

“Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord God is an everlasting Rock.”  
Isaiah 26:4

# THE ROCK

Issue No. 9

September 2009

## Special Dates

- August 30 Rally Day & church picnic
- August 30 Confirmation meeting with parents
- Sept. 1 Elders meeting
- Sept. 3 Thursday AM Bible Study
- Sept. 7 Labor Day—Office Closed
- Sept 8 Circuit Pastors Meet in Salida
- Sept 9 Confirmation begins
- Sept. 16 Quilting begins
- Sept 17 Thursday AM Bible Study
- Sept 17 Council meeting
- Sept. 18 3rd Friday
- Sept 20 Tween/Teen Tea
- Sept 21 Ladies Bible Study Begins
- Sept 22 Ladies Guild Meeting
- Sept 24 Preschool Potluck
- Sept 25 Scrapbooking
- Sept 26 LWML Fall Rally
- Sept. 27 Olive Wood Display
- Sept 27 Handbell Choir Starts
- Sept 27 Youth Night
- Sept 30 Vocal Choir Begins

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## Living Biblically

I recently read the book “The Year of Living Biblically” by A.J. Jacobs. It sounded like an interesting premise- the author (a secular Jewish writer) decided to try and live by the Bible’s laws, literally and to the letter, for an entire year. There would be no picking and choosing, no prioritizing. So, the ten commandments would have equal weight with the food laws in Leviticus 11 and the command “do not wear clothing woven of two kinds of material” in Leviticus 19:19. In total, he came up with laws that he would follow.

Being a secular sort of person, Jacobs was not in the habit of following any sort of laws or rules. In fact, he admits that part of the reason he attempts the experiment is because he is raising a toddler. He fears the moral relativism so prevalent in our society, and is searching for something that will give his child a firm foundation. On the other hand, he also wants to show literalism as being “ridiculous”. After all, what Biblical literalist Christian in America today stones idolaters or Sabbath breakers? Aside from his intentions, the journey that unfolds is quite interesting.

Now, Jacobs is no Biblical Apologist. He doesn’t end the year by being baptized or believing in Jesus Christ as his Savior. What stood out to me, though, was the utter futility of his attempt at following the law. He chronicles his struggles attempting to not touch anything his menstruating wife or any other woman had been in contact with- as this would make him unclean. As he attempts to follow the Ten Commandments, it becomes even more difficult. How on earth can a person walk down the street in New York City and not struggle with number 6? How can he read the newspaper without experiencing envy? How can he pray without believing in a personal, real, God? How can he call Jesus Lord apart from faith?

To we who believe that is the whole point. He CAN’T!!! This is actually shown in his writing. Jacobs decides to spend 9 months of the year on the Old Testament and the last 3 on the New. It becomes clear that following the “law” in the New Testament is quite difficult. There is very little to follow! He doesn’t even deal with those sections of scripture that clearly state Jesus was the fulfillment of the law, or that exempts Christians from certain aspects of the ceremonial law (try reading Acts and not getting that circumcision is not necessary for Christians)! Apart from faith in Jesus, the New Testament doesn’t make much sense. It really isn’t a great moral textbook. It doesn’t give lots of crazy laws to follow. Instead, it gives us Jesus Christ, the one who actually did live perfectly according to the law. It gives us his life as a sacrifice, and his resurrection as our certain hope that we will arise with him. It gives us forgiveness for all of our mistakes. This Jesus gives us a new life through baptism and bowls our world over. Jesus changes everything.

Jacobs ends his year and goes back to his former life. Sure, he has changed a few of his habits. But mostly he is relieved to not have to follow all those rules. He misses the entire point, the one thing that sets Christianity apart from all other religions. He misses Jesus. I pray that you don’t!

Deaconess Sarah Sacco

## American Idols

No, I'm not talking about the popular television show. Although it may reflect the topic in its glamour and glitz. In our Sunday morning adult class, we've been studying Isaiah. And one particular theme we noted was God's response to the people's needs for idols – big ones, little ones, gold-plated, silver-plated, all shapes and sizes – people believing in all sorts of gods, represented by little idols they fashioned with their own hands. The Lord challenged the people to have their idols foretell the future. He challenged them to make any impact upon this world. He noted how they could not even move themselves, they had to be loaded on the back of an ass and hauled from the store to the home. And then when put in place on the family shelf, they had to be nailed down so as not to fall over. The Lord does have a sense of humor.

Now I have noted that when I visit your homes, you are a little bit different from the people of Isaiah's day. You don't have a special little altar and shelf in your living rooms for your family idols. You haven't been down shopping at "Idols R Us" for the latest carved wood, gold plated idol of the week. But does idolatry still exist in our modern society? Are there "American Idols"? Oh, yes. We no longer bow down to idols and images crafted of clay or wood or silver and gold. No, instead we worship at the altar of the god of self. This brand of modern idolatry can take various forms.

