

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

January 2018



Pastor's Corner

Pastor Mel Nielsen
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31 What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? 33 Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. 34 Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? 36 As it is written:

*“For your sake we face death all day long;
we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.”[j]*

37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons,[k] neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

- Romans 8:31-39 (N.I.V.)

I can't recall if I have ever mentioned that I don't get into New Year's resolutions. Can't keep 'em, don't make 'em. I suppose if I really wanted to change my life for the better I could do it anytime. I shouldn't have to wait until the calendar changes over to a new year. To make a worthwhile change in one's life requires resolve, that's the root word of resolution. “I resolve to lose weight in 2018.”

I lost some weight in 2017, but not because my resolve was more sound than in 2016, but because my doctor told me too. He meant it, so I did. I have backslid since my lowest weigh in. I must need more

resolve.

Instead of making a New Year's resolution about weight loss or watching less television. Those usually work for a couple of weeks until the Super Bowl rolls around, then we are back in front of the T.V., eating.

Let me suggest something else. 2017 has been a particularly hard year. My little parish has numerous people who are suffering, the larger area reveals even more heartbreak and brokenness. We listen to the news and we hear even more awful things like the continual violence in Chicago, the Las Vegas shooting, the church massacre in Texas, terrorism attacks in New York and in Cairo.

Why do these seem to be getting worse. I think these terrible stories seem worse because we know they are no longer isolated, they are becoming the norm. That's frightening. Do you remember the Ice Bucket Challenge a few years back? Getting a bucket of ice water dumped over your head isn't so bad when it is only going to happen once. Now it's like we have been drowned in ice water every other week.

We shouldn't be getting accustomed to it. Ice water is really good at numbing the senses. I wouldn't want our senses to get numb to the idea that hatred, ugliness and unbridled sinning are now, “*just how things are and complaining about it won't help.*” I agree, complaining usually doesn't get you very far.

Instead, let us enter this new year expecting something different. We need to want it, we need to pray about it and we need to expect that something different can happen. Maybe we have stopped expecting God to ‘give us all things’ as Paul writes above. Maybe we have stopped believing that Jesus is interceding on our behalf. When this happens hope fades and when hope is diminished our enemy makes headway into our very core.

Let us adopt our heritage and become more than warriors, not with spear and shield, but with confidence in Jesus the Christ. The one who died so that you and I may never live without hope.

– Pastor Mel

Sunshine Circle Holds Annual Christmas Party



Photos by Pastor Mel

Pictured above are members and friends of the Sunshine Circle who participated in their annual Christmas Party at the Bonfield Evangelical Church on Wed., Dec. 20. The group enjoyed a potluck, exchanged secret pal gifts and had a good time trying to decorate a Christmas gift. Teams of two people attempted to wrap a gift using only one hand each.

Grand Prairie Sunday School Christmas Program

The Grand Prairie Sunday School Christmas Program was held at the church on Sun., Dec. 10. A live nativity and lots of Christmas music gave those in attendance something to help them get ready for the season. Pictured below show members and friends of the congregation of all ages participated in the program.



Photos by Pastor Mel

Next Ladies Book Club

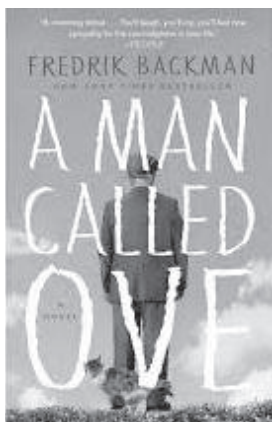
Tuesday, January 16, 2018

6:30 pm at the parsonage

Reading:

A Man called Ove

by Fredrik Backman



Fireman's Breakfast

The Salina Township Monthly Fireman's Breakfast will be held on Sun., Jan. 7, 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., Jan. 2, 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.

Parish Office Hours

Beginning in January 2018 the new parish office hours take effect officially. Pastor Mel's office hours will be Mondays 8 a.m. - Noon and Thursdays 8 a.m. - Noon. Hope Raymond's office hours are Tuesday, 1-5 p.m. and Thursdays 8 a.m. - Noon. Please note that all information for the bulletin is due on Thurs., before 9 a.m.



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
January 2018 worship.*

(Readings & message may change without notice.)

January 7

Baptism of the Lord

"Jesus Was Poor"

Altar Color - White

OT: None

NT: None

Gospel: Matthew 25:31-45

January 14

2nd Sunday after Epiphany

"Can I Change?"

Altar Color - Green

OT: 1 Samuel 3:1-10

NT: 1 Corinthians 6:12-20

Gospel: Matthew 3:3-17

January 21

3rd Sunday after Epiphany

"Do I Have A Purpose?"

Altar Color - Green

OT: Jonah 3:1-5 & 10

NT: 1 Corinthians 7:29-31

Gospel: John 1:29-42

January 28

4th Sunday after Epiphany

"Can God Help My Brother?"

Altar Color - Green

OT: Dueteronomy 18:15-20

NT: 1 Corinthians 8:1-13

Gospel: Mark 1:21-28

February 4

5th Sunday after Epiphany

"Pastor Mel on Vacation"

Altar Color - Green

OT: TBA

NT: TBA

Gospel: TBA



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

Bill Chittenden, Kurt Boesen, Shirley Brunner, Shirley Coffman, Sue Coons, Ron Cordes, Jean Dunn, Dennis Hertz, Linda Johnson, Janice Logsdon, Allen Messer, Dorene O'Connor, Merle Penrod, 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.

