

# Cross Currents



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## Faith Moving Forward

One of the unfortunate things about Easter is that so many people treat it as a temporary respite from the moment and struggle of life. From such a perspective Easter is a holiday, one which calls upon many to make a seasonal visit to a church and hear once again the story of death and new life, and sense the possibility of new life for themselves.

Such a perspective 'dumbs down' the raw force of God's intrusion into human history, via the birth of his son. And the remarkable love that son displayed in life, in teaching, and especially in his willingness to accept death, the death on a cross that we might discover and accept new life for ourselves. It is God's deepest desire that you would believe the truth revealed in Jesus' life, teaching, death and resurrection - and that you would respond to it with commitment.

Think about the commitment the folks of Nebraska have to our football program. I remember huge celebrations after their biggest victories. But think how shallow the commitment of fans would seem, if the next time a game was played, the stadium was less than half filled. If their caring lasted for a day, and then faded into the back corners of life behind other choices. Now think of the resurrection and the enormous victory over death this gave us... It is a victory we are called to respond to with action.

On the Sunday after Easter, you are invited to share with us in a major step of faith for eight of our young men and women. It is Confirmation Sunday on May 1<sup>st</sup>, and the class will help as liturgists for worship and will then be received as full members of Christ's church, taking vows of membership. Because they all desire to join during the same service, we will not have a worship service at 9:00 on May 1<sup>st</sup>. We will still have Sunday School at 10:00 and follow that with worship, and the reception of our Confirmands at 11:10.

I hope all who are able make a real effort to continue the celebration of our faith, as we watch 'faith move forward' into commitment in the lives of our young people. See you in church!

**Kirk**

P.S. – This is also the day for our reception of the One Great Hour of Sharing Offering, so bring this gift that has been growing throughout the Lenten season, it is another great opportunity to help others.

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# Spirit of Mission

## Appreciating Our Teachers at ILP and Walnut Hill Elementary

**No one can dispute the importance of a good education for our children.** We generally appreciate our teachers for the work they do with our children. But at the same time, we may easily gloss over how difficult a teacher's job is... especially their task of providing for the diversity of students encountered every school day.

Teaching is tough work, especially at the Integrated Learning Program (ILP) at Druid Hill and Walnut Hill Elementary schools (both in OPS), two of the schools that our Mission program supports. Students' families from these schools are unstable, transient, or have difficulty securing basic needs. These teachers are professionals who have **little to no appreciation or support**, but spend their time preparing students for their future.

ILP is an OPS K-12 alternative school that serves students with physical, mental, behavioral, or emotional challenges. The teachers at ILP work the entire school day with **children and youth at risk** who are unable to make it in the regular classes offered by OPS. In addition, the teachers arrive early and stay late because of the amount of personal documentation each student requires. The ratio of teacher to students is 1:3 with an equal number of paraprofessionals. They spend their school days counseling children and their families, preparing special lessons, playing good cop and bad cop, being surrogate parents, and still find time to teach the lessons students need to graduate. Teaching these students is even more demanding than the general education population. *Autism, cerebral palsy, hygiene issues, and students acting out are prevalent.* Consequently, they need a structured environment in order to learn. Some students may be able to mainstream in a regular high school, but for most that can be difficult. Students can remain at ILP until they are 21 and some stay that long to learn life skills they need to cope in the world. **Unfortunately, ILP does not have a PTA** to support the teachers and sustain strong parent/teacher relationships.

Walnut Hill Elementary School is an OPS K-5 school that serves students in the area near 43<sup>rd</sup> & Hamilton. In contrast to ILP, Walnut Hill has built up a stronger parent/teacher relationship due to the leadership of the principal and their strong Family Liaison program. Walnut Hill adopted a plan to get the community around their school more engaged and also created more parent/child interactive events. *PCOC initiated a mission effort about the same time and showed that someone cared outside their community.* Walnut Hill parents needed to be taught how to teach their children at home because they did not understand how to teach or what their children were learning. **Consistency of parental support sometimes wanes, they have difficulty with PTA leadership, and they raise little extra money. Teachers often spend their own money to fill the gaps.** While these students attend regular OPS classes, they have difficulties with their studies, homework is often done alone, and many live in single parent families.

