



## Message from Pastor Ben

Dear Pastor,

*Can you tell me about being born again? It's one of those things that gets talked about, but isn't quite clear.*

*Sincerely, Curious in Lytton*

Hello there Curious,

"Being born again" is an idea and an experience that is rooted in scripture, particularly John, chapter 3. That is when Nicodemus came to Jesus at night and was questioning him. Jesus replied, *"Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the spirit."*

Through much of Church history being born again didn't get much attention, but insofar as it did, it was associated with baptism. The Roman Empire legalized Christianity after about three hundred years of off and on persecution. A little later it became the state religion. Then, in time, virtually all citizens became Christians. As this system developed, citizens of a Christian country were baptized (almost) automatically. So then, some thousand years after this developed, to be a citizen of England or Spain or France was (almost) synonymous with being a Christian. All infants were baptized. All people celebrated the religious feasts. All people were required to go to confession. Holy Communion was mandatory once a year. Some people were good at it, monks in particular. Some people were not. But there was really no choice in the matter.

This system that automatically assumed the faith of all citizens was rejected by the Reformation churches. Many of them wanted membership in the church to be limited to those who had had an identifiable experience of Christian conversion, a conscious acceptance of the teachings of scripture, of one's sinfulness, and of Christ as Savior and Lord. They yearned for the faith to be lifted up as the most valuable treasure, not demeaned as a kind of thoughtless habit. It is out of this context that "being born again" was. *\*ahem\** born again.

Probably the dominant understanding of being born again in America is the Evangelical one which came out of this rejection of lazy, habitual, citizenship faith. It has come to mean arriving at a deep awareness of your sins and placing your faith in Jesus as your savior. This conversion experience is what is meant when an Evangelical asks, "Are you saved?" They are asking, "Have you had that experience where you knew that you were a sinner, repented of it, and put your faith in Jesus to save you?" This also gets called "making a decision for Christ" and is the start of "having a personal relationship with Jesus." This is the reason why Evangelical churches or revivals will have altar calls, when people in the worshiping assembly are invited to the front to be prayed over. This is an opportunity to act on the desire to leave the old sinner behind and be made new.

Being born again, according to this tradition, is no longer a rejection of a state church. But it is still rooted in having an experience of conversion that sets it apart from merely being a member of something by habit or birth.

The Lutheran understanding of being born again, though we are a church of the Reformation, is totally different. The Lutheran understanding of the faith is built on this, "I believe that I cannot by my own understanding or effort believe in Jesus Christ my Lord, or come to him." In other words, we believe that we COULD NOT and CANNOT do the very thing that many Christians felt they HAD to and HAVE TO do. Though we might notice the same problem that others have noticed, we are powerless to do anything about it.

Rather, "The Holy Spirit has called me through the Gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, and sanctified and kept me in true faith." We are born again in baptism, and we are born again each day as we confess our sins and receive his forgiveness. Being born again, in a Lutheran sense, is receiving something as a gift and living daily in the promise that he has given us.

That said, I think there is common ground. I think that Lutherans would agree that faith is no thoughtless habit (though surely there are days or even seasons like that.) We would agree that true faith means understands our sinfulness and relying on Christ to save us. We would agree that being born again is a priceless treasure. We would agree that our lives should reflect Christ.

Does that help? I was hoping to give an explanation that, though incomplete, might shed some light. If not, don't be afraid to ask again. And that goes for the rest of you too. Ask away!

[Submit questions by email: [ben.worley.rev@wisynod.org](mailto:ben.worley.rev@wisynod.org) or by text: 712-541-4785 or just slip it under my office door. I won't mention your name.]

Rev. Ben Worley  
Emanuel St. John, Lytton, IA  
(712) 541-4785 (cell phone)



## Emanuel-St John Lutheran Church Council Meeting Minutes May 9, 2010

President Brian Lantz called the meeting to order. Present were Cindy Souder, Jeff Ellerbrock, Dennis Booth, Kari Lantz, Colleen Arndt, Rhonda Johnson, and Ron Haden. Brian Lantz gave devotions. Motion by Jeff Ellerbrock, second by Dennis Booth to approve the agenda. Motion passed. Motion by Dennis Booth, second by Ron Haden to approve the April minutes. Motion passed. Treasurer's report was presented to the council by Treasurer Rhonda Johnson. Motion by Dennis Booth, second by Jeff Ellerbrock to approve the treasurer's report with a balance of \$5711.98. Motion passed. A written EPIC report was given to the council.

