



FROM THE PASTOR

Looking for a Deeper Relationship with God

“When you are in the final days of your life, what will you want? Will you hug that college degree in the walnut frame? Will you ask to be carried to the garage so you can sit in your car? Will you find comfort in rereading your financial statement? Of course not. What will matter then will be people. If relationships will matter most then, shouldn't they matter most now?” (Max Lucado)

When newcomers move to Florida, they are looking for relationships, relationships with people. They come to churches in an attempt to connect with people, to have friends, a family who understands them, who will care about them. In addition, many of them come to a church in Florida to reconnect with God. They want to have a relationship with God. At Open Bible, we provide what people are looking for. We provide a chance at making new friends, but most importantly, we provide a way to reconnect with God. We provide the living and enduring Word of God. It is not watered down here, or put on the backburner to other social programs. It remains the foundation on which Open Bible was built.

In my recent evangelism calls, several people who have lived in the Villages for years, and have a church home, are looking for a new church. Not all of our guests on Sunday are from the 466A or 44 area of the Villages. A new breed of church searcher is out there. Here is what the new searchers have said to me. “Pastor, I felt there was something missing in the sermons at my old church. They didn't seem to connect with me. They were either above my head, or not really Bible based. They were not pointing out my need for a Savior. But the messages at Open Bible are right on!” Isn't it wonderful that we offer the one thing needful at Open Bible?

We offer messages that matter. We offer the Word of God. We offer the only way to have a real relationship

with God. And when we get down to the final days of our lives, isn't it that relationship and the relationships with our earthly family that will matter the most?

I am looking forward to a very challenging fall, as I introduce several new small groups at Open Bible. These groups will help us to develop authentic Christian friendships, give us an opportunity to grow in our relationship with God by studying his Word, and provide an avenue to build new relationships with people who still don't know the Savior. I am well rested and ready for the challenge set before us. As Jesus once said, “I have meat that you know not of.” What Jesus meant is that there is a real fulfillment in seeing Christians grow in their walk with God and each other. I am fueled by what I see happening at Open Bible. Go Open Bible!

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Sunday August 4 marks the 10th Anniversary of Open Bible Lutheran Church. It will no doubt be a very special day for all of us and especially for those individuals who played such a significant role in laying the groundwork for this congregation and in the development of this House of God. Having not been here from its beginnings, I have spent considerable time reading its early history (and I encourage everyone to do the same). From persistent inquiry to rapid development and resulting growth, our church history is nothing short of remarkable. Matter of fact, the term remarkable is a uniquely common term that I find prominent throughout our first ten years.

I think it was rather remarkable that a core group of individuals literally took a Sunday morning Scripture reading as a sign from God that there might be a need for a WELS church near The Villages. The verse I am referring to was from Mark 1:38, But He said to them, “Let us go into the next towns (Villages), that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I have come forth.” We all certainly recognize and value God's word but in this case, even though it was taken a bit out of context, it proved to be more of a direction than even

they may have realized. It was also quite evident that God had supplied the kind of lay leadership that was truly needed to produce the desired results from that point forward.

I think it was quite remarkable that after a visit from the District Mission board in July of 2002, the group started out on their own, as an unfunded mission with Bible study in member's homes. With the guidance of a retired minister, Rev. Donald Meier, enough growth was evident that in January of 2003 the leadership group sought, and was given permission, to hold its Bible study in the Church on the Square. As more evangelizing took place, the remarkable hand of God intervened once again and Open Bible Lutheran Church became a reality by holding its first service on August 3, 2003 in a leased facility. Services continued under the leadership of Pastor Meier until late 2005 when health issues forced him into retirement and God answered our need by sending the steady hand of Pastor Roger Dale to lead Open Bible in the next phase of its history.