For the 5<sup>th</sup> year, the PCOC Mission Committee helped fill some of these teacher support gaps by hosting **Teacher Appreciation Day luncheons** on March 2nd at Walnut Hill and March 3rd at ILP. The objective was to help these educators feel appreciated and recognize the teachers' contributions to students and parents. **Our volunteers for 28 educators at ILP** were John Bennett, Kristin Jacobi, Richard Hulsey, Linda Miller, and Jon Boomgaarden. **The 42 educators at Walnut Hill were hosted by** Hugh Stoddard, Sue Freyer, Lou and Faythe Harrison, Jim Halbersleben, Kirk Ryckman, and Jon Boomgaarden. Their big hearts were "hugely" appreciated by these teachers at these "hands-on" mission events. Volunteers were able to meet with and listen to these teachers personally during a lunch catered by Fernando's. Each teacher received a \$20 thank you gift card and "Go Now In Peace" was sung as the closing.

Through this project, PCOC affirmed our "mission-relationship" commitment to these schools in a very meaningful way. The teachers were very thankful for this recognition and it was a rewarding experience for all! **Thank you, congregation and volunteers, for your "Spirit of Mission"!**

### Integrated Learning Program



(left to right) Richard Hulsey, Jenny Haddock (ILP media specialist) John Bennett, Linda Miller, Sandy Bender, ILP director)



(Left to right) Kristin Jacobi, Sandy Bender



(Left to right) Sandy Bender, John Bennett, Linda Miller, Kristin Jacobi, Jon Boomgaarden, Richard Hulsey



### Walnut Hill Elementary School



(Left to right) Kirk Ryckman, Hugh Stoddard, Faythe and Lou Harrison, Principal Loraine Amill, Jon Boomgaarden, Sue Freyer, Jim



Principal Loraine Amill



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## Easter 2011

Another Holy Week has come and nearly gone. Easter looms large before us, and perhaps you are already busy buying for and preparing an Easter dinner. I have long loved the Easter celebration above other holidays. I have appreciated the fact that while Hallmark has gotten a hold of this High Holy Day, in my mind I have been able to keep the consumerist side of Easter away from my own Holy Week observances. Long ago, someone said to me, “If you can read the passion narrative [the chapters of Scripture pertaining to Christ’s arrest, crucifixion, and resurrection] and not be in the least disturbed or stirred by it, you need to have your eyes checked.” And I agree. The difficulty is that we read these passages—the Last Supper on Maundy Thursday, the crucifixion narrative on Good Friday, and of course, the account of Christ’s resurrection each Easter—every year. We might begin to think, “I know this story. What’s different about it this year?”

A lot is different this year. The world is different. Japan continues to struggle and will continue to struggle for many years following the devastating earthquake and tsunami. Tornadoes that ripped through the United States last week, leaving a trail of carnage in their wake, will forever alter the lives of those impacted. As a nation, we continue to struggle economically, and for many, this year has presented tremendous challenges for families and individuals just trying to make ends meet. And what about your life? Perhaps you have lost a loved one this year and there will be one less place setting at Easter dinner? Maybe you moved, took a new job, or welcomed a new child into your life, and this Easter you’ll be in a new home or initiating a new little one into your Easter traditions. No matter who we are, each and every time we approach Christ’s empty tomb on Easter Sunday, we are not the same person we were the year before.

I encourage you, in your Holy Week observances this year, to read the ancient words with fresh eyes. The story hasn’t changed, but you have. Whether you realize it or not, Christ has walked with you through your own “passions”—your moments of weakness and pain. The risen Lord has been there in your moments of greatest joy and success. And in everything you have encountered, Christ has been at work transforming you and all of your pains and joys into a new creation. No matter what has happened in our lives, the tomb is still empty and Christ is risen. What does the empty tomb mean to you this year? Maybe it means that there is a promise of new life and renewal where there has been death and stagnancy. Maybe it serves as a catalyst for you to take your faith more seriously in the coming months and year. Whatever you find when you look into the tomb, trust in this: Our risen Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, has triumphed over death and lives and reigns as Lord of this earth and Lord of your life. And while the story hasn’t changed, it certainly is good news!

