



The Red Door

March 2012

Making Sense of the Cross

That's the title of the book we'll be using this Lenten season for our midweek Bible study series. At first, it didn't make a whole lot of sense to me. What do you mean by "making sense" of the cross? Isn't that supposed to be a given? I mean, we all know what the cross is all about, right? We've learned it from very early on when our parents and grandparents told us about God and Jesus. We also very clearly remember our Sunday school teacher explaining to us how much God loved us that Jesus was willing to die... for us... on the cross.... Whoa, hold on a moment. Die? For us? For me? Why? How come? I mean, die? Really? Think about it. It's such a big statement. First of all, how come Jesus *had* to die? We all have come to learn that God sacrificed God's Son for our sins, but if God is "all powerful", couldn't God have found another way to get things done? Why God would send Jesus to die? Why in the world would a parent—we call God "Father", right?—would want his or her child to die for a bunch of unrepentant sinners? That's a bit too much, when you stop to think about it, to wrap your mind around. And then, there's the issue of "for me." Last thing I want in my conscience is to have to carry the responsibility for someone else's death, much less the death of God's Son. So, now that I think about it, the cross really doesn't make much sense at all. Gush, and I had to come to realize that right at the beginning of Lent. Talk about bad timing!

And yet, this is not such a big discovery. I'm not the first one—not by a whole lot—to all of a sudden realize that the whole business of the cross messes up with your mind. From the disciples of Jesus, to those of "the Way" (how the first converts were known, Acts 9:2), to Martin Luther, to even us today; the events around the passion and death of Jesus have defied both logic and faith. It was Paul, the apostle, who wrote for the first time about how difficult it was to make sense of the cross. "For the message about the cross is foolishness... we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles" (1 Corinthians 1:18-25). From there on, believers and ironically non-believers also, have spent literally centuries thinking about the mystery of the cross. They have looked at it from all sorts of angles, perspectives, points of view and what not trying to understand, to decipher, yes, even to believe what it is all about.

Dr. David Lose, author of the "Making Sense" series invites us to join the long line of those that have devoted time and prayer to think about the cross. This is not a quest to conquer the unconquerable. What makes us think that we will solve what countless other theologians have not been able to totally explain to this day? Rather, the task is more correctly described as one in which we attempt to continue to understand what and who God is. Difficult as it may be, we are all called to grapple with the cross, because in knowing the cross, we know God. In his "theology of the cross", which Martin Luther wrote after much thought and anguish, he concluded that the cross is the only way in which one can come to know God. What God *is*, is what the cross *is*. Whatever we come to know, or understand, or even believe about the cross, is what we know, understand, and believe about God. There is that much at stake! So, no, we won't solve all the mysteries of the cross. Much of it will be left to faith, but we will continue to approach it with both wonder and awe, knowing that in doing so God continues to be revealed to us. Therefore, come, Wednesdays at 6:30 pm, and together we will see how much sense we can make of the cross.

The light of the eyes rejoices the heart, and good news refreshes the body. Proverbs 15:30

a benefit for abused and neglected children in the DFW metroplex

CARING FOR KIDS:
New Land & New Beginnings



Saturday, May 5

6 pm

American Airlines
C. R. Smith Museum

Ft. Worth, TX



Please join me in supporting the children in foster care in the Dallas and Ft. Worth area through Lutheran Social Services. I'd love to see you at the 3rd Annual Caring for Kids event on May 5th. *Cathy Zwernemann*

3rd Annual

Caring for Kids

to benefit the Nelson Children's Ministries in Dallas and Ft. Worth areas

Scheduled for take-off:

Saturday, May 5, 2012 6:00 p.m.

Please save the date and join us in providing the abused and neglected boys and girls in the DFW area with safe havens and foster homes where they can be loved, nourished, and healed.

For sponsorship and ticket information, call 800-938-5777 or go to www.NelsonChildrensMinistries.org

Sunday School News

We will be having our annual Easter egg hunt on Easter Sunday. Will Dorward has graciously agreed to have the Youth Group supervise the “egg extravaganza” again this year. Details will follow, as we get closer to Easter. You may leave the plastic eggs filled with wrapped candy in Pastor Julio’s office. Please read the calendar dates below for important Sunday School events.

April 8 – Easter Sunday, Easter Egg Hunt (supervised by the Youth Group)

May 13 – First Communion (Mother’s Day)

May 20 – Final Sunday School class

May 27 – Confirmation, Youth Liturgy, Pentecost

These are pictures of our financial education classes held at Erickson Hall this February through our partnership with Catholic Charities. The financial education class had an average of 9 adults who came on a regular basis. The participants found the classes to be helpful. The instructor has offered one on one consultation to those that wanted to learn more about handling their finances.

