



# The Star of *Bethlehem*

MARCH 2018

**Bethlehem Lutheran Church**  
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## THE SPITE HOUSE

This year the church's season of Lent takes us through the entire month of March (Easter is April 1<sup>st</sup>). Since we are focusing on Job during our Lenten journey I thought it would be appropriate to keep our focus on Job - and ultimately, Christ - in our March Newsletter.

If anybody had a reason to live in a Spite House, with amounts of animosity and resentment, it was Job. But he prayed his enemies. So did Jesus. And, by God's grace, so will we!

***"My servant Job will pray for you, and I will accept his prayer and not deal with you according to your folly"*** (Job 42:8).

In 1882, a New York City businessman named Joseph Richardson owned a narrow strip of land. It was 5 feet wide and 104 feet long. Another businessman, Hyman Sarner, owned a normal-sized lot adjacent to Richardson's skinny one. Sarner wanted to build an apartment that fronted the avenue and offered Richardson \$1,000 for the slender plot. Richardson was offended by the amount and demanded \$5,000. Sarner refused and Richardson called Sarner a tightwad and slammed the door on him.

Sarner assumed the land would remain vacant and instructed the architect to design the apartment building with windows overlooking the avenue. When Richardson saw the finished building, he resolved to block the view. No one was going to enjoy a free view over his lot.

So Joseph Richardson built a house. Five feet wide and 104 feet long and four stories high. The house was so narrow that only one person at a time could use the staircase. The largest table in any room was 18 inches wide.

A newspaper reporter of some girth once got stuck in the

stairwell and after two tenants were unsuccessful in pushing him free, he got out only by stripping down to his undergarments. People called the building "The Spite House."

The Spite House was torn down in 1915, which is odd—very odd . . . because I distinctly remember spending a few nights there some time ago. And, if memory serves me, I think I saw you squeezing through the hallways.

The spite house is a lonely house isn't it? There's only space enough for one person. And people who live in the spite house are reduced to one goal: make someone miserable. They usually do. Who is that person? Themselves. We're in a mid-week sermon series on Job. And if anybody had a reason to live in the spite house, with large amounts of animosity and resentment, it was Job.

We wouldn't be shocked if Job decided to build a spite house and live in it the rest of his life. But, wonder of wonders, in Job 42:8 God says, ***"My servant Job will pray for you, and I will accept his prayer and not deal with you according to your folly."*** In Job 42:7-8, Job is called "*servant*" four times—four times! What does God's servant do? He intercedes for his enemies. He blesses those who cursed him. He doesn't return evil for evil. Though Job is still a broken man, still scraping his boils with pieces of broken pottery, he refuses to unleash weapons of revenge.

You understand, don't you? All of this foreshadows and previews the greatest act of forgiveness. If anybody—and I mean anybody—had a reason to live in a spite house with large amounts of animosity and resentment, it was . . . Jesus. (*cont.*)

At the top of the list were the chief priests and scribes. They had paid Judas to betray the Master, sent temple soldiers to arrest Christ in Gethsemane, brought his case before Pilate, and stirred up the crowd to demand that Jesus be crucified.

And then there were the Pharisees and Sadducees. The Pharisees were the first to actively plot to kill Jesus. And when the Savior cleansed the temple, the Sadducees joined in the plan to murder Christ, at any cost.

And don't forget the Roman soldiers. They brutally butchered Jesus at Gabbatha; placed a crown of thorns on his head; blindfolded him and struck him in the face with their fists; spit upon him, railed against him and finally, with three nails, the Roman soldiers crucified him.

Add to the list Pontus Pilate who had found Jesus innocent. Yet, because of Jewish pressure the Roman governor sentenced Jesus to crucifixion and then publically washed his hands. What a crass, political, double-faced act of betrayal!

That's quite a list, wouldn't you agree? But it's not complete. There are other notorious sinners that Christ could have, should have, had huge amounts of spite toward. And who are those people? Brace yourselves. You and I are on the list. Our sins sent Jesus to the cross—our corruption, our pride, and our pettiness.

The soldiers hoist Jesus up, the cross swaying forward, then back until it is secured with wedges at the bottom to hold it upright in the hole. Then they gamble to decide who will get the Savior's garments.

