



the

Care Giver

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Christ caring for people

through people



Thanksgiving from the Bible

He brought us to this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey and now I bring the first fruits of the soil that you, O Lord, have given me. Place the basket before the Lord your God and bow down before Him. Deuteronomy 26:9-10

Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine. Proverbs 3:9-10

Therefore the **LORD HIMSELF**
WILL GIVE YOU A SIGN:

Behold

*the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and shall call His name*

IMMANUEL.

ISAIAH 7:14

IT'S NO WONDER, then that the greatest gift God gives is His presence. His name is Immanuel-God with us.

For God to be with us indicates that He has dealt with our sin. Experiencing His divine presence also means that, no matter who is against us, every resource of heaven is at our disposal. Knowing that He is with us is testimony to His tender love—and nothing can ever separate us from that love.

"CHIT CHAT"

with Linda J

The Four Secrets of Optimism

Recently I came upon a Yahoo News story entitled "**The Four Secrets of Optimism.**" I read the piece and thought it was good, but it was anti-climatic because something very important was missing—God. Here is the original printed report.

"Not only is life hard, it can unexpectedly become harder. One day we might be comfortably cruising along, and then suddenly it seems like everything is going wrong. Your marriage is in a shambles, or you've just discovered that you're not as financially stable as you thought, or you suddenly lose a friend or family member. The world has changed. Everything seems ominous and uncertain.

That's when you can fall into the trap of pessimism and negativity. It may seem like the natural thing to do given what you're going through. How can we work on building a healthy and optimistic way of living when we're overcome with pain, anxiety and fear?

But no matter how hard things become, there are ways to approach your situation that can make it less burdensome.

Here are four ways to stay positive when life gets you down:

Express Gratitude: *Be mindful about what you do have, whether it's a fantastic friend or a wonderful spouse. Try making a list of things you're grateful for every night for two weeks. It can be even more powerful to express gratitude to someone whom you feel truly thankful for. Write them a letter telling them how they have helped you. Additionally, try to cultivate a sense of gratitude in everyday life for things both major and minor. Thank that stranger who goes a little out of his way to hold the door for you. Appreciating the good in the world can change the way you look at life.*

Volunteer: *Take your awareness outside of yourself and focus it on the wellbeing of others. This may not be possible if you're in crisis mode, but it can be very helpful if you're increasingly preoccupied by your own negative thoughts. Many studies have shown that community service and philanthropy are more satisfying over the long term than focusing on your problems. Try volunteering at your local library, homeless shelter or hospital. You can become less focused on the bad stuff you've been dealing with—and even form a connection with others in the process.*

Notice the Good: *It might seem nearly impossible to find the silver lining in a burdensome situation, but it can be helpful. Maybe you've gone through some personal growth and change because of what's happened, or you've become closer to someone.*

Change Negative Self-Talk: *It is way too easy to think the same negative thoughts over and over again. However, you can learn to change this by doing some cognitive-behavioral therapy on yourself. When you notice yourself having a negative thought about yourself, replace it with a positive one. If you find yourself thinking "It's all my fault" or "I'm not good enough," stop and remind yourself of how well you've been doing and how others appreciate you.*

The bottom line on becoming and remaining optimistic: *We can't*

change what happens to us or to loved ones, but we can change how we react to it. And though that process may take some time, it's worth it because of the joy and peace of mind optimism can bring."

As Christians and Stephen Ministers we immediately see the missing piece of this story. We know we can't be optimistic or anything else without first having God in our lives. Sure, people always try to fix everything by themselves, but we know the real truth is to always put our faith and trust in God before we do anything. He wants us to talk with Him regularly, share our ups and downs with Him and He wants us to give him thanks and praise.

With a little editing here is how I would add God to each of the four positive listings. (from Keeping God In The Small Stuff)

EXPRESS GRATITUDE: Begin everyday with God so you can remember what He did for you yesterday. Reflect on the small stuff God has accomplished in your life, sit quietly in the early morning with your Bible and your coffee and just reflect. Let God speak to you from His Word, and then close your eyes and let Him bring to mind the wonderful things He did for you yesterday. Soon the little remembrances will dawn on you and wash over you like a sweet scent, and you will realize that God is going to do it all over again today.

VOLUNTEER: God doesn't want us to ignore the "real world." He wants us to bring a spiritual dimension into it. Jesus walked the streets and met the people. He was moved with compassion and responded to the hurts and needs of the people. He connected with people and brought the kingdom of God to them. Worship God today by connecting with the people around you and letting them see God's nature in you.

NOTICE THE GOOD: When you see God in the small stuff, your life becomes more meaningful. We like to compare seeing God in the small stuff to looking at the stars. If you've never studied astronomy, you could look at the stars all night long and never know anything about them. The sight would be beautiful, but your appreciation would be limited. However, if you were to do a little study, get a star chart, and plunk yourself down with a telescope, those little points of light would take on much more meaning and significance.

