

THE ROCK

Issue No. 5

May 2012

Special Dates

- April 29 Commissioning of Ukraine Team
- May 1 Elders meeting
- May 3 Thursday Morning Bible Study
- May 6 Voters Meeting
- May 8 Circuit Pastors meet at Family of Christ
- May 10 Ukraine Team meets
- May 11 Ukraine Team Meets
- May 12 Youth Group Service project
- May 14 Book Club
- May 15 Ladies Guild Salad Supper
- May 17 Church Council
- May 18 Songwriters
- May 20 Graduate Recognition
- May 20 Young Adults go Bowling
- May 21 Ladies Bible Study
- May 23 VBS Meeting
- May 24 Preschool Graduation
- May 27 Commissioning of Ukraine Team
- May 28 Office Closed
- Ukraine Team leaves
- May 31 Thursday Morning Bible Study

Inside this Issue

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Move On | 2 |
| VBS | 2 |
| Sports Team Update | 3 |
| Library Selection of the Month | 3 |
| Westside Cares | 4 |
| Funds Update | 4 |
| Book Club | 4 |

Rooted and Established in Love

“I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.” Ephesians 3:16-19

The week after Easter I was puttering in the garden- soaking up the warm sunshine as I once again searched for a tiny sprout. It had been over a month since I put the asparagus root crowns in the ground. They had arrived looking lifeless- woody and seemingly worthless. I had faithfully followed the instructions and excavated a foot deep bed, amending the soil as the roots soaked in warm water. I covered them a couple of inches, watered, and waited. And waited.

That sunny early afternoon I decided I once again needed to water the patch. Perhaps, just perhaps they were close to sprouting??? Then, as the water soaked into the parched earth I saw them. Two tiny, purplish little Asparagus shoots. Hurray! It was maybe 3 p.m. A couple of hours later I dragged my family out into the garden to share the joy. I looked and looked for those teeny bits of life to no avail.

“Is this it- it sure looks like Asparagus” Anthony said. It was. But it was NOT the same shoot I had seen before. It was on the other end of the bed. In three hours this other shoot not only broke ground but grew over 6 inches tall. Yes- SIX inches! Miraculous!

Regardless of the miracle that God created in the ground, that Asparagus shoot is not destined for my plate. To properly **establish** an asparagus bed it is necessary to wait a couple of years to harvest. The plant needs the time to properly **root**. If everything goes well the plants should live for decades, growing spears of delicious goodness each spring.

Jesus, given his cultural milieu, often illustrated spiritual truth with agricultural common sense. As I pondered that miraculous Asparagus spear (and believe me I was excited for DAYS) I was reminded of Ephesians. How incredibly gracious is our God- who lovingly plants and tends to us even as we are fully dead in sin. He soaks us in the life-giving waters of baptism, crucifying our sinful nature with him on the cross. He plants the seed of faith in our hearts, and then roots and establishes that seed within us, helping us to walk the new life as we grow in him.

Thankfully, God continues to cultivate- rooting and establishing us in Him. He causes us to be filled with His Word, to be watered with the Spirit. He continues to offer this free gift of faith- working on the roots beneath what often appears to be barren soil. It may take years. But one day, the seedling reaches towards His Light. The miracle happens as faith grows and produces fruit.

What a miracle! Thank God!

Move On!

One of my favorite verses is Exodus 14:15. The Israelites, having just gained their freedom, are by the Red Sea when the Egyptians appear in hot pursuit. Moses tells the people that “the Lord will fight for you, you need only to be still.” But God answers Moses by saying, “Why are you crying out to me? Tell the Israelites to move on.”

There may be times when God tells **us** to move on. Like the Israelites, God may need us to move to finish what’s started. Or, maybe it’s time to get on to the next thing and let God take over. During last year’s trip to Ukraine, I heard God say, “Move on.”

As we headed to Savron, Ukraine, I was eagerly anticipating our reunion with Misha, a teenage orphan that the team had met the previous year. Misha is a sweet, gentle and kind young man with a firm faith. During the 2010 trip, Misha hauled our bags up the (very) steep staircase to our rooms. He climbed to the top of the cherry tree to bring me the best cherries. And during our few exchanges, aided by the translator, Misha impressed me with his enthusiasm for God. I couldn’t wait to see him and his shy smile again.

When we arrived in Savron, we were greeted by Pastor Kola and his family with big smiles and hugs all around. We saw many of the orphans we had met the previous year but no Misha. When I asked Pastor Kola, his face fell. He told us that Misha, over objections, had moved to Odessa to find a job. The last Pastor knew, Misha was in prison.

It felt like I had been kicked in the gut, thinking about Misha in prison. How God could allow this to happen to him? I prayed that night for Misha’s protection, for his health but mostly, I was sad to think about what could be happening to this sweet young man.

The next morning, as we drove to an orphanage and me still feeling despondent, God said, “Move on.” I opened my Bible to the verse in Exodus and this time, read on. After God says to move, he stands between His people and their enemy. He makes it dark on one side and light on the other. It would have been difficult for the Israelites to know what was happening but at the end, they saw the great power that God displayed and trusted Him.

