

FOOTPRINTS

Bethel Lutheran Church Believe—Belong—Become

"Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path." Psalm 119:105

IN THIS ISSUE:

Pastor's column

Profile – Pastor Al

Holy Week Timeline

Youth in Action

The NALC

Seasons & Holy Days

Church Music

Focus on Ministry

And more . . .

*For God so loved
the world that he
gave his one and
only Son....*

JOHN 3:16, NIV

FOOTPRINTS



ON THE COVER:
Nails & John 3:16
Pixabay

FOOTPRINTS

Issue # 3

With the name **FOOTPRINTS**, we honor our commitment to walk in the steps of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ leaving a legacy for others to follow. At the same time, we look back and acknowledge the Bethel believers and our own personal *cloud of witnesses* who have gone before us leaving their footprints of faith for us to follow. We hope our humble efforts give Glory to God and provide enlightenment, entertainment, and knowledge to our readers. God bless you all!

† † †

Bethel's **vision** is to be a dynamic, life-changing church of fully devoted disciples of Jesus Christ.

† † †

Bethel's **mission** is to engage the curious, encourage the convinced, and empower the committed to be fully devoted disciples of Jesus Christ.

† † †

PoWeR SuRGe

Pray daily
Worship regularly
Read Scripture daily
Serve others
Relate to other Christians in Faith
Give of your financial resources

† † †

Editorial Board:

Gay Hanson (Editor in Chief), Susan Adda, Pam Dodane, Pastor Doug Gast, Carole Kuhn, Sarah Manro, John Patterson, Kirk Pfeil, and Connie Wooldridge.

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CONTENTS



PASTOR'S COLUMN

3



PROFILE:
PASTOR AL SCHOONOVER

4



HOLY WEEK TIMELINE

6



GENEROSITY TALKS

8



YOUTH IN ACTION:
VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

10



NALC

12



ASK THE PASTOR

13



SEASONS & HOLY DAYS

14



LUTHERAN CHRISTIANS:
STATIONS OF THE CROSS

15



CHURCH HISTORY

16



CHURCH MUSIC

17



CARING CORNER

18



MISSIONS

19



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

20



FOCUS ON MINISTRY

22



BOOKS OF INTEREST

23



WORD PLAY

24



CALENDAR & EVENTS

26



WORSHIP TIMES

28





LENT—EASTER

PASTOR'S COLUMN

Every year I try to think of a word that will guide me through the next 12 months. The words like “through,” “intersections,” and “relationships,” have been some of the words of past years. For myself, I have settled on the word “Accompaniment” for 2018. It seems to me to be a pretty great ministry word.

A basic definition of accompaniment is “something or someone who complements something else.” In music an accompaniment is someone who supports a solo voice, instrument, or group. Accompaniment is intended to give completeness or symmetry to something else.

When Terri and I go to Symphony on the Prairie in the summer, one of the performances we most enjoy is when there is a group that is accompanied by the Indianapolis symphony orchestra. The symphony adds power, depth and beauty to the performance.

When I do a wedding and then go to the reception it is fun to listen to the introductions the DJs make of the wedding party. They introduce a bridesmaid and tell us that she is accompanied by one of the grooms-men. And they walk in together.

When watching a playoff football game, the broadcaster will tell us the quarterback has received the snap, and handed it to the running back, and then his voice hits a crescendo level as he shouts into the mic . . . “This is going to be a big play . . . the running back is being accompanied by a convoy of blockers.” A touch down was scored by the skill of the running back, but more importantly by the ones who ran before him to accompany him to the goal.

But accompaniment is more than music, weddings or sports.

In the Bible there are many stories that tell of God coming into the lives of His people to accompany them in the journey they are on. One of my favorite accompaniment stories is about the resurrected Jesus joining the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. He gave them new insight for their journey, renewed their spirits and reignited their faith. Great story.

Here’s another. When Jesus appointed 70 others and sent them out ahead of him to every town and place He intended them to go, how did he send them? He sent them in pairs . . . together. He knew that His mission would be better, more enjoyable and more fruitful because His disciples would travel together and support and encourage one another in the ups and downs of mission work and witness.

Our Christmas celebrations are over and the main message of the birth of Jesus is that God is with us. He is our

Emmanuel. When Jesus looked down from the cross, he saw his mother and one of his closest disciples. Right there and then, He gave them to one another . . . “behold your mother . . . behold your son.” They became family and from that moment on, they would accompany one another throughout the rest of their lives. And remember that the last words Jesus shared with His disciples before ascending into heaven was the promise “I will be with you always.” There is no place or time when Jesus is not there to be with us and for us and in us to accompany us through everything, every place and every moment of our lives.

God knows . . . how lonely and isolated we can feel. That’s why He created us for relationships.

God knows . . . life is best in accompaniment.

God knows . . . our lives are better balanced, richer, and fuller when we live in accompaniment.

God knows . . . ministry is best with accompaniment.

God knows . . . joy is fuller, we are stronger, and we are less anxious and more centered when we are accompanied by brothers and sisters in Christ.

Look around you. Who are the people God has brought into your life to accompany you? They are there. Often we call them angels or wives/husbands, our friend, our doctor, our colleague, our special gift from God who is there with the right word, right touch, right spirit, right listening ear. And look around again, because there is someone(s) who God is calling you to accompany . . . to encourage, to help out, to sit with, to care about, to listen to.

Here at Bethel, I think of the blessings of ministry. What a joy, what a privilege, what a blessing it has been and continues to be to accompany each other in the ups and downs in the good times and bad, and in the fun times as well as the hard times. As a church family we share all life together . . . we work and serve together . . . we reach out to one another in prayer and we care about one another. We grow in fellowship and community together in Christ. I think that is what ministry is at its most basic.

What is your word for this year? If you don’t have one yet, might I suggest “accompaniment?” God has called us together for a purpose. God has designed us to experience life in all its fullness together. And God leads us to grow in our ministry of accompaniment. God accompanies us each and every day, now and forever. May we give God thanks for all those He sends to accompany us and may we be ever alert and sensitive to those God calls us to accompany as well. It is our call . . . and our vocation.

Yours in Christ,

PASTOR DOUG GAST
Senior Pastor



PROFILE:

PASTOR ALLEN SCHOONOVER



GROWING UP IN THE MIDWEST

Karen and Pastor Al are born and raised mid-westerners. Karen and her family are from Valparaiso, where her father (LaVerne) owned his own electronics repair shop, and then later, worked for Sears for 30 years until he retired in 1987. Her mom, Ruth, was a stay at home mom, though after moving to California she worked as a church secretary. Both of her parents have been involved in the Church, serving in a variety of ministries and leadership positions. In their retirement, Ruth and LaVerne served for 10 years as Mission Builders, working on church projects in the Pacific Northwest, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Indiana. There was never a time when faith and church weren't part of Karen's life. She has a sister, Carol who (with husband Bill) lives in Clovis, California, along with their three adult children and various cousins. Two brothers, Wayne (and Debbie) and Paul (and Janis) live with their families in Beaverton and Stayton, Oregon, respectively.



The entire extended family

Karen attended Butler University, graduating with an Elementary Education teaching credential in 1984. She taught in Lebanon, IN, and was a charter member of a new mission congregation – Christ Lutheran in Zionsville, pastored by Rev. E. Dean Windhorn. An important summer job for her in college was as a camp counselor and (for one summer) Assistant Director at Lutheran Hills. After teaching for two years in Lebanon, she was ready for a new adventure, so moved in 1986 (without a firm job offer!) to Fresno, where she quickly landed a position teaching 5th grade in a small town just north of Fresno.

Pastor Al grew up a “lonely only” in Hinsdale, a southwest suburb of Chicago. He contends he wasn’t spoiled as a child, merely “well loved” by his parents and grandparents. His father, Rob, was a salesman, and his mom, Virginia (“Ginny”) was a stay at home mother. She taught music lessons and volunteered as the “picture lady” in the neighborhood school for many years.



Rob and Ginny

Rob died from a stroke the day after Christmas, 2006. We were blessed with ample and easy family gatherings! Ginny died in 2010 after a 40+ year battle with Multiple Sclerosis. Al has fond memories of exploring Door County, WI with his parents, monthly camp outs and summer week-long camp with the Boy Scouts with his Dad, visiting Nana outside Boston the week between Christmas and New Years, and playing in the Marching Band (tenor sax) and Orchestra (clarinet) throughout High School.

MEETING IN FRESNO

Karen and Pastor Al met at Christmas-time, 1986 in a young adult group sponsored by Karen's church in Fresno. Al was doing his parish internship at another Lutheran church in town (Good Shepherd), but he attended the group's activities. They started dating casually that spring, and by the end of summer (before heading back for his final year of seminary



Karen and Al

in Minnesota!) he realized he was head over heels. That final school year was long, separated as they were by distance – without the modern conveniences of cell phones, FaceTime, or texting – but they survived and were married at the church where they met (Trinity Lutheran, Fresno) surrounded by friends and family. Al spent that first year of marriage as a hospital chaplain before entering the call process and receiving a call to Peace Lutheran Church in San Bruno in October 1989. Over the next 25 years, Karen and Al served congregations in San Bruno, Modesto, Fresno, and Vacaville, all in Northern California. During that time Karen taught 5th and 6th grades at various elementary and middle schools.

BUILDING A FAMILY

After struggling through the challenges of infertility and miscarriage it became clear that their family would grow through adoption. They adopted Abby in 1996 through an open adoption process. They have an ongoing, loving relationship with Abby's birthmother who lives in California. They are in awe of God's providence throughout the adoption process. Abby loves to read, loves horses, and enjoys Bible study and gaming. She had a year of college in California, and continues to take classes at Ivy Tech, waiting to see the direction God guides her.



Abby

As Abby grew, Karen and Al frequently discussed whether they would have more children. Finally deciding that one was enough, they sold the baby things and began to move on with life. And then God said wait a minute, there is one more member of your family in China. Through a series of unexpected events it became clear that a sister for Abby was in the works. After a 2 1/2 year process and wait time, Karen, Al and Abby traveled to China in August of 2007 to meet their new family member Amy who was 10 months old at the time. Amy was just the person needed to complete the family. The family enjoys meeting annually with other families who also traveled to China at the same time with them, continuing to build

relationships with other girls adopted at the same time. Amy loves to bake, run, swim, play piano and hang out with her friends. She is currently in 5th grade, and looking forward to middle school next year where she hopes to begin playing violin.



