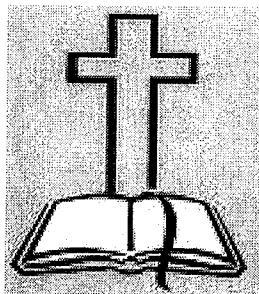


March 2009 Newsletter



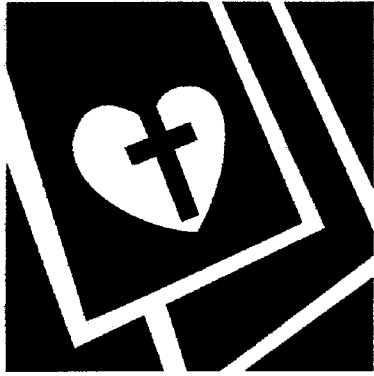
Christ Our King Lutheran Church,
2150 Dundas Street West,
Mississauga, Ontario L5K 1R5
905-822-8931
coklutheran@christourking.ca
www.christourking.ca

Greetings from Cathy Sookhoo
Nursery School Administrator and Supervisor
March 2008

Although Spring has not "sprung" yet, the staff and education/nursery boards are already gearing up for Fall registration. Our initiative for 2009/10 is to have a higher enrollment in our afternoon kindergarten class. Presently, we have 38 students enrolled in the morning and afternoon programs. This includes, nursery, kindergarten, full-time and part-time students. By the grace of God we have been blessed with the enrollment of 3 new students in February and March and we pray that 2009/10 is a blessed year for our Christian Education programs. Upcoming Open House dates are being planned and staffing arrangements are being talked of. Please share the word with family and friends about the great faith-based program Christ Our King has to offer.

Kindergarten report cards will be distributed on March 13th as well as parent/teacher interviews conducted for the Nursery School children. During the interviews; parents are encouraged to ask questions in regard to their child's progress, voice concerns, and of course; inquire about the upcoming school year. These interviews are an integral part of our "planning" process for the following school year. It gives the boards and staff an idea on our fall enrollment.

A Family Fun Day is planned for March 28th from 10:00am-12:00pm. All nursery school, kindergarten and congregational members are invited to attend. This year we are happy to announce the return of Charmaine Hand from "Worship in Motion". Last year's event was such a hit that it was highly recommended that we have her back again. It will be a fun-filled morning with hands-on musical entertainment, crafts and refreshments. We hope you can come out to this wonderful event and don't forget to invite your friends, as this is a community event to promote Christian education.



FROM THE PASTOR

Lent 2009

When people suffer, they often fall into the devil's temptation to think that God is angry with them. Perhaps there have been times when your own suffering has caused you also to wonder: "Is God punishing me? Is He angry with me? Although there may be many reasons for your suffering, you do not suffer because God is angry over your sins. Why do you not suffer for your sins? You do not suffer for them because "Christ suffered for you" (1 Peter 2:21). He offered His body on the cross "once for all" (Hebrews 10:10). What Jesus has already done, you cannot redo.

Just as a lightning rod absorbs and redirects the devastating fury of a lightning strike, so also has Jesus redirected all God's wrath away from you, absorbing it into Himself. Just as a lightning rod protects a building from fiery destruction, so also does Jesus, by His death and resurrection, protect you from the fire of eternal condemnation in hell, as He promises: "For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thessalonians 5:9).

Keep this central truth in mind: You do not suffer because God is punishing you for your sins! So why do we sometimes suffer? We can highlight some of the reasons:

1. **God is calling you to repentance and faith. (Hosea 6:1)**
2. **God is blessing you with his loving, fatherly discipline. (Hebrews 12:4-11)**
3. **God is allowing you to be persecuted for your faith, so that others might be drawn to Jesus. (1 Peter 4:12-14)**
4. **Sometimes we can only say that our suffering for hidden reasons, known only to God. (Psalm 10:1).**

However, because Jesus died on the cross, fully paying the price for your sins, God is no longer angry with you! On the cross: "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself" (2 Corinthians 5:19). In other words, God so loved the world (John 3:16) that He made peace with the world (Luke 2:14; Romans 5:1) through the crucifixion of Jesus.

