

New Beginnings

Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."
John 6:28-29 N.I.V. Matthew 19:26

Bonfield Grand Prairie Parish

February 2018



Pastor's Corner

Pastor Mel Nielsen
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1 If I speak in the tongues[a] of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. 3 If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast,[b] but do not have love, I gain nothing.

- 1 Corinthians 13:1-3 (N.I.V.)

The Beatles sang it this way, "All you need is love." Elizabeth Barrett Browning wrote these words in her famous poem, "How do I love thee? Let me count the ways." Leo Tolstoy once wrote "All, everything that I understand, I only understand because I love." Even Forrest Gump got into the love conversation with his words, "I may not be a smart man, but I know what love is."

No other emotion has garnered the imagination of songwriters, playwrights or poets more than love. We have an obsession with love. When love is felt and shared properly, the world is a better place. When it is abused, mistreated, misunderstood and withheld the world becomes far uglier.

God understands love better than all of us. We may have a hard time seeing love hanging from a wooden cross, but God saw love. That demonstrates the gap between our Creator's perfect understanding of love and ours. We try to control and manipulate love, we try to make people earn our love and we also use love as a bargaining chip.

Love is one of those great gifts from God which we have chosen to use as an avenue for sinning. Love is one of those great gifts of God which we have attempted to rip from the hands of God and hold only in our own hands. We misuse other God-given blessings

like wisdom, intelligence, empathy and so many others. Since February is associated with love due to Valentine's Day I want to write to you about God's gift of love.

Let me update the words of Paul for you, from verse 1, If I only say I love my spouse or family but never make them a priority in how I live and interact with them, I am a resounding gong. Words are empty, God says, your actions should support what your mouth says. In verse 2, God is saying if you get straight A's in school, achieve huge successes in business or even become a leader in your church but you fail to love all those you met along your journey, you achieved nothing. In verse 3 we read that even living the life of a disciple in poverty and self sacrifice will not equal a life in Heaven if we fail to love.

It's no wonder we put such a passionate emphasis on this one emotion, it carries a lot of weight. Boy's Town founder, Father Flanagan, was looking at a magazine called *The Messenger* when he came across a drawing of a boy carrying a younger boy on his back, with the caption, "He ain't heavy Mr., he's my brother."

Imagine our Savior, Jesus, carrying the weight of all the sin that was, is and ever will be committed on his back. All that weight hanging off of his body as he hung on the cross. The weight of love has been removed by Jesus' action on the cross. God indeed put action in place of word.

Love shouldn't create burdens that seem impossible to lift. The little boy that moved Father Flanagan's heart may have been as simple as Forrest Gump. That little boy knew that if he loved his brother he would not just tell him, he would show him by picking him up and carrying him.

God's attempt at telling us about love where never felt nearly as much as watching his only son die on the cross. This Valentine's Day, don't just let a card do what you know you should be doing yourself. Live the love you have been given.

- Pastor Mel



Photos by Pastor Mel

Pictured above are Connor and Belle Lowey, who participated in the Christmas Eve play held at Bonfield First United Methodist Church on Christmas Eve. The play combined secular understandings of the Christmas Tree along with Biblical teachings that support our holiday heritage. The night also featured readings, Holy Communion and a Candlelight Service. It was a very cold night but those who attended were filled with the Holy Spirit.

100th Anniversary Planned For Evangelical Church

The Bonfield Evangelical United Methodist Church is planning to recognize 100 years of the church being in Bonfield. Special plans are being discussed to celebrate a century of ministry, mission and outreach. The anniversary committee has asked that you save the dates Aug. 25 and 26, 2018.

Not all arrangements are final, but the committee is looking to invite past members and pastors to a special service on Sat., the 25 which will feature lots of music from local members, recalling of historical stories, skits, a presentation from the Sunday school youth and more. The evening will be capped off with a soup and sandwich supper.

Sunday, Aug. 26 will see a potluck beginning at noon, followed at 1:30 by a musical concert with a group yet to be determined.

The committee would like all your help in getting the word out to all who might find this weekend a blessing. All are invited and there is no charge for the meals or entertainment.

Sunshine Circle Report

Sunshine Circle held its annual Christmas party on Wed., Dec. 20 at 6:30 p.m. at the Bonfield Evangelical Upper room.

The meal was a potluck with officers furnishing meat and desserts. Devotions were given by Ardis Messer and Donna Diefenbach.

