



The Beacon

FAITH LUTHERAN HIGH SCHOOL'S VERY OWN BIMONTHLY STUDENT PUBLICATION

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Food For Thought

By Taylor Wright

Last Friday at 3:10 wrapped up Faith Lutheran High School's first annual food drive challenge. The drive took place Monday, November 17 through Friday, November 21. Participating in the challenge along with Faith were two other schools: Fox Valley Lutheran and Christ Lutheran Academy.

Mission Fellowship members sacrificed their nights to collect food from various towns. Citizens of Marengo, Woodstock, and Crystal Lake were visited by the volunteers who collected from a different city each night.

With participation from supporters of FLHS, students, and residents of McHenry County, Mission Fellowship counted a grand total of 1101 donated items. FLHS proceeds are being taken and donated to the Woodstock Food Pantry.

The school with the most items is to receive not only a trophy, but also pizza, to be enjoyed by the whole school.

Christ Lutheran's collection efforts brought in 180 items, and will be donated to a pantry near them.

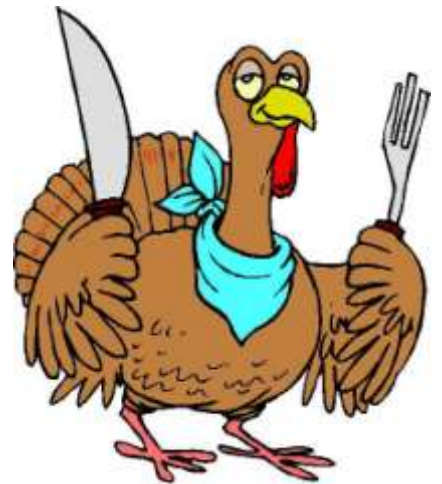
Fox Valley Lutheran collected 536 items, which will be given to the pantry in their area.

As motivating as pizza and a champion title may be, it is important to remember the reason Mission Fellowship sponsored this event. As we have passed through the Thanksgiving season, especially remember those less fortunate than you this holiday season and make a difference in someone's life.

Thanksgiving Traditions

By Paul Duda

Every year around mid or near the end of November we celebrate Thanksgiving. We call aunts, uncles, grandparents, cousins, and even just close friends. Everyone gathers to eat, drink, and enjoy each other's company. Family waits around for the turkey to cook, all the guys are watching the Bears game, and all the women are cooking in the kitchen. When dinner is finally served, everyone sits down. I usually start the prayer, "Thank you O Lord for these thy gifts from which we are about to receive from the bounty of Christ, our Lord, Amen." After the prayer, my grandpa carves the turkey, and gives his little speech. Then he gives a toast, and everyone drinks. There are mashed potatoes, corn, biscuits, sweet potato pie, pumpkin pie, stuffing, and even some turkey for the dogs. Everyone is happy until someone brings up politics or religion, then the arguing begins. Without the arguing, there would not be any Thanksgiving, though. As time goes by, people start to get very full. My uncle and grandpa usually unbuckle their belts and unzip their pants after dinner is all over. Everyone talks for about a half hour and then dessert comes out. Every year we have the same thing: pumpkin pie and ice cream. After my mom, aunt, and grandma clean up the dining room table, they all sit down and enjoy a long conversation with a cup of coffee in hand. When it starts to get late, lots of the family starts to head home. We all exchange our hugs and good-byes, and cannot wait to see each other again next year. These are just my Thanksgiving traditions. It's interesting to compare them to ones from around the world. Here are different forms of Thanksgiving that do not fall on the same day as our Thanksgiving.



Chinese: Celebrate the August Moon festival, which is one of the most celebrated holidays in China. Chinese families celebrate the end of the harvest season by having a big feast. Instead of having pumpkin or apple pie, the Chinese make moon cakes. They even send the cakes to other family members around the country. It is said that the moon is the brightest on this day, and it is a day of love and the renewing of friendships.

Jewish: The Jewish Thanksgiving is called Succoth (feast of the tabernacle), which last for about seven days. A succoth was also a living space for farmers in their fields. It is a time to thank God for the crops each year.

African: Africans hold the Yam Festival, which is the celebration of crops. A yam is also the most common food in most African countries. The yams are offered to gods and dead ancestors, and then they are passed out to all the people.

Korean: Chusok is known as the Korean Thanksgiving. Chusok means a great day in the middle of August and happens on the 15th of August. The Korean people give gifts to their ancestors, such as fruit and rice. Chusok last around 3 days, so everyone takes 3 days off from work. It is a time to celebrate family and to give thanks for all that they have.

