



FROM THE PASTOR

Heaven: Does It Really Exist?

Over the past several years there have been books produced and movies made on people who have died, seen visions of heaven, and returned back to life on this earth. One of those movies is called, "90 Minutes In Heaven." Movies like this may spur a question from our friends, "Why should I think that heaven really exists and that God sends people to hell? These movies are just figments of people's imagination". What do you say?

First of all, when you view various cultures throughout our world, there seems to be a universal belief that there is life after death. In fact, in Ecclesiastes 3:11, it says, "He has also set eternity in the hearts of men." There is a divinely infused awareness of realities beyond the here and now. In addition, when you look at the injustices that constantly take place in our world, there is a real longing for a better place which reflects real righteousness and goodness.

As we look into the Bible, Peter tells us that we are aliens and strangers in this world. (I Peter 2:11) In the book of Hebrews 11:13-14, we are told that the old testament believers were looking forward to a country they could call their own, a heavenly one. Of course, we have the sure words of Jesus who tells us those beautiful words in John 14:1-2, "In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am." Jesus, as the Son of God, is in a unique position to know what he is talking about. He taught the concept that there is life after death.

Worldly studies have found that people who believe in an afterlife can actually improve the overall quality of their life. Dr. Harold Koenig did a study about belief in an afterlife and came to this conclusion: "These people are less likely to suffer from stress and depression, less likely to attempt suicide, less vulnerable to a host of other ailments, and more likely to live longer." Believing in an afterlife is actually good for you.

What is hard for many people in our society to accept, is that the majority of humanity will one day end up in hell. When you think about it, hell is a logical consequence of a life lived separated from God. God has told us, that if we break his commandments, we face his punishment. However, in His love, God realized we would sin, and couldn't save ourselves. So He put together a rescue plan to satisfy his justice and show his love. He sent Jesus into the world to live and die for us. So when people go to hell, they actually choose to go there. They reject the rescue plan God has set up, reject Christ as their only Savior from sin and only way to heaven. As a result, at the final Judgment, God will simply consign people to the destination where they've already been heading. C.S. Lewis sums it up well when he says: "There are only two kinds of people in the end: those who say to God, 'Thy will be done,' and those to whom God says, 'Thy will be done.'" Rejoice that we believe in the rescue plan that God has established in Jesus Christ, and that Heaven is our real home.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

The last Sunday in September marks the second of our three annual congregational meetings. Even though the heat and length of days of summer have a tendency to slow things down some, life moves along at a vibrant pace at Open Bible. Even the large amount of rain we experienced in July and August didn't stop the flow of almost weekly guests into our beautiful facility.

Although the church council did not meet in June again this year, it did address a number of significant items in meetings held in July, August and September.

In July the council accepted and endorsed our synod doctrinal and policy statement regarding the institution of marriage. We believe that marriage is the sacred, lifelong union between one man and one woman. Therefore, our Pastors will not officiate in any marriage ceremony or celebration and our church sanctuary may not be used for any activities related to a marriage ceremony or celebration that is inconsistent with these beliefs. The council also finalized service times for future Advent, Lent, Maundy Thursday and Good Friday services. Service times will be at 5:30 with a light meal being served at 4:30 (during Advent and Lent). It was also decided to continue having two Sunday services but only during the months of January, February and March with service times at 8:00 and 10:00 with fellowship between.

Council also looked at a Mission Awareness/Preparedness checklist sent to us by our synod and the consensus among council members was that Open Bible is doing a good job of nurturing our membership as well as in the area of outreach. It was further decided that we need to work on two and five year Ministry Action plans for future growth. A committee is currently being formed to carry out this task.

Due to travel and vacation plans of committee members, our building committee met sporadically. They began meeting more regularly in September to pull together ideas and potential plans to be brought before the congregation in the near future.

During the summer months, attention also focused on gearing up for a very active fall season. Our elders created a spiritual gifts survey and asked our members to check the areas of strength they felt they possessed for future service opportunities. A list was also published describing all the small group activities that will be available to participate in beginning in early to mid-September. A special worship service was then held on September 13th emphasizing the special spiritual gifts that God has blessed each of us with. As our members exited the Sanctuary at the close of service they were presented with the opportunity to visit nineteen different tables and gather information about the various small groups being offered. Our members were educated on the many wonderful opportunities for growth in their Christian faith, serving their Savior and enjoying fellowship with fellow Christians. It was a wonderful way to kick off the fall activity season at Open Bible.

