



## FROM THE PASTOR

### ***How Could A Loving God Allow Such A Thing?***

In 1906, San Francisco, California, was rocked by a magnitude 7.9 earthquake. The large tremor did major damage to the city, but it was the fire that followed that nearly burned the entire city to the ground. None of us were alive to witness this tragedy, but it would not be surprising if some reacted with statements like, "How could a loving God allow such a disaster to happen?"

About 4,000 years prior to the fire that destroyed San Francisco, there was a fire that destroyed a pair of cities in the Middle East, the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. To the outside observer, again one might make the charge, "How could a loving God send such a disaster?"

The premise behind this question is potentially the false assumption that God is ONLY a God of love. When people in their mind eliminate the justice of God, they can never grasp why God would allow or intentionally bring judgment on a person or group of people. We don't know the mind of God as it relates to Sodom and Gomorrah, but we are told that God was angered by their evil ways. They had deserted God. They had given themselves over to homosexual relationships and deviant sexual behavior. God told Abraham that he was going to destroy the city because of their wickedness (Genesis 18:20-21).

However, Abraham is bold to plead for the mercy of God because his nephew Lot and family lived in those cities. Abraham didn't question the justice of God. In fact, he affirms that he is a God who is fair. Yet, he also knew God is love and pleaded for his mercy to be shown to the cities for the sake of the righteous. Finally, Abraham petitioned God to spare the cities if he could find just ten righteous people living there. The fire the next morning tells us ten righteous were not found. God carried out his justice (Genesis 19:24-29).

We must remember even today that God is just and has every right to punish those that deviate from his ways. Yet we also cannot forget that God is love and desires to forgive and save every person. Where do these two realities find resolution? Only in Jesus Christ. He loved you and me so much that he put himself under the justice of God and was punished for our sins only so he could apply his perfect life to our imperfect lives. As a result, we experience the love of God through Jesus. God forgives our wickedness and remembers our sins no more (Hebrews 8:12).

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

In our May newsletter Pastor Schulz, in his column, spoke to the importance of planning. He was speaking of the plans that God has for our personal lives as well as His plans for Open Bible. Pastor was referring to the many opportunities we have for Christian service, fellowship and spiritual growth. Throw in a list of the new groups that have been formed, ideas for future growth and our wonderful 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration, and you have a pretty good sampling of what has been happening at Open Bible since our annual meeting last January. Our Church truly has been very active as witnessed by the steady stream of visitors we have had, many who have become recent members.

It all began with our annual newcomers' welcome along with a dinner and program to welcome back our winter members last February. It is always wonderful to renew old acquaintances and welcome new friends into the Open Bible family.

Early in March we continued our annual concert series with a "Magnificent Christian Hymns" concert featuring professional musicians Timothy Moke on trumpet and Dave Krewall on the organ. This wonderful concert was followed in late March by the Branches Band consisting of Andy and Rachel Braun. These two excellent musical presentations were followed by the students of King of

Kings Lutheran School of Maitland FL. in their annual spring concert entitled "A Kids Life" and presented in conjunction with our neighbors at the Carriage House.

The winter, spring and summer months saw a great deal of emphasis placed on outreach by Pastor Schulz as our membership grew by 29% by the end of August. New programs such as New Life in Christ classes and the introduction of a book club became realities.

Our Lenten journey focused on the names our Savior has been called in the pages of scripture. Also, worship opportunities were increased to two services allowing more of our members and guests the chance to join us in praising the Lord.

As our numbers continue to increase, the Church Council thought it wise to purchase additional seating for the Sanctuary. Thirty five new chairs were purchased in June. In early August one hundred new Bibles were also purchased with some financial assistance from one of our families. Earlier this spring we introduced a series of new banners designed to glorify God and coincide with the seasons of the Church year as well as matching Hymn board insets and pulpit paraments. These items were also donated by a family in the congregation. All of these additions have added an element of beauty to the front of our Church.

Summer also witnessed a teen youth group from Minnesota led by Pastor Dale and Connie's daughter and son-in-law arrive at Open Bible to conduct some outreach activities. The teens were able to canvas about 235 homes in Bison Valley and Fairway communities as well as enjoying a variety of activities in and around The Villages.

