

## “The Word of the Lord”

By Pastor Carlson

Recently Dr. Don Bierle was with us and presented “Surprised by Faith” during our Sunday School time. Dr. Bierle had grown up in a Lutheran church home, but had gone on to become an agnostic college professor of biology. However, God was at work and confronted him with the truths of the existence of God, and also of the truth of His Word. In his book, (in our church library!) “Surprised by Faith” Dr. Bierle gives a concise summary of the compelling evidence that the Bible (New Testament is his particular focus) is indeed God’s inspired and inerrant Word, which has been divinely preserved throughout the centuries and demonstrates how we can have full confidence in it. There are three main tests/questions that scholars use to determine the reliability and integrity of an ancient text. The New Testament passes (and immensely exceeds!) these tests better than any ancient text in the entire world!

In brief they are:

1. How many manuscripts have been found?
2. How early are the manuscripts? And
3. How accurately were the manuscripts copied?

### 1. How many manuscripts have been found?

The “best” of ancient literature includes Homer’s “Iliad” (1,757 copies found), Caesar’s “Gallic Wars” (251 copies), Plato’s “Tetralogies” (210 copies), and Aristotle (49 copies). These are standard readings for college courses and no doubts are presented about their authenticity. In contrast to these “gold standard” ancient writings, the New Testament shows itself to be in a class of its own: we now have 24,406 ancient manuscript copies of the New Testament! “There is no body of ancient literature in the world that enjoys such a wealth of good textual attestation as the New Testament.” (p.36) Obviously, the more manuscripts, the better, as scholars can compare them all, and see if they are exactly the same, or if the message has been corrupted through the course of time.

### 2. How early are the manuscripts?

This is an important question, because if the accounts we have in our possession were actually written during the lifetime of the author, or author’s followers, then we have good reason to be assured of their accuracy. If they were written long after, then we might have good cause to doubt if what we have is the authentic account of what they originally wrote.

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## Ruthfred Lutheran Church

3401 South Park Road  
Bethel Park, PA 15102  
www.Ruthfred.org

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### June 2019 Issue

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The submission deadline for the next Herald is **Saturday, July 20, 2019.**

The publication date is **Wednesday, July 31, 2019.**

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"All Creatures of Our God and King"

### Herald Mailing Update

If you signed up for the Herald by email recently and are wondering why you are still receiving a paper copy, please note that we are still working to remove members from the postal mailing list. We've had quite a few members who are switching to email, which is fantastic. Thank you for your patience!

### Pastor Osier's New Address

Adam and Courtney Osier  
3136 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Apt. A  
Plymouth, MN 55441

## **... Continued from Front Page**

The “best” of ancient literature reveals a staggering length of time gap that elapsed between the author and the earliest manuscript in our possession. There are as follows: Homer (400 year gap), Caesar (950 yr.), Plato (1,300 yr.), and Aristotle (1,450 yr.). Incredible! And yet, they are viewed as authentic, and without serious question, even though the gap between the life of the author and the earliest surviving manuscript is between 400–1,450 years! Amazingly, we have actual manuscript fragments and portions of the New Testament that date back to A.D. 50. Keep in mind that Jesus died around A.D. 30. This means that we have in our possession portions of the New Testament that were written down within just a few years after Jesus’ death, and that the authors themselves might well have still been living while those (ones that we have!) manuscripts were in circulation in the early church. In fact, so extensively do the early church fathers quote (we have their writings!) from New Testament books, that it evidences the fact that those books were already widely circulated and well known by A.D. 100.

“No other ancient writing can trace its manuscript copies all the way back to the generation of the eyewitnesses and its original authors!” (p. 39)

### **3. How accurately were the manuscripts copied?**

The more numerous the manuscripts found, the more opportunity to find errors or distortions due to the copying process over the centuries. Again, it is God’s Word that shines above all others in this third test! Even though we have over 24,000 manuscripts of the New Testament, in comparing them all, there is only a 0.2% distortion rate among them! Furthermore, this distortion affects no question of doctrine or historical fact of the Christian faith. No other ancient literature even comes close to the New Testament! I encourage you to check out Dr. Bierle’s book, “Surprised by Faith.”

Pastor Carlson

### **Mission News**

International Orality Institute

[www.oraltyinstitute.org](http://www.oraltyinstitute.org).

Pastor Kevin Olson reports ongoing programs in Uganda and India using the oral curriculum developed when he was with the Ambassador Institute. Currently, Pastor Olson has taught the curriculum in Baja, Mexico and the Dominican Republic. Please see the website above for other information and opportunities for short-term mission trips.

Family Guidance Pittsburgh

[www.familyguidance.net](http://www.familyguidance.net)

Check out this website for videos about mentoring programs and the Promise Camp program where city kids experience God’s creation and the love of Christ.

Remember that you can access news of AFLC missionaries at [www.aflc.org](http://www.aflc.org).