God didn't allow our congregation to sit back and admire what they had accomplished in a relatively short period of time. He had more remarkable progress in store for Open Bible. In March of 2005, with the assistance of a grant from the CEF, we were fortunate to be able to purchase ten acres of land adjacent to the Villages (our current church site). It wasn't long before the remarkable presence of our loving God was once again in evidence as the leadership group was able to sell part of the land and utilize the money, along with some significant assistance from our membership, for a future church building. Ground breaking ceremonies took place on March 30, 2008 and construction itself began in October of that same year. In a little over a year's period of time our beautiful structure was completed and formal dedication occurred at 4:00p.m. the afternoon of February 21, 2010.

God, in his infinite wisdom, didn't just provide us with remarkable lay people to lead the way through the initial stages of our church's development, he also provided the spiritual talents of each of our three pastors. Each one possessed specific skills that God used at specific times. When Pastor Dale announced his retirement in early 2012, and Pastor Schulz accepted our call, he became our third pastor. It had become evident to everyone that outreach needed to be the next major theme of Open Bible and Pastor Schulz was the perfect answer to that need. It has once again been nothing short of remarkable how God has blessed those outreach efforts as witnessed by our current growth.

Where will the Holy Spirit lead this congregation during the next ten years and beyond? Only God knows the

answer to that question but somehow one has to believe that it will be nothing short of remarkable.

God's blessings to all,
Greg Wendorf

WHO'S WHO AT OPEN BIBLE

By Leslie Nelson



Karen and Dan Pearson have been very active members with us since last fall, so it is high time for all of us to get to know them a little better. Karen serves as our church secretary, and Dan has been playing golf with our church league when his work schedule allows it. Karen also enjoys playing golf.

The Pearson's were both born and raised in Chicago. Karen attended public schools and graduated from Kelvyn Park High School, while Dan attended St. John's Lutheran Grade School and Luther North High School. He went on to DeVry Technical Institute and graduated from Rock Valley College in Rockford, IL.

Dan was baptized and confirmed at St. John's. Karen was baptized at Zion Evangelical Lutheran and confirmed at St. Peter's United Church of Christ, where the couple was later married, a few years after meeting at Karen's church bowling league. When they moved to Bensenville, IL, they attended St. Luke's in Itasca, but before too long they relocated to Poplar Grove and joined the WELS church in Loves Park, Peace Lutheran.

Most of their married life has been spent in Bensenville, IL, (20 years.) Before moving to The Villages, they were living at Candlewick Lake in Poplar Grove, where both Dan and Karen were volunteers on committees. Karen enjoyed volunteering on the Candlewick Lake Patrol, keeping safety and peace on the lake.

The Pearson's have been married for 30 years and have one son, Daniel, Jr., who is 28 and lives in Chicago. Dan Jr. graduated from Northern Illinois University with a degree in Kinesiology and is now a personal trainer/assistant manager at X-Sport Fitness.

Dan's career has been centered on electronic engineering. He has worked for Sony, Magnavox and Panasonic, his employer for the past 12 years. Since moving down to The Villages, Dan has found a job with less traveling working for Restor Telecom in Leesburg. Karen has worked mostly in the insurance field. At one

time she owned her own construction company, dealing in drywall and acoustic ceilings. In addition to being our part-time secretary, she is also a Shaklee distributor.

Karen loves steak and pizza, but Dan prefers Mexican food. His favorite author these days is Stieg Larson, and she likes books by Danielle Steel, in addition to Meditations. Her favorite movies are romantic or comedies. "Die Hard" is Dan's favorite movie, plus the Bourne series. Both Dan and Karen enjoy playing guitar, and Karen is a member of Open Bible Choir. She is very creative, making jewelry and doing glass fusion.

You may not know that Dan has been a volunteer firefighter for the last 20 years, and Karen was on the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) specializing in water rescue and land search and rescue. Way to go Pearson's!

MISSION FESTIVAL



SUNDAY AUGUST 11th – Pastor Josh Sternhagen, WELS missionary at St. John's in Antigua will be our guest preacher.

