

**FROM THE
 PASTOR'S DESK**

Two men cut wood all day long. One worked straight through, without stopping to rest. At the end of the day he had a sizable pile of logs. The other would chop 50 minutes and then take a ten-minute break. At the end of the day he had a much larger pile.

"How could you chop more?" asked the man who'd worked continuously. His friend replied, "When I stopped for rest, I also sharpened my ax."

This story from Reader's Digest tells a terrific truth: Time out, wisely spent, is not time wasted.

That is the purpose for the Sabbath Day. God wants you to take time out, and to spend it wisely "sharpening your ax" with his word, worship, prayer, and sacraments. As Psalm 84:4 says, "Blessed are those who dwell in your house."

Like the man who gained by taking time out to sharpen his ax, God promises that you will be blessed by the time you take out to dwell in his holy house.

- ✘ Are you wearied by the burdens of life? Jesus says, "Come unto Me, all ye that are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).
- ✘ Are you uncertain about your life's direction and purpose, not sure if you are going the right way? Jesus says, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life" (John 14:6).
- ✘ Are you troubled and distressed with problems and perplexities? Jesus says, "Do not let your hearts be troubled; trust in God, trust also in Me" (John 14:1).

✘ Do you feel insufficient for the tasks laid upon you? Jesus says, "Remain in Me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in Me. I am the Vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in Me and I in him, he will bear much fruit. Apart from Me you can do nothing" (John 15:4-5).

✘ Do you need reassurance of God's love for you, his mercy and forgiveness, his promise of eternal life? Jesus says, "My sheep listen to My voice. I know them; they follow Me; I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish. No one can snatch them out of my hand" (John 10:27-28).

Take time out on the Sabbath Day. Spend it wisely listening to your Master's voice. Whatever your personal needs and problems, it will help to go unto the house of the Lord, there to "sharpen your ax" for daily living.

Pastor Kevin Vogts

**Voters
 Assembly**



The regular quarterly meeting of the the Voters Assembly will be held on Monday, April 7 at 6:30pm.

This meeting might possibly include consideration of a Call for a Preschool Director.

All adult members of the congregation are eligible to become voting members and everyone is invited to attend and help manage the affairs of the congregation.



**Preschool
 Registration
 Night Change**

Registration Night for the Holy Cross Preschool has been changed to Wednesday, April 16th from 6:00pm-7:30pm. Come learn more about our high quality preschool program, and hold a spot for your child for next fall by paying the \$40 registration fee.

For more information contact Marjo Johnson, preschool administrator, at 605-235-1688 or Janet Martin, Board of Education chair, at 605-232-9657.

**Easter
 Egg Hunt**



Holy Cross is sponsoring a Community Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday, April 19 (day before Easter) at 10:30am on the church grounds. The whole community will be invited to this free event and we are planning for about 100 children.

This is an ambitious effort to reach out into the community and your help is needed. Among items needed: 1,200 plastic eggs; candy to fill 1,000 eggs; inexpensive items—preferably of a religious nature—to give as prizes for

slips of paper in the other 200 eggs; about a dozen larger prizes—again preferably of a religious nature—such as books, videos, etc; and LOTS of help preparing and at the event.

If you can help or donate items, please contact Board of Evangelism member Janet Martin (605-232-9657). Cash donations to help defray the costs of this event may be marked “Easter Egg Hunt” and placed in the offering plate.



Lutheran Sunday School in Siberia Reaches Out to Orphanage

This mission story comes from Siberia, where The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has a very successful outreach program carried out in conjunction with Concordia Theological Seminary, Ft. Wayne.

For a long time the Lutheran congregation in Touim, Siberia has been working with an orphanage in the village of Tselinny, an hour by car from Touim.

Crossnotes

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Holy Week **SCHEDULE**

Maundy Thursday, April 17

Service with Holy Communion at 6:45pm

Good Friday, April 18

Service at 6:45pm

Saturday, April 18

Community Easter Egg Hunt at Holy Cross at 10:30am

Easter Sunday, April 20

Siouxland Sunrise Service at 6:00am
*Siouxland Convention Center, 510 East 5th Street
South Sioux City, Nebraska*

Easter Service at Holy Cross at 9:15am

Recently, parishioners from Touim, including Sunday school members, held their first program in this orphanage.

