

# Newsletter

February 2017



## Serving at Friends In Christ:

### PASTOR

Mark Willig

### SECRETARY

Deb Carter

### MUSIC

Bonnie Nelson

### ORGANIST

Kris Farber

### CHAIR

Bonnie Nelson

### VICE CHAIR

Cathy Thompson

### TREASURER

Georgette Walker

### ASSIST. TREASURER

Carol Hansen

### ELDERS

Dick Enervold

### MISSIONS

Vicki Kahn

### YOUTH

Cathy Thompson

### HOSPITALITY

Earlene Enervold

## THE BEGINNING OF VALENTINE'S DAY

In the middle of this month comes a day observed all over the world as a day of love and romance. How did this happen?

1. First it is not Valentine's Day but St. Valentine's Day. There is some history. It has to do with a Christian named Valentine or Valentinus. There are several stories and we are not sure about any of them. One of the more interesting says that he was "arrested and imprisoned" for "marrying Christian couples and otherwise aiding Christians". Claudius II "took a liking to [him] until Valentinus tried to convert the Emperor – whereupon the priest was condemned to death." (from Wikipedia) Another story has him beheaded in the year 280 under Emperor Claudius; but before he was executed teaching, converting, and healing the daughter of his jailer. Both are stories of selfless love. Where does that come from?

2. It is important to know that the Christian understanding of love is not the same as the world's. When we talk about love we are not talking an emotion that makes you swoon or go weak in the knees. We are not talking about passion, lust and desire.

We are talking about what is in the center of our faith. It is a determined love that seeks the best and greatest for the beloved. We are talking about Jesus Christ. All proper and true human experience of love is pulled and tugged back to the cross.

It can't be any other way, because the greatest love is what Jesus said in John 15 "that a man lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends . . ." Every love is measured by its connection to that love. Let's look at several, very different kinds.

Con't ...



to remember ...

FEB 1 ... LWML (10:00 am)  
13 ... Senior Service (1:00pm)  
14 ... Friendly Seniors (12:00pm)  
19 ... Youth Night (5 -8pm)

Come  
**WORSHIP**  
With us!

Saturday Evenings ... 5:30 pm  
Sunday Mornings ... 8:15 am  
10:45 am

Sunday School  
(Adults and Kids) ... 9:30 am

Tuesday Morning  
Bible Study ... 9:00 am



## THE BEGINNING OF VALENTINE'S DAY (...Con't)

(1) There is the love that a man and woman have for each other, and for the sake of that love they will give to and sacrifice for each other. Luther said that when they are first married they will do anything for each other joyfully and not asking what is in it for self. (2) There is the love a soldier has for his brothers in arms; that reaches so far that he will even die for them. This is the example most closely linked to the cross. (3) There is the love parents have for their children that moves them to sacrifice continually through many years so their children may grow strong and be blessed.

How closely are each connected to the cross? When we give of ourselves for the blessing of others it is because the pattern of the cross is given by God to our lives. When we depart from the pattern of the cross, then what is supposed to be cross-shaped and Christ-focused becomes self-centered.

How deep does this go? How far back?

God gives us His love in Jesus Christ. It is a blessing we experience now. The pattern of the cross fills all of life. But it is a love that goes back before the world was created. Let's trace back step by step: God called Abraham to know Him and promised the blessing of Jesus Christ would be for every family on earth.

In Genesis 3, after the fall into sin, God promised to send Jesus for their salvation. He said this about Jesus to the devil, "He will crush your head and you will strike His heel." In love Jesus came for us; in love He fought and won the victory for us; in love He was wounded and laid down His life for us; and in love He rose for us. As the world was being created Jesus was celebrating the work of His Father "rejoicing before Him always, rejoicing in His inhabited world and delighting in the children of man." (Proverbs 8)

Even before the world was created the plan of salvation was in place. Paul talks about "a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory." (1 Corinthians 2:7) And it goes even deeper than this.

We finally come to the question "Why?" Why has God loved us? Why did God care for us and send Jesus to suffer in our place?

The proper theological answer (the one you will get from the very best professors at the seminary) is: "I don't know." There is something completely inexplicable about the love of God.

Did He love you because you were better than your neighbor? No. Did He love me because I was searching for Him? No. Did God love some instead of others because he saw that they would respond to His love? No.

The love of God comes before anything we could do in responding to Him. In fact the love of God calls us in spite of who we are and what we are like. C. S. Lewis, famous Christian writer describes himself as "being dragged kicking and screaming into the kingdom of God."

