



Trinity Lutheran Newsletter

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February 2012

The Up and Coming at Trinity

Pastor Boehne

I decided to use this newsletter article mainly as a chance to inform. The following are three things that will be going on at Trinity in the next few months and I hope you will all have the chance to be involved in some way.

1. Special Voters' Meeting February 19th for Trinity Lutheran Preschool

On Sunday, February 19th, after service (11:00 a.m.) we will hold a special voters' meeting to address several key items regarding the Preschool. At the regular Voters' meeting in January we were simply unable to cover everything necessary due to a lack of time. Specifically we will vote on an addition to the By-Laws of Trinity Lutheran Church which describes the Preschool Board. This will give the details of how the Preschool Board is constituted and appointed and what authority the Board has in matters pertaining to the Preschool. The proposed addition is printed on page 2 along with the other Preschool news. Secondly we will consider what financial support the Church will provide for members who attend the Preschool. Finally, we hope that this meeting will be a chance for the Preschool Board to answer any questions and generally inform the congregation of what is happening with Trinity Lutheran Preschool.



2. 2012 Lenten Midweek Series "Prayers in Scripture: How do I pray when...?"

February 22nd is Ash Wednesday this year and marks the beginning of the season of Lent. There will be a service of Holy Communion at 7 pm that evening along with the traditional imposition of ashes. Then on Wednesday, February 29th, and for four Wednesdays thereafter we will be meeting at 6 pm for a Lenten supper and at 7 pm for a Lenten midweek service. This year the Lenten series is on prayer and specifically focusing on prayers recorded in Holy Scripture. Using the very prayers of God's people recorded in Holy Scripture, we will seek to answer such questions as, "How do I pray when God seems deaf? How do I pray when evil is winning? How do I pray when sin is recognized?" (The theme for the series comes from the book *Is God Listening?* by Andrew Steinmann, Concordia Publishing House, 2004) We will again need people to prepare and serve the Lenten meals (five of them) and a sign-up sheet will be available in the narthex.



3. Spring Bible Study: Revelation 101

Our Fall Bible Study *Bible on Trial* was well attended and so we've decided to offer another Sunday night Bible Study this spring for four Sunday evenings. This study will be an overview of the book of Revelation and will meet at 6:30 p.m. in the Parish Hall on April 15th, 22nd, 29th, and May 6th. Obviously, the book of Revelation isn't easily covered in just four meetings. However, this class will be very helpful in a general understanding of Revelation and how to read and interpret the book. We will look in depth at passages that have caused confusion and often been misinterpreted. In addition, we will discover the great joy and comfort that is given in this Word of God from St. John. More information will continue to be given on this Bible Study in the coming months, but make plans now to attend.



Trinity Lutheran Preschool

FEBRUARY 2012 UPDATE

As stated on the first page, we will have a special Voters' meeting on February 19th to address some key items regarding the Preschool. We are excited about this new mission opportunity that the Lord is placing before us. The Preschool will be a particular place where children are brought to Jesus and hear the Gospel every week. It will also be a particular place for our congregation to reach into the community and offer a Christ-centered preschool where children can develop spiritually, socially, and academically. The following are items the Preschool Board is focusing on currently:



1. Bringing the Preschool room up to fire marshal standards (as voted on at the January Voters' meeting). This means installing an emergency exit door on the north side of the building, installing a window in one of the classroom doors, and installing smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. Other changes may be needed but more research is being done to figure that out.
2. Recruiting and hiring a Director/Teacher. We will have someone hired by March 1st and we will begin taking registrations at that time.
3. Advertising: You may have noticed our ads in the El Paso Journal. They will continue to run every week through May. We will also be distributing flyers around town in the next month. Also, we have ordered two large banners to place along Hwy 24 (in the parsonage yard).
4. Paperwork: We are also working on a Parent Handbook, an Employee handbook, registration forms, teacher aide job description, applications for non-profit status, etc.

Please continue to keep the Preschool in your prayers. In the near future we will be asking for assistance with painting, cleaning, etc in the Preschool room. Also, we would greatly appreciate your attendance at the meeting on February 19th that we may all work together to carry out this mission.

Chairman: Joan Comincioli
Treasurer: Rhonda Zielsdorf

Vice-Chairman: Teresa McFarland
Secretary: Amy Enright

Pastoral Advisor: Pastor Boehne

Proposal: By-Laws Addition under Article VIII: Terms and Duties of Officers

(to be voted on at the meeting February 19th)

PRESCHOOL BOARD

The Preschool Board shall consist of six members: Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Treasurer, Secretary, a 4/5 yr class parent, and a 3 yr class parent. All members will be appointed by the Preschool Board and approved by the Church Council. The Director/Teacher of the preschool and the Pastor will be advisory members. The Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Treasurer, and Secretary must be members of Trinity. The two additional parent members of the board may be non-members.

