



THE VOICE



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There is a video going around Facebook and Twitter, entitled “Why I hate religion, but love Jesus” and it causing quite a stir within the Christian community. The video on You Tube has achieved more than 16 million hits. Jefferson Bethke is the 22-year-old spoken-word artist in the video. He uses spoken word to condemn religion, but not Jesus.

Though many will jump on this bandwagon of, “Yeah, we hate religion too... but love Jesus” let’s not forget that you cannot separate Jesus from religion. If you believe in Jesus, you are a religious person. Somewhere in the craziness of history, being “religious” meant that you were a ignorant fool who is a hypocrite. Many have equated religion to mean, “a rigid dogma that has nothing to do with me”. What Jesus spoke out against was the abuse of religion and its leaders who did not follow what they taught.

Bethke, a Tacoma, Wa., resident, has been following the frenzy and had this to say on his Facebook page: “If you are using my video to bash ‘the church’ be careful. I was in no way intending to do that...The Church is Jesus’ bride so be careful how you speak of His wife. If a normal dude has right to get pissed when you bash His wife, it makes me tremble to think how great the weight is when we do it to Jesus’ wife. The church is His vehicle to reach a lost word. A hospital for sinners. Saying you love Jesus but hate the Church, is like a fiancé saying he loves his future bride, but hates her kids. We are all under grace. Look to Him.”

There is a distinct difference between being *religious* and being *Christian*. Religion is what we do when we gather together to strengthen our belief and

support one another in our Christian faith. Christian is simply the label that identifies us as a believer in Christ.

Some would say to be religious is to follow rules and keep order. Religion is the actions and traditions that we use such as: following an order of worship, lighting candles and praying. Still others who are the “religion haters” are actually upset with all the regrettable things about religion: corruption, greed, hypocrisy, empty expressions of faith, and all-around human flaws. Bethke’s poem is a call to keep Christ as the focus of our religious gathering.

The following is a transcript of Bethke’s poem:

What if I told you Jesus came to abolish religion?

What if I told you voting Republican really wasn’t his mission?

What if I told you “Republican” doesn’t automatically mean “Christian”?

And just because you call some people “blind” doesn’t automatically give you vision?

I mean, if religion is so great, why has it started so many wars?

Why does it build huge churches but fails to feed the poor?

Tells single moms God doesn’t love them if they’ve ever had a divorce?

But in the Old Testament God actually calls religious people “whores”

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Worship Times

Sundays

8:30 & 10:45am

Wednesdays

6:30 pm



WELCA NEWS

Our circles continue with our Bible Study from the Gospel of Mark, "Take Heart; get up, [Jesus] is calling you." Our February study, session 6: **Tough Questions**. If you could ask any question of God, what would it be? Bible Study briefing with Pastor Laura will be on February 28th at 10:45 A.M.

Be sure to pick up a copy of the church's Annual Report if you were not at the Annual Meeting on January 29th. In the report you will see a summary account of the activities of the women's organization over the past year, as well as the financial transactions.

The Mission Action report shows that much has been accomplished by this group of dedicated ladies. Thank you to everyone who is involved in any way to make this possible. If you have some extra time on our designated quilting days, please join us.

February Activities:

February 23rd - 2:00 pm Dorcas Circle visit Dakota Sun

February 27th & 28th - 9:00 am Quilting & block cutting.

February 28th - 10:45 am Bible Study Briefing

March 3rd 9:00 am World Day of Prayer

Volga - Calvary Presbyterian - Hostess

WELCA Pres.—Ellen Young

First Place 4 Health

"Return to the Lord, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love." These words from our Lenten season liturgy, taken from Joel 2:13, turn our hearts and minds to the central message of the season. God's great love for us is shown by the suffering and death of his Son, Jesus, in order that we may have the gift of eternal life. Can we show our gratitude to God in some special way during Lent? Christians often give up something for Lent. Instead, we can add something for Lent. We can replace a bad habit with a good habit. Give some thought to your attitudes to see what could be improved. You might create a Gratitude List and add to it every day. You might consciously look for ways to encourage others, with the goal of encouraging at least one person every day. You might choose a memory verse of the week and work on that. You could give up complaining and replace the negative thought with a positive

one. Choose one way to make this Lenten season more meaningful for you. Attend Lenten worship on Wed. evenings if possible.

Here is a quick and easy way to add more vegetables to your day. This soup contains only 110 calories per cup.

MINISTRONE SOUP

1 18 oz. minestrone soup

1 16 oz. black beans

2 16 oz. diced tomatoes

1 16 oz. shopeg corn (may substitute whole kernel yellow corn)

Heat on stovetop or in crock-pot.

