



NEWSLETTER



MARCH 2015

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LENTEN SERVICES



The theme for this year during Lent derives from one of the ideas dominant in St. Matthew's Gospel—that Jesus is the King. Jesus is God's greatness in the flesh, the ultimate conqueror, who is truly God's Lion-hearted One. Yet He is willing to be a king despised and dishonored, that we might be considered great in God's Kingdom.

Join us this Lenten season as we consider a merciful King of kings and Lord of lords, who goes where human reason would never expect a king to go—high and lifted up on a cross, bearing away the sin of the world, so that He could triumph over it in the resurrection. All so that you might receive the exalted title of "Sons of God."

Services on Wednesdays from 5:30-6:30 PM
Soup Supper from 4:30-5:30 PM

March 4th, 2015

Sermon: Matthew 26:69–75 "The King Denied"

March 11th, 2015

**Sermon: Matthew 27:11–26 "The King
Condemned"**

March 18th, 2015

Sermon: Matthew 27:27–31 "The King Mocked"

March 25th, 2015

**Sermon: Matthew 27:35–44 "The King on the
Cross"**

FROM THE PASTOR

I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." John 16:33

Take Heart!

He sat in the church office, pouring out his troubled soul to his pastor. "Pastor, I don't understand why all this is happening to me now. First my health, then one of my kids is diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, now the news about my investments—why is this happening to me?"

The pastor, who himself had gone through trying times, replied softly, "Rick, why not you?"

The pastor's question cut to his heart. "Am I that bad that God must punish me, must rearrange my life around a series of painful scourges?" The conversation continued, as Rick was directed to messages of his heavenly Father from his written Word. Yes, he hurt. Yes, his sins were serious. Yes, he and everyone else rightly deserved punishment from the hand of a flawless, righteous God.

But that's not how God chooses to treat us.

In this world, Jesus promises, we will experience trouble of all kinds—persecutions from the enemies of Christ, the realization of our failure in the face of Satan's temptations, the pain that results from disobedience to God's holy laws on all sides, the consequences of living in a fallen world. With the apostle Paul we sigh, "We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life. Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death." But how did Paul view these agonizing chapters of his life? He wrote, "This happened so that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead" (2 Corinthians 1:8-9).

"Why not me?" is an important question every hurting Christian must ask. Am I out of the world already and in heaven, where there is no sorrow? Has Satan for some reason put a protective hedge around my life and called me off-limits to his destructive plans? Was Jesus wrong in my case when he promised that in this sinful world, I would face trouble? Do I not need his gracious hand to help me rely on him and not on my own efforts? Thank God! He—who has power even to raise the dead and for Jesus' sake has called you white as snow and cleansed of guilt—has overcome the world and has sanctified your pain and tears for his glory and your eternal good. Take heart! Please Lord, calm my anxiety by lifting my head and heart above the troubles of this world to a confident faith in your forgiveness, love and peace. And lead me to trust that you will turn my troubles into something that glorifies you as my Savior who overcame the power of sin and death to give me eternal life. Amen.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Today more than ever we live in a disposable culture. Just take a moment and reflect on the numerous containers that are made with its contents designed to be consumed and then simply thrown away. Let's make a short list; water bottles, soda cans, paper plates, plastic eating utensils, razors. How about the fast food industry? The list could go on and on. Products are used, tossed and then simply replaced.

Our disposable culture is also reflected in more significant ways. How many marriages today end in divorce? True commitment in many relationships is seen as optional. Marriages often struggle to survive. Long-term employees are discharged close to retirement in favor of cheaper options. Other employees move from job to job at the drop of the hat seeking a better deal. Athletes count the days until they become free agents and can sign with the highest bidder for some ridiculous amount of money. It seems as if loyalty is a thing of the past and nothing lasts for very long.

On the opposite side of that spectrum there is something that has far greater value and is far more important that does indeed last. Our unchanging God has promised that His loving mercy lasts forever. In a throw away world, the permanence of God's mercy and grace gives us hope. We can shout with the psalmist, "Oh give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For his mercy endures forever". (Psalm 136: 1).

