

The Messenger

May 2021

Our God is...Good

Everything that exists has attributes or characteristics. They are what help to define that thing. God has attributes as well. This year in our newsletter articles we are going to take a look at some of the attributes of God. As we consider his attributes, we will be considering God's own essence. As we consider his attributes, we will be confronted by mysteries beyond our full comprehension. Yet, we can simply listen to his Word and marvel

Have you ever felt like the guy in the cartoon with a rain cloud over his head? Wherever he goes, the rain cloud follows, but he's the only one getting wet.

When your relationships are stressed, your 401(k) tanks or your job is on the line, it feels like that rain cloud is following wherever you go. You see your friends or neighbors and you wonder, "Why am I the only one getting wet?"

At times like that, it's easy to wonder if God is good. It may feel as if God is good to some people, but right now he's skipping you. Sometimes it seems as if God plays favorites.

We can learn about God when we look at the way this world works. Aside from cartoons, the rain never falls on just one person. If God really played favorites, only the people of his choosing would be blessed with sun, rain, and the bounty of the earth.

Look outside. It is spring! Good people and

those not so good can enjoy the freshness.

God doesn't play favorites with sunshine and rain. That gives us insight into the way that he acts. The Bible says, "The Lord is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made" (Psalm 145:9).

Just as God sends rain and sunshine on people who believe in him and on people who don't, he sent his Son, Jesus, for every man, woman, and child on this earth. It doesn't matter whether people believe in him or not, he still sent Jesus here to save them.

Look outside again. Whether you know it or not, spring has come. The sunshine and rain tell us that God is good.

Whether you know it or not, God cares for you. Jesus' life and death tell us that God is good.

Come and hear about it. Through faith, you will learn that no matter what rainstorms come your way, the Son will still shine in your life.



A LOOK AT LUTHER

LUTHER BACK IN WITTENBERG

The Elector of Saxony, who had protected Luther by having him taken to the Wartburg Castle, warned Luther that he could not protect him if he left the Wartburg. Luther, however, wrote his ruler that he had a stronger Protector in God, who would always be able to take care of him. As matters were going, Luther could not stay in hiding any longer. The people to whom he had preached, who had seen the error and tyranny of the teaching of the Catholic church, and who believed in salvation by grace alone, needed him to teach and guide them.

That's because in Wittenberg some men were trying to reform the church in the wrong way. They thought that since they were no longer Roman Catholics, they should cast *everything* out of the churches that had been used by the Catholics. They began to remove the altars and the pictures and to change the whole order of service. By doing this, they went too far, and the church members became confused. The leaders did not know what to do, so they wrote to Luther about it. Luther saw that it was time for him to return to Wittenberg in order to continue the work he had begun.

There was great joy among the people when Luther was in Wittenberg again. In a short time most all of the troubles were settled. Luther worked hard to give the people a sound knowledge of God's Word and to build up the church with the pure gospel. From its enemies, this church received the name which it bears to this day: the Lutheran Church. Lutherans can be proud of this name because in a true Lutheran church the pure word of God is preached and taught.

Much of Luther's time was taken up by writing letters, tracts, and books. He



kept the printing presses busy. And the people were eager to buy what he wrote. They were hungry for the Word of God. He also preached powerful sermons in Wittenberg and other places. Many young men came to his university in order to be trained by him for the ministry.

Luther often made trips to the other towns and cities of Saxony. He gave advice on how to build good Christian congregations and helped the people solve their problems. He was especially interested in the schools. Everywhere he told the people to provide and support Christian schools in which all the boys and girls could learn the Word of God and receive a good education from Christian teachers. Luther did many things to assist in the spiritual training of children. He showed that it was the duty of the church to *assist* parents in teaching children the Bible stories and the Catechism. In a short time there were Lutheran churches and schools in all parts of Germany and some also in other countries. As America became settled, the Lutheran Church was also brought to this country.

