

# Steve Ave's Ramblings

Well hi there Steve! I'm BAAAack! I've got more news for you from the front lines of CHAOS. First, note my [disclaimer](#), [Opt-in](#), and [Opt-out](#) stuff at the bottom of this newsletter.

## What's CHAOS?

C.H.A.O.S. is the name chosen by high school students for the Senior High Youth Ministry at St. John's Lutheran Church. It is the acronym for "Claiming Him As Our Savior."

## CHAOS News and Stuff

### Trunk or Treat

The annual "Trunk or Treat" was a big hit again this year. It's a "spooktacular" event Steve Terry encourages the youth to do every year for the children of St. John's. The children come out to do some safe trick or treating plus get to play games. Basically CHAOS youth who have cars park outside the Fellowship Hall, decorate their cars, everyone decorates themselves, and have games for the children. Of course we hand out candy (and eat some ourselves)!



Jane Moore as Jelly Belly

Every year the turnout is great regardless of the weather. This year it wasn't too cold, but boy was it windy.

Yes, everyone had fun in costume. Ruthanne created our costumes with inspiration from "Jack and the Beanstalk." We thought it would be less frightening to the youngest children than our "Spider Van" we did last year. We put a big spider made of black garbage bags on the back of the van with its legs draping down over the sides. Yeah, that

didn't work. Raising 4 daughters who liked to be frightened didn't transfer well to that idea. The beret I'm wearing made me look more like a "Jacques" so our theme became "Jacques and the Beanstalk."

### CHAOS on Wednesday evenings

This is an every-Wednesday thing that Ruthanne and I look forward to regardless of how tired we are. There's something about those lively high school folks that always seem to overcome our desire to sit on the sofa after work.

The general format is:

**6:30 pm**; Meet in the Fellowship Hall for socializing. Treats and drinks are served, and lots of talking!

**7:00 pm**; Everyone gets into a big circle for announcements. I say big because we generally have 45 youth there.

**7:15 pm**; Lesson or program. This can be discussion in the big group or a lesson then break into small groups.

For example, during Advent CHAOS is making blankets to give the homeless people in our community. We have enough donated fleece from church members to



make 40 blankets! So each Wednesday we have our work cut out for us - I should say we have "cut out" work for us <Grin>.

Once completed, we'll be literally handing them out to homeless in town. More than likely the Jesus Coffeehouse and Safe Harbor. I'll let you know how that goes.

*8:05 pm*; Prayer. We sit in a circle with a candle in the center, dim the lights, and hold hands. Then we pass around a wooden cross that was handmade years ago by a student of Steve Terry. When the cross is passed, each person is encouraged to share their prayers with the group either out-loud or silently. When each person finishes the group offers up that prayer to God with an "Amen."

Have you ever been part of a group sharing game called "Highs and Lows?" That's when you go around the group and each person shares their high and low points of the week with the group. Great way to get to know everyone, as long as their is sharing.

It takes a while for folks to get used to honestly share their feelings to a group. If you don't trust others in the group, you won't share.

I remember doing this in years past with youth groups. It could be a popular activity. It depended upon the youth in the group quite a bit. If you get some squirrely youth in there, it will be hard to keep them focused.

The prayer circle has replaced "Highs and Lows" at CHAOS. When the cross is passed there are lots of important personal items shared with God. Prayers for healing of friends and family (some very tough times for youth, I'm telling you!), concerns for grades (well, it's important to them as it is their parents), and for relationships of all kinds. Prayers of thanks are not forgotten either - thanks for family, friends, church, and CHAOS.

After maybe 30 minutes of prayer we end with standing and "passing the peace." Plenty of honest, heartfelt, Christian hugs are shared.

To have 40 or so high school folks sit quietly and participate in group prayer is a testament not only to CHAOS but to Thrive, the children's programs at St. John's, and the parents. People don't wake up one day and say "Hey! I wanna sit and spill my guts in prayer for 30 minutes with 40 people tonight!" This behavior is developed, not created.

## Calendar

*December 22*; CHAOS finishes the blankets and has a little party for themselves.

*February 5-6, 2011*; CHAOS retreat at LOMC.

