



The whole book of Genesis is amazing. It is a gigantic and complex drama filled with interesting and flawed people. It is a redemption story. And it gets wrapped up after fifty chapters with a short passage as full of the gospel as anything that you can find in the New Testament.

Joseph's brothers also came and fell down before him and said, "Behold, we are your servants." But Joseph said to them, "Do not fear, for am I in the place of God? As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today. So do not fear; I will provide for you and your little ones." Thus he comforted them and spoke kindly to them." Genesis 50:18-21

Joseph and his brothers were born into a family which, through no fault of their own, was already plagued by jealousy and dishonesty. Their father Jacob, when he was a young man, had tricked his brother out of his birthright and, with his mother's help, had stolen his father Isaac's blessing, which was meant for his twin brother Esau. As the story moves forward, this lying, stealing, and tricking is returned to him by his uncle Laban who tricks Jacob into marrying the wrong woman so that he can get an extra seven years of free labor out of him. And so Jacob marries Leah, a woman whom he doesn't love, and then his beloved Rachel after another seven years of work. This trickery and stealing doesn't go away. It remains a part of their family system. The children of the beloved Rachel, especially Joseph, are valued. The children of Leah (and also of the two concubines) are valued less. These older brothers are made to work (as Jacob had been made to work), while Joseph was

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not. And this caused understandable resentment, especially when Joseph started telling everybody his dreams about how they were all going to serve him.

One thing led to another, and the brothers decided to act on their resentment. They considered murdering Joseph, but sold him into slavery instead. And then they did what this family did best. They lied to their father and tricked him into thinking that Joseph was dead (by covering his cloak in blood and letting Jacob believe that his son had been killed by a wild animal). Having committed this double sin, they keep it a secret for years.

Then events lead them down to Egypt and the reunification of Joseph with his father. From our point of view, it might seem as if Joseph is happy to bring his family back together again. But this is not at all what his brothers understand. They are convinced that Joseph has not taken revenge on them only because doing so would hurt their father Jacob. And so when Jacob dies, they are terrified. Now is the time when Joseph, who is a powerful man, will make them suffer for what they did to him. And they are right to be afraid because the story of this family is of passing along the betrayal and trickery and lying and trauma. Certainly the one who has been wronged will take revenge. Wouldn't that be justice? (Jacob went through this same terror as he prepared to meet his brother Esau whom he had wronged.)

But Joseph declines to exercise his power over them to deliver justice. Rather than justice, he gives them a short sermon that might have come from Jesus' lips. To paraphrase, "You tried to harm me, but God took your evil actions and made something good out of them. You tried to kill me.

But instead of your evil bringing death, God used it to bring life.

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I love this drama and the verse that ties it all up because it shows who God is. We like to say that God is just, but that's not quite right. If God's justice were his defining characteristic then we would live in terror like Joseph's brothers. No, God is love. That's his very essence. God is merciful. God is forgiving. And our story will not end with God finally deciding to give us what we deserve. The last thing he wants is for this family story of tricking, lying, stealing, and hurting to continue. "Justice" in this case is just perpetuating the evil that has been passed down through the generations. No, God renounces justice, just as Joseph does, and he freely chooses restoration for his wayward family. And that is why Genesis 50:20 is one of my favorite scripture verses.

--
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**Emanuel-St John Lutheran Church
Council Meeting Minutes
September 11, 2024**

President Jeff Ellerbrock called the meeting to order. Present were Cindy Souder, LaVerne Arndt, Dar Lake, Rhonda Johnson, Pauline Lange, Jeff Ellerbrock, Pastor Ben, LeRoy Johnson, Randy Souder and Kari Lantz came in late. Pastor Ben gave opening devotions. Motion by LaVerne Arndt, second by Dar Lake, to approve the agenda. Motion passed. Motion by Dar Lake, second by LaVerne Arndt, to approve August minutes. Motion passed. Motion by Dar Lake, second by Randy Souder, to approve the treasurer's report with a balance of \$6275.15. Motion passed.

Old Business: Updating bylaws. Motion by LeRoy Johnson, second by Dar Lake, to have each committee look into the bylaws and if they want to make any changes or updates to bring it to the next council meeting October 9th. Motion passed.

President's Report: Jeff commented on Fall Fest and how things went.

Pastor's Report: Pastor Ben reported that he enjoyed Fall Fest and it was a good start to the new Sunday School year. He has also been stopping to see the nursing home and home bound residents.

Worship and Music: None

Parish Ed: None

Outreach: Kari Lantz reported they are working on Mission Festival. They are also working on finding a replacement committee member for next year. They would like to let the congregation know what the committees do before the annual meeting so the members have a better idea of what the committees do when they are looking for volunteer opportunities within the church.