## Official Acts

May 20–June 16, 2019

### Baptisms

- \*Freya Dawn Miller – May 19, 2019
- \*Emma Ann Deremer – June 15, 2019

### Confirmands

May 19, 2019

Caleb Joshua Cox  
Andrew Jason Dolence  
Emma Elizabeth Hardy  
Matthew Garrett Russell  
Vivian Louise Russell  
Landon Ray Tarrant  
Zachary Andrew Taylor

### Funerals

- \*Ruth Shea – May 13, 2019
- \*Betty Roth – June 15, 2019

### Weddings

Margo Elizabeth Burkholder and  
\*Matthias John Campion – June 14, 2019

\*Indicates Members

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## Council Highlights

May 13, 2019

- Brandon Fouks reported that TNT draws participants from Baldwin, Ringgold, and South Fayette school districts as well as Bethel Park.
- For security reasons, the side door near the youth room will be continuously locked beginning May 26th.
- Dagostino Electronic Services will be awarded the contract to provide and install outdoor security cameras in Phase 1 of Ruthfred's security update. Partial funding has come from a generous donor. The remainder will be paid from the Building Fund.
- Council approved the transfer of \$6,000 from the Current Fund to the Benevolence Fund.
- Becky Evans, Rich Rostauscher, and Chuck Morrison were approved as replacements on the 2019 Finance Committee.

Respectfully submitted,  
Leslie D. Gill, Secretary

## Member Profile

By Mettelise Ziegler

### Gary Ausefski

Gary Ausefski, our church council president, believes he has been blessed with faith as long as he can remember. He can look back and see how God has worked in his life. He can also see that the Lord is at work through Ruthfred.

Gary believes he started attending Ruthfred at about five years of age. His parents, Carol and Andrew, had become acquainted with Pastor Dennis through Bethlehem Lutheran Church—Mt. Washington. When the family moved to South Baldwin, Ruthfred became their likely congregation.

Confirmation should be a time young people commit their lives to God. Although this is not true for all, it was for Gary. He remembers his confirmation reverently. Although he admits to pitfalls along the way, he has returned to his confirmation vows over and over again.

In 1982, Gary met his future wife while playing baseball at a park in Pleasant Hills. His friend was dating her at the time. A year later, enjoying a day at Kennywood, he recalls enduring the nauseating Enterprise ride just to spend time with its attractive operator—Stephanie. The couple has been married thirty-four years. Gary and Stephanie have been residents of Bethel Park since 1987. They had two children, Brian and Kristen. Kristen is currently living in Kennedy Township. She works for PNC Bank. Tragically, Brian was fatally injured in an accident in 2010.

A manufacturer's representative for over fourteen years in the commercial door industry, Gary's newest job is working for Allegheny Millwork in Lawrence. When not working, Gary enjoys golf and devoting time to the church.

At this time, Ruthfred is considering a new pastor to replace Pastor Osier. Gary is working with the call committee to find the right man for the job. Gary believes in the power of prayer. He is praying that the man who comes to Ruthfred will work in harmony with Pastor Carlson so that the pastoral team will serve the congregation effectively and move the church forward.

## 2019 High School Graduates

Michaela Bieda  
Coltin Cox  
Lyndsey Fisher  
Ryan Ghise  
Halle Hewitt  
Rebecca Libell  
Emma Petrick  
Daniel Pollock  
Jared Yantek

Congratulations Class of 2019!

## Vacation Bible School is July 22-26!

Looking for Volunteers!

**WE NEED YOU**

Let's make it great for the kids!

Please look at how you can get involved.



We really need YOU to help make VBS awesome—we are looking for **lots of volunteers!** Look how you can help!

Go to the following website to sign up:  
<https://vbspro.events/p/events/68ad8a>

**Visit the table at the bottom of the stairs on the first floor for more information!**

Questions?

Contact Lauren Compel by email at  
[VBS laurencompel@yahoo.com](mailto:VBS_laurencompel@yahoo.com)

## Song of the Month

By Tom Glasser

### All Creatures of Our God and King

Lyrics: St. Francis of Assisi

Music: Lasst Uns Erfreuen

Dr. Don Bierly recently gave two talks as a guest speaker here at our church. Citing Romans 1:18-20, he made the case that the specified complexity of the universe, and especially life, show clear evidence of design, not random chance. He also noted the amazing comprehensibility of God's creation, even to the point of being describable with elegant mathematical equations. Therefore the ungodly are "without excuse" in denying God's existence. The author of this month's featured song, "All Creatures of Our God and King," perhaps inspired by Psalm 148, takes this one step further. He calls upon the various aspects of creation to not only be dumb witnesses, but to find voice and actively praise God. He starts out with all creatures, but then proceeds to include the burning sun with golden beam, the silver moon with softer gleam, rushing wind so strong, clouds sailing along, rising morn, lights of evening, flowing water making music, and mother earth sprouting flowers and fruits. Mankind is not excluded: "all ye men of tender heart, forgiving others, take your part." Even death is included: "most kind and gentle death" [that] "ledest home the child of God, and Christ our Lord the way hath trod." Most of these voices of praise are metaphorical, of course. Or are they? Perhaps in some divinely mysterious way they are truly literal.