Amy, Karen, Abby, & Al Schoonover

GOD'S LEADING & GUIDING

Karen enjoys working at Washington Woods Elementary in Westfield, teaching 3rd grade. After attending Bible Study Fellowship for many years in California, she was happy to start attending the Tuesday evening satellite class here at Bethel. She likes to listen to books on tape, watch movies, hang out with family and friends and bake. As a family we enjoy playing games, watching TV and movies, taking walks, camping, swimming and being with friends and families. They have enjoyed the four seasons, although they are still hoping for a real snowstorm!

God's leading and guiding was evident as we went through the call process in the summer of 2015. Even with family across the country, we are delighted to be here and serving with you.

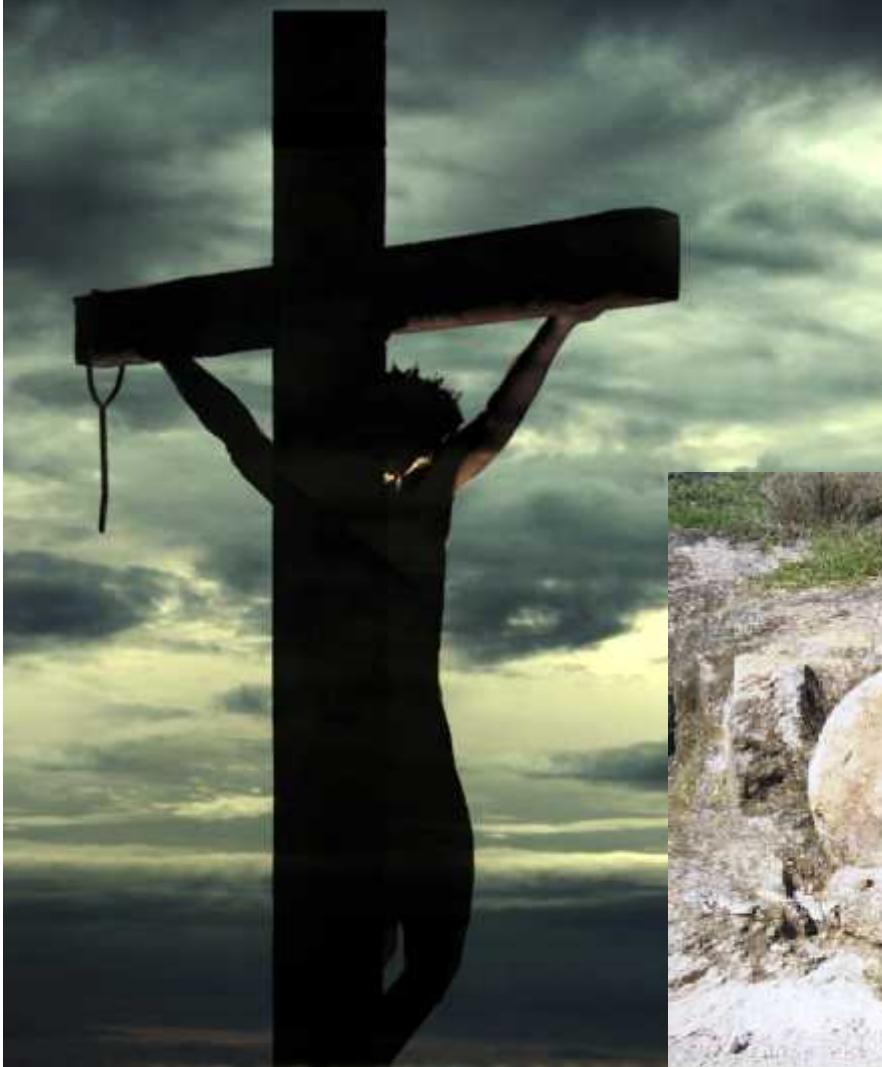
Pastor Doug and Terri and the Bethel extended family have opened itself wide to receive us, and for that we are extremely grateful. It is exciting to see the Holy Spirit at work in our midst, and to know that God is holding our present and our future in his trustworthy hands.



Pastor Al



HOLY WEEK TIMELINE



PALM SUNDAY



Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem

*Matthew 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-11;
Luke 19:28-44; John 12:12-19*

MONDAY



Jesus Cleanses the Temple

Matthew 21:12-13, Mark 11:15-19; Luke 19:45-46

Jesus Curses the Fig Tree

Matthew 21:18-22; Mark 11:12-14

TUESDAY



The Lesson of the Withered Fig Tree

Mark 11:20-25

The Challenge of Jesus' Authority

Matthew 21:23-27, Mark 11:27-33, Luke 20:1-8

The Parables of Warning

Matthew 21:28-22:14, Mark 12:1-12, Luke 20:9-19

Jesus Debates the Jewish Leaders

Matthew 22:15-46, Mark 12:13-37, Luke 20:20-44

Jesus Warns About the Scribes and Pharisees

Matthew 23, Mark 12:38-44, Luke 20:45-21:4

Jesus Talks about the Temple's Destruction and Signs of the End Times

Matthew 24-25, Mark 13, Luke 21:5-36

WEDNESDAY



Often called the "Silent Day" as there is no record of what Jesus did on this day recorded in the Gospels.

Conspiracy of the Chief Priests

Matthew 26:1-5, Mark 14:1-2, Luke 22:1-2

Jesus is Anointed

Matthew 26:6-13, Mark 1:1-9,

THURSDAY



The Last Supper

*Matthew 26:17-35, Mark 14:12-31,
Luke 22:7-38, John 13:1-17*

The Garden of Gethsemane

Matthew 26:36-46, Mark 14:32-42, Luke 22:39-46

Betrayal and Arrest

*Matthew 26:47-56, Mark 14:43-52,
Luke 22:47-53, John 18:1-18*

Trial Before Jewish Authorities

*Matthew 26:57-75, Mark 14:53-72,
Luke 22:54-71, John 18:19-27*

GOOD FRIDAY



Trial Before Pilate

*Matthew 27:11-31, Mark 15:1-20,
Luke 23:1-25, John 18:28-19:16*

Crucifixion

*Matthew 27:32-56, Mark 15:21-41,
Luke 23:26-49, John 19:16-37*

Burial

*Matthew 27:57-61, Mark 15:42-47,
Luke 23:50-56, John 19:38-42*

HOLY SATURDAY



Watchers at the Tomb

Matthew 27:62-66

EASTER SUNDAY



The Resurrection

*Matthew 28:1-10, Mark 16:1-8,
Luke 24:1-12, John 20:1-18*

The Report of the Watch

Matthew 28:11-15

On the Road to Emmaus

Luke 24:13-35

Jesus Appears to the Disciples

Mark 16:14, Luke 24:36-49, John 20:19-23

Note: The exact order of events in Holy Week is still debated by Biblical scholars. This is an approximate timeline of events.

GENEROSITY

Last fall as part of the church's Stewardship focus, Bethel was blessed to have nine of its members give personal testimonies on God's Generosity to them. We will be sharing them over several issues of FOOTPRINTS as few people were able to hear all of them, and their messages are awesome reminders of God's real presence in our lives.

BY BOBBI DANKERT

Hello, my name is Bobbi Dankert and I have been a member at Bethel with my family since 2003. Our experience started with small children. We moved through the school years, HS graduation and now the next stage. I appreciate the celebrations and services that are executed so well at Bethel. They make up a big part of my family memories now.

The people of Bethel and my family have helped me to flourish. Now, I can appreciate when the unexpected happens. It is then, when I get to have the experience of miracles and the blessings of forgiveness.

The way I have been supported, makes me feel accepted here at Bethel, which feels like grace. It is the feeling of being shown love. God works through all of us to experience his message of hope. Being shown love can change a person's mindset. Isn't that the miracle? This isn't the romantic kind of love, it's the kindness kind: sharing your smile, giving a hug, doing something for someone just because, letting them know they were a part of your thoughts during the day. Maybe our existence is only about showing kindness to others.

I coordinate the Sunshine Club, which provides meals to people of Bethel who need some extra support during a life-changing event. I find taking a meal to assist a person or family helps me to be in this cycle of kindness more often. Did the experience give to me, or was it just about me giving? It gets blurred in the process of taking or coordinating a meal. In the end, I've always received something different than I anticipated. Mostly, I receive a token of grace through the sharing of a moment with someone, starting a friendship, and eventually feeling blessed that I am able to do this. When I send an email out requesting meals and people sign up, I am blessed twofold by others who also want to support this service. My response in my head is "Wow – look at the kindness of others."

I've learned it's not what or how you create the food (pre-made at a store or restaurant is good too). It's taking the time that makes the difference. I don't do this myself. There are about 40 members at Bethel who volunteer, making it easy to fit it into your own schedule and to volunteer as little or as much as you can. In the past, I used to do stuff because I felt guilty that I should be doing more. Don't go there! When I attempt to give from a guilty heart, I don't receive any of the gifts of grace. Do the action out of love and your world opens up. Maybe your joy is related to another activity. People supporting the youth and prayers at Bethel have been a big blessings to our family. Go where your skills are implemented easily. However you share your gifts, look for the joy because miracles happen everywhere. It's just a matter of sharing your heart and kindness. The results will bless you with grace in one way or another. You will find the miracles in your own journey.

Just one meal makes a difference.



BY ANNETTE LANG

I am not sure if anyone can relate to being given a gift and not sure what to do with it, but I can. If I like it I keep and put it to good use or if I don't like it I give it to The Bethel Rummage sale, Goodwill or re-gift it to someone who I hope will like it better than me.

However, I am not talking about this type of gift. The gift I am talking about is spiritual gifts.

For the past 25 years (maybe longer) I have been working as a psychiatric social worker. For 13 of those years, I have been working primarily with chronically mentally ill patients and at least 50% of these patients I see are addicts.

My struggles with my spiritual gifts are that I did not want the responsibility of these gifts. Some of you may be wondering what I am talking about when it comes to responsibility of the gifts. The gift of Mercy is defined as being "compassionate toward others who are in distress showing sympathy and sensitivity coupled with a desire and the resources to lessen their suffering in a kind and cheerful manner."

So this was my old way of thinking. Please bear with me in this jumbled process.

I am supposed to help desperate people in a cheerful manner and not be stressed. Suppose I don't know how to help these individuals get the help they need? Suppose I am not real fond of the individual sitting in front of me. What if I am not cheerful that day? Okay so why am I the one who is given this gift? I don't mind helping people out but I believe in more of a hand up not a hand out so where is the mercy in that? I am well aware of the proverb saying you *give a man a fish you feed him for a day, but teach him how to fish you feed him for life*. Fine and dandy. So this means I don't enable people; so that means I use my gift of encouragement and using the gift of mercy and encouragement require me to use the gift of discernment. Holy cow! Now I have three gifts. This was my old way of thinking about my spiritual gifts

When I was able to identify my spiritual gifts and to weave them in with my skills as a therapist I was able to witness a noticeable improvement in my patients getting better. As I have become more aware of using my spiritual gifts; I have been able to engage in a more open conversation with my patients about their spiritual beliefs. Let me tell you their beliefs run the gamut.