At that point, what does Jesus say? "*Father, forgive them,*

*for they know not what they do.*" Who is the "*them*"? The chief priests and scribes; the Pharisees and Sadducees; the Roman soldiers; Pontus Pilate; you and me.

God's servant intercedes for his enemies. He blesses those who cursed him. He doesn't return evil for evil. Jesus is a broken man. He hangs in pain and misery. Yet he still refuses to unleash his weapons of revenge. Jesus refused to live in the spite house. How about you?

Oh, I know. It's so easy to hold on to raw anger and bitter resentment. I know. I know. He treated you like trash. She left you when you needed her most. They let you down in the most crucial moment of your life.

You can flee, fight, or forgive. Some opt to flee: to get out of the relationship and start again elsewhere, though they are often surprised when things go sour, again.

Others fight. Houses become combat zones, and offices become boxing rings, and tension becomes a way of life. Still others choose to forgive. Where do they get that power? In the words of Jesus, "*Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*"

Does that make forgiveness easy? No. Quick? Seldom. Painless? I don't think so.

But stay the course. You'll spend less time in the spite house and more time in the grace house. And as one who has walked the hallways of both, I can guarantee that you're going to love the space of grace. (Note: the illustration on the Spite House comes from Max Lucado, *You'll Get Through This.*)

In His grace,  
Pastor Dana Allen Brones

## The Total is Greater Than the Sum of the Parts....

I have always loved that saying because I have seen the evidence of it over and over in my life. And also because it speaks to Unity, another concept I have seen and continue to see play out all the time. We have all recently been a witness to Super Bowl Madness (whether we wanted to or not!), followed closely by the Olympics. I am not necessarily a big fan of either, however I like the half-time show and the opening ceremonies. (The commercials are fun too.) All of the afore mentioned events are examples of Unity and the 'total' thing. I was thrilled to see played out as well as spoken about, the theme of Unity in the performances of the opening ceremonies of the Olympics. Such breathtaking beauty because of the unity! No one person was a superhero, but rather all those folks working together with precision resulting in a stunning performance. How much more we can accomplish by working together. Just this morning I was told a wonderful little story about a family who visited Seminary and attended a service. The two small children in the family were not particularly interested in music, however when they heard the 300 or so men singing together, they were very impressed: "that was awesome!" Most members of our choir (or any other choir for that matter), don't consider themselves as great soloists. but are often amazed at what they can do when they blend together in Unity. The sound and strength grow exponentially. A pot-luck dinner always grows into a wonderful meal that far surpasses anything that any one person could (or would) do. As human beings we have so many opportunities to use the Unity that we just have because we are humans. Within our humanness there are little subgroups of unity which just exist whether we recognize them or not. My very first night in Europe was in Brussels. I was by myself, on my way to Paris. My first night in Brussels, I found my way to a Jazz Club. I didn't know anyone and didn't speak the language (Truthfully, I wasn't even sure what the language was!) I found my way to a table right next to the stage where there was a jazz group playing. I sat as close to the piano as I could get, enjoying the music. I was amazed that they were playing all the same songs that I knew. There were five people and I later found out that there were three languages spoken between them. The Unity was not the verbal language. The second night I returned to the club and the same seat. The pianist, recognizing me from the night before, signaled to me, asking if I wanted to play. Of course, I wanted to be part of that unity! I approached the bench and all the band members looked at me with a What-do-you-want-to-play question on their faces. I quickly replied "Satin Doll" in C; 1,2, a-1 2 3 4, and Unity took over. I see the Unity in our church every day. It is the work of Tami and Jennifer and Marvin and Vicar and Pastor and the Elders and all the committees that keep our church vibrant. It is the unity of our devoted little choir which provides us with the wonderful music every week. Paul wrote to the Ephesians: "... endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." And of course, my favorite from Psalm 133: "How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity!.....For there the Lord bestows His blessing, even life forevermore."

May these blessings be upon all of us during this thought-provoking season of Lent.

