“I will give them an undivided heart... I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh.”

Ezekiel 11:19

God wants What from Me?

Worries about life can so easily divide our hearts. Rather than trusting in God, we look to ourselves. Concerns about the stability of our employment, health issues, failed relationships, the death of loved ones, pet sins, and the world with its many pleasures and treasures, would draw our hearts away from God, and focus our attention on ourselves. Jesus warns us sternly, “Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matthew 6:21).

Jesus came into our world so that he might change our stone-cold, selfish hearts. He suffered and died on the cross so that our hearts might no longer be divided, and that we might find great joy in belonging to God, both heart and soul.

Non-Christians have a hard time understanding why it is that we do so many of the things we do. They might think that we do them because we are trying to earn God's favor, or a place in heaven. That is their motive for doing “good things.” But we go to church, and tell our neighbor about Jesus because our hearts belong to God—the God who loved us first, and proved that love by sending his Son to die for our sins.

Let me be yours forever, My faithful God and Lord; Let me forsake you never Nor wander from your Word. Lord, do not let me waver But give me steadfastness, And for such grace and favor Your holy name I'll bless.
Heart-Healthy Saturday

Parish Nursing and our Outreach Committee will be hosting Star’s first Health and Wellness Fair entitled Heart-Healthy Saturday on Feb. 14, from 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. A variety of informational booths, free blood pressure checks, etc., will be available. If you would like to help with the day, please contact Susan Abel/Parish Nurse Coordinator or Ty Foren/Outreach Committee Chairman. Join us for a fresh start with the Health and Wellness Fair on Feb. 14!

New Adult Bible Class

Vicar Reis will be teaching the “I Am Statements of Jesus” through February 15. After that, we will cover the topic “The Glory of Jesus’ Suffering, Death and Resurrection” during the Lenten Season, which will be led by Pastor Gawrisch. Why not get started in Adult Bible Class this week. We meet Sunday mornings, 9:20 a.m. or as soon as we can get started. Donuts and coffee are available beforehand, so come early! The schedule for February includes:

February 1 – I am the Resurrection and the Life
February 8 – I am the Way, the Truth and the Life
February 15 – I am the Vine
February 22 – In the Upper Room

ALTAR FLOWERS

There are some new sheets on the bulletin board to sign up for altar flowers on the weekends. If you would like to donate flowers in memory of someone or in honor of a special occasion to glorify God, it would be greatly appreciated. Thank you for any donations!

Midweek Lenten Services

The season of Lent will begin on Ash Wednesday, February 25. We will have a Midweek Lenten Service each Wednesday at 6:30 p.m. Area WELS pastors will again serve as our Guest Speakers. The theme for our Midweek Lenten Services will be: Father, Forgive Them. Please join us each week as we review our Savior’s innocent suffering and death as our Substitute.

BIBLE INFORMATION COURSE

Please speak to Pastor Gawrisch if you would like to go through the Bible Information Course. We will be happy to work out a schedule to cover the material one-on-one, if needed. Daytime or evening classes are available, just ask. The course is free and all materials are provided. The course covers about 10 weeks, one and a half hour classes, one day a week. This basic course in Christian doctrine is a requirement for anyone who would like to become a member able to receive the Lord’s Supper with us. It is also a requirement for anyone with tuition children in our school, so that you can reinforce what the children have learned in school at home. For any questions or to enroll, please call 262-786-2900 or email jgawrisch@starofbethlehem.org.

Death and Burial

It pleased Almighty God to call out of this life the soul of Laura Vernace at the age of 88. A Christian Funeral Service was conducted here at Star of Bethlehem on Thursday, Jan. 22. Committal took place at the Highland Memorial Park in New Berlin on Jan. 23. May the Lord comfort all who mourn with the sure hope of a blessed reunion in heaven.

Welcome

We welcome to our congregation this month: Adrea and Daniel Knoll, and their children, Avery and Molly, and also, Brian and Blanche Dziak, together with their children, Samantha, Lauren and Cole. After completing the Bible Information Course, Blanche and Brian Dziak were confirmed at Star of Bethlehem on Sunday, Feb. 1. May the Lord continue to bless all of your spiritual growth among us!
The Martin Luther College Choir will be here to present its choral concerts for our Worship Services on Sunday, March 8. This is the final stop for the choir on its tour this year. It is a very special privilege for us to have them here! Please mark the date on your calendar, so that you are sure not to miss these young people, future pastors and teachers, present the Word of God in song to us! There will be a free will door collection following the Service to help cover the choir’s expenses. We will also be serving the choir lunch before they head back to New Ulm, MN that afternoon.