The term of office for all board members will be two years. The Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Treasurer, and Secretary shall not serve more than two consecutive terms in the same position. Meetings shall be held monthly. Nominations for vacant positions will be made at the February board meeting. Appointments shall be made and approved in April. General responsibilities of the Preschool Board will be the following:

1. *Determine policies and procedures to be maintained in the By-Laws, Parent Handbook, and Employee Handbook.*
2. *Develop a strategic plan for future operations.*
3. *Recruit, hire, evaluate, support, and encourage all preschool staff.*
4. *Set the annual budget for the Preschool and review the financial records at each monthly meeting.*
5. *Work with the Board of Trustees of Trinity Lutheran Church to provide and maintain adequate, functional facilities.*
6. *Work closely with Trinity Lutheran Church to coordinate with other church functions and activities.*
7. *Plan and implement fundraisers throughout the year in coordination with the Director/Teacher.*
8. *Promote, publicize, and provide information on the Preschool within the community and within the congregation.*
9. *Provide an avenue for incorporation of non-member families into the congregation and congregation members into the preschool program.*

Is Religion Bad?

Pastor Boehne

Yes, according to one of the latest YouTube videos that went viral, "Why I Hate Religion, But Love Jesus" by Jefferson Bethke. Over 17 million people have already watched it and it continues to make the news. Since some of you may be among those 17 million people who have seen his video, I thought it would be good to give a short response. If you haven't seen the video, you can easily find it on YouTube by just searching for the title.

The main theme of Bethke's video is that Jesus and "Religion" do not go together in any way, shape, or form. He starts out by saying that Jesus came to abolish religion. From there he proceeds to show why he thinks that "religion" is antithetical to everything Jesus is and everything Jesus teaches.

The main problem for many Christians has been confusion. Many of the things that Bethke says are "spot on". He talks about Jesus' all-sufficient death on the cross. He talks about how Jesus specifically came to save sinners. However, he also repeatedly attacks what he calls "religion". Every viewer is left wondering, "Who is he attacking? What does he mean by 'religion'?" Is he attacking the Church?

Like many other things in life, if you're going to watch Bethke's video then you have to distinguish the good from the bad. The right from the wrong. For all the positive elements of his video, he also grossly fails to tell us what he means by "religion". He fails to distinguish between what is *true* religion and what is *false* religion. What he seems to be attacking is false religion: religion that is based on our works, our attitude, our lives, etc. However, that isn't true religion. In other words, true religion isn't bad. Jesus didn't come to abolish true religion. He IS true religion. Jesus says specifically, "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them" (Mt. 5:17). He is the fulfillment of all that is *true* religion.

False religion is always *legalism*—the teaching that we can appease God by doing this or that, by following the law. Unfortunately, Bethke unknowingly leads us right back into legalism by his insistence that we shouldn't look one way on the outside and be completely different on the inside. He says that he once was this way. But apparently now he's different. Now he's better. This is the very thing he wants to speak against—but leads us right back into it.

The bottom line is that "religion" isn't the problem. We always like to put the problem and the blame somewhere else. But the real problem is always *us*. We are the sinners. And the answer isn't attacking religion—but realizing that true religion is Jesus Christ who suffered, died, and rose for us sinners. For two very good responses to the video, go to Issues, etc. (www.issuesetc.org) and click "Listen>On-Demand Archives. Search for "religion" and you will find two audio shows on this topic.

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

Valerie Boehne	Feb. 3
Gordon Eichelberger	Feb. 8
Gina Ales	Feb. 8
Rachel McFarland	Feb. 10
Kurt Iskrzycki	Feb. 11
Claire Eichelberger	Feb. 14
Alexa Schramek	Feb. 15
Kathy Johnson	Feb. 16
Amy Copple	Feb. 20
Cooper Toth	Feb. 20
Ashlee Caflisch	Feb. 22
Les Baumann	Feb. 23
Leah Meyers	Feb. 24
Dorothy Wollberg	Feb. 26
Kris Joye	Feb. 28

Happy
Birthday

(If there is a birthday we have missed, please let us know.)

Wittenberg Lutheran Center Update



TALK TIME FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS On the last Friday before finals, nine students from Wittenberg prepared a delicious meal and delivered it to international students meeting for "talk time" at the Encounter house. Over forty students from around the world were served, and we were able to make acquaintance with many who shared their stories and impressions of campus life in the USA. We are looking for congregational partners to help us this spring for additional opportunities to help international students. Please contact Pastor Jensen if you would like to help or have any questions. Congregations are requested to provide groceries for the meal, which will be prepared at Wittenberg, and delivered to the Encounter House to share with the students.

