

Bethany Free Lutheran Church Newsletter

September 2021

READY – SET – GO

On Labor Day in 2020, Clara and I drove up the McKenzie Highway on our way to spend the holiday with our son and family over near Grass Valley, Oregon. We left in the morning enjoying a beautiful clear day and the beauty of the valley crossing the McKenzie Bridge into the forested areas up to the old highway towards Sisters. But behind us that day was a developing disaster as fire broke out and devastated the valley. For days the fire raged, the skies were dark and the air quality was dangerously low. For a considerable time period the McKenzie Highway was closed and for the rest of the year we avoided that route.

Since arriving in Astoria we have made a trip up the McKenzie this summer and observed the devastation to homes, communities and the wooded areas. But interestingly enough, in the midst of the loss of buildings, wooded areas, plant life has sprung up and it is green again! Construction is in full force as new homes are being built. Already the valley is beginning to come back. But it will never be the same.

As we get **READY** for the fall schedule, it will not be the same. Everything is different here at Bethany Free Lutheran, not because of a disaster but because of the blessing of marriage as Pastor Craig has moved to Ferndale. Because of that and the ongoing threat of COVID, it will not be the same. As always, it is right to begin by praying about our fall scheduling. And we continue to pray as we plan. Let us be dedicated to seeking the Lord in prayer at all times. God invites us to pray and it is His pleasure to answer. Call unto me and I will answer you and show great and hidden things which you do not know.”
Jeremiah 33:3

During this interim period there are certain scheduling hard commitments such as Sunday School, Brown Bag, WMF Bible studies, council meetings, and quilting. The other options to consider necessitating flexibility because of COVID are mid-week Bible study and prayer times, youth meetings, and monthly family times. The strategy will be important to plan towards well defined goals. Proverbs 19:21 says, “Many are the plans in a man’s heart, but the counsel of the Lord, it will stand.” We begin with prayer and we keep on praying looking to the Lord as we are planning, strategizing and prioritizing.

Time marches on and we have a starting time which is **SET** for 9:30 a.m. on Sunday September 12. There will be the need to get set-up for Sunday School classes, for congregational activities, special programs and etc. Already, set in place are a series of studies for the Adult Sunday School class entitled, *That The World May Know*, a video study series displaying God to a broken world.

Then as the time arrives, on the 12th of this month, we **Go**. Sunday school will begin, the quilters will be back in action, the flex options for midweek studies and youth meetings will need to be tentatively decided on and I am glad to say that the Gideons will be with us on the 19th.

I am reminded of Paul’s counsel to the Ephesian church and would exhort you with his words inspired by the Holy Spirit, “Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise, **making the most of your time, because the days are evil.**”

Pastor Gunderson