A note from Pastor Saul Stensvaag

Angels Came!
The older I get, and the longer I’m in ministry, the more I find myself drawn to the writings of Gerhard Frost, who, for over 50 years, expressed his compassionate concern for people as pastor, professor, and freelance writer. He understands and articulates grace and the love of God as well as anyone I’ve read.

If you’ve never encountered any of his books, I urge you to find and read something, anything by this amazing Christian author. You can find some online at Amazon.com or Alibris.com. I share here a piece from his, “A Second Look.” And behold, angels came and ministered to Jesus.

(Matthew 4:11) Angels came. Our Lord experienced this, and my heart says, “Me too!” Has life sometimes seemed to you to be so tightly packed with pain that you couldn’t go on? Have you felt suffocated by circumstances which you were powerless to alter? But then your feelings changed. The circumstances were the same but somehow you were different.

I’ve experienced this and wondered, is this just a matter of moods? Now I believe that there is a better answer. Angels came!

We affirm an invisible kingdom where God is at work and where wonderful things happen. We acclaim the power of intercessory prayer. We believe that prayer can make a difference.

Each sunrise tells us that God hasn’t given up on us. He is still willing to do his good work on us, forgiving and renewing. Today, too, we can expect that when evening comes we will be able to say, “angels came!”

My friends, may God send his angels to minister to you in your struggles, and remind you that, as Frost puts it, “each sunrise tells you that God hasn’t given up on you.”

In Christ,

Saul Stensvaag

Introduction to our new bookkeeper: Katrina Johnson

Hello!! My name is Katrina. I have spent most of my life in and around the Fergus Falls area. I graduated from Fergus Falls High School and grew up playing hockey. I was a bit of a band geek playing trombone in every band possible (Wind Ensemble, pep, marching, jazz etc.). I also grew up just down the road at Bethlehem Lutheran Church. I spent many youth years being an active member and was lucky enough to attend two National Youth Gatherings. After high school, I immediately continued my education at M State in Fergus Falls and received my Practical Nursing Diploma. I married my high school sweetheart Travis Johnson a year later. Together we are raising two active boys Zachary and Griffin. They are 5 and 6 years old and are active with soccer and hockey.

I wear many hats in life right now and love each one. I have been a LPN for over ten years. I have always loved helping and supporting people. I feel very privileged being able to be a support for people in some of their most vulnerable times. Some of you may already know, nursing can also be very demanding and wearing on a person. With my passion for people in mind, I went back to school and obtained my Real Estate license. I feel I am able to continue helping and supporting others, but I get to experience more of the happy moments in their lives. I have also been very lucky to have Leslie Flugstad as my mentor at Century 21 and now as your new bookkeeper!! I still “play” nurse from time to time and will continue in real estate as I serve here. I’m so excited to get to know all of you and be a part of First Lutheran Church.

Katrina Johnson
October 4
Made for One Another
Text: Genesis 2:18-24
God has given us the gift of love to share with one another. There are no easy answers to the questions raised in the readings today. Yet we live and grapple with the questions and rejoice in the gift of love that God has given us to share with one another.

October 11
The Old, Old Story
Text: Mark 10:17-31
Today's Gospel story is our story. Like this decent, religious man, our many possessions and self-reliance hold us back like an immovable anchor. Can our loving savior free us from our “stuff” and pull us through the needle’s eye and into his kingdom? Hear again the old, old story of grace and find out.

October 18
The Servant Leader
Text: Mark 10:35-45
What does a Christian leader look like? Is a leader the most wealthy, the most demanding, the most bossy? Today we learn about Servant leadership and how to follow Jesus with our actions.

October 25
Reformation/Stewardship Sunday
Guest Preacher—Pastor Jimalee Jones
I Don’t Want Your Money
Text: John 8:31-36
Today’s Gospel speaks of freedom for those who “…continue in my word,” and are truly Jesus’ disciples. As disciples of Jesus, we will explore together what freedom means for us and for the world in which we live. Does Christian freedom mean that we do what we should do? Does it mean freedom to do just anything? Or does it mean something else altogether?

