



Newsletter



February 2020

Volume 15 No. 2

From the Pastor **by Pastor Mark Schulz**

Open Bible on The Move Again!

At our Annual Voters' Meeting, Gerry Hughes, Chairman of our long-range planning committee shared some words about our purpose as a congregation, and what really makes a vibrant and healthy church. Here is what Gerry Hughes said. As Christians, "we simply respond to Christ's love by heeding his call to do all we can to share the Gospel with our members and the lost. Therefore, we believe a healthy congregation is simply one that is regularly asking itself, 'What else can we do to help all people know Jesus?' May God grant that thinking to us all."

At Open Bible, two seismic changes are occurring as I write this article. The purpose behind both of these changes is to help more people know Jesus. We now have a projection system for worship, and will soon call a Staff Minister of Music and Education. As we look at these changes, we need to get past the self-focused thinking of what we like and want, to what would be a vessel to reach more unchurched retirees and future retirees to the Villages.

The Millennial generation is growing up with technology. They have iPhones and iPads. They visit social media sites like Facebook and Twitter. They learn more from visual teaching than from reading books. Millennials want interaction with others. They are very comfortable with music that is played by a guitar, piano, and drums.

Millennials like eating and fellowship. They would like to see a question and answer session after the sermon about the Bible. They like to share what God is doing in their lives, and the importance of praying for one another. They like to use their gifts to serve others.

At Open Bible we are on our way to reach out to not just the millennial generation but to the generations after them all the way up to us baby boomers. At Open Bible, we have a projection system to visually communicate the hymns, the readings, and points in the message to God's people. Judy Anderson recently commented, "I can't read the bulletin well because of my eyesight, but I can see everything clearly in the worship service on the screen". What a blessing the screens are. Last Sunday, instead of hauling out the portable screen and rolling the cart up the aisle, the WELS connection began to be shown in the snap of a finger.

Excellent music in worship is another avenue to reach the unchurched. With music we give praise to our God, and are edified and uplifted. Open Bible is up to the challenge of providing excellent music in our worship services. Our present music director, Judy Hainen, is very ill. She can no longer carry out her responsibilities of playing organ, directing our choir, octets, duets, and soloists. Because of her unavailability, and the departure of Pastor Dale this summer, the Voters' of Open Bible unanimously approved the calling of a part-time staff minister of Music and Education.

I have contacted our District President, and he instructed us that once we have a call meeting date set, he would send us a list of candidates. In fact, because of the special requirements of this call, and it being part-time, and our interaction with Randy Cochran, the district president told me he would send us a list of one. That being the name of Randy Cochran. So in the next few weeks your church leaders will be putting together a job description and compensation for this position. If we can pay off our mortgage, it would help us to pay completely for this yearly position. Our mortgage payments presently are \$2600 a month, multiply by 12 = \$31,200. Pastor Dale's salary for 9 months at 10 hours a week was \$11,250, and Judy Hainen's compensation was \$4200 a year. All of these figures add up to \$46,650. So, it can be done. My hope is that everyone might give a one-time gift to help Open Bible to become debt free and allow us to adequately fund this position. As I write this article, we have received \$197,862 in commitments and contributions to kill our \$280,000 mortgage. Go Open Bible. We can do this.

President's Message

The new year is upon us and as we look back on 2019, we can see that a lot of change has occurred at Open Bible.

Some has been by design and some has not, but all has been under the protective embrace of our Lord and Savior.

It began in January with the offering of a blended worship service on Saturdays at 4:00 p.m. The service offered a little different format and style of worship as well as offering more

modern Christian music on an alternative day of the week. It is being offered again this year between January and the end of April with the aid of new technology that will also be used in the Sunday morning services.

During the month of March, we observed and participated in a wonderful weekly Lenten series entitled "Behold the Man!" We took a closer look at the man who suffered, died, and rose again to save each of us from our sins. This is the same man whose death led to our life of spending eternity in heaven. March also witnessed the beginning work of creating a beautiful Memory Garden. Benches, tables and colorful landscaping were provided to create a peaceful setting for those who wanted to enjoy sitting and reflecting amongst the personalized granite blocks placed in memory of their loved ones. The project was completed, and the garden dedicated on October 27th which coincided with the tenth anniversary celebration of the building of our wonderful worship facility. At that time, we also recognized and gave thanks for the founding fathers of Open Bible Church.

