dufeck*



Jerry Dufeck and Pastor Carl at the St. Paul Synod Assembly.

Kairos Celebrates the Reformation

By Pastor Jeanne Hartfield

This fall marks the 500th anniversary of the start of the Protestant Reformation and Kairos is the place to learn about it. The series will kick off on Sunday, September 17 as Pastor Janet Karvonen-Montgomery presents on *Luther's Morning Star: Katharina Von Bora Luther*. Other dates and topics include:

October 8: *Martin Luther and the Called Life* with Dr. Mark Tranvik.

October 15: *Seven Ways to Look at Martin Luther and His Work* with Dr. Mary Jane Haemig.

October 22: *Luther, the Pastor* with Dr. Mary Jane Haemig.

October 29: *"Follow the Money" in Martin Luther's Reformation* with The Rev. Luther Dale.

November 12: *Martin Luther - Liturgy and Life* with Dr. Dirk Lange.

Kairos is Incarnation's Sunday morning adult learning opportunity that explores the integration of faith and life and draws on engaging speakers from within Incarnation and from the wider community. Choose either the 8:45 a.m. or 10:05 a.m. session in the Fireside Room. Explore the full range of topics and speakers at incarnationmn.org/kairos.

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going through open doors in the process until either there were no more open doors or we had a child. Thankfully, doors were open to us, even as older parents. We are working with Holt International in their China program and have been matched with a little girl. She is currently three years old and we plan to call her Tillie. There are still some steps of paperwork to complete, but we expect we'll travel to bring her home in the early months of 2018.

Holy ground isn't always dramatic. It can be a quiet conversation with a friend or a moment of honesty about a persistent hunger we have in heart, body, mind or spirit. It can be a phrase from a song or a sermon or a Bible reading in worship. The outcomes aren't always so dramatic either; but God does speak to our hearts and our lives in countless ways, guiding us from holy ground to our holy work. How might you create time and space to notice holy ground?



Incarnation Lutheran Church

Worship, Prayer & Among the Congregation

Hospitalized: Babs Riedel.

Sympathy to: Kerry Rieck and family on the death of her brother; Judy Nordstrom and family on the death of her father; the family of Marit Swenson on her death.

Connect and Grow

Kairos September 17: "Luther's Morning Star: Katharina von Bora Luther"

Using her remarkable knowledge and skills while overcoming personal tragedies, Martin Luther's wife and partner, Katharina von Bora, made a significant contribution to the Reformation in her own way. Living into our Christian and Lutheran idea of vocation, we too can proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ. Presenter, Pastor Janet Karvonen-Montgomery, recently spent time in Wittenberg and will share her story.

When: September 17, 8:45 a.m. & 10:05 a.m.

Connecting in Grace Small Groups

Connect with others around *Connecting in Grace*, a new faith study written specifically for Incarnation small groups. Take part in meaningful conversations around themes at the heart of our faith. New groups start this fall on a variety of days/times and meet once/month. Watch for the latest groups on the website. To register: dfloe@incarnationmn.org. Suggested contribution: \$10.

Walk Through the Bible Returns September 13

Walk Through the Bible is a weekly Bible Study where participants read and discuss the preaching text for the coming Sunday. Come when you can. Feel free to bring a lunch.

When: Wednesdays beginning September 13, 12 - 1:00 p.m.

Growing Through Loss

Have you experienced the death of a loved one, a broken relationship, a pregnancy or infant loss, a job loss or change, or any other loss? Check out Growing Through Loss, a grief support series sponsored by the North Suburban Grief Support Coalition, which includes Incarnation, at Centennial United Methodist Church in Roseville.

When: Mondays, September 18 - October 23, 6:45 - 9:00 p.m.

Women Read: *The Late Homecomer*

This is a monthly gathering for women to discuss a variety of books. For September, discuss *The Late Homecomer* by Minnesota author Kao Kalia Yang. All are welcome. No need to register.

When: Wednesday, September 20, 1 - 2:30 p.m.

Primetimers: Luther & the Reformation

Primetimers is a time of fellowship and learning for everyone ages 63 and older. In September, participants will watch and discuss Rick Steve's film "Luther and the Reformation." Cost: \$5, includes lunch. Sign up in the Incarnation Office.

When: Thursday, September 28, 10:15 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Spiritual Spa: Centered

Pastor Jeanne Hartfield will lead as participants reflect on what is at the center of their life and learn ways to reconnect with Jesus at the center. Cost: \$20, includes dinner. Scholarships available. Register online or in the Incarnation Office by Monday, October 2.

When: Friday, October 6, 6 - 9:00 p.m.

Save the Date: Fall Financial Peace University

Craft a healthier financial future with Dave Ramsey's Financial Peace University (FPU) at Incarnation. Free childcare will be provided for children age 8 and younger. Sign up in the Incarnation Office. Cost: \$89. Scholarships available.

