

## Things I've Learned by Pastor Glenn Huebel

Most pastors who have been in the ministry for 31 years have served in 2 or 3, or even more congregations during that time span. I have served only one. I'm not sure if that is good or bad or whether it has limited my growth or furthered it, but I have tried to leave all that into God's hands. I have always desired to yield to Him where I serve and when I leave. I'm sure that people who have been married five or six times in 30 years have some interesting insights into

marriage, but I'm also sure that those who celebrate silver and golden anniversaries have wisdom that can be gained in no other way than long term relationships. Husbands and wives who have been married a long time have probably changed considerably over that time. It's called maturing, and it's probably a major ingredient to their success together. I know that I have changed considerably since I came here fresh out of seminary. I hope that it has been a

maturing rather than a degenerative process, but I'll leave that for the Lord to judge also. Obviously, I can't list all the things I learned in 30 years here at Messiah, but here's a few.

### Christians are always Sinner-Saints in this world.

I knew this theologically when I came here. In fact, we Lutherans even have a theological Latin phrase to describe it: *simul Justus et peccator*. But it is one thing to study theology in the classroom and

another to see it in real life. Most young pastors come out of the seminary with a few unrealistic expectations about the ministry, about Christian congregations – and about themselves. That isn't a bad thing, unless they are so naïve that reality crushes their spirits. Pastors discover fairly quickly how BROKEN this world is, and how profoundly this brokenness affects the church – affects their nice little congregation. When reality sets in young pastors must be extremely careful not to turn cynical and bitter. They also must guard against despair, for Satan will use their baptism of fire to convince them that they themselves are so filthy and sinful they are beyond grace. They may even begin to wonder whether pastors can be saved, since they fall so far short of their calling in Christ. When this roller coaster ride ends, the pastor is finally in a position to commend their congregation and themselves to the grace of God alone. A rookie may wonder, after reading through 1 Corinthians, how Paul can, with straight face, call these people "sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints" (1 Cor. 1:2). A veteran pastor gives thanks to God that His grace is that wide and deep. A rookie may stand boldly like St.

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From  
generation  
to  
generation  
we will praise  
You,  
O Lord.

Messiah Lutheran Church

1981 ✠ 30<sup>th</sup> ✠ 2011

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*That you may believe that Jesus is the Christ,  
the Son of God, and that by believing  
you may have life in His name. —John 20:31*

Peter declaring allegiance to Jesus. A veteran fully understands and finds comfort in the words of St. Paul who realized that God chose him “that in me, as the foremost (sinner), Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life.”

### **Trust and Respect are far more influential in the Church than eloquence or a strong argument.**

When I first came out of the seminary, I was fairly well equipped to analyze and argue theology. I don't begrudge that education. I pray that the seminary continues to prepare sound theologians for the church, but I discovered that the sheep aren't led by sound arguments alone. God did not give us His Word for academic exercise and debate. He gave it primarily for the very practical purpose of creating and nurturing faith in Christ. I have seen many brilliant pastors (conservative ones) who have excellent theology and can out-debate anyone, but who cannot lead a flock of humble sheep because they have not gained the trust and respect of the people. If people don't see the love of Christ in their pastor's words and actions, they don't really care how many theological arguments he can win. They won't follow him.

### **Trials burn the dross and purify the gold.**

Every congregation, just like every Christian, will face trials and tribulations. This painful experience does the same for congregations collectively as it does for believers individually. It causes self doubt and forces self examination. It

tempts us to doubt God's favor and promotes repentance. It causes pastors to doubt their calling and congregation members to consider moving to another fellowship. The fires of affliction test our character and distinguish the true from the false. Tribulation brings out the best and the worst in people. Some rise to the occasion and become the pillars for others to lean on. Some who may have seemed pillars wilt and become reeds blowing in the wind. When tribulation passes – and it always does – the landscape is changed. The congregation is renewed in strength of faith and unity. Every major tribulation in our history has produced a new phase of exciting ministry and new servants to lead the flock. In thirty years I have discovered the truth of God's Word that discipline is never pleasant, but it always yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it (Heb. 12:11).