The business meeting followed with Jan Green reporting on the Street Church. Meals were cancelled due to recent construction. The meals will continue when the construction project is completed. Two poinsettias will be purchased and given to Darlene Charter and Phyllis Riegel. A discussion was held on changing the group's monthly meeting from the 3rd Thurs. to the second Wed. All agreed to change.

A sign up sheet was passed around for 2018 hostesses. Mystery Pals were drawn for the new year.

Ladies brought food, presents and gift cards for two families in this area. They delivered a good supply, thanks to all who made this possible. Secret Pal gifts were exchanged. A game was played where teams of two had to wrap a gift using only one hand each. Best job went to Carol Buente and Janis Cadieux. Desserts were enjoyed by all. The next meeting will be Wed., Feb. 7 at 6:30 p.m. at Jan Green's home. There will be no meeting in Jan.

150th Anniversary Underway At Grand Prairie

The 150th Anniversary Celebration Committee has been hard at work making year long plans to acknowledge the congregation's 150 years in ministry. The committee has announced a save for the date for Oct. 28, 2018 as the official date.

Members and friends were welcomed into the sanctuary by seeing 150 snowflakes hanging from the arch in the Chancel. Each month those hanging items will be replaced by something new. The last Sunday of each month will see a return to the 'old' days when men and women will sit on opposite sides of the sanctuary. The last Sunday of each month will feature a short history moment provided from a member.

Plans will be announced soon about the purchase of memorabilia to commemorate this anniversary. Keep watching the newsletter for more details.

Fireman's Breakfast

The Salina Township Monthly Fireman's Breakfast will be held on Sun., Mar. 4, 2018. Don't miss out on a great breakfast and an opportunity to support their efforts. Breakfast includes eggs, pancakes, biscuits and gravy, bacon and more.

Fellowship Breakfast

Tue., Mar. 6, 2018, 8:30 at IHOP in Bourbonnais. Come enjoy a great breakfast and even better fellowship with other church members and friends. This is a good way to get to know other people who worship God in the Bonfield area. You do not need to be a member to attend. Everyone is invited.

Thank You

"Thank you to Pastor Mel and everyone in our Parish Family and Community who offered so many prayers before my surgery, during my surgery on Oct. 24, and now as I recover from the shoulder replacement. We are so blessed to have such a caring and loving support system in our Parish and Community.

With gratitude
~ Linda Meyer"

Time For Church



Bonfield First

172 Church Street

8:00 a.m. Sunday Services

9:15 Adult and Youth Sunday School

Bonfield Evangelical

348 Smith Street, Bonfield

9:15 a.m. Sunday Services

10:15 Adult and Youth Sunday School

Grand Prairie

Rt. 17 Bonfield

10:30 a.m Sunday Services

9:15 a.m Adult and Youth Sunday School

Upcoming Worship Schedule

*The following is a tentative schedule for
February 2018 worship.*

(Readings & message may change without notice.)

February 4

5th Sunday after Epiphany

"Pastor Mel on Vacation"

Altar Color - Green

OT: TBA

NT: TBA

Gospel: TBA

February 11

Transfiguration Sunday

"Stranger Things"

Altar Color - White

OT: 2 Kings 2:1-12

NT: 2 Corinthians 4:3-6

Gospel: Mark 9:2-9

February 18

1st Sunday in Lent

"Freedom and Power"

Altar Color - Purple

OT: Genesis 9:8-17

NT: 1 Peter 3:18-22

Gospel: Mark 1:9-15

February 25

2nd Sunday in Lent

"Confessing Christ"

Altar Color - Purple

OT: Genesis 17:1-7 & 15-16

NT: Romans 4:13-25

Gospel: Mark 8:31-38

March 4

3rd Sunday in Lent

"Our Responsibility"

Altar Color - Purple

OT: Exodus 20:1-17

NT: 1 Corinthians 1:18-25

Gospel: John 2:13-22



There is POWER in PRAYER

Pastor Mel invites you to join in praying for the following names and causes.

Friends and Family Close to Home

Heritage Village

Vi Morse

Butterfield

Mel Brinkman family

Don Mau

Bernice Schultz

Harvest View

Warren Cochran

Roscella Piper

Randy Riegel

Manteno Veterans

Bob Grob

Byron Warren

At Miller Rehab

Jackie Wagner

At Home

Jan May

Westwood Oaks

Fostine Schwark

From Our Church Bulletin

Curt Boesen, Shirley Brunner, Shirley Coffman, Sue Coons, Ron Cordes, Jean Dunn, Dennis Hertz, Linda Johnson, Janice Logsdon, Allen Messer, Dorene O'Connor, Kevin Reiniche, Rob Reiniche, Randy Riegel, Jackie Wagner, Richard Wildman, Pam Wilking.

