

How Does He Love Me?

By Helen Martin

Last year I wrote about my favorite Valentine's Day gift ever (the ring and marriage proposal from Ken, back in 1993). Ken would have little chance to top that gift, no matter how many Valentine's Days we celebrate together!



But, frankly, Ken and I don't make a huge deal over the observation of Valentine's Day much anymore. Maybe it's the close proximity between that day and our son Jack's birthday, but neither of us seem to put too much effort into it and neither of us seem to mind. (Things really do change when you have kids. Not that I'm complaining!)

One friend says she has no interest in getting candy or flowers on "traditional" days when it's expected, but prefers to be surprised randomly on those "for no reason" occasions. I'm not picky, though. I will gladly take any gift, large or small, on any day it's given! And I have always been one of those women who likes little acts of kindness and service to make me feel loved. Ken may do the dishes, run my bath, or buy me a wild flower bouquet, and the smile on my face will tell him he has hit the mark, regardless of the date on the calendar.


And he has even simpler ways he shows me that I'm valued. He turns the light out even when he'd really rather read another chapter; he goes back downstairs to get the water I forgot to grab; he gets up with the child who's having a nightmare... if I nudge him enough times, and do it hard enough. And he *always* makes a little melted cheese English muffin for me when he's making some for himself. Even when I say I don't want one, he knows me; and he knows that as soon I see that bubbly melty goodness coming out of the broiler, I won't be able to resist.

Ken has always surprised me; not only with gifts, but also with his seemingly unending humor, patience, wisdom, and kindness. I told him before we were married that he was twice what I expected. He replied, "And half what you deserve." I would have to argue with that. But the fact that he would even say it is just one more proof that I got a great catch!


Cool Water Ministries' February/March Calendar

Sunday, February 1

My Name is Daniel

 **Monday, February 2**
Self-check Day

Friday, February 13
White Cross 10 am - 12 pm

 **Monday, March 2**
Self-check Day

Friday, March 13
White Cross 10 am - 12 pm

Friday, March 13
Craft Night!
6:30 - 11:30 pm (or whenever...)
Childcare is provided!

March 27 - 29
4-State Women's Retreat
Village Creek Bible Camp

Looking Ahead...
May 1 - 3

Women and Girls Retreat
Village Creek Bible Camp

Clever Saint Patrick

By Helen Martin

As the legend has it, Saint Patrick used a shamrock to explain idea of the Trinity: that there is one God existing in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

It can't stand up to theological scrutiny (nor could any earthly symbol for such a eternal mystery) but his use of the shamrock, which was sacred to the Druids, was a clever and resourceful choice.



Inspire Uplift Renew

February/March 2009

“Consider it wholly joyful, my brethren, whenever you are enveloped in or encounter trials of any sort or fall into various temptations. Be assured and understand that the trial and proving of your faith bring out endurance and steadfastness and patience. But let endurance and steadfastness and patience have full play and do a thorough work, so that you may be perfectly and fully developed, lacking in nothing.” James 1:2-4

I am studying the book of James right now and as soon as I read those words, the meaning and impact of that truth really jumped out at me. How is James asking us to respond when we run into trials or temptations? With joy! How, we ask, are we supposed to consider it an opportunity for joy when our lives are interrupted, when we are going through hard times or we are facing temptations we don't think we can handle? We need to look at those trying times through God's eyes and know deep in our hearts that He has a purpose for us in experiencing that. Romans 8:28 assures us that “We know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to His purpose for them.” What does God promise He is working out in our lives as we face these things? Endurance, steadfastness and patience! Who doesn't want these qualities in their lives? But who wants to go through the difficulties to gain them? Let God work through you and trust Him to see you through to the end. May you take comfort in David's words in Psalm 56:11, “In God have I put my trust and confident reliance; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?”

Sheri

An Untapped Resource?

