

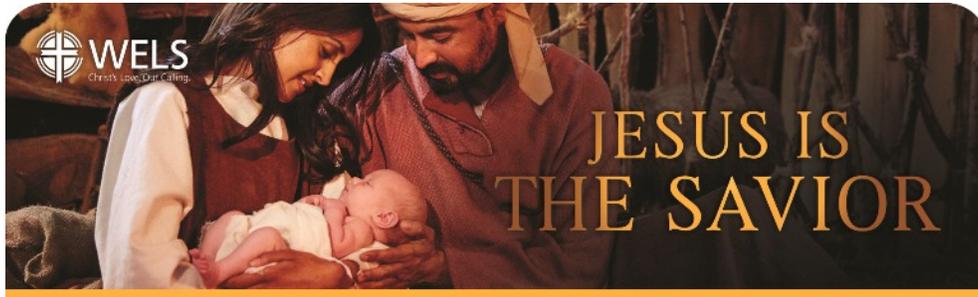
# The Messenger

*Rooted in Christ.*  *Reaching Out With The Word.*

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*Faith Ev. Lutheran Church  
Pastor Joel Neumann - (715) 284-0772  
February 2016*

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## **Jesus is the Suffering Savior**

**He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. ... He was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities, the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. – Isaiah 53:3,5**

### **God's Words of Love**

Valentine's Day cards contain words that are chosen very carefully. They are meaningful words of love and affection. Sometimes when we are sending a valentine to someone, we might even agonize over which words to use. We want to choose the right words that express the deep love we have.

How about the words printed above by the prophet Isaiah? Would you include any of his words in a card to your loved one? At first thought you would say, "Absolutely not!" Words like "despised... rejected... sorrows... suffering... punishment" would be the last choice for a Valentine's Day card! But the Bible surprises us. These words from God are really a wonderful expression of his true love for people.

The first thing to understand is that Isaiah was writing about Jesus. Jesus, God's Son, was sent to earth to be the world's Savior. The Bible tells us that because of sin there was punishment looming for all people. But Jesus took that punishment on himself. Jesus is our Savior who suffered for sinners. He took

all this suffering on himself, including death on a cross, so that people wouldn't suffer eternally.

The second thing to remember is that we are talking about something very personal to all of us. We were the ones Jesus came to suffer for. We were the ones who were headed to the punishment of eternal separation from God. Our sinful thoughts, words, and actions condemned us. But as the prophet wrote, "He was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities, the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed."

Jesus' love for us is deep and long-lasting. It's not a shallow love that we might receive from others, or a love that is here today and gone tomorrow. Jesus' love is eternal. He promises that since he suffered and gave up his life for us, he will continue to love us each and every day.

Every time you open the Bible it's like Valentine's Day. These are God's words of love for you.



## Lutheran Mobile Clinic – CAMM – Malawi

January 2016

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

It has now been raining almost everyday here in Malawi, which has cooled the heat but it still isn't the "White Christmas" I'm used to. But nothing about this Christmas season is like I'm used to. Instead of the hustle and bustle of shopping centers, it is the usual hustle and bustle of the open-air markets in the city -sometimes a little more hustle if it is raining. There are no Christmas lights lining houses or city streets—we are lucky if our regular lights are on. There is a distinct lack of Christmas music on the radio 24 hours a day.

While all the trappings of Christmas are missing, the real reason we are celebrating is universal to any time and any place. Jesus, our promised Savior, has been born. In fact, the focus may be even clearer here because of the lack of commercialism associated with Christmas. When discussing family Christmas traditions, most Malawians I've spoken with stated they would go to church, and then come home and have a nice family meal (chicken or beef, rice, and relish). No mention of gifts at all

This year for Christmas I spent the holiday at the lake with a few friends who remained in Malawi. We left Lilongwe in the early afternoon and arrived after dark due to getting lost (Google maps said there was a road that didn't exist—a regular occurrence, unfortunately). As soon as we pulled up to the house we were staying at and I got out of the car and immediately noticed the stars! They had shown so brightly. It made me think of the star that the Magi followed to find the baby, Jesus. The stars shine so brightly in Malawi, but I can't imagine how brightly that star must have shone!

