

August 2019 **Faith Matters**
Summer
Pastor's Page **FUN**



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As a matter of principle, I ignore social media as much as possible. Once in a while, though, I feel duty-bound to check my Facebook page, because I find information there that I would not learn otherwise, including important events in the lives of Faith's members.

Once in a great while, I also find a post that I think is really insightful, such as this one:

I spent time last summer with Danes from the Inner Mission and their faith is way stronger than anything I've seen in the US. Because they are a minority, they place a high value in Christian community (they need each other), biblical and theological education (they have to know their faith because they are looked down for having it), and they are missional (they are not afraid to engage the larger culture).

I forgot to copy the author's name and no longer recall who posted it, but I found it fascinating for three reasons.

The first is its connection to the history of Faith Lutheran. This church was founded by Danish immigrants who were part of the Inner Mission. It was part of a larger movement called Lutheran Pietism. The "inner" mission was a call to develop heartfelt devotion to Christ, not just intellectual acceptance of doctrine. It urged Christians to pursue passionate faith in Jesus and total obedience to His will. Pietism helped to revive the Lutheran church in Europe and to plant it in this country, especially in the Midwest. Sadly, however, Pietism also tended over time to become highly legalistic and self-righteous, which helps to explain why Inner Mission Danes were also called Holy Danes, Sad Danes or Gloomy Danes!

A second reason that paragraph struck me was because I had no idea the Inner Mission still existed in Denmark. I had associated it only with 19th- and 20th-century Lutheranism and immigrants to America. Given the generally sad state of Christianity in Europe, it is really encouraging to know that the Inner Mission continues to witness and work for Christ.

Mostly, however, that paragraph hit me because I think it depicts very accurately what Christians are facing more and more in this country, too, along with faithful ways to respond.

- As support for Christianity erodes in our culture, gathering in Christian community is more crucial than ever. We also "need each other" for support in Christian faith and life, as we gather to be renewed by God's Word and the Lord's Supper.

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- Biblical and theological education are more vital than ever. For centuries, almost everyone in the Western world had at least a basic knowledge of the Bible and Christian teaching, but that is no longer the case. Even if we are not “looked down (on) for having” faith in Christ, it is crucial for us to know the faith so that we can faithfully witness to others.
- Given current trends, we also must develop a missional mindset. As hard as it is, we, too, cannot be “afraid to engage the larger culture,” but find ways to speak the gracious truth of Jesus Christ in the face of popular falsehoods and testify to his saving will for all people.

What my Facebook “friend” encountered with the Inner Mission movement in Denmark is a powerful call to us and all Christians in America. Business as usual is no longer sufficient in the Church. We would do well to emulate the Inner Mission descendants of our Danish forebears, never missing the chance to gather with other believers, learning all we can about the Bible and Christian truth, and praying for the Holy Spirit to make us bold and effective witnesses to the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ.

Grace and peace to you,
Pastor Scott Grorud



stump the pastor

Q: With everything going on in the world today, from natural disasters to the seeming breakdown of society, could this be the time when Jesus will return?

A: This question was asked by an older person, who (to paraphrase Karl Barth) had the Bible in one hand and a newspaper in the other. Given what is in the news these

days, the answer to the question could very well be “yes.” Jesus warned his followers that, before the Last Day, “nation will rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be earthquakes in various places; there will be famines. This is but the beginning of the birth pangs.” (Mark 13:8) Jesus clearly promised that there would be great distress before he appeared again in glory at the end of time, and that time certainly could be now.

The answer, though, could just as likely be “no,” for there is no way to know for sure when Jesus will return. In that same discourse, Jesus also warned his disciples, “But about that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come.” (Mark 13:32-33) Christian history confirms Jesus’ words, because every decade, almost every year, since he spoke them has included all the turmoil he foretold, yet the Last Day has still not arrived. There is simply no way for us to know for sure when it will.

So, rather than try to anticipate the day of His return, Jesus called his followers to be prepared to greet him at any time. “Blessed is that servant whom his master will find at work when he arrives.” (Luke 12:43) That is not a call for some kind of constant hyper-readiness that would be impossible to maintain, but rather a call to live out the callings God gives us, so that whenever the Last Day dawns, He will find us faithfully tending to our work and the good of others.

