

Bethany Free Lutheran Church Newsletter

NOVEMBER 2019

The Most Influential

As the millennium came to a close in 1999 Johannes Gutenberg, the inventor of the printing press, was at the top of many lists as the most influential person of the past 1000 years. Gutenberg's hometown of Mainz, Germany has an excellent museum that tells about Gutenberg, his invention and the history of printing. The Luther tour group I was a part of visited there in 2017.

Our guide at the museum attempted to give us biographical information about Gutenberg, but it wasn't easy. It took her almost 10 minutes to basically tell us, "Nobody knows much about him." The inventor of the machine used to print books didn't write anything about himself, and nobody else wrote much about him, at least not anything that was preserved.

Gutenberg doesn't fit with our modern culture that is obsessed with self-promotion. A lot of people in our world are famous, but they haven't done much to improve the lives of other people. Gutenberg stands out in contrast. It appears he didn't do much to promote himself. He isn't famous in the modern sense. We don't know what he liked to eat for lunch or any other minute detail of his life, the way some people know all about modern celebrities. He was influential more than famous.

The influence of Gutenberg's invention was immense. The first book it was used to print was the Bible. Soon many people, for the first time in their life, were able to hold a Bible in their hand and read it.

The timing of Gutenberg's invention was

just right for another man who was the other contender for the title of most influential person of the millennium: Martin Luther. Gutenberg's press was ready for commercial use in 1450. In 1517 Luther posted his 95 Theses on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany. These bold assertions of ways in which the church had strayed from Scripture were soon printed and widely distributed, and the Protestant Reformation began. The printing press was a crucial tool, effectively used by the Reformers.

The most influential one of the past millennium, and every millennium, was not Gutenberg or Luther, but the Lord. He gave Gutenberg wisdom to invent the printing press so Luther could use it and the Church could be brought back to the great truth that salvation is by grace alone through faith in Jesus alone. God used relative nobodies like Gutenberg and Luther. He directed their steps and caused things to happen at just the right time. "I am the Lord, your God, who teaches you what is best for you, who directs you in the way you should go. If only you had paid attention to my commands, your peace would have been like a river, your well-being like the waves of the sea" (Isaiah 48:17-18). We look at history and we see God doing great things. Sometimes His influence isn't recognized, but He is always at work, directing the path of history. We give thanks that the great God of history is graciously willing to direct our lives today.

—Pastor Craig

Men's Breakfast Saturday Nov. 2 at 8:00 a.m.

If you'd like to help prepare the breakfast please contact Pastor Craig.

**Fall Festival Sunday, Nov. 3 at 5:00 p.m.**

This year's festival includes congregational singing, special music and sharing about mission work in Alaska. An offering will be received for the ministries of the local and national Women's Missionary Federation. Join us after the program for sandwiches and desserts that include Scandinavian delicacies. Those who'd like to bring desserts or sandwiches to share are welcome to do so.

Pastor Craig will be on a mission trip to Israel

Nov. 4-15. On Sunday Nov. 10 David Handsaker and his family will be visiting Bethany. David is a seminary intern, serving at Spencer Creek Lutheran in Eugene. During the adult Sunday school class David will share about life as a seminarian at the Free Lutheran Seminary and how to pray for students in seminary. David will also share the message during the worship service.

**Women's Missionary Federation (WMF) Meets Thursday Nov. 14 at 1:00 p.m.**

downstairs here at the church. All ladies are invited.

Bring your Operation Christmas Child Shoebox to church Nov. 17

The shoeboxes will then be distributed to needy children around the world. Empty boxes and information about what to put in them are available at the back of the sanctuary. The youth group will be delivering the boxes to Seaside on Monday Nov. 18. We'll meet at the church at 6:00 p.m.

Movie Night Nov. 24, 6:00 p.m.

This month's movie is THE LEAST OF THESE: THE GRAHAM STAINES STORY. The movie is based on the true story of Graham Staines and his family who were missionaries from Australia serving lepers in India.

Thanksgiving Day Service 10:00 a.m.

This service on Nov. 28 is a time to remember the many good things God has done, a time to praise Him and a time to give thanks for His many blessings. Special music will be shared by our choir and instrumentalists. The service will also include congregational singing, a message and time for sharing testimonies of thanksgiving to the Lord.

Congregation Quarterly Meeting Highlights

The Congregation Quarterly Meeting on Oct. 20 focused on ongoing projects, meeting the needs of our community and ideas about new possibilities. Here are some of the highlights.

- ◆ Local Giving Offering was sent to the Astoria Rescue Mission, our local food bank and a new outreach called Quilts for Kids in Trauma
- ◆ Our church website is currently being updated. You can find it at bethanyfree.com
- ◆ An idea to have a building in the overflow parking lot was discussed. The building could provide a multipurpose venue used for local outreach and ministries. It would also include a garage for the church van. The Board of Deacons and Trustees is in the process of exploring what the project would involve.



*Enter His gates with
Thanksgiving and His courts
with praise; give thanks to Him
and praise His name.*

Psalm 100:4