

# Ripples

Stillwater Free Lutheran Church

“Sharing Jesus Christ with our Neighbors”

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## *From the Pastor's Desk*

On Sunday morning January 1, 1773, Pastor John Newton first shared his new hymn, "Amazing Grace" with his Anglican congregation, St. Peter and St. Paul Church in Olney England.

John Newton looked back to his own life and how God's undeserved grace and mercy had reached into the darkness of his life.

As we prepare to celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus, let's take a moment and remember the Grace and Mercy we find in our own lives, by remembering what Jesus didn't do on that first Good Friday.

First, we see that Jesus did NOT retaliate.

The dialogue going on that Friday morning was pretty angry and bitter. The onlookers in the crowd shouting, "Come down from the cross if you are the Son of God!"

The religious leaders angrily yelling, "He saved others, but he can't save himself."

Soldiers mocking, "If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself."

Bitter words, heavy with sarcasm. Hateful, even. Wasn't it enough that he was being crucified? Wasn't it enough that he was being shamed as a criminal? Were the nails insufficient? Was the crown of thorns too soft? Had the flogging been too short?

For some, apparently so...

Funny, but of all the scenes around the cross, this one angers me the most. What kind of people would mock a dying man? Who would be so low as to hurl insults on one who was enduring such intense pain!

And as I write this – I am reminded of the song by Stuart Townsend -  
How Deep the Father's Love for Us.

The hymn praises and admires the love of God the Father and the sacrifice made by Jesus Christ.

BUT

In the second verse, we read:

Behold the man upon a cross, My sin upon His shoulders; **Ashamed, I hear my mocking voice Call out among the scoffers.**

It was my sin that held Him there Until it was accomplished; His dying breath has brought me life – I know that it is finished.

When we think about it – this is what WE DID! It was our sin that held Jesus there!

And Peter says (1 Peter 2:23): When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.

Did you see what Jesus did not do? He did not retaliate. He did not bite back. He did not say, “I’ll get you!” “Come on up here and say that to my face!” “Just wait until after the resurrection, buddy!”

No, these statements were not found on Christ’s lips.

Did you see what Jesus did do? He “entrusted himself to him who judges justly.” Or said more simply, he left the judging to God.

He did not take on the task of seeking revenge. He demanded no apology. He hired no bounty hunters and sent out no posse.

He, to the astounding contrary, spoke on our defense. "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." (Luke 23:34)

Yes, the dialogue that Friday morning was bitter. The verbal stones were meant to sting.

How Jesus, with a body wracked with pain, eyes blinded by his own blood, and lungs yearning for air, could speak on behalf of some heartless thugs is beyond my comprehension.

No one ever has seen such love. If ever a person deserved a shot at revenge, Jesus did. But he didn't take it. Instead, he died for US!

How could he do it? I don't know. But I do know that all of a sudden, I'm so very grateful that He did!

It truly is Amazing Grace!

Chris Tomlin adds to John Newton's words:

"My Chains are gone; I've been set free. My God, My Savior has ransomed me. And like a flood, His mercy rains, unending love, amazing grace."

So, as we prepare to Celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus let's all rejoice in God's Amazing Grace!

Pastor Craig

# Stillwater Youth Groupies

*The Youth are committed to serve the community through our strength in Jesus Christ.*

