

Ripples

Stillwater Free Lutheran Church

“Sharing Jesus Christ with Our Neighbors”

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**“Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up
for evil; live as servants of God.”**

-1 Peter 2:16

From the Pastor's Desk

Standing at the Crossroads
Jeremiah 6:16

As we get ready to celebrate the birthday of our nation, we as a people need to make a choice. We can choose to follow the crowds and the ways of the world, or we can choose to stand firm and follow the ways of God!

God told Jeremiah in Jeremiah 6:16 - This is what the LORD says: "Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls.

Jeremiah recorded these words of God in about 620 BC. That was a full 20 years before Babylon took over Jerusalem.

God warned His people that if they do not heed the message, certain destruction will follow.

And, looking at the historical record, we know what happened - Babylon completely destroyed Jerusalem, and the people were carried off to captivity for 70 years.

At this point in time - Jerusalem was at a fork in the road. They had a decision to make. They could continue in the path they had been walking, or they could choose to turn aside to the path God had shown them.

Looking at where they had wandered, their situation was bleak.

They had forsaken God and were worshipping the pagan gods of the nations around them.

God said they were adulterers, giving themselves to the pagan temple prostitutes.

They were even sacrificing their children to these foreign gods in the hopes of receiving more stuff!

God said that their character was so far gone that they didn't even know how to blush anymore at the atrocities that were being done!

Their preachers proclaimed lies, and the leadership was ungodly, and the people not only accepted it, but embraced it!

So, God: ever merciful, and gracious, and loving, reaches out to His people through His Prophet and pleads for them to turn away from the path they were on.

He tells His people to stand in the way and see, or stand at the crossroads and look.

This literally means to stand at the intersection of the paths and look.

This gives us the idea that as we stand at the intersection we get to look right or left and see what awaits us.

We see the old path that God Himself laid out for us, and we see the path that man has put in.

So, what path are we on? And this question is being presented to a people. God is not asking what path you are on personally, but what path is the nation on.

So, that begs the question - How are we doing as a Church?

Are we doing, ok? Sometimes I would say - Yes, we are doing ok, but then there are other times when I think that we aren't doing so well!

So - what do you think? And as you ponder that question, I want you to think about a few things:

The outstanding public debt as of 1 July, 2021 at about 11:15 AM was: \$28,334,679,892,640 That's 28 Trillion - with a T! That means each person's share of this debt is \$85,776.

It is estimated that 3,000 abortions are conducted daily, so it is estimated that there have been more than 62 million abortions since Roe Vs. Wade.

And according to Barna Research - only about 9% of American Adults hold a Biblical World View.

Which means that only 9 percent of adults in America hold to Absolute truth, that the Bible is totally accurate, that Satan is real, that a person cannot earn their way into Heaven, that Jesus Christ lived a sinless life on earth; and that God is the all-knowing, all-powerful creator of the world who still rules the universe today.

9 percent. That means that only 9 people out of one hundred believe these things! So, how are we doing as a Church?

If the mission of the Church is to make Disciples, and only 9 people per 100 have a Christian world view - How do you think we are doing?

God established the nation of Israel, and He wanted to lead them in one direction and one direction only - toward Himself. But the Jews were not content with only following the Lord. They began to worship in what were called the high places. There they would offer worship and sacrifices to pagan gods, the gods of this world.

I am sure at first these pagan practices seemed harmless to the Israelites. Compromise usually starts small, but it started them down the wrong path. There is a saying which goes "when you choose a path, choose it carefully, because eventually you come to the end of it, and the end isn't always pretty." In Jeremiah's time the Jews had come to the end of the path and judgment was coming!

The verse goes on to tell us that after we look at the paths presented to us - we are to step out on the path that God has given us - and WALK in it!

So often, we as a Church oscillate between decisions, and go back and forth trying to decide what to do. We seem to stand in the intersection afraid to step out. It seems the Israelites suffered from the same hesitation.

We as a Church need to check the path we are on, ensuring we are following the Word of God, then we need to step out in Faith!

And notice the results of this: you find rest for your souls!

