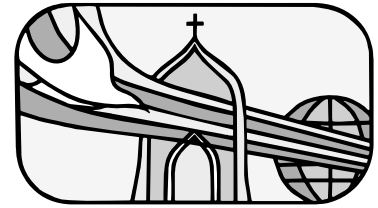


The Tidings

January 2006



Bethlehem Lutheran Church Sun Prairie, Wisconsin

New Look for 5th & 6th
Grade Sunday School



We are excited to announce that **Kingdom Quest** for the 5th and 6th Graders is taking on a new look. Beginning on January 8 Sunday school for 5th and 6th Graders will be called **Quest 56**. The first seven weeks this winter in **Quest 56** the students will be focusing on **Prayer: A Closer Walk with God**.

The primary objective of this series is to increase the prayer life of children by helping them build a deeper relationship with God and experience a closer spiritual walk with Him.

The teaching model for this series is the Lord's Prayer combined with the visual metaphor of a shopping mall called Prayer Walk Mall. There are six shops to visit and each will feature, or sell, a different aspect of prayer related to different parts of the Lord's Prayer. Students will receive a prayer journal to keep in their Bible from week to week and use it to record prayer goals and outcomes. The series is divided as follows:

January 8) **Guest Services Introduction**

January 15) **Praise Warehouse**
Praying With Praise - Our Father, Who Art in Heaven, Hallowed Be Thy Name.

January 22) **In the Gap Zone**
Priorities - Thy Kingdom Come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven.

January 29) **Security Central**
Protection - Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

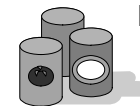


February 5) **Daily Food Court**
Provisions - Give us this day our daily bread.

February 12) **Forgiveness Unlimited**
Pardon - Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.

February 19) **Walk the Entire Mall**
Conclusion - For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.

Two Upcoming Youth
Ministry Servant Events



February 5 - Souper Bowl - The youth will collect cans of soup for the Sun

Prairie Food Pantry. Please bring cans of soup to church that Sunday and the youth will deliver them to the Food Pantry.

February 11 - Leave for Love - The youth group will be offering **child care** for parents between 4:30 -



8:30pm. Giving parents a chance to go out on a date for Valentine's Day! Sign-up Registration can be found in the Narthex and a free will offering will be taken. Children will watch a movie, eat dinner, do crafts and more.

BLK Sledding Party

Bethlehem Lutheran Kids (grades 1-5) will go sledding at Sheehan Park on Sunday, January 29 (snow permitting) after late service. Bring a sack lunch to eat at church, your sled and warm clothes. We'll come back to the church for cocoa and cookies around 3:00 p.m. If there isn't enough snow, there will be an alternative activity planned. Parent drivers and chaperones will be needed.



Benediction

"The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you; The LORD lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace." (Num. 6:24-26)

Reality shows, or at least "in your face" shows appeared fast on television after "The Survivor" first appeared in 1998. Sometimes that reality is pretty rude. Anne Robinson, voted the rudest woman on television appeared in a black cape on *The Weakest Link*, and when contestants were voted off by treacherous competitors, she snapped "Goodbye" and they then had to deal with a bad-bye knowing that their peers had just rejected them. Martha Stewart frames it differently on her version of the same show: "You just don't fit in!" To produce a reality show was to produce a show based on fierce, cutthroat competition and where the loser was not allowed to depart with grace or dignity but instead was required to suffer the further indignity of a verbal undressing before being dissed and dismissed.

Thanks be to God that there is a reason we call the worship space a "sanctuary." It is a place where the "reality" of the fallen world can be left behind for an hour or so. It is the place where our Lord communicates with us and we respond to His message. It is a place where we confess our sins and for a few moments live, breathe, and worship in a benedictive experience where congregants and Pastor share the words:

"The Lord be with you!; And also with you! ."



I can't think of a better way to start the new year than with the words of the Benediction. The Hebrew word for blessing, benediction - *b'ra-khah* - comes from *berekh* ("knee"), thus making a connection between worship and kneeling.

It's hard to fight when you're kneeling. We are a living, breathing body of believers; not the "frozen chosen." It is interesting that a recent measure of congregational health done by the Hartford Institute for Religious Research found that a congregation that adopts spiritual programs - let's call them benediction blessings - significantly increases the chances of measurable growth. When I read that I just went, "Duh..." Why spend millions of dollars to find out why a church is a church? Growth will only come from hearing His Word and partaking of His Sacraments.

Let television and the world utter dire imprecations and maledictions on people whom they deem to be losers. Let the church and its people offer benedictions and blessings upon all those same people and ourselves!

"The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace." May our Lord's benediction live in your hearts throughout the year.

Your shepherd in Christ,
Pastor Mueller ><>

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

Men and Women of Prayer in 2006

Is prayer an integral part of your daily life, or is it a hit-or-miss habit? Do you "pray without ceasing," or is your prayer life an afterthought? The answer to these questions will determine the direction of your day - and your life. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 says:

*Be joyful always;
pray continually;
give thanks in all
circumstances, for
this is God's will for
you in Christ Jesus.*

So here is the challenge: during the next 365 days, make yourself a man or women of prayer. Begin your prayers early in the morning and continue them through the day. And remember this: God does answer your prayers, but He's not likely to answer those prayers until you've prayed them.

My prayer in 2006 is that God makes us not only men and women of prayer but a church of prayer. I pray that He gives us the wisdom to consult Him often, the insight to hear His voice and the courage to follow His path everyday of this year.



