



The GOOD NEWS

To provide hope by Reaching out and Connecting people to Jesus through the Holy Spirit and Encouraging them to share the same Good News.

January 2019

A Message from Pastor Brewer . . .

St. John Lutheran Church

Pastor Carl Brewer

Lutheran Church Missouri Synod

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Worship Services

Sunday at 8:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.

Monday at 7:30 p.m.

L.I.F.E. Hour

Sunday at 9:15 a.m. & 10:15 a.m.

Holy Communion is served the 1st & 3rd weekend of each month.



One of my fondest memories as a kid was Saturday mornings. My brother and I would wake up at 7am to a morning of magic on TV, Saturday Morning cartoons. We had GI Joe, Thundercats, Smurfs, Tom and Jerry, Bugs Bunny, and if we got up early enough The Three Stooges. But one of my favorite cartoons of all time, even though Michael Bay made them terrible in the movies, was the Transformers. Robots in Disguise.

Now you're probably wondering why the heck I'm talking about the Transformers in a pastoral newsletter. New Year's brings resolutions of transformation every year, and indeed if you're like me we transform with great struggles how we write the date on things for a few weeks. Transformation isn't just a theme in the secular world around the New Year, it is a very common theme preached in the Christian faith. The way transformation is most commonly spoken of, though, has more in common with New Year's resolutions than with the Bible. Don't take my word for it though, let's compare the two.

First New Year's resolutions. Transformation is just setting one's mind to a task such as changing a habit like spending less, saving more, going on a diet. The assumptions behind resolutions are that we have free will and can make choices of all natures in order to accomplish the goal that we've set for ourselves. If we don't accomplish the goal we did not have enough resolve, or will power, to follow through on the goal. The most common way people motivate each other to accomplish their goals is to keep focusing the person on their goal in spite of the pain, to show the potential gain over the pain, and if that doesn't work eventually shame or scare them into accomplishing the goal.

The New Year's resolution form of Christian transformation looks almost identical to this picture. We have free will to choose all things, including God. We need to set our mind on the goal which is heaven, Jesus, salvation, etc. but which all ultimately come back to us being better people and changing certain things about our lives, usually very visible things that others notice but not so much the inner issues that are the root of the visible things. If we aren't changing enough in another Christians eyes then they call into question if we even had faith in the first place, remind us about the fires of hell, and seek to help us map out a new route to earthly perfection.

Biblical concept of Transformation. I'm going to compare two different places where the apostle Paul speaks about transformation in the Bible. First from 2 Corinthians 3, read the whole thing on your own but here are a few highlights:

1 Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, like some people, letters of recommendation to you or from you? 2 You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everyone. 3 You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts. 4 Such confidence we have through Christ before God. 5 Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God. 6 He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

And later, *12 Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold. 13 We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to prevent the Israelites from seeing the end of what was passing away. 14 But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. 15 Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. 16 But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. 17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 18 And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.*

Paul also discusses transformation in Romans 12, please read the whole thing but I want to highlight the first verses:

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. 2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. 3 For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. 4 For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, 5 so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. 6 We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; 7 if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; 8 if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

Paul's encouragement for transformation to Christians is not to point them to themselves but instead point them to Jesus/God who is transforming them. When he encourages them to do something with their lives it is always in response to what God has done and continues to do in transforming them through His Spirit. He doesn't teach free will, but God's will in changing our sinful and inadequate lives through the righteous and omnipotent life of Christ. He points the believers to Christ again and again, to the transformation that Christ is making in their lives. Paul doesn't call into question their faith but instead declares the promises that Christ has made to them and encourages them to live in the light of that promise.

Here's what I'm trying to get at. Today is a new day and a new year because God continues to make universe move in the ways that He set it and time passes. Today we are new people because Christ died on the cross and rose from the grave. Today the Spirit is drowning our old sinful nature in the waters of our Baptisms where we are directly connected to Jesus death and a new creation is rising from those waters even as Christ rose from the dead. Our proclamation of change and transformation needs to begin and end in Christ, proclaiming and pointing people to Christ the transformer and declaring what He said He has done for us now and forevermore.

So here's my question for you. As you look at your life and your proclamation, what is the message you're speaking? Are you pointing people to themselves? To their own inadequate efforts, and they'll always be inadequate because we are inadequate through and through in our sinful condition. A condition that persists as long as we live in this life. Or are you pointing people to the Christ who fulfilled our salvation, redeemed us from sin, death and the devil, and who now is preparing a place for us in heaven? One leads to failure and inadequacy, the other leads to forgiveness and salvation.

† In Christ, Pastor Brewer

NEWS & EVENTS

We are preparing for our yearly Church Council Elections and are looking for parish members who are interested in serving on one of the council boards. If you or someone you know would be interested in being a council member or you have questions about being a council member, Contact Pastor Brewer or the church office. Thank you for giving this opportunity prayerful consideration.

Voters Assembly: Please mark your calendars for the next Voters Assembly Meeting which will be held on Sunday, February 3rd. All members are encouraged to attend this important meeting as we elect our 2019 Church Council members and are updated on ministries and projects for the coming year.

My Time! Do you know someone who struggles with addiction (abuse of alcohol, drugs or prescription pills) or mental illness? Is this negatively affecting your life? Join others who are also dealing with the same issues My Time – A support group meeting for parents, spouses, adult children and friends of loved ones with addiction or mental illness. The group meets on Tuesday evenings at 7pm.

