

God is Constant

A few years ago my extended family traveled out to Grand Teton National Park in western Wyoming. The Tetons are a stunning sight: tall snow-crested mountains rising above a large lake and sprawling plain. Traveling out to these mountains my family clambered into two cars and a school bus converted into an RV. The trip was wonderful but hectic—lots of nieces and nephews, mountain weather that would change in an instant, bus problems that caused concern. Yet in all the excitement and variables of our trip, those mountains never moved. They stood tall and majestic, solemn and quiet, as they have done since God designed them in their beauty. Our lives change while they remain the same. It does the soul good to gaze at mountains. It gives you a healthy perspective of your smallness at the foot of something so great and solid.

In the College & Career group that my wife and I have had the privilege to lead in our short time at Ruthfred, there's a constant theme in the lives of young adults: change and transition. From leaving home to begin college or start a trade, to renting/buying places to live on one's own, to seeking new relationships in new environments—life changes fast in your twenties. That change doesn't stop, does it? Throughout our whole life we experience constant transitions. To what do we look for consistency, for a solid foundation upon which we can plant our feet?

Our young adults have been studying the Hebrew names and titles for God in the Old Testament. Names like Elohim, "God of gods;" El Olam, "God Everlasting;" Yahweh Yireh, "The LORD whom I see," among others. Some refer to His desire to heal us, His deep love for His people, and His personal relationship with His creation. They have a common thread, a unity that reminds us something important about God: He is powerful, He is constant, He is unchanging. One of my favorite titles for God is El Shaddai, "God Almighty." This name is invoked in Psalm 91:1-2:

"He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say to the LORD, 'My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.'"

This psalm is traditionally attributed to Moses, the one who ascended the mighty mountain of the Lord, Mt. Sinai, and whose face radiated with the light of God's glory (Exodus 34). Moses and the Israelites experienced great change, having left Egypt for the wilderness. They found refuge in the shadow of their never-changing God, a mountain under which they could always find shelter.

May we have a perspective of God like small creatures at the foot of a great mountain, where our troubles and transitions pale before the immensity of His might. Yet even before His power, might we also find refuge in the shadow of a God who loves us so.

In Christ,

Vicar Brian Westerbur

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From the 2019 Church Picnic



Member Profile

By Mettelise Ziegler

Mary Lou Streiner



Mary Lou Streiner has been a member of our church since the early 1970's. She tells people how much she loves this congregation and cannot imagine worshipping anywhere else or identifying herself as anything other than Lutheran.

Raised in the Lincoln-Lemington area of Pittsburgh, Mary Lou attended Epiphany Lutheran Church, which closed many years ago. She was the oldest of three in a hardworking family. Many Pittsburghers remember when Isaly's was a hub in neighborhoods throughout the city. Mary Lou's mother baked pies for the Homewood store.

After marriage to Ernie, the couple belonged to Homewood Presbyterian Church, eventually returning to Lutheranism. Ernie had been baptized at St. John – Millvale, but his parents were not practicing Christians when he was a child. As an adult, Ernie chose First Lutheran in downtown Pittsburgh, determined to belong to a church.

Unfortunately, Ernie died on February 3, 2018. A practicing optician, he owned Suburban Optical in Bethel Park for thirty-three years, which is the community he and Mary Lou called home for most of their 53 years of marriage.

Mary Lou is related to several Ruthfred members. Her first cousin is Jeanine Szalinski who is mother to Emily and Kate. Emily is married to Ben; they have two children. Kate is married to Jeff.

Mary Lou has a special heart for little ones. For twenty-five years, she and Rosie Del Bene taught children who attended morning Journey Through the Word. The program included much more than supervision for the children whose parents attended Bible study. The conscientious duo planned Biblical lessons so that the children learned about God too.

These days, Mary Lou can be found in the church kitchen preparing and serving funeral lunches. She knows first-hand how meaningful they can be for people who have lost loved ones.

The last eight days Ernie lay in the hospital, unable to raise his head, were particularly inspirational for Mary Lou. Unexpectedly, he raised himself up proclaiming, "If God is for us, who can be against us? Follow His path."

Mary Lou is determined to follow God's path wherever it may lead. She continues to find ways to serve the Lord through the ministries at Ruthfred, the church she loves to call her own.

Official Acts

July 22, 2019 – August 18, 2019

Baptisms

*Atticus Adriel Fouks – August 18, 2019

Weddings

Erica Feller and Russell Kolker—August 17, 2019

Funerals

*Donald Wilkinson – August 1, 2019

*Ronald Fees – August 10, 2019

*Indicates Members

Evening of Prayer and Praise Service

The Worship team extends an invitation to come and see if this service fits your faith journey! God speaks of praise to Him over and over again in His Word and praise from the heart is delivered in many ways, glorifying God all the same.

