

St. John's Ev. Lutheran Church
627 South Washington
New Ulm MN 56073

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Welcome to St. John's!

627 S. Washington St.

507-354-6744

www.stjohnsnewulm.com

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Worship Times

Saturdays: 7 pm

Sundays: 8, 9:30 & 11 am (No 11 am January 1)

Adult Bible Classes

Thursdays: 10:30 & 7 pm

Fridays: Women's Bible Class: 9:30 am

Sundays: 9:30 & 10:45 am (No class January 1 or 8)

Children's Sunday School

Sundays: 9:30 am (No class January 1 or 8)

Staff

Pastor Jeffrey A. Bovee
revbovee@gmail.com

Staff Minister Kelly Emde
kremde@comcast.net

Church Office
stjohnsnewulm@gmail.com

Bookkeeper
wlambrecht@newulmtel.net

Administrative Teacher
jdretske@splnewulm.org



January 2017

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How Lovely Shines the Morning Star

The ancient Western Church set aside January sixth of each year as the Festival of the Epiphany. At Christmas we hear that the Jesus was born the Son of David of the tribe of Judah. Since the promise of a Savior was first made to the children of Abraham, the people who surrounded Jesus were Jewish: Mary and Joseph, Simeon, Anna even the shepherds who kept watch over their flocks on the hills surrounding Bethlehem.

Once the twelve days of Christmas are over, we celebrate the arrival of the first non-Jewish people mentioned in Scripture who worshipped the infant Jesus - wise men from the east. They probably came from one of the regions we call Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Iran or Iraq. We don't know how many there were. Since three gifts were mentioned (gold, frankincense and myrrh), legend has imagined that there were three magi, each carrying one of the gifts. The fertile imagination of some Christians long ago even gave each of the three a different country and a name: Gaspar (of India), Balthazar (of Arabia), and Melchior (of Persia - now Iran). Matthew's Gospel simply tells us there were more than one. There could be two magi, or two dozen for all we know.

These were men of great learning, and were probably employed by the government of their nation. They were the scientists of their day. But like scientists of all ages, they approached their studies with a strong belief about the cause and meaning of all discoverable phenomena. For instance, magi often read into the stars a prophecy that a battle or a kingdom would be won or lost, depending on how the stars and planets were aligned.

At the same time, these men were well-read in the literature of other civilizations. Perhaps during the Assyrian or Babylonian captivities of the Hebrew people, earlier wise men passed down to these magi the prophecy that there is a connection between an abnormally strange appearance of light in the sky with the birth of a Jewish king.

"I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near.
A star will come out of Jacob; a scepter will rise out of Israel."
- Numbers 24:17

The meaning of this phenomena was important enough for these wise men to get a leave of absence from their king and make the trip (of anywhere from 50 to 1,000 miles) in order to find this newborn King. It is amazing that these men, steeped in pagan religion and culture as they were, did not set out on a mere research project. Following the star, they brought expensive gifts over long distances across desolate and waterless miles to find their Savior. Most of us have miles or even blocks to drive in order to hear about the Baby born in Bethlehem. Or we can pick up a book and read at our leisure about the love of God who sent him to save us. We can be relatively sure that we won't be jumped by bandits from another caravan or lose our way in some god-forsaken desert. The thought must have

Continued on page 2

run through their minds, "What if we travel all that way only to find the whole thing is a hoax?"

The star led them as far as Judea. But God must have hidden its light from their sight, because they had to stop in Jerusalem to ask Herod for directions. This must have been a horrible disappointment. God leads them all the way to Judah and then the bottom falls out. Not only did the star fail them, but the Word and promise of God as well! Now they are left to ask wicked Herod where the baby was to be born. They might have said to themselves, "That's what we get for following the prophecy of the God of Israel! We were better off in the safety and security of our homeland, our own gods and among our own people."