We also again held a Mission Festival Sunday (as well as recognizing the twelfth anniversary of our Church) on August sixth. Missionary Sternhagen (son-in law of Ted and Sandy Hahm) preached on the theme of "Praying Big" which is an important focus for his congregation in Antigua. He emphasized that we often overlook how great our God is and what he can do. We need to be more faithful in our prayer life and take everything to the Lord in prayer. With that concept in mind let me close with the following Food for Thought article I came across a number of years ago that is still very appropriate today. Author is anonymous.

I got up one morning
And rushed right into the day,
I had so much to accomplish
that I didn't have time to pray.

Problems just tumbled about me
And heavier came each task,
"Why doesn't God help me? I wondered,
He said, "But you didn't ask."

I wanted to see joy and beauty
But the day toiled on grey and bleak,
I wondered why God didn't show me,
He said, "But you didn't seek."

I tried to come into God's presence

Used all my keys at the lock,
God gently and lovingly chided
“My child you didn’t knock.”

I woke up early this morning
And paused before entering the day,
I had so much to accomplish
that I had to take time to pray.

May each of us make prayer a greater priority in
our lives and may we always “Pray Big” that God
continues to shower His blessings upon Open Bible
as we continue to move forward.

All God’s blessings,
Greg Wendorf

WHO’S WHO AT OPEN BIBLE

Ruth Vance



Ruth Vance is one of the original members of Open Bible Lutheran Church. Ruth was born and raised in Michigan and belonged to the Methodist Church in her small town until she met and married her husband,

Bud, who was Lutheran.

Bud and Ruth had three children, two boys, Rick and Mark and a daughter Stacey, who, as we all know, is presently the Choir Director here at Open Bible.

Bud’s career was in the United States Coast Guard and consequently the family moved around the country a lot. Ruth’s favorite place where they lived was Governor’s Island, New York. While Bud was busy with his Coast Guard duties, energetic Ruth worked for the Coast Guard attending to the bidding process for dry docking.

Upon Bud’s retirement from the Coast Guard the Vance family moved to Miami, Florida and resided there for ten years, at which time they bought an RV and moved to Montana. Looking at tiny Ruth, it’s difficult to imagine once she was in Montana

she rode horses in the rodeo and in horse shows. Also while in Montana Ruth worked for the largest construction company in the pacific north west. Ruth and Bud lived in Montana for eleven years and then returned to Florida to Port St. Lucie.

After Bud passed away in 1999 Ruth moved to the Water Oak community in Lady Lake. Ruth is quite the thespian, with the Water Oak Players.

The Players have variety shows throughout the year, mostly doing comedy skits and “who dun it’s” Last year in one of the skits Ruth played the part of the maid, who was really an undercover Scotland Yard detective. The comedy monologues are written by the Players themselves.

Ruth Vance is a wonderfully kind, intelligent and witty lady, and Open Bible is truly Blessed to have her in our midst on Sundays.

By Jan Britton

SMALL GROUP OPPORTUNITIES

OCTOBER 2015

Sunday Morning Bible Study (Led by Pastor Schulz Job: Compassion in Calamity-Study of the Book of Job-God’s Word for Today

Why do the just suffer? Where is God in the midst of loss, illness, ridicule and defeat? Those questions probe deeply into the heart of every person, and all too often demand ready answers in our uniquely human, and sometimes painful, experience. Job’s true story of God’s grace in the midst of his profound suffering will teach you:

- the purpose of adversity in the lives of the faithful;
- the role of Satan regarding our relationship with God;
- the hope and strength we have through the promise of our Redeemer.

October 4th: Christ to the Rescue

October 11th: With Friends Like These

October 18th: Where is God When I need Him

October 25th: The Lord is Coming

Wednesday in the Word at 5:00 P.M. (Led by Pastor Schulz) The People in David's Life and in Yours

David was the greatest king of God's Old Testament people, the Israelites. Throughout his life, God used many people to mold David into the man and leader he came to be. This Bible study looks closely at those people, but also helps participants focus on the people God brings into their lives for the same purpose.