For those who take the good way, the ancient path, the way trodden by those who have been faithful through the years, there is a promise of rest.

Jesus tells us in Matthew 11:29 - "Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."

The old way isn't the popular way! It is being abandoned daily by people who have decided that new is better. They are leaving the Bible, worship of the Lord, and Biblical Teaching.

The enemy is active and prowling, tossing out new and different ideas - that are neither new nor different!

We as a Church need to be on the lookout! We stand at the crossroads.

Are we seeking the ancient ways? The Good ways? And are we walking in them? Because there is where we will find Peace for our souls!

God Bless - and Happy Independence Day!!!



Women's Missionary Federation

Fourteen women met at the church on June 10th. Judy Hogan opened with devotions titled "A Grateful Heart". Sherri led us in our Bible study titled "God's Desires for Pastors and Deacons". Next month we will do lesson 7. Judy Karboski gave a report on a missionary family; Elaine read our minutes, and Linda gave the treasurer's report. We have \$372.88 in the bank. Linda will send \$50.00 for WMF at annual conference.

Following the reports, we went over upcoming events. We decided to have cake after church for Father's Day. Karen will oversee picking it up. We will have a

church picnic July 31st. We are still looking for helpers for VBS July 19th-23rd from 9AM to noon. Talk to the Christian Ed board if you are able to help.

Our next meeting will be at Gayle Lantto's home on July 8th. Neila will lead Bible Study titled "God Uses Pastors to Save You" from 1st Timothy 4, and Gayle will do devotions. Our host and co-host will be Gayle and Hattie. We look forward to seeing you there. Our August meeting will be August 26th.

A very delicious taco lunch was served. Thank you, Karen and Neila, for all the work you have done!

Submitted by,
Elaine Lessor: Secretary

Feeding the Flathead

Sue and Shelby helped serve 70 to-go meals on Monday, June 28th. We had bags with a hearty turkey sandwich, a cutie orange, chips and a sweet treat, with cold bottled water ready to go.

Again, the guests are always so appreciative of our efforts, and it is great to chat with many of them, even just lending an ear.

Much thanks goes to Darlene A., Early M., Juanita H., Judy H., and Nancy I. for donating the various needs of cookies, cheese, lettuce, oranges and chips. We will use the donated chips from Marie next month.

Our plan for the next service on July 26 will be the same menu. So, if you feel led to donate, I use the whole turkey breasts from Costco (three of them), cracked wheat bread (3 large pkg), sliced cheese, head lettuce (3), tomatoes, and fruit (cuties, apples or bananas) and cookies, brownies, etc. We plan for 75. Please let me know if you want to sign up for any of the above.

As always, this is a long-time ministry and I'm so thankful our Church participates!

Praise goes to our Father in Heaven,

**Sincerely,
Lori and Sue**

After-School Program

"Grace to you and peace"

Our after school program could use your prayer!!! We really are praying that West Valley gets back to the normal bus routes. Having the students brought to us rather than picking them up with our very tired van would be such a blessing!!! Karla, Pastors Craig and Bryce were our drivers for last year during COVID. Some of you drive by that big beautiful new facility for boys and girls club on church drive. They may have a larger pool of students coming their way. We are praying for our program to "fill up"... that word of mouth advertising would bring them in. At the early stage of this program the congregation was voting to continue as long as it "paid for itself." Thanks to all who contribute whether it is through your prayers, your treats, your time to volunteer, and your dollars. Last year we did not meet budget. I know many of you see our beautiful facility used for the community and this is one way that we see us "sharing Jesus with our neighbors." Thanks for your prayers and support. I did volunteer to do a fund raiser if need be so I'll keep you posted. Thank you, Karla and Rachel, for agreeing to continue as well as your faithful volunteers. We are trusting in our gracious Lord who answers prayer, who loves each family that has been touched by this ministry, who saves, keeps, protects, provides... "Isn't He wonderful...eyes have seen, ears have heard, it's recorded in His Word."

Lavonne West for the after school program.... She is your Monday volunteer.