**Old Business:** Jeff Ellerbrock reported he still has not heard back from the St Paul's Lutheran Church about the EPIC Leader job description. DVD's of old church services and programs are available for anyone wanting to view them.

**President's Report:** Brian Lantz is still checking out prices for putting rock between the trees and street on the west side of church parking area. Ron Haden reported on limestone from Wirtjers. He said it would be approximately \$23 a ton for the limestone rock. Brian will contact the Graphic newspaper about our worship and Sunday school times in their paper.

**Pastor's Report:** Brian Lantz reported that Pastor Ben will be gone this Sunday and next Sunday.

**Worship and Music Committee:** Dennis Booth reported that the committee is working on the Gala Days service responsibilities. Motion by Jeff Ellerbrock, second by Dennis Booth that the offering from the Community Worship Service on May 26 be divided 50/50 to go towards the Beacon of Hope Ministries and the Pastor's Discretionary Fund. Motion passed.

**Parish Ed Committee:** Kari Lantz present. The Sunday school will be ending the year this Sunday. VBS plans are getting finalized. Dates for VBS will be advertised in local papers so that children in the surrounding communities know they are welcome to attend.

**Outreach Committee:** Colleen Arndt present. The committee will be hosting a graduation reception. They will also be helping Parish Ed with the Teacher Appreciation reception. The Outreach Committee would suggest that next year these two events not be on the same date. This way each group is better recognized. A group of bike riders will be coming thru Lytton in June sometime. The Outreach committee will be asking for volunteers to provide homemade bars for them.

**Property and Management Committee:** Ron Haden will talk to Doug Schultz about mowing church grounds. Ron and Jean Matter are working on possibly replacing bulbs in the dining hall to LED bulbs. Outside lights were reported to not be working correctly. The bat exterminator has contacted Pastor Ben.

**Stewardship and Finance Committee:** Jeff Ellerbrock present. Jeff noted that the church general fund balance is low. The income is not keeping up to pay expenses. Jeff explained how the Pastor's Discretionary Fund works. The council discussed the EPIC program and its finances. Endowment Money is not available to be used for the general funding of regular bills of the church.

**WELCA:** No report.

**New Business:** Council discussed setting a fee for the use of Church dining hall. Float for Gala Days was discussed.

Motion by Colleen Arndt, second by Dennis Booth to adjourn. Motion passed. Lord's Prayer.



Memory of the Month DVD for June will be the 1987 Christmas Program starring Doug Bartels and a cast of dozens. The DVDs will be available on June 5<sup>th</sup> on the table in the entrance where the cards are.

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

- 1) Alan Meyer
- 3) Rob Fry, Derek Greene
- 4) Tony Dettmann, Jason Grodahl,
- 5) Vanessa Althiser
- 6) Rick Dettmann, Joleen Grodahl,  
Trista Murray
- 8) **Richard Baskerville, Jr.**
- 9) Case Picard
- 11) Randy Souder
- 12) Carrissa DeRuyter, Peyton Riley
- 14) Kiersten Purdie, Zayda Winey
- 15) Troy Arndt, Mindy Foote, Lille Greene,  
Deb Kennebeck, Melissa Stell
- 17) Nate Hauptert, Chad Lankford
- 21) Judy Kruckenberg
- 23) Denise Lake
- 27) Catherine Diersen, Nevaeh Purdie,  
**Evelyn Scharn**, Jason Wattonville
- 28) Don Ringgenberg
- 30) Chase Pibal



