

NEWSLETTER



February 2016 Volume 11, No. 2

From the Pastor

Give Up Something For Lent?

Generally, Lutherans do not “give up” something for Lent, although the practice is not unknown among Lutherans. Going without something can be helpful when it reminds us on a daily basis that the Lord Jesus gave up his life so that we might be freed from the curse of our sins. St. Paul reminded the Corinthians: “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich” (Corinthians 8:9). This is a good reason for what is sometimes called “Lenten self-denial.”

Lutherans tend to steer away from Lenten self-denial, however, because it has so often been abused in the Christian Church. Too many people “give something up” during Lent because they think they are making points with God, earning by their self-denial at least a little part of his forgiveness. The Bible rejects this thought completely. Peter wrote: “For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect” (1 Peter 1:18-19). In the hymn “Rock of Ages” we sing, “Nothing in my hands I bring; simply to thy cross I cling.”

Lutherans believe that the forgiveness of sins is God’s free gift to human beings. They believe that God forgives sins because Jesus met the demands God made of sinners. In the place of sinners, Jesus lived perfectly and obeyed all the laws God had set down for sinners. In the place of sinners, Jesus died, enduring the punishment God had decreed for sinners.

Because they believe that forgiveness is theirs because of Jesus’ life and death, Lutherans focus on Jesus’ life and death during the season of Lent. On the Sundays of Lent they watch as Jesus battles and overcomes Satan and his cohorts. During special services during the week, most Lutherans review the story of Jesus’ final days on earth—his visit to the Garden of Gethsemane, his betrayal, arrest, trial, crucifixion, death, and burial. The color of the altar at this time of year is purple. Purple is the color of royal mourning and repentance.



Lenten Services

Places of the Passion

The scenes of Lent are familiar: the Upper Room, the Garden of Gethsemane, the halls of Pontius Pilate, and the hill of Golgatha. These are the places we remember when we meditate on our Lord's Passion. Yet when Jesus enters a place, He never leaves it as He found it.

These are not the only places that our Lord enters. When Jesus visits the most troubling places of our lives, they become the most amazing place of God's grace. Places of the Passion will enable us to gaze in wonder on the spiritual work that our Lord does in those places. We will enter the Places of the Passion only to discover our Lord there...waiting for us and willing to share with us a love that was set in place before the foundation of the world.

February 10th, 2016- Ash Wednesday

Luke 22:1-13

"A Place at the Table for You"

Soup-Salad Supper: 4:30-5:15 P.M.

By: Women of Open Bible

Worship with Communion: 5:30 P.M.

February 17th, 2016

Luke 22:14-38

"The Upper Room: A Place of Service"

Soup-Salad Supper: 4:30-5:15 P.M.

By: The Open Bible Choir

Worship: 5:30 P.M.

February 24th, 2016

Luke 22:39-46

"Gethsemane: A Place of Strength"

Soup-Salad Supper: 4:30-5:15 P.M.

By: Men's Breakfast, Defenders, any other men willing to help

Who's Who at Open Bible



Susan and Mel Parker are new members in the Open Bible Family. Susan was born into a very large closely knit family on a

farm in Paris, Ohio and lived there until the age of 15 when she moved to Bradenton, Florida. Susan graduated from high school in Bradenton, Florida. Susan attained her certification in dietetic nutrition at Kent State University; her BA in psychology at Florida International University and a BS in restaurant management. Susan's career was spent in the food service business, although she did teach dancing at the Fred Astaire Studios. Susan taught a Bible study class at John Knox for ten years as well as volunteering at Bayside Nursing Home. She enjoys working with the elderly. She also enjoys interior design and decorating.

Mel was born in Lawton, Oklahoma and attended high school at a very small boarding school in Minnesota. Mel intends to return to Minnesota this September to attend his 55th class reunion. Mel's career was spent in finance, specifically in the insurance field. Mel is the father of three children, two of whom live in Jacksonville Beach, Florida and one in Miami. He has four grandchildren.

Mel has been a chess player for 65 years and would really enjoy playing in a World Championship Chess tournament.

Mel and Susan met when Mel was a customer of the restaurant where Susan worked in Boca Raton, Florida. They married in 1998.

