

St. John's Lutheran Church: *Fortress*  
March, 2018

**REMEMBER WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT**

**Luke 24:1-8** On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. <sup>2</sup> They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, <sup>3</sup> but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. <sup>4</sup> While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. <sup>5</sup> In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? <sup>6</sup> He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: <sup>7</sup> 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.'" <sup>8</sup> Then they remembered his words.

I did it just the other day... I needed something at the store, so I drove there and went in; but somehow I got sidetracked. I bought a whole shopping basket full of stuff, paid for it, and I was halfway home before I realized that the main item for which I had gone to the store in the first place was not among the items I had purchased. I had to turn around and go all the way back to get it. How silly of me.

It reminds me of the way we sometimes set our priorities when it comes to spiritual things. The first disciples of Jesus had the same problem. Jesus had told them he had to go to Jerusalem to be arrested, tried and condemned, to be horribly mistreated, and finally to die. However, every time he said that, he would always remind them that he would also rise again from death. That was the main thing.

Sadly, they always seemed to forget that part. They kept hearing that Jesus would suffer and die – that, they always remembered. But they were so sidetracked by all the other details they ignored the one thing that would assure them of their salvation – that Jesus Christ would rise from death.

However, on that first Easter morning, as the women came to the tomb, expecting to find the stone stuck fast in the mouth of the sepulcher, and the corpse of Jesus lying still and cold inside of the tomb, they were in for the surprise of their lives. The tomb was open and Jesus was not there. Two angelic messengers informed them that Jesus had risen from death. They reminded the women that it was exactly what Jesus promised them he would do.

The Bible tells us: **Then they remembered his words.** The most important item on the list was the one they had forgotten.

When St. Paul wrote about the resurrection of Jesus, he told the Corinthians: **For what I received I passed on to you as of *first importance*: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures** (1 Corinthians 15:3-4 – italics added for emphasis). Paul says, this is of first importance, that is, nothing is more important than this. Jesus Christ, who died for the sins of the world, has risen from death. And because Jesus is risen, our salvation is certain. His resurrection proves that every claim he made – that he is the Messiah who was to come, that he is the I AM God of the Bible, and that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life – is true. God accepted his sacrifice on our behalf.

Yes, this is still the most important item on the list. We as sinful human beings can sometimes get sidetracked by the cares and allurements of the world. We can be like an absent-minded shopper who goes to the store for one important item but becomes so distracted by all the other things in the store that he forgets the one thing he needed most.

We too can sometimes focus on things that are of no value. We become worried and anxious about the problems of life, or sometimes lackadaisical and apathetic about all that God has done for us. We latch on to other things in

this world for comfort and confidence, but often forget the One Thing Needful, that is, the saving gospel of Christ which teaches us that Jesus died for our sins but has risen to prove our salvation.

That is why the Easter message of the Resurrection is of first importance. That is why we need to return to the empty tomb to hear comforting words of the Easter angel who said: **"Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.'"** Then, we are like the women at the tomb: **Then they remembered his words.** May we remember them always and embrace them with joy and confidence. These words are the heart and soul of our Christian faith, and the certainty that because Jesus Christ is risen indeed, we too have eternal life through faith in his name.

In Christ,  
Pastor Jeffrey A. Bovee

## St. John's Choir

Sing a new song to the Lord! Anyone in 8th grade and older who would like to sing with the church choir is welcome to join us Wednesday evenings at 7:00 in the balcony for rehearsal. We are preparing special music for Good Friday and Easter Sunday.

Please direct any questions to Bethel Boeder at [boederbj@mlc.wels.edu](mailto:boederbj@mlc.wels.edu).

## From Your Staff Minister

Lent continues in March and culminates with the Holy Week. We have the opportunities to attend midweek worship services on Wednesdays at 4 pm and 6 pm. Dinner will be provided between 4:45 pm and 6 pm. Maundy Thursday services will be held at 4 pm and 7 pm. The Tenebrae service on Good Friday will be at 7 pm. There will not be a Saturday night service on March 31.

"Later, knowing that all was now completed, and so that the Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, 'I am thirsty.' A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of a hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips. When he had received the drink, Jesus said, 'It is finished.' With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit."