Property and Management: LeRoy Johnson reported new LED lights were installed in the dining hall and they would like to continue to replace the old lights with LED to save approximately \$250. Paul Mogensen will be painting the wood on the outside of the church. Darold Matter and Daryl Glasnapp will take down the dead tree in parking lot. Brice Dooley sprayed the north cemetery and restored spots with needed fill and put down seed. Would like to replace trees that were taken out (evergreens) at North Cemetery but would like to buy more ground to the west, then will purchase new evergreens and will need someone to water them.

Stewardship and Finance: Dar present no business.

WELCA: 10 members attended Dorcas Cluster Women's Fall Retreat at Twin Lake Bible Camp said it was great meeting.

New Business: None

Motion by Dar Lake, second by LeRoy Johnson, to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed. Closed with the Lord's Prayer

Hands of Hope Fall Conference Meeting will be Sunday, October 20, 2024 at 2 p.m. at Grace Lutheran Church, Fort Dodge. We will get 'zoomed-in' with the Synod Office for welcome/announcements and then we will get to our meeting. I am shooting for no more than an hour-long meeting. It will be nice to check-in with y'all! Blessings and apologies for adding to your calendar.

Dan Kahl

October Birthdays

- 2) Sheila Toms
- 3) Jeff Ellerbrock
- 4) Tanner Crabb, Jean Matter, Jax Purdie
- 5) Ella Adams
- 6) **Karen Cerra**, David Hutchens
- 8) Cortney Diersen
- 10) Theodore Albright
- 11) Donovan Kennebeck
- 12) Steven McKinney
- 13) Bruce Byriel, Cody Lanning, Cindy Souder
- 14) Michael Sage
- 15) Grant Grodahl
- 16) Nolan Huddleson, Jenna Jensen
- 17) Ron Maulsby, Rodney Rix, **David Sands**, Julie Wilson
- 19) Kristin Bailey, JoAnn Ellerbrock, Debbie Otto
- 20) Chris Souder
- 21) **Dorothy Wilson**
- 22) Mindy Riley
- 23) Amy Diersen, Barbara Hedin
- 25) Daniel Kennebeck, Gary Manning, Adelaide Worley
- 27) Jake Ackerson, Sam Adams, Emily Bailey, Morgan Hillmer, Marlyn Purdie
- 28) Dennis Johnson
- 29) Brittany Garcia, Paul Toms
- 30) Earl Bartels, Matthew Gibson, Daryl Glasnapp, Kari Lantz



- Oct 5, 1996 Bob & Jodi Purdie
Oct 9, 2021 Chris & Kaylynn Larson
Oct 29, 2005 Mark & Angela Edmondson



Bibles to 4th Grade Students

Myla Albright, Lily Bartels and Adelaide Worley received a Bible during worship Sunday, September 15th. Elin Albright will receive her Bible at a later time. We pray for God's blessing on each of them as they read and study His word!



IT'S A BOY!

Andrew and Amberly Van Hulzen's first born son, Izaiah Kurt, was born Friday, August 30. Izaiah weighed 8 lb. 6 oz. and measured 20 inches long.

Izaiah's grandparents are Kurt and Teresa Van Hulzen and his local great grandmother is Nelda Bartels.

Congratulations to the Van Hulzen family.



DORCAS CLUSTER FALL RETREAT

Humbly United in Christ

The Dorcas Cluster of the WELCA held the Fall Retreat at Twin Lakes on Wednesday, September 11. Ten ladies from ESJ attended and some gals helped with planning and coordinating the day. A highlight was Pr. Kelli Glasgo presenting updated information concerning the Church of the Damascus Road and, then, leading the Bible study from Philippians 2:1-11. Each congregation donated hygiene supplies for the Halfway House in Ft. Dodge.

The featured speaker in the afternoon was Dawn Thompson, who is legally blind. She shared her story of how she acquired and learned to use a Leader Dog through the Lion's Club.

There were ample songs of praise, a delicious lunch, and worship, all surrounded by beautiful fall decorations. It was a day of fellowship with about 80 Christian women. The theme was perfect- Humbly United in Christ.



October 2024: Now through December 31, Double your Donation!

Consider giving a gift to Lutheran Services in Iowa to support Iowans from all walks of life. Until the end of December, all donations will be doubled! A handful of generous donors agreed to match donations up to \$80,000. Increase your impact by donating today at LSIowa.org/donate.

You may be able to increase your gift even more! See if your employer has a matching gift program.

For more information, please contact Deb Whitford, LSI's Senior Director of Philanthropy and Church Relations, at Deborah.Whitford@LSIowa.org or 563-676-2065.

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Being a Christian is like being a Pumpkin:

God picks you from the patch and brings you in.

(John 15:16)

Then He washes all the dirt off of you.

(2 Corinthians 5:17)

He opens you up and scraps out all the yucky stuff.

He removes the seeds of doubt, fear, hate and greed.

(Romans 6:6)

He carves you a new smiling face. **(Psalm 71:23)**

And He puts his light inside of you to shine for all the world to see.

(Matthew 5:16)