Lenten Suppers

Several different groups have offered to provide meals through the Lenten season. Each group is trying to raise money for various planned projects. A menu will be published each week before the Wednesday service. A sandwich meal will be \$5/adult and an entrée meal will be \$6/adult. Children will always be \$3. Some menus already planned include lasagna, turkey and chicken as the main entrée. Each meal will include vegetable or salad, bread, drink, and dessert. The past years have been poorly attended but thought we should try one more year to offer this service. PLEASE mark the Wednesdays dates on your calendars between February 22 and March 28 from 5:30-6:30pm and come to support our church groups and enjoy some fellowship.

Youth News

Confirmation Meeting for students and their parents on Wednesday, February 8th following the 6:30pm Worship Service.

6th & 7th Grade Youth Group will meet on Sunday, February 19th from 1:30-3:00pm.

High School Youth Group will meet on Sunday, February 19th from 3:00-4:30pm.

Faithbook Journaling—there will be someone available on at the church February 29th & March 28th from 2-4pm to help with Faithbook Journals. This change is due to the lent service and suppers.



Preschool News

January fun! Snow hills and tunnels!



Classes/Groups

Feeding the Flock (FTF) is a program to promote families of all ages and sizes to share a family meal and prayer time while still meeting hectic schedules. Any person may sign up to participate in an afternoon of meal preparation and fellowship. Fifty dollars is required to register for a session where at least 5 meals are prepared, labeled, and ready to freeze for later use. Contact Joana in the church office to register. Tentative dates for the spring of 2012 are: February 19th, March 18th, and April 22nd. Questions may be directed to Joana or Pastor Laura. The tentative menu for February is: pinwheel flank steak, turkey pot pie, baked pork chimichangas, Stromboli, and wonderland Italian beef.

FLC @ FLC will meet on Friday, February 17th starting at 2:00pm. It has been a year since we started crafting once a month and plan on making this

Extras

Women of Faith: ALL women of any age are invited to spend 2 days that will make your life joyful and enriched. On OCT. 19 & 20 a bus will travel to St. Paul MN for WOMEN OF FAITH. The bus leaves EARLY Friday and will return on Saturday about 11 pm. We will stop and shop in the cities and have supper before attending the 7 pm session of Women of Faith. We spend the night at a hotel (breakfast provided) and will return to the Xcel Center Saturday for an all day session of music, skits, and speakers. It is a wonderful opportunity to grow in faith and spiritual maturity and to share with sisters, daughters, and friends. The ticket is \$ 92 and the hotel (4 per rm) and bus is only \$ 78 for a total of \$ 170. Anyone who buys a ticket (\$92) by MARCH 1 has their name put in a drawing for a free room and transportation!!! There will be prizes and “fun times” on the bus ride too. Contact Colleen Knutson (690-0859) or Cheryl Granum (690-8032) to sign up or for more information.

Soup Mix-The Students of SDSU’s University Lutheran Center will be selling bean soup mix on Sunday, February 26th. This mix will be used for the Ash Wednesday Supper.

Notice: First Lutheran Cemetery is seeking lawn mowing bids for 2012. All bids to include a per time value of mowing and trimming the First Lutheran Cemetery and the Bergh Cemetery. Bids are to be written and submitted to the First Lutheran Church office no later than April 1, 2012. Any board member may be contacted with any questions.

Dan Skogen, Ron Utecht and Craig Leite.

Due to the Current privacy laws, the only way that the pastors know that someone is in the hospital is if a family member calls, or if at the time of admission to the hospital staff are instructed to notify the pastors. If you or a family member are hospitalized, please notify Pastors Dan & Laura. They will gladly visit the hospital.

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First Lutheran Church
623 Kasan Ave
Volga, South Dakota 57071
Change Service Requested

The mission of First Lutheran Church is Inviting people to know Jesus Christ, connecting a living faith, and growing in ministry.

	Acolytes	Scripture Readers	Power Point Operators
Feb 5 8:30	Andi & Dani Seibel	Carley Peterson	Zack Ziegler
Feb 5 10:45	Cadan Koerlin/Alyssa Haaland	Landon Stevens	Austin Deibert
Feb 12	Zach Benson	Andrea Benson	Blair Nelson
Feb 12 10:45	Chase Ringheimer/Trevor Olson	Jordyn Ringheimer	Carley Peterson
Feb 19	Noah Laabs/Dalton Hanson	Katelynn	Andrea Benson
Feb 19	Lucas Trooien/Mikey Richarz	Jessica Pepperman	Austin Deibert
Feb 26 8:30	Chloe Larsen/Silas Larsen	Carley Peterson	Brock Swartos
Feb 26 10:45	Cassandra Rawden/Brooklin Vander Wal	Mariah Nelson	Andrea Benson