### **An Appeasement Policy causes more problems than it solves.**

One of the most important things I have learned in 30 years is that the devil often counterfeits virtues with glittering and appealing vices. One of these counterfeits is the identification of a policy of appeasement with the virtue of “maintaining the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph 4:3). Small, young congregations are tempted to believe that they can keep everyone happy. In this unrealistic environment, peacekeeping consists in doing only those things that everyone agrees with and not doing things that may make someone angry. Though this works to a degree in a small congregation in a superficial way, it develops a dysfunctional system that

actually breeds contention and strife. People learn soon enough that anger or the subtle threat of “taking your bat and ball and going home” is the way to get things done or, most often, to stop things from being done. It promotes bullying, stifles open and honest conversation, distracts the congregation from the call to serve Christ rather than men, and creates an environment where tension is ever present and strife is easily stirred. In my home, my children were taught that we would respectfully listen to any well reasoned, civilly presented request, but that temper tantrums, fits of rage, and other similar techniques would result in automatic denial of the request with no appeal considered. As a politician once stated, you get more of what you subsidize. Rather than rewarding threats of anger in order to avoid conflict we are better served to reward open, honest, and vigorous communication with a sincere attempt to find reasonable compromises where possible. It took me a long time to learn that one. I think our Synod still struggles with it.

### **Shortcuts to Church growth usually fall into the category of “too good to be true.”**

I must admit that to be a part of a rapidly growing congregation is exhilarating. No matter how much I caution myself (yes, I do talk to myself sometimes) not to become intoxicated with growth in numbers, my flesh still does what the flesh does – it focuses on the things of men rather than the things of God. Success produces a rush that can be addictive. Pastors, like everyone else, like to SEE results. The theology of glory is not far from any

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of us because of the flesh. The temptation to produce visible results by taking shortcuts in ministry is enormous. I know very well that “how to” sermons are more popular in the world today than sermons that are faithful to the text. I know very well that “relevant” topics draw more people than those which carefully lay the stones of a theological foundation for faith. I know that the doctrine of original sin is offensive to many. I know that maintaining a right distinction between male and female as taught in Scripture is considered anachronistic today. I know that the policy of close communion turns many people off. I know that 15 sessions, 22 teaching hours of pastors’ classes are more than many can bear. I know that expecting our youth confirmands to memorize the catechism is considered absurd by many. I know that expecting our youth to be abstinent and confronting those who think “living together” is OK is considered utterly unrealistic. Many churches have brought 100’s of people into the Lutheran Church by severely reducing the standards and educational requirements for membership – maybe a morning seminar instead of a pastors’ class. Many churches have reduced the required “public confession of faith” to a commitment to love and serve Jesus rather than a confession of the doctrine of the Gospel as summarized in Luther’s Small Catechism. Many don’t deal with negative topics like sin and repentance or abortion or sexual immorality. Many offer entertainment in place of worship. These are shortcuts that produce numbers but have long-term detrimental effects upon the health and welfare of the church. These are shortcuts that eventually

transform a congregation into something other than “Lutheran.”

### **The Pastor never has all the spiritual gifts a congregation needs.**

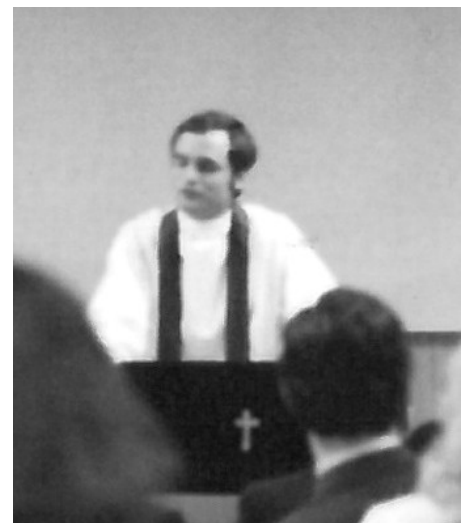
When I graduated from the seminary and began the ministry here in Keller I had unrealistic ideas about what a pastor could or should do. I assumed that a pastor should be able to do everything pertaining to the ministry better than anyone else – preaching, teaching, administration, teaching Sunday School, encouraging the elderly, leading youth, preparing people for marriage, evangelizing the unchurched, chairing meetings, marketing, preparing bulletins, comforting the grieving, dealing with contractors, choosing a building site, supervising secretaries, strategic planning, overseeing church finances, fundraising, fixing toilets, etc, etc. I simply absorbed what every individual expected of the pastor and added it to the list. All of this is absolutely ridiculous, of course, and I could not help but realize immediately that many lay people were much better at a lot of these things than I was. I felt woefully inadequate for the task and found comfort in the words of St. Paul, “our sufficiency is of God.” Over time I have come to really appreciate the Scriptural teaching that God has intentionally distributed special gifts to the whole church so that we must depend upon one another to accomplish the mission. I now have no problem admitting my inadequacies in many areas of ministry and find it exciting to recruit people to serve in areas where they are gifted – and to yield gladly to their wisdom and talents. I have also noticed that God usually

