

THE BETHANY

BEACON

FEBRUARY 2020

VOLUME II, NUMBER 2

"Let your light shine before others" (Matthew 5:16)



Lessons in Carrying the Cross

"Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls." (Matthew 11:29)

The burden of sin and selfishness is great, the Scriptures teach us. While self-seeking attitudes come so naturally to us, and we think that we're doing ourselves a favor by freely pursuing self-indulgence, God's judgment always follows. Simply put, "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23).

Adam's sin in the Garden is a perfect illustration of this truth. Our first parents were tempted to follow the path of self-indulgence, for "when you eat of [the tree]," Satan promised, "your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God" (Genesis 3:5). Of course, what they found out when they pursued those self-interests is that Satan always lies and that God's promises always stand: "When you eat of it, you will surely die" (Genesis 2:17).

In our arrogance we think we can pull the wool over God's eyes and get away with our self-centered sinfulness. But God's all-seeing holiness hones in on us daily, observing every misstep, noting every godless word and judging every selfish motive. Then his perfect law closes every loophole, answers every excuse and obliterates every rationale. And we are arrested! "The Scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin" (Galatians 3:22).

The chain of God's law and the cross of his judgment are burdens too heavy for sinners like us to bear, and yet this is our natural fate. We are "by nature objects of wrath" (Ephesians 2:3).

Which makes the saving work of Jesus and his glorious cross all the more amazing! Jesus took the chain of God's law on himself and carried the burden for us without stumbling. Then he picked up the heavy cross of God's judgment and laid aside his Father's righteous verdict

against us by taking up our sin and penalty. He truly became “sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness [perfection] of God” (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Jesus took our great burden from us, and now he invites us to take up an entirely different cross, the cross of discipleship. “Take my yoke upon you,” Jesus says, “and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart.” Our Savior God offers free lessons in carrying our crosses. He models for us the love that we are created and re-created through Baptism to have for others (Romans 6).

And this new glorious cross doesn’t end in judgment, instead, Jesus promises, “you will find rest for your souls.”

🎵 GRACE NOTES 🎵

Preparing for Worship at Bethany

Bethany will be celebrating a **mission festival** during the month of February, as part of its celebration of the Epiphany season. The season of Epiphany highlights the fact that Jesus is not only the Savior of a certain few, but the Savior of all people, “a light to lighten” all nations. And he has graciously called us to be his co-workers in the harvest field. As God’s people we are called to do and support the work of his Church through words, actions, prayers, and offerings. See the WINGS report below to find out more about the specific mission support efforts that the congregation will be undertaking in the month of February.

On **Wednesday, February 26**, we will commemorate the beginning of the **season of Lent** with **Ash Wednesday worship**. Services will be held at **Kenosha at 3:30 p.m.** and **Somers at 6:30 p.m.** Both services will include a celebration of Holy Communion. Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the 40-day period of repentance and reflection that precedes our celebration of Jesus’ resurrection from the dead on Easter morning. Follow in the footsteps of the Savior this Lent and always.

Unity Sunday is March 1. There will only be ONE service that weekend, a 10 a.m. Sunday service at Shoreland. More information about the event will be available in the weeks to come. Please make a note of it.

PARISH EDUCATION

Grow in the Grace and Knowledge of Our Lord Jesus Christ

- **Sunday Morning Bible Studies** meet at our **Somers (8:45 a.m.) and Kenosha (9:15 a.m.) locations**. Pastor Pagel is teaching a nine-lesson study entitled **Caring for Souls: People Matter**. Pastor Prange is teaching a five-lesson study on Paul's letter to the Colossians, entitled **The Fullness of God**. Make Bible study with your fellow Christians a routine.
- **Sunday School** meets at **the Kenosha campus only**, beginning at 9:15 a.m. Due to a lack of available teachers and students at our Somers location, Sunday School has been suspended for the time-being with the hope of being able to provide it regularly in the future. If you have questions or would like to help with teaching Sunday School, please speak to our Family/Youth Nurture chairman, Nick Spittlemeister, or to either pastor.
- **Studying the Sunday Scriptures** takes place at our Somers location every **Tuesday at 9 a.m.** Pastor Prange leads this weekly study that helps prepare you for weekend worship. Attendees have commented how much more they now get out of worship because they've studied the Gospel and lessons first. Our group has grown in numbers and knowledge. Join us for this informative study.
- **Wednesday Evening Bible Study** "Seven Visions, Seven Truths," a study of the book of Revelation continues on Wednesday evenings at 6:30 p.m. at the Dubis residence, 8686 122nd Street, Pleasant Prairie. Contact Larry or Deb at 262-948-3269 or via email at ldubis@wi.rr.com for additional information.
- **Breakfast Bible Study** On the last Wednesday of every month, a group meets at Perkins in Pleasant Prairie for breakfast and Bible study at 8:15 a.m.
- **Saturday Morning Bible Study** A group meets every other Saturday at 9 a.m in the home of Gary and Rudee Koepke to study the Scriptures. They are currently studying the books of Samuel and will meet on February 8 & 22.
- **Saturday Evening Bible Study** This 20 minute study deals with a range of topics and Bible passages. Please join us.