(John 19:28-30)

Kelly Emde

## Divine Call

On Tuesday, February 20, St. John's extended a divine call to Pastor Robert Guenther, who currently serves Grace Lutheran Church, Kenai, AK. He is the father of 4 children: 14, 12, 7 and 5- years-old and is married to Rebecca (nee Hennig).

Please remember Pastor Guenther in your prayers as he deliberates this divine call placed before him by our congregation in the name of Christ our Savior. May the Lord grant him the wisdom to choose how his talents and gifts will best be used for the sake of the Kingdom.

## Anniversaries

The Minnesota Valley Lutheran High School Board, together with the faculty and staff, invites you to attend a celebration of thanksgiving and joy to recognize the anniversaries in the teaching ministry of Mr. Jim Buboltz: 25 years; Mr. Jeff Koepsell: 40 years; Mr. Ron Wels: 40 years. Mr. Wels is also retiring at the end of this school year.

Please join us in thanking God for the faithful service of these men on Sunday, April 22, at Martin Luther College immediately following the year-end Sacred Concert by the MVLHS choirs. The concert will be held in the Chapel of the Christ on the MLC campus. This will be a time for fellowship and refreshments as we gather to share this occasion. Congratulatory cards and letters may be sent to the attention of: Dr. Tim Plath, Minnesota Valley Lutheran High School, 45638 561st Avenue, New Ulm, MN 56073.

## Upcoming Lent and Easter Services

**Join us each Wednesday at 4 and 6 pm  
as we continue to meditate on the Places of the Passion.**

March 7      The Courtyard of the High Priest

March 14     Pilate's Court

March 21     Golgatha

**Maundy Thursday services at 4 and 7 pm**

**Good Friday Tre Ore service at St. Paul's at 12 pm**

**Good Friday Tenebrae service at St. John's at 7 pm**

(no Saturday service on March 31 the Saturday before Easter)

**Easter Sunday services at 7 and 9:30 am**

(no 11 am service on Easter Sunday)

# Council Digest

The St. John's Voters' assembly and the Church Council met on February 20. A summary of reports and action from those meetings not reported elsewhere in the Fortress follows:

Thirty-two voters were present for a call meeting led by Minnesota District President Charles Degner. Led by the Holy Spirit, the voters unanimously called Rev. Robert Guenther to serve as administrative associate pastor at St. John's. Pastor Guenther is 39 years old and currently serves Grace Lutheran Church in Kenai, Alaska. He and his wife Rebecca are the parents of four children, ages 14, 12, 7 and 5.

Because of the call meeting, the council addressed a limited agenda. The main item of business was to address a new opportunity to purchase the home at 601 S. Washington Street. After legal counsel recommended the withdrawal of an earlier accepted offer to purchase the home because of the conditions of a trust associated with the property, a second opportunity arose. A St. John's member family subsequently purchased the home and presented the congregation with a number of options, including the opportunity to purchase the home from them at a price just below our previously accepted offer. The council considered the various options and agreed to move forward with the purchase of the home in keeping with our original goals and conditions. At the time of this writing, arrangements are being made to secure the funds for the purchase and to work with the family to complete the sale. Short term use of the home is envisioned as a transitional parsonage for our second pastor or additional Sunday School space. Long term options include moving the home to provide additional off-street parking on our campus.

## Membership changes

### Transfers Out

Amber Finken to Mt. Olive, Mankato, MN

Spencer and Heather Hammer; (Olive, Violet) to St. Paul's, New Ulm, MN

### Transfers In

Jonathan and Erin Laabs; (Genevieve, Mariah) from Trinity, Waukesha, WI

## Ministrations

### Funerals

6 Feb William Brei

16 Feb Sheryl Carroll

### Baptism

4 Feb Kyla Marie Wynn

The Endowment Committee had met the previous evening and decided against an additional fund distribution at this time. Bruce Savoy was elected chairman of the group.

Two council positions remain vacant—the chair positions for the Board of Stewardship and the Board of Trustees. Scott Deters was present to represent the Trustees at this meeting.

A recommendation to consider the purchase of a smaller decorative trees for placement in the sanctuary at Christmas time will be referred to the Altar Guild through the Board of Elders.