Indian: In South India, many people celebrate the festival Pongal. The festival lasts for 3 days and each day has a different meaning. On day one, people give thanks to the rain god for giving them such a great harvest. On day two, everyone praises the sun god. Then on the third day the people dress up cows and make them look beautiful, this is for all the hard work that the cows have done.

Thanksgiving is not about the turkey, the pie, or even the Bears beating the Packers. It is all about being with family. If there was no family, there would be no Thanksgiving. Give thanks to God for all you have.

Secret Saints

Gift Ideas & Strategies

By Curt Grimes

The **Secret Saint Program** is one of our school's Christmas traditions that takes place in the weeks leading up to winter break. Participation is voluntary. Those who wish to participate are randomly chosen by another person in the school. Their job is to be that person's "Secret Saint" and give them little gifts during the weeks. On the last day before winter break, one more gift is given and everyone gets to guess who their Secret Saint is, and then they are revealed. This last gift is usually a little more valuable than the earlier gifts, costing around \$10 to \$20. Now that you know how everything works, let's take a look at some easy gift ideas.

Candy: This is a great gift for almost everyone. You could buy heaps of different candy to shower them in day by day. Carefully talk to one of their friends (a trustworthy one) if you're not sure what kind of candy to get them. You could also support Student Council and buy Candygrams for your partner. This gives you the chance to leave a bewildering note with a nice candy, safely delivered by an honest tight-lipped third party.

School supplies: It's four months into the school year, and nearly halfway through. This is the time that each student's school supplies usually start dwindling. It might not be a bad idea to refill that supply. Some school supply gift ideas include pens, mechanical pencils, loose leaf paper, notebooks, or White-Out. I like to give them things that they don't have any need for, but will enjoy anyways. Gifts like this includes oddly-shaped colorful Post-it notes, highlighters, or Sharpies. They don't necessarily need them, but it's still a nice gift idea if you're struggling to find something.

The bigger gift: These are great ideas for the small gifts you can give someone during Secret Saint, but what about the big, amazing, WUMBO-TASTIC gift of greater value you're supposed to get them? Gift cards or movies are good ideas. Here are some of the top 2008 movie picks from customers of Amazon.com.

1. The Dark Night
2. Iron Man
3. Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull
4. Wall-E
5. Incredible Hulk
6. Kung Fu Panda
7. The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian

If you think they like movies, this might be your safest and easiest way to go. Of course, you might want to check with a friend of theirs to make sure you're not getting them something they already have, or if there's something else they would rather have. It's also nice to find a gift bag or wrapping paper to prepare your present for opening on that last day before break.

Now that everyone knows what I'll be gifting my partner with, I hope your own Secret Saint shopping goes well.

College Life

By Rene Castillero

The transition from high school to college can be either difficult or easy for college freshmen. You are entering a new school, but now you must make new friends, support yourself, and still get good grades. Despite how joyous college advertisements look, the reality is a little different. Faith Lutheran alumni, Mary Schuch, Merielle Mowery, and Matthew Boyer, have answered a questionnaire regarding college life. Questions were asked about how different the two environments are, both academically and socially, and how each have applied lessons learned here during their enrollment at Faith Lutheran.

All three freshmen shared that they felt they were more academically prepared for college than most of their classmates. Mowery explained that Mrs. Mathiesen's endless note periods helped her to recognize what was most important and note from the college professor's lectures. Because classes are small, teachers are able to give personal attention to students, giving us an opportunity to ask as many questions as we need. Boyer stated that Faith taught him how to encounter, process, and solve many problems on his own, giving him an academical advantage over his peers. Also, papers are common assignments in college, and probably the most crucial grade. Mary Schuch showed that although she hated how many papers she had to write in Ms. Krohe's literature classes, that because how finicky Ms. Krohe was about grading she was extolled for having a legit thesis statement in her college class

When transitioning, a major concern is how easily you will make friends. No one wants to leave their old friends and feel completely alone in college. Although we doubt, we know eventually we will make friends. Boyer shares his experience by stating, "Don't expect a BFF on the first day. If you're social with people and remain yourself, then God willing, you'll get friends, but it does take patience." Despite the opinions whether a small school was better than a large school, all three did agree on one aspect, that is to get involved! They say that their colleges have "networks" and many clubs that helped them make friends. Get involved and don't be anti-social.

