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Your Lenten Journey Ends Here

The radio show host of *A Prairie Home Companion*, Garrison Keillor, makes a distinction between the two different kinds of Lutherans in Lake Wobegon, Minnesota. First are the Happy Lutherans who like to hear about the grace and goodness of God, and who cheerfully go about their lives and enjoy living. Then there are the Dark Lutherans... Guilt, law, and repentance are the marks of a Dark Lutheran. They would say, “If everything in life is coming your way, then you’re probably driving in the wrong lane.”

Lent is a time when many of us feel the need to become Dark Lutherans, even if we are usually happy. For one thing, we will be reminded that “we are dust,” and to it we will be returning someday. Some people talk about our “Lenten journey” as a time when we travel a road of guilt and try to improve our morality. To top it all off, Lent comes during February and March when the days are still short, dark and cold. But the seasons of the church year are in place for a reason. Lent *is* a time for us to consider what it is to be a sinner in need of God’s grace. It is the season for us to contemplate God’s sacrifice, the life of His only Son Jesus, on our behalf. Does this make you feel guilty? It does me. But it should also make you feel extremely loved, important, and worthy. For your Creator to take such drastic steps on your behalf means that you are not just some wicked, sinful wretch—you are a child of God. You are loved enough to be worth saving!

During Lent on my internship we did a book study instead of Wednesday night worship services. We read the book *The Ragamuffin Gospel* by Brennan Manning (which I highly recommend!). The theme of this book fits in with our Lenten mindset, but emphasizes that our “Lenten journey” is over before it is even begun. To speak of “our journey” is a rather arrogant way of thinking; because it was God, not us, who made the journey from heaven to earth, to work his saving grace on us. And it is our great fortune to be the recipients of such love and forgiveness, even if we are ragamuffin sinners whose only hope is in Christ and not in ourselves. So remember, as we enter the season of Lent: Your journey is already over, and remember that you are a beloved child of God—both a sinner and a saint.

Peace in Christ,

Pastor Ben

Salem Church Council Minutes
January 12, 2010

The meeting was called to order by President Dennis Nardy with the following council members present: Chuck Eilers, Bert Henry, Chris Lane, Mike Linch, Sherri Nissen, Mike Richardson, Flossie Roberts, Todd Stofferahn and Warren Woods. Pastor Ben and Margaret Kneedler also attended.

Devotions were led by Mike Richardson.

M/S/C by Flossie Roberts and Bert Henry to approve the December council minutes.

Pastor's report:

- a) Visited 11 members and one visitor family
- b) Pastor Danette Johns visit with council will be set up
- c) The Sparks program will repaint the sign used for "High School Hangout" and use for advertising. They are also asking for donations.
- d) "Youthworks" summer mission trip will not take place this summer
- e) Pastor will be gone, Sunday February 7th.

Treasurer's Report by Mike Linch:

- a) The Live Nativity raised \$ 450.00
- b) The balance of the Roof Loan is now \$ 832.32
- c) Thanksgiving offering of \$ 450.00 was given to the Ministerial Alliance
- d) Christmas offering of \$ 940.00 was given to the local Food Pantry
- e) All 2009 bills have been paid with \$ 2500.00 carry over to start 2010

M/S/C by Todd Stofferahn and Chuck Eilers to approve the treasurer's report.

Old Business:

- a) Credit Card; Mike Linch offered to be the guarantor for one card, totaling \$ 500.00, M/S/C by Warren Woods and Sherri Nissen
- b) Sherri Nissen reported the scrapbook pictures are complete and will be placed in the Fellowship Hall. In a black portfolio binder.
- c) Two push bars have been purchased at \$ 460.00

New Business:

- a) M/S/C by Warren Woods and Todd Stofferahn to purchase five fire extinguishers at the cost of \$ 61.71 each and Signs for \$ 4.75 each from Car Quest with money coming from the Replacement Fund. Other prices were \$ 75.00 from the Fire Department and \$ 88.75 each.
- b) New Council members were discussed with one possible joining. By-laws state Pastor and know more than twelve members must be on the council. Discussion was held with reducing the number if others do not volunteer.
- c) Annual meeting is January 31st.
- d) New budget was presented by Treasurer, Mike Linch
M/S/C by Warren Woods and Mike Richardson to increase church secretary salary 10%, there has not been an increase in four years.

