



Newsletter



January 2021

Volume 16 No. 1

From the Pastor Encouragement for the New Year *by Pastor Mark Schulz*

Do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go." [Joshua 1:9](#)

On the first day of a new year many of us wish each other a "Happy New Year!" But as we begin a new year, we need more than a hopeful greeting from the people around us. We need to listen to what God told Joshua about 3,400 years ago. As Joshua was about to lead God's people into the promised land, he had reason to be afraid. He had an enormous task ahead of him, and he was well aware of the dangers that he and the people would soon be facing. The people living in the promised land did not want the Israelites in their land. There would be battles to fight. Some of God's people would die in battle. Others would face various health issues. Would there be enough food and water to survive? Joshua needed encouragement from the Lord.

We have just faced a challenging year in 2020. In fact, many of us are saying, "I am so thankful that this year is finally over". The normal activities we enjoyed were severely disrupted. We were homebound for a good portion of the year, afraid to go out into society because we might contract Covid and be one of the victims whose immune system

would not be able to overcome the virus, and we would die. When we did venture out into society, we had to wear a mask, and constantly douse our hands with sanitizer. The interaction we had with friends was disrupted, as we had to stay six feet apart. We used to hug and shake hands, now we are fortunate to bump elbows. The usual fellowship time we had after church was halted, due to concern that close contact would spread the virus. We are all saying, "Can't we just get back to the way life was?"

A new year brings lots of questions: Will the new vaccines be able to combat Covid if we have mutated versions? Will our economy be able to survive more shutdowns? Will inflation kick into high gear, and our stock market holdings plummet in value? Will I live to see the end of 2021?

The Creator of the universe comes to us and says, "Don't be afraid; don't be discouraged." What happens in this coming year is not left to chance. God is in charge, and he promises to stay close: "The LORD your God will be with you wherever you go." Many years later, the Lord Jesus made the same promise when he said, "I am with you always" ([Matthew 28:20](#)). That's the reason we can wish each other a "Happy New Year!" The Lord's abiding presence will be with us in 2021.

President's Message

It only took a second for the clock to move from 2020 into the new year of 2021. I doubt that many people were sad to see 2020 end. There still remains a great deal of apprehension about the future. Will the stock market crash or will our country be taken over by evil forces? Will the COVID-19 virus be contained and/or halted? More importantly, when will the world began to see their fellow man as children of God and equals regardless of the color of their skin or their social economic standing. These are just a few of the many questions that remain to be answered.

As I pondered these concerns, I came across the story of a young African American boy who grew up with an abusive father who made him feel invisible. His working mother tried to protect the boy, but she and the father fought frequently and often payed little attention to their son.

As the young boy grew older and looked back over his life, he remembered one man in particular who had a hand in shining light into his darkness. Every day, from the time he started school until he got through High School, he walked past drug dealers, literally had to step over the drunks and passed dangerously through the projects filled with gang members. Times were tough. There was a busy intersection on his way to school which was very difficult to cross. One day as he approached that intersection, he heard this voice saying, "will someone help me cross". An older man was dressed in a suit, had a cooler and a lawn chair in one hand and a cane in the other. "Will someone please help

me cross" he said again. People kept ignoring him and walked past hurrying on with their busy lives. The young man looked around and decided there was no reason he couldn't help. He reached out to the elderly gentlemen and said, "I'll help you." The old man said, "Well thank You son, my name is Mr. Bueller; may I have your shoulder?" The young man said, "yes sir." The older man responded by saying, "don't trick me now" and the young man replied' "no sir, I won't." They proceeded to cross the street. When the young man asked the older man where he was going, he said he was going to the school to sell praline candy to the kids. They walked together to the school. Mr. Bueller said, "thank You" and told him God would bless him for his kindness. They became friends and took that same walk every day.

One afternoon as the young man came out of school, he saw another student approach Mr. Bueller to buy some candy. The student handed him a dollar bill and told him it was a five-dollar bill. The young man stepped in and said, "Mr. Bueller, this is a scam". Needless to say, the young man had a lot of enemies at the school from that point forward, but he knew he had done the right thing. He was showing his gratitude to Mr. Bueller for being the first person in his life to really see him. What made it more special was the fact that Mr. Bueller was blind.