By Helen Martin

I wonder how long it took before I had any idea what the Minnesota/LaCrosse Association was. And after I knew, I wonder how long it took for me to care. I hope that doesn't sound too flippant. It is not meant to. I am a busy person and I just didn't see the need to invest much of my time into something that seemed somewhat mysterious and largely irrelevant to me.

But what I have come to realize is that “the association” isn't really something that I need to invest in as much as it's an organization that is invested in me; or rather, it's invested in us, the local church. And the association women's ministry basically exists to invest in each of the women's ministries in the individual churches.

A great example of this is what we experienced at the fall retreat. A getaway like we had is not an undertaking that any one of our sized churches could easily handle, so the fact that many churches were involved made it possible for us to share in the fun, have a great speaker and a wonderful worship leader/musical guest.

While we were there, not only did we get to enjoy the



getaway and have very special time together with ladies from our own church, we also got the benefit of finding out what other church's women's ministries are up to. Even though we are separate churches with different “personalities,” there is an understanding that we share common ground spiritually and this creates a comfortable framework for sharing ideas.

The annual Spring Luncheon is kind of an extension of that connection that we make each year at the retreat, where we're again updated about what the other churches women's ministries are up to.

While both of these yearly events are attended well enough to keep them going, the response has been low compared to the number of women in the twelve association churches. And while we still have a great time at these two gatherings, we would sincerely like to find ways to draw additional women in to enjoy what we are receiving and to open the gift that's wrapped so nicely just for them.

In order to help our women's ministry at Redeemer and that of the association know what would best serve you, please, go to the church website and give us your feedback on the short online survey. If you prefer, use the paper copy available at church. Either way, the survey ends on March 15, so please get your responses back by then!

Getting to Know You: Carla Theisen!

- 1. How long have you been coming to Redeemer and how did you choose this church?** For about two years. I came to see Audrey Canaday baptized and I really enjoyed the singing, preaching and friendly people.
- 2. Tell us about your family:** I have been married to John for 35 1/2 years. Our eldest daughter Sarah (34) & her husband Terry Gustaf live in Richfield with their 3 children- Chelsea (12), Nicholas (6 1/2) and Payton David (3 1/2). Our next oldest is Heidi (32) & husband Mark Neaman live in Rice Lake, WI with their 5 children- Summer Beth (13), Chantelle (12), Jonathon (11), Destiny Jewel (6) and Jaden (5). Our youngest is Derek (30) and wife Shelly, their son Vincent Anthony (3) and they live in Superior, WI.
- 3. What is your birthday and where were you born?** I was born on July 15, 1952 in Duluth, MN.
- 4. What is your occupation?** I am the property manager at Eastwood Village Senior Townhomes in Oakdale.
- 5. Can you share your testimony:** I trusted Christ at five years old and I recommitted my life to Him in 1974.
- 6. What are your hobbies/what are you passionate about?** I enjoy working crossword puzzles and good movies and I am passionate about my faith in Christ.
- 7. What are your God-given talents?** Singing and music.
- 8. What are some areas you love to serve God?** Music ministry and counseling.
- 9. What did you dream of being while you were growing up?** A registered nurse just like my mom.
- 10. What was your first job?** A waitress at Mr. Steak in Duluth.
- 11. What is your favorite:**
 - Book:** My Bible
 - Verse or scripture:** Proverbs 3:5&6
 - Hymn or worship song?** Victory in Jesus
 - Food/coffee drink?** Mexican food and coffee!
- 12. What do you look for in a friend?** Someone who is a believer, honest, trustworthy and loyal.
- 13. Share one of your pet peeves:** Inconsiderate drivers
- 14. What is your favorite way to unwind?** Doing crossword puzzles or eating out with John.
- 15. Favorite place to spend time with God?** My church and my bedroom.



Newsletter News

By Helen Martin

Inspire Uplift Renew has gotten a great response over the past year and a half and we know that many are blessed by it.