- June 2, 2014 Donald and Emily Bailey  
June 2, 1962 **LeRoy & Rhonda Johnson**  
June 5, 1982 Brian & Kari Lantz  
June 11, 1976 Ronald & Cheryl Haden  
June 11, 2016 Cory & Jamie Waller  
June 12, 2011 John III & Katie Conger  
June 14, 1997 Kirby & Denise Ramsey  
June 16, 1978 David & Carla Hutchens  
June 16, 2007 Jason & Shelby Pudenz  
June 17, 1959 **Ellis & Nelma Byriel**  
June 18, 2016 Cory & Whitney Dungey  
June 18, 1994 Jason & Tisha Murphy  
June 19, 1999 Dean & Teresa Lanning  
June 22, 1991 Kurt & Teresa VanHulzen  
June 22, 1996 Douglas & Christy Kral  
June 23, 1963 **Larry & Judy Kruckenberg**  
June 23, 1973 Randall & Cynthia Souder  
June 25, 2011 Nick & Krista Albright  
June 27, 1970 Darwin & Denise Lake  
June 30, 1968 **Darold & Jean Matter**

**HAPPY ANNIVERSARY**

## Sunday School Perfect Attendance for April, 2019:

Students present at Sunday School all Sundays in April were:

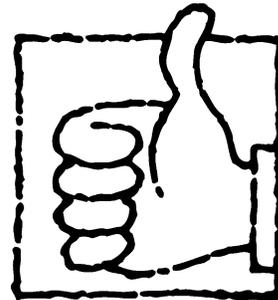
- ☆ Nursery-Pre-Kindergarten: Adelaide Worley, Elin Albright, Myla Albright, Lily Bartels, Jasper Heimdal and Johnny Worley
- ☆ Kindergarten & Grade 1: Chase Hejtmanek, Sawyer Riley, Lille Greene, Case Picard and Abby Worley
- ☆ Grades 2 & 3: Aidan Albright, Lilly Picard, Rhemy Picard and Benjamin Worley
- ☆ Grades 4 & 5: Kelsie Hejtmanek and Derek Greene
- ☆ Grades 6: Onna Hauptert
- ☆ Confirmation (Grades 7 & 8): No one
- ☆ Grades 9-12: Laura Greene, Taylor Greene and Kortney Riley

Class winner with the best attendance was Grades 9-12 taught by Nate and Shelley Hauptert.

## AND FOR MAY

- ☆ Nursery: Lily Bartels and Grant Hinrichs
- ☆ Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten-Grade 1: Lille Greene, Elodie Mentzer and Brinley Riley
- ☆ Grades 2 & 3: No one
- ☆ Grades 4 & 5: Sadie Wheelock and Derek Greene
- ☆ Grades 6: Onna Hauptert and Adlen Wheelock
- ☆ Confirmation (Grades 7 & 8): No one
- ☆ Grades 9-12: Laura Greene and Taylor Greene

Class winners for best attendance were Grade 6 taught by Faith Worley and Grades 9-12 taught by Nate and Shelley Hauptert.



**AWESOME!!!** We had one student, Lily Bartels that was present all the Sundays that we had Sunday School from September 2018–May 2019. Well done, Lily!!!

The youth will not have Sunday School during the summer months but the Adult Bible Class will continue to meet each Sunday morning at 9:00 a.m. Everyone is welcome!



Vacation Bible School will be June 24-27, 2019 from 9 am-2 pm for Grades 1-5 and 9 am-12 pm for 3 year olds through Kindergarten. Ingham Okoboji Lutheran Bible Camp will be leading VBS this year.



Condolences to the family and friends of Melvin Haden who died Friday, April 26, 2019. His funeral was held Sunday, April 28, 2019, at the First Presbyterian Church in Sac City with Rev. B. J. Ukena officiating. Melvin was the father of **Ron Haden**

Condolences also to family and friends of former member, **Maxine Thieking**. Maxine died November 2, 2018 in Plattsmouth, NE. A memorial service was held Saturday, May 11, 2019 at the Fratzke and Jensen Funeral Home in Newell with burial in the St. John Lutheran Cemetery in rural Lytton.

WE PRAY FOR GOD'S STRENGTH AND COMFORT TO ALL THAT MOURN.

## GOVERNING CoDR

I was recently elected to the Outside Church Council of the Church of the Damascus Road prison congregations. WOW! I didn't have to petition, run expensive TV ads or even campaign. All it took was experience with the prison ministry and a passion for the continuation of the ministry.

I have written previously about my 20 years experiences with CoDR worship, Bible study with the inmates, Storytellers, and Brothers In Blue. But I certainly cannot currently inform anyone on the nuts and bolts of keeping the organization Christ centered and financially stable.

