



President Paul Sieveking

“Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!”
(Phil. 4:4-7 NIV).

Some people say it's impossible. It can't be done. It's unrealistic. Even some Christians accept these words with some reservations, as if this was an overstatement, an ideal, the way we ought to be. “Rejoice always!” The simple, honest response of most people is that you just can't.

Counselors might say that you shouldn't. It isn't healthy. We have feelings, and often those feelings are very different than joy. We have our ups and our downs. To make people think that they must be joyful all the time only adds to the problem. It inhibits them from expressing their true feelings. It loads them down with even more guilt.

Do you think God would hold this joy out before us to taunt us with something that could never be within our reach, or that God isn't serious and doesn't really expect us to rejoice all the time?

God said it, and He truly did mean it. “Rejoice always!” What makes these words more credible is that they were written while Paul was unjustly in prison for the crime of talking about His Savior and living a God-pleasing life. If that's a crime, we all ought to be convicted. You would expect him

to have been down. His career was ending and death was near, but all he talked about was his joy.

For the third time in this brief letter, he reminds us to rejoice. He didn't mean that life has to be a laugh a minute, but to know true joy no matter what our circumstances or what kind of trouble or trials we face. He wants us to know joy that dominates our lives.

People are looking for joy in all the wrong places—in things or from other people. We might get pleasure from things. We might find happiness in other people. That's not real joy. Yet, people keep chasing after it where it cannot be found and that only brings them disappointment and discouragement.

People are looking for joy but often the wrong kind of joy, a sentimental, artificial kind of joy. They think joy is connected to turkey and dressing and family around the table like a Norman Rockwell painting. Those are good feelings but not real joy.

Sometimes you may not feel like that. Maybe you're too busy or too tired to rejoice just now. Maybe a particular problem stands in your way. Maybe you're angry at someone. Maybe you've been hurt. Maybe your heart is heavy with sorrow. Maybe you're feeling guilty. Maybe things just aren't working out in your life as you expected them to.

Paul's words come right back at us, “Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!” Don't overlook these three important words, “in the Lord.” Our joy comes from Jesus. In Him, we have forgiveness of all our sins and our guilt is taken away. In the Lord, we have hope no matter what our circumstances. In the Lord, we have peace in our trouble, comfort in our sorrow, power in our struggles and answers to our questions. In Jesus, we have life! Only in

the Lord can joy be found!

This kind of joy is evident in your life. Others see it. Paul said, “Let your gentleness be evident to all.” It is easy to be gentle toward some people, but so hard to be gentle toward others. We are patient with some, but we quickly lose our patience with others. Often, we are more gentle toward strangers than with those closest to us. During the upcoming holiday season, we want to be seen as gentle toward all. We are people who know firsthand the gentleness of our God, His patience with us and His love for us.

Paul reminds us “the Lord is near.” That was the watch word of the Early Church. This was the reason for their joy and gentleness. Jesus would soon return, and in light of His coming, Paul continued, “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.” Again, Paul used one of those unconditional and universal terms. Just as we are to rejoice always, be gentle to all people, here he says, “Don't be anxious about anything, but pray about everything.” Nothing is too great for God's power and nothing is too small for His care. In all our weaknesses, we can go to Him and seek all we need.

Note Paul's emphasis, “with thanksgiving.” We approach God not with bitterness or complaining, and never blaming Him for all of the problems we bring on ourselves. We pray, remembering all the times He has answered our prayers, remembering every good thing as a gift of His grace and remembering with gratitude.

And His blessing will surely follow, “the peace of God that

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EDUCATION



The Rev.
Bob
Riggert
Executive
Assistant

Caring for little lambs

I have read numerous books on children's ministry. I have heard leaders in the church explain children's ministry principles and practices. I have worked with gifted children's ministry professionals.

Most significantly, I have witnessed laypersons who sincerely love children and honor them in the Church. One such individual was Stan, the man who cared for little lambs.

Shortly after I began my pastoral ministry at Zion, Manning, in June 1987, I had the opportunity to teach an adult information class. One of the class members was Stan, a man in his early 50s. Stan shared that he had not been baptized. Desiring that his homebound parents witness the baptism, I was privileged to baptize Stan in his parents' home. Stan became a "lamb" of the Good Shepherd.

In an age of mega-farms, Stan still maintained a small farm with an assortment of farm animals. Stan often invited my children (and, in

recent years, my grandchildren) to his farm. The spring invitation included "Come see the little lambs." A farm visit included feeding the lambs, riding the horses, driving the tractors and eating cookies at the farm house.