supplies just the gifts we need when we need them most. I have never pastored another congregation, but I am amazed at the gifts God has supplied to this one. He certainly knows just how inadequate I am and how much help is needed to get the task of ministry done.

### **God is Faithful.**

I knew this before I became a pastor, but I have rejoiced to see 30 years of God’s faithfulness here at Messiah. He has blessed the Word as He promised by gathering a people who know and confess His Name. He has poured upon us a rich measure of material and spiritual gifts to carry on the ministry. He has forgiven our sins and carried us through every challenge and trial. His mercies are new every morning. Though we do not know what the future holds for this congregation, we do know that the One who holds us in His hand is faithful. To God be the glory.

Blessings,  
Pastor Huebel





## Youth News by Sanghwa Park

The youth group is off to a great start this year! Mr. and Mrs. Brandt hosted a swimming party on August 14<sup>th</sup> where we discussed our plans for community service projects, church events and activities, and our annual retreat.

We will continue to hold our monthly Braille workshops as our long-term service project (every 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday). The youth will meet at monthly outings to discuss our roles as young Christians in today's society. We have a Senior Youth Handbell Group that will meet every Wednesday evening starting in early September.

Look for our annual Butter Braids fundraiser in the next issue, and our youth corner will feature upcoming events and monthly follow-ups to record our journey throughout the year.



*Touch your finger to your nose...*



*Many of our parents came along to help.*



*Pool fun*

***Therefore...  
whatever you do,  
do all to the  
glory of God.  
(1 Corinthians 10:31)***



*The Youth Group. If you're in high school—come join us!!!*



# Messiah Lutheran Classical Academy



2011 - 2012

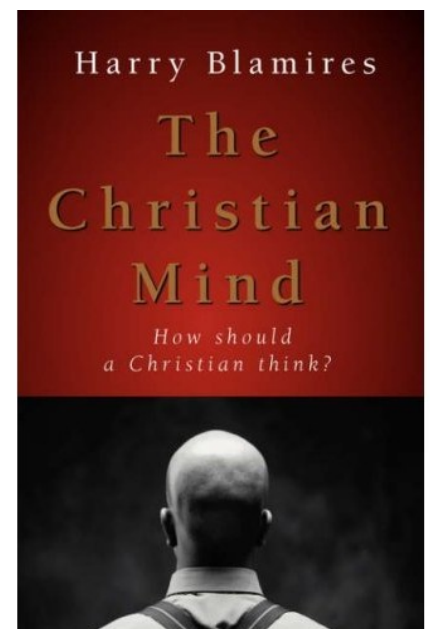
## Adult Sunday School Class to Study Blamires

The **Adult Sunday School** class has voted to study, as its next major topic, a book by Harry Blamires, ***The Christian Mind***. The thesis of this book is that while there is still a Christian ethic, practice and spirituality, there is no longer a Christian mind in the church. We have yielded almost completely to the secular worldview in our thought life. It is a challenging book that urges us to begin THINKING like Christians before we are smothered by secularism.

Pastor Huebel will begin this new topic when the present topic on evangelism through the Creed

concludes, probably sometime in mid-September.

