

First Hearts

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LRPC! (What?)

Bible Study! It's important! And yes, as a pastor, I am still learning and there's still so much I need to know about this amazing book and its deep content. My study continues and it needs to continue because I need to keep growing and because I have a bad habit of forgetting and I need to re-learn again and again! Bible Study is vital!

Join us for it Sunday morning. We won't put you on the spot!

Our current study deals with the book of Nehemiah in the Old Testament. Nehemiah is the man that God chose to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem after the exiles began to come back. Rebuilding is important for there are so many times in our lives when our walls have fallen down or gotten very old and rebuilding is needed and necessary. Any rebuilding needed around us?

Well, the answer is yes, and because of that the Church Council is appointing a Long Range Planning Committee! (If you see the letters LRPC around here, that is what they stand for.) This committee will have the same task that Nehemiah had – looking to the future, restoring the walls, and making them new again. It will be their task to pray and study and plan in order to see what needs to be done.

Nehemiah did this as well. He first received reports from his brother of the condition of Jerusalem and her walls. After hearing the report he wept at what war did to His people. After weeping, he then did something else important – he knelt in prayer. Not just for a few minutes though, as we often do, but for days and nights on end. He poured out his prayers to God asking the Lord for help and strength. He also brought the sins of the people to God and confessed them, crying to the Lord for forgiveness and mercy.

In these ways, He did something amazing! He became a picture of the Priestly Office of Jesus pointing to Him and His ministry of salvation. And how we remember Jesus doing the same as Nehemiah – praying endless hours to His Father in heaven about His mission. How we remember Him confessing the sins of the people from the cross, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do!" Yes, Nehemiah became a Christ-figure who rebuilt the walls of the Holy City just as Jesus would do, for through His ministry Zion is restored!

Through the study of the Bible we learn these things, and yes, through the book of Nehemiah (as well as Ezra) we gain valuable insights into how to rebuild. Join us in

Bible class as we learn about these things or read these books at home or maybe both! For you see, restoring the walls begins with restoring the Word in our lives! LRPC! In the name of Jesus, Amen! *In Christ, Pastor Schmidt*

Worship This Month

I pledge allegiance to the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the faith for which it stands, one Savior eternal with mercy and grace for all.

February 4 – 5th Sunday after Epiphany: *Isaiah 40:21-31; 1 Corinthians 9:16-17; Mark 1:29-39.*

February 11 – The Transfiguration of Our Lord: *2 Kings 2:1-13; 2 Corinthians 3:12-13, 4:1-6; Mark 9:2-9.*

February 18 – 1st Sunday in Lent: *Genesis 22:1-18; James 1:12-18; Mark 1:9-15.*

February 25 – 2nd Sunday in Lent: *Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16; Romans 5:1-11; Mark 8:27-38.*

THE SEASON OF EPIPHANY is a bit short this year. This means Lent is just around the corner! As such, we will be holding Lenten services as has been our tradition each Wednesday evening beginning at 6:30 p.m. We invite our members to join us for this journey to Jerusalem with Jesus where He will give Himself as a ransom for our sins!

Prayer List

OUR PRAYER LIST SHOULD INCLUDE:

Sick or Burdened Members:

General: Jim Beck, Don Weaver

Serving Our Country: Brett Anthonijs, Robert Boatman, Isaac Davis, Chad Kaiser, Adam Smith, Jeff Stone, Neil Whitehead

Other Prayer Requests:

MEMBERS WITH SICKNESS OR BURDENS:

Brion Bissell (needs kidney)	Blaine Smith
Margot Bridges (homebound)	Susan Spicer
Gladys Frankenberg (homebound)	Carl Testerman (cancer)
Gene Franklin	Judy Testerman (cancer)
Pat Hinds	the Varner family
Karla Hood	Don & Carolyn Weaver
Mike & Mary Jones	Kris Weaver

Dan Jordan Harold & Katherine Whitaker (homebound)
 Donna Korte Mary Ann Wheat
 Don Linde Marilyn Wing (homebound)
 Ralph & Dottie Mertz (homebound). Jerry Wing (nursing home)
 Sharon Mueller the Wolford family

