

*"May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all." 2 Cor. 13:14.*

## Grace and Peace

One of the underlying purposes of creating the Updates is to seek to interpret what God is doing at Lutheran Church of Hope and in the wider world. The definition of leadership which I emphasized in the ABLE: All Believers Lead course is as follows, "A leader helps create, articulate, and implement a vision." All three of these activities are essential to leadership, creating, articulating and implementing.

What the pastors seek to do in the Update is to respond to the second of these responsibilities of leaders, that is, to articulate God's vision, to interpret how that vision is being realized in the midst of the Christian community. Even though the task is always far beyond our own struggling efforts, who in the world can truly discern all that God is up to, the enterprise is worth our time and attention. At Hope right now it seems as if the Holy Spirit is transforming us all over again, in a myriad of ways, and it is important, I think, that we slow down long enough to try and understand it.

Thus in the next three Updates we will have this kind of reflection taking place. In this session Tina Rasmussen, our Women's Ministry Director will focus on a recent event in the Women's Ministry called Worshipalooza. Next week Pastor Pat Quaid will reminisce about Mission Jamaica, where 36 Hope leaders went to work, visit, witness and discern what God is doing in that third-world setting. And then in two weeks Pastor Richard Webb will reflect on the phenomenon which is called "Immersion," a Thursday evening worship event which is helping to create a new community of believers and disciples.

The specific Women's Ministry as it is understood and organized today began as recently as the spring of 2002. Some 70 women came together in a focus

group setting to try and discern God's vision for such a ministry at Lutheran Church of Hope, and then planning how to articulate and implement that vision. Two basic priorities were lifted up which eventually became the core of the mission statement:

1. The need for women to grow in their relationship with God.
2. The need for women to connect with other women.

At the same time the group decided to form an organizational structure around the insights of book that had been introduced by Pastor Mike to the staff entitled "Doing Church as A Team", by Wayne Cordeiro. To help coordinate the various teams a leadership team was put into place with the intriguing name of W.I.L.D., which is an acronym for "Women In Leadership Development."

Also coming out this time of discernment was the realization that worship is the most important event in the life of the congregation, and in the life of each Christian woman. Thus it was determined that worship would be strongly emphasized along with new opportunities. With this as background, one of the teams described above, led by Suzy Lowe came up with a new and stellar idea, that is, hosting a worship event with the title of Worshipalooza.

What is worshipalooza? In my persistent efforts to truly understand the phenomenon, I went on line to look under the rubric of "lollapalooza." The American Dictionary of the English Language said that lollapalooza is "something outstanding of its kind." All over the Web under this name is a rock musical group, supposedly devotees of alternative rock. I also remember when I was much younger there was some ice-cream parlor which served

something called a lollapalooza, which became their signature offering.

In this case worshipalooza was designed to be a huge celebration, a three-hour, multi-faceted, interactive worship experience. When word went out throughout Hope and into the community, the response was overwhelming, more than 400 women bought the \$1 admission tickets and many purchased tickets for neighbors, friends, co-workers, and family members; mothers, daughters, sisters, etc. Also each member of the leadership team as well as those who signed up were encouraged to do the Hope thing, which is invite, invite, invite others to come. When the Friday evening came around late in January, more than five hundred women flocked to the church to participate in this amazing palooza.

Worship was organized around four specific activities, again using an acronym, ACTS. The first part of the worship experience was "Adoration," utilizing hymns, songs and prayers which focused on the adoration of God and of Jesus Christ. Remember the words of the familiar song, "Father I adore you, Lay my life before you, How I love you." Adoration.

The second portion of the service centered on "Confession," beginning with a short talk on the importance of confession, moving into some video descriptions and then offering a confession cross and prayer stations. Confession and Absolution are always staples of Lutheran worship, and this was an essential part of worshipalooza.

After an intermission, the second half of the service continued with a time for "Thanksgiving." Each woman was asked the question, "For what are you thankful tonight?" Hymns of thanksgiving, readings, prayers followed. A public time of prayer was offered where people were encouraged to shout out things for which they were indeed thankful.

The final segment of the worship was that of "Supplication," which involves intercession, praying for each other, for the world, for the church, for whatever concerns were on the heart of the worshipper. The story from John 4 of the woman at the well became a teaching moment, as this woman

was transformed by Jesus Christ and went out to become one of the first witnesses and proclaimers of the Gospel.

Worshipalooza was a watershed event all by itself, but it also has led to increased involvement by women in Bible Study and discipleship. More than 200 women are now involved in neighborhood Bible studies, and many more are now participating in the Purpose Driven Life series during Lent. A followup event is being planned for March 6 entitled "Transformed By The Truth," focusing on how to separate truth from falsehood in modern culture, led by Joyce Feddersen.

God is doing something profound today in the women's ministry of Lutheran Church of Hope. Worshipalooza proved to live up to its name, a worship experience which was "something outstanding of its kind."