

## LENTEN SERIES



When it comes to exalted nicknames, some kings hit the jackpot. Who wouldn't want to be remembered with a glorious name similar to "Alexander the Great" or "William the Conqueror" or "Richard the Lion-heart?" "Wise King Solomon" and "Good King Hezekiah" are two biblical examples that are not too shabby as well.

In the Gospel according to St. Matthew, the evangelist paints with words the portrait of a royal figure—our Lord Jesus Christ, the King of kings. But Jesus is not presented in a way most kings would want to be remembered. He is not presented as "Jesus the Great" or "Jesus the Mighty." Instead, St. Matthew presents to us a lowly king who is rejected and betrayed. A king who is denied and condemned. A king who is mocked, forsaken, crucified and buried. If you had to give him a king's nickname based on St. Matthew's portrayal of Him in the Gospel, The Crucified King would certainly be appropriate.

That's good to hear because that's exactly the kind of king we need him to be. Ever since the fall, we all might be described as "Wannabe kings." We've rebelled against this King, putting ourselves first and God last. We have this king-sized inclination to be served rather than to serve. Our greatest need is not for a king whose glory is shown in His impressive power or strength, but chiefly in showing mercy to sinners. And that's exactly the kind of king St. Matthew presents.

The theme for this year during Lent derives from one of the ideas dominant in St. Matthew's Gospel—that Jesus

is the King. Jesus is God's greatness in the flesh, the ultimate conqueror, who is truly God's Lion-hearted One. Yet He is willing to be a king despised and dishonored, that we might be considered great in God's Kingdom.

Join us this Lenten season as we consider a merciful King of kings and Lord of lords, who goes where human reason would never expect a king to go—high and lifted up on a cross, bearing away the sin of the world, so that He could triumph over it in the resurrection. All so that you might receive the exalted title of "Sons of God."

**Services on Wednesdays from 5:30-6:30 P.M.**  
**Soup Supper from 4:30-5:30 P.M.**

**ASH WEDNESDAY**  
**February 18, 2015**

Sermon: Matthew 6:1–6, 16–21 "The King's Wisdom"

**February 25th, 2015**

Sermon: Matthew 26:47–56 "The King Betrayed"

## FROM THE PASTOR

### **Fear of the Future** **Psalm 46:1-2**

The other day at Open Bible I was speaking to a member who told me that they had suffered a \$600,000 loss in the stock market when the crash occurred back in 2008. The member joked, "Now, we are eating hamburgers in retirement." I could sense by the comment that there was a lingering bitterness in this person's heart about how the planned retirement future had been sabotaged. I think we all have stories of financial losses and mistakes we have made over the course of our lives.

Sometimes we can torment ourselves with the famous "What If" game:  
What if the stock market totally collapses again?  
What if my retirement money vanishes?

What if I get hit with a catastrophic illness that brings with it huge medical bills?

What if a revolution takes place in the United States?

What if my worst fears come to reality?

What are we to do when the fear of the future grips our heart and threatens to drown our soul in worry? We are to "remember the LORD who is great and awesome!" (Nehemiah 4:14).

- Remember that God is our refuge. He is a mighty fortress in the midst of great storms. He is the strong tower that we can run into and be safe. While the economy changes... and presidents change... and governments change... and kingdoms come and go... HE NEVER CHANGES. He is faithful and true. He is the same yesterday, today and forever. You can count on the Lord to ALWAYS be your refuge and strength.

- Remember that God is our help. Have you noticed the great tendency people have to leave God out of their lives? This tendency is clearly seen during times of prosperity. So God uses trouble to bring us back to Him. When we are in trouble, we see how woefully inadequate we are. We see how desperately we need Him. And God is gracious to hear our prayer in our time of need... and help us. He is present right now to help you if you will but cast your cares upon Him.

- Remember that God is in control. Psalm 46:10 tells us, "Be Still and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted on the earth." "Be still" literally means to let go and relax. You and I are not in charge, God is. The God who loves us and works all things together for our good and His glory is in control. SO RELAX AND TRUST HIM.

Psalm 20:7 says, "Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God." Don't put your trust in your money... or in our military... our in some political party. Put your trust in God!

God will take care of His children. He will shelter those who take refuge in Him. He will help those who look to Him. He says to us today, "MY CHILD, DO NOT FEAR. I AM WITH YOU. I LOVE YOU. I AM IN CHARGE. AND I HAVE EVERYTHING UNDER CONTROL. SO YOUR JOB IS TO SIMPLY LET GO, RELAX AND TRUST ME."