Compassion International Kids

- Latif Korogo.....Burkina Faso
- Maria Clara Maciel Da Silva "Clara".....Brazil
- Dayava Sanchez.....Columbia
- Witney Juarez.....Guatemala
- Shan Toppo.....India
- Junior Okwii BarasaKenya
- Genesi Marisol Martinez Vasquez.....Honduras
- Samuel Juda Lopez Miranda.....Mexico
- Mohini Ahirwar.....India
- Cinthia Yolany Carranza Aguila.....Honduras
- Sonaton Soren.....Bangladesh
- Yeferson David Ortiz Cortez.....Colombia
- Nevada Eric.....Rwanda
- Anielka Carolina Garcia Roque.....Nicaragua
- Schekinah Jean Louis.....Haiti
- Salome Vicente Melo.....Mexico
- Benjamin Sewu.....Ghana
- Lucky Hubiagbe.....Ghana
- Rebeca Callapa.....Bolivia
- Saray Morales.....Columbia

Pastor Changes February Communion Date

Holy Communion will not be held on the first Sunday in February. Due to a scheduling conflict with the the pastor's vacation, Holy Communion will be served on February 11. The pastor apologizes for any inconvenience but he needed to keep January open to be available for his grandson's dedication in Indiana and with Lent beginning on Feb. 14 there were not many dates remaining for a winter vacation.

Lent Book Study

Pastor Mel is pleased to announce the Lent Book Study beginning Mon., Feb. 19 and running through Mon., Mar. 26. The six, 90 minute classes will be held at 1 & 7 p.m. in the Bonfield Evangelical UMC Upper Room. The book is "He Chose the Nails," by Max Lucado. There are two books included for the study; a book to read and a study book for class and personal reflection. The cost of the two books is \$20. Please have your form (back page of this newsletter) and check to Pastor Mel before Mon., Feb. 12 so he can place one order. Please let Pastor know if you are purchasing your own books so he knows how many will be attending.

**Virtual
Historical
House Tour**

FREE

February 11, 2018
*2:00 p.m. at Bonfield
Evangelical Church*

**Hosted by the Bonfield Area
Historical Society**

Please use the North door

Donations Appreciated



February 14
Ash Wednesday

Reddick UMC
35900 E 3200 N Road, Reddick, IL
Pastor Mel Nielsen

February 21

Harvest View Senior Living
100 Harvest View Lane, Herscher, IL
Speaker - TBA

February 28

Herscher UMC
274 North Elm Street, Herscher, IL
Speaker - TBA

March 7

Bonfield Evangelical UMC
348 E Smith St., Bonfield IL
Speaker - TBA

March 14

Essex UMC
114 Waverly Street, Essex, IL
Speaker - TBA

March 21

Herscher UMC
274 North Elm Street, Herscher, IL
Speaker - TBA

Dec. 2017 Attendance

	12/3	12/10	12/17	12/24	12/31
Evangelical	50	40	51	46	41
First	20	23	18	14	07
Grand Prairie	30	37	28	30	30
TOTALS	100	100	97	90	78

Bible Quiz

Paul declares that nothing “will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Which of the following does Paul specify as unable to block God’s love?

- A. death; life
- B. angels; demons
- C. present; future
- D. height; depth
- E. all of the above

See answer below

February Memory Verse

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this:
While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
– Romans 5:8

+ Christian Symbols +



Lark

Birds became prominent in Christian art during the Medieval and Renaissance eras. The lark came to symbolize the humility of the priesthood because it flies high and sings only when flying upward.

Quotes Of The Month

“Let love live long; let hate live short.”
—Burmese proverb

“Love is a friendship set to music.”
—Various sources

“Though our feelings come and go, God’s love for us does not.”
—C.S. Lewis

“Love doesn’t make the world go round. Love is what makes the ride worthwhile.”
—Franklin P. Jones

Answer: E (See Romans 8:38-39, NIV.)