In the latter part of the 12th century (about the time Notre Dame cathedral was being built), in the town of Assisi in Italy, Giovanni Bernardone was born. His father, a wealthy cloth merchant, had just returned from a business trip to France. He was so enamored with all things French that he added the name Francesco to his son's baptized name. Giovanni Francesco grew up with the proverbial silver spoon in his mouth and lived a high-spirited life as a youth. But fairly early on, he began to be convicted by the Holy Spirit and to take the teachings of Jesus more and more seriously. After a confrontational incident with his father, he renounced all wealth and embraced a life of poverty, devotion, preaching, and service. Although he declined to pursue ordination as a priest, he gradually gained many followers who became known as "Franciscans." Giovanni Francesco, whom we now know as St. Francis of Assisi, was also known as a lover of animals and all nature. According to one legendary story, he was able to command a flock of noisy swallows to be quiet while he preached to a group of people on a hillside. For us life-long Lutherans, here are a few more interesting facts from St. Francis' life that we might not have known:

- He served in a military campaign against neighboring Perugia and served time as a prisoner-of-war.
- During the crusades, he got through the front lines of battle to visit the local Egyptian sultan to try to convert him to Christianity and end the hostilities.
- Francis is credited with starting the tradition of setting up creches as part of Christmas observances. His first one was actually a live nativity scene.
- The Franciscans are a group of mendicant religious orders that still exist to this day within the Catholic Church.



"In the year 1225, completely blind and nearing death, St. Francis of Assisi arrived at the Convent of St. Damian to bid goodbye to his dear friend, Sister Clara, the first woman to follow the call of St. Francis and take vows of the Order. Clara built him a small reed hut in the garden of her little monastery. It's said that at times St. Francis could be heard singing faint melodies from within the hut. It was at a meal with the sisters after having stayed for some time at the monastery that he wrote his famous text, "Canticle of the Sun," later paraphrased into the beloved hymn we sing today." (Hymnary.org)

# JULY 2019

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	<b>1</b> Elders' Meeting 7:00	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> HAPPY 92 <sup>nd</sup> BIRTHDAY ELIZABETH WOOD 10:00 Bible Study 	<b>4</b> HAPPY 103 <sup>rd</sup> BIRTHDAY DOROTHY JACOX 	<b>5</b> Men's Prayer Group 6:30 a.m. @ Panera's	<b>6</b> 
<b>7</b> Holy Communion 8:30 Sunday School 9:45 Holy Communion 11:00 Holy Communion 6:00 	<b>8</b> Elders' Prayer Time 7:00 Council Meeting 7:30	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b> 10:00 Bible Study 12:00 Esther	<b>11</b> Career & College Group 7:00	<b>12</b> Men's Prayer Group 6:30 a.m. @ Panera's	<b>13</b> Mary 9:30
<b>14</b> HAPPY 91 <sup>st</sup> BIRTHDAY RICHARD HUMMEL Worship Service 8:30 Sunday School 9:45 Worship Service 11:00 	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b> HAPPY 93 <sup>rd</sup> BIRTHDAY AL HATALA 	<b>17</b> 10:00 Bible Study	<b>18</b> 2:00 Ruth 6:00-8:00 Men's Night Barbeque @ Huwe's Career & College Group 7:00	<b>19</b> Men's Prayer Group 6:30 a.m. @ Panera's	<b>20</b> HERALD ARTICLE DEADLINE
<b>21</b> Worship Service 8:30 Sunday School 9:45 Worship Service 11:00 Evening of Prayer & Praise 6:00	<b>22</b> HAPPY 91 <sup>st</sup> BIRTHDAY ANDY KOVAC  <b>VBS BEGINS</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> Career & College Group 7:00 7:15 Benevolence Mtg.	<b>26</b> Men's Prayer Group 6:30 a.m. @ Panera's	<b>27</b> 
<b>28</b> Worship Service 8:30 Sunday School 9:45 Worship Service 11:00	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b> HERALD MAILING			



July 2019						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 2019	2 FLY	3 Convention	4 Estes	5 Park	6 GO
7 SWAP 6-7:30pm @ Church	8	9 TNT @ Nirella's 7-9pm	10	11	12 Kickball 6-10pm @ Church	13
14 Brunch SWAP 6-7:30pm @ Church	15	16 TNT @ Huwe's 7-9pm	17	18	19 2019 TNT	20 Camping
21 <u>Trip</u> SWAP 6-7:30pm	22 Ruthfred	23 TNT @ Gok's 7-8pm Lutheran	24 Vacation	25 Bible	26 Mini Golf School	27
28 SWAP 6-7:30pm @ Church	29	30 TNT @ Jame's 7-9pm	31			

## Ruthfred Youth Ministry Calendar