M/S/C by Warren Woods and Bert Henry to increase church secretary vacation to two weeks, with Margaret working out time and details with Mike Linch.

M/S/C by Todd Stofferahn and Chuck Eilers to approve the proposed budget for 2010 with the amended recommendations regarding secretary salary increase and vacation time.

Committee reports were presented:

- a) Christian Education; Thanks to all who helped with and supporting the Live Nativity. To date there are three campers interested in attending camp. January 29th, Family Fun Night at 6:00 p.m. Bert is getting information from the state and looking into cost, etc., to have the kitchen certified to allow meals to be prepared and sold of site for fundraising. Confirmation is May 16th with four students being confirmed. Next meeting is February 2nd at 4:30
- b) Church Property; no meeting
- c) Social Ministry; Plan to schedule two dates to serve the Open Table. Looking for volunteers to help with the potluck after the annual meeting. Next meeting February 2nd at 6:30
- d) Worship and Music; Ash Wednesday is February 17th. Lenten services will begin at 7:00 pm. Communion will be on the 2nd and 4th Sundays in February due to Pastor being gone the first Sunday in February. Discussion was held about various spring flowers being donated during Easter. They will continue to request only Easter Lilies this year. Discussion was held to set up a Memorial Committee to manage the memorial funds. Next meeting is February 10th, at 5:00 pm.

Council made a motion M/S/C by Sherri Nissen and Todd Stofferahn to continue managing memorial funds as current practice with the family completing the form and submitting it to the office. Current committees have difficulty filling terms and another committee is not necessary at this time.

- e) Finance; Budget for 2010 was presented to council

M/S/C by Warren Woods and Chuck Eilers to adjourn the meeting.

The next council meeting will be on February 11th at 6:30 pm. Opening devotions will be led by Dennis Nardy. The meeting adjourned and closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted:

Sherri Nissen, Council Secretary



Vi Johnson, Lois Paxton, Dorothy Vanella, Don Toyce, Mary Jo Foster, Mike Springer, Ella Groff, Marge Hansen, Janice Peterson and Willard Peterson. We ask God to send his Holy Spirit to comfort and strengthen these individuals.



Spec. Emily Cruise, Spec. Matthew Cruse, Major David Cruse, Sgt. Aaron Cunningham, Chief Msgt. David Groff, MGY Sgt. Mark Kinkade, Str. Airman Travis Mathis, SN3 Tony McNaught, SW3 Beth Hollingshead, SRA Zacary Sedlmayr, Col. Vic Wager III, Joseph Woodcock—We ask God to lead our young men and women who are protecting our country and serving in the Middle East. Please keep our servicepersons and the families of our military in your prayers.

February Birthdays

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| 02/03 Denise Roberg | 02/12 Vincent Soda | 02/22 Mark Kinkade |
| 02/04 Don Butler | 02/14 Michael Buck | 02/25 Kenton Groth |
| Phyllis Keuter | 02/17 Mike Ruchardson | Judy Pringle |
| 02/05 Kirk Levine | Sean Snodgrass | 02/26 Barb Abildtrup |
| Rosalie Wilson | Charles Western | Joan Staples |
| 02/09 Alec Paup | 02/19 Roxana Peterson | 02/27 Dave Riley |
| Gary Peterson | 02/20 Carol Peterson | 02/28 Jane Johnston |
| 02/10 Vi Johnson | Alexander Peterson | Raquel Linch |
| 02/11 Wyatt Hitz | Andrea Slight | Claudia Peppers |

February Anniversaries

- 02/04 Charles & Jean Western
 02/16 Darrel & Rosalie Wilson
 02/24 Chuck & Nancy Taylor
 02/27 Cliff & Lois Olsen

2010 ECUMENICAL SERVICES

<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>MINISTER</u>
February 21 st	St. John's UCC	Rob Alfalah
February 28 th	Jerusalem UMC	Barb Koenig
March 7 th	Salem Lutheran	Jim Gubser
March 14 th	First Presbyterian	Jim Morris
March 21 st	First UMC	Dan Moore
March 28 th	Crest Baptist	Scott Vandenheuval
April 2 nd	Holy Spirit	Ben McIntire