Faith Evangelical Lutheran Church

Council Meeting Minutes **SUMMARY**

April 19, 2021

CALL TO ORDER

- The meeting opened at 6:00 pm with Pastor Neumann leading us in prayer.
- Attendance: Pastor Neumann, Garrett Jessie, Dale Jessie, Dave Spaude, Brad Rahmlow, Rick Trep-tow (by Zoom), Tyler Jessie, Scott Templeton, Brad Markhardt

ELDERS REPORT

- Received into membership by profession of faith:
 - Christopher, Nicole and Deziree Mueller (Audrina, Gavin) – 4-18-21
- God called our Christian brother William Yahnke to heaven on April 16, 2021

PASTOR'S REPORT

- Pastor presented a statistical report for the month of March
- Council approved vacation days for Pastor on August 2-4 and August 19-24
- Council decided that a joint service would be of value this year. The date is set for June 20th in BRF at 10 a.m. with a meal to follow

FINANCIAL REPORT

- Tyler presented a financial report showing a net gain of \$23,548.84 through the end of March. MSC (moved, seconded, confirmed) to accept financial report for March, 2021

SPECIAL REPORTS

- Outreach Committee: Council reviewed the Outreach Committee Report supplied by Brad Markhardt
- Property Committee: Much of the equipment for installing the new video recording system has arrived and will be installed May 17th.
- Jesus Cares: Lisa Treptow has been heading up restarting the Jesus Cares Ministry. Council approved spending up to \$500 to purchase necessary supplies. MSC

OLD BUSINESS

- Statistics were shared that compared our loan amount and typical church loans throughout Wisconsin. Council leaned towards choosing to have CEF service our loan again for this next 5 year term.
- Council recommended to conduct a pledge drive to reduce the loan amount. The pledge will have a goal of \$100,000 and will start in June and go through October. MSC More details to come in upcoming newsletters and congregational meeting.
- Council also discussed the possibility of taking 50,000 from savings to pay down debt. This total amount will be decided after the pledge is concluded.

NEW BUSINESS

- Council decided to make one side of the BRF campus a non-social distancing area if the need arises due to space concerns.

Recorded by Garrett Jessie

MEETINGS AND GATHERINGS THIS MONTH

Elders Meeting

Tuesday – May 4 @ 6 p.m. in Black River Falls

Ad Hoc Child Protection

Saturday—May 9 @ 9 a.m. in Black River Falls

Ladies of Faith

Monday – May 10 @ 6 p.m. in Black River Falls

Ascension Worship

Thursday – May 13 @ 6:30 p.m. in Black River Falls

Church Council Meeting

Monday—May 17 @ 6 p.m. in Cataract

Worship Planning

Wednesday – May 19 @ 9:00 a.m. in Black River Falls

Ladies Aid

Saturday—May 22 @ 9 a.m. in Cataract

Youth Group

Sunday—May 23 @ 2:00 p.m. in Black River Falls

MAY BIRTHDAYS

Chad Goetzka	5/7
Kalleigh Kiesow	5/9
Mark Mueller	5/10
Owen Goetzka	5/16
Chase Severson	5/16
Grady Severson	5/16
Aspen Bue	5/22
Sophia Neumann	5/23
Macy Johnson	5/23
Audrey Timm	5/24
Isabelle Reetz	5/28
Kirk Goetzka	5/30

MAY ANNIVERSARIES

Ken and Janeen Folgers	5/1
Matt and Toni Anderson	5/20
Jerry and Jan Eggen	5/20



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

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.

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 Pastor Neumann either in person or at the following email address: pastorjoelneumann@gmail.com. Newsletter deadline: The submission deadline is the next-to-the-last Sunday of each month.

Faith Evangelical Lutheran Church

Congregational Meeting Minutes SUMMARY

April 25th, 2021

CALL TO ORDER

- The meeting opened at 11:15 am with Pastor Neumann leading us in a short prayer.
- Attendance: Pastor Neumann, Garrett Jessie, Dale Jessie, Scott Templeton, Rudy Jeseritz, Kirk Goetzka, Brad Markhardt, Gale Jessie, Tyler Jessie

ELDER'S REPORT

- The following actions were ratified by the congregation:
 - Acceptance into membership of Chris, Nikki, and Deziree Mueller (Audrina, Gavin) MSC (Moved, Seconded, Confirmed)

PASTOR'S REPORT

- Garrett Jessie presented a statistical report for March 2021 (*Copies can be found in the gathering areas of our two campuses*)

SPECIAL REPORTS

- Scott Templeton gave an update on the activities of the Property Committee so far this year. The big project to this point has been acquiring all of the equipment necessary to install the new videography system in the BRF location. Everything will be installed May 17th.
- The congregation reviewed the Outreach Committee Report supplied by Brad Markhardt. Many great outreach activities are planned for the remainder of this year. Fish will kick off their 2021 schedule of events on June 12th.
- The Jesus Cares Ministry is being revitalized. The first activity they hope to do will be to take Worship at the Cross DVDs to group homes.

