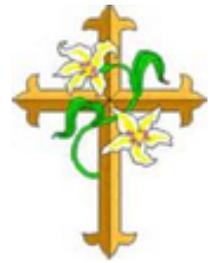




# Newsletter



April, 2017

Volume 12 No. 4

## From the Pastor

### Proof of the Resurrection

**I have put together some material by Josh McDowell. This information really gets us thinking how even the circumstantial evidence speaks to us of Jesus rising from the dead.**

#### **FACT #1: BROKEN ROMAN SEAL**

As we have said, the first obvious fact was the breaking of the seal that stood for the power and authority of the Roman Empire. The consequences of breaking the seal were extremely severe. The FBI and CIA of the Roman Empire were called into action to find the man or men who were responsible. If they were apprehended, it meant automatic execution by crucifixion upside down. People feared the breaking of the seal. Jesus' disciples displayed signs of cowardice when they hid themselves. Peter, one of these disciples, went out and denied Christ three times. Surely these cowards were not brave enough to break the seal and steal the body.

#### **FACT #2: EMPTY TOMB**

As we have already discussed, another obvious fact after the resurrection was the empty tomb. The disciples of Christ did not go off to Athens or Rome to preach that Christ was raised from the dead. Rather, they went right back to the city of Jerusalem, where, if what they were teaching was false, the falsity would be evident. The empty tomb was "too notorious to be denied." Paul Althaus states that the resurrection "could have not been maintained in Jerusalem for a single day, for a single hour, if the emptiness of the tomb had not been established as a fact for all concerned." Both Jewish and Roman sources and traditions admit an empty tomb. Those resources range from Josephus to a compilation of fifth-century Jewish

writings called the "Toledoth Jeshu." Dr. Paul Maier calls this "positive evidence from a hostile source, which is the strongest kind of historical evidence. In essence, this means that if a source admits a fact decidedly not in its favor, then that fact is genuine."

Gamaliel, who was a member of the Jewish high court, the Sanhedrin, put forth the suggestion that the rise of the Christian movement was God's doing; he could not have done that if the tomb were still occupied, or if the Sanhedrin knew the whereabouts of Christ's body.

Paul Maier observes that ". . . if all the evidence is weighed carefully and fairly, it is indeed justifiable, according to the canons of historical research, to conclude that the sepulcher of Joseph of Arimathea, in which Jesus was buried, was actually empty on the morning of the first Easter. And no shred of evidence has yet been discovered in literary sources, epigraphy, or archaeology that would disprove this statement."

#### **FACT #3: LARGE STONE MOVED**

On that Sunday morning the first thing that impressed the people who approached the tomb was the unusual position of the one and a half to two ton stone that had been lodged in front of the doorway. All the Gospel writers mention it.

Those who observed the stone after the resurrection describe its position as having been rolled up a slope away not just from the entrance of the tomb, but from the entire massive sepulcher. It was in such a position that it looked as if it had been picked up and carried away. Now, I ask you, if the disciples had wanted to come in, tiptoe around the sleeping guards, and then roll the stone over and steal Jesus' body, how could they have done that without the guards' awareness?

#### **FACT #4: ROMAN GUARD GOES AWOL**

The Roman guards fled. They left their place of responsibility. How can their attrition be explained, when Roman military discipline was so exceptional? Justin, in Digest #49, mentions all the offenses that required the death penalty. The fear of their superiors' wrath and the possibility of death meant that they paid close attention to the minutest details of their jobs. One way a guard was put to death was by being stripped of his clothes and then burned alive in a fire started with his garments. If it was not apparent which soldier had failed in his duty, then lots were drawn to see which one would be punished with death for the guard unit's failure. Certainly the entire unit would not have fallen asleep with that kind of threat over their heads. Dr. George Currie, a student of Roman military discipline, wrote that fear of punishment "produced flawless attention to duty, especially in the night watches."