But the Word of God was so bright and warm in their hearts that the lack of the star did not dissuade them. The magi went to Jerusalem and asked Herod what he knew about the birth of Jewish king. Herod was a busy, Roman ruler. He could only be bothered with the high affairs of governing the unruly, Jewish people. He had time neither for his soul's salvation nor for the things of God. No wonder he was clueless when God was about to be born! What could Christmas possibly mean to someone so reckless with his soul? One thing he knew: he was not about to yield his power to a Jewish citizen...much less a baby. So he sent to the temple to ask the priests. They quoted yet another prophecy from God's Word, Micah 5:2. Insignificant Bethlehem, the town of David, would be the birthplace of the King of the Jews and the Savior of all mankind. Herod acted interested as if wished to worship the Christ-child, too. But his intention was to kill the boy. If only he had the patience to listen, Herod would have found out that Jesus was no threat to him or his position. Herod ruled over a few citizens in an earthly kingdom for a short while with a sword of iron. Jesus came to rule in peoples' hearts by faith. His kingdom would have no end. And he would rule, not by force, but with the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God.

As they magi made their way to Bethlehem in accordance with God's prophecy, the star they had seen in the East reappeared. And they were filled with great joy. Of course they were! God and his Word only *seemed* to let them down when the star disappeared. Now their faith revived and became stronger than before. This is always the way God works to build up our confidence in Him! It was as if He said to the magi, "Don't you understand? I never left you then and I won't leave you now. I cannot go against my Word. You will see my only-beloved Son, just I said."

Even so God has promised that we shall see Jesus when he comes again to judge the living and the dead. And that blessed vision will be enough to fill us with joy for the rest of eternity!

The star that led them could not have been any ordinary star...nor was it the conjunction of planets...nor a comet passing precariously close to our planet. For it stood over the house where the child was. To point a single house out of a village of houses...not to mention a hemisphere...that star had to be exceeding by low. But the same Creator who hung the constellations and made everything run with a precision that makes a Swiss watch look like a sundial is able to create and govern a star like this, too.

The magi found the baby Jesus, not in a manger in the open field, but in a crib. This time the family was residing more comfortably in a house. First of all, the magi gave Jesus their hearts. They bowed low to the God who hid himself in human flesh to save them. Then they opened their rich gifts to him. This is always the right order. First the heart discovers the priceless treasure it has in this Savior from the guilt, punishment and domination of Satan and sin. Once God has our heart, good works will not be far behind. Even their disobedience to the wicked order of the governor to return and inform him about the whereabouts of the King of Kings was a good work for which heaven rejoiced!

Your Servant in Christ,
Pastor W. A. Laitinen

Your Synod at Work

WELS Church Extension Fund

This month we are going to take a look at the WELS CEF Activity Update for 2016. Their mission is to provide financing through loans and grants to mission congregations so they can acquire land and ministry facilities to be used for gospel outreach. There are a number of statistics they have recently shared:

1. They gave out \$32.8 million of new loans and \$4 million of new grant requests during their last fiscal year.
2. They approved 43 total origination projects, which included five land purchases, twenty-five facility projects, and eighteen other projects (renovations, increases, refinances, etc.).
3. Six mission congregations purchased existing facilities with additional loans for renovations; two mission congregations purchased land sites; and two missions completed a parsonage purchase.
4. Sixteen congregations were approved for new construction loans with final loans expected to total \$28.2 million.

In addition, CEF had a number of blessings for which to be thankful.

1. They were blessed with an operational surplus of over \$1.2 million during the last fiscal year.
2. Their \$139.7 loan portfolio includes loans to 208 WELS congregations and affiliates.
3. Over 3,500 WELS members, congregations, and affiliates have entrusted them with \$80.6 million in member investments.
4. They have maintained a base interest rate of 3.75% for new loans to mission congregations in addition to its matching grant programs and land and facility projects.
5. A net asset distribution of nearly \$843,000 to Home Missions was approved to help support the opening of additional new missions.

The WELS Church Extension Funds asks folks to consider helping their goal of assisting WELS congregations by investing with CEF, sending a gift, or informing other about their mission and financing programs.