NON-MEMBERS WITH SICKNESS OR BURDENS:

Dennis Lee Bagby (Donna Korte's friend Suzanne Chapman's son)
 Charlotte Brothers (wife of Carla Poore's co-worker), doing well; doctors believe they got all the cancer and she did not require chemotherapy. Praise God!
 Julie Brummitt (Jim & Rosa Beck's daughter)
 Jonathan Campbell (Diane Baum's co-worker's brother) fighting infection after an appendectomy to remove his ruptured appendix
 Steven Dew (Carolyn Weaver's friend)
 James Flanigan (Eric's brother)
 Mary Ann Fowler (Mike Anderson's aunt) with cancer and prognosis not good
 Andy Fultz (the Rodenbeck's relative) who is facing serious health issues
 Ken Hamilton (father of Anna Marie Hamilton, UT student from Alabama)
 Judy Hamrick (Shirley Watson's neighbor) with a tumor that is growing
 JoAnn Harbaugh (Kathleen Holliday's mother)
 Randy Hetzner (AnnMarie Bissell's father) with a broken foot and ankle
 Cheryl Hooks (Diane Baum's friend) undergoing months of chemotherapy after removal of part of her colon and intestines due to cancer
 Helen Linderfelt (Lynda Graves' friend)
 Joyce Lipscomb (Rick Elmore's friend)
 Annette Lotivio (Marc Blais's friend) with pancreatic cancer
 Joanne Mattingly
 Joan Mincey (Shirley Watson's friend) with stage 4 COPD and breast cancer
 Karen Nall
 Mary Jane Nichols (Becky Marshall's sister) having open heart surgery
 Tom O'Brien (Marissa Wilson's co-worker's husband) with prostate cancer
 Travis Parrott (the Wolford's son-in-law) needing a kidney transplant
 Kallee Pittenger (mother of one of our 3rd grade students), having chemotherapy for breast cancer
 Tom Roberts (Sara's grandfather) with Alzheimer's
 Daniel Rule (the Slifkas' friend) suffering from RSD
 Jason Rutledge
 Kristy Shirk (Lynda Graves' friend) with cancer of the sinuses

Connie Warren (Slifka family friend), undergoing breast cancer treatment
 Sam and Alex Weaver

Other News and Happenings

STEWARDSHIP – “I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich” (2 Corinthians 8:8-9).

Without commands or even arm-twisting, St. Paul encourages, even challenges, the Church in Corinth to demonstrate the sincerity of their faith by their generosity in giving. He does this because giving generously is a gift of the Spirit given to us through the Gospel.

St. Paul wrote: “But just as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us—see that you also excel in this grace of giving” (2 Corinthians 8:7). In other words, just as we grow in faith and speech and knowledge of eternal things by the Holy Spirit through the Word of God, so also do we grow in giving from the same Spirit through the same Word.

The problem is that the grace of generosity often grows cold in us. It's not so much that we stop giving, but we don't put it first. We treat it like all the other bills that must be paid. It becomes a chore, just one more thing to check off a list of things to do. That empties it of its spiritual power and robs us of the joy that Christ and the Scriptures assign to it.

On top of that, since this generosity is linked to faith and knowledge of divine things, a lack of excelling in giving is a sure sign that our faith and knowledge of God are under attack as well.

Thus St. Paul points to the foundation of generosity: the generosity of Christ Himself. Even though He was rich, He became poor so that we who are poor might become rich. Thus, the incarnation, suffering, and death of our Lord on the cross is the reason, source, and driving force for our generosity in giving to the church.

And since Christ who was rich became poor so that we might be rich in His grace—of which generous giving is part—so we also who are rich in His grace can excel in pressing His grace into service toward the gracious work of the church.

Pay attention to what you give to the church so that you may excel at it. And if you find that your heart has grown cold or indifferent toward it, immerse yourself in God's Word. Read it at home. Attend Bible Class. Hear and listen to it preached in the Divine Service.

