

FAITH MEMORIAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

753 N. CALUMET AVE.

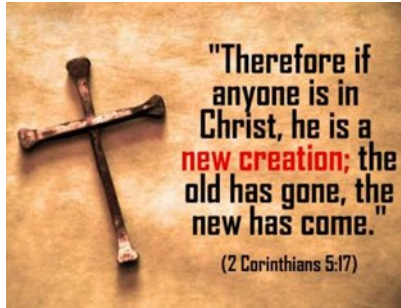
VALPARAISO, IN 46383

(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

Something's New...It's You!



2 Corinthians 5:17-21 ¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. ¹⁸ All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹ that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰ Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹ For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God

Have you noticed there is something new about you? I'm not talking about a new haircut, a new gift you got over the holidays, or some new pounds you may have gotten from going back for one more portion of your favorite Christmas food or desert. No the something new is you! Now, you may be thinking I don't feel that new. In fact, even in the last year, you may be finding any number of things in your life seem to be getting quite old. Joints may not be working the way they used to. Your memory may be having some storage and recall issues that make you wish you could get some new hardware. You may be finding that your patience and interactions with some people are threadbare to the point that they could probably use some work on the stitching that holds them together. Not exactly how most people picture new, right?

However, as Christians what makes us new goes beyond our parts and personalities. Our bodies may groan in one way or another until the day we die. Our behavior and relationships require constant work. Yet 2 Corinthians reminds us that, *"if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come."* In Christ, we have been given new life and new purpose. This involves both a "new now" and a "process of newness" as we await the things that are to come.

The "new now" is that in Christ, we have been reconciled to God. We are His children. Right now, this very moment, we already live in the promise of what will be. We will live eternally restored and reconciled in mind, body, and Spirit to God. Sin, death, and the power of the devil have had their eternal hold on us ripped away from them. We are the child who will live in relationship with God forever in paradise. In this way, the old, truly has passed away, the new has come.

At the same time, we also see a "process of newness" taking place. We all have those sinful habits that cling to us, much like the stiff knee that requires constant rehab clings to us or those couple of pounds we can never seem to drop cling to us as well. Yet, as we look forward to the day when God will remove all of our sinful habits and suffering and make us new once and for all, God calls us to begin the process of striving toward a taste of that newness right now. Making healthy choices, addressing behavioral issues, and reconciling ourselves to our neighbors; Renewing our minds, reminding ourselves of God's promises, and reorienting our lives through the power of God's Word and time spent in relationship with God; Serving as *"ambassadors for Christ,"* growing in grace, and putting our trust in the one who *"For our sake made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."* All these things are part of embracing the process through which we begin to more fully experience the new now that is already here. True there are some things that won't change until Christ comes back, but we can turn those things over to Christ and call on Him for strength and comfort, and ask God to help us discern those areas where he is indeed calling us to reach toward something new. This is all a part of the new you.

So Happy New Year, brothers and sisters, and may God help each of us to embrace the new you.

Additional Note: Speaking of new. There are several small groups that will be starting new topics after Christmas, and would love to welcome new members. Also, our Education and Fellowship Team will soon be sharing and encouraging the use of a new discipleship resource called RightNow Media. Be watching for more details.

In Christ,

Pastor Eric Schoech

Pastor Eric Schoech



On Tuesday, January 17, Faith Memorial will begin hosting 2 GriefShare Seminars led by Becky Graef. One will be held in the morning from 10:00-12:00 and the other in the evening from 7:00-9:00. These seminars are identical, so interested parties should sign up for one time or the other.

Please help us get the word out! If you or someone you know might benefit from a grief support group please call the church office at (219) 462-7684 and speak with Becky. You may also visit griefshare.org for more information.

Cost is \$15 for the workbook. The material is Christian-based but people of all faiths and denominations are welcome.

WOMEN WANTING WISDOM

WWW will begin meeting again on January 18 at 6:30 at the church. The group is studying the Psalms with the books *Psalms* from the "Knowing the Bible" series. Everyone is welcome to attend. We generally meet on the third Wednesday of the month and during the winter months, we meet at the church. If you would like to join the group and want a copy of the book, let Deb Porter (219-309-8794) know, and she can get one for you.



