



Newsletter



December 2020

Volume 15 No. 12

From the Pastor **Thank God Even for the Fleas!** **(Adopted from The Hiding Place,** **Corrie Ten Boom)** **by Pastor Mark Schulz**

The barracks where Corrie Ten Boom and her sister, Betsy, were kept in the Nazi concentration camp Ravensbruck were terribly overcrowded and flea infested. Corrie and Betsy had been able to miraculously smuggle a Bible into the camp, and in that Bible they had read that in all things they were to give thanks and that God can use anything for good.

Betsy decided that this meant thanking God for the fleas. This was too much for Corrie, who said she could do no such thing. Betsy insisted, so Corrie gave in and prayed to God, thanking Him even for the fleas. Over the next several months a wonderful, but curious, thing happened: They found that the guards never entered their barracks. This meant that the women were not assaulted.

It also meant that they were able to do the unthinkable, which was to hold open Bible studies and prayer meetings in the heart of a Nazi concentration camp. Through this, countless numbers of women came to faith in Christ. Only at the end did they discover why the guards had left them alone and would not enter their barracks: It was because of the fleas.

Many of us celebrated Thanksgiving this year, away from friends and family because of the Covid pandemic. In a time of economic uncertainty, in a time when many are facing physical and emotional challenges, there can be little doubt that such a trusting prayer of gratitude will be challenging to consider. But when you feel that challenge, take a moment and remember the fleas of Ravensbruck. And thank God anyway. Give thanks to God for every good and perfect gift (James 1:17), but also thank Him for how He will use all things for good in the lives of those who trust Him (Romans 8:28).

President's Message

I'm going to assume that many of you might remember the story about the very unique incident that occurred on Christmas eve during World War I. Let me refresh your memory by saying I don't think it took place before or since in history. On Christmas Eve 1914 the guns fell silent along a thirty mile stretch of the Western front. Soldiers peered cautiously over the top of trenches while a few emerged to repair their positions and bury the dead. As darkness fell, some German troops set out lanterns and sang Christmas carols. Men on the British side applauded and shouted greetings.

The next day, German, French, and British troops met in no man's land to shake hands, share food and exchange

gifts. It was a brief respite from war that soon ended when the artillery and machine guns roared to life again. No one who experienced "The Christmas Truce", as it became known, would ever forget how it felt and how it fueled their longing for lasting peace.

Skip forward about a hundred years and ask yourself what the chance would be of something similar happening today. It's a different world with a number of different kinds of wars being fought. Things certainly are challenging but two thoughts should come to mind and never change. Always trust in the Lord and never underestimate the power of prayer. Examine the Christmas prayer below and imagine how different and potentially wonderful our lives could be if we all acted and thought this way.

Let us pray that strength and courage abundant be given to all who work for a world of reason and understanding * that the good that lies in every man's heart may day by day be magnified * that men will come to see more clearly not that which divides them, but that which unites them * that each hour may bring us closer to a final victory, not of nation over nation, but of man over his own evils and weaknesses * that the true spirit of this Christmas Season—its joy, its beauty, its hope, and above all its abiding faith—may live among us * that the blessings of peace be ours—the peace to build and grow, to live in harmony and sympathy with others; and to plan for the future with confidence.

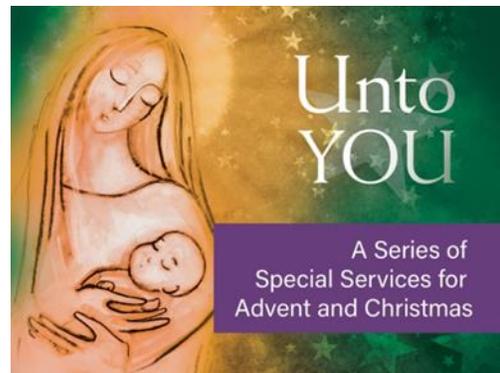
Let us always remember that in Jesus we can find lasting peace with God and harmony with each other. This is

the life changing message of Christmas. When you put your cares in God's hands, He puts His Peace in your hearts.

Let me conclude with this short prayer for each of you: God grant you peace at Christmas and fill your heart with cheer. God grant you health and happiness throughout the coming year. God guide you with His wisdom and keep YOU in His care- This is my special wish for you. This is my Christmas prayer.

All God's Blessings,
Greg Wendorf

Advent Season



Open Bible Lutheran Church will celebrate the Advent Season during the Mid-week Wednesday and the Sunday Services. The theme will be "Unto You" Wednesday Services will be at 5:30pm. All are invited.

Week 1: In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. Luke 2

Join us for our Advent worship series, Unto You, as we walk through the key verses of Luke 2 that remind us that Christ has come to each one of us. Each week will focus on a different word from

the reading that highlights what happened then and how that word applies to our lives today. In Week 1 we celebrate that we are registered as children of God through Christ.

