

Lutheran

Via de Cristo of Central Michigan

JUNE 2010



Newsletter

Sharing the "Way of Christ" with others who seek Him

See the Newsletter *in color* online: <http://www.editech-mi.com/lvccm/>

From the Lay Director

ASHES, ASHES, WE ALL FALL DOWN

My dad's words were uttered in a commanding tone. It was clear that he was displeased. And to his displeasure he added a twist as he said to me, "I said shovel *all* the snow off *all* the walks. What part of 'all' do you not understand?" As a twelve-year-old, I had soon grown tired of pushing a measly ten or so inches of partly cloudy off the steps, the porches, the driveway, and the sidewalks. And if I was not motivated enough to finish all of the work for the 50-cent reward that was promised, then the anger in my father's voice and the implications of his question were quite sufficient. "What part of 'all' do you not understand?"

There can be no mistaking the "allness" of "all", can there? All means all; it means everything, the whole, without omission. There can be no mistaking its meaning. And yet in our immaturity we persist in hoping that "all" somehow excludes this corner or that; that "all" means something other than totally my responsibility.

And so when the Bible says, "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God", our peculiar method of interpreting that is to hedge on the allness of all. All, but some more than others. All, but not too much for me. All, yes, but not anything that

(Continued on page 2)

Chancel Steps

THE MONASTICISM OF AGING

I heard this interesting perspective and I'd like to share it with you. Maybe you've had an experience like this, going to a high school reunion or a family reunion with people you haven't seen in a while. I am often taken aback by how much some folks have aged. Then comes the nagging thought that maybe I've aged, too. You wake up one day and your doctors are saying "Well, that's to be expected in a man your age."

Aging is a relentless natural process. A great philosopher, Charles Schultz of 'Peanuts' fame told the truth when he said: "Once you're over the hill,

you begin to pick up speed." You know the signs of aging as well as I do: our bodies let us know that our odometers have turned quite a few miles. The list of "you can't" begins to grow: you can't eat this. You can't play this. You can't climb that, you can't stay up past 8 pm, you can't, you can't, you can't... Another great Philosopher Woody Allen said, "You can live to be a hundred if you give up all the things that make you want to live to be a hundred." Some handle it gracefully. Some go into denial, like Groucho Marx: "I intend to live forever, or die trying."

(Continued on page 2)

SUMMER WEEKENDS #74
Trinity Lutheran Church,
Midland, MI
 Men - July 29 - Aug 1, 2010
 Women - Aug 12-15, 2010

ULTREYA INFORMATION

JUNE ULTREYAS

Tri Cities

Friday, June 18, 7:00 pm
 Fountain Ministries Christian Fellowship
 Hampton Towne Center
 Corner of Center & Pine, Essexville
 (old Hampton Mall, enter from parking lot)

Reed City

Friday, June 11, 5:30 pm
 St. Paul's Lutheran Church
 22275 4 Mile Rd., Reed City

Monroe

Friday, June 4, 7:00 pm
 Grace Lutheran Church
 630 N. Monroe St., Monroe

Warren Ultreyas have been discontinued.

JULY ULTREYAS

Tri Cities

Friday, July 16, 7:00 pm
 Trinity Lutheran Church
 706 W. Flint St, Davison

Reed City

Friday, July 9, 5:30 pm
 St. Paul's Lutheran Church
 22275 4 Mile Rd., Reed City

Monroe

Friday, July 2, 7:00 pm
 Grace Lutheran Church
 630 N. Monroe St., Monroe

From the Lay Director (continued from front page)

ASHES, ASHES, WE ALL FALL DOWN

really matters. I have not killed anyone, I have not stolen my neighbor's possessions, and I have not cursed or dishonored my parents. All, but not really *all* all. We hedge our bets on the allness of all.

But there it is, in bold letters, from the pen of the apostle, "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." All have sinned; the allness of all.

I have no children at home anymore and it has been a long time since I sang this nursery rhyme, but I think it goes something like this, "Ring around the rosie, a pocketful of posies, ashes, ashes, we all fall down." However you sing it, we did all fall down. It was the way the game was played; and when we did, we collapsed giggling, on the ground. We all fell down. Ashes, ashes, we all fell down.

One explanation of this little nursery ditty is that it refers to the plague that

hit London with such ferocity in the 17th Century. Perhaps it refers to the fact that the disease was so contagious that if you were in a group where someone sneezed, likely before long all in the group would fall down and die. I don't know about that; but I do know that there is a contagion more powerful than the plague; that there is a disease more virulent than AIDS and more deadly than H1N1. There is a sickness that infects us all, and from which all will die. It's called sin. As in, all have sinned. Ashes, ashes, we all fall down. We are all sinners.