Now let me ask you another question. How much is our salvation worth? Our Heavenly Father paid the ultimate price – his very own Son. But for terrible sinners like us, there is no charge. God doesn't say – you owe me. This salvation is God's free gift in Jesus. There are no strings attached. "It is by grace you have been saved, not by works, so that no one can boast ". (Ephesians 2:8,9).

We easily forget the deep sense of indebtedness to God that we should possess because of His grace. Considering who we are in light of a holy and just God, the only thing we truly deserve is hell. Knowing ourselves for what we are, we can't help but say "amazing grace, how sweet the sound!" Thank God that he doesn't consider us disposable but rather very special and unique. Thank God for giving us so much more than we deserve.

Before I close please allow me to share a special prayer I came across on a recent trip back to the cold north. It warmed my heart to realize just how special God thinks each of us really is. It was entitled [A Snowflake Prayer](#) and the author is unknown.

Thank you, Creator God, for the gift of winter, for cold frosty air, shimmering icicles, frozen lakes and rivers, and most of all for snowflakes, ever so beautiful, so special, so one of a kind. Let them remind that I am like that in your eyes--- so beautiful, so special, so one of a kind. Thank you, God, for snowflakes. Thank you God, for me!

All God's blessings,
Greg Wendorf

SMALL GROUP MINISTRY

SPLASH Single People Loving and Serving Him (Led by Pastor Dale)

___ SPLASH is having a Bible study at church on **Monday, March 9th** at 1:00 PM. The Topic is: Ephesians 4-5. Fellowship: Horse Show (date to be determined) Ocala Winter Festival, March 5th or 6th, or Great American \$1 million Grand Prix, Monday March 23rd. For more information please contact: Joan Sanderson, Nancy Rodriguez, and Angela Spengler.

North Country Group (Led by Alan Johnson)

___ Meeting twice a month on Sundays from 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM.

Meeting at the home of Alan & Pam Johnson **March 8th & 22nd** Topic: Whole Bible Project: Titus

466A Group and Vicinity (Led by Pastor Schulz)

___ This group will meet once a month on a Tuesday.

The next meeting is March 24th from 2:00-4:00 PM. At the home of Klaus & Helga Maass. Topic: Samson: Was it Suicide?

Men's Breakfast Group (Led by Dennis Duessler)

___ Men at Leisure (Meets at Perkins Restaurant at 8:30 AM on Friday, March 13th) Travel through Great Chapters of the Bible this winter. Perkins located on CR 466.

Open Bible Book Club (Pastor Schulz)

___ Group meets at church on **March 31st** at 4:00 PM. "Six Battles Every Man Must Win" by Bill Perkins. Please sign-up with Karen so she knows how many books to order. Cost is \$12.00.

Women of Open Bible (Led by Sandy Hahm)

___ Wednesday **March 11th** at 1:00 PM. Meets on the second Wednesday of each month at 1:00 PM for service, spiritual growth, fellowship, and recreation. This month Jeff Wittman a nutritionist will speak on the topic, Nutrient and Drug Interaction.

Happy Hearts-Happy Hands Handiwork

___ Meets on the First Friday of each month at church from 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM. Next meeting **March 6th**. Group creates quilts for those in need in our community. Also does knitting, crochet, and embroidery. Coordinator: Sandy Pawlowski

Fellowship Group (Led by Joe and Paula Malec)

___ Meets once a month for a recreational activity. All ages and friends welcome.

Adult Choir (Led by Stacy Vance)

___ Meets on Wed. from 6:15-7:15 PM. During Lent choir will meet 6:30-7:30 PM. All Voices are welcome.

Grief Care

___ Grief Care Facilitator - Patricia Major
8 week video-based small group to help those who have lost a loved one in death. Offered when needed.

Defenders (Led by Ken Wells and Bill Sigurdson)

___ Meets on the last Friday of the month at 11:00 AM. Meeting on **March 27th** at the Leesburg Gun Range on SR44. Contact Bill Sigurdson for more info.

Game Day & Nights: Sunday March 15th from noon – 3:00 PM, Saturday, March 28th from 6:00 – 9:00 PM.