Gerald Woodley



Caring and Sharing Jesus with Ex-offenders

The Minnesota River Valley Mentoring Program invites you to join us for a Friends in Christ mentoring workshop on Saturday, January 14th.

Chaplain Dan Krause will lead us through the basics of mentoring ex-offenders. This workshop will be held at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, New Ulm, from 9 am to 3 pm and includes lunch.

Please email Brad Price (brad.price@wels.net) if you plan to attend, or if you would like more information.

Divine Call Returned; Call Meeting

Pastor Ken Brokmeier declined the call to serve at St. John's.

On Monday, January 16, St. John's will have a call meeting at 7 pm. The call meeting will be followed by a brief church council meeting for the month of January.

St. Paul's Lutheran School

Board Of Child Discipleship Actions:

- Playground Fence: The fence has been installed at \$4,657 from the Zickler Fund as previously approved by the BOCD.
- MNSAA Accreditation Fees: St. Paul's Council approved the BOCD recommendation that the estimated \$4,000 cost for the MNSAA accreditation process from Thrivent Choice.
- StrengthsFinder – Transformational Leadership Seminar: January 28, 2017, 9:00 AM – Noon at the MLC Cafeteria Conference Room for faculty and St. Paul's staff.

Christmas Break

School will resume on Wednesday, January 4th. The end of the 2nd Quarter will be Friday, January 13 with report cards going home the following Friday. There will be no school on Monday, January 16. The faculty will be having an In-Service – There will be a Religion Curriculum Work Day at MLC with other schools in the area. There is another in-service on Friday, January 27th for faculty business.

Pre-Kindergarten Open House

Three-and Four-year old Pre-K Open House is Wednesday, January 11, from 2 - 6 pm. Visit the school, let your child "try out" the room and talk to Mrs. Meyer about the Pre-K program! Contact the Pre-K Director, Heidi Meyer at 507-354-2329 with questions.

Members of St. John's and St. Paul's are welcome to register early, January 4-17. (Morning sessions typically fill by early Feb).

Lutheran Schools Week

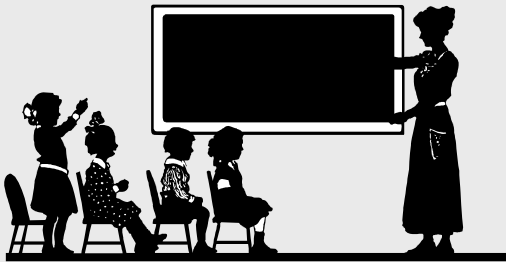
LSW will be held a little later than we normally have it. It will follow the four-day mid-winter break in February. The children will be singing the Sunday after LSW rather than the Sunday before. The dates for LSW will be February 21-24, with K-8 singing on Sunday, Feb. 26, at the 11 am service.

Calendar

Jan 4	School Resumes
Jan 11	Pre-K Open House: 2-6 pm
Jan 20	Report cards come home
Jan 22	Grades K-4 sing at 9:30 am service
Jan 27	NO School - Teacher In-Service
Jan 28	StrengthsFinder Seminar for staff
Feb 5	Jr. Choir (Gr. 5-8) sing at 11 am
Feb 17-20	NO School: Mid Winter Break
Feb 21-24	Lutheran Schools Week
Feb 26	Grades K-8 sing at 11 am

School's website: www.splnewulm.org/school

Respectfully submitted,
James L. Dretske,
Administrative Teacher: jdretske@splnewulm.org



OWLS

The OWLS group will meet on Wednesday, January 11, at 11:15 am in the MLC cafeteria for lunch.

The program "Here am I, send me" given by Dr. Mark Paustian begins at 12:30 pm in the auditorium. WELS theology and practice of the divine Call is unique in Christendom, and it comes with unique comforts and encouragements, unique surprises and joys. This narrative-driven, interactive session will address the questions and anxieties many people are likely to have submitting themselves to our practice of the divine Call, and promote an optimism about finding our place in mission, such as we are, whatever we are, that is deeply rooted in Christ.

National dues (\$15) are due in January and may be paid to Paul Fritze. He will also have the offering box for the general fund and chaplaincy program set out.