WINGS CORNER

Women in God's Service

Thank you to all those who donated bibles and money through our giving tree for our Apache mission! What a wonderful way we will be able to bless them! Final date for donating any more bibles is February 6.

February is **Mission Festival Month** at Bethany, and we will be focused on our Befriend A Mission in Utah, Pastor Quandt and Redemption Lutheran.

Save the date...Leap Day!! **Saturday, February 29 from 3-5 p.m. at Bethany-Somers.** We will be hosting a social event with food, refreshments and basket raffles to support this mission congregation. Our Lakeshore Circuit churches will be joining us on this fundraising event, so please consider joining us for fun and fellowship! Bring your spouse or invite a friend to come and make a fun Leap Year memory!



Our next meeting will be **Thursday, February 6, 6:30 at our Somers location.** We will be doing final plans for Leap Day and looking forward to future events together. If you are unable to make the meeting but would like to help with our event, please contact Lynelle Wagner at knlwags@gmail.com.

Please continue to keep Pastor Quandt and all of our missionaries around the world in your prayers this month!

CARING AND SHARING

News from Bethany and Beyond

Subscribe to the Bethany E-News and Notes

If you'd like to receive a weekly email in your inbox with all the Bethany News & Notes, please send an email to the Bethany office (blsoffice@bethanykenosha.org) to be included on our e-mailing list. The E-News & Notes will include the full range of news from Bethany Church and School and elsewhere, including Shoreland and WELS info, all at your fingertips.

COMMITTEES AND COMMUNICATION SESSIONS TO DISCUSS REUNIFYING CONGREGATIONS

In January 2020, all four Kenosha congregations approved the formation of five committees made up of members from each of the congregations to research and discuss different components of a possible reunification. These committees have been tasked with making recommendations to the four congregations on July 1, 2020, concerning the steps necessary to realize such a reunification. Five communication sessions have been scheduled as well to discuss different areas of congregational and school ministry. These communication sessions will give Kenosha congregational members an opportunity to react to initial ideas, to ask questions, and to provide input toward desired outcomes in each area. More information is available in a document available at both the Bethany-Kenosha and Bethany-Somers locations or at www.sites.google.com/view/welskenosha

SOMERS EVENING SEMINAR TO DISCUSS THE DIVINE CALL

After Jesus was raised from the dead and ascended into heaven, his people faced a dilemma. Jesus had given them an awesome task—to go and make disciples of all nations—but they were so few in number, only around 120 total people. They were also down one apostle-pastor because of Judas’ treachery and suicide. They needed to select someone to replace him, but Jesus was no longer around to help them do this. Or was he? Come and find out how Jesus continues to prepare and call his people to serve in the public ministry of the gospel, as we discuss the particular case of man named Matthias in a seminar entitled **“Called by God.”** We’ll meet at Bethany-Somers on **Monday, February 24 beginning at 7 p.m.**

“10 FOR 10” - DISCIPLINE ISN’T A DIRTY WORD

Our *Ten for Ten* emphasis has, on a regular basis, called the practice of firstfruits, proportionate, and sacrificial giving a spiritual discipline. Discipline has been defined as “training that develops self-control, efficiency.” Discipline is often viewed as a dirty word in our day—conjuring up pictures of parental punishment or of people who don’t have a life outside of their workouts and training.



Actually, discipline isn’t a dirty word at all. It’s a biblical word that we would do well to put into practice. God’s Word puts a high value on discipline. Proverbs 23:23 encourages us to “get wisdom, discipline and understanding.” Discipline (i.e., learning and life skills) is something that parents want for their children. God wants us to be a people who practice personal discipline. May the opposite never be true of us, “... fools despise wisdom and discipline” (Proverbs 1:7).

The practice of discipline touches almost every area of life. Think of it:

- If your goal is to lose or control your weight, you need discipline to eat properly.
- If your goal is to exercise, you need discipline to dedicate yourself regularly to working out.
- If your goal is to save money for travel, a child’s education, or retirement, you need discipline to set aside the money.
- If your goal is to get a degree, you need discipline to study, write, and test your way through decades of schooling.

We benefit by bringing discipline to bear in the tasks of daily life. As Christians, we benefit by bringing discipline to bear in the area of Christian giving.

St. Paul wrote to the Corinthian Christians to give much-needed direction to their practice of regular giving. “Haphazard,” “lazy” or “laissez-faire” aren’t words that would describe his approach. Instead he wrote: “On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a

sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made” (1 Corinthians 16:2).

Did you notice the discipline involved in what Paul wrote? First...Every...Each one...Set aside...In keeping with...Saving it up?

True, Christian giving does *sometimes* happen spontaneously when we become aware of an immediate need. But faithful Christian giving more often happens as a result of thoughtful planning, prayerful consideration of God’s blessings, deliberation over different options, regularity, and the discipline of follow through. Discipline is a desperately-needed ingredient for God-pleasing stewardship.

May the Lord richly bless our Bethany family with the gift of discipline when it comes to giving God our first and our best. In so doing, we are simply reflecting the giving nature of God—a God who gave us his first, his best, his one and only Son!