FINANCIAL REPORT

- Tyler presented a financial report showing a net gain of \$23,548.84 through the end of March 2021. (*Copies can be found in the gathering areas of our two campuses*) MSC to accept financial report for the first quarter of 2021.

NEW BUSINESS

- The annual church picnic will be held June 20th in BRF at 10am.
- Council presented a debt reduction plan to the congregation and the benefits that would be associated with reducing the principal amount on the loan. It was moved to have a special debt reduction offering. MSC.

The meeting adjourned at 12:30 pm with Pastor leading us in the Lord's Prayer

The next Quarterly Congregational Meeting will be held July 25th at 11:00am in BRF

Recorded by Garrett Jessie

JUBILEE DEBT REDUCTION OFFERING

What do you think of when you hear the word “jubilee”? In the dictionary, you will find it defined as “a special anniversary,” “a celebration of such an anniversary,” and “a season of celebration.” We can take it one step further.



In the Bible, a Year of Jubilee was instituted by God through Moses on Mt. Sinai (you can read more about it in Leviticus 25). The dominant theme of the Jubilee was the forgiveness of all debts, and it was symbolic of what was to come. Isaiah (61:1-11) reminded the children of Israel that there would be a time of complete forgiveness of the greatest debt of all, the debt of sin.

According to Luke 4:18-19, at a synagogue in his hometown of Nazareth, Jesus stated: “*The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor...to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.*” With these words Jesus is assuring us that every moment of our lives as Christians is a moment of jubilee. Our lives are marked by thankfulness that our greatest debt, the debt of sin, has been forgiven.

It is with everything wrapped up with the Old Testament Year of Jubilee, that the church council proposed, and the congregational voters approved, the idea of a debt reduction offering. But...why this need for a special offering?

As of March 2021, our congregation has a debt of \$653,630. Each quarter (every three months) we pay \$12,480. However in this last quarter, only \$5,193 of that was able to be applied to the principle of the loan while \$7,287 of went to interest. The church council believes that we would be better stewards of the riches God has given us, as well as put our congregation in a better financial position, if we would be able to apply a larger, one-time payment towards our loan. This would provide considerable savings to our congregation over the lifespan of the loan, while also allowing us the ability to continue and expand our ministries for the present and future. For this reason, the congregation has set \$100,000 as a goal for our special offering.

This Jubilee Debt Reduction Offering will begin on Sunday, June 13 and continue through Sunday, October 24. During this time, articles and updates will be communicated in our church newsletter – *The Messenger*. Mailings will be sent out and special offering envelopes will be made available. Ministry moments will be presented. Sunday services will be set aside so this need and opportunity are kept before us, and always with God’s forgiving love standing behind it.

Please note that with this opportunity to participate in the Jubilee Debt Reduction Offering, the church council does not want to take away from the planned giving you already give on a regular basis. Rather, this opportunity is set before you in the case that the Lord has blessed you with the ability to give an offering over and above what you have already set aside in your heart to give.

If you have any questions, please speak with a member of the Church Council. Further rationale and numbers behind this decision can be found in a report given to the congregational voters meeting on Sunday, April 25. This can be found in the gathering area. God grant each of us the heart of faith that prayerfully considers this opportunity in the months to come.



SPRING CLEANING AT CATARACT

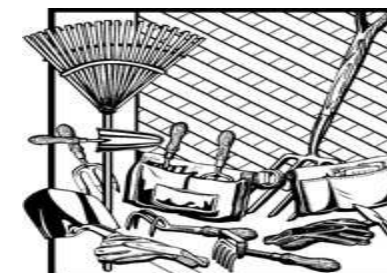
When: Saturday, May 22 @ 9 a.m.