First, we worship at the *altar of materialism* which feeds our need to build our egos through the acquisition of more and more "stuff." Our homes are filled with all manner of possessions (your pastor included). We build bigger and bigger houses with more closets and storage space in order to house all the things we buy, much of which we haven't even paid for yet. Most of our stuff has "planned obsolescence" built into it, making it useless in no time, and so we consign it to the garage or other storage space. [There is another special option coming up: you can donate it to the Church Parking Lot Sale next month to support our Ukraine mission!]

But then, having cleared some space, we rush out to buy the newest item, garment or gadget and the whole process starts over. This insatiable desire for more, better, and newer stuff is nothing more than covetousness. The Tenth Commandment tells us not to fall victim to coveting: "You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor" (Exodus 20:17). God doesn't just want to rain on our buying sprees. God wants to bless us. But He knows we will never be happy indulging our materialistic desires because it is Satan's trap to keep our focus on ourselves and not on Him.

God tried to redirect the people's hearts through Isaiah. Maybe He is trying to redirect ours. It was reported in the news this week that the world economy may not recover as fast as hoped. Why? Because Americans were not spending! The global economy has come to expect our excessive American spending. But the current recession has us becoming more and more cautious, saving more, and spending less. Maybe the recession can be a positive force, helping to redirect the priorities in our lives.

At its core, all idolatry of self has the three lusts found in 1 John 2:16: "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." If we are to escape modern idolatry, we have to admit that it is rampant and reject it in all its forms. It is not of God, but of Satan, and in it we will never find fulfillment. This is the great lie and the same one Satan has been telling since he first lied to Adam and Eve. Sadly, we are still falling for it. Even more sadly, many churches are propagating it in the preaching of the health, wealth, and prosperity gospel built on the idol of self-esteem. But we will never find happiness focusing on ourselves. Our hearts and minds must be centered on God and on others. This is why when asked what is the greatest commandment, Jesus replied, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind" (Matthew 22:37). When we love the Lord and others with everything that is in us, there will be no room in our hearts for idolatry.

Your servant in Christ Jesus,

*Pastor Ron*

## Ukraine Mission Trip 2009

We arrived in Odessa the afternoon of June 4<sup>th</sup>. We were warmly greeted in the Odessa airport by Pastor Sasha & Olga, a past interpreter from the local Lutheran Church. The next day we drove out to the seminary, which is still under construction. The first thing we noticed was the attractive fence and gate that surrounded the site. This fence was financed by Rock of Ages and had a lovely plaque that read "Thanks be to God for the "Rock of Ages" Lutheran Church, Colorado Springs, CO USA for their support in building of this fence". Pastor Sasha gave us a tour of the facility, which has made significant progress since last year, but still needs several rooms completed before they can start operations of the seminary.

From Odessa we traveled to the village of Kagarlyk where we first ministered in 2008. The church in Kagarlyk no longer has a vicar as their leader and is now being lead by their elder Mikhail (Mesha) with visits from Pastor Sasha for communion. Most of our ministry was targeted to the kids again. We saw many of the same children that we saw last year plus a few new ones. The kids really liked the sports balls we brought them and convinced us to play with them. The skits, songs, and crafts all went well with the kids.

Elder Mesha was really thrilled for the gift to the congregation of the DVD player and audio system along with the DVDs.

Mesha made arrangements for us to meet the mayor of the village who helped us in the distribution of blankets/quilts and work gloves. The mayor drove Mesha, John Y, John B, & Larysa around in his little Lada (Russian car) to some of the very poor people in the village that we hadn't previously known about. The gifts were much appreciated by those whom we were able to meet.

On Sunday we attended worship service with our host congregation. The service was well attended. John B gave a message on the theme "Man's labor and the rest we have in Christ" and we sang a hymn. A Christ Candle was given to the congregation along with gifts of work gloves, children's winter gloves & hats, sewing materials, soaps, and reading glasses.

After Odessa and Kagarlyk, we are off to Mykolaiv. We took Larysa to the bus and picked up another translator, Viktor. In Mykolaiv we met the Miller family and were received with much warmth and love. They are the pattern of Christian families. We met our second translator who was already there, Peter.

On the first full day in Mykolaiv we started by going to the men's mentally handicapped home, where John Y. gave a short presentation trying to teach them the importance of prayer. We are always so well received by the staff there. We were able to leave playing cards with the caregivers and distributed the ball caps, and sunglasses to individual members of the center.

