

## THE MEASURE OF A MUSTARD SEED

*Jesus told a parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all your seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and perch in its branches" (Matthew 13:31,32).*

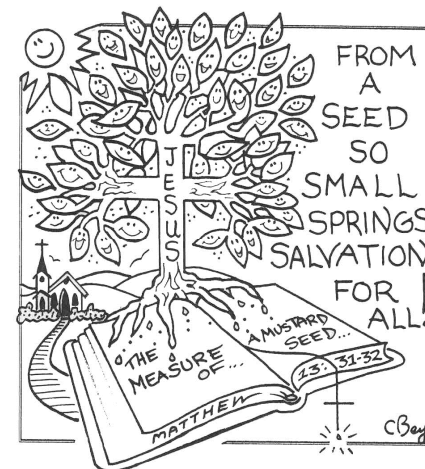
Who is America's richest man? America's tallest mountain? Largest lake? Largest city? Most populous state? If you answered Jeff Bezos, Mt. McKinley, Lake Superior, New York City, and California, you're part of the proof that Americans pay attention to big things. We live in bigger houses, eat larger meals, and work longer hours than almost any other people in the world. We tend to live by the motto, "Bigger is better."

But Jesus takes the "less is more" approach. He says: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed." Have you ever seen a mustard seed? It's so small that you could hold thousands in your hand. Why would Jesus tell us this? Because it's possible to be so focused on what *looks* big and impressive that we overlook him and his blessings.

It's a common mistake. At first glance, there was nothing big or impressive about Jesus. When he came to establish his kingdom, he arrived as a child of a poor girl in a conquered country. He was born in a barn. He grew up in an obscure village. His followers were nobodies. He never held a high position. He never lived in a palace or even a house of his own. After a few years in the public eye, he was killed on a cross like he was a ruthless criminal. On Good Friday he *looked* small and powerless.

When Jesus spoke about the mustard seed, he gave us a short story that speaks volumes for our lives. The measure of a mustard seed is not its tiny size, but the huge plant that it grows into. In the same way, the measure of Jesus' humble life and death is not how it appears to the human eye or if it meets some human standard, but what he accomplished. By his perfect life and his innocent death, Jesus has freed the world from the guilt of sin. He paid the ransom price God requires from sinners. Countless millions who have put their trust in him have become part of his eternal kingdom.

When Jesus rose from his humble grave to conquer death on Easter morning, he proved that what seems small and weak is amazingly powerful. And we need that reminder from time to time, don't we?



We need that reminder when our love for regularly gathering together for worship begins to wane. We need it, because it's all too easy to push worship aside if we forget the power of the message of Jesus found in the Word. We need that reminder when all the things of life are taking our attention away from Jesus. We need it, because it's all too easy to let Jesus become a low priority and overlook him and his blessings. We need that reminder when things in life aren't going well. We need it, because it's all too easy to let the problems in life make us think that Jesus is small and powerless.

But Jesus is not small and powerless. He is great and glorious. He is the Way, the Truth and the Life. As such, let us stay connected to his power through constant and regular use of his Word in worship, Bible Class and personal devotions.





Hosted by the Wild Rose Circuit  
at the  
Community Choice Credit Union Convention Center  
833 5th Ave - Des Moines, IA 50309

Save \$20 by registering early  
now through April 1, 2019

[www.LWMS.org](http://www.LWMS.org)

More information can be found on the table in the gathering area. There you will find the 56<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention Newsletter. Please take a copy if you are interested or go to [www.lwms.org](http://www.lwms.org).



### JESUS CARES WORSHIP AT THE CROSS

Our last Jesus Cares Worship at the Cross service was in November, but we would like to start having them again. The Worship at the Cross program is a simplified service that follows a format appropriate for people with a cognitive disability, including people with forms of dementia. Pictures and symbols lead participants through the parts of the service. These services provide individuals with special needs the opportunity to hear God's Word, participate in activities and engage in fellowship with family members, volunteers and community members.

In order to reach and invite as many of our local group homes to our service as possible, we could use your help. If this is something you would be able to help with, please talk to Pastor Neumann. We want to personally visit each group home and see if there is a day and time that works best, as well as providing them with information on what we will do. Our goal is to have our next Worship at the Cross service in April.