What: Cleaning of church inside and out

Other: A potluck at 12 p.m. is planned after the cleaning is done. Bring a dish to pass!

BRF LANDSCAPE BRIGADE

Consider helping the Landscape Brigade on Saturday, May 8, from 8-9 a.m. The Landscape Brigade will meet the second Saturday of each month, May through October, from 8-9 a.m. Tools will be provided, but feel free to bring your own if you would like.



WORSHIP SERVICE TIME CHANGE

Starting Sunday, May 30, we will once again flip-flop our worship service times for the summer. Therefore, services on the 30th will be: Cataract – 8 am and Black River Falls 9:45 am. These times will continue through Sunday, September 5.

ASCENSION WORSHIP SERVICE

“I rejoiced with those who said to me, ‘Let us go to the house of the LORD’” (Psalm 122:1). May the spirit of the Psalmist be our spirit as we consider the opportunity to gather in God’s house for Ascension worship. That service will be Thursday, May 13, at 6:30 p.m. in Black River Falls.



WORSHIP “CHANGES”

God is good! Of course, that is an understatement – but it is true non-the-less!

The past month of April saw our worship attendance increase as we gathered for Easter services and as the desire for on-campus worship continues to increase. What a blessing! How good it is to be in the house of the Lord together as we encourage one another in our Christian faith and life!

One good “problem” that this greater attendance has created is that it is a little more challenging to social distance throughout our worship sanctuary. In light of this, the church council at its last meeting discussed continued plans for gathering in worship and what changes might be most helpful. In those discussions it was decided that at our Black River Falls campus we would designate one side of the sanctuary as a no social distancing side and keep the other side social distanced. The ushers will assist you as you come to worship. At our Cataract campus, the “please do not sit here” signs will be removed and each member can decide where they feel most comfortable sitting.

As we continue to wrestle with how best to operate, we appreciate the patience and Christian unity our congregation has displayed. “How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity!” (Psalm 133:1). We invite you to join us on-campus for worship, to exercise your own judgment about when to worship, and to continue to rejoice as more and more gather for worship.

healthcare as was intended from the start. The FD will be entrusted with the bulk of the financial duties for the clinics and will continue to work with CAMMc on communication, including pictures and letters from the field and our Malawian or Zambian staff. The FD will be part of our presentation team when a church, school, or other group asks for someone from CAMM to do a presentation on our mission. Finally, the FD will be asked to serve in other ways as asked by CAMMc or WELS Board of World Missions, such as researching how we could possibly serve in other countries.

As a mission, we put our trust in the Lord in every decision we make. He has blessed CAMM and the work we do in Zambia and Malawi by providing wise counsel from the missionaries and the WELS Board for World Missions. He has provided good and faithful servants – both ex-patriate and national – to conduct the work at the clinics. He has generously provided supporters like Christian Aid & Relief, Lutheran Woman’s Missionary Society, many churches and schools, and hundreds of individual donors to pray for the work the clinics do and to provide financial support. Your donations will continue to go towards all of CAMM’s work – including the medical supplies, baby blankets, equipment, updates or repairs to the clinic, ambulances and more.

Although we are moving the Malawian clinic forward through the Nationalization plan, we realize that we are putting this mission even more into the hands of the Lord. Our expenses continue to go up in both Zambia and Malawi. In Zambia, we made the decision to add another Zambian LCCA Member Clinical Officer to train under Jackson, as we see a need for another clinical expert and possibly someone who can be groomed for the time when Jackson retires. In Malawi, we are adding at least two more positions to our payroll. At this point, we are employing 35 National staff combined in the two countries. Finally, we will have the added expense of our Field Director.

Please continue to pray for the work we are doing through the Central Africa Medical Mission – your prayers are appreciated as we know that it is God who allows us to continue to do this medical work. Finally, please thank God with us that He is faithful, generous, and always provides what is needed to do his work. The Lord be praised.

