



NEWSLETTER

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FROM THE PASTOR

“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.” Philippians 1:3-4

As Paul was under house arrest in Rome, awaiting a potential death penalty verdict, he was upbeat and filled with joy as he thought of the time he spent with the Philippian Christians. He had seen how the Gospel had worked in their hearts, and how they were letting their light shine to others around them. He was thankful for what God had done and was continuing to do in their lives. As your pastor, like Paul, I thank God for all of you. You are a congregation who loves to hear the Word of God. You are a congregation that looks for ways to involve yourself in serving. I am amazed at how many multi-talented people are in this congregation. Many of you have served on boards and committees in the past. So no lay leadership training is needed. In addition, you regularly set aside a generous percentage of your income for kingdom work. You are not shy to invite your friends to join you for worship. And you are supportive in expanding our ministry by adding additional worship services and giving helpful input on what the most pressing needs are in regard to fellowship, office, classroom, and storage space. Paul used the correct wording that we are partners in the Gospel from the first day until now. Indeed, we are partners in this ministry. I am truly humbled by the opportunity that God has given me here at Open Bible. So many positive things have happened the past two years.

However, we do have some challenges ahead of us as we grow. Your partnership is still very much needed. First, with the influx of new members, you will need to leave your comfort zone of hanging around the friends you have known for years, and attempting to sit by and talk to the new members or guests. These people were just like you many years ago, looking for relationships and friendships. Please give of yourself to connect with these people. Secondly, we will need more volunteers as we move forward. When our congregation begins two services this winter, there will be a great need for additional greeters, ushers, singers, musicians, snack providers and servers. Please display your partnership in the gospel by volunteering to help. Third, look to participate in one or more of our many Bible study opportunities this fall, to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. If you have gifts in the area of leadership and teaching, perhaps you could help coordinate one of our small groups. These small groups provide us with a way to invite some of our unchurched friends to a Bible book or topical study that might be of interest to them. Further, the groups help develop authentic Christian friendships and provide opportunities for the group to serve their Savior in some capacity.

During the next 3 weeks, I will be taking vacation time to recharge my batteries. I feel this is very important so that I can be 100% ready to serve when I return. I am anticipating an even busier fall, and am asking God to give me fresh zeal and determination to handle the tasks that lie before us. Again, “I thank my God for every one of you.”

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Even though our seasonal residents have returned to their summer homes, the pace at Open Bible has slowed very little if at all.

At our January congregational annual meeting we voted to designate the last Sunday in May as our third congregational meeting per year primarily as a means of seeking more input from the membership in church affairs.

As most everyone knows by now we have established a long range planning committee. The committee began meeting in March and held an open forum the Monday after Easter. It also gave every member a survey to fill out seeking input into a number of options as we move forward and address growth-related issues. As a result of some of the information gathered, the Council went on record at our May meeting as being in favor of having two Sunday services during the months of December thru March, beginning this coming December. They were also in favor of having fellowship time between the two services. A number of additional items were discussed but no further action was taken at this time. There will be more information presented at this meeting from the committee.

A second new and equally important group came together in late January. The group entitled "The Assimilation Committee" was formed to welcome new members into our Church family. It will also assist them in finding areas where they can be made to feel that they, too, are a valuable part of Open Bible. New members are asked to fill out a time and talent survey. Areas of strength are identified and service areas are made available.

A third new program, created in April, became operational the first Sunday in May and centers on the theme of prayer. A number of members were recruited to become prayer partners. Each member who consented was asked to commit to approximately fifteen minutes of prayer leadership once every three months. At the close of service each Sunday the prayer partner spends that time at the communion rail praying for the people on

our knee mail list for that week as well as being available to pray for anyone who may desire personal prayers that Sunday.

In addition to the above mentioned formation of new groups, we also conducted some annual events. Our concert committee hosted three winter concerts as we have done in the past and the ladies of Open Bible hosted our annual welcome back luncheon for our associate members in February. Not to be outdone, the men of Open Bible under the very capable leadership of Walt Farnsworth, hosted their annual Easter breakfast between services on Easter Sunday. Also in early April a dozen members participated in CPR and AED training provided by the Villages public safety department. We began learning this potential lifesaving technique about four years ago and continue to be retrained and certified every two years. This opportunity is made available to all of our membership every two years.