## THE LIVE TOMB – A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO WITNESS



What is a live tomb? It's an oxymoron – two words at odds with each other, but used to describe the same thing. It's also a way we could describe Jesus' tomb – he was dead, but rose to life. It's also what we call a unique opportunity to create more public awareness in our community about Easter events. We are again setting up a display of a tomb with live "Roman soldiers" standing guard at our Black River Falls location. Members are needed to help guard the tomb.

Like last year, there will be three hour shifts of two or three Roman guards in front of the closed tomb from 7:30 p.m. Friday (after the Good Friday service) to 5:30 a.m. Easter Sunday. At that time the tomb is opened we will have two angels waving to people as they come to the sunrise service at 8 a.m. We will have snacks, a fire pit for warmth and electric lighting for night. There will be handouts for anyone that stops with questions about what we are doing.

This is a living display, not a reenactment. Men, women and children may help guard the tomb as Roman soldiers – we will need a lot of help with this. We need two people to be angels for 2½ hours Sunday morning. We will need help setting up the tomb and help taking it down. Set-up will be Saturday, April 13 at 9 a.m. Take-down will be Saturday, May 4 at 9 a.m. This is very enjoyable fellowship! Come forward and help us witness to our community the saving love of our Lord. Sign-up sheets will be at both Cataract and Black River Falls locations during Lent. Contact Pastor Neumann or Brad Markhardt with any questions.

### YOUTH GROUP LOCK-IN

The Youth Group will be having a lock-in at our Black River Falls location on Friday—March 22, starting at 5 p.m. The Youth Group is open to all youth in 7-12th grade. A supper meal will be provided for them at 5 p.m. and parents are asked to be to church no later than 8 a.m. Saturday morning to pick their youth up.

If attending, the youth are encouraged to bring:

- 1) A six or twelve pack of soda to share with those at the lock-in
- 2) A snack to share with those at the lock-in
- 3) Board games they might like to play
- 4) A pillow and sleeping bag in case they get tired and want to sleep
- 5) Anything else that they might need in case they would like to sleep



Please watch the bulletin and your email for more information.



The pew edition of the new hymnal will be designed to make the text and music on the page clear and intuitive for all worshipers. Separate accompaniment editions for liturgy, psalms, psalter, and hymns will provide a robust resource for organists and pianists. Three settings of the main communion service will be included in the hymnal pew edition, each following similar worship structures while varying the musical style. Several additional musical settings are in development and will be made available digitally.

In addition to performance guidelines like tempo markings, the “Accompaniment for the Hymns” edition will include additional musical options for many hymns. A team within the Hymnal Project called the Musicians’ Resource Group is gathering even more arrangements for other instruments not included in the accompaniment edition, such as brass, flute, and guitar.

After four years of development, the updated lectionary for the new hymnal was recently completed. Each Sunday, the three Scripture readings, Prayer of the Day, Psalm of the Day, and Verse of the Day will now fall under one theme. The new Commentary on the Propers will help leaders plan their worship around these integrated service themes.

Each of these elements contributes to the Hymnal Project’s overall mission, which reads, “We begin our task so that worshipers now and long into the future can both hear for themselves and proclaim to God and the people around them the saving work of Jesus Christ.”

If you would like to learn more about the Hymnal Project and stay up to date on its continued progress, visit [welshymnal.com](http://welshymnal.com) and subscribe

**Answer:** The lesson about the Passover. Read about it together in Exodus 11-12:30.



N6598 County Highway A  
Black River Falls, WI 54615  
(mailing address)

N6774 Acorn Ave.  
Sparta, WI 54656

Phone: 715-284-0772  
Pastor: Joel Neumann

We're on the Web!  
[www.faithwels.com](http://www.faithwels.com)

**Faith Evangelical Lutheran Church** is a part of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod or WELS. The WELS is a church body with congregations in all fifty states and missionaries in 25 countries.

**We are a Christ Preaching Church!** We believe, teach and confess that Jesus is God's own Son, who came into the world to be the Savior of all people so that through his sufferings, death and resurrection, we might have forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

**We Are A Bible Teaching Church!** We believe and teach that the Bible is the true and divinely inspired Word of God, the sole authority for Christian faith and life.