**VBS IS JUST 2 WEEKS
AWAY! MARK YOUR
CALENDARS AND
REGISTER TODAY!**

July 19th-23rd from 9AM-12
Ages: Preschool –5th grade



Cookbooks are still available!
See Rachel T to get yours
\$10.00 each and all proceeds go to the
Activity Center

July Featured Recipe:

ROMAINE SALAD AND AVOCADO DRESSING

- | | |
|--|--|
| <i>1 Medium Ripe Avocado, peeled
and cubed</i> | <i>1 Bunch Romaine, torn</i> |
| <i>½ Cup Mayonnaise</i> | <i>3 Medium Tomatoes, cut into
wedges</i> |
| <i>¼ Cup Vegetable Oil</i> | <i>1 Cup Shredded Cheddar Cheese</i> |
| <i>3 TBSP Lemon Juice</i> | <i>1 Can (2¼ oz.) Sliced Olives,
drained</i> |
| <i>2 Garlic Cloves, peeled</i> | <i>2 Green Onions, chopped</i> |
| <i>½ tsp Salt</i> | <i>Corn Chips</i> |
| <i>¼ tsp Hot Pepper Sauce</i> | |

For the dressing place the first seven ingredients in a blender or food processor; cover and process until blended. In a large bowl combine the romaine, tomatoes, cheese, olives and onions. Drizzle with the dressing and toss to coat. Sprinkle with corn chips.

Lushia Alzner



Free Flyers Youth Group

The Free Flyers are committed to serve the community through our strength in Jesus Christ.

Hello to all, my arms are redder than Bob the Tomato from Veggie Tales, my wonderful wife is about to have a little Bryce, or Brycina, we'll see, and I keep confusing firework stands with food trucks (Hong Kong Harry's sounds like it should sell Chinese food), so it must be July! This month so far has given me tons of great spiritual metaphors, for example, just like God's love, this sun is never going away, and I don't understand how it's always so bright. All joking aside though, I am beyond thankful that we serve a never changing, omniscient, omnipotent God. Like He told Moses in the desert through the burning bush, I AM WHO I AM, and that same God is faithful and just. In one of my recent devotions, I was reading the story of King Solomon in 1 Kings 3 where God comes to him in his sleep, and asks Solomon what he would like, and tells him he will receive it. I'm sure we've all heard this story before, especially since I just told it to you, but two things really stuck out to me this time of reading it through. First, Solomon's honesty, he put his pride behind him and in verse seven, told God, "I do not know how to go out or come in", practically saying that he felt he didn't always know what he was doing. The second part of this chapter that really spoke to me was after Solomon asked God for wisdom, and God answered him in verse fourteen saying, "And if you will walk in my ways, then I will lengthen your days". We serve such a faithful God, but we also need to be faithful to Him and walk in HIS ways as well. It's a two-way street (if you drive down a one way the wrong way enough, you become very thankful for two-way streets). So let us be faithful to Him as we know He will never abandon us, but instead will bless us! Speaking of abandonment, for the most part, I always return the youth kids I get, so let's see what's up with them!

The last month has been hectic, but in a way that makes me thankful I get to serve this wonderful congregation, not the way that makes me want to pull hair out, that's what having kids is for! The youth group started their summer group on June 9th here at the church with a night of painting and going to sweet peaks. In total, there were twelve kids in attendance, not counting myself, and it was an awesome time. The youth had to paint pictures based on little sheets I handed them with ridiculous sentences on them, such as "paint the youth group riding a dragon to the moon", you know, normal stuff like that, and the rest of the youth group had to guess what the pictures were. After a couple stains, and some slightly disturbing, but really funny paintings, we all hopped in the church Cadillac and got ice cream. During the off week of summer group (we only go every other week), Rachel, Craig, Sherri, Lavonne, and myself all went out to Minneapolis for the AFLC's Annual Conference. The week was full of amazing electives, meetings, and events. It was very evident that God's hand was in the planning of the

