

**FROM THE
PASTOR'S DESK**

This month, I want to share an article by Arthur Brooks on the question of whether or not religion helps make people happier, which originally appeared in the Washington Post on September 24, 2007. The link between happiness and religion is an especially appropriate topic as we celebrate Thanksgiving Day this month.

The Happiness Gap

By Arthur Brooks
Washington Post
September 24, 2007

Americans can be divided into three groups when it comes to religious practice. Surveys indicate that about 30% attend houses of worship at least once per week (I will call them "religious"), while about 20% are "secular"—never attending. The rest attend sometimes, but irregularly. These population dimensions have changed relatively little over the decades: Since the early 1970s, the religious group has not shrunk by more than two or three percentage points.

How do religious Americans compare to the secular when it comes to happiness? In 2004, the General Social Survey asked a sample of Americans, "Would you say that you are very happy, pretty happy, or not too happy?" Religious people were more than twice as likely as the secular to say they were "very happy" (43%-21%). Meanwhile, secular people were nearly three times as likely as the religious to say they were not too happy (21%-8%). In the same survey, religious people were more than a third more likely than the secular to say they were optimistic about the future (34%-24%).

The happiness gap between religious and secular people is not because of money or other personal characteristics. Imagine two people who are identical in every important way—income, education, age, sex, family status, race and political views. The only difference is that the first person is religious; the second is secular. The religious person will still be 21 percentage points more likely than the secular person to say that he or she is very happy. Researchers have found similar results in other countries, suggesting that the connection between happiness and faith probably doesn't depend on nationality.

The 2000 Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey shows that those practicing religion are all far more likely than secularists to say they are happy. For example, people who pray every day are a third likelier to be very happy than those who never pray. What about the folks in the middle, who identify with a faith but practice inconsistently? They are generally happier than secular people, but not as happy as regular practitioners.

Obviously, not all religious people are happy—millions are not. Researchers in one 2006 study found that what makes some religious people unhappy is an image of God as severe, unloving or distant. Unhappy religious folks are the exception to the rule, however, and the percentage gaps in happiness identified here still translate into many, many more millions of contented churchgoers than nonbelievers. All in all, there is no good reason to doubt the claim that religion is associated with happiness for most people.

Arthur Brooks is Louis A. Bantle Chair in Business and Government Policy at Syracuse University's Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs. Excerpted and adapted from the Washington Post, September 24, 2007.

**Cornerstone
Laying and
Hog Roast
Success!**



Thank you to everyone who helped make the Cornerstone Laying for our new sanctuary and Hog Roast to benefit the Building Fund on October 21 a big success! Over \$2,000 was given for the freewill offering at the Hog Roast, with an additional \$1,300 in matching funds provided by Thrivent, for a total of over \$3,000 to benefit the Building Fund.

Our thanks to Jon and Gail Dorr for donating the hog, to Rev. Donald Meyer of Trinity Lutheran Church, Marcus, Iowa for roasting it for us, all those who donated delicious desserts and worked so well together for the setup, food preparation, and serving, and cleanup, and especially the members of the Hog Roast committee: Ginny Peterson, Betty Gunderson, Sherry Isley, Jeri Melstad, Mary Mettenbrink, and Terry Vogts.



Dear Members of Holy Cross,

Thank you so much for the wonderful cards and generous gifts given to me on October 21 for clergy appreciation month. It was a complete surprise and a very great blessing!

Pastor Kevin Vogts

Dear Members of Holy Cross,

Thank you all for your prayers, well wishes, cards and visits since my hip

replacement surgery. Recovery is a whole mind/body experience and you have all contributed to my emotional and spiritual recovery. A special thank you to Pastor Vogts for your prayers and visits especially at the hospital. May our Lord Jesus Christ continue to bless each of you and our congregation.

Sue Jansen

Sermon Themes



November 4

"Three Little Parables"

Luke 9:57-62

November 11

"Stand Firm"

2 Thessalonians 2:13-17

November 18

"Watch Out that You Are Not Deceived"

Luke 21:8

November 21 (Thanksgiving Eve)

"Don't Forget God!"