Second Annual BOWLING OUTING for Tuition Assistance

Our 2nd Annual Bowling Event/ Silent Auction for tuition assistance for our worker training students and secondary Christian education students will be held at the Sunset Bowl in Waukesha on Sunday, Feb. 22, beginning at 2:00 p.m. Sign up for an afternoon of bowling, fun, food and fellowship the bulletin board. If you don’t care to bowl, you are welcome to come and join in the fellowship. If you would like to bowl with a group, please sign up on the bulletin board as soon as possible. If you have any questions about the day, please contact Stephan or Colleen Hoffman 262-971-1648 or by email shoffmann2@wi.rr.com.

Boy’s Church Hoops

Our high school boy’s basketball team has 3 wins and 2 losses as we begin February. You are always welcome to come out to watch and cheer them on. A schedule is posted on the church bulletin board.

Men’s Basketball League

Star of Bethlehem is one game out of first place, with 5 games to go. The league season will conclude with the State Lutheran Men’s Tournament the weekend of March 13-15. Preliminary rounds of the tournament will be held here at Star of Bethlehem. If anyone would like to assist with tickets, concessions, score-keeping, supervision, please speak to Marc Meyer or Pastor Gawrisch.

Men’s Softball

It seems too early to be thinking softball, especially with the cold weather. However, men who would like to be part of this summer’s Star men’s softball team, which competes at Malone Park on Tuesday nights, need to stop at our Administrative Office and fill out a softball registration card required by the city to participate. Please fill out a card as soon as possible. We need at least 12 players to reserve a spot in the league, and are limited to 20 players per team. Players must be over 18. You do not need to be a resident of New Berlin. Practices are usually on Sunday afternoons in April with the first game the last week of April. The season is usually over by the end of July, unless rainouts extend the season.

STAR SENIORS

Come and warm up at our next Seniors’ Meeting on Thursday, Feb. 26, at 6:00 p.m. Soup/Salad will be the menu, followed by Vicar Reis’ presentation on the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. Bring a salad or items you would find on a salad bar to share. Soup will be provided. All senior members, 55 and over, as well as guests are invited to attend. Come and enjoy the company of your fellow senior citizens!

Vicar’s Viewpoint

Hello once again and welcome to 2009! January I can sum up in a phrase, ‘the month of meetings.’ There were plenty of meetings to attend during this month and that kept most of my nights busy! Other than the meetings, I preached on New Year’s Eve and also on January 18th. I am up again for preaching on February 15th. Other than getting those various sermons ready, I did many shut-in calls and a couple of hospital calls. I also am continuing to teach 7th grade catechism. I also attended the Western Lakes Pastor’s Conference on Monday the 19th. I did one Wednesday morning chapel service and one Wednesday Linden Grove Service. I have helped with liturgy most Sundays. Also I have been leading Adult Bible Class for the month of January. We are studying the ‘I Am Statements of Jesus’. If you haven’t attended Bible Class in the New Year yet, I encourage you to attend. It is never too late to start going to Bible Class! Looking ahead to February, of course it is going to be another busy month. I will be teaching Adult Bible Class through February 15th, which means February 22nd I will again be taking over the Teen Bible Class. There is also a report from me in the Annual Report. One of the things I enjoy here at Star is that I am able to participate and enjoy so many activities. I truly feel that I am getting a well-rounded experience here at Star. I hope and pray that the Lord blesses each and every one of you in this next month.

For the Teens: Please sign up for Laser Tag on February 8th. It is a great way to enjoy time with friends as we have the place to ourselves. Please feel free to invite friends from outside our Star family! Also please reserve March 5th on your calendars as we will be going to the water park! I encourage you to attend both of these events.
**TEEN OUTING**

Come and enjoy the next activity. We will be going to the Laser Tag Adventure in Waukesha on Feb. 8 from 6:00-8:00 p.m. Cost is $20 for two hours of laser tag. Invite your friends to join us, since we have the place reserved to ourselves. There is a sign up sheet posted on the bulletin board. Watch for information about the March outing to the Country Springs Inn and Water Park.

**PARENTING SYMPOSIUM**

Christ the Lord Lutheran Church in Brookfield is hosting a community outreach symposium on the subject of “Parenting.” This free, open to the public event, will be held on Thursday, February 5, from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. The speaker is Bev Yahnke, a clinical psychologist, who has provided consultation to synodical leaders and congregations for over 20 years. Register at christthelordbrookfield.org or call 262-782-3040. Child care will be available.

**CHRISTIAN WOMAN TODAY RETREAT**

The Christian Woman Today Retreat, sponsored by the women of Christ the Lord Lutheran Church in Brookfield will be holding their annual retreat at the Olympia Village in Oconomowoc on March 27-29. Retreat brochures and registration information are available on the bulletin board, or call Maureen Sertich at 262-784-0412. The registration deadline is Feb. 27th.

**WLHS AUCTION AND FISH FRY**

Join in the fun at the Wisco Auction and Fish Fry on Friday, March 20, at the Country Springs Inn in Pewaukee. Call 414-453-4567 Ext. 2016, for information or donation opportunities. The cost per person is $75, which includes dinner and a donation to the high school’s tuition assistance fund.