I used some of my beach time to reflect on the year I have spent here in Malawi. I've learned so much and grown—both spiritually and personally. I've also experienced so many firsts—my first safari, my first cockroach, driving on the left side of the road from the right side of the car. I've travelled to new places. Throughout all of this I'm reminded at how blessed I am to be here in Malawi—serving the Lord and his people—experiencing such amazing things. As I embark on another year of adventures, I recognize I have much more to learn and grow from.

My prayer for the upcoming year is for your continued support of Lutheran Mobile Clinic. I pray that through God's grace and your support, our clinic will continue to provide both spiritual and physical care to every patient that comes to our four clinic sites. I pray that the Lord continues to bless LMC with dedicated and professional staff. And finally, I pray for continued safety for our patients and staff, and for you at home, in America and Canada.

May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you. May the Lord look on you with favor and give you peace.

God's Blessings in 2016!

Amanda Oswalt

Nurse In Charge (Lutheran Mobile Clinic)

# Gift Cards

We will be collecting gift cards to send to the seminary for the married students. We are looking for gift cards, of any amount from Target, Woodman's, Meijer, Pick n' Save, and Walmart. These are the stores suggested by the student director of the food bank. You can also donate cash which would be used to purchase gift cards.

The cards or cash can be given to Annette Markhardt or Nancy Kirchman. We will be collecting cards/cash until February 28<sup>th</sup>.

Dean Ellis, student director of the food bank, stated in an email to the Kellens, "Thank you for keeping us in your prayers and for your help. We are humbled by the generosity of our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ."



## Reach Your Community Faith Outreach Meeting

This is an open meeting – anyone interested is encouraged to attend. Agenda items include home devotion and community concert ideas. Our meeting will take place Sunday, February 21, at 12:30 p.m. in the BRF church building.

# CHILI COOK-OFF

Friday, February 26 @ 6 p.m.

Enter to Compete – or Show up to Eat!

Are you tired of feeling chilly and frozen? Time to warm-up with food and friends! On Friday evening, February 26, we will have our 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Chili Cook-off. It will be at 6 p.m. at the Black River Falls church building. This is a very informal cook-off and a great opportunity for some fun and fellowship!

If you would like to enter the contest, please bring a crock-pot of chili to church by 5:30 p.m. so the set-up can begin. ANY type of chili is acceptable! We will begin tasting at 6 p.m. Anyone willing to taste chili will have the opportunity to vote for their favorite. The winning cook will receive a \$25 Gordy's Market gift card and the coveted wooden spoon trophy!

If you don't care to taste chili, no problem! You are welcome to come and enjoy hot dogs, salads and other munchies without having to participate in the chili contest. All food will be provided.

*Mark your calendars and make plans to thaw out at the chili cook-off!*



The choir will be changing their schedule starting February 9<sup>th</sup>, the day before Ash Wednesday.

We will be meeting from 6:15 - 6:45 p.m. on Tuesdays, right before Bible class. This will continue through March 22<sup>nd</sup> (Holy Week).

The last week in March we will be taking off.



## MIDWEEK BIBLE CLASS

With our Wednesday evenings being set aside for our Lenten journey to the cross and empty tomb, our regularly scheduled Wednesday events will be moved to Tuesday evening.

So, for the season of Lent, confirmation, choir practice, and our midweek Bible Class will be moved to Tuesdays.

All times remain the same.



# Council Meeting Summary

January 18, 2016

*Present:* Pastor Joel Neumann, Scott Templeton, Cody Heller, Jake Dahlke, Todd Volk, Mark Mueller and Dave Kellen, *Absent:* Brad Rahmlow

**Acceptance of Minutes.** The minutes of the Council meeting were accepted with the addition of "Treasurer" to Article III - Section 1.1.

## **Pastor's Report:**

- Pastor Neumann baptized two children: Tyrone Lawrence Laufenberg (age 7) and Adalee Marie Laufenberg (age 4).
- BIC classes are going on in BRF and will start on January 27 in Cataract.
- *Connecting Sinai to Calvary* Bible classes will be starting at both locations. There are 16 members participating in Cataract and 30 in Black River Falls.
- The Lenten rotation will consist of pastors from Tomah, Viroqua, and Sparta along with Pastor Neumann. The service times will remain the same - 4:30 p.m. in Cataract, and 6:30 p.m. in Black River Falls – with Simple Suppers at both at 5:30 p.m.
- There was discussion if the Imposition of Ashes should continue on Ash Wednesday or not. It was decided that we will not do the Imposition of Ashes this year and then determine future years from feedback after this year's' service.

