

Stepping Stones on the Way: Where Hosanna Is Going

(Most Sundays, Pastor Paul begins with a "Call to Worship"—a seed for prayer and a hint of the theme of that Sunday's worship. Lately, we've incorporated other informative voices to hold in prayer a vision of Hosanna's mission in these times. Kristene Furan & Brad Phillips joined Pastor Paul on August 21 with the following message.)



Lord God,
you have called your
servants
to ventures of which we
cannot see the ending,
by paths as yet
untrodden,
through perils unknown.
Give us faith to go out with
good courage,
not knowing where we
go,
but only that your hand
is leading us
and your love supporting us;
through Jesus Christ our
Lord.

One of the things I've grown to love in Louisiana is the Lake Pontchartrain Causeway, 23.83 miles of the longest continuous bridge over water in the world. What I love is, when you start out at one end or the other, you can't see where you will end up. You have to set out, not knowing where you're going, just trusting that this bridge has got to go somewhere.

Which is always a little unsettling isn't it? You get used to the Causeway pretty fast, but not knowing where you're going, not knowing how it will end, not knowing, just trusting, stepping out on a road you've never traveled before—it might excite you, the adventure of it, it might unnerve you, the uncertainty of it, but you never really get used to it. Faith is just such a journey; if it wasn't, it wouldn't be faith.

We are on such a journey as a congregation: *Called to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown.* Stepping stone to stone, looking for the next one, a steadfast one, one that will hold our weight, that won't wobble and throw us off.

A journey, a road, a trail, or no discernable trail at all—hoping, believing the Way between here

and there will appear. A trip, a pilgrimage, exploring new things, new ways of looking at things, seeing things in perspective. And God with us.

I have been your interim senior pastor now for just a little over a year, leading you through this transition process. Looking, not just to call a new senior pastor, but looking at where you have been as a congregation—where you started, where you soared, where you got stuck, where you got frustrated, angry with each other or disillusioned with God.

And where in the world you are heading, what in the world God is up to with you. Some of you have wondered: *How long till we get there? Where are we heading? Where does this path lead? Will it ever end?*

Actually, yes, it will end. We've come a long way together, and we are now at a stage of the transition process where we can begin to see landfall, that shadow shoreline on the horizon.

The Congregation Council has appointed a call team (see congregation president, Kristene Furan's letter in this newsletter). Pastor Blair Lundborg, our assistant to the bishop of the Gulf Coast Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, will return to Hosanna to train and install the Call Team in worship on September 11. That same day will start our Spiritual Growth Campaign—Hosanna sets aside 6 weeks every year in the fall for a Spiritual Growth Campaign that includes the entire congregation, an opportunity for all of us to re-commit to growing in our faith.

But before we begin this new stage of the journey, before we leap onto that next stepping stone on the way, it's important to see where we are now.

In worship on August 21, Kristene Furan reminded us that the vision of our congregation focuses on our mission to show the love of God to all people so that they may know Jesus Christ, grow in their faith, and follow Christ.

This year, the Congregation Council has wrestled with what that call of God on us means for Hosanna's future. The vision the council would present to you is to call a Senior Pastor followed by an Associate Pastor to implement ministry and programming to support the following:

- an active and growing congregation that actively nurtures small groups as an integral part of engaging people to grow their faith;
- a focus on the youth of our congregation by providing an atmosphere and programming for them to grow their faith along with interaction with mentors and fellowship with adults in our congregation;
- encouragement for first attenders so that they will be encouraged and excited to become involved in Hosanna through the welcoming, activities, excitement, sermons, and music we offer them on their very first visit!
- a preschool that seeks to develop the faith of young children and encourages their families to become involved at Hosanna;
- continued individual faith growth for the congregation through continually serving the community, expanding knowledge of scriptures, worshiping and gathering together in fellowship;
- people becoming actively involved in the life of the congregation;
- a continued listening process which listens to congregation and community needs.

The council thinks you share that vision of what God is already doing among us.