After the worship service Pastor Sternhagen and his wife, Kristin will have a presentation on their experiences serving in Antigua.

A salad luncheon will follow the presentation.

WORSHIP COMMITTEE

Have you ever found a long-forgotten flashlight? You flip the switch, no light. You open the top and find an ugly corroded mess. Batteries full of power go bad if left unused. The good Lord made his people with the same characteristics. Charged by God's creative grace we are designed to shine. Sometimes we forget our purpose and hoard the power we've been given - but we aren't designed to sit. Hoarded or unused resources

will go sour. Sometimes we worry that we won't last and we are needlessly conservative in using our power, but The Lord has made us rechargeable so there is no need to worry. Just shine! God will love it. We will enjoy it, and the people around us will benefit.

As we look in Holy Scripture we see the Lord's blueprint for the healthy, active Christian soul as part of the healthy, active Christian church family. Read Acts 11: 19-30. Healthy Christian activity was a power source. It is the message of Jesus Christ, the Word of God. In the city of Antioch the church's power was God's Word preached and expounded, explored and discussed. The Word in worship, in private study and meditation, in group study and discussion. This conveyed a divine energy to the people. And it still does!

And that energy can never just sit still. If it does, it will corrode. Divine power used provides light for the world. Faith shapes life. The Christians in Antioch saw a need and faith propelled them to use their resources to fill that need. All benefitted in the process. That's why God gave power. It is still why God gives power. We are God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus to do good works. (Ephesians 2)

Think of yourself as just one cell in the group or a battery that makes Open Bible what it is. Let The Lord have the privilege of charging and recharging you in his Word and Sacrament. Give him your time. And then remember that batteries are meant to be used. Add your God-given energy to the battery of Christians at Open Bible. It is truly amazing what great things God can do when he gathers us, working together for his glory and his work. Enjoy it, shine brightly and recharge weekly in worship.

FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE

The Fellowship Committee has taken off for July and August but plans are underway for this fall. Our first scheduled event will be an outing to the Melon Patch Theatre to see the musical, *Forever Plaid*. The date is set for Friday, September 27th at 8:00 pm. (hope this isn't too late in the evening)

This musical is one of the most popular and successful in recent memory. This deliciously goofy revue centers on four young, eager male singers killed in a car crash in the 1950's on the way to their first big concert, and now miraculously revived for the posthumous change to fulfill their dreams and perform the show that never was. Singing in the closest of harmony, squabbling

boyishly over the smallest intonations and executing their charmingly outlandish choreography with over-zealous precision, the "Plaids" are a guaranteed smash, with a program of beloved songs and delightful patter that keeps audiences rolling in the aisles when they're not humming along to some of the great nostalgic pop hits of the 1950's.

We have seen this musical and found it very entertaining. We think all of our members will enjoy the music and the story line. There is a sign up sheet on the pass through. Deadline for signing up is September 8th. If you are interested in having dinner in the Leesburg area before the performance please indicate this on the sign up sheet. Cost for each ticket is \$16.00 if you have 25 people. If not, the cost is \$18.00.

Let's make this first event of the fall a BIG success!

CHILDREN'S CHURCH AT OPEN BIBLE

In a continuing effort to offer more opportunities at Open Bible for small group Bible study we have an opportunity to offer a Bible Story study for children during the latter portion of the Worship Service. As Pastor Schulz has mentioned, at Open Bible we already have small groups. We have a choir, a Wednesday Bible study group, a Women of Open Bible group, a book club, a fellowship group and an altar guild. It is important that we look to expand our number of small groups as our congregation grows.

In a Sunday school or during Children's Church children learn the basics of the faith. They learn why Jesus loves them and why they can be called children of God. The Word in pictures, songs and activities cements these truths in their minds. Children who experience Jesus every week will never forget that truth.

