



NEWSLETTER



January 2016

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From the Pastor

The year 2015 was a year where Open Bible consolidated and digested some of its large recent membership gains, and continued to involve our newer members in Bible study, service, and fellowship. In the past, our membership has filled out spiritual gift, and time and talent survey sheets. Data from these surveys has been put into a computer data base. As a result, it is much easier to recruit members for ministry. Recently, data was used to find new ushers, workers in the kitchen, and those with gifts in the area of evangelism.

Our Sonshine and Rehab Committee under the leadership of Elders Jim Johnson and Dan Blaho made regular visits to our membership in 2015 that were in the hospital, rehab facility, or recovering from surgery or illness at home. Many cards, phone calls, and meals were delivered. The volunteers on the rehab committee serve a two week time frame each month. I have heard much appreciation from our sick and recovering members about the concern shown by our membership for them. I feel this Rehab Committee, and the tireless coordination of visits, cards, phone calls by Vanita McCurnin have been a wonderful blessing to our congregation. In addition, our Quilters at Open Bible supply us with satchels, that we fill with candy, comforting Scripture verses, and devotional booklets, to give out to our membership as they recover from

illness. They supply us with quilts that we give out to members who are bedridden for longer periods of time.

On January 31st, Chris Moellring, Christian Schmolke, Armand Ochhetti, and I attended a school of outreach in West Melbourne, with 4 other congregations. The workshop stressed the importance of having an identity and brand for your congregation in the community. In addition, the workshop helped us tweak our Worship Welcome process and the assimilation of new members. On February 8th, we had a Friendship Sunday at Open Bible. That Sunday we had the largest Sunday worship attendance at Open Bible with 218 in attendance. I delivered 7 bread gift baskets on the following Monday and Tuesday. The fields remain ripe for the harvest.

I am very thankful to God for the strong leadership he has blessed us with at Open Bible. Both our Elders and Church Council work together with a team spirit, with the love of Christ, and with a positive and upbeat spirit for the work set before us. The devil loves to foster negativity in a church. And I am so thrilled that we have such a positive group of workers for our Lord.

We were blessed with two concerts at Open Bible in 2015. On March 8th, the Wisconsin Lutheran College choir stopped by for a concert. Including the members of the choir, we had 332 people in our building when the concert was given. Special thanks to the concert committee for all their hard work in coordinating this event. What a joy to see our members show a servant

heart by unselfishly taking in a couple of students, interacting with them, feeding them, and providing overnight accommodations. Even when some of our members felt uncomfortable having strangers in their home, they paid for the accommodations for students at the Hampton Inn. The Michigan Lutheran Seminary choir was with us on April 8th at 7:00 P.M. The concert had a smaller attendance (around 150), but still very much appreciated by our membership and the community.

The King of Kings kids put on a musical called, "Joust" on Monday May 11th at Steeplechase. The residents were grateful for the musical. We still regularly conduct worship services every Sunday at Steeplechase. As of December 2015, we are averaging between 7-9 participants. One is a member of Open Bible, while the others have presently no church home. Special thanks to Sharon Sigurdson, who plays the piano weekly for our worship services there.

Karen Pearson and I produced a tract that has meditations and prayers in it, that is given out regularly whenever I make a hospital call. That tract is given out in addition to the humbags that our Quilters produce.

Open Bible was blessed with the donation of a baby grand piano during 2015. This piano has given us an opportunity to play songs with the choir and soloists during our worship service. I have heard many positive comments from both guests as well as members on the use of this piano. Amazingly, we still have seating for 214 in our worship sanctuary.

Our Bible studies during the fall of 2015 took place either at church, in the home of a member, or at an area restaurant. Our early bird study on Sunday mornings looked at the book of Job and the book of Esther. Our Wednesday in the Word class focused in on the Life of David and our Life. Our men's breakfast Bible study led by Dennis Duessler considered some 19 minute Bible studies. The 466A group had a video driven study by Pastor Mark Jeske, entitled, "I Need To Change." The North County Group did a book study of I John, II John, and III John. Judy Anderson led a women's Bible study at church

entitled, "Golden Fruit-Living", while Pam Riches, did a study at her home of some interesting Old Testament facts about the kings of Israel. Our book club looked at two books: "A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23", and "Ten Tough Questions You Hope No One Asks You".

In early September, the Elders coordinated a Bible study fair in the fellowship hall which promoted the different Bible study opportunities, as well as service and fellowship groups that one could join. It was well received and several people signed up on the Sunday it was presented.

During the fall months on Thursday nights, I led a 12 week video driven study, called "Griefshare" to give support to those in our congregation and the community who have lost a loved one recently. There were 4 participants in the class. One person was not a member at Open Bible.