MLC Ladies' Auxiliary

The mission of this organization is to encourage support of the students, faculty, staff and Governing Board.

The Food Bank provides food, household products, gifts of other kinds, and gift cards to married students and their families. A donation box is located in the narthex for our convenience.

Thank you for your prayers and support.
Jeneane Thiesfeldt
507-359-7018 or thiesfjm@gmail.com

Women of St. John's

Women of St. John's will meet on Tuesday January 3rd, at 7 pm.

MLC International student Tassia Channel Clemon, whose home is in St. Lucia, will be giving a presentation about herself, her home mission, her MLC journey and future plans. She will also share the history behind steel drums and perhaps demonstrate the playing of these drums.

Ladies, please join us for this event.

From Your Staff Minister

2017 has arrived! Thank you to all of you who served, who offered financial gifts, and who prayed for the good of the Church. The Lord has blessed St. John's through you.

If you haven't been asked to serve and would like to volunteer, please ask me for some insight on where you can serve. Also, look for a Stewardship folder in the next couple of months describing opportunities for service. God's blessings on your 2017!

“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.” (John 1:14)

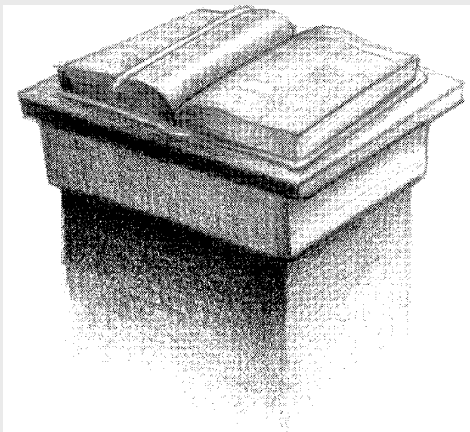
Jan 1	Luke 2:21	Let the Year Begin in the Savior's Name
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Jan 8 Ephesians 3:1-12 God Reveals His Mystery

Jan 15	Matthew 3:13-17	Jesus' Baptism Signals a New Beginning For Us All
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Jan 22 Second Sunday after Epiphany

Jan 29 Isaiah 8:19-9:2 A Light Shines in the Darkness



8 St. John's Lutheran Church

JANUARY 2017
354-6744

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 New Year's Day WORSHIP W/ COMMUNION 8 & 9:30 AM Church basement reserved	2	3	4	5 10:30 am Adult Bible Class 7 pm Adult Bible Class	6 9:30 am Women's Bible Class	7 WORSHIP 7 PM
8 Epiphany WORSHIP 8, 9:30 & 11 AM 11 am Retirement Service for Pastor Laitinen 12 pm Retirement Farewell Celebration	9 6:30 pm Elders	10 6 pm Sunday School Teachers' Meeting 7 pm Education 7 pm Stewardship	11 6:30 pm Public Catechism	12 10:30 am Adult Bible Class 7 pm Adult Bible Class	13 9:30 am Women's Bible Class	14 WORSHIP 7 PM W/ COMMUNION
15 Epiphany I WORSHIP 8, 9:30 & 11 AM W/ COMMUNION 9:30 am Sunday School and Bible Class	16 4 pm Ridgeway on 23rd Service 7 pm Call Meeting 8 pm Council Meeting	17 4 pm Oak Hills Living Center Service	18 6:30 pm Public Catechism Sr. Choir 7 pm	19 10:30 am Adult Bible Class 7 pm Adult Bible Class	20 9:30 am Women's Bible Class	21 WORSHIP 7 PM
22 Epiphany 2 WORSHIP 8, 9:30 & 11 AM 9:30 am Gr. K-4 sing 9:30 am Sunday School and Bible Class	23	24 7 pm Annual Voters' Meeting	25 6:30 pm Public Catechism Sr. Choir 7 pm	26 10:30 am Adult Bible Class 7 pm Adult Bible Class	27 10 am Sunset Apt. Service St. John's MVL Night	28 WORSHIP 7 PM
29 Epiphany 3 WORSHIP 8, 9:30 & 11 AM 9:30 am Sunday School and Bible Class	30	31 4 pm Oak Hills Living Center Service	Looking Ahead			
			Feb. 5 Jr. Choir sings at 11 am service			
			Feb. 26 Gr. K-8 sing at 11 am service			
			Mar. 1 Ash Wednesday: 4 and 6 pm services			