We hope we make it “look easy” but with the many commitments we on the Cool Water team have, we needed make a change. Starting with this issue, *Inspire Uplift Renew* will come out once every two months.

We will strive to keep this a work of excellence and a continued blessing. Your feedback is always welcome!

February/March Birthdays & Anniversaries



February

- 8 LaVonne Forster
- 12 Wendy Haugen
- 24 Bernie and Anne Ellering
- 25 Jenny Jensen

March

- 2 Karissa Reck
- 6 Anne Ellering
- 8 Bob & Judy Ruka
- 10 Paul & Kay Vorwerk
- 17 Mark & Brenda Pilgrim
- 18 Tom & Wendy Haugen

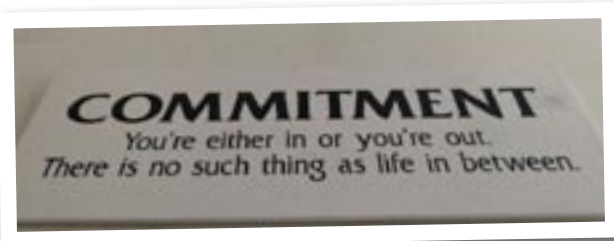
Excuses, Excuses

By Cindy Schwerdtfeger

I was thinking about how we often make excuses for why we can't do something or why we decided we don't want to do this or that anymore. Why is that we can't say a plain "Yes" or "No"? Or say "Yes" or "No" and then go into a long detailed answer? What about you? Do you make a commitment to do something and then make an excuse at the last minute to get out of it? (I am not talking about valid excuses like I am sick & in the hospital, broke my leg, etc. but the lame or not so truthful excuses).

In both the Old Testament and the New Testament we read about keeping an oath. In Numbers 30:2, it says, "When a man makes a vow to the Lord or takes an oath to obligate himself by a pledge, he must not break his word but must do everything he said." And then in Matthew 5:34-37, we read, "But I tell you, Do not swear at all: either by heaven, for it is God's throne; or by the earth, for it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black. Simply let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No' be 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one."

These specific scriptures are talking about keeping an oath. An oath, according to Merriam-Webster, is "to witness that one sincerely intends to do what one says". We should not swear to do this or that. If we do swear to do something,



then Matthew is saying that we sin. When I think on this, I think about how if I say that I am going to do something and then I don't do it, then I am

really lying to myself and to God about the real truth behind that statement.

For example, I say to my friend that I will go to a concert with her when in reality, I don't want to go. I am not telling her the truth.... I really don't want to go. Do I need to give her a reason? Not necessarily. Matthew is saying, rather than make an oath about something (swear that we *will* be there), we should simply say, "Yes" or "No". Many times in my life, I have made excuses for why I didn't want to go do this thing or that thing. When I read these scriptures and thought about all the "excuses" that I have given for doing or not doing something, I realized that I was not being truthful about my real intentions. However, I have found that once I do what I promised, I usually receive a blessing from that event or person that I was with.

Think about your answers to people... be truthful, and give them a yes or no. Once you do make a commitment to them, do it. You will find that you will be blessed in keeping your commitment and may even be blessed by the event you decided to attend!

Strawberry Pretzel Salad

- 1 1/2 c. crushed pretzels
- 1/2 c. sugar
- 1/2 c. melted butter
- 8 oz. cool whip
- 8 oz. cream cheese
- 1 c. sugar
- 2 (3 oz) pkgs. strawberry Jello
- 2 c. boiling water
- 2 (10 oz) pkgs. partially frozen strawberries

Mix first three ingredients well and press in 13 x 9 pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 10 minutes and cool.

Beat next three items until smooth. Spread over cooled pretzel layer making sure to go all the way to the edges so the Jello layer doesn't pour down the sides into the pretzels.

Mix last three ingredients together and pour over cream cheese layer. Chill minimum of four hours. Cut and serve. Enjoy!