As I engage with my patients to work on issues of forgiveness, and issues of anger, there is a noticeable change in my patients as they process these difficult issues.

A few of my patients who initially felt there was this "higher power" are now able to see that this higher power is what other people call God.

Having said this; I know that their revelation was not a result of me as a therapist, but rather it is the Holy Spirit working through me. I do find it interesting and humbling how the Holy Spirit has worked through me to help my patients see their life differently and as a result have a better quality of life.

I have other clients who are very appreciative of the fact that I am willing to talk to them about their spirituality. I

(cont'd on page 9)

GLAD AND GENEROUS HEARTS

(cont'd from page 8)

had two clients tell me that if they were to tell their psychiatrist that they hear from God and that they talk to God, the doctor is likely to label them with being psychotic for hearing voices. These clients were seriously concerned about this possibility. I just had to listen; I do not know their psychiatrist well enough to comment on their concerns; but it does give me pause for concern. I guess this may mean there is another opportunity to use my gifts at work.

I have known about spiritual gifts for some time but I just never thought it important to acknowledge them or try and incorporate them into my profession and into other areas of my life. I also believe that having been involved in BSF* here on Tuesday nights for 2 years, going on a third year, has also given me the confidence and knowledge I was lacking in my Christian education and Christian maturity to grow in my faith. The power of my gifts has become clearer to me as I have worked to step aside and let the Holy Spirit work through me.

One of the things I appreciate about Bethel is that most people sitting here tonight understand what I mean when I say that I have to step aside for the Holy Spirit to work through me. As I have embraced my gifts, and have used them on occasion with other members of Bethel in doing various programs here at the church, I have discovered that there are many gifted people here who are willing to donate their time, energy, spiritual gifts as well as financial gifts to help make Bethel and the community of Noblesville a better place. I am very humbled to know some of you and to serve with some of you. Your gifts have truly been a blessing to the members of Bethel and the community of Noblesville.

* Bible Study Fellowship

BY GREG MARSHALL:

I'm Greg Marshall... I was raised on my parents' beef farm in central Pennsylvania. My Dad is 89, Mom just turned 85, both are still in relatively good health, living now in a house in a small neighborhood, not far from the farm that they sold and moved off of about 15 years ago. My Dad grew up on a farm in southern Indiana, my Mom on one in the flint hills of Kansas. They never had much money most of their lives, frugal to a fault, but never in want of anything. They've always been fairly charitable. I remember weekly putting their envelope into the offering plate at church and feeling grown up when I was old enough to get my own envelopes to toss into the plate as well. Mom has always donated to this charity or that, as evidenced by the stack of free calendars, greeting cards and return address labels she gets from the various organizations annually. Did I mention Mom hates to throw things away? But I'd also say my folks can tend to be a bit judgmental, figuring that people often get what they deserve based on the choices they make.

I read a Forbes article about the challenges charitable organizations have to tell the story about people in need. It basically boiled down to the fact that it is easier to get

donations when circumstances would suggest that it is not the victims fault versus circumstances that imply that somehow it is the victims fault. That would be my folks most of the time... and probably me... and perhaps you as well. If someone makes bad choices and then life bites them in the butt, our tendency is to also think that perhaps "they got what they deserved."

When my folks sold the farm, they got a lot of money. Money they likely will never need, thanks to Dad's pension from working for the USDA for 30 years. One day after I suspect Dad was lecturing their next door neighbor about mowing her grass too short, she told him that she was going to have to sell her house. Marva was in the fight of her life, suffering from lung cancer, and with her medical bills mounting, she could no longer afford to pay her mortgage for the house she built, the house she loved. Marva was crying.

Now my Dad isn't the most empathetic guy in the world. But Mom says he walked into the kitchen that day and told her that they were going to buy Marva's house and rent it back to her really cheap. Marva smoked most of her life, was down to half a lung, and repeated chemo treatments... yet she was still smoking. I was pondering the other day, why Dad didn't judge that Marva was getting what she deserved? Marva cried, she told him her story, and he felt compassion. So they paid Marva \$300-some thousand for the house... probably more than it was worth, and then charged her only a couple hundred a month rent... so that Marva could stay in her house.

12 years later, just last month, still smoking, Marva finally succumbed to cancer, at age 79, survived by 6 adult children, 14 grandchildren and 8 great grandchildren. My folks undoubtedly will lose money when they sell Marva's house in this market and it reeks of smoke. But they didn't buy the house as an investment, they bought it to help Marva.

Last week, when I was home for a visit, they received a card from the family. I'd like to read it to you...

"Harold and Barb, Oh, where does our family begin to thank you for coming into Mom's life 12 years ago. Mom called both of you angels on so many occasions and you are the **soul** reason she was able to remain living in her home all these years. Your kindness and generosity has touched everyone of her children in a way that brings tears to our eyes. Mom was blessed to have you in her life. Even now after she is no longer with us in this world, your generosity, understanding and kindness continue. ...our whole family is blessed over and over again."

They say that generosity is a trait that we learn. I know I learned from my parents and now I can see that Marva's entire family has learned from them too. Whether it is by being generous with our time, our talents or our treasures, you can teach someone to be a generous angel to others too.

Thank you.





By Kris Lingenfelter

Vacation Bible School

A LOOK BACK...

During these cold winter days, it's fun to look back to warmer times...especially back to Vacation Bible School at Bethel! Last year, over 100 kids filled Bethel's sanctuary and rooms as they learned more about God and his incredible love for them during *Maker Fun Factory* VBS. They played games, imagined great inventions, enjoyed tasty snacks and heard Bible stories during the weeklong adventure taught by the incredible volunteer crew from Bethel.



Maker Fun Factory VBS 2017

By week's end, over 60 volunteers worked to ensure that each kid who walked through the doors left knowing how much God loved them. Our volunteers always tell us that they have just as much fun as the kids do! It was amazing to see Bethel come together for the kids—the majority who were not Bethel members! VBS is such an important outreach mission for our church, as we serve so many kids and families during this one week, many of whom do not have home churches of their own.

We are already looking forward to VBS 2018—*Shipwrecked—Rescued by Jesus!* We hope you'll join us!

PREPARATIONS...

A lot of preparation goes in to making Vacation Bible School spectacular, but the smiles and joy on the kids' faces makes it worth it! From planning and ordering supplies, to set design and construction, there is a lot that goes on behind the scenes before the kids ever walk through the door.

Typically, planning for VBS begins in January with deciding the curriculum and what materials our volunteer teachers will need. Planning continues throughout the spring with beginning to ask for volunteers and supplies. We need LOTS of volunteers to make VBS run smoothly! We need lead teachers, station helpers, Group Leaders and co-leaders, Preschool teachers and Group Leaders, registration help and much more! Every role is incredibly important to the success of Vacation Bible School and no amount of time you are able to give is too small.

A large part of getting ready for VBS is gathering the supplies needed. Many times this comes in the form of donated items that are "recycled" into our set and decorations. This aspect of our preparations is incredibly important as it helps to cut down on VBS expenses, allowing us to serve even more kids!



While there is much preparation that takes place months ahead of time, the biggest preparations for VBS take place the week before—set design and decorating! This is also a fun and exciting part of VBS preparations because we begin to see all of the hard work come to life! We are always looking for volunteers to help decorate—no artistic talent required! Please keep an eye out for decorating dates the closer we get to summer!

VBS WEEK

A week of VBS is fun packed and full of excitement! From the time the kids walk in the door in the evening, it is non-stop action!

Each evening, volunteers begin with fellowship and a light dinner at the church. This is a great way to help working families be able to volunteer and attend VBS without having to try and figure out dinner as well! After a brief volunteer meeting about the evening's activities, it's show time!



VBS in the Sanctuary

Each day of Vacation Bible School has a different Bible verse that is focused on. The Bible verse and theme for the day is accompanied by a fun cartoon character! The kids kick-off each evening in the Sanctuary with fun skits and singing their favorite VBS songs! This is always a favorite part of the night!

After the opening session, the kids break off into groups to travel through 5 different stations each evening—Imagination Station, Kid Vid, Bible Stories, Games and Kitchen Creations. The theme and Bible verse are reinforced at each station through engaging stories and activities. Each station lasts approximately 25 minutes and Group Leaders help to keep the groups moving along. The evenings definitely move very quickly!

At the end of the evening, the groups come back together one more time in the Sanctuary to wrap-up what they have learned and join in more songs. This time is also used to update everyone on special announcements and our Mission Donation goals. Usually at the end of the week, if our donation goal has been met, there is a special treat!

While every part of VBS week is enjoyed, the hands-down favorite activity falls on the last evening—the “World’s Largest” Slip-N-Slide! This is a fun way to end a great week of VBS at Bethel and is usually enjoyed by “kids” of all ages!

YOUTH HELPERS

We love all our volunteers! We especially appreciate and value our youth that take time out of their summer to come volunteer at VBS. This past year, we had more than 30 youth volunteer for a variety of roles!



A few of our amazing youth volunteers!

Youth can begin to volunteer at VBS the summer following their 6th grade year. We have lots of different ways they can volunteer—group leaders, games or crafts help, preschool VBS, and many more! If your child is interested, please have them talk to Kris Lingenfelter or Laura Houser!



More of our amazing youth volunteers!

Join us for VBS 2018—
Shipwrecked: Rescued by Jesus!





NALC

North American Lutheran Church

What We Confess & Believe

NALC Confession of Faith

The North American Lutheran Church confesses:

The Triune God — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and the Gospel as the power of God for the salvation of all who believe.

Jesus Christ is the Word of God incarnate, through whom everything was made and through whose life, death, and resurrection God fashions a new creation.

The proclamation of God's message to us as both Law and Gospel is the Word of God, revealing judgment and mercy through word and deed, beginning with the Word in creation, continuing in the history of Israel, and centering in all its fullness in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

The canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the written Word of God. Inspired by the Holy Spirit speaking through their authors, they record and announce God's revelation centering in Jesus Christ. Through them the Holy Spirit speaks to us to create and sustain Christian faith and fellowship for service in the world.

The canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God and the authoritative source and norm of its proclamation, faith and life, "according to which all doctrines should and must be judged." (Formula of Concord, Epitome, Part I)

The Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds as true declarations of the faith of the Church.

The Unaltered Augsburg Confession as a true witness to the Gospel, acknowledging as one with it in faith and doctrine all churches that likewise accept the teachings of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession.

The other confessional writings in the Book of Concord, namely, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles and the Treatise, the Small Catechism, the Large Catechism, and the Formula of Concord, as further valid interpretations of the faith of the Church.

