



FROM THE PASTOR

Open Bible had its first funeral since I arrived here in late August. It was held on November 17th at 11:00 am. The journey of Douglas Hartshorn to his heavenly home was celebrated on that day. The text that was considered was from the book of Revelation, where we read, "Be faithful unto death and I will give you a crown of life." Doug loved his Savior Jesus Christ and was faithful to him. Jesus kept his promise to Doug. The promise reads, "because I live, you also shall live." After the service the women of Open Bible under Marilyn Acklam put together a nice luncheon for the family and friends. The committal service was held on Monday, November 19th at National cemetery.

I am amazed at how the Lord continues to work behind the scenes at Open Bible to provide us with outreach opportunities. The funeral director is presently not active in any Christian church. He is a former Missouri Synod Lutheran and would like to talk about the differences between the Wisconsin Synod and the Missouri Synod. As I road to National cemetery on Monday in the hearse, the driver was Hugh Gibson, former state representative. I shared with him how it would be so nice if we had a better access to our church on Woodridge, and that we were only able to obtain golf cart accessibility. Hugh shared with me some ideas on how I might approach Gary Lester, who has contact with Gary Morse, the owner of the Villages. Hugh is a friend of Gary Lester. I am not exactly sure yet where this whole story will end up, but it appears that the Lord wants me to talk to Gary Lester soon about a possible modification to our present golf cart entrance on Woodridge.

This week, we should be putting the data of our Membership into Power Church Plus, a worship-accounting software program which was recently installed on our new computer in the secretary's office. This computer is networked with the laptop in my office, the laptop on our Bible study cart, and the laptop in the church. It is my hope that all membership

information will now be found on the mainframe in the office of our part-time secretary, the counters will eventually record contributions there, and our Treasurer will have remote access to this computer to put in his information. This system will allow us to be more efficient and better able to do all things decently and in order at Open Bible. Special thanks to James Langer for building and networking this system.

Thanks also to James Langer and Keith Mackey for filming the funeral service of Douglas Hartshorn. Copies of the service on disk are being made available to the Hartshorn family members.

Our first GriefShare support group meeting will be held on November 29th at Open Bible from 6:30 pm until 8:00 pm. It is a 13 week study and is open to anyone who has lost a loved one in the past few years and is still grieving. Brochures of the program have been dropped off at the local funeral homes. One idea that we might pursue is to recruit someone in our congregation to research obituary information from the Villages Sun, find out the local address of the family members who remain, and send them our Griefshare information so that they might have an opportunity to join us.

Our Mid-week Advent services will be held this year on Wednesday December 5th, 12th and 19th at 6:00 pm. The theme will be "The Carols of Christmas". A meal will precede the services at 5:00 pm. If you are not comfortable with driving at night, please sign up for a ride on the sheet located on the Friendship table in the fellowship hall. What a great opportunity this will provide our membership to be able to serve others and get to know better those they give a ride to church. At our next Voters' meeting, the congregation will decide future special service times.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

What do you remember most about Christmas as a youngster? I think what sticks out in my mind besides all the excitement and glitter of the season, was going

WHO'S WHO AT OPEN BIBLE

By Leslie Nelson

to church on Christmas Eve and anxiously anticipating the ride home to open presents I hoped would be under the tree. I also remember that at the time I thought it a bit strange that each year the same scenario seemed to occur just as we were getting in the car to leave for church. One of my parents always seemed to forget something in the house and had to go back inside. A few minutes later they returned and we proceeded to church. When service ended and we returned home something magical had happened. While we were gone, that jolly white haired gentleman had indeed visited our house and left a number of beautifully wrapped gifts as I had hoped. And oh how we enjoyed those gifts and all the fanfare that went with opening them. But just like most Christmases as we know them, it was soon over and we quickly returned to our normal routines.

Have you ever given much thought about that first Christmas in Bethlehem? Was there much holiday fanfare and excitement? Were there neatly wrapped gifts placed under a tree? Of course not and if not for the arrival of the wise men would there have been any gifts at all? I'm pretty sure that most people living at that time failed to realize that the greatest gift ever given had just arrived amidst the poverty of a peasant, and spent his first night in the feeding trough of a cow.