In worship that same Sunday, Brad Phillips, our congregation treasurer, provided some information about the face of our current congregation. After the resignation of both pastors over a year ago, we had to struggle as a congregation to come to grips with our past successes and failures, find reconciliation and forgiveness, and gain a new understanding of the challenges we have faced and will face as a growing congregation. We appointed a Listening Team that is doing great work among us, listening within the congregation and now beyond the congregation for a renewed vision of what God is doing among us.

During that time, we experienced a drop in attendance and giving. At present expenses are exceeding giving by about \$22,500. Hosanna has more than adequate savings to draw on—\$47,000 in savings (and another \$258,000 earmarked for a future building fund). And we are doing a good job of managing expenses, and reviewing insurance policies and contracts, while
(continued on the back of this page)



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Paul Olsen - Interim Pastor
Marilyn Boudreaux - Preschool Director
Vicki Entzel - Small Group Coordinator
Trudy Miller - Office Manager
Stacy James - Administrative Assistant
Troy King - Bookkeeper

Brian Johnson-Osborn - Director of Music at 10:30 am

volunteers step up to keep key programs and church functions going strong, and maintain our facility.

You can be a part of that by continuing to pray for guidance and direction as we enter the call process. You also can consider prayerfully an increase in your giving (that \$22,000 could be eliminated by just \$20/month per person or \$80/month per family).

And there is more good news: That drop in attendance has not only leveled off, it seems to be rising. Involvement in small groups this fall is growing. We welcome new people to worship every Sunday. Youth Night is a fantastic high-energy time of faith and fun every Sunday night. God not only is not finished with us yet but has great plans for us. We have a mission to bring grace to our community!

The theme of our Spiritual Growth Campaign is "Committed to Christ: Six Steps to Generous Living." And we are incorporating that into the theme we have set for the rest of the transition process: "Stepping Stones ... on the Way."

All that information might seem more like rocks in our path than stepping stones to the future. That's okay; every rock in the path is just another opportunity to turn them into stepping stones, opportunities to grow, to work on self and mission, to learn how to do this better, how to be a church better; to discern the vision of God for us, and the vision of God for our neighbor through us.

So, yes, maybe it will end, and we'll reach the other side of our journey together. But no, actually, it will never end, or as soon as it ends, it begins again. God will just call us again to some *venture of which we cannot see the ending, some path as yet untrodden, through perils unknown.*

Check out our new website:
www.hosannalutheran.com

But God is full of compassion and mercy, abounding in steadfast love, and will give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that God's hand is leading us and God's love supporting us.

And that will be enough. In fact, it's pretty exciting.

Glad to be a part of the adventure with you,

Pastor Paul Olsen

Kristene Furan,
Congregation President

Brad Phillips,
Congregation Treasurer

Congregational Care Team

The Congregational Care Team supports the spiritual, emotional, and physical needs of our Hosanna family by making visits to nursing homes, the homebound, and the hospitalized; providing spiritually uplifting cards and grief books; making phone calls and offering communion to the homebound, and more. Can we help you or a Hosanna member you know in need? Just call the church office.



Welcome to Mrs. Mandy Slye, our new Preschool Office Assistant. She will also be teaching our P.E. classes on Friday.



Now taking registrations for the 2016-17 school year

Our program is 9 am - 1 pm for 18 month through 5 year olds.

- *18 month to 2 year olds
- *2 and 3 year olds
- Tues/Thurs or Mon/Wed/Fri
- *2,3,4, or 5 year olds
- Mon - Fri

Monday and Wednesday we offer extended days until 3 pm. Call Marilyn Boudreaux, Director at 624-5525 for additional information.

Preschool began on September 6th
There is still space available!



Preschool Staff & Teachers are excited about the start of a new school year!

Adult Bible Study
Sundays at 8:00 AM in the Prayer Room.
All are welcome!

Hosanna Highlights

A Letter from Kristene Furan, Congregational Council President...

Congregation Members and Friends,
On behalf of the Hosanna Congregational Council, I am excited to announce that we have elected a six member Congregational Call Team for Senior Pastor.