The monthly financial reports showed a balance in the Home Operations Fund of over \$11,000. One of the primary factors contributing to the balance is that the congregation has been paying only one pastor's salary and benefits for the past 13 months. WELS missions and Minnesota Valley Lutheran High School were a combined \$1,000 behind for the first month of the calendar year.

The next Church Council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 20, at 7:00 p.m.  
The annual voters' meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 24, at 7:00 p.m.

Steven R. Thiesfeldt, Congregational Chairman

# Archives

## Miscellany

Archives articles for the next few months will recall items from service bulletins, newsletters, and council and congregational minutes from 60, 50, 25, 10, and 1 years ago. Items reported do not necessarily coincide with the time of the year. For the earliest years not all those sources are as complete as for later years. St. John's was organized in January 1948, and thus these miscellaneous items involve a congregation that is part of God's Kingdom of Grace—making what is reported more than just trivia. Hope you will find them interesting and that they might bring back some memories for some.

**1958, Pastor was Rollin Reim.** Services—still in the basement Church—were held at 8:30 and 10:00 on Sundays with Sunday school at 8:30; communion was celebrated once per month with registration on the previous Friday. The parsonage was at 517 S Washington. The parsonage phone number was 2005 and the church 955. The 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of St. John's was celebrated on Jan.12 with a special service at 7:30 pm. Pastor Roland Gurgel, who served St. John's from 1950-1953 preached. There was a special banquet at 12:30—attendance was limited to the 285 who had made advance registration.

**1968, Pastor was Frederick Nitz.** Services were held at 8:30 and 10am with Sunday school at 8:30 September to June; a single service at 9am June through August; communion on the last Sunday of the month with registration on the previous Friday either at the church or the parsonage. There are some miscellaneous items to be noted from service folders to be noted in following months. For this month your Archivist would like to report that council and congregational minutes for 1968 are missing from the archives. Wondering if anyone has saved them? **Help!**

**1993, Pastor was David Kolander; David Zabel was Director of Christian Education.** Weekend services were held Saturdays at 7pm, Sundays at 8:30 and 10:30 am with a single Sunday 9am service in summer. Installation of a new organ began in January. Dedication was held on March 7 with a special afternoon hymn festival.

**2008, Pastors were Jeffrey Bovee and Wayne Laitinen; Administrative Teacher was James Dretske.** St. John's celebrated its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Preachers for special services (in February, April, May and October) included WELS President, Mark Schroeder; son of the congregation, Jon Nitz; missionary, Rob Siirila; and former pastor, David Kolander.

**2017, Pastor was Jeffrey Bovee; Administrative Teacher was James Dretske.** A special service and meal were held in January to recognize Pastor Laitinen's retirement and his service at St. John's (2001-2016).

To be continued.

Bob Krueger

## Library News

If you were confirmed a long time ago as I was, I strongly urge you to check out the new “Luther’s Catechism - NIV Version.” It was written by two professors from the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary and two pastors from Northwestern Publishing House. The catechism along with its explanations has been the textbook used by hundreds of thousands of students to learn the truths of Scripture. The Bible verses that follow the questions let Scripture speak for itself and encourage students to search the Scriptures to discover God’s answers. Each unit is followed by a quote from Martin Luther who urged people to use the catechism throughout their life as he did. His quote is followed by an appropriate hymn.

“God So Loved the World” was written by the sainted professor emeritus, Lyle W. Lange. It is a study of Christian doctrine and its source, Scripture. Don’t let the size of the book discourage you from checking it out. It is divided into 30 chapters so it is possible to choose a doctrine that relates to your present circumstances. As an example, the final chapter is a study of what Scripture says about marriage and the family.

A recent donation to the library is titled, “The Pastor had 10 Kids.” The author is Frances Bradsher, the youngest of the ten children, whose father was a Methodist minister in Kentucky in the early 1900’s. She writes of the hardships they endured as the preacher’s kids and what life was like as they moved to another congregation. It paints a good picture of what life was like in the early nineteenth century.