Yes, it's true, that the first Christmas in Bethlehem took on a considerably different look than the ones we were accustomed to as kids. The Son of God didn't come wrapped in a sparkling Christmas package. There was no tree or glistening decorations. There was just a simple birth. The Savior of the world began his life of service in deepest humility. "The Word became flesh and lived among us." (John 1:14) The almighty God of the Universe left the glory of heaven to be born a humble child so that he might fulfill all righteousness for us and bear the curse of the sins of all mankind! He made it possible for us to inherit the glory that belongs to the children of God. "Though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich." (2Corinthians 8:9)

Through the small face of that stable-born baby, God says your sins are forgiven. Your name is written in heaven because God has entered your world.

Thank God always for that precious gift given to us on that first Christmas in Bethlehem. Because of God's marvelous grace, Christmas is forever. Look to where Christmas continues without end. Trust in Jesus and you will celebrate Christmas and all eternity in Heaven.

God's blessings to all for a most joyous Christmas,
Greg Wendorf



Keith and Renda Mackey have been members of our congregation for over a year now, and it is time we learned a little more of their background. Keith was born in Elizabeth, NJ, and raised in a Presbyterian family. Renda was born in Winter Haven, FL. Her family was Lutheran and her father was with the military, training pilots, so she has many places she called home.

Keith attended an all-boys grade and prep school. After high school, Renda attended Patricia Stevens Career College and Finishing School. They met while having lunch one day, and here is the neat coincidence: Keith's major focus was aviation! After graduating from Rutgers University and Embry-Riddle Aeronautical Institute, he worked for Trans Texas Airways, National Airlines and finally Pan Am, retiring as a B747 Captain in 1991. He is currently an Aviation Consultant, doing business as Mackey International.

Renda started out as an Administrative and Executive Assistant with various firms in Florida, and then became a Flight Attendant for National and Pan American World Airways. Together the Mackeys ran a commercial helicopter operation called Heliflight in Fort Lauderdale for 20 years. In 2003 they sold the business and moved to Ocala. Though they have lived in many cities, mostly in the Southeast, Florida has been their home most of the time.

Due to all the traveling during their careers, they both enjoy many types of ethnic foods, from French to Vietnamese to Mediterranean. Keith is always doing research of one type or another and doesn't have time for much reading for enjoyment, but Renda enjoys non-fiction of all types, mostly history. Movies have escaped their interest, but they do enjoy watching Fox News and the History and Travel channels.

I have a feeling there is a lot more to know about both of these special people, but it will have to be imparted one-on-one as we spend more time together in fellowship.

CHURCH COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

The majority of the November council meeting was taken up by a presentation by Pastor Steve Bloomer, our circuit pastor. His devotion and topics of discussion were all geared to encouraging the members of Open Bible in doing the Lord's work. That work is the preaching of the Gospel and the reaching out with that Gospel to the community.

Our financial situation is still on the positive side although for the month of October our expenses were \$400 more than our offerings. Our checking account balance is at \$16,000.

Council action included:

1. The acceptance of full-time members Gerald and Ina Taylor and associate members, Gordon and Shirley Roback.
2. Approving a 6:00 pm New Year's Eve service.
3. Finalizing the organizational chart for the church administration.

This coming month we will be preparing the financial budget for 2013.

Work will begin soon on revising our by-laws so that they are in accord with our growing needs.

WORSHIP COMMITTEE

The Worship Committee held its monthly meeting on Thursday, November 1st. The majority of the time was spent on looking at special services for Thanksgiving and Christmas. We sent a proposal to the Elders suggesting that we have a special New Year's Eve service at 6:00 pm on December 31st. The theme of the service would be to review the Lord's work this past year and to remember family members and friends who have passed away. This was brought to the November council meeting and was given the go ahead.

