



GATHERING PEOPLE TO BUILD RELATIONSHIPS IN CHRIST

International Friendship Centers (IFC) Twin Cities

As we begin to have interest again in the IFC here at Holy Cross, please pray and consider how the Lord might want to use you to volunteer in areas of relationship building through our IFC located in three locations of our Circuit churches. If you have need for ESL support; teaching basics in sewing using a sewing machine; helping immigrant mothers learn to cook food their children are eating at public school and now have trouble eating Mom's home cooking; and citizenship support.

Recently Pastor Jim has been contacted by a social worker of an Afghanistan immigrant who has a background similar to the beautiful story Donna Vig will share about building relationships in Christ in our community! The Good News is for all people to share God's love and forgiveness. We prepare the ground, plant the seeds, but God gives the growth. Thank you, Donna, for your ministry of reaching and teaching and sharing Christ's love and your story!

Tutoring Amina by Donna Vig

Amina has participated in our International Friendship Center since the beginning. We started in July 2019. She has only missed two sessions. One was for illness, and one was for an accident her grandson had. She was paired with me from the start. It was a good fit for both her and I, with us being around the same age. Amina is wonderful to work with because she is positive, tries hard and laughs easily. Basically, she was starting with no skills in speaking, writing, reading or comprehension of the English Language. Although she has been in our country for about 5 years, she continued using her native Somalia language.



We started off using flashcards of the alphabet and simple sight words with pictures. I have brought in actual objects to name, and we have walked around the church naming things. We have progressed to reading very simple books and working in beginner workbooks writing words, reading short stories and then answering questions to check comprehension. I try to have a variety for her, so it does not become mundane. One of the best things we do is have conversations. It can be challenging but we generally get the idea of what we both are trying to say. Some obstacles to a learning session are if she has forgotten her glasses or if she is not ready when I pick her up at her apartment building door.

I, myself have been on two extended vacations where she has regressed when we get back to our sessions. She has declared that she will only attend class if I am

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GATHERING PEOPLE TO BUILD...

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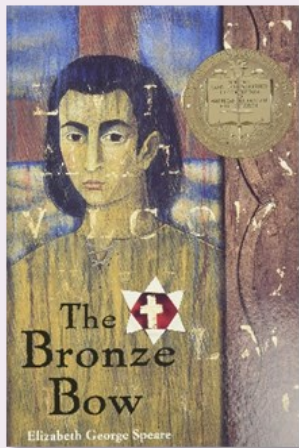
teaching the class, no substitute teachers for her. It's wonderful that we do not have time frames or competency tests to fulfill. We are relaxed and go at the pace she needs to be at.

I truly believe I have become friends with her as our group name implies. We have driven through Starbucks together; we show each other pictures of our husbands, kids and grandkids. We laugh together and I drive her to the New Creation church in Shakopee to receive food donations. Amina reads road signs as we drive along. She has crocheted a hat for me and brought Somali food she has cooked for me. I gave her a Christmas gift.

I have talked to her about my faith in God and have prayed while I am with her. I have told her about my Jesus who has died on the cross for my sins. She does not understand but I will keep trying, as her English gets better. She is pretty committed to the religion she has learned from her childhood. I feel because of her age she is set in her ways regarding her religion. I believe God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) is in control and I will trust Him.

BIBLE BOOKENDERS

Bible Bookenders will be meeting on **Monday, January 31st at 7:00 pm** at the church. We will be reading **The Bronze Bow** by Elizabeth George Spears. This book is set in first century Galilee. Daniel bar Jamin is a young Jew whose father was killed in front of him as an example, by the Roman occupiers. Daniel lives in the mountains with the rebel named Rosh with the goal of overthrowing the Romans. Daniel encounters Jesus of Nazareth. His life is slowly changed as he learns many new things and has many adventures. Please join us!



SERVICE THEMES & SCRIPTURES

JANUARY 2, 2022

Second Sunday after Christmas • 9:00 am Worship

Theme: The Father's Business – Renewing! The Wisdom of the Word in 2022 Renews!

Text: Luke 2:40-52 – The boy Jesus shares Wisdom in the Word in His Father's House.