After giving both the Elders and Council a strength and weakness survey of Open Bible, there was a common consensus that Open Bible needed to do more long range planning. President Wendorf recruited a committee led by Dan Pearson. The Committee will study both ministry goals and building maintenance work that will need to be done in the future.

The past two years our building committee has received input from the congregation via public forums and surveys as to what were the unmet needs, as they viewed our worship sanctuary and the ministries we offer. The concerns voiced by the congregation were that Open Bible needed a larger fellowship and welcoming area, more classroom space, more storage space, a library, extended kitchen, and updated offices for both the secretary and the pastor. Overcrowding in worship services would be taken care of by simply adding an additional service. As the committee continued its studies, three possible plans for expansion were developed. It was determined that the best plan of the three would be selected and submitted for discussion by the Church Council and the congregation. I am happy to report, that the committee has unanimously approved one of the three plans and is presently tweaking the design

put together by Signature Enterprises. I am very excited about the future of Open Bible. We are constantly on the move to expand the kingdom work to the Village community and to the world.

Our Church Mission offering has steadily grown the past three years. In the year 2012, we committed \$7500 to our CMO. The next year we doubled that amount. The recommendation for the year 2016 is that we commit \$25,008 of our offerings to the mission work of our Synod, which includes educating future pastors and teachers. We are attempting to give at least 10% of our offerings each year as part of our CMO. (church mission offerings) I thank God for the hearts of the members of Open Bible who, motivated by the Gospel, support not only the work we do here, but throughout the world.

Open Bible was blessed in 2015 by a monetary gift from one of our members named Ann Lind. Ann traveled to her heavenly home in 2014. Ann was always excited about the work we are doing here. She wanted that work to move forward and expand. Her gift of almost \$184,000 has been put into our congregational bank account, until the congregation determines at its January Voters' meeting how it is to be utilized. What amazing blessings our Lord showers down on Open Bible.

Our Fall-Reformation festival took place on November 1st from 3:30-6:30 P.M. Over 100 people from Open Bible participated in the event. 19 members of the Villages Harmonica orchestra played songs from the Great American songbook in our fellowship hall from 3:30-4:15 P.M. Our very own Frank Selvey and Bob O'Connell were part of the group. After the Harmonica orchestra was finished with its performance, Pastor Schulz and Les Stauske handed out a fun reformation quiz to the audience, and reviewed the questions with them. Important facts were learned, but in a humorous manner. From 4:30-5:30 P.M., members had a choice to watch a Luther movie in church, or go outside and play some games. From 5:30-6:30, a great pork and chicken dinner was catered in by Sonny's. Thanks to all who helped make this a wonderful congregational fellowship afternoon.

Open Bible participated in the Wildwood Winterfest on December 4th. Paula Malec and Dr. Larry Reed staffed a booth, and gave out devotional booklets, 30 DVD videos of "My Son, My Savior," bottled water, invites to Christmas worship, as well as mints, chips and candy. (thanks to Sally Stocks) Our choir sang Christmas carols from 6:30-6:50 P.M. I was able to tell everyone on the loud speaker about why Jesus came into the world and invite the people there to our Christmas Eve and Day services.

Our Christmas Eve service had the highest attendance in the history of our congregation. 217 worshippers were with us for the candlelight service. How wonderful that so many heard the real meaning of Christmas that night. What was interesting was the large number of children in attendance. I thought to myself I should do a children's message next year. On Christmas day we remembered that the baby Jesus was also True God. Special thanks to Pastor Dale for conducting worship on Christmas Day. During this service, I was given the opportunity to do an affirmation ceremony of my grandson's baptism.

We have a wonderful, caring, positive, and enthusiastic congregation at Open Bible. I consider it a privilege to serve all of you with the Gospel. Whenever I think of Open Bible, I think of the words of Paul in Philippians 1:3-6, "I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the Gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." Go Open Bible!



From the President

The New Year is upon us and most everyone wonders what 2016 will bring. It certainly is a question we can't answer as only God in his infinite wisdom knows what lies ahead. And there are many things in our world we have absolutely no control over. But we do have a certain amount of control over our attitude and our perspective about some of the challenges we face on a daily basis.

I recently came across a list of ideas (thanks to my wife) that were designed to enlighten your perspective. The list was compiled by the late Andy Rooney (ex 60 Minutes USA). Please allow me to share a few of them with you. (I'm sure you may have heard a few of these).

