

FAITH *In Focus*



Engaging the Word...Impacting the World

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WELCOME TO FAITH!

From Pastor Tom's Desk...

Are you tired of presidential politics yet? The election is ten months away, and I'm already starting to tune out the political ads and pundits. However, I keep reminding myself that this election cycle is critically important to the future of our nation. In fact, it is so important that we need to bring our faith to bear upon the entire situation. So I hope I don't offend you if I share a couple of political perspectives that I think are important.

First, the current campaign has reminded me that our hope is in Christ, not in any political figure, whether that figure is red, blue, or purple! Do I see any candidate who can fix the problems our nation faces? Probably not. The first priority of the Christian is to pray for the Lord to bring renewal and wisdom to our nation. Our basic need is for a change of direction. Fixing a few problems is not going to be adequate. We need to be praying for a change of attitude toward God and for a new submission to His will. Jesus Christ is still Lord of the Nations, including ours!

Second, having said that, it still seems to me that there are some candidates who are better than others. The responsibility of a Christian citizen is to evaluate the candidates in light of our Christian values. Are the policies and practices espoused by any given candidate consistent with Biblical teachings?

The first thing I look for in a candidate is a set of values that is consistent with my Christian convictions.

Third, this is not to say that simply being a Christian qualifies someone to be President of the United States. There are Christian men and women whom I respect deeply that I would not consider qualified to be President. In the process of selecting viable candidates, I start with those who espouse Christian values, and then I say, "Who among these is best qualified to be President?" After all, a President needs to understand national security, economic systems, social needs, and moral issues.

Finally, it seems to me that the President is in many ways the embodiment of who we are as a nation. He or she represents the character of the people who call themselves Americans. As I see it, that means we ought to elect someone who embodies the values that we embrace, and who lives those values in his/her daily lifestyle. Respect for people, civility and kindness, truthfulness, unwavering conviction, and integrity are elements that are essential to the presidency. Our voting can never be about whether we like a person's personality or appearance. Ultimately, the issues come down to character. I would suggest that Christians ought to be looking for candidates who demonstrate *Christian* character.

(Continued on page 2...)

From Pastor Tom's Desk...

(Continued from page 1...)

The trend in our society is to separate religious conviction from political persuasion – as though one's religious convictions have no place in political decisions. This could not be farther from the truth. My religious faith – this is, my Christian conviction – is the center of my identity. I can't lay it aside as I decide how to vote. I believe that religious faith is also at the center of our corporate identity as a nation. Our heritage is clearly Christian. As you evaluate candidates, remember to ask the question, "Who will help shape the character of our nation in the direction God wants us to go?"

Grace and peace,

Pastor Tom



Mission Trip Deadline

Mission Trip Deadline...

Today, January 31, is the deadline to register for the Gabon trip and the Arizona trip. If you are interested in participating in either of these trips, please speak with Pastor Dave *immediately*.

Spaghetti Dinner, February 14...

The Gabon mission team will be serving a Hope House style dinner for all interested persons on Sunday, February 14, from 11:00 am.– 2:00 p.m. Spaghetti is one of the staples at the Hope House, our partner orphanage in Libreville. Our meal will be prepared as Pastor Israel and Mama Natalie prepare it for the kids there. The made-from-scratch spaghetti will be accompanied by a baguette.

All proceeds for this meal will go to the travel costs of the Gabon mission team. Come and enjoy a delicious meal and support our mission outreach at the same time!



Current Prayer Concerns...

- Cierra Otting, departing for Gabon on Feb. 10
- Mitchell Nutt, recovering from back surgery
- Erin Zimpfer, upcoming surgery on Friday, Feb. 5
- Bob Finke, Shelly's father, heart cath on Feb. 9
- Dick Miller, friend of Pastor Tom & Pam, recovering from gall bladder surgery
- Amber Etzler, friend of Oakleys, cancer
- International student of Gabe Oakley, paralysis in legs
- Gene Dirksen, cousin of John Schulze, death of his wife
- Dottie McKibans, recently moved to St. Marys Living Center
- Jim Wessel, high blood pressure
- John Costa, Julie Sabourin's brother-in-law, mass in his abdomen
- Ted Wagner, recovering from heart surgery
- Robin Holcomb, Lavonna Springer's mother, recovering from bypass surgery
- Mary Ann Herriott, recovering from accident
- Ben Boyle's sister, Angie, brain tumor
- Chris Bowers, undergoing chemotherapy
- Jay Berkey, awaiting consultation
- Brent Paulus, on-going illness
- John Schulze's niece, Megan, auto accident
- Heidi Siebenaler's sister, Holly, back problems

Women's Fellowship Luncheon...

Any women who would enjoy a time of interaction with others are invited to gather at Casa Lupita for lunch on the first Sunday of each month. The group meets right after the second service. Casa Lupita is located at St. Rt. 66 beside Wagner's IGA in New Bremen.



Cram the Van Next Sunday...



Cram the Van

We will be collecting items for the Sidney Women's Center next Sunday. The Women's Center provides services to expectant mothers as well as offering baby items in their boutique. Suggested donations include: Similac Advance (blue lid), receiving blankets, baby monitors, small toys for packets, diapers size 4-6, wipes, nursing pillows.