The Gospel, recorded in the Holy Scriptures and confessed in the ecumenical creeds and Lutheran confessional writings, as the power of God to create and sustain the Church for God's mission in the world.

The NALC honors and accepts The Common Confession (2005) included here, as a summary of teachings otherwise affirmed in the Lutheran Confessions.

The Common Confession

(The faith statement of Lutheran CORE – Coalition for Renewal. Adopted: November 2005)

CC1) The Lord Jesus Christ

We are people who believe and confess our faith in the Triune God — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We trust and believe in Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord.

CC2) The Gospel of Salvation

We believe and confess that all human beings are sinners, and that sinners are redeemed by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. God alone justifies human beings by faith in Christ — a faith that God creates through the message of the Gospel. As ambassadors for Christ, God uses us to speak his Word and build His kingdom.

CC3) The Authority of Scripture

We believe and confess that the Bible is God's revealed Word to us, spoken in Law and Gospel. The Bible is the final authority for us in all matters of our faith and life.

CC4) A Common Confession of Faith

We accept and uphold that the Lutheran Confessions reliably guide us as faithful interpretations of Scripture, and that we share a unity and fellowship in faith with others among whom the Gospel of Jesus Christ is preached and the sacraments are administered in accordance with the Gospel.

CC5) The Priesthood of All Believers

We believe and confess that the Holy Spirit makes all who believe in Jesus Christ to be priests for service to others in Jesus' name, and that God desires to make use of the spiritual gifts He has given through the priesthood of all believers.

CC6) Marriage and Family

We believe and confess that the marriage of male and female is an institution created and blessed by God. From marriage, God forms families to serve as the building blocks of all human civilization and community. We teach and practice that sexual activity belongs exclusively within the biblical boundaries of a faithful marriage between one man and one woman.

CC7) The Mission and Ministry of the Congregation

We believe and confess that the church is the assembly of believers called and gathered by God around Word and Sacrament, and that the mission and ministry of the church is carried out within the context of individual congregations, which are able to work together locally and globally.

ASK THE PASTOR



IS THERE SOMETHING YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO ASK?

By Pastor Martins Irbe

A NEW “DARK AGE?” — THE BENEDICT OPTION

I’ve been preaching about the coming of a worldwide Christian revival for well over thirty years. I’ve been expecting it. I’ve been looking for it. I’ve been praying and hoping. It must come I thought, I simply have to be patient. Surely it will come.

Well, I’ve changed my mind. As we begin 2018, I don’t think we’re on the cusp of a global revival. Not in the form that the churches will fill to overflowing, the prisons will empty and genuine peace and love will pervade the planet. There will be, and it’s already begun, an enormous move of the Holy Spirit that will bring about a powerful Church with all the blessings that the Father has in store for his beloved children, but the number of Christians will dramatically decrease. I believe we are experiencing the very beginnings, not of a revival, but of a new dark age.

Allow me to explain. Gunta and I spent fourteen years living in Latvia and had the opportunity to travel widely in Europe. I’ve had the privilege of preaching in Sweden, Finland, France and Romania. We’ve attended retreats and conferences in Spain and the Czech Republic and ministered in Brussels at the Parliament of the European Union. We’ve seen the empty churches and experienced the post-Christian culture first-hand. Estonia and Albania “brag” as to which nation is the most secular in the world, as if it were a badge of honor. While the Protestant Church in Europe is not dead, it is most assuredly on life support.

In 2012 we arrived back in Indiana. At first Gunta, our daughter Inga and I thought that our discomfort in being back was due to our long absence. But it was much more than that. America had changed. People were more impatient, more self-absorbed, less hospitable, and more suspicious. Drivers were less courteous and neighbors less friendly.

Even more troubling was witnessing traditional Christian teaching and practice on family and social issues and individual behavior undergo a paradigm-shift. With breathtaking speed America was becoming “progressive values” Europe. When I spoke to people of chastity before marriage, most assumed I was joking. Science now proves that there is human life in the womb but if this “thing” cramps one’s life-style, abortion is the remedy. Gay marriage? Can’t be a homophobe. Alarmed at the breakdown of traditional cultural structures that have built western civilization? Can’t stand in the way of progressive change. Concerned about declining church attendance? Can’t take time to listen to a preacher say the same thing over and over again when there is shopping to be done or golf balls to be hit at “Top Golf.”

In the same year of 2012, Benedict XVI stated that the light of Christianity is flickering out in the West and that there are people alive today who may see the death of our faith. Thank God, the Church is growing in Asia, Africa and in parts of the Third World even as it speedily declines in North America and Europe.

As believers, what should be our response to all this depressing news? Rob Dreher has addressed this question with a book called “The Benedict Option.” He begins by telling us how sick, as a

church, we have become, particularly young people. He believes most American teenagers suffer from something called “Moralistic Therapeutic Deism” (MTD) which has five basic tenants:

1. A God exists who created and orders the world and watches over human life on earth.
2. God wants people to be good, nice and fair to each other, as taught in the Bible and by most world religions.
3. The central goal of life is to be happy and to feel good about oneself.
4. God does not need to be particularly involved in one’s life except when He is needed to resolve a problem.
5. Good people go to heaven when they die.

While MTD is not completely false, there is just enough truth to inoculate young people against real, biblical and traditional Christianity.

But before we chastize young people, we must admit that we are their teachers. What is the spiritual health of our congregations today? Dreher writes that “Every single congregation in America must ask itself if it has compromised so much with the world that it has been compromised in its faithfulness.”

Dreher compares our contemporary situation with that of “fifth- and sixth-century Rome.” In the year 476, the last Roman emperor was deposed, and the “Dark Ages” officially began. With the breakdown of authority there was an even greater loosening of morals. Violence and sexual depravity were now the rule, even as Romans considered themselves Christians. It was at this time that the Lord raised up a giant of the faith called “Benedict.” With a spirituality that was practical and yet dynamic, this man laid the foundations on which western civilization would flourish. Benedict’s “Rule” as a simple guide for living in a Christian community led to a revival of learning as the churches and monasteries became “schools” that kept the light of wisdom alive. “These monasteries kept learning alive within their walls, evangelized barbarian peoples, and taught them how to pray, to read, to plant crops, and to build things. Over the next few centuries they prepared the devastated societies of post-Roman Europe for the rebirth of civilization. It all grew from the mustard seed of faith planted by a faithful young Italian who wanted nothing more than to seek and to serve God in a community of faith constructed to withstand the chaos and decadence all around them. Benedict’s example gives hope today, because it reveals what a small cohort of believers who responded creatively to the challenges of their own time and place can accomplish by challenging the grace that flows through them from their radical openness to God and embodying that grace in a distinct way of life.”

How do we Christians in 2018 live out our faith in the face of a swelling tide of opposition and hostility? How do we deal with a technology that far outruns our wisdom? Can we “keep the faith?” and “run the race” when everyone else has embraced falsehood?

Continued on page 15.

SEASONS & HOLY DAYS

LENT

By Carole Kuhn

“Lent”—The word comes from the Anglo-Saxon word “lencten” meaning Spring Season. It is a time of 40 days from Ash Wednesday, the 7th Wednesday before Easter, excluding Sundays, as we remember how Jesus suffered and died for us..

“Excluding Sundays” is a practice by the Western Christian world remembering Sunday as the day of Resurrection. We are reminded to think of this time as a time of self-examination and reflection, a time of repentance, and perhaps how we can give of ourselves as Jesus gave himself to save us.

The 40 days reminds us of the time when Jesus was baptized and the 40 days he spent in the wilderness, praying, fasting and fighting off the temptations from the devil. Fasting is still observed by some. There are many references among the Christian world as to why 40 is such an important number: There are 40 Biblical references about Moses on Mt. Sinai with God; Elijah spent 40 days and nights walking to Mount Horeb; Noah and the great flood, 40 days and nights; the Hebrew people trying to get to the Promise Land spent 40 years in the desert; and there was Jonah’s prophecy of judgment when he gave the people of Nineveh 40 days to repent or be destroyed. Then, Jesus in the wilderness, leading to Maundy Thursday (sometimes called Holy Thursday) for the last supper.

There are also many Holy Days celebrated during Lent. We begin with Ash Wednesday. Palm Sunday marks the beginning of Holy Week when crowds threw down palms to mark Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem on the donkey; and Holy week...the last week of Lent before Easter when we celebrate Maundy Thursday and remember the Last Supper. During this 40-day period, the word “alleluia” is removed from liturgy as it is a word of “joyful exclamation.”

Celebration on Ash Wednesday may begin at church with the imposition of ashes...a black cross placed on our foreheads—the cross another reminder of our baptism. The pastor will remind us “You are dust and to dust you shall return.” These ashes may be made from burning the previous Palm Sunday’s palm leaves. Crosses and crucifixes may be covered with cloth in sanctuaries and some families even cover religious pictures or wall hangings at home. The color black is used on Ash Wednesday also to signify the absence of light and the curse of sin and darkness. Other colors of this “season” include purple, meaning repentance and solemnity and perhaps scarlet or white on Maundy Thursday.

In today’s fast-paced world, time for personal reflection may be hard to accomplish.

But overall, taking time to pray for repentance, thinking of our blessings and how we might pray for and give to others, as well as “almsgiving” by giving to help others... all can help us “celebrate” Lent. For the true character of Lent is penitence.

As services end on Maundy Thursday, the altar is stripped in preparation for Good Friday.

¹¹ For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

¹² And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.”

Luke 2:11-12 ESV

¹ After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem ² and asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.”

Matthew 2:1-2 (NIV)

LUTHERAN CHRISTIANS

WHO WE ARE - WHAT WE BELIEVE

By Susan Adda

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

The journey of the Stations of the Cross is a practice that began soon after Christ was crucified on the cross.

Early Christians retraced the route Jesus took as he carried his cross to his death. The first pilgrimages followed different routes through Jerusalem. Later, during the Medieval period, pilgrimages started at the Fortress of Antonia (Pilate's Judgement Hall) and concluded at the ancient Church of the Holy Sepulcher, the traditional site of Golgotha (Calvary) and the tomb of Jesus. By the sixteenth century, this route came to be called Via Dolorosa or The Way of Sorrow.



What can Lutherans of today do to reenact this unbelievably sad journey? During the season of Lent and up to Good Friday, we can make our own journey by visiting the 14 Stations that Jesus took from being condemned to death until he was laid in the tomb.

At Bethel Lutheran, we have a Peace Trail with plaques representing each station. The service held on Good Friday allows us to take our own pilgrimage along this trail and truly experience the emotions that Jesus, his mother and his loyal followers must have felt.

While it's true that Jesus' death was not in vain and we have been given a new life - an eternal life with God - because of this great sacrifice, we must remember the stations as we celebrate the true victories in our lives.