Before this, there was only humanitarian aid: the church brought them groceries, drinking glasses, and pens for school.

The regional administration let us use its car and bus especially for this trip. Everyone was excited. For many of them it was the first outing like this, the first declaration of their faith in front of many people. Teachers of the orphanage gathered all the children in a big hall. Everyone was interested in our songs accompanied by flute. The organizers of the program tried to make every song unusual. The light was turned off during one of the songs.

The listeners actively participated in the program when they had the oppor-

tunity: they played games, and also enjoyed learning a new song. The orphanage employees liked the concert and asked us to come more often.

Here is an interview with Sveta, one of the Lutheran children from our Sunday School who helped lead the program. She is twelve years old.

Question: Sveta, what did you like about this trip?

Sveta: There are good teachers and the children were listening carefully.

Q: Is this the first outing with a Christian program for you?

S: Yes

Q: What kinds of things did you participate in? Who else was with you on this

trip?

S: I sang. My friends from Sunday School sang with me.



Twelve year-old Sveta was one of the Lutheran Sunday School children in Siberia who shared their faith at a nearby orphanage.

Q: Was it hard to prepare the program?

S: It was not as hard as it was scary to appear. When we arrived at the orphanage and got out of the bus, so many children gathered around us!

Q: What do you remember most of all?

S: When I got caught on something during the play and at the same time I tried to turn around; I could hardly stand up. That would have been terrible if I had



Lutheran Sunday School children from Touim, Siberia share their faith at an orphanage in Tselinny.



Sermon Themes for April

April 2 –Lent Service (6:45pm)

"I Thirst"
John 19:28

April 6–Fifth Sunday in Lent
"Forgive and Forget" Jeremiah 31:34

April 9–Lent Service (6:45pm)

"It Is Finished"
John 19:30

April 13–Palm Sunday

"One of Those Weeks?"
Mark 11:1-10

April 17–Maundy Thursday (6:45pm)

"Holy Communion–A Feast for the Senses" 1 Corinthians 11:23-27

April 18–Good Friday (6:45pm)

"Into Your Hands I Commit My Spirit"
Luke 23:46

April 20–Easter Sunday

"Easter Makes the Difference"
Mark 16:1-8

April 27–Second Sunday of Easter

"Sent As He Was Sent"
John 20:21



A new addition to our Sunday schedule is a Sunday School opening with a Children's Sermon by Pastor Vogts, each week at 10:25am. Sunday School and Adult Bible Class follow from 10:30am to 11:15am.

The Adult Bible Class is currently studying the book of Colossians, which packs in many interesting and timely topics into a book just a few pages long.

Bring your family for worship and stay for the Children's Sermon, Sunday School and Adult Bible Class.

Easter Lilies



If you would like to donate lilies for Easter please sign up on the bulletin board at the back of the church, naming whom they are in memory or honor of.

You may either bring your own plants or purchase through the church from Mosher's Greenhouse, \$11.30 for a one-stem, six-bloom plant in six-inch pot.

New Board Chairs, Elders and Officers

Board chairs, elders and newly elected officers will be installed during the service on April 6th. Our thanks for your service!

President–Doug Martin
Secretary–Terese Vogts
Treasurer–Dennis Melstad
Financial Secretary–Sue Jansen
Elders–Greg Huibregtse,
Paul Harkness, Dennis Melstad
Education and Evangelism–
Janet Martin
Trustees–Doug Jansen



A renewed acolyte program will begin in April. The age is being lowered to allow younger children to participate as long as they are able to handle the candlelighter. Children will also assist at times in carrying the processional cross.

Our thanks to Doug Martin for beautifully restoring the candlelighter and putting a longer handle on it, and to Sue Jansen for altering one of the acolyte robes for use by younger children.

Please let Pastor Vogts know if your child would like to be an acolyte.