How far reaching is all this?

You have been loved by God and it is a love that spans all time. It even goes beyond all time. The love of God actually begins deep within the Trinity. It is what characterizes the relationships between Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It is eternal.

This love of God then comes into our world, to us and for us. It is a love that bears all things and conquers all things. It is a love that sets the pattern for the whole creation and is the pattern for the future. It is the kingdom of God that is coming and no king or nation is able to stop it. It is a love that is the greatest power and is the gentlest kindness. And "every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Pastor Mark



# Prayer Shaws

CALLING ALL KNITTERS AND CROCHETERS!

*We need your help!*

We are looking for people who enjoy knitting or crocheting and would like to share their favorite pastime passion for this ministry.

Please contact Tina Nighsonger  
for more information

**815/942-6737**

## Senior Service

Come worship with us  
and enjoy visiting over lunch  
afterwards!

MONDAY  
FEBRUARY 13<sup>TH</sup>  
at 1:00 PM

Come join us for a sweet,  
St. Valentine's Day Lunch!

## Friendly Seniors

TUESDAY  
FEBRUARY 14<sup>TH</sup>  
at NOON



# LWML

LWML meets on February 1 at 10:00 a.m. This meeting will begin with a short devotion, then we will work on a craft, making cards for the Card Ministry. Please come and enjoy the fellowship with your friends, Women of the Word, Lutheran Women in Mission.

Here is a devotion that came from the LWML we thought you would enjoy:



## **In the Word**

*Your word, O Lord, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens.* [Psalm 119:89](#)

## **Of the Word**

"Do I actually have to READ the Bible?" "I read the Bible once so I know it." "My Bible has old-fashioned words in it and I don't understand them." "I'm not a good reader." "I don't have time to read the Bible."

Would the persons who made the above comments say the same thing about food? "Do I actually have to eat?" "I ate once; I know what it's like." "I'm not a good eater." "I don't have time to eat." We would laugh at that kind of reasoning, but the same kinds of excuses are often used for neglecting the reading of God's Word. It is the Word that provides spiritual nourishment for daily life.

God wants us to READ the Bible so we can learn of His grace. Reading it just once is not enough. Contemporary English versions, Bible tapes, CDs, or DVDs make reading easier. Is time the issue? Ask God to slow you down so that you make time for Him in your busy schedule. Time with God may just become the best part of your day!

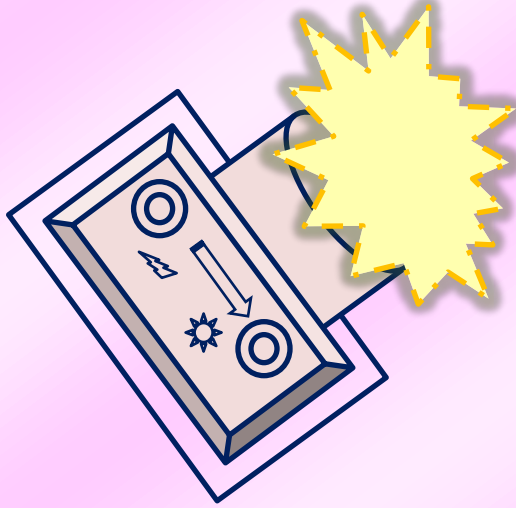
## **Walking with my Lord**

Father God, Your Word tells me Jesus opened the minds of His followers so they could understand the Scriptures. Please fill me with Your Spirit of understanding and give me a burning desire to read Your Word. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Mustard Seed: [Living in the Spirit](#). Authors: Marcia Gomulka, Dcs. Betty Knapp, Myrna Lou Meyer. 18/30 ©2007 Lutheran Women's Missionary League, 3558 S Jefferson Ave, St. Louis, MO 63118. [www.lwml.org](http://www.lwml.org)

# EXTRA! EXTRA!

New Pictoral Directories coming soon!



Mark your Calendars!  
Save the Dates!