Our problem, however, brothers and sisters, is that nobody wants to hear that and nobody wants to acknowledge how deep that goes. We have trivialized the notion of sin; but that in itself is a witness to precisely how deep that sin goes. We do not want to see the allness of sin. All have sinned; ashes, ashes, we all fall down.

Chancel Steps (continued from front page)

THE MONASTICISM OF AGING

Many have long-term negative reactions to aging, like bitterness, discouragement, or depression. How many products, plans, vitamins, supplements, surgeries and 'miraculous' products are sold every day to people who want to take 10, 20, 30 years off? We could accept the inevitable and slowly withdraw from life. We could vigorously (sort of) pursue those things we love while we still can. For instance, do you know the average age of a new Harley-Davidson owner? It's 47 and has been going up 6 months a year for a decade. A blessed few enter into this arena of the monasticism of aging, though they've never heard of the concept. So first, a working definition is in order.

"Monasticism (derived from Greek monos, alone) is the religious practice in which someone intentionally renounces worldly pursuits to fully devote their life to spiritual work." We have the opportunity, as we age, to parlay the "You Can'ts" of life, to renounce them in order to more intentionally focus our lives on Christ and His Kingdom work. Perhaps this is a better way to age - GRACEfully. To allow God to fill you with His grace and let Him use you to make all those in your environment soaking, sopping wet. I think this is a perspective well worth considering.

Your brother in Christ,
Pastor Jim

Periodical Format Information

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You see, we prefer to look for someone or something else to blame. We want someone else in the leaking boat with us. So we attempt to escape our singular responsibility for our actions.

There comes a time to acknowledge that we do know our transgressions, and our sin is ever before us. Today is the day to stop blaming all those who shaped us, taught us, or influenced us in the wrong direction. Today is the day to grow up and to take it, as David did; my sin, my transgression, my fault, my flaw, is before me. Lord, have mercy on me. Ashes, ashes, all fall down, and all includes me and all includes all that I have done. What we do and who we are is of concern to the One who made us. He knows and He cares, and, more than that, He is hurt when I try to usurp His place.

I'm sure most of us think of ourselves as very small fish in a tiny little pond, and that what we are about has very little consequence. But I tell you that in the economy of God there are no small fish, there are only His sons and daughters of infinite worth. And therefore, His heart is broken when we let malice or hatred, prejudice or dissembling, or any such thing, take us over.

God loves you and so do I,

Steve Brown





**"I WAS IN PRISON
AND YOU VISITED ME."
Matt 25:36**

SHARING TESTIMONIES

Pastor Lynn Chappell was a spiritual director on the women's Keryx weekend. There were 54 women candidates (inmates) on the women's weekend, plus inside and outside team. (Outside team are civilian volunteers; inside team are other inmates who have previously attended a Keryx weekend in the prison.)

It was time to eat in the chow hall. As the Keryx group was entering the chow hall, the correction officer separated the outside team from the candidates and inside team members. The inmates had to sit on one side of the chow hall and the outside volunteers were required to sit on the other side. The officer had effectively separated them. This has never taken place before. (On all previous Keryx week-

ends, the inmates and the outside volunteers sat together and discussed the progression of the weekend. It is a very well thought out dynamic.) This resulted in tension and concern. The officer felt it and said, "I have been given my orders to separate you all. If it were up to me, I would allow you all to sit together. But just wait and see what God does with this. He has a reason for allowing it." You could have heard a pin drop. What a beautiful testimony from this officer.

(By the way, Pastor Lynn said that over 500 female inmates applied to attend the women's Keryx weekend.)



In the prison, count is taken during the weekend. Inmates are counted and their location is accounted for by the officers. This is a normal part of the weekend.

At Huron Valley, the outside volunteers are required to stand and go to the outside of the room during count, effectively surrounding the inmates who remain seated. Everyone is silent. The outside team began praying; the seated inmates noticed this, reached out silently and began holding hands, reaching from table to table, and began praying, all in silence. What a beautiful testimony to the officers and to all of us.

Tom D.

REFLECTIONS FROM KERYX #32

From the time I was first asked if I would serve as Rector for Keryx #32, I felt a calmness I never thought I would feel serving in this capacity. I think much of the calmness came from the repeated reassurance from those who had asked if I would serve, that God wants these weekends to go well, and with His help, this one would go well. Their belief in God's presence was without question, and they were so correct in their belief.

Many times during the weeks of preparation, I said to my wife that I have never worked with a group of people so willing to say "YES" when asked to help. This started with the calls to form a team and continued all

through the weekend. What a blessing to have this group of people to serve with and to call friends.