One more incident with Mr. Bueller. One morning the young man was late meeting him. As he approached the intersection, he could see that Mr. Bueller was not saying a word. He walked up behind him as quietly as possible. As he got closer, Mr. Bueller said "I know you are there son, because

I was listening for you". "Sometimes in life, when you pray and you have said all you could possibly say, all you have left is to stand and wait and listen". He truly was a point of light.

There are many people in this world that are waiting, wanting, saying, asking, begging and hoping for answers. Will someone help me cross? We must choose daily to serve the people around us. We do not accidentally stumble into selfless service to others. We all have the power to be a point of light. Let your light shine and may each of us be a point of light in 2021.

Remember what God has said; "Since I live in you, let Me also live through you, shining my light into the darkness". Have a wonderful 2021.

All God's Blessings,
Greg Wendorf

Music & Education Report By Randy Cochran

WORSHIP

I will use this space every month to explain how worship services are planned at Open Bible. This month:

The Lord's Prayer: Traditional or Contemporary?

The church council has requested that when the Lord's Prayer is spoken, we will alternate on a monthly basis between the traditional and contemporary versions.

On very rare occasions, perhaps two or three times a year, we will put the Lord's Prayer to song. It's an opportunity to offer variety in that the music can help us refocus on the

petitions of the Lord's Prayer.

During the midweek Advent services, we have been singing the prayer to the tune of "Away In a Manger."

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

HANDBELLS

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

CHOIR

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

Our second semester will begin January 6, Wednesday, at 5:15. This would be a great time for new members to join.

ASSISTED LIVING VISITS (CARRIAGE HOUSE)

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

Due to a few recent outbreaks of COVID at the facility, I am not allowed in at the moment, but hope to resume January 11, Monday.

466A BIBLE STUDY GROUP

On January 26th, Tuesday, 2:00 – 3:30pm, I will be offering a one-time workshop for All members. Planning Your Christian Funeral: What to do Before, During and After. I worked at a funeral home for about 5 years and feel I have some "inside" information which might be beneficial in planning a funeral.

[SPLASH \(Single People Loving and Serving Him\)](#)

We recently held a Christmas party/planning meeting with about fifteen in attendance... three of them guests who answered the ad in the paper! Activities planned are: Edna's on the Green, local dog show, musical show at the Howey Mansion, the Harmonica Players of Open Bible, Sparky's Strummers at the Savannah Center, and a presentation by the CEO of Help Agency, Inc (Ocala State Forest residents).

[CAREGIVERS](#)

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

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

Special thanks to Leslie Nelson for volunteering to assist with this ministry.

Joanne Stuedemann has asked for some assistance with Ron. I met with them this past Tuesday for devotion and communion.

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

[CHRISTMAS FOR KIDS](#)

Thanks to the many volunteers! The number of children participating was not what we expected but are grateful for the ones who did. There were nine children in attendance.

One of our volunteers suggested an Easter Egg/Easter for Kids event this Spring. I'm also looking to plan a Trunk or Treat event October of 2021.

[5TH SUNDAY](#)

Based on feedback from those who attended in November, we will be offering another outdoor service sometime in the first half of 2021...perhaps friendship Sunday on February 14th?

Our next 5th Sunday will be January 30/31. It will be designated as our Mission Sunday. Pastor Hartman has agreed to preach and give a presentation To our congregation on January 30-31. This is an exciting ministry that includes Academia Cristo, an online Spanish-language Bible study that reaches out to non-Christians and trains Latin American church members how to share their faith. For more information about this ministry, please click the link:

<https://wels.net/serving-others/missions/latin-america/>.

A COVID friendly snack will be served after BOTH services, along with the mission presentation by Rev. Michael Hartman.

[2021 WORKSHOPS](#)

I plan on offering two workshops during the first half of 2021. One will be for those who have recently lost a loved one. It's titled "Grief Share". The other will be titled "Planning Your Christian Funeral: What to do Before, During, and After," to be held January 26th, Tuesday 2:00 – 3:30pm.

BUS TOURS

Depending on how COVID behaves, I'd like to organize some motor coach trips in 2021 for our members and their friends. If you have any suggestions, let me know. One suggestion is a trip to the Ark Encounter in Kentucky!