By: Jan Britton

Small Group Ministry

Summerhill Seekers: This is a new Bible study group. The Topic: "From Promise to Glory" led by Pastor Dale. This Bible study is 8 sessions, and will meet twice a month. It will be an overview of the New Testament. The first meeting will be on Thursday, February 11th from 2:00 – 4:00 at the home of Mike & Donna Davis, and February 25th at the home of Ron & Mary Helen Schultz.

God's Promise is a multimedia Bible Study tool designed to help a person gain a good understanding of the Bible in a relatively short time. It uses a combination of illustrations, text and 3-D worlds, and interactions to help users learn about the people and events in the Bible and about God's promise of a Savior. Travel from Matthew to Revelation with us!

466AAA Topic: Take Two – 19 Minute Bible Studies with the Messiah! This group will meet twice a month at the home of Ron and Diane Brutlag. They will meet Thursday, February 4th and Thursday, February 18th from 1:00 – 2:30pm. All are welcome to join this group regardless of where they live. Please call Ron & Diane if you plan to attend.

These studies cover stories from the life of Jesus. (The Barren Fig Tree, The Friend at Midnight, The Sower, The Two Debtors and many more.

Book Club: Topic: Evidence for the Resurrection Location: Open Bible Lutheran Church. Date: February 23rd 2015 Time: 4:00 PM Facilitator: Pastor Schulz In this fascinating look at the claims of the Gospel writers and 2,000 years of believing Christians, bestselling author Josh McDowell and his son Sean examine the compelling evidence and conclude that Jesus Christ conquered death and the grave. In clear,

concise, and accessible chapters, Josh and Sean present the facts about the resurrection and what it means for readers today.

Ladies Tuesday Bible Study- Tuesdays 1:00pm at Open Bible. Pam Johnson is the leader of this study. Join us as we study the best-selling book - *Having a Mary Heart in a Martha World.* This Bible study is by author Joanna Weaver. Come discover the intimate relationship with God we were designed to enjoy." It will consist of 12 lessons.

Defenders: (Led by Ken Wells and Bill Sigurdson) Will be meeting Thursday, February 25th at 11:00am. This group meets at the Gun Range on SR44 in Leesburg. The group shoots from 100-150 rounds. The cost is \$10.00 if you have your own ammunition and targets. Once the group completes their shooting, they have a time for prayer as they bring requests to God to protect our soldiers, and to continue to bless America. Then, they head off for lunch. Ladies are welcome to join this group!

SPLASH

ATTENTION SINGLE PEOPLE: Our next meeting and breakfast outing will be February 16th, 9:00 a.m., at the Cottage Inn, 340 S. Hwy. 441/27, about one mile from 466 towards Leesburg. We will have a brief Bible Study afterwards. Please come to this important meeting so we can discuss future times and dates. Please sign up no later than Feb. 14th, so reservations may be made.

Fellowship Group: (led by Joe & Paula Malec, Dan & Karen Pearson)

Sign-up for the Valentine's Eve Candlelight Pot-Luck Dinner. It will be Saturday, Feb. 13th from 6:00 – 8:00pm. The pot-luck information is provided on the sign-up sheet located in the kitchen pass-thru. If you have any questions, please contact Karen Pearson or Paula Malec.

Men of Leisure: (Led by Dennis Duessler.) Enjoy 19 Minutes Bible Study: Take a look at the parables and some special stories of the Bible.

Meeting at Perkins Restaurant on Friday, February 12th at 8:30 A.M. The Men are also planning a boat ride down the Withlacoochee River. The trip will be Friday, March 18th from 10:00 – 12:00. Cost is \$18.00 per person plus tax. Plan on having breakfast or lunch. See sign-up sheet in the kitchen Pass-thru or Dennis Duessler. There are a limited amount of seats available.

North County Group: (Led by Alan Johnson) The North Country's Bible Study meets twice a month. The topic :*Government a Godly Perspective*. This is a CD generated Bible Study from Kramer Publications. Studies for February will be on Sunday Feb. 14th and 28th from 6:00-8:00pm at the home of Alan & Pam Johnson.