With God's presence and guidance, the guidance of former rectors, Chaplain Greg, team members, and the board, plus the power of prayer offered by so many Christian friends in the U.P. and all over the world, as demonstrated by the many letters of prayer support, I believe the weekend was what God intended it to be.

God was present with all of us, He was present at the tables, in the chapel and prayer room, and He was present with the inside team, assisting them and guiding them in their encourage-

ment of potential candidates. With Chaplain Greg's guidance, a great group of candidates was selected. We must not forget to support our new brothers in Christ as they continue their walk of faith.

I am thankful for God's help and support, and the support of so many Christian friends, and I look forward to serving with my brothers and sisters in Christ as often as I am called to serve. I believe God wants me in this place, and I pray I can continue to serve Him.

Your brother in Christ,

Bob Johnson
Rector, Keryx #32



THANK YOU



Dear Fellow Servants,

The Board of Servants would like to thank everyone who contributed for the tables for the women's and re-entry weekends. They were put to use on the women's weekend the first weekend in May. It is a blessing to see how the Lord supplies our needs. May you all be blessed for your kindness and generosity. We are truly grateful for you and all that you do to further God's kingdom.

Blessings to all.

Bill Kuehne

KERYX NEWSLETTER CONTACT

*If anyone has an article that would be appropriate for the Keryx insert of the monthly newsletter, **please submit the article via email** to Bill Kuehne, the Keryx newsletter coordinator.*

Please send your email to Bill at wakuehne@chartermi.net. Bill can also be reached at (989) 631-1650.

A MESSAGE FROM PAUL KRUSE

As many of you are aware, I have felt called to enter the ministry for decades and a few years ago I entered the seminary program. The amazing news is that I have finally completed my program of study and I am anxiously anticipating my upcoming ordination. I made a commitment to my family not to serve on a Via de Cristo team until I was done with my studies and I have not seen many of you for a long time, but I want to extend an invitation to you.

If you are interested in celebrating my ordination with me, I would be honored to have you attend the service on Sunday, July 11, at 3:00 at Trinity Lutheran Church in Port Huron. There is a potluck dinner to follow if you can stay around and enjoy the Christian community in fellowship.

I would like to thank the entire Via de Cristo community for all the prayers and support you have offered in these past years, and I look forward to having the opportunity to serve as spiritual director at some point in the future.

God loves you and so do I!

Paul

THE CHARLES SCHULZ PHILOSOPHY

The following is the philosophy of Charles Schulz, the creator of the 'Peanuts' comic strip. You don't have to actually answer the questions. Just ponder them.

1. Name the five wealthiest people in the world.
2. Name the last five Heisman trophy winners.
3. Name the last five winners of the Miss America pageant.
4. Name ten people who have won the Nobel or Pulitzer Prize.
5. Name the last half dozen Academy Award winners for best actor and actress.
6. Name the last decade's worth of World Series winners.

How did you do?

The point is that none of us remember the headliners of yesterday. These are no second-rate achievers. They are the best in their fields. But the applause dies. Awards tarnish. Achievements are forgotten. Accolades and certificates are buried with their owners.

Here's another quiz. See how you do on this one:

1. List a few teachers who aided your journey through school.
2. Name three friends who have helped you through a difficult time.
3. Name five people who have taught you something worthwhile.
4. Think of a few people who have

made you feel appreciated and special.

5. Think of five people you enjoy spending time with.

Easier? The lesson: The people who make a difference in your life are not those with the most credentials, the most money, or the most awards. They simply are those who care the most.

"Be yourself. Everyone else is taken!"



I AM WHAT I AM

This was the title of a devotion I did recently. Reading and meditating on it brought many things to mind.

I came home from school one day in tears. Mom asked me what was wrong and I told her they'd been calling me Jimmy Durante and Danny Thomas because I had a big nose. It really hurt because the boy I liked was doing it also. She comforted me with a hug and these words, "Not everyone can look like them. You're special to me and that's how God made you". I also had naturally curly hair when the rage was straight and a space between my front teeth. I couldn't win.

That was at 12 years of age. I'm a lot older now, hopefully wiser. My hair is gray and still curly, I had the space between my teeth fixed, put on a few extra pounds, don't move as fast, like my naps and that nose holds up the glasses I need to see better.

We can become very vain about our outward appearance. That's why Lady Clairol, Rogaine, Weight Watchers, Nutri System, just to name a few, are so popular. Some think designer clothes are going to make them cool and accepted by the "in crowd". A great car, big house, cottage, boat, whatever the Joneses have, will make them happy.