The members of this team, nominated by the Mutual Ministry Team, and elected as per the congregational by-laws include: Brian Burbrink, Linda Busfield, Perry Cole, Phyllis Giffin, Todd Gregory, and Scott Quillin.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank these individuals for agreeing to serve on the Congregational Call Team. We know their decision to serve on this team was not made lightly, and we appreciate their willingness to be such an integral part of this time in the life of our congregation. This is a significant time commitment on their part; please be sure to offer them your support during the upcoming weeks.

The Call Team will be working closely with the Listening Team to take the information they have pulled together and share that with Pastor Lundborg in the form of a Ministry Site Profile which will help him to identify candidates for Senior Pastor at Hosanna. They will then interview and select a candidate to present to the congregation for your approval. Communication with the congregation during this process will be an important part of what they do once they begin their work. What an awesome task this team has in front of them!

Please mark Sunday, September 11 on your calendar. On this day, Pastor Lundborg will be here to worship with us and we will formally install the Call Team at both services.

We are so appreciative of the support of the congregation throughout this time of transition. This team has an important task ahead of them as this congregation continues along the stepping stones to fulfill our mission and remain Committed to Christ. As I just said to council, it's once again time for my favorite Bible verse – Jeremiah 29:11 “For I know the plans I have for you”, declared the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future.” We at Hosanna are so blessed by God and I am so excited to see the opportunities He will provide to us to go and share our blessings and His love with others.

The deadline to submit information for the next newsletter is 9 am on September 13th.

With this most recent flooding in our area, this congregation has once again shown its love to those impacted, and I have no doubt we will continue to show the love of God to all people so that they may know Jesus Christ, grow in faith, and follow Christ.

God's Peace to you all,

Kristene Furan

Congregational Council President

Church Council Meeting
September 19th
7:00 pm

Sunday School
9:00 AM

for 4 years old to 4th grade
upstairs

Children's
Church 10:30 AM
for 4 years old to 4th grade
during service

Youth Night Menu

September 11th
Chicken Alfredo, Cesar
salad, garlic bread

September 18th
Jambalaya and
salad bar

September 25th
Hot dogs and nachos

October 2nd
Spaghetti & meatballs, Italian
salad, garlic bread



Hosanna Quilters

Meet every Thursday

9:00 AM - 12:30 PM and on the
second Tuesday of each month

9:00 AM - 11:00 AM for quilting
lessons and 12:30 PM - 3:00 PM
for quilting

No Experience Necessary!

Join us to see what love creates!

Confirmation Mentors and Parents

Mentors are invited to join the confirmation students for dinner from 6:00-6:30 pm to get to know their student on the following evenings:

September 18
November 6
January 29
April 9

Mentors of 8th graders are also invited to the confirmation retreat on March 10th & 11th. Confirmation for 8th graders will be May 14, 2017. 8th grade mentors, please mark your calendars to be present at 10:30 am worship that day.

Parents, please let your student's mentor know if your child will not be able to attend one of the mentor dinners. Mentors, please let the office know if you will not be able to attend one of the mentor dinners so that another adult can arrange to sit with your student.

CONFIRMATION LOCK-IN

SEPTEMBER 16TH, 6:00 PM -
SEPTEMBER 17TH, 8:00 AM



Sundays,
5:30 - 7:30 pm
3rd - 12th grade

Dinner is provided

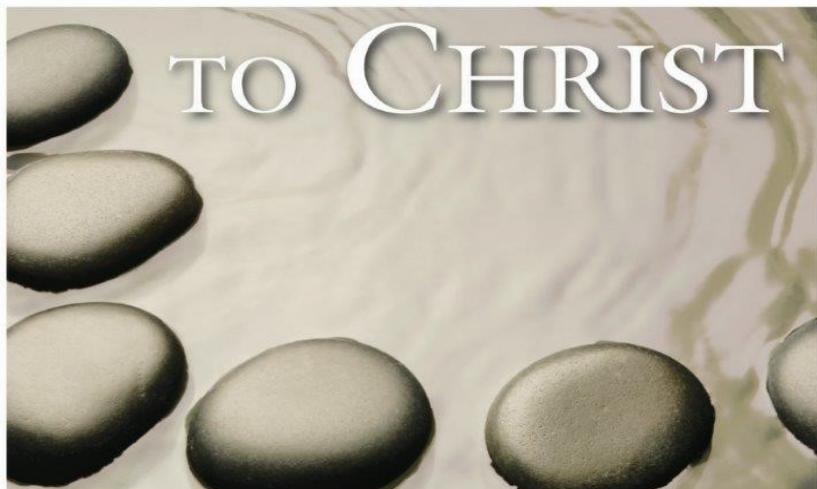
All participants must
register to attend.
Parents must sign
registration.