October 7th: Abigail-The Friend Who Saved David From Himself

October 14th: Uriah-The Friend David Murdered

October 21st: Nathan-David's Pastor

October 28th: Absalom-God's Tool for Chastening

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

Meeting twice a month, once for study, and once for recreational activities

October events:

Sunday Brunch at Water Oak, October 4

Bible Study at church, October 12, 1:00 pm.

November:

Tour in a glass-bottomed boat at Silver Springs and much more. Watch for more information.



Coordinators: 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.

October 11th & 25th – Meeting at the home of Alan & Pam Johnson. Topic: I John

466 A Group and Vicinity (Led by Pastor Schulz)

This group will meet once a month on Tuesdays. Tuesday October 22nd from 2:00-4:00 PM at the home of Klaus & Helga Maass

Topic: **I Need To Change:**

A Video Driven Study led by Pastor Mark Jeske, from Time of Grace Ministries. Each session will

begin with a 20 minute message by Pastor Jeske on the specific topic mentioned. The Group will spend time in discussion and application:

October 2015: Less Bitter, More Content: Romans 8:28-37

Men's Breakfast Group (Led by Dennis Duessler)

Men at Leisure (Meets at Perkins Restaurant at 8:30 am. on Friday, October 9th. 19 Minutes with the Messiah: Take a look at the parables and some special encounters of Jesus with others in his ministry. October's Topic: Revelation 21

Defenders (Led by Ken Wells and Bill Sigurdson) Meets on Thursday October 22nd 11:00 AM at the Gun Range on SR44 in Leesburg. Ocala date and time will be announced at a later date.

Women's Bible Study (Led by Judy Anderson) Golden Fruit - Living the Fruit of the Spirit Through the Best Times of Your Life.

This Bible study helps the Christian woman put all of these roles, characteristics, and emotions into perspective. Each session focuses on one fruit of the Spirit and considers how the lives and stories of nine biblical women convey that characteristic. As you study women like Esther (self-control) and Dorcas (goodness), Ruth (love) and Elizabeth (joy), you'll see how God is at work in your life too and how His promise of salvation and peace through Jesus are fully yours all the time. For individuals and small groups, this Bible study includes questions that dig deep into Scripture and make personal applications of Jesus' gospel to your life.

Open Bible Book Club (Pastor Schulz)

Group meets at church on Tuesday October 27th at 4:00 PM.

October's Book: Through a Season of Grief by Bill Dunn and Kathy Lenard

Though many people have lost a spouse, a family member or a friend, it can be a difficult experience to handle in a healthy way. More than 30 well-known Christian professionals provide insights on walking through the valley of shadow of death to wholeness, healing and hope.

Women of Open Bible (Led by Mary Helen Schultz)

Wednesday October 14th at 1:00 PM for service, spiritual growth, fellowship, and recreation. October's meeting will be followed by the movie "Cross Creek."

Happy Hearts---Happy Hands Handiwork --- (Led by Sandy Pawlowski)
Meets on the First Friday of each month at church at 9:00-12:00 PM – Meeting will be October 2nd, 2015. Group creates quilts for those in need in our community.

Fellowship Group (Led by Joe and Paula Malec & Dan & Karen Pearson)
Meets once a month for a recreational activity. Friday, October 16th Movie Night starting at 7:00 PM. Do you like to laugh? Well, join us for a night of Fellowship and Comedy. Our host Fred Hainen will show some of the best classic short films like Laurel & Hardy, Abbott & Costello and a few cartoons. Bring your favorite snack to share and a lawn chair (if you like). Beverages will be provided.

Adult Choir (Led by Stacy Vance)
Meets on Wed. from 6:15-7:30 PM.

GRIEF SHARE(Facilitator Pastor Schulz)
Thursdays, 6:30 – 8:00 PM.
13 week video-based small group to help those who have lost a loved one in death.

Women of Riches (Led by Pam Riches)
Meets on Mondays at 1:00pm at the home of Pam Riches. The study will be "That the World May Know-Promised Land" 8 Faith Lessons.