February Birthdays

February 1.....Mark Osenga
 Nicole Swaite
 Elizabeth Buente Shannon
 Randy Riegel

February 2.....Brianna Dayton
 Robyn Howard
 Leslie Diefenbach
 Fostine (Milton-Dahn) Schwark
 Lindsay VanVoorst

February 3.....Haley Ireland
 Caitlyn Diefenbach

February 4.....Rev. Andrew Noxon
 Lauren Meyer
 Austin Schwark

February 5.....Lara Evans

February 6.....Alice (Bradley) Lambert

February 7.....Brian Heath
 Todd Hertz
 Drew Emmerson Wenzelman
 Alyssa (VanVoorst-Miller) Durbin

February 8.....Jonathan Wood
 Gina (Bolatto) Phillips
 David Hansen
 Marcia (Meyer) Svenkson
 Ronda (Foltz) Davis
 Marion (Diefenbach) Panozzo
 Alex Charles Higginbotham

February 9.....Dennis Duchene
 Esther (Walter) Marcotte
 Dennis Schwark
 Lucas Wood

February 10.....Tyler St. Germaine
 Brad Williamson
 Catherine Schwark
 Raleigh Turro

February 12.....Donna Voigt
 Jeffrey Hertz
 Kaleena Vaughn

February 13.....Ronald Cordes
 Linda (Rieke) Willibey
 Christopher Sikes
 Carolyn Brinkman
 Dayle Seitz

February 14.....Brandon Bauer
 Joy (Fecke) Ruckman
 Pam (Bennett) Wood
 Chelsea Kingsland
 Charles Brinkman

February 15.....Albert Brunner
 Bruce Wilson

February 16.....Sarah Rice

February 17.....Logan Meyer
 Joseph Sikes
 Michaela Sikes
 Diane Boyer
 Ruth (Buente) Wheeler
 Carolyn Schwark

February 18.....Lauren Berghouse
 Richard Wildman

February 19.....Heidi Nottke Williams
 Jennine (Tooper) Wulff
 Brandon Brinkman
 Andrew Osenga

February 20.....Samuel Wilson
 Matthew Wilson
 Mark Schwark
 Cheyenne Overacker
 Oliver Miller

February 21.....Noah Sackett
 Allen Orwig

February 23.....Bartlett (Bart) Durbin
 Debby (Mau) Bitner
 Josh Wenzelman
 Alan Krieg

February 24.....Elliott Svenkson
 Sandi (Grumish) Schultz
 Amber Riegel
 Trent Wilking

February 25.....Milton Brunner
 Karen (Rice) Adams
 Kay Ellen Meyer
 Connor Overacker

February 26.....Rachel Heath
 Diane (Prater) Kuipers
 Adam Riegel
 Anita (Jensen) Wendling

February 27.....Rebecca Coffman

February 28.....Keith Bauer
 Jill (Berghouse) Grant

Please notify the church office of any names and birthdays which need to be added, removed or corrected. Office number 1-815-802-9805.

Bishops Uphold Values of Mission, Unity, Space, Contextuality in Interim Report on Way Forward Work

LAKE JUNALUSKA, N.C. - Placing emphasis on the values of unity, space and contextuality - all for the sake of mission – the Council of Bishops (COB) is exploring sketches of three models as possible directions for a way forward for The United Methodist Church over LGBTQ inclusion.

With the mission of God through the risen Christ at the core, the bishops this week received an interim report from the Commission on a Way Forward that offered three sketches of models that would help ease the impasse in the church, noting that the power of the Holy Spirit trumps and guides all the church's activities. The Commission serves the COB, helping prepare the COB to fulfill its mandate to make a recommendation for a way forward to the General Conference.

Just as the Commission did not express a preference for any of the models in its interim report to the COB in order for the bishops to fully do their work, the COB is also not now expressing a preference for any model, while engaging deeply with them and the implications for their church and their leadership. This will provide the space bishops need to teach and engage leaders in their episcopal areas.

After receiving the interim report of the sketches of the three possible models, the bishops engaged in prayerful discerning and offered substantial feedback to the Commission, but did not take any vote on any of the sketches.

The moderators of the Commission on a Way Forward noted that the values highlighted in any one model also live within the fabric of the other models. Values expressed by any one model are not exclusive to one or absent in another. The values that may be associated with the identity of any one model are there because it may be a value lifted to a higher level of preference or differentiation among the models.

“Operate with a heart of peace and an openness. All three models grew out of mission, vision and scope. Each one of these models connects to a story and experience that is represented in this body,” Bishop Sandra Steiner Ball, one of the moderators told her fellow bishops.

She added: “As we talk about it, let's be respectful of each model. When we speak about one of the models in a less than respectful way, we are

speaking of someone's experience or someone's conscience. How we talk about these models is important because they are representative of where people are standing and how people are experiencing the church.”

The Commission and the COB acknowledge the interaction between the values of unity, space and contextuality, and the tension this interaction often creates, as part of what completes the UMC as a denomination rather than what divides it.