*The Messenger* is published monthly for the congregation and friends of Faith Ev. Lutheran Church. Its purpose is to provide information regarding all areas of congregational news and to offer enlightening articles.

Anyone wishing to contribute articles, please contact either Pastor Neumann - in person or at the following email address: [pastorjoelneumann@gmail.com](mailto:pastorjoelneumann@gmail.com); or Laura Mueller at [muellerlaura@hotmail.com](mailto:muellerlaura@hotmail.com). Newsletter deadline: The submission deadline is the next-to-the-last Sunday of each month.

**LENTEN WORSHIP**

Starting Wednesday, March 6 and continuing through Wednesday, April 10, we will have special Lenten Wednesday afternoon/evening worship services in Cataract (4:30 p.m.) and Black River Falls (6:30 p.m.). These services will revolve around the theme: *Three Words of Truth*.

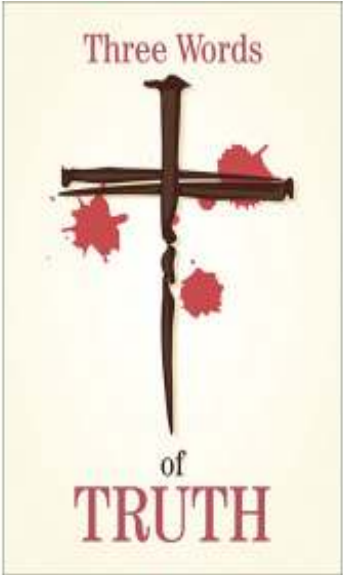
As one listens to the gospel accounts of Jesus’ passion, it is interesting to see how many little three-word phrases pop out, often with pointed impact. The themes for this Lenten sermon series make use of several of these well-known three-word phrases. Throughout this Lenten series we will consider:

- |                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| <i>Is it I?</i>        | <i>Love One Another</i>                    |
| <i>Watch and Pray</i>  | <i>I Am He</i>                             |
| <i>What Is Truth?</i>  | <i>Take Him Away!</i>                      |
| <i>Save Us Now!</i>    | <i>Take and Eat; Take and Drink</i>        |
| <i>It Is Finished!</i> | <i>Remember Jesus Christ: He Has Risen</i> |

We pray that the Lord richly bless our Lenten worship so that the eyes of our hearts may be enlightened in order to “know the hope to which he has called [us], the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe” (Ephesians 1:18,19).

**SCHEDULE CHANGE**

During the season of Lent our normal Wednesday confirmation and Bible study classes – as well as choir practice – will move to Mondays. We will still meet at 5:15 p.m. for confirmation, 6:15 p.m. for choir, and 7 p.m. for Bible Study. The first day of this change will be Monday, March 4.



**ASH WEDNESDAY**

Ash Wednesday  
Services – March 6

4:30 pm – Cataract  
6:30 pm – Black River Falls

**LENTEN MEALS**

As we approach the season of Lent, we again have the wonderful opportunity to see how God has blessed us, and how he provides for both our physical needs (in the form of convenient meals) and our souls (mid-week Lent services to reflect on and express our gratitude for what he did for us). We see Lent as a special time, a time for repentance and renewal.

The Ladies of Faith in Black River Falls have been forming teams, with each team working together on two of the six Wednesdays of Lent. This year’s menu will be a variety of soup and sandwiches each evening. The Ladies Aid in Cataract has also been planning their meals. Our church ladies thank everyone for their kindness and willingness to serve.

Plan ahead starting Wednesday, March 6 and running through April 10 for suppers from 5:30 p.m. to 6:15 p.m. at each location; followed by the mid-week service at 6:30 p.m. in Black River Falls; and preceded by a service at 4:30 p.m. in Cataract.



LADIES OF FAITH BLANKET MAKING

The Ladies of Faith—under the guidance of Laurie Goetzka—will get together for a second round of making Hospice quilts on [Saturday, March 9](#) in Black River Falls at 9 am. Lunch will be served by means of a simple pot luck (so bring a dish to pass); if you have a sewing machine and are willing to sew, please bring it; there will also be a need for scissors, ironing boards and irons. Even if sewing isn't your thing -you are still invited and welcome to come and enjoy the Christian fellowship. There are many other tasks which you will be able to do to help in making these quilts.