WELS CONFERENCE OF PRESIDENTS HAS WINTER MEETING

The Conference of Presidents (COP) met for its winter meeting on January 6-9. The COP meeting addressed many topics, including:

- The COP approved proposals to amend the synod’s bylaws dealing with disciplinary procedures carried out by the districts. These proposed changes are intended to clarify the terms, timing, and process to be followed when discipline becomes necessary. The proposed amendments will be reviewed by the synod’s Constitution Committee and will ultimately be presented to the 2021 synod convention.
- Asia Lutheran Seminary has enrolled several American students who will soon graduate. To prepare these students for serving in stateside ministry, the COP approved Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary’s plan to provide these graduates with a year of stateside vicar experience and with two semesters of additional instruction at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis.
- The COP issued a divine call to Prof. John Hartwig to serve as a civilian chaplain in Europe and to Mr. James Sievert to serve as a part-time assistant consultant for the Commission on Lutheran Schools.
- The COP has asked for a review of the Ministry of Christian Giving’s major gifts program to ensure that the Ministry of Christian Giving is best positioned and structured to carry out its work.
- The COP received with thanks the news that Congregation Mission Offerings (CMO) for 2019 were \$330,000 higher than what congregations had committed. CMO subscriptions for 2020 are now being gathered, with the prayer that congregations will

be able to increase their subscriptions to provide additional support for WELS missions and ministry. Looking ahead to 2021, the COP will prepare an encouragement video highlighting the blessings that Congregation Mission Offerings have made possible.

- The COP approved a proposal that congregations will be encouraged to designate one Sunday in 2021 as a “WELS Mission and Ministry Sunday” as a way of highlighting the work we do together. Informational and worship materials will be provided.
- Each of the 12 districts will be asked to consider the proposed change to the WELS Pension Plan at this summer’s district conventions. Informational materials will be provided well in advance, and each district will be given a detailed overview of the proposed changes. Districts will be asked whether or not they approve of the changes. Depending on the results of those votes, the Synodical Council will determine how and when to proceed with the process.
- The COP has overseen a restatement of the synod’s doctrinal position on the roles of men and women, entitled “Male and Female in God’s World.” The restatement does not reflect a change in our teaching; rather, it was intended to clarify and update the current doctrinal statement. The restatement will be reviewed by pastor and teacher conferences. In addition, an accompanying Bible study is available for use in congregations. The districts will be asked to provide reaction and input before a final draft is presented to the synod convention in 2021.
- The COP has also developed a “Statement on Human Sexuality,” which presents a biblical perspective on the transgender issue.

CHURCH IN PANAMA CITY REDEDICATED AFTER HURRICANE

What a difference a year makes. On October 10, 2018, Hurricane Michael blew through Panama City, Fla., as a category five hurricane, severely damaging the church and parsonage of Amazing Grace as well as the homes of many of its members. On October 20, 2019, Amazing Grace moved back into its rebuilt worship facility. During that year, more than 200 WELS volunteers poured into Panama City to help Amazing Grace with the necessary cleanup and rebuilding. In addition, people from around the world joined together in praying for their Christian brothers and sisters and donating funds and materials to help.

In the immediate aftermath of the storm, Amazing Grace’s members banded together to check on one another and to help each other. As soon as the roads were cleared, members from neighboring congregations also pitched in. Then, volunteers from WELS Christian Aid and Relief and Kingdom Workers’ Builders For Christ began arriving, including more than 40 Martin Luther College students who volunteered at various times.

“It was an eye-opening experience,” says Hailey Stade, one of the Martin Luther College students who helped with cleanup soon after the hurricane. “I had no idea what to expect until

we crossed the bridge to Panama City. Buildings were flattened. Every tree you saw was on the ground or bent in half. Power lines lay all over the sides of streets and sidewalks. A building was considered lucky if it even had some of its roof intact.”

The roof of Amazing Grace’s church was ripped open during the storm and the parsonage’s roof was peeled up, causing flooding throughout the home. With such extensive water damage, most items needed to be replaced and much needed to be rebuilt. Yet Amazing Grace was blessed with donations and volunteers every step along the way to lighten the load. On January 12, members of Amazing Grace rededicated their worship space and invited volunteers back to celebrate with them. About 25 volunteers who helped with the rebuilding process attended this grand reopening celebration.

“The grand reopening was more like a grand reunion,” says Rev. David Kehl, current pastor at Amazing Grace.

Although the past year posed many challenges for them, members agree that this experience brought them closer together—with each other, with their fellow WELS members, and with their community. As they move forward, they’re excited to take the next step with their ministry plans.

As Mr. Torger Reppen, president of Amazing Grace, notes, “It’s so nice to be back in our own building, our own home. Now we can focus on outreach. We’ve been focusing on rebuilding, and now we can focus on daily church stuff.”

BETHANY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH AND SCHOOL

**2100 75th Street Kenosha, Wisconsin
262.652.3574**

**1520 Green Bay Road Somers, Wisconsin
www.bethanykenosha.org**