## **Special Reports:**

**Property Committee:** The Property Committee has been working on the most recent edition of the "wish list." They would like to have the hutch removed in Cataract and replaced with a new countertop and cabinets installed. Gale Jessie has volunteered to install them. MSC to purchase cabinets and a new countertop in Cataract.

**Outreach Committee:** Brad Markhardt will present a report at the Congregational meeting with all of the 2015 highlights and expenses along with a proposed 2016 expense forecast and projected activities.

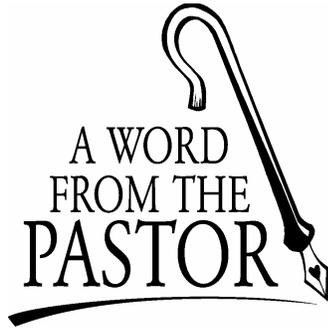
## **New Business:**

**2016 Budget:** Cody Heller presented the projected Profit and Loss Budget Overview for 2016. MSC to accept the budget presentation.

**The next Congregational meeting will be  
January 31, 2016 at 1:30 p.m. in Cataract.**

**The next Council meeting will be  
February 15, 2016 at 6:30 p.m. in Black River Falls.**

*Recorded by Jake Dahlke*



## WHAT WILL YOU DO IN THE NEW YEAR?

So how many of those New Year's resolutions have you broken so far? None! Some! All! I pray that the resolutions found in the newsletter last month have not been broken; keeping them means walking in step with God's holy Word. Here are four more to add to that list.

**God grant us the spiritual wisdom to stick to these Biblical resolutions...and God bless you as you do!**

### 1. Give thanks in all circumstances (1 Thess. 5:18)

Remember why we celebrated Christmas? It was because of the gift of God's one and only Son come into the world to be our Savior. What greater reason to give thanks do we have than that!

But this also means to give thanks during hardships; to give thanks for our food, jobs, houses, and livelihood; to give thanks for family, and so much more

### 2. Therefore encourage one another and build each other up (1 Thess. 5:11)

How about choosing a fellow member of shut-in to visit this year

How about asking a fellow member how they are doing or if there is anything you can do to help

How about sharing the promises of God with the fellow member who is going through a rough patch

How about going out of your way and taking time out of your busy schedule to stop in and see that individual who has lost a loved one in the past few years

### 3. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good...Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. (1 Cor. 12:7, 27)

This means using your gift (yes God has given you a gift) for the service of the church

Could you say yes when asked to serve on a committee or board

Could you try teaching Sunday School

This means being active as a missionary in your own mission field—your life!

### 4. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. (Gal 5:22, 23)

Do you lose your temper easily; use God's Word and his help to be more patient and gentle

This means living our lives in such a way that people know we are children of God

**Jesus answered, “Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way? Or those eighteen who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them - do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem?”** (Luke 13: 2, 4)

## *We Want Answers*

Why did that happen to him and not to me? Why did that seemingly innocent group of people suffer so horribly? Was there a reason God allowed tragedy to happen to them? Did God send it as a judgment? Was it coincidence? Was it karma?

When tragedy strikes, we have questions and we want answers. We're no different from the people in today's reading. Why did Roman Governor Pontius Pilate kill those people up north in Galilee? Was it something they said or did? Were they being punished for their evil actions? What about that accident down south in Siloam? Were those people the target of God's justice? Had he finally had enough with them? Did they get what they had coming?

Why do these tragedies happen? We want a reasonable explanation that makes sense. We want to connect cause and effect. We're especially concerned and even baffled when tragedy strikes in the lives of outwardly good people or professing Christian people. Did we miss something? Is there more than meets the eye? Is this world out of God's control, or worse, does God not care?