Continued from page 13.

After a quick historical review on how and why western civilization got into a pickle, Dreher gives different real-life examples of "The Benedict Option." Some might go the monastic route. My very dear friend in Latvia, Janis, is building a convent and has recruited several women to be nuns. The "Rule" is based on the Orthodox model, but Janis himself remains a Lutheran pastor with the full blessing of the Latvian national Church. Others might choose to live not in a monastic setting, but nevertheless in close communities with other believers. Some Christians might be led to embrace the poor and marginalized even at the risk of poverty and marginalization for themselves. Still others are developing ways of integrating "church" and "home" and striking a balance between communal and individual spirituality.

Dreher says, "Benedict Option churches will find ways within their own traditions to take on practices, liturgical and otherwise, for the sake of deepening their commitment to Christ by building a thick Christian culture. And Benedict Option believers will break down the conceptual walls that keep God safely confined in a church-shaped compartment. That's because a church that is a church only on Sunday and at other formal gatherings of the congregation is not only failing to be the church Christ calls us to

Like God's eternal gift, many of our victories come after troublesome times, despair or heartbreak. When the light at the end of the tunnel appears, we can fall to our knees and thank God for the blessing of relief.

Before we celebrate Jesus' resurrection (the grandest of all celebrations), take the journey on the Peace Trail with Jesus and the people who loved him most, and believe and hope that only good will continue to come of his death.



Reference - "The Cross as a Journey - The Stations of the Cross for Protestant Worship" by Dennis Bratcher, published at *The Voice: Biblical and Theological Resources for Growing Christians* [<http://www.crivoice.org/stations.html>]

SEE ALL THE IMAGES AND PLAY THE **STATIONS OF THE CROSS** MATCH GAME ON PAGE 24.

The 12:15 p.m. Good Friday Service follows the Stations of the Cross. Weather permitting, the service will be outside on the Peace Trail. Join us for thoughtful meditations, prayer, and reflection on Christ's journey to the cross.

be: It is also not going to be a church with the strength and focus to endure the trials ahead."

Their is no cookie-cutter answer to how the Lord wants us to live. Some of us might, in the not too distant future, be called to martyrdom like Dietrich Bonhoeffer or might have to suffer torture in prison like Lutheran pastor Richard Wurmbrand in communist Romania. But all of us are called to service. If we believe (grace) then we will do (works).

I hope I'm wrong about a coming dark age. But whether future opposition to our faith is light or comes at us with the force of a hurricane, we should all hope to be ready.

The late Cardinal Francis George said in 2010: "I expect to die in my bed, my successor will die in prison and his successor will die a martyr in the public square." But here is the Cardinal's next sentence which is rarely quoted: "His successor will pick up the shards of our ruined society and slowly help rebuild civilization, as the church has done so often in human history."

2018 will undoubtedly offer us many opportunities to get to work proclaiming the glory of God as we seek to further His Kingdom.

Pastor Martins Irbe

CHURCH HISTORY

OLIVE BRANCH LUTHERAN CHURCH: 1895-1932

Olive Branch

In the 1850s and 1860s, several Pennsylvania Germans and a few families directly from Germany settled in an area 4 miles southeast of Cicero. This community centered around two focal points. These were the Baton Rouge School, located at the intersection of 206th Street and Cumberland Road, and the Zimmer Cemetery, 1 ½ miles east of the school.

When roads were passable, the pioneers worshipped in homes and the schoolhouse. They were served by pastors from Bethel and Mt. Pleasant, usually on Sunday afternoons. After existing as an informal congregation for almost 40 years, it was decided to erect a building of their own. An argument arose as to the best location for the church building. Some wanted it built near the Zimmer Cemetery and some near the Baton Rouge School. A site near the school was selected. The dispute caused a few families to merge with Bethel 40 years before the rest of the Olive Branch congregation. In 1895, a frame building was erected diagonally across from the Baton Rouge School. The congregation was named Olive Branch.

In 1909, Olive Branch organized as a congregation separate from Bethel, yet sharing pastors. The following year, some members of Bethel, who lived closer to Olive Branch, left Bethel and joined Olive Branch. The church had a membership of 60 in 1915.



Olive Branch Lutheran Church—1916

The coming of the automobile made the 4 miles between Cicero and Olive Branch shrink. This pulled the congregations closer together. More and more, the activities of the church were part of and connected to Bethel. In the 1920s, the churches had common pastors, Missionary Societies, and Dorcas Societies. In many cases, the two churches were not only connected by a common faith and the same pastor,

but also by family relationships. The church merged with Bethel in 1932.



Otis Roberts, Kid Kepner, Walter Barker, Leonard Eck, Ralph Kellam, Ora Kepner in front of Olive Branch.

Historical Highlights

1895 – A committee from Bethel and Pastor Marion Mohler formally developed this group into a congregation naming it Olive Branch, but still connected to Bethel, the mother congregation.

1895— A building committee was organized. A frame building was erected diagonally across from the Baton Rouge school at the intersection of 206th Street and Cumberland Road.

1895— John Yansel donated his sawmill to cut the 15,000 feet of lumber for the building.

1909—Olive Branch was granted the privilege of organizing as an independent congregation, yet part of the Cicero Lutheran Parish.

1910— Thirty members of Bethel withdrew their membership and joined the Olive Branch congregation located in their immediate locality.

1932—Olive Branch voted to join Bethel's congregation by a ballot of 19 yes, 4 no, and 4 abstaining. Olive Branch ceased to exist as a separate congregation.



The last Bethel member to have attended Olive Branch was Jane Kaiser Owens. She died on her birthday in August of 2011 at the age of 92. She is buried at the Zimmer Cemetery, which is located on the farm where she was born.



CHURCH MUSIC

By Michelle Whitehead

THE STORIES OF TWO FAMILIAR LENTEN HYMNS

Beneath the Cross of Jesus

1868

The author of this hymn, Elizabeth Clephane, was born in Edinburgh, Scotland, where her father was Sheriff of Fife. One of her siblings later wrote: "My sister was a very quiet little child, shrinking from notice and was always absorbed in books. The loss of both her parents at an early age taught her sorrow. As she grew up she was recognized as the cleverest one of our family. She was first in her class and a favorite at school. Her love for poetry was a passion. Among the sick and suffering she won the name, 'My Sunbeam.'" (Elizabeth's own comment on her nickname is written into a line of this hymn: "I take, O Cross, thy shadow for my abiding place; I ask no other sunshine than the sunshine of His face.")

At some point, Elizabeth's family moved to Melrose, southeast of Edinburgh, where she spent her remaining years. Though frail, she was a diligent Bible student, a sympathetic listener, and a worker among the poor. She and her sisters raised money for the unfortunate, on one occasion selling their horse and carriage for a needy family.



Elizabeth's poems were published in the Scottish magazine, *The Family Treasury*. This one, appearing after her death, was discovered by Ira Sankey and introduced in the great Moody/

Sankey meetings in Britain. In this autobiography, Sankey stated: "The author of this hymn, Elizabeth Clephane, also wrote the widely known hymn, 'The Ninety and Nine,' and these two were her only hymns. The first time this hymn was sung is still fresh in my memory. The morning after I had composed the music, Rev. W. H. Aitkin was to speak at our mission in London...Before the sermon, I sang, 'Beneath the Cross of Jesus' as a solo; and as in the case of 'The Ninety and Nine,' much blessing came from its use for the first time. With eyes filled with tears and deeply moved, the preacher said to the audience: "Dear friends, I had intended to speak to you this morning upon work for the Master, but this new hymn has made such an impression on my heart, and evidently upon your own, that I will defer my proposed address and speak to you on 'The Cross of Jesus.'"

Sankey's tune has since been replaced in popular usage by ST. CHRISTOPHER, music composed for this hymn by Frederick C. Maker.

In the Cross of Christ I Glory

1825

When the World Trade Center collapsed following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, workers excavating the site found a cross-shaped beam that, standing upright amid the ruin and debris, became a make-shift center of worship. The picture of that cross was published around the world and served as a symbol of hope.



A similar story is associated with this hymn. On the island of Macao in the region of Hong Kong, a magnificent cathedral was destroyed. Only the front wall remained. Atop it was a great metal cross, blackened with age, silhouetted against the sky. It is said that hymnist John Bowring was so inspired by the story of this cathedral that he wrote the hymn, "In the cross of Christ I glory, tow'ring o'er the wrecks of time."

The validity of that story is questionable, but we do have a verified story about RATHBUN, the tune to which this hymn is set. It was composed by Ithamar Conkey, organist/choir director at Central Baptist Church in Norwich, Connecticut.

In 1849, Central's pastor had planned a series of sermons on the seven last words of Christ on the Cross. According to the *Norwich Bulletin*: "One Sunday during the series it was a very rainy day. Mr. Conkey was sorely disappointed that the members of the choir did not appear, as only one soprano came. Mr. Conkey was so discouraged and disheartened that after the prelude he closed the organ and locked it and went to his home on Washington Street. The pastor and choir gallery were at opposite ends of the church, and he could leave without attracting the attention of the congregation. That afternoon, as he sat down at the piano for practice, his mind was distracted with the thoughts of the sermons Dr. Hiscox had prepared and the words of the hymn, 'In the Cross of Christ I Glory.' He then and there composed the music that is now so universally familiar in churches of every denomination, know as RATHBUN. He admitted afterward the inspiration was a vivid contradiction of his feelings at the morning service."

But why did he name his tune RATHBUN?

The one choir member who showed up on that rainy Sunday in 1849..that one faithful soprano...was named Mrs. Beriah S. Rathbun.





CARE MINISTRY

By Kim Radant

***He Heals the broken in heart
and binds up their wounds.***

Psalm 147:3

Lift Up Your Mind, Body, and Spirit in 2018

The winter doldrums can impact us all. Lack of sunlight, inactivity during cold weather, over-consumption of food and alcohol over the holidays, overscheduled calendars, and incoming holiday bills can leave us feeling exhausted and overwhelmed. Here are a few tips to help you beat the winter blues:

MOVE! Did you know that even one single episode of exercise can boost your mood and spirit?

Research has shown that intentional movement, at any magnitude, can enhance a positive mood and decrease negative thoughts. The good news is that you do not have to join a health club to MOVE. Take a thirty minute walk each day. If you can't get out, make a concerted effort to stretch gently, lifting your arms over your head



or holding on to the back of a chair and raising and lowering yourself on your tippy-toes. Anyone, regardless of physical ability, can focus on gentle movement as a way to enhance mobility and balance and boost your spirits.

