



THE TIMOTHIAN

ST. TIMOTHY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH (ELCA)

January 2010

“Called, gathered, enlightened and made holy by God, we strive to live out the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Through worship, education, prayer, study, outreach and our Child Care Center, we share the love of Jesus Christ with all people.”

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Pastor

Rev. Dean M. Hunneshagen
Home phone No. 662-6037
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Director of Music

Peter Gates

Office Hours

Monday-Thursday 9am-1pm

Office Secretary

Adrienne Neutz

Sunday Worship

Holy Communion
8:00 am
10:30 am

St. Timothy Child Care Center

Phone 716-773-9249

Director

Lydia Shiposki

A MESSAGE FROM THE PASTOR

“What on earth are you good for?”

I have heard that said many times. Sometimes it is said as a criticism to express disappointment. Sometimes it is said in jest as a way of laughing at some human attempt that should be easy but fails. Sometimes it is said as a serious question that deserves careful thought and a serious answer.

I would like to raise the question as it is used in the latter sense.

As we enter the New Year, it would be wise if each of us individually as well as St. Timothy, the faith community, were prepared to answer it. This would be especially so if we perceived that it is God who is asking us the question.

The question has two parts. What on earth and what for. “What on earth...what in this location...at this particular time?” is the first part. “What are you good for?” is the other. What in this particular circumstance and for this particular stage of our life, what will be the outcome of our being here? What could one expect of us? When we set out to do something, what is the outcome we are hoping to achieve? What on earth are we good for?

“Outcome thinking” is essential to any individual or group that hopes to accomplish much. Outcome thinking requires that before setting out to do something you get clear about what you want to achieve. The destination is identified before choosing actions to get there.

People in organizations are notorious for getting busy doing things before they get clear about why they are being busy in the first place. Actions and methods are selected before it is clear what those actions and methods are supposed to achieve. The old saying is true: “If you don’t know where you are going, any path will get you there.”

Last month I wrote in this article: “I happen to believe St. Timothy’s finest days are ahead. It is not that former days were bad. It is just that the future days can be finer... I know that God has so much more in store for us than we can imagine....When we allow Him to break us and rebuild us into a new and renewed force for Him, our finest days are ahead of us.”

But we need to ask ourselves, what are we going to be good for? For God’s sake, what do we need to get expert in so that the outcome of our actions will result in something significant for God? The days are long gone when St. Timothy (or any other Christian faith community) can afford to go along being “active” but not “active” for a clear purpose. The finest days ahead will be days filled with accomplishing something for God!

Pastor Dean



The pre Christmas party was enjoyed by over 20 women, with games, carols, and many surprises. A variety of delicious food was enjoyed by all. Many thanks for all the clean up helpers. Hope to see you all next year.

The annual pound auction/salad bar luncheon will take place in the fellowship hall on Saturday February 7th promptly at Noon. This event will be chaired by Cheryl Wasson, and co-chaired by Elaine Hardman. Please bring any kind of salad to share, and a pound item cleverly wrapped, and \$ money \$ to bid with. Invite your friends, family and co-workers for a luncheon and a winters fun afternoon. The more the merrier. All women are welcome so spread the word. A sign -up sheet will be on the bulletin board in the Narthex. Thrivent Financial for Lutherans is helping fund the proceeds of this activity, as we designated to help outreach to Passage House, a shelter for abused women and children.

Thank you,
Respectfully
Elaine Hardman

Defensive Driving Course



A defensive driving course will be held on January 16 and January 23 beginning at 8:30 am and ending at 12:30 pm. Any age driver is accepted. Call Terri Glassman at 694-7342 for reservations.

Offering Envelopes



Offering Envelopes for 2010 are in the Narthex.



21 Days of Renewal has completed nine sessions and will resume on Wednesday, January 6. The theme for January will be Christian Stewardship and the discipline of giving. Our average attendance has been 41. New enrollees are being sought. People both within the parish and from outside are welcome. Call the church office to enroll.



Alicia Neutz and Brian Judkins were joined in marriage on December 19th. Alicia is the daughter of Larry and Adrienne Neutz.

Annual Meeting and Luncheon



The Annual Meeting is on Sunday, January 31, 2009. The Sr. & Jr. LYO will provide a **luncheon** in the fellowship hall following the 10:30 service. **The meeting will begin following the luncheon.** In addition to the normal business we desire a conversation with Pastor Hunneshagen about our future direction as a congregation. We welcome people to participate in this conversation. Please sign-up on the bulletin board if you plan on attending the luncheon. A "freewill" offering will be collected.

Committee Report Due

**Committee reports for the annual report
should be submitted to the office no later**

than January 11.