God's plan for Stan did not include marriage and his own biological children. God's plan did include Stan being an adoptive "grandfather" for the children in the neighborhood and the church. He carried an attention-getting watch, children's books, candy and, most importantly, a gentle voice and easy smile. Adults did not see Stan as handsome or engaging. Children sensed acceptance and sincerity. Stan saw children as God's little lambs.



Stan

In mid-August, I received a shocking telephone call that Stan had been killed in an automobile accident. Circumstances

with Pastor Conner at Zion, Manning, provided the opportunity for me to conduct Stan's funeral. The grieving family and community were reminded that Stan was Jesus' lamb because "the Lamb of God" had taken away the sins of Stan and the world's. The worshippers also were reminded that, like Stan, we have the privilege and responsibility of caring for Jesus' "little

lambs," the children of the congregation and community.

My prayer is that every congregation has some "Stans" who notice the little children, call them by name, accept them as they are and pray that they, too, will be faithful to the Shepherd.



*"Who's so happy as I am,
Even now
the Shepherd's lamb?
And when my short life
is ended,
By His angel hosts attended,
He will fold me to His breast,
There within His arms
to rest."*

LSB 740:3

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Rev. Mark Gerken
Executive Assistant

Deaf sing praises!

The choir was singing. The congregation “heard” the beautiful praises and joined in, but there was no sound. This was a deaf worship service. And, yes, they were hearing praises not with their ears but with their eyes. The blessed hope and comfort of God’s saving message is proclaimed through music conveyed through worshiping hands.

Just as in a “hearing church,” the deaf have hymns and praise songs. Just as there are a variety of styles of music and arrangements in a hearing church, the deaf worship has variety. Along with music styles, the deaf church has different forms of leading its members in song. It has soloists, choir and congregational singing. The size of the sign, the direction and the intensity of how the hand is shaped and moved add to the meaning. The language of sign is more than what is produced on the hands; it also includes body movement, head gaze, eye markers and facial expressions.

Helen is a great soloist! In a remarkable way, she can look over the words of a hymn and God gives her music in her heart that she conveys with beautiful movements in her hands and body.

Dorene, Kathy, Susan and Dora are profoundly deaf and love serving the Lord. One of their cherished activities is signing songs together as a deaf choir. Like a regular choir or

orchestra, there is a director that coordinates the melody of signs. When they use recorded music, they use a hearing person to help cue them with verse changes, rhythm and intensity. Just like hearing a song with loudness and softness, deaf music has “loudness and softness.” They challenge each other, learning to sign simultaneously, learning to use the whole altar area, and learning the scriptural meaning of the songs/hymns.

Iowa District West deaf choir is a great example of God’s work among the deaf in the district. They are based in Calvary Lutheran Church of the Deaf in Des Moines. Interested persons (both hearing and deaf) who know sign language are welcome. The choir is accepting invitations to hearing churches to share the Gospel in Word and song.

For more information, contact Pat Monroe at 712-435-9663 or pat.monroe@idwlcms.org.

Amigos en Cristo scholarships

Recently, 19 scholarships were awarded to students from Mount Olive Lutheran School, Des Moines; St. Paul Lutheran School, Sioux City; and Zion Lutheran School, Denison; as part of the *Amigos en Cristo* (Friends in Christ) Program. *Amigos en Cristo* is a program to support the work of our Hispanic ministries in Iowa District West by providing scholarships for Christian education, specifically for Hispanic children to attend one of our Lutheran elementary schools or preschools.

You may still contribute to the *Amigos en Cristo* scholarship fund by sending your gift to the district office with a notation that it is for *Amigos en Cristo*. Or, perhaps your Sunday school or Bible class could adopt it as your mission project for a

month or quarter. We hope to continue to award scholarships as long as the funds are available. A scholarship application can be downloaded from the district website at www.idwlcms.org.

He gets it!

Why do we keep sending mission dollars to Memorial, Ames, to support its ministry to international students attending Iowa State and their families?



K'June enjoying himself at his church car wash.

Allow me to share a story from Hannah McCulloh, new International Student Ministry director at Memorial.

“Ten-year-old K'June of South Korea first started coming to vacation Bible school and the summer children’s program because his mom served as a nursery helper. Over the past couple of years, he learned many stories about Jesus and received his own English/Korean Bible.

“One day this summer after classes, K'June helped me organize some of our English materials. In the midst of doing that, he paused, looked up at me and said, ‘You know, they should really send people to other countries to help them with English and tell them about Jesus.’