Serving Him!
Randy Cochran
Music and Education

Small Group Ministry

Wednesday in the Word:

Led by Pastor Mark Schulz
Join us on Wednesdays from 4:00-5:00 pm & ZOOM 6:00 – 7:00 pm

The Christian In Today's World

We live in a world that is quickly changing. Attacks on our family structure, advances in technology, political unrest and open hostility to God's people is now rampant in our country and around the world. Can we help but wonder what our grandchildren and great grandchildren will experience? The purpose of this study is to take an insightful look at six areas of deep concern to God's people today. The sessions are meant to give Christians an opportunity to understand the problem, discover what God has to say, and go forward with renewed hope in the Lord's sovereignty.

The study includes many opportunities for participants to discuss and share personal feelings and viewpoints. Perhaps now more than ever we need to rely on the words of David who assures us, "My times are in your hands."

January 6th---Living In Today's Political Environment

January 13th- Living In Today's Family Environment

January 20th- Living In Today's Hostile Environment

January 27th- Living In Today's Technological Environment

February 3rd--Living In Today's Educational Environment

February 10th-Living In Any Environment

466A Group Bible Study

Led by Randy Cochran

On Tuesday, January 26th, Randy is having a workshop for all members titled: Planning Your Christian Funeral: What To Do Before, During, and After.

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 January 15th

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

at 1:00 pm.

Led by: Genie Selvey
WinGS will have their next monthly meeting on the second Wednesday of the month (January 8th.)

SPLASH: *Single People Loving and Serving Him*

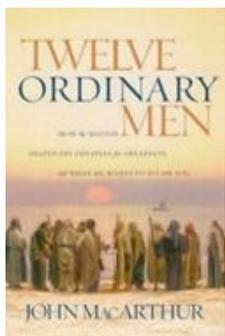
Led by: Randy Cochran



is an organization for singles. We have a Bible Study and brief meeting the second Monday each month. Next activity: Monday, January 11th at 3:00-5:00 pm. Edna's on the Green. Meet at church at 2:30pm if you want to carpool.

North Country Group

Facilitator: Alan Johnson

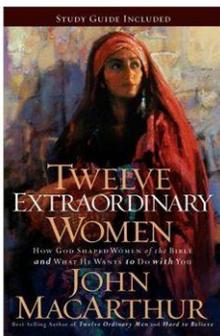


Continues Sunday, January 10th & 24th at 6:00 pm at Alan & Pam Johnson's home in Ocala. Continuing with "Twelve Ordinary Men" by John MacArthur. All are welcome to join,

contact Alan Johnson if interested.

Ladies Tuesday Bible Study

Led by Pam Johnson



Begins again on Tuesdays, January 5th 2:00-3:00 pm at Open Bible. Our 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, January 8th, 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 Leslie Nelson. Please contact her if you are interested in joining.

Golf Cart Ministry: If you are



interested in driving the golf cart to pick-up people from the surrounding Independent Living Facilities and bring them to Open Bible Worship services.

Contact the church office.

Choir: Music Director is Randy Cochran Meeting on Wednesdays at 5:15 pm. (following the Wednesday in the Word Bible Study) Begins January 6th.



Altar Guild: Leader: Diane Olsen

The altar guild will have their next meeting on Wednesday, January 13th at 10:00 am.

If there is anyone interested in finding out more about the Altar Guild, you are welcome to attend their meeting. Also on Sunday Jan. 10th, following the service they invite all to help take down the decorations.

“Mornings with Mommy”



We had fun on December 15th singing Happy Birthday to Jesus.

The next Mornings with Mommy will be on Tuesday, January 5th and January 19th 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.

GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP

Help and encouragement after the death of a spouse, child, family member, or friend

GriefShare is a special weekly seminar and support group designed to help you rebuild your life after losing a loved one. Our group is led by caring people who have experienced grief and want to help you through the difficult days ahead.

We know it hurts, and we want to help.

Contact Us Today

Mondays 2-3:30pm starting Feb. 1st
Student books provided - no cost

Open Bible Lutheran Church Fellowship Hall
4671 Bellwether Ln., Oxford, FL 34484

To register, contact: Staff Minister Randy Cochran
Randy.Cochran78@gmail.com 407-637-4876

GRIEF SHARE



LWMS News

Thank you, thank you and thank you again to the people who gave a gift of any size to our “cup of coffee for the Branch schools campaign, during first 2 weeks of December. The combined generosity of the people of Open Bible was amazing. Because there wasn't a lot of advance notice, I missed the time to bring this request before the council. Pastor reached out to the council to secure approval for participation in the Giving Tuesday drive. The council approved and the rest is history. Because of the Holy Spirit working in our hearts the children served by the Branch

Saturday Worship Services

Saturdays, January 9th through April, 2021: 4:00pm.

