

FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH NEWSLETTER

Volume 6, Issue 03 – March, 2021 928-535-9575 2750 Mogollon Drive, Overgaard, AZ 85933

www.faithlutheranovergaard.org

SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES – 9:30 am

Is Believing in God Enough?

“Do you believe in God?”

If you are like most people in our country you would likely answer,

“Yes” to that question. And with that affirmation of your “faith” you might

also join the crowd in thinking that, all things weighed in the balance, you

and God are on relatively good terms. Certainly not in much danger of missing out on your

“eternal reward” for being the basically “good person” that you are. After all, you’re not

a thief, robber, pervert, or murderer. You’re pretty nice to other people, most of the time.

You even volunteer at the library, or food bank, or homeless shelter. You once even bought a Big Mac for

beggar outside of McDonald’s! When you think about it, in all humility, you really do kind of shine.

“Do you go to church?”

A lot of people answer that question this way, “If I have to be honest about it; No, I *don’t* go to church. To be quite frank, I don’t really have the time to waste going to church. I have a lot of responsibilities in my life, and when I’m not up to my eyeballs in them, I need some personal ‘me time’ to relax and rejuvenate. Besides, I don’t *need* to go worship according to some man-made tradition or special building. I’m closest to God when I’m in nature, in the forest, or going fishing. Me and God do just fine on our own. I pray to him and tell him what I need all the time. What else does anyone really need beside that? People have put too much baggage around God over the years. I do ‘PURE Church’ on my own ... without all the baggage!”

“Do you know God?”

Now you might be thinking to yourself, “What

kind of crazy question is that, who *knows* God?

Can *anyone* know God? Isn’t all that

really matters is to believe in God

... you know, believe that he

exists? But actually

KNOW

him? It’s not like I’ve ever had him over for dinner or

anything like that. I mean, he’s so far away ... way up in heaven, and probably never even *heard of me*. How could I, or *anyone know* God?”

“Are demons generally smarter than humans?”

(I threw this one in to get your attention. I will answer the question now with a brief “Yes”, and circle back in a moment with how I have come to this conclusion)

These are all very important questions, and the answers are equally important and very revealing. The first question about “belief” in God is important because how it is answered sharply divides the definitions of “belief” verses “faith”. To “believe” in something is no more than an acknowledgment that the thing is true or exists. The simple acknowledgement that God exists is a long way from identifying WHO that God is. In our world, almost everyone believes that *some* kind of god or gods exist, but there is so much diversity of opinion about *who* the god or gods are that many finally throw up their hands and say, “There must be a god, I just don’t know who he or she is!”



MONTHLY MEETINGS & EVENTS



Mar 15 – Elders Meeting 9:00am
- Women's Ministry 1:00pm
Mar 23 – Council Meeting
Mar 28 – Confirmation of Amelia Jensen

*Lenten Midweek Services at 6pm
every Wednesday until Holy Week.*



Women's Ministry

**Open to ALL women who attend
Faith Lutheran Church!**

- Met February 15.
- No Lenten Soup Suppers due to COVID.
- Optimistic for Rummage Sale 2020.
 - Masks will be mandatory and provided if needed.

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**



CHURCH COUNCIL UPDATE

- Met February 23
- No actionable items
- General Health of the Congregation is good. Financials are doing well. Attendance is down due to Covid, but numbers are better than 75% for this time of year.

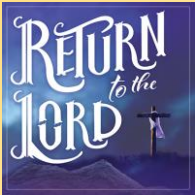


Birthdays

Mar 7 Teddi Jackson
 Mar 22 Viola Allen
 Mar 27 Mary Robles

Anniversaries

March 19 Maegan and Mike Garrison



In the Book of Joel, the prophet paints a vivid picture of the coming judgment of God, the Day of the Lord. The imagery is bold and terrifying: hordes of locusts swarming over the land and decimating everything. Joel's prophecy has teeth even today as wars rage, natural disasters threaten and destroy, and our culture seems to be unraveling. But right in the middle of this frightening portent, we find a tender invitation from the Lord: "Return to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love; and He relents over disaster" (Joel 2:13). God's invitation and promise finds its fullness in Jesus Christ, who personifies and accomplishes all that God declares. During this season of Lent, we are considering the theme "Return to the Lord" and examine how the call to return played out in practical ways for the people who walked alongside Christ as He demonstrated and carried out God's grace and mercy on our behalf, taking God's wrath upon Himself, setting the stage for God to "turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind Him" (Joel 2:14).