#### **FACT #5: GRAVE CLOTHES TELL A TALE**

In a literal sense, against all statements to the contrary, the tomb was not totally empty—because of an amazing phenomenon. John, a disciple of Jesus, looked over to the place where the body of Jesus had lain, and there were the grave clothes, in the form of the body, slightly caved in and empty—like the empty chrysalis of a caterpillar's cocoon. That's enough to make a believer out of anybody. John never did get over it. The first thing that stuck in the minds of the disciples was not the empty tomb, but rather the empty grave clothes—undisturbed in form and position.

Pastor Schulz

## **The President's Message**

Last month we talked about excelling in the grace of giving, which you have done and continue to do. This month I would like to speak briefly on excelling in the grace of prayer. What a blessing prayer is for us, and what power that has been placed in our hands. When one thinks about this, what an awesome privilege and responsibility we have at

our disposal; speaking directly with God our Father with Christ Jesus our brother acting as our intercessor and the Holy Spirit acting as our translator, forwarding our prayers in clear terms to the Father. (Paraphrasing scripture in these matters.) We should be continually praying for our church leaders, particularly our pastors, that the truth of God's Word always be foremost in their preaching and teaching. Our intercessor and Savior, Christ Jesus, pleads with us to make use of this communication tool continuously and most importantly to deeply believe in faith that your every prayer is heard and answered. ( Mark 11: 24 " Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours." )

Prayer is not only our privilege, but our responsibility, as recoded in 1 Thessalonians 5: 7 " Be joyful always; pray continually; Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." We are not to worry about anything, for what does worry gain us? This is a worldly reaction and thought process. (Philippians 4:6 " Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus."

Just completing a Bible study on the book of Revelation; knowing that we are and will be triumphant is certainly comforting, but we are definitely in the End Times, during which the love of many will grow cold and Satan will have more freedom as the Day of the Lord approaches. These are the truths of God's Word. Like it or not, in our current environment in the United States of America, our Pastors will have cast upon them heavy burdens of expectation, with society ready to condemn any perceived weakness or " mistake". Our own beliefs will come under closer scrutiny as the years pass and we must be prepared for challenges from without and from within the church. The worldly reaction to these predictions is to worry and fret about what is coming. We as Christians and children of God are strengthened through prayer, particularly when we know and believe that God our Father is with us and protecting us. (1 Peter 3: 12 " For the eyes of the

Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”)

Excel in the grace of prayer, praying continually to God our Father for our Pastors, our brothers and sisters in the faith and our country. Our God is all powerful, all loving, and full of grace and compassion. He is anxious to answer our prayers, so follow the advice in his Word; Romans 12:12 “Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in Prayer.”

So, Open Bible family, pray boldly with confidence; pray with faithful conviction in your heart that you will be heard; pray with love in your heart for God the Father and for your brothers and sisters in Christ. For without love, our acts are useless.

Your humble servant in Christ,  
Dan Blaho

## Mike's Corner

### Small Investments in our Senior Resident Communities make a BIG Difference.

When one looks around senior resident facilities, they may be led to think that the residents “have it good:” however, the truth is many are lonely and with little interaction from family. They feel hopelessly forgotten, and unloved. I believe that no matter what activity our members serve in, they are reflecting the Lord's Glory.

I am very encouraged by our church family that have already volunteered to serve the Lord in humility and providing mercy to these children of God. Right now, the Lord has entrusted Open Bible Church with eight volunteers serving for a total of 34 hours each month at both Buffalo Crossing and The Willows. This an excellent start, considering the short time that this care ministry has been in operation, but we believe we can grow this ministry by additional members stepping forward. Just one hour weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly will make a difference in the life of these residents. Feedback from those serving currently, state how much they enjoy it and how much the residents

appreciate the loving care they receive. It may even change a person's eternal destination. Your role, you should choose to accept it, would be to assist the Activity Director in making the residence involvement something that is worth their while. These activities, while they may seem trivial, help bring the residents together and assist us to establish an ongoing relationship with these senior residences. Please note that “your” involvement may change someone's eternal destiny, and certainly brings some joy to those who participate.

