



*YOUR ATONEMENT
LUTHERAN CHURCH
NOVEMBER 2015
NEWSLETTER*

Hi Everyone,

This is your new Atonement Lutheran Church Newsletter. This is new for us in the office so we will be improving as we go. The office welcomes any entries you would like to have printed in the newsletter. Try to have your items into the office by the 25th of every month. We welcome all ministries to have an article placed here for your fellow parishioners. Hope you enjoy the items in this newsletter and look forward to seeing you next month.

God Bless/Office Staff

“A Chat with the Pastor”

“After three days, they found [the boy Jesus] in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, ‘Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you.’ ‘Why were you searching for me?’ Jesus asked. ‘Didn’t you know I had to be in my Father’s house?’” – Luke 2:46-49

Any parent who can’t find a child knows something of the anxiety Joseph and Mary felt when twelve year old Jesus goes missing. “We’ve been searching all over for you – how could you do this to us?” I can’t help thinking of the day I came out of the bathroom to a strangely quiet house. Brian was still in diapers, but while I was predisposed he saw his opportunity to escape. As I was frantically searching each room in the house for a second and third time, a knock came on the door. It was the lady next door, and she had a little boy in diapers in her arms. “I found him running down the street towards the McDonalds,” she said. Apparently, the call of the golden arches overwhelmed any concern he had for his own personal safety.

History repeated itself when we moved across the state. I had recently started at my second church and we were in the church basement enjoying a marvelous potluck after the service. Soon, two of the church members, a mother and daughter, came down the stairs with a little boy in between. They had found Brian running down the sidewalk (which ran along a busy street), heading towards the McDonalds two blocks away. Again, the golden arches were calling irresistibly.

As he joined his family on their trip to Jerusalem, Jesus must have felt like he was coming home. Nazareth was a tiny town, barely a bump in the road. Jerusalem was a magnificent walled city of nearly 100,000, David’s capital and site of the Jewish Temple. The Romans considered it a hole in the wall, but to Jews it was the center of the world. As one modern author puts it, “there was no city more unique, more holy, more venerable in all the world than Jerusalem” (Reza Aslan, *Zealot*, p. 11).

And there on the Temple mount stood the amazing Temple built as a house of worship for all the Jews. In Psalm 69:9 God’s faithful one declares that “zeal for your house shall consume me,” and we see just that happen to the boy Jesus. He is drawn not to golden arches, but to the golden walls that towered above the city. He goes there to be in his Father’s house, to spend time in the place which was built for the purpose of bringing human hearts into their Maker’s backyard, of connecting heaven and earth. There in the Temple courts he talked to the religious professionals and wannabes, and amazed them with wisdom and understanding even they had never heard. There in the house of God, Jesus was on home turf.

A lot has been said about the younger generations today, especially those who are now between 15 and 30 who are commonly referred to as “Millennials.” As a whole, this generation shows great support for issues such as same-sex marriage and legalizing marijuana. They are also the most educated and racially diverse generation America has known. They are less likely to invest, and more likely to choose a job they love over one with a higher paycheck than previous generations, but 84% give to charity (often through Kickstarter or other crowdsourcing websites). One researcher calls them “digital natives” because they have grown up surrounded by digital technology and the Internet.

The religious habits of Millennials have been studied for years. We know they are part of a long trend in America of decreasing religious participation, going back to the 1940’s. They are less likely to describe themselves as religious as previous generations, and when they do, there is an increasing likelihood that they believe in a “higher power” rather than a traditional idea of God. 25% of them declare themselves to have no religious affiliation, which has earned that group the label “Nones.”

Despite concerns about the changing relationship between young people and their faith, the picture changes when looking at Millennials who do claim to be Christian. Within that group, recent research suggests today’s young people tend to be more committed to their faith than Baby Boomers or

Gen X Christians who preceded them. November's issue of Relevant Magazine quotes David Kinnaman, president of Barna Research Group, as saying that a "countertrend" is emerging in this generation: "...the trend toward 'noneness' is being 'counterbalanced by a different one of younger Christians being as or more committed to the Bible, Christian practice, and even theology' as Christians before them..."

