

The St. Laurence Beacon

January
2012

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News From Nina

NOTE: Several people recommended the following article to me. Since the author said it much better than I can, the following are excerpts from an article written by the Lutheran Bishop of the Gulf Coast Synod, Mike Rinehart.

Insiders and Outsiders (December 2011)

My theory is that the mainline churches have ceased to be relevant to the culture, because insiders trump outsiders every time. Decisions are made for the benefit of those inside rather than those outside the church. In every single decision, even the little ones, insiders trump outsiders. Take hymns, for example. Musical decisions are not made considering what will attract spiritually hungry outsiders, but what will please the card-carrying, bill-paying membership. Most church outsiders don't care if you ever sing "How Great Thou Art." They won't be slightly offended by a guitar in church. Time and time again church leaders receive heat from church insiders upset about this or that, because the insiders are trying to recreate their childhood church experience or simply have a rigid idea of what church is supposed to be.

People don't like change, especially those who have status in the church. Pete Steinke taught us that every church is an emotional system. Some people are benefiting from the system as it currently is. Some benefit emotionally. They are revered as church saints. Or they are validators to whom everyone turns for approval of decisions. They are having an emotional need met by receiving recognition. Or perhaps they are simply tirelessly defending The Tradition, regardless of how new or unhelpful that tradition may be. People in power, who have privileges in the current system, will resist change and make life really hard for any leader who seeks to be a change agent. Pastors are paid from members' giving, so there is a potential conflict of interest.

Why is this happening?

Church structures were set up to preserve what exists, not change it. These stable structures work well when society is changing slowly, imperceptibly. If something is working, protect it at all costs. But what if it is not working? What if the rate of societal change skyrockets, and old patterns and structures no longer work? Peter Drucker once said, "When the rate of change outside the organization exceeds the rate of change inside the organization, the organization is doomed."

What do we do about it?

Change. Adapt. The church has adapted, survived and even thrived in times of tectonic change in the past. It can again.

Stable structures are a high value in a stable culture, but when in a climate of rapid change, adaptability is the higher value. In a time of stability, experience is crucial. In times of change, experience can be a liability, especially if the experienced make the fatal mistake of assuming what garnered success in the past, will guarantee success in the future. What got you where you are now will not get you where you need to go in the future. Sorry. Leaders who don't get this are in for some rough sledding.

Let's face it, change is hard. Change, however is non-negotiable. The only constant in life is change. There is no growth without change. As someone once said, "**The only one who likes change is a wet baby.**" Any kind of change creates conflict. Leaders can only tolerate so much discontent. And even a little discontent sounds LOUD when you're in the hot seat. So when things heat up, leaders circle the wagons, which is precisely the wrong thing to do. Instead, leaders need to sin boldly. Lead boldly. Look at any successful enterprise and you can be certain that someone, at some point, took a huge risk along the way. Nothing great is accomplished without risk. But risk is risky, and change is simply too difficult and painful. Most organizations won't change until they're desperate, like the alcoholic that won't go to rehab until s/he hits rock bottom.

So what will give us the courage to take those risks?

(Continued on page 2)

(continued from page 1)

This takes us back to the beginning. Churches will not adapt to the new realities until they care as much about reaching those outside, as appeasing those inside.

The world is hell-bent on destruction in countless ways. It is desperately in need of a church that offers a Way of peace, truth, compassion and hope, as opposed to the world's way of power, materialism, exploitation and violence. It needs leaders willing to risk comfort, status and economic security for the life of the world and the outreach potential of the church. It needs a church that looks less like the Pharisees' religion and more like Jesus' ministry. It needs a church that is willing to sacrifice everything for those outside: buildings, budgets, sacred cows, traditions, structures. It needs a church that so loves the world, that she'd be willing to die for it.

So here's the plan. New policy. Every decision, every single decision made by staff, council and every committee is made on behalf of those not yet here. Every sermon choice, every hymn, song and musical choice, every building and grounds choice, every spending choice is made with outsiders in mind.

When we become a church for the world, the outsider, when the pain of staying the same (and dying of irrelevance) for those already here exceeds the pain of changing (and sacrificing old ways) for those not yet here, we will be the church for which God incarnate came to this earth and gave his life.

WARM WINTER WISHES

From your Senior Warden:

You, dear members of the congregation, have accomplished a great deal this past year. We built upon the work we did in 2010 with the surveys of the congregation, the S.W.O. T. (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) exercise, and our Quarterly meetings. We have identified our Core Values of Church Family, Spirituality and Outreach. We have our Vision statement to guide us in the future: "Our vision is to be a community where everyone is invited to grow spiritually closer to God and to be empowered to serve others".