THRIVENT CHOICE CONTRIBUTIONS This past year, your contributions to Wittenberg via Thrivent's Choice Dollars program amounted to almost \$900! Our thanks to all who have directed these funds our way, allowing us to offset a variety of expenses such as fellowship, outreach, and publicity. If you are an eligible Thrivent member, your Choice Dollars can be directed to the Lutheran organization of your choice – Wittenberg Lutheran Center, for example – through a simple process.. Go to www.thrivent.com and click on "Thrivent Choice" for a simple no-cost way to support our ministry and mission to the campus community. We are blessed by your care and concern!

January Voters' Meeting Minutes

JANUARY 18, 2012

The voters' meeting was called to order by Tim Matzke. Opening study was given by Pastor Boehne. Roll call was taken with 27 members present. Kent and Rhonda Zielsdorf expressed their intent to become voting members. Motion was made by Grant Armstrong to accept these new members. Seconded by Diana Uphoff. Motion carried. Minutes from the December 21st, 2011, voters' meeting were read. Motion was made to accept the minutes by Dennis Hocker. Seconded by Mert Franke. Motion carried. Pastor reported no new members or transfers.

Annual Reports: Treasurer Joan Comincioli reported the 2011 year-end balance was \$20,776.87. She noted that the 403b line item 11 will no longer be used. Memorial Fund report was given. The balance in the fund is \$3,320.16. The financial secretary report was given by Barb Weber. The building fund loan balance at year end was \$5,114.04. That balance is currently \$2,614.04. There was a motion to accept all financial reports as presented by Diana Uphoff. Seconded by Sharon Duncan. Motion carried.

The reports from the elders, trustees, board of education, youth group, and Ladies Aid were outlined in the annual report booklet. Preschool board report was given by Joan. The board has been formed with a chairperson, co-chair, treasurer, and secretary. They have formed their bylaws. There is an advertising plan and a financial tracking record set in place. They have applied for a LWML grant. They currently have one application in hand with the possibility of one other. They hope to have the teacher position filled by March 1st. Board of Evangelism report by Tim. The board is working on creating a welcome center/visitor center in narthex and have other plans as outlined on the handout.

Old Business:

Paul Meyers has volunteered to be the delegate for the district convention which will be held July 8-10, 2012. An alternate is needed. Larry Finck agrees he will be the alternate. Motion was made by Tim to elect Paul and Larry. Motion carried.

New Business:

Preschool: Discussion was held regarding removing the dividers in the future preschool room per fire marshal's instructions. Lisa Hocker also talked about the escape door needed in that room. Joan made a motion that voters allow preschool board to place an emergency exit door according to fire marshal's specifications on north end of the preschool room. Work will be done by Dennis Hodel. Seconded by Larry Finck. After more discussion on needed changes in the future preschool room and the responsibilities of the Trustees, the previous motion was rescinded. A new motion was made by Joan for voters to allow the preschool board permission to bring the preschool room up to fire marshal's code in order to hold the preschool in that room. Seconded by Paul Meyers. Motion carried. Sandy Finck wanted preschool board to know that the health department stated no cooking can be done in second kitchen for preschool purposes.

Pastor began a discussion on other Preschool items on the agenda. The Preschool board needs to set their budget for the upcoming preschool year. When the surveys were conducted on congregational support for the preschool, 75% surveyed said the congregation should help support the preschool up to \$2,500 for each school year. The Preschool board would like congregation to consider paying the added insurance costs needed. At this time there is not a definite amount for that cost, but the initial study indicated it would be approximately \$1,500. In addition, Pastor discussed the handout regarding supplementing tuition for Trinity members' children, but also keeping in mind church will have added costs in electricity and various other costs related to operating the preschool. No further discussion was held on the tuition issue because of the late hour. Craig Duncan moved to table a motion on the insurance issue to a special voters meeting due to the late hour. Voters agreed that the insurance is an important issue that needs to be decided immediately. Further discussion was held.

Larry Finck made a motion that the congregation pay increased costs on insurance policy on a continuing basis each year up to the amount of \$2,500 until we vote different. Seconded by Paul Meyers. Barb Weber made a suggestion to ask insurance company if we need an umbrella policy. Joan stated she will do so. Motion carried.

A portion of the handout which will be discussed in the future was a voting membership addition to the bylaws, which was read to the voters by Tim. Also on the handout were the terms and duties of the preschool board and the preschool bylaws.

Lisa Hocker made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Craig. Meeting was adjourned with the Lord's prayer.