In the last moments before He died on the cross, Jesus preached a one-word sermon: *Tetelestai*. This word translates as: "It is finished" (John 19:30). Merchants also used this word when writing a bill of sale for a customer. The merchant would write *Tetelestai* on the bill after it was paid. Thus, when Jesus preached from the cross, *Tetelestai* or "It is finished," it is as if He was saying: "The bill is paid in full." Knowing that the bill for his own sin had been paid, the Reformation-era theologian Martin Chemnitz could joyously write: Christ on the cross, about to yield up His spirit to the Father, says: "It is finished!" With these words He bears witness that all things necessary for the expiation [that is, removal] of sins and for redemption from the curse of the Law have fully, sufficiently, and abundantly been done and paid by His obedience and suffering.

(Martin Chemnitz, Examination of the Council of Trent, Translation of Examen Concilii Tridentinum, electronic ed., vol. 4, page 174, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999, 1971).

We must let our thoughts continually return to Jesus, who lovingly came to earth to be a lightning rod for you, and who drew all of God's wrath upon Himself. As a result, we are now safe and secure even in the midst of tempest and storm. Even in our worst suffering, nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:39).

In 2 Corinthians 12:7 St. Paul explains who gave him the thorn of suffering and twice he states for what purpose: "To keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me – to keep me from exalting myself!"

Although there has been speculation in every century about exactly what the thorn was in Paul's side, there is no need to speculate about why he was so afflicted. St. Paul explains that the thorn was to keep him from "exalting himself," from being puffed up, proud, or arrogant.

In discussing Paul's suffering, Martin Luther shows how other major personalities of the bible, including Abraham, Moses, Aaron, and David, all suffered similarly. Then, surprising many of us, Luther adds that becoming filled with pride "is a shortcoming which we all have." He explains this assertion by saying: "When God bestows outstanding gifts, the old Adam exalts himself and becomes proud; for he sees that others do not have similar gifts. God then permits an angel of Satan to harass us (by giving us a particular thorn in our flesh), lest we destroy ourselves eternally with our pride." (Luther's Works, American Edition, vol. 3, p. 5.)

Do you have a thorn in your flesh? Have you thought about what your thorn might be? Perhaps your thorn in the flesh is your inability to memorize large sections of God's Word. Maybe God permits Satan to hamper your memory so that instead of bragging how you already know much of the Bible, you are driven to reread God's Word daily to acquaint yourself constantly with God's will and promises in Christ. "My eyes fail with longing for Thy Word . . ." (Psalm 119:82).

Your thorn in the flesh may be in the dismay that you cannot live a more holy life. God may be permitting Satan to point out your spiritual failures so that you will seek Christ's perfect righteousness instead of privately thinking you are leading a pretty good life, especially as compared with others. When you recognize your sin of self-righteousness, turn away from yourself to Jesus. God's Word will then enable you to say with St. Paul: "I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, . . . and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith" (Philippians 3:8-9).

For you merely to be aware that you have a thorn in your flesh serves no purpose. However, when you realize you have a thorn in the flesh, see this as a gift that God has given to you to help you. In other words, don't ignore your thorn. Instead, let the thorn in your flesh move you to repentance that is pleasing to God, a type which Paul expected from the Corinthians believers. "Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful . . . For [godly sorrow] produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation; but the sorrow of the world produces death" (2 Corinthians 7:9-10).

Peace and Joy in Jesus

Pastor Larry Flohr

Excerpted from *Good News*, Volume 23

How Strong is Your Faith?

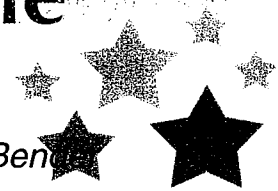
*O for a faith that will not shrink,
Though pressed by many a foe,
That will not tremble on the brink
Of poverty or woe. (#496 TLH)*

The words and thoughts of this old Lutheran hymn might well be in the minds and hearts of individuals, family, and friends of those affected by the dreaded disease of cancer.

The following article, taken from the 2009 winter edition of the Tapestry, an LWML-Canada publication, shows how one of our former members of Christ Our King has come to deal with the invasion of cancer into her life.

“After you have suffered a little while...”

by Kathy Ben



How can we shine like stars when we are suffering the effects of sin in our world? Strengthening our faith and becoming more aware of God's presence in the good times can help.

