

Bethany Free Lutheran Church Newsletter

JANUARY 2020

Our Security Force

On the last Sunday in 2019 a man shot and killed two people during a church service in Texas before a member of the church's security team shot and killed him. In 2017 another shooting at a church in Texas resulted in 26 people being killed. That led to a law being passed in Texas allowing for armed security teams in churches.

In this day and age with so many mass shootings, so many lives being lost, so many families suffering devastating heartache, churches have been forced to have discussions about armed security teams. What works for each individual congregation is their decision. In the midst of the discussion, however, it should not be forgotten that God's church already has the most powerful and effective security team in place.

In II Kings 6 it tells of a time when the king of Aram sent his army to capture the prophet Elisha. The servant of Elisha looked out and saw an imposing, threatening army with horses and chariots surrounding the city. He cried out, "Oh, my lord, what shall we do?" (v. 15). We look around us at a violent world, full of trials and challenges, threats and dangers, and we fearfully cry out to God, "What shall we do?"

Elisha told his servant, "'Don't be afraid ... Those who are with us are more than those who are with them.' Then he prayed, 'O Lord, open his eyes so he may see.' Then the Lord opened the servant's eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha" (v. 16-17).

Elisha knew, by faith in the Lord, he was surrounded by an angelic army that was much stronger and more powerful than any earthly army. That security team usually isn't seen by our physical eyes, but it is very real and present. By faith in Christ we can have that same confidence Elisha had. God's security team is still in place and on the job. We pray as Elisha did: that our eyes might be open to see the greatness of His protection and hear the beauty of his invitation to not be afraid.

The angelic army blinded the eyes of the army of the king of Aram. Elisha led them to the king of Israel where they were captured. The king was prepared to wipe out these enemies, but Elisha said to serve them a feast. The feast was surprising and undeserved, and a great illustration of grace. The feast resulted in the end of conflict between Aram and Israel (v. 23).

Because of God's security team, we no longer live in cowering fear of the big, bad world out there. Instead we end conflicts by graciously serving those who intend harm.

As we enter a new year it is tempting to wonder if we are going to be safe? Are we prepared? God is prepared. Our hope and our security rest in Him. "Let the beloved of the Lord rest secure in him, for he shields him all day long" (Deuteronomy 33:12).

—Pastor Craig

Men's Breakfast Saturday Jan. 4 8:00 a.m.

If you'd like to help prepare the breakfast, please contact Pastor Craig. All men are welcome.

**Deacons & Trustees Meet Jan. 5**

Deacons and Trustees will meet following the worship service on Sunday Jan. 5.

Pastor Craig is Going to India

Pastor Craig will be on a missions trip to India Jan. 6-17. He'll be teaching a class for pastors and church leaders of the AFLC India. Prayers for the classes and our sister congregations in India are appreciated.

WMF Meets Jan. 9

The Women's Missionary Federation (WMF) will meet downstairs at church on Thursday Jan. 9 at 1:00 p.m.

Jean E. will lead the Bible study. The WMF Officers will provide dessert. All ladies are invited.

**Meet the Missionaries Pastor Paul & Becky Abel**

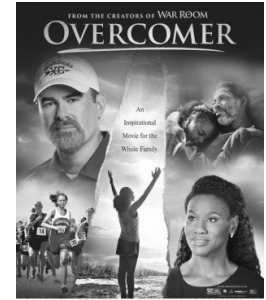
Missionaries to Brazil, Pastor Paul and Becky Abel, will be with us Sunday Jan. 19. During the Sunday school time they'll be sharing about the work in Brazil that they've been involved with for over 30 years. They'll be sharing during the service as well and Pastor Abel will share the message.

Jan. 19 is Sanctity of Human Life Sunday

It's a time to remember that each life – whether unborn, unhealthy, diseased or disabled – is a special creation of God to be cherished and protected. This is also a time to remember in prayer the ministry in our community of the Coast Pregnancy Clinic.

Movie Night Jan. 26

On Sunday Jan. 26 at 6 p.m. we'll have a movie night and show the film Overcomer. The movie is made by the same




people who made War Room, Fireproof and Facing the Giants. It is about a coach and a community facing an uncertain future and looking for strength to overcome. Everyone is invited to come watch the movie and bring a friend.


Congregation Annual Meeting Jan. 30

Our congregation's annual meeting will be Thur. Jan. 30 at 7 p.m. We'll have a potluck dinner before the meeting, starting at 6:00 p.m. We'll reflect on the many ways God has blessed us during the past year. We'll have elections and prayerfully consider what God might have us to do in the coming year. Everybody is invited.

There are 3 ways to access our newsletter.

 Online at our website
www.bethanyfree.com

 By email

 Printed and mailed.

Just let us know what you prefer.

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Happening This Month...

Men's Breakfast Jan. 4

WMF Meeting Jan. 9

Movie Night Jan. 26

Potluck & Annual Congregational Meeting Jan. 30

