



BIMONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF UNITED FREE LUTHERAN  
MARCH/APRIL 2020 – VOLUME 2

# United Voice



## An Organized Mess

*Pastor David Niemela*

I have found it difficult to reconcile the tension between two thoughts shown in the following verses:

First of all, that we should pray “for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity” (1 Timothy 2:3). Then there is 2 Timothy 3:12, which says, “Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.”

Paul also said concerning personal life, “...[M]ake it your ambition to lead a quiet life and attend to your own business and work with your hands” (1 Thess. 4:11). Yet, we know Jesus came to earth, not to bring peace, but as a sword that can even divide

families (Matt. 10:34-39).

What are we to say?

God created all things good, as is written in Genesis, and we see this still reflected in the creation we enjoy and even in our work, just as Adam and Eve had worked in the garden.

But this perfect creation is still seen only as a reflection in a rearview mirror. Sin messed it up. The world is beautiful, but it is fallen. It is an organized mess. That’s why Jesus came and suffered here, in the same mess we live in. He wanted to get us out of the mess.

The world’s ability to function in disorder can’t last forever, although some live as though it will.

Remember, it is those who love

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### Church Events

- **Wednesdays, Feb. 26<sup>th</sup> - April 1<sup>st</sup>** – Soup Suppers (6 p.m.) & Lent Services: Theologian of the Cross (7:30 p.m.)
- **March 7<sup>th</sup>** – Elvina Shimpa’s 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday Party Open House at United, 1-3 p.m.
- **March 9<sup>th</sup>** – WMF 6:30 p.m.
- **March 21<sup>st</sup>** – Area-wide Women’s Conference in Roseau
- **April 4<sup>th</sup>** – NW MN WMF Spring Rally at United
- **April 5<sup>th</sup>** – Palm Sunday Brunch Youth Fundraiser
- **April 9<sup>th</sup>** – Maundy Thursday Service 7:30 p.m.
- **April 10<sup>th</sup>** – Good Friday Service 7:30 p.m.
- **April 11<sup>th</sup>** – Niemela Baby Shower at United, 2-4 p.m.
- **April 15<sup>th</sup>** – WMF 6:30 p.m.

*“An Organized Mess” continued from front page*

the mess who love sin and are described as being “enemies of the cross of Christ” whose focus is “on earthly things” (Philippians 3:18-19).

This orderly chaos is why Jesus suffered on earth, as we especially remember during Lent.

This is also why we suffer as earth’s inhabitants.

Yes, Christians should work hard and attend to their own business, but sometimes the payoff from labor is taken away through persecution.

Yes, Christians should enjoy what God provides richly for them *to* enjoy (1 Tim. 6:17), such as their family. However, family life can get in the way of experiencing joy when not all of the family members trust in Christ.

So, the family is divided without peace, as Jesus predicted.

What are we to say? What are we to do?

We can confidently look to Christ and know He also went through this mess, even through death, so He could bring us also through death into life. Therefore, we don’t need to seek escape from the mess here — Christ is right in it with us.

As Paul said, “I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am [in] . . . [for] I can do all things through Him who strengthens me” (Philippians 4:11, 13).

So, are we to suffer or rejoice in our circumstances?

We can do both, knowing that whatever lot we are dealt, or whatever season of life we are in — whether abundance or poverty, difficulty or peace — the tension we experience will only be adequately handled when met in Christ.

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## Kids Sunday School

*Children’s Sunday School Staff*

We are busy working on the Fifth Petition of the Lord’s Prayer, “And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.” Our lessons have incorporated short videos, a dissolving candy cane, and even a balloon and paperclips showing how sin can drag us down until we ask for forgiveness. Pastor Niemela has also led some of the lessons, and the kids learned what a projector is 😊!

In the Sundays to come, we will continue practicing the Lord’s Prayer, and look forward to more fun crafts, games, and snacks centered around the upcoming events (St. Patrick’s Day, Palm Sunday, and Easter). The students will be singing during the church service Palm Sunday.

We love seeing our regular kids and welcome visitors!

## VBS is coming soon!

VBS 2020 dates will be released as soon as they are confirmed. We are presently waiting for the Free Lutheran Bible College Summer Teams to be assigned.

If you would like to help with VBS in any way, please tell Joni Wiskow.

Questions regarding Sunday School or VBS 2020 can be directed to Joni Wiskow at (763)486-9150 or [joni.wiskow@gmail.com](mailto:joni.wiskow@gmail.com).

## A Website for United

*Jennifer Niemela*

You may have heard some rumblings (or simply noticed in the bulletin) that a website is being developed for United Free Lutheran. Well, the rumors are true!

A small group of congregation members presented the idea, along with a sample site, to the Church Council at its January and February meetings. The council approved moving forward with the project, and a committee to oversee it was formed. Committee members include representatives from United’s active ministries, along with Pastor David and myself.

The committee is aiming to having the site ready for launch early April.

Some may be wondering why a church website is necessary, which is a fair question. As was shared with the council, when David and I were receiving pulpit inquires last winter, we researched each interested church as we prepared for our visitations. When we tried looking up United, we only found a Facebook page that did not provide much of the church’s basic information. In fact, we even had to contact the call committee to find out the time of the worship service; it wasn’t posted online.

Obviously, this did not interfere with our being called to become members of the United church family.