Last December I sat in my doctor's office waiting for test results. As Executive Director with the B.C. Mission Boat I travelled monthly to remote coastal communities. In October I had bumped my head on one of these trips resulting in a large goose egg. Three days earlier I had undergone a hysterectomy for an ongoing problem I was having with anemia, low energy, recurrent infections and generally feeling worn out. At age 47 it was a logical treatment. It was because of this surgery that the bump had been explored more closely.

As soon as he entered the room and said "I'm sorry," I knew it was cancer. I was in a bubble the next few days, it was

like the world existed all around me but I was in a slow motion haze. My thoughts ranged from thinking it simply could not be happening to me, to being devastated and wondering how long I would have to live. I wondered why me, why now? Then again...why not me?

I was diagnosed with multiple myeloma, a cancer of the bone marrow affecting the blood. It causes all of the symptoms that led to the hysterectomy plus others including bone lesions and erosion. It was one of these that I had hit directly when I bumped my forehead causing the swelling.

I prayed and even my prayers were disjointed. I know that my Father understood the turmoil in my heart. I relied on the verse from Romans 8:26: "the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We

do not know what we ought to pray, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express." I depend on this reassurance.

I tried to picture myself with God, crawling up onto His lap and Him putting His arms around me, drawing me close to His heart. There I was surrounded by His arms and robes, I felt safe and loved, nothing could harm me. I clung to this image when I felt the fear and panic rise and it helped calm me.

On Boxing Day I went to emergency with kidney failure and the treatment for that put me into congestive heart failure. I spent the next two weeks in the hospital. During this time I had many tests and

underwent my first cycle of drug treatment in preparation for a stem cell transplant. I also received radiation for lesions on my spine.

One of the drugs given to me could cause hallucinations. I didn't expect this to happen but it did one night. I had the sensation of large bugs crawling under my skin and thought I could see my skin bubbling from it. I was terrified. All I could think of was the Lord's Prayer. Through the night I said the Lord's Prayer over and over, for hours. I felt that if I could focus on this, on staying in touch with God, that He would see me through and I would have nothing to fear. I will never forget that night. Isaiah 41:10 is a passage that I cling to: "So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with My righteous right hand." I know God was in that room with me. When my body was so out of control, God was there.

Stem cells were collected from me in February, and in early March I had my stem cell transplant. Essentially the bone marrow is killed by high dose chemotherapy, and the stem cells are reintroduced into your blood stream where they travel back to the bone marrow and regenerate it. This means there is a time when you require transfusions of

red blood cells or plasma until your body starts to make its own blood again, which can take up to three weeks. There are many side effects, at one point it was very hard for me to walk, eat or stay awake and I developed a very high fever caused by an engraftment reaction, putting me in isolation for a week.

Some of my sisters in Christ took turns staying with me for two weeks at the Cancer Lodge. They prayed with me, cared for me and loved me. This is a very special memory for me, they were Christ to me and I felt Him through their ministering. My body had received the treatment and was going to do what it had to do, I could not say "okay, stop now

I've had enough." I simply had to make it through each day.

I have always smiled at the passage from 1 Peter 5:10, "And the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will Himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast." I have always wondered what Peter meant by "a little while." A little while to God might be a long time to me, and Peter makes it sound so simple. I focus on being made strong, firm and steadfast!

I have learned to trust God with child-like faith. When you have a terminal illness everything changes. You are not the same person as before the diagnosis.



Other Scripture that was helpful

Psalm 27

Psalm 121

John 14:27

Romans 5:3-5



taken near Kathy's home at Rathrevor Beach, Parksville, B.C., in June, three months after her stem cell transplant.

There is no longer a "normal." Your life becomes a series of doctor's appointments, tests, monitoring, working on your health, reflection and resting. My whole life I have had challenging jobs; I have enjoyed that. I am not strong enough to work yet. Who am I now? What will I be able to do? There are a lot of unanswered questions and surprisingly, I have adapted to these unknowns. I am so glad to be alive.

I believe it is important to communicate with family and friends as much as you are able. This helps them and equips them to help you. When you are diagnosed with cancer, they are too, because they walk with you on the journey and they experience their own challenges and questions. This required me to show God's grace to others, and it surprised me as I felt so drained by my own issues.

Cancer is now part of me and makes me who I am. Some people have asked, some have wondered but been afraid to ask, if I am okay with God. I know that God did not make me sick. God does not want us to suffer. Our human bodies are affected by this life on earth – by our choices, by the environment and more – they don't last forever. Cancer is one of the ways our bodies show this deterioration.