In His service and yours,  
Kathleen, Minister of Music

# St. Patrick and St. You

The month of March is known for many things. One of my favorites is that it is the only month whose name can also be used as a verb - "march!" Another appealing aspect of March is St. Patrick's Day, on March 17th. I always looked forward to this day as a child, because my mother would make one of her best, one-time-a-year-only meals: corned beef and cabbage. Cooked low and slow all day long in the Crockpot, by the time dinner finally rolled around my mouth would be watering and the entire house filled with the aroma of that melt-in-your-mouth corned beef. Mmmm...

The scent of that meal, however, lingered no where nearly as long as St. Patrick's legacy. The man we commemorate on March 17th was born in Britain to Christian parents around the year 389 A.D. By the time he was a teenager though, he had been captured by raiders and sold as a slave in Ireland. (Makes your teenage years seem pretty tame, doesn't it!) After *six years* of serving his masters as a slave/shepherd, Patrick finally escaped and made his way to a monastery community in France, where he was eventually ordained as a bishop.

His time in captivity, you see, had strengthened His faith. Having everything - family, friends, liberty - stripped away from him, only drove him deeper into the one thing that could not be stripped away. Namely, the gift of salvation that God had given him through Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. Take what they wanted, no raiders could touch that.

So convinced was Patrick of the truthfulness of this salvation, and the life changing power of this Gospel, that he dedicated the rest of his life to brining this Gospel to the very people and country *that had once held him captive*. Around 433 A.D., Patrick made his way back to Ireland and lived out his days spreading the Gospel, establishing communities for Christians to live in, and teaching and defending the Christian doctrine of the Trinity - even when it was not popular to do so. Because of Patrick's commitment, he forever changed the attitude of Celtic Christianity - he gave it a missionary zeal that it didn't have before. This is a very good thing, because it was from this part of the world that missionaries would be sent out to evangelize Western Europe centuries later!

The ripple effect of *one man* who dedicated his life to telling others about the salvation offered in Jesus Christ is enormous. It stretches all the way to you and me. I wonder what would have happened if those raiders hadn't stripped him of everything he had and left him focused solely on Christ? Would he still have dedicated his life to telling people about Christ? Would this message of salvation have reached the Western world? *Would it have reached you?*

This Lenten season, I would like to encourage you to strip something out of your life... and in its place spend that time telling someone about Jesus. Open your mouth, and talk about the salvation and forgiveness that no one can take away, that will outlast every other thing. Remind your spouse and your children. Invite them (drag them) to church. Talk to your friend. Bribe them with lunch if they will come hear about this Jesus with you on Sunday or Wednesday. Like Patrick, what you say could have an eternal difference, not just for one soul, but for a whole chain of events that is beyond your scope of vision. After all, if God can use an uneducated teenager taken captive to care for sheep, he can use you. What are you waiting for?

# Worship Schedule for March

## ***Palm Sunday***

March 25<sup>th</sup> - 8, 9:30 and 11 am

## ***Maundy Thursday***

March 29<sup>th</sup> 7 pm

***Good Friday***, March 30<sup>th</sup> 12 noon & 7 pm

## ***Easter Sunday, April 1***

7 am Sunrise Worship

8 - 9 am Easter Breakfast

8:30 am Easter Egg Hunt

9 am and 11 am Traditional Worship

## Stewardship

	<b>Jan. 2017</b>	<b>Jan. 2018</b>
Worship	\$55,357.20	\$45,193.47
Restricted	12,414.00	1,279.68

## March News

Since we made the turn at San Antonio last November, we have been heading West. Standing on Manhattan Beach staring at the Pacific, we came to the conclusion that maybe we should head North for a while. Actually, we saw that coming months in advance and planned for it. Now we are taking your greetings to congregations in the Bay-Sacramento area: Good Shepherd, Turlock; Mt. Olive, Milpitas; Benicia Lutheran, Benicia; St. Andrew, Stockton; Town and Country, Sacramento.

Throughout this year we - all of us - have been traveling with Jesus, standing with those who, through various epiphanies, have been astounded and moved to ask, "Who is this guy??" We were invited along to take a turn up the mountain to witness His glory as we walked the path of the Law and Prophets, completing and fulfilling them. We considered His coming 'exodus' salvation, which he would accomplish with neither staff nor sword, but with His own body. Yes, indeed, He was doing a new thing, but a new thing that was attached to, flowed from and was the very fulfillment of a very old thing. The same thing God had always been working on.

