



## Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church *Pastor Terry's Thoughts of the Week*

### **Our Faith**

One time we talked about faith with each other. It is amazing how many of us find faith active in the most unusual situations. Many of us have been “found” by faith at times when we wondered and questioned everything around us. Our faith was given to us at the time of our baptism. Our faith was God’s gift to us – some of us as wee babies and some of us as adults.

I say that there are times when we are “found” by faith because there are times in our lives when we may be at the bottom of what we think is a great pit. We feel sorry for ourselves and we make a great thing of making sure we LOOK down and hope that everyone will reinforce our feelings of sorrow. There is a wonderful phrase that is used often in Al-anon, the group for adults who are living with an alcoholic – most of them women. They refer to a “velvet lined pity pot”. We get into that hole and keep lining it, day by day, with the soft cloth of pity. It gets so comfortable there that we forget that we are NOT the center of the universe and there is goodness out there waiting to happen – if we will only let it.

The folk in Al-anon are the ones who help each other out of that sorrow filled “pot” and bring them back to real life – there is something they can do other than just sit around and feel sorry for themselves. In the process, that love from others helps renew life and brings everyone to a better place. New hope is given by those who are in similar circumstances. And soon the person who is so burdened with sorrow “finds” their faith again. You see, it really hadn’t gone anywhere – but the person involved and moved away! We do that.

Faith, hope and love are really a part of the same package. Sometimes we get confused when we hear Luther’s credo – Faith alone, Word alone, Grace alone. But it’s a matter of “you can’t have one without the other. Faith without works is dead. God’s grace without faith is sterile. Faith and grace without the scriptures is hollow.

God is with us because he loves us, each of us. We are held together by his love and when we forget that love we feel alone and sometimes frightened. We are both saint (because of our baptism) and sinner (because we do try to do our own thing and not God's) but God never leaves us. There are times in our lives when we try to "go it alone" but, like it or not, God doesn't leave us. Faith is the foundation - a foundation given by God. Rejoice! This is a day the Lord has made!

*TMK*

-- *Week of January 31, 2010*