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

In reviewing our yearly congregational meetings (we now have three) a common theme or thread appears over and over. That theme centers on our growth and involves many opportunities for service, special fellowship, and plenty of reasons to reach out and encourage our friends and neighbors to come and see the many blessings of God on display at Open Bible Lutheran Church. This was especially obvious when you consider the fact that thirty three new souls joined our ranks and many new programs were initiated in 2014. Among those new programs was the formation of prayer partners, a program designed to foster the ever growing need to pray for our members on our weekly knee mail list as well as the opportunity to make special prayer requests for friends and relatives. This program coupled with the outreach efforts of Pastor Schulz and the members of our Evangelism team were especially noteworthy.

The year 2014 witnessed the continuation of many of our traditional events. In February the ladies of Open Bible once again hosted our welcome back dinner for our seasonal members as well as hosting several special Sunday opportunities to welcome newcomers. Our concert committee hosted four winter concerts and we had two different performances from the children of King of Kings, a sister congregation from Maitland Florida. The men of our congregation once again hosted our annual Easter breakfast between services on Easter Sunday. And our every other year renewal of members choosing to learn CPR and AED lifesaving techniques took place in April. In July Rev. Kevin Stellick and family joined us from Taiwan with a presentation about WELS outreach efforts in China.

September ushered in the fall season and the beginnings of several new small group activities for our congregation including a second weekly Bible study offered by Pastor Schulz; this one occurring on Sunday mornings prior to our regular church service. On Sunday November 2nd we not only celebrated Reformation Sunday but we also held our first Reformation festival. The afternoon program began with a brief but entertaining concert presented by that renowned German pianist Heinrich Von Schnabel and hosted by a German Master of ceremonies who looked a lot like Pastor Schulz. A wonderful German meal followed and the evening concluded with a very interesting presentation by our own Dr. Martin Luther. November also witnessed the continuation of our

annual Thanksgiving dinner attended by some sixty members and guests.

The month of December was a very busy month at Open Bible. Advent services began the first Wednesday under the theme of comfort and joy. Each week we found out about the different types of comfort Christ came to bring and experienced the resulting joy that is a part of Advent. Our church also participated in Christmas in the Courtyard celebration in front of the Wildwood Town Hall on Saturday December 6th. Our choir performed late in the afternoon and we also operated a booth from which we were able to distribute information pertaining to our church. Sunday, December 7<sup>th</sup>, also brought us a guest preacher. Pastor James Mattek of WLCFS-Christian Family Solutions spoke at both services and presented information concerning Christian counseling, in-home care services and senior living solutions. Our ladies followed up on that Sunday evening with their annual Advent by Candlelight event. This evening of fellowship and devotion was created to help prepare participants for the coming birth of our Savior Jesus Christ. December also saw a first at Open Bible as we began a second Sunday service with Congregational approval. The tremendous rise in membership and the return of many seasonal members, spurred the addition of a second service during the months of December through March. This change in Church worship opportunities, suggested by our long range planning committee, will be further evaluated next April.

Finally, I would like to recognize and thank Doc Blaho for his years of service to the Church Council. According to the rotation system reorganized by your Council last year, a change needed to take place this year. Doc has been an integral part of this Church and Council for a number of years as well as being a real blessing to Open Bible in general. Thank You Doc for your faithful service. I would also like to thank the many members of our congregation who participated in and/or contributed in some way to the successful and God pleasing events of the year 2014.

As we move forward in 2015 much work remains to be done. Regardless of the tasks still to be performed we need to continue to trust that God will oversee all that we do and guide us in the decision making process. His amazing grace has brought us to this point in time and will continue to carry us forward.

God's continued blessings to each and every one of you,  
Greg Wendorf

## WHO'S WHO AT OPEN BIBLE

### Bob and Pam Riches



We welcome one of our newest couples Bob and Pamela Riches to Open Bible. Pamela was brought up a WELS Lutheran, but has been Missouri Synod Lutheran her adult life and Bob for the past twenty years. They moved to The Villages in 2009 after Bob retired from Palm Desert, California.

Bob is a retired Navy E-9 Master Chief Petty Officer having worked on shipboard Missile Radar Systems, teaching Electronics, and facilitating organizational development workshops. Bob has seen much of the world as he has set foot in more than thirty countries while serving on board Navy ships for 12 years during his 24 year career in the Navy. After the military, Bob became a GIS (computer mapping) technology guru for St John's County, Florida and several small companies in Jacksonville. He was an adjunct professor at California College of the Desert, and retired from the city of Palm Desert, California in 2009.

Pamela worked for ten years in banking, ten years as an executive secretary, and most recently for the past twenty-five years as an insurance and securities agent, specializing in group health, 401Ks, Medicare and financial planning. She returned to college and completed her Bachelor's Degree in Organizational Leadership Development, with a minor in religion in 2003.

Bob and Pamela have a total of four sons. One son lives in Sao Paulo, Brazil, with his wife and seven year old daughter. Another son is single and lives in Los Angeles, another son lives in Owensboro, Kentucky, with his wife and two boys, ages 4 and 1, and the fourth son is single and lives in Jacksonville, Florida.

