



October, 2018

God, Keep Us Faithful

I can only imagine the fear that filled his heart as he stood before the throne. He knew that what he had said and done was punishable by death. And he knew that even if the head of the government was sympathetic, the *real* leaders of the people, were not. Death was a probable outcome.

But what could he do? It was either risk death or deny the truth. And to deny the truth was to deny God. So rather than succumb to the threats levied against him he would take his stand. Boldly, standing on the Word of God, he would not back down. And he would suffer for it.

So we find the prophet Daniel at eighty years of age refusing to stop praying to the true God, refusing to pray to the king of Babylon, willing to die for his decision—and be thrown into a den of hungry lions.

“Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before... So the king gave the order, and they brought Daniel and threw him into the lions’ den.” (Daniel 6:10,16)

What gave Daniel the strength to honor God at the risk of his own life?! In Daniel chapter 9 he wrote, ***“I, Daniel, understood from the Scriptures, according to the word of the Lord given to Jeremiah the prophet, that the desolation of Jerusalem would last seventy years.”*** In short, he knew God’s promises. It wasn’t that Daniel found the strength in himself to be faithful. God gave him the strength in the Word.

Fast forward about 2,000 years later. I can only imagine the fear that filled his heart as he stood before the emperor. A monk by the name of Martin Luther, had a plot out on his life. He didn’t face a den of hungry lions, but he risked being burned alive if he were to take a stand on the Word of God and be labeled a heretic for it.

But, like Daniel, he couldn’t hide his faith. Too much was at stake! At a time when the truth of the Gospel was all but lost, he had to proclaim the truth! He could not cower, but would continue to boldly preach and teach, proclaim and write the truth about the gospel: That we are saved by God’s grace alone, not by our merits in any way! We are saved through faith alone and not by our works or deeds! So he took his stand and was branded a heretic so that any who found him could legally take his life.

What gave Luther such courage to be faithful to God? Like Daniel, Luther found his strength in God’s Word; in the gospel he found reading the Scriptures. Like Daniel, he relied on the promises that the Word contained. He studied them. He knew them well. He drew his strength from the mercy of God that he found promised in them. And in them he found courage to be faithful in the face of fierce opposition and in his trial before the emperor.

Fast forward about 500 more years. I know the fear that fills my heart when I’m called upon to witness for Jesus. For we too will face opposition in our lives for being faithful. We may not be thrown into a den of hungry lions for daring to pray to God or be declared wanted criminals for sharing the gospel. But we will face opposition in other forms. We will face ridicule and insults. We will be considered intellectually inferior because we dare to believe that Jesus rose from the dead, that he is who he said he was, that he accomplished our salvation, that every word of the Bible is true. We will face lions of our own.

But in the middle of the lions’ den, we too can find our courage in the gospel. We find our strength in the truth that we are forgiven for all the times we’ve cowered or stood down because we loved ourselves more than we loved our God. We find our courage in knowing that God sent his only Son to fight against that roaring lion who

was looking for someone to devour. We find our nerve when we again recall how Jesus conquered the devil by being devoured by God's wrath in our place on the cross. We find our zeal to speak up when we again rejoice in Jesus' resurrection from the dead for our justification, so that now, by God's grace alone, through faith alone, we are rescued—from satan, from our own sin, from death, and from eternal death in hell. Through Christ alone, the victory is ours!

And, like Daniel and Luther, we find our strength to be faithful to God not in ourselves, but in our Savior and in his promises of grace. So let's continue to cling to that Word by which Christ will keep us faithful, before friends and family, before neighbors and coworkers, even in the lion's den, even before emperors and kings.

And God will give us the courage to boldly declare, ***"I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes... For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: 'The righteous will live by faith.'"*** (Romans 1:16-17)

Pastor Rob Guenther

Our Synod at Work

Lutheran Institutional Ministry Association (LIMA)

The work of the Lutheran Institutional Ministry Association (LIMA) in Minnesota is fulfilled by faithful chaplains, campus pastors, and staff with the help of our gracious God. At hospitals, college and university campuses, prison, and jails across Minnesota, those in need are being served by the truths of God's Word. Here are some of the ways in which that is being done:

Hospital Visitation: Last year hospital chaplains in the Twin Cities and Rochester made over 1,200 visits with patients and their families at 24 different hospitals and care centers. In addition, the "Church Away from Home" ministry with our partners at Ascension Lutheran in Rochester has become more active. A parish nurse is making some visits to patients. They have also provided patients and their families with temporary housing, rides, meals, gift cards for food, gas cards, parking passes, and companionship. They have also distributed toys and coloring books for children.

