



**Ash Wednesday**  
— Lent Begins

Bethany Free Lutheran Church  
451 34th St.  
Astoria, OR 97103

### The Power of Forgiveness

Some across the world have really enjoyed watching the mini-series about Jesus and His followers called "The Chosen." The newest season will be released in the theatres this month. The series portrays events that could have happened to Jesus and His followers mixed in with true events from the Scriptures. While some events portrayed in the series did happen very closely to how the series played out, there has been some creative license in some events portrayed where the Bible is silent. While these events should be considered fictional, how the events play out in the series could have very well happened. Furthermore, we get a better glimpse at the historical events that were happening in Jesus' day and how they might have affected Jesus and His followers. If your family is looking for a wholesome entertainment option, I would recommend it.

In one of the scenes Jesus was talking to a child, who was telling Jesus about a bully. It was obvious that the child was struggling with anger toward this person, and wanted to fight back. Jesus didn't get angry with the child, or scold him, but rather helped the child see that it was God's place to administer justice, and showed from the Scriptures that revenge is not what a God-fearing person should seek.

As I reflected on this, I began to think about all the injustices that have been happening in the world. While Christians are beginning to be persecuted more in America, active persecution of Christians has been commonplace in the world throughout the centuries. While I was in seminary, a man named Peter from Africa was in my class. Peter shared stories of Muslims in his country who would mutilate and torture Christians. Some in his own family had even been on the receiving end of such treatment. As more time passes it seems that Christians are less safe, even here in America. Sadly, as we get closer and closer to the end of the world and the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming of Jesus, the Bible tells us that persecution will only increase!

So how can we prepare? What should Christians do to ready themselves for the increase in persecution? Instead of arming ourselves with guns and bombs, we should arm ourselves with God's Word. There are many Scriptures that provide clear guidance on this issue. 2 Thess. 1:6

-8, Deut. 32:35, and Rom. 12:17-19 are just a few of the many verses that provide clear Biblical clarity on this matter. Furthermore, we are to remember that God will judge all people, and this is not for us. And those who die continuing to reject the calling of God to repent of their sins, well they will be severely judged and punished in hell for eternity. The coming judgement for unbelievers will be swift and severe. This is something that even our worst enemies should not experience. The short answer is that we must learn the art of forgiveness.

While persecution will increase from unbelievers (and we kind of expect that), sometimes persecution occurs from those that we don't expect- fellow believers! Sometimes this type of persecution is the hardest to forgive. Afterall, they should know better right? For those of us that are, or have been persecuted by Christians, we would do well to remember the great debt we have been forgiven by God. For if God can forgive us our debt from all our sins, any persecution we endure by our brothers and sisters in Christ should be quickly and completely forgiven as well. It stinks when it happens, and one would hope that it wouldn't happen, but it does.

As crazy as it sounds, the more we are persecuted, the more we have the opportunity to demonstrate one of God's most important actions toward others- forgiveness. Instead of growing angry or bitter when you suffer, count it all joy. James chapter 1 verse 2 reminds us of this truth. Not only does it help us to develop steadfastness in our faith, it helps others to see something different in those who follow Christ. If we want to change the world, it starts with the people that surround us. Forgive them, as God has forgiven you, you forgive them. May our actions speak louder than words in showing the world the transformative power of Jesus' love and forgiveness.

Pastor Rich Carr

## Worship With Us

8:45 A.M. Glad Tidings Radio 1370 A.M.  
9:30 A.M. Sunday School  
11:00 A.M. Worship Services

## New Live Stream

The new livestream Subsplash app is now up and running. We live stream our 11:00 A.M. Sunday worship services on Subsplash. You can download the Subsplash app.. Not only does it give you just the current service but you can find the full library of past services that have been live streamed and search a particular service based on the topic of the sermon. The app also has a weekly Bible reading amongst other things. This is a great app for a cellphone which allows you to quickly connect but you are also able to chat and message in it. If you still prefer Facebook we are still there on our page but with the issues that Facebook has given us it was time to move away from them as a primary app. Sunday sermons are also posted on the same day on our YouTube channel. You can find links to all of these on our website at [www.bethanyfree.com](http://www.bethanyfree.com)



## Men's Prayer Breakfast

Will be February 3, 8:00 A.M. Cooking starts around 7:15 A.M. if you would like to help. We would love to have more men join us.

## Deacons & Trustees Meeting

Wednesday February 7, 5:30 P.M

## Bethany Sewing Ministry

February 1,15, 22 & 29 at 10:00 A.M. All sewing skills are welcome. A lunch is provided. We work on quilts that are mostly sent to the AFLC Alaska Missions in Naknek, AK



## Alaska Tote

We will be filling a tote to go to The Net, again this year in May. The Net is an internet coffee house in Naknek, AK. The coffee house is a place where people can come and have free coffee, treats and hear about the free gift of salvation. More information about The Net can be found on the AFLC Home Missions site.

<https://aflchomemissions.org/alaska/the-net-cafe/>

A registry on Amazon for ideas on things they need can be found here also.

Examples –cookies mixes, premade frosting, canisters of hot chocolate & coffee, paper cups, paper supplies, cleaning supplies, shelf stable milk, powdered creamer



## Brown Bag Ministry

Every Tuesday, 1:30 P.M. Weekly our Brown Bag Ministry prepares brown bag lunches that are distributed in the community, we are always grateful for any volunteers.

## Prayer & Praise Band

The Contemporary Prayer & Praise Service will be held Sunday evening, February 25 at 5pm. The group has been meeting Sunday evenings at 5pm to practice. They can always use singers and people who play musical instruments. The first one was held last month and was enjoyed by many. Thank you to all who have put so much time into this great addition to our church.



## WMF Meeting

Women's Missionary Federation will be meeting February 8, at 11 A.M. All Ladies Welcome! Bring your sack lunch. a dessert is provided.



## Small Group Bible Study

Will be help at Pastor & Brenda Carr's home Thursday February 8 & 22 at 6:30pm. This is open to anyone wanting to come. They are doing a study on the books of Acts from Right Now Media.

## Women's Bible Study

Brenda Carr is hosting a women's Bible study and fellowship time on the 4th Tuesday of every month. It will be February 27th at 7pm at the Carr's home. All women are welcome.

## Lenten Services

Ash Wednesday is February 14th, we will be starting our Wednesday evening bread & soup dinners for Lent. Dinner at 6pm and service to follow at 7pm. A sign up sheet is on the bulletin board to provide bread & soup. Dates will be February 14,21,28, March 6,13 & 20th.

## Change of Name

The church for many years has had an internal helping fund called Helping Hands, because of a few local groups with the same name it was decided to rename our group to Bethany Blessing Funds. For future donations to this fund please note new name.

## Looking Ahead to March

- Spring cleaning 16th at 10am
- Palm Sunday
- Maundy Thursday service on March 28th at 7pm
- Good Friday March 29th at 7pm(location to be determined)
- Easter Sunday 31st