God doesn't provide us with answers to our every question. He does, however, speak to us with his assurances in the Bible. There he reminds us that he is in perfect control of the world even though things often seem chaotic, uncertain, and random. He reminds us that he is a just and gracious God. When tragedy strikes, he encourages us to focus not on the answers he chooses to keep hidden from us, but on the answers he gives in his Word. God, in his grace, sent his Son to carry out his gracious will. Jesus suffered the ultimate "tragedy" on Calvary's cross. His Word tells us that although we deserve God's punishment because of our sin, Jesus died to cleanse us from every sin. He reminds us that our heavenly Father is in control. He tells us that even when tragedy strikes, he will turn it into blessing for his people. When tragedy strikes, let's look for answers where God gives them - in his Word.

**Prayer: Dear heavenly Father, we have so many questions. Help us seek you and your answers in your Word. Comfort us with the knowledge that you are in control and help us accept your heavenly will. Amen**

***Meditations:** NPH February 29, 2016  
When Tragedy Strikes*



## **Jesus Cares Ministry**

**Monday - Feb. 22nd**

**6:00 p.m.**

### **BRF worship location**

Please join us for Bible Class, snack, and a craft. As always very one is welcome.

Please contact Mark Mueller if you have any questions:

#715 670-0076

muellermark707@gmail.com



## Teachers Meeting

There will be a Faith teachers meeting on

**Sunday, February 28th  
from 10:15 - 12:15  
in the BRF church building**



Our first youth group gathering is in the books and it was a success. We had a Bible Study; we made some plans; and we played a game.

We will do the same on . . .

**Thursday, February 18th  
from 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.**

We hope to make some more detailed and firm plans for our first youth event.

# A Word from the PASTOR



## Lent begins

### LENT - "IRONIES OF THE PASSION"

The month of February ushers in the season of Lent with Ash Wednesday on February 10. Lent then continues for 40 days (not counting Sundays) until we reach Easter Sunday. The focus of Lent is repentance and sorrow over sin. We meditate on the meaning of Christ's suffering and death for our salvation. We concentrate on the continued importance of amending our sinful lives.

But Lent also leads into remembering the greatest victory of all time: Christ's triumphing over sin, death and hell with his death and resurrection! May this reminder of what we focus on during lent lead you to make every effort to join us in our repentant midweek walk toward the glory of Easter Sunday!

### Our Wednesday worship service schedule is as follows:

- 4:30 p.m. – Worship in Cataract
- 5:30 p.m. – Simple Supper at Cataract and Black River Falls
- 6:30 p.m. – Worship in Black River Falls



Matt Anderson	2/4
Jacob Markhardt	2/6
Brad Markhardt	2/7
Tucker Fatla	2/8
Zachary Mueller	2/15
Dave Kellen	2/17
Greg Fatla	2/19
Jerry Kirchman	2/23
Rilyn Holcomb	2/23
Cody Heller	2/25
Pam Johnson	2/25



## Lenten Simple Suppers

Starting Ash Wednesday, February 10<sup>th</sup>, we will have our Lenten simple suppers at both worship locations. They will be served at 5:30 p.m.

Church service in Cataract will be before the supper at 4:30 p.m. and church service will be held after in BRF at 6:30 p.m. Everyone is invited to come and share in the fellowship before or after the service.

Any questions in BRF, please contact Annette Markhardt and for questions in Cataract, please contact Karen Jessie.



Please note that the newsletter and calendar submission deadline has changed from Sunday to Saturday. For the month of March, the deadline is Saturday, February 20<sup>th</sup>. Please contact Todd or Alisa Volk if you have any questions.

February 10, 2016

ASH

WEDNESDAY

4:30 p.m. Service Cataract

5:30 p.m. Simple Suppers  
(Both worship locations)

6:30 p.m. Service BRF



Daylight  
Saving  
Time  
Begins

March 13, 2016

'Spring Forward' One Hour



**FAITH**  
EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH

*Black River Falls & Cataract, WI*

*www.faithwels.com*

*The Messenger* is published monthly for the congregation and friends of Faith Ev. Lutheran Church. Its purpose is to provide information regarding all areas of congregational news and to offer enlightening articles.

*Anyone wishing to contribute articles or information:*

*Contact Alisa Volk either in person or at the following e-mail address: aavpc@hotmail.com.*

Newsletter deadline: The submission deadline is the next-to-the-last Saturday of each month. February 20<sup>th</sup> is the deadline for the March, 2016 newsletter.