We need your help! Do you have extra pumpkins, squash, and gourds? First Lutheran decorators could use them to spruce up the church during the fall season. Please bring them into church and leave them in the planter by the main doors in the New Narthex. Thank you for thinking of us!

REMINDER:
First Lutheran Church Foundation will meet on Monday, October 5th, at 5:15 PM in the Conference Room.

OCTOBER SERVICE UNITS
THE FOLLOWING ARE THE PEOPLE IN THIS UNIT
PLEASE SAY “YES” WHEN YOU ARE CALLED TO HELP!

Donna Andstrom  Eldon & Margaret Kratzke  Wendy Schiesser
Jay Bjorgum  Brad & Cindy Larson  Eric & Rachel Shelstad
Renae Eide  Gertrude Larson  Pam Slifka
Luella Estenson  Glenda Meister  Mark & Judy Stock
Cindy Eull  Joel & Allison Myhre  Brenda Swedberg
Chad & Kelsey Felstul  Robbie & Karen Olson  Sean & Anne Taylor
Dale & Jody Hanson  Carl & Diane Prischmann  Chris Toso
Mark & Joyce Hjelle  Rod & Jill Rolfs  Bob & Karla Wynn
Sunday School will carry on!

There will be a ton of added activity in the Education Wing, but we will still have Sunday School. Families will be invited to a brunch /dinner that day in Fellowship Hall. The Stewardship Committee will be asking for an RSVP to plan for food. Parents can take their children out of Sunday School and bring them back after the meal if they plan ahead.

Sunday school teachers are invited to bring their remaining students to the meal.

SHINE

“We’ve changed! Our Sunday School has adopted a new curriculum that coincides with the SPARK Bibles that are used for Sunday School! We are rotating our students through five workshops that encourage students to explore a Bible story in depth. The workshop options for Grades Kindergarten-6th grade include Art, Bible skills and games, Cooking, Creative Drama and Video. There was a lot of movement in the Sunday School wing over the last couple weeks! This active hands-on model has been a fun and exciting change. As important to us are the Preschoolers. The Preschoolers experience an in-room rotation with Storytelling, Art, Snack, Music and Games. They still attend “Butterflies” once a month with their parents or other adults. Please note that the “Butterflies” now include Preschool 2! Parents, please come for the fun and fellowship with other families!”

There will be NO Sunday School on October 18

October 25, Reformation/Stewardship Sunday

Cindy Larson

OCTOBER
MILESTONE EVENTS
• 2nd grade Blessing in worship
• 3rd grade Class, “Family Devotions” with Parents
• 3rd grade Blessing in worship

2nd grade Milestone Blessing In worship OCT 4
3rd grade Milestone Class w/parents 11 11
Butterflies (infant-3 yrs) 11
No Sunday School 18
3rd grade Milestone Blessing in worship 25
Stewardship / Reformation Brunch 25
**OCTOBER MESSENGER**

**Fall 2015 Gathering**
Cluster 8 Women of the ELCA

**Love Days Quilters**
Every Monday
9:00-3:00
JOIN US!

**WELCA Board**
**No October Meeting**

**CIRCLES**
Sarah—Wed. Oct. 21st
9:30am @ Pioneer Point

Hannah—Wed. Oct. 21st
1:00pm @ Church

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**WELCA FALL CAMPAIGN**
“Coins, Cash & Checks Change Lives”

Each Fall, the Women of First Lutheran Church reach out to each of you asking for financial support of Missions that are important to all of us. Therefore the product of this Campaign is Coins, Cash and Checks. The product of a generous culture is Changed Lives locally and Around the World.

We helped financially to Change Lives in these areas in 2014:
KBRF Morning Watch,
Jail Ministry, Lutheran Campus Ministry, A Place to Belong, WELCA Scholarships, Lakeland Hospice, Luther Crest, PioneerCare Chapel Fund, OBA Scholarships, OBA Shule Funds, OBA Mama Naomi Clinic, Haiti Medical Mission, Haiti School Children (Soaring Unlimited) and Haiti Mission Fund (wells).

