

The Star of Bethlehem



May 2019

JOY IN THE MIDST OF HARDSHIP

Psalm 71:22-24

Several months ago I decided to begin reading through the Psalms as a part of my devotional life. I soon discovered that the Psalms are meant to be prayed (Oh how I wish I had learned this a long time ago)! In any case, those who pray the Psalms are aware that, in spite of their own infidelities to God over the years, God has nonetheless remained faithful. Were that not the case, they (we) would not be praying the Psalms at all.

The sense of God's lifelong fidelity is at the heart of the Christian experience (I know that we don't like to use that word "experience" in our church but we do experience God's faithfulness in our day to day lives). In the middle of the second century, put on trial for his faith in Jesus and pressured either to renounce that faith or die a violent death, the venerable church father Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, responded to the judge: "For eighty-six years have I served Him, and He has done me no wrong. How can I blaspheme the King who saved me?" How amazing that the message of the gospel can be such a threat to the powers of this world that an 86 year old pastor would be burned alive for proclaiming that message! What I mean by sharing this story is that trial and trouble shape the context of God's faithfulness in this Psalm, as they did in the long life of Polycarp. And it is often in our trials and hardships that our "lips will shout for joy."

The many trials mentioned in this Psalm are well known to the servants of Christ (both those who serve the church vocationally and those who serve the church voluntarily). These trials were certainly known to the one who described his experience this way:

Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea; on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers; in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. 2 Corinthians 11:24-27.

I know some members of Bethlehem who have suffered great hardship, perhaps not as described by the great lion of God, the Apostle Paul, but, nonetheless, hardship. And what does the servant of God do in the midst of such trials? What do **we** do? According to Psalm 71, we are chiefly engaged in praising God:

*²² I will also praise you with the harp for your faithfulness, O my God;
I will sing praises to you with the lyre, O Holy One of Israel.*

²³ My lips will shout for joy, when I sing praises to you; my soul also, which you have redeemed.

*²⁴ And my tongue will talk of your righteous help all the day long,
or they have been put to shame and disappointed who sought to do me hurt.*

Once again the ministry of the Apostle Paul comes to mind. One remembers how Paul, after being beaten at Philippi, sang songs of praise during the night in his jail cell. One recalls that he uses words for "joy" in a letter that he wrote from a prison cell (that is, the Epistle to the Philippians) more often than in any other of his letters.

For you, dear brothers and sisters in Christ, may you find joy in our Lord and his "righteousness" (mentioned five times in this Psalm) so that, even in the midst of hardship, Jesus is seen in 2019 and always.

Grace, peace and mercy,
Pastor Dana Allen Brones

March Attendance

Date	8 am	9:30 am	11am	Total
Mar 4, 2018	109	81	109	299
Mar 3, 2019	81	85	98	264
Mar 11, 2018	63	79	101	243
Mar 10, 2019	63	68	67	198
Mar 18, 2018	86	74	89	249
Mar 17, 2019	69	61	75	205
Mar 25, 2018	97	89	170	356
Mar 24, 2019	81	109	106	296
Apr 1, 2018	111	236	161	508
Mar 31, 2019	70	109	76	255

Stewardship

	March 2018	March 2019
Monthly Totals:	<u>\$60,302.64</u>	<u>\$75,002.72</u>
Restricted:	2,986.00	14,153.47
YTD Totals:	<u>\$159,052.97</u>	<u>\$180,305.00</u>
Restricted:	\$6,781.18	\$24,381.72

Outreach

Please join the LWML for our first Bethlehem Pre-School Book Drive and Bake Sale on Sunday, May 5, 2019. We will have a wish list of books the pre-school teachers have put together. A book title can be retrieved from the display, purchased, and returned to the narthex. A second option is for the book title to be placed in an envelope with a donation and allow the LWML ladies to purchase the book for you. All bake sale proceeds will be used to replace old books in the current pre-school library.

SENIOR GAME DAY

Monday, May 6

Disciples Hall at 9:30 am

Talk with MaryAnn Lawrence 708-9492

Mission House

Request for all worshippers: We need Mission House help every 3rd Friday. 6:00 to 7:30 PM feeding the hungry and poor. A sign-up sheet is in the narthex. 800 Shetter Avenue, Jacksonville Beach.

Story Time

In late March, my mom and sister arrived to Jacksonville Beach to spend their Spring Break with me. It was so good to see them again and it was great to show them around. I was able to share the joys of this great place with my family. Thank you all for welcoming them while they were here. They had an absolute blast.

