

Bethany Lutheran Church

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August 2022



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www.bethanylutherancushing.org

BETHANY: GROWING IN FAITH

Recently I took a little time away from my pile of work to take a Lutheran literacy quiz found in chapter 16 of a book entitled *On Being Lutheran*. The quiz, according to the author Dr. Timothy Lull, is a way to check Lutheran understanding and a chance for Lutherans to benefit from a "checkup" of their knowledge of their heritage. As I took the quiz, I found it to be a friendly visitor, not a hostile interrogator, as to where I am in my faith literacy. For as Dr. Lull said in his introduction to the quiz, "Christians today need to work hard to be well-informed.

Most believers have busy lives with only a few hours each week for church activities. And the religious pluralism in our society means that there is little reinforcement of Christ faith or even sharing basic religious information in schools, on television, and in newspapers. To keep our faith lively, we have to deliberate about our Christian identity and the knowledge that supports it. Knowing the fact and figures in a quiz is no sure sign of faith but ignorance is no cause for pride, especially when with little effort all could better understand the Bible, the history of the church, and one's Lutheran heritage."

It was late fall in 1997 and I was the confirmation teacher for a group of ninth grade boys at my seminary contextual education site. The six boys and I had moved through a biographical study of Martin Luther in the first month of our time together, and we were just starting to get into the Small Catechism by looking at the first of the Ten Commandments. It was then that one of the boys asked, "Where do they find this stuff?" "What stuff," I said. "These Ten Commandments where do they come from." As I questioned the student and his five friends, I quickly found out that they all were at a loss as to the Biblical history and theological meaning behind the Ten Commandments. In fact, I found out that they were oblivious to many facts, figures, and focuses of the Bible. As I continued to talk to the boys in greater detail about their Biblical knowledge and their Lutheran understanding, I found that all six had no one at home to mentor them on the Bible, on church history, or on any aspect of their faith literacy. And as far as church education, none of the boys had ever been in Sunday School, or had been required to go to Release Time, and the only Bible they owned were those given to them by the church that had very small print and were hard to read. Basically, those ninth grade boys were biblically illiterate.

It was soon after that confirmation session and then a follow up dialogue with my seminary friends, that I became aware of the importance of developing a Biblical literacy tradition in one's church. I found that it is vitally important to take time to read, analyze, scrutinize, and research what it is that

we believe. For although faith is a gift given to us by our most gracious God, and without faith education, our faith can easily become stagnant.

In an Ascension Day sermon given in 1533, Martin Luther said, "There are obstacles to faith that one needs to continually work through. There are times when our faith falters, and it is then that we need to turn to the tools of faith: the reading and hearing of Christ Jesus' Word, and our prayer of intercession asking for God to come into our lives. And as Luther stated in a sermon from October 29, 1525: "The true, living faith, which the Holy Spirit instills into the heart, simply cannot be idle. I say this in order that no one may be secure. Although he has attained to faith, he should not let the matter rest there.

The point is not merely to begin but also, as time goes on, to increase and grow in faith and to learn to know God ever better." Biblical literacy isn't a prerequisite for faith development, but it is a way to grow in one's knowledge of God. It is our chance to expand our understanding of what being faithful can mean in our daily lives. As we begin the Fall church schedule, there are many opportunities for each of us to grow in our faith. From weekly Bible studies to Sunday School, from Circle to congregational gatherings, from Christian growth found in the various choirs and music groups to various committees within the church, each lends to faith growth and development.

Please check out the many opportunities at Bethany Lutheran for faith growth, for there are many in our congregation who want to "turn to the tools of faith to increase and grow in faith and to learn to know God in new ways."

In Christ,
Pastor Carl

August 2022

Team Bramstedt: Amanda & Glen Bramstedt, Joel & Jeanine Pantzke, Brad & Mary Hansen, Andy & Kourtney Frank, Lois Breden, Kim Schultz, Tom & Sandy Bjorge, Glen & Theresa Welters

September 2022

Team Bushinger and Ford: Darren & Lynn Bushinger, Bruce Ford, Leone Johnson, Norma Pantzke, Florence Jones, Darline Molde, Irene Oldenburg, Carla Fritz-Wolff



Aug 23^d Norb & Jan Bueckers

Aug 4 th	Jan Bueckers
Aug 5 th	Donna Lundgren
Aug 5 th	Waylon Hendrickson
Aug 6 th	David Christensen
Aug 6 th	Everleigh Frank
Aug 29 th	Arnie Akkerman

Contact any Council Member if you have specific needs:

Norb Bueckers 320-760-9055
Amanda Bramstedt 507-259-0411
Wendy Richmond 320-360-1981
Gary Oberton 320-749-2992

Darren Bushinger 218-252-5011
Bruce Ford 218-575-2335
Harvey Bloom 320-749-2929

Members of the family of Bethany are assigned to Service Teams so everyone has the opportunity to help with the affairs of the church. Service teams are headed by a Church Council member and are assigned two months a year.

Opportunities to serve include reading the lessons, lighting candles, serving communion, ushering, and serving fellowship. There is a sign-up sheet on the back table in the fellowship hall to sign up for the service you'd like to provide. Feel free to sign up for any month, as you're not limited to serving only during your designated month. We welcome youth to share in these responsibilities, too.

Your team leader should contact you ahead of your month, but if they don't, please contact them and talk about what you'd like to do. If your assigned month doesn't work for you, talk with your team leader about a better month.

Thank you for participating in the workings of our congregation!

Service Teams:

January/July Captain: Harvey Bloom

Members: Harvey & Helen Bloom, Gary & Pam Bellamy, Lois Brenner, Tom & Pat Crawford, Lucas & Tania Hendrickson, Jim & Elizabeth Oberton, Arnie Akkerman

February/August Captain: Amanda Bramsteadt

Members: Amanda & Glen Bramsteadt, Joel & Jeanine Pantzke, Andy & Kourntey Frank, Lois Breden, Kim Schultz, Tim & Sandy Bjorge, Glen & Theresa Welters, Brad & Mary Hansen

March/September Captains: Darren Bushinger & Bruce Ford

Members: Darren & Lynn Bushinger, Leone Johnson, Mark & Mary Schlangen, Norma Pantzke, Florence Jones, Darline Molde, Irene Oldenburg, Carla Fritz Wolff

April/October Captain: Wendy Richmond

Members: Mike LuConic, Chuck & Char Stockman, Randy & Janet Beinhorn, Joanie Miller, Steve Ahlrich & Barb Anderson, Bob Miller & Becky Wetch, Synde Dehmer

May/November Captain: Gary Oberton

Members: Gary & Sue Oberton, Marilyn Mueller, David & Maggie Peterson, Dave & Sharon Cina, Kathy Wray, Doug & Jackie Wiherski, Gary & Tracy Statema

June/December Captain: Norb Bueckers

Members: Norb & Jan Bueckers, Ken & Judy Shorter, Lonnie & Shauna Stokes, Roxie Flicek, Charlie & Anna Hansen, John & Phyllis Nelson, Don & Heddie Wolbeck, Wade & Kayla Sandbakken, Rick & Donna Lundgren