Fore-Giving Friday Golfers:

MORE GOLFERS WELCOME

Every Friday afternoon, a group of "Fore-Giving Golfers" from Open Bible plays on one of The Villages Executive courses. The location varies, but the friendliness does not. If you are a beginner, a hacker or an old duffer, we invite you couples or singles to join us. Leslie, (352) 753-2484, leslien42@comcast.net, puts in the request every Monday evening during the winter months. She will need your ID# and email address.

Open Bible Duffers Golf outside "The Villages" at an 18-holf Golf Course every Saturday. Men and Women are welcome. If you would like to participate, please email Jim Petrie at JSPetrie@gmail.com.

Happy Hearts-Happy Hands Handiwork Meeting Friday, February 5th from 9-12:00pm. This group creates quilts for those in need in our community. Also if you have knitting, crochet or embroidery you are working on, join the group for fellowship as you work on your project!

Women of Open Bible

The Ladies have their monthly meeting on Wednesday, February 3rd beginning at 12:00pm.

We are meeting a week early to plan for serving at the Ash Wednesday Light Supper the following week (Feb. 10th.)

Wednesday in the Word: Continues for one more week (Feb. 3rd) from 5:00 – 6:00pm join our leader: Pastor Mark Schulz. Topic: Burden Bearing. God has borne all our burdens in Christ. His love compels us to bear each other's burdens. This study leads us into Scripture's lessons on suffering. Discussion based on real-life accounts lets participants consider how they should demonstrate love for others.

February 3rd: Burdens Are Bridges to Repentance and Faith.

466A Group Topic: A Look at Luke (Luke 2, 10, 15). Tuesday, February 16th from 2:00 – 4:00pm at the home of John & Jan Liermann
Leader: Pastor Mark Schulz

Women of Riches: Bible study at Pam Riches' home continues Monday's through February at 1:00pm. There are 10 faith lessons, ending one week before Easter, March 21st. It is the series called "That The World May Know" by Ray VanderLaan, volume 4, entitled The Death And Resurrection of The Messiah. Should be a good study especially before Easter!

Game Nights: Game Nights are back. Friday, February 5th & 19th from 6:00 – 8:00pm. Bring friends, games and a snack to pass!

L.W.M.S.

(Lutheran Women's Missionary Society)

Some of our newer members may not be familiar with this branch of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, so below is a summary: Women of Open Bible belong to this society, and as the name suggests, our main concern is supporting missions. At our monthly meetings we place two plates for contributions – one for our "Working Fund" and the other for "Missions." Twice a year (spring & fall) we have a circuit rally (there are 17 churches in our circuit.) We each

take turns hosting the rallies. Our turn comes up the spring of 2019. About a month before the rally, we post the location, time, etc. and start soliciting funds from the entire congregation so that we can all take part in this worthy project. We then take the money we have collected over the last six months, plus what the congregation has donated, and we send it to the Circuit Treasurer. Seventy-five percent is divided between Home and World Missions; twenty-five percent is sent to the Central Office for distribution at the annual convention, which this year is being held in St. Charles, Illinois the 23rd thru the 26th of June (more on this later.) You may have noticed a small envelope in your church mailbox. This is for the rally donation. If no envelope, any envelope will do, but please make your check out to "Open Bible Lutheran Church" and mark it for "L.W.M.S." Please help us with these projects. Our Missionaries need our help desperately.

Ruth Vance

Council Highlights

January Council Highlights

The church council met on January 21st.

Following are the highlights from the meeting:

- December income was \$23,889 more than expenses. Year to date income was \$44,556 more than expenses. The mortgage balance as of 12/31/15 was \$380,081.
- 3 LACE CDs totaling a little over \$40,000 were redeemed and placed in a new CD with LACE that is paying 3% interest. \$180,000 of the money received from the Anne Lind estate was also placed in this CD which now has a little over \$221,000 in it. This is technically a 5yr CD but LACE will not charge a penalty for early redemption should we need the cash for a building program.
- The building committee chairman presented

an updated drawing of their recommendation for the building expansion. A special voter's meeting will be held following the late service on Sunday, Feb. 14th. The building plans and cost estimates will be presented for review and input from the congregation.