Written by Shelly Sievert on behalf of the CAMM Stateside Committee

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES

CONGRATULATIONS AND
GOD'S BLESSINGS TO
CHASE MANSKE, CHASE
SEVERSON, AND JEREMI-
AH SPAUDE WHO WILL BE
GRADUATING FROM
HIGH SCHOOL THIS
SPRING.

Library Corner

Divine Footprints - Christ in the Old Testament by Eugene P. Kauffeld studies passages from the Old Testament that refer to the coming Messiah and the times in which he would live. *Divine Footprints Fulfilled*, also by Eugene P. Kauffeld, uses the Old Testament passages to show how they apply to Jesus Christ. The second part of this book gives a chronological description of teachings that have hidden Christ's divine footprints. These books can be found in the Bible Aids section of our church library located in the Fellowship Hall at our BRF location.

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



Central African Medical Mission

April 2021



He is risen! He is risen indeed! May these Easter greetings find you and yours rejoicing in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ's victory over death. No matter if you are reading this in California, Michigan, Canada, Malawi, Zambia, China or somewhere in between, there is great comfort in knowing we are all saved by the same Savior!

In March's letter, we shared the news that we are working towards nationalizing Malawi, similarly to how we nationalized Zambia in 2007-2008. Please accept this as an apology for not being clearer in the last letter about how our work is changing in Malawi. Thank you to those supporters of ours who reached out with questions to clarify. This is precisely why we felt we needed to do a follow up letter and a Frequently Asked Questions sheet. (The FAQ can be found on our website—camm.us). Please allow me to answer some of those questions here as well.

Nationalizing Malawi does not mean that we are pulling out of the country and are no longer doing our work there. Rather, please look at this as us pushing our mission work there forward.

In 2007, we entrusted the day-to-day operational responsibility of the Mwembeshi, Zambia clinic to a Zambian national named Jackson Kalekwa and the Zambian staff. Even after 14 years, we continue to be very involved with this clinic's operations from a financial, spiritual, and strategic standpoint.

In 2018, our stateside committee (CAMMc) appointed Gary Evans, current Administrator in Charge in Malawi, to also be the Field Director over Zambia to give more visibility and accountability into what is happening at our clinic. This includes working with Jackson and our Zambian Administrator, Alisad Banda, to get them supplies and equipment as needed. Gary's involvement in Zambia, and collaboration with CAMMc (thanks to advancements in technology along with modern travel) was instrumental in the work we recently did in repairing and upgrading our clinic there. In addition, we work with both the local Lutheran Church of Central Africa (LCCA) Pastor and the Zambia Lutheran Medical Committee (an advisory group made up of two LCCA pastors, our Mission Liaison, Gary, Alisad, and Jackson) on the devotions that are given daily at the clinic, along with educational content used in counselling, and overall clinic operations.

Finally, CAMMc works closely with Gary, Alisad, and Jackson on items that are needed from our supporters – like the baby layettes, hats and blankets that were recently sent. As a mission, we are so very thankful that the Lord has continued to bless us with supporters and a path that allows the Zambian clinic to move forward with Zambians serving Zambians.

What does all this mean for our Lutheran Mobile Clinic in Malawi? We believe that God is now opening the door and providing a path for our Malawian staff to serve Malawians. We will operate with a structure in Malawi similar to what we have in Zambia.

We have hired two LCCA members to be our Nurse-in-Charge and Administrator-in-Charge to oversee the day-to-day operations in Malawi. We have made the decision to appoint a stateside Field Director who will oversee both the Zambian and Malawian clinics. Our Malawian Nurse-in-Charge and Administrator-in-charge, who will be introduced in May's newsletter, will be responsible for making sure that our ambulances are stocked and ready to head out to clinic each day. They will handle hiring, training, and managing the staff. They will manage the pharmacy, medication, and nutrition inventory. They will be working with our Field Director to communicate when things like pill bottles, sunscreen, or other supplies from our supporters are needed. They will be tasked with communicating weekly or more frequently with our Field Director and, as needed, with CAMMc.

While we will no longer have Americans living in Malawi, we will continue to be as involved as ever, just with a new interface. Our Field Director (FD) will be asked to travel to both countries on a quarterly basis. The FD will also be working weekly with the leadership from both clinics to ensure our clinics continue to offer Christ-Centered