Blessings,  
Nadia

## Lenten Study Participants

Don’t forget to fill out your evaluation form at the conclusion of the study. You will find a copy of the evaluation form in your grey participant folder. If you lost your form or would like another copy, extras will be available at the information desk. You can turn in completed evaluation forms to the church office or at the information desk. Those involved in planning the Lenten Study use the forms to assist in the preparation for next year’s study. Thanks again for your participation and input!

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## Christian Education

### **Bible Explorers Rotation Workshop (Kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade) Theme: "Lydia" May 1<sup>st</sup> – May 22<sup>nd</sup> 10:00 – 10:50 AM**

While we know very little about Lydia, what we do know is intriguing. She was a Gentile, a wealthy woman, the head of her own household and a business woman who sold the purple cloth for which her hometown was known. Her wealth and independence set her apart from the typical Jewish woman of that time. Paul welcomed her into the faith, and she in turn welcomed him into her home.

### **Art Workshop – Dixie Williams Drama Workshop – Ruth Madison Games & Puzzles Workshop – Karen Metzger Video Workshop – Stephanie Weaver**

#### **ADULT EDUCATION CLASSES WILL RESUME ON MAY 1<sup>ST</sup>**

The regular Adult Education Classes will resume on Sunday, May 1<sup>st</sup> during the 10:00 education hour.

The following classes will continue through May 22<sup>nd</sup>, when our education hour ends until next fall.

*Christianity and World Religions* led by Mary Cramer & Norma Schnabel

*The Study of Esther* led by Mary Kern

*Preview of the Lectionary* led by Dr. Kirk Ryckman & Pastor Nadia Mullin

The Tuesday Study Bunch also will continue their study of the book of Acts with Nancy Bunjer on Tuesday afternoons.

Please plan to join us for one of these exciting classes!

### **WORK FOR HIRE – A BIG SUCCESS !**

Many thanks to all of you who provided work for our senior highs to do last weekend! The youth group earned over \$1,000.00 towards their summer mission trip to Strong hold Conference Center! This money will help cover the costs of food, lodging and transportation to Oregon, Illinois for a week in June. We truly appreciate all your support in this fundraiser! You are a very generous congregation!

### **YOUTH MISSION TRIP PLANNING MEETING!**

An important meeting is being held for all senior high youth and their parents who are planning to attend the Summer Mission Trip in June. We will meet on Sunday, May 1<sup>st</sup>, at 6:00 PM for a potluck dinner, followed by a brief meeting. The church will provide the hamburgers (which we'll be grilling on our newly purchased Event Grill), paper products and beverages. We would like to ask each family bring a salad, side dish, or dessert to share. During the meeting, you will receive information about the trip, medical forms and waivers to complete, and ask questions about the mission trip. This is the only meeting we will have prior to our departure on June 5<sup>th</sup>. If you are interested in attending the Mission Trip, you should make every effort to attend. Contact Sheri at the church office, if you have any questions.

## MOPS NEWS



Our MOPS group recently completed a service project for the Madonna School staff and students. We made back packs and filled them with First Aid Kits for the teachers to use on the playground or to take on field trips. We also made hygiene kits for each classroom and filled a bag full of school supplies for each teacher. It was exciting to hear that these items were well received and appreciated by the staff and students at the Madonna School!

Our MOPS year is winding down but we still have two more meetings that you can attend. We meet the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesdays of the month from 6:30 – 8:00 PM. in the Gathering Space. Child care is always provided!  
**Tuesday, April 26<sup>th</sup>** – “Healthy Habits” Bring a recipe for a healthy snack or entrée, and wear your walking shoes. We’re going to take our kids (strollers optional) and go for a long walk around the church neighborhood. When we return, we’ll munch on healthy snacks!

**Tuesday, May 10<sup>th</sup>** – We’ll discuss Chapter 4 in the Momology book and watch the final DVD series on “Grandscape”.

**Friday, May 13<sup>th</sup>** – MOPS Family Picnic from 6:00 – 8:00 PM here at the church. Special activities are planned for the kids.

### A NEW MOPS PROGRAM IS COMING NEXT FALL!!

**MOMSnex**t is a new program that is an extension of our current MOPS program. It is especially designed for moms of elementary age children in 1<sup>st</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> grades. The current plan is to have the two groups meet on the same night (2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesdays of the month) at the same time (6:30 – 8:00 PM), use the same child care provider, share programs, speakers, and activities but divide into two separate groups for discussion. Early registration for 2011-2012 is now underway for both MOPS and MOMSnex groups. Registration forms are available at the Information Desk or in the church office. There is a discount if you register before June 1<sup>st</sup>! For more information, please contact Sheri at the church office, 402-333-7466.