Thank You

Words can not begin to express my appreciation for all the prayers, visits, food, flowers and special shawl. Being a part of our church family and such an amazing community are a true blessing. A very special thank you to Pastor Mel for his overwhelming kindness, home visits and prayers. How lucky we are to have such a wonderful spiritual guide.

Carol Higginbotham

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

Prayer Shawl Meeting

The Prayer Shawl Group will meet on Thurs., Jan. 2 at 1:30 p.m. at Bonfield First Church, 172 Church Street. The group hopes the new time will encourage some in the community, who like to knit or crochet, but do not like to drive at night to come and join them. If you know of anyone who could use the encouragement of a Prayer Shawl please let Pastor Mel know and he will be glad to provide them with special hand-crafted prayer shawl.

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.

Thank You

I would like to thank all my friends for the prayers, calls, visits, cards and food. All of it was very much appreciated. I love you all and hope to see you soon.

Phyllis Riegel

Thank You

We would like to thank all in the parish for your expressions of sympathy and caring during the time of my sister, Ronda Smith's, illness and passing. Words cannot tell you how much it was all appreciated.

Judy Orwig Mau and family

Bible Quiz

At the start of a new year, we remember that God continually gives us new chances. What does Jesus say to a woman caught in adultery?

- A. "Go, and from now on sin no more."
- B. "Not even in Israel have I found such great faith."
- C. "Peace be with you."
- D. "Tell no one what I have done for you."

See answer below

January Memory Verse

Your love, Lord, reaches to the heavens, your
faithfulness to the skies.
— Psalm 36:5

+ Christian Symbols +



This set of letters spells "Christ" in Greek. It may be written using the Roman alphabet (from which the English alphabet descended), but is also often presented in Greek characters, as shown here.

Quotes Of The Month

"Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that."

—Martin Luther King Jr.

"Kindness is like snow — it beautifies everything it covers."

—Kahlil Gibran

"The greatest act of mercy that God performs is giving the gift of faith."

—R.C. Sproul

"A smile is a curve that sets everything straight."

—Phyllis Diller

Answer: A (See John 8:11.)



Photo by Pastor Mel

Bonfield Evangelical Sunday School Christmas Program

Pictured above are the Bonfield Sunday school youth who took part in the Christmas program on Sunday Dec. 17. The youth really touched the hearts of those in attendance with some great singing and wonderful performances.



Photo by Pastor Mel

Martha Circle Christmas Party

Pictured above are the ladies who enjoyed the Martha Circle Christmas Party at the Ohrt family shed on Wed., Dec. 6

First United Methodist Women Enjoy Potluck Christmas Party

December was busy for First UMW as missions were the focus. Not only did the group donate profits from the chicken supper to several organizations, but like always the congregation played a huge part in this success. Cunningham Home received \$185 in gift cards which will be used to make the children's holidays brighter. In addition, 130+ winter items (hats, scarves, gloves, mittens) for both children and adults were given to the Salvation Army to pass out to those in need in hopes that all will stay a little warmer this winter.

The Christmas potluck Sunday, Dec. 10, was filled with not only delicious food, but entertaining games (thanks Mel & Debbie), as well. It seems like the Dittuses were the big winners capturing both the "You Cannot Say That Word" game award and "Name that Christmas Carol" cartoon game. What fun it was to eat, laugh, and just be with friends.

The 2018 UMW meetings begin in March, so please watch the bulletin for information. All women are very welcome!



Photo by Pastor Mel

Puzzle!

The 12 Old Testament books known as the Minor Prophets aren't unimportant - just short! Unscramble the names of these books. Then unscramble the circled letters to find a fruit of the Spirit.



Fruit: _____

LEJO _____

IHCAM _____

ABKUKKAH _____ ○ _____

DHAIABO _____ ○ _____

MUNAH _____

OAESH _____ ○ ○ _____

AZAEHINPH _____ ○ _____

NJHAO _____ ○ _____

AGIAGH _____ ○ _____

OASM _____ ○ _____

AHRIZAHCE _____

IHCMALA _____

Answers: Joel, Micah, Habakkuk, Obadiah, Nahum, Hosea, Zephaniah, Jonah, Haggai, Amos, Zechariah, Malachi; Kindness

Almond Chicken & Strawberry-Balsamic Sauce

INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 cup panko (Japanese) bread crumbs
- 1/3 cup unblanched almonds, coarsely ground
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- 4 boneless skinless chicken breast halves (4 ounces each)
- Butter-flavored cooking spray
- 3 teaspoons canola oil, divided
- 1/4 cup chopped shallots
- 1/3 cup reduced-sodium chicken broth
- 1/3 cup strawberry preserves
- 3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh rosemary or 1 teaspoon dried rosemary, crushed
- 1 pkg (9 ounces) fresh baby spinach

DIRECTIONS

- 1.) In a large resealable plastic bag, combine the bread crumbs, almonds, salt and pepper. Add chicken, one piece at a time, and shake to coat.
- 2.) In a large nonstick skillet coated with butter-flavored spray, cook chicken in 2 teaspoons oil over medium heat for 4-5 minutes on each side or until juices run clear. Remove and keep warm.
- 3.) In the same pan, cook shallots in remaining oil until tender. Stir in the broth, preserves, vinegar and rosemary. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat; simmer for 5-6 minutes or until thickened.
- 4.) Meanwhile, in a large saucepan, bring 1/2 in. of water to a boil. Add spinach; cover and boil for 3-5 minutes or until wilted. Drain; serve with chicken and sauce. Yield: 4 servings.

Recipe from
TasteofHome.com

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January 2017

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