Professional picture days are tentatively set for  
MAY 11, 12 & 13

Stay tuned for more details coming soon



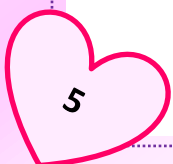
*Happy Birthday!*

|                  |                |
|------------------|----------------|
| 3 <sup>rd</sup>  | Terri Gillette |
| 6 <sup>th</sup>  | Kim Mann       |
| 8 <sup>th</sup>  | Dan Hanson     |
| 14 <sup>th</sup> | Karen Thompson |
| 16 <sup>th</sup> | Lucas Collins  |
| 17 <sup>th</sup> | Lois Sampson   |
| 18 <sup>th</sup> | Kathy Wills    |
| 22 <sup>nd</sup> | Jerry Farber   |
|                  | Steven Wills   |
| 24 <sup>th</sup> | Will Knapp     |
| 27 <sup>th</sup> | Mike Collins   |

*Happy Anniversary!*

13<sup>th</sup> Bonnie & Kenneth Sanders  
47 years

19<sup>th</sup> Pastor Mark & Paula Willig  
40 years



# February Youth Night

Plans for Youth Night are in the works!

**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 19<sup>TH</sup>**

More information  
to follow!

In January, we had 5 adults and 9 kids in attendance. We enjoyed a wonderful meal followed by a devotion and a relaxed night of games in our own youth room. Spending quality time with friends was a perfect way to enjoy a chilly, January evening.

*(Below)*

Jamie (Ruedin) and Tarahji (Woods) deep in a Ski Ball competition...





# We Care of Grundy County

READ ALL ABOUT IT!



WE CARE  
IS CHANGING THE  
WAY  
THEY COLLECT  
DONATIONS!



**Pancake Mix/Syrup**

**Canned Meat/Tuna**

Eric Fisher, We Care's current Executive Director, is trying a new approach to donation collecting. Instead of giving out a master list of each month's donation suggestions, he has designed bins with removable, interchangeable tags, (that he has also created,) and is distributing to all of the businesses in town that donate on a regular basis like we do. As different needs arise, he will simply call and have us switch out the tags to meet the needs.

"Of course," he stated, "ALL donations are considered a blessing and are very much welcomed. Our goal is to not only pin-point more directly the needs of our clients, but also make better use of the space we have to work with." He will pick up the donations once a month.

If you have any questions, you may call Eric at We Care (815/342-6389) or the church office.



# THE GREAT *Psalm*

## GIMMEL (Part 1)

- 17 Charitably deal with Your servant,  
that I may live and observe Your word.
- 18 Clear-sighted make my eyes, that I may behold  
wondrous things out of Your law.<sup>†</sup>
- 19 Cast off; I am a sojourner on the earth;  
hide not Your commandments from me!
- 20 Consumed is my soul with longing  
all the time for Your ordinances.

## Verses 17-20 “My Hope in a Foreign World”

Everything should be blessing and delight. The heart is reconciled. Sins are forgiven. All is founded and built on the Mighty Acts of God in Jesus. Why must the psalmist cry out? How can it be that God should seem distant? But that is where he finds himself, so much that he calls to God to deal charitably or he will not even survive.

Together with the basic cry there is an added desire woven in – as the psalmist says, “and observe Your word.” His life is not simply to continue breathing and having a heartbeat. It is to be connected to God through His word.

Let’s go deeper. “Observe Your word” goes beyond hearing the word of God. It works out from believing God’s word. It develops even beyond meditating on God’s word. It means to look, watch, trust, and see with eyes of faith as God’s word works into and changes every part of life, as every bit of history is taken captive by the kingdom and plan of God. And that means not only history in general; it means I see my life being made part of the kingdom and plan of God. The psalmist struggles to see his life in that way; to see by faith. But seeing by faith in that way calls for more faith and a different vision than any of us can bring. “Charitably deal with Your servant!”

We might think of Peter in Matthew 16 suddenly seeing, “You are the Christ,” and Jesus saying, “Blessed are you Simon . . . flesh and blood have not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.”

Even more to the point, think of Jesus in the garden. He prays, “Father, if it is possible [and the answer is, “No”]. “Let this cup pass [again, “no”]. “Yet not my will, but Yours.” (“Let Me live and see Your word acting, conquering, victorious.”) But there is only one way for that to happen and it is the cross. Isaiah 53 says, “Because He poured out His soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors.” (v. 12) “Because” of that He will live and observe “Your word.” And again, “out of the anguish of His soul He shall see and be satisfied.” (v. 11) In this way Jesus has joined us in our separation, our sojourning – to find us, to meet us and to bring us back by showing us that He knows our cry and makes it His own.



Verse 18 repeats the prayer slightly changed to open it up even more. “Clear-sighted make my eyes.” If God does not do this, if the Holy Spirit does not guide and open these things to us, there is no way we can see any of the acts of God, or any of His Word, or grasp any of the revelation (Torah) of God.

