

FAITH MEMORIAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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



Be My Valentine?

Matthew 5:43-48 ⁴³ "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' ⁴⁴ But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵ so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. ⁴⁶

For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? ⁴⁷

And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? ⁴⁸ You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

As I looked at my calendar for this month, I found it interesting that Ash Wednesday, which starts the season of Lent comes only four days after a holiday that many consider to be the most love centered holiday of the year. How interesting to have a day about love followed immediately by a season of repentance and self-reflection.

This got me thinking that it would certainly would be worth the time to meditate on the importance of repentance, forgiveness, and self-reflection in things like marriage. (I hope many of you will do this, and that we can look further at more of this subject another time). However, as I prepared for this article another question also began to come to mind that seemed worth spending some time considering.

I began to wonder how many people this Valentine's Day will be sending love letters to people on death row, members of Isis, or the various murderous dictators of the world. Even if some were sent, how many would be sent by the people they had harmed? On a more personal level, I started thinking about those you or I might have a hard time sitting across from at a nice dinner, let alone loving or praying for them? I don't just mean an abstract and distant love or muttering a one second generic prayer for a faceless group of people who could be on your enemies list. I'm talking about the kind of love that blesses, does good, and gives to those who have wronged you, abused you, even stolen from you. The kind of love that gets down on its knees and pleads for God to move in the hearts of our enemies and to provide for them (see also Luke 6:27-36). Loving, forgiving, and going out of our way can be hard enough at times for our families, friends, and those we would want to call our valentine, let alone doing this for our enemies. It's not always easy for us to live the kind of love to which God calls us.

One famous quote from Benjamin Franklin says, "Love your enemies for they tell you your faults." As we begin a season that focuses on repentance and self-reflection these words have a ring of truth. Where better can we see our own petty behavior, our propensity for anger, our lack of generosity and forgiveness, or a host of other sins, than in our interactions with our enemies and those who have somehow wronged us. However, to see a wonderful example of doing the opposite we need look no further than the cross.

On a day that was all about love, Jesus allowed himself to be persecuted, stripped of his cloths and nailed to a cross all in order to save us. While we were still sinners, enemies of God, Christ died so that we might be reconciled and rose that we might live (Rom 5:8,10). With the faces of those who had nailed Him to the cross all around Him, and covered in His own blood, Jesus prayed some of the most powerful enemy- forgiving words in all of scripture, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do." This is the example God has empowered us to follow, and this is the kind of love that now flows from the Lord who lives in our hearts.

As we begin this Lenten season that begins and ends with love, I pray that all of us will continue to grow in the love of Christ, and continue to repent, reflect, and find new ways to live out that love, even for those we might call our enemies.

If you are struggling with a conflict in your life, our Sunday Bible class is currently studying how we as Christians interact and deal with conflict. You can join us at any time and materials from the entire study are available!

In Christ,

Pastor Eric Schoeck

NOTES FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

January 2015 has arrived and the glorious cold with it. The holidays have departed, and the teams at Faith are ready to move into the new year with new hope, new plans, new team leaders, and a renewed optimism for the future of Faith. Our (hopefully bi-annual) retreat was held on Saturday January 24th from 10 am to 3 pm at VU. Much was discussed, many plans were made and all involved felt it was a very enriching experience. The Board appreciated the opportunity to hear what the teams are about and what those awesome team leaders are planning for us in 2015. We will be sharing with the entire congregation what we are planning to do within the small groups and to extend opportunities for congregation involvement.

The Board would like to take a moment and thank all of those members who stayed after to "de-green" the church, narthex, fellowship hall and the outdoors, your work was noticed and appreciated. The Board would also like to thank those of you who are going out of your way to help the visitors feel welcome and to find their way around the church. Although we currently do not have ideal space for adult Sunday school, we feel this a wonderful problem to have! We are currently working on a place within the church that offers the right acoustics for sound projection and plenty of space for all to enjoy.

I was once told that 80% of life was just 'showing up'. We are blessed that our congregation actually does more than that, they actually get involved!!

The BOD feels blessed and grateful to have your support and prayers! We also feel blessed to have both Bruce's re-instated for another 20 years (hopefully), well, for sure, another 2 more years. The expertise of both gentlemen is a true asset to the board and the congregation!