The month of August literally heated up with especially meaningful events for Open Bible. Sunday August 4 we celebrated the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of our Church and then experienced our 1<sup>st</sup> Mission festival the following Sunday. Both events were tremendous successes. Hats off to Herb Schaefer and Pastor's wife Jeanne for putting together an excellent slide presentation that outlined the 1<sup>st</sup> ten years of our history. Also to Pastor Josh Sternhagen, son-in-law of Ted and Sandy Hahm, for his Mission Festival presentation explaining his work in Antigua.

September also had very special meaning for us in a number of ways. First, Pastor Schulz celebrated his 1<sup>st</sup> anniversary as our shepherd and his 30<sup>th</sup> year in the ministry. We give thanks to God for Pastor Schulz as well as for providing us with two other outstanding men over the years; all that have provided us with the spiritual leadership and direction that is so critical in our daily walk with the Lord. Secondly, we saw the

completion of eight months of work done by the sign committee. This group of congregational members then made a recommendation to the Council which was accepted. The new signs which were badly needed feature our name, "Open Bible Lutheran Church" and our signature bell tower all designed to enhance our visibility in the community. These signs are in the process of being constructed.

We often speak about how God has blessed Open Bible. Those blessings continue to flow in abundance, and it will certainly be interesting to see where they take us in the future. We know we will be facing many new challenges but we should always remember, the task ahead of us is never as great as the Power behind us.

God's blessings to all,  
Greg Wendorf

## WHO'S WHO AT OPEN BIBLE

By Leslie Nelson



Pam and Jim Johnson have been members since December and many of you have enjoyed visiting with this friendly couple. They were both raised in Christian homes, baptized, confirmed, etc., and married at Fort DeRussy in Hawaii in 1967. Pam's best friend was Jim's cousin and she introduced them. After 5 dates in only two months they decided to marry! This October they will celebrate 46 years together.

Both are natives of Iowa. After 2 years at Northwest Missouri State College, Jim volunteered for the U. S. Army and served almost five years. He attended Officer Candidate School in Fort Benning, GA, graduated from Jungle Expert School in Panama, and then served in Viet Nam from April, 1967 to March of 1968.

The Johnsons have 3 daughters: Wendi, who has 5 children; Julie who has 4 children; and Katie who has one child, so they have 10 grandchildren already! Each one is a special gift from God.

Besides Iowa, they have lived in many places in PA, NJ, IL, and OH, but basically, their family was raised in Arlington, Heights, IL. Jim started out working in sales for Kraft Foods, and by the time he was promoted to a General Manager, there had been so many moves that their oldest daughter was in her fifth school by 3<sup>rd</sup> grade! So Jim took a job with CFS Continental in Chicago and settled his family in Arlington Heights,

where they have an excellent school system. All 3 girls graduated from high school there.

Eventually Jim started his own business and spent his last twenty working years growing a small auto repair shop with 5 employees into five stores with 100 employees. Each store had 20+ service bays.

Pam worked as a candy striper while in high school and later as a nurse's aide in Pennsylvania. In New Jersey she became a licensed EMT and enjoyed serving with the volunteer ambulance crew in Sicklerville, NJ.

The Johnsons have been members of ten ELCA congregations and were both very active in various groups, committees, retreats and choirs. They found outreach and evangelism to be fulfilling, and helped start a new congregation in New Jersey, where Jim was the first President of the Church Council. But as the years went by, they became more and more uncomfortable with the way things were going in the ELCA and were looking to make a change to a church more in line with their beliefs. By this time they had moved to The Villages. They came to Open Bible and liked what they saw. They immediately felt comfortable with WELS and the friendly people at Open Bible.

Jim and Pam love The Villages. They enjoy eating out and playing golf several times a week, and socializing over a card game with neighbors and friends. Jim likes reading, especially John Grisham and Max Lucado books, and enjoys watching old western movies. Pam enjoys spiritual books and movies. She also likes having a small home so she can keep it clean in only a few hours a week.

You wouldn't guess it now, but Pam was once very shy. She is a very sympathetic and loyal person. Jim is a grateful recovering alcoholic, being sober for 26 years. He has a severe hearing loss and is unable to hear people when in groups, or if several people are talking to him at once.

