

## “God Will Take Care of You”

Maybe I'm the only one who “feels” this way, but I don't think so. As the nasty effects of this lengthy economic downturn continue to ensnare more and more people, I've noticed that many people's public behaviors are becoming less and less civil; why, in some cases, those behaviors are becoming murderous – like the action of the man who, because of his frustration with the IRS, took a cue from an old World War II newsreel and decided to fly his single-engine plane *kamikaze-style* into a Texas IRS Service Center. I'm guessing that *stress* over the circumstances of life plays a very significant role in this degeneration of human behavior.

Thinking about these things, I spent a little time on the “web” searching “stress.” It didn't take long for me to stumble on the name of Dr. Hans Selye (1907-1982) who, because of his life-long research into the effects of prolonged stress on people came to be known as “the father of stress.” Way, way back in 1956, he wrote an important book entitled *The Stress of Life*. In that work, Selye spelled-out an important distinction between the two kinds of stress we know in life. To do that, he appended two prefixes borrowed from the ancient Greek language, to the word *stress*. He called one **distress**; the “bad” kind of stress about which we all know too much: too much to get done with too little time in which to do it; barely enough time to say “Hello” or “Goodbye” to those we love because we're like two ships passing in the night; I'm sure you can name your own examples. Selye named the second kind of stress, **eustress**; that's “good” stress, the kind that helps us grow and helps us to be engaged with life in healthy ways: like getting married, having children, working a demanding job which, though difficult, does not tear us down but leaves us with a feeling of having accomplished something of value and worth.

At the beginning of this Lenten season, I've come to understand that we who call ourselves *Christian* do, by our claiming that name, place ourselves into a life with a certain kind of stress. “Why?” you ask. I think it's because we Christians are called by God to live as “different” from the group; we are called to be different from the rest of those around us in the world. To borrow an old, old phrase, while we may live *in* this world, we, as Christians, are not *of* this world. Or, as I said in my Transfiguration Sunday sermon (February 14<sup>th</sup>), we don't belong in this world; heaven is our home. The **eustress**, the good stress, of faith comes as we try to live *in* this world without *giving-in* to this world. The life that is lived in Jesus, brings with it the sometimes difficult choice of taking “the road less traveled,” or making the difficult ethical decision. Sometimes the **eustress** comes as we struggle with the weakness of our faith.

Somehow, I think that's why we have Lent every year! Lent gives us the opportunity to embed ourselves more deeply in the Word of God, in prayer, and in true devotion to our Lord. Lent gives us the opportunity to be strengthened by those things for the task of living our Christian life *in* this world without *giving-in* to this world. The taking-on of additional burdens such as mid-week worship leads us ever more deeply into a sure and confident faith in God who, through Jesus, and by the working of the Holy Spirit, can lead us to sing:

Be not dismayed whate'er betide, God will take care of you;  
Beneath his wings of love abide, God will take care of you.

**Refrain** *God will take care of you, through ev'ry day, o'er all the way;  
God will take care of you; God will take care of you.*

Civilla D. Martin, 1869-1948

May we, working and walking together, grow into such faith as this!

## Preaching Matters

During the month of March we will travel ever more deeply toward the central core of the Christian Faith: each week takes us a step closer to the week we call "Holy" and its Friday . . . the one we call "Good" . . . and our intense remembering of all that God has done for us in Jesus. The length of this Lenten journey sometimes leaves us feeling that we are wandering in a wilderness . . . the wilderness of temptation where we found ourselves with Jesus on Lent's first Sunday . . . a wilderness from which there does not seem an escape.

Perhaps that is where we need to be: for, as the scriptures repeatedly show, it is when we feel lost in the wilderness that we may finally give up relying on our own strength and so learn what it means to be children of God. The lessons appointed as guideposts on our journey through the Lenten wilderness in March are:

### March 7<sup>th</sup>: The Third Sunday in Lent

Isaiah 55:1-9; Psalm 63:1-8; 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 10:1-13; and, St. Luke 13:1-9

### March 14<sup>th</sup>: The Fourth Sunday in Lent

Joshua 5:9-12; Psalm 32; 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5<sup>th</sup> 16-21; and, St. Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

### March 21<sup>st</sup>: The Fifth Sunday in Lent

Isaiah 43:16-21; Psalm 126; Philippians 3:4b-14; and, St. John 12:1-8

### March 28<sup>th</sup>: The Sunday of the Passion/Palm Sunday

*For the Palm Sunday Processional: St. Luke 19:28-40*

*For the Liturgy of the Passion: Isaiah 50:4-9a; Psalm 31:9-16; Philippians 2:5-11;  
and, St. Luke 22:14 – 23:56; or, St. Luke 23:1-49*

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# The Sign of JONAH

The Sign of JONAH is the theme for this Lenten season's midweek worship. Yes, that might seem "fishy" at first; but if we remember that Jesus said, "Everybody's looking for proof, but they're looking for the wrong thing! They're looking for something to tickle their fancy, to satisfy their lust for miracles, and to entertain. But the only proof they will get is the sign of Jonah, the proof given to the

Ninevites,” it does begin to make some sense. What Jonah was to Nineveh, the Son of Man is to this age.” On each of these four March Wednesday evenings, we will gather in the Parish Hall at 6 p.m. for a light supper; at 6:30 we’ll engage in a short study of a part of the book of Jonah, which will lead us into our time of worship (7:00 p.m.) in the nave.