It is true that preparing for college is very stressful, and will take plenty of time and mental power. Once in college, you still have to deal with the temporary loneliness and change in class structure. Just remember all the lessons taught here at Faith and you will do fine.



Tests Of God

missed an auction in over 15 years. I was so upset because we do not have any money, and we have to pay to fix this

I do not understand why God would do this to such a wonderful person. My grandma praises God for everything He

By Paul Duda

I woke up at 6:45 a.m. on Sunday. I had to work and serve food at an auction. I got out of bed and did my daily routines. Mom had already gotten a cup of coffee, and I was getting one right after her. I got dressed, ate some breakfast, and got ready to go outside. We own two hotdog wagons, one is a bus and one is a trailer that hooks up to a truck. My dad uses the trailer and I use the bus. My mom was helping me that day with the auction. She was supposed to ride in front of me and lead the way. I jumped into the bus and started it. I let it sit for about fifteen to twenty minutes, so it could warm up. This auction was one of the biggest ones that we had this year. There was going to be over 500 people there. I had thought that I was going to leave there with over 600 dollars. My mom needed this money for gas, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and just life in general. I jumped into the bus and popped it into drive. I pressed on the gas and it would not even move an inch. I got kind of upset, so I tried again but it still would not go. It was about 7:45 a.m. and we needed to get to this auction. My mom called a mechanic and a couple friends. They all said the transmission was frozen, which means the vehicle was not going anywhere. We had to call the auctioneer and tell him that we could not make it. We have not

bus.



My grandma was also diagnosed with Alzheimer's, which is a brain disorder that destroys brain cells more and more over a period of time. My grandma taught at William Penn Elementary School in Chicago for over 40 years, gave her life to God, and has never said no to anyone. She is a woman of great dignity and respect. She hates it when people do not use proper etiquette. My mom is dying inside, because she is losing her best friend. Her mother has been there for her all her life. Now her mother can barely remember what day of the week it is. It kills me to see my mother like that. I pray everyday for her, but it just gets worse and worse for us.

does. I hate it when people say that this is a test of your faith. What kind of test is this? Its a pretty sick test, and I am not laughing. I get upset at God so much, and I do not understand why He does these things. I have lost faith in God. I pray and pray, and my mother prays but nothing happens. I have lost my sight of the path. There are so many more things that have happened, but it would take ten pages just to tell you everything. You may read this and say what an undevout Christian. I have praised and worship God all my life, and this is what I get for it? Why do you do this to me God? I do what you tell me to do, and I go nowhere. I always remember the old story about Abraham and Isaac. God asked Abraham to kill his son Isaac, so Abraham tied up Isaac and put him on the pile of wood and was about to sacrifice him. The second before he was about to kill his son, God told him to stop. See God was testing Abraham's faith, it was a test. God is always testing us, sometimes we might not even know it, but it's a test of our faith. I now see that I must put all my faith in God. My grandmother is in God's hands, and He will take good care of her. I don't know why God didn't want me to go to that auction. Something could have happened if I had driven the bus that day. I now put full trust into God, and I know I am not alone.

Faithful Fish By Kerri Mathiesen



Student Council News

By Rene Castillero

Perhaps the phrase "Much Ado About Nothing" is the best way to describe the recent Student Council meetings. Complications with the new basketball schedules cut time into the class representative's time, making progress sluggish in meetings. Despite the lack of topics in the council in general, the last meeting did show hope. A recent school survey hosted by the council shows that a majority of the student body would be interested in an "open field activity." Proposals have been made by both the Communications

and Fundraising committees. Sophomore representative, Ryan Castillero's, proposal passed, and \$50 would be given to buy materials to overhaul the Student Council bulletin board located in the lunch line hallway. The goal of a more attractive board is to get the attention of students going into lunch and keep them better informed with activities and other topics. On Monday, December 1, President Rene Castillero is hosting a student meeting after school at 3:15. Castillero's hope is that this will provide an opportunity for the students to directly ask questions, make suggestions, and share any other thought they feel needed. Obviously, money is important to the

council, and the Fundraising committee has been working to creatively bring in the funds. Data Match results came in, but were found to be below par compared to last year's survey. Vice President Kerri Mathiesen proposed to re-run the Candy Gram program from last year because of its remarkable outcome. Candy canes would be sold for \$1 and a student may write a small note to attach to it. The candy would then be delivered to the person of choice with the note attached. Keep these programs and concepts in mind as you go about the following weeks and get involved.

Tithing Teens

By Taylor Wright



Ten Percent...

We learn about it in math, just 10 apples out of a hundred. 2.4 hours out of a day.