This particular small group ministry is a way to connect Christian children and parents to each other, and build authentic Christian friendships. We are asking you to consider being a member of the Children's Church team. The teams would consist of a teacher and an aide and be available based on an agreed upon schedule. The hope is that we would have enough team members to teach at least once a month. The schedule would begin on September 8, 2013 and end on December 22, 2013.

Any questions or comments contact Pam Johnson (352-390-6982) or Pastor Schulz.

THE BOOK CASE

Most people have heard of "The Diary of Anne Frank". The book was published under several titles, one called "The Hiding Place".

Should you find yourself in Amsterdam, in The Netherlands, you will see the building where Anne and her family secretly hid from the Nazis in WWII, is now a museum.

It is fascinating to open the bookcase and enter the small area where the family found shelter for a few years.

Here at Open Bible we have a bookcase and it is somewhat hidden in a corner. There are some real treasures to be found. It is called the "Church Library". Take a peek back in the corner of the Conference Room. Check it out and find a good "read".

No Library Card is needed. Just an honor system, you read and return. If you have a good Christian book that you would like to share, lend or donate, just leave it on the shelf for others to enjoy.

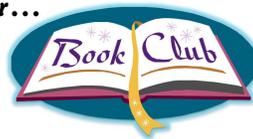
So check out the bookcase in the hidden corner and let others know you found it.

HELP NEEDED, a tidy cat to keep the books neat on the shelves. Just a few minutes a week. Can you spare a few and help out? No pay, but a great title! LIBRARIAN.

Just let Pastor or a Councilman, know you will.

OPEN BIBLE BOOK CLUB

*Book Club is
for...*



...you!

The Open Bible Book Club will meet again on August 27th at 10:00 am. The book for study is, "Heaven and Hell" by Brian Keller. Duane Anderson will lead the discussion questions for the gathering. If you would like to order the book, please contact Karen, our church secretary.

GOD'S CAKE



Sometimes we wonder,
'What did I do to deserve this?' or
'Why did God have to do this to me?'

Here is a wonderful explanation!

A daughter is telling her Mother how **everything is going wrong**, she's failing algebra, her boyfriend broke up with her and her best friend is moving away.

Meanwhile, her Mother is baking a cake and asks her daughter if she would like a snack, and the Daughter says, 'Absolutely Mom, I love your cake.'

'Here, have some cooking oil,' her Mother offers.

'Yuck' says her daughter.

'How about a couple raw eggs?' 'Gross, Mom!'

'Would you like some flour then?

Or maybe baking soda?'

'Mom, those are all yucky!'

To which the mother replies :

'Yes, all those things seem bad all by themselves.

But when they are put together in the right way, they make a wonderfully delicious cake!'

God works the same way. Many times we wonder why

He would let us go through such **bad** and **difficult times**. But God knows that when He puts these things all in His order, they always work for good! We just have to **trust** Him and, eventually, they will all make **something wonderful!**

God is crazy about you.

He sends you flowers every spring and a sunrise every morning.

Whenever you want to talk, He'll listen.

He can live anywhere in the universe, and He chose your **heart**.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY



Joe Price – 1
Nikki Mitra – 2
Roger Acklam – 3
Jim Musiel – 5
Bill Murray – 8
Carol Yahn – 9
Doreen Schaefer – 10
Peggi Carrier – 11
Gail Rathgeber – 11
Marvin Krahn – 14
Alan Johnson – 14
Gordon Roback – 16
Phil Herring – 19
Ron Dahm – 21
Esther Hartwig – 21
Russ Follett – 25
Pat Knack – 25
Sandy Pawlowski – 25
Linda Draeger – 26
Jim Johnson – 30

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY



Tom & Sandy Pawlowski – 2
Bill & June Murray – 3
John & Sherilyn Bielefeldt – 13
Bill & Sharon Sigurdson – 17
Keith & Renda Mackey – 21
Earl & Doris Schlicht – 25
Jack & Sharon Affeldt – 31