



# February 2018

## Faith Lutheran Church

### NEWSLETTER

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Pastor: Rev. Christopher Natan Sperb

*Glorifying God the Father and filled with the Holy Spirit, we celebrate our relationship with Jesus and invite others to join our celebration.*

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#### **Binding Up the Broken**

The First Geneva Convention, signed on August 22, 1864, established the international principle that soldiers wounded in combat should receive proper medical treatment, no matter their national allegiance. In this way, the Convention created an amazing irony: when the battle ends, the same soldier who wounded his enemy now joins the effort to heal his enemy's wounds!

This irony illustrates how God works repentance in our heart and mind. God first creates contrition in us by wounding us with the crushing blows of His Law. Then, like a soldier under the Geneva Convention, He bandages those same wounds by applying the healing "medicine" of His Gospel promises to us.

Many people think of *repentance* as a work *they* must perform *for* God in response to His Word. But the Scriptures plainly announce that actually *God*, not man, *does* the work of repentance (Acts 5:31; 11:18). In fact, except for God's work in him, man cannot even recognize his sin and desire an escape from it! The Law comes from God, and St. Paul says, "*Through the Law comes the knowledge of sin*" (Romans 3:20).

Repentance begins when God "wars" against us, so to speak. Using the demands and condemnations of His Law, God "attacks" us and crushes our conscience with the terrible realization of our sin. In this way, God creates contrition, or sorrow for sin.

Perhaps our conscience has experienced the blows of God's Law so severely that we feel like King David, "*For my iniquities have gone over my head; like a heavy burden, they are too heavy for me.*" (Psalm 38:4). Or, perhaps we have experienced a simple recognition of our sin. Either way, the knowledge of sin is God's gift to us. Whenever we feel our conscience accuse us, this is the first part of repentance, which God lovingly and mercifully works in us. Without it, the second part of repentance is impossible.

After God has wounded us with His Law, He acts like a Geneva Convention soldier: He binds up our wounds with the healing promises of the Gospel. As the prophet Jeremiah said, "*I will restore health to you, and your wounds I will heal*" (Jeremiah 30:17). Through the power of the Gospel promise, God creates faith in us, which is the second part of His work of repentance.

The healing that God provides our wounded conscience comes from a very specific source: **Jesus**, the crucified Son of God. As the prophet Isaiah wrote concerning Jesus, "*He was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed*" (Isaiah 53:5). Whatever "wounds" we may experience at God's hand because of our sins, Jesus suffered even more because of them! In fact, He shed His blood for all our sins, so that our own physical suffering and death will not be required of us. God's Law may now afflict us, but not so that we may be punished for our sins. Jesus Christ suffered the punishment of the cross for us (1 Peter 2:24). God's Law now afflicts us with the specific purpose of preparing us for the rich healing of His Gospel promises in Christ, which hold before us the assurance of eternal life. In the forgiveness and faith Christ gives, God no longer wars against us, for now "*we have peace with God*" (Romans 5:1).

Healed by Christ,  
Pastor Christopher Sperb

## Director of Christian Education

### A Jam Packed Month

This month we have many exciting things happening. We are finishing our bootcamp theme of exploding our Bibles! We have our annual Winter Meltdown Retreat at RVR. We have a flex night which has many possibilities, and then we are ending our month with Dinner Around the World! You don't want to miss out on the endless opportunities with our teenagers!

Our Young adults have had a very cold January, but we were able to come together for some small group time. Unfortunately, our snow tubing excursion turned into a game night which we then had to cancel due to no electricity and heat. Thankfully February, is looking way better! We will be ending our series on Joining Jesus on His Mission and visiting the residents of Sunflower Hill. At Sunflower Hill we will be playing some bingo! They love seeing and beating our young adults at BINGO! All young adults are welcome to join us! The more the merrier!

\*Personal Note - Thankful that it is finally February! January was very eventful for me personally! Take a look at some of the events! Surely, making some Maryland memories!

- Losing HOT WATER in our house for a couple of days!
- Powerline down in area and losing electricity and heat on the coldest Saturday.
- Deer Incident at church! Where a DEER jumped through a window in the fellowship hall and got stuck in the kitchen. Come to church on a Friday and you will have an adventure for sure!