Mixed in with all the wonderful happenings going on at Open Bible during the past year, a major disaster occurred on August 7th when lightning struck our bell tower for a second time. Only this time the damage was much more severe. Included in the damage was the total destruction of our organ, as well as our security system and irrigation systems just to name some of the major damage areas. Thankfully, God's guidance and mercy came into play once again as we were covered by our wonderful Insurance program which jumped into action immediately. The

Insurance company replaced everything we lost. We also were able to repair our bell tower, installing lightning rods and repairing and painting the back wall of the Sanctuary. God's guiding and protecting hand continued to be on display throughout the entire process. What a wonderful God we have!

Late fall saw the organization and establishment of a new Long-Range planning committee. The LRPC met on four Saturdays in September, October, November and finally December. They reviewed the work done by previous planning committees and did a great job of analyzing the current conditions of our Church. They made recommendations that included establishing plans for one, three, and ten years down the road. Additional information concerning the work of this committee was made available in mid-December in a well written letter to the congregation by chairman Gerry Hughes followed up by Pastor Schulz's December 20th Update. These recommendations were unanimously passed by the Council.

Wednesday, December 4th saw the beginning of three weekly Advent services entitled "In Those Days". The series outlined the events that led to the birth of the Christ child and carried over to our Christmas Eve and Christmas Day celebrations. Those services brought to life once again the true significance and tremendous importance of the birth of our Savior for all mankind.

All in all, 2019 was a year filled with many blessings at Open Bible. The wonder of God was certainly on display in many venues. We look forward to much of the same in 2020. Thank You Lord for once again blessing us in more ways than we can count.

*All God's Blessings,
Greg Wendorf*

Out of the Darkness

At the New Year's Eve service I was in the middle of the sermon when the power went out. For two to five minutes it was dark in the church, very dark. I was disoriented and failed to remember much of what needed to be said. The text was: 1 Peter 1:23—"For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God."

The apostle Peter was urging readers to live holy lives, like we are strangers and foreigners in this perishing world. Why? Because we have been redeemed, that is our freedom has been paid for with the precious blood of Christ. Second, we have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring Word of God. Think about that! Redeemed! Reborn! For a new life as God's child. Christ's blood redeemed us from the penalty of our sins! God's Word gave us new birth to a new, holy life.

Peter compares God's Word to a seed that, when planted, produces a new plant (life). When God's Word is planted in us, it produces new birth and new life. The difference between God's Word and ordinary seed is that God's Word is "living and enduring". Ordinary seed has to die in the process. It can produce a new plant just once. God's Word is living and enduring. It keeps on producing new life indefinitely.

Peter wanted his readers to keep on growing in faith and it's fruit of holy living, the very thing God's Word produces. What would he say to us today who carry the whole Bible in our pocket or purse? There is a website that gives you access to the whole Bible in many languages for free. You can search

the whole Bible and even listen to it on the Audio Bible. Check out www.biblegateway.com. There are other Bible websites too if you want to explore.

Daily Bible reading is the normal activity of strangers and foreigners in this world who have been redeemed and reborn. Need help? I would be happy to help you get started. Just ask.

My hope is that out of that darkness on New Year's Eve light will come to many from God's Word.

Pastor Dale

Friendship Sunday



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 FRIENDSHIP SUNDAY, on February 23rd, 2020. We will have refreshments after 9:30 service, special music. Start thinking and praying about whom you will bring!

Council Activities

The Church Council met on January 16th, 2020.

Items discussed included:

Agreement to transfer \$50,000 from the General Fund to the Mortgage Reduction Campaign.

Support the Ladies Group to reduce the Fellowship Time food items to cheese, sausage & crackers, donuts, fresh fruit and coffee due to lack of kitchen and cleanup volunteers.