That was the idea behind a saying widely attributed to Martin Luther. (There is no clear evidence that he actually said it, but if he didn’t, he should have!) Someone asked him what he would do if he knew Jesus was coming back tomorrow and he said, “I would plant an apple tree.” It will be a glorious day when Jesus appears again in glory, but it doesn’t call for any extraordinary or dramatic preparation. Simply cling to Christ’s promises, fulfill your callings and trust that “when He is revealed, we will be like Him, for we will see him as He is. And all who have this hope in Him purify themselves, just as He is pure.” (I John 3:2b-3)

Grief Support Group



GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP

Joyce is a 56-year old widow whose husband had just died. “We thought he was in good health,” she said, “but suddenly he began experiencing severe pains, which eventually led to hospitalization, endless tests and eventually he was put on hospice.

Then death.” Joyce was in such a whirlwind of emotions that she didn’t know where to turn. She was invited to a grief support group held at her church, where she worked through her grief. “It was hard and it took time,” Joyce reports “but it was the best thing I ever did. I can say I have a peace now that I thought would never come.”

Henry is 61 years old. He is a farmer, living with his wife on the family century farm. Their children have been gone from home for several years. Henry and his wife like their “empty nest” life together; but sometimes Henry is amazed at how short-tempered he can become. He’s had episodes during which he lashes out at his wife, and sometimes his married children. He apologizes and promises not to repeat such spells. But often his anger just bursts forth without warning. His loved ones are puzzled and dismayed. When Henry is alone in the barn he sometimes wants to just cry over his behavior, but he isn’t able to do so. Despite his success as a farmer, husband and father, he feels like a failure.

Grief is a necessary and proper reaction to loss. When we lose something we treasure, and can never get it back, grief is a normal and rightful response. It is also one of the most difficult things we will ever face in life. While grieving is normal, it is also misunderstood and feared. Thus many people, when they lose a loved one, or something they have treasured (like a job, a good friend, etc.), simply suffer in silence, hoping that in time it will go away. They bury their emotions inside themselves, only to experience more difficult things such as anger, physical illness, loss of faith, depression or anxiety. They don’t realize that those symptoms can be a direct result of unresolved grief.

Both Henry and Joyce joined a grief group. In an atmosphere of openness and understanding, they grew to understand some dynamics of grief. They learned that when hurts and needs are openly shared in a place where confidentiality is assured, they can come to grips with the hurts and ugly feelings that are part of their grieving. They actually resolve their grief issues and experience a peace and confidence they haven’t known since their grief began.

For Joyce, it was an obvious loss. Everyone knew her husband had died. For Henry, it was a grief experience from long ago, in his adolescent life following his mother’s death. He had never understood or resolved his grief. He eventually came to see that somehow he was blaming himself for his mother’s death. In difficult conversation, and with the support of the grief group, he learned that it was irrational for him to place guilt on himself. He began to experience an amazing sense of inner freedom.

Grief groups can help people know peace and freedom in the midst of difficult losses. They provide an atmosphere of confidentiality and privacy that allows for an “emptying” of painful emotions, so that more positive and truthful feelings can emerge. Conversations with people enduring some of the same struggles fosters more objective understandings of how grief is affecting one’s daily life. Grievers experience a spiritual and emotional growth that frees them to get on with their lives. They actually become stronger than if the grief had never happened.

Faith Lutheran Church will be starting a grief group soon. Marsha Schmit and Pastor Paulus are planning to get a group up and running this coming fall. They will be facilitators for these sessions. The dates are as follows: ***September 8, 15 and 22 from 9:10-10:00 a.m., in the conference room by the offices. Anyone, church member or not, can sign up by contacting Marsha Schmit or Pastor Paulus; OR by calling the church office (587-2093).

New Hope Mission Society News

Despite all the problems and issues with social media today, it remains a marvelous tool for communicating around the world. As one example, the Bisharah mission in India, which Faith Lutheran supports through the New Hope Mission Society, has a Facebook page. NHMS was founded to support the evangelistic work of K.K. Alavi in southwest India, a mission that is now largely run by K.K.'s son, Abdul. The mission is located in a complex called Bisharah and includes a Bible school called Shaliach's. To see some pictures from the Bisharah mission and learn more about its work, search for "Markaz-ul-Bisharah India Trust" on Facebook.