This praise service is offered on the third Sunday of the month at 6:00 PM in the large Sunday School room. The service opens with prayer and is interspersed with a number of classic and contemporary praise songs led by the Worship team and highlighted with opening and closing prayer, devotions, and Scripture. Worship continues with the Lord's Prayer in song and a benediction that ends the evening's service. There is always a time of fellowship afterwards that is a blessing to those in attendance. It is our hope to add monthly testimonies of faith and we encourage anyone to let the Worship team know if they would like an opportunity to share.

The Worship team also invites anyone interested in sharing their musical abilities—with instrument or song—to the Tuesday evening practices in the large Sunday School room at 7:00 PM. It would be an opportunity to practice with the current group and an opportunity to see if participating on the team would be a good fit. Our practices begin with prayer and continue to be blessed by oneness in the Lord as we share our gifts and talents for God's glory. It has been a privilege to sing occasionally during the Sunday morning worship services as well as at evening Journey.

We hope to see you for our next Evening of Prayer and Praise on September 15th. Prayers and meditations will focus on our worship of Jesus, the One and Only! What a beautiful name it is—the name of Jesus! A heart in tune with God can't help but sing His praise!

“The trumpeters and singers joined in unison, as with one voice, to give praise and thanks to the Lord. Accompanied by trumpets, cymbals, and other instruments, they raised their voices in praise to the Lord and sang: ‘He is good, His love endures forever.’”
2 Chronicles 5:13

Song of the Month

By Tom Glasser

Rock of Ages

Lyrics: Augustus Montague Toplady

Music: Thomas Hastings

And the Lord said to Moses, “Behold, there is a place by Me where you shall stand on the rock, and while My glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with My hand until I have passed by. Then I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back, but My face shall not be seen.” Exodus 33:21-23.

One day when Reverend Toplady was traveling through Somersetshire, England, he was caught in a torrential downpour and found shelter in the cleft of a great rock. Perhaps the passage from Exodus 33 crossed his mind. Whether it did or not, he was inspired to jot down the following lines:

*Rock of ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee.*

Toplady later added to these lines and completed the hymn-poem we know and love today. It appeared in “The Gospel Magazine” of which he was the editor. This was two years before his death in 1778 at the very early age of 38. Despite his youth, Toplady exhibited a great deal of wisdom during his years of ministry. Consider the following excerpt from a personal journal when he was 27:

“O, my Lord, let not my ministry be approved only, or tend to be no more than conciliating the esteem and affections of my people to thy unworthy messenger; but to do the work of thy grace upon their hearts: call in thy chosen; seal and edify thy regenerate; and command thy everlasting blessing upon their souls! Save me from self-opinion, and from self-seeking; and may they cease from man, and look solely upon thee.”

*Let the water and the blood,
From thy riven side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure;
Save me from its guilt and power.*



The concept of “God,” almost by definition, implies omnipotence. Even people who are not particularly religious refer to Him as “The Almighty.” Imagine, however, if God was all-powerful, but not good—not just! There is no logical connection between the two qualities. Thankfully, the Bible teaches us that God is indeed both. Then imagine that God is all-powerful and just, but not merciful. Then where would that leave us? Consider what God told Moses a bit earlier in Exodus 33: “You are a stiff-necked people; if for a single moment I should go up among you, I would consume you!”

Thanks be to our God that He is all-powerful, good, just, *and* merciful. He is a God who provides a safe refuge in the cleft of a rock. In fact, He provides a refuge in the Rock. “For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ.” (I Cor. 10:4) Yet the cleft is not created by an act of power that cost God nothing: our cleft is the riven side of His dear Son!

Morning Journey Through the Word

The morning Journey Through the Word will begin on Wednesday, September 11 from 9:15–11:15 AM.

The topic for this coming year (September to April) will be “The Book of Acts.” This Book tells us how the early Christians launched out on their challenging assignment of evangelizing a hostile world. Do we need to be prepared to reach a hostile world today? And how do we go about evangelizing the unbelievers of our world? “The Book of Acts” contains the answer.

Morning Journey has added a Men's group for those who would like to consider a daytime study. It has been well attended this past year. Kurt Zeigler will be teaching the men's portion of the Journey.

Registration slips for Morning Journey Through the Word are available in the baskets at the church entrance or via the church website at www.ruthfred.org. Return completed slips to the baskets or church office.

Childcare for preschool and nursery-age children will be available. If you have questions, please call Joanne Segerdahl at (412) 833 -2069 or Sue Swan at (412) 708-3535.

Coming to Ruthfred Sunday School, beginning October 6, 2019

A video-based class featuring Dr. Kevin Leman, who is an internationally-recognized Christian psychologist, author, and speaker, known for his common-sense psychology and wit.

