



Breath of Life

VOL 28 No 2 • SUMMER 2011

Pass the Salt!

If I were to buy a piece of fresh meat and accidentally leave it on the kitchen table for several days, what would happen to it? All sorts of bacteria and microbes would grow on it. So much so that it would turn an icky shade of brown, smell horribly rancid and most likely be covered with disgusting maggots. In other words, it would be spoiled. Very, very spoiled. Yuck!

And so it is that this meat could have used some salt.

Kind of like the world in which we live. Which started out perfect. Fresh. Without any spoilage. Without any corruption. Without any sin. As the Lord God created all things. And saw that they were good. Very, very good. No problems...no earthquakes...no tsunamis. No unplanned pregnancies...no abusive relationships...no abortions. No need for an Alpha Life Resource Center.

Until that fateful day when the serpent talks to the woman. And the woman eats the fruit. And then her husband eats the fruit. And everything is ruined...and decayed...and corrupted. And then the world gets worse...and worse...and worse.

Unlike the philosophy of some folks who lived in the late 1800s...the so-called Age of Optimism...and pro-

A message from Pastor Dale Hella • Alpha Center board member

claimed that the world would be getting better and better. No more wars. No more poverty. No more suffering. Hasn't exactly turned out that way, has it?

And so it is that the world could use some salt. And the blessings available at our center. The literature, the counsel from God's Word, the friendship, the basic necessities stored in the back.

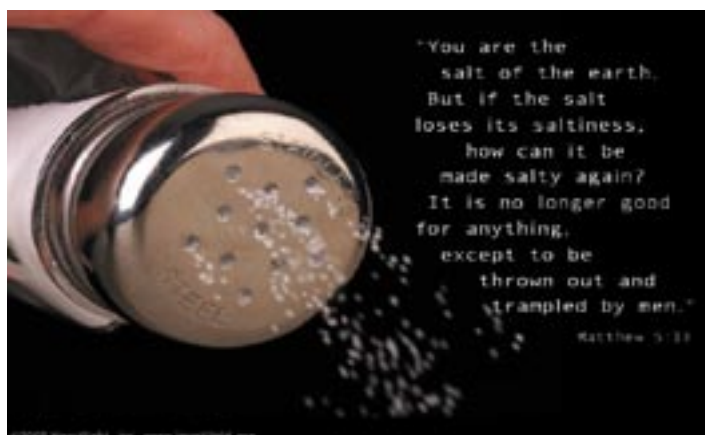
In Matthew 5:13 Jesus says, "You are the salt of the earth." In Biblical times salt was used as a seasoning for food. It was a symbol of friendships...and covenants. It was used in some of their offerings. It was even used as a disinfectant...newborn babies were rubbed with salt. It became a symbol of the Lord's judgment. Remember Lot's wife?

In other words, salt was...and still is...very important. Indispensable. Invaluable. Priceless. Especially when used as a preservative. Not just in food. But also and especially spiritually. In souls. Among people.

According to Jesus we as Christians are a preservative. We are salt. We are salty. We have saltiness.

We have an effect upon this world. We have an influence. Our presence here is very important. What we

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And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

2 Corinthians 9:8

Pray, Praise and Give Thanks



Thank you, Pastor Hella, for your words of encouragement as we combine our saltiness as volunteers, supporters and prayer warriors to assist in the Great Commission through the ministry of the Alpha Center!

We extend a grateful welcome to Michele Marrier (St. John, Juneau), a new counselor, and Carla Breber (St. John, Waterloo), who has joined Team Receptionists! We are always giving thanks for offerings of time and talent such as this.

We appreciate her We thank our Savior for those who think of Alpha when someone goes to heaven or celebrates a special life event. Our recent gratefulness includes gifts

IN MEMORY OF:

Marian Thomsen	from Tim & Wanda Fredrick
Ed Mueller	from Rev. Ron & Kay Uhlhorn
Ed Green	from Terry & Beth Lundsten
Leland Gunst	from Mari Fleischer
Gary Stark	from Gerald & Joanne Brandt
Pam Griepentrog	from Terry & Beth Lundsten

IN HONOR OF:

18 great-grand kids	Luanna Fenz
Harriet Parpart	Linda Parpart
Nancy Schmitz's 50th Birthday	Reuben & Family
Linda Berg's Birthday	Leroy & Marion Nell