Bob and Pamela enjoy their 30' Winnebago motor home, although they just moved into their second house in the Village of Pinellas in The Villages. Pamela enjoys drawing, sewing, gardening, and making greeting cards. They enjoy teaching others how to play the card game of Hand, Knee and Foot (Triple Play). Pamela has a weekly Bible study group throughout the year in their

home. Bob is semi-retired, but still does GIS work as needed for the Villages Technology Solutions Group.

Bob and Pamela are pleased with Open Bible's traditional service, size of the congregation, how well it is organized, and the definition of close communion, but are especially impressed in the delivery of the sermons by Pastor Schulz. Bob says he really looks forward to coming to Open Bible Church services on Sunday morning and both said how much they appreciate the special attention given to communion.

Bob's words of advice are, "Don't sweat the small stuff." And he gives a message to young people that honesty and integrity are so very important in life. "We should be thankful that we are so blessed to live in this country." Pamela would tell young people and all to be faithful to the end because as Pastor Schulz states, "Christians will be persecuted for their faith".

We are most fortunate to have another very special Godly couple become part of our family at Open Bible. Thank you, Bob and Pamela, for sharing your life with us!

Michael Benrud

## SMALL GROUP MINISTRY

### **Wednesday in the Word at 5:00 PM. (Led by Pastor Schulz)**

\_\_\_ **When People Forget About God:** A Look at Judges (2 Sessions, Feb .4<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup>).

### **SPLASH Single People Loving and Serving Him (Led by Pastor Dale)**

\_\_\_ SPLASH is having a Bible study at church on **February 9<sup>th</sup>** at 1:00 PM. On Valentine's Day, **February 14<sup>th</sup>**, we meet at the church at 1:00 PM to play the card game Hand and Foot. At 3:30 PM we plan to go to the Olive Garden to eat. For more information please contact: Joan Sanderson, Nancy Rodriguez, and Angela Spengler.

### **North Country Group (Led by Alan Johnson)**

\_\_\_ Meeting twice a month on Sundays from 6:30pm to 8:30 PM Meeting at the home of Alan & Pam Johnson- **February 8<sup>th</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup>**.

Topic: Whole Bible Project: Titus

### **466A Group and Vicinity (Led by Pastor Schulz)**

\_\_\_ This group will meet once a month on a Tuesday. **The next meeting is February 24<sup>th</sup>** from 2:00-4:00 PM.

At the home of Dave & Nancy Gonia: Topic: Jonah: The Unwilling Missionary.

### **MEN'S BREAKFAST GROUP (Led by Dennis Duessler)**

\_\_\_ **Men at Leisure (Meets at Perkins Restaurant at 8:30 AM on Friday, February 13<sup>th</sup>)** Travel through Great Chapters of the Bible this winter.

Perkins located on CR 466.

### **WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY (Led by Judy Anderson)**

\_\_\_ **Colossians: Weekly study on this New Testament book.**

This study provides an insight into the nature of Jesus Christ. Specifically, we see Jesus as the very image of God, as the Creator, as He who has always existed, as the head of the church and as the great reconciler, and most importantly, as the one in whom all the fullness of God dwells. Besides the great things we learn about Jesus as noted above, we also learn about false philosophy, Christian grace, the Christian family, and the character of the new man in Christ: **Continues on Tuesday February 3<sup>rd</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> from 1:00 PM-2:30 PM.**

### **Open Bible Book Club (Pastor Schulz)**

\_\_\_ Group meets at church on **February 24<sup>th</sup>** at 4:00 PM. "Pontius Pilot" by Paul Maier. Please sign-up with Karen so she knows how many books to order. Cost is \$15.00.

### **Women of Open Bible (Led by Sandy Hahm)**

\_\_\_ **Wednesday February 11<sup>th</sup>** at 1:00 PM. Meets on the Second Wednesday of each month at 1:00 PM. for service, spiritual growth, fellowship, and recreation. This month after the meeting, Karen Pearson will show us how to make a cross pendant out of wire!

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

\_\_\_ Meets on the First Friday of each month at church from 9:00-12:00 PM. Next meeting **February 6<sup>th</sup>**. Group creates quilts for those in need in our community. Also does knitting, crochet, and embroidery. Coordinator: Sandy Pawlowski

### **Fellowship Group (Led by Joe and Paula Malec)**

\_\_\_ Meets once a month for a recreational activity. The activity will be **Friday, February 13<sup>th</sup>** at 5:00 PM. Potluck supper and a fun guessing game. Please bring an old photo of yourself! All ages and friends welcome.

### **Adult Choir (Led by Stacy Vance)**

\_\_\_ Meets on Wed. from 6:15-7:15 PM. During Lent choir will meet 6:30 – 7:30 PM. All Voices are welcome.

