

Q: What's at the center of our life?

A: An experience of the Living Christ.

by Pastor Bradley Schmeling

At the center of our life together as Gloria Dei is the ongoing experience that Jesus is alive among us. As Lutherans, we trust that his living presence comes to us through good words read in Scripture and proclaimed in the pulpit; and in water, bread, and wine. Of course, Christ is present in all things, so I'm going to add "the gathered assembly" as one of our sacramental expressions. We know Jesus when we gather together.

When we designed our guiding principles, we realized that the one of the things we do together that touches the most people, 500 on an average week, is Sunday worship. Everything we do flows out of that time together. All our ministries connect back to worship. The council wanted to make sure that our plans for the future made it clear that worshiping together is the most important thing we do. Without it, we lose our energy, get dried up, wiped out, or just plain busy.

Here's our first question for you as we roll out our guiding principles and figure out how to make them concrete: How will you engage worship so that it becomes more meaningful and relevant in your life?

Of course, we all will have a different way of answering that question. What's yours? How will you make a commitment to worship and make the experience of the living Jesus the center, not only in your church life, but in your whole life?

One suggestion, as we enter the summer, is to make Sunday worship a priority for you, even in the Minnesota summer when we all want to be outside and feel the sun, your pastors included. If you're traveling, find a church to attend. It's always interesting to see how other

Continued on next page

Christians worship. If you come to worship on fewer Sundays in the summer, make a plan this year to come more frequently. It's not as much fun without you here. If you're one of the regular participants, think of a way to delve more deeply into the liturgy. Read the lessons ahead of time, or use the daily lectionary printed on the prayer list to read the bible every day.

Take the prayer list with you and put it in a place that will remind you to pray for the people on the list. Listen to the sermons [online](#). Sign up to be a communion assistant or an usher, something that will help you engage in the liturgy differently. Let me know if you're interested in serving. Here's a shocker: sit in a different place! Meet some new people. Deputize yourself as a chief of hospitality; make a point of greeting people you don't know. How could we make everyone feel more at home? Think of something that would work for you.

We are rooted in Christ!

Intergenerational Mission Trip July 29—August 5



by Katie LeClair

On July 29, 12 adults and 11 teens from Gloria Dei will be flying to reindeer country! Fairbanks, Alaska, here we come!

Our travelers will be setting out as an intergenerational team to join others as part of Next Step Ministries to serve, grow, play and learn together. Next Step is an interdenominational organization that facilitates Christ-centered summer trips to bring people into closer contact with the good work the Holy Spirit is already doing. We'll be engaging our

hearts, bodies, souls, and minds through worship and the arts, construction projects, and community development.

In addition to rural construction work, we'll be supporting some projects in the city of Fairbanks, such as The Door, a teen drop-in center for at-risk youth, and Camp Li-Wa (which stands for Living Water), which provides retreat and camp facilities for those around the state.

Continued on next page

Our longest standing partnership is with former Native American Chief, Will Mayo and his wife Yvonne. We have worked alongside them to build a retreat center on their multi-acre property, spread across beautiful Alaskan landscape. Will and Yvonne use the retreat center, cabins, prayer cabins, and trails to host youth, missionaries, and families in need of spiritual retreat and support. Our teams continue to support the building of the retreat center, work to split and distribute wood as a much needed means to survival in the area, as well as soak in the amazing relational and spiritual opportunities with Will and Yvonne.” -[Next Step](#)

We'll have time in the day to focus on Bible study and connecting our work to God's larger story through music, song, and art. We will spend a day at Denali State Park and before we fly home, there will be time at Camp Li-Wa for shopping and site-seeing around Fairbanks. We're looking forward to living a week with 23 hours of sunlight every day!

Finally – some statistics. Of our 23 travelers, only eight have been on a trip with Gloria Dei before. Unlike previous summer trips, we won't be doing a long road haul – so the experience will differ in many ways. There are six parents and two church staff people attending – and all adults will serve as guides and participants in all activities through the week.



Our team is looking to raise \$13,000 dollars to help with airfare and program costs. We are operating on a tight budget, hoping to come back with amazing stories of personal and Spirit-filled impact.

Would you consider contributing? Click [here](#) to donate. God bless you!



Camp Li-Wa

From the Children's Ministry Director

Thoughts from the Water Tower: April Rotation for 1st – 4th Graders

by Deacon Pat Derry

Saul says, "Jesus loved me even though I rejected him."

This is the year when our Water Tower children focus on lessons of God's Grace. From Martin Luther to Jonah, the Prodigal Son to the penitent thief, we now turn to Saul. Saul was born about 3 CE in Tarsus, now in Turkey, a city full of Greek culture and Roman administration. He must have come from a wealthy family, was well-educated, and a Roman citizen. But Saul was also a faithful, devout Jew, a Pharisee who practiced the rules of his religion to a tee! He was convinced that the "cult" built up around Jesus was blasphemous – only God is God. So Saul set out to eradicate the new branch of Judaism who were called Christians. He arrested men and women and threw them in jail, and even was present and approved of the stoning of the first Christian martyr, Stephen.

Saul was given authority to arrest any Christians he might find in the city of Damascus. As he traveled by horse, he was stopped by a bright light. Out of that light Jesus spoke to him, and asked why he was persecuting him. Saul was blinded by the light, led to the city, and there he waited. Jesus had spoken to him! He had seen Jesus! Can this crucified man be alive?

Could he really be who Christians claimed him to be?

A Christian man in the city, Ananias, was sent by God to Saul, saying, "This man is the agent I have chosen to carry my name before Gentiles, kings, and Israelites." Ananias healed Saul, baptized him, and Saul was filled with the Holy Spirit. Immediately he began preaching that Jesus is God's Son!

