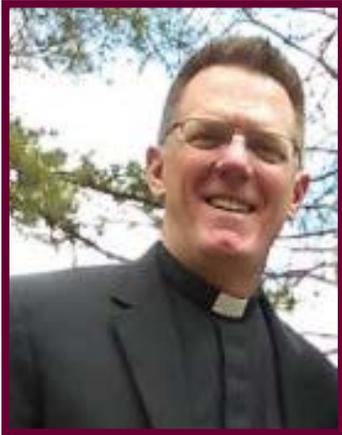


# FOLLOWING HIM IN FAITH

Volume 2/April 2019



"Philip said, 'Come and see!'" John 1:46b



Dear Saints of First Lutheran,

"Inspire" ... what does that mean exactly? One definition is "fill (someone) with the urge or ability to do or feel something, especially to do something creative."

Over the past several weeks, we've been filled with the Holy Spirit through God's Word. He's enabled us to begin to see the incredible future He has in store for us. A future where our worship, our daily life with Him, and our engagement in the community around us fills Calvert County with His presence through us. In case you may have missed it, you can see some of what the Holy Spirit has been helping us imagine for the future on the First Lutheran website at <http://www.firstlutheranchurch.org/following-him-in-faith>.

However, this future isn't primarily about "things." Getting "things" shouldn't be the motivation for what we do as we follow Him in faith. The *Following Him in Faith* campaign is first and foremost about how we, as God's children, assured of eternal life through our risen Savior, can live our lives in faithful service to our generous God. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, it is about learning to trust that He will provide for our needs as we joyfully participate with Him in achieving His vision for the future of His creation ... using whatever things He has given us.

This is my prayer for each of us. May the *Following Him in Faith* campaign be used by our generous God to strengthen our faith in Him and His promises. May our hearts and minds be opened to the Holy Spirit's leading as never before as we respond to His love through His Son, Jesus, our risen and living Savior. May we gladly respond to His love for us by thankfully making sacrificial gifts from the abundant provisions God has entrusted to us in order that we may joyfully participate in His vision for His creation.

To help us see the vision our heavenly Father has for all of us, I ask you to join us from April 26<sup>th</sup> through May 19<sup>th</sup> for Bible Study, Worship, and Home Gathering fellowship to become inspired by the Holy Spirit to follow Him in faith toward the glorious future He has already imagined for us.

God is alive and active in His creation. He calls each of us to join Him in joyfully participating in His mission to redeem His creation through His risen Son, Jesus Christ.

Hallelujah! He is risen! He is risen indeed!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Pastor Jim".

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**April 28-May 19** – *Following Him in Faith* Bible Studies, Sermon Series, & Other Inspire Events

**April 26, April 27, May 3, May 4, & May 10** – *Following Him in Faith* Home Visits

**May 10** – Initial Commitments Event

**May 19** – Commitment Sunday & Celebration

**June 2** – Commitment Dedication

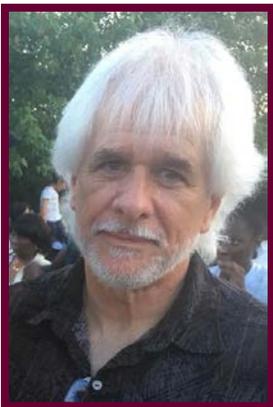
## Letter from the Campaign Director

To my brothers and sisters in Christ:

During this season of Easter, we are reminded of the triumphs and sacrifice that Jesus went through. Riding in to town on a donkey to the cheers of his followers, then to be arrested, beaten and hung on a cross to die. Jesus rose from the dead on the third day. As instructed the 11 disciples went to Galilee. Then, Jesus came to them and said “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore go make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”(Mark 28:18, 19)

As I think about the “The Great Commission”, the expansion we are about undertake is doing what we can to further His kingdom and make disciples. During our campaign we plan to make improvements to the sanctuary by upgrading the sound system and install visual aids with the hope of making the worship experience easier to participate in and listen to. Also, we plan to expand our campus to improve our current ministries, create new ministries and increase our outreach in the community. A lot of work has been done to inform our brothers and sisters in Christ about the planning that it takes to make this campaign successful. We have done land studies, received conceptual designs, and discussed and evaluated financial alternatives. We are moving into the “inspire” stage of this process and I am looking forward to, with God’s help and our congregation’s commitment, getting the designs, improvements and finances in place as we look forward to “Following Him in Faith”. I would also like to sincerely thank Pastor Jim all of the members of the campaign committee for their hard work and dedication. God is good!

Many Blessings,  
Bill Johnson  
Campaign Director



## SAVE THE DATE

for our Commitment Celebration!