As we look to our future we know that much remains to be done at Open Bible to further the work of our Lord and His Kingdom. We will continue to face numerous challenges and be presented with many service opportunities. Working together we can accomplish many great things. As you contemplate your role in our future please keep one thought in mind: we can't all play the same part in God's band of service, but we should all play in harmony.

All God's blessings,
Greg Wendorf

WHO'S WHO AT OPEN BIBLE

CHRISTINA MOELLRING



It is always enjoyable to talk to people who are very happy and I am not sure I have ever talked to anyone who presents more happiness than Chris. She is presently an active golfer, bowler and

member of P.E.O. (a philanthropic educational organization for women). Good health, she says, is truly a blessing.

Chris, like most people, had challenges in her life. When she was in Arizona, she contracted a deadly lung illness, Valley Fever. She lost 35 pounds and it took 5 months of intense treatment to heal. But, that illness resulted in Christina moving to Florida and of course without the move, we probably would never have gotten to know her and her husband, Ron.

Ron retired from the secret service, working under Presidents Nixon through George Bush Sr. His responsibilities were for protection as well as criminal investigations. Because of Ron's many transfers, they had numerous moves in several states. Chris was oriented to moving as a child. Her father was a gas pipeline contractor and she said her family moved so often that her older sister went to first grade in six different states. It appears that Chris and her husband have now found a permanent home, as she loves Florida and is extremely pleased to be part of the friendly family of Open Bible.

Chris had a long and interesting working career. Her first job was as a Medical Secretary, and then she moved to Arlington, VA and started what became a 23 year government career. She started with the Department of Defense, and after marrying Ron and moving around the country, she ended up working for immigration, Small Business, U.S. Secret Service, U.S. Marshall, Naval Ocean Research and Development Command and ending with HUD doing loan counseling for FHA Home loans. She was also a licensed Realtor in LA, WA and SC.

Chris again shows how relationships with our friends have much to do with the growth at Open Bible. It was June Murray's invite while golfing with Christina that led her to visit us at Open Bible. Although growing up Catholic and spending many years in the Methodist Church, she feels most happy here at Open Bible. It is special to hear how much it meant to her the first time she entered our church and saw the statue of Christ in the entry. Our friendly pastor and welcoming members

convinced her that Open Bible would become home.

Christina has one brother in Pittsburg and one sister in Virginia. Other than traveling in their motor home, she and Ron reside in their home in Village of Tall Trees in The Villages. When asked what she would do differently if she could, she said basically, "nothing". "I am very happy, have been very blessed and have a wonderful husband of 42 years of marriage." She would recommend to the young, "get involved with your church". Christina quickly adopted her own advice, as she is part of our choir and the Women's Group. Christina's upbeat attitude is inspiring —thank you for being a part of our church.

By Michael Benrud

FROM THE WORSHIP COMMITTEE

The Liturgy in Today's Church

The liturgy does today exactly what it did for Christians of ages past: it focuses the attention of worshipers squarely on the words and works of Christ. It does this by reviewing the principle teachings concerning Christ's work of salvation (this portion is called the Ordinary) every Sunday and by reviewing Christ's life and ministry (this portion is the Proper) every year. It also presents to the believers a regular opportunity to receive the holy sacrament instituted by Christ.

The focus of the Propers is set by a unique calendar called the Christian church year. Beginning in late November or early December each year, the Christian calendar repeats the cycle of Jesus' ministry and mission: his forerunner in Advent, his birth at Christmas, his manifestation in the world during Epiphany, his battles with Satan and evil during Lent, his suffering and death during Holy Week, his resurrection in the Easter season, his Ascension into heaven, and his commissioning of his church on Pentecost. During the months between Pentecost and Advent, the Christian calendar calls to mind the nature and work of the church and its people. as well as the special relationship that exists between Jesus and the

believer. The scripture readings and sermons are all based on one of these seasons of the church year.

From its beginning, the Christian church has placed a high value on the holy supper that Jesus gave to his people on Maundy Thursday, the night he was betrayed. Thus we make provisions to celebrate this special meal often in our churches and have a special liturgy that sets this meal apart.

A service based on the historic Christian rite, the determinative use of the church calendar, and the inclusion of the Sacrament are, then, the marks of the liturgical style of worship that we use in our worship services. The liturgies that we use will all fit into this format. Words may change, responses may be different, songs may be new but the liturgical format is still there. If a new hymn is sung or a new response is used just remember that the service is still liturgical and that is what we at Open Bible have built our worship services on.

