



United Voice

BIMONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF UNITED FREE LUTHERAN CHURCH | GREENBUSH, MN

JANUARY – FEBRUARY – ISSUE 1

LIGHT IN DARKNESS 2021

By Pastor David Niemela

What will be different about this new year for you?

If it is simply *your* time to spend, probably nothing.

If it is according to God's will, there is great hope for an end to all your labors.

See Ephesians 5:15-17 (ESV):

15 Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, 16 making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. 17 Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

"Making the best use of the time" (v.16) may remind you that the clock is ticking, but this pressure doesn't seem to be the only point of this passage. Patience still has its place, and it may take some patience and slowing down to "Look carefully then how you walk" (v.15).

The "then" refers to the

previous verses of Ephesians 5, of the dark life of unbelievers, which should contrast with our "walk" as God's children (5:1-2). We are to "Walk as children of the light" (v.8) and reveal sin, rather than live in the dark. The Lord's will is to reveal with light, so we can "Look" clearly at how we walk.

This darkness of evil in our world is what makes this statement true: "the days are evil" (v.16). That is a basis to walk wisely.

So, take time to pause this new year and "Look carefully how you walk, not as unwise but as wise."

See how Proverbs, well-known as wisdom literature, instructs us:

"But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, which shines brighter & brighter until full day.

... continued on page 3

Church Events

- Jan. 10 – Church Membership Class begins
- Jan 13 – WMF Bible study & business meeting at 6:30 p.m. Lesson 1.
- Jan 13 – Council Meeting at 8 p.m. (tentative)
- Feb. 5-6 – Midwinter Bible Conference at UFLC
- Feb. 7 – Children's Sunday School resumes
- Feb. 10 – WMF Bible study & business meeting at 6:30 p.m. Lesson 2.
- Feb. 10 – Council Meeting at 8 p.m. (tentative)
- Feb. 17 – First day of Lent (Round-Robin series)

Highlights from the 2020 Christmas Program



"New Star"

This year's Lent services will be done as a "Round Robin" amongst the AFLC Northwest Minnesota District pastors.

The first service will take place
Wednesday,
February 17, 2021.



Interested in becoming a United member?
Wanting a refresher course?

New Members Class

- Session 1: Introduction and Where is the Heart of Christianity?
- Session 2: What is the Heart of Christianity?
- Session 3: Returning to the Heart of Christianity, Part 1
- Session 4: Returning to the Heart of Christianity, Part 2
- Session 5: The Heart of Christianity in Greenbush
- Session 6: Loose Ends, Questions

Growing Together

**Six sessions during Sunday School:
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 Update

The name of the game this year has certainly been "flexibility"! We were able to have an in-person Christmas program, and except for the two main parts all other parts were assigned the day before the program. We did not want the kids to learn and practice parts in advance in case some of them could not make it last minute. The kids did a great job. As with most things, kids are better at adapting than the adults. We also showcased the new "adventure" for Sunday School – children's bells. Youngest to oldest all had a chance to play the bells and they loved it. We look forward to using the bells more as we learn along with the kids. We also put together Christmas gift bags for the kids with an ornament, a Christmas craft, a picture find and a candy treat. We did for the kids that could make it in-person and also for our kids that are doing Sunday School at home.

The Sunday School will be on Christmas break through February 7, 2021. We all look forward to coming back together in 2021 and to continuing our journey through the Old Testament. We hope that you all have a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Thank you,
Sunday School Staff

"Light in Darkness 2021" continued from front page.

*The way of the wicked is like
deep darkness;
they do not know over what they stumble"*
(Proverbs 4:18-19).

God has set you apart in Christ, and counts you as righteous. He treats you as His child. So, that first part of the Proverbs passage shows God's time for you has a blessed end to your labors.

The darkness around you may deepen, but God's light on your path gets increasingly brighter.

Think about the book of Judges. Once settled in the Promised Land, the Israelites cycled through periods of forsaking the Lord and needing to be delivered. "The people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the LORD" is a common refrain in the book, showing, in general, experience did not teach them. "The way of the wicked is like deep darkness; they do not know over what they stumble." Experience alone will not teach us either — since alone, it is without light to reveal the way.

Caught on the hamster wheel of evil days, we get sucked into a haphazard way, like the young man walking near sexual temptation (Proverbs 7:8) or laziness as opposed to the wise ant who worked at the proper time (Proverbs 6:6-11). Even if we find earthly success in diligent labors, we forget to ask, "For whom am I toiling and depriving myself of pleasure?" This also is vanity and an unhappy business" (Ecclesiastes 4:8).

