

FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH NEWSLETTER

Volume 4, Issue 11 November, 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

"IF I SHOULD DIE BEFORE I WAKE"



how to blow a cold wind! Patty had the two oldest boys in tow and I had the baby (Isaac) snuggled cozily in a backpack on my back. We were crossing the parking lot from one store to another in a shopping mall, enjoying our walk together, breathing in the crisp winter air. We were no strangers to cold winter conditions, having lived in Portland and in the mountains of California before. We were both competent winter drivers, well acquainted with driving under hazardous rain, snow, and black ice conditions.

I guess that I forgot to apply my inclement weather driving skills to walking. Whereas driving in winter conditions requires constant vigilance and caution, today I was in a bit of a hurry to get across the parking lot and neglected to pay careful attention to the ground beneath my feet.

I impatiently turned my head back to urge Patty to hurry up and keep up as I stepped off the curb and onto the parking lot. As I resolutely returned my gaze forward my foot came into contact with what I confidently assumed would be the firm asphalt pavement of the parking lot. . .

. . . It was not. The asphalt lay invisibly below a one-inch sheet of perfectly smooth and completely frictionless black ice. My leading foot flew out forward from beneath me, followed by my other foot that I desperately threw down searching for any point of traction. There was none. With both feet in front of me I was falling backward toward the frozen, rock hard black ice and pavement below. Time slowed to a crawl . . . as did all my muscles even as I yelled at then to MOVE!

It was our first winter in the Mid-West. There wasn't that much snow on the ground (a disappointment to us), but Indiana sure knows

"ISAAC!" my brained screamed. "Isaac is back there, and you are going to crush him!"

I commanded my body to turn around so that I would NOT land on my back ... and on Isaac. But slow as time was, my body was even slower as I only succeeded in twisting partially to one side before impact.

At impact, it was not my side that first encountered the ice, but Isaac's head... and then the full weight of my falling 200 pounds crushing his head between my shoulder blade and the anvil-hard ice below.

In my 25 years of serving hurting people as their pastor I have watched, more times than I wish to number, as people have said goodbye to family or friends that they love. An almost equal amount of times I have consoled those whose grief was compounded by "arriving too late" to say goodbye. Not a few times have I held a sobbing parent in my arms who not only grieved over the violent death of their child, but whose grief was overwhelmingly weighed down upon them by a sense of personal guilt. "If only I had ...", or "If only I had not ..."

When a parent loses a child to death, especially violent death, the grief and guilt is unequalled by any pain you can imagine. The first thought is that, "My baby was ALONE and terrified. I wasn't there for him!" What can be worse than a helpless child dying in pain, terrified, and ... alone.

As parents it is our sacred and solemn duty to be there for our children; to protect them; even to die for them. ... and when we fail (and we will and do fail), how deep does our failure twist the knife into our own hearts?

With Isaac, now completely silent, beneath me on the cold, hard ice, I scrambled to get off him and release the backpack so I could get to him. "Isaac! Isaac!" I cried as I fumbled with the strap release.

Deafening silence.

Continued on the last page)



Women's Ministry

Open to ALL women who attend Faith Lutheran Church!

- There was no meeting in Octobrr
- Next meeting November 18, 2019

Sunday Evening Services at 6:00 PM

amazon smile

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

- | | |
|-------------|---------------------|
| November 7 | Jim McClurg |
| November 8 | Mike Gill |
| November 14 | Brian Parker |
| November 15 | Pastor Wirtz |
| | Sonia Dittmer, |
| | Maegan Harding |
| November 22 | Christina Cox |
| November 28 | Morgan & Raegan Cox |
| November 29 | Ali Harding |

Anniversaries

- | | |
|--------|-------------------|
| Nov 2 | Ron & Mary Unger |
| Nov 15 | Jim & Jan McClurg |

CHURCH COUNCIL UPDATE



- Pastor reported that while the Fall decrease has begun, attendance has generally been greater this year.
- Reformation and Thanksgiving Services are being added this year.
- Trustees are working on resolving the exhaust fan leak over the range. The roof cap needs a seal installed.

MONTHLY MEETINGS & EVENTS



- Nov 05 – Church Cleaning 9:00am
- Nov 13 – Pastor in Phoenix for Conference
- Nov 18 – Elders Meeting 9:00am
– Women’s Ministry at 1:30pm
- Nov 21 – Elders Bible Study 8am
- Nov 26 – Church Council at 9am
- Nov 24 – Potluck after Morning Service
- Nov 28 – THANKSGIVING SERVICE



Practice Wednesdays - 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

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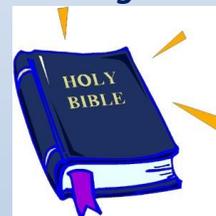
Tuesdays – 5:00 pm

Youth Confirmation

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Thursdays - 9 am

Judges



SUNDAY SCHOOL

Bible Lesson
for Kids



Sundays – 9 am

Sermons can be listened to on
the website.

www.faithlutheranovergaard.org

(Pastor's Corner: continued from page 1)

"Oh God! O God! O God!" I was not taking the Lord's name in vain, I was desperately PRAYING!
Now the silence was so loud it filled me with terror.

"Oh God! PLEASE! Don't let him die! Take me instead!"

Silence still.

Then the words of evening prayer came to me,

"I thank you, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong and graciously keep me this night. **For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things.** Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen"

Perhaps a more commonly known prayer says pretty much the same thing,

"Now I lay me down to sleep
And pray the Lord my soul to keep
If I should die before I wake
I pray the Lord my soul to take."

The point is, that for those who trust Christ to deliver them from all evil and death (even as Jesus taught us to pray; "deliver us from evil"), it means that we have comfort in knowing that we are NEVER ALONE. Even when no other mortal can be with us, Jesus has not left us. He has even charged his powerful angels to stand by us ... and, finally, to carry us to himself. As it is for us, who trust in Jesus, even so it is for the ones we love who also have faith in Him.

I (Jesus) am with you always, to the end of the age."
~ Matthew 28:20

"See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that in heaven their angels always see the face of my Father who is in heaven.

~ Matthew 18:10-11

For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways. On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.

~ Psalm 91:11-12

And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.

~ John 14:3

The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's side.

~ Luke 19:22

The world now a blur through my tears, time and senses returning to their proper speed, my last prayer as the latch released was, "Lord, I don't want to lose him. I can't bear the thought that I killed my own son, but ... I KNOW that he has been in your arms since the day you adopted him through the waters of your baptism. ... I know, with You, he is safe ... in this life ...and the next."

Then the silence of a baby's deep, DEEP inhalation before the vocal outburst of objection to pain was broken by the ear piercing screams of my youngest child

... God's child!

EPILOGUE

Twenty years later, my confidence in God's care of my son was, again put to the test, when I asked him at the altar of prayer if he was prepared to give his life in service to his country. He answered, "Yes." And I was comforted in knowing that wherever he went and whatever happened, he was not alone and (in Christ) never would be. Three years later, while he was in Bagdad, ISIS laid siege to the city. I held fast to the comfort that had been given me before. (Even though there was only an overwhelmingly outnumbered skeleton contingent of marines to protect the city, the walls were never breached)

Today, he has a son and daughter of his own. Next year he will also shepherd a flock of hurting, wounded sheep. His consolation to them and comfort in his own family will be the same that has carried me and all I have served over these many years. I hope it will be yours too. In Jesus, you are loved, safe, and never alone.