The major thing that we did together during our week was travel to Disney World. My sister and I grew up on Disney and Pixar movies. I think the first movie that I ever saw in a theater was Toy Story. Ever since we were young, we wanted to go to Disney World and my mom wanted to take us. As friends of ours took Spring Break trips there and we heard all of the stories and saw the pictures, we wanted to go even more. But as we got older and older, we never got the chance. Until this year.

We spent two days at Disney World. We went to Magic Kingdom and Hollywood Studios. Being there felt like we were transported into another world. I have no better word to describe our experience other than magical. The fireworks display at night at Magic Kingdom was the highlight for me. I couldn't help but tear up a little bit as songs and pictures from the stories that I have loved were displayed on that Castle as the beautiful fireworks lit up the night sky.

Disney movies have impacted generations of people. Those stories have impacted many people emotionally. They have transported us to different places and times and have given our imaginations a place to play. As amazing as these stories are, we know they are just stories. As amazing as Disney World is, we came back to reality abruptly.

Our 7th grade confirmation class went through the entire Bible this year. We talked about the major stories in scripture. These stories aren't from Disney, this is what happened. These are the stories about the people of God. These are our stories. These stories are meant to encourage us. They are meant to remind us about how amazing our God is. When you read the stories of the Bible, read them with confidence. Read them with energy. Our faith is not from our imaginations. It doesn't come from movies. It comes from the greatest story ever told. And it is all true. The best story is one we just heard. It was the story of Jesus's death and resurrection. His defeat of death to give us life. Nothing that Disney can come up with can touch that wonderful true story.



In Christ,
Vicar Jeremy

May Birthdays and Anniversaries

Curan Ahern	5/1	Dennis & Dianne LaForty	5/14
Tami Moe	5/1	Dennis Reed	5/19
Brianna Addison	5/2	Robin Ford	5/20
Steven Starkey	5/2	Michael Werner	5/20
Sloan Mattila	5/5	Bob Wortelboer Sr	5/22
Louise Birkholz	5/6	John Hornsby	5/23
Holly Dellinger	5/7	Zach Heisler	5/24
Russ Furtick	5/7	Robert Navarro	5/24
Bennett Bryant	5/8	Brandon & Patricia Burgains	5/20
Kristen Lee	5/8	Erich & Lori Eischen	5/20
Morgan Sharp	5/8	William & Kristen Randolph	5/21
Mary Tereskiewicz	5/8	David Jacobs	5/26
Mike Culbertson	5/9	Michael Junk	5/26
Alex Heilig	5/9	Eugene Wells	5/26
Jeff Ford	5/10	Damarion Addison	5/27
Anthony Wood	5/10	Marvin Beaty	5/27
Margaret Winter	5/11	Nancy Florey	5/27
Jack Grosshandler	5/12	Luann Prosek	5/27
Hannah Gruhn	5/12	Pamela Roberts	5/27
Gloria Nowland	5/12	Beverly Furtick	5/28
Jacob Florey	5/13	Joan Mattmuller	5/28
Cheryl Peterson	5/14	Caleb Reep	5/30
Laramie Fredell	5/15	Matthew Zikeli	5/30
Paisley Johnson	5/16	Marvin & Susan Beaty	5/29
Robert Richards IV	5/16	Robert & Eleanor Corbett	5/31
Aubrey Corbitt	5/17		
Karen Woodsmall	5/17		
Deborah Headley	5/18		
Harry Thompson	5/18		

Please call the office if your birthday or anniversary has been omitted.

Watch the Services

Watch pages only available on Call Day

About Call Day

Call Day at Concordia Seminary is the day when second year students learn their vicarage church assignments (a one-year internship at an LCMS church anywhere in the U.S.) and fourth year students learn their first call assignments. Deaconess students learn their deaconess internship assignments or diaconal call assignments on this day as well. These assignments are announced and celebrated during two worship services on Call Day.

Share in the celebration by using hashtags #CallDay2019 and #CallDayWatchParty.

Services & Bulletins

There are two services on Call Day:
Assignment of Vicarages & Internships

May 1, 2019 at 4 p.m. (EST)

May 1, 2019 at 8 p.m. (EST)

Friday, June 7 - Sunday, June 9

Women's Retreat at Luther Springs

For more information,
please continue to check the bulletin board & bulletin.

He is Risen!

Concordia College New York

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

Thank you for your recent gift to Concordia College New York. You are a blessing to our students and the Concordia Community.

