

United Voice

November – December 2020

Bimonthly Newsletter of United Free Lutheran
Church | Greenbush, MN | Issue 6



Mark Your Calendar

11.1

Congregation Special
Meeting

11.15

Confirmation Sunday

11.22

UFLC Annual Meeting

11.17

WMF Bible Study

11.22

UFLC Annual Meeting

11.26

Community
Thanksgiving Dinner

12.24

Christmas Eve Service

What is a Heretic, and Can They Be Saved?

By Pastor David Niemela

My brother, with his friends from a church of an ethnically Finnish denomination, were going to play a pickup game of football at the school one Sunday afternoon. Another group of kids showed up. They were from the other ethnically Finnish local church, which had split from the other church some years back. After both parties agreed to have a game of football, one kid from the second church exclaimed, “Alright, it’s us versus the heretics!” The great thing is my brother didn’t know what that meant at the time, and he said he would have had it printed on a jersey, if they had those.

Maybe you, like my brother back then, don’t know what a heretic or heresy is. Heresy is false teaching, and a heretic is one who teaches that. It is contrasted with orthodoxy, which a church (even a heretical one) desires or claims to have. I decided to focus on this concept of heresy as church membership classes are planned for January and February. We desire in our church to have orthodox teaching— and not just so we can say we agree with United’s teaching and are a member, but rather so the Body of United can be safe in Christ.

A heretic could be an unbeliever, but this is not always the case. In his book *Heresy*, Alister McGrath says, “it is not unbelief; it is rather a vulnerable and fragile form of Christianity that proves incapable of sustaining itself in the long

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**For a child will be
born to us, a son
will be given to us;
And the government will
rest on His shoulders; And
His name will be called
Wonderful Counselor,
Mighty God,
Eternal Father,
Prince of Peace.**

— Isaiah 9:6

COMMUNITY THANKSGIVING DINNER

Preparations for our second annual
Community Thanksgiving Dinner
are underway!

The dinner will take place Thanksgiving
Day, Thursday, November 26, from 11
a.m. to 1 p.m. The meal will be free to
all, and will be available for dine-in,
pick-up, and/or delivery.

There are many roles to be filled and a
variety of shifts available to best fit the
interests of you and your family.

If you would like spend part of your
holiday with us, talk to Matt Green,
Angie Truscinski, Pastor David, or
Jenny Niemela for the sign-up sheet. If
you would like to order a meal, visit
unitedfreeaflc.com/thanksgiving-dinner
or call the church at 782-2249.

“What is a Heretic . . .” continued from front page.

term” (83). Time will tell, in other words. While **“the gates of hell shall not prevail against”** the church (Matthew 16:18), those who follow heresy will, years down the road, not find themselves in the true Church, even if they claim it.

We don’t condemn all non-Lutherans as heretics. Baptists, Assemblies of God, Covenant...etc. all do vary in specific teachings from AFLC Lutherans, but we acknowledge they, in general, teach the same foundation: Jesus Christ. Heresy, though, poses a large risk of losing that foundation of Jesus Christ. It is not submitting to a name, “Lutheran” or “Christian,” whether with a membership or attendance, that saves. It is not by outward connection with a church, but rather by faith in Jesus Christ.

C.F.W. Walther was a 19th century Lutheran who, after his conversion in Germany, did not want to join the Lutheran Church because he thought that they claimed to be the only ones who were saved. He learned that he was mistaken: they claimed to have the only pure teaching and Creeds, but they did not claim to be the only ones saved. “Then I understood that it is not necessary to condemn anyone who is in error regarding some article of the Creed, but only those who have seen their error and still want to stick to it.” (Walther, Law and Gospel, 381).

Some do stick to heresy, but they do it unknowingly. Ignorance is bliss, though, isn’t it? You don’t have to go through all of the work to read the Bible and find correct teaching, right? That may be the case, but it is dangerous. Over time, heresy may not only maim your faith, but kill it. Besides this, the next generation needs faith, and heretics can’t pass that on well, if at all. Probably the most obvious sign someone will fall into heresy is when they only learn Christian teaching on their own. For one, they ignore everyone else’s interpretation. This can come from a heart of pride, an attitude condemned by the Bible.

Second, the very Bible they are studying tells them that, through this Word, God builds a Body, called the Church. God gifted this Church with **“apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers”** to teach God’s Word, **“for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes”** (Ephesians 4:12-14). True teaching will unify the Body of Christ, the Church, into a mature, strong group that can weather any false teaching, even while the followers of heresy eventually become shipwrecked.

This is why we go back to the creeds and other teachings in Church membership class. Returning to the basics of orthodoxy, which makes the Church the Church, isn’t just slapping a label on yourself through membership, as if you only put on a jersey. It is teaching based on God’s Word, which is safe. The orthodox word will last forever, and the gates of hell don’t even stand a chance against it.