Be reminded of what Christ has done for you in His incarnation, suffering, and death. For this will strengthen

your faith and knowledge. And where that excels, so will the grace of giving excel also.

NEWS FROM EVANGELISM – E-mail, Facebook, text message, Instagram, Twitter, and Periscope. What do you mean? I simply want to find out if my friend wants to go fishing. I'm not trying to launch the Space Shuttle. I simply want to ask my friend a simple question and get a simple answer. Why is it so complicated? Did cavemen have these problems? My guess is, probably so. I suspect that there needed to be someone nearby to interpret the smoke signals and hieroglyphics. Now, imagine the impact of the Gutenberg press on the people centuries ago. The way we communicate is constantly changing.

This coming year, the Evangelism Committee will take a look at how we can improve communication among our members that will enhance the worship experience and increase member participation to support the many ministries we have. We will also look at creating better ways to be more effective in sharing the message of God's grace and salvation to non-believers. We should recognize that it is a privilege to be part of God's work and that being an extravert isn't essential to becoming involved in evangelism, only obedience and love are.

If you would like to be involved or learn more, please e-mail me at shadamattern@gmail.com.

In Hoc Signo Vincas, Shada Mattern

WELCOME MRS. SCHMIDT – The Early Childhood Center would like to extend a warm welcome to Mary Schmidt. She has taken a position as lead teacher for the one- and two-year-olds. Mary has had numerous years of experience teaching preschool and kindergarten in former classroom settings along with achieving directorship licensing. We welcome Mary to our staff and pray every blessing upon her as she brings Jesus to the little children!

BATHROOM PROJECT – As everyone knows, the bathrooms in our school needed great attention and upgrading. They were a poor witness for us to the public who used them at school events.

The good news is that donations have really taken off! The members of our congregation are coming through to accomplish this task. We still have a way to go, but the start has been good! We invite everyone to continue to help us achieve the monetary goals.

Many thanks go to Christine Sprecher for her efforts in spearheading this project. Her care for our school is exemplary to all our members! A big thank you to Christine and to all who are making this project happen!

TALENTS NEEDED – If you are a photographer, videographer, graphic designer, or artist of any kind, we are

looking to create new content for our website, social media and publications. please contact Shada Mattern at shadamattern@gmail.com.

DAY SCHOOL BOARD MEETING is 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, February 6.

BOARD OF ELDERS MEETING is scheduled for 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, February 6.

55 ALIVE will meet Thursday, February 8, at 12:00 noon, featuring Sargent White and Julie Bond presenting the SCAN program (Senior Citizens Access network). A delectable luncheon at \$7.00/person will be served. Hope to see you there!

MISSION SERVE is Saturday, February 10. Please let Karen Farris know if you can help.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES meeting and workday at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, February 17.

BOARD OF STEWARDSHIP will meet at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, February 20.

THERE ARE FEW PILGRIMAGES more spiritually refreshing than going to the Holy Land! Rev. Michael Wolfram and Tim Wolfram will be hosting a trip to Israel beginning February 4, 2019, which will enable you to see and experience many Biblical sites. If you would like to find out more about this opportunity, you may contact Rev. Wolfram at mcwoilfram@aol.com or call. 515-988-4324 or you may contact Til Wolfram at timwolfram@bellsouth.net or call at 865-522-0951. Be sure to ask about early bird registration discounts!

School News and Happenings

CALENDAR

- 9 – No UniDay – theme: Valentine's Day
- 14 – ECE Valentine Parties
- 19 – Presidents' Day – No School/No ECE
- 20 – Class portraits, Groups/.Clubs, and Sports
- 22-25 – Basketball Tournament, Huntsville, AL
- 23 – No UniDay – theme: Olympics
- 25 – K - 3rd sing at FLC

NEWS FROM FIRST LUTHERAN SCHOOL

Dear Friends,

In Paul's first letter to the Corinthians he tells us that love is patient and kind. He says, "If I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge,

have
faith to move mountains, but do not have love I am nothing.” It is also revealed to us what love isn’t. Love does not envy or boast, and it is not arrogant. It sounds like love is complicated, and we sure can make it complicated. We love those who are easy to love. We pick and choose who we give our love to.