- 1) I've learned- That the best classroom in the world is at the feet of an elderly person.
- 2) I've learned- That just one person saying to me, "You've made my day!" makes my day.
- 3) I've learned- That having a child fall asleep in your arms is one of the most peaceful feelings in the world.
- 4) I've learned- That everyone you meet deserves to be greeted with a smile.
- 5) I've learned- That love, not time, heals all wounds and a good hug can help.
- 6) I've learned- That life is like a roll of toilet paper. The closer it gets top the end, the faster it goes.
- 7) I've learned- That when your newly born grandchild holds your little finger in his little fist, that you're hooked for life.
- 8) I've learned- That everyone wants to live on top of the mountain, but all happiness and growth occurs while you're climbing it.
- 9) I've learned- That being kind is more important than being right.
- 10) I've learned- That sometimes all a person needs is a hand to hold and a heart to understand.

11) I've learned- That I can always pray for someone when I don't have the strength to help him in some other way.

12) I've learned- That we should be glad God doesn't give us everything we ask for.

Our perspective and attitude are very important as they can change our lives for the better and make us really appreciate what we have. So that being said, what will we need the most in the coming year? That's really quite simple: Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved (Acts 16:31). The answer is very basic. No rules or rituals, or regulations. No special words or frills. No mighty deeds. No self-improvement.

To "believe in the Lord Jesus " is to know that you cannot save yourself. It is to confess that you are a sinner who deserves to die eternally in hell. But to "believe in the Lord Jesus" is also to know that by his life and death, Jesus has saved you. Even death cannot harm you. Jesus rose from his grave to prove it. Because Jesus lives, you will live also. So have a blessed New Year and let God's word change and refresh you each and every day. As you consider all the awesome things that have come to you through Jesus, God's perfect gift, remember that it is but a taste of all the good things that are yet to come. Let it remind you that the difficulties of this life are temporary but the happiness of heaven is eternal.

Happy New Year and God's blessings to all,
Greg Wendorf



Who's Who at Open Bible



Here at Open Bible we all know Stacy Vance as our Choir Director. However, this is just a tip of the iceberg of this dynamo.

Stacy was born in Erie, Pennsylvania, and as the daughter of a career United States

Coast Guard member, moved around quite a bit in her early years. Also, we know Stacy is the daughter of another Open Bible member, Ruth Vance. She has two older brothers. Her brother Mark will soon retire from the Synod and is well known within the WELS family.

Stacy's early education was in Miami, Florida, although her senior year of high school was completed in Montana and upon graduating she attended Montana State University where she majored in music with the flute and a minor in vocal.

Upon receiving her Bachelor's Degree in Music, she went on to teach music in the Montana Public School System. Stacy's pursuit of her Master's Degree in performance was cut short after she developed carpal tunnel. At this point, Stacy switched her professional interest from music and worked as a nanny for several years

In the meantime, Stacy's parents moved back to Florida. After Stacy's father passed away, Ruth persuaded Stacy to come back to Florida and truthfully, being homesick, she agreed to come back and began work at a hospital in the mental health department. Stacy laughingly calls herself a professional student. She graduated from Massage School as the Valedictorian of her graduating class and commenced work as a massage therapist working for a physical therapist.

Deciding she needed more stability with her employment, Stacy left massage therapy and

joined the Quality Risk Department at the Villages Hospital and is presently the Assistant Director of the OR at the Villages Hospital. She has attained her second Bachelor's Degree, this time in Health Care Administration and has attained her MBA in Health Care.

As if all of the above isn't enough, come autumn her plans are to enroll in the two-year Nursing Program at Lake Sumter College. Juggling a full-time responsible position with the Villages Hospital, going to school full-time, Stacy still manages to lead our Choir, with hours of practice and dedication.

Open Bible is appreciative and indeed fortunate to know and love this multi-talented lady who gives so much in service.

By: Jan Britton

Church Envelopes

Note to Envelope users

Envelope numbers will remain the same as you had last year. Starting in 2017 new numbers will be reassigned.

Four new special envelopes will be found at the beginning of your box. Please use as you wish or wait till we have a special service for them.

Envelope date is not looked at by the counters, it will be deposited when given as will multiple envelopes.

Envelopes have a seal to use if you wish. Please do not use scotch tape to seal your envelope, it makes it very difficult to open.

All envelopes, etc. are kept for historical backup. It will help the counters if you label it "cash" when you do use cash. Also putting on the amount saves the counters time and avoids errors.

If you forget your envelope, use the pew envelope and use your name or number and it will be entered correctly.

Low envelope users will be placed in a # category for IRS use and you will be notified of that # (saving the cost of the envelopes).

