

# United Voice

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF UNITED FREE LUTHERAN  
JANUARY – FEBRUARY 2022

## Faith Now Counts (Not Our Background)

*Pastor David Niemela*

Mary exclaimed at the news of her pregnancy of the Christ, “From now on, all generations will call me blessed” (Luke 1).

Christmas has passed for us, and we wonder what Mary was thinking at home as the Savior of the world lay in her arms. Is she set for life? Thirty years later, a woman in the crowd listening to Jesus may have thought that Mary was:

As he said these things, a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said to him, “Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts at which you nursed!” (Luke 11:27)

How did Jesus respond to this woman?

But he said, “Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!” (Luke 11:28)

Did Jesus just say his mother Mary was not blessed?

No, Jesus rather explains to us why Mary is blessed, and how we are blessed. Mary was chosen as she took heed to God’s Word. Since she listened to God’s Word and practiced it, she was blessed. She believed in the Savior, so she was blessed as she bore the Savior.

Doing, keeping, observing, or obeying God’s Word actually does not start with your works, but it flows out in works. It starts with “obedience of faith” (Romans 1:5), or trusting in the Word of Jesus. A mere background associated with Jesus, even if it is being His mother, does not automatically mean you are blessed.

Blessed by association is a lie. No matter how many times you sat in a

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## Church Events

- **Jan. 2<sup>nd</sup> – Movie night”  
Like Arrows”**
- **Jan. 9<sup>th</sup> – “The Art of  
Parenting” study begins**
- **Jan. 12<sup>h</sup> – WMF meeting  
and Bible study**
- **Jan. 13-14<sup>th</sup> – Quilting**
- **Jan 16<sup>th</sup> – Sunday School  
resumes for all ages**
- **Jan. 27-28<sup>th</sup> – Quilting**
- **Feb. 4-5<sup>th</sup> – Mid-Winter  
Bible Conference**
- **Feb. 9<sup>th</sup> – WMF meeting  
and Bible study**
- **February (TBD) – Kids’  
Club resumes**

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pew, or ate bread at the altar, and any other related actions, it does not guarantee anything. It's just as Jesus spoke about judgment day in Matthew 7, "On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'" (vv.22-23).

It's not your background of works, but faith in the Word

present at the pew or at the altar that is "counted as righteousness" (Romans 4:5).

It's not your past actions, but the Word present now that makes the difference.

Faith in Jesus' Word guarantees all spiritual blessings (cf. Ephesians 1:3) because this faith is in Christ. Faith also causes good works, even if we don't do them perfectly.

Do you not have any prominent family background of faith, nor are skilled in Bible trivia? Do you feel new to the

faith and don't have many good works under your belt? Don't worry, you are blessed not by your background associated with the Word, but by faith in the Word of Jesus.

**"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ."**

**Ephesians 1:3**

## Happy New Year from the WMF

We have a new Bible Study starting in January, **Behold Our God**. It is written by Karen Floan, Anne Presteng, Gwen Berge and Wendy Westlake. These ladies are all sisters, we thank them for writing this study on Psalms.

We would love for you to join us to study God's Word. We meet the second Wednesday of each month at 6:45pm. If you would like a different night or another time for a study, there are probably more ladies that would like that also, so let us know and we will do our best to set up additional groups.

We continue to have Potluck Dinners on the third Sunday of the month. In lue of having a fall dinner, we are prayerfully asking that you add a little extra in for the potluck dinners. These funds allow us to donate to various organizations that have needs along with our own church needs.

The WMF Booklets that have all the groups listed, and the months each group serves along with our Bible Study and Meeting outlines will be out the first part of January.

Please be praying for our WMF officers and for all our ladies in WMF.

Blessings ~ Angie, WMF President



## Children's Sunday School Christmas Program

The kids worked hard and their Christmas program was a huge success! They did a great job of singing and we also had a group of talented actresses and actors. The kids, along with help from our generous program audience, raised over \$1500 that will be donated to the Miriam Infant Home in Brazil. What a giving and blessed way to ring in the Christmas season! Sunday School will now be on our holiday break and will resume January 16th, 2022.

Thank you all!  
~ Sunday School Teachers

# An Invitation

You are invited to fellowship around God's Word as you are led through the study, "Christ's Bride So Free: A Study of the Congregation as the Bride of Christ" at the Free Lutheran Church of Roseau, February 4-5. We as the board of the Northwest Minnesota District of the AFLC will host Rev. Martin Horn, PhD, as our teacher of this study.