Lessons: 1 Kings 3:4-15; Ephesians 1:3-14; Luke 2:40-52

JANUARY 9, 2022

Epiphany - Baptism of the Lord • 9:00 am Worship

Theme: Epiphany/Baptism of Our Lord – “Led by and to the Star; Provided Always in All Ways”

Text: Matthew 2:1-23; Led to the Star Luke 3:15-22 The Baptism of Grace in Jesus

Lessons: Matthew 2:1-23; Isaiah 43:1-7; Romans 6:1-11; Luke 3:15-22

JANUARY 16, 2022

Life Sunday - Epiphany 2 • 9:00 am Worship

Theme: Life Sunday – “God's Life Plan and Vision is Eternal Salvation for All”

Text: Isaiah 62:1-5 Life renewed with God's Plan on Earth as in heaven! (and reference today's other lessons)

Lessons: Isaiah 62:1-5; 1 Corinthians 12:1-11; John 2:1-11

JANUARY 23, 2022

Epiphany 3 • 9:00 am Worship

Theme: “Trusting the Lord When things Look Dismal”

Text: Nehemiah 8:1-10 Rebuilding Jerusalem's Wall and Temple (and reference today's other lessons).

Lessons: Nehemiah 8:1-10; 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a; Luke 4:16-30

JANUARY 30, 2022

Epiphany 4 • 9:00 am Worship

Theme: “God's Rescue Mission of the Corinthian Congregation – Through Love”

Text: 1 Corinthians 13:7 Love bears all things, believes all things, hope all things, endures all things.

Lessons: Jeremiah 1:4-10 (17-19); 1 Corinthians 12:31b-13:13; Luke 4:31-44

Hope

"It wasn't what I was expecting, Mom."

Those reflective words from my five-year-old come from countless experiences of navigating transitions and life together. The intersection of hope meeting reality is something he wears on his sleeve. He is not the type of person who thrives on or even enjoys surprises. Over the years we have worked to give meaning and language to what he feels when something just does not match up with what he hoped for or imagined it to be in his head and now we have settled on that phrase "it wasn't what I was expecting".

Sometimes, we just don't want surprises

This phrase most recently came out the day before his birthday party. We were talking about what he could expect and he inquired about the presents his friends would bring. He wanted to know what he could expect his presents to be because: "You know I don't really like surprises, Mom."

We talked in this case about how he should not expect that everyone would give him a gift, but he could expect that anyone who gave him a gift would have taken time to think about what he would like. He could expect that the gift was given with the hope that he would love it and have fun. In the midst of that conversation is where I found my own longings for the year ahead.

What "surprises" will a new year hold?

I am also just as eager to know what I can expect too, not in the form of birthday gifts, but in the upcoming year. After two years of navigating a pandemic the start of another year with the reality of a virus and its various strands still present feels like my expectations for good gifts ahead will be likely unmet. Making resolutions or picking a word of the year? Is it even worth taking the time to set my own 2022 expectations?

Can I expect that I will have to deliver news of being quarantined to my kids again? Probably. Can I expect that I will see more people I know get sick? Probably. Can I expect that I will experience tension over politics

and current events? Probably. Can I expect to generally face something personally difficult in the coming year? Definitely.

And if that was all I was expecting to face in 2022, I am not sure I will be able to get out of bed on January 1. If my hope, and trust, was anchored on whether or not I would be receiving good gifts from the year ahead, I could expect that my year would be one devastating experience after the next.

Christ is our anchor

Where do I turn for hope as I look to turn the calendar to 2022? I turn to the pages of God's word where He meets me day in and day out with promises that always exceed my expectations. In Hebrews 10:23 the author writes:

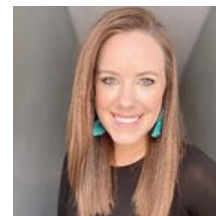
"Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful."

My hope for the new year ahead can be rightly placed in the manger that held an incarnate Savior. It can be placed on the cross where that same Savior hung to die and my hope can be placed in the empty tomb where that Savior rose defeating death and sin for eternity.

This type of hope "does not put us to shame (disappoint us), because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us." (Romans 5:5)

2022 won't be what I am expecting if I only place my hope in resolutions or words of my own choosing but it will be everything I am expecting when I place my hope in the hands who created hope itself.

