

Zion Lutheran Church • Fairbanks, Alaska

Pastor's Monday • April 16, 2007

April 16, 1968 – New Orleans, St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Port and Burgundy. Two days after Easter, a Tuesday. Vicarage (internship) at neighboring First English Lutheran Church. Freshly 24 years old. Hebrews 12:1-2. Bride and Groom blessed by both families, loved generously by both congregations, she a daughter of St. Paul, he one of Dr. Ed Homrighausen's (pastor of First English and Southern District President) 18 vicars.

We were so young then. And we thought we were busy then. We'll be spending this anniversary apart. I'm in St. Louise for a Board for Mission Services meeting, she back home in Fairbanks after 9 days away visiting her mother and sister in Indiana and then to Providence, R.I., where she graduated and was certified as a Parent Coach by the Parent Coaching Institute. We haven't spent many anniversaries apart. Our first anniversary we spent in St. Louis, while I finished my fourth and final year at Concordia Seminary, she as a Nurse at Barnes Children's hospital. I think we were fresh pregnant and didn't know it. Jill, our first was born the following Jan 28 – two weeks late...you can do the math. We began a tradition that year that we have continued most years. Dinner by ourselves and then a review of the year – writing on a napkin or piece of paper or a spare menu the events of the years. There have been some wonderful anniversaries, and some sad ones, but without a doubt, God has blessed us and continues to do so. Both of us have had our share of physical ills – but in the span of 39 years, those times have been very, very few. Four children – four grand daughters. (One tubule pregnancy between our 2nd and third child.) Three Parishes, Trinity in New Orleans (5 years), The Lutheran Church of the Ascension (18 years) in Atlanta, and ZIONfairbanks (12 ½ years). Judy has been blessed with wonderful places not only to do her nursing but to advance from her original Diploma Nursing degree to a BSN in Nursing from Ga. State University and her Masters from Emory University, both in Atlanta. Ascension in Atlanta was extremely generous with me, supporting my doctoral work at Candler School of Theology by not only paying my tuition, but also giving me time off to do the work and then when dissertation time came, gave me two sabbaticals of three and five months.

Old age pushes hard on us. We fight it at times, and embrace it willingly at others. But at times things just pile up and come together in ways that let us know that God is with us in a very big way, in spite of our age. This past week was one of those times. For years Zion has embraced and encouraged young and the not so young to be involved in training for full time ministry. We had summer DCE interns and then full year interns. We had Shawn Deterding as a vicar. We encouraged Pam Tacquard over the past several years in her pursuit of certification as a Director of Christian Outreach. When she returned this week, she had successfully defended her Master's thesis! Tia Pugh, who began as our DCE intern, was called this past week to be our DCE, Commissioned Minister, and she was Commissioned and Installed yesterday. And on Friday, our Assistant to the Pastor, Michael Steckel was officially accepted as a student at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. He follows in the tradition of two sons of Zion who are now LCMS pastors, Andy Carlson and Kraig Gilkey. But that is not all. The baptism and the new members yesterday, the Laughlin and the Feldhaus families, represent what Zion is all about – receiving and nurturing a long time and well extended Fairbanks family, the Laughlin family, and a military family new to Fairbanks, the Feldhaus family. And yes, we also said good by to Marcus and Sherry Grimes and their two children, as they wrap up 5 ½ years at Zion, including a 15 month deployment by Marcus to Iraq. I was privileged to baptize both of their children – the first, Evan baptized on Earthquake Sunday! Add to that a major effort to begin a Lutheran School this Fall by opening a first grade room with a commitment to continue that in the coming years to a full 8 grades, makes life meaningful. Full. Rich. Wonderful.

And so much more to come! Confirmation is this coming Sunday. 12 wonderful young people will make a commitment to Christ in the Affirmation of Baptism. The Lutheran Service Book, the new hymnal of the LCMS is being considered. And the number 21? Keep tuned.

And as I mentioned at the offerings at SNA and at the 11:00 AM service, we received the final financials for the fiscal year just ended on March 31. It is almost – well, it is only because of what God has done. You will get the report at our annual report Sunday on the 28, 29. In brief, “Yeah God!”

Blessings.

Pastor Kuehnert.

Weekly Prayer Concerns

Cancer

Eva Lose (Mr. Gary’s wife)
Linda Yeakley (Bill Fisher’s sister)
Russel Paju (Marty Paju’s father)
Michael Caskey

Other Illnesses

Nancy Waydig (Judy Kuehnert’s mother)
Virginia Addy (Shirley Bouse’s mother)
Baby Sierra
Tomi Baird

Recovery

Doug Campbell
Richard Wright
Steve Eldridge
Merlin Barkdull
Charles Aleman
Karen Milne
Richard Hauger (Karyn Dehaas’s dad)
Michelle

Surgeries

Ruth Leazenby (Doug Fry’s Mother)
Chares McGonegal
Nathan Burgess

Deaths

Family of Bob Tomlin
Family of Jon Flowers