(Verses 19-20) This is the only answer we have in our wandering. For all those times we feel cast off (and they are many), or a sojourner (wandering without plan or home), when the word of God seems closed and we call out for a word, a commandment, a revelation – for anything! When we are overtaken with longing and it gets to the point where it seems to be “all the time,” there is the Sojourner of God, the Lamb forsaken, the Servant (“Behold My Servant!” <sup>(1)</sup>) struck down. And He is there to bring the charitable dealing – the GRACE <sup>(2)</sup> of God with the wonderful “It is finished,” and we are connected again!



### Prayer:

Lord Jesus, You came to me in my wandering, bearing my burdens and meeting me in the place of separation. When God seems distant and heaven seems closed, remind me of Your sojourning, of Your walk of faith, of Your prayer in the garden, and how You know all that is in

my soul. Help me when I am in the middle of things I do not understand – help me then to lean on You and know that no matter what anything seems or feels like; You are my Lamb forsaken, my companion in my journey every day and every hour.

Amen.

#### Notes:

<sup>1</sup> For further reading:

The Servant Songs of Isaiah show us Jesus as the suffering Savior. Piece by piece His ministry is revealed through:

Isaiah 42:1-9 – the Servant will bring salvation to the world.

Isaiah 42:18-21 – the Servant must walk by faith, not by sight, and so exalt the words and promises of God.

Isaiah 44:1-5 – the Servant brings together all the Old Testament purposes of God and sends His people out as witnesses to the world.

Isaiah 49:1-13 – the Servant, sent first to the people of Israel, has His mission expanded to the whole world.

Isaiah 50:4-9 – the Servant draws His strength from the word of God in order to comfort and encourage, and in order to face the suffering that is involved in bringing us salvation.

Isaiah 52:13-53:12 – the Servant goes to suffering for our forgiveness.

Isaiah 61:1-3 – this is the preaching of the Servant, as preached in the Synagogue at Nazareth, and it describes the results of His ministry.

<sup>2</sup> GRACE = God's Riches At Christ's Expense

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# Prayer Calendar

# FEBRUARY 2017



| SUNDAY   | MONDAY   | TUESDAY  | WEDNESDAY  | THURSDAY  | FRIDAY   | SATURDAY  |
|--|--|--|--|---|--|---|
|  |  |  | <p>1</p> <p>Please pray daily for Pastor Willig and Deb Carter and their families. Missionaries everywhere, Deaf Ministry, Iglesia San Pablo Church, People of the Book Lutheran Outreach and Christians being persecuted.</p> | <p>2</p> <p>We ask that You bless our Women of LWML and help them to be a light for others by the projects that they do.</p>    | <p>3</p> <p>We pray that the grace of our Lord will be poured out on our staff and congregation, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.<br/>1 Tim. 1:14</p> | <p>4</p> <p>Thank you Lord for calling us according to your purpose.<br/>Romans 8:28</p>  |
| <p>5</p> <p>Lord, let us see by Your Spirit.<br/>Ephesians 6:12</p>  | <p>6</p> <p>Lord, help us to be strong and courageous in character and actions.<br/>Deuteronomy 31:6</p>                                     | <p>7</p> <p>We ask You Lord to be with Pastor and the Elders as they meet and discuss things that are important to our congregation. Bless their prayer time with You O Lord.</p>              | <p>8</p> <p>Be with our youth Lord. Bless them and help them walk each day with You.</p>   | <p>9</p> <p>Lord we ask that you help us trust You will all our worries and problems.</p>                                       | <p>10</p> <p>Help us to align our hearts with You O Lord.<br/>Psalm 51:10</p>  | <p>11</p> <p>Shine through us Lord, so others may see You in us.<br/>Romans 15:21</p>   |
| <p>12</p> <p>We pray for all struggling with Cancer. Help them through each minute of each day. Bless them with a healing only You can give.</p> | <p>13</p> <p>Thank you Lord for listening to our prayers. Today we pray for .....</p>  | <p>14</p> <p>We pray for the healing of our nation.</p>  | <p>15</p> <p>Lord today we pray for those who are unsaved. Help Your Word to be planted like a mustard seed and for it to grow in hearts of unbelievers.</p>   | <p>16</p> <p>We pray Lord for the wise use of finances in our church and ministry.</p>  | <p>17</p> <p>I thank You Lord for Your patience towards me. For without Your patience and understanding we would not be able to function.</p>                                | <p>18</p> <p>Lord, help our youth to fight the good fight of faith, taking hold of the eternal life to which they were called.<br/>1 Timothy 6:12</p> |
| <p>19</p> <p>We praise You Lord and ask that You teach me to develop habits that protect my spiritual health.<br/>Matt. 6:13</p>                 | <p>20</p> <p>Lord, help us to put all our trust in You.<br/>Prov. 3:5-6</p>  | <p>21</p> <p>Lord we have a few in our congregation that have drifted away from church. We miss them and ask that you put a desire in their hearts to come back to church and worship You.</p> | <p>22</p> <p>Lord, we pray that You would help comfort those among us going through difficult times.</p>   | <p>23</p> <p>God, we pray for wisdom and discernment for the Trustees as they make decisions that would be pleasing to You.</p> | <p>24</p> <p>Thank You for our families and friends. Help us to treasure them as You treasure us.<br/>Luke 1:67-80</p>   | <p>25</p> <p>Help us to prepare our hearts before we come to worship You O Lord.</p>  |
| <p>26</p> <p>Lord, we pray for the farmers to get the precipitation this winter that they need to get the soil ready for their crops.</p>        | <p>27</p> <p>Lord, we ask that You help our youth to know that Your plan for them is to have a relationship with You.<br/>Jeremiah 29:11</p> | <p>28</p> <p>Lord, my prayer is simple. Make my faith in You greater.<br/>Luke 17:5</p>  |  |   |  |   |