What a relief we don’t get the same treatment from our Father. The love we receive from HIM is overwhelmingly uncomplicated. HIS love bought us back through the work of HIS son. Each day is an opportunity for us to teach our students and each other about this unfathomable gift.

In the month of February our middle school athletes will travel to Huntsville to participate in a tournament with other Lutheran Schools. Each year this tournament is a wonderful opportunity to have fellowship with their peers. We look forward to our kindergarten students showing us some of the skills they have picked up during their Olympics on the 23rd. We will also complete a service project for the Lymphoma and Leukemia Society to raise funds for children afflicted with these illnesses.

As we work together to strengthen our church and our witness, let us give a little more love to our community and to each other.

In Christ, Lindsey Hofman

DEADLINE FOR THE MARCH NEWSLETTER IS FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 16

Edward H. Schmidt, Pastor; Ceci Steele, Editor.
Worship Services are held Sundays at 10:30 a.m. and
Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. Children’s Sunday School and
Adult Bible Classes are held on Sundays at 9:15 a.m.

First Lutheran Church
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Birthdays and Anniversaries

BIRTHDAYS

- 2 – Luke Buckner, Jason Collver
- 3 – Audrey Miller, Mike Sanders, Denver Slifka,
Brittany Tipton
- 4 – Emily Norton
- 5 – Dave Wheat
- 7 – Dawn Johnson
- 9 – Kari Williamson
- 10 – Judy Kelly
- 13 – Morgan Lyke
- 14 – Elizabeth Davis, Nathan Parker, Katie Wells
- 15 – Isaac Parker
- 18 – Seth Nutter
- 20 – Jim Beck
- 21 – Steve Hardin, Joshua Keyes
- 22 – Amanda Parker, Easton Sternberg
- 23 – Julie Cloninger, Sara Keyes
- 25 – Nicolas Lukens
- 27 – Lindsey Blair
- 28 – Emily Blomenberg, Erin Rodgers

ANNIVERSARIES

- 16 – Larry & Kim Mabe

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
February 2018						
				1	2	3
4 8:45 First Bells Rehearsal 9:00 Fellowship 9:15 SS & Bible Classes 10:30 Worship Service 12:30 Confirmation Class	5 6:00 New testament Books	6 6:00 Day School Board 7:00 Board of Elders	7 8:30 School Chapel 6:30 Worship Service 7:30 Choir Rehearsal	8 12:00 55 Alive	9	10 9:00 Mission Serve 9:00 Karate Graduation
11 8:45 First Bells Rehearsal 9:00 Fellowship 9:15 SS & Bible Classes 10:30 Worship: <i>K-3 Choir</i> 12:30 Confirmation Class	12 9:30 Quilting 6:00 New Testament Books	13	14 ASH WEDNESDAY 8:30 School Chapel 6:30 Worship Service 7:30 Choir Rehearsal	15	16 DEADLINE FOR MAR. NEWSLETTER	17 9:00 Workday
18 MTEBOX SUNDAY 8:45 First Bells Rehearsal 9:00 Fellowship 9:15 SS & Bible Classes 10:30 Worship Service 12:30 Confirmation Class 12:20 Voters' Meeting	19 PRESIDENT'S DAY 6:00 New Testament Books	20 7:00 Board of Stewardship	21 8:30 School Chapel 6:30 Worship Service 7:30 Choir Rehearsal	22 7:00 Planning Council	23	24
25 TRANSFIGURATION 8:45 First Bells Rehearsal 9:00 Fellowship 9:15 SS & Bible Classes 10:30 Worship Service 11:20 Confirmation Class	26 9:30 Quilting 6:00 New Testament Books	27	28 8:30 School Chapel. 6:30 Worship Service 7:30 Choir Rehearsal			