



Newsletter



May 2020

Volume 15 No. 5

From the Pastor by Pastor Mark Schulz

"Open Bible Keeps Its First Love" Revelation 2:4

"Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love."

Years ago, in the year 53-57 A.D. the apostle Paul established a congregation in a city called Ephesus on his 3rd Missionary Journey. Paul spent 3 years at Ephesus. Ephesus was located in modern day Turkey. The town was filled with allegiance to Greek gods. In fact, one businessman, Demetrius, actually had a great business going by selling silver shrines of Artemis. Paul preached against man-made gods, and eventually was driven out of Ephesus. About 50 years later, the writer John in Revelation scolds the congregation that they had forsaken their first love. What that means is that they had begun to take the promises of the Gospel for granted and treated the threats of the law lightly. In other words, "We know Jesus died on the cross for our sins, but we've heard that again and again. If we get angry, don't always tell the truth, think hurtful things, are selfish at times, no big deal. We don't have to come to church or hear God's Word regularly, we're good to go." As you can see, they did not truly believe the fact that they were worthless sinners, who had offended their God by their daily shortcomings. They didn't feel they were damned sinners. They did not appreciate how wonderful it was that Jesus had washed away their sins.

As a result, they did not worship regularly, serve, give generously, or demonstrate unselfish love toward others.

What makes Open Bible a special congregation is that we have not forsaken our first love. The majority of our membership recognizes the truth, that we all continue to slap God in the face with our daily sins. That our God has every reason to send us all to hell. We truly appreciate the truth that Christ shed his blood on the cross for us and washed us clean. Jesus means everything to us. As a result, you see members of Open Bible that love to worship, love to study the Word in Bible class, love to serve, and love to give generously to support the message of Christ going out into the world. Christ's love compels us.

Pastor Dale and Connie mentioned in the goodbye ceremony we had for them on Monday, which will be featured in our Sunday online service, that they had never experienced in all their ministry such a loving and caring congregation as Open Bible. That is so true. Most of you recognize the importance of showing God's worth regularly by worshiping him. You show God's worth by being involved in small group Bible studies, looking for ways to serve in some capacity, and giving generously from your financial resources to support our ministry at Open Bible.

I stand in awe of what this little congregation (less than 200 members have done) In the last 8 years our congregational mission offerings have increased from \$8000 a year to \$33,000

a year. We have been blessed with offerings in the past 3 years of 1.2 million dollars toward our expansion and original mortgage alone. Because of these offerings, we have completely paid for our expansion, furnishings, Memorial Garden, painting of church, recoating parking lot, lightning rods, etc. at a cost of \$900,000. And as of last Sunday, our original \$280,000 mortgage on the building has been completely paid for.

We are debt free as a congregation.

Your generous gifts, whatever the amount have made this happen.

Our congregation stands at 195 confirmed members. If you calculate the average weekly worship attendance throughout the year, it comes up to 146. That means that 75% of our membership worships regularly. The average Christian congregation today has 46% of its membership in church on a Sunday. Worship is a way the members of Open Bible show their love and appreciation to their Savior.

Open Bible has a bit over 100 of its members involved in some sort of Bible study each month. That might be a Women's Bible study, Men's Breakfast Bible studies, Wednesday in the Word, SPLASH, Early Bird Sunday morning, or groups like 466A or the North County group. The average Christian church today has between 10-15% in Bible study. We have a bit more than 50%.

Open Bible has many involved in serving, whether it is being a greeter, usher, committee member, kitchen helper, quilter, board member, musician, soloist, choir member, handbell player, etc...Your love for Christ motivates you to serve.

Now these facts are not meant to say, we are a great congregation, and should be patted on the back. Rather, it shows us how much we appreciate our Savior Jesus Christ, who provides us with a meaningful life on this earth, and

eternal life in heaven. May Open Bible continue to be a congregation in the Word. For it is the Word, where the Holy Spirit works to mold us into an ever-greater congregation that demonstrates love. May we never lose our first love as the Ephesians did. Go Open Bible!

