

EBLYP Newsletter Article for February/March 2019

As the winter days are sunlit a little more each day as we move towards Spring, I pray that God's Epiphany blessings light our way as we process into Lent! From Mardi Gras to Ash Wednesday to the Lenten Road to Easter, may you all palpably feel God's presence as you walk the Way.

May the Light of Christ guide you on your journey!

Peace,

Pr. Craig.

* **EBLYP Annual Mardi Gras Fundraiser**, Saturday March 2nd at Trinity Lutheran Church-Alameda (1323 Central Ave.). Come celebrate the precursor to Lent with this festive dinner party that benefits the EBLYP. We serve a delectable NOLA inspired dinner, we have a fun silent auction, and a spirited live-auction as well. There is a happy hour (where you can buy alcohol for the evening), live music, youth performances, and cupcakes from Spun Sugar!

Tickets are \$50/person (this is a fundraiser, BTW!) That said, we do have some sliding scale tickets available, as well. Tables of 8 can be reserved for a \$25 discount. Tickets can be purchased online at Eventbrite, or contact Jessica Fleischman at trinityalameda@gmail.com or call her at 510.812.4752. Please purchase tickets by February 21st.

* **EBLYP Family Ministry - for EBLYP families and friends**

Our Family Ministry held our annual All-Youth Group 'Bowled Over by the Spirit' Epiphany Party at Mel's Bowling in Alameda on Sunday, January 6th, 2019. This event is co-sponsored by Trinity-Alameda and we served festive treats and beverages. We marked the celebration of Epiphany by praying in 'lane groups' after each game that we bowled. In Epiphany we are bowled over by the spirit of Jesus moving in our lives; we remember our baptisms and celebrate the spirit joyfully bowling us over as it did with Jesus in his baptism.

Next Family Ministry Event:

1. There is a kids Mardi Gras party at Trinity Lutheran Church in Alameda on Saturday, March 2nd from 5:30-9pm. Please contact Pastor Craig to reserve a spot. There is a nominal fee of \$10 for this party. Dinner is included.

2. Parents' Night Out (PNO) Babysitting Fun Night at St Paul Lutheran Church (1658 Excelsior Ave., Oakland) from 6-9pm on Friday, March 29th, 2019. Kids are fed dinner, we pray and sing songs together, we play games, do a craft, and watch a movie with hot chocolate and popcorn as treats. Cost is \$25 for 1 child, \$35 for 2 siblings, and \$45 for 3 or more siblings.

Please RSVP for this event with Pr. Craig at craigminich@gmail.com or 510.390.4045 by March 20th.

* **G.E.T. (God's Elementary-people Together)** - our upper elementary youth group.

We had 10 youth and a few of their parents attend our annual Epiphany Bowling Party January 6th, 2019. We were 'Bowled Over by the Spirit' as we knocked over those pins! We also prayed that the Holy Spirit would guide us in God's good Grace before and after our game!

NEXT G.E.T. MEETING will be held on Sunday, March 3rd from 12:30- 2pm at St. Paul Lutheran (1658 Excelsior Ave, Oakland). Each family is asked to bring a drink and snack to share.

G.E.T. together, G.E.T. excited, and G.E.T. connected with God!!!

* **MYLK (Middle Youth, Lutheran Kids)** - our 6-8th grade youth ministry.

Our MYLK & SNL group 8th and 9th graders began the **new Confirmation Class** at our first **confirmation sleepover** of the program on **Feb 8th-9th**. There are four students from St. Paul Lutheran: Chewy, Elsa, Iris, and Amalie. There is one student from Resurrection Lutheran: Hanna. There is one student from United Lutheran: Ivonna. We began to build community, learned our first lessons, prayed together, and took part in our first service learning project: visiting residence at Crown Bay Health Care Center in Alameda (see Mary James' article). We brought Valentine's Day cards, we sang songs, and we talked with the residents we visited. Our youth are excited to begin this Faith journey!

Next MYLK events:

1. We are asking all of our MYLK youth to either be servers at the EBLYP's annual Mardi Gras Dinner and Fundraiser on Saturday March 2nd, 2019 at Trinity Lutheran Church in Alameda or to help with set-up on Saturday morning, March 2nd from 11-1p m. Pizza and beverages will be provided. You could come to both if you really want to!

2. Our annual **Snow Retreat**, originally scheduled for February 1st-3rd needed to be rescheduled due to treacherous driving conditions and weather related conditions that weekend. **Our new date for this annual Retreat is April 5th through 7th** and will be held near Northstar Resort. Our chaperones will be: me, Nate Pearson, Zach Johnson, and Sandra Turetta! We are VERY excited to experience God's grace in all that new snow!!!

Please note this new date and RSVP for this event with Pr. Craig at craigminich@gmail.com or (510)390-4045. **Our next regular MYLK meeting:** Sunday, March 24th from 12:30- 2pm at St. Paul Lutheran (1658 Excelsior Ave, Oakland).

* **SNL (Sunday Night Live)** - our 9th -through 12th youth group.