One final note, together with the help of God, we can all work together and make Faith all that the Lord would like it to be in 2015 and beyond! One body, many parts! (1 Corinthians 12:12)

Be blessed and stay warm, — The BOD

MARK MAKERS

Our next meeting will be held Wednesday, February 11 at 7:00pm at Faith Memorial.

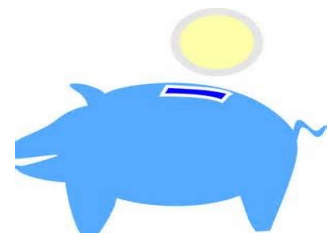
This will be our last meeting until after Easter at which time we will resume meeting on the first Wednesday of the month. Everyone is welcome and bring a guest!

Care in congregation ...

Continues through February. We are collecting new stuffed animals for our mission project for "Day of Caring". The basket is quickly filling with "Reading Buddies". If you would like to contribute but cannot shop, \$5 donations are also welcome.

"Share the Dream" is the mission project for Sunday School. With help from the congregation they hope to buy a little farm of animals for World Vision. Look for the blue pig near the entrance to the sanctuary to drop in your donation.

This is an Easter mission project.



THOUGHTS FROM THE DEACONESS

"A Gift from God"

"Over the king's treasures was Azmaveth the son of Adiel; and over the treasures in the country, in the cities, in the villages, and in the towers, was Jonathan the son of Uzziah; and over those who did the work of the field for tilling the soil was Ezri the son of Chelub; and over the vineyards was Shimei the Ramathite; and over the produce of the vineyards for the wine cellars was Zabdi the Shiphmite. Over the olive and sycamore trees . . . Over the herds . . . Over the camels . . . All these were stewards of King David's property." *1 Chronicles 27: 25-31*

"And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues." *1 Corinthians 12:28*

"All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills." *1 Corinthians 12:11*

"As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies – in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen." *1 Peter 4:10-11*



SEWING SEEDS OF LOVE

Like to sew or want to learn? Join us on Wednesday, February 11, at 7:00pm and/or Monday, February 23 at 6:00pm. We are making designer pillowcases to be distributed to shut-ins, seniors and residents of care facilities in the area. If you have your own machine please bring it. Guests are welcome.

Experience is not necessary!

NOTE: This will be the last meeting of this group until after Easter as we will not meet during Lent.



EVANGELISM

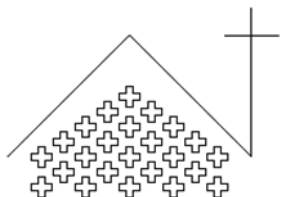
During Lent, the Evangelism Committee will be distributing cloth bags with the FMLC logo on them and a magnet and postcard attached. The card will give recipients instructions to fill the bag with food items for our local food pantries and bring them back to Faith Memorial on Wednesdays during Lent, just before the soup supper (around 5:00pm). Donors will be welcomed by the greeting committee and invited to stay for supper and church service. The committee hopes to schedule speakers to provide entertainment and instruction during the supper. The congregation will be able to mingle with and welcome newcomers and guests for fellowship. Watch for more information in the next newsletter as well as the bulletin announcements on Sunday.



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Lutheran Church**

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**SOUP SUPPERS
DURING LENT**

As is our custom at Faith Memorial, we will hold a Soup Supper prior to each Wednesday Evening Prayer Service during Lent. The suppers will begin at 6:00pm, followed by church service at 7:00pm. The Soup Supper dates are Feb. 25, March 4, 11, 18, and 25. There will be supper on Ash Wednesday.



FAITH MEMORIAL WORSHIP SCHEDULE

The Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany, February 1, 9:00am Holy Communion
The Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany, February 8, 9:00am Holy Communion
The Transfiguration of Our Lord, Sunday, February 15, 9:00am Holy Communion
Ash Wednesday, February 18, 7:00pm Holy Communion
The First Sunday in Lent, February 22, 9:00am Morning Prayer
The First Wednesday in Lent, February 25, 7:00pm Evening Prayer
The Second Sunday in Lent, March 1, 9:00am Holy Communion
The Second Wednesday in Lent, March 4, 7:00pm Evening Prayer
The Third Sunday in Lent, March 8, 9:00am Morning Prayer
The Third Wednesday in Lent, March 11, 7:00pm Evening Prayer
The Fourth Sunday in Lent, March 15, 9:00am Holy Communion
The Fourth Wednesday in Lent, March 18, 7:00pm Evening Prayer
The Fifth Sunday in Lent, March 22, 9:00am Morning Prayer