I look around my house and think, these things really don't mean anything. What really matters is my relationship with God and with others in my life. What matters is stopping to see the blessings in each day. What matters is listening

Books I found helpful...

- *When Your Doctor has Bad News*, Al B. Weir, M.D., Zondervan ISBN 0-310-24742-X
- *Stories of Prayer for a Healthy Soul*, Christine M. Anderson, Inspirio, ISBN 1-59328-009-2
- *Picking up the Pieces*, Magee and Scalzo, Raincoast Books, ISBN 10 1-55192-901-5

to and loving friends and family, seeing the beauty in the way raindrops cling to leaves, going slower and accepting others as being on their own journey with God.

God loves us. God wants us to have joy, to prosper and to love. He sent His Son, Jesus, to save us out of His immense, pure love. As I go through this journey I still have many unknowns, health challenges and times of uncertainty. I have cried rivers of tears in my sorrow, and found humour in the oddest places. All of this is part of the process.

God has shown His love for me by placing peace in my heart, by surrounding me with amazing brothers and sisters in Christ who love me, by helping me have wonderful doctors and having my treatments go as efficiently as they possibly could have. Romans 8:28 required me to open my heart and eyes to see things differently ("and we know

that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him").

I believe that God was at work when I bumped my head, otherwise I would not have been diagnosed when I was. My cancer was further advanced than expected and receiving such prompt treatment gives me a better chance at longer life. I thank God for that bump! I thank God for each person who prayed for me. These prayers made me stronger, gave me peace and kept me close to God. People are still praying for me and I need these prayers and this help. I have learned to ask for help now.

I have been blessed by this illness, life is richer and deeper in many ways for me. It seems quite bizarre but it is true. God wants us to be with Him for eternity...we only see our life here on earth. I cling to this certainty with hope and peace. If you are struggling, picture yourself in your Father's arms and tell Him what is in your heart, He is waiting to hear from you.

My experience in working with the B.C. Mission Boat as Executive Director and Outreach worker for the past five years made my faith stronger and my awareness of God's presence much clearer. I encourage everyone to stretch themselves by stepping out to serve God in some new way, something not comfortable, something that will help you grow. You have to work on every relationship in your life, including the one with God.

Scripture quotations are from the New International Version (NIV)



taken when Kathy and her son were exploring on a logging road last August. Her comment: This just says it all about life!

NEWS FROM THE WOMEN'S GROUP

“Neither height nor depth, nor anything else
in all creation, will be able to
separate us from the love of God
that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

-Romans 8:39

Our Ladies' Group met this past month on Thursday, Feb. 19th and had a wonderful time connecting over a delicious meal, warm fellowship and Bible study activities on the theme of LOVE. Our “chef de cuisine” this month, Mary Mulligan, spoiled us with a mouth-watering chicken and pasta dinner and Friedl Ballaban treated us to a delicious marble cake, which we understand she is quite famous for! After our dinner (yes, gentlemen – with tablecloths and candles!) we then had some fun singing some tunes based on love, and Susan Vernon and Wendy Chant were voted as the winners, leaving Canadian Idol participants quite envious. Our ladies were then divided into pairs and did a short Bible study activity, and afterwards presented their insight and individual discussions to the whole group. We then finished the evening by reading some beautiful and powerful poems about God's amazing and perfect love for us, followed by prayer. Our Bible study activities reminded us all of God's gracious love for us sinners, as beautifully and tenderly expressed in 1 John 4: 15-16: “If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God. And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. GOD IS LOVE. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him.”

Our next Women's Group get-together will be on THURSDAY, MARCH 26 instead of our usual third Thursday, due to March Break plans the week of the 19th. This is an invitation for ALL ladies and friends of our congregation to come out and join us for a few hours of fellowship, good food and Bible study on relevant topics. Even if you have not had the opportunity to make it out to one or any of our events, why not make this a first – you won't be disappointed! Keep your eyes posted for an email coming later at the beginning of March for more details. We hope to see you there!

In His Service,

Donna Prusha and Wendy Chant



Try saying "Good Morning" as though you really meant it

Then (tomorrow, say) try treating some teenager like an adult.

Find someone to praise for doing a good job—waitress, bus driver, newsboy, store clerk, anyone.

Show respect for an older person's experience (or fortitude).

Be patient with someone who doesn't understand as quickly as you do.

