

Announcements

While Pastor Lilienthal is serving the vacancy at First Shell Rock Lutheran Church in Northwood, IA, some of these announcements reflect the concerns of that parish.

Please Keep in Your Prayers:

- Darrell Cafourek, medical needs who is struggling with his ailment at home
- Ernie Halvorson, who is going through various medical procedures
- Randy Giebel, who has various intensive

Members who are homebound, kept from gathering with us, but visited and called by the Pastor:

- Darrell & Rachelle Cafourek
- JoAnn Green
- Randy Giebel
- Ernie Halvorson
- Sandy Pieper
- Marcie Severson
- Betty Stalheim
- Verna Tuttle
- Marilyn Wendt
- Dale Thompson

Lay Education Conferences

On April 27 in Hartland and September 21 in Ames there are two Lay Conferences being held in our Circuit. The purpose is to keep laypeople (non-pastors) updated and strong in theological topics and discussions, so that the congregation may be strengthened. It is advisable for us to elect at least one delegate to attend each of these conferences.

Congregational Forum

Pastor Lilienthal has received a call to serve Our Savior's and Rock Dell Lutheran Churches in Belview, MN. He would like to host a congregational forum on Sunday, January 7, at 2p.m., to answer questions and discuss the thoughts of church members. If you would like to share your thoughts with Pastor Lilienthal during his deliberations, please attend this forum. If you cannot attend, you may share your thoughts with him by phone, e-mail, or written note. And please keep him in your prayers as he deliberates his calls.

Ladies Aid Minutes

The Ladies Aid met in Luther Hall on December 14th with a noon potluck dinner.

President Kathy Halvorson presided over the business meeting.

Thank you notes were read from Bethany Auxiliary, Cross-Stitch, Rachel's Hope, Bethany College, the Synod and Bethany students for the donations.

A motion was made by Carol Hagen and seconded by Marcie Drescher to give Christmas gifts to 8 Seminary students in the form of \$25 Walmart gift certificates.

The next meeting will be April 11, 2024. Plans will be made to have the Spring Salad Luncheon on May 3, 2024.

Respectfully submitted,
Betty Knutson, Sec.

January 2023

To Get Ahold of Pastor:

- **Wednesdays 11-2**
- I might not always be in my study, because I'm frequently out making pastoral calls or taking care of my family. **Call me: (715) 295-4020, or (507) 369-5832; or e-mail me: revmlilienthal@gmail.com**

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From Pastor's Desk

Rev. Michael G. Lilienthal

I told a friend recently how I continue to be amazed at the way God works. Looking at his operation through Moses in the Old Testament, for example, God demonstrates so clearly the ideal he requires, but also presents (and expects!) the failure of his people because of their sin. So we see him preparing at every step the restoration by his own power, grace, and sacrifice. My friend replied, "Indeed. The Lord's Supper always drives that home for me...the words 'for you' are so powerful. In the holy meal, of course, but in confession and absolution, in a well-preached sermon, and in the readings."

I realized that he was simply describing the Divine Service in general. That's where we regularly get all these gifts. It's so unfortunate that "going to church" is considered a requirement. This attitude has ironically made it possible today for many to avoid church. Some feel guilt over it, others feel justified in their absence. May God give us repentant hearts for the ways we have driven people from church! Our attitudes always should have been one




not of "should" but "get to."

When you think of people not coming to church, how often do you think of the Third Commandment? That's not wrong, of course. That commandment teaches us that we must not despise teaching and the Word but hold it sacred and *gladly hear and learn it*. But when others in the church make fellow worshipers feel as though they are lesser Christians because of how difficult it might be for them to make it to worship any given Sunday, the unfortunate result is often that those members *cause* their brothers and sisters to despise preaching and the Word.

In one of my favorite Psalms King David sings, "**I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go into the house of the LORD'**" (Ps. 122:1). Why can you be glad? Because of those words my friend pointed out: "for you." Jesus is here *for you*. Here he gives his body and blood *for you*. You aren't here for him. He's here *for you*.

And in turn, you are also here for your brothers and sisters in Christ. You can check your attitude when

January 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1— Circumcision & Name of Jesus	2	3 10a.m. Bible Study	4	5	6—Epiphany 6p.m. Service 
7—Holy Family 9a.m. Service  10:30 Sun. School 2p.m. Cong. Forum	8	9 7p.m. Two Parishes Meeting	10 10a.m. Bible Study	11	12	13
14—Epiphany 2 9a.m. Service 10:30 Sun. School	15	16	17 10a.m. Bible Study	18— Confession of St. Peter	19	20
21—Transfiguration 9a.m. Service  10:30 Sun. School / Voters' Meeting	22	23	24—St. Timothy 10a.m. Bible Study	25— Conversion of St. Paul	26	27
28—Septuagesima 9a.m. Service 10:30 Sun. School	29	30	31 10a.m. Bible Study			

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you come to church: is it one of joy or grumbling? Will you find someone to complain about? your words and actions encourage others to come, or to stay away? Rejoice instead in the forgiveness of sins you share here!

Think of this especially in the Lord's Supper, as my friend did. What utterly despicable sinners we all are—and yet God forgives you. He leaves it without doubt, too, by giving you this physical sign you can *taste* often! As often as we sin, I'd benefit

from tasting God's forgiveness every day. I certainly am humbled by my unworthiness to touch my Lord's body, let alone to ingest it. But it is in this exact way that he repairs our situation, raises me up, and gives me what I lack. As an additional blessing, he unites me to all other Christians—to you—in this meal as well. This is a better unity than any club membership or fraternity of feelings. We are united in the resurrected body of Christ!

Last Month:

Attendance:	Offerings Received:	Weekly Need:
11/26 32	\$687.00	\$2041.15
12/03 55	\$1810.05	
12/10 31	\$1099.00	
12/17 40	\$4814.05	
12/24 40		