



Newsletter

HAPPY
FATHER'S
Day!

June 2020

Volume 15 No. 6

From the Pastor by Pastor Mark Schulz

"Will You Receive the Mark of The Beast? " Revelation 13:16-17

"He also forced everyone, small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on his right hand or on his forehead, so that no one could buy or sell unless he had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of his name."

Recently, I watched a video by a Biblical scholar who informed his listeners that the United States government would soon require everyone to receive a vaccine for Covid, which would contain a microchip, where the government could track you wherever you go. The scholar claimed that this was the mark of the beast, found in Revelation 13:16-17. His message has caused quite a stir. Some people are panicking. I have heard people saying, "I am not getting that vaccine, no matter what!" More fear has been created.

So what is the mark of the beast? For starters, the "mark of the beast" is by no means **a medical procedure**. Most likely, it's not even a physical or visible mark at all. The mark of the beast is not something that can be taken accidentally. The mark of the beast is closely connected to the worship of the beast. Thus, the mark of the beast is a mark of loyalty and devotion to the beast. Who is the beast? There are two

beasts mentioned in Revelation. One is the Beast of the Sea and the other is the Beast of the Earth.

The Beast of the Sea, is a government that seeks to crush Christian influence in its jurisdiction, while the Beast of the earth is the apostate church. The apostate church includes all world religions that teach a works concept in how we are acceptable before God. Those who receive the mark of the beast are individuals **who deny** that they are saved by God's grace through faith alone in Jesus Christ as Savior. They are loyal to the government and the apostate church.

We are told in Scripture that in the last days, world governments will not tolerate Christians who stand up for their faith in Christ, nor will the apostate church. In fact, Revelation teaches us that governments will join forces with the apostate church to cause suffering and death to Christians. Those who have the mark of the beast will be treated kindly by the government and the church. They will find themselves moving up the ladder in business and politics.

However, the Christian who does not have the mark, will find life difficult and hard to make ends meet. When I was in Egypt a number of years ago, a Coptic Christian told me, that if you identify yourself as a Christian, you might as well forget ever being in a high position in government or in the business world. It is tough sledding when the government and the apostate church team up against Christians.

But take heart, Christian, we are part of the 144,000. We are part of the total number of God's elect. Remember 12 is the number of the true church, and 10 is the number of completeness. $12 \times 12 \times 1000 = 144,000$. We are part of the complete church. Our Lord Jesus Christ promises to give us the final victory. The Good News message of Jesus Christ will not be silenced. We shall overcome! May none of you have the mark of the Beast!

President's Message

It certainly would be a tremendous understatement to say that the level of anxiety amongst all of us with the deadliness of the Coronavirus has led to a lot of questions and concerns in these uncertain and trying times. Our attitudes do make a great deal of difference when we are seeking answers to difficult questions. It is our joy in the Lord that should be our strength. Be joyful that you are someday going to heaven; be grateful that you have someone who always loves you, no matter what. Everyone has to attend to some unpleasantness in life. Don't dread them, but learn how valuable God's peace is in those circumstances.

A friend of mine recently sent me an inspiring story about an elderly gentleman named Ben who was down on his luck to say the least. Ben began to stop into a local Church each day at noon to pray. He was a factory worker who brought with him his lunch pail because he had only a short time before returning to work. As the days passed the Pastor began to notice Ben's routine. Finally, one day, out of a number of concerns, the Pastor went up to him and inquired why he repeated this ritual each day.

The old man responded that the lunch time was his time to pray for strength and power. "This is what I say: "I just came by Lord to tell you how happy I've been since we found each other's friendship, and you took away my sin. I don't know much about how to pray, but I think about you every day. So, Jesus, this is Ben, just checking in today! "

The minister feeling rather foolish, told Ben that it was just fine and that he was welcome to pray there anytime. "It's time to go, and thanks", Ben said as he hurried to the door. The minister then knelt at the altar warmed with love as he met with Jesus there. Tears flowed down his cheeks as he repeated old Ben's prayer.

Past noon one day, the minister noticed that old Ben hadn't come by to pray. The days passed and still no Ben and the minister began to worry some. He went to the factory and learned that Ben had taken ill. The hospital staff was worried, but also told the minister that he had given all of them a thrill. The week that Ben was with them, brought changes in the ward. His smile and level of joy was contagious and changed people's outlook on life.