Eleanor Runke,  
Church Librarian

## St. Paul’s School

School Website: [www.splnewulm.org/school](http://www.splnewulm.org/school)

### **BoCD Work (SP Board of Child Discipleship)**

**Ministry prioritization** Board Preliminary **Prioritization for Budget** areas to include 1) \$7,000 for a part-time teacher to take over classes taught by principal to achieve MNSAA recommended administration time; and 2) an amount of \$5000 toward Technology funding

**Enrollment** remains at 271 in K-8 with. PreK enrollment is at 48. The annual Kindergarten Roundup on February 26-27 will provide us with a projection of next year’s class sizes.

**School Improvement Project:** With gifts totaling over \$2.1 million at the present time and expenses of about \$450,000 paid, there is a current balance of about \$1,600,000. St. Paul’s church Building Fund committee is working on a new commitment program now that the initial three-year commitment is completed. St. Paul’s has looked into borrowing more money to insure a spring 2019 building start, but would like to have as much as possible in the fund to eliminate high payments to interest. Over \$129,000 has been given from St. John’s members. Continue to keep this project in your prayers

**MNSAA**—The Steering Committee is finalizing reports in preparation for the April 2018 MNSAA visit.

**Mr. Plocher’s Call** On January 29 Mr. Michael Plocher received a call to be 8<sup>th</sup> grade teacher and director of technology at Trinity Lutheran School, Caledonia, WI. The Holy Spirit has led him to continue his ministry here at St. Paul’s.

**Mr. Dretske’s Absence** – following an MRI on 2/14, bilateral sacral fractures were found as well as cystic development in the hip replacement area. Follow-up appointments with primary doctor and orthopedic surgeon will determine the plan for return to work. The classroom continues to be covered by Mrs. Becky Rogotzke.

### **MLC Basketball Tournament**

The basketball season concluded with the MLC Tournament on February 16-18. The 7-8<sup>th</sup> Girls team finished with the 1st Place Trophy winning the final game against Mt. Olive, Mankato in the Championship game. The 8<sup>th</sup> grade Boys team won the 3<sup>rd</sup> place game against Good Shepherd, Burnsville. Thanks to all who support the St. Paul's Raiders!

### **MVL Music Festival**

Some of our young musicians will be participating at the MVL Music Festival on Saturday, March 3. Students will perform solo, duet, or larger ensemble pieces on piano or band instruments. This is not a competition, but the participants will perform before a judge. Afterwards, the judges will meet with the students to discuss their performance.

### **Raider Choir Musical & Grades 3-4 Musical**

The Raider Choir will be performing the musical, "Dorothy in Wonderland" on the evenings of March 16-17 at 7 pm. Grades 3 & 4 will be performing the musical, "Three of a Kind" on Tuesday, March 20. Come and join us for evenings of music. The musicals are open to the public and will be funded through a free-will collection. The St. Paul's Social Events Committee will once again host an Italian Bistro on Saturday, March 17, at 5:30 pm, before the performance of the Raider Musical. Social time will begin at 5 pm. The pasta dinner will include salad, spaghetti and meatballs, bread sticks, and a slice of homemade cheesecake for dessert. The meal will be served by our charming 5<sup>th</sup> grade wait staff. Seats for the dinner must be reserved in advance at <https://goo.gl/2L7ZZK> by Friday, March 9. Pay for the meal when you arrive at the event. The cost is \$6 per person for children and \$10 for adults. All proceeds benefit the Raider Choir and will be used to cover their production expenses.

Contact Missy Hunter at [missyann18@hotmail.com](mailto:missyann18@hotmail.com) or Sarah Zahrt at [zahrtse@gmail.com](mailto:zahrtse@gmail.com) with questions.

### **Calendar**

- Mar. 3 MVL Music Festival
- Mar. 4 SPS Family Swim at Vogel: 5 pm
- Mar. 5-7 NO Dist. 88 Busing
- Mar. 8-9 NO School - Spring Break
- Mar. 16 Raider Musical: 7 pm
- Mar. 17 Dinner: 5:30 pm; Raider Musical: 7 pm
- Mar. 19 Spring Sports Begin
- Mar. 20 Gr. 3-4 Musical: 6:30 pm
- Mar. 29-30 NO Dist. 88 Busing

Respectfully Submitted,

James Dretske, SJ Administrative Teacher [jdretske@splnewulm.org](mailto:jdretske@splnewulm.org)

## Reflections

Women of the area are invited to the annual Reflections Service which will be held on Sunday, April 8th from 2:30 - 4 pm. We will gather at St. John's Lutheran Church for dessert, fellowship, and a candlelight service of songs, readings, and prayers. Our theme will be "Living to Share". More details and the sign-up sheets are found in the narthex or by e-mailing [kgrunwald@splnewulm.org](mailto:kgrunwald@splnewulm.org).

