

**FEBRUARY  
2020**



## Bethlehem News



Matthew 17:1-4

After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus. Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put up three shelters – one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah."

While we gear up for the Easter season, we need to slow it down a little. We tend to jump from the transfiguration to Easter. We want to skip Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. But isn't that what Peter James and John were doing?

They wanted to jump straight to the final act, the mountaintop experience. The second coming of Jesus. They wanted to stay on the mountain top with Moses, Elijah and Jesus. I'm not really sure if they just wanted to skip the messy part of Jesus suffering and death, but we tend to do the same in our actions. We want to avoid the pain, sadness or suffering in our lives or gloss over it. When in fact we are suffering and that is ok. And maybe that's why we enjoy Easter so much.

Easter Sunday draws crowds of people to celebrate Jesus victory over death. We all get dressed up wearing our Easter best. You see some ladies wearing hats and the children are all dolled up.

But what about Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday and Good Friday? Attendance is not so good. Maybe it's not that important.....But Ash Wednesday has ancient roots in us being repentant and reminding us that like the ash that can get everywhere and make a mess, sin is much the same.

Maundy Thursday helps us appreciate and remember Christ's sacrifice, His body and blood, and the forgiveness that Jesus aches to give us. All of this leads us to Good Friday.

Come and remember your need for repentance on Ash Wednesday and the effect that sin has on our lives. Come celebrate what Jesus has done for you and receive often the gifts he has for your benefit. And remember: there is no Easter without the cross.

All Gods Blessings  
Pastor Karl

### Bethlehem Launches *re:Vitality*

Our congregation is participating in the LCMS Lutheran revitalization program called **re:Vitality**. "Vital" is the key component of "revitalization." Wherever the Word is proclaimed in its purity and God's Sacraments are rightly administered, there is spiritual vitality. **re:Vitality** builds upon spiritual vitality and guides the church in positive action for sustainable, adaptable, focused, and healthy ministry for years to come.

The first step in the *re:Vitality* process is to submit honest feedback about our congregation from everyone involved. We want to encourage everyone to fill out a simple online questionnaire; husbands and wives should each complete their own survey. To complete the survey, go to : [www.lcms.org/survey/revitality](http://www.lcms.org/survey/revitality) anytime between **February 9 and March 1** and enter our congregation code: **C325936**.

For those that prefer to use a paper version of the survey, there will be copies available in the Narthex and at the entrance to the fellowship hall. Place the completed surveys in the boxes next to the surveys. ***ALL responses, online or paper, are completely anonymous.***

The resulting reports will be based on the compilation of all the responses submitted. The combined feedback will provide us with an assessment of where we are as a church today including our strengths and our opportunities for the future. The report will be ours and will not be shared with anyone outside of our congregation.

We will use our feedback to determine the next steps to take to strength Bethlehem. We will share our feedback with everyone and engage your help in initiating these efforts.

### News and Updates

#### EDUCATION

The education department is beginning to plan for summer vacation Bible School. We urge you to consider using your talents to help make this successful. There are many children who need to hear about Jesus. We will be having a planning meeting very soon. Watch the bulletin for further information. I also urge you to try a Bible study on Wednesday or Sunday, (I know Pastor doesn't like the word try), but you just might find yourself wanting to come back. Yearn to learn!!!

*Sandy*

#### MOVIE NIGHT

Gary Dreischerf and Linda Kirsch have volunteered to co-host movie night at Bethlehem. They welcome all suggestions and ask that anyone that would like to attend and those willing to help with the set-up and clean-up please sign up on the sheet on the kitchen bulletin board.

They would like to start in February so please sign up now!

#### THRIVENT

Now is the time to donate your Thrivent Choice Dollars to a charity, hopefully Bethlehem Lutheran Church.

*Betty*

#### LWML

Tickets are still being sold for the beautiful handmade quilt and prayer shawl drawing to be held on February 23rd . See a Ladies Guild member.

Through the end of February "undies" for children may be donated for Mission Haiti- there are labeled bins in the Narthex and at the entrance to the fellowship hall. All of these will be sent with the many children's shorts and dresses that are being made by our Ladies Guild members-they are hanging on the walls of the fellowship hall. February 9 is LWML Sunday at Bethlehem. Our Sunday church service will be ushered and served by our ladies in purple. Dozens of freshly baked muffins will be available for a donation to "Muffins for Mites." This is our annual donation drive dedicated to the national Lutheran Women's Missionary league.

Thanks so much for your contributions.

*Pam*



#### STEWARDSHIP

Are you aware that you can make a tax-free gift to Bethlehem Lutheran Church from your IRA/401K?

If you're 70 1/2 or older the IRS requires that you withdraw an amount they calculate and call your RMD (required minimum distribution). You are taxed on this amount at your regular tax rate. If you don't withdraw your RMD you have to pay a penalty of 50%.

However, if you make a contribution to a qualified charity (Bethlehem) as part of your RMD there is no tax on that portion. This is known as a qualified charitable distribution or QCD. It helps ease the burden on your annual offering to the Bethlehem while still benefitting the church.

Please consider this opportunity now and in the future.

*Your Stewardship Committee*

#### EVANGELISM

Our most effective outreach/ evangelism program remains our monthly dinners. We bring in nearly 900 diners, many of whom do not attend our church. Thank you to all who make this happen. Pastor Karl is our best ambassador, greeting and getting to know those enjoying their dinners. We will continue this outreach through 2020.