President's Message

Easter Sunday was truly a memorable day for many of us this year. It began with a wonderful service by Pastor Schulz entitled "COVID – Christian Optimism Victory in Death." Later in the day our family, back in the Midwest, spent some quality time face timing with us. In between I ran across a wonderful video entitled "Four Candles," which I found to be extremely comforting considering all that is happening around us. In the background of the video, a beautiful flute solo of "Amazing Grace" was played and as the videos progresses the first three candles are blown out one by one. I hope you enjoy the message as much as I did.

"The Four Candles"

Four candles slowly burned. The ambience was so soft, one could almost hear them talking...

The first candle said: *"I am Peace". "The world is full of anger and fighting. Nobody can keep me lit."* Then the flame of Peace went out completely.

The second candle said: *"I am no longer indispensable. "It doesn't make sense that I stay lit another moment."* Just then a breeze softly blew Faith's flame.

Sadly, the third candle began to speak: *"I am Love!" "People don't understand my importance, so they*

simply put me aside. They even forget to Love those who are nearest to them". And waiting no longer, Love's flame went out.

Suddenly... a child entered the room and saw the three unlit candles. "Why aren't you burning? You're supposed to stay lit till the end." Saying this, the child began to cry.

Then the fourth candle answered: "*Don't be afraid, I am Hope.*" "*While I am still burning, we can re-light the other candles.*" With shining eyes, the child took the candle of Hope and lit the other candles.

The greatest of these is Love... but the flame of Hope should never go out in your life! With hope each of us can live with Peace, Faith and Love.

Prayer:

"Dear God; You are my light and salvation. You are my Hope. Please come into my heart, forgive all my wrongs and give me Your wonderful gift of eternal life. Help me be an instrument of Your love and cause Your light to shine on others through me. Amen

When we place our Faith and Trust in the Lord, we have Peace and there is always Hope!

All God's Blessings,
Greg Wendorf

A Message from Pastor Rodger and Connie Dale

Thank You and Goodbye for now. We wish we could have said thank you and goodbye face to face but that is impossible due to the coronavirus. For now, we will have to do it in print. It has been a privilege to be part of the

Open Bible family. God has blessed us through you in many ways. We thank you for all those blessings over the years and for the cards and gifts we have received in recent days.

May God continue to bless Open Bible and each of you personally. You will be in our thoughts and prayers, and we will look forward to coming back for a visit. If you are ever near Port St Lucie, be sure to stop in.

Pastor and Connie Dale

New address: 509 NW Galatone Court,
Port St Lucie, FL 34986

Funeral Service For Judy Hainen

If you would like to be a support to Fred Hainen and his family, visitation at Open Bible will be on Sunday, May 3rd, from 10:00-11:00 A.M. If you come, please wear masks and practice social distancing. The funeral service will take place from 11:00-11:45 in the church. Unless the governor changes his rules, the service will be for just the immediate family. Randy Cochran will be playing the organ for the service.

Open Bible Prepares to Reopen

Recently, I presented several different options on how we as a congregation should reopen our worship services at Open Bible. The Church Council overwhelming selected option 4 listed below.

1. Two Services: One at 8:00 A.M., one at 9:30 A.M., with

members wearing masks and sitting apart from each other.

2. Outdoor worship service, with chairs set up outside, spaced apart. Members wearing masks

3. Outdoor worship in parking lot. We would need a shortrange FM transmitter, so people could turn to the radio signal location on their radios in their cars. Live Oaks Community Church does this.

4. Regular service at 9:30 A.M. We would encourage greeters as well as members to wear masks and leave adequate spacing between us. Husband and wives could sit next to each other. No handshaking. Greeters would just welcome by standing away from door, not shaking hands. Communion would be on a small table, with bread on one table and wine on another table. I would say the words of institution as people spaced apart walk up and take the elements. We would need to have rows of bread, so no one touches the other wafers.