WMF News: Greetings to all the Ladies of United Free

We have been meeting weekly to catch up on our missed Bible Studies from “Don’t Follow Your Feelings.” We will be all caught up by the time you read this, so we will move on to our last Bible Study for the year: Lesson 11: “Knowing God’s Will”

Here is an excerpt from the lesson:

How can we be sure of God’s will for our life? I am sure everyone one of us has struggled with that question many times, both in the major decision of life as well as everyday choices. We often go by our feelings, sadly, we have found out later that our feelings were wrong. Why Can’t We Trust Our Feelings? Feelings can deceive us because there are three sources, God, Satan or self. The truth of God’s word must always be the source of faith and feelings.” The author shared some guidelines for us for tough decisions and pressures we face.

1. Does it violate any part of scripture? 1John2:3-6
2. Does it have the appearance of evil? 1John 2:15-16
3. Do I have doubts about it? Romans 14:23
4. Does it draw me closer to Christ or drive me farther away? Romans 6:15-16
5. Will it cause others to sin? Romans 14:12-13
6. Who am I really trying to please? God or myself? Romans 15:1-3
7. Can I ask God’s blessing on it? 1 Corinthians 6:19-20
8. Would Jesus do it? 1 Peter 2:21-23
9. Will I someday be ashamed of what I did? Galatians 6:7-8
10. Would I want to be doing this when Jesus returns? Luke 21:34-36, Matthew 24:44

Please join us for this last lesson of the year on Tuesday, November 17th (note date change) at 7 p.m.

Also, as we move into the holiday season, Christmas keeps popping up for me — celebrating Christ’s birth — and the Ladies Christmas party. I am fervently looking for a speaker and all the normal things that go along with the party: food, singing, Bible verses. If you have any suggestions please send me an email, a txt, a phone call or catch me in person.

Blessings to all,
Angie Truscinski, WMF President

Help Fulfill Wish Lists This Xmas!

Did you know you can give actual items, not just fiscally, to AFLC ministries? Visit the following websites to view ministry wish lists and have the items delivered straight to where they are needed!

Association Retreat Center:
www.arc-aflc.org/donate-to-arc

Alaskan Mission:
www.aflchomemissions.org/alaska-gift-registry/

The Net:
www.aflchomemissions.org/alaska/the-net-cafe/

New Members Class

Want to become a United Member?
Looking for a refresher course?

Six Sunday School Sessions:
January 10, 17, 24, 31,
& February 7 and 14

If you have to miss a session, Pastor David can get the material to you.

CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL

We have been back to Sunday School for 4 weeks now and we love seeing the kids again! We have learned about The Wise Man and the Foolish Man, the Days of Creation, Adam and Eve and Noah's Ark.

To go along with these lessons the kids have made fake sand, muffins for snack time and are working on a project to help decorate the bulletin board as well. Singing is also a big part of Sunday School and we have been singing a lot of throw-back songs to support the stories from the Old Testament - "The Wise Man Built His House", "Arky, Arky (Rise and Shine)", "I am a C" and we are also working on a song to help learn the Books of the Old Testament.

We wish that we had a definite plan for the Christmas Program this year, but we are not sure what it will look like at this time. We hope to have an in-person program of some kind, but as with everything else in these crazy times we cannot be certain. We want to make sure that we do our best to showcase these great kids, but also keep everyone safe. We will keep you posted.

Thank you all and take care!

Sunday School Staff

Online FLBC Christmas Concert, Dec. 11

The Free Lutheran Bible College and Seminary will move its annual Christmas concert entitled The Light in the Darkness, to an online event debuting on December 11 at 7PM Central Standard Time.

Due to capacity limitations and public health concerns, the traditional concert was unlikely to be held as usual. The online concert will be pre-recorded with excellent production quality and music from a variety of groups on campus, including all three choirs. Dr. Wade Mobley, President of FLBCS, noted, "Christmas at FLBCS is a highlight every year, and we are at the same time saddened to modify this event and thankful to be able to deliver the content to a perhaps wider audience." A link will be provided for those who wish to view the concert together during the premier, and the program itself will be archived at www.flbc.edu.

**Originally published on the
Free Lutheran Bible College website*





Youth Group Happenings Fall 2020

Where does the time go?! Every Wednesday since the beginning of September we have been having youth group, and it is hard to believe that it's already the middle of October as I write this. It seems like just yesterday we started the year! But this year, youth group looks a little different. The youth board met over the summer and decided it would be a great idea to have the youth group and confirmation join together some weeks and to start every Wednesday night off as one big group. So we play games! And we get to know each other, so that once those students are confirmed, hopefully they will still want to come to youth group and be involved in church and ministry. Our walk with Jesus Christ doesn't end once confirmation is done. It doesn't end when you graduate high school. It is a continuous walk that needs fellowship with other believers and Word of God. So we hope it is a fun time for the youth to be together, but more than anything we hope that it's a time where the youth of our church learn what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ in this fallen world.