WHO'S WHO AT OPEN BIBLE

Joe and Paula Malec



As with most village Florida area retirees, this life of leisurely enjoyment was predicated by many years of hard work. The Malecs are a prime example as they have been married 50 years and together took on many challenges and persevered. Joe was a Navy Submarine sonar operations veteran who went on to the University of Hartford

and earned an engineering degree. Joe worked nights at United Aircraft (Pratt and Whitney) so he could pursue his degree during the day. Paula met Joe when she was a senior in high school. She became a registered nurse for 40 years, and most recently worked in the dementia/alzheimer units prior to retiring at age 59. Joe last worked for IBM, but while he and Paula both performed their full time jobs, they purchased and ran a sporting goods store. Paula worked twelve hour shifts at the hospital and then worked at the store. Joe and Paula juggled store work hours so that one could be home with the children. Somewhere in their hard working history, Joe and Paula also owned a real estate company with two offices which they ran for 10 years.

Joe and Paula have a married son and daughter with five granddaughters. Their daughter, Kimberly, her husband Jim and their daughters, Brooks and Hailey, live in Dacula, Georgia. Their son Thomas and his wife Laurie have three daughters, Emerson, Avery and Harper, and live in Madison, Connecticut.

Joe and Paula believed their children should travel with them whenever possible. They accompanied Mom and Dad on many travel explorations while growing up, and were also involved in an educational exchange in Russia and Belgium. The Malecs both feel how important it is for parents to provide opportunities for their children to experience different cultures. Today, the Malecs continue their desire to explore and travel as they belong to a Villages motorhome club and love to travel on extended long cruises.

With few regrets, Joe expressed that he wished he had not pushed so hard during his working years. And Paula expressed she wished she had not let her family talk her out of joining the Navy as a very young lady. Words of wisdom from the Malecs are to pay yourself first – meaning to put some money away each month and live off the balance, thus preparing for the future and to become educated.

Joe golfs and operates remote aircraft and boats. They both like camping and have been involved in Operation Shoebox, the food pantry and Books to Keep. Joe and Paula were not raised WELS, but as a common theme at Open Bible, they visited and

after a follow up visit by Pastor Schulz and experiencing the friendliness of our members, they decided to make Open Bible their church home. Joe and Paula, we are blessed to have you worshiping with us and thank you for the insight into your history. By Michael Benrud

WLC CONCERT

**Wisconsin Lutheran College
2015 Florida Concert Tour
Sunday, March 8th, 4:00 PM
at Open Bible Lutheran Church**

Everyone is welcome, invite your friends,

CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

The church council met on February 19th. Following are the highlights from the meeting:

- January income was \$959 more than expenses. The mortgage balance as of 1/31/15 was \$401,280.
- Maundy Thursday and Good Friday services will be held at 5:30 PM and Easter Sunday services at 7:00 AM and 9:30 AM with communion only in the 7:00 AM service.
- It was decided that we would not allow ads for local companies to be placed on the church bulletin board.
- Carl Liebner (WELS Christian Giving Counselor) will conduct a seminar on Christian giving at Open Bible on Sunday March 22nd, 2015 at 4:00 PM. He will also speak for a few minutes after both services on March 15th to invite members to the seminar and give a brief description of what will be covered in the seminar
- A committee will be appointed to investigate other insurance companies for our insurance needs.
- Dan Blaho and Huns Gustrowsky were appointed to the building committee.

- Our church facilities will be allowed to be used only for Open Bible church related activities.
- It was decided to have only one Sunday service in December and one service for Advent and Lent at 5:30 PM.
- A new safe will be purchased using money from the Thrivent donations.

WORSHIP COMMITTEE

This past month we have not only reviewed and approved themes, liturgies, and suggested times for all the special services during Lent, Holy Week, and Easter, we also worked on long range plans for our church's worship services.

A lengthy discussion on setting criteria for music and song selections for our worship services was held and some guidelines were set up.

1. Music and songs should be chosen to fit the theme of each service if possible.
2. Hymns and songs should be doctrinally sound.
3. A strong emphasis should be on the redemptive work of Christ.
4. Praise songs and hymns can be selected if they make reference to persons of the Trinity.
5. Melodies should be singable and if new or unfamiliar they should be introduced by the choir or organists.
6. Portions of our liturgy can be substituted with other liturgical portions from other CW liturgies and the CW Supplement.
7. In all we do in hymns, songs, and special music we always need to be mindful of the message given.

