

The Tidings

Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Sun Prairie, Wisconsin

February 2008

Lenten Worship Schedule



February 6 Ash Wednesday with Holy Communion 7:00 p.m.

Better For One Man to Die Than the Whole Nation Perish John 11:49-50

February 13 7:00 p.m.

What Is Truth? John 18:33-38

February 20 7:00 p.m.

Behold, the Man! John 19:5

February 27 7:00 p.m.

He Saved Others. He Cannot Save Himself Luke 23:35

March 5 7:00 p.m.

Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews John 19:19-22

March 12 7:00 p.m.

Truly This Man Was the Son Of God! Matthew 27:50-54

March 16 Passion Sunday 8:00 & 10:45 a.m.

Father, Forgive Them, for They Know Not What They Do Matthew 27:39-44

March 20 Maundy Thursday with Holy Communion 7:00 p.m.

Let His Blood Be On Us and Our Children Matthew 27:15-26

March 21 Good Friday 7:00 p.m.

It Is Finished! John 19:30

March 23 Easter Sunday 8:00 & 10:45 a.m.

Why Do You Seek the Living Among the Dead? Luke 24:1-11

Dinner is served A light supper will be served before each Wednesday Lenten Service beginning at 5:45 p.m. A free-will donation will be accepted.

The Double-Edged Sword: The Double-Edged Sayings of the Passion



“For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.” Hebrews 4:12

The Word of God is “sharper than any double-edged sword, dividing even soul and spirit, joints and marrow.”

We Lutherans have always understood that verse in connection with the fundamental distinction between Law and Gospel. The Law shows us our sin. The Gospel shows us our Savior. The Word, like a double-edged sword, kills our sinful old nature (Law) and brings the New Man (Christ in us) to life (Gospel).

But other ages saw the Word of God as a double-edged sword in other ways no less important. Throughout the Middle Ages, the great scholars of the Bible marveled at the layers of meaning that could be found in any one verse of Scripture. God’s Word is rich, so rich that it cannot always be understood just one way. Some verses have two, three, or even four different meanings, all of which are valid. The edges of the sword of God’s Word can stand for the different meanings the Word can have.

This Lenten Midweek Series recognizes how rich the Scriptures are in their meaning. Many things were said in Christ’s Passion. Some of these things were said in love, some in hate, but the sayings on which we will be concentrating definitely have more than one meaning. And that’s good. Those layers of meaning draw out the richness of God’s love for us in

Christ’s suffering and death. This is God’s masterpiece and its layers of meaning help us see the full picture. God’s masterpiece be your joy in this Lenten season!

All the Midweek services will begin at 7:00p.m. The Sermon series is as follows:

- @ Ash Wednesday/with Holy Communion (Feb. 6) *Better For One Man to Die Than the Whole Nation Perish*-John 11:49-50
- @ Feb. 13 – *What Is Truth?*-John 18:33-38
- @ Feb. 20 – *Behold, The Man!*-John 19:5
- @ Feb. 27 – *He Saved Others. He Cannot Save Himself*-Luke 23:35
- @ March 5 – *Jesus of Nazareth, King Of The Jews*-John 19:19-22
- @ March 12 – *Truly This Man Was The Son Of God!*-Matthew 27:50-54
- @ Passion Sunday-March 16 – *Father, Forgive Them, For They Know Not What They Do*-Matthew 27:39-44
- @ Maundy Thursday/with Holy Communion-March 20 – *Let His Blood Be On Us And Our Children*-Matthew 27:15-26
- @ Good Friday-March 21 – *It Is Finished!*-John 19:30
- @ Easter Sunday-March 23 – *Why Do You Seek The Living Among The Dead?*-Luke 24:1-11

In His service,
Pastor Mueller

“For I resolved to know nothing while with you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.” (1 Cor. 2:2)

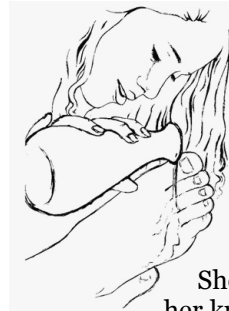


Extravagant Love

Jesus arrived in Bethany where Lazarus lived. The home that they were in didn’t belong to Lazarus though, it was, according to Mark 14:3, “Simon the Leper’s” home. First of all, you would never eat dinner at a leper’s house unless the leper had been healed. If he wasn’t it might mean a whole new thing if you ask him to pass you something. The fact that they were at Simon’s house points to his healing. Simon literally owed his life to his guest. Another guest also owed his life to Jesus. Lazarus was there. In the previous chapter, where was Lazarus? In the tomb!

