

forward in faith

The Bible abounds with people who, believing the task set before them is God-given, act on faith. They risk scorn, their possessions, their very lives to carry out what they believe is God's mission.

Stepping forward in faith is still asked of all God's children - and is still a struggle. Perhaps that is why we identify so readily with movie characters wrestling with their own questions of faith.

In the last Indiana Jones movie, for instance, Indy literally steps forward in faith into a seemingly bottomless abyss to save his father. In "Field of Dreams," Ray Kinsella risks both ridicule and his farm to faithfully follow a voice he neither understands nor cares to hear.

God has not given us an abyss in which to leap, nor a compelling voice to follow. Yet, in a sense, the people of Shepherd of the Hills decided to take a step forward in faith when we overwhelmingly voted to determine if our church is ready to financially commit to a building project. Our vote indicated we believed a God-given task had been set before us.

It's been said that, "Coincidence is the language of angels." If that is true, our church surely has had a host of angels communicating God's blessing. Each of us has contributed what talent the Lord has given us. Think of the warm and enthusiastic welcome visitors receive; the heart-felt singing of our dedicated choir; the joyful look in the children's eyes when the puppets appear; the many acts of kindness done for one another and for those in our community; the powerful messages of God's love and hope expressed so eloquently by Pastor Jeff.

Surely among the greatest blessings our church family has received is the \$200,000 plot of land virtually given to us by Nazereth Lutheran Church in Cedar Falls, Iowa. Without this tangible vote of confidence in our pastor and congregation, a church as young as ours probably could not even consider this step "Forward in Faith."

All of our lives, we have been taught that the church is not the building, it is not the steeple, it is all the people. That is, of course, true. Shepherd of the Hills is us, not the building in which we meet. But for us to best do the work of our ministry - to proclaim God's love, to worship together, to provide Christian Education for our children, to better serve our community, to make a difference in our own small corner of God's universe - we need to have an adequate facility.

Ultimately, your commitment decision is between you and your Lord. Please share in the God-given task. Give more than your treasure. Give your trust and step "Forward in Faith" for the glory of God.

Nancy Dorman-Hickson

Co-chair, Communications Committee

... **W**e will strive to be
a congregation
where all people
will be strengthened by word
and sacrament for mission and
ministry. We will share the gospel
of Jesus Christ to all people,
conveying God's redeeming love,
forgiveness and compassion...

*From the Shepherd
of the Hills Lutheran Church
Mission Statement.*