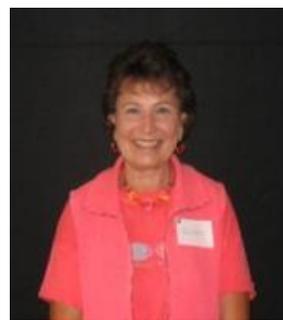
Seek a member to serve as Chair of Evangelism.

Seek members to be trained on new Media Shout software to assist in audio visual Church Services utilizing the new laser projectors and screens.

Yours in Christ:
Les Stauske
Secretary

"Serving the Savior" This Month

In the month of February, we would like to acknowledge another person who is "Serving the Savior." Audrey Hoerchner has been an Associate Member for a number of years. She is the only person who orders the communion wine and wafers. She also transports to church the Easter Lilies and Poinsettias at Christmas time. Audrey serves each year on the Altar Guild and



she helps in arrangements of the Thanksgiving display at the Altar.

She can be seen in the kitchen assisting with the fellowship on Sundays and also suppers for Lent and Advent. She is a member of the WinGS (Women is God's Service) and participates in their activities as well.

Audrey is considered a "Snow-Bird" who returns to Menominee Falls, Wisconsin for family functions.

We appreciate Audrey for all she does for Open Bible Church.



Just a bit ago I put a copy of part of the Fall Winter 2019 Newsletter from the LWMS North Florida Circuit. It was a devotional "Carry Each Other's Burdens", written by Pastor Chris Rathje serving Abiding Hope, Ocala, Florida. I hope you had the chance to read it. It inspired me to look at the opportunities that God puts in my path to support His work right where I am.

We, myself included, tend to think of missions as somewhere else, far away in another country with strangers, people who are so different from us. But the simple truth is, to God we aren't so different at all. We are all sinners, in need of salvation so we can be restored to God's family. In recognizing that fact we need to share God's love with the people He has put in our lives. We need to support each other in prayer, and in doing kind acts to those around us whenever we can.

I invite you to come meet your sisters in Christ, as we learn about

opportunities to serve LWMS and our circuit (election of officers), and to serve the many mission fields both world and at home. We can extend our reach by praying for our fellow circuit churches, their pastors, our missionaries and their families, and supporting mission projects through our financial gifts.

So come join us.

Save the date March 14, 2020

Who: Ladies of Open Bible

What: North Florida Circuit Spring Rally

Where: St. Paul's Lutheran Church

Beverly Hills, Florida

Mission Focus: Vietnamese ministry in

Boise, ID. Speaker is Pastor Dan

Kraemer

Cost: We pay for the lunch when we arrive. Usually a lovely lunch is provided for about \$8.00.

Mite box donations should be turned in by Feb. 15, so we can forward our gift to the Circuit Treasurer by Feb. 21, 2020. I will post a sign up sheet if you are planning on attending so I can let St. Paul's know a number to expect. Also indicate if you need a ride or if you are able to drive.

Another Date to circle on your Calendar is June 25-28, 2020. This is the date for the LWMS Convention held this year in Athens, Georgia. The convention theme is 2020 Vision for Missions. We live by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7. Information is available at www.lwms.org. Check out the 2020 convention pages for answers to most of your questions about lodging and transportation, World and Home Mission speakers, convention schedule, registration forms, meal and workshop selections. It promises to be a wonderful experience.

Peggi Carrier, Reporter

Small Group Ministry

Wednesday in the Word:

Led by Pastor Mark Schulz

Feasts of The Bible

Discover the Jewish Roots of Christianity Throughout the Old Testament, God commanded the children of Israel to observe his holy days to remember the mighty things that he had done in the lives of Israel's forefathers. The Feasts of the Bible is a quick overview and summary that celebrates and explains the meanings behind the different feasts and why they are important to God. It reveals how each holiday points to Jesus as the promised Messiah.