**Back to School for Seniors!**

What kind of senior housing is a good choice for you? Find out about all the options at the fourth in a series of educational topics called “Senior University” at Christ the Lord Lutheran Church in Brookfield. Wednesday, February 11, at 10:30 a.m. in the gathering area. Whenever the new issues arrive, they are placed in that location. Why not join?

PARENTING SYMPOSIUM

Christ the Lord Lutheran Church in Brookfield is hosting a community outreach symposium on the subject of “Parenting.” This free, open to the public event, will be held on Thursday, February 5, from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. The speaker is Bev Yahnke, a clinical psychologist, who has provided consultation to synodical leaders and congregations for over 20 years. Register at christthelordbrookfield.org or call 262-782-3040. Child care will be available.

**CHRISTIAN WOMAN TODAY RETREAT**

The Christian Woman Today Retreat, sponsored by the women of Christ the Lord Lutheran Church in Brookfield will be holding their annual retreat at the Olympia Village in Oconomowoc on March 27-29. Retreat brochures and registration information are available on the bulletin board, or call Maureen Sertich at 262-784-0412. The registration deadline is Feb. 27th.

**WLHS AUCTION AND FISH FRY**

Join in the fun at the Wisco Auction and Fish Fry on Friday, March 20, at the Country Springs Inn in Pewaukee. Call 414-453-4567 Ext. 2016, for information or donation opportunities. The cost per person is $75, which includes dinner and a donation to the high school’s tuition assistance fund.

**Back to School for Seniors!**

What kind of senior housing is a good choice for you? Find out about all the options at the fourth in a series of educational topics called “Senior University” at Christ the Lord Lutheran Church in Brookfield. Wednesday, February 11, at 10:30 a.m. in the gathering area. Whenever the new issues arrive, they are placed in that location. Why not join?

**MEDITATIONS AND FORWARD IN CHRIST**

Meditations is a booklet with devotions for every day of the year. There are enough devotions included in each copy for the next 3 months. Copies are available free of charge on the back counter also. Copies are also free of charge. Read about some of the exciting mission and ministries that are being carried out within our synod. Also, you will find many devotional articles that are great to read with the whole family. Pick up your copies of Meditations and Forward In Christ today!

**Retirement Announced**

Mr. Lorry Westphal, our outstanding trade and technology teacher and Practical Arts Department coordinator, has announced his retirement at the end of this school year. In his letter announcing his retirement plans, Mr. Westphal wrote:

It is with mixed emotions that I submit this letter, but I feel it is time to let someone younger carry on the ministry that I have loved for 39 years. I have been truly blessed, more than anyone can imagine, with the honor and privilege of serving WLHS for these past years.

Mr. Westphal has and continues to be a wonderful blessing to this ministry. He will be deeply missed. Preparations are now taking place for the calling of a teacher to assume Mr. Westphal’s position.

**WHY GO TO CHURCH?**

**Q:** If a member of my church says they don’t need to be in church all that much. What are some useful explanations I can provide to encourage them to attend?

**A:** The words often attributed to Billy Sunday came to mind when I read what your friend said. Replying to someone who had said, “Going to church doesn’t make me a Christian,” Billy reportedly said, “Going into a garage doesn’t make you a car either — but if you’re a car you know where you belong.” The important point is that you will never change the heart or attitude of your friend by listing reasons why public worship and fellowship and shared approaches to Christian tasks is important and to be treasured. His problem is most likely in his relationship with Jesus Christ and God’s Word, the Bible. So I would speak law and gospel to him, impress on him his utter sinfulness and his perfect Savior from sin. Repeatedly and unapologetically. The Holy Spirit then may work a change of heart, revive a living faith, and a changed attitude over against attending church will then follow.

But if you seek a list of reasons why believers see value in church attendance, here is a start:

- God’s will is that we use Word (gospel) and sacrament as means of grace. Attending church is better defined as gathering around Word and sacrament — using the means of grace. While home Bible reading is always possible for non-attenders, perhaps one in fifty actually has meaningful Bible study on their own.
- God’s revealed will is that we worship and praise him. And publicly confess him before other people. Attending church is a prominent way of doing this. Is it possible that a non-attender may do this? Yes, but I’d politely ask for an accounting here. The lifestyles of willful non-attenders are seldom centered in the Lord, but in self.
- God’s will is that believers encourage, instruct, nurture, and discipline each other. That is a major part of “church” work. How is that priority carried out by non-worshippers? It seldom if ever is.
- God’s will is that we manage our time, possessions, money, and very lives and abilities to serve God and our neighbor. First-fruit, generous, and cheerful monetary offerings play a role here. Church is an efficient way to pool believers’ resources to support gospel work locally and worldwide, plus serve others in Christ’s name in a variety of ways. How is this normally done among loners and non-worshippers? It isn’t.

(From www.wels.net)