Two guys...each one “one-upping” the other with story after story. Simon talking about being “whole” and Lazarus talking about being out of a “hole!” The dinner must have been great, and the conversation even greater.

It was a good time and then something wild took place. Mary enters the room and brings Jesus



a God-honoring offering. She approaches Him, breaks open her alabaster jar, and pours it all over his head.

She then falls to her knees and pours what is left on his feet and wipes it with her hair. The fragrance of the perfume fills the room as tension fills the air.

Judas is quick to rebuke her. Why? But the Lord Jesus is just as quick to honor her. Why?

Jesus blessed her gift and made sure that her selfless act would be remembered forever. Mark 14:9, “I tell you the truth, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her.”

There is one fact about her God-honoring offering that leaps from this story that I’d like us to see:

Extravagant love is pleasant to others.

John 12:3

“And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.” The whole house was filled with the fragrance, not just the room in which they were seated. Her gift had an effect on everyone who was present. Sooner or later everyone would know what had been offered.

Even those who were outside would know what had been offered within.

When we give ourselves to Jesus the aroma is powerful. When a congregation is made up of committed Christians who are willing to give everything they have to Jesus, the scent is inviting. Even those outside of these walls become drawn to the fragrance within. The people outside of these walls that are starving for truth and life! Don't be deceived, people hunger for worship and if they are not drawn to the TRUTH, they will settle for the counterfeit. This is why we see highly educated men and women with crystals around their necks in hopes of getting in touch with something beyond themselves and their sad existence. They are starving for HIM, not stories about HIM. And when God's people give their very best to HIM the aroma will draw people to HIM.

Tommy Tenny, God Chasers, “People don't sense God's presence in our gatherings because it's just not there sufficiently enough to register on our gauges.” God inhabits the praises of His people... when we bring the sacrifice of praise, the fragrance is attractive. Don't wait for someone else to do it before you do it. Just like Mary did, we encourage one another with our sacrifice. When we hear of someone else's sacrifice it encourages us to do more for Him. You be that person. Bring your best to HIM. Let Him inhabit your praises! A God-honoring offering is not just precious to us; it is pleasant to others.

As we enter this month of Love and as we enter the Lenten season let me ask each of you: How can you show your extravagant love for Christ?

Pete Imlah

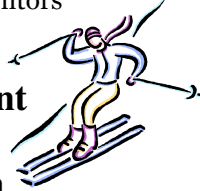
Cross†raining

Middle School Ministry –
Wednesdays at 6:00 p.m.

February

- 6 The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper I
- 13 The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper II
- 20 The Recipient of the Lord's Supper
- 27 Confession/Mentors (6th Graders)

February Event
Ski Trip
February 15th

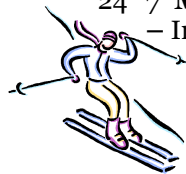


Soul†Fire

High School Ministry
Sundays at 6:00 p.m.

February

- 3 No Youth Group – Super Bowl Sunday
- 10 **BULLS EYE LIVING** – In Youth Room
- 17 **7 Marks o f Maturity** – In Youth Room
- 24 **7 Marks o f Maturity** – In Youth Room



February Event
Ski Trip
February 15th

Our Children in Church



Every now and then it is important to review our responsibilities to one another in the worship service. With these few lines please consider our children attending worship. **We want the children in worship as much as we want their parents in worship. Worship is the single most important thing we do together as the**

family of God. But worship does not come to us naturally. So, as with anything we want to do well, we must learn it, practice it, work at it and in the doing together, we teach each other.