And now we are marveling that he declined to stay on the mountain in glory, turning down what would have undoubtedly been a massive stream of religious tourists hoping for a glimpse of the Great Man - people who would have been awed at the sight and no doubt inspired, even as they were left in their sins and the cold grip of death.

Nope. He took a turn. In this case, not North or South, but down. It seems He is always coming down. There is no glory in it for Him. Imagine what it must have been like, hearing the praises and adulation: "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the Name of the Lord! Hosanna in the Highest!" "Save us!," is what they were saying, literally. He would indeed, but not one of those happy people that day had the slightest idea what He was coming to do and how He would pull it off. And still He graciously received them. All the way down the hill.

Mountaintop experiences are wonderful, but when I really need Him, down He comes. Whenever the Lord is coming to meet me, He is always heading downhill.

Dave Horn

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## Baby Shower for the McCarty twins

We are having a baby shower for Erica on March 11th after the 11:00 service. All women of the congregation are invited. Light snacks and beverages will be served. They are registered at Target under "Nate McCarty and Erica McCarty" and at Amazon under Erica McCarty. Please join us to help the McCarty's prepare for this awesome event the way only Bethlehem can.

## Church Work Day

Bethlehem will be having their "spruce up the grounds" work day on March 17th starting at 8:00 am. Please help us to beautify the grounds before Easter. Bring your yard tools and gloves and lots of energy. Lunch and drinks will be provided. Thank you in advance.

## Easter Egg Hunt

There will be an Easter egg hunt on Easter morning starting at 8:30. Please have your children bring a basket to collect their eggs in. Age appropriate areas will be set up for different aged children. Donations of candy are needed. There will be a basket in the Narthex to put the donations into. Help is also needed with the hiding of the eggs Easter morning. Please contact Brenda @ 465-1781 if you are able to help.

## Easter Breakfast

Breakfast will be served Easter morning from 8 - 9 am in the Disciples Hall. Join us for the best breakfast in town.

# Operation Barnabas

"Joseph" was the birth name of Barnabas, a Levite from Cyprus.

The Disciples gave him the name Barnabas (which meant, Son of Encouragement).

The people loved Barnabas, he helped bring many to God. King Saul was one such example. Saul, the first God - appointed King of Israel stood tall, with a striking appearance but his leadership abilities did not match the expectations created by his appearance, he often overstepped his bounds, he was jealous of David and tried to have him killed and Saul disobeyed God on several occasions.

Eventually King Saul had a change of heart and wished to help spread the Good News of Jesus Christ. But many were leery of Saul's motives, even the disciples.

Barnabas was the one who brought Saul to the disciples, assuring them Saul had changed. They accepted Saul and helped him to spread the Word of God!

Our Mission in Operation Barnabas is for each and every one of us to bring not just our military families to Christ and aid them in their daily lives but this gives us, members of Bethlehem, an opportunity to help fulfill the Great Commission! A Goal To Bring Humanity Into A Closer Relationship with Our Lord!

Be a Barnabas and support our chapter!

# UPCOMING EVENTS

LWML Meeting at the cottage on March 4<sup>th</sup> at 12:15

Senior Cards Monday, March 5<sup>th</sup> at 9:30

Guatemala Mission Trip

Our next mission trip to Guatemala is coming up FAST! The trip is April 28-May 6. The deadline for registering is March 11. Anyone who is willing and able to participate in this mission is encouraged to do so. So far we have at least a dozen people who would like to go but 6 of those people will require funding to help facilitate their trip.

We presented this need to the church with the hope that those who would like to support this mission by helping send these missionaries will have the opportunity. We collected a door offering to help offset the cost of the trip. Please prayerfully consider this mission and helping in any way you feel lead to do so. Feel free to put a check in the offering plate and mark for Guatemala.

If you would like more information about the trip, please contact Holly at [Jaxbulldogs@comcast.net](mailto:Jaxbulldogs@comcast.net) or Carol at [carolpiet@aol.com](mailto:carolpiet@aol.com).

# BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

Kimberley Barteau	1
Robin Buckner	
Madison Gray	
Lucy Barley	2
Brandy Fredell	
Emily Palmer	
Bob Johnson	3
Debra Borcharding	6
John Woodsmall	8
Margaret Buerkle	9
Susan Helberg	
Elizabeth Kespohl	
Anthony Mack Jr.	10
Seth Smith	
Teagan Torgerud	
Jack Ahern	11
Joan Fischer	
Veronica Allen	12
Peggy Harris	13
Staci Hunter	
Susan Setina	14
Ann Baum	15
Joyce Ray	
Claire Williams	
Eugene & Rita Wells	16
Logan Gruhn	18
Margaret Limbaugh	
Michele Bacon	19
Linda Cox	
Daniel Heumann	
Patricia May	
John Poe	21
Peyton Swatkowski	22
Joan Carr	23
Mary Spreier	
Don & Laurene Arthur	24
Shari Gruhn	
Emily Lambert	
Angela Matthews	
Jeanne Mackert	26
Cade Werhner	
Brenda Murray	27
Marilyn Seibel	
David Elo	28
Timothy Streeter	
Cynthia Stafford	29
John Garner	30
Dr. David Pietrasiuk	
Ayden Zarski	
Reese Williams	31

Like us on Facebook

# Primary Focus for the 2017-19 Biennium

## Lutheran Women in Mission Focus On:

### Nurturing Faith in Christ

By God's grace we offer each woman opportunities to be in the Word and to use her unique gifts in God's service

### Making Our Faith Meaningful

We equip each woman to make a significant difference in the lives of all people.

### Sharing Encouragement

We value each other in Christ and we accept and encourage each woman to grow in her relationship with others.

### **Mission Statement of the Lutheran Women's Missionary League:**

The mission of the LWML is to assist each woman of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in affirming her relationship with the Triune God so that she is enabled to use her gifts in ministry to the people of the world.

### **Vision Statement of the LWML:**

The LWML, the leading group for LCMS women, is the place where each woman is welcomed and encouraged to use her unique God-given gifts as she supports global missions and serves the Lord with gladness.

*Bethlehem's LWML ladies will be meeting on March 4<sup>th</sup> after the 11 am worship service in the cottage for a devotion and fellowship time together as we work on a special project. Please join us! You can contact Becky Bicknase @ 605-949-1608 with any questions. We have mite boxes available in the Narthex, for you to drop off your spare change and don't forget Mitey Mutt! It will be a blessing! Visit [www.lwml.org](http://www.lwml.org)*

## Five Keys to Breaking Down Barriers in the Church

1. Listen. "Don't be so quick to speak. Sit back and listen. Once you say something, you can't get it back. Pray about it. Walk away from it."
2. Be winsome. "Sometimes we come across as arrogant and demeaning. People don't like that."
3. Get out there. "We are Lutherans don't like being out in the front in who we are. You won't see us on radio or television. So people just don't know who we are. We're not part of the dialogue."
4. Speak up. "We haven't always been a very vocal church. There are a lot of things we haven't been saying anything about, whether it's poverty, the prison population, blighted urban areas or people left behind. We need to be willing to speak about more than the things that Christendom is typically comfortable speaking on—things that demonstrate our care for the whole person. Make them say, "Oh! So you Lutherans care about more than just abortion and gay marriage!"
5. Love sinners. "Don't demonize sinners. Let God do that. He calls you to care for them, love them and help them through. Sit by the well with them. (John 4). Don't push them in."

From: *The Lutheran Witness, February 2018*

## Congrats

Kendra McNatt is a DCE and Career Missionary in Frankfurt, Germany. She interned as DCE at Trinity Lutheran Church in Frankfurt 2013-14 after which she received a call as a career missionary to Trinity Lutheran. Since then she has provided leadership among the youth and youth workers in Europe through the Association of International Churches of Europe and Middle East (AICEME). She has served as the Director for AICEME in 2015 and is continuing to accept speaking engagements around Europe at youth conferences.