| Sun  | Mon   | Tue  | Wed   | Thu   | Fri           | Sat  |
|--|---|--|---|---|---------------|--|
| <div>29</div> <div>8:15am - Worship</div> <div>9:30am - Bible Study</div> <div>9:30am - Sun. Sch.</div> <div>10:45am - Worship</div>   | <div>30</div>                                 | <div>31</div> <div>9am - Bible Study</div>   | <div>1</div> <div>10am - LWML</div> <div>5:15pm - 8th Gd Conf</div>   | <div>2</div> <div>4:30pm - 7th Gd Conf</div>                                    | <div>3</div>  | <div>4</div> <div>Communion</div> <div>5:30pm - Worship</div>  |
| <div>5</div> <div>Communion</div> <div>8:15am - Worship</div> <div>9:30am - Bible Study</div> <div>9:30am - Sun. Sch.</div> <div>10:45am - Worship</div>                               | <div>6</div>                                  | <div>7</div> <div>9am - Bible Study</div> <div>1pm - Euchre Club</div> <div>4pm - Elders Meeting</div> | <div>8</div> <div>5:15pm - 8th Gd Conf</div>  | <div>9</div> <div>4:30pm - 7th Gd Conf</div>                                    | <div>10</div> | <div>11</div> <div>5:30pm - Worship</div>                      |
| <div>12</div> <div>8:15am - Worship</div> <div>9:30am - Bible Study</div> <div>9:30am - Sun. Sch.</div> <div>10:45am - Worship</div>   | <div>13</div> <div>1pm - Senior Service</div> | <div>14</div> <div>9am - Bible Study</div> <div>12pm - Friendly Srs.</div>                             | <div>15</div> <div>5:15pm - 8th Gd Conf</div>   | <div>16</div> <div>4:30pm - 7th Gd Conf</div>                                   | <div>17</div> | <div>18</div> <div>Communion</div> <div>5:30pm - Worship</div> |
| <div>19</div> <div>Communion</div> <div>8:15am - Worship</div> <div>9:30am - Bible Study</div> <div>9:30am - Sun. Sch.</div> <div>10:45am - Worship</div> <div>5pm - Youth Night</div> | <div>20</div>                                 | <div>21</div>  | <div>22</div>   | <div>23</div> <div>4:30pm - 7th Gd Conf</div> <div>7pm - Trustees Meeting</div> | <div>24</div> | <div>25</div> <div>5:30pm - Worship</div>                      |
| <div>26</div> <div>8:15am - Worship</div> <div>9:30am - Bible Study</div> <div>9:30am - Sun. Sch.</div> <div>10:45am - Worship</div>   | <div>27</div>                                 | <div>28</div> <div>9am - Bible Study</div>   | <div>1</div> <div>Ash Wednesday</div> <div>10am - LWML</div> <div>5:15pm - 8th Gd Conf</div> <div>7pm - Worship</div> | <div>2</div> <div>4:30pm - 7th Gd Conf</div>                                    | <div>3</div>  | <div>4</div> <div>Communion</div> <div>5:30pm - Worship</div>  |