

December 2016

Dear Friends,

“And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. ¹⁰ And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. ¹¹ For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. ¹² And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. ¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, ¹⁴ Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.” Luke 2:10-14

The shepherds had every reason to be afraid on that evening when the angel appeared unto them. Such manifestations were not very common. While the shepherds were watchful, they probably did not expect to witness a heavenly visitor. Whenever we hear of such divine encounters in the Scriptures, fear is often the response. After Adam had eaten of the forbidden fruit in the garden of Eden, he hid from God ***“...I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid...” Genesis 3:10*** When God calls Isaiah to prophesy to the people of Judah, Isaiah is terrified to be in the presence of God; ***“Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.” Isaiah 6:5*** Peter was fishing when he met Jesus for the first time. When Jesus instructs him to cast out his net again after a night of fruitless fishing, Peter is overwhelmed with the resulting catch and what that catch meant. ***“When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.” Luke 5:8***

Sin has caused us to be afraid of a holy God, which is why a holy God must take action. The angel cries out to the shepherds ***“Fear not...”*** because God has sent them a remedy for their sin, which will dispel their fears. God has visited His people, not to punish them *for* their sins, but to deliver them *from* their sins. ***“For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved.” John 3:17*** When the angel declares ***“Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will toward men”***, he is telling us that God has come to make peace with His children, and that because of the Christ-child, His divine favor now rests upon them.

The babe that was born in a manger grew up among them, ministered to them and ultimately suffered and died for them, so that they would never have to live in fear of God again. These good tidings are for us as well. The blood of the Saviour has cleansed us from sin and His robe of righteousness has made us holy and acceptable in the sight of our Heavenly Father. As the hymn writer Charles Wesley records in his hymn “Hark the Herald Angels Sing”,

“Peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!”

May the song of the angels ring in your ears, and may our loving and gracious God fill your hearts with His joy and peace in this Advent and Christmas season.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Chuck Bylkas



DONATIONS RECEIVED...

In memory of Jeremy Kuivanen
From W. Jack & Ada Hurula

In memory of Gordon Jukuri
From Dave & Barb Jukuri

In memory of Carol Wendland
From Jack & Ruby Munter
Pastor Chuck Bylkas, Joy & family

In memory of Doris Heikkinen
From Pastor Chuck Bylkas, Joy & family

In memory of Nancy Helmes
From Dave & Gladys Wiitanen

In memory of Ernest Bylkas, Jr.
From Pastor Chuck Bylkas, Joy & family

In memory of Clifton Rautio
From Faye Rautio & family

In memory of Kathleen Forsman
From Pastor Chuck Bylkas, Joy & family

In memory of Gerald DeMotts
From Myra DeMotts

In memory of Elsie Wirkkala
From Pastor Orval & Beth Wirkkala



LOOKING AHEAD TO THE SPRING SEMESTER

The spring semester will begin Monday, January 23, 2017. The following classes will be offered:

History of the Church: Reformation to the Present day (3 credits) – The history of the church from the Reformation to the present.

Science & Christianity (2 credits) – A study of the relationships and differences in the methodology and epistemology of modern science and the Christian Faith.

Christian Ethics (3 credits) – A study of the systems of ethical thought and an analysis of how the ethical dilemmas of humankind should be addressed by those who confess Christ.

Old Testament Introduction (3 credits) – An introductory study of the origin, authorship, purpose and reliability of the Old Testament writings with special attention devoted to their literary design and individual and corporate unity.

New Testament Introduction (2 credits) – An introductory study of the origin, authorship, purpose and reliability of the New Testament writings with special attention devoted to their literary design and individual and corporate unity.

Ministry to the Aging (1 credit) – A study of the various facets of ministering to senior citizens as vital members of the Body of Christ.

Liturgics & Hymnology (1 credit) – A study of the origin and meaning of orders of worship and the parts of the Christian worship service with an emphasis upon current application.

Minor Prophets (2 credits) – A study of the structure, content, historical significance and apocalyptic interpretations of the “minor” prophetic books of the Old Testament. *Note – this will be the Monday night class taught in Hancock at 7PM.*

Jay will also be teaching **Philippians** at 7PM on January 12-18, 2017. It will be hosted by Pastor Tomas Nyblom at the Vine Community Church in South Carolina (location to be determined). For questions or to register, please call 864-430-4364.

Pastor Elmer Yliniemi will be teaching **History of the Laestadian Church**, April 24-28 and May 1-5, 2017 from 9AM-Noon. This is a 2 credit class and is an investigation of the origin and impact of the Laestadian movement both in its native Finland and in the United States.

2017 SPRING SEMESTER	<u>Monday</u>	<u>Tuesday</u>	<u>Wednesday</u>	<u>Thursday</u>	<u>Friday</u>
8:00a.m.	History of Post Reformation Church		History of Post Reformation Church		History of Post Reformation Church
9:00 - 9:50a.m.	Science & Christianity	Old Testament Introduction	Science & Christianity	Old Testament Introduction	Science & Christianity
10:00 - 10:50a.m.	Christian Ethics	Old Testament Introduction	Christian Ethics	New Testament Introduction	Christian Ethics
11:00 - 11:50p.m.	Ministry to the Aging			New Testament Introduction	Liturgics & Hymnology
7:00 - 8:40p.m.	Minor Prophets				

Please contact the seminary if you are interested in taking any of these classes -email cilseminary@ilseminary.com or call (906) 482-3337.