Having a copy of the book is not necessary for those attending the class, but it would be very helpful. The book is available at both Barnes and Noble and Amazon for \$12.08 (paperback). You may be able to find one at a used bookstore for a bit less. **A group order will be placed on September 12.** Sign up on the copy room door. Please make checks payable to Messiah Lutheran, earmarked "Adult Sunday School."





Our annual Rally Day Picnic is scheduled for Sunday, September 11th, immediately following the 10:45am Worship Service. This event is to celebrate the new Sunday School year and the advancement of our students in their classes. The whole congregation is encouraged to come and enjoy the afternoon "rallied" together along with lunch, games, and family fun. Bring your lawn chairs, and a side dish or a dessert to share.

## Library News



*It's getting there!* We are hoping to reopen the library by the end of the month, and are working to do so as soon as possible. At the moment, the books are all moved and 95% of them are in their proper place.

More still needs to be done, however. The refrigerator in this old youth room will be moved out to make room for more shelving. The items seen in this photo are from the old ECC closet, which is now part of the copy room. These things are awaiting their home in the new and almost finished ECC closet, behind the old library door. When everything is cleared out, an inventory will be performed and then you will be able to check out books once more.

**A heartfelt thank you to all those who worked long hours this summer cleaning, building, and painting to give us all a nicer facility!**

**Let's thrive:**  **Thrivent Financial for Lutherans**

## Social Security Educational Workshop

### Workshop conducted by Mr. Jim Caulder

Keynote speaker Jim Caulder was employed with the Social Security Administration for over 33 years. He is known for his witty and entertaining presentations that explain complex Social Security laws in a way that is easily understood by all.

Please join us to hear Jim Caulder, "Mr. Social Security", present informative and entertaining updates on this important subject. This workshop is hosted by Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, your financial representatives at the Summit Group and the Dallas-Tarrant Chapter. Refreshments will be available.

### This workshop will cover:

- The most up-to-date information on Social Security
- How to maximize your benefits
- How to avoid costly mistakes

### Event Details

Monday, October 10

Messiah Lutheran Church, 1308 Whitley Rd. Keller, TX 76248, at 7:00 p.m.

RSVP to: [diann.higgins@thrivent.com](mailto:diann.higgins@thrivent.com) or 817-282-2044



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## *Sing to the Lord a New Song* by Vicki Main, Music Director

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For the next 4 four Sundays in September we will be singing *Voices Raised to You We Offer* – LSB 795. This particular hymn is in the *Praise and Adoration* section – an immediate clue to its content. The text was written by The Rev. Herman G. Stuempfle, Jr. and the tune [Song of Praise] was composed by Carolyn Jennings.

**Rev. Stuempfle**, born in 1923, was a pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and served parishes in Pennsylvania and Maryland. In 1959, he joined the staff of the Board of Missions in the former United Lutheran Church in America. Throughout his 27-year career as Professor of Preaching at Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, he also served as the school's Dean and President. He was known for his contributions as a poet, preacher, and professor. One article stated he would long be remembered for his preaching, his hymnody and his personal graciousness. He wrote an estimated 550 hymn texts. He died in March 2007 at the age of 84 years old.

**Carolyn Jennings**, born in August of 1936, is a Professor Emerita of Music at St. Olaf College (Northfield, Minnesota) where she taught for many years. She also served in administrative roles, including being Chair of the Music Department and Associate Dean for the Fine Arts. She has recently retired as Music Coordinator and Director of the Senior Choir at St. John's Lutheran Church, Northfield, Minnesota, where she served as a church musician for over thirty years. Her compositions and arrangements include works for voices, orchestra, and piano. Her publications include over a hundred choral compositions and

arrangements, a number of text translations, contributions to several hymnals, and articles for professional journals.

At some point, their paths crossed and we were blessed with *Voices Raised to You We Offer* as seen in our hymnal.

