



FROM THE PASTOR

How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God. And that is what we are. *1 John 3:1*

CHILD OF GOD

Tim Hansel, in his book, *Holy Sweat*, tells the story of a walk he once took with his young son. The two of them were out in the country, climbing around on some small, rocky cliffs. Tim had his back to his son for a few moments. Suddenly he heard his boy yell, "Hey Dad! Catch me!" Tim whirled around and looked up just in time to catch his son. You see, his son had yelled, "Hey Dad!" and then he had jumped.

Tim was so shocked at first that he could hardly talk. Finally, when he found his voice, he blurted out, "Zac! Can you give me one good reason why you did that?" His son responded with a calm voice. He said, "Sure, because you're my dad."

Think about that for a moment. As far as the boy was concerned, his dad was trustworthy. Therefore, no matter what the circumstance, he trusted that his dad would always catch him. He knew who his father was, and that was that.

Now let's talk about you. As you read or listen to these words, what kind of fear are you carrying around in the pit of your stomach? Is it fear about something with your children or grandchildren? Fear about a lab result you're waiting for? Fear about what others think of you? Is it fear about enough money to be retired or stay retired? Fear of looking foolish? Fear of getting old? Fear of being alone?

Remember who your Father is. God sacrificed his own Son to adopt you into his family. Then he

raised his Son to life to assure you he meant what he said.

Does this mean you should jump off a rocky cliff and expect someone to catch you? No, not at all! But it does mean that God will never drop you. It does mean you are his forgiven child. It does mean you can finally stop being afraid.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, through faith in Jesus I am your child. Because of who you are, I am safe, I am secure, I am never alone. Fill me with your Spirit. Drive out my fears. Empower me to live my life fully for you. Amen.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Those of us who have been to a circus at some time in our lives have no doubt seen a high flying trapeze act performed. We probably marveled at the beauty, grace and strength on display as they flew through the air with the greatest of ease. But the real star of the performance had to be the catcher – the teammate who hung from another trapeze bar and caught the flyer and thus provided him or her a safe landing.

If you were to ask these two performers the keys to their success I think they would both probably tell you it required a great deal of trust in one another as well as precise timing. The flyer must trust that the catcher is ready and able to catch and hold him and they must both believe that the timing of each maneuver is just right.

Isn't our relationship with God based on those same two principals? As we fly through life isn't God always there as our catcher ready to pull us safely to Himself so that we can be with him forever? Timing can affect our real lives quite dramatically too. Much of what the world calls

success depends on being in the right place at the right time. In the biblical story of the death of Jesus's friend Lazarus, Martha considered timing to be critically important. If Jesus had been there, she lamented, Lazarus would not have died. Martha had seen Jesus regularly heal the sick by his divine power, by speaking the word. She knew by faith that Jesus would have healed Lazarus if he had only arrived sooner. Martha was torn between grief and hope, but her faith told her to rely on Jesus. In John 11:22 she demonstrated that trust in her Lord when she says "But even now I know that whatever you ask of God, God will give you".

Jesus always stands ready to help those who believe. The real litmus test is trust. Do you trust that God is for you even when He doesn't give you what you ask for? Do you trust that He has reasons beyond your reasons? Do you trust that His plan is better than yours? Sometimes God leads us to a place where we have nowhere to turn but to Him: our only option is to trust Him.

Our heavenly father is far too wise and loves us far too much to give us everything we ask for. Someday we'll thank God for the prayers He didn't answer as much or more than the ones he did.

Life is indeed a risky business, but be encouraged. If you have put your faith and trust in Jesus Christ, the catcher is waiting at the end to take you safely home.

God's blessings to all,
Greg Wendorf

SMALL GROUP MINISTRY

May 2015

Wednesday in the Word at 5:00 PM

(Led by Pastor Schulz)

___ Christians In Conflict: Continues thru May 27th

- May 6th Blessed are the Peacemakers
- May 13th Peacemakers and Faith Lesson
- May 20th Equipped for Peacemaking
- May 27th Hard Teachings

Early Bird Bible Study

(Led by Pastor Schulz)

___ Sundays 8:00 – 8:50 AM thru May 24th "Let's Grow and Be Mature: A study of the Book of James.

- May 3rd Taming the Tongue
- May 10th Dealing with Conflict
- May 17th Manipulated by Money
- May 24th Learning Patience

SPLASH Single People Loving and Serving Him

(Led by Pastor Dale)

___ TBD: 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.

May 17th & May 31st

Topic: Whole Bible Project: 1, 2, 3 John.

466A Group and Vicinity

(Led by Pastor Schulz)

___ This group will meet again in September.

MEN'S BREAKFAST GROUP

(Led by Dennis Duessler)

___ Men at Leisure Meets at Perkins Restaurant at 8:30 AM on Friday, May 10th. Travel through Great Chapters of the Bible this spring. Meeting at Perkins located on CR 466.

WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

(Led by Judy Anderson)

___ Meeting on Tuesdays at 1:00 PM for 6 weeks. Beginning on May 5th. Study on Philemon and Philippians.

Open Bible Book Club (Pastor Schulz)

___ Group meets at church starting again in September. Book names will be released in August.

GRIEF CARE

Facilitated by Patricia Major

___ GRIEF CARE 8 week video-based small group to help those who have lost a loved one in death. Offered when needed.

Women of Open Bible

(Led by Mary Helen Schultz)

___ Wednesday May 13th at 1:00 PM. A trip is planned to pick blueberries after the meeting. Meets on the Second Wednesday of each month at 1:00 PM for service, spiritual growth, fellowship, and recreation.

Happy Hearts-Happy Hands Handiwork

Coordinator: Sandy Pawlowski

___ Meets on the First Friday of each month at church from 9:00-12:00 PM. Next meeting Sept. 4th. Group creates quilts for those in need in our community. Also does knitting, crochet, and embroidery.

Fellowship Group

(Led by Joe and Paula Malec)

___ Meets once a month for a recreational activity.

Defenders

(Led by Ken Wells and Bill Sigurdson)

___ Meets on the last Friday of the month at 11:00 AM. Meeting on May 29th at the Leesburg Gun Range on SR44. Contact Bill Sigurdson for more info.

Women of Riches

(Led by Pam Riches)

___ Bible Study begins May 4th. For more information, please call Pam Riches at 352-751-7628.

New Life in Christ

(Led by Pastor Schulz)

___ Take a look at God, creation, the work of the Holy Spirit, Baptism, Lord's Supper, the dual natures of Jesus Christ, Heaven and Hell, Judgment Day and more. Class is a good refresher for members and pre-requisite for those wanting to join Open Bible. Thursdays 4:00 – 5:30 PM at Open Bible

WHO'S WHO AT OPEN BIBLE

Vernon and Kathy Griffin



We normally don't expect our new Open Bible members to have relocated from California, but after one visit by Vernon and Kathy Griffin, they were convinced that

the active life style of the Villages was what they wanted for their retirement years.

Although Vernon moved from Texas as a boy, he and Kathy met in high school in California, ultimately married and now celebrate 47 years of marriage. Although they built what they believed would be their retirement home on the Colorado River near Blythe, California, they decided they needed more activity. Therefore, they bought a new home in the village of Lake Deaton near Brownwood this past July.

The Griffins had a very active career life, as Vernon owned a painting contractor business for 25 years (for which Kathy did the bookkeeping). Vernon spent his final working years working for the school district as a painter.

Kathy said she was always able to be home raising their two children. Early on, Kathy did day care out of the home. Then she ran a mini mart seven days a week that they owned for eight years. In the latter years of her working life, Kathy did accounting for other businesses and then retired from the Sony Corporation in the accounting department.

Although Kathy says she is very shy about being in front of groups for presentation purposes, her life experience accounts of confronting gas thieves, shop lifters and counterfeit money passers seem to indicate a strong resolve to do what needs to be done, rather than being shy.

Vern and Kathy have two children. Their son, Robert and his wife Cindy have two children, Megan and Matthew. They live in Riverside, California, where Robert is following in his father's

footsteps as a painting contractor. Their daughter, Deanna Cogbill and her husband, Jason, have two daughters, Jessa and Amber. They reside in San Diego County, California.

Like so many of our new Open Bible members, Vernon and Kathy were not raised WELS, or even Lutheran. Prior to attending an ELCA Lutheran Church in Blythe, Colorado, the Griffins attended an Episcopalian church. After a visit to Open Bible and several visits by Pastor Schulz, Vernon and Kathy were convinced that Open Bible was the right size and had the teachings and friendly members that they were looking for.

Vernon and Kathy are most appreciative of the quality of life God has given them and stated that “we all need to treat each day as a blessing and live life to the fullest, presenting kindness to those around us”. Vernon and Kathy, your marriage of 47 years is a testament to us all that putting Christ first in your lives results in many blessings. Thank you for becoming part of our family at Open Bible.

By Michael Benrud

ELDERS TO SERVE YOU

Installation on May 3rd

I. Assimilation Elder: Help new and old members find a place to serve in the church, and feel more a part of Open Bible and its ministry.

1. Armand Occhetti
2. Jim Orcutt

II. Retention Elder: Regain the straying from the flock.

1. Dennis Duessler
2. Bob Riches

III. Rehab Elder: Oversee members who are sick or are homebound.

1. Jim Johnson
2. Dan Blaho

Head Elder: Oversees ushers at Open Bible and the duties of the Elders.

1. Jim Fehlhaber

CHURCH COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

The church council met on April 16th. Following are the highlights from the meeting:

- March income was \$12,706 more than expenses. Year to date income was \$19,098 more than expenses. The mortgage balance as of 3/31/15 was \$398,153.
- Approval was given for the King of Kings kids to put on a musical called “Joust” on Monday, May 11th at 11:00 AM at Steeplechase Independent Living home. We will also provide them with a lunch.
- The building committee is still in the process of getting more information regarding the different options for expanding the church building. Architectural drawings for the elevations of the expansion to the South and East side of the building are being obtained. It is hoped that we will have some details available for the May voter’s meeting so we can get feedback from the members regarding the different building expansion options.
- A committee will be set up to come up with a plan for handling medical emergencies during services.
- It was decided to instruct the congregation on the parts of worship via newsletter articles with perhaps some brief explanations in the Sunday bulletins.
- There will be no Council meeting in June.