The head nurse couldn't understand why Ben could be so glad, when no flowers, cards or visitors came. The minister stayed by his bedside and voiced the nurse's concern. "The nurse is wrong said Ben; she couldn't know, He's been here all the while". Everyday at noon He comes here, a dear friend of mine, you see, He sits right down and takes my hand, Leans over and says to me: "I just came by to tell you, Ben, how happy I have been, since we found this

friendship, and I took away your sin. I think about you always and I love to hear you pray, and so Ben, this is Jesus, just checking in today!"

Many people will walk in and out of your life, but only true friends will leave footprints in your heart. May God hold you in the palm of His hand and may **His** angels watch over you.

So, friends, this is me... "Just checking in today."

All God's Blessings,
Greg Wendorf

Open Bible Prepares to Reopen

Open Bible will have its first worship service on June 7th at 9:30 A.M.

Seating will be provided so husband and wives can sit together, but all groups or singles, will be separated by 6 feet. Our ushers will not be passing out anything. They will now be considered hosts who point out locations where you are able to sit. They will also dismiss you at the end of the service, beginning with the back of the church first. The rows will exit through the side aisle.

Jim Duncan and Jim Orcutt, have put some green tape on the chairs, where you may sit. Masks will be recommended, but not required to wear. The entire worship service will be on the screen, so no bulletins will be passed out. The offering can be given before or after the service by dropping envelopes, checks, or coins into a box on a stand in the Welcome Center. A greeter will hold the entrance door open for you, so you won't be touching any door handles. Hand Sanitizer will be

available at a couple of locations. If you feel in any way sick, please stay home.

The doors to the worship sanctuary will be left open. **Communion will not be celebrated on June 7th, since it will be our first week back.** Communion thereafter, will be on the first and 3rd Sunday of each month. Ushers will direct you when communion is offered, to pass by two tables, where you will pick up the wafer (while Words of Institution spoken by Layman 6 feet behind the table), and the same situation as you pick up the wine. (while Words of Institution spoken by pastor 6 feet behind the table). The altar guild is looking into the possibility of having communion at the beginning of the service vs. the end. But for now, it will be in its normal timeframe.

The chairs, doors, and restrooms will be sanitized by the ushers after the worship service is completed. We will have the worship service available in the Welcome Center, and the Fellowship Hall, once capacity is reached in the sanctuary. We figure that 56 can be seated with social distancing in the church, 12 in the Welcome Center, and 40 in the Fellowship Hall. Right now, we are working on the sound system in the Fellowship Hall, so you can hear and see the worship service on the screen. The camera that displays our worship service in the Welcome Center, can also project the video and audio into the Fellowship Hall.

CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING REPORT

LWMS and North Florida Circuit News

The Church Council met on May 21st, 2020.

Items discussed included:

1. Church Services will resume on Sunday, June 7. The service will be shorter and will not include communion.
2. The Church Council approved a Big Red Bus Blood Drive to be held in the Church parking lot with the date to be determined.
3. The Church Council did **not approve** Open Bible to be used as a polling station site.
4. Pastor's vacation was confirmed for the second and third week in July. Pastor Balza will cover during this time.
5. Sunday July 5th has been set to install Randy Cochran as Half-Time Staff Minister of Music and Education. We will also have a special July 4th Service and a Mortgage Burning Ceremony,

The Council also gratuitously accepted an Church Organ donation from Fred Hainen. It may be used at Open Bible or made available to another WELS Church.

Yours in Christ:

Les Stauske
Secretary

The end of this quarter's Meditations devotionals is May 30th. I hope you will consider donating your used copy to the Prison Ministry. I am forwarding them to the Special Ministry Office. Please bring them to church June 7th and put them in my mailbox if the collection box for them is not available. The Special Ministries office reports that the copies are snapped up as soon as they are made available. Also, the need continues for men and women who would be willing to be a Christian friend to an inmate as a pen pal or test corrector. You can get more information by contacting prisonministry@wels.net or 414-256-3243.