While the call process is now done for David and I, there will likely be more new faces moving to the Greenbush area in the future, and they may be interested in learning about the area churches and will be conducting their own research. Plus, some families or individuals may be parting from their current congregation and will want to know more about the other options are available nearby. Could we simply add the worship and Sunday School start times to the Facebook page? Yes, but there is much more to be known about a church other than when its congregation gathers. What doctrine does it follow? What ministries are available? For United specifically, what is the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations? Such questions are likely to come up when individuals are looking to join a new church family, and presenting the answers to those questions in a clear, nonintimidating manner is what the website committee is striving to do.

The hope is that United congregants will also find the website beneficial, such as accessing the calendar and special event webpages, learning what current classes/groups are studying, listening to previous sermons, and being able to give gifts or tithes online.

All in all, the goal is to make the site a hub of information that will help United better serve its community and immediate family.

*As a side note, this newsletter template came with the website’s host site membership plan.*



# United Free WMF News

Angie Truscinski, WMF President

At the February meeting of the WMF (Ladies Aid), we studied “When I Doubt if I’m Saved,” a chapter from our 2020 Bible Study book *Don’t Follow Your Feelings* by Linda Korhonen.

The study reminded us that, “God’s Word teaches that assurance of salvation is for EVERY believer! That means [we] can know *for sure* that Jesus is [our] personal Savior. Assurance is the absolute confidence that [our] sins are forgiven, and that Heaven is [our] eternal home.”

Likewise, I John 1:9 reads, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

At the beginning of the study, the ladies read and discussed verses on assurance, grace, and hope.

During the business meeting, Anna Mattson gave a Missions update and Dawn Baumgartner read the January meeting minutes. We also congratulated the quilters on making more than 100 quilts this year. The ladies did an excellent job and the work is beautiful.

Anyone wanting a quilt can purchase it at the suggested cost of \$25 for a small/baby quilt and \$50 for a larger quilt. Talk to Sharon Christianson or Paulette Nelson, if you are interested in buying.

With Lent coming up, the ladies discussed serving soup and sandwiches before the evening services. The youth and confirmation families will serve half the Wednesday nights and the WMF the other.

The Martha group will take March 11, and Esther will

take March 25. Please contact your group leaders, if you are able to participate in serving.

Anna Mattson served a delicious lunch after the meeting.

Ladies of all ages are invited to join us for the WMF Bible study and short business meetings the second Wednesday of each month in the church dining hall at 6:30 p.m. Attendees are not required to read aloud or contribute to discussions. If you just want to listen and soak it in, we welcome your fellowship!

## LADIES, TAKE NOTE:

The March meeting has been moved to **MONDAY, March 9** at 6:30 pm. The change of date is due to the Lent Service taking place that Wednesday. The study chapter is titled, “When I feel Hopeless.” Deb Vacura will be the Bible study leader.

The April meeting will be on **WEDNESDAY, April 15** at 6:30 pm (a week later than usual). We will be studying the chapter, “The Poison of Unresolved Anger.” Corrine Mattson will be the Bible Study leader.

The 2020 WMF study book *Don’t Follow Your Feelings* is available in the narthex for \$12.

## Quilting News

Sharon Christianson, for the quilters

The quilting ladies have been busy. There are piles of colorful quilts — over 100 — waiting to be distributed to those in need. We will dedicate the quilts Sunday, March 8 during the worship service. The quilts will be donated to the Alaska Mission, our local Social Services, hospital, and nursing home. Quilts are given to high school graduates, new babies, newly married couples, and anyone entering the nursing home from our congregation. Quilts are donated to local benefits and anyone in need. Quilts also are for sale with half of the proceeds going to the AFLC – Vision Building Program.

Thank you to the quilters — Paulette Nelson, Arlene Jenson, Elvina Shimpa, Shirley Lunde, Florence Dvergsten, Anna Mattson, Corrine Mattson, Angie Truscinski, Rachel Green, and special helper, Stella.

Thank you to all who have donated fabric and supplies. If you know someone in need of a quilt, let us know.

*“Blest Be the Tie That Binds”*



# Kids Club Highlights

*Crafts, games, snacks, and lessons all centered on God's Word*



Have suggestions or submissions for the May/June newsletter? Get them to Jenny Niemela by Wednesday, April 22  
unitedfreegreenbush@gmail.com

Kids Club meets Wednesdays after school from 3:15 to 5 p.m.

Students in kindergarten through 6<sup>th</sup> grade are able to ride the bus, if desired.

Preschoolers must be accompanied by a parent/guardian.

Have questions or want to help? Talk to Lynn Strand, Pastor David, or Jenny Niemela

## Upcoming AFLC Events

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

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

- ❖ Women's Retreat – April 24-26
- ❖ ARC Spring Boutique – April 26
- ❖ Family Work Weekend – May 22-24 (free)
- ❖ FLY Zone – July 19-23 (same week as FLY Beyond)
- ❖ Family Camp – Aug. 2-8

### Association of Free Lutheran Congregations

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

- ❖ Annual Conference, ARC – June 9-12
- ❖ WMF Day, ARC – June 9
- ❖ FLY Beyond, ARC – July 19-23 (early-bird registration deadline, April 30)

### NW MN District

*More information to appear in future bulletins*

- ❖ NW MN WMF Spring Rally, United Free – April 4
- ❖ Men Alive Retreat, Galilee Bible Camp – Apr 17-18
- ❖ Stop at The Well, Alma – April 19
- ❖ Missionary Paul Abel, Our Saviour's in TRF – April 26

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

*For more information, visit [flbc.edu](http://flbc.edu)*

- ❖ Spring Campus Days – April 17-19
- ❖ Spring Concert – May 8
- ❖ FLBC Golf Scramble, Oak Grove, MN – July 31
- ❖ Summer Institute of Theology – Aug. 3-7