Any further questions, notify Bill Sigurdson

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, January 14th from 2:00 – 4:00 at the home of Ingeborg Holzmann, and January 28th at the home of Ron & Lois Klatt.

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 (no this is not a typo!). But a new Bible study group! 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, January 14th and Thursday, January 28th 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: The Encore Effect by Mark Sanborn Location: Open Bible Lutheran Church Date: January 26th 2015 Time: 4:00 PM Facilitator: Pastor Schulz Everyone wants to make a difference in the world, but most have no idea how to maximize their impact. In The Encore Effect, best-selling author and leadership expert Mark Sandborn provides the answer.

Ladies Tuesday Bible Study- Tuesday Afternoon Ladies Bible Study will begin again in January on Tuesday January 5 at 1 p.m. Pam Johnson will be the leader of this study, giving Judy a break. "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, January 28th 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

SPLASH is planning to have brunch at Water Oak on Sunday, January 10th after the 10:00am service. Sign-up is in the kitchen pass-thru.

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

We have an exciting adventure planned for Saturday, January 30th. How about a cruise on the St. John's River? The Cruise is from 11:00 – 2:00pm and a full lunch will be provided during the cruise, plus entertainment!. 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, January 8th at 8:00 A.M.

North County Group: (Led by Alan Johnson) The North Country's Bible Study begins again in

January with the topic :*Government a Godly Perspective.*

This is a CD generated Bible Study from Kramer Publications. Studies begin again on Jan. 10th Meetings are the 2nd & 4th Sundays 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.

Happy Hearts-Happy Hands Handiwork Meeting Friday, January 8th 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, January 13th beginning at 1:00pm.

Wednesday in the Word: Beginning on January 13th 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.

January 13th: We Live in a Burdened World

January 20th: Sin Leaves Burdens in its Wake

January 27th: Burdens Also Come to Believers' Lives

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

466A Group Topic: A Look at Luke (Luke 2, 10, 15). Tuesday, January 19th from 2:00 – 4:00pm at the home of Dave & Nancy Gonia.
Leader: Pastor Mark Schulz

Women of Riches: Bible study at Pam Riches' home begins Jan. 4th. 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, January 8th & 22nd from 6:00 – 8:00pm. Bring friends, games and a snack to pass!

Council Highlights

December Council Highlights

The church council met on December 17th. Following are the highlights from the meeting:

- November income was \$671 more than expenses. Year to date income was \$19,842 more than expenses. The mortgage balance as of 11/30/15 was \$386,041.
- The following were accepted into membership by transfer:
 - Bob Smith
 - Barb Smith
- The following were accepted into membership by adult confirmation pending their completion of class:
 - Mel Parker
 - Susan Parker
 - Marilyn Awkerman
- The building committee chairman presented an updated drawing of their recommendation for the building expansion. The committee will

meet again in January to finalize their recommendation along with detailed costs. This will be presented to the Church Council at their January meeting for their approval. It is hoped that a presentation can then be made to the congregation sometime in February.

- Approval was given to give a short explanation of the various portions of our liturgy during the church services beginning in early 2016.
- Times for the special services in 2016 were set as follows:

Lent – 5:30pm with a meal at 4:30pm
 Maundy Thursday – 5:30pm
 Good Friday – 5:30pm
 Easter Sunday – 7:00am & 9:30am

(breakfast after the 7:00am service)

Thanksgiving – 10:00am
 Advent – 5:30pm with a meal at 4:30pm
 Christmas Eve – 5:30pm
 Christmas Day – 9:30am
 New Year’s Eve – 5:30pm

- We have obtained new panels for our 2 main signs showing the new times for our Sunday services during January through March (8:00am and 10:00am). They will be installed in the Dec 28 – 31 timeframe.

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.

Fellowship Workers: Training for the kitchen will be Tuesday, January 5th at 10:00 am., Coffee and snacks will be provided. Any questions, please see Joanne Stuedemann.

Happy Anniversary

Phil & Karen Herring – 1
 Ed & Marilyn Pearson – 25

Happy Birthday

Shirley Miller – 2
 Armand Occhetti – 3
 Carol Hinz – 5
 Paula Malec -6
 Ed Pearson – 8
 Doug Tharp – 8
 Judith Keintz - 8
 Dave Mottl – 11
 Eva Orcutt – 12
 Fred Aguda – 15
 Diane Kuhlman - 16
 Leslie Nelson – 18
 Vern Griffin – 18
 Loreli Aguda – 22
 Marilyn Vander Weir – 22
 Nancy Gonia – 24
 Sharilyn Bielefeldt—25
 John Marks - 26
 Joan Blaho – 29
 Bob Hinz – 31