Bible Studies & Sunday Services

Bible Studies

Sundays – 8:00 am: Revelation
 – 10:45 am: Youth Confirmation

Thursdays – 9:30 am: 1 Kings

Sunday Services

9:30 am

Sunday Services can be viewed and listened to on the website either **live** or archived.

www.faithlutheran.org/worship

(recorded audio and video usually posts by 1:00pm Sunday)

Lenten Midweek Services -

Wednesdays 6:00pm

Mar 28 – Palm Sunday & Confirmation of Amelia Jensen

Apr 01 – Maundy Thursday Service 6:00 pm

Apr 02 – Good Friday Service 6:00 pm

Apr 04 – Resurrection Sunday

It's at this point that I want to return to the last question, "Are demons generally smarter than us?" I can answer with an emphatic "YES" because there is NO DOUBT amongst demons **WHO** God is. They hate Him ... but they most assuredly know who He is.

And when [Jesus] came to the other side, to the country of the Gadarenes, two demon-possessed men met him, coming out of the tombs, so fierce that no one could pass that way. ²⁹ And behold, they cried out, "What have you to do with us, O Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time?" (Matthew 8:28-29)

And immediately there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit. And he cried out, "What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God." (Mark 1:23-24)

So, with all the **human** ambiguity and confusion about who God is, amongst evil **demons** there is total agreement that Jesus is the Holy Son of God. And, lest there be any doubt, He proved His divine authority as God by immediately silencing and dispatching the demons by the command of His word . . . both in the examples above and at every encounter, with no exceptions.

Now, the fact that even the demons "know" who is God does not equate with "knowing" God. One (simply "knowing" who God is) leaves us lost and without hope and the other (actually knowing God through a relationship of faith) rescues us from hopelessness. James, the brother of Christ, tells us as much in his letter: *You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder!* (James 2:19)

So, "knowing" God is much better than simply "knowing about Him". To "know" God is to know what He has revealed about Himself through His Word about who He is and what He has done for us in and through Jesus, His Christ ... and to TRUST Him in that Word and those actions. Trust is another word for faith, and while "belief" and "faith" are similar, they are not the same. One acknowledges, the other trusts.

Now, the more we learn and know about God, the more we learn about ourselves. Sadly, one of the first things we find out about ourselves is that, actually, we do NOT shine very brightly at all. In fact, measured against God's expectations and demands of us we are miserable failures ... completely without hope in and of ourselves.

That's where going to church and "knowing" God come in. Contrary to what you may have heard or personally believe about the value of spending time in Christian Corporate Worship, it is NOT an invention of man, but a divine institution and even a command from God (Remember the Sabbath and keep it Holy). Further it offers far more to you than you could ever do for yourself. For those who think they are "tight" with God because they pray, they may be missing two very important points; to WHOM are you praying, and is prayer your **only** connection to God? If you dialed the wrong number (who), your prayer is useless. If you only **speak** to God, but never **listen** ... your prayer is useless.

The listening comes from exposure to His Word, the Bible. Reading by yourself is certainly useful, but that is not the only way that God has provided for you to get to "know" Him and for Him to serve you. God is **not** far away, but close; as close as His Word; as close as other Christians; as close as His Divine Service to you in Corporate Christian Worship. By His command he has called you to physically gather with other Christians around His word (read, preached, and sung) and around His table where He offers His very body and blood in, with, and under the bread and wine of His Holy Supper, which He gives for the forgiveness of your sins and the guarantee of eternal life through Him. (**You** may have never had God over for dinner, but **He** has invited you to His Holy Feast) These are things that you can **only** receive by "going to church" in a Christian congregation.

So, in the grand scheme of things temporary and eternal; Is going to church important? Is a saving, eternal faith-relationship with God important? ... maybe **THE** most important thing?

... because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.
(Romans 10:9)