Week 2: Lineage: Joseph ... was of the house and lineage of David. Luke 2:4

Week 3: Great Joy: I bring you good news of great joy. Luke 2:10

Christmas Eve: Glory: The glory of the Lord shone around them. Luke 2:9

On this holy night, we celebrate and sing along with the angels, "Glory to God in the highest," for the birth of our Savior among us.

Christmas Day: Good News: I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Luke 2:10

On this blessed day, we celebrate the good news that the Baby Jesus has arrived.

Music & Education Report By Randy Cochran

WORSHIP

I will use this space every month to explain how worship services are planned at Open Bible. This month: **grand piano, electric piano, or the organ?**

Open Bible has three beautiful keyboard instruments which can be utilized in the worship service. I have been using the grand piano for most pre-service and post-service music. The organ is mainly used to accompany hymns and liturgy. The electric piano is used with the small

choir and perhaps some other special music. Using all three gives worshippers a variety of sound throughout the service.

Our worship committee meets once per month to plan and discuss worship. It is chaired by Fred Hainen. There are usually about eight of us in attendance.

HANDBELLS

Handbells are meeting and will be playing about once per month.

CHOIR

Our small choir is meeting and will be singing about twice per month.

ASSISTED LIVING VISITS (CARRIAGE HOUSE)

My scheduled day is Mondays at 11 AM. We have a short devotion/Bible study, followed by singing time. I currently have a solid core of 8-10 people who are attending. I am limited to about ten guests due to COVID-19 guidelines.

466A BIBLE STUDY GROUP

Our Bible study topic: World Religions. All are invited...not just the 466A neighborhoods. Next study is December 22nd Tuesday, 2-3:30 PM in the church fellowship-hall. Among other things, come learn about kosher foods, the Hindu celebration of Dali, and doctrinal differences among Christian denominations.

SPLASH (Single People Loving and Serving Him)

Our next gathering will be our December 14th meeting at 1:00. I have received many phone calls from single women who saw our ad the in the paper!

CAREGIVERS

If you are a caregiver, it could be that you can't leave your spouse at home by

themselves. Or, it is difficult to find someone to watch them when you need to leave the house.

I am willing, along with other members, to come sit with your spouse for a period of time so you can run errands, meet with friends, etc. Or, perhaps we can help by running errands for you...such as shopping or picking up meds. Maybe we can prepare a few meals and drop them off.

If you need assistance, call me at 407-637-4876 or e-mail me at randy.cochran78@gmail.com

I have arranged care for a friend of BJ Collins who is a member of our church. BJ will be bringing her friend to church. Jennifer Mercer and I will initially be offering three hours on Thursdays from 10-1 to allow BJ's friend some relief time.

If you are interested in taking a three hour shift, let me know.

CHRISTMAS FOR KIDS

We are conducting a Christmas for Kids on December 12th, Saturday. I will need some help with preparing snacks, lunch, arts and crafts, etc. The idea is that parents can drop off their kids while they run Christmas errands. It would be for preschool (age 3) thru grade six children. Ads are running and gifts to help cover cost are arriving!

2021 WORKSHOPS

I plan on offering two workshops during the first half of 2021. One will be for those who have recently lost a loved one. It's titled "Grief Share". The other will be titled "Planning Your Christian Funeral: What to do Before, During, and After."

BUS TOURS

Depending on how COVID behaves, I'd like to organize some motor coach trips in 2021 for our members and their friends. If you have any suggestions, let me know.

Serving Him!
Randy Cochran
Music and Education

"Serving the Savior" This Month

This month we would like to acknowledge



Jane Valley. This is a hard working lady! Jane is always willing to serve her savior with a joyful heart.

Jane is the coordinator of

"Mornings with Mommy." She plans, prepares, and sets up all the activities for the kids twice a month. She is always glad to have others volunteer with her. Jane is also the Vice-President of the WinGS (Women in God's Service) here at Open Bible Church. She joyfully will be seen handing out invitations, flyers, etc. for activities here at church.

Thank you, Jane, for all you do to serve our Savior!

Small Group Ministry

Wednesday in the Word:

Led by Pastor Schulz. Bible Study will resume in January with a new topic.

Defenders:

Led by Bill Sigurdson.
Next meeting will be Thursday, December 3rd at 11:30am at Wolfy's

Restaurant located at 2159 E Silver Springs Blvd, Ocala at After lunch on to R&D Tactical located at 1031 NE 16th St, Ocala for a little target practice.

466A Group Bible Study

Led by Randy Cochran

This is a group is meeting on the fourth Tuesday of the month at Open Bible. In the Fellowship Hall.

TOPIC: World Religions

Next meeting will be: December 22nd:

Handbells

Facilitator: Pam Johnson.