Please pray for K.K. Alavi, who is facing multiple health issues, leaving him in a fragile position. At age 71, after a lifetime of witness to Jesus Christ among Muslims, K.K.'s body is showing signs of wearing down. Pray that our Lord would grant healing, but also give him a peace that is his in Christ Jesus.

Stewardship Snapshot



It is not by chance that one of the first words young children learn is "mine!" It is, instead, a window into human nature, which is and remains essentially self-centered. One main job of parents is to teach their children not always to put themselves first and to be concerned for others, instead. Still, that driving sense of "mine" abides into adulthood and lies at the root of so much human misery in the world.

One main purpose of Biblical stewardship is to remind ourselves that nothing we have is truly "mine," because everything we have and are is a gift of God. As we place our trust in God, it frees us from the fear that I will not get what is "mine" and frees us to put the gifts God gives us to work for our needs and the good of our neighbors. To give away a portion of what God first gives us undercuts that instinctive sense of "mine" and fosters confident generosity toward others in its place.

Calling all college-aged youth!

How would you like to spend part of your winter break in Costa Rica? Join your friends for this trip of a lifetime from December 31, 2019—January 7, 2020. The cost is \$700 and registration is now open at faithlc.com under the Forms tab. Get your passport up to date and prepare now for this unforgettable opportunity!





Bibleopoly Update - Get Your Dots On!

How is your Bibleopoly reading going? Have you run into any questions? Have you learned anything new? We would love to hear how it is going for you so send an e-mail, Facebook post or give the office a call.

Have you been too busy to stop in this summer and get your dots on the board? Well never fear—Bibleopoly in the Park is near! One of the boards will be making its way to Library Square on Sunday, August 18 (weather permitting), so make sure to bring your list of books read and you can add your stickers there.

Did you know...that according to current dots, we have read 1,426 books since January 1? Did you knowthat members are sharing this adventure outside of FLC and it is spreading? Did you know....that a maintenance person that came into FLC to do a repair took a reading plan home with him? Did you know....that when the Holy Spirit takes hold the Gospel can spread like wildfire?!

Don't be left out. It's not too late to start reading today. If you started out strong and have lost track of reading time, you can start again today. If you have been reading all along, don't give up. Keep reading! Don't forget, Bibleopoly is for EVERYONE!

Crafting Group

This new group will meet again on Thursday, August 22, at 6:30 p.m., in the Faith Center. We will be making centerpieces to sit atop the new quilted mats for the tables in the Faith Center. Cyndi Lauer is helping us create centerpieces to fit the seasons and our church. We need your help to put it all together. Arrive when you can and stay for whatever fits your schedule. Join us for an evening of fun, creativity and fellowship. Contact Carreen Pierson, 587-5602 or Gail Telecky, 223-9218 with any questions.



Faith Lutheran Church Women (FLCW)

The FLCW welcomes Connie Saloum as our new president. All women of FLC are members of this women's group and are welcome to all activities. If you are interested in being a part of the board we love fresh faces and new ideas. Thank you Michelle Mies for your service as president.

Upcoming Events

Cake Walk at the Fall Extravaganza on Sunday, September 8. Start dusting off your favorite kid-friendly dessert recipes!

Advent Tea with Christmas themed/decorated tables will be on Saturday, December 14, so get this date on your calendar now!

Thank you!

A special thanks to all who baked pies and helped serve them at the Music in the Park event on July 1.

Augustana District Women of the Word (WOW) Annual Gathering

The 2019 Fall Gathering of the Women of the Word will be on Saturday, September 21, from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., at Peace Lutheran in Nevis, MN. The theme is "For Such a Time as This." Cost is \$20, which includes lunch. The registration deadline is September 14. Forms are available in the church office. Anyone interested in carpooling should leave a message at the church office.



Hi Faith Family!