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The Rev. Steve Hayden Executive Assistant

*With voices united
our praises we offer
And gladly our song
of thanksgiving we raise,
With You, Lord, beside us,
Your strong arm will guide us.
To You, our great Redeemer, forever be praise!*

LW 494:3

“We Praise You, O God” is a hymn of thanksgiving that many of us sing every year around this time. It has become all too easy to celebrate Thanksgiving by mentally going over a list of things that we own: I am thankful for my house, for my car, for my clothes, for this dinner. And certainly we are thankful to God for the physical blessings that He has provided to us. The hymn writer, however, also reminds us to be thankful for God’s continuing presence and guidance in our lives.

In youth ministry, we have witnessed God’s ongoing love and care for His people in many ways this fall.

We thank God for the leadership of Pastor Riggert

Here in Iowa, we are certainly thankful for the way God has been present with and guided youth ministry through the leadership of Pastor Bob Riggert. For 14 years as our district’s executive assistant for Youth Ministry, he has through

word and action shown God’s love to youth throughout our district and on a national level at Synod events.

This fall, Pastor Riggert retired from full-time district youth ministry. He continues to be active serving part-time in a variety of ways, and he continues to be a reminder of God’s love and presence to youth—now to a crowd of young believers who call him “Grandpa.”

We thank God for the opportunity to ‘Tailgate’

While footballs were flying and burgers and brats were on the grill, something more than just your ordinary tailgate party was happening at Memorial Lutheran Church and Student Center in Ames, Iowa, on Aug. 28.

More than 100 high-school students gathered to hear the band, “The Spark,” and to hear Jeff and Stacy Cesler (Jeff is the associate director of Athletic Academic Services, and Stacy is the head softball coach at Iowa State) and a group of Iowa State student athletes speak about relying on the presence of God as they balance athletics, academics and faith in a college setting.

Thank you to Memorial Lutheran in Ames for hosting us and to Christ Lutheran in Bouton for the meal.

We thank God for ‘Sacred’



In October, sixth-, seventh- and eighth-grade students met again at the Sheraton Hotel

in West Des Moines for the junior youth gathering, “Sacred.”

Pastor Luke Timm from Living Faith in Clive was the keynote speaker, reminding those in attendance that God has brought them

into a sacred relationship with Himself through their baptism. The students also learned the basics of sacred relationships with God, parents, church and creation as God provides direction through the Ten Commandments.

We thank God for ‘Journey’

High-school youth from across Iowa, South Dakota and Nebraska



journey to Omaha for the first regional youth gathering this month. “Journey” is the name for the gathering.

Life for many teens is fast-paced and full of demands. Often their journey is confusing. Thank God for Jesus who walks with us on our journey, bringing us a hope and a promise that His way leads to life eternal!

Pastor Bill Yonker shares this journey with the youth as they hear God’s promise in the Book of Romans that,

“Nothing will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 8:38-39)



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Gary Thies

LWML group gathers at Mission Central

The Iowa District West LWML members are truly “not normal!” No normal group would ever plan a gathering on Labor Day weekend. However, remember, this group is NOT NORMAL. The members of the LWML think differently than normal people and do amazingly “not normal things!”

What a JOY to welcome this group of women to Mission Central on Sept. 3. The full day of action and activities was attended by nearly 150 people, along with four amazing speakers and presenters. It was something to see the cars parked all over the grounds at Mission Central.



Pastor Russell Senstad of Redeemer Lutheran Church in Sioux City, Iowa, presented an enjoyable collection of good ol’ down-home country music selections, and his yodeling was “out of this world.” A number of women said, “We could have listened to him all day!”

Linda Reiser, former president of the International LWML from Grand Island, Neb., came to present in the barn and gave an enjoyable and inspirational talk.

One of the highlights of the day was the presentation by our own David Reddel, executive director of Mission Central’s website, who, with his group called “Band of Brothers,” led a group of about 150 men from all over the United States to Colorado to climb a 14,000-foot mountain. The story and pictures that were presented were exciting. One 14-year-old young man who could not walk wanted to get to the top of that mountain. With God’s help and the effort, struggle, prayers and dedication of all of the men, they carried that young man all the way to the top, accomplishing something that many said, “it can’t be done.” It was truly an inspiring story of how God can do all things!



In the above photo, you see LWML Iowa District West President Adeline Gutz and Reddel after his presentation.

The keynote speaker of the day came all the way from Bangkok, Thailand, to speak to this special group. Dennis Denow, who has been in Southeast Asia for 31 years, came to provide an unusual story of how the Orphan Grain Train and Mission Central combined in an effort to send a complete 40-foot container filled with books to the 7,000

students in 30 Lutheran schools in the highlands of Papua New Guinea. It was an amazing effort that provided books for students who never have had a library or books to use. The pictures and story were truly touching and accomplished by a memorial gift left by the family of an LWML member.