### GAHU

2/2 - GAHU Gathering: Bootcamp @ 7:00 pm  
YW Servant Event Meeting @ 9:00 pm - 10:00 pm  
2/9-2/11 - Winter Meltdown RVR Retreat  
2/16 - GAHU Gathering @ 7:00 pm  
High School Time @ 9:00-10:00 pm  
2/23 - Dinner Around the World @ 7:00 pm

### YAM

2/13 - Small Group @ 7:30 pm (MODULAR)  
2/17 - Bingo @ Sunflower Hill @ 1:00 pm  
(Westminster)  
2/27 - Small Group @ 7:30 pm (Blessing Household)

Meghan O'Hara (DCE)

## Small Group Ministry

"As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, 'Follow me.' And he rose and followed him. And as Jesus reclined at table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were reclining with Jesus and his disciples. And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, 'Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?' But when he heard it, he said, 'Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go and learn what this means, "I desire mercy, and not sacrifice." For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.'" (Matthew 9:9-13 ESV)

Finke shares in chapter 17, "...if we are going to learn how to join Jesus on his mission, our neighborhood is a logical place to start...*How do we start?* How do we join what Jesus is doing in our neighbors' lives if we don't even know their names? The Finke's conclusion?

Have a...

**PARTY!!!**

Some people refer to the above Jesus account as a *Matthew Party*. Those in attendance at a Matthew party are a mix of Jesus followers and those who do not yet know Him. It is an opportunity for people to let their hair down (for those who have hair...I only have memories), be themselves and enjoy the company of others. It is an opportunity to burst the "Christian bubble" for Jesus followers who only know other believers. It is an opportunity for those who do not yet follow Jesus to see that Christians can enjoy a good time too.

I don't have much experience in throwing large-scale parties with the neighbors, but when living in Lake Zurich, IL, my wife, Amy, and I did intentionally invite our next door neighbors plus some friends from our church for a BBQ at our home. One story that sticks out involved Ralph from across the street. Somehow Ralph mentioned being invited to our house to *his* next door neighbors. His neighbors thought it sounded cool, so *he* invited them to join us...perfectly fine by us! After the party Ralph shared that we should do these more often which we unfortunately didn't do. But that one BBQ did help build a better conversational relationship with Ralph. And from that point on, we were getting freshly picked vegetables from his garden throughout the subsequent summers.

Whether it is having *many* neighbors over or a *few* who live on either side of your home or apartment, what will be your next step to break the ice and maybe even...PARTY!!!?

<http://joiningjesus50daydevotional.blogspot.com/2014/1/1/day-30-of-50.html>

Join a small group to discuss, pray, serve, learn and grow as a Christian community. Need more information? Contact DCE Meghan O'Hara via email at [dce@faithmd.org](mailto:dce@faithmd.org) or by phone at (410) 795-8082 ext 204 if you would like to get INVOLVED. We hope that you consider this opportunity to grow in your faith and with fellow members of our church family.

## SaLT (Servant Leadership Team)

Hail and Farewell!

January marks a transition of some note for SaLT. For the first time in 2 election cycles, we have a new President and we also have added a new member at large. I would like to introduce the two new members and then celebrate those moving to other opportunities.

Alex Ihde – Our new SaLT President, who pronounces his last name as EE dah, in case you were curious, has been a life-long Lutheran from his baptism in the Cathedral in Wetzlar Germany and his confirmation at Zion Lutheran in Baltimore City. He and his wife of 30 years, Sharon, began attending Faith Lutheran in 2003 and have raised their three children, Anne, Mike and Daniel here at Faith. You'll know Alex for his guitar prowess and melodious baritone voice as a leader of the 10:45 am services Praise Team. Alex and Sharon recently celebrated the birth of their first granddaughter, Alora! Professionally, Alex works at Johns Hopkins' Applied Physics Lab, and is a graduate of the US Naval Academy (Beat Army... next year).