After getting back to Miller's for lunch we rushed to Yura Maskov's church to do the skits and crafts with about 20 children and then played outside with the parachute.

The next morning took us to the boy's rehabilitation center, where we did our skits, taught them the silly songs that they just loved and enjoyed the wreath craft. We gave them the things we had bought for them (underwear & socks), plus some soccer and basketball and some ping-pong paddles and balls. Most of the gifts had to be left with the caregivers, along with some basic fishing gear for the boys who get to go fishing in the river.

That afternoon we went to Yura's church again. We did the Easter skit and the cross craft and played with the parachute again. The children demanded a repeat of Dustin's song.

We then spent some time with the Miller's, visited the sanctuary and gave him the Christ candle. Then we set out for a picnic prepared by Gena Miller, he seems like he always has time to spend with us and then prepare a wonderful meal on the riverbank that was enjoyed by all. The boys all went swimming in the cold river.

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## Ukraine Mission Trip 2009 – continued

Our mission trip after Mykolaiv continued on to Yalta area of Crimea. We drove all day by bus. The local Pastor, Rudolph Krause meet us in Yalta. It turns out he booked a hotel near where he lives, which actually was better for us as a group and allowed us to know Pastor Rudolph and his family better. We took two casual meals out with him and his family and were able to visit and have fun. We also did some swimming in the Black Sea and sight seeing of Yalta that was easier done by staying near.

We visited the TB sanatorium in Alupka over the course of three days, with approximately two one-hour sessions each day. The groups we visited were the youngest and middle-aged children. Some children were in beds and being actively treated, while others were there for summer rehabilitation. We shared our skits and songs over the three days and crafts over two. Songs that involved participation from the groups were best received. We sang Father Abraham in English and Rudolph led the groups in Russian. Dustin gave his message to the middle-aged children.

We also visited a special education school and performed a skit, sang songs, and completed a craft. This was our first visit to this facility. It is the same facility where Pastor Rudolph has conducted his weekly worship services.

We visited the elderly women's center again this year. We sang hymns with Rudolph playing guitar and reading a Psalm. John B. gave a short message.

The culmination of our visit was a church service with Pastor Krause and his congregation. We sang for them and Steve gave his message. We presented a Christ candle to him.

Next, our mission trip included our first visit to a city on the Dnieper River. Although we were unsure of the reason for our travel to East-Central Ukraine, we made our plans to include Dnepropetrovsk as Pastor Alexey had requested. We took the night train from our Crimean mission area. It was a first for most of us to travel by train across country in a sleeper car.

Alexey met us at the train station with a van. He took us to the apartment where he had made arrangements for us to stay. It is used for Christian university students that need housing. All but one of the students, Rodion, were away for summer break and so we all had a bed and a shower.

After some site seeing in the morning, we ate lunch at a mall and then we walked the riverfront "board walk". We meet up with Rodion here and then all of us took the van over the home of a special Christian family.

This is where we learned one of the reasons Alexey brought us here. We meet the man (Viktor) behind the broadcasts for Alpha and Omega. He, along with his family, record and produce a monthly Christian broadcast for T.V. We saw samples of their work and learned more about this tremendous outreach. Viktor gave us samples of the broadcast and a DVD on the Alpha and Omega program. We got to see the offices of A & O and the inner workings of this group. When we left we understand the vast audience this group reaches every year.

After dinner, we head back to the apartment and stay up late sharing with Rodion about our mission and his journey of faith.

The next morning we meet up with Pastor Alexey to go over our trip and make plans for the next year. Afterwards we drove to a neighboring village, Zarya, to visit a school. Many children greeted us, some of which dressed in traditional Ukraine clothing and brought us a loaf of friendship bread. It is to be offered around until every shares of the bread. We were lead through the school by the headmaster, Sveta -who is also very active in the A & O. She showed us all the specials and regular curriculum. Pastor Alexey is allowed to teach Christian ethics in this public school. After the tour we were invited to her home where she and her mother served a lavish lunch. We ate, visited, and really enjoyed ourselves.

The last thing we did was to attend a special church service at Alexey's church back in Dnepro. He planned it for our visit. Many young adults came. We sang songs and Steve and John B. were able to share their short messages with them. We gave him a gift of the Christ candle before we all left. Then we took the train again, with Alexey leading us, back to Odessa for our trip home.