You are invited to the Siouland Sunrise Service jointly sponsored by all the LCMS congregations in Siouland, including Holy Cross, on Easter Sunday, April 20th at 6:00am in the Siouland Convention Center, 510 East 5th Street, South Sioux City, Nebraska.

Easter Sunday service at Holy Cross will follow at the normal time, 9:15am, with Sunday School and Bible Class at 10:30am.

Digging Up the Bible



A series of articles on archaeological discoveries relating to the Bible.

When King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon laid siege to Jerusalem for the first time in 597 B.C., King Jehoiachin of Judah was taken captive to Babylon (2 Kings 24:10-12). The second siege and destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians came a decade later, in 586 B.C. (2 Kings 25:1ff).

The Bible reports that 37 years after being taken into exile, the deposed King Jehoiachin was released from prison and treated favorably by a new Babylonian king: "In the thirty-seventh year of the exile of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the year Evil-Merodach became king of Babylon, he released Jehoiachin from prison on the twenty-seventh day of the twelfth month. He spoke kindly to him and gave him a seat of honor higher than those of the other kings who were with him in Babylon. So Jehoiachin put aside his prison clothes and for the rest of his life ate regularly at the king's table. Day by day the king gave Jehoiachin a regular allowance as long as he lived" (2 Kings 25:27-30 NIV).

Excavations of Babylon, the Babylonian capital city located in modern Iraq, were begun by German archaeologists in 1855. Probably the most famous find of these excavations was the monumental Ishtar Gate, which was taken to a Berlin museum and reassembled.

But, from the standpoint of Biblical history, a much more significant find were some broken pieces of clay tablets, unearthed in the bottom of a basement stairwell in a building near this gate, where they had fallen when the upper floors collapsed. With the precision of a modern accountant, these tablets meticulously list rations of oil,



Hola!

come to

Rancho Roundup

Where The Good Shepherd Leads Kids Back Home!

2003 Vacation Bible School

Morning Sessions for 3, 4 & 5 Year Olds
9:00am-11:30am, Monday - Friday, June 2-6

Evening Sessions for 1st - 6th Grades*
6:00pm-8:30pm, Sunday - Thursday, June 1-5
(*Class child will be entering in Fall, 2003)

Bible Stories ♦ Crafts ♦ Singing ♦ Snacks

All Invited – Everyone Welcome

For more information or to Pre-Register
contact Marjo Johnson at 605-235-1688



Theme Bible Verse

The LORD is my shepherd;
I shall not want.
He makes me lie down
in green pastures;
He leads me beside
still waters.

Psalms 23:1-2

barley, etc. paid from this royal storehouse. Included in the list of those receiving rations is "Yaukin, king of the land of Judah," using a spelling for Jehoiachin also found in ancient Israel on seals impressed in clay pottery.

This is one of the most stunning confirmations of the Bible from archaeology. These tablets were badly broken up and deteriorated, and the odds of this particular entry being preserved are unfathomable!

["King Jehoiachin in Exile," W.F. Albright, *Biblical Archaeologist*, Volume 4 (December, 1942), pages 49-55.]

When I Grow Up

(From the Summer, 1996
"Lutheran Women's Missionary
League Quarterly")

Children can often be overheard telling each other what they want to be when they grow up. Perhaps you have even heard, *When I grow up I want to be just like my day or I want to be like mommy.* A warm feeling momentarily floods over you when you hear these precious words from your own child. Next you think: *me*, an example, a role

model for my child? Whoa! I know I'm far from perfect.

What an awesome responsibility it is to be a parent. Children are marvelous imitators. What am I teaching by my example? Do I take time to do spiritual things with them? How do I *show* and not just *tell* about God's love? These were questions I had as we were raising our family.

Begin with prayer. First of all, ask God for wisdom and guidance. Teach your child to pray. *Now I lay me down to sleep... and Come, Lord Jesus, be our Guest...* are the most common prayers taught from infancy. As your child grows, pray for those special concerns in life: Jesus to be with Grandma who is sick, help me not to be afraid during a thunderstorm, keep our family safe on vacation.

