

FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH NEWSLETTER

Volume 4, Issue 08 August, 2019 928-535-9575 2750 Mogollon Drive, Overgaard, AZ 85933

www.faithlutheranovergaard.org

WORSHIP SERVICES – 10:30 am & 6:00 pm Sunday
Solid Bible-Based Preaching & Teaching

"Connected"



I was pastor of one inner-city church for 16 years. Our house was across the street from the church, and also just two houses from the cross street that served as the border between two of the meanest gangs in Los Angeles. We had the bullet holes in our house and in the church to prove it. The Highland Park Bad Boys and the Avenues had frequent skirmishes in the street right in front of our house as they vied for control of our neighborhood (officially Highland Park Bad Boys territory) and the lucrative vice and drug businesses that another gang (the Bloods) operated out of the apartment buildings on our street. Whichever gang controlled our street collected "rent" from the Bloods in exchange for "permission" to operate on "their turf".

When we first arrived, the gun battles between the two gangs were frequent; at least once a week and sometimes daily. Often, these shootouts involved more than two or three shooters, and sometimes involved semi-automatic, full-automatic rifles, and shotguns.

Basically, the gangs hold power in neighborhoods using two tactics; Divide and Conquer, and Fear (terrorism). When they infest a neighborhood, they first look for the signs of a lack of community; people keeping largely to themselves; run-down housing and

yards; litter on the street and in yards, abandoned, broken-down vehicles and the like. Then the gang-members begin the terrorism; harassing school kids on their way to school, tagging walls with their gang signs and mottos, congregating on corners until very late at night making lots of noise and occasionally firing off a round or two either into the air or into the side of someone's house. The result is that the occupants of the neighborhood are afraid to come out of their houses ... and as everyone (except the gang members) avoids lingering outside for any length of time, there is no neighbor to neighbor conversation. So whatever sense of community may have been there before is snuffed out.

They recruit and retain members using Fear as well. (You join because you are afraid of "the other gang", and you stay because, once you are "in", the only way "out" is in a coffin.) The violence is self-propagating, as the only real way "in" for the boys is to kill one of the "enemy" (who has killed "one of yours"). Getting "in" as a minor is encouraged, since the "worst that can happen to you is that you go to Juvie until you are 18." In that way, the elders (who are not already in prison) get the minors to do their dirty work for them while they avoid legal culpability.

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Women's Ministry

Open to ALL women who attend Faith

Lutheran Church!

- Discussed upcoming Silent Auction (Sept 7)
- Decided on Ribs for picnic in the park (Aug 25)
- Next meeting – August 19

Sunday Evening Services at 6:00 PM

amazonsmile

IF YOU SHOP ON AMAZON, BY LOGGING INTO SMILE.AMAZON.COM 0.5% OF THE PURCHASE PRICE CAN BE DIRECTED TO FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH, OVERGAARD. ONCE ON SIMPLY CLICK "CHANGE CHARITY" BUTTON THEN SEARCH FOR "FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH OVERGAARD"



Birthdays

- | | |
|------------------|--------------------------|
| August 3 | Judy Newton |
| August 6 | Linda Chackerian |
| August 8 | Rosalie Zimmerman |
| August 13 | Ann Witt |
| August 16 | Candy Murray |

Anniversaries

- | | |
|---------------|--------------------------------|
| Aug 05 | Wayne & Linda Minde |
| Aug 21 | Jerry & Lin Rose |

CHURCH COUNCIL UPDATE



- Worked on and approved 2019-2020 Budget
- Next

Congregational meeting July 28 – Budget was unanimously approved.