We would like to thank the people responsible for building the beautiful Thanksgiving display in the front of the altar. This added to our worship service and was a good reminder of blessings from our gracious Lord. We look forward to having the church decorated for the Christmas season.

If you have a favorite hymn or form of liturgy that you would like to see used in our worship services just mention it to one of our committee members, Sharon Sigurdson, Stacy Vance, Ron Brutlag, Pastor Schulz and our newest member Pastor Dale and we will see if we can incorporate it in one of our services.

Are you looking for or thinking about someone to invite to our Friendship Sunday?

FELLOWSHIP NEWS

Our plans for a fellowship activity for November was cancelled due to the cost and also due to the date. Sorry about that. However we have plans for December. As you have heard we are looking for many of our members to join us on Saturday, December 15th for Christmas caroling. We plan to meet at church at 3:45 pm that day to run through a list of carols that we will be singing. Steeplechase is expecting our arrival there at 4:30 in order to carol for the residents before they go to dinner. Following our singing everyone is invited back to church for a chili dinner. Our famous chili maker will be cooking up a batch for our enjoyment. Since the evening will still be young we are offering a game night for those that wish to stay around. It is important that those who plan to help out caroling sign up in advance. There is a sign up sheet on the counter top of the pass-through for this purpose. Also please indicate your intentions to stay for the chili dinner.

In January we are planning a movie night or matinee on Saturday the 18th. If you have a favorite movie you could suggest to the committee please do so. Weather permitting it might just be a drive-in movie. Can we all stay awake for an evening movie?

Then in February we will be hosting the annual Welcome Brunch for all of our members who have joined the past year. Also at this brunch will recognize our associate members who have returned to Open Bible. The date for this activity is February 3rd. A sign up sheet will be available in January so that you can sign up and tell what you plan to bring to the pot-luck brunch.

See you all on the 15th for caroling.

Ron Brutlag

WOMEN OF OPEN BIBLE NEWS

Merry Christmas everyone!

Ladies don't forget to sign up for the Christmas Party at the kitchen pass through.

Where: Nancy Lopez Country Club on Buena Vista Blvd. We will order off the menu.

When: Monday, Dec. 10th at noon.

Please bring a wrapped White Elephant gift. This is fun so get ready to have lots of fun. This gift is optional.

Happy and a healthy New Year too!!

Your sister in Christ,
Marilyn Acklam, President

THANK YOU

Dear Open Bible Church Family,

I thank each and every one of you for the out pouring of love for Doug during his illness. He loved his church family so much. Your visits, cards, love, and many prayers were overwhelming. Every day and many times several times a day Pastor came to see Doug, even during the wee hours of the morning. Pastor's visits and devotions were of the greatest comfort to Doug and to our whole family.

Doug has received his well earned reward and is in heaven worshipping our Savior all day long without pain and in all the glory of God.

I am so blessed with a church family that has embraced me throughout this process with encouragement and love and prayers. As one of you said "we have also lost someone we love and we must lean on each other", thank you for letting me lean on you. Thank you for all the many acts of love, far too numerous to list, each one of you have bestowed on me and our family. All I ask is for your continued prayers.

In Christ's love,
Barb Hartshorn and family

CHURCH DECORATING



We will be decorating the Church's Christmas trees on Saturday, December 1st at 10 am. Many hands make light work!

THRIVENT

Congratulations to our Thrivent members. We have the highest percent of donation to our church of all the church members in the Lake-Sumter chapter. Those monies are donated from Thrivent, every month as they become available.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY



Christina Langer – 2
Mary Burel – 5
Karen Dahm – 9
Larry Fronk – 10
Carol Benrud – 14
Duane Anderson – 14
Pam Johnson – 15
Chance Langer – 19
Ruth Vance – 20
Elisabeth Wells – 22
Velma Miner – 26
Shirley Roback – 27

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY



Walter & Joyce Schrenk – 22
Fred & Gail Rathgeber – 28
Daniel & Morganne Langer – 31
Jim and Jeanette Kellam