Write or phone someone having a difficult time. Say you know it's rough, but you have faith in him.

Look pleasant.

Do your job a little better. Maybe you'll get some praise, but certainly you'll get more satisfaction.

Help someone—a handicapped across a street, a young man or woman looking for a job (whether you can give it or not, give him hope) or an older one, discouraged in his.

Contribute to some church or charity—money if you can, time if you can't.

It just could be that this sort of *understanding* is what this country needs right now.

Try it tomorrow—all day tomorrow. You might be surprised!

Recipe for Friendship

You take a bit of sunshine, and you mix it with a smile.

And human understanding as you travel every mile

And then you add some loyalty, which mingles in so well,

And blend it with a voice that has some cheery news to tell.

And don't forget some sympathy for other people's woes,

And lots of human nature, everywhere a person goes;

Plus love for ordinary folks who have no wealth to give,

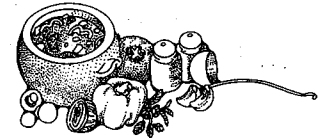
And dignity, with which all men have got the right to live.

Then add to these a hand clasp strong, and measure out some truth,

And willingness to help the old plus time for eager youth;

Now stir them all together, and your task is at an end,

For all of these combine to make life's greatest gift—a friend.



One Day at a Time

*This is the day the Lord has made;
I will rejoice and be glad in it.*
There might not be much to laugh about.
Tears may flow, and
pain torment my body or mind.
Frustration and weariness
may slow me down.
But I will rejoice and be glad.
"The Lord is with me;
I will not be afraid."*
Nothing will happen to me today
that the Lord and I can't handle.*

I can do it.
I can take it.
I will make it!
"I will not die but live."*
One day at a time.

*"The Lord is with me;
He is my helper."*
He will give me wisdom to make decisions,
strength to bear my burdens,
courage to face whatever comes my way.*

I will "give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
his love endures forever."*

*Assurances from Psalm 118
(24, 6, 17a, 7a, 29)

You Are Loved

God loves you
though you feel unloved or unlovable.
God loves you
with a love that is undeserved and unchanging.
God loves you
as you strive to please Him;
God loves you
as you insist on doing your own thing.
God loves you
during times you praise and thank Him;
God loves you
during times you ignore and doubt Him.
God loves you
if you are content with the pattern of life;
God loves you
if life makes no sense, seems unfair, unjust.
God loves you
when you are surrounded by family and friends;
God loves you
when you are lonely, rejected, heartbroken.
God loves you
while you are healthy and strong;
God loves you
while you are sick and weak.
God loves you
if you are happy and successful;
God loves you
if you are miserable and discouraged.
God loves you
whether you are glad, sad, mad or bad.
God loves you
because God is love.

LWML Canada NEWS

It's hard to believe that the season of Lent has already arrived. Our Pre-Lenten Breakfast and Prayer Service certainly prepared us for this time in the church year!

A big thank you goes out to all who supported our efforts to collect mites which provide funding for mission projects, both close to home and abroad.



A few upcoming dates need to be marked on our calendars. The first is our monthly meeting which takes place on Monday March 16th. This will again be a work night , in which we will do a variety of tasks (making rolled bandages, trimming stamps, etc.).

Please mark May 3rd on your calendar. This is the date of our Spring Workshop to be held this year at St. Paul's in Cobourg.

On our LWML-Canada notice board, you will find a poster inviting you to join those of us attending the National LWML-Canada Convention being held this year in Ottawa, July 9-12. Please see Hazel Steiss for more info.

It's time again to order the Tapestry. This is a magazine put out four times per year and has very interesting and revealing articles. Subscriptions are \$8.00 yearly. Please see Mary Mulligan , if you are interested . One of the articles in the current Winter addition is included in this month's newsletter and should be of interest to all of us.

This month's mission focus is that of the purchase of maternity ward equipment for Tanzania Lutheran Hospital and the distribution of the Gospel in Swahili. We pray:

Dear Father in Heaven, bless the use of maternity ward equipment purchased by our mites We ask your blessing on the newborn babies and their mothers who receive care at Tanzania Lutheran Hospital. As well, through the distribution of the Gospel of John in Swahili, may the families hear your beckoning voice calling to all, especially to the little children to come and learn of Him . May they see Jesus , who loves them dearly. In Your Gracious Name we pray . Amen.