May 19<sup>th</sup>, 12:30-2:30pm

There will be food (Mission BBQ), drinks, games, door prizes, fellowship, & praise!

Keep an eye on your mailbox. Invitations will go out shortly.

## A Stewardship Moment

For years this was my prayer in times of trouble, "God, if you help me through this I will go to church. I will do whatever you want me to do and go." After 10 years plus of praying that empty prayer, my prayer changed to "God I believe in you, please lead me to whatever church you want me to be in. I believe in you and please help me through what I'm going through". After 15 years absent my prayer changed to, "God I believe in you. But it's been so long since I've been to church. I can't even go now. I'm so sorry. There's no way you could ever love me still. But please help me....I don't know what to do".

After that, everything fell apart. I had lost hope in myself, hope in others, and was alone. Through circumstances, my family was crumbling and there was nothing left. What I had built my life around had fallen and it was the darkest moment of my entire life. What I didn't realize is that my family was waiting for me at First Lutheran. That fateful day I was about to give up, but Nancy, the secretary, brought me in off the steps of First Lutheran in tears. I had gone to other churches but they were closed and not even one would open the door. But she brought me in and showed me something I never imagined. She said "whatever you're going through, God loves you," while she embraced a total stranger. Through her kindness and genuine compassion, I knew, somehow, I was safe. A day later Pastor was talking to me and my life would never be the same. I walked in to First Lutheran to see Bill Hallam opening the door and welcoming me that first Sunday and every Sunday since with joy. Everyone was so happy to see me and greeted me every place I turned. Why I asked myself? I was someone who didn't believe God would ever take me back. Yet here I was, being welcomed and embraced by total strangers. They looked at me with genuine love and I didn't understand.

The next week I came in and everyone greeted me by name. "David it's so good to see you and have you here," is what I heard. What happened next I could never have expected. People were sitting with me after services and telling me they were there for me. Not just in a superficial way but genuinely sharing in what I was going through and holding my hand and heart through what seemed like a hopeless time. I'll never forget those days and those who showed me what love is. Thank you.

What I had found in all of it was my family. My true family that could never be broken. I don't know where I would be without having a place to turn like FLC. I write this with tears of joy knowing why I am part of the First Lutheran family now. I'm so proud of what we are and what we will be in the future. Since I have become a believer I realize now that I no longer serve myself but Christ. He has blessed me with gifts I could never have imagined on my own. Being a steward of these gifts and the knowledge of the grace he gives has driven me to do whatever I can to help the body of Christ. While financially I have not been able to give much, I instead use my God-given talents and gifts to serve the church. It may be in serving on Sundays or Wednesday service or doing maintenance and upkeep on the buildings here. I've learned that there are many ways to use my time and talent to do what is needed. That in itself is a treasure, I believe. Looking to the future, I am so excited to be a part of the construction team to do my part and be one of the many hands that will be required. Through Pastor Jim's messages and the testimonies of our brothers and sisters I have also learned the meaning of sacrificial giving. It is true that everything we have comes from God. The Holy Spirit has put me under conviction several times since we had that first meeting for the building plans. As a young Christian I had not spent much time truly understanding what was required of me as a steward of God's gifts. I now always ask myself "how does this glorify God?" when tempted to spend money on impulse or comforts. I look at a bag of chips or a fast food meal as a box of screws to build a safe place for the lost. It always leads back to knowing that I have nothing without God and He has already given more than I deserve in Christ's love on the cross.

Finally, we are so blessed as a congregation to have some of our charter members still active and with us. They stepped out in faith years ago so we can have what we do today. They could have never imagined the people and lives who have come through the doors at First Lutheran. As we go into this time, I'm so excited because there are blessings upon blessings waiting to be poured out on generations to come. They are passing the torch to us and as the song says, "may all who come behind us find us faithful". I pray we continue to do our parts in the same Spirit that started in a living room so many years ago. I only hope we will always be there for that person in need who has nothing left. Always there to say, "welcome home, you're safe here".



With every piece of my heart,  
David

If you have any questions regarding the campaign or wish to pray for the team, they are:

Pastor

Rev. James Kent

Campaign Director

Bill Johnson

Campaign Coordinator

Sabrina Wolfersberger

Prayer Director

DCE Shawn Maassel

Communications Director

Susan Fogleman

Inform Director

Tammie Lauer

Initial Commitments Directors

Melli Lantz & Mary Ziehl

Commitment Celebration Directors

Paula Fogleman & Tina Richnafsky

Youth & Children's Emphasis Director

Susan Fogleman

Follow-Up Director

Darren Richnafsky

School Emphasis Director

Angie Hohl

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