Thanks to leap year, I was not late writing this newsletter article for this month, so please enjoy my December newsletter! Alright, first bad dad joke out of the way, 12 more to go. The month of February has been a massive blessing all around for ministry and life. We had one major youth gathering (our valentines day fundraiser) and I also celebrated my youngest daughter's first birthday! One of these two events had lots of messes and quite a bit of crying, and the other was Lilly's birthday party, but both a ton of fun! Though it probably doesn't need to be stated, it is very hard to believe that we're already in March, considering we just finished sending out the last of our Christmas cards. There are many certainties in life (before Jesus comes back, which of course could be any day, He has a divine plan), but until then, time is one of them. As time moves along, other certainties come with it. You get older, you experience more, and frankly, more obstacles come up. In this sinful world, life is full of unforeseen trials and obstacles, these examples start as soon as original sin enters the world. The Israelites wandered around the desert for 40 years, an obstacle that the people didn't think they'd face. Job lost everything – family, livestock, property. Jeremiah was thrown into a pit by the people he was trying to help and speak to. Different kinds of obstacles look different in all of our own individual lives, but we all go through unexpected hard times. Since we all have this same common denominator, the real question is, how do we handle it? In 1 Peter 5, Peter is talking to the elders of the church instructing them how to lead their flock. In verses 7-9 it reads, "Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings." Peter even acknowledges that we all go through struggles, that is not uncommon to man, but what is uncommon, unfortunately, is trusting in the Lord and casting all your cares and anxieties upon Him. Satan looks for any opportunity he can, like Peter reminds us, "a lion looking for someone to devour", but he is truly defeated when we give our anxieties and ultimately our life to the One who already defeated him. 1 Corinthians 10:13 also states, "No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it." So whatever obstacle or temptation you may face, God always provides a way out, and it's Him! Don't forget our Father who loves us and never forsakes us, hallelujah!

Ok, now that sermon time's over, let's see what's happening with the youthies (as the young, hip whippersnappers say). In February, we were able to have three "regular" youth groups with an average of 13 and also participated in two different events! The teens are still doing a great job learning about leadership and applying it as well. All of them have a different role in the youth group from picking a monthly memory verse to helping set up games to cleaning the youth room after youth group (they bring their own hazmat suits). As previously mentioned, we hosted our annual Valentine's Dinner fundraiser Saturday, February 10<sup>th</sup> and thanks to our awesome youth and congregation who were all a huge part of it, it went great! Every year we do a different menu, such as breakfast (I think we all remember the great basement fire of 2020), Italian, seafood, etc, and this year, the youth voted on American, which was actually a food group I knew a little bit about this time. We had 11 youth cooking burgers, fries, bacon, soup, and pretty much any other food group you can name, as well as served the food also! A total of 50 people showed up to support the youth, praise God, and enjoy the food and blow some hard-earned money on the silent and live auctions! Eighteen different items and baskets were donated and helped us raise around \$2,500! Again, I just can't say thank you enough to all who came and helped set up and just simply supported, but I'll try one more time, thank you! On the 21<sup>st</sup> the youth got to go over to Faith and hear about two AFLC missionaries, John and Hannah Lee, present about their time serving in Brazil! It was a very encouraging message to hear about two soldiers for Christ answering a difficult call to go and serve Him! For upcoming events, we have our annual lock-in with Faith, on Friday March 22<sup>nd</sup>, so I'm going to start my hibernation soon. For our other youth ministries, our confirmation classes are still plugging away, and are on pace to even finish ahead of time! Our last school year youth group, before we get into our summer group schedule, will be Wednesday, June 5<sup>th</sup> and our last confirmation will be Sunday, May 26<sup>th</sup>! It's hard to believe we're already talking about these dates, but I've found out it's always better to plan further ahead than the night before!

For the prayer portion of this newsletter, I ask for prayers for continued strength and peace as we get closer to Spring, but sometimes still feel so far away as well. It's also great to work on our contentment levels and truly be thankful for what we have as it is so easy to wish for what we don't have. We are so thankful for this congregation that we serve and all the people who have truly made this place our home! Have a blessed March, talk to you all in a month!

God Bless,

Bryce Timmerman

**Palm Sunday**  
March 24  
Worship

**Maundy Thursday**  
March 28

**Good Friday**  
March 29,  
service @  
Faith, 6 pm

**Easter**  
March 31  
7a Sunrise  
9:30  
Celebration  
Service

*Holy week*

**\*Good Friday service will be at Faith Lutheran Church, 6pm.**

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- **Easter! He Is Risen! Sunday, March 31**
    - 7 am Sunrise Service
    - 9:30 am Celebration Service
    - Followed by Brunch served by the Youth
      - Children's egg hunts



WMF met on Thursday, February 15th at 10:00 in the activity center. Fourteen women packed the classroom! Since January, two new ladies joined our group—it's exciting watching our group grow in numbers and more importantly, spiritually. Lori shared devotions, reminding us of the late Corrie

ten Boom, who was instrumental in assisting numerous Jews to escape the Holocaust. One of the many powerful Corrie quotes was, "Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God." We are enjoying a study of Philippians called Exuberant Joy! Sherri led us in another thoughtful discussion, on Paul's imprisonment for sharing the gospel.