Home pastors or patients need to contact LIMA's chaplains for hospital visitation. Chaplains no longer have access to a list of WELS members maintained by the hospitals. Rochester chaplains can be reached at 507-272-9430 and Twin Cities' patients can call 612-756-3377.

True North—Twin Cities Campus Ministry: LIMA continues to support a campus ministry in the Twin Cities with opportunities for fellowship, service, Bible study, and worship. The primary partner in this ministry is St. John's Lutheran Church in Minneapolis, which celebrated its 150th anniversary last year. The participation of college and university students remains high, and some young men and women are joining St. John's for worship and congregational life.

The Beacon—Mankato Campus Ministry: Many opportunities are available throughout each week for Bible study, worship, and fellowship at the Beacon. The LIMA partner in this effort is St. Paul's Lutheran in North Mankato. After about twelve years as the primary campus pastor, Pastor Wong has retired, so the Beacon is now served by St. Paul's Associate Pastor Marques Nelson. Carl and Danielle Wold also serve the Beacon as Resident Assistants, living in an apartment at the center.

Jail and Prison Ministry: A new ministry opportunity presented itself in 2016 when LIMA was offered a regular Sunday morning time-slot at the Hennepin County Jail in Minneapolis. The LIMA Board of Directors recently approved a new part-time position of Jail and Prison Ministry Coordinator. Opportunities exist to regularly

proclaim the Gospel to the incarcerated at county jails and state prison facilities.

If folks have questions regarding LIMA, Mike Valleau is the Chair of their Board of Directors and can be reached at 651-387-0275.

Gerald Woodley

Archives

Education Connection (Continued)

The subject for this month is, again, Christian education, specifically, St. John's connection with Minnesota Valley Lutheran High School. That only goes back to 1979, MVL's first year. Prior to that many of St. John's members made use of Dr. Martin Luther High School/Academy. The growing enrollment of Dr. Martin Luther College led to the Synod deciding to move what was primarily a worker preparatory school to Prairie Du Chien, Wisconsin. Information in the archives (bulletins, newsletters, congregational minutes and reports) varies in detail—especially in regard to enrollment of St. John's members and comprehensive reports from MVL for some of the earlier years. However, the following does indicate St. John's connection to and interest in Christian education. The following was gleaned from what could be found in St. John's archives with help from the MVL staff.

1987-88, Pastor was Norval Kock; Tod Hauf was Director of Christian Education. Principal at MVL was Jerome Birkholz. Enrollment was 178. St. John's budget for 1988 included \$18,000 for the general fund and \$12,240 for capital expenses.

1993-94, Pastor was David Kolander; David Zabel was Director of Christian Education. John Schultz was MVL Principal/Administrator. Enrollment was a record 245; 49 from St. John's. According to the 1993 annual report St. John's contributed \$23,238 for general support and \$8,580 for capital expense. There was frequent reference to an "Expanding the Mission" building project to replace three temporary annexes and to provide for an increasing enrollment of 300.

2008-09, Pastors were Jeffrey Bovee and Wayne Laitinen; Administrative Teacher was James Dretske. MVL Principal was Tim Plath. Enrollment for the year was 232. Support from St. John's for 2008 was \$56,910. The 2008 annual report noted concern regarding \$1.7 debt and a campaign titled "Faith, Family, Future" to deal with it. A new award, "Spirit of MVL" was presented to MVL's first principal, Jerry Birkholz, his secretary Becky Markgraf and to Les and Ardella Enter and the first class to enroll at MVL.

2017-18, Pastors were Jeffrey Bovee and Wayne Laitinen; Administrative Teacher was James Dretske. Tim Plath was MVL's principal. Enrollment was 196; 23 from St. John's. St. John's 2018 budget for special support is \$58,140. The 2017 annual report noted that "after 38 years of indebtedness, MVL is now debt free."

As with St. Paul's School there's more to St. John's relationship with MVL than just names and statistics but a continuing and important commitment to Christian education.

Bob Krueger

From Your Staff Minister

Currently I am serving as the Chairman of the Trustees along with my other duties. I will be looking for adult men to serve on the board as well as to be the Chairman. If I don't contact you and you are interested in serving, please contact me at 354-6744 or KREMDE@comcast.net.