Our SNL youth attended the **Senior High Synod Weekend Retreat**, February 24-26, 2019 at Mt. Cross. We explored the Bible verse: "The Light shines in the Darkness" - John 1:5 and learned about the sacred spiritual system of the enneagram to better understand and love ourselves and to help us be better neighbours. There was a prayerful dance that we lovingly called a 'prayer rave,' and we also had moving prayers around the cross by candlelight. It was a powerful retreat and our community bonded deeply on this mountaintop experience. We also held elections for a new year of service on SPSYC. Chase Beardsley from Trinity Lutheran in Alameda was elected as the new president of this committee. Also, Olivia Tyreman from St. Paul Lutheran was re-elected to the committee after a one-year break. Sophia Hoffman from Trinity in Alameda continues to serve out her second year of a two-year term as youth representative to the Sierra Pacific Synod council. We are very proud of our young leaders and we celebrate our leaders who are finishing up this year's term: Kylie Halmi, Kiki Valenzuela, Joanna Ruiz, and Maggie Werner. Well done good and faithful servants! I've seen amazing growth during your time as leaders on the Synod Youth Committee.

Summer Trip 2019: We're planning to go to NYC where we will be participating in original youth group-written prayer services at 4-5 iconic and meaningful sites in New York City, making connections to the stories of our faith and their relevance for us today. So far, we are looking at doing a prayer service at the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island (stories of people of faith on the move), the United Nations (stories of World Peace), at the Stonewall Inn & Museum of Jewish Heritage (stories of overcoming/oppression), and at Grand Central Station (stories of the bigness, depth, and interconnectedness of God's love). We, of course, are also planning service opportunities in the city, and will take in other cultural and festive activities while we are there. Please pray for us as we fine-tune the details of this aspirational trip.

NEXT SNL Events:

1. Our annual **Snow Retreat**, originally scheduled for February 1st-3rd needed to be rescheduled due to treacherous driving conditions and weather related conditions that weekend. **Our new date for this annual Retreat is April 5th through 7th** and will be held at Northstar Resort. Our chaperones will be: me, Nate

Pearson, Zach Johnson, and Sandra Turetta! We are VERY excited to experience God's grace in all that new snow!!!

Please note this new date and RSVP for this event with Pr. Craig at craigminich@gmail.com or (510)390-4045. We are asking all of our SNL youth to be servers at the EBLYP's annual Mardi Gras Dinner and Fundraiser on Saturday March 2nd, 2019 at Trinity Lutheran Church in Alameda.

NEXT SNL Meetings: Sunday, March 24th, 2019 from 4:30 to 6 p.m. at St. Paul Lutheran Church (1658 Excelsior Ave, Oakland). Please bring a drink and snack to share.

Mental Health concerns in our youth.

I have been noticing an increased levels of anxiety in our high school youth over the past two years. In response, our youth ministry has offered Phase One responses in Suicide Prevention Trainings and Mental Health First Aid trainings. As we look into a Phase Two response, I have been working with the Christian Education Committee at Trinity Lutheran Church in Alameda who has developed a survey to help us collect data to guide that response. We look forward to reporting on our findings next month. We continue to minister to our youth struggling with anxiety and depression, and we ask for your prayers for all youth in our churches and in our communities facing these challenges.

A reflection from Mary James about our confirmation visit to Crown Bay Nursing Home:

Surprised by Joy at Crown Bay Nursing Home - February 9th

Six of our amazing youth from the EBLYP and Pastor Craig and I visited Crown Bay Nursing Home on the morning of February 9th with hopes of being blessings there. God had bigger plans and my toes still tingle thinking about it.

The youth who were able to come, (straight from an overnight event at St. Paul), included Amalie, Iris, Elsa, Hannah, Charlie and Cecil. They came ready with Valentines to share that they had made. We gathered together to share thoughts and pray before starting our visits and then God let us have it:

One of our first visits was with a woman named Mary who told us several times that she was 92 and that in her lifetime she had never seen God forsake the righteous. She was reading Psalm 37 when we came in and her message was right from verse 25 of that Psalm which we then read with her. In several of our visits we sang "This Little Light of Mine" and were delighted to often have them join in. After we visited Bruce, we later heard him singing that song as we were walking down the hall. What a special treat that was.

We also had a delightful visit with Eva Fields who looked so radiant that I took a picture of her with our group. She told us the inspiring story of a time when she had paid some visits to people at Crown Bay with her dog, Ginger. On one of those visits when Ginger put her head in a woman's lap that woman slowly put her hand on Ginger's head. The woman's husband and the nurses were stunned because she hadn't moved at all in a year due to a major stroke. That started her recovery.

A woman there, Dawn, was being visited by her brother Chuck from Yuba City who was planning to move to this area to help her. Turns out that he is Lutheran and asked about our church.

Our last visit was with another woman named Mary and when we sang "This Little Light of Mine" with her, she then taught us 2 more verses to that!

We had planned this time with the hopes of being blessings to the people we met there. And that truly happened, but God's bigger plan was what an incredible time of blessing it was for us, too. In our reflections afterwards, there were many comments on the joy that we experienced there.

Hugs and blessings, Mary James