## GRIEF CARE

\_\_\_ GRIEF CARE (Facilitator by Patricia Major) 8 week video-based small group to help those who have lost a loved one in death. Offered when needed.

## Defenders (Led by Ken Wells and Bill Sigurdson)

\_\_\_ Meets on the last Friday of the month at 11:00 AM Meeting on **February 27<sup>th</sup>** at the Leesburg Gun Range on SR44. Contact Bill Sigurdson for more info.

## Women of Riches (Led by Pam Riches)

\_\_\_ Meets on **Mondays at 2:00pm starting February 2<sup>nd</sup>** for 6 weeks at the home of Pam Riches. The study will take a look at Kings and OT Prophets. 5 studies and one lunch get-together.

## New Life in Christ (Led by Pastor Schulz)

\_\_\_ Take a look at God, creation, the work of the Holy Spirit, Baptism, Lord's Supper, the dual natures of Jesus Christ, Heaven and Hell, Judgment Day and more. Class is a good refresher for members and pre-requisite for those wanting to join Open Bible. Continues **Tuesdays from 12:00-1:30 PM**. 9 Sessions.

## CHURCH COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

### January Council Highlights

The church council met on January 15<sup>th</sup>. Following are the highlights from the meeting:

- December income was \$3,214 more than expenses. Income for all of 2014 was \$17,147 more than expenses.
- The audit of the church books was completed. Only a few minor adjustments needed to be made.
- CMO offerings for the Southeast district were up 10% in 2014 vs. 2013. CMO offerings for all of Synod were up 1%.
- It was decided to cancel the exclusive private showing of the movie "Jerusalem" at the Regal Hollywood Stadium #16 and IMAX theater in Ocala on Tuesday, February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2015 at 10:00 AM.
- It was decided to have coffee available after the second service on friendship Sunday – 2/8/2015.
- It was decided to have only one Lenten service at 5:30 pm with a meal at 4:30 pm.
- It was decided to have communion in only the first service on Easter Sunday.

- Pastor Scharf will be preaching at Open Bible on February 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Extra envelopes will be put in the 2016 envelope packets for Meditations, Forward in Christ, and Debt reduction.

## ALTAR GUILD NEWS

The altar guild met for their first meeting of the year. They reviewed the past year blessings to the church in time, talent, and treasure by their members and others. In November the Women of Open Bible donated funds to help purchase items to adorn the chancel for our thanksgiving celebration. Many thanks to that group. A prayer was raised for the need of a more fitting Christmas tree and the church was blessed with a new 12' pre-lit tree that fit beautifully in our worship area. This tree was purchased from a memorial gift from Donna Reed. It was decorated by many faithful hands. Also the large Nativity that graced the loft area above the doors was installed carefully and again removed at the appropriate time.

The communion set up for two services on Sundays, begun in December, has gone smoothly since it hasn't been done before and was an unknown. We have also been blessed with a new banner which is presently in use. Thanks to Chuck Majors memorial.

Looking forward we have several months of Communion Sundays covered but there are still opportunities to serve. The altar guild is open to all ladies of Open Bible and we invite anyone interested to join to give of their service to the beauty and order of our worship service. If you've never served you may assist a guild member. Members are Audrey Hoerchner, Bonnie Farnsworth, Leslie Nelson, Joan Blaho, Jeri Leeper, Linda Gustrowsky, Carol Stauske, Barb Matthias and Mary Burel. Interested ladies may contact any member to learn more.

Again at Easter we will be placing lilies in the Chancel. We are asking for donations for purchasing flowers as in the past.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Mary Burel

## WOMEN OF OPEN BIBLE

Women of Open Bible will meet February 11<sup>th</sup> at 1 PM in the Fellowship Hall. All ladies are welcome. Hostesses for February are Audrey Hoerchner and Ruth Vance.

Women of Open Bible will be serving at the Feb. 18<sup>th</sup> and March 4<sup>th</sup> Lenten Suppers. Please sign up on the sheet located in the kitchen pass through if you plan to attend.

Reserve the date of March 20<sup>th</sup> for the Salad Luncheon. More information in the March Newsletter.

Hope to see you at our February meeting.

Sandy Hahm, President

## HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

Herb & Doreen Schaefer – 9  
Bob & Pam Riches – 24

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Ray Welch – 1  
Bill Sigurdson – 2  
Marilyn Pearson - 5  
Sharon Sigurdson – 12  
Ardith Schmidt – 14  
Judy Mahnke – 14  
Dan Blaho – 17  
Judy Hainen - 23  
Gloria Butzow - 24  
Les Stauske - 27  
Judy Anderson - 28  
Dianne Bliss - 28  
Barb Hartshorn - 28  
Jeanette Kellam – 28