Deuteronomy 8:11

November 25

"The Parable of the Faithful Servants"

Luke 19:11-27

Crossnotes

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A large crowd including many guests from neighboring congregations and the community were on hand for the Cornerstone Laying on October 21. Pastor Vogts struck the cornerstone with a trowel three times, blessing it in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

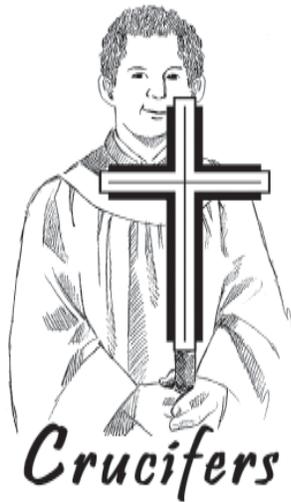
*Building
for the
Future*



Following the ceremony those in attendance and many other members of the community enjoyed a Hog Roast (in our future Fellowship Hall!) with proceeds benefiting the Building Fund.



The hog was donated by Jon and Gail Dorr and roasted for us by Rev. Donald Meyer of Trinity Lutheran Church, Marcus, Iowa. Doug Jansen and Rob Finkral helped "pull" the pork.



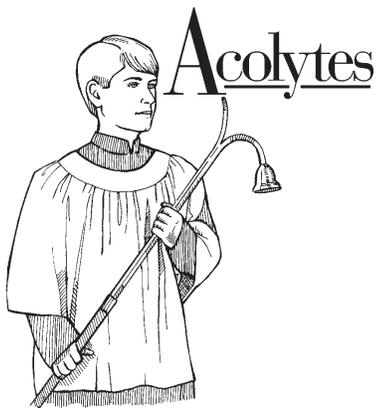
November 4
Jacob Vogts

November 11
Tyler Fletcher

November 18
Zachary Selby

November 21 (Thanksgiving Eve)
Kylie Martin

November 25
A.J. Michels



November 4
Myron Bose

November 11
Trevor Vilhauer

November 18
Evan Steemken

November 21 (Thanksgiving Eve)
Keegan Johnson

November 25
Justin "J.P." Peterson



Concordia University
Seward, Nebraska

Presents

A Concordia Christmas

at St. Mark's Lutheran Church
1821 North 90th Street
Omaha, Nebraska

A Spectacular Christmas Concert
Choirs • Wind Symphony • Handbells

Saturday, December 8, 2:00pm

Free Tickets!

We Plan to Carpool
Leave Church at 9:30am
Lunch Together at The Cheesecake Factory
Concert at 2:00pm

Sign Up on the Bulletin Board at Church
Deadline to Sign Up November 11

For More Information Contact Pastor Vogts



Psalm 96:1 says, "Oh, sing to the Lord a new song!" Our Holy Cross Choir this year has been doing exactly that, utilizing our new hymnal *Lutheran Service Book* for many of our selections. This hymnal features many beautiful new songs, and having them sung by the choir is a great way to help teach them to our congregation.

We had a very busy October, singing "Seek Ye First" (LSB 712) on October 7, "Listen, God Is Calling" (LSB 833) for the Cornerstone Laying on October 21, and "Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word" (LSB 655) for Reformation Sunday on October 28.

During November we plan to sing "Give Thanks with a Grateful Heart" (LSB 806), and we've begun practicing our first song for Christmas, "The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came" (LSB 356).

You are invited to help sing praises to the Lord in the Holy Cross Choir! Choir practice is on Sunday mornings at 8:15am. For more information about the choir, contact director Janet Gustman (258-1124) or Pastor Vogts.

**Order Your
Poinsettias**

We have again arranged for poinsettias through Mosher Garden Center for \$11 each. Sign up on the bulletin board indicating that you wish to have these plants purchased for you, and put your payment in the offering marked "Poinsettias."

The deadline to sign up is Wednesday, December 5. The plants will be delivered to the church on December 7 for display beginning on Sunday, December 9.

You are also welcome to bring your own plants, if you wish to purchase them elsewhere or receive them as gifts. Please sign up on the bulletin board indicating that you will provide your own plants and drop them by the church anytime before Christmas.

After Christmas you may take home the plants you have donated or brought. When you sign up, please indicate whom your plants are in memory or honor of, the way you want it printed in the January newsletter.



Altar Flowers

The flower calendar is on the bulletin board at the back of the church. Occasions to remember include anniversaries, birthdays, in memory of loved ones, etc. Flowers may be obtained anywhere and you may provide



**Community
Thanksgiving
Service**

Bring Your Family and Guests to Celebrate Thanksgiving
Wednesday, November 21, 7:00pm

Led by Pastor Kevin Vogts
at Holy Cross Lutheran Church
Dakota Dunes Boulevard & Bison Trail

All Invited — Everyone Welcome!