We welcome the addition of the 5 foot baby grand piano that was donated by one of our members. It will truly add to our music program and will be used with the choir and other times throughout our worship services. What a great addition to our music program. Thank you so much on behalf of the Worship Committee.

A reminder of worship times:

All Lenten services at 5:30 PM with a light dinner at 4:30 PM.

Holy Week special services at 5:30 PM.

Easter services at 7:00 and 9:30 AM.

Sundays through March at 8:00 and 10:30 AM.

Continue to welcome all of our new members and visitors. A warm reception is the first step in their returning.

Remember that your mission field might be in your front or back yard!

LADIES LUNCHEON & FASHION SHOW

The Women of Open Bible will host their 6th Annual Spring Salad Luncheon and Fashion Show on Friday, March 20th at Noon in the Fellowship Hall.

Salad Luncheon



Fashions will be provided by Bon Worth. RSVP by March 13th to Sandy Pawlowski at 352-430-4338. Sign-up sheets are in the kitchen pass through.

All ladies of Open Bible are invited and bring a friend!

WOMEN OF OPEN BIBLE

Women of Open Bible will meet March 11th at 1 PM in the Fellowship Hall.

We will have a guest speaker, Jeff Wittman. He owns Lake Nutrition Center in Leesburg. He will be speaking on Nutrient and Drug Interaction starting at 1 PM. He will be happy to answer questions. All ladies are welcome.

Hostesses for March are Mary Helen Schultz and Carol Benrud.

Hope to see you at our March meeting.

Sandy Hahm, President

GIVING ALTERNATIVE

Notes from the Treasurer

This past year a member of our congregation made an offering in the form of stock.

At that time we only operated out of a checking account and did not have a mechanism to accept stocks, bonds or mutual funds and proceeded to set up an account to handle these types of contributions. Therefore, members can now make offerings directly to Open Bible in the form of stocks, bonds or mutual funds.

Another way to contribute to Open Bible or other WELS organizations is through our WELS Giving Counselors. The WELS Giving Counselor can also help with Wills, Trusts, and Advanced Directives and in many other ways.

The WELS Counselor for our area is Carl Liebner and he has been invited by the Church Council to present a Seminar on these topics on **Sunday March 22nd at 4:00 PM at Open Bible.**

Mark your calendars and plan on attending this very informative Seminar!

INSURANCE COMMITTEE

At the February council meeting it was decided to investigate additional insurance options to better meet our needs in the face of ever rising costs. We are looking for a few individuals with either an insurance background and/or an interest in gathering information in this area so an informed decision can be made. If any members of the congregation are interested in being a part of this committee please contact Greg Wendorf in the near future.

CHURCH NOISE LEVEL

We are again requesting the membership and guests to please be aware of the noise level as you enter the Church proper. The volume can be quite loud in the fellowship hall and easily carried into

the main area of church. We have a number of members who enter early to prepare themselves for worship. Please remember you are in the house of the Lord and use the proper level of volume.

PALM & LILY PLANTS FOR EASTER

The Altar Guild will be purchasing Palm plants for Palm Sunday, March 29th & Easter lily plants for Easter Sunday, April 5th. If you would like to help us purchase these plants, please give your donation to the church by **Sunday, March 22nd**. A donation of \$10.00 per plant is appreciated for the Palm plants. We will be purchasing the Easter lily plants from Lowe's in the Villages at a special price for churches of \$5.00 per plant. You may pay in cash or write a check to Open Bible Evangelical Lutheran Church & indicate the amount for the **Flower Fund**. If you have questions, contact Carol Stauske at 352-292-3079.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

- Christian Schmolke – 2
- James Malone – 5
- Bonnie Farnsworth – 7
- Pam Johnson – 7
- Pam Riches – 7
- Ty Miter – 8
- Arline Kiewra – 14
- Betty DeWitz – 17
- Richard Kuhlman – 22
- Greg Wendorf – 26
- Chris Moellring – 27
- Jean Butts – 27
- Sharon Sanner – 29

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

- Jim & Eva Orcutt – 8
- Bill & Jeri Leeper – 17
- Jerry & Ina Taylor – 18
- Craig & Jean Marshall – 23
- Jim & Joanie Musiel – 26
- Pastor Mark & Jeanne Schulz – 27
- Vern & Kathy Griffin – 31