5. Two Services: one on Saturday and one on Sunday....same as number 1

If you have any personal feelings about how we should begin getting together again, please let our Councilmen know. They are having their monthly meeting on May 21st at 9:00 A.M. We are thankful that this virus is only taking the lives of less than 5 percent of our population. Our

prayer is that God be merciful to us as a country and bring about proper medication and a vaccine soon.

Online Video Worship Services Made Available

Since the introduction of the Covid-19 (corona virus), Open Bible continues to offer Sunday Worship Services online with a program called Vimeo. Each week Pastor Schulz will send out an email with the complete worship Service. There is a link that you click on to view either the entire Worship Service or just the Sermon video. We film various clips from our worship service and put it all together so you may watch it. We have a team that works every week to provide you with a personal Worship Service. The team includes Pastor Mark Schulz, Karen Pearson, Jeanne Schulz, and Stacy Vance. Instead of seeing the whole church sanctuary from a distance, you are getting close-up views.

Each week we film a call to worship, confession of sins and absolution, a reading from the Bible, hymns, a Sermon, prayers, the Lord's prayer, a blessing and a closing hymn. There are a few different ways to view the video:

Each week Pastor Schulz will email you a link to view the service. You can also go to our website "OpenBibleLutheranChurch.com" And if you click on the middle blue box labeled *Church Service* it will take you to the current worship service.

Also, at the top of our home page, you can click the Sermon tab. On that web page, you can click either the Printed sermons, Audio sermons, or Video sermons tab. If you'd like to have a bulletin, there is a

tab located on the home page, on the right-hand side toward the bottom, called "Sunday Bulletin." You can print out a bulletin there from your printer.

Finally, if you use Face Book you can go to our Face Book page "Open Bible Lutheran Church" and there will be videos of the worship services and sermons.

Thank you all for following as we journey this earth together. Apart, but together in Christ.

Hope to see you very soon!

LWMS and North Florida Circuit News

President Cynthia Natsis announced the cancellation of the 57th Annual LWMS Convention via Facebook Live video on Friday, April 24. That same morning an email was sent to everyone registered for the convention. Those registered without an email address will be notified by mail.

Although LWMS members are not going to be able to meet face to face in Georgia there are some plans afoot for a great online experience. Planners report that "they have the unique opportunity to partner with our friends in the WELS Missions Office to hold an exciting online event that combines the best of our convention with the exciting missions event **Taste of Missions**.

Plans are underway to hold a two-week online event called **Taste and See**. During this event we will have live-streamed worship services, the LWMS flag presentation, workshops, mission speakers, and devotions, as well as cooking tutorials with mission families, recipes, family fun activities, and mission updates. So, mark your calendars to **save the date!** Taste and See will begin, Saturday, June 27 and wrap up with the commissioning of **new**

missionaries on Saturday, July 11.

Taste and See will be a **free** event, please visit the LWMS Convention website to request a refund for your convention registration fees prior to June 16, 2020.

"Taste and See that the Lord is good!" (Psalms 34:8)

The Taste and See event sounds like it has something for everyone. I hope both men and women will take the time to listen to some of the worship services, workshops, mission speakers and devotions. What a wonderful opportunity for the men in the congregation to hear the inspiring speakers and their presentations that have motivated the women in their lives for many years.

North Florida Circuit Update

The LWMS Spring Rally was cancelled due to the need to follow Covid 19 guidelines.

The North Florida circuit board held a conference call this past week to discuss items that needed to be resolved because of the cancellation of our Spring Rally.

*** Our Fall Rally will be held at St. Paul's - Beverly Hills (they were very disappointed they weren't able to host the Spring Rally and asked to host the Fall Rally) It is scheduled for the second Saturday in October, 2020.**

*** A new Rally Rotation moves our congregation back to hosting in the Spring of 2027**

*** A silent auction will take place for our 2021 Send One Sister recipient at our Fall Rally**

*** If you had any baskets or items (non-perishable) that were to be donated for the Spring Rally - please bring them to the Fall Rally**

I will be attending the August Circuit board meeting as the new Secretary for our circuit. An update about other decision results will be made available through the monthly WinGS meeting report or the monthly church newsletter. Submitted by: *Peggi Carrier*

Small Group Ministry

It looks like all 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



WINGS
WOMEN IN GODS 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.