ALL parents are invited to attend this 7-week series. (Targeted for children aged 3-12). In order to ensure adequate supplies of participant booklets, please register either on the church website at www.ruthfred.org, or at church on the sign-up sheet outside the nursery. Come to learn valuable tips for your parenting journey, as well as to get acquainted with fellow Ruthfred parents.

Dr. Kevin Leman

value-packed
parenting



Raising Rock-Solid Kids in a Pleasure-Driven World

AFLC Conference

Editor's Note:

The AFLC Conference was held on June 11-14. Several of Ruthfred's attendees submitted articles about their experiences at the Conference. Due to the number of articles, they had to be published in two separate issues. Here are the remaining articles:

Mettelise and I arrived Wednesday afternoon and were immediately impressed with the Spruce Lake Conference Center. This Christian facility provides a slice of heaven in the Poconos. It was a perfect setting that was chosen by Living Faith Lutheran Church in Boyertown, Pennsylvania. They were wonderful hosts and very organized.

Besides the inspirational services, speakers, and fellowship, the thing that impressed me most was reconnecting with our two former Ruthfred Pastors, James Molstre and Brent Olson, plus former Vicars Micah Hjermstad and Nathan Olson. Now Pastor Kevin Czymbor, who was ordained at the conference, can be counted as a Ruthfred Alum!

Along those same lines, after my message at the Thursday evening Layman's service, a man who represented Our Savior's Lutheran in Crookston, Minnesota shook my hand and said, "So you're from Ruthfred Lutheran." Now Our Savior's is the church to which our former Vicar Alex Amiot was called. He went on to say, "We normally would not call a first-year Pastor to our church, but knowing that one who served as a vicar at Ruthfred is well trained and visits his flock made a big difference in our decision to call Pastor Amiot," From what I was told Alex Amiot is doing a wonderful job at Our Savior's. What a blessing to hear how Ruthfred is contributing to the AFLC!

Submitted by Kurt Ziegler

Our church AFLC Conference was located at Spruce Lake Retreat in the Pocono mountains. The retreat is a Christian facility which is truly Christian based. Accommodations were excellent. The food and care for our visit was handled wonderfully. And being in the mountains gave it a beautiful setting, feeling God was right there with us.

Sue Hughes in her letter to The Herald gave a perfect message. So I will not comment any further, I couldn't have worded it any better.

I will however say what a special blessed feeling it gave me to attend this conference. Seeing so many Christian-believing people in one setting gives me a lasting hope for our future. Surely God was with us, His presence was felt and we dwelt with Him. Our theme was "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" from Joshua 24. It was a perfect theme for this year's conference. Glory to God our Father and Jesus Christ. May the Holy Spirit guide us always.

Submitted by Joanne Salvetti

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On Tuesday of the conference week about 120 women gathered for WMF Day (Women's Missionary Federation). This year's theme was "Faithful to all Generations" based on Psalm 145:4, which says "One generation will commend Your works to the next and they shall proclaim Your mighty acts." The day began with a welcome from the WMF President, Lavonne West. That was followed by a devotion from Bev Enderlein who shared with us how she has experienced the Lord's faithfulness in her own life. She was a Christian Education teacher for many years at the AFLBS and many of the women at the conference had had her as their teacher. Next, we were treated to a lovely praise and worship time with one of the Ambassador teams (AFLBS students). They sang for us and we sang along with them on some of the songs including the theme song for the meeting, "Great is Thy Faithfulness." This was followed by an update on the ministry of Jonathan and Tamba Abel in Brazil and a talk by Vicki Johnson on "Four Lessons Learned Behind the Mic." Vicki is Pastor David Johnson's wife—they come from Living Faith Lutheran, the church in eastern Pennsylvania that made most of the arrangements for the conference. Vicki is not only a busy pastor's wife; she also has a radio program on a local Christian station! Her lessons were primarily drawn from the book of Proverbs about how our words should be few and our listening intense.

After the lunch break, Pastor Rodgers Olson (Pastor Brent's dad!) played the piano (beautifully!) while we sang. Then it was time for my talk. My teaching was titled "Loving God in Every Generation" and the text I chose was Deuteronomy 6:4-25. I asked the women if they thought about what they wanted to leave to the next generation. In this passage, Moses leaves the next generation with this message: Love God and keep His commandments. There is nothing more vital and eternally life-giving than passing on our faith—love for God and trust in His Son, Jesus Christ. I shared three things we learn from the Deuteronomy passage if we want to pass on our faith to the next generation: love God passionately, trust and obey God completely, and give testimony of His faithfulness personally. After my teaching time, Vicky and Pastor David Johnson and their daughter sang for us. The day concluded with a time of small group prayer and then a business meeting. It was a pleasure, an honor, and a privilege to get to speak to the women of the AFLC at the conference and to share with them from God's Word. All glory to our Sovereign Lord for this time together.