In addition to the spiritual and self examination work we have done, we have also built our "Road to the Future" with the resurfacing of our drive, the treatment of the exterior of the Church has begun and continues, weather permitting. A new television and DVD system have been donated and installed, a new sofa arrangement for Donoghue Hall has also been donated and Donoghue Hall has been repainted. The playground was donated and set up and is being enjoyed by our children. These are just a few of the physical improvements and ongoing maintenance accomplishments.

My profound thanks to all of the Vestry members I have had the privilege to serve with these last three years. While Vestry members have come and gone during this time, we have always managed to work well together as a team focused on the greater good for the health and vitality of St Laurence.

As always, I continue to encourage the congregation to communicate with the Vestry. If we do not know about your concerns, we cannot respond to them.

Faithfully yours,
Beth Lincoln

CAMERA ALERT

Thanks to the generous donation of a parishioner, we are updating our audio visual equipment. We now have a camera and microphone in the sanctuary to display or record special services on a screen in the parish hall.

January 2012

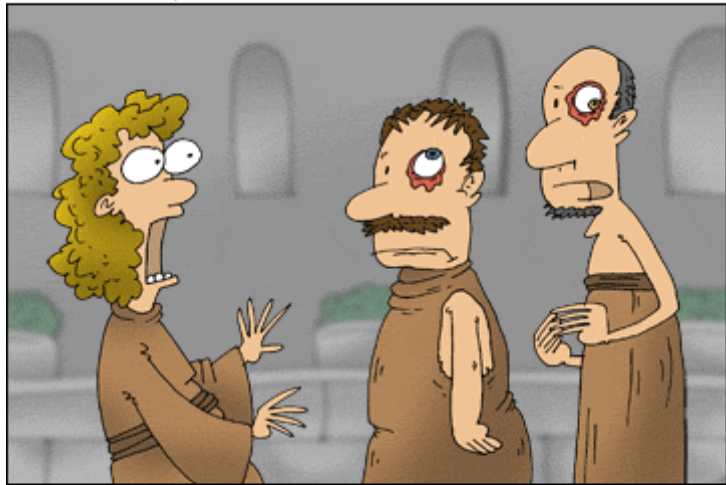
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 8 am Holy Eucharist 10:15 am Holy Eucharist	2	3	4 5 pm Renaissance Singers 6 pm Silent Meditation 6:30 pm Evening Prayer	5	6	7
8 8 am Holy Eucharist 9 am Adult Forum 10:15 am Sunday School 10:15 am Holy Eucharist 12 noon Vestry	9 10 am Prayer Shawl Ministry	10 3:40 pm Cub Scouts	11 5 pm Renaissance Singers 6 pm Silent Meditation 6:30 pm Evening Prayer	12 6 pm Book Group	13	14
15 8 am Holy Eucharist 9 am Adult Forum 10:15 am Sunday School 10:15 am Holy Eucharist 12 noon Meagan Webber China presentation 4 pm UCC Church Service	16 10 am Prayer Shawl Ministry	17	18 5 pm Renaissance Singers 6 pm Silent Meditation 6:30 pm Evening Prayer	19 6 pm Book Group	20	21
22 8 am Holy Eucharist 9 am Adult Forum 10:15 am Sunday School 10:15 Holy Eucharist	23 10 am Prayer Shawl Ministry	24 3:40 pm Cub Scouts	25 5 pm Renaissance Singers 6 pm Silent Meditation 6:30 pm Evening Prayer	26 6 pm Book Group	27	28
29 9 am Adult Forum 10:15 am Holy Eucharist 10:15 am Sunday School 11:30 am Annual Meeting and Pie Sale (or directly after services)	30 10 am Prayer Shawl Ministry	31				

St. Laurence Budget

Budget information will be available at the Annual Meeting on January 29 right after the service.



REVERENDFUN.COM COPYRIGHT BIBLE GATEWAY



(See Leviticus 24:20)

01-13-2012

**WE TRIED THE EYE FOR AN EYE THING BUT
COULDN'T GET THEM TO GO BACK IN PROPERLY**

THANK YOU...THANK YOU...THANK YOU TO...

Joyce Conrey, Jack Morris and all the other merry elves for the Holiday Baskets.