You are asked to place your coins, cash, or checks in an envelope marked **WELCA Fall Campaign** and either put it in the offering plate or bring it to the office before the end of October.

We are all called to Grow in faith, to Support one another and to Engage in Ministry and Action. Thank You for your Support of this Campaign. Because of your Actions, we will be able to help Change Lives again this year.

-WELCA Board
CHRISTMAS GIVING TREES

The Christmas Giving Trees are coming! This is a wonderful, annual outreach program for First Lutheran. Each year, local organizations provide us with a list of “Christmas Wishes” ranging from personal items for their members or clients to items for the organization as a whole. The items are collected at First Lutheran and then distributed to the groups the week before Christmas. Someplace Safe and A Place to Belong are the selected organizations in 2015. Please contact Rick West at 218-205-6963 or rickwest52@hotmail.com if you are interested in being a volunteer for this big project or becoming a member of the Outreach Committee. This is a great opportunity to serve others during the Christmas season.

THANK YOU SO MUCH!

I want to send a big thank you to all the ladies at Stavanger Lutheran Church who have made dresses for the girls in Haiti! They have 33 dresses all done and they have also collected soap and wash clothes for each girl. What a Blessing, God is Good! Not only that, they want to do it again. Now we have a “Partner in making the Haiti Dresses.” Just think about the happy girls, who had only an oversized tee shirt, who now will have pretty dresses to wear. Thank you so much. Jane Willett

CHILDREN’S OFFERING — ELCA WORLD HUNGER

Related to our Sunday School Theme, “Shine,” our Children’s offering collected during worship will be given to one of our benevolences, ELCA World Hunger. Specifically, a project to provide mosquito nets to help eliminate Malaria in Africa.

“To most of us in the United States, mosquitoes are nothing more than a nuisance. But in many countries, especially in Africa, just one bite from an infected mosquito could transmit malaria and lead to death. A mosquito net treated with long-lasting insecticide, coupled with instructions and education on how it is used, helps ensure that families are protected from this life-threatening disease each night as they sleep.”

One mosquito net is $10 and mosquito nets for a small village is $250. All money given during our Children’s Offering will be sent to ELCA’s World Hunger Appeal. If you would like to designate your offering to this cause, please write “World Hunger” on your offering envelope or memo line of your check.

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” Romans 15:13
CONSECRATION SUNDAY IS COMING... OCTOBER 25TH, 2015

Congregations that approach financial stewardship from a biblical perspective do not view the money Christians give to their church merely as a way to pay its bills. Rather, such congregations see financial contributions as a way to help people grow spiritually in their relationship with God by supporting their church’s mission and ministry with a percentage of their incomes. Our congregation’s finance committee has selected the New Consecration Sunday Stewardship Program as a way to teach the biblical and spiritual principles of generous giving in our stewardship education emphasis this year. New Consecration Sunday is based on the biblical philosophy of the need of the giver to give for his or her own spiritual development, rather than on the need of the church to receive.

“Instead of treating people like members of a social club who should pay dues, we will treat people like followers of Jesus Christ who want to give unselfishly as an act of discipleship.”

New Consecration Sunday encourages people toward proportionate and systematic giving in response to the question, “What percentage of my income is God calling me to give?” During morning worship on Consecration Sunday, we are asking our attendees and members to make their financial commitments to our church’s missionary, benevolent, and educational ministries in this community and around the world. Every attendee and member who completes an Estimate of Giving Card does so voluntarily by attending morning worship on Consecration Sunday. We urge people to attend who feel strongly opposed to completing a card. The procedure is done in such a way that no one feels personal embarrassment if he or she chooses not to fill out a card.

