

Chosen For Service



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Do you remember as a kid choosing up sides to play a game? How important it was to be chosen! Two of the better players were captains. They took turns, choosing their teams, picking the best players until only two were left. Then one captain said to the other, “I take him and you get...” The last one was never chosen. Usually he didn’t stick around very long. He got the message. They really didn’t want him on their team. But what a relief to be chosen! Then you knew you belonged.

As you grew older it became even more important to be chosen; for student council, for a part in the play, for a date to the prom, by an employer, as a marriage partner...chosen to serve as an officer in the church.

Why were you chosen? Maybe it was because you were the best player, had the best voice, were the most attractive, the hardest worker, the most qualified. Maybe it was because you had earned it or deserved it. Maybe, but not always. Maybe you were chosen because your friend was doing the choosing or because someone took special interest in you and wanted to give you a break.

St. Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, “We know brothers, loved by God, that He has chosen you” (1 Thessalonians 1:4). Like the Thessalonians, you have been chosen by God too. But why? Why of all the people in the world did God choose you? How do you know that He has chosen you? Chosen you for what?

God has chosen you! Why would God choose anyone except the most worthy...the very best? Most of us would confess that we aren’t the best at anything. We’re not even all that good. We certainly aren’t worthy to be chosen by God. So then why would He choose you?

As you search the Scriptures, you could ask that question again and again. Why did God choose Abraham with all of his faults and weaknesses to be the father of a great nation? Why did He choose the children of Israel to be His people? They constantly rebelled against Him! Why Moses to lead His people? He wasn’t much of a public speaker. Why did He choose Ruth...a foreigner to be included in the family line? Why David, a shepherd boy, to become king? David would be a liar, an adulterer, a murderer. Or Jonah with all of his prejudices? And why did God choose Mary to be blessed above all women to be the mother of His Son?

Isn’t it obvious that God didn’t pick any of them...or any of us...because of our qualifications, our hard work, or because of any special talents or abilities that we possess?

He chose us in spite of our faults and weaknesses...in spite of our backgrounds...our personalities...our present circumstances. He chose us even though we continue to sin against Him.

But why? We still haven’t answered that question. There is only one reason, and this is hard for most people to believe. God chose you because He loves you. Paul could never hide his wonder and awe at God’s undeserved love for him. He never grew tired of proclaiming God’s amazing grace!

God loves you...that’s the only reason He chose you...claimed you as His child through Holy Baptism. He loves you...and sent Jesus to die on the cross for your sins. He loves you and chose you for a place in heaven with Him. He chose you to serve Him.

Paul said, “We know brothers, loved by God, that He has chosen you.” How did he “know”? Paul said, “We continually remember before our God and Father, your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope.” Paul could tell by the way the Gospel had been working among them...“not simply with words but also with power.” He could tell by the way they responded...by the way they lived. Three things stood out in Paul’s mind; their work, their labor and their endurance.

Paul could tell by their “work produced by faith.” God had given them the gift of faith that for Jesus’ sake they were forgiven. This faith filled their hearts and compelled them to find ways to thank God with good works...all the things that Jesus spoke of: feeding the hungry; clothing the naked; visiting the sick; welcoming the strangers.

Paul saw their “labors prompted by love.” God’s love moved them to reach out to all in need, especially to those in need of a Savior. They had labored to share the Gospel with their neighbors in Thessalonica, throughout the province of Macedonia, and into the rest of the Roman Empire. Their mission work flowed from their love.

Paul also pointed to their “endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.” God had filled their hearts with hope in the Lord Jesus who had risen from the dead...hope that after this life an eternity of joy awaited them in heaven. This hope enabled them to remain faithful in spite of persecution and opposition...through disappointments and troubles.

All this flowed from their “faith, hope, and love.” The three things that Paul told the Corinthians would always last. Because

(continued on page 15)



Church, Des Moines, Iowa, Installed July 26, 2009 by Rev. Bill Van Nostrand at Prince of Peace, Fort Dodge.

- Rev. Nicholas Thackery, Pastor at St. Paul Lutheran Church, Emmetsburg and Peace Lutheran Church, West Bend, Ordained and Installed August 9, 2009 by President Paul Sieveking at St. Paul, Emmetsburg.
- Rev. John Rutz, Pastor at St. John Lutheran Church, Hastings and St. Paul Lutheran Church, Oakland, Ordained August 2, 2009 by Rev. Steve Turner at Immanuel Lutheran Church, Livermore, Iowa, Installed August 16, 2009 by President Paul Sieveking at St. John, Hastings.

50th Anniversary

Faith Lutheran Church, Early, will celebrate the 50th anniversary of its founding on Sunday, November 8. They will have a regular service at 10 a.m. that morning. They will then have a catered dinner. At 1 p.m. they will have a special afternoon service. They are planning a Sunday School bell choir, historical account and several numbers by the Community Crooners. The afternoon will conclude with refreshments.

Everyone interested is invited to attend the celebration, especially the afternoon program.

Faith Lutheran was started when a number of members of Immanuel Lutheran, Cook Township, decided to start a congregation in Early. Their first service was held on November 1, 1959 in the Municipal Building auditorium. They met in this venue until their church building was completed in 1962.

2009 Church Secretarial Conference



Church Secretarial Conference

The fall 2009 conference is scheduled for Tuesday, Sept. 22, 2009 at First English Lutheran Church in Spencer, Iowa. The planning committee is thrilled to announce that Jenny Herrick is our special speaker for the day. Be sure to reserve this date on your calendar.

YES Ministries

(continued from page 6)

of charge from the District office.

Men's Ministry Makes an impact

"God in My World" is the theme of the November 14, 2009 Men's Ministry Breakfast hosted by Redeemer Lutheran Church, Sioux City. Keynote presenters will be Rich Cohrs who is instrumental in developing the new men's ministry initiatives through Lutheran Hour Ministries and President Paul Sieveking who will share mission insights for our post-modern world.

Joy in Ministry

(continued from page 7)

the support of endowments, memorials, and gifts from congregations and individual donors, Iowa District West will provide \$130,000 to support their ministry preparation. Gifts to support these and future workers are extremely important and can be directed to "Joy in Ministry" at Iowa District West. District staff and students are also available to tell the story of ministry recruitment and student support.

Mission News

(continued from page 5)

Winterset and look forward to our ongoing partnership in other ways as we work together for the extension of the Gospel within our communities, throughout the District, and into all the world (IDW Mission Statement)!

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(continued from page 4)

these gifts of God were so obvious among the Thessalonians Paul knew they had been chosen by God.

Be assured that He has chosen you, too. This is the greatest comfort and the greatest joy you can know in this life. He has chosen you because He loves you. He has chosen you to be His child and to live with Him now and forever. He has chosen you for service. He has chosen you for works of faith, for labors of love, for endurance inspired by hope.

Thank God... you are chosen!