Sunday Morning Small Group

This small group will begin meeting again on January 8. For the next 6 to 8 weeks we will be learning about the life and times of Martin Luther (the 600th anniversary of his birth is in 2017.) This is a video-enhanced topic and we will be watching a short video and then discussing it. We invite you to come join us, especially if you are interested in finding out more about the man whose work resulted in the Lutheran Church. This small group meets in the classroom next to the copy machine room.



WWW Adopts a Classroom

WWW participated in the Hilltop Neighborhood House "Adopt a classroom" campaign in December. We collected needed classroom supplies and donated them to the HNH program. Through the generosity of our members we were able to donate glue, glue sticks, markers, crayons, rulers, erasers, scissors, tempera paint and brushes. Hilltop Neighborhood House provides high quality child care to local families. They provide scholarships for families without the resources to pay full price. Two of our members, Nancy Kickbush and Deb Porter, serve on the board of Hilltop.

The Care Committee would like to thank everyone for their generosity with donations to Warm a Home and the food cart during this past season of Advent. Your donations certainly helped ease the lives of some of our local families who are struggling with basic needs of food and shelter.

THOUGHTS FROM THE DEACONESS

"Another Way"

Herod the Great was his title. His reign over Palestine began in 47 B.C.; he was given the title King in 40 B.C.; he died in 4 B.C. In many ways, especially the early years of his rule, he was a decent king. He kept the peace, brought order to a disorderly country, built many fine buildings, cut taxes during natural disasters, and was trusted by the Romans. But even the best of rulers often has at least one character flaw. Herod was insanely suspicious and that paranoia increased as he aged. Five family members were killed at his order. Herod feared for his life and his crown.

As Herod neared the end of his life, magi came from the East. Scholars surmise that they came from the area of Persia and were wise men or philosophers or astrologers or soothsayers. Their role in society is not known and scripture isn't clear as to how many came. But they came because they had seen something different, unusual, unexpected in the heavens. It may seem extraordinary that men should travel a long journey to find a king, but the strange thing is that, just about the time Jesus was born, there was in the known world a strange feeling of expectation of the coming of a king. Even Roman historians at the time knew this. Tacitus tells of the belief that "there was a firm persuasion . . . that at the very time the East was to grow powerful, and rulers coming from Judea (Palestine) were to acquire universal empire." Herod was afraid, and even more so when the magi sought to find the child born "the King of the Jews". That was Herod's title.

The rest of the story is well known. Jesus is found with his parents. Gifts are given. As the magi prepare to return to their own country, they are warned in a dream not to return to Herod with the location of Jesus. They listen to the voice in their dream and follow the instructions. They do not go back to Herod and they don't travel the same road home. The magi go home "another way". We can surmise that their life's journey after seeing the King of the Jews was never the same again.

And what about the journey of our lives after seeing the baby? Do we stay on the same road in our life's journey or do we go "another way"?

CANCELLATION OF CHURCH SERVICES DUE TO SEVERE WEATHER

On December 18, we were forced to cancel Sunday Services due to a severe snowstorm. If this situation should arise again this winter, there are several ways to check if church services are cancelled. An email will be sent to all members and friends that are on the prayer chain. If you are not on the prayer chain and would like an email, send Linda Berner your email address at berner21@comcast.net. Notification of closing will be on three radio stations: Indiana 105-105.5 fm, the Z-107.1 fm and WAKE radio-1500 am. If you don't have a radio or a way to receive email please give your phone number to Bruce Berner at (219) 464-2774 and he will call you if there is a service cancellation.



THANK YOU! ... to the small groups who hosted Advent Suppers in December. They were a very welcome time of warmth and fellowship.

After establishing several active Small Groups in 2016, Small Groups are now making plans for 2017. If you might be interested in joining a group, please talk to any current small group member, or contact Marilyn Lindner or Paul Nord for more information.



rightnow MEDIA

Coming Soon

Be watching for
more information.