When I work with youth, I'm used to seeing a wide range of interest and participation within a youth group or confirmation class. Some are there because their parents make them be there, and you can tell. Some are really interested in the material -- they ask great questions and want to know more. Some are passionate about living for Christ and doing things for others. Others would rather sneak out and head for the golden arches.

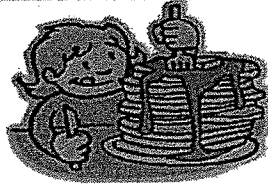
I have to say, it is a continual pleasure to work with the young people here at Atonement. Brenda Lenz is an exceptional youth leader, and I have great helpers in Marcia Weil and Jim Turner to assist with confirmation classes. The confirmation students show a genuine desire to grow in faith. Our youth, as busy as they are, value the time they are together. This year we have a small batch of senior high youth, while I have 8 in confirmation. Brenda suggested that we bring the groups together once a month for youth group. I'm excited about the possibilities this will bring to both our youth and confirmation programs. We'll be starting this on Nov. 21 -- after the regular confirmation class from 10:30am-noon, we'll have pizza and spend an hour or so together as the youth group.

I see many large churches around us investing lots of time and money in flashy, high-energy programs for young people. A small church like Atonement, however, can do an excellent job bringing young people together through a youth and family ministry that focuses on relationships and spiritual growth. It is important to make sure our young people remain included as we look toward the future, as we plan our worship services, as we think about the fellowship and service that we do. How are we reaching out to, listening to, and making room for Millennials and younger people among us? How can we make sure they don't go missing, or if they do it's because they're in their Father's house...?

Peace,

Pastor Scott

Pancake Breakfast!



PANCAKES. SAUSAGE. EGGS. ORANGE JUICE AND COFFEE

Saturday Nov 14, 8am-noon

Atonement Lutheran Church

29617 SR54 Wesley Chapel 813-973-2211

Helping Hands Pantry Fund Raiser

Stock our Shelves (SOS) Appeal

\$5 Donation; Kids under 5 free!

Cash Donations Welcome!

Plus Local Vendors and Crafts!

Helping Hands Food Pantry

Open to ALL every Wed 10 am — 2 pm

Helping 250 needy families every week!

Sponsored By:

Atonement Lutheran Church ALC

Pantry Volunteers/WELCA Boy

Scout Troop 2

Food Provided By: Sunrise

Eatery, Zephyrhills

Helping Hands Is a Non-Profit Volunteer Group. USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

ELCA BIBLE STUDY FOR WOMEN

Women of Atonement are now forming monthly bible study groups to encourage women to read the bible and learn the meaning of God's word. The bible study series is found in "Gather Magazine" published 10 times a year by Women of Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The annual subscription is \$15.00, it takes about 2 months to start receiving the magazine. Starting in 2016 a four-session Bible study will be on the book of Philippians. The authors of the studies are generally women pastors or leaders of the ELCA. In addition the articles in the monthly magazine relate to the monthly Bible study.

Each month the magazine has a Bible Study along with a leaders guide. The studies are not difficult and provide many thought provoking concepts and views.

There are 6 women from Atonement currently using the study in Gather Magazine. The monthly study last about 2 hours and is held in members' homes. The rewards are many, Biblical understanding, meeting new women, singing, praying together, sharing, fellowship and, of course, good food. It is recommended that groups stay small for discussion and participation by all attending.

If you are interested in forming/joining a bible study group there is a sign-up sheet in the lobby. You need to sign up for a specific day of the week and time that you would be available to attend and a contact number. For more information and help in getting started contact Marlys Luehmann 352-668-4481. Copies of 2015 Gather Magazine are available at the church office for preview.