## SMALL GROUP MINISTRY, OCT. 2013

### **SPLASH (Single People Loving and Serving Him)**

#### **Topic: Psalm 23**

Location: Open Bible Lutheran Church

Date: October 14<sup>th</sup>

Time: 1:00 PM

Facilitator: Pastor Rodger Dale

This group has one spiritual meeting a month and one service or recreational activity each month.

### **466A Group- Topic: Angels and Demons**

Location: Meeting at home of Jim and Sandy Fehlhaber

Date: October 15<sup>th</sup>

Time: 3:00-5:00 PM

Location: Meeting at home of Bob and Margie O'Connell

Date: October 29<sup>th</sup>

Time: 3:00-5:00 PM

Facilitator: Pastor Mark Schulz

### **Godly Men of Leisure- Topic: "It is Good"**

Location: Perkin's Restaurant

Date: October 18<sup>th</sup>

Time: 8:00 AM

Facilitator: Dennis Duessler

### **Women's Bible Study- Topic: Women of the Bible**

Location: Open Bible Lutheran Church

Dates: October 10<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>

Time: 1:00 PM

Facilitator: Judy Anderson

### **Wednesday in the Word: Topic: Speaking the Truth in Love to Muslims**

Location: Open Bible Lutheran Church

Date: October 2<sup>nd</sup>

Time: 5:00 PM

Facilitator: Pastor Schulz

New Topic: Tough Questions

Dates: October 9<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup>, and 30<sup>th</sup>

Time: 5:00 PM

### **Book Club: Topic: Predestination**

Location: Open Bible Lutheran Church

Date: October 29<sup>th</sup>

Time: 10:00 AM

Facilitator: Duane Anderson & Pastor Schulz

Please contact our church secretary to order your book for this month!

### **North County Group: Topic: Heaven and Hell**

Location: Home of Alan and Pam Johnson

Dates: October 13<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>

Time: 6:00 PM

Facilitator: Alan Johnson

## WORSHIP COMMITTEE

### *We Have Come Into the Presence of God*

Twice a month at the very beginning of the service the Pastor addresses the congregation with the words: **“We have come into the presence of God...”**

Isn't God everywhere? Certainly! God is omnipresent (present everywhere at all times). The Psalmist asks: *“Where can I flee from your presence?”* as he discusses the fact that God is everywhere (Psalm 139).

Nevertheless, the Bible speaks of special places where God is present. At the dedication of the temple in Jerusalem King Solomon prayed: *“But will God really dwell on earth? The heavens, even the highest heavens, cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built!”* (1 Kings 8:27) Yet, after the dedication the Lord appeared to Solomon and said: *“...I have consecrated this temple, which you have built, by putting my Name there forever. My eyes and my heart will always be there.”* (1 Kings 9:3) Where God “puts his Name” **he is present to instruct, receive offerings, hear prayers and bless.** Regarding the tabernacle he had said through Moses: *“But you are to seek the place the LORD your God will choose from among all your tribes to put his Name there for his dwelling. To that place you must go, there bring your burnt offerings and sacrifices, your tithes and special gifts, what you have vowed to give and your freewill offerings, and the firstborn of your herds and flocks, there, in the presence of the LORD your God, you and your families shall eat and shall rejoice in everything you have put your hand to, because the LORD your God has blessed you.”* (Deut. 12:5-7)

Recognizing that there is a difference between our church buildings and the tabernacle/temple of the Old Testament, we can still regard our church as a special sanctuary in the troubled world where we come into God's presence to be built up in faith through the Word and Sacraments, and to worship with hearts and hands and voices.

But if we are coming into the presence of God, what is the proper way to do this? A hymn in Christian Worship offers this answer:

God Himself is present – Let us now adore Him  
And with awe appear before Him.  
God is in His temple—All within keep silence,  
Humbly kneel in deepest reverence,  
He alone, On his throne  
Is our God and Savior; Praise His name forever.  
(Gerhard Tersteegen, 1729-; CW #224)

At first glance this hymn may seem like an overstatement. However, when you think of **who** God is, that he is infinite in power and glory, holiness and justice, you realize that an “otherworldly” reverence is appropriate in his presence. We only dare to come into his presence in the name of and for the sake of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Another hymn put it in these words:

I do not come because my soul  
Is free from sin and pure and whole  
And worthy of Thy grace;  
I do not speak to Thee because  
I've ever justly kept Thy laws  
And dare to meet Thy face.