Alpha Center Wish List

- bathroom cleaner, paper towels, tp (ofc)
- ** carseats, any size **
- ** strollers **
- disposable diapers (sz NB and up)
- baby wipes
- baby wash, lotion, sunscreen, rash cream
- kids' shoes and sandals up to size 13
- children's clothes up to size 6 (especially the larger sizes...since they wear out much more often, we don't get as many donations of them, but the need is just as strong)

Donations of any new or clean, gently used baby clothing or maternity clothing or other baby items and equipment are always welcome and can be dropped off at the center during our office hours.



Pass the Salt, from p. 1

believe matters. Our opinion counts. How we live...and what we say...makes a difference.

Including and especially our volunteers and counselors at the Alpha center!

This saltiness is not ours by nature. For by nature we are insipid and tasteless. Sinful and unclean. Having sinned against God in thought, word and deed. Having deserved God's wrath both now and in eternity.

On the one hand, our saltiness comes from our Lord Jesus Christ. Whose perfect life and sacrificial death has saved us and preserved us from the corruption and decay of our sins. On the other hand, our saltiness comes from the work of the Holy Spirit. Through the law and the gospel. Through the means of grace. Through the word and sacraments.

And so it is that we alone are the salt of the earth. There is no other salt. There can't be any other salt. The only salt of the earth is us. God's people. And places such as our Alpha center.

A grain or two of salt on a piece of meat wouldn't make much of a difference. The meat would still decay...and spoil.

So also just one or two Christians might make a little bit of difference in this world. But probably not much.

But by God's grace we are not alone. Through our Alpha Life Resource Center, hundreds and hundreds work together...combining their saltiness. As volunteers and counselors, as the board of directors, as members and supporters. Together we can and do make a difference in lives of the women and families who turn to our center for counsel and assistance.

Yes, we are the salt of the earth. Not might be. Not could be. But rather: are. We can't help ourselves. We don't have a choice. It's who we are. By God's grace.

It's such a great privilege. And a great responsibility.

May the Holy Spirit preserve and strengthen our saltiness for this important work!

Breath of Life

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News about Alpha ... know it, use it, share it!

BABY BOTTLE BOOMERANG!

THANKS TO THE EFFORTS OF BOARD MEMBERS AND AREA SCHOOLS AND GROUPS, BABY BOTTLE FUNDRAISERS ARE BACK!

SIMPLE, APPEALING EVENT SUPPLIES IMPORTANT FUNDS FOR THE CENTER TO CONTINUE ITS WORK IN THE CHURCH AND COMMUNITY

Alpha Center volunteers continue to meet and work with many different needs visitors bring with them—sometimes it's the traditional pregnancy test situation, when we get to help a woman through a stressful moment in her life, and then make sure she gets the right information and care after the results are in. Sometimes women or families come in who feel at the end of a rope because of some other stress—money problems, relationship struggles, parenting issues, family trouble. Our bridges to the Gospel—pregnancy or other material assistance—are much needed and very appreciated by the visitors who come to see us at Alpha. Many of the items we give away are donations of clothing, supplies and equipment from families who have grown out of them; of course, however, there are items, such as diapers or gas to get to a job interview, that require cold, hard cash from the treasury.



We are thrilled to report that several area schools, churches and groups have been responding to our needs by operating baby bottle drives, where school children and other supporters take a bottle home and fill it with change for a specified period of time. The coins and small bills really add up! If schools and groups wish, they can request a speaker from the Center to present the mission of Alpha to its membership.

Whether your ability to help runs closer to pie-throwing contests or to quiet and steadfast attention, Alpha would appreciate your consideration. If you'd like some info about conducting a drive, call 261-9207 or e-mail office@alphalifecenter.com.



St. Luke Watertown and its Sunday School recently designated Alpha a quarterly mission offering recipient.



St. John Lutheran School in Watertown held a contest in conjunction with the collection that allowed winning students to toss pies at the principal. The students raised an amazing amount for the Alpha Center!

