



Lovilia Circuit Writer



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Pastor Jill Leveck

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PASTOR'S COLUMN

With tax time low on the horizon and concepts like assets and investments finding their way into conversation, I got to thinking about those words and what they mean to us as Christians. Our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ should anchor all that we think, say, and do and sharing that faith with our children so that they have a strong mooring point from which to set sail in life is one of the **most** important investments we can make. But, how do we teach the faith?

I've been reading and researching C.S. Lewis a great deal recently for a paper I'm writing for the January class I took at Denver Seminary. Lewis was an academic, a professor, and a man who had little contact with children and yet who created a fictional world populated with talking beavers, clumsy giants, powerful centaurs and beautiful unicorns. It was a land overshadowed by great evil in the form of the white witch and an even greater good in the shape of Aslan the not-tame Lion, Son of the great Father from across the sea.

Into this world come four children who encounter adventures galore and challenges aplenty and, in the process, they grow. When two of them are told by Aslan that they will not return to Narnia, their sadness centers around the fact that they will never see Aslan again. But he tells them that he is in their world also. "But there I have another name. You must learn to know me by that name. This was the very reason why you were brought to Narnia, that by knowing me here for a little, you may know me better there." (p.216, Voyage of the Dawn Treader)

But how will they know Aslan's other name (Jesus) if we don't tell them? It's up to us as parents and as a church to provide learning/growth opportunities like kids club, youth group,

Sunday School, camping etc for our children even as we attempt to model our faith in our day-to-day life.

So, having a strong and vital program for our children is, no matter what kind of accounting you use, an important investment and should occupy a great deal of our time, effort and energy.

What ideas do you have to make our ministry to youth more effective and complete? Now is the time to take action.



READERS CORNER

Traveling Light by Max Lacado

Do you "over" pack for your trip of life?

A suitcase of guilt, a sack of discontent, a duffel bag of weariness over one shoulder, a bag of grief hanging on the other, add a backpack of doubt, an overnight bag of loneliness and a trunk of fear.

This is how the author views our journey. For all of us, David wrote the 23rd Psalm. Max Lacado examines each sentence of this Psalm, exploring the promise God has given us in this Scripture.

To reach the top of the other mountain, we must go through the valleys.

Scripture assures us God is always there, loving, encouraging and guiding us. Earth is not our home. We are on a journey.

Enjoy this book. It will deepen your faith.

By: Goldie Kraber



LOCAL CHURCH NEWS



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FINANCES

During the month of February our regular offerings totaled \$1,615 and our monthly costs according to the 2006 budget are \$2,076.51.

The special collection for the PET project described in the February newsletter was \$244 (from Lovilia) and more than \$900 total for the whole parish. the construction on the mobile transportation units will begin soon. Thank you!

UMW NOTES

The next meeting is April 6, 2006 at 1:30 or 7:00. If you are not a member of our UMW fellowship, we invite you to come to our meetings. The afternoon group is a more formal meeting while the evening group has an informal format.

**Watch your thoughts;
they may become words
Watch your words;
they become actions
Watch your actions;
they become habits
Watch your habits
they become character
Watch your character;
it becomes your destiny.**

YOUTH GROUP

Baked Potato Supper - March 16th

To celebrate Saint Patrick's Day and raise money for our youth, once again we will hold a baked potato supper on Thursday, March 16th from 5:30-7:00PM at the Bussey church. Enjoy giant potatoes baked to perfection with a wide variety of toppings, a selection of salads and desserts. Come one, come all for a little touch of the blarney.

Watch your Sunday bulletins for information about upcoming youth activities and service projects.

PARISH NEWS

The Journey to Easter Begins - Ash Wed. - March 1

Our first leg in the journey to Easter began with a parish worship service in Lovilia, on Wednesday, March 1st at 7:00PM

But who ashes on Ash Wednesday? "As you know, Jesus retreated into the wilderness and fasted forty days to prepare for his ministry. It was for Him a time of contemplation, reflection, and preparation. By observing Lent, we join Jesus on His retreat.

Lent consists of forty days before Easter. We skip over the Sundays when we count the days of Lent, because Sunday is always the joyful celebration of the Resurrection. Therefore, the first day of Lent is always a Wednesday.

Biblical societies relied heavily on wood fires for heating and cooking, which meant that keeping ashes under control was a major housekeeping task. Ashes became a sign of remorse, repentance, and mourning. Today someone might wear black to signify that they are in mourning; back then people put ashes on their foreheads. Thus, it is most appropriate on Ash Wednesday, when we begin a period of sober reflection, self-examination and spiritual redirection to don this visible sign.

Traditionally, the ashes for the Ash

Wednesday service come from burning the palm fronds from the previous year's Palm Sunday celebration.

BIBLE STUDY ON REVELATION

Parish Bible Study on Revelation at Lovilia

On Sunday evenings at 6:00PM we're trying to unravel or at least understand a little better the last and most mysterious book in the New Testament. It's not too late to be a part of the fellowship and learning. Come and join us!!!