Correspondence

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Wendy Lambrecht wlambrecht@newulmtel.net

Jim Dretske jdretske@splnewulm.org

T.V. Service:

Mondays: 6 pm

Tuesdays: 1 pm

Thursdays: 10 am

on

Comcast Channel 14

NU Telecom Channel 3

<div> <div>Archives</div> <div>Those Who Served</div> </div> <div> <p>Over the years St. John’s has held elections just like our government does but with a different purpose. Though this article may just be names, it might also bring back some special memories and indicate some changes in the organization of the congregation. Their service was important to the history of St. John’s</p> <p>1956: Pastor, Rollin Reim. For 1956 the 1955 Annual Report names Cornelius Trapp as Moderator and the following as members of the Church Council: Harold Kaiser, Chairman; Elmer Kitzrow, Secretary and Trustees Chairman; Ronald Spelbrink, Treasurer; Paul Vorwerk, Financial Secretary; Henry Wacker and Maynard Beilke as Trustees; and Rudy Gatzke, Deacon.</p> <p>1966: Pastor, Frederick Nitz. Delmar Brick was Moderator; Fredrick Manthey, Secretary; Harold Just, Treasurer; Henry Baumann, Financial Secretary; Harold Kaiser, Arnold Koelpin, and Harold Schroder served as Elders; Elvin Stoering, Roland Fehlberg and Raymond Laabs as Trustees; and Duane Bode as Deacon.</p> <p>1991: Pastors, Norval Kock and David Kolander (as of Aug.); David Zabel, Director of Christian Education. Rodney Karnitz, Howard Wessel, Dennis Jaspersen, Robert Johnson, Wayne Wels, John Paulsen, Arnold Koelpin, Charles Enter, David Morse and Douglas Patterson served, respectively as President, Vice President, Secretary, Financial Secretary, Treasurer, Deacon and Chairs of the Boards for Stewardship, of Education, Trustees, and Evangelism.</p> </div>	
<div>Cards of Caring</div> <div> <p>Happy New Year! Thank you to everyone who helped our Cards of Caring group with donations of materials and/or with help to make our hundreds of cards during the year. Our members and mission families and students appreciated the cards they received. We especially thank the eight MLC students who helped us.</p> <p>Our 2017 meetings are scheduled for January 21st and February 11th. We meet on Saturdays between the hours of 9 am and noon at 308 S. Washington St. Our focus will be on making “Warm Winter Wishes” and Valentine cards. We welcome MLC students and members from grade five and older.</p> </div>	<div> <p>2006: Pastors, Jeffrey Bovee and Wayne Laitinen; Administrative Teacher, James Dretske. Serving on the Church Council were officers: President, Steven Thiesfeldt; Vice President, Robert Krueger; Secretary, Roger Hermanson; Treasurer, Wayne Wels and Financial Secretary, Jim Grunwald. John Paulsen served as Deacon, Philip Leyrer as Stewardship Chair, John Boeder as Youth and Education Chair, Rod Karnitz as Trustees Chair, Ben Strackbein as Evangelism Chair, and Bill Dinse as Elders Chair.</p> <p>For 2016 and for 2017 you may refer to the Annual Report.</p> <p>Many others also served over the years as members of boards and committees, ushers, officers and leaders of other organizations and in other less official capacities. Some names will appear in future articles. Over the years some names reoccur for various offices and positions. Maybe sometime it might be interesting to see who has the record for most offices or positions held. Is there anyone willing to volunteer to research this? Thanks to all.</p> <p>Bob Krueger</p> </div> <div> <p>The following is a note from Sara Marquardt, an MLC student whose father is serving in a foreign mission field.</p> <p>“Dear Members of St. John’s,</p> <p>Thank you so much for the lovely card that you sent me. I really appreciate it. It is so heartwarming to know that there are brothers and sisters in Christ who are thinking about me! I have been busy preparing for exams before Christmas break starts. I also have been getting ready to go to India. I will be visiting my parents this Christmas Eve and staying for 5 days. We will be touring Dehli and nearby temples, museums, and shops. But I am most looking forward to seeing my parents. Thank you again. God’s blessings!</p> <p>Sara Marquardt”</p> <p>Contact Lois Willems at 359-7403 with questions.</p> </div>