February 5th- Feast of Tabernacles

February 12th- Hanukkah

February 19th- Purim

466A Group Bible Study

Led by Pastor Rodger Dale

This is a group especially for those who live around the area of 466A. It is held in homes of participants the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month at 2:00 pm. February 11th 2:00 pm will be hosted by Tom & Betty DeWitz for a study of Acts 17-18:22 "The Gospel is Preached in Athens & Cornith (Second Missionary Journey) On February 25th the hosts will be Jim and Eva Orcutt. The Bible Study will be on Acts 18:23 – 20:38 "Concentrated work in Ephesus (Third Missionary Journey.)"

Handbells

Facilitator: Pam Johnson.



Meets on Sundays at 11:00 am.

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 February 21st.

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 will have their next monthly meeting on the second Wednesday of the month

(February 12th.) Also, save the date for a Road Trip to Appleton Museum of Art (in Ocala) on Tuesday, February 25th. More information and a sign-up sheet is available on the counter.

SPLASH: Single People Loving and Serving Him

Led by: Pastor Rodger Dale



is an organization for singles. We have a Bible Study and brief meeting the second Monday each month. We will be studying favorite Psalms. This month on February 10th, we will meet at the home of Marlene Kuechenmeister for a pot-luck lunch at 11:30 am. The Bible Study topic is Psalm 139 – God's Attributes – Too Wonderful for Me." All are welcome to join. Please notify Pastor Rodger Dale.

BOB Breakfast: Band of Brothers:
Men's Breakfast and Bible
Study The group
coordinator is Richard
Raine and Pastor Rodger
Dale. Next Bible Study will
be Saturday, February 1st



at 8:30am. A breakfast Bible Study
for men meeting the first Saturday of
the month at 8:30 am. Topic this
month: Great Prayers of the Bible – A
Beggar Bargains with the Almighty,
Abraham's Prayer for Sodom.

Contact person: Richard Raine, 352-
753-6151 or Pastor Dale, 352-901-
1162. Get to know other men of
Open Bible. Learn how God wants
men to lead in their family, church
and community. Sign up at the
counter next to the fellowship hall.

North Country Group

Facilitator: Alan Johnson
Continues Sunday, February 9th &
23rd at 6:00 pm at Alan & Pam
Johnson's home in Ocala.
Continuing with Battles of the Bible
through February and into March.
A new topic will be chosen soon
and begin on March 22nd. All are
welcome to join, contact Alan
Johnson (352-262-1911) of
Sirbenfro@cox.net if interested.

Ladies Tuesday Bible Study

Led by Pam Johnson
The Tuesday Ladies Bible Study will be
leaving the Soul Spa in February. Our
final day will be Feb 11. Our new Bible
Study will be Twelve Extraordinary
Women by John MacArthur. This study
is full of fascinating information about
these women and the unmistakable
work of God's redemption plan in
history through their lives. AS we meet
these women in Scripture and get to
know more about their lives and
character, they will motivate you,

encourage you and inspire you with
love for the God they trusted and
served. We meet at 2 p.m. at Open
Bible. Please contact Pam Johnson
(352 208 1271) Lambteach@cox.net if
you are interested in joining us.

Men of Leisure:

Led by: Dennis Duessler



First meeting will be
Friday, February 14th
8:30 am at Bob
Evans on CR466.
Topic: Minutes with
the Messiah

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.

Game Day!

Fridays, from 1:00 – 4:00pm.

There will be a Game Day. Bring your
friends, a snack to pass and your
favorite game to play and we will
enjoy fellowship and games.
Facilitators: Carol Yahn, Sandy
Pawlowski.

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 Joe Malec.



Choir: Music Director is Judy Hainen. Meeting on Wednesdays 6:15 pm. (following the Wednesday in the Word Bible Study)



Caring for Caregivers May Be for You

Is caring for Caregivers for you or someone you know?

Most people focus on the person receiving care. Their prayers are for the person who is ill, injured, etc., but it is often the caregiver who has the greater burden. Caregivers need prayers and support too.

Caring for Caregivers is a support group at Open Bible. We meet on the first Thursday of the month at 2:00 pm, next meeting Feb 6th and everyone is invited. No meeting in January.

Do you know a caregiver who could benefit from this sharing, learning experience?

