

FAITH MEMORIAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

753 N. CALUMET AVE.

VALPARAISO, IN 46383

(219) 462-7684

WWW.FAITHMEMORIAL.NET

Embraced by God through Jesus Christ our Lord, we share this gospel of hope and healing within and throughout our community

Out with the Old in with the New?



Luke 5:36-39 ³⁶ He also told them a parable: "No one tears a piece from a new garment and puts it on an old garment. If he does, he will tear the new, and the piece from the new will not match the old. ³⁷ And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the new wine will burst the skins and it will be spilled, and the skins will be destroyed. ³⁸ But new wine must be put into fresh wineskins. ³⁹ And no one after drinking old wine desires new, for he says, 'The old is good.'"

Have you ever been tempted to want new results without making any real changes, especially in the long term? See if any of these sound familiar: wanting to get healthier, while trying a temporary diet and exercise plan; wishing our marriage or family would be closer to God or to each other, while going about our lives and business the same way we always have; desiring to live with a victorious Christian attitude, while playing the same defeated messages over and over in our heads; hoping that the message of Christ would be proclaimed and the world might be changed, while the church and its members stay silent or in their comfort zone; talking about living the new Christian life, while clinging to old worldly habits. Are there specific areas where you have been trying really hard to do something new in your life, but find yourself avoiding acknowledging or making the changes that are necessary for you to have any chance at success?

It's been said the definition of insanity is "doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results," but isn't this what so many of us do on a regular basis? We can try to add one new patch or another to various parts of our life, or pour our new desires into the same old behaviors, but the results will hardly be desirable.

With the New Year, many will put forward some of the same resolutions they have in the past, and likely will not be surprised when those resolutions have faded or disappeared within a few months. It is so easy to slip back into our old, comfortable habits and treat them as the more desirable, "good."

However, I hope that many of us can take some time this year to really look at which things, old and new, are most important and healthy for us. Hopefully by doing this, we can identify some changes that are needed most in our lives and then put a plan in place, including any other important changes that will make those changes successful in the long term. A vital part of this is seeking support, prayer, and accountability among our fellow Christians. None of us is meant to bear our burdens alone. After all, we all share in the most important change of all, and that is that we have been made new in Christ. For all of our efforts, at the end of the day, our new life comes from the good and ancient love of God that has been working to restore and redeem us since long before we were born. We will never be perfect in this life, but in Christ we have indeed been made new. So as we set aside the old year and enter into the new, may we joyously receive the love and forgiveness God continues to pour into our lives, and may we seek to live out the new lives He has given us all in the glory of God.

In Christ,

Pastor Eric Schoeck

NATURAL CHURCH DEVELOPMENT

Last year, Faith Memorial, through its Pastor and Board of Directors, began working through a process called "Natural Church Development" to aid us in our direction as a congregation. This process, developed by Christian Schwarz of Germany, has already helped more than 70,000 Protestant congregations from over 70 countries determine the areas where they have needed to put their focus in order to improve their overall church health. A sampling of our members recently participated in an survey, which was used to identify our own areas that are most in need of attention. Our church Health Team now goes to work with Pastor Schoech and our NCD coach, Pastor Warren, to work with the congregation in developing and implementing a plan to help the congregation address these areas. The Health Team consists of Deb Porter, Dorothy Kehe, Jon Dunlap, Mark Price and Bruce Berner.

Please plan to attend the Voter's Meeting on January 17 (after service) to hear the survey results from our Natural Church Development Survey. The Health Team will present the results and seek input from members as we move into the next phase, and we will vote on a sound system.

ROLL ON!

Please join us for an afternoon of bowling fun in Valparaiso. We will meet at Inman's Bowling & Recreation Center at 2:00pm on Sunday, January 31st. See Paul Nord or Paul Grossnickle for questions.



We will be taking down the Christmas decorations after church on January 10 (1st Sunday after Epiphany). All help is appreciated. Thanks in advance.



SMALL GROUP NEWS FOR JANUARY

- **WOMEN WANTING WISDOM** will not meet until April due to weather concerns in January and the fact that Lent is early this year (Ash Wednesday is Feb. 10). The next meeting will be Wednesday, **April 20**, at 6:30pm with place and topic to be announced.
- **MARK MAKERS** will meet at church on Wednesday, **January 6** at 6:30 pm.
- **SEWING SEEDS OF LOVE** will continue their regular meetings on the second and fourth Thursday of the month at 9:00am at church. Their next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, **January 14**.



THOUGHTS FROM THE DEACONESS

"Gospel"

After Jesus ascended into heaven and the Spirit came at Pentecost, the disciples began their work. Some stayed in Jerusalem to spread the Gospel to the Jewish people. Others began to travel throughout the Mediterranean. During this time, Saul, later named Paul, was converted by the vision of Jesus. He, along with Barnabas, shared the Gospel primarily with the Gentiles.