In Him [Christ] alone my trust I place,  
Come boldly to Thy throne of grace,  
And there commune with Thee.  
Salvation sure, O Lord, is mine,  
And, all unworthy, I am Thine,  
For Jesus died for me.

(Frank B. St. John 1878; #TLH 379)

Long ago Martin Luther added Confession and Absolution to the beginning of worship services. Why? Because it is fitting that we confess our sins and receive his forgiveness when we come into his presence. With this burden of guilt lifted we may continue our worship with a song of praise from a heart that is at peace with God.

## CHURCH COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

The monthly church council meeting was held on Thursday, September 19<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 am.

The treasurer reported that our donations for the month of August were \$19,354 and our expenses were \$19,082. Very close but we still had a positive \$272. Year to date our income is \$169,653 and our year to date expenses amounted to \$128,444. This shows a surplus of \$41,210. The Lord is truly blessing Open Bible and the hearts of our members. Our mortgage at the end of August was \$440,323.

Council action includes the following:

1. Accepted donation of a new Dell laptop for the pastor's office from one of our members.
2. Denied usage of our facilities to a group wanting to have space for cello practice.

Presently our facilities are used almost daily by our own activities

3. Revised some of the new by-laws before they are presented to the congregation.
4. Prioritized a list of suggested projects to be financed by our surplus.

Our next meeting is scheduled for October 17<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 am.

## WOMEN OF OPEN BIBLE

Reminders of dates for our events in October:

**October 9<sup>th</sup>** – Monthly meeting at 1 pm in the church fellowship hall. All ladies are invited.

**October 12<sup>th</sup>** – LWMS Fall Rally at New Hope Lutheran Church in West Melbourne. Pastor Goeglein will speak on the work being done at the Asia Lutheran Seminary in Hong Kong. Registration will begin at 9:15, and the rally will start at 10:15. Registration deadline is September 30<sup>th</sup>. Sign-up in kitchen pass-thru.

Just a reminder to be sure to sign up for the Ocala Consignment Bus Tour on Friday, Nov. 15<sup>th</sup>. Space is limited to 45 people. Finger foods and beverages are provided at each stop. Departure from church at 9:15 am and return back at 5:15 pm. The cost is \$25 per person. Please pay Sandy Hahm.

Hostesses for Oct. are Sandy Hahm and Ruth Vance.

Sandy Hahm, President

## WORLD MISSION UPDATE

### *Nepal and Pakistan*

Since 2002 a total of nine Bible-storying workshops have been conducted in Nepal. Since many in Nepal are illiterate, the catechism is being taught through these Bible stories. Trained nationals are now participating in the teaching, and congregations are being formed through the efforts of those who take the Word back to their respective places of residence. All told the number of people being reached in Nepal through WELS materials and those trained by WELS is now more than 13,700 in the Scripture learning program and reaches into 29 of the 75 districts of the country.

World Missions is working closely with Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary's Pastoral Studies Institute to find

ways to advance training of a select few to the Bible institute and seminary stages. After five years, more than 256,000 pieces of literature have been distributed in Nepal. Through baptisms and ongoing training of leaders in Scripture, a small confessional Lutheran church has been formed that numbers more than four thousand souls.

In Pakistan more than 30,000 students have now been enrolled in the Bible Correspondence and Teaching School courses. Most of these numbers are children being trained in Christian schools of other denominations, although close to four thousand of these courses are distributed to villages by workers via bicycles. This effort, begun in 2006, has now resulted in the distribution of 154,000 pieces of literature in this Muslim country. The requests for WELS materials have been huge since no other mission agency has provided materials for children that have the Urdu translation and graphic illustrations like those provided through WELS Multi-Language Publications. Through Bible workshops and Christian instruction via the Internet, our Pakistani contact, his immediate family, and a significant number of his staff have been confirmed as Lutherans. A small confessional Lutheran church in that country now numbers 36 communicants. This small church has been at the forefront of outreach through medical clinics and flood relief efforts at which Christian literature is distributed. World Missions is continually uplifted by this courageous witness of the Christian community in Pakistan in the face of heavy Muslim opposition.