Wednesday, March 3<sup>rd</sup>: Our Providing God

Wednesday, March 10<sup>th</sup>: Praying in the Belly of the Great Fish

Wednesday, March 17<sup>th</sup>: The God of the Second Chance

Wednesday, March 24<sup>th</sup>: About Face

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### **In Concert:**

## **The Detroit Lutheran Singers**

Larger choral works by Johann Sebastian Bach and Johannes Brahms will be featured in the concert program of the Detroit Lutheran Singers to be presented here at Faith Church on Sunday evening, March 21<sup>st</sup>, at 7:30 p.m. Great music by two of history’s most-widely-revered composers – what a privilege and blessing for a listening audience! We are pleased to be able to host this outstanding choir. How wonderful it would be if most of our members would attend this concert, **and** invite friends and relatives to join in listening to an evening of inspiring and beautiful music.

*When Life Begins to Fail Me*, from Bach’s monumental St. Matthew Passion, and his motet for two choirs, *Come, Jesus, Come*, open the first half of the program. The backbone of the second half of the program is Brahms’ *Celebration and Remembrance*, for eight-voice choir. Hanging from the substantial skeleton provided by these “masterworks” and balancing their weight will be compositions by three 20<sup>th</sup> Century composers: John Rutter, Francis Poulenc, and Healey Willan. Rounding out the program will be two “spirituals.”

From its founding in 1967, the Detroit Lutheran Singers have always been dedicated to promoting excellence in choral music. Eric Freudigman, the DLS musical director since 1973, has programmed this concert in firm support of that goal. Member-singers of the DLS are also committed to this lofty goal. Many selections are sung without accompaniment. When accompaniment is required, Doris Hall, a member of the American Guild of Organists, fills the need.

Tickets (\$10 for General Admission; \$7 for Seniors and Students over 12) will be available at the door. However, as host congregation, we have the opportunity to sell tickets in advance at the rate of \$5 each. Please see Joyce Bigelow for tickets. Plan now. Invite now. Purchase now. Tickets will be available at this reduced rate in the Church Office until the morning of the concert.

### **Congregational Meeting: January 24, 2010**

The following resolution was moved and passed: RESOLVED – that a committee be formed to analyze the life and giving of Faith and to recommend goals and possible strategies for the next 3 – 6 years. Volunteers for this committee are Karen Keutgen, Beth Hare, Sue Thomas, David Nims, Julia Machnak, Karen MacKenzie, Dave Benoit, Bill Otto, Pastor Carr & Ralph Paschke. This committee will have its first meeting on February 16.

The following officers were elected:

Congregation President ~ Ralph Paschke

Congregation Secretary ~ Karen MacKenzie

Worship Shepherd ~ Walt Smith

Mission Shepherd ~ Cassie Haupt

Fellowship Shepherd ~ Virginia Smith

Remaining in office until January 2011 are the following:

Congregation Vice President ~ Jim Haupt

Congregation Treasurer ~ Doug MacKenzie

Education Shepherd ~ Linda Bozgan

Also passed was the 2010 budget as presented at the meeting. (Those interested in seeing the budget may contact the church office.)

Linda Bozgan thanked the many people working with Sunday School, the teens, and had a special thanks to Julia Machnak for her many years of service.

Kudos were also given to the Parish Life Committee for supplying lunch for the meeting.

**LIBRARY UPDATE:** WOW! The complete reno was scheduled for 10 days, and that is exactly what it took! The room is new from top to bottom – the ceiling has been returned to white, the walls are a wonderful soft shade that varies between blue, white, & gray (depending on the light), the window trim is a soft gray, the room is now fully carpeted, there is a new counter top and sink, and soon, there will be new blinds. This was an Eagle Scout project by Matthew Andrus, along with his parents, Kathy & Carl, his troop and parents of the scouts. They did an absolutely incredible job! We wish to thank them along with Dave Thomas who tore apart the old counter, capped off pipes, purchased, cut & installed the new counter top & sink. Funds for this project included the collection of change & returnable bottles & cans. Donations can still be made. Mark your envelope "Library Renovation." Thank you and be sure to wander down to see the wonderful 'new' space!

