

**Faith** is the gift of God calling us to be gathered into community, to know the power of God's love for us, and to fill us with the Spirit of God so that we might grow in this gift of faith and share the joys of the faith with others.

From **birth onward** we discover that we are created by God and God continues to bless and be creative in our lives. **Baptism** is the event that affirms God's claim upon our lives forever.

**Learning and growing** in faith is a lifelong process in our homes, our personal lives, and within the faith community of God's church.

**Christian parenthood** is the primary teaching opportunity for adults. **6th graders through adults** serve as teachers and helpers in Vacation Bible School. **High school students through adults** lead the Midweek Connection opportunities. **Adults** serve the Sunday morning Sunday Church School programs, serve as mentors to confirmands, and as sponsors for youth program activities. Adults model for all the congregation by serving and continuing to be part of lifetime learning and growing in faith.

This folder notes a number of **faith stepping stones** along life's journey, but certainly not all of them. We could add other steps such as learning the Lord's Prayer, Apostles' Creed, the Ten Commandments, reading the Bible and getting a driver's license. Within your family, continue to celebrate all the steps of faith along life's journey. **Adult stepping stones** certainly include the first job, committing one's life to another, birth of a child, the loss of parents, becoming a grandparent, retirement, and every change of residence.

Once our young people affirm their baptisms and are confirmed, they are considered full members of the congregation and are therefore voting members of the church and can fully participate in the life and ministry of the congregation.

This also begins the lifetime growing in understanding stewardship of one's time, talents

and resources. As we grow in faith, and mature as Christians we become more fully united in a lifestyle that shows our faithfulness and commitment to the church. Annually members are invited and encouraged to renew their pledges to be active in the ministries of the church here at Gethsemane and in the church around the world. This examination of our talents and pledge for the new year normally happens in the fall.

The ELCA has made a new commitment to "become more fluent in the first language of faith", the language of the Scriptures. As ELCA Bishop Mark Hanson has said, *"this is an invitation to hear more clearly the fullness of God's voice and the voice of God's people in the Scriptures, to experience their voices as those of beloved companions in faith. It is an invitation to attune not just our intellect but our whole lives to their voices. This invitation to enter so deeply into conversation with voices of Scripture that their language becomes your own. It happens when you yearn for the heart of God. The path to fluency is personal and communal. This is the first language by which we do all things."*

This reminds us that life with God is for a lifetime and we never stop growing in the stepping stones of faith.

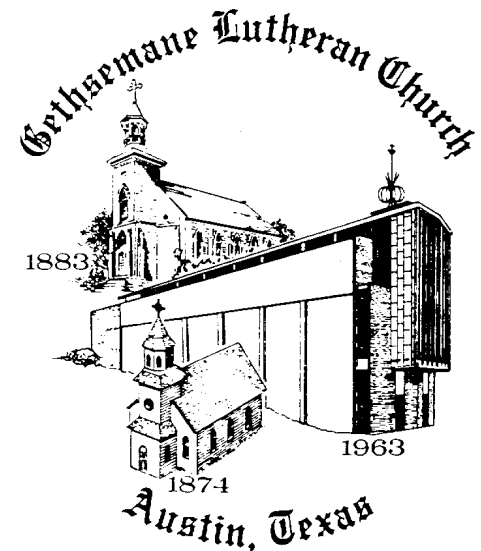
**All steps are done in the context of  
grace and God's gift of life;**

**Gethsemane  
celebrates the  
stepping stones of faith!**

**Gethsemane Lutheran Website:  
[www.gethsemaneaustin.org](http://www.gethsemaneaustin.org)**

**Facebook: Gethsemane Austin**

# GETHSEMANE FAITH STEPPING STONES



*"...so that Christ may dwell in  
your hearts through faith."*

**Ephesians 3:17**

**2009-2010**

**OVERVIEW OF  
FAITH STEPPING STONES**

<b>Birth</b>	All arrive in this world as a miracle of God
<b>Baptism</b>	Anytime from birth through adults to schedule a baptism; this is a gift of God bestowed upon us
<b>Age 2</b>	<i>September:</i> welcome to begin Sunday Church School learning process and continue through adulthood
<b>Age 3</b>	<i>June:</i> begin to participate in Summer Vacation Bible School
<b>K-3rd grades</b>	Begin <b>Little Lutherans</b> for those K through 3rd grades
<b>Students</b>	<i>August:</i> blessing of the backpacks for students of all ages & teachers
<b>3rd grade</b>	<i>October:</i> New Revised Standard Version Bibles are presented to 3rd grader
<b>3rd grade</b>	<i>Palm Sunday and Maundy Thursday:</i> 3rd graders and above learn of Holy Communion and participate in this sacrament
<b>4th grade</b>	Begin JAM, " <i>Jesus and Me!</i> " for 4th through 6th grades
<b>6th grade</b>	<i>May:</i> be introduced to the confirmation program which begins in September
<b>7th grade</b>	<i>September:</i> begin weekly confirmation instruction
<b>7th grade</b>	Begin serving as acolytes and crucifers for worship services
<b>8th grade</b>	<i>May:</i> celebrate the end of the two year study of confirmation
<b>9th grade</b>	<i>October:</i> Affirmation of Baptism on Reformation Sunday
<b>12th grade</b>	<i>May:</i> high school graduates recognized
<b>College age</b>	<i>August:</i> sending forth college students

**FALL, 2009  
FAITH STEPPING STONES**

<b>August 23</b>	Blessing of the backpacks Sending forth college students
<b>September 13</b>	2 year olds through adults begin Sunday Church School; Rally Sunday is the Sunday after Labor Day
<b>September 23</b>	7th & 8th grades confirmation instruction begins; serve as acolytes and crucifers
<b>October 4</b>	3rd graders presented Bible
<b>October 25</b>	Affirmation of Baptism/ Confirmation
<b>November 1</b>	All Saints' Sunday; all who died in their baptismal promise since All Saint's, 2008 are remembered in worship
<b>November 6-8</b>	7th & 8th graders Fall Retreat
<b>November 25</b>	Youth lead Thanksgiving Eve worship service
<b>December 19</b>	Angel Tree Ministry, all ages
<b>December 24</b>	Christmas Eve, tradition of HS Senior females serve as Santa Lucia
<b>December 28-30</b>	Senior High Youth Gathering, Austin

**JANUARY—AUGUST, 2010  
FAITH STEPPING STONES**

<b>January 8-10</b>	Family Mission-Vision Trip to Mexico Border for all ages
<b>February 27– 28</b>	Congregational Retreat for all ages
<b>March 28 &amp; April 1</b>	First Communion, Palm Sunday and Maundy Thursday
<b>May 19</b>	6th graders introduced to the confirmation program
<b>May 19</b>	8th graders celebrate completing confirmation instruction
<b>May 23</b>	Pentecost, recognize baptisms since Pentecost, 2008
<b>May 30</b>	12th grade graduates recognized Youth lead worship services
<b>June 21-25</b>	Vacation Bible School for 3 year olds and above; V.B.S. is the week after Father's Day
<b>Summer</b>	2nd - 6th graders attend summer camp on their own
<b>Summer</b>	those completing 7th & 8th grades attend summer confirmation camp
<b>Summer</b>	Senior High Servant Experience
<b>August 15</b>	College students sent forth