Earning a college degree is not something our students take for granted. Over a third have no family history of college. Some are adults who have nurtured families before thinking of their own education. An increasing number are veterans for whom transition from service to civilian life has not been easy. Many face the daily challenges of living in poverty while reaching for a different life.

Your gift creates opportunities to learn at Concordia, where mutual respect flourishes, responsibility is developed and reverence for God is cultivated. These opportunities make an impact on students that they carry out into the world. You have equipped our diverse array of students with an ethics-infused Christian education. You have given the world educators, nurses, corporate and non-profit executives, academics, church workers, social workers, entrepreneurs and more. You have positively impacted our world through our students' lives of passion, purpose and service.

On behalf of our students and the entire Concordia College New York community, thank you for your partnership in our mission.

With gratitude,
Lois Montorio

Interim Director of Advancement and
Director of Alumni & Donor Relations

171 White Plains Road, Bronxville, NY 10708
www.concordia-ny.edu

***Please sign the attendance book
and let us know of any address,
telephone or email changes.***

Did You Know?

You can remember or mark a special occasion with Altar Flowers? Each of the beautiful arrangements are \$20 per vase and a sign-up sheet for each Sunday of the year is in the Narthex. This is a great way to acknowledge a birthday, anniversary, and to remember a loved one who has gone before.

Unity – The Power of Song!

Years ago, before we came to Bethlehem. We were living in Naples, FL –(HOT – no, TOO HOT!) In spite of the weather I did have some wonderful musical opportunities. One of my favorites was working as an accompanist at the high school in the music department. The choral director was young – new at the job, extremely talented, very serious about teaching and producing high quality music and, as it turned out quite wise beyond his years. The students were serious, taking their cue from him and as a result, one of the best high school choirs in the state, winning awards and going on tours. It was heady stuff for high school kids and they loved it and worked hard or got out. Everything went along fine for most of the year.....Spring approached, they were tired, had a mild case of spring fever and a sort of unrest began to bubble under the surface. I watched things begin to escalate ever so slightly. I also watched the teacher, wondering if he was aware of what promised to be trouble and if so, what he would do about it. Sure enough it did indeed turn into trouble and although it wasn't West Side Story (let's rumble) it was serious enough that kids began to take sides and it was clear that it was close to serious infractions of kindness and light. On this one particular day, we were rehearsing for the spring concert and it broke out in the middle of the rehearsal. Names were being called. The director stopped abruptly, bringing a silence to the room and briskly and with great determination, left the room, closing the door very firmly. Everyone stopped, silence prevailed and we all wondered what was next. It was a frightening few minutes. Shortly he reentered the room, came to the piano, put a sheet of music upon the rack and instructed me to play it. Of course I did. In the meantime, he wrote on the board the following: "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in Unity." He said: "now, everyone sing" and they did! My eyes filled with tears as they are right now and as they do every time the choir sings this song. I have taught it to every choir I have ever worked with and I always marvel at the power of a song and the wisdom of this young man and his choice of Psalm 133: verse 1 to solve what could have become a very ugly and serious problem. The next time you hear the choir (or Praise Team) sing Unity, (and you will), remember this story and the power of a song.

In His service and yours,
KATHLEEN OLIVE, MINISTER OF MUSIC

Thanks to everyone that came out and helped beautify our campus for Easter.

The Gideons International

Dear Pastor Dana,

Murray and I were blessed to worship with you at Bethlehem on April 7. We saw and spoke with many old friends and naturally felt right at home.

Please thank the congregation for their generosity and know that those dollars will send the Word of God across our city and around the world. Without faithful partners like you there would be no Gideon ministry.

Please encourage your members regarding their interest in becoming Gideons. As you know, they need your "blessing".

May our Lord continue to bless all you do at Bethlehem. The Gideons are praying for you.

Your brother in Christ,
Tom Trotta

Dear Bethlehemers,

It's time for the MS Walk again! Last year we raised \$200 for the ongoing fight against MS. This year I'd love to raise even more! I've posted an envelope in the narthex for you to add to this cause. Thank you for generosity!

Julie Truax



Your shopping makes a difference.

Amazon donates to Bethlehem Lutheran Church when you shop at smile.amazon.com/ch/23-7061413. Thank you for your support!

Food Support

We have a great group of ladies that help support grieving families with a luncheon following a Memorial Service at BLC. We are blessed. If you would like to help with your time or with food donations, please email Joan Richards @ nanajoan1977@comcast.net.

