

Jesus Appears on the Tough Days

January 6, 2021 was a pretty tough day. Early in the morning, Carol Wood, our former pianist at church and a beloved member of our congregation, passed away. She had battled various health problems for many years. Later in the morning I was told the sad news that Paul Flues had died. Paul was a member of our congregation for all of his 85 years. He was a kind and helpful trustee for many years, a faithful volunteer at our Kids' Club for many years and a good friend.

Around noon I did a check of the news and saw pictures of the mob storming the U.S. Capitol. Watching this destructive horde going through the halls of the majestic and historic Capitol building didn't seem real. But sadly it was all too real.

A vicious and violent mob was assaulting and vandalizing this building that symbolizes our democracy and means so much in our nation's history. The terrorizing thugs shattered windows, busted down doors and caused elected representatives and others to cower in fear, prevented from doing their jobs. Police officers were beaten and people were killed. And in the middle of all the violence and destruction people were flying flags with the name of Jesus on them.

All of this sadness happened on the day in the church year we call Epiphany. It is a day when the church commemorates God leading the Magi to come and find Jesus. Epiphany is a time to celebrate that God reveals Jesus to all people, even those far away like the Magi. As the Lord shined the light of the star for the

Magi, so He causes His light to shine in this dark world today.

This year January 6 had a lot of darkness. I felt the darkness of sorrow with the passing of two friends. We watched the darkness of violence on full display in the U.S. Capitol. As I saw the name of Jesus on the flag being held by the mob beating the police officers, I felt it was the darkness of evil, trying to bring shame to the name of Jesus, discredit His church and turn people away from the Lord.

As the Gospel of John speaks of the revealing of Jesus to the world it says: "In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not overcome it" (John 1:4-5). The darkness that was on display on January 6 did not and will not overcome the light of Jesus. Not even death can stop the light of Jesus from shining.

God's light was shining on January 6 in the actions of Capitol Police officer Eugene Goodman. He diverted the attention of the intimidating mob onto himself and away from members of Congress. He chose to risk his life to save others. It reminds us of what Jesus did for us. He stood between the judgment of the Law and us and took the punishment we deserve upon Himself, so we can be saved. "This is how we know what love is, Jesus Christ laid down his life for us" (1 John 3:16). Even in this world so full of darkness, the love of Christ keeps shining bright.

—Pastor Craig

Worship With Us

Our 11:00 a.m. in building Worship Services continue. To comply with the state regulations regarding COVID-19, everybody is asked to wear a facial covering and observe social distancing by sitting six feet apart from other families while in the pews. Free masks are available on the entryway table.

We also live stream our 11:00 a.m. Sunday worship services on Facebook Live. Devotional videos are also posted on our congregation's YouTube channel. Links to both of those sites can be found on our website: bethanyfree.com.

Men's breakfast will be Sat., Feb. 6 at 8:00 a.m. If you'd like to help prepare the breakfast, please contact Pastor Craig.



WMF Meeting

Women's Missionary Federation (WMF) Thursday Feb. 11 at 11:00 a.m. Everyone is asked to bring a sack lunch. All ladies are invited.



Pastor Craig will be Gone

Pastor Craig will be attending an AFLC World Missions retreat and taking vacation time from Feb. 8-15. Please contact the church office if needed.

Lenten Services

Lenten services will begin on Ash Wednesday Feb.17 at 7:00 p.m. We'll continue to have Lenten services each Wednesday at 7:00 p.m. until Holy Week. Lent is a time when we reflect on the love



of Christ demonstrated at the cross. Our services are a time for worship and drawing closer to the Lord. We plan to live stream the services each week on our church's Facebook page.

Lenten Soup Suppers



We'll have soup suppers before Lenten services, starting at 6:15 p.m. each Wednesday.

FLY 2023

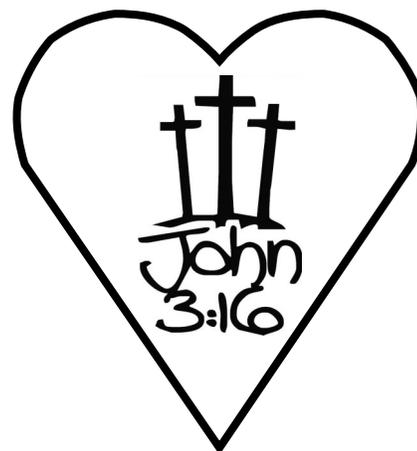
Because of Covid concerns, the Free Lutheran Youth National Convention (FLY), planned for July 5-10, has had to be postponed until 2023.

Thank You Amy!

We give thanks for Amy Boyovich's years of service as our church treasurer. She has stepped down from the position.

Congrats Lois!

The Trustees have hired Lois Grothe as the new church treasurer.



"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

Coming This Month...

February 6 Men's Breakfast

February 11 WMF

February 17 & 24 Lenten Soup & Services