WORSHIP COMMITTEE

What is the purpose of our Worship Committee? You might of asked this very question yourself. What we have been asked to do is to make sure our worship services are what they have always been in the church: the intellectual and the emotional interaction between Christ and His church. Just as Luther, we look to present services that are built on the historical and liturgical style of

worship. That means we look at a set of worship forms that were developed in the western Christian church.

The first goal of any worship service is to make sure that the entire service is Christ focused. This is accomplished in three ways. By making the liturgy its main order of service in which:

- 1.by reviewing the saving doctrines of Scripture as found in the Ordinary (parts that do not change),
2. by repeating the words and works of Christ in the Propers (parts that do change),
3. By observing the Sacrament in which Christ offers us His body and blood, given and shed for the forgiveness of sins. The same can be said for Baptism and any of the rites that are used in worship and in our hymns and church music.

The five historical Ordinary texts that long time Lutherans are very familiar with are: Kyrie, Gloria in Excelsis, Nicene Creed, Sanctus, and the Agnus Dei. These five strongly emphasize the saving Gospel. Our hymnal has put these five in a more contemporary language and with a musical setting from the Choral Service Book but they all still have the Gospel as their main emphasis. The same is true of the Ordinaries that are in use when the Lord's Supper is celebrated.

A unique aspect of our worship services is that they are interactive. When the Pastor, who is the Lord's spokesmen, speaks God's words to the worshipper; the worshipper has the opportunity to respond back to the Lord. There is dialogue occurring and the congregation is involved in worship.

The use of the Propers give the worshipper the opportunity to review the life of Christ and the church's faith life. The readings, the verses, the prayers all fit into the theme of a given Sunday or festival as do all the hymns and the choral selections. Again it is fitting for the worshipper so to interact with these parts of the services. Responses, solos, choral sections come in this portion of the service.

The liturgical orders in our services will assure that the next generation of Lutherans that use them will receive benefit from public worship that allows the Gospel to be predominate.

Starting soon we will be highlighting a portion of the liturgy each Sunday for 14 weeks so that we can have a fuller understanding of what it really means and why it is important.

CHURCH COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

September Council Highlights

- September Council Highlights
- The church council met on September 24th. Following are the highlights from the meeting:
- August expenses were \$1,135 more than income. Year to date income was \$26,181 more than expenses. The mortgage balance as of 8/31/15 was \$391,107.65.
- The following were accepted into membership by adult confirmation:
 - Doug Tharp
 - Claudette Tharp
 - Michael Davis
 - John Marks
 - Feg Henkel
 - Joan Henkel
- It was decided to hold a fall festival on November 1st.
- November 22nd has been designated by Synod as a special Sunday for requesting a special offering to help reduce the outstanding 4.5 million dollar debt of Synod. Special envelopes will be provided to our members for anyone wishing to make a contribution to Synod for this purpose.
- We will be looking for individuals to be trained in the use of HymnSoft. This would be used to provide organ accompaniment if no organist is available for a particular service.

WELS SYNOD CONVENTION

Wels Synod Convention

The Theme of the convention was One in Christ, Won in Christ.

The convention opened Monday evening with over 700 WELS members in attendance at St. Paul's Lutheran Church with a communion service. The message because Christ won, we are one in Christ.

On Tuesday morning, it is traditional to open the convention with the Lutheran Women's Society presenting the flags of all the nations that WELS has a presence. There are 24 worldwide nations that WELS has some presence.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

President Mark Schroeder was reelected to another 4 year term as President of the Synod. Pastor Joel Voss was reelected 2nd Vice-President of the Synod. He is the nephew of our own Elisabeth Wells. Pastor James Huebner is the Synod 1st Vice President and his term expires in 2017. I had the chance to speak to all of these individuals. The Synod is in good hands with these leaders.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Six new Home Mission congregations will be opening in the United States this year and next. CMO Offering has been virtually flat for the past seven years. But the Synodical Council has done a good job in reducing expenses to offset salary and health insurance increases. However, congregations are encouraged to give more generously to mission ministries.