Saul was not dramatically changed by discussions or arguments. He was not transformed by a new set of rules. Saul was changed by meeting the living Jesus. It was personal! Jesus is a person who is alive and when Saul met Jesus, it turned his life upside-down! Saul the persecutor was changed to Paul the apostle. After meeting Jesus, Saul called himself only by his Roman name, Paul, which means "humble or small." The persecutor, become missionary, traveled the known world preaching and teaching about the living Lord Jesus, and the many letters he wrote to the new converts are now contained in our Scriptures. Jesus loved Saul, even when Saul rejected and persecuted him. By God's grace, Jesus transformed Paul's life to one of devotion and service, an agent of Jesus to the world!

Hope in Recovery — Recovery Sunday Event on April 8, 2018

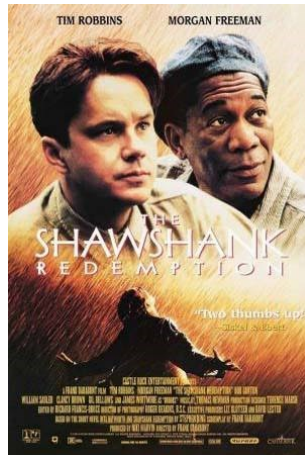
by Daniel D. Maurer, Author and Gloria Dei Member

One of my favorite movies is *The Shawshank Redemption* from 1994. It's the story of the Portland, Maine banker Andy Dufresne who is wrongfully convicted of murdering his wife and her lover, and sentenced to two consecutive life sentences at the Shawshank State Penitentiary. The story goes on to show Andy's friendship with "Red," a man who had been rightfully convicted for the murder of a gas station clerk.

Without spoiling the movie for you (if in the unlikely event you've never seen it), despite the corrupt warden's continual unfair treatment of the prisoners—Andy included—Andy and his compatriots finally get their due justice, and the warden and his minions receive their comeuppance.

The movie has even been hailed as being grounded in Christian mysticism, with Andy and his friends compared to Jesus and his disciples, and the warden standing in for Lucifer.

Apart from any interpretation of the film's intended meaning, one reason I think I gravitate toward the story so much is because it shows people's intentions and actions within a hostile environment. The convicted (many of them, anyway) disclose their humanity, while the overseers show just how nefarious and selfish people can be.



Perhaps no other illness is stigmatized as much as addiction. Probably mental illness runs a close second. Our country is currently embroiled in an addiction crisis; anyone can read the daily headlines pointing to the opioid crisis, but many other drugs and alcohol certainly continue to play a main role. Few families are untouched by the ravages addiction can wreak.

The connection of the movie's theme to addiction is more obvious than we perhaps care to admit—often addicts and their families are viewed as the “bad guys” while the rest of us easily dole out judgment, or, at the very least, shake our heads at the tough circumstances.

What we often fail to recognize is that people who have gone through the trials of addiction, as well as the families who have been affected by it, have something to teach us all.

The implications might surprise you: having gone through this trial personally—I am a person of recovery—I can attest to the fact that I wouldn't trade my past poor choices for anything. Today, I'm more spiritually-fit person *because of my addiction and recovery*, not in spite of it. The hostility in addiction I faced forced me to reflect on my relationship with God. I know also from direct experience that my family members consider my addiction and recovery as a turning point with their own faith journeys.

This year, the Hope in Recovery Team at Gloria Dei will host a panel of participants, both from the recovery standpoint, and also from the perspective of recovery from codependency as well.

Growing the Green Annual Auction is April 21st



Lakeside getaways, a ski weekend, a warm weather escape- The Gloria Dei Auction committee needs your help securing items like this for the annual auction event. Funds raised at the auction support the mission and operation of Gloria Dei. Do you have an extra week at your cabin or time share to donate? Please contact [Marshall Saunders](#) at to make your donation.

Please plan now to join us for this year's auction on Saturday, April 21, 2018 from 6:00-9:00 pm. Join us on the green at Highland National Golf Course to grow the green - funds to support the ongoing mission of Gloria Dei. It will be an evening of fun and fundraising. Register [online](#) today.

We need everyone's help to make this year's event a success!

Bakers- preheat your ovens and plan to bring your best bars for our dessert bar baking contest. Categories include best use of peanut butter, gluten free goodies, fun with fruit and choco-licious. You can also showcase your creativity in the costume contest- mix plaids or reinvent your dad's ugly golf pants to create an amazing party outfit.

Many of your friends and neighbors have created exciting and enjoyable events and experiences for you to bid on. Dinners, excursions, parties and lessons are just a few of the options available. We hope to see you there.

Capital Fund Information

Contributions Year to date	\$	64,413
Monthly mortgage payments	\$	18,752
Capital Improvement Cost Year-to-date	\$	0
Balance in Capital Accounts Feb 28, 2018	\$	356,116
Mortgage Balance Feb 28, 2018	\$	2,847,181

Operating Information February 28, 2018

Total offerings	\$	85,522
Ahead(Behind)	\$	12,517
Total Income	\$	97,783
Total Expenses	\$	114,777
Net for Month	\$	16,994
Total YTD Offerings	\$	268,274
Ahead (Behind)	\$	12,350
Total Income	\$	293,050
Total YTD Expenses	\$	229,392
Net for Current Year	\$	63,658

Gloria Dei Lutheran Church

700 Snelling Avenue South

St. Paul, MN 55116

651-699-1378

By God's grace, we are called to be a caring, healing and welcoming community who proclaim and celebrate the love of Jesus Christ, live as God's servants and seek justice for all people.