As Paul and Barnabas were ministering in Antioch in Syria, others began spreading the word that the Gentiles couldn't become Christians without first being circumcised. In other words, first they would have to abide by the rules of the Jewish faith, and then second they could learn about Jesus Christ. A debate occurred between Paul and Barnabas and the other men. Because of the need to resolve this question, a council was called in Jerusalem. (For those of us who lament church meetings and conventions, we can blame the early Christian church.)

Paul and Barnabas and some of the others were appointed to go to this council.

At the council, the apostles and elders of the church gathered to discuss the question. After much debate, Simon Peter took the floor. In a few words, he reminded the hearers that God gave the Holy Spirit to both Jews and Gentiles. By the grace of Jesus, both Jews and Gentiles would be saved. Paul and Barnabas then related their experiences among the Gentiles and the Gospel that was being spread. When they were done, the apostle James spoke the words that ended the dissension, "Therefore my judgment is that we should not trouble those of the Gentiles who turn to God . . ." *Acts 15:19* James was saying that it wasn't necessary for the Gentiles to follow all the rules of the Jewish faith before they could become Christian. But, he did add that there were some things they could do out of respect for Jewish Christians, such as abstaining from food offered to idols and sexual immorality.

For those of us who have been Christians for a long time, we can get stuck in the rules. We can especially get stuck in "that is the way we have always done this" or "that is the way I want it done". The rules can hinder the un-churched and the non-Christian from becoming followers of Jesus Christ. We can get in the way of the Gospel when we are unwilling to change or flex or expect visitors to act a certain way or when hospitality isn't shown.

As we move into this New Year at FMLC and we work to reach out with the Gospel, may we keep this comment from Pastor Mark Jeske in our minds, "Lead with the Gospel. Share the rules much later."

Lent – Already?!

Well, not quite. But Lent is starting earlier than we usually expect it. Ash Wednesday is February 10 and Easter is March 27 (the earliest it can be is March 22). During the season of Lent and finishing on Easter, we will be following the theme of *"Places of the Passion"* by the Rev. Dr. David R. Schmitt, professor at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. The theme will draw from the Gospel of St. Luke and will focus on the spiritual wonders of Jesus' work in our lives. The most troubling places of our lives become the most amazing places of God's grace when Jesus visits them. This theme will appear on Wednesday evenings, Sunday morning Bible studies, children's messages, and daily devotions to be used by every member of FMLC. Mark your calendars for Ash Wednesday. Plan now to participate in a Sunday morning Bible study and to commit to reading a daily devotion throughout the days in Lent.

See you on February 10, 7pm!

CANCELLATION OF SERVICES AT FAITH MEMORIAL DUE TO SEVERE WINTER WEATHER

Linda Berner will send an email to all members and friends that are on the prayer chain. If you are not on the prayer chain and would like an email give her your email address by sending her an email at berner21@comcast.net

Notification of closing will be on three radio stations:

- *Indiana 105—105.5 FM*
- *The Z—107.1 FM*
- *WAKE Radio—1500 AM*

If you don't have a radio or a way to receive email, please give your phone number to Bruce Lindner and he will call you if there is a service cancellation.

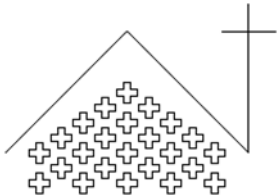
For questions please talk to Linda Berner or Bruce Lindner or call the church office at (219) 462-7684.



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**MENS' OVERNIGHT
SHELTER**

Our next commitment to the Men's Overnight Shelter at Immanuel Lutheran will be Saturday, January 16 at 6:00pm. There will be a sign up sheet in the Narthex if you would like to volunteer to work a shift or bring food. Thanks to all who help with this important ministry!



FAITH MEMORIAL WORSHIP SCHEDULE

The Epiphany of Our Lord, Sunday, January 3, 9:00am Holy Communion
The Baptism of Our Lord, Sunday, January 10, 9:00am Holy Communion
The Second Sunday after the Epiphany, January 17, 9:00am Holy Communion
St. Timothy, Pastor & Confessor, January 24, 9:00am Holy Communion
The Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany, January 31, 9:00am Holy Communion
The Transfiguration of Our Lord, Sunday, February 7, 9:00am Holy Communion
Ash Wednesday, February 10, 7:00pm Holy Communion
The First Sunday in Lent, February 14, 9:00am Morning Prayer
The First Wednesday in Lent, February 17, 7:00pm Evening Prayer
The Second Sunday in Lent, February 21, 9:00am Holy Communion
The Second Wednesday in Lent, February 24, 7:00pm Evening Prayer
The Third Sunday in Lent, February 28, 9:00am Morning Prayer