This year LWMS lost both our Spring Rally and our yearly Convention that was scheduled for Athens, GA. Gone were the opportunities for hearing about the many missions that LWMS helps fund, meeting the missionaries and their families, and hearing firsthand about the joys and challenges they face as they are the hands, feet and voices carrying Jesus's message of hope and salvation all over the world. We gained a new understanding of the perils they faced from hostile forces. They also faced issues of loneliness, culture shock, missing older children, grandchildren and ailing parents. And they shared stories about the people, the lessons they have learned and friendships they have formed. They find comfort in the Bible and knowing what they do is vitally important to the communities where they are serving. Their stories are inspiring and reaffirm our role as they share what LWMS support emotionally and financially has meant to them. Our Circuit rallies and yearly conventions can draw us together and bind us in a commitment to

carrying out Christ's Great Commission. I hope when the rallies come back, and the yearly convention can be held you will have the opportunity to attend them.

This unusual year has presented some new ways to use technology for communication for many of us. Our Online worship services have been a blessing to feel the connection to our church and the Zoom Bible Study of Revelation has been a wonder. Pastor checks us in from the waiting room and we come together from Florida, Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin and probably a few other states I missed.

Another virtual opportunity is coming our way the end of June. I will share a bit of the information from LWMS President Cynthia Natsis:

“ I think you all know by now that our in-person LWMS convention is being combined with the Taste of Missions event put on by the WELS Missions Office. This joint project will be called Taste and See and will appeal to many of your senses. This two-week virtual event will come to you through your sense of sight on your computer or smartphone. You will be using your sense of hearing to listen to our mission speakers and workshop presenters. We will also have recipes from some of our mission fields that you can download and try, which will use your senses of smell, taste, and touch. I believe this event will deliver a whole new way of experiencing our missions.

I hope you will join us online for Taste and See. The convention committee and the Board of Directors are working to make this a lively, interactive experience. Come and join us on June 27th for opening worship and come back every day for the mission presentations. I think you will agree: “Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good!”

As I get more information, I will post it in the Sunday bulletins, or you can go to LWMS.org to get more information.

See you June 7th.

Peggi Carrier

Altar Guild

In a concern for everyone's safety, the Altar Guild will look into ways to safely distribute the Sacraments to the congregation during Communion beginning on June 21st.

Also, the Altar Guild is entrusted to other aspects related to worship, the Altar and worship areas. If you have a concern or praise please speak to Mary Burel (chairperson.)

During the months ahead, all that have signed up for Altar flowers, will be acknowledged in the announcements. We thank you for your contribution to the beauty of the Altar.

Revelation “Zoom”

Do you want to see Open Bible members, hear their voices, ask questions, chat, and learn the Scriptures together with your pastor? Do you want to know what is going to happen before the return of Christ? How can we prepare for it? What do we need to know? "Renew Your Vision" is a complete study of the book of Revelation. How about joining us on Wednesdays from 6:30 - 7:30 P.M. on your desktop, Tablet or Smart Phone for a virtual Bible study. If you are up north already, you can still join us. We have just a few more lessons left.

I will be utilizing an online meeting program called Zoom. I will be sending out an invitation email to you on Sunday

to join our meeting. You will be prompted to install/download the Zoom app, once you have clicked the link I send you. The app can be put on your desktop, Tablet, or Smart phone. The app for Zoom is free. Don't wait until Wednesday at 6:00 P.M. to do this. Avoid last minute stress.

Be sure and note the meeting ID number and name. You will need a camera and audio on your device. (Some desktop monitors don't have that) As host, I will need to have the Pro Membership which runs about \$15.00 a month. That allows us to have unlimited participants, and we can meet longer than 40 minutes.

Our study will be 8 sessions on the book of Revelation. You will find this study very helpful for your life today. It will include PowerPoint slides on your screen when I share them in the presentation. If you plan to join us, let me know. I will email you the study guide for the next Session that you can fill out during the online class. Just print the study guide from your printer.

If you need help setting up Zoom, contact Carmen Smith. She is our coordinator for Zoom meetings. Her email is: Cismith2010.cs@gmail.com You can also call her on the phone at 612-296-4482. Go Open Bible!

Small Group Ministry

It looks like most of our small group activities have been suspended until further notice. Here is a list of our small groups:

Wednesday in the Word:

Led by Pastor Mark Schulz – a Bible Study on different topics.

466A Group Bible Study

Led by Randy Cochran

This is a group especially for those who live around the area of 466A.