No one chooses who their parents are, how they look, how smart they are. God does all this for us, ahead of time, before we're born. He knows the number of hairs on our head. Only when we can accept who we are, be comfortable with our station in life, who are friends are, can we find peace. Some never reach this level of comfort. Pray to God. He will guide and direct you down the right path.

I close with I Corinthians 15:10a,

"But by the grace of God I am what I am, and this grace to me was not without effect."

In His Service,

Bev Wright



Weekends to pray for:

June-3-6

Men's Great Banquet, OH
Girl's Chrysalis Flight, OK
Men's Kairos Inside, Ontario

June 10-13

Coed Episcopal Cursillo, FL
Girl's Awakening, IL

June 17-20

Men's Camino, MO
Men's Unidos en Cristo, MN

June 24-27

Women's Via de Cristo, FL
Women's Anglican Cursillo, New Zealand

TWO MEN IN THE HOSPITAL

Two men, both seriously ill, occupied the same hospital room. One man was allowed to sit up in his bed for an hour each afternoon to help drain the fluid from his lungs. His bed was next to the room's only window. The other man had to spend all his time flat on his back.

The men talked for hours on end. They spoke of their wives and families, their homes, their jobs, their involvement in the military service, where they had been on vacation.

Every afternoon, when the man in the bed by the window could sit up, he would pass the time by describing to his roommate all the things he could see outside the window.

The man in the other bed began to

live for those one-hour periods where his world would be broadened and enlivened by all the activity and color of the world outside.

The window overlooked a park with a lovely lake. Ducks and swans played on the water while children sailed their model boats. Young lovers walked arm in arm amidst flowers of every color and a fine view of the city skyline could be seen in the distance.

As the man by the window described all this in exquisite details, the man on the other side of the room would close his eyes and imagine this picturesque scene.

One warm afternoon, the man by the window described a parade passing by. Although the other man could not

hear the band, he could see it in his mind's eye as the gentleman by the window portrayed it with descriptive words.

Days, weeks and months passed. One morning, the day nurse arrived to bring water for their baths only to find the lifeless body of the man by the window, who had died peacefully in his sleep. She was saddened and called the hospital attendants to take the body away.

As soon as it seemed appropriate, the other man asked if he could be moved next to the window. The nurse was happy to make the switch, and after making sure he was comfortable, she left him alone.

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5)

TWO MEN...

Slowly, painfully, he propped himself up on one elbow to take his first look at the real world outside. He strained to slowly turn to look out the window besides the bed. It faced a blank wall.

The man asked the nurse what could have compelled his deceased roommate who had described such wonderful things outside this window.

The nurse responded that the man was blind and could not even see the wall. She said, "Perhaps he just wanted to encourage you."

Moral: There is tremendous happiness in making others happy, despite our own situations. Shared grief is half the sorrow, but happiness when shared is doubled.



THOUGHTS

God wants spiritual fruit, not religious nuts.

Dear God, I have a problem, it's me.

Growing old is inevitable...growing UP is optional.

Silence is often misinterpreted but never misquoted.

As a child of God, prayer is like calling home everyday.

A grudge is a heavy thing to carry.

He who dies with the most toys is still dead.

Have a great day!!! The SON is shining and He can certainly use you!

INFORMATION DIRECTORY

LVCCM Prayer chain

If you have a prayer concern, call or email:
Ann Mapes.....989-687-6960

Email contact—Brigette Trudell
brigchik224@aol.com

Applications or Brochures

Leonard Leavens.....989-879-2854
leninpinny@yahoo.com

Ultreya Information

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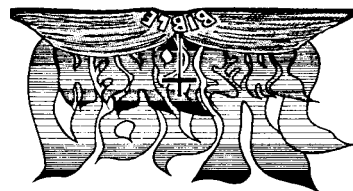
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The LVCCM Newsletter is designed to keep the LVCCM community informed about Via de Cristo activities, inspired toward a closer relationship with Jesus Christ and encouraged and challenged by the witness of renewed peity, study and action in our midst. This newsletter depends largely on your suggestions, comments and articles to help accomplish these goals.

The preferred way to submit newsletter items is via email, in a Microsoft Word attachment. If you are unable to do so, contact the editor, see information directory on the right side of this page. The deadline for items to be submitted is the 1st of the month for inclusion in the subsequent issue. The editor reserves the right to edit all items for content or length or to postpone publication if necessary. Unfortunately, space limitations do not allow the LVCCM Newsletter to print notices of individual church activities, unless they are directly related to the LVCCM community.



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Lutheran Via de Cristo of Central Michigan
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