February 2012

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 2:10pm Conf. 6:30pm Worship	2 9:00am Mary Circle 2:00pm Rebecca Circle  Groundhog Day	3	4
5 8:30am Worship Ed. Hour 10:45am Worship	6 5:45pm First Place 4 Health	7 12:00pm Dorcas Circle @ SDSU 7:30pm Elizabeth Circle potluck @ church, A-M serves	8 2:10pm Conf. 6:30pm Worship 7:00pm Meeting for Confirmation students & parents	9	10	11 1:30pm Bridal Shower for Stephanie Nelson @ FLC
12 8:30am Worship Ed. Hour & Vibrant Faith Meeting 10:45am Worship 1:00pm Feeding the Flock	13 5:45pm First Place 4 Health	14 	15 2:10pm Conf. 6:30pm Worship 7:00pm Board Meeting 8:00pm Council Meeting	16	17 2:00pm FLC @ FLC	18
19 8:30am Worship Ed. Hour-Family Activity Day 10:45am Worship 1:30-3pm 6th & 7th Youth Group 3-4:30pm HS Youth Group Dakota Sun Worship	20 5:45pm First Place 4 Health 	21	22 2:30pm 9th Grade meet @ Dakota Sun 6:30pm Worship 	23	24	25
26 8:30am Worship Ed. Hour 10:45am Worship- baptism of Elyse Loen SDSU student Reps selling soup mix	27 9:00am Quilting 5:45pm First Place 4 Health 7:00pm Book Club @ Volga Community Center	28 9:00am Quilting 10:45 Bible Study Leader's Meeting	29 No Confirmation 6:30pm Worship	<p align="center">623 Kasan Ave Volga, SD 57071 (605) 627-9418 E-mail: info@firstlutheranvolga.org Website: www.firstlutheranvolga.org Facebook: www.facebook.com/flcvolga</p>		

Religion might preach grace, but another thing they practice	Now lemme clarify: I love the church, I love the Bible, and yes, I believe in sin
Tend to ridicule God's people, they did it to John the Baptist	
They can't fix their problems, and so they just mask it	But if Jesus came to your church, would they actually let him in?
Not realizing religion's like spraying perfume on a casket	See, remember he was called a "glutton" and a "drunkard" by "religious men"
See, the problem with religion is it never gets to the core	
It's just behavior modification, like a long list of chores	But the Son of God never supports self-righteousness; not now, not then
Like, "Let's dress up the outside, make it look nice and neat"	Now back to the point: One thing is vital to mention
But it's funny, that's what they used to do to mummies while the corpse rots underneath	How Jesus and religion are on opposite spectrums
Now I ain't judging, I'm just sayin', "Quit puttin' on a fake look"	See, one's the work of God, but one's a man-made invention
'Cause there's a problem if people only know that you're a Christian by your Facebook	See, one is the cure, but the other's the infection
I mean, in every other aspect of life, you know that logic's unworthy	See, because religion says "do," Jesus says "done"
It's like saying you play for the Lakers just because you bought a jersey	Religion says "slave," Jesus says "son"
See this was me, too, but no one seemed to be on to me	Religion puts you in bondage while Jesus sets you free
Actin' like church kid while addicted to pornography	Religion makes you blind, but Jesus makes you see
See, on Sunday I'd go to church, but Saturday gettin' faded	And that's why religion and Jesus are two different clans
Actin' as if I was simply created to just have sex and get wasted	Religion is man searching for God; Christianity is God searching for man
See, I spent my whole life buildin' this façade of neatness	Which is why salvation is freely mine, and forgiveness is my own
But now that I know Jesus, I boast in my weakness	Not based on my merits but Jesus' obedience alone
Because if grace is water, then the church should be an ocean	Because he took the crown of thorns, and the blood dripped down his face
It's not a museum for good people; it's a hospital for the broken	He took what we all deserved; I guess that's why you call it "grace"
Which means I don't have to hide my failure, I don't have to hide my sin	And while being murdered he yelled, "Father forgive them; they know not what they do"
'Cause it doesn't depend on me; it depends on him	Because when he was dangling on that cross, he was thinking of you
See, because when I was God's enemy and certainly not a fan	And he absorbed all your sin, and he buried it in the tomb
He looked down and said, "I want that man!"	Which is why I'm kneeling at the cross, saying, "Come on! There's room!"
Which is why Jesus hated religion, and for it he called them fools	So for religion, no, I hate it; in fact, I literally resent it
Don't you see it's so much better than just following some rules?	Because when Jesus said, "It is finished," I believe he meant it