Handbells

Facilitator: Pam Johnson.



Happy Hearts, Happy Hands Handiwork

Led by: Sandy Pawlowski

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



Led by: Genie Selvey
WinGS will have their next monthly meeting on the second Wednesday of the month. Sept. – May.

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.

North Country Group

Facilitator: Alan Johnson

Meets the 2nd & 4th Sundays at

6:00 pm at Alan & Pam Johnson's home in Ocala. All are welcome to join, contact Alan Johnson if interested.

Men of Leisure:

Led by: Dennis Duessler



Meeting on the second Friday of the month at 8:30 am at Bob Evans on CR466.

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. Still meeting!

Ladies Tuesday Bible Study

Led by Pam Johnson Meeting Tuesdays at Open Bible (check back when it will resume)

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. Still meeting!

Fantastic Friday Game Day!

Will be back in the fall! For fellowship and fun playing sheepshead, uchre, hand & foot, rumicube or bring a game to share and friends to play with. 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 *Randy Cochran.*



Caring for Caregivers

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.

Do you know a caregiver who could benefit from this sharing, learning experience? All past, present and potential caregivers are welcome. Invite other caregivers to be your guest. *Randy Cochran, facilitator.*

New Life in Christ

New Life in Christ Bible Study, Led By Pastor Schulz: This class will be offered when needed.

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.

Altar Guild: Leader: Mary Burel. If there is anyone interested in finding out more about the Altar Guild, Please contact Mary Burel.

Early Bird Bible Study:



Led by Pastor Mark Schulz Usually meets on Sunday mornings before church.

Mornings with Mommy



Jane Valley is the director and if you are interested in helping her, please give her a call at

989-450-1937. We expect 8 – 10 children. Please contact Jane Valley if you have a child (up to age 5) that would like to attend.

Meditations & Forward in Christ

Karen Pearson, Church Secretary will put the next **Meditations** and the last few months of the **Forward in Christ** in your mailbox for you to pick up when you return to church. Please let her know if you are not here in the summer months. Thanks!

KarenOpenBible@gmail.com

Church 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

Alan & Pam Johnson - 1
Gene & Bette McConkey - 3
John and Janis Liermann - 5
Frank & Genie Selvey - 7
Greg & Carol Wendorf - 7
LeRoy & Jane Valley - 7
David & Annette Rystrom - 7
Jerry & Mary Brooks - 10
Ken & Elisabeth Wells - 15
Pete & Diane Olsen - 15
Tom & Betty DeWitz - 18
Ken & Brenda Severa - 20
Dan & Karen Pearson - 25
Walt & Bonnie Farnsworth - 25
Ray & Norma Welch - 28
Bob & Carol Hinz - 29



Happy Birthday

June Murray - 1
Elvin Schlegel - 3
LeRoy Valley - 4
Maya Ute Mitta - 4
Pat Holmes - 5
Gerry Hughes - 5
Joanne Stuedemann - 7
Jane Valley - 8
Jeanne Schulz - 9
Brenda Severa - 11
Carol Stauske - 12
Ruth Niermeyer - 13
Ken Wells - 13
Elizabeth Koch - 15
Donna Davis - 17
Jennifer Schlegel - 19
Frank Selvey - 21
Sandy Richesson - 23
John Kiewra - 25
Mary Brooks - 29
Ted Hahm - 29
Norma Welch - 29

Open Bible Evangelical Lutheran Church

Pastor Mark M. Schulz

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Oxford, FL 34484

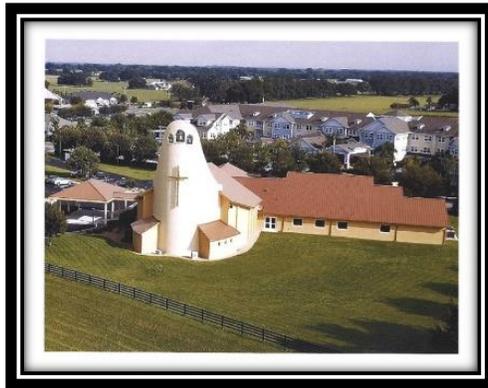
352-753-9038, 989-525-5514

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 103.5FM

“The Shepherd.” Our time slot is 11:05 – 11:30am



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