

promise to uphold it with our **prayers, our presence, our service, and our substance (monetary giving)**. We may believe the first two, but the last vow of giving of ourselves to the Church and promising to pray, be present in church, to use our spiritual gifts in service to God and others, and give of our tithes and offerings are more than likely the shoestring part of our faith.

Why do we have shoestring faith? More than likely, it is because our passion for Christ isn't passion anymore. I don't mean passion for the church, I mean passion FOR Christ. We won't have the passion if we don't know what we believe or understand about Christ. We won't have passion if we don't get to know Christ through the scriptures and talking with him (prayer). We won't have passion for Christ if we don't meet with other Christians and share our journeys of faith together, interpreting and exploring the scriptures together, in praying together, in working together, and in serving together.

Alas, I fear that many Christians are content to live on a shoestring when it comes to faith. They have "counted the cost," and the cost is too high for them. It might cost them study, time, money and themselves. If they attend worship one Sunday a month, they think they are committed. People expect the church to live on a shoestring budget, and often rightly so, but perhaps that is also a reflection of their faith.

Let me pose some questions? What do you really know or think about Christ or God? Is God/Christ a personal friend or an acquaintance? Are your baptismal vows more than lip-service? And do they involve your very life? What does God want of you? God wants your whole life, not some piece of it when you can make the time for God.

If you have been living "faith on a shoestring", the Good News is that God is a forgiving God. God is a God of possibilities. God is a transforming God. Whatever your relationship with God or Christ has been in the past, God is the God of **new starts**. God **creates** out of brokenness, failure, faithlessness. **God has a passion for us—to recreate us, reform us, and transform us**. May we quit living our faith on a shoestring and **grasp the wonder of his amazing love and regain a passion for Christ** that will be evident to everyone.

John Bell has a song whose words speak volumes about God's challenge to us to be committed. I am quoting only verses 1 and 2 here.

"The Summons"

Will you come and follow me if I but call your name?

Will you go where you don't know

And never be the same?

Will you let my love be shown,

Will you let my name be known,

Will you let my life be grown in you and you in me?

Will you leave yourself behind if I but call your name?

Will you care for cruel and kind

And never be the same?

Will you risk the hostile stare

Should your life attract or scare?

Will you let me answer pray'r in you and you in me?

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In Christ, for Christ,
Pastor Carol Pfeiffer

Outdoor Worship Enjoyed

Our congregation enjoyed the outdoor worship service on July 16. We sat in our lawn chairs and sang praises to God as well as celebrating communion by intinction (dipping the bread into the juice), and hearing a message from God's Word on being Christ look-alikes. Following worship Jon Stout grilled hamburgers and hotdogs to go along with the many carry-in dishes for our picnic. Kathy Denney entertained the young children with bubbles and games after the worship service. There had to be some mighty tired youngsters by afternoon. Lots of good food and fellowship. An enjoyable time was had by all.