We will do no home solicitation to ask people to complete cards. During morning worship our guest leader will conduct a brief period of instruction and inspiration, climaxed by members making their commitments as a confidential act of worship. We will encourage participation in Consecration Sunday events through the Consecration Sunday team and governing board members. Since we will make no follow-up visits to ask people to complete their cards, we will make every effort to inform, inspire, and commit everyone to attend Consecration Sunday worship. Thanks in advance for your enthusiastic participation in Consecration Sunday events.

Stewardship Chairperson,

John Demuth
I don’t know if you know this about me, but I absolutely LOVE the Green Bay Packers. I know, I know. Packer fans in this area are few and far between. I grew up in Wisconsin and moved to Minnesota 15 years ago now. And I still just can’t shake my love for this team. I’ve honestly tried to cheer for the Vikings. I’ve even got a Vikings shirt that stays buried in the bottom of my drawer. I’m just a Green Bay fan and expect that probably won’t ever change. My team is just a part of me. I can’t shake it.

Do you, like me, like something that not a lot of other people around you like? Do you have a different or unique interest? Do you ever get made fun of because you are a little different from other people?

It’s easy to get a little down on ourselves sometimes because we think that we don’t quite measure up to someone else’s standards, or we feel like we don’t exactly fit in. Those feelings are very normal. I have them too, even now as a 35 year old. When I was younger I used to get made fun of because my hair was so blonde that it looked almost white. I dreamed of the day that I could color my hair just a little darker. But you know, that was a feature of me that made me unique. And over time, God made my hair a little darker.

Do you know how BORING this world would be if we all were the same or all had the same likes and dislikes? Those different things about you are absolutely a part of what makes you YOU. Don’t change. Be you. Don’t apologize for being a little bit different. God made YOU just the way you are for a reason. That’s what makes you special. And there is only ONE of you in the whole world. Nobody else can be you.

See you in church!!

“For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.” (Psalm 139:13-14)
Tanzania Testimony from the Outdoor Worship—August 2014

Karibu. Welcome.
The warm welcomes, hospitality, and friendliness we encountered in Tanzania were unlike any other. As I read through my journal, I had just gotten to Wednesday, July 16th, the first day we were actually in Africa and I had written, "I fell in love with Africa only moments after we left the airport. Driving down the streets of Tanzania people seem to WANT to greet us. They were waving and smiling and just seemed genuinely excited to see us. I can already tell this is going to be an amazing trip and it literally just started 10 hours ago. God is SOOO good."

Because this was the first time I have ever been out of North America, and African culture isn’t anywhere near the same as American, I was definitely scared, but it was nice feeling so welcomed so soon. It wasn’t just people waving at us as we drove by, but it was our Maasai Warriors and guards staying up all night just to make sure we slept safely, or an elderly woman approaching us singing, dancing and having fun despite the language barrier, or the kids at the Plaster House who were so eager to see us and play with us, even though they seemed more interested in our electronics to begin with, or the warm welcome we received at the Maasai Girls School, or the girls giving up their chairs to us at our cultural night so we wouldn’t have to sit on the floor, or just all the workers who were willing to make us meals every day.

And not once did I hear anyone complain. At the beginning of the trip this really amazed me. Why are these people so willing to serve us Americans? We have houses for our dogs and some of them share a one room mud shack with several other people. But that’s what makes them happy. And so does making sure that their guests are taken care of. Of all the places we went in Africa, all the good, and all the bad we saw, the selfless gestures made by the people there is truly where I saw God.

It didn’t matter that we came from a country where we have clothes hanging in our closets with tags still intact just because we don’t like them anymore, or where we buy a new phone every two years just to get the latest style. What really seemed to matter to them is that we are Christians, just like them. We wake up in the morning, just like they do, because God was gracious enough to give us another day. We go to church on Sundays and receive the body and the blood. And we all believe that one day we will all be one sitting in God’s kingdom. The people of Tanzania truly exemplify beautiful Christians. Their love for God and their willingness to serve is something I will never forget about this life-changing experience. I never thought 10 days would be enough to change my perspective on many aspects of my life, but everyday I think about how welcoming and hospitable the Tanzanians were to me and try to use that to better the way I treat others.

Danielle Freitag