MISSION FESTIVAL (SPECIAL SERVICE TIME)

We will be having a special mission festival preacher and Bible Class presenter on [Sunday, March 24](#). Please NOTE the items below!

- 1) This will be a joint service held at our Black River Falls location. Service will start at 9:30 a.m. that morning.
- 2) There will be a Bible Class Presentation on Grace in Action at 10:45 a.m. (Information on this para-synodical organization can be found below)
- 3) Sunday School will still be held at 10:45 a.m.
- 4) A door offering will be collected to support **Grace in Action** after service that day.
- 5) A potluck will be held after the Bible Class at 12 noon.

OUR NAME

**Grace in Action** – It embodies that all goes back to God’s undeserved love at work in and through us.  
**nextdisciple.com** – We always want to focus on the future and equipping people for service and leadership, the next disciple.

WHO WE ARE

Grace in Action is a ministry leadership organization. It was founded in 2011 when a group of business leaders from the **WELS** got together and talked about how they could assist in ministry. They decided that leadership training was desperately needed. So they formed a group in 2011 called Grace In Action.

MEETINGS AND GROUP GATHERINGS THIS MONTH

- Outreach Meeting – Sunday, March 3 @ 12:30 p.m. in Black River Falls
- Ladies Aid – Thursday, March 7 @ 12:30 p.m. in Cataract
- Ladies of Faith – Tuesday, March 12 @ 6 p.m. in Black River Falls
- Child Protection Ad Hoc Meeting—Saturday, March 16 @ 9 a.m. in BRF
- Youth Group – Sunday, March 17 @ 2 p.m. in Black River Falls
- Faith Teachers – Sunday, March 24 @ 1:30 p.m. in Black River Falls
- Council – Tuesday, March 26 @ 6:30 p.m. in Black River Falls

CMO totals for 2018 and CMO subscriptions for 2019

(The following articles are from the February 19 issue of the Together Newsletter)

**Congregation Mission Offerings** (CMO) received in 2018 totaled \$21,111,878. We are grateful for this generous support of our synod’s mission and ministry. The total, however, was \$246,000 (1.2%) below the offerings received in 2017 and \$148,000 (0.7%) less than what congregations had indicated in their CMO subscriptions for the year. More than a decade of flat, and now even decreasing, CMO has made it increasingly challenging to maintain our current level of ministry, not to mention to seize some of the many gospel opportunities that God is graciously placing before us.

Adding to that challenge is the fact that subscriptions for 2019 are \$20,913,700, nearly 1% less than 2018 receipts. Since our planning forecasted that subscriptions would be met in 2018 and that subscriptions for 2019 would increase by 0.5%, the task to maintain and expand ministry has become even more difficult. The results for 2018 and subscriptions for 2019 are \$350,000 less than the forecast and compound to reductions from what was used for planning the next biennium of \$454,000 and \$456,000 for Fiscal Year 20 and Fiscal Year 21, respectively.

One bit of good news is that offerings for January 2019 were 6.4% higher than the January offerings in 2018.

At its meeting later this week, the Synodical Council will be looking to adopt a Ministry Financial Plan that recognizes these financial realities. All areas of ministry have been asked to look for ways to economize and to plan for less spending than what had been anticipated. Once a plan for the next two years is adopted by the Synodical Council, it will be forwarded to the synod convention this summer for approval.

As the economy improves, we pray that God will enable congregations to meet—and even exceed—their CMO subscriptions in 2019.

Serving in Christ,  
President Mark Schroeder

Big steps for the WELS Hymnal Project in 2019

The development of the new WELS hymnal and its supplementary products is making significant progress this year in anticipation of the final release scheduled for Advent 2021. A preview of the new hymnal will be available in 2020.

“It’s really wrapping up,” said Hymnal Project Director Rev. Michael Schultz. “Almost every aspect of the main content is going to be finished at the end of the calendar year.”

The Executive Committee of the Hymnal Project reviews and finalizes all content. Several specialized subcommittees lead the design of certain elements or worship resources that serve the specific needs of churchgoers, musicians, and pastors.