Speaking of grandchildren, I couldn't get the bio for our newest SaLT member at large, Bruce Flanick as he is currently in Alaska celebrating the birth of a newborn grandson (Bruce and Karyn are blessed with a granddaughter as well). Fortunately, his son Adam was there to fill in some gaps! Bruce, Karyn and their family joined Faith Lutheran in 2014, coming to us from Concordia Lutheran in Hagerstown, MD. The whole family jumped right in and began leading in a variety of ways almost immediately. Bruce is also a communion assistant, primarily at the 10:45am service and teaches Sunday school to our 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders. Professionally, Bruce is an Electrical Engineer at Northrup Grumman.

We say "farewell" to two members of SaLT. I use quotes because neither are going far. Jim Blackwell is leaving the At Large post to concentrate on the inner workings of the Property team, where he will become even more embedded into the lifestyle of "the guys". Michele, Debbie and Meghan are also honorary members of "the guys," but mostly just to keep them in line. We thank him for his contributions and look forward to continuing to work with him.

Finally, we say farewell to our leader of the past 2 terms, John Blessing. Let me tell you, if you don't know already, that John's shoes will be awfully big to fill.

Having worked alongside of him for several years now in SaLT, I can tell you that the effort and results John put forth on behalf of the congregation and the effective running of the Operations side of Faith Lutheran were outstanding. We cannot thank him enough for his service. As a reward for a job well done, John will be stepping away from the physical operations and moving to our spiritual fitness as a newly elected Elder of Faith Lutheran.

Thank you to all who have served, and those who are stepping up to serve. Gentlemen, we salute you!

Jed Davis  
(Servant Leadership Team)

## Missions Ministry Team

This month's Highlighted Mission effort will be in support of:

### **"LUTHERAN HOUR MINISTRIES"**

The Lutheran Hour Ministries is an auxiliary of LCMS. Its mission is bringing Christ to the Nations – and the Nations to the Church. LHM is a Christian outreach ministry supporting churches worldwide. Lutheran Hour Ministries produces Christian radio and TV programming for broadcast as well as internet and print communications, dramas, music, and outreach materials, to reach the unchurched people in the U.S. and more than 30 other countries. LHM's flagship program, "The Lutheran Hour," airs weekly on 1400 stations and the American Forces Network.

The First Sunday in February is "Lutheran Hour Sunday" to acknowledge all the work this organization does.

*Our congregation was able to share our blessings with Tender Care Pregnancy Center, Inc. by donating \$660.00 for the month of December, 2017.*



## Worship Ministry

I'm forgiven Because You were forsaken I'm accepted.  
You were condemned

I'm alive and well. Your Spirit is within me. Because  
You died. And rose again

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The season of Lent gives us the opportunity to reflect on what miserable helpless sinners we are. No matter how hard we try we cannot free ourselves from the grips of our sins. Thankfully Jesus came into the world and took the weight of our sin upon Himself. He freed us and has made us righteous to stand before our perfect God in Heaven.

As we think about the gravity of what God has done for us through His Son Jesus, especially as we enter Lent let's remember to come to our sovereign Lord with true repentance and humility. Not just to ask for forgiveness but to say "I'm sorry Lord". He hears our prayers, He knows us and He loves us. All He asks in return is that we confess, repent and follow Him.

"This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us."  
1John1:5-10

Please join us for Worship services during our Lenten journey beginning with Ash Wednesday, February 14th at 7:00 pm and each Wednesday that follows through March 21. Then join us for Palm Sunday March 25, Maundy Thursday March 29, Good Friday March 30 and Easter Sunday-Sunrise 6:30, Traditional service 8:00 and contemporary service 10:45.

May you always have God's Word in your heart and a Song of praise on your lips!

Connie Simmons

## Women's Ministry Team

### "Daughters Of The King" Women's Ministry Update

We want to extend a special "thank you" to all those who came out on January 3rd for our Pizza & Game Night! 24 Daughters, including a number in the high school and college age range, enjoyed a time of food, fun and togetherness. We look forward to hosting another such community building activity later this year when our college-age Daughters are home for break. Stay tuned for more information in a few months regarding this event.

### February Women's Ministry Event:

- **Monthly Women's Ministry Gathering - Visual Faith: Praying in Color.** Saturday, 2/17/18 - 9:00-10:30

Event details can be found in the church bulletin. Please contact Dana Stigdon ([dstigdon@gmail.com](mailto:dstigdon@gmail.com)) or Debbie Geiger ([geigermama14@gmail.com](mailto:geigermama14@gmail.com)) if you have any questions.