<div>Council Digest - December 2016</div> <div> <div>Call update</div> <div> <p>Rev. Kenneth Brokmeier, currently serving Our Savior Lutheran Church, Brookings, South Dakota, returned our call to serve as administrative associate pastor on Saturday, December 17. The council decided to postpone the extension of the next call until after the Christmas and New Year holidays. A call meeting has been set for Monday, January 16, at 7 pm. All voters are encouraged to attend. Anyone wishing to nominate someone for consideration on the call list should contact Minnesota District President Charles Degner at mndp@wels.net at least one week prior to the meeting. In the meantime, the Elders will implement a plan to cover the vacancy created by Pastor Laitinen’s retirement on December 31st until our call for a new pastor is accepted.</p> </div> </div> <div> <div>St. John’s Church Council Digest – December 2016</div> <div> <p>The St. John’s Church Council met on December 13. A summary of reports and action not reported elsewhere in the <i>Fortress</i> follows:</p> <table> <tr> <td>Professions of Faith</td> <td>Daniel and Laura Clyne; (Madelyn, Grayson, Bentley)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Baptisms</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>20 Nov</td> <td>Luke Kenneth Dummer</td> </tr> <tr> <td>28 Nov</td> <td>Alena Marie Wagner</td> </tr> </table> <p>A fellowship supper provided by the outgoing members of the council preceded the business meeting. Outgoing members Gerald Woodley (vice president), Mark Bauer (deacon) and Heath Dobberpuhl (youth and education) were thanked for their service. The meeting also provided an orientation opportunity for the newly elected members of the council. Greg Diersen (vice president), David Bellig (deacon) and Stephen Balza (youth and education) will join the council in the new year. Installation of newly-elected members of the council as well as appointed board and committee members is set for Sunday, January 8, during the 11:00 am service.</p> <p>Chairman Bill Pekrul of the Evangelism Board reported details of a retirement recognition event planned for Pastor Laitinen on Sunday, January 8, following the 11:00 am worship service. A fellowship meal is being arranged by the Women of St. John’s and Helping</p> </div> </div>		Professions of Faith	Daniel and Laura Clyne; (Madelyn, Grayson, Bentley)	Baptisms		20 Nov	Luke Kenneth Dummer	28 Nov	Alena Marie Wagner
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<p>Hands organizations and a brief program is planned. Sign-up sheets for helping with the meal by providing a desert or salad and attendance at the meal will be placed in the narthex in the weeks leading up to the event.</p> <p>Stewardship Board Chairman Josiah Stoering brought a recommendation to designate the Lutheran Charities offering envelope receipts for WELS Christian Aid and Relief. A decision on designation of the \$12,000 Endowment Fund distribution for 2016 was delayed until the January council meeting. At that time, the congregation’s year-end financial picture will be clearer. Any recommendation on the use of these funds is subject to the approval of the voters’ assembly.</p> <p>Preparation for the annual voters’ meeting, scheduled for Tuesday, January 24, was initiated. All annual reports are due by the time of the council meeting the previous week.</p> <p>The Trustees have arranged for the installation of a new water softener and the upgrading of the water heater. Chairman David Rauch also noted that the board is investigating reports of rusty water and faulty electrical outlets in the kitchen.</p> <p>The annual voters’ meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 24, 2017.</p> <p>Steven R. Thiesfeldt Congregational Chairman</p>									