On **February 6th at 2:00 pm** Gloria Ebey will speak about Vitas Hospice and other helpful information. All past, and potential caregivers are welcome. Invite other caregivers to be your guest.

Pastor Dale, facilitator

New Life in Christ

New Life in Christ Bible Study, Led By Pastor Schulz: Meeting time and day will be determined soon.

This is a class for people interested in becoming a member and a good refresher course for members. It is a wonderful review of the basic teachings of Scripture.

Early Bird Bible Study:

Led by Pastor Mark Schulz
Sundays from 8:00 – 8:50 am.



“Jesus’ “I Am” Statements

Jesus Christ-his life and work-is the heart of the gospel message. A study of Jesus “I Am” statements will define who Jesus claimed to be and reveal to us the many facets of his mercy and love. Topic: February 2nd: “I Am The Way, The Truth, and The Life. February 9th: “I Am the Vine.” Then beginning February 16th:

“The Book of Hebrews”

Knowing Christ brings joy. Knowing Christ in a sinful world may bring pain. Will joy triumph over pain of persecution, or will persecution rob the Christian of faith and joy? This is the choice many early Christians had to face. For Christians today, the temptations may be different. The letter to the Hebrews presents the beauty of Christ and gives us strength not to forsake Jesus.

February 16th: Hebrews 1:1-2:4 Don't Forsake Jesus – he is greater than the angels.

February 23rd: Don't Forsake Jesus – no matter how humble He seems.

Altar Guild:

Leader: Mary Burel

It has been a year of grace and service for the altar guild. Members are dedicated to the sanctity and beauty of the altar and chancel of our beautiful church. Monthly duties of placing communion articles on the altar for the congregational sacrament are important parts our liturgical worship. They record the number of communicants each week that assists the churches accounting of participants. Other areas of beauty and personal remembrances are the weekly flower arrangements that are ordered and placed in the chancel area. Special displays are placed for the various seasons, festivals, and special occasions by AG members. The Lenten and Advent seasons, Easter, thanksgiving, and Christmas festivals are the most notable but also patriotic and other celebrations have distinct displays with banners, flags and flowers.

Each A G member selects a month to serve the Lord according to their time, ability and talents doing the work of the altar guild.

We always welcome anyone who feels called to serve in this capacity.

*Respectfully
Mary Burel*



"Mornings with Mommy"

The next Mornings with Mommy will be on Tuesdays from 9:30 – 11:00 am, February 4th and the theme will be **Red**

♥ Hearts and Valentine's Day!

Then the following date is February 18th from 9:30 – 11:00am. Please contact Jane Valley if you'd like to help or have a child (up to age 5) that would like to attend.



Concerts 2020



We are honored to host the Martin Luther College Choir

Date: Sunday, March 8th

Time: 9:30 am Service

The MLC College Choir is looking forward to visiting us. They will join us for the 9:30 worship service on that day and we will provide them with lunch or a congregational potluck following the concert. There will be approximately 70 people in the group.

Leslie Nelson is our concert contact person, so she may ask for you extra help during this time.

Our Open Bible Choir has been asked to join them on one choir piece!

After Service Fellowship

Thank you to all members that have helped with kitchen duty for Sunday Fellowship for the last year. The church council has approved a more simplified menu for Fellowship time. The menu will be coffee, decaf and regular, apple juice and water. There will be cheese, sausage and crackers that will be purchased and be available to be served. We will also purchase fresh fruit and/or vegetables as available in the stores. There will be donuts available. There will be no need for the helpers to supply food. They only will need to come and serve and stay to help clean up. The crew can now be reduced from 4 to 3 servers. The new sign-up sheets are now available, so please sign up to volunteer.

If you have any questions, please call: Mary Helen Schultz, Fellowship Coordinator 352-430-3993.