St. Timothy Lutheran Church
1st Sunday of Christmas
December 27, 2009
I Samuel 1-3
Luke 1-2

**“Answering the Call”
by
Pastor Dean M. Hunneshagen**

God calls.

Through His living WORD, God calls.

Yet not everyone hears His call. For that matter, even among those who do hear His Call, not everyone answers His call.

Still, God calls.

Is it possible that God, in 2010, will be calling you? Is it possible that God will be calling you to a new level of significance...of greater significance than ever before?

Let me tell you about **three women** who answered God’s call and the significance their lives had as a result.

The three women had several things in common:

None of them had had children.

None of them expected to have children (at least not then).

All three would have a son.

All three would dedicate their sons to a lifetime in the Lord’s service.

(This meant giving up something which they held most dear...

”giving up” in the sense of “handing over,” of “sharing” with others what they most treasured for themselves.)

Furthermore, the three women had three character traits in common.

First, they had a strong connection to God

There was a bond there.

Out of their connection, their bond, they were willing to follow His leading...to answer His call.

Second, they had emerged with a strong sense of gratitude.

They felt especially blessed and so were deeply grateful.

Out of their gratitude they were willing to respond to God’s call.

Third, they were strongly committed to the Lord’s purpose in the world.

They felt duty bound to honor that commitment.

This would lead them willingly to “lend” (as one said) their sons to the Lord’s work.

The three women’s names were: **Hannah, Elizabeth, and Mary.**

Hannah and her husband Elkanah were devout people.

Faithfully, they traveled to Shiloh each year to offer sacrifices and to worship at this holy place of Israel. The one thing that marred their life was Hannah's deep disappointment over not being able to have children.

Hannah would make the pilgrimage to Shiloh every year... and every year she would be reduced to tearful prayers...for she could not have a child. One year, Eli, the chief priest, noticed her, perceived her dismay, and prophesied that Hannah would one day have a child.

Sure enough, God granted her tearful request. Elkanah and Hannah conceived and Hannah gave birth to a son whom they named **Samuel** (which means "I have asked him of the Lord").

Then in a remarkable act of gratitude and faithfulness, when Samuel was weaned (which means he was still very young, 3-5 years old), she took him to the Temple and with these words gave him over:

"For this child I prayed; and the LORD has granted me the petition that I made to him. Therefore I have lent him to the LORD; as long as he lives, he is given to the LORD." (I Samuel 1:27-28)

Samuel would rise to become the chief priest to succeed Eli.

Elizabeth and her husband-priest Zechariah served the Temple in Jerusalem faithfully for many decades.

They were "righteous people." Only, sadly, they could have no children. Then, long beyond Elizabeth's child bearing age, a holy angel of God announced to Zechariah that Elizabeth would bear a son. This son, the angel said, was destined to be the forerunner of the coming Messiah.

Zechariah and Elizabeth conceived and Elizabeth bore their son. They named him **John**, as directed by the Angel.

Once again, in a remarkable act of gratitude and faithfulness she took him to the temple and dedicated him to the Lord's service.

John would rise to be that "preparer of the way" as foretold:
"And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High;
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,
to give knowledge of salvation to his people
by the forgiveness of their sins. (Luke 1:76-77)

Mary, the young peasant girl betrothed to Joseph, (you know her)...

Mary gave birth to a Son. At the appointed time, she brought him to the Temple in Jerusalem and dedicated him to the Lord's service.

In the Temple, at the dedication, a devout man of Israel, by the name of Simeon, took Jesus into his arms and declared:

“This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.” (Luke 2:34-35)

Jesus became that ... and more.

I tell you the story of these three women to make two points:

1. To illustrate what can be accomplished when connected, grateful, committed people answer God's call to act. They represent lives of significance.
2. To make the point that these three women led lives of significance not because they themselves were a Samuel, John or Jesus; but because they answered God's call. Through them God worked significance for the world.

Sometimes the significance of our lives resides more in what we facilitate happening than in what we ourselves do as a “point person” of God's actions.

Occasionally, we may be the “front man” for God's accomplishments; more often we are the behind-the-scenes “tools” God uses to accomplish something done by others.

Yet crucial to this happening is one's willingness to “answer the call.”

God calls.

Not everyone hears His call. Not everyone answers His call,
Some do answer His call.

Who are they?

They are the individuals like Hannah, Elizabeth and Mary
who, out of a strong connection with the Lord, are willing to follow His
leading;
who, out of a strong sense of gratitude, are willing to give joyously;
who, out of strong commitment to the Lord, are willing to “lend” God (as
Elizabeth said) even the most precious thing in their lives.

It is possible that God, in 2010, will be calling you to a life of significance greater than you have ever imagined.

I know He will be calling St. Timothy to that, for this could be a defining year.

Will you be answering His call? Or will you “screen out the call” and send it to “saved messages” (to delete at a later date)?