**O Give Thanks unto the LORD,
for He is Good**

your own vase or use one of the assortment in the church kitchen.

October 7
Jon & Gail Dorr

October 14
Harold & Mary Mettenbrink
In Memory of Richard Mehlhaff
and Areita Mettenbrink

November 4
Jane Michels
In Memory of Jim Michels

November 11
Doug & Sue Jansen
Veteran's Day

November 18
Mabel Schibonski
Birthday

November 25
Deb Stein
Birthday

December 2
Teri & Dolores Hageman
In Memory of Everett Hageman



**BUDGET
UPDATE**

As of October 28, 2007

| | |
|--------------------------|-----------|
| Offerings Budgeted | |
| Per Week | \$2,615 |
| Total Offerings Budgeted | |
| Year-to-Date | \$103,325 |
| Total Offerings Received | |
| Year-to-Date | \$97,113 |
| Total Budget Shortfall | |
| Year-to-Date | (\$6,212) |



Mabel Schibonski, November 14
Debra Stein, November 23
Jane Michels, November 27

We list members' birthdays and anniversaries in the newsletter each month and the bulletin each week. If your information is missing or inaccurate, please accept our apologies and notify the church office at 232-9117 or email holycross@longlines.com.



Elders for November
Doug Jansen and Ron Yockey

Next Elders Meeting
November 1, 7:00pm



**AFTER CHURCH
SNACKS**

In the back of the church is a sign up sheet to bring snacks for after worship. You are welcome to bring whatever snacks you wish.

Holy Cross Preschool Soup Supper

Help Support Holy Cross Preschool
Sunday, November 18
4:00pm-7:00pm

Adults-\$5 Children 4-12-\$3 Under 4-Free
All Invited — Everyone Welcome!

Those bringing snacks are also asked to please prepare the coffee. Instructions are posted near the coffee maker. Coffee, cups, napkins, plates, etc. are all provided and in the kitchen. Thank you to those providing snacks!

November 4
Finkral

November 11
Need Volunteer

November 18
Schibonski

November 25
Need Volunteer

All the missionaries we are remembering this month are among over 40 newly appointed LCMS missionaries pictured at right who are just beginning their service in the mission field



November 4
Rev. Dr. Mark Nuckols
LCMS Chaplain in Iraq



November 11
Carissa Dreier
Panama



Each month we remember in prayer in our worship specific missionaries sponsored around the world by our congregation, through our Synod and related organizations.



November 18
Rev. Frederick Reinhardt
Togo



November 25
Rev. Craig Molitoris
Hong Kong



By Rev. Dr. Mark Nuckols
LCMS Chaplain in Iraq

I was standing at attention beside a hero's bed, along with the Commanding General, the Command Sergeant Major, and the Command Surgeon. This wounded warrior received a purple heart for being severely injured from enemy action against him and his convoy.

His brutal encounter with an EFP (Explosively Formed Projectile) had cruelly removed both of his legs from his pelvis, as well as horribly mangling the gluteal muscles of his posterior. Losing several units of blood and barely conscious, he called in the MEDEVAC for his other less seriously wounded soldiers, not realizing that he was calling in his own aid as well.



Advent-Christmas Sermon Series

December 2

1st Sunday in Advent
*"Gabriel's Surprise
for Zechariah"*
Luke 1:5-25, 57-66, 80

Wednesday, December 5
Advent Service I – 7:00pm
"Escape to Egypt"
Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23

December 9

2nd Sunday in Advent
*"Gabriel's Surprise
for Mary"*
Luke 1:26-38

Wednesday, December 9
4:00pm
*Preschool-Sunday School
Christmas Program*

Wednesday, December 12
Advent Service II – 7:00pm
*"A Multitude of the
Heavenly Host"*
Luke 2:8-12

December 16

3rd Sunday in Advent
Rev. Steve Benson
Guest Pastor

Wednesday, December 19
Advent Service III – 7:00pm
*Confirmation Christmas
Program*

December 23

4th Sunday in Advent
*"The Angel's Surprise
for Joseph"*

December 24

Christmas Eve
*"Good Tidings
of Great Joy!"*
Luke 2:1-20

December 30

First Sunday after Christmas
*"The Name the Angel
Had Given Him"*
Luke 2:21-40

While we saluted him in honor of his sacrifice, he comprehended our presence only through a drug-induced stupor. Before leaving his side, I requested to pray with him, and with slow movements he nodded his head and blinked his eyes. Claspng his young hand in mine, I bent down to his ear in order to be heard, since the blast had dampened his ability to hear well. We prayed for his recuperation, which would be long, and for his wife and his parents. Finally, he moved his lips with ours in praying the Lord's Prayer together and received the benediction.



