



Make Every Step Count

Lift, It Is!

Loaves, Fishes, and ... Simple Quilts?

Theology on Tap Berks – An Insider's Perspective

Make Every Step Count

The Power of a Simple Act

Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod Women Attend Seventh Triennial Gathering



By Pastor Roxi Kringle, St. John Lutheran Church, Farmersville

Forty people from St. John's, Farmersville, took the challenge to walk 5,762.63 miles from Bethlehem Township, PA, to Bethlehem, West Bank, Israel—and they did it without leaving the country.

Beginning the first week of October, the congregation was invited to keep track of all the steps they took during the week. Every step counted: shopping, yard work, sports, and, of course, walking. Every activity was converted to miles and each week the miles were added up (see chart, [below](#)). The challenge was to make it to Bethlehem by Christmas.

Slips of paper to log daily activity were available every week of the challenge. Members placed the slips in the offering plate each week. These slips included the chart to convert activities to miles. The Board of Pensions provided ten pedometers to keep track of steps walked.

"We were hoping that we'd be able to make it in 11 weeks. We figured if 40 people walked an average of a mile and a half a day, we'd make it," said Pastor Roxi Kringle. As it turned out, the congregation made the goal with 1,550 miles to spare by the end of the challenge on December 20, 2008.

Participants ranged in age from 4 to 74. Throughout the challenge, Bethlehem to Bethlehem t-shirts were given to people with the most miles, most consistent miles, and the youngest with the most miles. Total miles walked were reported in the Sunday bulletin.

Many of the participants reported steps they took in the course of an average day. For Pastor Kringle, the challenge coincided with training for a 5-mile race in December. "I had been planning on this race since September, but I knew if I exercised I would add on miles," she said.

The challenge took on an ecumenical turn when an associate member, Sharon Ann Burns, shared the idea with fellow teachers at Avona School in Wilson. "I have asked some of my fellow Avona teachers to join in the St. John's Bethlehem to Bethlehem



endeavor," she noted. "I have been amazed at the excitement in the responses from many unexpected people. A few actually said this would offer them an incentive to be more faithful to their exercise program. So Catholic, Presbyterian, Methodist, and some fellow Lutherans from Avona have joined in making *Every Step Count*. It has caused quite a bit of conversation each day as these teachers have felt the need to share how far they walked or exercised either that day or the day before."

When the challenge reached its end, the Avona walkers decided to keep on. "Tom asked me if he could continue to give me his miles so that he is kept accountable for getting exercise, said Sharon Ann. "Mike was happy that he was part of something worthwhile and thought it was great that the goal was met and the return trip partially completed. Trudi and I were more committed to seeing that we increased our steps and did something healthy. Thank you for allowing us to be part of the St. John's walk to the Holy Land – we are healthier and happier by having been connected with it!"

Here is the chart the group used to calculate their miles.

Activity	Length	Miles
Walk/run/hike	1 mile 2,000 steps	1 mile
House work	1 hour	3 miles
Yard work, gardening	1 hour	4 miles
Bike	1 mile	1 mile
Exercise machines (Elliptical, stair climber, treadmill)	1 mile	1 mile
General gym workout (aerobics, strength training)	1 hour	4 miles
Swimming	65 laps	2 miles
Bowling, golf	1 hour	2 miles
Vigorous sports (Soccer, basketball, skiing)	1 hour	5 miles