Sermons Online

Weekly sermons are available by visiting our church website at <http://www.blcjaxbeach.org/>.



The "MANE" Event

The best week of summer !!

ROAR VBS
June 10-14

Life is wild... God is good !!

New Member Class May 15, 22, & 29

We will take 3 weeks to review the teachings of the Lutheran Church as expressed in the Bible and Confessions. Join us at 6:30-8 pm in the Fellowship Hall. You will have the opportunity to meet and get acquainted with others who are attending Bethlehem. Please sign up in the Narthex.

Ascension Sunday, May 30th

The most forgotten Thursday of the Church Year is Ascension Day. Coming forty days after Easter, Ascension reminds us how our Lord went off with His disciples and disappeared into the clouds. His promise is that He has not abandoned His people but has gone to prepare the way. He sends the Holy Spirit so that we will not be without a counselor and guide.

Schedule for May

	Screens		Greeters	Altar	
<u>May 5</u>	8 am	Pat	Val & Jackie	Jenn	Val
	9:30 am	Brenda	Joan R		Brenda
	11 am	Toni	Bruce & Holly D		Beth
<u>May 12</u>	8 am	Sam	Anna & Angela	Tami	Susan
	9:30 am	Tami	Joan R		Nina
	11 am	Carol	Julie T,		Holly
<u>May 19</u>	8 am	Angela	Larry & Eleanor	Anna	Val
	9 :30am	Candace	Joan R		Barb
	11 am	Carol	Lee & Joan F		Diana
<u>May 26</u>	8 am	Val	Rob & Deb	Carol	Susan
	9:30 am	Romaine	Joan R		Amy
	11 am	Gina	Mary D & Jean S		Kathy

Thank you for your service

Who Can Help You at BLC

Altar Guild	Val Gruhn	904-536-2912
Baptism	Church Office	904-249-5418
Bible Study	Rev. Keith Bicknase	904-249-5418
	Alex Limbaugh	904-219-5044
CD Ministry	Office	904-249-5418
Coffee Fellowship	Carol Pietrasiuk	904-536-2871
Columbarium	Val Gruhn	904-536-2912
Elders	Gordon Gruhn	904-838-6585
Fellowship	Brenda Murray	904-220-0447
Funerals	Church Office	904-249-5418
8:00 Greeters	Anna Arno	904-223-1766
9:30 Greeters	Joan Richards	904-463-6703
11:00 Greeters	Jean Shimp	904-249-2040
Hand bells	Brenda Murray	904-220-0447
Kitchen cleanup	Carol Pietrasiuk	904-536-2871
Mission House	Brenda Murray	904-220-0447
Newsletter Articles	Church Office	904-249-5418
Outreach	Holly Dellinger	904-346-6059
Prayer Ministry	Vicar	904-249-5418
Preschool	Pat May	904-249-1204
Property	Brian Kientz	904-616-3361
Screen Operators	Romaine Moore	904-422-2881
Senior Card Day	MaryAnn Lawrence	904-246-3279
SS	Deb Donnelly	904-241-4062
8:00 Ushers	Susan Heimbach	904-307-1917
9:30 Ushers	Donny Barley	904-955-3838
11:00 Ushers	Allan Werner	904-223-0939
VBS	Darlene Maxwell	904-307-9078
Weddings	Church Office	904-249-5418

Baby Bottle Campaign

Starting Sunday, May 12th we will have bottles available for members to fill with their loose change, dollars or checks. Join us in saving lives and ministering HOPE to women, men, and families facing unplanned pregnancies by participating in this year's campaign. The First Coast Women's Services receive no government funding and depend solely on the generosity of God's people. Taking a baby bottle and filling it up with coins is an easy way to help provide a significant amount of support so they can continue to offer life-affirming solutions in a safe, confidential place. They make a difference, but there is more work that needs to be done.

Their daily prayer is that every child will be able to live out their destiny and that Mothers and Fathers will receive the support needed emotionally, physically, and spiritually to assist them in their decision.

Please return them to church by June 16 and talk with Anna Arno if you have any questions about this campaign or check their website www.fcws.org.