## Parish Ministry Assistant

Jesus replied, *"I tell you the truth, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only can you do what was done to the fig tree, but also you can say to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and it will be done. If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer."* Matthew 21:21-22

*"And pray that we may be delivered from wicked and evil men, for not everyone has faith."* 2 Thesalonians 3:2

\* \* \*

Grace, peace, and faith from our one true God--the Holy Trinity--Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Toward the beginning of the Book of Revelation when Jesus talks to the churches, a recurrent theme of His is *perseverance*--not losing faith no matter what. He seems concerned that even in the church where faith is a gift of the Holy Spirit, His people may fall away from trusting in Him for all needs--physical, material, and spiritual. The world we live in certainly encourages this.

The devil, the world, and our sinful selves (the terrible trinity) doesn't want us to completely trust God for everything. It doesn't want us to pray to the Lord and have faith. It wants us to put our trust in princes (just the opposite of Psalm 118:9 and 146:3), to rely on self as our only savior, and depend upon the schemes, gadgets, and intellect of mortal man. This not the faith of Holy Scripture.

True faith is ... *"being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see."* Hebrews 11:1, and ... *"Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ."* Romans 10:17.

The people of the Old Testament had faith in the promise of the coming of the Messiah. We have faith that our God the Messiah has come and reigns in our Savior Jesus Christ--who died on a cross for our sins and rose again in victory taking our sins away giving us the faith to believe in Him by the power of His Holy Spirit. All of the accounts in the Bible leading up to Jesus and following Jesus are not just stories. They are the Word of God and they accomplish what God wants them to (Isaiah 55:11) and God cannot be mocked (Galatians 6:7).

In these tough social, economical, and spiritual times we are now in I want to encourage you even more so to pray for even more faith and put all your trust in the One who measures all the waters of the earth in the hollow of His hand (Isaiah 40 :12). We have and will see changes in our lives that may shake our faith from time to time, but we can be confident that our God is in control and that He will never change (Malachi 3:6). So pray to the Father, trust in the forgiveness won for us by Jesus on a cross and in an empty tomb, and depend upon the Holy Spirit to get you through this life. In other words--have faith in our Triune God for everything, in the good times and especially in the tough times. Amen.

Faithfully in Him,

Troy Dieters, Parish Ministry Assistant

## Library—Monthly Featured Item

### **"Solomon: The Bible (1997) NR"**

King Solomon's ascent -- from a young man to a sovereign famous for his wisdom and international coalitions -- is recounted in this two-part, made-for-TV movie. Part 1 depicts the rivalry between Solomon (Ben Cross) and his half-brother. Defeating his older brother, Solomon is crowned King of Israel and rules the land with love, peace, and respect. Part 2 ex-

plores the notion that Solomon and the Queen of Sheba (Vivica A. Fox) shared more than just a political partnership. He meets the beautiful Queen of Sheba when she visits his kingdom and when she returns to her own lands, becomes bereft of her absence and falls into a deep depression, departing from his once idyllic world of peace and luxury while his kingdom threatens to collapse. The script interleaves background information to provide a historical framework. (Both parts: 172 minutes)



**"TRUST IN THE LORD FOREVER, FOR THE  
LORD GOD IS AN EVERLASTING ROCK."  
ISAIAH 26:4**

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**Newsletter Deadline  
September 16, 2009**

**LUTHERAN HOUR TIME**  
Sun. 7:30 a.m. KZNT 1640 AM

## **Ladies of Rock of Ages**

### **You are Invited!**

**Tuesday Sept 22<sup>nd</sup> 7pm Rock of Ages  
Devotion time, meeting, and fellowship!**

**Dessert and drink provided!**

**New faces welcomed!**

**Hope and pray to see you there!**

**Ladies Guild/LWML 2009-2010**



## **FUNDS UPDATE**

Building Fund = \$195.00  
Scholarship Fund = \$9,147.75  
Capital Improvement Fund = \$14,247.52  
Ukraine Fund = \$2,634.00



# **Rally Day**

**Sunday, August 30th**

We start the day with Worship at 9:00 a.m.  
followed by our Rally Day Program outside  
And the Church Picnic at 11:30 a.m. sponsored by  
Thrivent Financial for Lutherans

The children have been doing an "animal" theme for  
the summer and will have fun bringing all of their  
lessons together on this day.

Should be lots of fun so plan to attend!!!

## **Sunday School**

Hello To All!

The summer has come and gone! Thanks for  
joining us for Rally Day! It was a great time! I  
would like to thank all of the Summer Sunday  
School teachers for their help in making Sum-  
mer Sunday School a success. Now we are  
geared up with a great group of teachers for  
Fall/Winter and looking forward to working  
with a great group of kids and young adults! If  
you would still like to help out please don't  
hesitate to get more details and join us! Please  
keep the Sunday School Program in your  
prayers and keep an eye out for all the fun  
events coming up.

In His Name,  
Karen Bodine  
SS Superintendent