If you are interested in being baptized or having a child baptized, please call the church office to let us know.

Hosanna's Fall Spiritual Growth Campaign

COMMITTED



Six Steps to a Generous Life

September 11th - October 16th

Reading Plan

Gathering 1: Let Us Pray

Read Chapter 1, "Let Us Pray"	Sept. 5
Read "Prayer Made Easy"	Sept. 6
Read 1 Chronicles 29:11	Sept. 7
Read Matthew 6:5-13	Sept. 8
Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-18	Sept. 9

Gathering 2: Reading the Bible Daily

Read Chapter 2, "Reading the Bible Daily"	Sept. 12
Read "God's Measuring Stick"	Sept. 13
Read 2 Timothy 3:15-17	Sept. 14
Read James 1:19-25	Sept. 15
Read Exodus 20:1-17	Sept. 16

Gathering 3: Let Us Go to the House of the Lord

Read Chapter 3, "Let Us Go to the House of the Lord"	Sept. 19
Read "Faithful Worship Attendance"	Sept. 20
Read Matthew 7:15-20	Sept. 21
Read Ephesians 5:18b-20	Sept. 22
Read Leviticus 19:14	Sept. 23

Gathering 4: You Shall Be My Witness

Read Chapter 4, "You Shall Be My Witness"	Sept. 26
Read "An Invitation"	Sept. 27
Read Acts 1:7-8 & Colossians 4:5-6	Sept. 28
Read John 8:12 & John 1:40-46	Sept. 29
Read Corinthians 3:6-10	Sept. 30

Gathering 5: Financial Giving

Read Chapter 5, "Financial Giving" twice	Oct. 3
Read "You Tithed But..."	Oct. 4
Read Deuteronomy 15:1-11 & Mark 14:1-9	Oct. 5
Read Leviticus 19:9-10 & the Book of Ruth	Oct. 6
Read Mark 12:41-44 & Mark 10:17-31	Oct. 7

Gathering 6: Hands-On Service in Jesus' Name

Read Chapter 6, "Hands-On Service in Jesus' Name"	Oct. 10
Read "A Man Named Ernie"	Oct. 11
Read James 1:27 & Psalm 118:24	Oct. 12
Read 1 Corinthians 12	Oct. 13
Read Galatians 5:13-16 & Matthew 25:31-46	Oct. 14

Our Spiritual Growth Campaign, *Committed to Christ – Six Steps to a Generous Life*, begins September 11th.

Hosanna will provide one book per family, but if you would like to help defray the cost or need an additional one, \$5 covers each book. Books are available at the Info Center on Sunday morning. A bookmark reading schedule is included with each copy.

Committed to Christ – Six Steps to a Generous Life offers a clear vision of six expectations the Lord has for us: Prayer, Bible Reading, Attending Worship, Witnessing, Giving, and Service.



Hosanna Small Groups

Small Groups "Do Life Together" at Hosanna. This means small group members care for each other, discover Christ and serve one another.

Small group is so much more than learning new information - it is about experiencing God, seeing how God moves in others and exploring His plan for our lives. Grow in community with other believers as you celebrate God.

If you are interested in learning more about Small Groups or signing up to join a Small Group, please pick up a form at the Info Center.



*Stressed? Discouraged?
Lonely? Sad?
Don't Suffer Alone.
Help is Available.*

If you're sad or struggling inside, don't suffer alone. Ask for help. We've got a team of [Stephen Ministers](#) who are ready to provide confidential one-to-one care, encouragement, and support to help you through a tough time. Find out more about [Stephen Ministry](#) by talking with one of our Stephen Leaders: Blair and Lois Sundquist. Our Stephen Ministers are ready to bring God's love and care into your life.