



ONE VOICE



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

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From the Pastor's Desk

"You cause the grass to grow for the cattle, and plants for people to use, to bring forth food from the earth, and wine to gladden the human heart, and oil to make the face shine, and bread to strengthen the human heart." Psalm 104:14-15



The month of June is a time of growing. The seeds planted in the fields and in the gardens during the month of May, broke forth from the earth and rows of living corn, soybeans and other planted seeds were seen. I always have a sense of joy when I can first row the corn fields and bean fields. They represent new life, new hope. In the month of June, the rows of corn and beans grow from sprouts to corn that can be four to five feet tall by the end of the month and the beans almost two to three feet tall. It is amazing to watch the fields and the gardens change. The fields change from stripped colors of green and black to different shades of green as the corn and beans fill out their leaves. I am reminded when my Mother-in-law first came to live with us for a couple of months during the summer. Then, she lived in Tennessee. When we brought her up from Tennessee and she saw all the different fields of corn and beans, she said in awe, "I never knew there were so many different shades of green." How true it is. The Lord causes the plants to grow and we see the green corn and the beans a deeper shade of green, the leaves on the trees and the grass in the ditches, the hay in the fields, the grass on the lawns all different shades of green, all signs of life and faithfulness of the Lord.

Of course, the plants in the fields and the gardens aren't the only life growing in June. We see the calves run and jump in the pastures. The calves get bigger and bigger until they are almost the size of mom by the end of June. We see sheep and goats grow as well and pigs seem to grow faster and faster now adays, which of course is good for hog farmers. We also witness the growth of our children and grandchildren in our midst. Parents and grandparents spend many hours on the



bleachers watching game after game of baseball and softball. We see the young athletes begin to grow in skill and confidence. In the beginning of the season, whether they are starting to play T-Ball or playing in high school, we see growth. At first our little athletes are a little hesitant, not sure of hitting the ball or should they run to the second base, who to throw the ball to as they scramble to get the ball in their glove. It is the same in high school, as the athletes begin more experiences, they grow in confidence and skill by the end of the season. They learn from their mistakes. They learn there is another game to play after defeat. They learn to play their best and if they play their best, and they lose, they learn to overcome adversity and stick-to-it-iveness. When they win, they grow in confidence and self-esteem. Parents, grandparents and coaches love to watch the young athletes grow in skills and as a person.

As the psalmist noted, all this growing doesn't happen by itself. It is the Lord who causes the plants to grow. It is the

Lord who provides the sun and the rain. It is the Lord who provides the nutrients from the earth. And as we witness our children and grandchildren grow as athletes and as a person, it isn't done on their own. The athletes need the support and coaching of the coaches. The athletes need the support and encouragement of their friends, fellow teammates. The athletes need the support of their parents to not only bring them to practices and cheer them on at games, but they need their encouragement and unconditional love and support to keep trying to keep growing. Again, it isn't just the coaches or the parents or the grandparents or fellow teammates, it is the Lord behind it all. The Lord blesses us with our children. The Lord blesses with coaches who are willing to teach the athletes skills and help them to grow as a person. The Lord blesses with love and patience, perseverance, challenges and successes. The Lord loves you and I and our children. The Lord loves to see them grow in skills, as a person, to laugh, to play, to work hard, to know the joy of the success of hard work.

I am reminded of Martin Luther's explanation of the fourth petition of the Lord's prayer in his Small Catechism. Luther wrote, "Give us this day our Daily Bread. What does this mean? In fact, God gives daily bread without our prayer, even to all evil people, but we ask in this prayer that God cause us to recognize what our daily bread is and to receive it with thanksgiving. What then does Daily Bread mean? Everything included in the necessities and nourishment for our bodies, such as food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, farm, fields, livestock, money, property, an upright spouse, upright children, upright members of the household, upright and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, decency, honor, good friends, faithful neighbors and the like." The Lord loves to bless us in abundance with all we need. So as we witness the growth in the corn fields, the bean fields, the growth in our children, grandchildren, we are witnessing God's steadfast love and faithfulness. As Luther points out, the Lord blesses us with all that encompasses our Daily bread, whether



we remember to ask for it or to give thanks for the Lord providing it. The Lord opens his hand and provides simply because God loves you. Like you, God loves to see the athletes grow in skills and as a person. Like you God loves to laugh together, to create memories, to celebrate success. Like you, the Lord loves to see you grow stronger when you overcome adversity. The Lord only created one you. The Lord loves to bless you in abundance and witness the wonder of you as you grow and love the Lord and one another in your daily journey. As you witness the growth all around you in June, you are witnessing God's faithfulness and blessings in abundance.

Pastor Randy



WANDERINGS AND WONDERINGS



The LORD is my shepherd,
 I shall not want.
 He makes me lie down in
 green pastures;
 he leads me beside still
 waters;
 he restores my soul.
 He leads me in right paths
 for his name's sake.
 Even though I walk through the
 darkest valley,
 I fear no evil;
 for you are with me;
 your rod and your staff —
 they comfort me.
 You prepare a table before me
 in the presence of my enemies;
 you anoint my head with oil;
 my cup overflows.
 Surely goodness and mercy shall
 follow me
 all the days of my life,
 and I shall dwell in the house of the
 LORD my whole life long.



them to get some exercise as well, so she agreed.

The next school day, the neighbor and her little girl set out following behind Timmy as he walked to school with another neighbor girl he knew named Susie. She did this for the



whole week.

As the two walked and chatted, kicking stones and twigs, Susie noticed the same lady was following them as she seemed to do every day all week. Finally she said to Timmy, "Have you noticed that lady following us to school all week? Do you know her?"

Timmy nonchalantly replied, "Yeah, I know who she is."

The little girl said, "Well, who is she?"

"That's just Shirley Goodnest," Timmy replied, "and her daughter, Marcy."

"Shirley Goodnest? Who is she and why is she following us?"

"Well," Timmy explained, "every night my Mum makes me say the 23rd Psalm with my prayers, 'cuz she worries about me so much. And in the Psalm, it says, 'Shirley Goodnest (surely goodness) and Marcy (mercy) shall follow me all the days of my life', so I guess I'll just have to get used to it!"

So it is with God - May Shirley Goodnest and Marcy be with you today and always my friends!

Wanderings and Wonderings,
 Pastor Bill Peters

Here is a fun story making an important point about God.

A mother was concerned about her kindergarten son, Timmy, walking to school alone. He didn't want his mother to walk with him. She wanted to give him the feeling that he had some independence, but yet know that he was safe. So she had an idea of how to handle it. The mother asked a neighbor if she would please follow him to school in the mornings, staying at a distance, so he probably wouldn't notice her. The neighbor said that since she was up early with her toddler anyway, it would be a good way for