## CONFERENCE UPDATE

The fall conference of the Cypress and Everglades circuits was held on September 23<sup>rd</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup> at Christ the Crown Lutheran Church in Orlando. The Conference was attended by Pastor Schulz, Pastor Dale, and Ron Brutlag. This conference was very edifying both spiritually through the devotions and opening service under the theme of Saints Triumphant and intellectually through the papers and reports. There were two practical papers given, one on "What to Do with Children in Worship" and the other on "Assimilation of Members". Other papers dealt with

the book of Haggai, I Corinthians 8:1-13 and Monastic Vows.

Highlights from the Synodical Convention were given by our District President, Pastor Guse. The following are of interest for our members:

- Three decisions were related regarding the issue of Bible translations:
  1. No adoption of the NIV 2011 at this time.
  2. Our publications from Northwestern Publishing House will make use of the translation they judge to be the best for any given project.
  3. Approval of a standing committee to give input and suggestions for improvement to other existing translations as they are revised.
- WELS-Canada was made its own mission district.
- Formalization of fellowship with the Lutheran Confessional Church of Norway.
- Continued talks with the Missouri Synod to strive for true unity based on full agreement in doctrine and practice.
- Training of more principals and early childhood directors through new programs at Martin Luther College.
- Next synod convention to be held at Michigan Lutheran Seminary in 2015.

The president of Martin Luther College was also present and reported on the status of our worker training college. With the anticipated shortage of pastors, male teachers, and early childhood directors through growth and retirements we all need to pray for more of our young people to seriously think about ministry as their vocation.

## WARM HUGS FROM THE APACHES

The Quilters of Open Bible got the nicest thank-you letter from Grace Lutheran Church in San Carlos, Arizona. They have an outreach called "Warm Hugs Ministry - Wrapping Apache families in the arms of Jesus' love - one quilt at a time!" In August, our ladies sent Tom Naumann, Missionary to the San Carlos Apache Nation, 15 of our hand-made quilts in all sizes and many beautiful colors. Some were full-size blankets, appropriate for senior citizens on a cool desert night. Many were lap robes, very nice for seniors in a wheelchair, or as a blanket for a baby or young child.

The people of Grace Lutheran Church, where this ministry is centered, are very grateful for our labors of Christian love, and want us to keep their program in our prayers. Pray that their outreach will bring children to Sunday School and families to church, where they can come to know the love of Jesus.

## THANKSGIVING DINNER

We are planning to gather together for Dinner on Thanksgiving Day, Thursday, Nov. 28<sup>th</sup>. It will be a great Church Family Day. As of now the group is approx. 20. Seeing that Thanksgiving is 2 months away, we are sure others, who have no local family, will join in.

There will be a follow up, with more information and details in the next newsletter. Remember, you can sign up at the kitchen pass through or email Karen in the church office:

[secretaryopenbiblechurch@centurylink.net](mailto:secretaryopenbiblechurch@centurylink.net)

## THRIVENT CHOICE DOLLARS

### THRIVENT MEMBERS

During the months of October and November, Thrivent Choice will double dollars to approved congregations. They will double your directions you make from Oct. 1 to Nov.30 until \$15 million has been awarded. So be sure and contact them even if you have done so this year. Phone # 800-847-4836.

# HAPPY ANNIVERSARY



Jerry & Carol Yahn – 1  
Mike & Gloria Butzow – 3  
Dave & Dianne Bliss – 8  
Ron & Christina Moellring – 8  
Huns & Linda Gustrowsky – 9  
Les & Carol Stauske – 11  
Jim & Pam (PJ) Johnson – 12  
Dennis & Pat Knack – 21  
Duane & Judy Anderson – 28  
Don & Ardith Schmidt – 31

# HAPPY BIRTHDAY



Sharon Affeldt – 1  
Russ Niermeyer – 2  
Bette McConkey – 4  
Daniel Langer Jr. – 8  
Ken Phillips – 8  
Art Hartwig – 9  
James Langer – 9  
Stephen Langer – 11  
Carol Sonnenberg – 11  
Zoey Langer – 14  
Sandy Fehlhaber – 17  
Dennis Duessler – 17  
Daniel Langer – 18  
Don Schmidt – 18  
Dave Buss – 26  
Matthew Draeger – 27  
Herb Schaefer – 29