The "days are evil;" just as you woke up yesterday, worked, and slept, so it will be today. Time may in fact not heal, but actually harden. It may be clear in time, but that time may be too late.

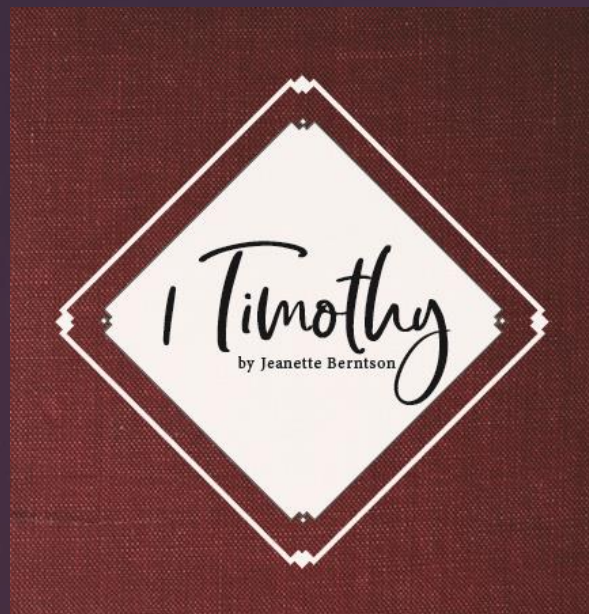
Time won't change the cycle.

Rather, God has in Christmas.

The birth of the Son in the flesh cut into the evil cycle. He is the Light that stepped into this day-in, day-out, dark world.

How would God change that cycle for you personally? The Word shining light upon you through reading, and vulnerability to let one another examine our lives in the light of God's Word. This is so we can "Look carefully" at our walk this past year. It is so we can move forward in Christ's forgiveness of our wasted time. Maybe it will help you toward your resolutions. Maybe it will change them.

"The days are evil" is a trap to the person without God's light. To the one with God's light, "The days are evil" is only a challenge to one with God's light. Because, shedding God's light upon our walk, the time is redeemed.



"A Study on 1 Timothy"

2021 WMF Bible Study

This is an inductive study on 1 Timothy. Why is what you believe important? Does it matter what we do at church? Does it matter how we live? Should we have requirements for our pastors? God has given us clear teaching on the role of the church. He wants us to hear His Word. He wants our churches' teaching and our beliefs to be the same doctrine found in the Bible. Only teaching from God's Word has the power to create repentance, faith, and love. Jesus came to save sinners and He brings His salvation to the world through His Word, preached and believed by the Church. May God bless you as you study 1 Timothy.

God wrote this letter through the Apostle Paul to Timothy. Paul often refers to truths from other parts of the Bible. Timothy had studied God's Word and knew what Paul meant. To understand 1 Timothy, we will also take the time to learn what God teaches us from related Bible passages.

*Cost is \$12 a book.
~ Publisher's Description*

Restored

2021 FLY CONVENTION • JULY 5-10

AND HE WHO WAS SEATED ON THE THRONE SAID, "BEHOLD, I AM MAKING ALL THINGS NEW." ALSO HE SAID, "WRITE THIS DOWN, FOR THESE WORDS ARE TRUSTWORTHY AND TRUE." AND HE SAID TO ME, "IT IS DONE! I AM THE ALPHA AND THE OMEGA, THE BEGINNING AND THE END. TO THE THIRSTY I WILL GIVE FROM THE SPRING OF THE WATER OF LIFE WITHOUT PAYMENT. THE ONE WHO CONQUERS WILL HAVE THIS HERITAGE, AND I WILL BE HIS GOD AND HE WILL BE MY SON. ~ REVELATION 21:5-7

Our Purpose

The Purpose of the Free Lutheran Youth Convention is to provide congregations with a tool to: win the lost, build the believer, and encourage student discipleship in the local congregation.

Registration Information

A \$150 deposit is required for each individual registering. All deposits and registrations are non-refundable and non-transferable. Both the online registration and a deposit must be made for someone to be considered registered.

Day Passes: \$70 per person. Includes meals. Register on site at the FLY Office.

COVID Contingency

In the event FLY 2021 is cancelled (Due to COVID-19), your deposit will be fully refunded to you, or you can defer it to the 2023 FLY Convention.