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.

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.

WinGS

The Mission Report to the members who were present involved information on the Special Ministries Program. There are 8 groups that receive services through Special Ministries. The main focus was on the Prison Ministry. Attendees heard about several projects that are handled through WELS Prison Ministry such as Test Correcting, Pen Pals, Making book marks and cards, and donation of Meditations. WinGS is collecting used but not marked up Meditations to send to some prisons that they serve. A box is on the table in the Fellowship hall to collect used Meditations magazines. They will be sent out quarterly or as we have enough collected to send. The members also voted to send a donation of \$150 to help cover production of materials and mailing costs.

WinGS Mission Report: Open Bible and WinGS supported mission activities provide many opportunities for involvement. We who are not the feet God sends can be the hands that lift the missionaries and their families when they are serving in places around the world. It is my privilege to share information about some of the mission programs we have supported financially. We continue to have an interest in and feel concern for these programs that reach and serve God's people world wide.

Submitted by: *Peggi Carrier*

Central Africa Medical Mission Stateside Committee (CAMM)

"With the uncertainty of how Covid-19 could spread in Malawi, CAMM has made the difficult decision to bring Gary Evans, our Clinic Administrator, and Beth Evans, our Nurse in Charge, back from Malawi to their home in the United States. We are thankful that God brought them back safely. They will continue to monitor the conditions for what is happening in Malawi remotely from their home. Although we have temporarily suspended clinic operations, there is still plenty to oversee, especially in Zambia where we are still operating our clinic. We will continue to monitor the safety of traveling back to Malawi to determine a return time in the future. Please keep our Malawian and Zambian brothers and sisters in your prayers. We continue to depend on your financial support as we are still incurring the payroll for our Malawian staff in the interim as they stay home with their families and enforce preventing spread of the virus in their communities." *Cheryl Valus, CAMM Contact Woman Coordinator*

Beth and Gary Evans stress that monetary donations are always needed. They are able to buy many needed supplies and medications locally which haven't been available from the government as before, so cash is always a wonderful gift going directly towards helping the people of Malawi who are served by their clinic. Due to limited space and also the difficulty of getting the supplies that are mailed to them picked up no packages are to be mailed to either the Lutheran Mobile Clinic or the Lutheran Mission Rural Health Center. Contact me if you have something you would like to donate to CAMM. We are not able to ship anything to either of the medical centers at this time. Please do not keep collecting the pill bottles. We will let

everyone know if and when we again collect them.

The following is an excerpt of April 2020 report from Gary Evans, CAMM Field Director:

As of Saturday, 28 March 2020, at 9:15am (Central time), there are no confirmed cases of COVID-19 (or CoronaVirus) in Malawi and there are 22 in Zambia – most of which are confined to Lusaka, which is more than 100 km from our clinic in Mwembezhi. Even though there is limited exposure, the Central Africa Medical Mission is still forced to make decisions about the clinics and our staff.

In Zambia, the government has done a good job of educating their citizens about the spread of the virus and the preventative measures that Zambians can take now. They have been supporting us out at our clinic – including getting us some extra supplies, providing a statistician to help keep them updated on what is happening there and making sure that their Environmental Health Technician is out in the villages educating them, as well. Our clinical director, Jackson Kalekwa, and our Administrator, Alisad Banda, have been closely following the instructions of the government and have been requiring hand washing of every patient as they come into the clinic and limiting the number of people who can be in the clinic at one time. CAMM will continue to monitor the situation in Zambia to keep our staff and our patients as protected as possible during this pandemic.