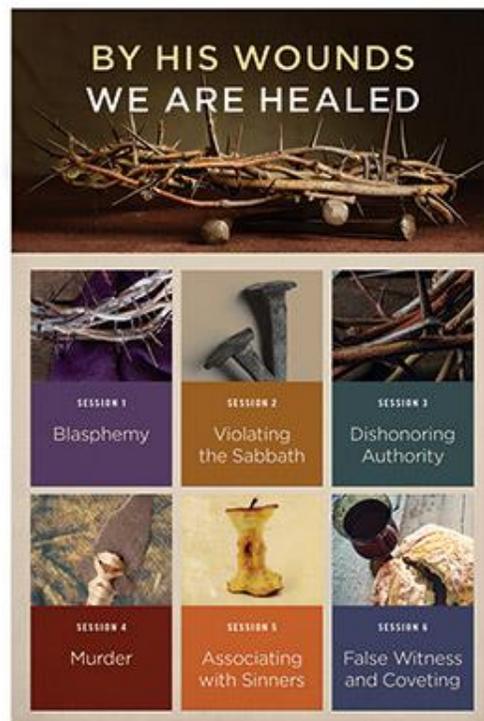
Saturday Worship Services

Saturdays, February 8th through April, 2020: 4:00 pm.

Join us on Saturday for Worship Service. A blended service includes the basics of a traditional liturgy. We will have a confession of sins, absolution, Scripture readings, Creed, Prayers, Lord's Prayer and Benediction. How it differs is that we will have appropriate modern Christian music played, where we will join the singers, by following along with the words on the screen. Since we do not have any guitar players, we will initially use recorded music with singers. Some traditional hymns will be included that are played by guitars and other instruments. There will be a children's message each week, as well as a sermon based on one of the readings. It is our hope that some of the young families who have participated in our Mornings with

Mommy program, as well as members of our own membership who have interest in modern Christian music will join us for worship.

Wednesday Lenten Services And Soup Suppers



Lenten Service begin with Ash Wednesday on February 26th at 5:30 pm. The Theme this year is **"By His Wounds We Are Healed."**



The Ash Wednesday will focus on "The Wounds of Blasphemy" *Jesus is accused of blasphemy and misusing God's name.* If you have never attended our Wednesday Soup Suppers, you are in for a treat! Beginning on February 26th, Ash Wednesday from 4:30 – 5:15pm, we will have our soup suppers hosted by various small groups from Open Bible. Each menu is different and made by participants in the group. The suppers are followed by the Mid-week Lenten services.

February 26th: WinGS Service Supper

Key Holders

Reminder: If anyone has a key to the church, please let the church secretary, Karen Pearson know that you have one. Thank you for your cooperation.

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 Carol Stauske at 352-292-3079.

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.

Happy Anniversary

Herb & Doreen Schaefer – 9
Richard & Sharon Tess – 27

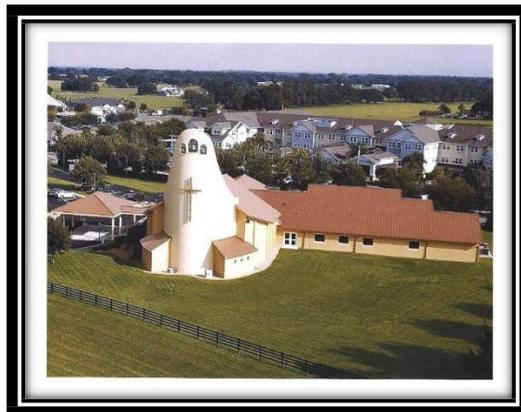


Happy Birthday

Ray Welch - 1
Bill Sigurdson - 2
Ella Sandra Mitra - 2
Marilyn Pearson - 5
Dick Chapman - 7
Pauline Zeiger - 9
Sharon Sigurdson - 12
Carmen Smith - 14
Sharon Patti - 14
Earlene Raine - 16
Dan (Doc) Blaho - 17
Judy Hainen - 23
Pete Olsen - 23
Gloria Butzow - 24
David Roessler - 26
Les Stauske - 27
Judy Anderson - 28
Dianne Bliss - 28
Barb Hartshorn - 28
Jeanette Kellam - 28

***Open Bible Evangelical Lutheran Church
Pastor Mark M. Schulz
4671 Bellwether Lane
Oxford, FL 34484
352-753-9038, 989-525-5514
Pastor Rodger Dale: 352-901-1162***

“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.