**Join Our Bible Study!** All ladies are welcomed to the Tuesday Morning Ladies Bible Study held every Tuesday 10:00 - 11:30 in the modular. We are currently studying the book "I Know His Name" - Discovering Power in the Names of God by Wendy Blight. Any questions, contact Michele Narcross 410-549-1707.





**Sunday February 4 is Lutheran Hour Sunday.** Lutheran Hour Ministries is a trusted expert in mass media proclamation with a global network of partners. Each week we reach more than 70 million people around the world with the Gospel. Lutheran Hour Ministries has ministry centers in over 30 countries, each with local staff working hand-in-hand with dedicated volunteers and church partners.

Instead of the detailed Lutheran Hour Sunday presentation, I would like to share the Children's Lutheran Hour Sunday message, which is good reading for us all.

### **A Campout Adventure Nobody Would Choose**

Have you ever been camping? What did you do? How long did you go? Was it fun?

Getting away from the house and living outdoors for a few days without the TV and the microwave, and the grocery store right around the corner, and other things that make our lives easy, can be fun-it can be an adventure!

But one of the things that makes it so great is something we really don't think about that much: after a few days of living outdoors and away from the things that make our lives comfortable, *you can go back home*. Back to your neighborhood, Back to school-yes, even school.

But what if you were *forced* to go camping-and when you got there, you had no idea how long it would be before you could go home?

Syria and Lebanon are two countries in another part of the world that are neighbors of Israel, the country where Jesus lived while He was on earth. Both countries are mentioned more than 60 times in the Bible,

Over the Last few years *{most of your life!}*, there has been a terrible war in Syria, and many families have had to run away from their homes to escape the fighting. Thousands and thousands of families ended up in Lebanon; and now they live in tents-camping every day, you could say- and they don't know if they'll ever get to go back. If they could choose to end their camping trip and safely go back home, back to school, they would do it today, right now.

But while they're forced to camp out, there are organizations of people who love Jesus that are helping them. They bring them food and clothing and blankets. They bring things to keep their camps clean and safe; they bring medicines; they help them set up schools for their kids and bring materials so the kids can learn.

And they share a very special story with them. What do you think that story is?  
*{Yes, the story of Jesus ..the story of how He died on a cross to share His love with everyone.}*

This month we're thanking God for one of those organizations, whose name is **Lutheran Hour Ministries!** The people from Lutheran Hour Ministries in Lebanon are sharing Jesus' love and message of salvation in very special ways with families in great need-and we want to be sure and pray for them and encourage them in their work!

### **Prayer**

Dear Jesus, we know You care about all of us and You want everyone to know about your love! Please watch over the families that have had to leave their homes because of war, Thank you for people who are working in Your name to help those families, especially in Lebanon; please keep them safe and bless their work!



### **Youth Sunday School Mission Statement**

Making Christ the center of each lesson, we will teach the children the Gospel message of Jesus Christ, show enthusiasm for Jesus so they will want to share it with others, and make the Gospel message relevant to every age or level of learning.

#### **Sunday School**

**Sunday School Opening begins promptly at 9:30 a.m.**

Please join us as we continue our new interactive opening. Connie and Ben Simmons continue to enrich us as we prepare our children to be a special part of our worship service with their voices.

#### **Sunday School Envelopes**

The 2018 Sunday School envelopes have been distributed or placed in your mailbox. Please remember to continue bringing in your offering to help support our Compassion International child, Witness Musa Mhwaji of Tanzania where she lives with her parents.

#### **Ages 3, Pre-K and K “FaithWeaver Now”**

Weaving faith into today’s families NOW.

#### **Grades 1-8 “Growing in Christ”**

The winter quarter will focus on how “The Holy Spirit Leads the Apostles.”

#### **High School Class**

Life’s Big Questions and God’s Answers  
By Brad Alles  
(Modular)

#### **Adult Bible Study Classes**

#### **That the World May Know**

**Curt Thomas  
(Sanctuary)**

**Keep it Shut  
Dana Stigdon  
(Modular)**

**The Book of Esther  
Don Hall  
(Modular)**

**Sunday  
Morning  
Bible Study**

