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Bethlehem Lutheran Church - Davey

November Helpers

Lector—Jon Mumgaard
Communion Assistant—Sharon Mumgaard
Ushers—Open
Cleaners—Wk 1/2—Linda Sestak
Wk 3/4—Mike/Virg Unverferth
Altar—Open

Bethlehem Lutheran Church
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Encounter Christ Grow in faith Love as Christ loved Tell the Story

Treasure in Heaven

During this year, the book I’ve mainly used for my own morning devotions is *Seeking Aliveness* by Brian McLaren. For the last several weeks, he’s been working through Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5 – 7. One of my seminary professors described Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount as his version of Martin Luther King, Jr.’s “I have a dream...” speech. The sermon places before us Jesus’ vision of the Kingdom of God...his vision of heaven.

One from yesterday really struck me – it’s based on Matthew 6:19-20:

⁹ “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; ²⁰ but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Here’s how Brian McLaren paraphrases it:

Do not let greed cloud your outlook on life, but store up true wealth by investing in a growing portfolio of generosity and kindness.

A growing portfolio of generosity and kindness. I love that.

I am not someone who believes heaven is some other place. It’s more like an alternate reality that is somehow here and not yet completely here. After all, Jesus said, “the Kingdom of God has come near.” In this now and not yet time, the Kingdom of Heaven is tangled in with the brokenness of the present time and place. Sometimes heaven seems far away on the other side of a wide chasm. But other times...amazing times...in “thin places” ...you get glimpses and visions of God’s realm.

That chasm gets narrower between our world and the Realm of God when we live by Jesus’ teachings from the Sermon on the Mount.

We narrow that chasm when we build up our portfolio...not our professional portfolio, nor our investment portfolio, but when we build up our portfolio of generosity and kindness.

How is your portfolio of generosity and kindness doing?

Christ’s peace,

Pastor Kris

Bible Questions of the Month

Question #1

Who decided, and how did they decide that Matthew, Mark, Luke and John would be the canonical gospels, and the Gnostic and other gospels did NOT fit in?

First, a couple of definitions—*canon* means the collection of books that were ultimately decided to be included in the Bible. *Canonical* is an adjective describing the books that made the cut.

Gnosticism comes from the root *gnosis*, to know. This system is based in the separation of spirit and matter, or spirit and body. Matter, including bodies, is believed to be evil, or at best, not really real. In Gnosticism, the belief was that the divine creation was intended to be entirely spirit, but something went awry and the material universe, including our existence as bodies, was a mistake.

In this mistake, there are still bits of spirit trapped in bodies. A special messenger then comes to bring special knowledge which will free the spirit from the body and allow it to escape. Although it might go by other names, Gnosticism is alive and well today.

At the time of Jesus, what was known as scripture was Hebrew scripture...our Old Testament. That canon was set long before Jesus and the gospels.

Over time in the early decades and centuries of the Christian church, theologians, teachers and preachers came to a gradual consensus that Gnosticism and some other early beliefs were inconsistent with how they understood God...the God who created the material world and called it good. They also came to a gradual consensus that incarnation...God taking on a real human body in the person of Jesus was more consistent with their understanding of not only God, but the teachings...and death and resurrection of Christ himself.

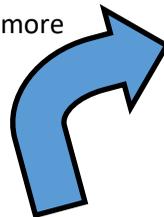
As the church taught and proclaimed Jesus, it relied primarily on the texts that ultimately became the canon because they seemed to capture better what Jesus was about.

The four gospels were among the first books to be accepted as scripture. The Gnostic gospels were rejected. And four gospels were included, each differing slightly from the others, to avoid anyone claiming that any one disciple had received this special knowledge from the messenger.

By the end of the second century, most of the canon was established – the gospels, Acts and Paul's letters. By the second half of the 4th century, consensus was reached on what books should be included and which ones shouldn't be.

There was never a council or anything that decided the canon, unlike the creeds. It was more about how the books fit with the understanding of God and Jesus Christ as revealed by the Old Testament, the Hebrew scriptures, and Jesus himself.