Submitted by Sandy Newman

Thank you to all who attended the AFLC Conference and for submitting articles!

Ministry Spotlight

Women's Ministries




Women's Ministry Meeting meets the second Tuesday of each month, from 7:00 to 8:00 PM. Here, the planning for the year and upcoming events takes place. Benevolence projects are discussed, and plans are made for when they will happen each year. This team also determines the Bible Study for the upcoming year as well. All of the women of the church are invited to this meeting. The women of the church accomplish significant ministry through their dedication.

Esther Circle meets on the second Wednesday of each month at noon in the Fireplace Lounge. Members bring their own lunch and a dessert is provided by the volunteer hostess for that month's gathering. The women also take turns volunteering to lead the Bible Study; this year they have been studying the Old Testament book of Joshua. Next year's study has yet to be determined. Their stewardship outreach for a number of years has been the sponsorship of a child in Haiti through Compassion International. They close their study each year with a covered-dish brunch during their regularly-scheduled meeting in December.

Mary Circle meets the second Saturday of every month at 9:30 AM. Each month, women take turns hosting a light breakfast. They discuss any updated information on the woman's ministry group, send out cards to the "Sun Shine Sisters" (women who can no longer attend), then have their Bible Study. Currently, all the circles are studying the book of Joshua.

Ruth Circle meets the second Thursday of every month at 2:00 PM. They have been meeting at Lee MacManus' home, but that may soon change to Virginia DiSalvo's home.

SEPTEMBER 2019

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1  Holy Communion 8:30am, 11:00am, 6:00 pm Sunday School 9:45 PROMOTION SUNDAY SCHOOL- KICK OFF	LABOR DAY Church office closed	3 Worship Team 7:00pm Preschool Parent Mtg 7:00pm Fellowship Hall	4 First Day of Pre-School Confirmation classes 6:30pm Senior Choir 7:30pm	5 College & Career 7:00pm	6 Men's Prayer Group 6:30am. @ Panera's	7
8 Worship Service 8:30am Sunday School 9:45am Worship Service 11:00am	9 JTTW Leaders Mtg 9:15am Craft & Sew 9:30am Elders' Prayer Time 7:00 Council 7:30pm	10 Worship Team 7:00pm	11 JTTW 9:15-11:15am Esther 12:00 Confirmation classes 6:45pm Bell Choir 6:30 JTTW & Kid's Time 6:45pm Senior Choir 7:30pm	12 Knit Wits: 10:00am College & Career 7:00pm	13 Men's Prayer Group 6:30am @ Panera's	14 Mary 9:30am HERALD ARTICLE DEADLINE
15 Worship Service 8:30am Sunday School 9:45am Worship Service 11:00am Evening of Prayer & Praise 6:00pm	16 JTTW Leaders Mtg 9:15am	17 Worship Team 7:00pm	18 JTTW 9:15-11:15am Bell Choir 6:30pm Confirmation classes 6:45pm JTTW & Kid's Time 6:45pm Senior Choir 7:30pm	19 2:00 Ruth College & Career 7:00pm	20  Happy 91 st Birthday Margie Jacobsen Men's Prayer Group 6:30am @ Panera's	
22 Worship Service 8:30am Sunday School 9:45am Worship Service 11:00am	23 JTTW Leaders Mtg 9:15am	24 Worship Team 7:00pm	25 JTTW 9:15-11:15 am Bell Choir 6:30pm Confirmation classes 6:45pm JTTW & Kid's Time 6:45pm Senior Choir 7:30pm HERALD MAILING	26 Knit Wits: 10:00am College & Career 7:00pm	27 Men's Prayer Group 6:30am. @ Panera's XYZ-start up - noon	28
29 Worship Service 8:30 Sunday School 9:45 Worship Service 11:00	30 Happy 92 nd Birthday Harry Fjaere JTTW Leaders Mtg 9:15am 					

September 2019

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 Sunday School 9:45am SWAP 6-7:30pm @ Church	2	3 TNT 7-9pm @ Church	4	5	6	7
8 Sunday School 9:45am SWAP 6-7:30pm @ Church	9	10 TNT 7-9pm @ Church	11	12	13	14
15 Sunday School 9:45am SWAP 6-7:30pm @ Church	16	17 TNT 7-9pm @ Church	18	19	20 Friday Night Movie Night 7-10pm @ Church	21 <u>MIGHT SWAG</u>
22 Brunch Sunday School 9:45am SWAP 6-7:30pm @ Church	23	24 TNT 7-9pm @ Church	25	26	27	28 <u>TNT Cookout @ Mingo</u>
29 Sunday School 9:45am SWAP 6-7:30pm @ Church	30					

Ruthfred Youth Ministry Calendar