We're very excited about the re:Vitality survey because it will allow us to strengthen our outreach. Outreach is an area we want to focus on going forward. Based on the feedback, re:Vitality has programs that will help us understand where we need to change and how to strengthen our outreach.

*Terri*



Jennifer Morosey with some of the youth attending the January meeting.



## FEBRUARY 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2 10:30 Worship 9:00 Bible Class Sunday School	3 LWML Meeting 1 PM	4	5 10:30 Bible Study	6	7	8
9 10:30 Worship 9:00 Bible Class	10	11 LWML Lunch	12 10:30 Bible Study	13 Church Dinner	14	15
16 10:30 Worship 9:00 Bible Class Sunday School	17	18 LWML Sewing Day 9-3	19 10:30 Bible Study	20	21	22
23 10:30 Worship 9:00 Bible Class Sunday School	24	25	26 <i>Lent Begins</i> 10:30 Bible Study 7 PM Ash Wednesday Service	27	28 6:30 Youth Group	29

## MARCH 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 10:30 Worship 9:00 Bible Class Sunday School	2 LWML Meeting 1 PM	3	4 10:30 Bible Study	5	6	7
8 10:30 Worship 9:00 Bible Class	9	10	11 10:30 Bible Study	12 Church Dinner	13	14
15 10:30 Worship 9:00 Bible Class Sunday School	16	17 	18 10:30 Bible Study	19	20	21
22 10:30 Worship 9:00 Bible Class Sunday School	23	24	25 10:30 Bible Study	26	27 6:30 Youth Group	28
29 10:30 Worship 9:00 Bible Class	30	31				



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**How to Talk About Your Faith**  
**The Spiritual Conversation Curve**

In our bible study we were introduced to this tool (*see diagram on page 3*) to help us talk with non-Christians about the Christian faith. This conversation model is simple, but not simplistic. It is based on careful research and biblical theology.

Three basic spiritual postures (unreceptive, receptive, and seeking) can be found at the base of the curve. Of course, there's a *multitude* of religions and spiritualities and philosophies on today's spiritual landscape. That's one of the striking features of the age we live in. But relative to the Christian faith, there are actually *three* basic spiritual camps in our culture today: those who are *unreceptive* to Christianity, those who are *receptive* to Christianity, and those who are *seeking clarity* about Christianity. You can see these three basic camps along the bottom of the *Spiritual Conversation Curve*

The corresponding prayerful responses to each posture (gain a hearing, give good news, and guide toward faith) can be found in the arrows along the top of the curve. As you can see, if someone is unreceptive, the wise approach is to pray God would help us "gain a hearing." If someone is receptive, we pray God would help us "give good news." And if someone is actively seeking clarity about the faith, we pray for help to "guide toward faith."

But what do you actually talk about? Notice the six different conversation types found at each point along the curve. Each distinct conversation type is helpful, but it's the spiritual posture of the non-Christian that determines when each type of conversation is most helpful. Knowing where someone is in their spiritual journey helps you discern whether it is most helpful to chat, relate, share, connect, explore, or clarify.

While the colors of the curve illustrate the different stages of someone's spiritual journey, the shape of the curve illustrates the different dynamics of that journey. For example, notice that if you are relating with someone who is unreceptive to the Christian faith, this can feel like *walking up a hill*. It takes time. It's not fast. It can be fatiguing. That's why the curve illustrates that part of the journey as heading up a hill.

If you would like to get a copy or learn more the curve, see me or email me ([rrgerlach@aol.com](mailto:rrgerlach@aol.com)).

*Richard Gerlach*

	Elders	Altar Guild
<b>February 2 Communion</b>	Edison Johnson Ron Mueller	Sandy Grage & Pam Rugenstein
<b>February 9</b>	Paul Rugenstein	
<b>February 16 Communion</b>	John Wittenberg Kurt Laser	
<b>February 23</b>	Ron Mueller	
<b>February 26 Communion</b>	Edison Johnson Paul Rugenstein	

**Sunday Worship**

**9:00AM** Bible Study and Sun School

**9:45-10:30** Fellowship Time

**10:30 AM** Worship Service


Rev. Karl Glander

[pastorkarlglander@gmail.com](mailto:pastorkarlglander@gmail.com)

239-293-1489

Organist: Holly Bell

Church Secretary: Linda Kirsch



**IN MEMORIAM**

**Gone Home to God**

Dean Hinrichs      January 23

**Prayer Chain Needs**

Do you know that Bethlehem has a prayer chain that prays for the sick, dying and hurting needs of our church family?

Call or email Linda at (239) 693-5026 or [jlkirsch3@comcast.net](mailto:jlkirsch3@comcast.net)

Your needs will be taken to the Lord!

FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES	
2	Lori and Chris Jensen
14	Carolyn and Gary Fernberg
14	Karen and Jim Keiper

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS	
3	Al Vine
5	William Weyl
9	Judy Wittenberg
13	Paul Rugenstein
14	Ginny Glander
15	John Rousch
18	Joseph Kogoy
22	Karen Keiper
23	Norm Wellman; Harrison Kimbrell
24	Bertha Bos

**May God Bless Each One of You As We Celebrate Your Special Day!**