Pat McDonald



Emanuel Community Center Treasurer's Report

February, 2012

INCOME-EXPENSE STATEMENT

Balance	\$18,853.72
Income	
ELC Individual Contributions to Food Pantry	360.00
Faith LC Flower Mound -Food Pantry Gift	1,055.00
Individual Contributions from Outside ELC	100.50
Thrivent Electronic Food Pantry Gifts	88.00
Creations of Heart Sale Proceeds	174.00
Unidos Podemos January-February Rent	240.00
Youth Brunch Proceeds	527.87
Check #1522 Voided	<u>93.80</u>
	2,639.17
Expense	
North Texas Food Bank – January Bill	858.64
Pastor Julio Cruz – Creations of Heart Materials	61.37
Pastor Julio Cruz – Check #1522 Replacement	93.80
Blanca Illades – Food Pantry Clerical Supplies	<u>21.41</u>
	1,035.22
Ending Balance	\$20,457.67

FEBRUARY, 2012 CHECKBOOK STATEMENT

Beginning Balance	\$18,853.72
Deposits and Credits	
Check # 1522 voided	93.80
February 7 Deposit	290.00
“ 8 “ (electronic)	88.00
“ 15 “	174.00
“ 27 “ #1	578.37
“ 27 “ #2	<u>1,415.00</u>
	2,639.17

Checks and Other Charges

#1532 – Pastor Julio Cruz – COH Material	61.37	(2/3)
#1533 – “ “ “ – Replace Check #1522	93.80	(2/3)
#1534 – North Texas Food Bank – January Bill	858.64	(2/16)
#1535 – Blanca Illades – Food Pantry Clerical Items	<u>21.41</u>	(2/22)
	1,035.22	

February 29, 2012 Ending Balance \$20,457.67

Notes

We had a very blessed month as income exceeded expenses by over \$1,600.00. Our checkbook balance is actually over \$20,000.00 for the first time in almost two years. However, not to become complacent, as noted below.

We had a very generous food pantry gift from Faith LC of Flower Mound which resulted from their “Superbowl of Caring” special offering. Later in the month the Boy Scouts from Preston Meadow LC of Plano came to the church with 2,301 cans of food that they had collected by leaving bags to be filled at Plano homes and then going door-to-door to pick them up. These two gifts from two of our long-time partners provided over \$2,200.00 in cash and food to the food pantry.

The Creations of the Heart Valentine sale generated \$174.00 in income for that program and that program is operating in the black so far this year.

One great piece of news is that back in November, 2011, Pastors Julio and Susan applied to the Mission Endowment Fund for a grant for the 2012 Summer Reading Program. We just learned that this grant has been approved for \$2,000.00. Since we have not received the check yet, the grant is not reflected in the above numbers.

Please be aware that in March we will be making our quarterly payment to Emanuel LC, that the Youth Brunch proceeds will leave us for Thrivent and that I expect fairly large food bills from the NTFB and Amy.

BUDGET vs ACTUAL INCOME/EXPENSE

(1/12 of the year's budget)

	<u>Budget</u>			<u>Actual</u>		
	<u>Income</u>	<u>Expense</u>	<u>In-kind</u>	<u>Income</u>	<u>Expense</u>	<u>In-kind</u>
Food Pantry	\$ 4,000	3,916	1,034	\$ 3,038	\$ 3,168	\$ 1,151
Creations of the Heart	500	166	0	174	156	0
ESL	334	334	16	0	0	0
Unidos Podemos	240	240	0	240	0	0
Operating Expenses	266	1,000	0	528	0	0
Angel Tree Program	84	84	1,166	0	0	0
Summer Reading Program	500	600	266	0	0	0
Back to School Carnival	1,000	750	500	0	0	0
Totals	\$ 6,924	\$ 7,090	\$ 2,982	\$ 3,980	\$ 3,324	\$ 1,151



Quarter Collectors – We are providing these for you to use as a special Lenten offering opportunity. Put a quarter in it every day during Lent as part of your daily prayers or meditations. Plan to return your full quarter collectors on Easter Sunday. The special offering will go to benefit the World Hunger/Food Pantry fundraising drive.

Bible Study – Beginning on Wednesday, February 29th, we will have our Bible study series for the season of Lent. We will use the book “Making Sense of the Cross” by David Lose. You are invited to bring a favorite soup and bread or crackers to share and to fast during the day. We’ll break fast together starting at 6:30 p.m. to feed both the body and the spirit. All are welcome!

Hymnals – We have ordered 100 new hymnals at a cost of about \$25 each. Much of this money can come from our existing “Memorial” account, but that depletes funds we may need for other uses. Members may wish to make a contribution to help cover the cost of the hymnals and possibly dedicate the new books in honor of or in memorial of someone. If so, please make a separate check or offering for this purpose. Forms will be available for making dedications. We will introduce the books with a special prayer on a Sunday during Lent.