Mark and Julie Bellinghausen for ushering almost continuously through the Christmas services. Also to **Mark** for buying and installing a new TV, camera and microphone so we can watch services in the parish hall.

Janine Brazell for serving as Clerk to the Vestry for several years.

Adrian Brideau for getting the Christmas poinsettias.

April Coveney for directing the Lessons and Carols service and the Christmas pageant, both huge undertakings and great successes.

The Choir for the Lessons and Carols service.

The Children and Karen Kargel for a glorious and well done pageant.

Robert Dalton for the wonderful medley of carols he played on his accordion before the 5:00 pm Christmas Eve Service.

Paul Gallagher for pulling Jesse's car out of the snow.

Lindy Grote for the endless hours she put in over Christmas.

Stan Johnston for meeting with and loading up the cars of woodpile clients.

Jacque Scott for organizing the gift angels.

Bev Kroeker, April Coveney and many, many others for another successful ChristmasFest.

Meagan Webber will give a talk and slide show presentation on Sunday, January 15 about her visit to China with the People to People program.

This was started by Eisenhower to create as a way for students to be ambassadors to foster peace through understanding. Meagan will be speaking immediately after the 10:15 service.

**COLD
WEATHER
AHEAD**



Mardi Gras Party at St. Laurence

Saturday, 18 February at 6 pm

Entrée will be provided, please bring a side dish or dessert.

MUSIC by **The Drifter Band**, gospel music of the sing-along, dance-along variety
\$8.00/person, \$20.00/family

Same Sex Blessing process at St. Laurence

In early December a committee met to set up a process for this parish to consider receiving approval to perform same sex blessings. The members of the committee are Pat Beckham, Graham Gibbard, Christy Schaad and Pat Vick. The first step in that process is a short questionnaire which follows. We would appreciate it very much if you would fill it out and return it to the office. You can do that by mailing or emailing it in or by bringing it in on a Sunday. We have also emailed/mailed it out to all parishioners. They are due by Sunday, 22 January, so that the committee can compile the results and present them at the Annual Meeting on Sunday, 29 January. The second step of the process will be 2 meetings (you can attend either one) at the end of February. Based on the questionnaire and meeting results, the committee plans to make a recommendation to the Vestry in early March.

YOUR PARTICIPATION IS VITAL TO THE PROCESS.

Same sex blessing questionnaire

With the permission of the Bishop and seeking to be faithful to our vision to be a community where everyone is invited to grow spiritually closer to God and to be empowered to serve others, the Vestry of St. Laurence has entered into discernment to consider whether our parish is called to be a church where same-gender blessings might take place.

“Because we share one common life and mission as a Diocese and respect the many different contexts in which we carry out that mission, we encourage all congregations to enter into discernment about whether this pastoral response fits into their community and share the outcome of that discernment with the Bishop.” Bishop Rob O’Neill

2) My comfort level with this issue is:

- 1 Very Comfortable
- 2 Somewhat Comfortable
- 3 Undecided
- 4 Somewhat Uncomfortable
- 5 Very Uncomfortable

1) My thoughts and feelings about this issue are:

FAITH ADVOCACY DAY

See how to turn the corner from charity to justice at Faith Advocacy Day 2012!

Join others from many different faith communities and be encouraged to keep advocating on behalf of the poor and disenfranchised in Colorado! Our voices together are stronger than our individual voices.

Monday, February 20, 2012, 9 am-2 pm at the History Colorado Museum, 1200 Broadway. Because it is a holiday, street parking is free that day.

Registration cost is \$25.00 by Wednesday, February 15, 2012. Includes lunch. Register on-line at www.lam-co.org or mail registration to Lutheran Advocacy Ministry, 455 Sherman Street, Suite 160, Denver, CO 80203, Phone 303-777-6700 or 1-800-525-0462. Registration e-mail: whobbs@rmselca.org . Website: www.lam-co.org .
Questions: Brad Wood, Lutheran Advocacy Ministry, bwood@rmselca.org

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*We're on the web:
www.stlaurenceconifer.org*

All Find a Welcome

ANNUAL MEETING AND MEN'S PIE CONTEST

On Sunday, 29 January there will be **ONE SERVICE** at 10:15 am followed by the Annual Meeting and the 3rd annual Men's Pie Contest. There will be Adult Forum at 9 am that day as usual. We will elect new Vestry members, approve the 2012 budget, and discuss other church business. It is very helpful and important for as many as possible to be there. You can't miss the pies!