Ladies interested in setting a table are encouraged to contact Mary or Karen or sign up at church.

Please invite friends and sign-up by Monday, April 2nd.

Questions, please contact Mary Hussman at 354-3001 or Karen Grunwald at 507-217-6229.

## Our Synod at Work

### **The 2018 Annual Report from the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod**

The Wisconsin Synod's Annual Report to members for 2018 has been distributed and, as has been past practice in this column, we will review some of the information in the next few columns. There was a big change in the report this year as both the size and the amount of information contained has greatly expanded. One expansion is the number of "personal stories" that are featured. In fact, St. John's member Carl Boeder is featured in one of the stories in the "Called to Prepare" section. What has remained the same is that the report is divided into sections: Called to Prepare, Called to Proclaim, Called to Serve; and Called to Support.

The calling of WELS is "to nurture the faith of our members and to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the world." We are the third largest Lutheran church body in the US. We have 1,275 churches, 363,997 baptized members, and 2,890,863 communicant members. We have twelve districts to allow for more "area-specific ministry, personal contacts, and member involvement." We also operate one of the largest parochial school systems in the US with 298 Lutheran elementary schools, 384 early childhood ministries, and 25 area Lutheran high schools.

WELS is a member of the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference, which is an organization of 32 confessional church bodies that are located throughout the world.

At the synod convention in August of 2017, we marked the retirement of the synod's debt. The "One in Christ" campaign to eliminate the synod's debt was begun in 2015. The payoff of the debt occurred one-and-a-half years ahead of schedule. The money being used for debt payments can now be used to support ministry.

Congregation Mission Offerings are the main source of support WELS ministry. While they have slightly increased, they are not keeping up with inflation and they have remained rather flat for about ten years. In order to maintain existing ministry with rising costs and flat revenue, the Synodical Council authorized a great use of reserves in the biennium's ministry financial plan.

The Financial Stabilization Fund continues to be sound. This fund holds all non-CMO sources of operating support, which include gifts from individual and non-CMO gifts from congregations, bequest, investment income, grant money, and endowment fund distributions. These gifts are spent in the year after they are received, making it possible to avoid sudden reductions in ministry.

We will continue to look at sections within the Annual Report in the months to come.

Gerald Woodley



## Lutheran Women's Potluck Lenten Fellowship Meal

The second potluck meal will occur on March 21st.  
Please sign-up on the sheets between March 11 - 18th.  
Thank you for your participation.

## MLC Ladies' Auxiliary

Please continue to support the Food Bank. A donation box is located in the narthex.  
The contact person is Jeneane Thiesfeldt at 359-7018 or [thiesfjm@gmail.com](mailto:thiesfjm@gmail.com).

## Cards of Caring

The "Cards of Caring" volunteers will meet on Saturday, March 17, between 9 am and 12 noon. Come as your schedule allows. We meet at 403 N. Minnesota St. (enter on North 4th Street).

We will be making Easter cards using recycled cards and decorative stamps. We make about 60 cards for each holiday. We can find tasks for you to do. Everyone, age 12 and older is welcome to come for fun and fellowship, including MLC students. Contact Lois Willems at 359-7403 with questions.

## Men of Truth

The ***Men of Truth*** formed in 2015 to gather Christian men around God's Word, to consider the blessings, challenges and opportunities in their lives, and to strengthen and equip them to carry out their God given mission in their homes, churches, and communities.

The 3rd Annual ***Men of Truth*** Conference, Leadership ***in Your Walk of Faith***, will be held March 17th at the Martin Luther College Auditorium, 8 am - 2 pm. Three featured speakers will explore the topics of Christian Leadership in the Church, Career and Family. Continental breakfast and lunch included. Register for the event at [menoftruth.org](http://menoftruth.org). Early registration discount ends March 12.