Meets on Sundays at 11:00 am. We need two more people that would like to ring bells or learn to ring bells.

Happy Hearts, Happy Hands Handiwork

Led by: Sandy Pawlowski



Meets on the third Friday of the month from 9:00 am – Noon. Next meeting will be December 18th

This group creates quilts for those in need in our community. Also, many will bring their knitting, crochet, and embroidery to work on. So, if you have any craft project you are working on, please come and enjoy the fellowship.

WinGS:

Women in God's Service



WINGS
WOMEN IN GODS SERVICE

Led by: Genie Selvey
WinGS next meeting will be Wednesday, January 13th at 1:00 pm. All women of Open Bible are

invited to join us.

Sunday, December 6th at 6:00 pm.

WinGS will present Advent by Candlelight. We will have a hostess for each decorated table that will each seat 3 guests. (social distancing). From 6:00 pm until approximately 6:45 we will have fellowship and a small dessert. Then we will adjourn to the sanctuary to celebrate "The Bells of Christmas" with songs, scripture readings, candle lighting and bell ringing! Come and prepare your hearts for the coming of Our Savior!

Friday, December 11th, WinGS will have their annual Christmas Luncheon at a nearby restaurant. (Details will be announced soon) Please bring a decorated Christmas Bag with non-perishable items to donate to the food pantry. (Here's an idea: Maybe a complete dinner for a family, or a fun activity for the family like ingredients for baking cookies, etc.) We did this last year and the Wildwood Food Pantry Loved this idea!

Small Choir: Music Director is Randy Cochran. Meeting on Wednesdays following the Advent service.



SPLASH: Single People Loving and Serving Him

Led by: Randy Cochran



SPLASH is an organization for singles. We have a Bible Study and brief meeting the second Monday each month. Next event, December 14th at 1:00pm. We will have a meeting/Christmas Party.

North Country Group

Facilitator: Alan Johnson

Continues Sunday, December 13th & 27th at 6:00 pm at Alan & Pam Johnson's home in Ocala.

Topic: "**Twelve Ordinary Men**" by John MacArthur. All are welcome to join, contact Alan Johnson if interested.

Ladies Tuesday Bible Study

Led by Pam Johnson

Ladies Bible study will meet again in January 2021. We will continue with the book 12 Extraordinary Women. Chapter 5 Hannah is where we begin.

Ladies Bible study will meet at 2 p.m. on Tuesdays at Open Bible. Beginning January 5.

Contact Pam Johnson 352 208 1271, if you need a book.

Men of Leisure:

Led by: Dennis Duessler



Next meeting will be Friday, December 11th 8:30 am at Bob Evans on CR466.

Topic: Nineteen Minute

Bible Study.

Friday Fore-Giving Golfers

Facilitator is Sandy Fehlhaber



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.

Sunrise Saturday Morning Golfers:



This group is for those of you that would like to golf at The Villages executive golf courses in the morning. This group's

coordinator is Doug Tharp. Please contact him if you are interested in joining.

Golf Cart Ministry:

If you are interested in driving the golf cart to pick-up people from the surrounding



Independent Living

Facilities and bring them to Open Bible Worship services. Contact the Church Office.

Care for the Caregivers:

If you are a caregiver, it could be that you can't leave your spouse at home by themselves. Or it is difficult to find someone to watch them when you need to leave the house.

Please consider this. I am willing, along with other Open Bible members, to come sit with your spouse for a period of time so you can run errands, meet with friends, etc. Or, perhaps we can help by running the errands for you...such as shopping or picking up meds. Maybe we can help prepare a few meals and drop them off?

You might even have some other suggestions! Please prayerfully consider this offer and get back with me if you are interested in these services.

You can e-mail me at randy.cochran78@gmail.com or call me at 407-637-4876. I look forward to hearing from you!

Randy Cochran, facilitator

Altar Guild: Leader: Diane Olsen

The Altar Guild welcomes any lady interested in serving with the guild. You may contact any member or Diane Olsen or just attend the meeting. We will train you so you will feel comfortable in your service.

We are preparing for the winter festival season with Advent and Christmas.

“Mornings with Mommy”

We had a nice group of children for our Mornings with Mommy session in



November!
Lots of
energy! New
People!

What fun God has in store for these children. Our next session is December 1st theme is Fun with Music and December 15th will be Christmas. So spread the news! Please call or text to preregister 989-450-1937.

LWMS NEWS

Special Ministries-Prison Ministry

The Meditations devotionals for this quarter ended on November 28th. If you are donating them, please bring them in by December 13th. They will be bundled and sent out only once a quarter. They can still be donated but will go in the next shipment.

Please consider the following guidelines when donating the devotionals.

