

From the Interim

"If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!" 2 Corinthians 5:17

I have a confession to make. Oh, it's nothing so earth shattering or titillating that my confession will cause a ripple in time and space but a confession none the less. I have always been fascinated and challenged by the rhetoric of scripture. I read things like the above verse from the Apostle Paul's 2nd letter to the church at Corinth and wonder if there hasn't always been a disparity between what we have been freed to become and what we are actually willing to be.

It would appear that such disparity centers around a single word: change. I've heard it said that some churches are required to call a special congregational meeting in order to change a burned out light bulb. Really? Hopefully this is just an exaggeration. Yet it does speak to the difficulty of change for all of us. Change is difficult mostly because it is easier to stay in a comfortable rut and to play it safe than it is to be innovative risking failure by seeking out the new and challenging. But isn't change the thing that is necessary in order to experience and to become the new creation that the Apostle Paul is speaking of, the change that takes place when one is in Christ or is that just so much rhetoric?

I don't think all the talk about becoming a new creation is just rhetoric. It becomes a reality through a combination of things: 1) through a desire to grow in one's faith. Unless one desires to grow in faith and begins moving closer to God, the possibility of becoming a new creation is very limited. There is no magic bullet for such a transformation. 2) The phrase "in Christ" indicates that we need to be where Christ is in order to become a new creation. Where is Christ found? Jesus Christ is found in scripture, in Holy Communion, in fellowship with other Christians and in service to others. Becoming a new creation takes an effort and a discipline. 3) Try, try again when we stumble and fall. There is abundant grace and mercy with God. When we fail to live up to our expectations it is not the end of the world God always meets us where we are at but never leaves us there. God moves us to where God wants us to be. So change is no big deal, failure is no big deal because it is God's desire for us to be a new creation in and through Jesus Christ.

The Lenten Season

I really appreciated the Lenten season last year mostly because I didn't have to do all the preaching and teaching. But as everything in life this year's mid-week Lenten services are going to be a little different, there is going to be a **change**.

Ash Wednesday is early this year. It is on Wednesday, February 10. The service will include the imposition of ashes, prayer and hymns. The other mid-week services will explore the 5 parts of Luther's Small Catechism. The Deacons thought that this might be a nice **change**. Plus, the parts of Luther's Small Catechism are also going to be explored as part of this year's confirmation instruction so the series serves two purpose. Then Holy Week begins on March 20 with the celebration of Palm Sunday and Holy Communion. Maundy Thursday is on March 24 and Good Friday on March 25th. Easter then is celebrated on the last Sunday of March on the 27th. There will be more information on the Church calendar and in the Sunday bulletins about this year's Lenten services.

Stewardship Thought

So how are you doing with your New Year's resolutions? I believe I read somewhere that most New Year's resolutions are abandoned within the first month of the New Year. Good intentions do not necessarily translate into success. And the same can be said many times about our financial stewardship resolutions. Good intentions do not automatically translate into success.

What I found in my own financial stewardship is that in order to be successful in my giving intentions is to be realistic about my goal and my ability to reach my giving goal. It takes discipline and honesty to be successful in all areas of our life and no more so when it comes to our giving. So take heart, regroup and try again to meet the giving goals that you have set for yourself this year.

YOUTH NEWS

Confirmation Students:

February 3rd the Church is serving at the Banquet. As part of your Confirmation requirements you are required to help! If you need a ride please meet at the church by 4:45 p.m.

Sign up sheet in the narthex!

First Communion Class:

First Communion class will be offered in March. Pastor will be meeting with students and parents on March 20th after church. Please note, that parents will be attending the class with their child. The class also will only run one day instead of 4. This is a change from what we have done in the past. Watch for more information in the March newsletter.

Sunday School Schedule:

No Sunday School February 14th

Reminder: All Sunday School cancellations will be on the radio, posted on Facebook on the church Facebook page, on Keloland's close line, and emails will be sent out to all teachers and parents.(if I have your email address)

I will do my best to have this all done by 8:30 a.m.

YOUTH SCHEDULE

6th - 8th Grades meet on Sundays - 7:00 - 8:00 pm.

9th - 12th Grades meet on Wednesday Nights - 7:30 pm.

Dalton Bass Youth Leader: dalton_bass05@hotmail.com

(Contact Dalton on times for Youth Nights during Lent)



Dear Members of Bethlehem Lutheran Church,

Thank you for your congregation gift to Shetek Lutheran Ministries. Without your generosity, Shetek Lutheran Ministries simply could not continue its mission of providing year around opportunities for Christ centered renewal and learning for all ages. You are truly making a difference in the faith building experience for the youth and families coming to Shetek Lutheran Ministries.

Thank you for your partnership! Marvin Nysetvold, Executive Director

Shetek Lutheran Ministries Annual Meeting

When: February 14th

Where: Shetek Lutheran Ministries Dining Hall

Time: 4:00 pm.