- Based on a recommendation from the audit committee, it was decided that any asset that costs \$500 or more and has a life of more than 1 year will be considered a capital asset. Other items costing less than \$500 or having a life of 1 year or less will be considered an expense in the year they are purchased.

Festival of Friendship

Just remember: Everyone should try. Don't be afraid of failure. Somebody should not be the same people participating over and over. Anybody can do it. All you have to do is try. And...Nobody's perfect!

Who's gonna do it? Remember...You are the only one who can invite your friends, neighbors or relatives to our FESTIVAL OF FRIENDSHIP SUNDAY, on February 28th, 2016. We will have food and refreshments after both services, special music, and fellowship. Start thinking and praying about whom you will bring!

Special Voter's Meeting

There will be a special Voter's meeting on Sunday, February 14th at 11:15am. This meeting is called to present and discuss the building design for a potential expansion. All are welcome to give input.

Special Guest Speaker



On Ash Wednesday, February 10th, from 3:30 – 4:40pm, Open Bible Lutheran Church, will have a guest speaker talk to us about mission work in Pakistan. Dr. Patrick is the lay leader of our church in Pakistan (37 home churches, 40,000 addresses to which law/Gospel messages are sent each month, and a TV program about the catechism. He is a surgeon who has his own hospital where he has about 30 doctors and nurses at work, half of whom are Muslim. He is in the US now because there are indications that his life might be at risk in Pakistan.

He is using the time here to grow in his Bible knowledge in order to give the Pakistani Lutherans the best guidance he can. If he receives a working visa he will probably go to New York City and do outreach work amongst southeast Asians in the vicinity of our congregation there. He is still working with the house churches in Pakistan, and recently began a regular Video Facebook contact with them. He plans to return to Pakistan from time to time since he feels that short visits there will not cause any danger for him and his wife. He is by nature an enthusiastic person and a good speaker. His English is a bit broken at times but very understandable. **Invite your friends and neighbors to come and hear Dr. Patrick share the blessings and challenges of being a Christian in a Muslim Country.**

Did you know?

Can Collection: Bring your “crushed” & “rinsed” cans to church on the 1st and 3rd Sundays. Put your cans in the back of the red car parked out in front of church. Thank you from the Women of Open Bible.

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.

Do You Understand The Church Year in a Lutheran Church?

The Church year is divided into the Festival and the Non-Festival half. The Festival Half of the church year focuses in on the life of Christ and his teachings and runs from the end of November through May. (depending on when Easter is). The Non-Festival half of the church year runs from approximately June through early November, and focuses in on the life of a Christian. Let’s review what we celebrate during the Festival Half of the Church year.

ADVENT-We focus on Christ’s Second Coming on the last day, his continual coming to us in Word and Sacrament, and to a lesser extent his first coming as the Christ Child. (4 Sundays before Christmas)

CHRISTMAS-We focus on God’s fulfilled promise to send a Savior and the Savior who is God Incarnate.

EPIPHANY-We focus on showing forth Christ (Messiah). Epiphany means “showing forth or revealing.” (January 6th to Lent)

LENT-We focus on Christ’s suffering and death as our substitute to save us from sin. (40 days before Easter)

EASTER-We focus on Christ’s resurrection victory that he shares with his church.

PENTECOST- We focus on the promised outpouring of the Holy Spirit to empower the Church to remain faithful and carry out the Great

Commission in all the world. Pentecost is one day but marks the beginning of the longest season of the church year, lasting until Advent or in some churches until the short season of END TIMES
END TIMES: We focus on the final things: Reformation, Last Judgment, Saints Triumphant and Christ the King. (These Sundays take place in November)

Happy Anniversary



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

Happy Birthday

Ray Welch - 1
Bill Sigurdson – 2
Marilyn Pearson – 5
Dick Chapman - 7
Sharon Sigurdson - 12
Judy Mahnke - 14
Dan (Doc) Blaho – 17
Mary Williams - 20
Judy Hainen - 23
Gloria Butzow - 24
Les Stauske - 27
Judy Anderson - 28
Dianne Bliss - 28
Barb Hartshorn - 28
Jeanette Kellam – 28

Happy Birthday