MONTHLY MEETINGS & EVENTS



Aug 06 – Church Cleaning 9:00am
Aug 19 – Elder’s Meeting 9:00am
Aug 19 – Women’s Ministry at 1:30pm
Aug 25 – Church Picnic in the Park 10:30am
Aug 27 – Council Meeting at 9am



Practice Tuesdays - 4:30 PM

Pastor's Office Hours

Mondays - 10am - 4pm In the Office
Tuesdays - 10am - 12pm In the Office
Wednesdays - Visitation Day
Thursdays - 10am - 12 pm In the Office

Call for appointment -
928-535-9575 or 323-717-4390

revnwirtz@yahoo.com,
or just drop in, or call anytime

BIBLE STUDY

Sundays – 9 am

James

Thursdays - 9 am

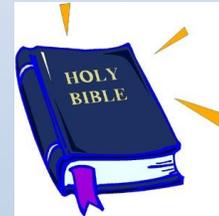
Joshua

Mondays – 2pm

Adult Confirmation

Wednesdays – 4:30pm

Youth Confirmation



SUNDAY SCHOOL

Bible Lesson
for Kids



Sundays – 9 am

Sermons and Bible Studies can
be listened to on the website.

www.faithlutheranovergaard.org

After a shoot out across the street from our pre-school when the children were in the line of fire, I started talking and walking. I walked to all the gang occupied houses that I knew of and I talked with them. I tried to get them to think about their own families and the deadly legacy they were leaving. I talked to the younger boys in the neighborhood and tried to show them alternatives to gang-life. I visited gang members when they were sent to jail and talked to THEM. I talked to the mayor. I talked to our councilman. I talked to the District Attorney of Los Angeles. I talked to SWAT. I talked to ATF. I talked to the DEA. I talked to our precinct captain, and our community relations officer. I talked to the police that patrolled our neighborhood. I talked to anyone who would listen. AND I talked to our neighbors. I invited everyone (government, law enforcement, Probation, all our neighbors, and even gang members) to come to our parish hall and regularly TALK TO EACH OTHER. I established our church as a "sanctuary" for anyone who was afraid and assured them protection from their persecutors while they were insider our walls.

I also put our precinct headquarters on speed dial on my cell phone ... and used it. When I saw gang members congregating and generally disturbing the peace on a corner late at night, I would press the speed dial, walk over to them and announce, as I held up my now lit-up phone, "You guys can keep messing around, but I just wanted you to know that this is LAPD on the line right now and they're on the way over." They never failed to disperse accordingly.

The result was that I became fairly well known as a pastor and as a resident who was not afraid, and who had "friends in high places." That I was a pastor, and that anyone who knew me, or knew of me, knew that they had nothing to fear from me personally and that I was sincere ... I could be trusted to follow through with whatever I said.

One day I was in my front yard, and I hear a scream from a woman in the parking lot next door. I exited my yard immediately and ran over to the parking lot where I found a well-muscled 6 foot man beating on what I presumed was his "girlfriend". I was half a foot shorter than him, and not nearly in as good of shape as he, but bullies have always flipped the "stupid" switch in my head. Even though one of the locals yelled at me, "No Pastor! Don't!" I went up to him and pulled him off the woman, telling her to run to my house and call the police.

Mr. Six Foot raised to his full height and then some (as he even raised up on his toes) and glared at me. He started to go around me to chase her, and I pushed him back. He tried to brush me aside but I shoved him back again with my open hand, hard, in his chest. He looked at me, enraged, and roared at me, "YOU DON'T TOUCH A BLACK MAN! I'LL KILL YOU!"

I was just beginning to reconsider the wisdom of my neighbor's warning, and preparing to receive some serious hurt, but I just couldn't let him hurt that woman any more. It was just at that moment that I was rescued by three of the man's friends who grabbed him from behind and wrestled and dragged him backward away from me. I recognized one of them as a member of The Bloods who lived in the apartments. I heard him tell the man, who was still struggling against his three friends, "You DON'T mess around with THAT white boy; he's connected!"

To this day, I don't know whether he meant that I was connected to every law-enforcement agency in the city of Los Angeles, or that I was connected to God. One thing I do know; it sure is nice to be connected. Several places in the history of God's people, their connection to Him protected them and gave them victory in the face of overwhelming odds and overwhelming enemies, even if that meant taking them home to himself. While this could have ended very differently ... with serious injury or even death to me, this I do know; I AM connected to God as Jesus has fought my greatest battle for me – my own sin, and the death that comes from it. Jesus has forgiven my sin and defeated death itself for me . . . and for you! I stand in His victory because I trust in what he has done for me. In that way I really am "connected". Are you connected?

"The LORD is on my side; I will not fear.

What can man do to me?" - Psalm 118:6

"... in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord". - Romans 8:37-39