Join us on Saturday for Worship Service.

Lutheran Schools of Haiti will have food for their bodies, their minds and their souls through a Christ-centered education program. A check for \$10,401 was sent to support the work done in the schools attached to the 4 orphanages and with surrounding children. Just an idea of what that amount of money can provide is shown below.
 \$15 a month = 1 student can attend Branch Schools. (453 students 1 month attendance= \$6800) + \$100 a month = 1 school's nutrition supply. (1Year of a school's nutrition costs \$1200) + \$200 a month = 1 teacher's salary. (1 Teacher's salary for one year = \$2400) When we join together to further the Gospel message wonderful things can happen.

Please take a bit of time before or after church to check out the Mission bulletin board. Information about our 5th Sunday service for January will be highlighted. Our 5th Sunday focus will be a Mission Festival which should be very interesting. We will be hosting a special presenter for the speaker.

*Peggi Carrier,
 LWMS Reporter for Open Bible*

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 2021 Flower Calendar has been placed on the bulletin board near the water fountain. The cost is \$35.00 per arrangement or \$70.00 for both. Please indicate on your envelope payment is for "flowers". Two families may sign up for a Sunday and share the cost. If you have questions, please call Sheryn Daw 928-232-7730.

Emergency Contact Information

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

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

Church Envelopes

Please check your mailbox for the 2021 Offering envelopes. If you are in need of envelopes, please see Bill Sigurdson so he can assign a number for you.

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. Also, 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.

Any further questions, notify Bill Sigurdson

Annual Voter's Meeting

The Annual Voter's Meeting will be held Sunday, January 24th at 11:00am. All Open Bible members are welcome to attend.

The Church Council is Asking that Any New Male Members who joined Open Bible since the January 2020 Congregational meeting to sign the "voter registration book" (if you have not already done so). The book will be located on the friendship/greeters table starting Sunday, January 10th.

Mission Weekend:

Saturday, January 30th & Sunday January 31st: during the worship Service, we will focus on Missions. We will have a guest preacher. Pastor Hartman will enlighten us on his Missions. We will also have the choir singing and food available after the services.



Happy Anniversary

Ed & Marilyn Pearson – 25



Happy Birthday

- Armand Occhetti – 3
- Pat Omness – 4
- Barb Probyn - 4
- Paula Malec -6
- Jim Bohlmann - 6
- Jim Duncan - 7
- Ed Pearson – 8
- Doug Tharp – 8
- Eva Orcutt – 12
- Diane Kuhlman - 16
- Leslie Nelson – 18
- Vern Griffin – 18
- Marilyn Vander Weir – 22
- John Marks - 26

Open Bible Evangelical Lutheran Church

Pastor Mark M. Schulz

4671 Bellwether Lane

Oxford, FL 34484

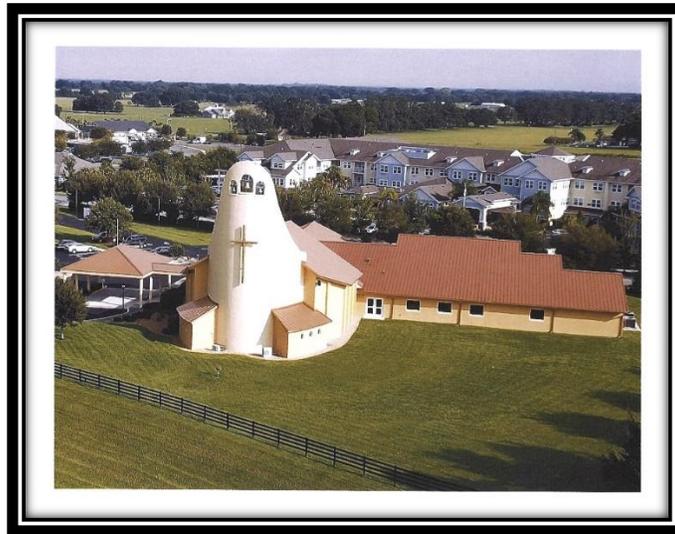
352-753-9038, 989-525-5514

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



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I-Pad and go immediately to our web site.