

Zion Lutheran Church • Fairbanks, Alaska

Pastor's Monday • April 23, 2007

What a week. What a week! St. Louis. Blacksburg, VA. Baghdad. Fairbanks. Washington, D.C. A Supreme Court ruling upholding the federal ban on partial birth abortions. Will Bergeson's body recovered from the Chena River. 167 killed in Baghdad on Wednesday. 33 die on Monday in the space of a couple of hours at the Virginia Tech University. I was in St. Louis, fighting a nasty virus, attending my first face to face meeting of the Board for Mission Services of the LCMS (our denomination, Lutheran Church Missouri Synod). Death in the midst of life. Death everywhere. In our meeting we were strategizing how to address a different kind of death, eternal death that threatens 2/3 of the world population. Scary. The national board is no different from a local board – the same temptations to micro-manage while losing grip on the big picture, or getting so caught up in the “vision” that nothing practical happens. But what a great group of people – and what a terrific staff that works for our Synod managing and encouraging mission work in 22 countries.

Back in Fairbanks early Friday morning for – Confirmation Weekend! What a surprise and thrill – the review by the 12 confirmands on Friday evening not only went well, it was fun! The banquet on Saturday evening was so very nice with a riveting and challenging talk by guest speaker Thom Roser. Yesterday at the 11:00 AM service, we had confirmation for the first time in a contemporary service. NO ONE FAINTED this year! Judy, my wife, had sternly commanded them to eat breakfast and to not lock their knees. When I asked before the service if everyone had breakfast, there were a few who meekly admitted they had not had breakfast. The banquet on Saturday evening had some unforgettable moments provided by the What Jesus Means to Me essays and the Christian Service Projects as these young people shared their faith – some in the most simple terms, and others with an eloquence well beyond their years. There are at least two of our confirmands who have the gift of humor – I hope they keep it, the church needs more smiles, the church needs to not take itself so seriously.

We had the privilege of having Rev. Ron and Carol Lyn Scheer worship with us at the 8:30 service – and they stayed for my Bible Class. They are from Temperance, MI. Their son Jonathan was the A-10 pilot who lost his life in a crash on Ash Wednesday, February 22, 2004. They were in town for the dedication tomorrow at Eileson AFB of a conference room named in Jonathan's honor. Pastor Scheer shared with me something he had told me when I first met them three years ago, that he had given his son his own confirmation verse, “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they know me....”

MY BIBLE CLASS – the one on worship. We are examining the new hymnal, the Lutheran Service Book, that has just been published by the LCMS. We'll be looking at it again this coming Sunday – come and join us – 9:45 in the Sanctuary.

THIS IS THE WEEK – Vicarage Assignment Day and Call Day at our seminaries is Wednesday. I visited with Joe Baumgarten in St. Louis on Wednesday afternoon. He and Cyndi are very anxious and excited about knowing where they will finally put down roots after four years of school (St. Louis) and vicarage (internship in Iowa). The Vicarage Assignment service is in the afternoon – the Call service is in the evening. Our congregation has placed a solemn call for Joe to be our associate pastor. Please pray that God's will be done. I did hear from Pastor Kauth this past week and he and Le will be with us for about seven weeks from the beginning of June through the third week in July. It is our hope and fervent prayer that Joe will receive and accept the Call to ZIONfairbanks. As soon as we know, we will post it on our web page!

21Days.Com will be formally introduced next weekend - **Annual Report Weekend**. We hope you will be with us to celebrate the great year that God has given us. **And now (drum roll, please....) what is 21Days.Com?** It is 21 days of study, fellowship, prayer, devotions, small group Bible Study and commitment. For those of you who have been around awhile, it is our Spring Stewardship Program! This is what you can expect: 1) A personal devotional book for reading, journaling and prayer; 2) An invitation to three small group Bible Studies; 3) An opportunity to Commit yourself once again to your Lord for all the things he has done for you! Why 21? We assure you it has nothing to do with the legal drinking age in Alaska, or Blackjack! More details later.

Blessings,
Pastor K