WELS representatives are holding formal and informal meetings with other Lutheran Church bodies: Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Luther Church-Missouri Synod, Church of the Lutheran Confessions, and the Ukrainian Lutheran Church. Pastor V'yacheslav Horpynchuk, Bishop of the Ukrainian Lutheran Church addressed the convention on the condition of his country and the help and support his church has received from WELS. Pastor John Moldstad, President of the ELS church body also addressed the convention. A



**Fall Reformation Festival
Open Bible Lutheran
Nov. 1st ~ 3:30 - 6:00 PM**

representative from the Missouri Synod was in attendance but did not address the convention.

In President's Schroeder's report was the main focus of this convention, that being the financial health of the Synod. There is a goal to eliminate the remaining 4.7 million debt by June 30, 2016, two years ahead of schedule. Doing so will put our Synod in a better financial position to increase our mission expenditures. On Sunday, November 22, there will be "Christ the King" Day; for congregations to designate the offerings on that Sunday to defray the Synod debt. Materials will be sent to each congregation on how to implement this request.

WORLD MISSIONS:

Missionaries Mark Panning, Terry Schultz, and Rob Siirila addressed the convention delegates on how the gospel is being preached around the world bringing lost souls to Christ. I was amazed to learn that there are over seven billion people in the world. Six billion of these are non-Christians. So a lot of work needs to be done to bring these souls to Christ.

REFORMATION 500

A committee has been working on the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. The goal of the committee is to educate WELS and others on the important truths of the Reformation as well as to help congregations reach out in their communities by providing resources for them to point to Christ using the emphasis of Luther and the Reformation. New material is being assembled on Martin Luther, a new book is coming out on his life, and there will be other materials sent to congregations as they become available over the next two years.

SUMMARY

It was a very gratifying three days and I am very thankful and honored to be able to represent our congregation. I only touched on the highlights of the convention. I could go on, but I think I hit the high points.

In Christ, Dennis Duessler

**The Villages Harmonica Orchestra
with Open Bible Member Bob
O'Connell playing songs from the
Great American Song Book and a
special rendition of Amazing Grace**

**Educational Fun Quiz on Reformation
Facts**

**Outdoor Games like horseshoes, lawn
darts, bean bag toss, volleyball, and
badminton**

Indoor Parlor Games

**Catered Dinner by Sonny's with Pork
and Chicken two sides, rolls,
beverages, and more!**

***** A great time to invite your
friends to see our church and meet
our great people at Open Bible.**

**3:30 - 4:00 Harmonica Orchestra
4:00 - 4:15 Reformation Quiz
4:15 - 5:15 Games and Fellowship
5:15 - 6:00 Fantastic Dinner**

***** A suggested Free Will Offering
of \$12 per person**

LWMS NEWS

Our L.W.M.S. fall rally will be held at St. Mark Lutheran Church, in Leesburg, on October 10th with Registration and Coffee at 9:15am. The rally starts at 10:00am. We will car-pool and leave church at 8:30am.

Lunch will consist of a Southern Chicken Dinner and will cost \$7.00. There will also be a bake sale. Babysitting and children's lunch will be provided.

ADVENT BY CANDLELIGHT

Save the Date for Advent by Candlelight

To all the Ladies of Open Bible:

On Sunday, December 6th at 6:00 pm we will be celebrating the 4th annual Advent by Candle Service. It is a way to prepare our hearts for the coming of our Savior at Christmas. If you have never attended, you will enjoy an evening of festivities. The lights will be turned down, the candles on the decorated tables lit and a wonderful dessert prepared by your hostess. After dessert we move into the church to join in a special Advent service to encourage us to prepare for the coming holiday. This is a wonderful opportunity to enjoy the fellowship with other Christian women as well as an opportunity to invite friends and neighbors. Don't forget to mark your calendars. Watch for more information.

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
Bill & Mary Whitford - 26
Duane & Judy Anderson – 28

HAPPY BIRTHDAY



Sharon Affeldt – 1
Russ Niermeyer – 2
Bette McConkey – 4
Ken Phillips – 8
Art Hartwig – 9
Carol Sonnenberg – 11
Matthew Hand - 13
Carol Beetch - 13
Sandy Fehlhaber – 17
Dennis Duessler – 17
Corinne Mahoney - 23
Dave Buss – 26
Herb Schaefer – 29