

Farmington comedian shares his wholesome humor

BY KAREN SMITH
STAFF WRITER

Comedian Bill Thomas — who specializes in wholesome humor — will appear at 7 p.m. Friday at Calvary Lutheran Church in Clarkston.

The Farmington resident does routines for churches, corporations, chambers of commerce, associations and business groups to help people "lighten up, laugh more and live long."

Though not a "Christian comedian" per se — Thomas says he's a comedian who happens to be a Christian — the humorist has developed a routine that helps church members laugh at themselves. He pokes fun at bumper stickers that say "God is my co-pilot" on cars with major dents and the way people

have stretched the word "ministry" to include even pie making.

"I'll have some jokes about church and going to church, the different personalities that go to church. It cuts across every different denomination," he said.

Thomas was invited to perform by the church's Jesus, Jays, Jubilation team, which features talent in a "coffeehouse setting" every two to three months.

This week, the Christian quartet Witness will also perform.

The idea is to give members an event to which they can invite their non-church friends and relatives that isn't a worship service, said Gayle Buschur, director of outreach ministry. The performances, held in the fellowship hall, are also open to members of the public. The

hope is that non-members will build a relationship with members. They're more inclined to get to know Jesus by having a relationship with someone who's a Christian," Buschur said.

There is no charge for admission, though a free-will offering will be taken. Coffee and desserts will be served.

Thomas started working as a comedian 20 years ago after he was laid off from his job, giving him real-life experience from which to draw his material on the importance of humor in the workplace. "A guy said only the truth is funny, and it's so true," he said. Thomas' goal, no matter his audience, is to "lighten people's loads" by taking their mind off their troubles and helping them put things in perspective. "I have no grand plan for changing the world," he said. "You just want to... make it a little easier for them."

Thomas, who also once worked as a radio talk show host for WXYT, has appeared "every

place from Pine Knob to Atlantic City," he said. He has been the opening act for Tonight Show host Jay Leno and singer Wayne Newton.

Calvary Lutheran Church is

on the southwest corner of M-16 and I-75 behind Oxford Bank. For more information, call (248) 625-3248.

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HUBRED

FROM PAGE C4

them and mixed everything the next day. I learned later this was a rather large procedural error, and ultimately, irreversible.

But I digress.

So many elements added together to make this a true culinary disaster. The pastry sheet lid; everything stuck to it. I'd forgotten the step that requires a turning stick to get the rolled lefse onto the griddle, and a knife didn't work all that well.

What I finally got onto the griddle and cooked on both sides tasted like flour, because I had to use so much to keep the dough from sticking.

Finally, I scrapped the whole works. I was a lefse loser, a Norwegian knothed. I was — in a word — depressed.

If there's one thing Best Friends can't tolerate, it's depression. When he got home, mine gave me a consoling hug and reminded me I wasn't a failure at lots of other things. I talked about how my mother made lefse and remembered her rolling pin was always covered with a cloth "sock."

Maybe that's what was wrong, he said, and sat down at the computer.

Minutes of exhaustive minutes of exhaustive minutes turned up a Web site that offered the finest in lefse-making equipment, everything from an \$80 electric griddle to a turning stick with a painted handle. A few key-strokes later, he'd placed an order for the most necessary equipment: a duck-cloth covered rolling board, stick-proof socks for the rolling pin and the turning stick. When the box arrived, not only did it include the most necessary equipment, but a lefse recipe that was nothing like the one published by the Sons of Norway — a recipe that started turning out better right from the beginning. My Brother the Conservative would likely attribute this to the inherent superiority of a profit-driven business. I wouldn't go that far.

In any case, I set about lefse-making once more, and the second time around proved vastly more successful. I had the right equipment, a better recipe, and I had learned that when you've got a total failure on your hands, it's just best to stop until you figure out what it is you've done wrong.

If you think about it, life can be like that. Failure isn't a reason to give up, it's an indication that you lack the proper tools or

you're putting things together the wrong way.

Sometimes, we figure these things out for ourselves. And sometimes, we just need a little help from a friend.

Jon Hubred is editor of the Farmington Observer and an aspiring lefse expert. Contact her at 3341 Grand River, Farmington 48335; at (248) 477-5450, by FAX (248) 477-7722 or via e-mail to jhubred@homecomm.net

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