I know CoDR is "The Inmates" Congregation that exists inside the walls with the inmates as members. It is not the ministry of an outside congregation allowing its pastor to minister in the prison. CoDR functions with an elected Inside Church Council within each prison. It governs the spiritual life inside the walls.

There is also an Outside Church Council (now including me) that is responsible for the support of the inside congregation. Both the Inside and Outside Councils have a constitution and by-laws to rule and guide them. There are officers and council leaders much like any church congregation. The Outside Council is made up of persons from congregations of any Christian denomination in Western Iowa. It is important that these people pray for CoDR, meet to share ideas, set and reach goals, and expand awareness of this prison ministry and develop financial sustainability. The inmates have no way to financially support a fulltime pastor so CoDR depends on contributions from churches, individuals or foundation gifts. It sounds like a daunting job to me but I know there is a strong council whose desires are to support CoDR. I ask for continued prayers that God gives us wisdom and guidance. Also, prayers that people prayerfully and financially support CoDR so that inmates may learn and feel God's love and change their lives.

Candace Booth, Lytton, IA



## MY EARTHLY DAD

With these three words,  
 "Dear Heavenly Father,"  
 I begin my every prayer,  
 But the man I see  
 While on bended knee  
 Is always my earthly dad.  
 He is the image  
 Of the Father divine  
 Reflecting the nature of God,  
 For his love and care  
 And the faith he shared  
 Pointed me to my Father above.



**June 2019, LSI Bulletin/Newsletter Article and Story**

**Happy Father's Day!**

At Lutheran Services in Iowa (LSI), we strive to build up and empower Iowa kids and families. For us, Father's Day is a time to celebrate all the fathers and male role models we see every day.

Through our Early Childhood Services, young men are learning to become dads. They're becoming confident and active in their child's life, and they are creating loving, bright futures for their families.

Many of the boys and young men that LSI serves in our Bremwood and Beloit Residential Treatment Centers have never had a positive male role model in their lives. But our caring volunteers and staff members are there to help guide them.

You are making all of this possible through your support of LSI. Thank you for responding to the love of Jesus Christ through compassionate service!

*Our Mission: Lutheran Services in Iowa responds to the love of Jesus Christ through compassionate service. LSI is an affiliated social ministry partner of the Iowa congregations of the ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) and a member of LSA (Lutheran Services in America). We proudly serve people of all ages, abilities, religions, sexes, gender identities, national origins, ethnicities, races, and sexual orientations. Learn more at [LSIowa.org](http://LSIowa.org) and [Facebook.com/LSI.iowa](https://www.facebook.com/LSI.iowa).*

**A New Life**

A year and a half ago, Kevin was homeless. He struggled with substance use. He didn't have a car. Or a driver's license. Or a job.

Then, his world turned upside down and all at once, his priorities shifted. He found out he was a father to a beautiful baby girl, Willow. Kevin immediately began rehab and fought hard to build a healthy lifestyle. After months of hard work and efforts to get clean, Willow was placed in Kevin's care while her mother received treatment for her substance use disorder.

Kevin turned to LSI's Early Childhood Services for support and a community to help him create the best home for his daughter. After starting services last year, Kevin can't imagine life without LSI.

Through regular in-home visits from Lindsay, his LSI worker, Kevin is helping Willow develop her language and speaking, as well as her motor skills. Now one and a half, Willow is learning to use pens and markers, and loves writing and coloring. Her favorite book is a present from her dad – a picture book of the ABCs.

Kevin now has sole custody of Willow, and he works closely with her mother to ensure she gets regular visits. His life has changed for the better, and he credits Lindsay and LSI for walking alongside him on his journey.

"LSI teaches you to think about all the little things we often overlook as parents. And we learn to appreciate those little things more because of it," Kevin says. "LSI is teaching me to be the best father I can be."



**OUR DAD**

God took the strength of a mountain,  
The majesty of a tree,  
The warmth of a summer sun,  
The calm of a quiet sea,  
The generous soul of nature,  
The comforting arm of night,  
The wisdom of the ages,  
The power of the eagle's flight,  
The joy of a morning in spring,  
The faith of a mustard seed,  
The patience of eternity,  
The depth of a family need,  
Then God combined these qualities,  
When there was nothing more to add,  
He knew his masterpiece was complete,  
And so, he called it  
Dad