**LENT MEALS & SERVICES** are scheduled for Feb. 24, March 3, 10, 17, & 24. Dinner will be served at 6:00pm with prayer service at 7:00pm. Please sign up in the Narthex for the meals you are planning to attend so that the cooks have an accurate count.

**Order your Easter lily now** through Sunday, March 21. Cost is \$10 per plant. Use one of your special envelopes or a pew envelope, mark it 'lily', & write down any dedication you may have. Plan to take your plant home after service Easter morning.

**EASTER SCHEDULE** is as follows:

Palm Sunday is March 28. Service will be at 10:00am

Holy Week begins Monday, March 29.

Maundy Thursday is April 1, with service at 7:30pm

Good Friday is April 2, with noon prayer and service at 7:30pm

Vigil is April 3, with service at 7:30pm

Easter is April 4. Service will be at 10:00am that morning.

Continental Breakfast will be served from 9:00 – 10:00am & 11:00 – noon that morning in the Parish Hall.

**Sign up to make a donation for Easter Breakfast** in the Narthex.

We are looking for coffee cakes, bagels, hard boiled eggs, breads, etc.

## **Education, Youth and Special News:**

Sunday School ~ on Feb. 14, Sunday School students participated in a special activity of using old palm crosses to make ashes that were used in Faith's Ash Wednesday service. Please plan to attend the next special Sunday School session on Sunday, March 28. Everyone will view a video about Palm Sunday and learn how to make a palm cross.

Faith's Teens Say Thanks! The family of Faith enjoyed a wonderful "SOUPER Bowl" lunch that Faith's teens and their families prepared and served on Sunday, Feb. 7. Thanks to our members' generosity, the free will offering collected at the meal garnered \$265 to support ELCA's World Hunger project.

Teen Pretzel Sale ~ on Sunday, March 28, Faith's teens will be offering delicious, hot pretzels and condiments right after church. Your support of this fund raiser will help pay costs for the Easter Egg Hunt.

Annual Easter Egg Hunt ~ the year's hunt will be at Saturday, March 27. Participants ages

walking through 10 years of age are invited to arrive at 10:00 with the hunt beginning at 10:30am. The event is free & open to all children. Please sign up on the board in the Narthex on Sundays or in the Education Lobby during the week if your child(ren) is attending.

### March Event for Faith's 7<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> Graders

- Thursday, March 11, from 4:30-6:30pm. Meet at Faith and travel to Putting Edge in Novi for FREE glow-in-the-dark indoor mini golf. Permission slip required. Wear a white shirt and slacks if you want to shine! Bring \$\$ for snacks.
- Thursday, March 25, from 4:30-6:00pm. Meet at Faith to help with a service project, to enjoy some snacks, and have some fun!

### St. Patrick's Day Dance for 7<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> Graders

Saturday, March 13, from 7 – 10pm at Holy Cross Lutheran Church. Permission slip and current school ID are required. The \$5 donation is also entry in a raffle for prizes. Snacks and pizza will be sold at the event. Proceeds support the LSSM Family Center in Westland.

### March Event for High School Teens

On Sunday, March 7, Livonia-Lutheran Teens in grades 9 – 12 will meet from 6:30-8:30pm at Holy Trinity Church (39020 Five Mile, just east of I-275). Bring a friend and join the fun!!

### COMING UP:

~ People of Faith, be sure to keep your eyes peeled for fun (or possibly discount) party supplies such as cake mixes, party plates and napkins, party hats, and small toys for a spring outreach project! Also keep those peepers open and read through newsletters and bulletins for details to come! Cassie Haupt is in charge of this adventure!

~ Red Cross Training for CPR & our AED: in order to keep it functioning correctly, Faith's AED (Automatic External Defibrillator) will soon be refitted with a new battery and three new defibrillation pads. Now, we need some congregation members to attend a training class from The Red Cross in order to obtain and renew their certificate in CPR (Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation). Using CPR and our AED would make it possible for you to **save a life**, so please contact Linda Bozgan (313-278-8250) to sign up for a class that will be offered in the near future. Also, if you know other folks who would like to learn how to use CPR or the AED, then please invite them to join us.

### The Cross

A little word.  
But on it  
A mighty deed  
Performed.

The blessed Jesu  
Bows  
To surrender life  
For the good of man  
And for his salvation.

O man  
Do you know?  
Do you ever think?  
How gruesome it was!  
How all alone it was!

Spend some time  
Gazing,  
Feeling the suffering  
Mingled with love  
Flowing from my heart.

This is your lot too  
For to be my disciple  
You cannot love  
Without the spear-stab  
Twisting your heart.

~ Marianne Dorman