The Malawi government, on the other hand hasn't done nearly as much work in preparing their citizens as they have in Zambia. Although there are no confirmed cases at this point, the Malawi government knows that the best

preventative measure will be to try to keep the virus from coming into the country. They will be restricting travel - on April 1 airports will be closed to international flights, border crossings will also close and there will limits to travel on buses, taxis, trains and boats. There have been radio spots informing people about the disease but to date the Government run rural health centers have received little or no training. Our staff with the LMC has been teaching about COVID-19 to our patients at each clinic site. We know that although the government has given some social distancing recommendations (such as staying a meter away from another person and no gatherings over 100 people), it is nearly impossible to follow them. For instance, we regularly have over 200 people at clinic on any given day right now due to it being the rainy season. We are keenly aware that as we operate a mobile clinic and travel out to 4 villages from the largest city of Malawi, Lilongwe, we are in a precarious position of being carriers from one of these places to another. The government has shut down its own mobile clinics. All of this could cause us to be overwhelmed with what to do.

Branch Lutheran Schools of Haiti:

In Haiti, the unthinkable is everyday life – food shortages, businesses closed by a crisis, economic turmoil, lack of health care, limited education. As Covid-19 covers the island, the pain will only deepen. Instead of food shortages, the **threat of starvation**. Instead of limited health care, **no access to health care**. Instead of offering church online as American pastors can, several Haitian **pastors were arrested March 22** for offering church services in person.

"Bad news for us." The message came from one of our orphanage directors in Haiti. "Corona virus come. School will close tomorrow. Only 50 beds for all the country. No foods no cleaning products. Many problems. God knows." Yes. God knows - and promises to help.

"For I am the LORD, your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, 'Do not fear; I will help you.'"
Isaiah 41:13

One of the ways God will help in Haiti is through his people - ordinary people like you and me who are blessed to know that Jesus Christ gave his life to redeem us. He will help through those who understand the urgency of sharing this message with as many people as possible. That's why, even in troubled times, we think of **Branch Lutheran Schools of Haiti** with joy. More than 950 children are learning the gospel, reading it for themselves, and sharing it with others. The schools are growing rapidly, and God continues to provide exciting opportunities. With your support, we **added a middle school** in 2019 and we're preparing to open four **vocational training centers** this year so orphans reaching the age of 18 and adults from the community can learn marketable skills and receive spiritual support.

We know God will bring Branch Schools through this current crisis. Because of seeds planted and systems in place, students and teachers are already better equipped to endure. Please continue to support this vital work.

We pray God will keep you safe as you work through the challenge of Covid-19 in your own life. Our friends in Haiti pray for you also. There, even school children understand crisis - they have known little else. Praise God that

through your love, prayers, and gifts, they, too, have hope of a better tomorrow on earth and eternity in heaven!

Lee Petersen, Chairman of the Board of Directors, and all your friends at Branch Schools Hearing reports from the people serving in the field helps us gain an appreciation for the conditions which exist where they serve.

Peggi Carrier LWMS Reporter to Open Bible

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

Bob & Marge O'Connell - 1
Marvin & Pat Krahn - 11
Stan & Henrietta Cobb - 16

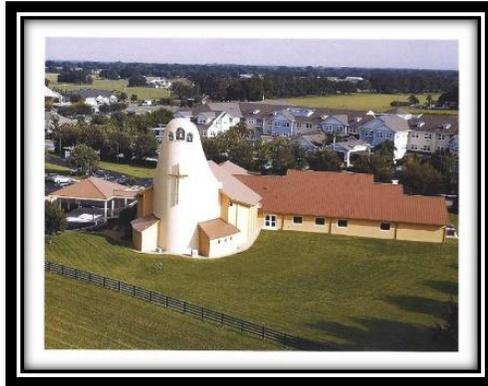


Happy Birthday

Doris Schlicht - 2
Jutta Owens - 6
Richie Davis - 9
Patricia McCartin - 12
Randy Cochran - 19
Tom DeWitz - 21
Mary Helen Schultz - 21
Joe Malec - 22
Kim Cochran - 22
Dave Bliss - 23
Joan Henkel - 25
Stacy Vance - 27
Henrietta Cobb - 27

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“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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