Judy K gave the treasurer's report. A \$212 gift was given to Bible translator Alexis Olson. We have \$248.63 in our account. There are still some who owe \$14 for study books. Gayle gave the secretary's report. A correction was made by Sherri—the cost of the A-Z children's book is \$12 vs \$15.

Karen VS went over the upcoming calendar of events and business was discussed. 1) This Saturday, February 17th is a fiery bonfire event with piano music—dress warmly and bring a snack to share. 2) Potluck is March 3rd following the service. Lori's group sets up, Suzanne's serves and Sherri's cleans up. Be sure to refer to assignment instruction sheets in the drawer below the coffee pot. 3) March 20th will be the last Wednesday night Kids Club until it resumes in the fall. Adult Bible study will continue to meet. 4) Primetimers will meet for lunch and music on Saturday, March 24th from 12-2:00. A freewill offering will be taken. Everyone is welcome! 5) FYI—an outside group will be utilizing the activity center Monday and Tuesday evenings from 6:30-9:30 through the end of April. 5) There will be no movie night in March. 6) Easter is March 31st, with services at 7:00 and 9:30. The youth will be serving a light Easter breakfast following the 9:30 service. A sign up sheet for food donations



will be posted. 7) Should we have a rummage sale this year? If so we need a minimum of 3 dedicated persons to run the sale. Donations vs pricing items works best. A plan on how to get rid of items that don't go would need to be arranged should we move forward with the sale. Karen B will inquire with a group to see whether they would be willing to take all leftover items. 8) Judy K is tentatively planning a salve making class on Saturday, July 25th. More details to follow. 9) Karen B shared about Intercessors for America—praying God's purposes for my state. Further information is available at [IFApray.org](http://IFApray.org) or 1(800)-USA-PRAY. 10) There is interest in having another Stillwater Christmas Shoppe this fall/winter. We will ask Suzanne's help in determining the best weekend to hold the event.

There were several prayer requests for family members with health issues—for healing and wisdom to make the best possible healthcare decisions from available options.

We had Gayle's Swedish Kringla with coffee and tea during our study and meeting time. For lunch Debbie served a scrumptious white chicken chili with tortilla chips. Linda M provided salad and Meri apple cake—both yummy additions.

Next month's study and meeting will be held at the activity center with Elaine and Gayle as hostesses. Karen B will lead Bible study (lesson 3) and Ronna will have devotions. We look forward to seeing you in March for another meaningful discussion time together.

Submitted by Gayle Lantto, WMF secretary

## Mind Blowingly Blessed

As a musician the term mic drop comes to mind. My husband has been “in the booth” so to speak for 22 years. The mic drop reference would not be welcomed.

A large gift recently has given our church some food for thought.

*On a side note – one of our residents at the Montana Veteran’s Home is bedridden and loves Disney. While I was feeding her the other day, she was watching Mary Poppins. Mr. Banks had to face a long table full of cranky looking board members.*

I’d like our decision makers to be cheerful givers. Someone who is a prayer warrior. A person with the gift of giving. A person with the gift of discernment as other requests will come and they will have to weed out the “chaff.”

I have been on the receiving end of charitable giving in my “work” with the women’s missionary federation. The director of development brings requests to a number of donors. One extra generous couple were able to give a substantial amount every quarter. All the AFLC ministries would give their “top five” needs. Then they would pray it through and decide which requests to cover.

This is such a new problem for Stillwater. Ken and I have served through some lean years. The board chair would have to stand up and make a plea for funds. This “my cup overflows” situation we find ourselves in is blowing our minds.