Please do not think this care ministry is for SPLASH members only. Our singles got this train started but everyone is encouraged to hop on-board.

The schedule for activities for both Buffalo Crossing and The Willows during April may be viewed in the Fellowship Hall.

### Let the “Sonshine!”

The Sonshine committee already is making a difference in the lives of Open Bible members. The basic activities involved in this critical ministry are to care for our membership by providing encouragement and prayer for those who are in need. This is accomplished in three primary ways: calling, visiting, and sending card to those who need support and encouragement. We do need more members to be engaged as there are quite a few openings still unfilled. Vanita McCurnin and Mary Helen Schultz are diligently searching for others to join this critical ministry. There may come a time when you will need assistance or encouragement. For more information, please contact Vanita, Mary Helen, Alan Johnson, or myself.

Blessings to all during this most Holy time of year.

### **He has Risen!**

Mike may be contacted by email at [villemmj@mlc-wels.edu](mailto:villemmj@mlc-wels.edu), or by phone at (352) 693-5380 and (507) 261-8610.

Mike Villemure

## Who's Who at Open Bible

Let's meet Ed and Sandy Richesson.



Ed and Sandy Richesson were both born in Ohio, Ed in Columbus and Sandy in Wooster. Ed attended High

school in Columbus and Bliss Business College in British Columbia. Ed served 4 years in the Air Force during the Korean War. His work as an accountant took them to Michigan, North Carolina, Barrie, Ontario and finally returned to Ohio living in Salem and Wooster. Sandy has done secretarial work and bookkeeping in addition to owning and operating a Hallmark Store for 14 years. As retirement approached, although the "snow was beautiful, we thought it was time for warmth and sunshine year round and so here we are living in Polo Ridge in The Villages," Sandy added.

Ed and Sandy have been blessed to be together 51 years on April 11. They have 5 children and a total of 17 grandchildren. Through-out their childhood and later adult life church attendance has always had a place in their lives. Since coming to Florida they have found a church home at Open Bible. Sandy said they watched Open Bible being built and finally curiosity won and they visited the church. The friendliness and welcoming attitude of everyone they spoke with was a plus. " Pastor Shultz took a lot of time and effort with us although there was only two of us in the classes," explained Sandy.

They enjoy passing time by reading mysteries, legal stories and Grisham is a favorite author of Ed's. Eating out at Long Horn Steak House or Applebees wins Ed's vote while any place Sandy doesn't need to cook is a good choice for Sandy. They are looking forward to becoming involved in some Bible Study groups and getting acquainted with

more of the people at Open Bible. Ed says "I like church."

We look forward to getting better acquainted with Sandy and Ed through the activities at church. When you see them , say "Hi" and tell them about the things you participate in at Open Bible then invite them to join in.

Written by: Peggi Carrier

## Small Group Ministry

### North Country Group

**Facilitator: Alan Johnson**

These are a group of Open Bible members from the Ocala area who meet twice a month on Sunday nights from 6:00-8:00 pm. They will meet Sundays, April 9<sup>th</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup> at the home of Alan and Pam Johnson or Dave & Kim Mottl. Topic: the "Book of Acts" using the People's Bible.

### SPLASH

**Single People Loving and Serving Him**

**Led by Mike Villemure**

**Facilitated by: Peggi Carrier, Ina Taylor**

### SPLASH!

The next SPLASH Bible study is on Monday, April 10th at 1 pm. The Topic: Our God of Politics. After the study we will have a social. ALL ARE WELCOME to attend. In the meantime feel free to contact Peggi, Ina or Mike.