## THANKS

It was a beautiful day! The annual Spring Clean-Up on Saturday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, was deemed a success by those who participated in the fun.

A huge thanks goes to all those folks who pitched in to help: Bob Knightly, our organizer, Ethan Bennett, Alena Bennett, John Bennett, Verl Bunjer, Reece Conner, Erin Erickson, Collin Erickson, Chris Erickson, Daniel Erickson, Jae Falcone, Bill Ferrand, Tim Goodman, Art Halbersleben, Jim Halbersleben, Doug Hartman, Joanie Hartman, Fred Henry, Martha Henry, Rich Hulse, Kristen Jacobi, Reva Knightly, Darold Lundgren, Frank McMullen, Jim Miller, Nadia Mullin, Dave Pederson, Don Sievers, Fiona Smith, Jeff Swenson, John Swenson, Chris Voss, Marilyn Willis, Roy Willis, Kay Wilson and Wayne Wilson.

Thanks also to Frank McMullen for providing the snacks for all who participated. It was a grand day! MISSION ACCOMPLISHED! THE GROUNDS LOOK GREAT!



## Do you have a dirty mind?



A mind for real dirt, weeds, and flowers, that is. The Building and Grounds committee is searching for people to establish a Garden Ministry sub-committee to oversee our ever expanding need to keep our grounds attractive.

We have been blessed to receive a landscape plan for future plantings and now we need a committee to steer its implementation.

If gardening or landscape planning interests you, please call Doug Hartman (402/333-5839) for more info or to sign up. Thank you.

## Friday Night Gourmet

We will meet May 13th at 6:30 at Upstream, 17070 Wright Plaza (west on West Center Rd at 170th Street) in the Tower Room. Desert will be purchased off the menu. Host and Hostesses are Stanton and Charlene Weyand, 402-397-2691 and Dan and Nancy Hamil, 402-502-6809.

## Voice Recital

The members and friends of Presbyterian Church of the Cross are invited to Brianna Clancy's Senior Voice Recital. The recital will be held Saturday, April 30th at 7:00pm, at Presbyterian Church of the Cross. Brianna has been studying with Wendy Eaton will be accompanied by Stacie Haneline.

# May Birthdays

- 1 Jerry Cornett, Jean Lynn
- 2 Anne Flairty, Adrian Hinz, Lucah Sekle
- 3 Kevin Bunjer, Doug Gollehon, Duncan Koch, Ben Miller, Mary Ann Pederson, Sherryl Shannon
- 4 Janet Burnham, Peyton Holubeck
- 5 Fred Bekins, Jerry Bland, Twink DeRoin, Charles Frenk, Joan Sacco
- 6 Laura Innes, Juli Kistler, Joshua McFadden, Don Sievers
- 10 Catherine Brady, Bob Pierson
- 11 Donald Gould, Lynette Olsen, Bobbi Swedlund, Robert Wright
- 12 Finn Mooney, Ethel Pauba
- 13 Mark Brady, Carl Greiner
- 14 Kendall Kahler, Morgan Koch
- 15 Neelo Bomgaarden, Michael Shannon
- 16 Jim Butler
- 17 Emma Boe, Jane Fry
- 18 Paige Knight
- 19 Roman Grossardt, Nancy Nicas
- 20 Sarah Gerot, Paul Stiles, David Thorson
- 22 Ben Fritz, Gary Lynn
- 23 Phyllis Armstrong, Teresa Bunjer
- 24 Daley Gibson, Melissa Glen
- 25 Angela Assignon, Owen Rock, Patti Sparks
- 26 Patty Hindman, Don Jones, Matt Kahler, Virginia, VanSurksun
- 27 Robert Barber, Elaine Holdren, Rich Hulsey
- 29 Matt Kluck, Cameron Martin
- 30 Chad Couillard, Heather McIntyre-Haas, Don Thorson
- 31 Charles Myers, Eric Sitzman, Becca Whitlow



### *Cross Currents*

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