



ONE VOICE



Churches: ♦Bethany ♦Immanuel ♦Lunder ♦Silver Lake ♦Winnebago

Pastor Randy Baldwin & Pastor Bill Peters

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From the Pastor's Desk

"But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? ... So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ." Romans 10:14, 17



June is a beautiful month as we watch what we planted in May begin to grow. I have to admit, I like the month of May better than June, just because May is the month of my Birthday. But June is a fun month. Usually by June we have been able to row corn and beans for a while. It is fun to see the fields turn from black earth to stripped fields with rows of green to fields of green as the beans and corn begin to canopy the rows by the end of June. Then when the wind blows we can see waves of wind across the green fields.

During the month of June, I enjoy watching the flowers I planted around my house grow and blossom with colors of yellow, red and purple and white daisies. I enjoy seeing the colors of flowers around the churches and homes and gardens. God's creation fills our eyes and our hearts with all kinds of colors. We have the bright colors of flowers. We have all the different shades of green. We have all the different shades of leaves from the trees in town and the groves surrounding the acreages. The soybeans and corn have their different shades of green. The grasses in the road ditches and on the lawns all have different shades of green. The green of the road ditches are spotted with white, blue, yellow, red wild flowers. After a long winter of white it is delightful to see the rainbow of colors.

June is also the beginning of summer. We begin summer with Vacation Bible School. At VBS we have lots of energy with upbeat music, crafts, games, snacks and of course Bible story time. We start planning VBS in January and before you know it, the kids are coming through the doors with their smiling faces and after four days, it's over, another memory.

Families like to create family memories during the summer since the kids are out of school. It is a time for the kids to develop some sporting skills. So parents and grandparents bring kids to ball practices. Parents and Grandparents spend hours on benches or lawn chairs watching baseball or softball games. Then there is swimming lessons. There are a variety of camps for the kids, like Bible camps, Scout camps, volleyball camps, basketball camps, soccer camps, football camps, music camps. Plus, there is camping, where there is swimming, riding bikes, campfires, making of smores. A lot of fun.

It is good to get out and enjoy the wonderful blessings of creation. As we witness the beauty and wonder of nature, we are witnessing the wonder, the wisdom and the power of our Creator. When we watch the seeds that were planted in the fields and in the gardens we are witnessing the miracle of life. The little rows of green in the garden soon begin to develop into identifiable plants of green beans, green peas, carrots, onions, radishes, potatoes, tomatoes,

cucumbers, squash and whatever you decided to plant. As I mentioned we see the delicate flowers with all their brilliant colors. We hear the wind blowing through the leaves of the trees once again. We listen to the rivers babble as it runs its course. Or we hear the waves of the lake in a comforting rhythm splash ashore. All the wonders of creation give a wonderful witness of our Creator.

Having said that, the witness of creation may fill us with awe and wonder, but does the witness of creation satisfy the hunger of our spirits? Apostle Paul, in his letter to the Romans writes that *"Everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved."* But then he asks some good questions. *"But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? ... So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ."* As great as the witness of creation is, it is not a clear word of Christ.

The Word of Christ reveals who our Creator is and through God's grace revealed by our Lord, Jesus teaches us that we can call our Creator, Father. Jesus also reveals the Father's love for us. Jesus reveals his Father's love in his teachings about the kingdom of heaven as we hear the parables that the Kingdom of God is like a shepherd searching for a lost sheep, who rejoices upon finding it. We hear how Jesus reaches out to those who were considered outside of God's love like the sick, the blind, the lepers, the demon possessed and we hear how we are also included, when we think or others think that we are outside of God's love. We hear how Jesus takes time to listen and to eat with people. The witness of scripture tells us that Jesus also takes time to listen to the prayers of our hearts. When we come to the altar and we receive the body and blood of our Lord through the Bread and Wine, we receive the gift of forgiveness, the gift of peace, the gift of love claiming us as children of God, the gift of joy of being forgiven and claimed, the empowering by the Holy Spirit to forgive as we are forgiven and to love as we are loved. We experience the love of God by the power of the Holy Spirit through the fellowship of the communion of brothers and sisters in Christ. This is the witness of the Word of Christ that is proclaimed as we worship together.

So enjoy the witness of creation this summer, but do not neglect the witness of the Word of Christ that gives us life, hope, peace, joy and a communion of brothers and sisters in Christ.

Pastor Randy



WANDERINGS AND WONDERINGS



Community Gardens

“He began to teach them many things in parables, and in his teaching he said to them: Listen! A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell on the path... other seed fell on rocky ground ... other seed fell among thorns ... (and) other seed fell into good soil and brought forth grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirty and sixty and a hundredfold.” (Mark 4:2ff)

We are going to try something new this summer – community gardens. Now gardening ... and farming ... is not something new. Not all of us farm ... nor garden...but many of us have gotten our hands dirty in the soil at some time here or there. Not all of us farm ... nor garden... but we are part of a collective presence ... a spirit of ...farming and gardening. We live in a land that “grows things”. And grows things well.



We are called to feed the world ... locally, nationally, and globally. So we support and do things in our “faith lives” that is consistent with that calling. We farm the land. We support our local food banks. We contribute to “world hunger” funds. We raise money in the ELCA Good Gifts program to provide seed, plants, animals, and “know how” to people who need help. We support originations like “Feed My Starving Children” to provide meals for those who suffer food scarcity. We live up to our calling.

And we are going to do something we haven’t done before ... we are going to establish some community gardens. We are going to provide the resources and the “know how” to help others grow food for themselves and others. In particular, we are going to partner with some people that participate in our local food banks and grow food ... for them ... and in the abundance promised by God, share it with others.

Community gardens draw on the skills, gifts and other assets of our community as we respond to real needs of our community. In a community garden, listening is more important than planting. We listen to God’s call, the community around us, and to our congregations.

The community garden is a ministry, not just an activity. Community gardens are spaces to

build community and experience firsthand the amazing wonder of creation and our dependence on God. “Gardening is depending on the basics. You are dependent on water, light, sunshine, warmth, and weather. It’s the basic celebration of the wonders of the world.”

Here are the basic parameters that we used to outline our invitation to others to join us.

Do you like to garden? Do you like to learn to garden? If so, sign-up now!

We ...

- Have five Garden plots
- Will help ready the plots, decide and purchase the seed and fertilizer
- Provide necessary tools
- Have people willing to mentor/help plant, nurture, and harvest

You ...

- Need to commit to garden from start to finish
- Work the ground, plant the seed, weed the plot, and harvest



Benefits and Partnership

- Garden workers get to take and use the produce that they can consume
- Extra produce would be brought and given away at the Food Shelf

Many of the people who agreed to participate, do not have a whole lot of experience. But all were excited to learn. As we were recruiting people, we wanted to make sure that they understood that whatever they grew and could use was theirs to enjoy. And anything that they grew beyond their personal needs was to be shared at the food bank. One person as they were listening to this spiel exclaimed emphasis, “Well of course we are going to share! That is what this is all about!”

“...(and) seed fell into good soil and brought forth grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirty and sixty and a hundredfold.”

*Wanderings and Wonderings,
Pastor Bill Peters*