The question then is, “What are we teaching our children when we allow them to make repeated loud noises and to come and go from the family worship experience?” We are telling them “Others’ worship experiences are not important... It is not important for you to be here... God doesn't expect you to praise Him... Your voice, your prayers, the offering of yourself doesn't count for much.” Of course none of these things are true. Jesus said, “**Permit the little children to come to me...**” and He blessed them. Solomon wrote we should “**Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it.**” Indeed, learning the Christian life starts very young and how to worship God is a large part of it.

A couple of things that will help:

1. Help your child to follow along with the order of worship.
2. Sit up front. Your children will be able to see what's going on. When up front, they will be less distracted by things going on in the congregation. If you have to take them out, the congregation will understand.
3. Keep your child with you in worship. They will never learn to sit still, speak quietly, follow along and participate, if they are continually off to the bath-room, out for a drink or off to play with the stuff in the nursery. It is excellent discipline to teach your child to get a drink and go to the restroom before worship begins. They should know that you expect them to stay with them throughout the service.

What a great joy we have been given by our God – to teach even the youngest among us how to praise Him for His most excellent love for us. And to begin

preparing them for receiving the awesome gift of His Son's body and blood in the Lord's Supper.

It begins very young. It takes a consistent stand. It begins right now. God bless you in this great work.

Refocus Team Highlights

Many Additional Programs and Activities to Serve the Lord and Help Outreach into the Community

During this past year many members of Bethlehem participated in the Refocus process as it relates to our church as a body. We spent time on what our mission and focus should be as a congregation and what we need to do to live out that mission for the Glory of God. The biblical purpose that we agreed to was *"Bethlehem Lutheran Church exists to be a bright **STAR** of compassion and hope in our community.*

Sharing the promise of eternity through Christ our Savior with our community and inviting others to experience a personal, loving relationship with Jesus.

Training and encouraging individuals to joyfully serve the Lord.

Applying Biblical principles to all areas of our daily lives.

Raising our hearts, hands and voices to joyfully praise God always and in all things."

In addition to our biblical purpose the team identified a vision statement that is intended to give direction on how we will live out our biblical purpose. The final **vision statement** is:

"Members of Bethlehem Lutheran Church are called and enlightened by the power of the Holy Spirit to passionately serve within and beyond the walls of Bethlehem, praising God and igniting all people for Christ."

The team also identified 4 areas of focus for the next 3-5 years for Bethlehem to live out our Biblical Purpose and fulfill our vision. These areas of focus are:

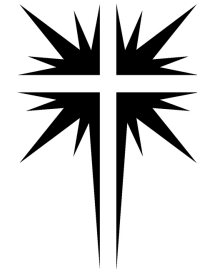
- Create a culture and a sense of urgency on reaching the harvest field.
- Create an atmosphere of a warm & caring church.
- Helping member and new comers to discover their God given gifts and abilities so they can faithfully serve their Lord and Savior.
- Become a church that is Passionate about its spirituality.

A tentative list of strategic initiatives was also put together as a starting point for how we can execute on the areas of focus. There were so many ideas developed that I will not include them here, but needless to say our plate will be very full if we implement only a percentage of the possible initiatives (see Pete for a complete list of the initiatives identified). Based on these initiatives, it was determined that we need a team leader at Bethlehem to implement these initiatives and organize our members in the fulfilling of our Biblical Purpose.

A group of church leaders then scheduled an appointment with Pastor Wille, President of the South Wisconsin District to get his input on what we should look for in a leader to accomplish these initiatives. We all agreed that Pastor Mueller's strengths are his caring style and the one-on-one counseling he offers to the members of Bethlehem, versus the level of leadership we need to accomplish these initiatives. It became clear that we need to call a Lead Pastor to assist us with this task. President Wille did state that we should be able to find someone with that skill set and we should be able to attract them to Bethlehem due to our proximity to Madison and because of the growth of our community.

This was reported back to the Board of Lay Ministry which unanimously agreed to ask the staffing committee to reconvene to look at this recommendation.