Kendra was a member of Bethlehem in her youth. They are blessed to have her.

### January Attendance

Date	8 am	9:30 am	11 am	Total
Jan 8/17	78	90	86	254
Jan 7/18	106	90	57	253
Jan 15/17	70	72	86	228
Jan 14/18	79	75	101	255
Jan 22/17	96	95	81	272
Jan 21/18	91	112	79	282
Jan 29/17	77	94	89	276
Jan 28/18	71	88	104	263

*Thanks for Worshipping with Us. See you next week!*

Visit our website for more information: [blcjaxbeach.org](http://blcjaxbeach.org)

**Bethlehem Lutheran, Bible Study, Children and Families, Ministry Meetings, Music Ministry, Official Acts, Mar 2018 (Eastern Time)  
 Outside Groups, Pastor/Staff, Preschool, Special Events, Youth and Young Adults, Christian Holidays**

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
25	26	27	28	1	2	3
<b>Mites Sunday</b> <b>Pastor Brones Out</b> <b>Second S. in Lent</b> 8 am - Donut Sunday 8 am - Liturgical	6:30pm - Small 7pm - "South of the	6pm - Handbells @ 7pm - Executive	9:30am - Chapel 12pm - Midweek 1pm - Staff Meeting 5pm - Adult Bible 5:30pm - Confirmati	9:15am - Prayer 9:30am - Adult Bible 6:30pm - Choir 6:45pm - AA		8:45am - AA 9am - Grounded in 10am - Praise Team 5:30pm - BLC
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<b>Third S. in Lent</b> 8 am - Liturgical 9:30am - Adult Bible 9:30am - Adult Bible 9:30am - Family: 9:30am - Sunday	9:30am - Senior 6:45pm - Gideon's	6pm - Handbells @ 6:30pm - Adult Bible	9:30am - Chapel 12pm - Midweek 1pm - Staff Meeting 5pm - Adult Bible 5:30pm - Confirmati 7pm - Midweek	9:15am - Prayer 9:30am - Adult Bible 6:30pm - Choir 6:45pm - AA 6:45pm - Gideon	<b>Vicar Out of Office</b>	8:45am - AA 10am - Praise Team
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
<b>Daylight Savings</b> <b>Fourth S. in Lent</b> 8 am - Liturgical 9:30am - Adult Bible 9:30am - Adult Bible 9:30am - Family:	7pm - "South of the	6pm - Handbells @ 7pm - Elder's	9:30am - Chapel 12pm - Midweek 1pm - Staff Meeting 5pm - Adult Bible 5:30pm - Confirmati 7pm - Midweek	9 am - Circuit 9:15am - Prayer 9:30am - Adult Bible 6:30pm - Choir 6:45pm - AA	6pm - BLC Serves	8 am - Spruce up the 8:45am - AA 9:30am - 8th Grade 10 am - Praise Team 5:30pm - BLC
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
<b>Feed My Sheep</b> <b>Fifth S. in Lent</b> 8 am - Liturgical 9:30am - Adult Bible 9:30am - Adult Bible 9:30am - Family:		6pm - Handbells @ 7pm - Call	9:30am - Chapel 12pm - Midweek 1pm - Staff Meeting 5pm - Adult Bible 5:30pm - Confirmati 7pm - Midweek	9:15am - Prayer 9:30am - Adult Bible 6:30pm - Choir 6:45pm - AA		8:45am - AA 10 am - Praise Team
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
<b>Mites Sunday</b> <b>Palm Sunday</b> 8 am - Donut Sunday 8 am - Liturgical 9:30am - Adult Bible 9:30am - Adult Bible	7pm - "South of the	6pm - Handbells @ 7pm - Executive	9:30am - Chapel 11am - Staff 5pm - Adult Bible 5:30pm - Confirmati	<b>Maudny Thursday</b> 9:15am - Prayer 9:30am - Adult Bible 12pm - Holy 6:45pm - AA 7pm - Holy	<b>Good Friday</b> 7 am - Preschool 9 am - Church Office 12pm - Good Friday 7 pm - Good Friday	<b>Holy Saturday</b> 8:45am - AA 10 am - Praise Team 5:30pm - BLC