Bethlehem Lutheran, Bible Study, Children and Families, Ministry Meetings, Music Ministry, Official Acts, Outside Groups, Pastor/Staff, Preschool, Special Events, Youth and Young Adults, Christian Holidays May 2019 (Eastern Time - New York)

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
28 Mites Sunday Second S. of Easter 8am - Donut Sunday @ Disciples' 8am - Liturgical Worship @ 9:30am - Adult Bible Study @ 9:30am - Adult Bible Study @ 9:30am - Family: Contemporary 9:30am - Sunday School @	29 6pm - Hand Bell Choir Rehearsal 6:30pm - Small Group on Hodges	30 9:30am - Chapel with the 11am - Staff Meeting @ Conf. Rm 7pm - Adult Bible Study @	1 9:15am - Prayer Group @ 9:30am - Adult Bible Study @ 6:30pm - Choir Rehearsal @ 6:45pm - AA Meeting @ 6:45pm - Barnabas Life Group	2 9:15am - Prayer Group @ 9:30am - Adult Bible Study @ 6:30pm - Choir Rehearsal @ 6:45pm - AA Meeting @ 6:45pm - Barnabas Life Group	3 6pm - BLC Serves Supper at	4 8:45am - AA Meeting @ 10am - Praise Team Rehearsal @
5 Third S. of Easter 8am - Liturgical Worship @ 8am - LWML Book Drive & Bake 9am - Bake Sale and Book Drive 9:30am - Adult Bible Study @ 9:30am - Adult Bible Study @ 9:30am - Family: Contemporary 9:30am - Sunday School @	6 9:30am - Senior Game Day @ 6:45pm - Gideon's Meeting @	7 6pm - Hand Bell Choir Rehearsal 6:30pm - Small Group @ The	8 9:30am - Chapel with the 11am - Staff Meeting @ Conf. Rm 7pm - Adult Bible Study @	9 9:15am - Prayer Group @ 9:30am - Adult Bible Study @ 6:30pm - Choir Rehearsal @ 6:45pm - AA Meeting @ 6:45pm - Gideon Ladies Meeting	10 8:45am - AA Meeting @ 10am - Praise Team Rehearsal @	11 8:45am - AA Meeting @ 10am - Praise Team Rehearsal @
12 Fourth S. of Easter 8am - Liturgical Worship @ 9:30am - Adult Bible Study @ 9:30am - Adult Bible Study @ 9:30am - Family: Contemporary 9:30am - Sunday School @ 11am - Liturgical Worship @	13 6:30pm - "South of the Border"	14 6pm - Hand Bell Choir Rehearsal 7pm - Elder's Meeting @	15 9:30am - Chapel with the 11am - Staff Meeting @ Conf. Rm 6:30pm - New Member Class 7pm - Adult Bible Study @	16 9am - Circuit Pastor's 9:15am - Prayer Group @ 9:30am - Adult Bible Study @ 6:30pm - Choir Rehearsal @ 6:45pm - AA Meeting @	17 6pm - BLC Serves Supper at	18 8:45am - AA Meeting @ 10am - Praise Team Rehearsal @
19 Feed My Sheep Sunday @ Fifth S. of Easter 8am - Liturgical Worship @ 9:30am - Adult Bible Study @ 9:30am - Adult Bible Study @ 9:30am - Family: Contemporary 9:30am - Sunday School @ 11am - Liturgical Worship @	20 6pm - Hand Bell Choir Rehearsal	21 6pm - Hand Bell Choir Rehearsal	22 9:30am - Chapel with the 11am - Staff Meeting @ Conf. Rm 6:30pm - New Member Class 7pm - Adult Bible Study @	23 9:15am - Prayer Group @ 9:30am - Adult Bible Study @ 6:30pm - Choir Rehearsal @ 6:45pm - AA Meeting @	24 Choir Retreat @ Palm Coast, FL, USA	25 8:45am - AA Meeting @ 10am - Praise Team Rehearsal @
26 Choir Retreat @ Palm Coast, FL, Mites Sunday 8am - Donut Sunday @ Disciples' 8am - Liturgical Worship @ 9:30am - Adult Bible Study @ 9:30am - Adult Bible Study @ 9:30am - Family: Contemporary 9:30am - Sunday School @	27 6:30pm - "South of the Border"	28 7am - Preschool Closed 9am - Church Office Closed 6pm - Hand Bell Choir Rehearsal 7pm - Executive Council Meeting	29 VBS Build 9:30am - Chapel with the 11am - Staff Meeting @ Conf. Rm 6:30pm - New Member Class 7pm - Adult Bible Study @	30 Ascension Day 9:15am - Prayer Group @ 9:30am - Adult Bible Study @ 6:30pm - Choir Rehearsal @ 6:45pm - AA Meeting @	31 6:30pm - Preschool Graduation	1 8:45am - AA Meeting @ 10am - Praise Team Rehearsal @