



The CHIMES

Monthly Newsletter of
Bethlehem Lutheran Church

A Message from Pastor Jen...

In Jesus' name...

While driving to church this week a random memory from my childhood popped into my head. I was in the fourth grade and spending time with my cousin at her home in Belleville, WI. We were talking to a couple of girls who lived a few houses up the street. They were telling us how if someone is trying to attack you all you need to do is say "In the name of Jesus I rebuke you!" and they will leave you alone. Ridiculous! I recall us laughing at them and peddling our bikes away in disbelief.

As I continued my commute, I thought about what the girls told us and how we responded in light of what I've come to know through study and prayer. In all honesty I figured if someone were attacking me and I uttered the suggested phrase I'd probably still get attacked. If someone were that intent upon completing an attack they probably don't think much about Jesus, let alone stopping because they were rebuked in the name of our Lord and Savior. If demons in Mark (5:7) and Matthew (8:29) are found to be talking to Jesus, just saying his name is probably not the weapon for which we hope.

Now, at my desk I'm able to focus completely upon my thoughts and I recall part of a hymn. In Martin Luther's "A Mighty Fortress is Our God" he writes:

*And though this world, with devils filled,
Should threaten to undo us, we will not fear,
for God hath willed his truth to triumph through us.
The Prince of Darkness grim, -- we tremble not for him;
His rage we can endure, for lo! His doom is sure, --
One little word shall fell him.*

(That "little word" is probably *liar*, but that is an entirely different topic.)

The name of Jesus is not part of a book of magical words and phrases that we can say to get us out of harm's way. Jesus isn't a magical spell, nor is he a good luck charm, like a lucky rabbit's foot or special pair of socks worn during a basketball game. As Luther writes, there's something about that Triune God who has created, called, redeemed, equipped, and sends us that is a fortress against all the evils that exist. It isn't about what we say; rather, it is about who the Triune God is.

Theologically and biblically we have words to tell us who God is. Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer. Father, Son, Holy Spirit. Lord. These words describe or indicate who God is by what God does. Titles become names. Personally, I do not see a problem with this. Actually, it's fine. The names we use for God indicate not only who God is, but what we believe in or respect about the Triune God. So, when we say the name of Jesus or invoke one or more persons of the Trinity in our speaking we are declaring and proclaiming belief in God's power.

The girls in my random memory from the fourth grade were declaring and proclaiming their belief in God's power through Jesus Christ. My cousin and I laughed at them. Looking back, I wish I could go and apologize and ask for their forgiveness. When we ask for something in Jesus' name, we are not talking so much about ourselves as we are about Jesus. We are making a faith statement. We are publicly announcing in whom it is that we place our trust. We are, knowingly or not, sharing our ultimate belief. Would an attacker stop if the girls cried out, "In the name of Jesus I rebuke you!"? Probably not. But, in the utterance of that statement the girls are saying what Luther refers to in his hymn; the evils of the world crumble under God's power.

Amen, amen, amen.

Pastor Jen

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From the Council...

Because the January council meeting needed to be rescheduled, there will be no report from council in the Chimes for February

If you have any questions or concerns about this, please contact Tania Anderson at 608-697-5999.



Chancel Flowers

The cost is \$28 and you will be billed directly by Edgewater Greenhouse. Thank you for supporting our congregation in this way!

Thank you to this month's sponsors!

1/6

Barb Rothwell & Dick Olson in memory of daughter, Jennifer

1/13

Linda Lewis in memo ry of her husband, Dennis Steinke

The 2019 sign-up sheet to sponsor the cost of our chancel flowers throughout the year can be found in the Narthex.

Coffee Hour

Coffee Hour Fellowship is a great time to make new friends, catch up with old friends and enjoy time together here at church.

As our worship schedule has changed to one service at 9:00 a.m. on Sundays, coffee hour will follow.



Thank you to everyone who signed up to host coffee hour in 2018!

The sign-up sheet for 2019 can be found in the Narthex.

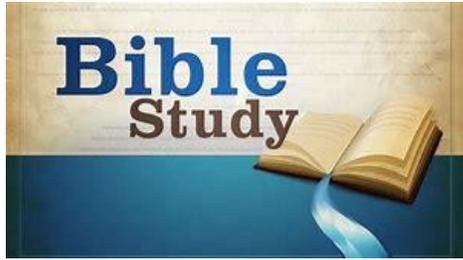


Please Join Us!

Tuesday, January 8, 2019 marks the inaugural Weekly Bible Study with Pastor Jen. We will meet in the Fellowship Hall at 11:00, following quilting.

All are welcome to participate. No previous experience is needed—the Holy Spirit takes care of that!

Bring your Bible, a paper and pen if you wish, and your curiosity. Our times together will last somewhere around an hour.



Sunday School News

This year's Christmas Program, A Lamb's Tale, was performed Wednesday, December 12th, at 5:30 p.m. and Sunday, December 16th at 9:00 a.m. followed by a brunch. We had a good turnout. We would like to thank everyone who helped to make this an awesome program! There are so many people who helped and all of you are truly appreciated, whether you brought food for the brunch or cookies or helped with set up and clean up. It truly took all of us to make this a success.

To start the New Year, on January 6th, following the worship service, we will be having a Game Day and potluck for all ages. Everyone is invited and you are welcome to bring along a favorite game to share. And feel free to invite your friends and family to join us! This is for all ages. We are providing hotdogs and chips; we are asking everyone to bring a food item to share, based on the breakdown of last names below.

In January, the Sunday School students will be studying Jesus' Baptism (Luke 3:15-17, 21-22) and Jesus Goes to Nazareth (Luke 4:14-30).

Happy New Year from your Sunday School staff.

Youth Group News

2nd Annual Pizza Sale!!!

Our High School Youth Group will once again be taking orders for homemade pizzas! Place your order ahead of time (starting soon!) and pick up on Sunday February 3rd! These pizzas will be ready to bake or freeze for another day!

You'll find an order form on the back of this newsletter cover page, but there will also be forms available in the Narthex. We really hope to promote this sale in the community so please grab an extra order form or two and share them with your friends, co-workers, teammates and anyone else you think would love some yummy pizza!

Who likes to have conversations?

Who enjoys spending a little time talking about things that matter most? Who thinks it is important for confirmation students to put their faith into words and action? Why, YOU do! Here's your chance to do all these things at once.

For the remainder of our Confirmation classes, we will all meet together for the Big Picture Lesson and then break off into smaller conversation groups, so we can dig deeper into the topic of the night.



The more conversation partners we have, the better we think this will be.

Talk with Pastor Jen to find out more!

Sunday School News

The Children will be singing on Sunday, February 10th.

In January we held a game day and potluck. It was such fun that everyone asked if we could do it again so on February 17th following church, we will be having a game day and potluck. This is for all ages. Bring a friend or family, a favorite game, we will have games for all ages. The Sunday school staff will provide BBQ, hot dogs, juice and milk. We ask that you bring, based on your last name: A-G chips, fruit or veggies, H-N Salad or casserole and O-Z desserts.

In February our lessons are The Disciples (Luke 5:1-11 8:1-3), and Joseph Feeds his Family (Genesis 45:3-11,15).

In March we will be selling books for all ages from March 3rd through March 24th on Sunday's and Wednesday. You will need to pay when ordering. They will be set up in the Narthex and will be here in time for Easter.

Please continue to bring in food for the Food Pantry and pop tops for the Ronald McDonald house.