Register By	Feb. 12, 2021	April 16, 2021	May 29, 2021	Walk Ups
Students	\$499	\$599	\$699	\$799
Dorm Leader	\$399	\$499	\$599	N/A
Staff	\$399	\$499	\$599	N/A
Adult	\$699	\$799	\$899	\$999
Pastors	\$599	\$699	\$799	\$899
Children	\$199	\$199	\$199	\$199

UPCOMING AFLC EVENTS

Association Retreat Center (ARC) ~ Osceola, WI

For more information, visit www.arc-aflc.org

❖ Winter Youth Retreats: Sno Daze & SidexSide – Feb. 5-7

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

❖ Midwinter Bible Conference at UFLC with Pastor Terry Olson – Feb. 5-6

❖ Missions Conference at Our Saviour's in Thief River Falls – Feb. 20-21

Free Lutheran Bible College & Seminary ~ Plymouth, MN

For more information, visit flbc.edu ❖ Spotlight Conference – Feb. 8-9

December-February Bible Reading Plan

		Week Day Reading		Additional Two-Year Reading
Friday	Season of Christmas	January 1	Isaiah 9	
Saturday		January 2		Isaiah 10
Sunday		January 3		Isaiah 11
Monday		January 4	Isaiah 12	Psalms 18
Tuesday		January 5	2 Thessalonians 1	Isaiah 13
Wednesday	Season of Epiphany	January 6	2 Thessalonians 2	
Thursday		January 7	2 Thessalonians 3	Isaiah 14
Friday		January 8	1 Samuel 1	Isaiah 15
Saturday		January 9		1 Samuel 2:1-10
Sunday		January 10		Isaiah 16
Monday		January 11	1 Samuel 2:12-36	Isaiah 17
Tuesday		January 12	1 Samuel 3-4	Isaiah 18
Wednesday		January 13	1 Samuel 5-6	Isaiah 19
Thursday		January 14	1 Samuel 7-8	Isaiah 20
Friday		January 15	1 Samuel 9	Isaiah 21
Saturday		January 16		Isaiah 22
Sunday		January 17		Isaiah 23
Monday		January 18	1 Samuel 10	Isaiah 24
Tuesday		January 19	1 Samuel 11-12	1 Samuel 13
Wednesday		January 20	1 Samuel 14:1-23	1 Samuel 14:24-52
Thursday		January 21	1 Samuel 15	Isaiah 25-26
Friday		January 22	1 Samuel 16	Isaiah 27
Saturday		January 23		Isaiah 28
Sunday		January 24		Isaiah 29
Monday		January 25	1 Samuel 17	
Tuesday		January 26	1 Samuel 18	Isaiah 30
Wednesday		January 27	1 Samuel 19	Isaiah 31
Thursday		January 28	1 Samuel 20	Isaiah 32
Friday		January 29	1 Timothy 1	Isaiah 33
Saturday		January 30		Isaiah 34
Sunday		January 31		Isaiah 35
Monday		February 1	1 Timothy 2	Isaiah 36
Tuesday		February 2	1 Timothy 3	Isaiah 37
Wednesday		February 3	1 Timothy 4	Isaiah 38

Thursday	Ash Wednesday	February 4	1 Timothy 5	Isaiah 39
Friday		February 5	1 Timothy 6	Obadiah
Saturday		February 6		Isaiah 40
Sunday		February 7		Isaiah 41
Monday		February 8	Isaiah 42	Amos 1-2
Tuesday		February 9	Isaiah 43	Amos 3-4
Wednesday		February 10	Isaiah 44	Amos 5-6
Thursday		February 11	Isaiah 45	Amos 7-8
Friday		February 12	Jonah 1-2	Amos 9
Saturday		February 13		Isaiah 46-47
Sunday		February 14		Isaiah 48-49
Monday		February 15	Jonah 3-4	Isaiah 50-51
Tuesday		February 16	Isaiah 52:1-12	
Wednesday		February 17	Isaiah 52:13-53:12	Isaiah 54
Thursday	Season of Lent	February 18	Isaiah 55	Isaiah 56
Friday		February 19	1 Samuel 21-22	Isaiah 57
Saturday		February 20		Isaiah 58
Sunday		February 21		Isaiah 59
Monday		February 22	1 Samuel 23	Isaiah 60
Tuesday		February 23	1 Samuel 24	Isaac 61-62
Wednesday		February 24	1 Samuel 25	Isaiah 63-64
Thursday		February 25	1 Samuel 26	Isaiah 65-66
Friday		February 26	1 Samuel 27-28	1 Samuel 29
Saturday		February 27		1 Samuel 30-31
Sunday		February 28		2 Samuel 1-2
Monday		March 1	Matthew 1-2	2 Samuel 3
Tuesday		March 2	Matthew 3-4	2 Samuel 4
Wednesday		March 3	2 Samuel 5	2 Samuel 6
Thursday		March 4	Matthew 5	
Friday		March 5	2 Samuel 7	
Saturday		March 6		2 Samuel 8
Sunday		March 7		2 Samuel 9