

Pastor's Monday
November 26, 2007

Consecrated Stewards – what a great program! Uncomfortable maybe... but being held accountable is always uncomfortable. But what a joy it is to see the blessings as God continues to shower blessings upon us. I think the weekend was a perfect time... the weekend after Thanksgiving; to recommit ourselves to return “as God has prospered” us. My thanks to the Task Force led by Bruce and Raelynn Radway If you have not turned in your pledge, please do so – it is a great help for you to hold yourself accountable as you prove faithful to your commitment, and it is a great help to those who plan our budget for next year. You will be receiving a letter this week either confirming your commitment or asking you to consider making a commitment....

Thanksgiving – I am giving the rest of this Pastor's Monday over to two of the Thanksgiving stories told at our Thanksgiving Day services - The first is from Moriah Matherly, a young mom of six children: the second is from the Bartons – new to Fairbanks and Zion (they joined yesterday) who are expecting their first child.

Moriah Matherly's message:

“My name is Moriah Matherly. I would like to share what I'm thankful for this Thanksgiving. When I think about what I'm thankful for of course my first thought is of my large family that God has truly blessed me with – my husband Jim, step daughter Parker and my five small boys that constantly surround me.

But it goes beyond that....

I'm thankful for my country where my family can worship God Freely, where I don't have to be afraid to tell people that I'm a Christian. I'm thankful for Zion Lutheran Church – a place where I can bring my children to learn about Jesus ... for pastors and Sunday School teachers who teach them about Jesus' love and His sacrifice for all of us.

My six-year-old son was given an assignment at school. As I read the teacher's instructions, I cringed. The paper said, “Discuss with your child what a hero is. Then have them draw a picture of their hero and write a sentence explaining why this person is a hero.” Here I was trying to make dinner with two crying two-year-olds attached to each one of my legs and a homework assignment I thought was going to be difficult. I imagined myself having to explain what a hero was as my son watched TV over his shoulder and me trying to pull out of him someone other than Sponge Bob Square Pants who was his hero. But to my surprise, Ross said, “Oh Mom, I don't need your help. I already know who my hero is!” He grabbed a pencil and a piece of paper and started drawing. I got lost in the chaos of my kitchen. Within five minutes, Ross handed me his completed assignment. Tears welled up in my eyes as I looked in disbelief. This is what I saw (see attached drawing). I don't think any of us could have done a better job or said it in a more beautiful way.

So most of all, I'm thankful for all of you, my family in Christ, who allow me and my family to worship God in our not so quiet way. I'm thankful for my twins voices saying, "church" as we drive here on Sunday morning and I'm thankful for the Praise Team's music my kids love to dance to. I'm thankful for this place because I know this is where Jesus wants us all to be."

Here is the Barton thanksgiving Message.

Charles': The Lord has blessed us in many ways big and small in the past few months. First of all, we have been given the opportunity to serve our country in Alaska! We moved up from lower Alabama doing 10 days of driving in 12 days in a 26' Uhaul and a pickup truck, both loaded down. We conquered the Alaska Highway without a single crack on the windshield! We arrived on a Friday and pulled in to Alaska Mini Storage with our names on two reserved units. Both units had no entrance from the outside, and were not close to each other. I was NOT looking forward to unloading the Uhaul and our 6x12 pretty much by myself having to carry everything individually through a hallway to get to our storage garage. God knew we were coming and that my pregnant wife was going to be mostly there for moral support. I asked the manager if he had any units with an outside entrance. He checked, and wouldn't you know, earlier that day a lady had checked out of two storage garages the size we needed. They were close together and on the outside! My wife did a fantastic job helping as much as she could and we got almost everything unloaded. We stopped for the night still having the piano and various heavy furniture items left to move. At the hotel I looked through the phone book with hopes of finding an LCMS church in the area for Sunday when I found Zion. I called Saturday morning to find out service times when a very enthusiastic voice on the other end asked if there was anything else we needed. I asked if it wouldn't be too much trouble I needed a hand moving a piano out of the truck. "We'll be there in 10 minutes," Pastor excitedly proclaimed. I remember thinking that I didn't think I could even be there in 10 minutes! Pastor has rounded up a posse consisting of himself, Pastor Joe, and David Matz. We finished in about 15 minutes and I got the truck turned in on time! The Lord also guided us while we searched for a home. We were working on closing in North Pole in less than 4 weeks from our arrival! I have been blessed to have been assigned to a unit already deployed. Though my prayers are daily for the safety of the Sugar Bears in Iraq, I am grateful that I can spend this year at home to see the birth of our first child. Most of all, God has taken care of us physically, financially and spiritually by providing a home we could afford and introducing us to many wonderful Christian people at church and at work and I am very thankful for that.

Kimberly's: What I'm most thankful for this year is our church family. I was healthy enough for the first two trimesters of my pregnancy to travel 4500 miles, from the Gulf of Mexico through the entire United States, up through Canada, in a separate car from my husband, with two puppies and camping the whole trip. We had so much excitement with moving and finding a home and starting a job once we got here. Then, once that excitement was over, I suddenly became sick. The day I started my third trimester, I started having all the signs of pre-term labor. The church family really made us feel just that - part of the family. We are so grateful for the dinners we received and the prayers for us. Not only were we taken care of physically, but also emotionally and spiritually. It enabled us to really take it easy and to take care of myself. It also helped our families back home rest easy knowing we were being taken care of the same way they would take care of us if they could be here in person. Last Tuesday more of our

prayers were answered. After two months of concerns and doctor visits, we were told that I've made a complete recovery and have no more signs of delivering pre-term! This is definitely a great blessing to give thanks for."

ADVENT Holden Evening Prayer This Wednesday. If you have not experienced this hauntingly beautiful sung evening liturgy, please make sure you don't miss it... because by the third or fourth week of Advent, the melodies will haunt you for days! Really! Our Focus will be "Conversations..." from some unlikely characters in the Christmas story. Don't miss the opportunity to prepare yourself for Christmas through our special Advents services.... Supper 6:00 Service 7:00

Pastor Kuehnert