Just like the Israelites, I didn’t know what had happened to Misha - and still don’t. But just like at the dry bottom of the Red Sea, God has not left Misha. Our great God, mighty and awesome, still defends the cause of the fatherless. (Deuteronomy 10: 17-18) However, it was time for me to move forward. I knew I would continue to pray for Misha but that day, God had other work planned to reveal His power and I needed to trust that He had things well in hand.

It’s now time to move on from last year’s trip. As great as it is to remember His awesome displays, it’s just as good to see what He has planned. With this year’s team coming back in a month, soon we will have new stories of God’s continuing display of power and glory in Ukraine.

Karen Twenhafel

Amazing Desert Journey

Vacation Bible School July 16th—20th
8:30 - 11:30 a.m.



Rock of Ages Sports Report

Hello sports fans! With the spring season here, and summer fast approaching, your ROA sports team members are gearing up for softball season. Our coed league begins the first week of June, with our first practice on Sunday, May 20th at 12:30p at Vermijo Park. Stay tuned to the weekly bulletin and Rock of Ages website for more details, along with our summer schedule.

It should be a fun and action packed season of coed softball, as we look to improve on our 2nd place division finish from a year ago, and see if we can finish with a winning record. However, most importantly we wish to enjoy our time together, sharing in Christian fellowship, always keeping in mind that we are representing our Lord and congregation out in the world.

Once again, the ROA sports teams would like to thank everyone for their contributions at our annual Lenten dinner (the Greek dinner). The money raised goes towards paying the league registration fees for our softball and volleyball teams. We certainly appreciate the congregation's continued support.

Spring is here. The Easter celebration is in full affect. He is Risen, He is Risen Indeed! Now.....get outside and enjoy His Creation!

-Jim Kuehnert

Library—Monthly Featured Items

"DRAGONS OR DINOSAURS? Creation or Evolution" - DVD from the producers of "Left Behind: The Movie"

Dragon images and legends exist all over the world and in nearly every culture. But what if dragons were actually dinosaurs? The popular understanding of the dinosaur era is often used to discredit the Bible's teaching of creation, a young early earth, and Noah's flood. But what if the existence of dinosaurs actually proves what the Bible says?

This documentary is filled with cutting edge research, recent incredible discoveries, and remarkable answers for both young and old. It presents startling and verifiable evidence that humans walked with dinosaurs.



HUMOR FOR THE MONTH -

Sunday after church, a Mom asked her very young daughter what the lesson was about. The daughter answered, "Don't be scared, you'll get your quilt." Needless to say, the Mom was perplexed. Later in the day, the pastor stopped by for tea and the Mom asked him what that morning's Sunday school lesson was about. He said "Be not afraid, thy comforter is coming."

While driving in Pennsylvania, a family caught up to an Amish carriage. The owner of the carriage obviously had a sense of humor, because attached to the back of the carriage was a hand printed sign. "Energy efficient vehicle: Runs on oats and grass. Caution: Do not step in exhaust."

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

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ITEMS FOR DONATIONS FOR WESTSIDE CARES FOR MAY ARE:

Pasta & Sauces

**Newsletter Deadline
May 16, 2012**

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

Upcoming Book Club Selections:

May: Brennan Manning [The Ragamuffin Gospel](#) Are you bedraggled, beat-up, burnt-out? Most of us believe in God’s grace—in theory. But somehow we can’t seem to apply it in our daily lives. We continue to see Him as a small-minded bookkeeper, tallying our failures and successes on a score sheet. Yet God gives us His grace, willingly, no matter what we’ve done. We come to Him as ragamuffins—dirty, bedraggled, and beat-up. And when we sit at His feet, He smiles upon us, the chosen objects of His “furious love.” (description from amazon.com)

June/July: [Man Seeks God](#): by Eric Weiner- When [Eric Weiner](#) is hospitalized and thinks he might be dying (of what turns out to be gas), a nurse asks him “Have you found your God yet?” Weiner, who, like me, grew up as a secular Jew, is hit with an epiphany. He hasn’t. Upon regaining his health, Weiner, a former NPR correspondent, immerses himself in eight different faiths, a mere sampling of the 9,900 religions currently available. The eclectic pilgrimage results in “[Man Seeks God](#)” in which he hopes to get in touch with his dormant spiritual side, for as he says, “Good religion elevates us, makes us better people than we thought we were, than we thought possible. (review by Brian Franzen- published in Washington Post online)

August/September: [Blue Like Jazz](#)- "I never liked jazz music because jazz music doesn't resolve. I used to not like God because God didn't resolve. But that was before any of this happened." —Donald Miller

In Donald Miller's early years, he was vaguely familiar with a distant God. But when he came to know Jesus Christ, he pursued the Christian life with great zeal. Within a few years he had a successful ministry that ultimately left him feeling empty, burned out, and, once again, far away from God. In this intimate, soul-searching account, Miller describes his remarkable journey back to a culturally relevant, infinitely loving God. (book description from Amazon.com)

Disclaimer: The Books chosen for discussion in Book Club do not necessarily reflect LCMS doctrine, beliefs, or practice. Many times they are chosen for this reason! Whether you agree with all that you read, or find yourself disagreeing heartily, it adds to the discussion and we can learn from each other.



FUNDS UPDATE

Building Fund = \$210.00
Scholarship Fund = \$14,151.85
Capital Improvement Fund = \$16,949.47
Ukraine Fund = \$3910.32