A possible solution would be to expand the 10 Commandments Fund. This has been a blessing to many Stillwater families through the years. AFLC director Tonnes Pollestad may have ideas to share. What a wonderful problem to have. You need \$50,000 to build a church in Brazil? Here you go. Bonnie would love that.

Lavonne West, National WMF President

# Stillwater Library News

Our library continues to grow, and many thanks to those who have donated books to share with others. I will leave a big red bag on the desk in which you can place books you would like to donate. That will help get them to the right place so they can be shared here in our library newsletter before they get to the shelves.

Thanks also to those who have signed the sheet on the clipboard also on the desk, to help us know if the library is being used. It is just a way to help us know since we don't have a checkout system. We appreciate your help and support!

God's blessings and happy reading!!

Susan and Meri



Fiction new to Us:

**The Cross and the Switchblade by Rev. David Wilkerson** This is a story of a country preacher's fight against teen-age crime in the big city slums. Its an old story but applicable to today? I would think so!

**The Wedding Dress by Marian Wells** Young, orphaned Rebecca had a trunk that contained a wedding dress, her only heritage from her mother. Read on to find out how the dress played into her life. The author's mother was born and raised in a Mormon family, married outside the faith and raise the author following Christ.

**In Holiday Florida by Sandra Bricker** One of the Love Finds You books, Cassie has no plans to stay in Florida. She is just there to renovate a vacation house and sell it. Will she be delayed? Will she find interests there? You'll want to read this one to find out.

**Keeper of the Stars by Robin Lee Hatcher** Forgiveness is the only cure for heartbreak. But can Penny forgive the man she holds responsible for her brother's death? (Thomas Nelson Pub.)

New Children's books:

**Toy Story, an infinite Friendship**

**The Little Skyscraper**

**The Snow Must Go On,** a way, way off-Broadway adventure



Nonfiction:

**The Practice of Godliness by Jerry Bridges** This book focuses on putting on the new self--growing in Christian character. The author cites Bible passages that help us understand what is Christian character. Perhaps a good Bible study?



# Stillwater Book Club



Our next book discussion on Mar. 1, at 10:30 a.m. will be *The Heart's Choice* by Tracie Peterson and Kimberley Woodhouse. In 1904, a strong, independent, young lady from Chicago, completed her schooling and was offered a job as the first woman court stenographer in Kalispell. She left her family and journeyed west to take this job. She is greeted by the judge and his wife, who also provided housing for her. Based on an experience she had as a young girl she

sees injustice in the wrongly accused and strives to prove him innocent. She also comes to know her Lord and Savior. This is the first in a series of books in the *Chronicles of Kalispell*. Please join us as we discuss this first book by these new Kalispell authors.

I have extra copies of the schedule of books for the rest of the year if you would like a hard copy.

The schedule of books for the rest of the year is as follows:

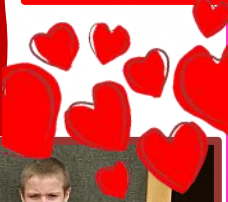
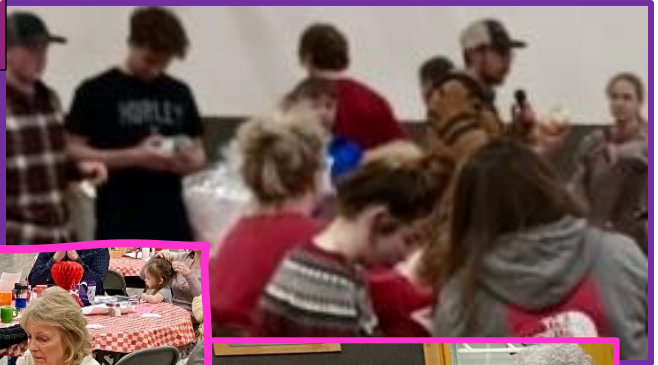
- |         |  |
|---------|--|
| Apr. 5  | <b>The Prayer Box</b> by Lisa Wingate                    |
| May 3   | <b>Leota's Garden</b> by Francine Rivers                 |
| June 7  | <b>I'll Push You</b> by Patrick Gray and Justin Skeesuck |
| July 12 | <b>Corelli's Mandollin</b> by Louis De Bernieres         |
| Aug. 2  | <b>Nothing to Lose</b> by J.A. Jance                     |
| Sept. 6 | <b>The Sound of Light</b> by Sarah Sundin                |
| Oct. 4  | <b>American Massacre</b> by Sally Denton                 |
| Nov. 1  | <b>The Winter Garden</b> by Kristin Hannah               |
| Dec. 6  | <b>Radar Girls</b> by Sara Ackerman                      |