Parish Youth Group

There is a growing interest in getting our youth group up and going again. Ideas and opportunities are swirling around. What we have to do now is grab hold of them and get moving. Pastor Jill will be visiting with seventh through 12th graders in our churches to find out about dreams and possibilities for youth activities in the parish.

Camping

It's time to be thinking about summer camp. There are five sites from which to choose and multiple camping experiences to consider. From day camp for 3-5 year olds, to weeks for specific grades, and from a special focus to intergenerational events, there is something for everyone.

Contact pastor Jill for a book that lists all of the wonderful opportunities available.

UNITED METHODIST MEN

Thanks to folks in all three churches, the men now have enough to purchase a palette of wood to begin making the mobile transportation units. They will discuss it further at the meeting on Saturday, March 4th at 7:00AM in Bussey.

LOOKING AHEAD - on April 1st at 7:00AM the women are invited to enjoy eggs, pancakes, sausages, coffee and juice and a talk by Patty Barnhill's son. He will share with us about his helping efforts down in Louisiana.



Shirley Hugen and family, Scott Hugen, Frieda Davis, Curtis Davis, Thelma Smith, Lois Walter, Warren

Jones, Kevin Maughan, John Waters, Lyle Hugen, Ralph Bryant, Dale Allison, Donnie Tucker, Arlene Bonnett, Vera Reed, Esther Courtney, the family of Dale Spaur, Margaret Conner, Beverly Mick, our shut-ins and their caregivers, our leaders and our service men and women around the world.

BEYOND THE LOCAL CHURCH

MISSION MINUTE

One of the missionary families from whom I receive regular updates is Dr. Samson Retinaraj and his wife Priscilla who serve in Nepal. They train church leaders and coordinate a community health evangelism effort. Back in December Dr. Retinaraj required an emergency angioplasty. They report that he has recovered well and within a week was back to work again. He went with a team to Dhamile village and, to get there, he had to climb uphill for 2-3 hours every day. It is amazing that he could do all that.

They thank God for the little things like words of greeting and encouragement on their birthdays. Due to the unstable political situation and the often dangerous travel conditions, they need our prayers. That's something we all can give on a regular basis.

United Methodist Men Annual Meeting

The 2006 Annual Meeting will be held Friday-Saturday, March 10-11 at Iowa 4-H Camping Center, 1991 Peach Avenue in Madrid, Iowa.

Rev. Ed Kail will be speaking on the theme: "Discipleship - Jump out of the Safe Boat."

The cost is \$50 for the weekend (free for under 35 years of age). To register, send name and address, phone and e-mail address to Dan Houston (djhouston@opencominc.com). For directions to the camp, contact pastor Jill.

Are you interested in a Great Adventure?

There are folks in both Bussey and Lovilia who have gone on a mission trip. They gave of their time and talents to help those in need and had a great and fulfilling time in the process. The Mission committee thinks that it's about time to try it again.

Knowing that it takes months and months of time and fundraising, we're suggesting the summer of 2007 as a target date.

Please fill out the questionnaire below to indicate if you would be interested in participating in such an adventure.

_____ I would like to be a part of a mission team the summer of 2007

Length of time for trip: please indicate first, second and third choices

_____ Seven Days _____ Ten Days
_____ Fourteen Days

Mature Adult Ministry

The Iowa Conference Age Level Council will present a workshop on Saturday, April 8, 2006 from 10:00AM to 3:15PM at Collegiate UMC in Ames. The cost is \$15 including lunch and snacks. The topics include Understanding Hospice, Grief Care, Mature Adults, Pets in Long-Term care facilities and the Theological foundation of Older Adult Ministries. Registrations may be e-mailed to reservations@iaumcagelevelcouncil.org. The deadline for registering is March 25th

"A Sunday School teacher began her lesson with a question, "Boys and girls, what do we know about God?" A hand shot up in the air. "He is an artist!" said the kindergarten boy. "Really? How do you know?" the teacher asked. "You know - Our Father, who does art in Heaven..."

My Resolution

I won't look back; God knows the fruitless efforts,
The wasted hours, the sinning, the regrets;
I'll leave them all with Him who blots the record,
And mercifully forgives and then forgets.

I won't look forward; God sees all the future,
The road that, short or long, will lead me home,
And He will face with me its every trial,
And bear with me the burdens that may come.

But I'll look up into the face of Jesus,
For there my heart can rest, my fears are stilled;
And there is joy and love, and light for darkness,
And perfect peace, and every hope fulfilled.

Annie Johnson Flint

A successful man is one who can build a firm foundation with the bricks that others throw at him.

God gave us two ears but only one mouth. Some people say that's because He wanted us to spend twice as much time listening as talking. Others claim it's because He knew that listening was twice as hard.

You can either complain that rosebushes have thorns, or rejoice that the bushes have roses.

Thank You

Kevin and I want to thank all of you for the cards that we received in celebration of our 25th wedding anniversary.

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