Supper: 5:30 pm. Valentine Supper



NEWLY ELECTED OFFICERS

President: Jared Van Maanen

Vice President: Nancy Sandager

Secretary: Jan Solberg

Trustees: (1) Casey Westphal, Glenda Warner, Alan Leenderts, Pam Sells, Eric Hoyme

Deacons: Sharon Rossow, Eric Abels, Marie LaRock, Bob Wassenaar, Dawne Bridwell, Drew Forshey

Board of Education: Heather Erickson, Brandy Forshey, Nora Wysong, Heather Harris, Alyson Olson, Rochelle Rentschler

S.S. Superintendent: Kari Kueter

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAY'S

02- Marie LaRock

04- Marie Brown

05- Gwen Sells

06 - Colton Bass
Heather Harris

08 - Vicki Buschwitz

11 - Corey Buschwitz

16 - Melisa Abels

17 - Gail Arendsen
Norma Wassenaar
Calvin Erickson

18 - Mike Sandager
Caleb Ellingson

21 - Jeff Nelson

22 - Randy Warner
Sylvia Fick

23 - Andrew Hoyme

24 - Bailey Swan

25 - Larry Warner
Scott Harris

27 - Kathryn Erickson
Casey Kueter

29 - **Leap Year Birthday**
Tom Bush (15)



CAMI'S CORNER



Remember Valentine's Day is on Sunday, February 14th!

Lent is starting in Feb. with Ash Wednesday on Wednesday, Feb. 10th , 7:00 pm. Lent Supper begin on Wed. Feb. 17th at 6:00 pm. then Lent Service at 7:00 pm.

A religious man walks into a diner on the first Friday of Lent. He orders the fish plate. After the meal is finished, he pays the bill, but leaves no tip. He repeats this every Friday during Lent at the same diner. On the last Friday of Lent, the waitress finally asks the man " Excuse me sir. You've been eating here every Friday, and not once did you leave me a tip. Didn't I provide good service too you?" The man replies "The service you provided was excellent. But because it's Lent, I had to give up something. So, I decided to give up tipping."

Before preaching his First Sunday of Lent sermon the Pastor called the children to the front and engaged them in a message. He asked if anyone could tell him what Lent is. An 8 year old boy raised his hand and said, "Yes, it's what we get out of our pockets."



Tis so sweet to.....Trust in Jesus!
Keeping you posted

Bethlehem Lutheran Church

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SOUPER SUNDAY of CARING

On Feb. 7th over one hundred million people will turn their attention to Super Bowl.

On that same Sunday afternoon, almost a billion people will be hungry. Hunger is a worldwide epidemic that touches every nation, including our own. The **Souper Bowl of Caring** is a movement to combat hunger. Bring a can of soup to church on Souper Bowl Sunday, February 7th. Donations go to Rock County Food Shelf in Luverne.



THE BANQUET

Bethlehem will be serving at **The Banquet** in Sioux Falls on Wednesday, February 3rd. Our goal \$1,200. Serving BBQ ribs, coleslaw, baked beans & corn muffins. Donations may be put in the offering plate or drop off at the office. Volunteers must be 13 years or older to work in the kitchen or pour beverages. Volunteers 10-12 may wash tables or carry trays. Need 35 people to serve meal at 5:15 pm. and 6 people for prep work at 2:00 pm. Help Bethlehem reach our goal in feeding needy families.

~~THANK YOU to everyone for your prayers and concern, the delicious meals and goodies, flowers, cards and "get well" wishes while I was battling cancer. Thanks to Sharon for always being there for me. We may live in a small town but our caring community has **BIG HEARTS!**~~

Happy, healthy New Year and May God Bless all of you.

Thanks again, Bonnie Sundem

BETHLEHEM -FLOWERFIELD ANNUAL MEETING

Meeting held at Tuff Village following Lent Service at Bethlehem on Wed. Feb. 17th.



BAPTISM

Cullen Norton was baptized on Saturday, January 16th in the Bethlehem Chapel. Parents are Desirae & Sheldon Norton. Godparents: Derek & Nicole Valnes.

90TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

Who: Gwen Sells
Where: Tuff Village
Time: 2:00 - 4:00 PM.
When: Saturday, Feb. 13



Activity Department at the Tuff Home is seeking donations for Tuff County Store.

Work Search books, shampoo, lotions, body spray, deodorant, gripper socks, candy bars, Little Debbie Snacks, trinkets.
Thank you for your consideration!



Ash Wednesday

7:00 pm. Wednesday, Feb. 10th

Wednesday Lent.....

Lent Supper 6:00-6:45 pm.
Lent Service 7:00 pm.
February 17th Deacons serve
February 24th Board of Ed. serve