Why is prayer so important? Prayer is a powerful tool for communicating with our Creator; it is an opportunity to commune with the Giver of all things good. Prayer helps us find strength for today and hope for the future. Prayer is not a thing to be taken lightly or to be used infrequently.

The quality of your spiritual life will be in direct proportion to the quality of your prayer life. Prayer changes things, and it changes *you*. In 2006, instead of turning things over in your mind, turn them over to God in prayer. Instead of worrying about your next decision, ask the Holy Spirit to lead the way. Pray constantly about things great and small. God is listening, and He wants to hear from you now.

The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. James 5:16b

Happy New Year!! I will be praying for each of you and I ask that you be praying for me. God's Richest Blessings in 2006!

Peter R Imlah
Youth & Family Minister

Cross†raining

Jr. High Youth Ministry

January

- 4 The Holy Spirit (1) 6:30pm
- 11 The Holy Spirit (2) 6:30pm
- 13 Sledding & Pizza (Friday) 5:30pm
- 18 Creed Final & Overview of the Sacraments 6:30pm
- 25 The Sacrament of Baptism 6:30pm

Soul†Fire

High School Youth Ministry

January

- 8 "Narnia" TBA
- 15 Faith Full Living - 6:00pm
How to profit from our problems
- 22 Faith Full Living 2 - 6:00pm
Triumph over temptation
- 29 Bowling Olympics TBA

Ladies' Guild News



The cookbook sale has been a great success! We still have some extras - cost is \$18 each if you buy 1-2

copies, or \$15 each for 3 or more. The profits will go to a fund to support our youth in their ministries.

Many thanks for your support of the Cookie Walk! \$910 was raised to which was added \$800 matching funds from Thrivent Financial for Lutherans - Care in Congregations program. The funds were divided between the Home Mission Fund and Bethlehem's Emergency Assistance Fund.

We continue to sew quilts so keep the fabric, used blankets and sheets coming. Materials can be left beneath the mailboxes.

Welcome New Members

On Sunday, December 11, we welcomed the following new members into Bethlehem's family:

Earl and Patti Schalk and their children **Jacob (10), Colton (7) and Sophia (3)** by transfer from Trinity Lutheran Church in Toledo, Ohio. Earl works in the transportation department at Kraft and Patti is a homemaker. They live at N5663 State Rd. 73 in Columbus.

Jason Madaus by adult confirmation. Jason is part-time in the National Guard and going to school. His wife Tracy is a long-time member of Bethlehem. They live at 900 Olympic

St. in Sun Prairie with boys Colton and Mikhail.

Lutheran Bowling Tournament



Do you want to bowl in a fun tournament? Men's, Women's & Junior Divisions. Bring a team, two, three, or more (or just yourself). Takes place at the Village Bowl, N86 W18330 Main St., Menomonie Falls, WI March 4 - May 7, 2006. \$300 estimated 1st place men's team prize based on an entry of 100 or more teams. \$150 estimated 1st place men's team prize based on an entry of 50 or more teams. Call Floyd Becraft at 837-9808 or John Geiger at 837-4649 for details and entry forms.

Call the Church Office If...

- % You or a loved one are hospitalized
- % You experience the loss of a loved one
- % You have need for Christian support
- % You have a change of address
- % Your phone number has changed
- % Your committee or group changes a meeting date or time
- % A member becomes homebound
- % You change your name
- % Members of your family are students attending school away from home or living at a different address



The

Elizabeth House

Offering hope to mother, child and community

The Elizabeth House is a Christian residential program for pregnant women sponsored by Care Net Pregnancy Center.

It's a place where all women 18 and over are welcome – regardless of race, religion or income.

A place where medical, physical and emotional needs can be addressed.

A place where women struggling to accept their past decision to end a pregnancy can come for healing, recovery and acceptance.

A place where solutions are discovered and obstacles are overcome, one-day-at-a-time.

A place where women can meet God and develop their personal relationship with Him.

A place our community is proud to build and support.

Call the center at (608) 259-1606 to inquire about openings in the program, and to begin the application process.

Care Net has received the offer of \$500,000 in matching funds for the Elizabeth House.

Contributions can be made to Care Net Pregnancy Center of Dane County, 1350 Macarthur Road, Madison 53714 – specify “Elizabeth House.” More information can be found at www.carenetdane.org.

Oakwood Village East – Volunteer Opportunities

Contact Kim Viney Coordinator of Volunteer Services 230-4238

Village Mercantile Volunteers

Volunteers needed weekdays and weekends once a month for the gift and grocery store, M-F 12:30-3:15 p.m. or on Saturday 12:45-3:15 p.m. Training provided.

Pet Visitors

Volunteers with appropriate, sociable pets to come in and visit with Seasons Assisted Living and Knoll Memory Care residents once a week, any day of the week, mornings through early evenings. Day and time negotiable based on volunteer's availability.



One-Time Musical Entertainers

Individuals or groups welcome to volunteer by providing musical entertainment or performances for assisted living and memory care residents during the year. Vocal or instrumental Jazz, Gospel, old-time, classical or big band music most appropriate.



Bethlehem Lutheran Church

300 Broadway Drive
Sun Prairie, WI 53590

www.bethlehemlc.org
bethlehem@bethlehemlc.org
608.837.7446, fax 608.825.2268

Worship

Sundays 8:00 & 10:30 a.m.

Sunday School & Bible Classes 9:10 a.m.

Rev. Stephen M. Mueller, Pastor
Mr. Peter Imlah, Youth & Family Minister