

Dear members and friends of St. John Lutheran,

Perhaps you remember the **Indiana Jones movie**, where Jones and others were trying to locate the Holy Grail, the cup used by Christ in the Last Supper. The adventure took viewers through many harrowing experiences, and finally led to a scene where Indy's father (played by Sean Connery) was shot. Indy had to get the Grail to heal his father before he died. He came to a deep chasm that looked impossible to cross. His instructions were to take a "leap of faith" by stepping out. He finally did, and realized that there was a hidden walkway across the chasm. Only a 'leap of faith' would have revealed this. Several scenes later, he comes across the room where hundreds of cups were laid out. Picking the wrong cup would mean death to his father. Again, he 'stepped out in faith.' He picked the right cup and he and his father lived. While the movie was just made-up fiction, it never the less provided some interesting insights into the Christian life. God wants you and I to trust Him. He provides spiritual growth, but only when there is *faith* present.

Years ago, my wife and I became members of a church in Texas. This was a relatively large congregation with about 850 baptized members. After only a few months, I was asked to head up adult education for the church. I was in my early thirties, and had never had any leadership position in the church. For some unknown reason, when asked, I said, "Sure, why not." Walking away from this discussion, I immediately thought to myself, "What have I done?" The church had a very active adult education program, with three courses offered simultaneously, year around. I quickly was in over my head. But with help, I survived and *God used this experience to grow me spiritually.* It was a true 'leap of faith,' and God richly blessed me in the process.

Sometimes, the 'leaps' are only small 'steps.' The first adult Bible study I went to was more of a 'step.' I was concerned that I was going to look 'stupid' – that I didn't know as much as everyone else. But God was faithful again. I never once felt like my lack of Bible knowledge made me a "lesser Christian. And He blessed me as I got into a deeper understanding of His Word. Sharing our faith with others is usually a 'leap' as well. We're positive that it won't go well, and after we try it, we think, "That was a lot easier than I thought!" God, again, is at work in those times when we try something that will bring glory to His Holy name, or move us closer to Him. This principle applies to everything we do in God's name. When we 'step out in faith' by increasing our financial giving, spiritual growth (i.e., a better understanding of and a closer relationship with our Lord, Jesus Christ) occurs.

This leads to the following question: Have your "stepped" or "leaped" lately?

Have you tried a Bible study? Have you come to a Ladies Aid activity lately? How about helping with Sunday school or Youth? Have you considered singing in the choir? Have you increased your financial giving to the church lately? Have you shared your faith with a friend or neighbored that was in need? Have you invited someone to church on Sunday?

Yes, it is possible to only attend church and be a Christian. Through prayer, listening to God's word when it is spoken or read, and receiving the Lord's

Supper, we remain connected to our Lord. However, God *expects us* not to be satisfied with just getting by. He wants us to grow spiritually (see Ephesians 4:11-16). God blesses us richly when we step out of the old Sunday morning routine, and move into 'territories unknown.' It can be scary and intimidating – but our Lord is faithful. He promises to be at our side, and gives us the strength we need. Through prayer, ask God for opportunities to grow spiritually. And don't be surprised when they come up! Just answer, "Sure, why not."

Pastor Travis