Women's Bible study opportunity: On February 12th we will begin a study on Idol Lies by Dee Brestin. All women from any congregation is encouraged to attend. The cost of the book is \$14 payable to Ann Reckelberg by January 8th. Dee's book explores the hidden idols that destroy a woman's heart. Move past your cravings to understand-and-receive what you are really hungering for. Please consider joining our group. We meet every other week on Tuesday mornings from 8:30 to 10 a.m. any questions please contact Ann at 920 536-0425 or email kareckelbrg@yahoo.com. Please contact me if joining or signup on the signup sheet.

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Lutherans for Life Life Sunday - January 20th

Life Donations

On January 13th and 20th a basket will be located in the Narthex for free will donations. These donations will go towards the support of those in need and educational purposes regarding the sanctity of life

Maternity and Baby Clothes Drive

Collection of diapers and new or gently used clothes for babies and children (up through 2 years old), will be collected in the crib in the Narthex. Past donations have been given to women's shelters, those in need, and other organizations including: AA Alexandrina House, House of Hope, and, The Crossing.

Porkie/ Pancake Breakfast

When: Sunday, January 27, 2019*
Where: St. Paul Lutheran Church,
N4118 County Road AB, Luxemburg (Montpelier)
Serving: 9:30AM – 12:00PM
Fee: \$6.00 (12+ years), \$3.00 (4-12years), children 3 and under are free

Sponsored by Lakeshore Lutherans for Life

*We will be hosting our Life Sunday Porkie/ Pancake Breakfast on Sunday, January 27 to help celebrate the kickoff to Lutheran School's week.

Powerful Tools for Caregivers Class: For Parents of Children with Special Needs – This class is an educational program to help parents/grandparents take care of themselves while caring for children with special needs. The 6-week class will be on Thursdays, beginning February 7th from 5:45 – 7:45 pm at St. John Lutheran Church in Luxemburg. To register or for more information please contact Renee Koenig, Family Living Educator at 920-388-7137 or Lisa Van Remortel, Family Caregiving Program Specialist at 920-683-6111. Sponsored by Kewaunee County UW-Extension and the Aging & Disability Resource Center of the Lakeshore.



St. John Ruby's Pantry
700 Heritage Road | Luxemburg, WI

Registration: 8:30 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.
Food Distribution begins at 9:00 a.m.

Upcoming Pantry Dates:

Held the 2nd Saturday of Every Month

2019

January 12	May 11	September 14
February 9	June 8	October 12
March 9	July 13	November 9
April 13	August 10	December 14

Everyone Who Gets Hungry Qualifies!

No residency or income requirements or restrictions

- \$20 cash donation
- Bring 2 large boxes, totes or laundry baskets
- You will receive an abundance of grocery items
- Distribution will take place at St. John, 700 Heritage Road in Luxemburg

Optional Online Pre-Registration is also available for January 12!

\$20 Share Donation + \$1 Processing Fee
Use Your Debit or Credit Card On-line
www.rubyspantry.org

Select a Time Slot / Arrive 15 Minutes Before Your Time

Minimal Waiting on the Day of the Pantry

Pre-Registration is Available Until 3:00 pm Day Before Pantry

For more information: www.stjohnlux.com or call (920) 845-5250

Ruby's Pantry is a non-profit food ministry serving our rural communities on a monthly basis.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Church Council Meeting December 19, 2018

Members present: Pastor Brewer, Craig Van Pay, Rob Funk, Norene Giese, Larry Jorgenson, Marv Perleberg, Marilyn Mueller, Ann Reckelberg, Lloyd Loberger, Nancy Loberger

Pastor Brewer opened the meeting with prayer.

Minutes of the last meeting were reviewed. Motion to approve the minutes was made by Rob Funk. Seconded by Marv Perleberg. Motion carried.

Pastor reported Transfers In/Out: Myles Behling and Ezra and Jenny Frater transferred in through Affirmation of Faith. Larry and Lila Schlorf were released from membership to St. John, Rankin, and Gary Perleberg was released through peaceful release.

Rob Funk provided the budget for January 1 through November 30, 2018:

- Church Revenue - \$265,105
- Total Expenses - \$244,943
- Total Assets - \$212,836
- Difference minus Operating Expenses = \$8,435

Elders –

- Will be working on list of delinquent members.
- Board of Evangelism will be sending cards to the non-attenders.

Trustees – No Report

Stewardship Committee – No Meeting in December, next meeting is January 8.

Board of Education – Minutes available from December 5.

Evangelism Committee – Continue search for candidate for 2019 election.

Old Business:

- Future Needs Assessment – Resealing of parking lot for summer of 2019, estimated cost of \$8,000-9,000.

New Business:

- Todd Krueger has agreed to be on the ballot in 2019 for Trustee.
- Suggestions were given for President. Discussion will take place with the individuals. Let Craig or Pastor know of any other suggestions.
- The December Ruby's Pantry gave out 325 shares. There were new people taking shares this month. Need to reach out to the Hispanic community.
- The hearing aid system in the sanctuary has been adjusted and is working well.

The next Council Meeting will be Wednesday, January 30, 2019, 7:00 p.m.

Lloyd Loberger moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Rob Funk. Motion carried.

Closed the meeting with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Norene Giese
Council Secretary