CHURCH COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

The church council met on May 15th. Here are the highlights from the meeting:

- April income was \$4,920 more than expenses. The mortgage balance as of 4/30/14 was \$418,985.
- 8 new full time members were accepted.
- A recommendation will be made to the voters at the May voter's meeting that we take the \$8,000 that was budgeted for advertising on the Time of Grace TV program and transfer that amount to a Council Discretionary Fund.
- The state of Florida has offered to make a presentation to the members of our congregation on Crime and Identity Theft Prevention. The Council approved having this done on a Wednesday evening in November.
- A recommendation will be made to the voters at the May voter's meeting that for the months of December through March we

have 2 services on Sunday mornings with fellowship time between the 2 services. This would start in Dec, 2014.

- The allocation for the funds received from Thrivent for members directing their choice dollars to Open Bible will be to have 25% going to each of the following:
 - Concert fund
 - Choir fund
 - Education fund
 - Building fund
- It was decided to put on hold the purchase of a TV for the conference room that was authorized at the April council meeting.
- It was decided to have only one service on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday at 6:00 PM.

WELS WORLD MISSION UPDATE

Ordinations in Russia



Easter Sunday was especially memorable this year for the Russian Lutheran Church. On that Sunday, two native Russians were

ordained and installed as pastors - the only two national pastors for this 312-member church body. Rev. Alexei Fehringler will serve as pastor in Akademgorodok, while Rev. Arkady Sedelnikov as pastor in Novosibirsk.

"The ordinations on Sunday were historic milestones for the Russian church," says Rev. Arno Wolfgramm, who serves as a part-time professor for Russian leaders. "Two men are standing in pulpits proclaiming in their native tongues that, 'Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!'"

Rev. Larry Schlomer, administrator of the Board for World Missions, and Mr. John Lange, a member of

the European Administrative Committee, were at these important events. "It's just a new chapter for the church—to have the Russians in charge and leading," says Schlomer. "The churches there are small but faithful. With the newly trained pastors the emphasis of the mission is really going to need to shift to bringing people into the churches as the Lord allows."

The ordinations were just one thing Schlomer and Lange experienced during their visit to the Russia mission field April 8-21. They attended Holy Week services at several different congregations. They also met with four WELS members who are teaching English in Tomsk through Martin Luther College's Daylight International program. This ministry is opening the doors for them to develop relationships, show Christian love, and share the gospel message. Schlomer says the goal is to have seven teachers in Russia next school year, some continuing to serve in Tomsk and some in Akademgorodok.

Schlomer and Lange also attended an English as a Second Language class in Akademgorodok, currently taught by Missionary Ben Foxen and his wife, Becky. An hour-long Bible class follows the English class; most of the students attend both. Schlomer says he sees these classes as wonderful outreach opportunities—10 of these students attended worship on Easter Sunday.

Visits like this give stateside administrators the chance to understand the mission field more thoroughly as well as to discuss challenges and opportunities with resident missionaries and national church leaders. One topic discussed on this trip was the recent annexation of Crimea by Russia. Two congregations from the Ukrainian Lutheran Church, which recently became a part of WELS World Missions, are in Crimea, making it difficult to transfer funds and to conduct services in the Ukrainian language. The Russian Lutheran Church has offered to assist in any way it can. WELS missionaries in Russia also are putting together an evacuation plan in case the political climate turns dangerous. "They're considering how long the welcome to American missionaries will last," says Schlomer, "though there are no signs of trouble at all yet."

Currently two missionaries, a part-time professor, and the two new national pastors serve four congregations and one preaching station. Learn more at www.wels.net/missions/russia.

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

Alan & Pam Johnson – 1
Gene & Bette McConkey – 3
John and Janis Liermann – 5
Frank & Genie Selvey – 7
Greg & Carol Wendorf – 7
Art & Esther Hartwig – 8
Armand & Dianne Occhetti – 9
Jerry & Mary Brooks – 10
Ron & Diane Brutlag – 14
Joe & Mary Price – 15
Ken & Elisabeth Wells – 15
Tom & Betty DeWitz – 18
Larry & Ardyce Fronk – 20
Fred & Judy Hainen – 20
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
Joanne Stuedemann – 7
Jeanne Schulz – 9
Brenda Severa – 11
Carol Stauske – 12
Ruth Niermeyer – 13
Ken Wells – 13
Tom Pawlowski – 15
Frank Selvey – 21
John Kiewra – 25
Ardyce Fronk – 27
Mary Brooks – 29
Ted Hahm – 29
Norma Welch - 29