Word is Spreading

Kimara Winters, Center Director

So is my word...it will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I have sent it. Is. 55:11

It's always a pleasure to see a plan coming together, isn't it? Perhaps you've experienced this pump-your-fist, slight smile-at-the-corner-of-your-mouth feeling that I'm talking about. You spent hours in meetings—in a group or simply deliberating within your own mind—and twice that time implementing your plans. You've spent almost as much time wondering if it's all for naught, whether it was a stupid idea to begin with, anyway.

You follow up, monitor, update, adapt. You keep at it, sometimes slowly, always quietly. And slowly, quietly, you notice little changes. More people are nodding as they recall your program instead of giving you the blank “who-are-you” stare. You get a call from someone who wants to give to your project, and you notice they're not on your mailing list. A group you've never solicited calls to ask you to give a presentation on your organization. You get an unexpected email asking for your group's advice. Maybe it WAS worth all that effort!

I'll assume you're guessing I'm talking about the Alpha Center, and while I definitely am, I hope you can relate to a dozen other activities we Christians of the Great Commission undertake on a regular basis. Maybe it's that new stewardship program at your church, perhaps the outreach project you agreed to help implement, or the efforts at improving your 18–25 year olds' worship service attendance. Maybe it's “just” that straying sister whose return you keep gently encouraging.

I am indeed happy to report a continued upturn in awareness for our Center and its ministry. We have been invited to present our ministry at churches, schools and groups over the past year. We receive

calls and e-mails regarding life issues. We are being referred new clients by such diverse agencies as the city Health Department, private physicians and area schools (all without any prior

solicitation on our part). We have received offers and contributions from groups and individuals we've never contacted for donations. New volunteers arise to help both at the Center and with our big events. Past clients are sending their friends. Heavens, I can feel the corners of my mouth turning up even as I write about these events!

Giddy me, that I share this good news like I had much to do with it. Like you, I know my feeble human efforts are in vain unless the Lord brings it to pass. There's where the really great news pops back up to the forefront: for as many hours as we spend wondering whether we're “wasting our time,” or whether we should've gone with the idea we scrapped at the last planning session, there's the fabulous reassurance we have in our ministries, great or small in scope: His Word will not return to Him empty. His purposes are always achieved.

All we need to do is to simply keep doing it. Are you doing it? Want to help us do it? Want to let the Lord use you to bless the earth? There are many opportunities for many more hands and hearts. We are making a difference here at Alpha, and word of it is spreading. Even better, His Word is spreading.

(reprinted from the archives, just as applicable today)



You are invited!

Tri-County Chapter, Christian Life Resources

ALPHA LIFE RESOURCE CENTER

presents its annual

ICE CREAM SOCIAL

SUNDAY, JULY 10, 2011

ST. MARK SCHOOL COMMONS

706 JONES ST. • WATERTOWN

10 AM-1 PM



Come for lunch...

homemade hot turkey or beef sandwiches

hot dogs, potato salads, beans and other sides

Stay for dessert...

Mullen's ice cream for splits, sundaes or ala mode for your choice of dozens of homemade pies and tortes!

COME CELEBRATE LIFE WITH US!

Please celebrate with us our Gospel-motivated ministry to our area congregations and communities.

Of special note this year at the social will be a silent auction for four day passes to Country Springs Hotel Water Park. (A \$100 value, good for any day, that expires 10/31/11) Think about bidding in support~

When you come to the social, think about bringing a new or gently used children's Bible, devotional or Christian storybook. Family devotionals are also in great demand. There will be a box in the cafeteria for you to place your donation. Our counselors will use your donation to encourage a whole new generation of believers who come to the Center looking for assistance. Thanks for your support!

Ice Cream Social • Sun, July 10 • 10-11
Mark your calendars for a super opportunity to fellowship and support our ministry. Join us at St. Mark school commons in Watertown from 10-11pm for lunch, and more importantly, dessert! See inside page 5 for more details and another opportunity to help!

Alpha Banquet & Auction • October 15
Mark your calendar and talk to your friends about a fun night out enjoying fellowship, shopping, eating and supporting our ministry. Includes a social hour and catered meal, as well as 100s of wonderful items to buy, including trips and one-of-a-kind treasures.

National Convention • November 5
The agenda is filled with topics and speakers who will provide guidance through God's Word and will share experiences from their own lives. Look to www.cirevents.com for more details as the summer progresses.