Written by
Kyla Rodriguez



THE LUTHERAN HOUR



The Lutheran Hour can be heard each Sunday on WCCO (830 AM) at 6:05 am. And it can be streamed online too, www.lhm.org. Check-out LHM's daily devotions too.

January 2

"Gospel Power for Personal Patience"

Speaker: Rev. Dr. Gregory Seltz

No one likes to wait! Hear God's promises for impatient people. (Luke 2:40-52)

January 9

"Facing Rejection"

Speaker: Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler

How does one deal with rejection? Push through it? Rise above it? Or start over? (Luke 3:1-22)

January 16

"Hazed and Confused"

Speaker: Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler

God is against our pride because He wants to give Himself to us. (Luke 4:1-37)

January 23

"Caught"

Speaker: Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler

(Luke 4:38 - 5:16)

January 30

"TBD"

Speaker: Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler

2 MINUTE MULTIPLIER



A weekday 2-minute devotion that helps you see Jesus at work in your world.

Expert

It doesn't rain often where I live. But when it does, it seems the clouds have only one speed: wide-open. The fully-on variety is causing me problems. Need to beef up my french drain system. I think. I'm not the expert in such things. YouTube offers me a variety of gurus. Who to choose?

I went with someone I know. Called him up. Explained the problem. "I'll come out on Monday. Give it a look. Tell you what I think." I hung up. Relieved.

Not because I had my answers. I'm still sitting in the outer office waiting for the doctor to poke his head out. I'm relieved because someone I trust is coming to help.

He's got more experience than me. A more-water-knowledge-in-his-little-pinky type of guy. Having someone you can trust with problems relaxes the shoulders. Takes the kinks out of the neck. Lets the worry you've been holding in flow freely and noisily out.

God desires you see Him in such a way. To go to Him for insight. To consult Him when you're struggling. To confide in Him when you're doubting. To take five and ask Him who to call when water is causing you headaches.

I suspect you're like me and tend not to ask Him. I suspect you skip over Him and go straight to pacing and worrying. As if somehow that will make you a stronger person.

God gave you His Spirit miraculously when you became part of His Family. Deposited it in you with the water of baptism. Interwoven it into your soul in a divine double knot you can't untie.

All so that the Expert of all experts is 24/7 at your disposal. All so that you know the Who that has the knowledge to really help.

He's sending over my buddy on Monday. That makes for a nicer weekend. For sure.


Rev. Bill Woolsey
President and Founder

FiveTwo Network

Sign up to receive the 2 Minute Multiplier emailed to you! www.fivetwo.com/2mm

January 2022



| SUN | MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT |
|---|---|---|--|-----|-----|--|
| | | | | | | 1 HAPPY NEW YEAR |
| 2 2nd Sunday after Christmas 9:00 am Worship/Communion 10:15 am Bible Study | 3 | 4 8:00 am Men's Bible Study 7:00 pm Elder's Meeting | 5 12:00 pm Happenings Articles Due 4:00 pm Confirmation Class | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| 9 Epiphany 9:00 am Worship/Communion 10:15 am Sunday School 10:15 am Bible Study | 10 7:00 pm Church Council Meeting | 11 8:00 am Men's Bible Study | 12 12:00 pm Happenings Articles Due 4:00 pm Confirmation Class | 13 | 14 | 15 12:00 pm Newsletter Articles Due |
| 16 2nd Sunday after Epiphany 9:00 am Worship/Communion 10:15 am Sunday School 10:15 am Bible Study | 17 Martin Luther King Jr. Day  | 18 8:00 am Men's Bible Study | 19 12:00 pm Happenings Articles Due 4:00 pm Confirmation Class | 20 | 21 | 22 |
| 23 3rd Sunday after Epiphany 9:00 am Worship/Communion 10:15 am Sunday School 10:15 am Voter's Meeting | 24 | 25 8:00 am Men's Bible Study | 26 12:00 pm Happenings Articles Due 4:00 pm Confirmation Class | 27 | 28 | 29 |
| 30 4th Sunday after Epiphany 9:00 am Worship/Communion 10:15 am Sunday School 10:15 am Bible Study | 31 | | | | | |