

# An Introductory Message from Pastor's Mark Williamson

## The Book of Faith Top Ten

On January 25<sup>th</sup> in our congregational meeting, St. Paul passed a resolution to become a Book of Faith congregation, a community joyfully committed to becoming more fluent in the first language of faith, the language of Scripture. In doing so, we are responding faithfully to the call both of the larger church and to the way the Spirit has been prodding us at the grassroots through the Pitching Tent Discernment Process (Can you say "Christian Catechumenate"?).

By becoming a Book of Faith congregation, St. Paul has found yet another way to lead by example among congregations of the ELCA. Someone asked me recently if Augsburg Fortress, our publishing house, will be able to keep up with us in providing the new resources they've promised are in the pipeline. That's a good question; I guess we'll find out. Right now I'm just concerned that we ourselves keep up with the Holy Spirit.

And that starts with you. Bible study isn't a club sport for a select group within the church who like that sort of thing; it's for each and every one of us. If you haven't the foggiest idea where to start, the Exploratory Team that has been meeting over the last three months has generated a terrific list of ideas and is committed to making them happen. I've adapted them here into a "Top Ten" list:

1. Participate in the three-part *Rediscovering the Book of Faith* course I'll be leading in February during the education hour (see opposite page.)
2. Join one of several small groups gathering during Lent (most meeting after Wed. evening worship), and using the resource *Book of Faith Lenten Journey*, a forty-day devotional on the Lord's Prayer. Or try leading one!
3. Supervise study halls or movie/game nights for kids so parents can have time to learn and grow.
4. Sign up and/or compose midweek St. Paul e-devotions to keep us connected to God and each other over the summer or during special seasons like Advent or Lent.

5. Find resources and participate in discussion boards at the Book of Faith Central section of the St. Paul webpage or check out the Book of Faith display of the church library.

6. Try being a teacher or steward for a rotation in the Vineyard or serve as a mentor for a confirmand in the next season of Making Disciples.

7. Order a copy of the new *Lutheran Study Bible*, a reader-friendly NRSV version that features introductions, notes, and articles written by over sixty Lutheran pastors and teaching theologians. Then read it!

8. Celebrate your accomplishment as an individual or family or group when you've completed reading a book of the Bible by adding a leaf to the Scripture tree appearing soon in the Sanctuary.

9. Attend Bible study leader training events and small groups when they're offered.

10. Invite your friends, acquaintances, neighbors, and enemies who aren't part of the St. Paul community to participate in Book of Faith activities. No membership card required!

And that's just a start. Maybe you have fresh ideas of your own. I want to hear them! Maybe the Spirit is tugging you to introduce a new ministry that relates to the Book of Faith. I want to help you get started!

Open Scripture. Join the Conversation. Get fluent in the first language of faith, so together we can more fully live into our calling as a people renewed, enlivened, empowered, and sent by the Word.



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