Happy reading, and God's Blessings,  
Meri Putzler



# February was full of Festivities, Fun and Fellowship

## Youth Valentine Dinner and Auction Fundraiser





Special Music  
during Worship



**Bonfire!**



**John & Hannah Lee and family  
Missionaries to Brazil**



## Primetimers



Several years ago, when Bonnie Upton started this group, they usually met monthly in local restaurants where they had a room for seating 20-25 people. She always arranged to have games of some sort and brain teasers. After Bonnie's passing, I made it my mission to keep these luncheons going. For the past year or so we have been meeting in the activity center where we can seat many more people. I have tried to schedule these luncheons about every three months along with a variety of musical entertainment. So far donations have pretty much covered the cost of food and entertainment. These luncheons are always open to the congregation and family and friends. We believe this is one way of sharing Jesus Christ with our neighbors and a time of great fellowship. We try to get an estimate of how many will attend so we can plan for food.

Please contact me if you have suggestions or ideas for improving these events. For example, we have reduced the music time from two hours to an hour or less. This was due to your feedback! Thanks to all for their support and participation. My plan is to invite an accordion group to play sometime this summer. More on that later! At our last luncheon on February 24, we were blessed with the music of one of our own, Gary Byrer on electric guitar. We had forty-two in attendance and all reports are it was once again a great success! I thank my family members for preparing and serving the food and for those that set up and tore down the tables and chairs.

A Fellow Primetimer,

Ed Van Scoten Sr.



## After School Program

After putting on the Belt of Truth and the Breastplate of Righteousness the kiddos will be learning about fitting their feet with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. This month the kids will memorize Ephesians 6:15!! February saw a decline in illnesses so praying this continues through the remainder of the school year!!

Again, I want to thank our regular volunteers (along with the occasional stand in from Darryl and Pastor Craig) for faithfully helping Debbie and me each week! We could not run our program without you!! As in past months I humbly ask you to continue to pray the word of God is planted and will grow in little hearts and also to please continue to cover us all in prayer for good health!!!

God's Blessings ~ Ashley

## Spring Concert Set!

Some of you might remember the group called BrassWerks Ensemble, a six-piece brass band who performed a Christmas concert for us in December. They will be returning Sunday April 28 to perform a Spring concert. As of now it is scheduled for the afternoon from 3-5 PM in the activity center. More information will be forthcoming as we get closer to April 28.

### **Direct 2023 Choice Dollars BEFORE March 31<sup>st</sup>!**

- Are you or someone you know a **Thrivent** member? If you haven't already done so, you can still direct 2023 Choice Dollars to **Stillwater Free Lutheran Church!** Don't miss the opportunity to recommend where Thrivent gives back!



Daylight Saving Time begins at 2 am Sunday, March 10<sup>th</sup>. Change your clocks AHEAD 1 hour.

## Help us Decorate the Sanctuary for Easter!

Ed's greenhouse heater failed during the cold snap we had a couple weeks ago, and he lost all his flowers and plants that we were going to use for Easter.



So, if you are able, bring a potted Easter lily or fresh cut flowers to church on Palm Sunday, 3/24 or during the week (T-F) between the hours of 9a and 2p.

Please REMOVE the staymen /carpel from the center of each flower before you bring them to church, otherwise Pastor will not be able to breath or preach!