### Ladies Tuesday Bible Study

**Led by Pam Johnson**

The topic for the Tuesday afternoon Ladies is: "Hebrews 11" the heroes of faith chapter. They meet at 1:00pm at Open Bible. No Meeting April 11<sup>th</sup>. Please contact Pam if you are interested.

### Men Of Leisure - Men's Breakfast Group

**Led by Dennis Duessler**

The group is discussing a Bible study booklet on some of the issues retired men and men in general face.

Next meeting is scheduled for Friday, April 21<sup>st</sup> at the Bob Evans Restaurant 2199 Parr Drive, The Villages (on the corner of CR466 & Southern Trace). The starting time is 8:30am and the Topic of discussion will be a 19 Minute Bible Study.

### **Game Nights**

**Facilitator: Carol Yahn**

Game Nights are back. Friday, April 7<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> from 6:00 – 8:00pm. Bring friends, games and a snack to pass!

### **Happy Hearts---Happy Hands Handiwork**

**Facilitator is Sandy Pawlowski**

**New Meeting Date: Friday, April 21<sup>st</sup>**

Meets on the Third Friday of each month at church from 9:00---12:00 PM. Group creates quilts for those in need in our community. Also does knitting, crochet, and embroidery.

### **LIFT (Ladies in Faith Together)**

**Facilitator: Genie Selvey**

Bible study various ladies homes at 1:00pm. The Topic is the series called "That The World May Know" by Ray VanderLaan, Please contact Genie Selvey if you would be interested in joining this Bible Study. Her phone# 507-469-0546.

### **Journey With Jesus**

**Led by Judy Hainen**

Journey with Jesus Bible Study will continue through the 15<sup>th</sup> of May at 9:15 am with Judy Hainen. This study meets at various homes. Contact Judy for details. The Lord's Prayer is the current topic and will conclude April 10<sup>th</sup>. The next Topic is Philipians.

### **Friday Fore-Giving Golfers**

**Facilitator is Leslie Nelson**

This group meets once a week on Fridays to golf the Executive courses in The Villages. Teams are determined by the Sunday prior to the golf date. Each golfer is equipped with a small plastic bag with extra-long tees and a business card from Open Bible to hand out to unchurched golfers.

### **Defenders**

**Led by Bill Sigurdson & Ken Wells**

This group meets twice a month to shoot 50---100 rounds at one of these two places: The Gun Club off 44 near Leesburg and also R/D Tactical Solutions 1031 NE 16<sup>th</sup> St. in Ocala. Ken and Bill supply everyone with targets or you can buy one for \$1.25. In Ocala, your spouse can shoot for just \$6.00. The next shoot is Thursday April 13<sup>th</sup> in Ocala at 1:30pm. Then on Thursday, April 27<sup>th</sup> on Hwy 44 in Leesburg. Meet at 10:30am. Following the activity, the group has lunch at Beef O' Brady's and devotes time to pray for our country and military.

### **WinGS**

**Led by Mary Helen Schultz**

The Women of Open Bible meet every 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month. Our 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Spring Luncheon and Fashion Show scheduled for April 7<sup>th</sup>. We enjoy lively meetings with good fellowship and a tasty dessert. Please join us on April 5<sup>th</sup> at 1:00pm (1 week earlier to make final plans for the Spring Luncheon).

## **Easter Lily Plants**

We will be purchasing Easter Lily plants for Easter Sunday, April 16th. If you would like to donate for the purchase of these plants the cost is \$6.00 per plant. You may pay in cash or write a check to Open Bible Evangelical Lutheran Church, place in the offering plate & indicate the amount is for the Flower Fund/Easter Lilies. The plants may be taken home after the last Easter Sunday service. If you have questions, contact Carol Stauske at 352-292-3079.