The Prayer Ministry group continues to look for ways to improve our church family commitment to prayer. A brochure with styles of prayer and inspirations is being considered as a prayer guide to make our members more comfortable with prayer. If you have ideas or suggestions for ways to implement our prayer outreach please let me know.

Prayer Group meetings are devoted to prayer for friends and members in crises, our church and our country but a portion of time will be spent on learning the different forms of prayer and fellowship. Coffee is always available.

We meet the 3rd Friday of each month at 10 am at my home. Please join us. Call or email me for more information.

Lolalambert056@gmail.com 813-423-2328

THE MUSIC CORNER

Again, November has arrived, bringing reminders of a few things. (1) Daily Savings Time ends on the 1st (set clock back one hour); (2) Election Day on the 3rd; (3) Veterans Day on the 11th; (4) Thanksgiving Day on the 26th; and (3) the season of Advent starts on the 29th. Interestingly, in any given year, November starts on the same day of the week as March and ends on the same day of the week as August.

Our gratitude to the men and women, as well as to their families and loved ones, who have sacrificed their lives to fight for freedom in various parts of the world, knows no bounds. We continue to pray for those who have survived and come home sick or wounded or not like they were before they went to war. May everyone find the grace to express their gratitude by helping them in any way.

Thanksgiving Day comes on the heels of Veterans Day. Although this day is designated as one special day of thanksgiving, we Christians believe that every day is Thanksgiving Day; that every day there is always something to thank God for; and that God's mercies are new every morning and great His faithfulness endures forever. What beautiful and comforting thoughts these are and there is just one thing for us to do: BELIEVE.

Then, as Advent reminds us, God's greatest gift came in the form of a tiny Baby born in a manger, grew up as a carpenter and was regarded as just an ordinary man in His hometown. Then He fulfilled His mission of redeeming us from our guilt sentence, which is death, by taking our death upon Himself. We can't ever undermine the depth of such love from the sinless Him who lay down His life for us, unworthy though we may be.

The choir will remind us of all the wonderful events about the first steps that Jesus took to fulfill Jesus' mission by performance of the Christmas cantata for this season, *Worship the King* by David Culross. Once again, we tell the good news in song and recount His birth with our voices. Why not come and join us in doing all this? If you can sing (no, I don't expect a trained or operatic voice) and can keep pitch, rhythm and harmony together, follow my leading, and have the inclination to serve the Lord in this manner, DO COME.

Join us on Tuesday evenings at 7:30 when we continue to learn this particular musical narration of Christmas. Tuesday rehearsals will continue till the two Tuesdays before Dec. 13 which is the scheduled date when we sing the cantata at Atonement. Also, we are having an early performance (like our dress rehearsal) at 3 p.m. at Westbrooke Manor Assisted Living Facility in Zephyrhills. Here's a chance for anyone who can't be at Atonement on Dec. 13 to hear the cantata. Tell your friends.

Rehearsals for Sunday anthems will continue on Tuesdays at 8:30 p.m. after the cantata rehearsal. Do come and help us make a joyful noise unto the Lord with praise and thanksgiving.

Ruby L. Aguir
Choir Director



NOVEMBER BIRTHDAY

Aepfel, Matthew	Nov. 9
Anderson, Macie	Nov. 7
Davis, Ann	Nov. 7
Giesking, AJ	Nov. 18
Guthke, Maureen	Nov. 2
Lenz, Brenda	Nov. 23
Lenz, Nils	Nov. 22
Peterson, Ruth	Nov. 10
Prescott, Brian	Nov. 16
Reynolds (Diemer), Joshua	Nov. 13
Stripe, Jerry	Nov. 13
Zabel, Stacey	Nov. 5

NOVEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

Lenz, Brenda & Nils	Nov. 8, 1986
Craig, Barbara & Mike	Nov. 15, 1975

*Happy
Anniversary*