WLC & MLS CONCERTS

To all of you who took students home with you or took them out to dinner following the choir concerts in March and/or April, I hope you had as good a time as I did. And to the many others who paid for hotel rooms and/or dinners, provided transportation, prepared lunches and goodie bags, baked brownies, cleaned up the kitchen, etc., a most hearty thank you. It was a little work, no

doubt about that, but it was a lot of fun, wasn't it? We were blessed by hearing excellent concerts, and we gave back by making the young people feel welcome and special.

It was interesting to note the differences between the college-age kids and the high schoolers: I call it the confidence < -- > giggling scale.

By Leslie Nelson

Following are comments from people who hosted students:

Thank you to everyone who helped host the choirs from Wisconsin Lutheran College and Michigan Lutheran Seminary. Thanks also to all who helped with the whole project. As someone who works with the Concert Committee I can tell you that it was daunting to think of hosting and feeding all the students. But Open Bible people did a wonderful job of making memories for them. And they left us with fond memories too. Now we need to remember to pray for the students who came into our lives for such a short time.

By Pastor and Connie Dale

On April 9th I had the privilege of hosting two members of the Michigan Lutheran Seminary Concert Choir—Mr. Daniel Gensmer and Mr. Nick Thompson who sang in the performance called “God’s Word in Song” that was held at Open Bible Evangelical Lutheran Church that was enjoyed by a “full-house” rousing crowd.

It was a plain joy to meet these young gentlemen on that evening following their performance and discussing their plans for the future. Suddenly, as we were talking together in the kitchen over popcorn, we all heard a loud crushing thunder, that resembled a tree falling on my house. We all looked at one another, as I said, “Did you hear that too”, as my loss of hearing sometimes leads me to question what is actually going on. Daniel was first to say, “something really did happen”, whereupon both boys rushed out the front door to see if they could determine what it was, both going in different directions around the house. Meanwhile I opened the door to the garage and when I pressed the garage door opener, Nick stuck his head through the garage door and he said, “I think I

might have found the problem—A large shelf that had many things on it had fallen off the garage wall, making quite a mess of it.

While they wanted to help me reassemble the shelf, I told them to just let it be and I would take care of it tomorrow. That enabled us to continuing our fellowship together the rest of the evening.

The next morning we enjoyed a hearty breakfast of Country Ham, (not city ham), and swiss chard and cheese omelets. Then I returned them on time to catch their comfortable chartered bus and on to the next performance venue on their journey.

I would encourage anyone wanting to host in following years to avail themselves of the opportunity to meet our own WELS Christian family members. It is both an honor and a privilege to get a chance peek at the generation to come by meeting such young men and women as these. The musical ability of these young people was so enjoyable!

By Armand Occhetti

SUNSHINE COMMITTEE KICKOFF

Sunday, April 13th the Sunshine Committee had their kickoff with twelve two-person teams volunteering to “Share God’s Love” with members in the hospital or rehab centers.

We still have 6 half month slots needing to be filled in The Villages/Leesburg and 8 slots open in the Ocala area. If you are interested in helping to spread some love and friendship, please contact Jim Johnson to volunteer.

SPRING MUSICAL

The King of King’s School children from Maitland will be presenting their spring musical, “Joust” at Steeplechase on Monday, May 11th at 11:00 AM. Let’s show our support by marking this date on our calendars and attending this event. It will be an opportunity for us to reach out to the residents of Steeplechase.

WOMEN OF OPEN BIBLE

Elections were held at our April meeting. Elected were Mary Helen Schultz, President, Nancy Gonia, Secretary.

Our next monthly meeting is May 13th at 1 PM in the fellowship hall. After the meeting a trip is planned to go and pick blueberries or blackberries. Hostesses for the May meeting are Gail Rathgeber and Pamela Riches. All ladies are invited. Women of Open Bible do not meet during the summer months of June, July and August.

A luncheon is being planned in June for the ladies. Please watch for the sign up sheet for the luncheon. All ladies are welcome.

ANYONE FOR GOLF?

Golf the executive courses in The Villages on Fridays with your friends from Open Bible. Please contact Sandy Fehlhaber at 815-282-6937 for more information or to sign up.

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

Bob & Marge O'Connell – 1
Skip I& Jutta Owens – 2
Marvin & Pat Krahn – 11
Fred & Loreli Aguda – 14
Russ & Ruth Niermeyer – 28

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Doris Schlicht – 2
Bill Gebhard – 5
Barb Jasper – 5
Jutta Owens – 6
Ron Brutlag – 9
Patricia Major – 12
Adrianna Thise – 19
Tom DeWitz – 21
Mary Helen Schultz – 21
Joe Malec – 22
Dave Bliss – 23
Ina Taylor – 24
Stacy Vance – 27