

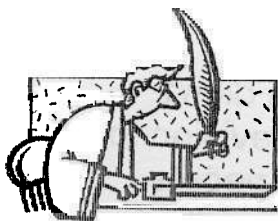


Park View Lutheran Church & School

3919 North Monticello • Chicago, IL 60618-4127 • 773-267-0072

The Rev. Dr. David Nelson
Headmaster & Pastor

The Messenger April 2010



“Out of the Wilderness”

The Reverend Dr. Eugene Winkler was for many years the Senior Minister of the First United Methodist Church of Chicago – The Chicago Temple and lived in the parsonage, which was located in the building at Clark and Washington Streets in Chicago’s loop. From his patio he could grill hamburgers and watch demonstrations in the

Dave’s World

Daley Center Plaza or the lighting of Chicago’s Christmas Tree. The Chicago Temple is a unique place that practices its ministry in the heart of the city.

Last fall, the Metropolitan Chicago Synod asked Dr. Winkler to be our speaker at the annual Professional Leadership Conference. This year’s title was “Re-Visioning the Church” or what will the church be like in the future. We talked about some of the same issues that have been a feature of the three “Dave’s World” and were brought up again at the annual meeting of our congregation.

Unlike many other scholars Dr. Winkler believes he can pinpoint the exact moment when Christianity’s decline began in America. He said: “I count the beginning of the end of Christianity’s impact on Western Civilization to September of 1950 when the Saenger Theater in Vicksburg, Mississippi began showing movies on Sunday nights. This decision not only marked the demise of the Baptist Church’s dominance of Sabbath life – because the movies drew more people

than their worship services – but it also marked the end of the church’s hegemony over Southern life.”

North or South going to church is no longer the cultural norm. In fact, showing your faith in any way is the counter-cultural thing to do. In the glory days of the church it was expected that you attend. Those who did not go – and remember that was the family I grew up in – were suspect. People went to church. If you look back, they also were packing Orchestra Hall on Sunday nights to listen to the speakers of the Chicago Sunday Evening Club. They seemed to be very, very interested in religion, or, as I believe, they were bored and looking for something to do.

Remember, in those days the stores were closed, the bars didn’t open until noon, and there were fewer talking heads on television to do battle like Roman Gladiators of the Intelligencia. I think people were spending a lot of time in church, or joining the Moose or the Masons to kill time.

Since the late sixties, the church has been on a downhill slide, and we have not helped ourselves. Dr. Bruce Larson wondered once “how many lovely people have been kept away from church by the unlovely attitudes of some of the people on the inside.” Add the television evangelist scandals and the abuse of children by clergy and it does not make an institution that people are going to gravitate to.

Dr. Winkler clearly understood in his presentations that many of the practices that once worked in the church no longer do. The church is now in the “wilderness”, he said, “like the Israelites who escaped from Egypt. We’re about half-way through the journey,” he thinks, “so the church has another twenty years of wandering left.”

My good friend Pastor Douglas King of Acacia Park Lutheran Church noted that “It is often observed by commentators and preachers that the forty years of wandering in the wilderness was the time it took for the generation that remembered life in Egypt to die off.” He maintains that only when all of those who were pining and whining for the leaks and cucumbers (Numbers 5:11) of Egypt were dead they were free to

accept that life would be different now. When they got over it they were free to march into the promised land.

In many ways Pastor King is right, but there is another theory about the Children of Israel's wanderings. Some scholars believed that they were going in circles. They could have been out of the wilderness at any time had they just made a right or left turn, but instead round and round they marched.

What Pastor King does forget is that while they were in the wilderness, they were also "birthing babies". All this generation knew was wilderness. They thought wandering in the wilderness was a natural way of life. They had heard stories of the slavery in Egypt, and the promise of a new land to come, but everyday for them was another day in the wilderness.

So what is one to do? Keep wandering? Wait for the opponents to die? Or turn, and try to go in another direction.