- Be sure to write your name on your plant if you would like to take them home with you.
- We would like to have them for the next couple of weeks.
- Talk with Karen Van Scoten if you have question



## Set Apart



*“Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.*

Acts 13:2-3

*Set apart* is a great description of what the Orality Institute is about. It means that students set apart time to study God’s Word, the leaders dedicate two years to teach them, and the style of education is set apart from traditional methods.

This picture is one of the new Ugandan churches that have been started through the Ambassador Institute’s ministry. This is one of five new house churches, and it is held at Mama Rose’s business. It has taken years for the oral students to see the

need to start their own churches, but it seems that this simple house church model is beginning to spark interest in Uganda. The leadership is divided among the members, and they worship in a simple and personal way. The Word of God, prayer, and worship is the heart of their gatherings.

Paul Kneeland's trip to Uganda is to encourage the ministry and give the leaders some practical training. Paul's two-week trip has very little time for rest. He will be participating in two of the five graduations, four zonal leaders' meetings, and two meetings with the Ugandan international missionaries.

The training has grown so quickly that we need to add some structure to the vision and passion. We have multiple places requesting training and six potential missionaries. This trip gives Paul a chance to introduce clear expectations and qualifications for those that represent the Orality Institute when they travel to other countries. He will be introducing budgeting and structural topics so that classes can start in a strong and stable manner. We need to be strategic with the use of our finances and make sure that when we begin in a new location or country, they will be trained well.

## Established



*Aquila and Prisca, together with the church in their house, send you hearty greetings in the Lord. All the brothers send you greetings.*

1 Corinthians 16:19-20

One of the greatest blessings of a ministry that spans years is watching the Lord transform lives. Alex and Mary were both graduates from the oral ministry in Uganda. Mary became a teacher and taught her class through their graduation while she worked in the Ambassador Institute office. Alex was a budding pastor, and he was mentored by Pastor Brent Raan and Michael Rokenbrodt as he started a church outside of Jinja.

Shortly before their engagement party Alex was in a severe motorcycle accident. At first, he was expected to die, then after finding a hospital that would treat him, they expected that he may have permanent spinal or head injuries. The Lord healed him in some miraculous ways. When they were married a month later Alex was able to walk and stand on his own. Their wedding was a celebration for the whole ministry family in Uganda.

Now Alex is the pastor of Gideon church. He grew in his preaching through his oral training. Alex and Mary have led their congregation in spiritual growth and they have seen people set free from various forms of spiritual bondage through Jesus. They have also faced severe spiritual opposition. Strong winds blew down their church, one of their leaders was killed by a falling brick, and Alex was mugged when he was delivering money. Yet, they continue to faithfully proclaim the hope in Jesus and teach oral classes.

Their daughter Rohi, which means *The Lord is my Shepherd*, just turned three. She has been in the center of the missionary meetings from the day she was born and travels with her parents to the graduation events as a special guest of honor. The Orality Institute truly is an international family.

We proclaim the hope of the resurrection,  
Blessings, Pastor Kevin

# Prayers for March

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

## Church Ministries

Sharing Jesus Christ with our Neighbors  
Church Leaders, Staff & Worship Team  
After School Program  
Stillwater Youth Group  
Kids Club  
Stillwater & National WMF  
Intervarsity Christian Fellowship  
Orality Institute  
The Gideons  
CarePortal

## General Prayers

Marriages and Families

- Brester family

Our Country and Leaders

Caregivers

Missionaries

Military and First Responders

- Mace Breamer
- David Bruyer (Askvig)
- Arron Burns
- James Gelormino
- Jonathan Gelormino
- Gage Triplett



## Health Concerns

Ina Clarke

John Hutchins (Christenson)

Jane (Putzler)

Jennifer (Banzet)

Darryl Askvig

Carol Hogan

Bill Voerman (Burns)

John Kruger

Steve & Debbie Beck (Van Scoten/Scavo)

Sylvan Herset

Justin Gronley (Joel & Cody Bartholomew's son)