\$15 dollars out of a \$150 paycheck.

It doesn't seem like much in the whole scheme of things does it?

To many of us, especially teenagers, the idea of tithing is pretty much the last thing on our minds. Hard earned and hard to come by money, is quickly spent on our "necessities" like the latest video game or cool new gadget.

Sure we give money to others, we pay our parents for gas money, sometimes even give a few coins to the Salvation Army bell ringer. But is that all? Are we supposed to give whatever we have left and don't need?

The idea of tithing was first mentioned in the Old Testament to the Israelites.

"A tithe of everything from the land—belongs to the Lord." (Leviticus 27:30, NIV)

The people were to give ten percent of their harvest or flocks, the best of everything they had. Before anything else, selling, or even eating, the best of everything they had was to be used as an offering for the Lord. Does God need this? No.

Many ask, what if I'm on a tight budget with not much to spare?. "'Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse.—Test me in this' says the Lord, 'and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have enough room for it" (Malachi 3:10, NIV).

Tithing is a way of putting God and others before yourself. Setting our priorities straight. When we make the decision to give the first of what we have on a regular basis, it not only helps us remember that God is in control, it also serves as the reminder how much we have been blessed.

"Recent data by the Barna Research Group shows that only 3 percent of adults contributed 10 percent of their 2002 income to churches, which marks a 62 percent decrease from 2001 when 8 percent of American adults tithed. Among born-again Christians, the decline was similarly steep, from 14 percent in 2001 to 6 percent in 2002. Barna attributes the sudden drop to a variety of factors, including the soft economy and ongoing terrorism threat. But he also pegs shifting church demographics—younger adults don't share their parents' and grandparents' convictions about tithing." Remember although you, like many, may feel like you're only a teenager—tithing isn't just for parents; not only is it never too early to start, but we are the next generation of "parents" and need to take responsibility.

Student-to-Student Secrets

Tools to Help You with Your Schoolwork

By Curt Grimes

Researching a topic can be a daunting task. Often the biggest problem is figuring out where to start. Getting started doesn't have to be that difficult, though. Here are a few websites that make completing your research a bit less painful.

Wikipedia (<http://wikipedia.org/>): Wikipedia is a really good tool for quickly familiarizing yourself with a topic. While you shouldn't cite Wikipedia directly in your research (which is teachers' main concern when they tell you not to use Wikipedia as a source), it can be a great starting point for your research. Wikipedia's authors are actually required to cite where their information comes from, and you can use that rule to your advantage. Look up a Wikipedia article. At the very bottom of the article there are a number of resources that you can use. The article on Baseball, for example, has a *References* section, which lists every book cited in the article (with their ISBN number, so you can look up the book at your library), a *Sources and further reading* section, which

lists more books that you may or may not be able to find, and *External links*, which lists a number of websites

External links

Baseball Organizations/Leagues/Clubs

- mlb.com Major League Baseball
- milb.com Minor League Baseball
- baseballsoftballuk.com British Baseball Federation

Baseball Reference & Stats

- baseball.wikia.com The Baseball Wiki
- baseball-reference.com Baseball stats

on the subject. You will find that this last section is very useful. It often lists the very best places on the internet to go to to read about your subject. These websites could probably be used as sources in your research. I often look at Wikipedia's list of links before even Googling a topic, because the links on Wikipedia are just that good.

Google Book Search (<http://books.google.com/>): If you are required to cite a book in a paper, but can't get to the library because it's closed and the paper is due tomorrow, here is a solution. Google has gone through many libraries and scanned the pages of several million books. With Google Book Search, you can search through the entire text of these books to find the exact quote you need. Since these are just books, you can cite them in your paper in the same way you would cite a regular book, only adding the URL and date accessed to the end of its entry on your Works Cited page. Some books in Google Book Search can only be previewed, but a large number can still be read in their entirety. Look for "Full view only" books when you're searching.

Internet Archive (<http://www.archive.org/>): Great. You finally found the perfect website that explains just about everything on your topic, but for some reason the one page you need isn't loading. It was loading yesterday, so the website is probably down now. And you need that information now because your PowerPoint is due next period! What do you do? Try looking up the page in the Internet Archive. The Internet Archive is a massive collection of websites all over the internet from any point in time in about the last ten years. You can look up one page and see how it has changed over time, or you can see if that page you need for your project was saved in the Internet Archive before it went down. There's a good chance that it was.

Hopefully these tricks will help get you started with your research, and on the way to finishing a great paper or project!