

Beautiful Savior February 2019 Newsletter

I Need More...Faithful Friends

A friend is someone who knows all about me and likes me anyway. Have you heard that description of a friend? How would you define what a friend is? Are you happy with the friends you have? Do you wish you had more friends or different kinds of friends? That your friendships were healthier or more helpful?

People might define friends in various ways, but one thing is certain. God designed people with a need for friendship. When he created the first man, he offered this observation: **“It is not good for the man to be alone”** (Genesis 2:18). We naturally feel the need that God observed, but faithful friends might be hard to come by.

In the internet world, friends often call each other BFF’s—Best Friends Forever. But those same friends often turn on each other and end up more as enemies than as friends. No matter how well someone knows and likes you, there really is no friend who knows all about you. Your innermost secrets remain locked within you, and there are deeper feelings than anyone could ever understand.

God wants you to know what you might have suspected all along. He does know all about you. He observes that you need someone to whom you can pour out your heart, and he is willing to be that one.

But do you want God to be a BFF, when deep down you know what he knows about you? As his own Word says, **“If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves”** (1 John 1:8). Few of us would make such a claim, but the good news is that God still wants to claim us as friends, despite our shortcomings.

That is why Jesus Christ, God’s Son, came into the world long ago. He came to do what only the best of friends would do—he came to lay down his life for you. He came to stand in for you and take whatever punishment God’s justice demanded for your sins. And God accepted his own Son’s sacrifice to wipe out the guilt of your sin.

That is why God invites you to see him as your best friend. He knows all about you and everything that you need. He extends his love to you without conditions, for the sake of his Son’s death on the cross.

You will not find a more faithful friend than God. Look to the living God and learn more about his faithfulness and love. The more you learn, the more you will find that he is a true Friend that you can always trust.

** The above article reprinted with permission from WELS Outreach resources*

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From the pen of the Pastor. “We love because he first loved us.” (1 John 4:19). Jesus was once asked what the greatest commandment was and he said, “**Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your mind and with all your soul and the second is like the first, “Love your neighbor as yourself.”** At the heart of these two great commandments is the word “love.” We are only able to love and strive to keep these commandments because God loved us first. Even before we were born, God was already loving us by sending his Son to pay for our sins. After we were born God loved us by sending the Holy Spirit to bring us into his family through the gift of faith. God’s love for us goes beyond our understanding. It can be seen in Jesus suffering on the cross but even that goes beyond what we could even imagine. Know that God’s love for you is truly amazing and it brings us life and forgiveness for our sins. God’s love enables his children to love in response and to forgive one another as he has forgiven us. May God’s love for you enable you to reflect that love in all that you do.

Recent Membership changes. Dan and Karen Heins transferred to Grace Lutheran Church in Falls Church, VA.

Lois Johnson was called home to heaven.

Finances and attendance. In January we received \$8962 in regular offerings against a need of \$9696 (4 weeks). The average attendance on Sundays in January was 63 per Sunday compared to 68 per Sunday in January 2018. Weather certainly had an impact on January attendance. May the Lord encourage us to be faithful in our church attendance and may he continue to bless us and give us a generous heart to share his blessings.

Food Drive to Help College Students – Riverland Community College has a food bank for their college students. Some students have a hard time supporting themselves while attending college and make use of this food bank. During the month of February we will be collecting items to donate – a collection barrel will be in the church entry. This is one way, we as Christians, can help folks in our community. They can use the following items:

Peanut butter, jam/jellies, pasta noodles, pasta sauce, breakfast cereals, nuts, dried fruit, crackers, granola bars, trail mix, salsa, chips, canned beans, canned meat, chili/stews, soups, dish soap, hand soap, toilet paper, Kleenex, toothpaste, pancake mix, pancake syrup.

Friendship Sunday – On February 10th we are going to have a “Friendship Sunday.” Look for someone to invite to come and worship with you and pray that God would give you an opportunity to extend that invitation. The worst that can happen is that they might say “no,” but the best thing that could happen is that they would say “yes” and have a chance to hear the Good News of the Gospel.

Women’s Bible Study – What a great opportunity to study God’s Word with your sisters in Christ! On Monday, 2/18/2019 at 9:00 AM there is a women’s Bible Study where we are looking at the Gospel of Matthew. Come and listen to the discussion or join in as much as you like. No prior knowledge is needed – just a desire to learn more about God’s Word. This is a great opportunity to bring a friend – everyone is welcome!

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You can help us on Facebook! If you are on Facebook, please like our page (beautifulsavioraustin) and share our worship video every Sunday. This will expand the number of people who have an opportunity to view our worship. It is another way in which we can reach out with the Gospel and it only takes a minute.

Voters' Meeting Recap. The voters approved the budget of \$126,000 for 2019. The voters also approved spending about \$1000 in memorial funds for (3) new flower arrangements for the season of Lent. The current ones are over 20 years old and need replacement. A special memorial was given to upgrade the sound system in the Fellowship Hall and add speakers to the classrooms and church entry. The voters approved this memorial project which will cost \$3000. This year our congregation gets to send a delegate to the Synod convention at MLC in New Ulm. The voters designated Ryan Timm as our representative at the synod convention. Easter falls on 4/21/2019 this year and so the voters decided that the next meeting will be on April 28th, after church. If you have any questions about the voters meeting you can talk to Gordy Handeland (president) or Pastor Welke.

Women's Society to Meet – On February 14th at 7:00 PM. All the ladies of the congregation are invited to join us as we start with a Bible Study and then have a short business meeting and close with desert and refreshments. Please note that we will be meeting on the **2nd Thursday of the month** this spring.

Family Game Night and Soup Cookoff – Since we had to postpone the Family Game night scheduled for January 27th due to weather, the Spiritual growth Committee thought it might work well to combine this with our annual Soup Cookoff on one Sunday, February 17th we will start with games at 3:00 PM and then have our soup cookoff at 4:30 PM. Come for the fun and with an appetite for soup. You can participate in it all or just come for the cook off.