As things wrap up here in my time at Faith Lutheran, I am in a pretty constant battle between tears over the departure and joy/thankfulness over my time here. I've spent so much time remembering, and I'd like to share with you some of my favorite memories (although this short piece will never do justice to the countless memories I have acquired over my 6 years).

What I will remember:

- Conversations with parents and church members stopping by my office to say Hello, and those shared over meals, coffee, office tables, etc.
- Confirmation chaos :)
- Youth row at church
- So much pizza...!
- Celebrating new life and mourning death with friends/members at funerals and baptisms
- Amazing parents, adult leaders, and church members who are so supportive of our youth ministry
- Traveling the country and serving Jesus with our amazing youth on our mission trips
- Getting to work with a great staff, supportive youth leaders, HAY, and summer interns
- Countless late-night games of Mafia, Grog, Sardines, and Swordfish (inside joke)
- Studying God's word and theology through Bible studies, AP Theo, book studies



A bullet point list could never capture what each of these things really means to me. They have meant late nights, early mornings, tears cried, and months of planning yet they've also meant deep relationships, so much laughter, healing for me, support for others, and growth in my walk with Jesus. God is most certainly at work here at Faith Lutheran and in our youth.

As Mark and I make this transition, please know that you, Faith Lutheran, hold a special place in our hearts and in our marriage. I want to thank you so much for the church you have been to both Mark and me. I could never thank you for all you have given me.

**Thank you,
Gladys Nissen
Your fellow worker in Christ**

Greetings Faith Lutheran!

With summer services in full swing, it's never too late to be thinking about joining the fun. Be it participating in the music or helping out with outdoor services, all is appreciated. On that same note, we are still in desperate need of help with building and breaking down the outdoor service area. Please

don't be deceived by the classic "someone else will take care of it" excuse! We need help every Sunday, so jump in and lend a hand after the service, or come to the park at 8:30 am to help build the set. Lastly, although we are a little over a month out, Faith Singers will be resuming its rehearsals on September 4. Lots of good music on the horizon and I can't wait to share it with all of you.



Blessings,
Will



Please Remember in Prayer

Please remember all those who are serving our country through active duty:



- Braiden Bjorge (Marines - grandson of Sandy Curtiss)
- Corporal Colin Bos (Marines, Camp Pendleton, CA - son of Dawn Bos)
- Sgt. Jason Gaulke (El Paso, TX - nephew of Alice Fransen)
- Petty Officer 3rd Class Mason Rutledge (Navy, Norfolk, VA - son of Lenny & Patti Rutledge)
- Col. Rob Skaar (Minneapolis/St. Paul Air National Guard - son of Dave & Marian Skaar)
- LT Brett Stadsklev (Navy, Corpus Christi, TX - son-in-law of Judy & Tom Felber)
- Corporal Nathan Thunstrom (Marines, Camp Pendleton, CA - son of Andy & Shelly Hedin and grandson of Dennis & Barb Hedin)
- SPC Ryan Wersal (Army, Fort Meade, MD - son of Roger & Laurie Wersal)

Remember our Faith members in nursing homes & health care centers:

Birchwood House

Ardell Novotny

Cedar Crest – Silver Lake

Patricia Lambert
Janice Rohrbach
Bernice Vorbeck
Lucille Wehking

Dassel Lakeside

Doris Betker

Harmony River

Margaret Alrick
Myrt Bauer
Irene Christensen
Betty Jensen
Jerome Lindquist
Karol Nolte
Joanne Olesen
Jean Pittman
Doyle Thielman
Harriet Thor

Oaks

Arlyce Drahos
Ellsworth & Delores Lorentzen
Barb Ryan
Charlie & Harriet Wixcey

Prairie Senior Cottages

Pat Fimon

Woodstone

Betty Garberich
Lucille Yukel

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OUR MISSION IS:
BUILDING FAITH

*"EQUIP THE SAINTS FOR THE WORK OF MINISTRY,
FOR BUILDING UP THE BODY OF CHRIST"*

EPHESIANS 4:12

TO LIVE OUT THAT MISSION, GOD CALLS US TO:

FOLLOW JESUS
ANNOUNCE THE GOSPEL
INVITE ALL PEOPLE
TEACH CHRISTIAN TRUTH
HELP ALL WHO ARE IN NEED



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