Don't Be a Hermit. It is tempting to stay curled up in your house during the cold winter months. Try to get out, meet a friend for lunch, and definitely get some fresh air! If you are at work, a few minutes of fresh air in the middle of the work day can help you clear out mental cobwebs and improve your spirit. AND, if you are alone and/or confined to your home, please contact our pastors or a member of the Bethel Care Ministry. We are here to visit with you, call

you, and give you some company during what can seem like some really long winter months.

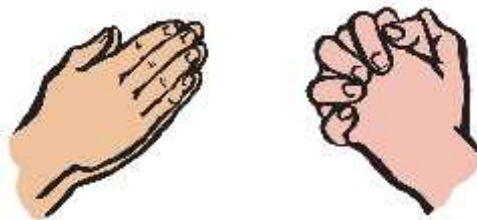


Care. The Bible tells us, "let us not become weary in doing good for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially those who belong to the family of believers." (Galatians 6:9) Did you know that caring for others does not only fulfill our commitment to one another as members of the Christian family, it actually improves our sense of health and well-being?



Research shows that the acts of volunteering and giving help reduce stress and depression by connecting us to society and giving us a sense of purpose. Bethel provides many ways to volunteer and use your time and talents, from making a meal, working in the food pantry, helping with Sunday school, donating financially, etc. In fact, it is practically impossible to list all of the ways you can volunteer and reap the rewards caring provides, even if you have limited resources or are confined to your home. Contact our Pastors or the Bethel Care Ministry for suggestions about how you can "care."

Pray. The ultimate sustenance in any season, prayer doesn't just strengthen our relationship with Jesus Christ and unburden us in times of trouble, it relaxes us! That's right...the Word of the Lord and talking to Jesus relieves our stress and eases loneliness by reinforcing that we are never, ever alone. Prayer sustains us through all seasons, and winter is no exception.



In this New Year, we can continue to grow in our walk with Christ and beat those winter doldrums all at the same time! Happy New Year!

The Bethel Care Ministry

MISSIONS

“GO AND MAKE DISCIPLES...”

LATVIA

By Gunta Irbe

Thank you for your support of Pastor Martins and Gunta Irbe's Continuing Mission to Latvia

We would like to thank Bethel Lutheran Church for your support of our mission to Latvia. Your prayerful support helps us reach out to many people and organizations with whom we had ministered in the past. Your financial support allowed us to make another trip from September 26 to October 22, 2017.

We experienced great highs and lows:



Via de Cristo—15th Anniversary Worship Service

Highs:

1. The 15th anniversary of our bringing the Via de Cristo movement in Latvia with over 200 people in attendance including the Archbishop of Latvia and the local Bishop.



Archbishop Vanags preaching at VdC15

2. Meeting with Bishop Hans at his home to discuss a possible Pastors' Conference in the spring of 2018. We initially reached out to the pastors and wives in 1993 with our first Pastors' Conference. It was the first time pastors and wives had ever been invited to meet together for 3 days of fellowship, encouragement and lectures dealing with



Bishop Hans & Pastor Martins

many areas of ministry – personal, theological and practical. This year we hope to return to help pastors and wives deal with the stresses of ministry in their family lives.

3. People telling us of the impact of our ministry: One woman thanked me for teaching Sunday School in Rujiena, our first parish in northern Latvia. She said it has laid the Christian foundation for her daughter's life. Although I barely remember her, she came to the class I held in one room for all grades with our daughter Inga (age 9) as assistant. Another woman thanked me for helping her start the Latvian Family Association. She and I spent hours praying, planning, visiting people, organizations, the Parliament and even one visit with the President of Latvia. She is continuing the work and says that she would not have had the courage to do all this without my support.



*Pastor Martins & Gunta with
VdC Leaders and Families*

Lows:

1. Living with a close friend whose husband died suddenly in June. It opened my eyes in a new way to the personal loneliness of widowhood. We also visited the widow of one of the first pastors we did ministry with in Latvia – Pastor Aivars Beimanis. He died during the time we were away. He and his wife had no biological children, but his funeral filled the Cathedral in Riga with his spiritual children, many of whom are now pastors or pastor's wives. A book should be written about this man.
2. Hearing that the man who has taken over “Lutherans for Life of Latvia” has lost his vision and zeal, resulting in nothing happening other than updating the website.
3. Listening to stories of pastors who have fallen into sexual or financial sin or depression resulting in their inability to lead their flock.

A pastors' conference is being planned for this April with the encouragement of Archbishop Janis Vanags and Bishop Hans Jensen. We hope to bring together pastors and their wives for fellowship and mutual support. Strong, healthy marriages lead to strong, healthy congregations. Please pray for that the Holy Spirit will change their lives and their ministries.

Your Servant in Christ, Gunta Irbe

CHRISTIAN

CHILDREN AND YOUTH



SUNDAY MORNING

Sunday School — For children ages Kindergarten through 5th grade begins at 10:00 a.m. Children go directly to their rooms where they will meet their teacher(s). They are dismissed to parents at 10:55 a.m.

Nursery — Infants and toddlers under 3 are welcomed into our nursery during the 8:45 service through the end of the Sunday School hour. Nursery attendants read Bible stories, play and love on our youngest members while their parents attend Adult Education classes or worship.

Preschool — Children who turn 3 years old before December 31st are invited to join our Preschool Sunday School Class at 10:00. Gospel Light Curriculum teaches children Bible lessons in a fun, age-appropriate way, with engaging songs, stories, videos and puppets!

K-5th Grade — Children are grouped into Sunday School classes by age/grade. Over a three-year cycle, students learn the basic stories and Lutheran concepts in preparation for Confirmation during middle school.

High School — We explore various topics of mutual interest, seeking to apply our faith to real-life situations and challenges; to move beyond the accumulation of more head knowledge, into the arena of faith application and growing as disciples. We begin class each week sharing at least one good thing from the past week. We encourage conversation and discussion in a respectful manner. We encourage active serving while reminding them of the little eyes looking up to them here at church. We end each class with prayer requests and prayer.



Confirmation

Confirmation class for Middle School students (grades 6-8) strives to move faith from the heard to the heart through a highly interactive experience that includes both large group presentation and small group discussion. Following class, we attend the 11:11 a.m. service to worship together. Once a month we will continue our time together after worship with a large group fellowship activity. Our goal is to develop a sticky, life-long faith through a combination of engaging learning events, regular fellowship activities, and frequent service opportunities in and beyond the congregation. Join us upstairs in the Student Center. Contact Youth and Family Minister Joe Rudy for registration information (joerudy@bethellutheranchurch.com).



MIDWEEK: High School Youth Ministry

Wednesdays, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Our High School (grades 9-12) youth ministry meets upstairs in the Student Center. A typical night involves hanging out, eating Oreos or something awesome, listening to music, playing games, watching a video, discussing the important and the not-so-important things and wrapping up the evening with HI's and LOW'S. We welcome all (members and friends alike), and we encourage each other throughout the week. We have been known to go on trips, mission work, summer camp and Boundary Water Adventure journeys. High School life is too hard to do it alone so we try and do it together.

Baptism Class

This class is for parents who wish to have their child(ren) baptized. During this session, we explore what happens when we come to the font and what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. We review the expectations placed on parents and the support they can expect to receive from the church.



First Communion Class

Children in 4th grade and up learn about God's promises and the importance of Holy Communion. Classes are held each Spring during the Sunday School hour, beginning in Lent and culminating with the Rite of First Communion on Maundy Thursday. For more information, speak with Kris Lingenfelter (Kris@BethelLutheranChurch.com).

Discovery: Becoming a Disciple of Jesus

*Sundays —
Next class starts April 15*



During this interactive and engaging "new disciple" orientation, participants will grow deeper into the life of discipleship as we explore key aspects of our Lutheran Christian faith, including how God has wired each person to be ministers rather than simply members of the Church. Talk to one of the pastors or call the church office at 317-773-4315 to register.



Faith Stepping Stones

Bethel offers several "faith stepping stones" at significant points in a person's faith journey. These stones are intentional opportunities to go deeper in faith and, as a person matures, to accept for oneself the faith she or he has received from parents and godparents.

EDUCATION

ADULTS

Sundays

Coffee time: 9:40 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. Class from 10:00 a.m. - 10:55 a.m.

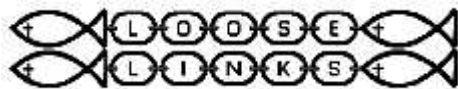
ONGOING CLASSES - End May 20th

New Participants Welcome!



Ask the Question—Chapel
Led by Jason Pearson & Lu Olp

The Church ought to be a safe place where we can bring our faith questions. In fact, a healthy faith questions and pushes for greater understanding, and a healthy church embraces those questions without feeling threatened or attacked. Join us as we discuss the questions you bring to the table, along with your cup of coffee and sweet treat from the coffee fellowship

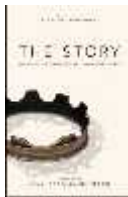


Loose Links—Library
Led by Suzy Patterson & Tree Rudy

A group of Christian friends who discuss, question, and banter around day-to-day life situations and use the Bible, their own "common sense," and humor to help each other out. This winter and spring, we will continue to explore and discuss *The Screwtape Letters* by C.S. Lewis. New participants expected and welcome!

The Story — Room 215

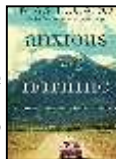
God has gone to great lengths to rescue lost and hurting people. That is what *The Story* is all about: the story of God's great love affair with humanity. Like any good story, it is filled with intrigue, drama, conflict, romance, and redemption. Join us as we continue to explore our place in God's story!



NEW CLASSES

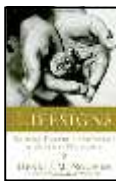
Anxious About Nothing — Fellowship Hall
Jan 7-Feb 4 Led by Greg Marshall & Pastor Doug

Do you feel weighed down with worry? Does the uncertainty and chaos of life keep you up at night? Are irrational fears your constant companion? Could you use some calm? Join us for this five-session video Bible study based on Max Lucado's book, *Anxious for Nothing*, and Philippians 4:4-8. Sign-up or just show up! No Worries! Keep Calm and Carry On!



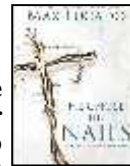
Our Call to Intimacy: With God, Ourselves, & Others — Room 216/218 *Jan 14-Mar 25*

If intimacy means, at its heart: "into-me-see", then given our fallen nature, coupled with our woundedness from relationships over our lifetime, it is both something we long for, but also greatly fear. Let's look, up close and personal, to the nature of intimacy, and, by God's grace, come to find more liberation than captivity, more insight than impulse, and our coming to choose the path of growing, mature love, rather than the increasingly, diminishing ways that come with the pursuit of self-gratification and personal self-aggrandizement. Cost for Nouwen's book and supporting resources will be \$15.



