

SUNDAY, JULY 11, 2010
THE SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Dear Friends in Our Lord Jesus:

There is really only one way to explain this incredible story, told by Pastor Tom Rietveld about his small Baptist church in Beatrice, Nebraska.

The date was Wednesday, March 1, 1950. The time was 7:30 p.m. The occasion was choir practice at the church. The church should have been busy with activity at that hour, but it was totally empty.

Pastor Rietveld tells the rest of the story: "Normally, all of the good choir members came early, well before the 7:30 starting time. But (on this night), one by one, two by two, they all had excuses for being late. Marilyn, the church pianist, overslept on her after-dinner nap, so she and her mother were late. One girl, a high school sophomore, was having trouble with her homework. That delayed her, so she was late. One couple couldn't get their car started. They, and those they were to pick up, were also late."

In point of fact, all 18 members of the choir -- including the pastor and his wife -- were running late.

And for the first time in anyone's memory, no one had arrived at the church by 7:30 p.m. And what a miracle that turned out to be. For at precisely 7:30 p.m., a gas leak in the basement of the church, directly below the choir room, was suddenly ignited by the furnace.

And the whole church blew up. The WHOLE church. At precisely 7:30 p.m. And no one was there.

Pastor Rietveld was reminded of Psalm 91:11-12: "For He shall give His angels charge of you, to keep you in all your ways. They shall bear you in their arms, lest you dash your foot against a stone."

-- The Very Rev. Dr. Steve Sellers+