The Commission shared sketches of three models, with the awareness that the Commission and the COB are not restricted to these sketches and are open to learning, listening and improvement. It is likely that additional models or sketches may emerge as this process continues. Here is the summary about the sketches of the models presented to the bishops:

- One sketch of a model affirms the current Book of Discipline language and places a high value on accountability.

- Another sketch of a model removes restrictive language and places a high value on contextualization. This sketch also specifically protects the rights of those whose conscience will not allow them to perform same gender weddings or ordain LGBTQ persons.

- A third sketch of a model is grounded in a unified core that includes shared doctrine and services and one COB, while also creating different branches that have clearly defined values such as accountability, contextualization and justice.

- Each sketch represents values that are within the COB and across the church.

- Each sketch includes a gracious way of exit for those who feel called to exit from the denomination.

The values underlying these proposed models are found in two documents: The Mission, Vision and Scope document, which was affirmed by the COB; and the Status Report of the Commission, released in July 2017. As part of the ongoing discernment within the church, resident bishops are being equipped to lead discussions in their episcopal areas by emphasizing the values of the proposed models as found in these two important documents.

The Commission will process the feedback received

BISHOP

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10)

from the bishops at the Lake Junaluska meeting and will continue to welcome further input from members of the church through conversations and discussions with their respective bishops on the strengths and limitations of each model. The basic resources for these conversations were shared in a handbook with the bishops, and this handbook will be available on the Commission on a Way Forward's website as a pdf.

The COB and the Commission have a series of meetings scheduled for early 2018 designed to continue the preparations for the Special Session of the General Conference in 2019. This includes Commission meetings in January and March; an additional COB meeting in February before a final report is discussed at the May meeting of the COB.

The COB is committed to prayerfully seeking God's future for the UMC and continues to invite the entire church to be engaged in praying for a way forward.

"Pray for the work of the Commission and for the bishops as they continue to discern God's plan for the future of the UMC; a future that shows love for all of God's people and a future with hope," said COB President Bishop Bruce R. Ough.

Blueberry Salad by Debbie Nielsen

INGREDIENTS (Jell-O)

- 1 pkg. Lemon Jell-O
- 1 pkg. Red Raspberry Jell-O
- 3 cups water
- 1 can blueberry pie filling

INGREDIENTS (Topping)

- 1 cup sour cream
- 1/4 cup powdered sugar

DIRECTIONS

Dissolve Jell-O in boiling water. Stir in canned blueberry pie filling. Pour into a 9 x 13 or 11 x 8 pan. Chill in refrigerator until set. Mix powdered sugar and sour cream spread over chilled Jell-O. Serve.

A Repentant Heart

Until we taste the bitterness of our own misery, we will never relish the sweetness of God's mercy. Until we see how foul our sins have made us, we will never pay our tribute of praise to Christ for washing us. ... If you would know the heart of your sin, then you must know the sins of your heart!

—William Secker

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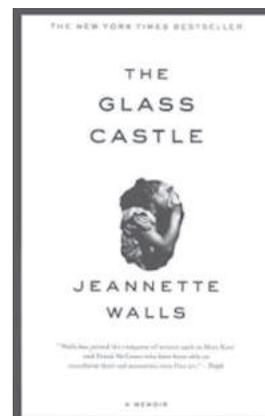
Good Words To Open Prayer

God, I bring all that I am today before you. Thank you for always welcoming me with open arms.

Ladies Book Club To Meet

The Next Ladies Book Club will be held Tues., Feb 20, 6:30 p.m. at the parsonage, 225 Country Lane, Bonfield, IL. They will be sharing insights from the book, "*The Glass Castle*" by Jeannette Walls. Everyone welcome!

All you need to do to participate in this club is purchase or rent the book, read it and then come to the meeting ready to discuss different aspects of the reading that you found interesting. You do not need to be a member of the United Methodist Churches to participate. All Ladies will be welcomed.



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February 2018

LENT BOOK STUDY

Feb. 19, 26; Mar. 5, 12, 19 & 26

1:00 p.m. or 7:00 p.m.

Bonfield Evangelical Upper Room

348 E. Smith Street, Bonfield

Fill Out and Return to Pastor Mel BEFORE Feb. 12

Name (s) _____

Phone _____

1 p.m.

7 p.m.

This study includes 2 books, a hardcover book and a paperback study guide.

**Cost for both books is \$20.00 payable to:
Pastor Mel Nielsen**