He Chose the Nails — Fellowship Hall
Feb 18-Mar 18 Led by Joanne & Jim Hogle

The wood. The thorns. The nails. Christ's sacrifice has defined the very essence of mankind's faith for the past 2000 years. And now, Max Lucado invites you to examine the cross, contemplate its purpose, and celebrate its significance with *He Chose the Nails*. With his warm, caring style, Max examines the symbols surrounding Christ's crucifixion, revealing the claims of the cross and asserting that if they are true, then Christianity itself is true. The supporting evidence either makes the cross the single biggest hoax of all time, or the hope of all humanity.



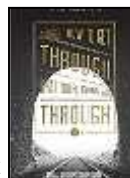
The Shack — Fellowship Hall *Apr 8-May 13*
Led by the Care Ministry

In a world where religion seems to grow increasingly irrelevant *The Shack* wrestles with the timeless question, "Where is God in a world so filled with unspeakable pain?" Join us for a study and discussion of this provocative book. How do the ideas the author presents square with the teachings of Scripture and our tradition?



Get Through What You're Going Through
— Fellowship Hall *Apr 8-May 20*
Led by Anne Perryman

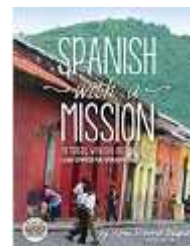
When the unexpected comes your way, your world is instantly turned upside down. You long to understand why. Life often doesn't make sense, and it dishes up more questions than answers. But we do know we can experience peace because God is with us and he loves us. In this study, we will strive to understand the journey of grief and what to expect along the way. It's not a linear experience, but with God's Word and his ways, he will carry you through it.



NEW CLASSES DURING THE WEEK

Spanish With a Mission *Thursdays*
Feb 15 - Mar 22 10:00 a.m. - 11:15 a.m.
Room 216/218 *Led by Debbie Nielsen*

Have you ever wanted to learn Spanish in a casual setting? Join us for *Spanish with a Mission*, a six-week language adventure that will give you confidence in conversing with Spanish-speakers. No prior Spanish experience is necessary; only a desire to have fun and learn is required! Workbook required and may be purchased at the first class (\$20). For more information, contact Debbie Nielsen (limberlostfriend@gmail.com or 317-995-6000).



CONTINUING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES:

Sausage and Scripture—Saturdays, 7:30 a.m. Bethel
Women on Wednesdays—Wednesdays, 9:15 a.m. Bethel
Women's Book Clubs—first Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m. (Rise Helgemo 317-877-8416), AND Saturdays at 11:00 a.m. at Harbour Trees Golf Club (Linda Crist 317-758-6748).

FOCUS ON MINISTRY

TEACHING SUNDAY SCHOOL

By Sarah Manro

Gary and Rise Helgemo, affectionately known as Mr. and Mrs. H by most of the youth here at Bethel, are our 4th and 5th grade Sunday School teachers. If you've had children attend Sunday School here you've likely met them as they have been teaching Sunday School here for about 18 years!



The Helgemos, who now live in Cicero, first moved to Noblesville in 1984. They became members of Bethel at its Cicero location soon after. They raised their two sons, Scott and Jon, at that location. They first started teaching Sunday School because there were not enough volunteers to teach and they decided they could do it together. It worked out

so well that they continued teaching together. Now it works very well for them since their classes, consisting of two grades, are usually quite large.

Their first class was a Pre-K/K class. They continued with this group of children until they reached confirmation age and then decided to continue teaching 4th and 5th graders.

Inspired by their personal religious educations growing up, the Helgemos developed their own curriculum over time. Gary grew up Lutheran in a small town in Minnesota and Rise grew up attending St Joan of Arc Catholic Church in Indianapolis. Their core belief as Sunday School teachers is that it is more important to understand what we believe verses memorizing words, and that learning can be fun. The Helgemos try to make their program relate to the students and the world they live in while retelling the biblical stories that are the basis of our faith. So many of the biblical heroes were just a few years older than the 9 and 10 year old students in their class, so it is easy for the children to imagine what it would be like for them in a similar situation. Their program is extremely participatory and the students are up out of their seats working together in teams learning why we believe in our faith. Their curriculum is based on the Old Testament in the fall and the New Testament in the Spring. They also have lessons on the Lord's Prayer, the Apostle's Creed, and the Psalms and Proverbs.

In addition to being Sunday School teachers, Gary has served on the church council for many years. He also volunteered many hours helping to build our current

Bethel home. They both volunteer for the annual Rummage Sale each year, help with funeral dinners, and help with many fellowship events including the 80+ Luncheon, and mid-week Lenten and Advent dinners. Outside of Bethel, they both volunteer with Janus Developmental Services, Inc. and mentor 2 fifth-grade students each in Hamilton Heights schools.



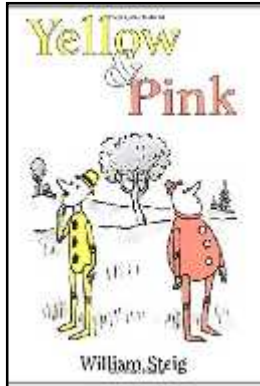
The Helgemos continue to teach Sunday School because it is so rewarding. "The students want to know more about their religion, and they ask such good questions and really work through issues." Gary and Rise truly believe that they have developed a deeper understanding of their own faith through their teaching experience. They encourage anyone to serve as a Sunday School teacher and believe that anyone who does so will find it a very rewarding experience!



BOOKS OF INTEREST

Reviews by Connie Wooldridge

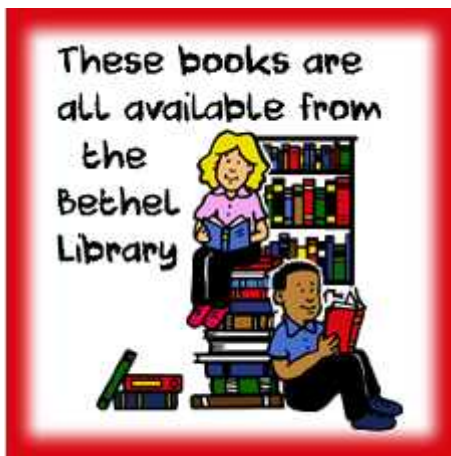
Reading level:
Grades 3-6



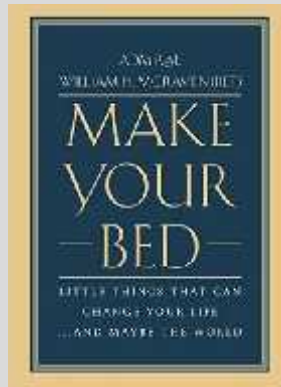
YELLOW & PINK

by William Steig

Two wooden puppets, one yellow and one pink, lie on newspapers in the sun waiting for their paint to dry. They wonder who they are and how they came to be. "Someone must have made us," Pink declares. Yellow doesn't agree. "I say we're an accident, somehow or other we just happened," he insists. They theorize and argue until something occurs that surprises them both. Only the incomparable William Steig (author of the book *Shrek* upon which the movie is based) could have brought such clarity, perspective, and wit to the creation/evolution debate.



Reading level:
Grades 7 to Adult



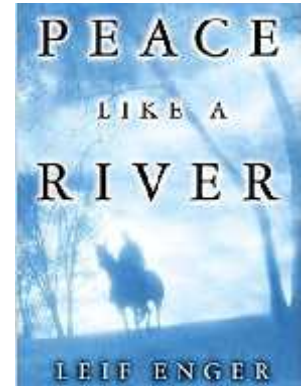
MAKE YOUR BED: Little Things That Can Change Your Life...And Maybe the World

By Admiral H. McRaven

In a commencement speech he delivered at the University of Texas in 2014, retired admiral William McRaven outlined ten things he'd learned during his Navy Seal training that he doubted his audience would be much interested in. It turns out his audience was *very* interested! His speech promptly went viral and the book that followed became a best-seller. It's full of simple, clear insights from a man who walked (and continues to walk) his talk. The wisdom here is brought to life by engaging anecdotes and delivered with humility by a man of rare integrity. It's short and readable and wonderful.



Reading level:
High School/Adult



PEACE LIKE A RIVER

By Leif Enger

Reuben Land, the 11-year-old asthmatic narrator of this book, has reason to believe in miracles. His life began with one when his father ordered his lifeless newborn body to "breathe in the name of the living God." When Reuben's older brother, Davy, lands in jail for shooting two intruders, Davy escapes, and heads for the North Dakota Badlands. Reuben, his father, and his younger sister set out in hot pursuit. The journey to find their wayward brother/son includes bad guys, romance, a shoot-out, and more miracles. Set in the 1960s, this is not only a rousing good tale but one that will deepen your faith in God's sovereign power to intervene in strange and wonderful ways.



MATCH EACH
STATION OF THE CROSS WITH
ITS DESCRIPTION

- _____ Jesus Meets His Mother
- _____ Jesus Falls the Second Time
- _____ Jesus is Nailed to the Cross
- _____ Jesus Falls the Third Time
- _____ Jesus Carries His Cross
- _____ Simon of Cyrene Helps Jesus
- _____ Jesus is Placed in the Tomb
- _____ Jesus is Risen!
- _____ Jesus is Stripped of His Garments
- _____ Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus
- _____ Jesus Dies on the Cross
- _____ Jesus is Condemned to Death
- _____ Jesus Speaks to the Weeping Women
- _____ Jesus Falls the First Time
- _____ Jesus is Taken Down From the Cross