Jim McCourt, Chair
Board of Lay Ministry



Staffing Committee Recommends Calling Lead Pastor as Addition to the Bethlehem Pastoral Staff

The staffing committee has met twice in the past quarter to discuss the need for additional staff at Bethlehem and has recommended that Lay Ministry prepare to call a new Lead Pastor for our church. Lay Ministry had discussions with Pastor Alan Boeck of St. John Lutheran Church in Portage at the suggestion of Pastor Mueller as he is a personal friend of Pastor's and he knew they had added a Lead Pastor at their church and thought it would be good for us to get his insights into how we should proceed and whether he thought we were on the right path with adding a Lead Pastor. Pastor Boeck agreed that based on the current growth of the Sun Prairie community and the relative lack of growth in our congregation as well as the direction from the Refocus team that we need a leader to provide direction for the additional programs and activities to help reach the unchurched in our community. He also agreed that leadership is not something taught in the seminary and not something that he was prepared for at his church in Portage. He stated that the transition to the addition of a Lead Pastor takes time and there will be some members that feel the church is stepping on the current Pastor which he agreed was furthest from the truth. The Pastors need to work as a team but there has to be one person in charge, and the lead Pastor has the added responsibilities to be that leader.

As the board of Lay Ministry, we have had discussions with both Pastor and Pete about this course of action and we have their support to move forward. We have looked at our current job description for Pastor Mueller as well as job descriptions from other Missouri Synod churches in our efforts to write the new job descriptions for Lead and Care Pastors. The newly prepared job descriptions have been approved by the Board of Lay Ministry with input from both Pastor and Pete and will be mailed to all members of the congregation in the coming weeks along with a copy of this write up on the process followed to date.

We are in the process of scheduling Question & Answer meetings for members to ask the board of Lay Ministry questions regarding the process which will be held prior to our next voters meeting on February 17 at 11:45 a.m. At that voters meeting we will also address additional questions on the process and ultimately bring a motion to add the position to the budget for 2008.

The one question that has come up in almost every discussion of this topic is "Can we afford another Pastor?" I believe the short answer to this question is, can we afford not too?! We are in a growing community in which 50% of the residents have no church affiliation and we are currently not growing our number of worshiping members. Our Biblical Purpose as stated above is to be a STAR of compassion and hope in our community. We can't fulfill that purpose if we have our church workers stretched so thin that they can't provide the leadership necessary to reach out into the community with the action steps we identified in Refocus. As for the dollars and cents portion of the answer, we do have some reserve funds that can be used to help fund this position, but we will need to increase the

weekly contribution over the long term to pay for this. With the Holy Spirit continuing to work in our church, we should be able to accomplish this.

Pastor Wille has agreed to help us with the call process in identifying potential candidates for a call. We will be forming a call committee to help with the interview and selection process (which we anticipate taking 3-6 months, depending on the availability of candidates). Please remember to keep our church in your prayers as we move forward with our plans.

Jim McCourt, Chair
Board of Lay Ministry

Lutheran Women in Mission



Our Women's Guild/LWML will welcome a special guest speaker on Monday, February 4 at 7:00 p.m. Andrea Henrich will show pictures and talk about her mission trip with MOST Ministries to Puerto Rico this past November. All women and confirmed girls are invited to attend.

LWML Zone 20/21 Prayer Service

"Stepping Out in Faith" is based on the 2007 Sioux Falls LWML Convention theme verses - Psalm 31:1-3. This 2008 Prayer Service encourages participants to "declare Jesus' praise and serve others."



**Sunday, February 10,
2008
2:00 p.m.
at
St. Paul
Lutheran,**

**2126 N Sherman Ave.
Madison**

All are invited; refreshments will follow.

Make a Blanket for Project Linus

Project Linus is a non-profit organization, dedicated to "Providing Security Through Blankets," for ill or traumatized children and teens.

Blankets should be **home-made of all-new washable materials** (no recycled materials or **wool**) in child or teen-friendly colors or prints. 45" by 60" is the most needed blanket size, but many sizes are useful. They should be at least 30" by 36" for infants, 45" by 45" and 45" by 60" for older kids, up to a maximum of about 45" by 72."

Blankets may be knitted, crocheted, fleece or quilted. For fringed fleece blankets, it is best to start with a 1 1/2 yd length of 60-inch wide fleece.

Place finished blankets in the blue box under the Women's Guild table in the hallway.