Chaplain Nuckols baptizing a soldier in Iraq.

Emotions were welling up within us all as we took our leave from him and returned to our seemingly mundane and far less critical daily activities. As the Command Surgeon left my side, he remarked, "Usually, I don't get emotional, but I couldn't stop myself crying." Very reflective did this brief encounter with bravery and self-less sacrifice leave our hearts and our minds. This young soldier will carry the price of freedom in his own flesh and will remind us all that such freedom is not free, but only comes at a cost; the price which he has willingly given for each of us in this nation of ours.

I was also recently privileged to honor the bodies of six of our fellow American soldiers. We call this time-honored observance a "ramp ceremony," because it occurs at the ramp in the back of a large cargo plane, a C-17 or a C-130. Our gathering of 24 soldiers formed two rows through which the chaplain and flag draped casket moved into the hold of the plane. Beginning at the command of "attention" we slowly salute the flag as it passes, and remain in the position of a "salute"



You Are Invited to a Christmas Open House
at the Home of Rev. Kevin and Terese Vogts
369 Partridge Circle, Dakota Dunes

Sunday, December 2, 1:00pm–5:00pm
Bring the Whole Family – Children Welcome

All Invited – Everyone Welcome!

until our fallen hero is set down in this flying hearse that will carry his remains to his grieving loved ones in order to be finally laid to rest. At the conclusion the chaplain offers a brief prayer of remembrance with the attendant soldiers dispersing back to their duties.

Ironically, while we were bestowing a grateful nation's tribute to the ones who gave the greatest gift in the fight against terrorism, not more than 100 meters away was another cargo plane being loaded with some of our wounded warriors who were being transported to Landstuhl, Germany and the United States for possible further medical treatment. One can only imagine the thoughts racing through the minds of these service members as they witnessed the "holy moment" in which we were ensconced with our fallen comrades.

An amazing military fact is that if our MEDEVAC choppers are able to deliver the injured soldier to our Combat Army Surgical Hospital here these warriors have a 98% chance of survival! So great is our percentage that many representatives from the U.S. have come over to view the trauma team at work.

The elation for the week came with the rite of Baptism for one of my 45 year-old soldiers. His most memorable quip was, "This was 45 years in the making!" There were a good number of our unit members in attendance, including the public affairs representative who came for some great pictures to be printed in the local weekly paper here at LSA Anaconda.

In addition to such a joyous Sunday there came the initial instruction of one of my LTC's who desires to be catechized, and ultimately confirmed in the faith. He is a very intelligent man whose questions are most stimulating for our weekly discussion of the Christian faith drawn from the Holy Scriptures and summarized in the Small Catechism.

***New Bible Class
November 18
"Joy to the World: The
Christmas Story in
Scripture and Song"***

On November 18 we will begin a new study in Adult Bible Class on Sunday mornings at 10:30am, "Joy to the World: The Christmas Story in Scripture and Song."



We will be taking a look at the Old Testament prophecies of the birth of the Messiah, which we traditionally focus on during the Advent season, and their New Testament fulfillment, which we celebrate at Christmas. As the title of the class indicates, we will also look at favorite carols based on these Scriptures.

A great way to focus on the real "reason for the season"!

Holy Cross Preschool

So p Supper

Help Support Holy Cross Preschool
Sunday, November 18
4:00pm-7:00pm

Adults-\$5 Children 4-12-\$3 Under 4-Free

Donations and Workers Needed
Contact Daniell Bargstadt (422-1366)

All Invited — Everyone Welcome!



Community Thanksgiving Eve Service



Bring Your Family and Guests
to Celebrate Thanksgiving
Wednesday, November 21, 7:00pm

Led by Pastor Kevin Vogts
at Holy Cross Lutheran Church
Dakota Dunes Boulevard & Bison Trail

All Invited — Everyone Welcome!

**O Give Thanks unto the LORD,
for He is Good**

Return Service Requested

Rev. Kevin Vogts, Pastor
149 Bison Trail
Dakota Dunes, SD 57049

Crossnotes
Holy Cross Evangelical Lutheran Church