

Good morning. Pastor Kayla asked me to reflect on a couple things this morning. Why Jesus? Why Ebenezer? Pastor Kayla, I probably should have told you to keep your sermon short. I wrote down what I was going to say but the more I thought about it the more I ended up wanting to change it. You really got me thinking about this and I didn't get it off my mind for the last two weeks now. Between the two seasons of Christmas and Easter I would have to say Easter has more of an impact on me. The birth of our savior has lost its meaning to many people. Christmas has turned into the season of giving and commercialization instead of the birth of our savior who three decades later will give his life for us. On the other hand the Easter story of Jesus' crucifixion has a much greater impact on me. It's almost like we relive his final dinner, betrayal, crucifixion, and resurrection over and over again. When I was a child I remember on Easter Sunday the Easter story was on TV. That's when there were only 5 channels so we couldn't help but to watch. Now there are too many choices and it goes untold to too many people. The drama of it and the suffering he endured has stayed with me. The Apostles Creed and Confession that we recite each week is a perfect reminder that his sacrifice was for our salvation.

Why Ebenezer.

- I'll answer this question with a little family history. Our church has ties that go back to the Ebenezer church that was established in 1799. We first shared Mt. Zion church in the Chilhowie area which was a Methodist church. Our church is one of the oldest if not the oldest in Smyth County.
- Some of the families in the area that we to Old Ebenezer were the Copenhavers (my middle name is Copenhaver), Rosenbaums, and Marty Copenhaver's Gene was a Lutheran pastor most of his life.
- There were 12 Copenhaver families in the early 1700s that got separated from the William Penn Colony that ended up in Pennsylvania.

Adam Rosenbaum – my great great grandfather on my Grandmother's side of the family, owned property that included land between where the golf course is now and Old Ebenezer. He gave 1 ½ acres of land to Ebenezer in 1848 that the church is on now and the existing old Ebenezer building was built in 1854.

He also gave land to the Virginia Literary fund that was supposed to be used to build a school on, which was there never was. The land is next to Old Ebenezer property.

- Old Ebenezer members combined in 1949 with the Marion Evangelical Church when this church was constructed. The Marion Evangelical Church was on Sheffey Street and was razed when the county wanted the land for a jail behind the courthouse.

There is a time capsule that was put in here at the time of its construction next to the church sign and it was opened in 1999 to celebrate the Church's 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary. It is to be opened again in 2049.

- The Virginia Synod built a college across the street in 1873. It was initially called the Lutheran Female College and was supposed to be a seminary. Later the name was changed to the Marion Women's College. In the 1960's it was sold and turned into the Blue Ridge Job Corp.
- My parents became members in the early 1950s right after this church was built. I was born an Ebenezer Lutheran and baptized by Rudolph Shults and confirmed by Pastor James Huntley along with Virginia Hagy and Merle Rogers. Both of our children were baptized and confirmed here by Pastor James Bangle.
- I never moved away from Marion so I have been a lifelong member here. I guess you would have to kick me out to get me to leave now.
- Delores and I have purchased niches in the columbarium so I guess our post lives will be here as well.
- All of us as children went to camp at Hungry Mother Lutheran Retreat Center. I highly recommend it for our young parents today.
- The biggest thing I was involved in was the addition to the church. The theme of the project was For All God's Children. We were able to do it with very little debt that didn't take long to pay off. At that time we had a membership of around 200 and the church services were generally full.
- I like the formal service that we have. The members are always friendly and chip in to help keep the church going. I hope one day we will have enough children again to start Sunday School classes back up.
- Thanks for listening. I hope I didn't bore you too bad.