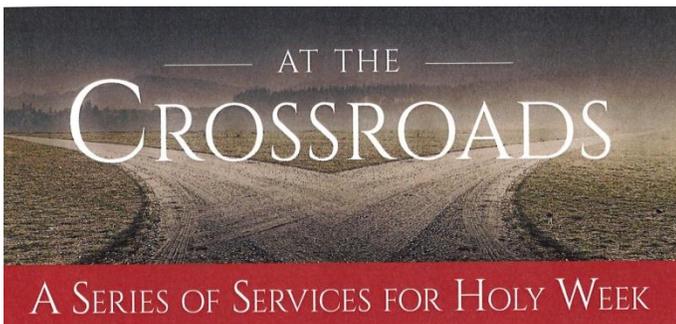
## Did You Know?

**Coffee Host/Hostesses:** Please sign-up to help with the coffee/fellowship hour. The sign-up sheet is located in the Kitchen pass-thru. Thank you.

**Can Collection:** Bring your “crushed” & “rinsed” cans to church on the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month. Put your cans in the back of the red car parked out in front of church. Thank you from the Women of Open Bible.

**Food Pantry Collection:** Please bring non-perishable food items on the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month. A collection bin is located by the front doors. Gordon & Shirley Roback will take the items to the donation site for the Wildwood Food Pantry and Soup Kitchen.

**The 2017 Flower Calendar** has been placed to the right of the conference room door. Again the cost is \$35.00 per arrangement or \$70.00 for both. Please indicate on your envelope payment is for “flowers”. Two families may sign up for a Sunday and share the cost. If you have questions, please call Carol Stauske at 352-292-3079.



### Mid-week Lenten Services 2017-----At the Crossroads

Many of those involved in the story of the Passion of Christ came to a crossroads and had to decide which way to go. Some chose well, some did not, and the stories of each of these experiences at various crossroads help us to know what to do and what not to do when we encounter similar crossroads in our own lives. In the end, each service in the series reveals in some way how Christ and his cross lead us to decide the path of God’s will for us.

April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2017—Lent 6—Obedience 5:30pm

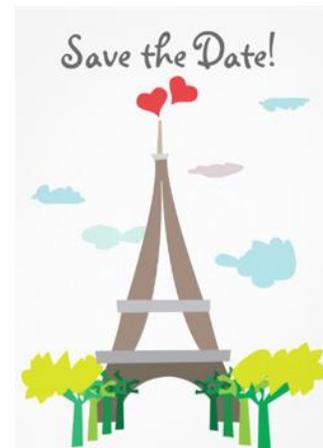
April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2017—Maundy Thursday—Forgiveness with Communion 5:30pm

April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2017—Good Friday---Death - The Pounding Of The Nails 5:30pm

April 16<sup>th</sup>, 2017---Easter Festival---Life - Sunrise Service 7:00am, Festival Service 9:30am

## April in Paris

Ladies: Are you interested in “April in Paris”? That is the theme of our 8<sup>th</sup> annual salad luncheon---fashion show on Friday, April 7<sup>th</sup>. We would like to invite all the ladies of the congregation to this event hosted by the Ladies of Open Bible and Anthony’s fashions. Please sign-up there are a few seats left.



# Happy Anniversary

Arline & John Kiewra – 5  
Mike & Pat Holmes – 8  
Ed & Sandy Richesson – 11  
Steve & Nancy Kuepker - 15  
Jim & Marion Petrie – 16  
Mel & Susan Parker - 21  
Ron & Joanne Stuedemann – 27



# Happy Birthday

Jackson Miller – 1  
Gene McConkey – 4  
Norma Phillips – 5  
Jim Petrie – 6  
Jerry Brooks – 10  
Walt Farnsworth – 10  
Barb Matthias – 11  
Amy Hand – 13  
Michael Davis - 14  
Shane Thise – 20  
Marion Petrie – 22  
Bill Stocks – 22  
Mike Butzow – 23  
Huns Gustrowsky – 27  
Pastor Rodger Dale – 29



***Open Bible Evangelical Lutheran Church  
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**“Growing in Christ through the Word, Making His Salvation Known”**

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