Over lunch one day at the Cliff Dwellers, Dr. Winkler told me another story. Some of us in our ministries have days they can remember vividly, and his was when the Chicago Temple voted to be an intentionally inclusive congregation for gay and lesbian members. One would have expected that because of the church's long-standing open door policy, the vote would have been a "no brainer", but it wasn't. About 15% of the congregation left, giving plummeted, and it looked like instead of leading people out of the wilderness, he had managed to lead people deeper into it.

There were a few rocky moments in the wilderness, but it was a stand that Dr, Winkler and the church's leadership believed had to be taken, and they took it no matter what the consequences. They stood up to those who with-standing held their money, said "don't let the door hit you on the way out" to those who announced they were leaving and, most of all, refused to let the voices of those who would keep them in the wilderness prevail.

The definition of craziness, it is said, is to keep doing the same thing over and over again, and expect better results. Churches can fight the same battles with the same people for years and get stuck in their

own craziness by cutting the crazies loose. They can stand up for what is right and not just give lip service to it. They can do fearlessly do battle with the wilderness generations and their spawns and win.

Pastor King remembered that Dr. Winkler was asked what he thought the "Promised Land" would look like. Doug writes, "there was a long silence. Winkler didn't know – no one does. Except we know it won't look like where we've come from."

If you are with people whose "promised land" looks exactly like their past. If you are with people who are acting the same way now that they did twenty years ago. If you are hanging with folks who have not grown even a little bit in one-half of a biblical generation. You're with people who love the wilderness, and who are going to be there forever.

The choice is yours? You can walk with them, and keep going around and around in circles, fighting the same battles or you can say for your own emotional well-being, "that's enough of that," make a sharp turn, and walk out of the wilderness. You may be alone, or with just two or three good friends, but at least you won't be lost anymore.

And you just might be following the way Jesus, who walked out of the wilderness, set his face toward Jerusalem and got himself killed. That took courage. That took a mind that was fixed on God and not the opinions of the crowd. That took bravery beyond measure, but it led to none thing – Resurrection!

Resurrection! New life in a new land! Never looking back, never going back. Now or ever.

*We'll see you in church or online
at
www.ChicagolandLutherans.org*

News And Views From Your Council

As you know, we had a Congregational Meeting on Sunday, March 7. The main focus was badly needed repairs to our building. We had estimates for some repair and tuck-pointing work to be done on the south side of the church where the wall, as you enter and go up the stairs, is crumbling. The estimated cost is - \$5,300.

There is also much more work needed in other areas: one being the top arch above the west window. This arch is cracked. It is part of the main structure, and is in danger of falling. This could not only cause damage, but could hurt someone, as well. Rough estimates for this additional work could be \$30,000. This includes: repairing the narthex wall, window replacements in the school building, gutter and flashing repairs.

We have some promises for money to defray the cost of the immediate tuck-pointing. The congregation approved proceeding with that work, as soon as the weather allows. Formal estimates will be obtained for the other work. Since it will be much more than we can handle, the council is investigating the possibility of adding to our loan from the mission investment fund.

Park View originally borrowed \$250,000. We paid off half to-date. Another Congregational Meeting will be held in April to up-date you on our findings; and to decide where we go from that point. We need all your prayers and support.

The Prime Time Gala was held on Saturday, March 27. The Seder Meal was offered on Maundy Thursday, April 1. The Annual Easter Breakfast was served on Sunday, April 4. *The Magic of the Rose* will once again be presented on Saturday, April 24. Mark your calendars!

A big thanks to Joan Currier, Mary Perillo and all those who helped with the Prime Time Gala. The chef did a GREAT job! You missed a good, if you did not attend.

Joan Luttgé
Church Council Co-President

APRIL

BAPTISMAL ANNIVERSARIES

Emily Blackwell-Walsh	
Robert Gordon	
Elizabeth Lund	14
June Craig	15
Sharon Buchman	28
Jeffrey Lund	29

BIBLICAL HUMOR

A woman had just returned to her home from an evening of church services, when she was startled by an intruder. She caught the man in the act of robbing her home of its valuables and yelled: "Stop! Acts 2: 8!" (Repent and be baptized, I the name of Jesus Christ, so that your sins may be forgiven.).