Women's Leadership Institute - CUW

**Sharing the Love of Jesus:
How-to's of Christian
Leadership**

April 4-6, 2008

Best Western Milwaukee-Airport
5105 Howell Ave.
Milwaukee, WI 53207

Women who attend will:

- ☞ Learn to intentionally influence lives for Christ
- ☞ Identify their sphere of influence through vocations, interests, and relationships

- ☞ Take an inventory of strengths and interests and discover how to become better equipped to use them in Christian leadership
- ☞ Link with other women and men to grow relationships that will build a network of servant leaders
- ☞ Be encouraged and better equipped to meet the leadership challenges they face in the church, home and workplace.

Find brochures with reservation forms on the LWML table across from the mail slots or visit www.wlicuw.org

Bake Sale Fundraiser



A bake sale will be held in the fellowship hall on Sunday February 24 between services. Proceeds will go towards the cost to attend the Beth Moore Conference in Minneapolis on July 18-19. All women of Bethlehem are invited to set these days aside to attend the conference. For more information call Gloria Birkholz at 837-6866.

Call the Prayer Chain

If you have a prayer request for members of Bethlehem, their families or friends call Judy Meyers at 608 837-4992 (home) or Nancy Anderson at 825-3333 (home) or 244-6181 (work) to activate the prayer chain.

Prayer is a beautiful and mighty tool that provides us direct access to our Lord and Savior. In 1 Peter 3:12 we learn "His ears are attentive to their prayer." We most certainly know that our Lord and Mighty Healer hears and answers our prayers--- we have experienced this for our members at Bethlehem, their family and friends, more times than we can

count. Thank you for being obedient, faithful and loving people of God.

Flower/Bulletin Charts are Up



Sign up to sponsor the altar flowers and/or the Sunday bulletin on the bulletin board next to the nursery.

Cost is \$20 for one bouquet or Sunday's bulletin. Flowers may be taken home after the 10:45 service that day. If they are left, they will be taken to one of our shut-ins. Payment can be placed in one of the "designated gift" envelopes in your offering box and put in the offering plate.

Volunteers Needed at the Sun Prairie Food Pantry

Bethlehem staffs the Food Pantry on Monday evenings from 5-7 p.m. At present we have need of new volunteers for the 3rd Monday of each month. Singles or



couples are welcome to volunteer. Please call Karen Est at 825-4296 for more information or to volunteer.

Balance and the Man in the Middle

God created our lives with balance – spiritual, emotional, physical, social/behavioral, work/education, recreation/leisure. We lost God-given balance when our first parents sinned. That balance had to be restored and was when Jesus Christ died on the center cross. He's the Man in the Middle. When we're out of **balance**, counselors at **Lutheran Counseling and Family Services of Wisconsin** are available locally to help. Call 800-291-4513.

Sun Prairie Community Blood Drive

Tuesday, February 5
1-6 pm



United Methodist Church
702 North St. Sun Prairie

For appointments call
1.800.give.life or visit
www.givebloodgivelife.org

Volunteer Opportunity

Oakwood Village East

5565 Tancho Drive
Madison, WI 53718

Contact Kim Viney, 230-4238 or kim.viney@oakwoodvillage.net to volunteer for any of the following or for more information.

Village Mercantile –

Volunteers are needed for the Village Mercantile gift shop and grocery store in the Community Center at Oakwood Village East Retirement Community. Volunteers are needed Monday-Friday 9:45 a.m.-12:30 p.m. or 12:30-3:15 p.m., or on Saturday, 12:45-3:15 p.m. New Village Mercantile volunteers receive training and a 20% discount on regular-priced gift shop merchandise on the day(s) they volunteer in the Mercantile.

Volunteer Drivers

Volunteers needed to help take Apartments or assisted living residents to weekday medical appointments or on personal errands, Mon – Fri, a few times a month. Volunteer needs to use their own vehicle and monthly mileage reimbursement is provided.

Pet Visitors

Volunteers with appropriate, sociable pets to come in and visit with Seasons assisted living and Meadows and Knoll memory care residents once a week, any day of the week, mornings, afternoons or early evenings. Day and time negotiable based on your schedule.