When: Sundays, October 8 - December 3, 4 - 5:30 p.m.

How to Have Hard Conversations

At home, work, or in friendships, our relationships create community; but technology, complex family dynamics, and differing viewpoints can complicate how we connect with people. Facilitated by Pastor Jeanne Hartfield, explore practical tools for engaging with others in these complicated times. Cost: \$10. Register in the Incarnation Office by Monday, October 16.

When: Tuesdays, October 17 & 24, November 7 & 14; 7 - 8:30 p.m.

Children, Youth and Family

Children, Youth and Family Registrations

Registrations are still being taken for SPARK Sunday/Wednesday and IGNITE Ministry for this coming fall. If you received a registration form last spring, we ask that you turn that in to the Incarnation Office. If you are new to SPARK or IGNITE Ministries, we would love to have your registrations turned in so we can create small groups that will create opportunities for growth in relations with Jesus and within the Incarnation community.

Serve

God Loves Moms: Small Group for Moms

This group for moms (infants - early elementary school) will connect for conversations around *God Loves Moms*. Discover how God shows up in challenges and blessings by exploring the stories of women in the Bible. Suggested contribution: \$10. Child care available for additional cost with registration. Register: dfloe@incarnationmn.org.
When: Once/month on Fridays, 9:30 - 11:00 a.m., October - May.

Friendship & Purpose with God's Love: Small Group for Moms

Friendship - it's a gift God wants for us, but sometimes tough to do. Reconnect with the love of Jesus and unpack what it means to be a friend, loving one another in the light of Jesus' love. Suggested contribution: \$10. Child care available with registration for an additional cost. Register: dfloe@incarnationmn.org.
When: Twice/month on Wednesdays, 9:30 - 11 a.m., October - January.

Holy Moments: Small Group for Moms

What are the ordinary moments that make up your life? It's easy to feel these moments are mundane or unimportant, yet God is present in these holy moments, giving them meaning. Connect with others around the faith study *The Church of Small Things*. Suggested contribution: \$5. Register: dfloe@incarnationmn.org.
When: Once/week on five Thursdays, 7 - 8:30 p.m., Oct. - Nov.

Solid Ground Winter Coat Drive

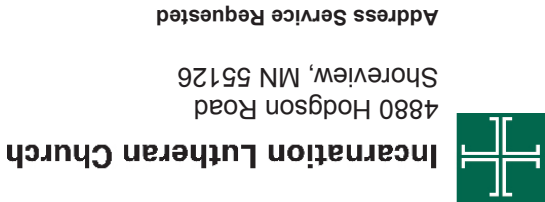
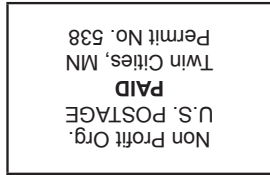
Donate new or clean gently-used coats, boots, hats, gloves and scarves of all sizes. Boots are especially in short supply. Drop off winter wear in the Coat Drive Box located in the Atrium.
When: September 3 - October 8.

Fall Clean Up Volunteers Needed

The Facilities Management Committee at Incarnation invites you to help in one or more clean-up days at Incarnation. Come when you can. Please call the Incarnation Office at 651-484-7213 to volunteer or for more information.
When: September 23, October 14 and 28, 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Hurricane Harvey Relief

Gifts to Lutheran Disaster Response, designated for Hurricane Harvey Response will be used entirely (100 %) for this disaster until the response is complete. Give today to support the needs in this response and others like it. Make checks to Incarnation with "Lutheran Disaster Response Hurricane Harvey" in the memo.



INCARNATION LUTHERAN CHURCH GENERAL FUND - INCOME & EXPENSE REPORT FOR THE MONTH ENDING JULY, 2017			
REVENUE	YTD ACTUAL	YTD BUDGET	YTD VARIANCE
Member Envelopes/Loose	\$957,462	\$996,222	(\$38,760)
Special Env./Misc.	\$21,790	\$29,510	(\$7,720)
Total Offering	\$979,252	\$1,025,732	(\$46,480)
Other Income	\$5,203	\$7,079	(\$1,876)
Total Income	\$984,455	\$1,032,811	(\$48,356)
EXPENSES	YTD ACTUAL	YTD BUDGET	YTD VARIANCE
Missions	\$128,694	\$129,500	(\$806)
Salaries/Wages	\$797,647	\$816,667	(\$19,020)
Ministries	\$15,419	\$62,504	(\$47,085)
Administration	\$32,961	\$39,229	(\$6,268)
Building	\$97,159	\$122,850	(\$25,691)
Total Expenses	\$1,071,879	\$1,170,750	(\$98,870)
Net Income (loss)	(\$87,424)	(\$137,939)	\$50,514

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN	
Beginning of the Month balance	\$167,340
Net Income for the month	14,683
Mortgage Payment	(28,540)
Other Capital Expenses	(21)
Monthly Ending Balance	\$153,461

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