Here is a summary of the study as given by Rev. Horn:

Georg Sverdrup, the founder of the Lutheran Free Church, once called the local congregation Christ's "chosen bride so free." According to Sverdrup, the freedom of the congregation is found in its identity as the Bride of Christ. I will examine the AFLC's "Free Congregation" in the light of the biblical metaphor of the bride. My studies will survey the use of the metaphor in Scripture, beginning in the book of Exodus and continuing in the prophets, the Gospels, Paul's letters, and concluding in the book of Revelation.

Rev. Horn is a 1983 graduate of the Free Lutheran Seminary, and has served AFLC congregations in Zumbrota, Fosston, and Kenyon, MN, and in Astoria, OR. He is currently serving as interim pastor at Christian Free-Lutheran Church in Wheatland, IA. In 2021 he completed a PhD in New Testament studies with a dissertation titled "The Congregation as the Bride of Christ: Georg Sverdrup's Concept of the Free Congregation." He and his wife Priscilla have three children: Andrew of Crystal, MN; Jonathan of Los Angeles, CA, and Amanda, who with her husband Anthony resides in St. Anthony, MN.

Free Lutheran Church of Roseau

1801 3rd Street N.E. | Roseau, MN 56751

**Friday, Feb. 4**

7 p.m. - Session 1

**Saturday, Feb. 5**

8:30 a.m. - Coffee

9 a.m. - Session 2

10:45 a.m. - Session 3

12 p.m. - Lunch

## 2021 Memorials

The following number of memorials were given in honor of:

**Melroy Wiskow**

Cemetery: 2

General: 6

**Glenn Iverson**

Cemetery: 2

General: 21

## Can You

Can you thread a needle?

Can you tie a knot?

Come see what it's all about.

Can you see all the colors?

Can you see all the patterns?

Come see what it's all about.

Can you have some coffee?

Can you have some lunch?

Come see what it's all about.

Can you hear the music?

Can you hear the laughter?

Come see what it's all about.

Can you fold them up?

Can you stack them up?

Come see what it's all about.

Can you come to quilting at the church?

January 13 & 14

January 27 & 28

9:30 a.m. - Potluck Lunch

Come see what it's all about.

## New Books in the Library

### *Gay Girl, Good God* by Jackie Hill Perry

“I used to be a lesbian.”

In *Gay Girl, Good God*, author Jackie Hill Perry shares her own story, offering practical tools that helped her in the process of finding wholeness. Jackie grew up fatherless and experienced gender confusion. She embraced masculinity and homosexuality with every fiber of her being. She knew that Christians had a lot to say about all of the above. But was she supposed to change herself? How was she supposed to stop loving women, when homosexuality felt more natural to her than heterosexuality ever could?

At age nineteen, Jackie came face-to-face with what it meant to be made new. And not in a church, or through contact with Christians. God broke in and turned her heart toward Him right in her own bedroom in light of His gospel. Read in order to understand. Read in order to hope. Or read in order, like Jackie, to be made new.

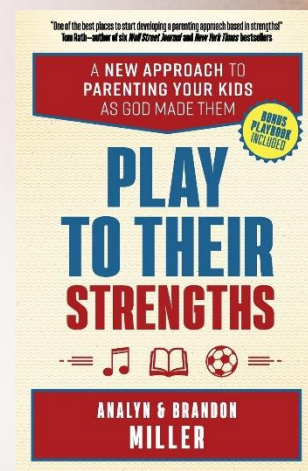


### *Play to Their Strengths* by Analyn and Brandon Miller

How can a good parent like you become an even greater parent? By shifting the focus to what's right with your kids instead of what is wrong with them. Discover how you can replace your frustration with joy by taking the pressure of performance and comparison off your children's shoulders.

Based in the belief that every child has God-given greatness within them, *Play to Their Strengths* shows you how to move with the natural momentum of your kids' talents and make the shift to a collaborative, strengths-based, and motivational approach to parenting. You'll see the powerful results of this shift in your children's shining eyes—and your own.

Now is the perfect time to experience a fresh fascination with your children and uncover the hidden gem inside each of them.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Association Retreat Center (ARC) ~ Osceola, WI

For more information, visit [www.arc-aflc.org](http://www.arc-aflc.org)

- ❖ Winter Youth Retreats ~ Feb. 4-6

### Association of Free Lutheran Congregations

For more information, visit [www.aflc.org](http://www.aflc.org) ❖ None at this time

### NW MN District

More information to appear on church website, Facebook page, and future bulletins

- ❖ Mid-Winter Bible Conference ~ Feb. 4-5
- ❖ Mission Conference at Our Saviour's, TRF ~ Feb. 18-20

### Free Lutheran Bible College & Seminary ~ Plymouth, MN

For more information, visit [flbc.edu](http://flbc.edu) ❖ None at this time

“But God demonstrates His  
own love for us in this:  
While we were still sinners,  
Christ died for us.”

Romans 5:8