whole conference, and He was definitely present at the meeting as well. I think everyone that went would tell you the same, but I felt a sense of renewing and support from old friends and fellow pastors that were all there. Another awesome event that took place was the fact that Rachel didn't go into labor on the middle of the Hi-Line during a forty-hour drive, God is good! Our second summer group took place on the 23rd, as we all went hiking at Finger Lake, and did some cliff jumping/falling to go along with it. Ten students were able to make it, and I came back with ten, so I think everyone would say it was a fun trip. Summer group will continue until September 1st, and we still have paintballing, tubing Flathead River, bowling, and lake days on the agenda, so if you know someone that is in sixth grade or older, please contact me and I'd love to invite them. The last two big events we have this summer are our two camps, the first one coming up the day after you read this (unless you ready this on a Wednesday, then I hope I've already gotten the kids to camp by then). Monday through Friday, July 5th-9th, we will be at the Flathead Lake United Methodist Camp, on, you guessed it, Flathead Lake. The camp is a substitute for our FLY convention that was unfortunately postponed, but this one is called Beyond FLY, and we have eleven students signed up, praise the Lord for the sweet numbers! Our second camp will be taking place August 23rd-26th at the Spear O' Wigwam resort in Buffalo, WY. Rachel and I are also very excited about being able to spend a couple days with the youth down there and watch them push the van back to Kalispell!

A ginormous thank you again to everyone who has donated and supported the youth financially, thanks to all of your donations, every student is able to go without having to pay anything! Thank you to Lois Rehbein, Julie Brubaker, and everyone that's donated to us at our valentine's dinner and talent show fundraisers, on behalf of the youth group, we are extremely appreciative! I ask for continued prayer, especially through camp week, that every kid there would let the Holy Spirit move through them and open their hearts to our loving God. Thank you for all the prayer we've already received and will receive, you're all family to us! Have a great, heat exhaustion free July, SERVE HIM!

God Bless,

Bryce Timmerman

Building Committee Report

As I reflect about how far we have come with this project since the groundbreaking October 13, 2019, I am also reminded of the multitude of prayers and support from so many and how God has blessed us from the very beginning. I am reminded so often of the words in Scripture, words like *Faith, Believe, Trust, Patience, Gifts, Blessings*, and the list could go on and on. Many in the congregation have put these words into practice for years as their vision of a new building became more real. Today we are benefitting from their steadfastness!

In some ways it is hard to believe that we are now entering the last large interior phase of the project, that being the completion of the kitchen. To be sure there will still be challenges and more work to be done such as improving the acoustics, furnishing the classrooms, offices etc.

We are in the process of identifying and purchasing equipment for the kitchen. If you would like to help, please contact Gayle Lantto. We expect the sidewalk with curb to be completed in the next month or two. Paving of the parking lot should follow soon thereafter. We are hoping to construct the North Drive-Thru before the end of the year. The covering of the patio will probably be done next year.

God willing our first big inside celebration will be our annual Harvest Dinner in October. Let us pray that becomes a reality! As I have said numerous times, we should never underestimate what God can do if we just trust Him and follow His guidance in all we do.

I pray you will join me in giving thanks to God for His blessings and the donors who have shared their gifts making this project possible and for the workers He has provided to make it all happen. We have been blessed to have our general contractor Matt Lee and his crew as well as all the sub-contractors involved!

Respectfully submitted by Ed Van Scoten

Prayers for July

Please take this home and use it all week long.

"Whatever you ask in prayer with faith, you will receive." Matt 21:22

Church Work & Ministry

Sharing Jesus Christ with our Neighbors
Building Project
Church Leaders, Staff & Worship Team
Stillwater Youth Group
Stillwater & National WMF
Feeding the Flathead
After School Program
Intervarsity Christian Fellowship
Child Bridge Ministry & Foster Families



General Prayers

Marriages and Families
Our Country and Leaders
Workers in the Harvest Field
Military and First Responders

Health Concerns

Sylvan Herset
Joyce Banzet
Jeremy Hartle
Deb & Jonny (Timmerman)
Leo Gallis
Bonnie Upton
Julie & JP Rodriguez (Hersets)