<http://www.lomc.org>

*February 19-20, 2011*; CHAOS annual ski trip to Sundown Mountain in Dubuque IA, the "Alps of Iowa."

*February 27, 2011*; Polar Plunge fundraiser for Special Olympics. Steve Terry "dove right in" with this fundraiser last February and since he survived we'll be participating. "We" is not defined by "me" jumping into slush.

*March 26, 2011*; Winterjam Christian concert in Champaign. <http://www.jamtour.com>

*July 18-22, 2012*; ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans. <http://www.elca.org/gathering>

## My Ramblings and Things

[Stewardship - Send in those pledges!](#)

Warning! If you get irritated with talk about pledges and stewardship....read anyway. aHEM! cough...cough. AHem! clearing my throat. He (me) stands up and walks to his soap box.... takes a deep breath.....;

If you have not sent in your pledge for 2011 yet, do so today. Let me share with you why from my perspective.

I was on church council for 2 terms - that's 6 years. During that time I served a year on the finance and stewardship committees. I'm telling you honestly, right from the front line, that we didn't know what funds we would have to work with unless those pledges were sent in. Without the pledges we didn't know what to tell the Children's Ministry Team for example, whether their budget would be cut or not. We didn't know if Senior High Youth would have the funds to put a leadership retreat together. Really, this is how it works and why it is important for you to send in those pledge cards.

Yes, I know the economy s&^#@ (expletive deleted). Boy I know it, my vocation is a "Dream Vacation Agent." Still, pray about it and if you are still not sure you've got an answer go ahead and fill out the card with a dollar amount you are *slightly* uncomfortable with and "Git 'er DONE!"

Related to the above, I am going to share a character flaw with you. Ready? I am a selfish man. That's right, I said it. I am a selfish man. I would much rather spend "my" money on ME! Yup. I would.

It's a battle I fight every day - please me or please God? Seriously. Yes, I do get loads of enjoyment giving to others. Yes, I do receive a "warm fuzzy" feeling when I do something unselfish.

But that little demon sits on my shoulder and whispers in my ear "Hey! you want that new Ipod Touch don't you? You know that pledge you made to the church?" Have you read C.S. Lewis's "[The Screwtape Letters](#)?" It's a lot like that.

So, just do it. Send in your pledge. Please.

### [Web links of interest](#)

Here are some web sites I highly recommend. I read these every week. Tip; if you have the Firefox web browser, install the add-on "Morning Coffee." You won't have to remember to read certain web sites.

<http://www.immersejournal.com/>

<http://www.thelutheran.org>

<http://livinglutheran.com/>

This one is great - you can get the daily Bible reading Emailed to you. It's kind of geeky to get setup with it so if you need help, ask me.

<http://archive.elca.org/ScriptLib/CO/bible/tbrBibleView.asp>

Here's a good devotional resource:

<http://www.elca.org/Growing-In-Faith/Worship/Lectionary/Year-A.aspx>

### [Recycling Batteries](#)

Check it out! Since January of 2007 St. John's has recycled 27,000 batteries. Yes, that number is correct.

My lovely wife is very big on recycling. She is proud of the nickname "Garbage Picker" she earned at the school she where she teaches. She recycles all the cans and bottles she finds. The battery recycling program started in the Social Action Ministry Team. The batteries were collected and counted before they were taken to Batteries Plus for recycling to gauge its success. It continues because of the support of the church members who deposit their old

batteries in the containers at the Welcome Centers.

Thank you for recycling batteries. There are 27,000 fewer batteries in our landfills.

### Disclaimer

This newsletter contains my comments, thoughts, and observations only. I'm not speaking on behalf of St. John's or anyone else. It's just me, myself, and I.

### Opt-in

If you want someone else to receive my inspired wisdom, just send me their email address to [stevenjaves@gmail.com](mailto:stevenjaves@gmail.com).

Oh, and if you want to change your email address just reply and tell me what you want.

### Opt-out

If you do NOT WANT to receive any more of my newsletters, just reply to this newsletter and tell me. No hard feelings at all.

### How to contact me

You can email me at [stevenjaves@gmail.com](mailto:stevenjaves@gmail.com) or you can call me at 309-530-3651. Share your thoughts, suggestions, chat.

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