For example, the Hymnody Committee evaluates which hymns to include in the new hymnal. Similarly, the Psalmody Committee is completing the text of the Psalter, a resource containing the full text of all 150 psalms with multiple musical settings for each. Other subcommittees focus on rites and Scripture as well as the technology for and communication of the project.



# FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES SUMMARY

FEBRUARY 11, 2019

## OPENING DEVOTION

- The meeting opened at 6:00 pm with Pastor Neumann leading us in a short bible study on “Understanding Law and Gospel – Part 2”

## ATTENDANCE

- Pastor Neumann, Garrett Jessie, Dale Jessie, Jerry Kirchman, Dave Spaude, Grady Severson, Brad Rahmlow

## ELDERS REPORT

- Non-member baptism: Declan Dean Deleon – 1-20-19
- Summer worship times: The elders proposed surveying the congregation about summer worship service times. 3 possible church times will be presented for members to choose from.

## PASTOR’S REPORT

- Pastor presented a statistical report for the month of January
- Mission Festival – February 24 @ 9:30 a.m. Cataract
- Installation of church officers will take place on the Mission Festival Sunday
- A door offering has been or will be collected for all 3 para-synodical organizations visiting our congregation this year - 2019. A motion was made and passed that if the door offering is less than \$500, the balance will be taken out of the general fund to make a minimum of \$500 to be given to each organization

## FINANCIAL REPORT

- Brad presented the financial report which reflects we have met the needs for our January expenses. MSC to accept financial report.
- Brad will write a short article for the bulletin explaining the use of offering envelopes with the new budgeting system

## SPECIAL REPORTS

- Outreach Committee
  - Pastor passed on information from Brad Markhardt concerning a Leadership Experience Conference that will be held in Lacrosse on March 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>. The cost will be \$149 per person
  - Pastor also passed on information from Brad Markhardt concerning an article in the Forward in Christ about the Care Committee for Called Workers (CCCW). Brad wanted to share this information since the CCCW was included and added to Faith’s Vision Timeline this past year.
- Property Committee
  - Pastor informed the council that the microphone system at our Black River Falls location may need to be updated eventually due to static. Cost of the project would be ~ \$1,600

## ADJOURNMENT

- The meeting adjourned at 7:30 pm with Pastor leading us in the Lord’s Prayer
- The next Council Meeting will be Tuesday, March 26<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 held in BRF.

Recorded by Garrett Jessie

## FiSH ACTIVITY

The FiSH group (Faith’s Social Harbor) invites adults for an evening Win, Lose or Draw – basically charades using a whiteboard. Experience is NEVER required with any of our activities – come, learn and have fun! We’ll meet Saturday, March 9, from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the BRF building location. This is a great opportunity for you to invite a friend, relative, or coworker. FiSH is our social group geared toward recreational activities for adults, single or married, younger or older.



## FROM THE LIBRARY

Looking for a devotion book for the season of Lent? Our church library located in the Fellowship Hall at the BRF

*Triumph at the Cross* by Rev. Harold L. Senkbeil has 47 devotions that start with Ash Wednesday and end with Easter. The devotions lead you on a journey of repentance. The author uses Scripture to show that Jesus is

*Up to Jerusalem* by John A. Braun has 55 devotions that start with Ash Wednesday and go through the Easter season. These devotions tie the four gospels together and lead you through Jesus' journey to suffering and

To checkout, write the date, your name and the name of the book/DVD/CD in the notebook on the shelf.

To return, put the book/DVD/CD into the basket on the shelf and cross out your entry in the notebook.

## Birthdays

Emily Timm	3/5
John Pleau	9/9
Linda Jessie	3/11
Jim Christie	3/19
Dave Spaude	3/21
Dawn Manske	3/21
Carolyn Diener	3/21
Jayden Bedell	3/21
Mackenzie Bedell	3/21
Chase Manske	3/21
Kevin Keisow	3/22
Charlie Severson	3/23
Karin Jandt	3/27
Bruce Olsen	3/31

## Anniversaries

Grady + Nina Severson	3/24
Brent + Joie Bacon	3/26

## CHILDREN’S CORNER

The picture below depicts a Bible lesson from the Old Testament. Ask your child(ren) if they know which lesson it is. *(the answer can be found on the last page)*