It's the same with the small point of light in your life—the places where God is working. If you don't make an effort to know God, if you don't read the Bible regularly, if you don't try to look at your circumstances more closely you'll miss out on the amazing things God is doing now and wants to do in the future.

CHANGE NEGATIVE SELF-TALK: The key to knowing yourself is to know your Creator better. It seems like everybody is trying to get to know themselves better, and there are plenty of people ready to tell you how to "tap the power within" or get acquainted with "your inner child." While there is value to knowing what you can do to improve your life, we would suggest that you spend more time focused on God than on yourself. Studying and learning about one's self isn't that hard. We are with ourselves 24-hours a day. But, God is different. Studying and learning about Him takes a lifetime, and even then we barely scratch the surface. Getting to know God better inevitably leads to knowing ourselves better. God created us in His own image. His imprint is on our lives. As we get closer to Him, we will get closer to who we really are.



of Humble Servants

In mid-October our Stephen Ministers had the opportunity to participate in the “Project Community Connect” program at the Fargo Dome.

“Project Community Connect” is a program by the F-M Coalition for Homeless Persons, the VA, Hope Lutheran Church and many other groups. Together these groups team up to provide services for those who are homeless or at risk of being homeless. Our Stephen Ministers’ function at this event was to listen to and pray with individuals in need of spiritual support.

Thank you to the twelve Stephen Ministers who graciously shared their time and gifts to those in need.



Stephen Ministry table at Project Community Connect

Some comments from Stephen Ministers regarding the homeless...

“A very humbling experience,” says Connie Carlsrud. “When I went there, the first people I saw were a young woman and her little girl sitting on a package of Pampers. It was amazing to see all the services that were offered. Kay and I had a conversation with a man who was a Christian, knew his scriptures and we joined hands and prayed for each other. He said the best thing God did for him was to put him in jail when he was 20 years old. That’s where he found Jesus.”

“It was amazing when you walked through the door and saw so many people,” says Gin Mason. “It was for a good cause and yet it was sad at the same time. I asked myself why is homelessness happening? I felt blessed that I was able to be at the Stephen Ministry table. I saw how people were hungry to read and hear God’s word. People that had very little or nothing at all were reaching out to the Lord. I was privileged to pray with a couple of people and I noticed how after prayer they somehow appeared different, like they had given their burdens over to Christ. I guess I will never know if I made a difference in someone’s life that day. One thing is for sure: I got to meet some of God’s children and spread His love to them through me.”



Connie Carlsrud



Stephanie Elsner



Traci Lavelle



Gin Mason



Chuck Olson



Maria Roesch



Pat Stoderl



Kay Swenson



Amy Tronsgard



Margaret Vollmuth



Gail Zehren



Kim Youngquist

Events for November & December 2011

November 3

Ministry Enrichment 6:30-7:30pm NC Birthright FM, Inc.
 Supervision 7:30-8:30pm NC Treats - Chuck O/Devotions - Pat S

November 17

Salvation Army Bell Ringing (see schedule below)

Supervision 8:00-9:00pm coffee house or restaurants. (Your Small Group Facilitator will be in touch with you regarding details.)

December 1

Ministry Enrichment 6:30-7:30pm SC Speaker from Alzheimers Accociation
 Supervision 7:30-8:30pm SC Treats & Devotions - Linda J

December 15

Christmas Fellowship 6:00-9:00pm SC (See details on page 3)

Stephen Ministry Salvation Army Bell Ringing

Thursday November 17 7:00 – 8:00pm

GROUP I

Village West Hornbachers
 Gin Mason
 Chuck Olson
 Stephanie Elsner

GROUP II

West Acres Food Court
 Gail Zehren
 Amy Tronsgard

GROUP III

Scheels on 45th
 Linda Jemtrud
 Denise Hudson

Gordmans

Traci Lavelle
 Kay Swenson

Cash Wise on 13th

Priscilla Smith
 Connie Carlsrud
 Pat Stoderl

Gander Mountain

Dave Olson
 Lis Nyhus
 Maria Roesch

**STOP.
 LOOK.
 LISTEN.**

Please contact Gin or your Small Group Facilitator if you are going to be absent for Supervision. It is very important that each Stephen Minister do a Check-In on your caring relationship twice a month!

Happy Birthday

Traci Lavelle.....November 9
 Amy Tronsgard...November 21



WHOA!

**HOLD YOUR
 HORSES!**

Stephen Ministry
 is going to be
 at the South
 Campus:

**December
 January
 February**



Leadership Team

Pastoral Advisor

Pastor Mike Toomey
 235-6629, x212

**Congregational
 Awareness** ---

Team Coordinator/ Referrals

Kim Youngquist
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Ministry Enrichment

Connie Carlsrud - 282-3207

Supervision

Gin Mason - 235-3652

Training

(OPEN)

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Small Group Facilitators:

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Kay Swenson.....478-3045 (h)

Priscilla Smith...492-2848 (h)

235-6629 (w)