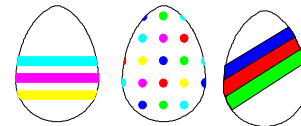
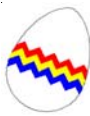
Go to church. Don't wait until your child has gotten to the *right age* to take along. Beginning with baptism into God's family, a child begins to learn about Jesus by regularly going to church with mom and dad. Then the day arrives to start Sunday School. Jesus said, *Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it* (Luke 18:16-17 NIV).

Take time for family devotions. Devotion books are available for all ages. Children often enjoy taking turns reading. Let them see you do your own personal devotions. This can be a valuable example for them to follow and make a natural part of their daily routine.

Make time for special things. If severe weather keeps you home or church is cancelled, have your own service at home. Involve everyone in some way as setting up an altar, lighting some candles, reading the Bible, playing the piano as everyone else joins in singing. Spend an afternoon or evening together popping popcorn and playing games.

Find ways to help others. A child can learn about serving God by doing something for someone else. Picking up toys and putting them away, emptying the dishwasher or setting the table

Community Easter Egg Hunt



Saturday, April 19 • 10:30am on Church Grounds
All Children Welcome—Invite Friends and Neighbors

Sponsored by Holy Cross for the Entire Community
For More Information Contact Janet Martin at 605-232-6957

are things to do at home to help out. Mowing a neighbor's lawn or visiting someone in the nursing home are ways to help others.

Praise God. Last of all, remember to take time to thank Him for all things. Together praise God for His love, forgiveness and all His blessings.

Our four sons have grown up and our nest is empty. We thank God for His guidance over the years and the reward of seeing them grow up in their faith.

Deporting a Woman to Torture?

"Nancy," the woman in this tragic situation, is a member of a congregation in Canada in fellowship with The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Please pray that she will be spared the impending deportation and almost certain persecution on account of her faith. This story is adapted from an article by Uwe Siemon-Netto, Religion Editor for United Press International.

Has Canada indirectly condemned an Iranian woman to be persecuted, tortured or even killed because of her conversion from Islam to Christianity? The Canadian authorities ordering her to be deported back to her homeland on April 24, 2003 do not believe this will happen in Iran, even though the U.S. State Department declared last year: "The (Iranian) government does not ensure the right of citizens to change or renounce their religious faith. Apostasy, specifically conversion from Islam, can be punishable by death."

"Nancy," an upper-middle-class Iranian and a nurse, became interested in Christianity through contact with a Christian friend while still in Iran. Her

contacts with Christians were found out. She was attacked and now literally bears the scars of her faith, according to Rev. Harold Ristau, her current pastor, a Lutheran.

She managed to flee Iran for Canada in 2000 and soon found herself in the bizarre situation of having to convince a Canadian immigration judge that she was indeed properly baptized and not just pretending to be a Christian in order to gain immigrant status. The judge wished to know, was Nancy duly baptized with water and in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit? The pastor who administered this sacrament e-mailed Ristau that he had indeed used the "Trinitarian formula" and water. But, the judge remained dubious of the sincerity of Nancy's conversion—and seemingly even the legitimacy of the Lutheran faith—and denied her asylum in Canada, even though Nancy's knowledge of the Christian faith was very impressive, according to John Stephenson, a Canadian Lutheran seminary professor who met her.

However, even if the Canadian government suspects Nancy is a fraud, it does not have sufficient proof and under Canadian law the legal principle should be, when in doubt, to rule in her favor. So, what's going on here? Why would Canada not let a much-needed nurse stay? "It totally baffles me," said Gloria Nafziger, a ranking official of Amnesty International in Toronto.

So, it seems that on April 24 Nancy will fly toward possible persecution, perhaps torture, or even worse, as an "apostate" in the Islamic Republic of Iran. Paul Marshall, senior fellow at the Center for Religious Freedom in Washington, D.C. and a leading expert on religious persecution, notes ominously, "Iran has the death penalty for apostasy from Islam. Whether in this case it will carry it out or not we don't know."