*Voices raised to You we offer;  
Tune them, God, for songs of praise.  
Hearts and hands we bring in tribute  
For Your gifts through all our days.  
Alleluia! Alleluia!  
Triune God, to You we sing!*

*All creation joins to praise You;  
Earth and sky Your works display.  
Art and music, gifts You lend us,  
We return to You today.  
Alleluia! Alleluia!  
God, Creator, source of life!*

*Christ, the song of Love incarnate,  
Touching earth with heaven's grace,  
For Your living, suff'ring, dying,  
For Your rising, hear our praise!  
Alleluia! Alleluia!  
Christ, Redeemer, Lord of life!*

*Spirit, flaming through creation,  
Kindle faith within each heart.  
Lift our voices high in chorus;  
Through our hands Your love impart.  
Alleluia! Alleluia!  
Spirit, Helper, breath of life!*

*How can any praise we offer  
Measure all the thanks we owe?  
Take our hearts and hands and  
voices—  
Gifts of love we can bestow.  
Alleluia! Alleluia!  
Triune God, to You we sing!*

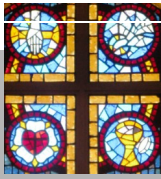
The Scriptures referenced are Colossians 3:16 [Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all

wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.], Isaiah 12:2 [Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid; for the LORD GOD is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation.'], 2 Corinthians 4:13 [Since we have the same spirit of faith according to what has been written, 'I believed, and so I spoke,' we also believe, and so also speak, . . .], and finally Psalm 147:1 [Praise the LORD! For it is good to sing praises to our God; for it is pleasant, and a song of praise is fitting.]

What joy we too should have in singing this hymn! May you be blessed with renewed praise and thanksgiving to our Triune God.







## Messiah Lutheran Church & School

*The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod*

1308 Whitley Rd. Keller, TX 76248

Church Office: (817) 431-2345

Early Childhood Center: (817) 431-6139

Classical Academy (K—8): (817) 431-5486

Sunday Worship: 8:00 a.m. & 10:45 a.m.

Sunday School & Adult Bible Class: 9:30 a.m.

Rev. Glenn Huebel, Senior Pastor

Rev. Dennis Kitzmann, Assistant Pastor

Mrs. Natalie Anderson, Principal, Classical Academy

Mrs. Alison Smith, Principal, Early Childhood Center

Mrs. Vicki Main, Music Director

Mrs. Kathy Blaschke, Financial Director

[www.messiahkeller.org](http://www.messiahkeller.org)

1981 ✠ 30<sup>th</sup> ✠ 2011

## September Events in our History

**1982:** On September 26, a Special Voters' Meeting approved the architect's

final working drawing of our first building. Plans then had to be submitted to the Texas District for approval. That building included the present sanctuary, a multipurpose room (now the back room of the sanctuary), a kitchen (current music office), two offices and three classrooms (two of which are now the ladies' restroom and the pass-through area.)



**1985:** September in 1985 was movie month. The old Luther film was shown on evening. A couple of weeks later, *The Temple of the God-Makers* was shown.

**1996:** A Messiah food pantry was established in the old kitchen.

**1999:** On September 5, 1999, we began offering two worship services. It was a necessary decision, but a reluctant one. We only held one service on 5th Sundays, followed by a potluck dinner.

**2001:** On Friday, September 14, a special service of Prayer and Remembrance was held in the wake of the terrorist attacks on 9/11, three day prior.

**2002:** Dinners for Six began, and through this little fellowship program, many of our members have made new, and lasting, friends.

**2003:** Our two year confirmation program began to grow into three with the beginning of a pre-confirmation Bible History class for sixth graders. Originally planned for Wednesday evenings, the class began on a Sunday evening before changing to the Sunday School hour on Sunday morning.

**2007:** Messiah held a well attended Financial Peace University seminar, led by Neil Gessling.

**2008:** A few dads go together and planned a Father/Child Retreat to Caddo Mills. Everyone had a great time—all we need is someone will to plan another one. Any takers???

*For the Lord is good; His steadfast love endures forever and His faithfulness to all generations. --Psalm 100:5*



# 30th Anniversary Celebration: Sunday, October 16.

*Sunday Morning Worship*

*8:00 a.m. and 10:45 a.m.*

*With guest preacher Todd Wilken of Issues, Etc.*

*Celebratory Banquet*

*Cross Timbers Winery at 6:00 p.m.*

*Watch your mail for the invitation!*