One of the surprises of the day was the fact that Viola Ehlers from Storm Lake, Iowa, was present and had the privilege of hearing Denow. She was his first-grade teacher many years ago! What a happy reunion. In the photo below, you see Denow and his first-grade teacher, Viola Ehlers.



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Ellie
Menz

What is happening? Floods and tornados in Iowa; hurricanes on the East Coast; fires in Texas; earthquakes in Haiti, Chile and Japan; and a tornado in Joplin, Mo. These disasters bring so much pain and suffering for thousands upon thousands of people. How do we as Christians respond? How do we help? How can we make a difference?

Many donate money and items to meet physical needs. Others go to the site of the disaster and help by praying with and lending a helping hand to those who suffered the loss of their home and/or possessions.

Some people respond by taking disaster-response training so they are informed and trained on how to best help themselves and others when a disaster strikes.

Lutheran Early Response Team (LERT) training, led by Pastor Glenn Merritt with LCMS World Relief and Human Care some years ago, was my first experience with disaster-response training. There are many facets to the training. He challenged us to think about what we would do to prepare our family and congregation for a disaster.

I present that question to you. Have you made preparations to protect your family and/or respond to a disaster? What about your church? What precautions will you take if you are worshipping on Sunday and a storm warning alarm is sounded?

We have become all the more aware of disasters in the past few years because they are affecting so many people in many different communities.

One part of preparedness is to have people and a LERT trailer equipped and ready to respond when disaster strikes. Pastor Erland Asmus and I conducted LERT training in several locations in Iowa District West a couple of years ago.



Pastor Roger Carlisle of Peace, Wall Lake, shares his thoughts and excitement about the new LERT trailer and what he and many leaders in the Sac City Circuit are doing to prepare to help others:

"About two years ago, a group of volunteers attended an Iowa District West training session on disaster response. It was the dream of a few of the Sac City Circuit volunteers to put together their own (LERT) trailer. After a few meetings this summer, that dream has now become the start of reality.

"The mission of the LERT project is to 'be Christ's hands and feet in times of need' by being an onsite presence of the compassionate, caring body of Christ in action. Our focus in providing disaster relief is twofold.

"First, we want to reach out and share the comfort of the Gospel with those hurting during times of natural disaster, beginning in our local area and reaching out into the regional

area and beyond. Second, we are providing opportunities for our circuit members to exercise their Christian faith and to use their God-given gifts and talents to help others.

"All nine of the Sac City Circuit congregations have committed to supporting our LERT team through prayer, volunteer recruitment and financial support. Currently, we have purchased an enclosed trailer to house and transport needed equipment and we are in the process of collecting funds for the purchase of more equipment.

True love and service begin with Christ. Not only does He forgive us our sins and give us new life in Him, but He also encourages us to live by faith, responding boldly in His name with the gifts He has given to us. We are 'being Christ's hands and feet in times of need.'"

For more information on the Sac City Circuit LERT trailer, contact the Rev. Glenn Hansen or the Rev. Roger Carlisle.

To check out the new LERT trailer, come to the "+grounded+growing+reaching" workshop at St. John Lutheran Church in Storm Lake on Nov. 5.

To register and/or to learn more about LERT and the upcoming March 10, 2012, volunteer disaster training at Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Lake View, contact me.

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Carole
White

Excitement builds to completion!

Mount Olive Lutheran Church and School, Des Moines, remodeled its existing building to add offices, classrooms and elevator access.



Holy Cross, Carlisle, located just outside Des Moines, built a two-story, 4,400-square-foot addition. The new space includes a larger narthex, new classrooms, more accessible restrooms and an elevator.

Dedication was held for both churches on Sunday, Sept. 11. A day set aside to remember what happened 10 years ago in our country also was a day to remember what our God has enabled us to do and will do. Both congregations look to reach out into their communities with their new facilities, realizing

the power given to them through the Holy Spirit.

Lutheran Church Extension Fund is proud to be a ministry partner to help churches and schools carry out their mission by making funds and services available. Loan services, Laborers for Christ and Capital Funding Services, a capital stewardship campaign, were the services utilized by the two churches.



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Parish Nurse

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

The week of Nov. 14-20 is "Get Smart About Antibiotics" week. Antibiotic resistance has been called one of the world's most pressing public health problems. The number of bacteria resistant to antibiotics has increased in the last decade. Many bacterial infections are becoming resistant to the most commonly prescribed antibiotic treatments. Every time a person takes antibiotics, sensitive bacteria are killed but resistant germs may be left to grow and multiply. Repeated and improper uses of antibiotics are primary causes of the increase in drug-resistant bacteria.