The youth group guys (and girls, you are welcome to come!) have been going through a study by Chip Ingram called "Love, Sex, and Lasting Relationships." Sadly, our world has its own formula for dating and having a "lasting" relationship that does not follow what God's Word has to say. Our goal is to show these guys what it means to live out what God's Word says, especially about relationships and dating and even sex. And the best way to understand and know what God's Word says is to memorize it! They are currently working on TWO memory verses for the year. One from Proverbs 28:26 and the other from Ephesians 5:1-2. It is so important to have God's Word in our heart! So besides going through a lesson and memorizing Scripture, every week one youth group member is

responsible for doing a short devotion at the beginning of the lesson time. We draw a name (or someone volunteers) to see who will do the devotion for the week to come and it is their responsibility to start youth group off with how they have seen God at work in their life and personal devotion. We have a lot going on in youth group and it's been a great fall! We are looking forward to the rest of the year!

~Shania Waage, Youth Director

UPCOMING YOUTH EVENTS:

- **Fruit Fundraiser!** It's that time of year to start selling fruit. This is a great fundraiser opportunity just in time for Christmas!
- **FLY 2021!** Who is pumped?! If you have never heard of the Free Lutheran Youth (FLY) Convention or if you want to learn more check out their website or find them on Facebook.
- **Youth Group EVERY Wednesday!** Bring a friend! And your Bible!
- **There will be more fundraising opportunities throughout the year, and we would really love ALL youth (confirmation and youth group) kids to help out!** It is a great way to raise money to do fun things (like FLY or random movie trips) and to have fellowship. Encourage your youth to be involved! ☺

Fruit Sales Are Happening!

Talk to a youth or confirmand or stop by the fundraiser table in the narthex after church
Sundays November 8-29.

Thank you for supporting our Youth!

November-December Bible Reading Plan

			Week Day Reading	Additional Two-Year Reading	
Monday	Pentecost	November 2	Psalm 4	Joshua 19	
Tuesday		November 3	Psalm 5	Joshua 20-21	
Wednesday		November 4	Joshua 22	Psalm 6	
Thursday		November 5	Joshua 23	Psalm 7	
Friday		November 6	Joshua 24	Psalm 8	
Monday		November 9	Revelation 1	Psalm 9	
Tuesday		November 10	Revelation 2	Psalm 10	
Wednesday		November 11	Revelation 3	Revelation 4-5	
Thursday		November 12	Judges 1:1-26	Judges 1:27-36	
Friday		November 13	Judges 2	Revelation 6	
Monday		November 16	Judges 3	Revelation 7	
Tuesday		November 17	Judges 4	Judges 5; Revelation 8	
Wednesday		November 18	Judges 6	Revelation 9	
Thursday		November 19	Judges 7	Revelation 10-11	
Friday		November 20	Judges 8	Revelation 12	
Monday		November 23	Judges 9:1-41	Revelation 13	
Tuesday		November 24	Judges 9:42-57 and Judges 10	Revelation 14-15	
Wednesday		November 25	Judges 11	Revelation 16	
Thursday		November 26	Judges 12	Revelation 17	
Friday		November 27	Judges 13	Revelation 18	
Monday	Advent	November 30	Judges 14	Revelation 19	
Tuesday		December 1	Judges 15	Revelation 20	
Wednesday		December 2	Judges 16	Judges 17	
Thursday		December 3	Romans 1	Judges 18	
Friday		December 4	Romans 2	Revelation 21	

Monday		December 7	Romans 3	Revelation 22	
Tuesday		December 8	Romans 4	Judges 19	
Wednesday		December 9	Romans 5	Judges 20	
Thursday		December 10	Romans 6	Judges 21	
Friday		December 11	Romans 7	Psalms 11	
Monday		December 14	Romans 8	Romans 9	
Tuesday		December 15	Ruth 1	Romans 10; Psalm 12	
Wednesday		December 16	Ruth 2	Romans 11	
Thursday		December 17	Ruth 3	Romans 12; Psalm 13	
Friday		December 18	Ruth 4	Romans 13; Psalm 14	
Monday	Christmas	December 21	1 Thessalonians 1	Romans 14; Psalm 15-16	
Tuesday		December 22	1 Thessalonians 2-3	Romans 15-16; Psalm 17	
Wednesday		December 23	Choose Christmas Readings. Suggested Texts: Isaiah 9:1-7; Isaiah 11:1-9; Micah 5:1-6; Matthew 1; Luke 2; John 1:1-18		
Thursday		December 24			
Friday		December 25			
Monday		December 28	Isaiah 1	Isaiah 2-3	
Tuesday		December 29	1 Thessalonians 4-5	Isaiah 4-5	
Wednesday		December 30	Isaiah 6	.	
Thursday		December 31	Isaiah 7-8		

UPCOMING AFLC EVENTS

Association Retreat Center (ARC) ~ Osceola, WI

For more information, visit www.arc-aflc.org ❖ ARC Holiday Shop – Nov. 7

Association of Free Lutheran Congregations

For more information, visit www.aflc.org ❖ No known events at this time

NW MN District

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

❖ WMF Christmas Party – TBD

Free Lutheran Bible College & Seminary ~ Plymouth, MN

For more information, visit flbc.edu

❖ Online Christmas Concert – Friday, Dec. 11 at 7 p.m.