The burglar stopped in his tracks. The woman calmly called the police and explained what she had done.

As the officer cuffed the man to take him in, he asked the burglar: "Why did you just stand there? All the old lady did was yell a Bible scripture at you."

"Scripture?" replied the burglar. "She said that she had an ax and two thirty-eights!"

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

Joan Currier	2
Virginia Buchweitz	6
Nanci Lund	10
Robert Gordon	13
Carol Raisanen	15
Marilyn Guzzetta	16
Alexandra Madsen	23
Debra Terzakis	29

RISEN

The singing was so glorious
That soon my heavy heart
Soared high with the resounding
strains,
And soon became a part
Of praises sung to Jesus
In melodies so sweet
That all my earth-bound flesh
reached up
To share the joy complete.

-- Florence Boutwell

GIFTS AND MEMORIALS

Given by Fred and Elaine Fischer in memory of Franz Benteler. Directed to Park View Lutheran Church – General Fund.

FAMOUS QUOTES

- ◆ No man is exempt from saying silly things; the mischief is to say them deliberately.
-- Michel De Montaigne
- ◆ Victories that are cheap are cheap. Those only are worth having which come as

the result of hard fighting.
-- Henry Ward Beecher

- ◆ Real generosity toward the future consists in giving all to what is present.

“I’M A LOT LIKE YOU, PETER!”

“Not I,” you said.
“I never will deny you, Lord – though others may.”
The tempter heard and was well pleased,
For he would sift you as the wheat.
And in the terror of that night your courage failed.
With cursing oaths three times you cried.
“I know Him not!”
Then when at dawn you heard the cock,
Your heart stood still!
They led Him by – the One who said,
“But I have prayed so that your faith will fail you not.”
And in His suffering, sorrowing look was boundless love.
With bitter tears and crushing grief you walked away.
Oh, may I never boast that I have strength to meet temptation strong!
When trials come and fears assail I, too, deny my precious Lord.
And as He sadly looks on me, my grief is deep;
But then comes hope – a message from the risen Lord:
“Tell my disciples – Peter, too-I meet them soon in Galilee.”
He who denied, denied not you!
Humbly I say, “You know all things; you know
How much I love you, Lord.”

With blessed fellowship restored.
He bids me tend His lambs and sheep.
-- Trudy Vander Veen

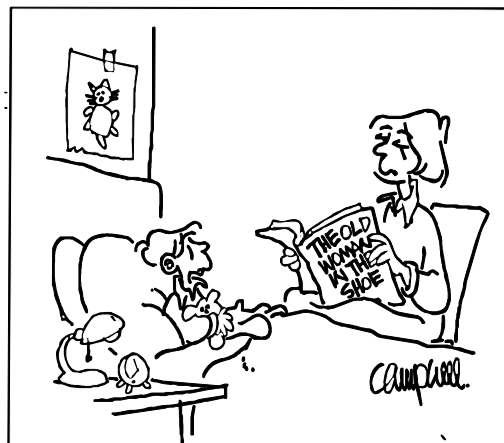
THE RECIPE CORNER

Rice Roll-Ups

½ c. instant brown rice
3 T. green onions, diced
3 T. lime juice
1 T. olive oil
1 lg. plum tomato, diced
⅓ c. poblano pepper, diced
½ c. red & yellow bell peppers, diced
3 T. sour cream
½ c. shredded Monterey Jack cheese
6 (8-in.) flour tortillas

Cook rice according to package directions. Combine onion, lime juice, olive oil, tomato, peppers and sour cream. Mix well. Add cooked rice and stir in. To prepare roll ups. Sprinkle 1-2 tablespoons of cheese on tortilla, add 2-3 tablespoons of vegetable mixture and roll firmly. Yields: 6 servings.

The Comedy Corner



“And of course they all waited ‘til 10 p.m. to announce that they needed a dozen colored Easter eggs for Sunday school the next day.”