Colds, flu, most sore throats and bronchitis are caused by viruses. Antibiotics don't fight viruses. Taking antibiotics when you have a virus may do more harm than good. Taking antibiotics when they are not needed increases the risk of getting an infection later that resists antibiotic treatment.

"If you have a cold or flu, antibiotics won't work for you." Talk to your health care provider about antibiotic resistance. When you are prescribed an antibiotic, take it exactly as the doctor tells you. Complete the prescribed course even if you feel better. If treatment is stopped too soon, some bacteria may survive and re-infect you.

There are some ways to feel better if the illness is caused by a virus. Get plenty of rest, drink plenty of fluids and avoid smoking and second-hand smoke. Ask your health care provider if a cool mist humidifier would be helpful.

May God protect our health during this cold weather season.

*In His Service,
Darlene Rueter, RN, IDW Parish Nurse Rep
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(Information taken from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website.)

CELEBRATIONS

PRESIDENT'S PAGE

(Continued from Page A.)

transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

Those are the familiar words of the *votum*, the sentence we speak after the sermon. God's answer to all our prayers is His peace—peace that transcends all understanding. In our wildest dreams, we could never imagine anything as wonderful as this. It is the peace God made with mankind when his Son Jesus died on the cross for us. It is the peace that keeps our hearts and minds.

The word that Paul used here was a military word. The peace of God stands guard over our hearts and minds. All our desires, feelings, thoughts, words and deeds are under the constant care and keeping of God. So, it is the peace of God that takes all the

anxiety out of life. It takes away all our fears, all our sorrows, all our anger, all our guilt—all of those things that rob us of joy. It is the peace of God that keeps us in Christ Jesus—in the Lord.

Can you see how Paul has come full circle? He began by telling us to rejoice in the Lord always—and our rejoicing must be evident in our lives. The anxieties of life cannot rob us of our joy because we can pray about everything. God answers our prayer with His gift of peace; and it is His peace that keeps us in the Lord. In the Lord, we really can rejoice always. It's not our doing. It's God's blessing for us.

So, it isn't an overstatement or some impossible ideal that God expects of us. This is a promise from God. In the Lord, Jesus, He gives us joy.

MISSIONS

(Continued from Page C.)

“K'June just recently learned the story of Jesus, yet, he gets it! Praise God for child-like faith!”

Has God brought someone into your community who needs to hear about Jesus? Whom can you support that is going to another country to tell people about Jesus?

At the last district convention, every congre-

gation was urged to support at least one Synod and one district missionary. Consider how your church might develop a relationship with a missionary through prayer, hands-on involvement and financial support.

For more information, contact Iowa District West Mission Executive Mark Gerken.

We congratulate

(November 2011)

Birthdays

- Nov. 1—Ralph Kingsbury, 90, Good Shepherd, Fort Dodge
Nov. 4—Martin Erickson, 85, Zion, Auburn.
Nov. 4—Helma Ladwig, 90, Zion, Denison.
Nov. 6—Vince Bobenhouse, 90, Trinity, Des Moines.
Nov. 9—Carol Molln, 95, St. Paul, Sioux City.
Nov. 12—Arnold Meyer, 90, St. John, Clarinda.
Nov. 16—Loretta Anderson, 90, St. John, Kiron.
Nov. 17—Phyllis Johnson, 95, Grace, Le Mars.
Nov. 18—Marie Readinger, 100, Immanuel, Guthrie Center.
Nov. 20—Glendale Larsen, 90, St. Paul, Sioux City.
Nov. 21—Shirley Haes, 90, St. Paul, Garner.
Nov. 20—August Kastendieck, 90, St. Paul, Fort Dodge.
Nov. 23—Darlene Graner, 90, Zion, Manning.
Nov. 25—Leroy Fowler, 90, Prince of Peace, Fort Dodge.
Nov. 25—Olga Hansen, 95, Holy Trinity, Farnhamville.
Nov. 30—Henrietta Schulz, 102, St. John, Charter Oak.

Anniversaries

- Nov. 4—Olie and Lois Leimer, 55, Zion, Storm Lake.
Nov. 18—Lyle and Gale Kruger, 50, Trinity, Cherokee.
Nov. 19—Leroy and Evelyn Fowler, 70, Prince of Peace, Fort Dodge.
Nov. 25—Kenneth and Joyce Thompson, 55, Zion, Humboldt.



Deadline for the January 2012 issue: Nov. 15

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