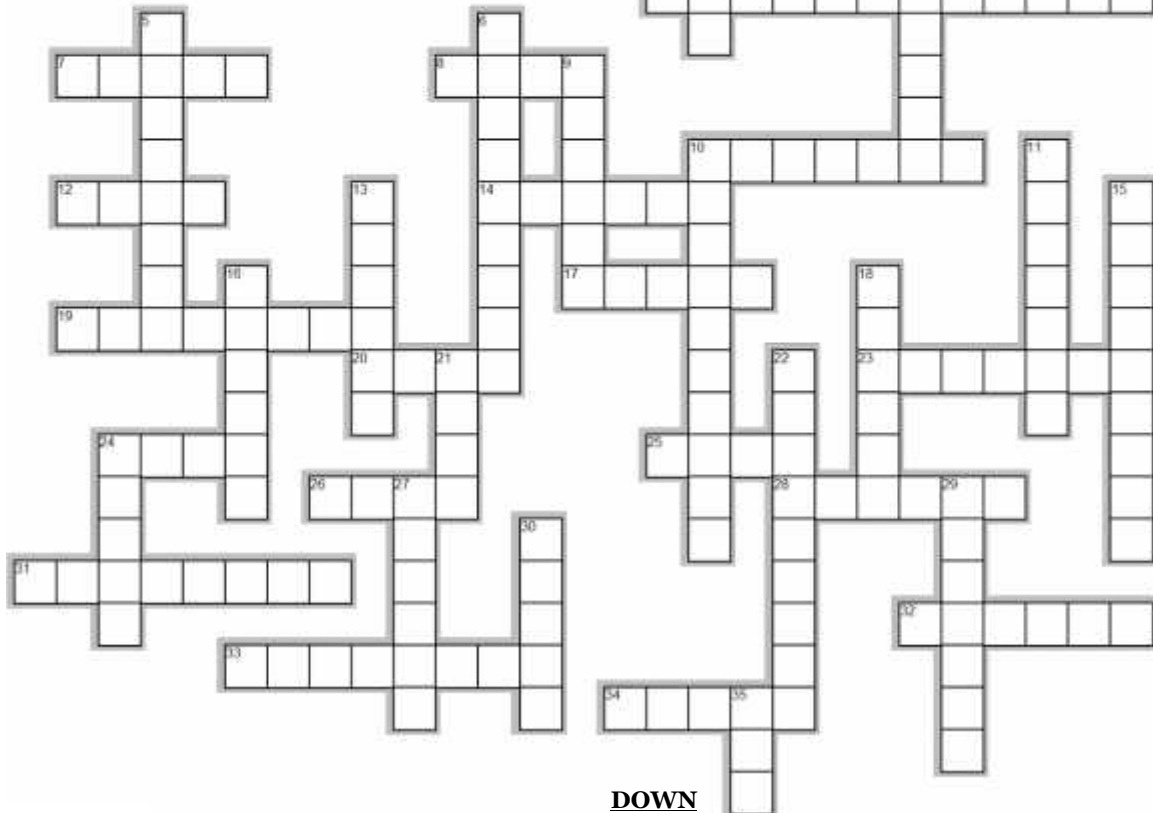
Answers may be found on Page 26.

The images used here
are from the etchings
that were done for the
Stations of the Cross
on the Bethel Peace Trail.
Come and see!



PLAY

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



ACROSS

4. the act of rising from the dead
7. Peter used this to remove the ear of a soldier who had come to arrest Jesus
8. season of fasting and penitence in preparation for the resurrection
10. these men died on crosses next to Jesus
12. ____ Friday, day observed as the anniversary of Jesus' death on the cross
14. ____ Tuesday, the day before Lent begins
17. the followers of Jesus did this while waiting for him in the garden
19. member of a Jewish sect that practice strict observance of religious ceremonies and laws
20. Sunday before Easter
23. whip used on Jesus before his death
24. to give up food
25. how the disciple betrayed Jesus
26. where Jesus was placed after his death on the cross
28. the Messiah or Anointed One
31. one of the disciples did this in exchange for 30 pieces of silver
32. a devout petition to God
33. Jesus promised one of the two men who died on crosses next to him that he would be with Jesus in this place because of his belief
34. the person who gave Jesus up to the Jewish authorities

DOWN

1. to be put to death by nailing or binding the hands and feet to a cross
2. Jewish festival that commemorates the exodus of the Jews from Egypt
3. Jesus went to this garden to pray on the night before he died
5. "place of the skull"
6. Jesus returned to this city to die and to be raised from the dead
9. crown placed on Jesus' head by soldiers
10. Satan's attempt to entice Jesus to worship him
11. the hill on which Jesus was put to death on a cross
13. person who owned the place that Jesus was laid after his death
15. Jewish assembly that worked to get Jesus sentenced to death on the cross
16. last name of the Roman governor who sentenced Jesus
18. day Christians commemorate Jesus rising from the dead
21. "behold, the ____ of God, who takes away the sins of the world"
22. the 12 personal followers of Jesus
24. number of days in the season of fasting and penitence
27. the ceremony of washing the feet of the poor, especially commemorating Jesus' washing of His disciples' feet
29. the time of day it was discovered that Jesus had risen from the dead
30. the number of times Peter denied Jesus before the cock crowed
35. ____ Wednesday, the first day of Lent

ANSWERS ON PAGE 26

LITURGICAL CALENDAR

Bethel Lutheran Church functions on a liturgical calendar with seasons and holy days. There are colors associated with each of the seasons and holy days. These are shown on this calendar and are reflected in the paraments in the sanctuary.

DAY	DATE	CHURCH CALENDAR
Sunday	2/11/18	Transfiguration Sunday
Wednesday	2/14/18	Ash Wednesday
Sunday	2/18/18	1st Sunday of Lent
Sunday	2/25/18	2nd Sunday of Lent
Sunday	3/4/18	3rd Sunday of Lent
Sunday	3/11/18	4th Sunday of Lent
Sunday	3/18/18	5th Sunday of Lent
Sunday	3/25/18	Palm Sunday
Thursday	3/29/18	Maundy Thursday
Friday	3/30/18	Good Friday
Saturday	3/31/18	Holy Saturday
Sunday	4/1/18	Easter
Sunday	4/8/18	2nd Sunday of Easter
Sunday	4/15/18	3rd Sunday of Easter
Sunday	4/22/18	4th Sunday of Easter
Sunday	4/29/18	5th Sunday of Easter
Sunday	5/6/18	6th Sunday of Easter
Thursday	5/10/18	Ascension of Our Lord
Sunday	5/13/18	3rd Sunday of Easter



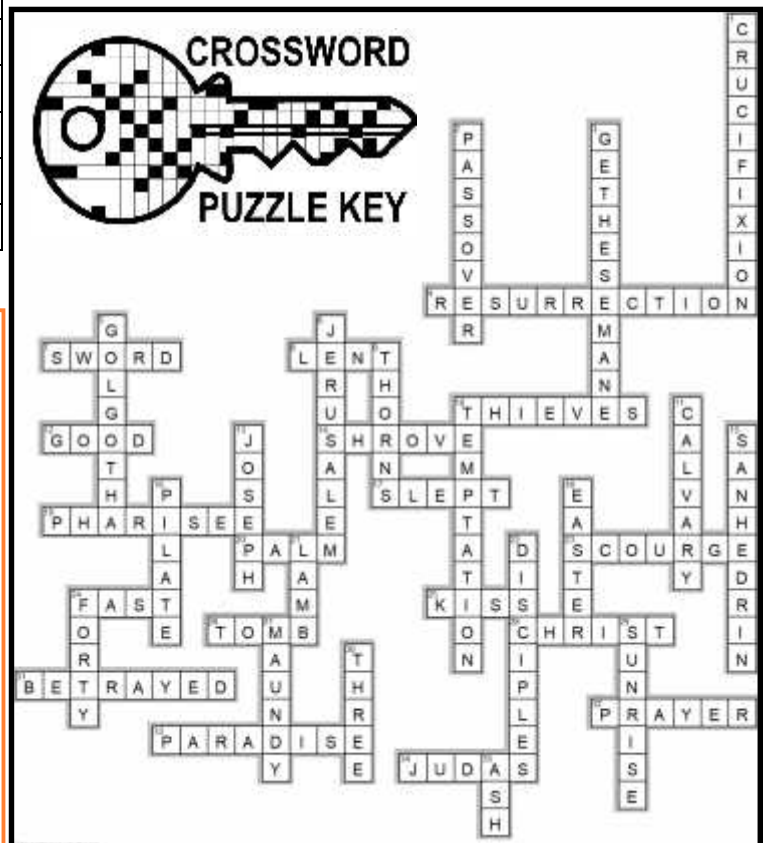
Answers to Stations of the Cross match on page 24:

IV. Jesus Meets His Mother; VII. Jesus Falls the Second Time; XI. Jesus is Nailed to the Cross; IX. Jesus Falls the Third Time; II. Jesus Carries His Cross; V. Simon of Cyrene Helps Jesus; XIV. Jesus is Placed in the Tomb; XV. Jesus is Risen!; X. Jesus is Stripped of His Garments; VI. Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus; XII. Jesus Dies on the Cross; I. Jesus is Condemned to Death; VIII. Jesus Speaks to the Weeping Women; III. Jesus Falls the First Time; XIII. Jesus is Taken Down From the Cross.

EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

February 11, 2018 – May 13, 2018

- | | |
|---------|---|
| Feb 2-4 | Youth Retreat |
| Feb 7 | Healing Service 7 p.m. |
| Feb 10 | Preschool Spaghetti Dinner 5-7:30 p.m. |
| Feb 11 | Transfiguration of Our Lord
New Member Reception |
| Feb 13 | Shrove Tuesday Meal 5:30-7:30 p.m. |
| Feb 14 | Ash Wednesday Service 7 p.m. |
| Feb 21 | Midweek: Meal 6-7 p.m. Worship 7-8 p.m. |
| Feb 23 | Comedy Club |
| Feb 28 | Midweek: Meal 6-7 p.m. Worship 7-8 p.m. |
| Mar 7 | Midweek: Meal 6-7 p.m. Worship 7-8 p.m. |
| Mar 14 | Midweek: Meal 6-7 p.m. Worship 7-8 p.m. |
| Mar 21 | Midweek: Meal 6-7 p.m. Worship 7-8 p.m. |
| Mar 29 | Maundy Thursday Service 7 p.m. |
| Mar 30 | Good Friday: Services @ 12:15 p.m. and 7 p.m. |
| Mar 31 | Holy Saturday Service 5:30 p.m. |
| Apr 1 | EASTER—6, 8, 9:30, & 11:11 a.m. services |
| Apr 4 | Healing Service 7 p.m. |



Events & Activities





WEEKEND WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

SATURDAY

5:30 p.m. – Casual Worship

SUNDAY

8:45 a.m. – Classic Worship

10:00 a.m. – Christian Education Hour

11:11 a.m. – Praise Worship

Communion will be celebrated at all services.

OTHER WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

FIRST WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH

7:00 p.m. – Healing Service

ASH WEDNESDAY— FEBRUARY 14th

7:00 p.m. – Worship Service

FEBRUARY 21st & 28th and MARCH 7th, 14th, & 21st

Midweek Lent: Fellowship Meal 6 p.m. & Worship 7 p.m.

HOLY WEEK

Palm Sunday 8:45 a.m. & 11:11 a.m.

Maundy Thursday 7 p.m.

Good Friday 12:15 p.m. (Peace Trail) & 7 p.m.

Holy Saturday 5:30 p.m.

EASTER SUNDAY

6 a.m. (Sunrise), 8 a.m., 9:30 a.m. & 11:11 a.m.

Bethel Lutheran Church

20650 Cumberland Road

Noblesville, IN 46062

317.773.4315

www.BethelLutheranChurch.com



NALC
North American Lutheran Church