Question #2 :



November Calendar

- November 4 9:15—All-Congregation Sunday school
10:30—All Saint's Sunday—Worship with Holy Communion; lighting of candles in memory of those who have died. We will especially remember those who have died in the last year:
Richard Kreiner
Dennis Hanson
Cliff Erickson
Rose Agena (not a member but whose funeral was at Bethlehem)
Mary Grendahl
- November 11 10:30 am—Guitar worship
- November 18 9:15—All-Congregation Sunday school
10:30—Worship with Holy Communion
- November 25 10:30—Worship at Saunders County Care Center

Church for the Sake of the World

Toyland—We are signed up for Saturday December 8 from 8:30—10:30 to volunteer at Lincoln's Center for People in Need's Toyland Christmas give-away. During November, if you would like to bring an unwrapped gift, especially for teen-aged recipients, and a package of diapers, we will get them to CPIN for the event.

Thank you! A huge thank you to everyone who donated coats, dollars and other winter gear for Bubba's Closet. We filled a laundry cart at Hanger's! The Bubba's Closet event will happen Saturday November 3—families will be able to “shop” for winter gear for their kids from the donated items

Bible Question #2

We know when Jesus was born and where he was born. But when and where did he die? Where is he buried?

Most important part of the answer: **Jesus is no longer buried anywhere!** That's what this whole resurrection thing means—he is NOT dead anymore! Hallelujah!

He died on a hill outside Jerusalem called Golgotha—“place of the skull.” It was likely a place designated for public execution. According to scripture, he was placed in a borrowed tomb, but rose after three days. We do not know where the tomb was, nor really even the precise location of Golgotha. Based on some things we can date—the reign of Emperor Tiberius, the governorship of Pontius Pilate, the rule of Herod Antipas and the timing of Passover, it's believed that Jesus' death was in April, either in 30 AD, or 33 AD.

On September 16, about 20 of us met to talk about ideas for service and outreach in the coming year. Based on that conversation, here is our proposed service/outreach plan for the year. There were other ideas offered as well which we'll hang on to for future use.

Year round

Individual volunteer service as you feel moved and have time for

A question was raised at the meeting about getting at the root of causes of poverty – here is just a short list of possible volunteer options that get at that – many will be aimed at children, education, and neighborhood development in low-income areas:

Head Start or other early childhood education program

Teammates

The Lighthouse after school program in Lincoln

City Impact - Lincoln

There is Bingo the 3rd Thursday at St. Mary's – not service, but it is a chance to meet some of the people who live in Davey

Attend other events in Davey – St. Mary's soup supper, fireworks, etc

Continue worship at care center quarterly – I'll talk to the enrichment coordinator to find out ways to expand how we serve there

September

Potato Bake with part of proceeds to Davey Christmas Lights

October

Judy will attend Village Board meeting to see if there are other ways we can engage and/or serve in the community

Possible pet blessing – Theresa to contact St. Mary's to see if there's interest in doing this jointly

Gather new and gently used winter clothing – coats, hats, gloves for Bubba's closet. Bubba's closet, which serves students in LPS, is probably the most in need. The event is in conjunction with National Education Week in early November. Last year they got a \$30,000 grant from Walmart plus donations and still ran out of coats and had a waiting list. We have given to Raymond Central and Waverly over the last couple years, so we'll go with LPS this year.

Not sure if there's as much need at Raymond Central and Waverly but we will find out as we think about how best to serve the schools with which we relate in the future

November

Gather toys/gifts and diapers for CPIN Toyland which is Dec. 8 – 10. Based on past experience, it seems like gifts for older kids/teens are what they don't get enough of

The Freed for Life dinner, which supports prison ministry, is November 9. I have reserved one table

The next time we lead worship at the Care Center is Nov. 25, the Sunday after Thanksgiving. We will again make that our morning worship. Before then, I'll talk to the Enrichment Coordinator and see what else we might do to make the holidays brighter – things mentioned at the meeting were visiting, bringing gifts, especially for those who don't get gifts, caroling, etc. But won't limit to Christmas time if that's not the biggest need. Valentine's Day was also listed as an option for taking roses, other small gifts and cards and visiting.

December

CPIN Toyland – we'll volunteer as a group. Volunteer sign up is open now, so the sooner we know when we want to do it the better. We've typically gone with early Saturday.

Saturday December 8th from 9:00-3:00

Sunday December 9th from 1:00-4:00

Monday December 10th from 3:00-6:00

January or February

Worship at Followers of Christ at the Nebraska State Penitentiary

Lent Project (Lent starts March 6)

Collect food items for Matt Talbot and serve there

Theresa and Jerri offered to be backup planners/callers and help plan when needed