Love and Hope Envelopes...



Located on the hall wall between the Fellowship Hall and Christian Education building are "Love and Hope" envelopes. You can share in sending our mission teams and help provide materials for the projects they will be working on during their trips by taking an envelope and filling it with the dollar amount listed on the front. Instructions are inside the envelopes. If every envelope is taken, we will raise \$20,000 for missions! Thank you for your support of our mission teams and projects.

"Paint and Praise" Fundraiser for Cierra Otting...



On Saturday, February 27, 2016, at Faith Alliance Church, Rhonda Hager will hold an art session and instruct painters how to create a Seascape painting. A continental breakfast will be available at 10 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall. The art session will be held in Room 5 of the Education Unit at 10:30. Devotions will be led by Loresa Burden during the class. The cost is \$25 per person and space is limited to 25 painters. Proceeds will go to Cierra Otting's Mission Trip. You may register in the church lobby before and after services today and on February 7 and February 14.

Financial Report

Offering January 24, 2016

General Fund: \$5,749

Local Mission: \$193

Great Commission: \$425

Care Fund: \$1,170

Building Fund: \$100

Love & Hope Envelopes: \$272

Hands of Grace Sewing Ministry: \$295

Cierra Otting Mission Trip: \$151

Tea House: \$10; E-4 Project: \$25

Trent Fledderjohann: \$210

Brent Paulus: \$20

Attendance

Week of January 24, 2016

9:00 Worship – 97

10:30 Worship – 143

Kids – 39; Adult Workers – 13

Total Worship – 292

International Class – 12

Wednesday Night Live!

JOURNEY–33

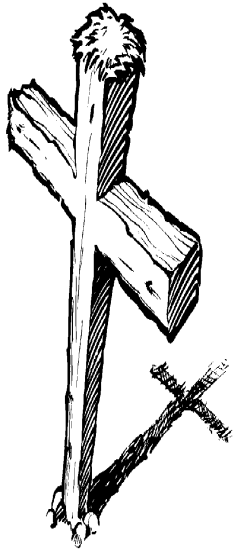
CONNECT–9

Kids–35; Adult workers–8

Youth Group – 37 students; 3 adults

Be Still
AND KNOW
THAT I AM GOD
-PSALM 46:10

RENEW



COMING EVENTS

Sunday, January 31, 2016

Today

- 9:00... Early Service
- 9:00... Discipleship Class
- 10:30... Late Service
- 10:30... Kids Church

- Feb. 6 ...Pizza Prep/Pick-Up Day
- Feb. 12 ...Last Overtime of the Year
- Feb. 19 ...Scene 75
- Feb. 26 ...Dodgeball Fundraiser

MINISTRIES



This Week

- Wednesday...Youth Group...6-8:30 pm
- Saturday...Pizza Day...9 am—12 pm



February Celebrations!



Happy Birthday to...

- 1—Roger Dicke
- 2—Chad James, Norah Lange
- 4—Jodi Schumm, John Storrer
- 5—Hanna Lemley
- 8— Catelyn Cedarleaf, Maryssa Warneke
- 10—Ben Boyle, Logan Bronkema, Mike Meyer
- 11—Aliyah Parlett, Sawyer Williams, Seth Williams
- 12—David Pence
- 14—Debbie Millhouse, Emily Mowrer, Julie Sabourin
- 15—Grant Brautigam
- 20—Chris Fyock, Kris Kuck
- 21—Paula Parlett, Jillian Zimpfer
- 22—Emmalee Otto
- 23—Trent Fledderjohann, Mike Jay
- 24—Shelly Finke

- 25—Teresa Bronkema, Hannah Springer
- 28—Becca Kuether, Simon Schrader

Happy Anniversary to...

- 1—Ted & Terry Wagner
- 14—Ben & Dottie Fennick
- 20—Chad & Tami James
- 28—Roger & Phyllis Dicke



Care Fund Needs Your Support...

Our Care Fund, formerly called the Deacons' Fund, provides assistance to those who are financially distressed. The needs of the Christmas season, coupled with an urgent request that we received, have more than depleted our funds.

If you wish to contribute, please place your gift in the regular offering and mark it, "Care Fund." I am hopeful that we can build our fund beyond the current deficit, so we are in a position to help others when they call. I thank you in advance for considering a contribution to this project.

— Pastor Tom



"God's Love"

We can't measure God's love for us. It starts before we're born and continues for eternity.

Directions: Down the left-hand column, spell out the name of each number. Then write the circled letters on the blank lines in the right-hand column. Read the words on the right, from top to bottom, to see what Psalm 33:22 (NIV) says about God's love.

20	_____	_____	"M a _____
4	_____	_____	y _____
99	_____	_____	u _ f a _ l _ _ _ g
7	_____	_____	l o _ _ _
1	_____	_____	b _ _ _
28	_____	_____	_____ h
60	_____	_____	u _ _ ,
40	_____	_____	L _ _ _ d ,
70	_____	_____	_____
6	_____	_____	a _ _
12	_____	_____	_____
64	_____	_____	p _ _ t
14	_____	_____	_____
81	_____	_____	_____ p _ _
9	_____	_____	_____
24	_____	_____	_____ "