1. Donated Meditations should be no more than one-year old. This is a specific request of the prison chaplains. They acknowledge the material is still relevant

but are not comfortable putting out old issues as a matter of respect.

2. Send copies that are not curled, torn, stained, written on or have addresses on them.

3. Forward in Christ and other magazines or books are not sent to inmates. Time of Grace pamphlets and Grace Moments, no more than one year old, are also accepted.

Materials that do not fit these guidelines are disposed of.

A thank you note from the Prison Ministry is posted on the Missions Bulletin Board. The card is drawn by one of the inmates who is served by this ministry. Also read how the inmates feel about the prison ministry services.

Thank you note from New Beginnings to WinGS and Quilters:

A thank you note was received for the 3 boxes of quilts that the WinGS ladies sent to the New Beginnings Home in Milwaukee, WI. The quilts were made by the Happy Hearts Happy Hands Handiwork group that meets once a month on the third Friday from 9 until noon.

New Beginnings – A Home for Mothers, located in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, provides a loving and supportive place for single mothers to start a new life. This Christian-based maternity home for mothers allows a resident to become a responsible parent – by raising her new baby in a caring environment.

New Beginnings enables a single mother to live away from negative influences and nurture her baby in a positive environment. Currently, the program provides opportunities to advance education, learn fundamental parenting and financial skills, participate in counseling sessions, and acquire an

objective baseline for responsible living through a structured faith-based program. The vision is to equip each mother with the skills and education needed to earn self-sustaining wages and learn responsible parenting skills.

The quilters also donated 5 quilts to send to our "Befriend a Mission" Home Missionary Pastor William Dunn and his family at St. Peters Lutheran Church in Milwaukee, WI as a Christmas gift. WinGS provided the shipping cost. The lady quilters furnished the quilts.

A thank you note from Pastor Phillip Birmer in Lusaka, Zambia.

Our contribution to the Lusaka Training Fund helped covered the costs for Covid tests for 7 Zambian and 8 Malawian men. This fund also helps to cover those same costs for their immediate family members who must come with the men. Pastor Birmer is one of the teachers at the Lutheran Seminary in Lusaka. His note is posted on the Missions Bulletin Board.

Please consider sharing an email greeting or a card with some of our Missionaries or their children The Christmas Season. 2020 has been tough on everyone and a greeting and thank you for the work they are doing can make visible our support for them. Addresses will be posted on the Bulletin Board.

Merry Christmas to the Members and Friends of Open Bible.
I am blessed to be serving Christ through LWMS.

Peggi Carrier, Reporter

Did You Know?



Can Collection: Bring your "crushed" & "rinsed" cans to church on the 1st & 3rd Sunday of the month. Put your cans in the back of the car parked out in front of church. Thank you from the Women of Open Bible (WinGS.)

Food Pantry Collection: Please bring non-perishable food items on the 1st 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 2020 Flower Calendar has been placed on the bulletin board near the water fountain. 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 Sheryn Daw 928-232-7730.

Emergency Contact Information

Open Bible can add an emergency contact person's information to your file. Please indicate the person's Name, Relationship to you, their phone number and the state/country that they live in.

Please give this to our church secretary, Karen Pearson and she will add it to your file. You never know when this will come in handy.

October Offering Report:

Year to Date Income: \$277,862.00
Year to date Expenses: \$256,450.00
October Income: \$ 31,503.00
October Expenses: \$ 41,644.00
Balance for month: -\$ 10,142.00
Balance for Year: \$ 21,412.00



Happy Anniversary

Gerry & Lynne Gividen - 19
Randy & Kim Cochran - 27
Dave & Lynn Buss - 31



Happy Birthday

Aimee Occhetti - 2
Mary Burel - 5
Carol Mehlberg - 6
Dottie Plybon - 7
Nancy Kuepker - 7
Karen Dahm - 9
Fred Hainen - 9
Karen Pearson - 9
Ron Klatt - 12
Carol Benrud - 14
Lynn Buss - 14
Pam "PJ" Johnson - 15
Margie O'Connell - 16
Patricia Frazier - 18
Carole Sheidler - 19
Ruth Vance - 20
Elisabeth Wells - 22
Lynne Gividen - 23
Barbara Chapman - 27
Shirley Roback - 27

Open Bible Evangelical Lutheran Church

Pastor Mark M Schulz

4671 Bellwether Lane

Oxford, FL 34484

352-753-9038, 989-525-5514

Randy Cochran 407-637-4876 Staff Minister of Music & Education

“Growing in Christ through the Word, Making His Salvation Known”

Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS)

www.openbiblelutheranchurch.com



Listen to our Radio Ministry on Sunday's at 103.5
"The Shepherd." Our time slot is 11:05 – 11:30am



Scan this image with your iPhone or
I-Pad and go immediately to our web site.