“In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering.” (He. 2:10)

Kelly Emde

Council Digest

The Church Council met on September 18. A summary of reports and action from the meeting not reported elsewhere in the Fortress follows:

Transfers In

David and Trisha Homan; (Jack, Noah, Levi) from
St. Paul's Lutheran, New Ulm, MN
Rachel Meyer; (Madisyn, Alivia) from Zion Lutheran,
Winthrop, MN

Profession of Faith

Marion Standing: (Dominick Olson, Jakobi Olson, Cora Baggenstoss, Hank Baggenstoss)

Release

Jacob Bases

Baptism

25 Aug Alayna Joyce Krueger

Funeral

14 Sep Dale Mack

Pastor Bovee reported that the youth group, led by Mike and Lisa Goeglein, will have its October activity on the evening of Friday, the 26th, with a bonfire behind the parsonage. Watch the Sunday bulletin for details as the date approaches.

Sunday School is underway with a full slate of teachers. Installation of teachers took place on Sunday, September 23. Since the Guenthers have purchased a home and will move out of the parsonage by November 1, the Board of Youth and Education will consider use of the home as additional space for Sunday School instruction. Any other organizations of the congregation that would like to use the home for their activities should contact congregational chairman Steven Thiesfeldt.

Sixteen catechumens are preparing for confirmation next spring (Sunday, April 28, 2019) and are participating in catechism instruction.

The St. John's/St. Paul's Lutheran School Christmas service this year will feature four banners as object lessons. The 3' by 6' banners will be printed by the MLC Graphic Arts department at a cost of \$25 apiece and will be displayed on the front wall of the chancel next to the cross.

Staff Minister Kelly Emde continues to arrange for and schedule pre-seminary student lectors from Martin Luther College to read the scripture lessons for weekend services about once a month. Use of a shared digital document has streamlined the process.

Bookkeeper Wendy Lambrecht has been unable to provide regular financial reports with her usual promptness and

efficiency because of some chronic health issues. A plan to provide her with assistance until she has recovered has been developed. Please keep Wendy in your prayers as she recovers.

Treasurer Paul Gunderson reviewed the process of developing the proposed congregational budget for fiscal year 2019. Each board will develop its budget proposal over the next month using a shared spreadsheet. The completed budget will be presented to the voters for approval at the October voters' meeting.

President Thiesfeldt presented a list of prospective candidates prepared by the Nominating Committee at a meeting on September 8 to fill various elective positions on the council and appointive positions on congregational boards for three year terms of service beginning on January 1, 2019. Responsibility for making the contacts with nominees in the coming weeks was assigned. If someone contacts you about having your name placed in nomination, please prayerfully consider the opportunity to serve. If you are willing to serve but are not approached, please contact President Thiesfeldt as soon as possible.

Elders chair Bill Dinse reported that several individuals have applied for the part time custodial position currently occupied by Paul Fritze. He will retire from his work at the end of the calendar year. Interviews will begin after the application period closes at the end of the month.

Chairman Dinse also reported on the results of a recent congregational survey to gather input on the second evening service time during Advent and Lent (currently at 6:00 p.m.) and the weekly Saturday evening service time (currently at 7:00 p.m.). The survey seemed to indicate a preference for a later midweek service time and an earlier Saturday evening time. A motion to move both the later Advent and the Saturday evening services to 6:30 p.m., subject to voter approval, was passed.

Five organ pipes recently were sent back to the manufacturer for repair and reinstalled under the direction of Prof. Emeritus Wayne Wagner. Additional pipes should be repaired and re-racked at an estimated cost of \$5,000, but the process can be delayed until the next budget year without any immediate problems.

The Elders also considered a recommendation from members of the Altar Guild related to decorations at the front of the church during the Christmas season. Among other things, the council approved replacing the single large tree currently in use with three smaller trees. If possible, the plan will be implemented this year; if not, our members can look forward to a new decoration scheme in 2019.

A Board of Stewardship update provided by Roger Klockziem noted that a quarterly budget update was mailed to all members along with an encouragement to use individual time, talents and treasures in service to the Lord. The practice of preparing and mailing quarterly contribution reports, a very labor intensive process, has been discontinued for the present time. The next general update will be mailed in early December.

A mission festival is planned for the first weekend in December. The guest preacher will be Ministerial Education Administrator Paul Prange and a noon fellowship meal is being planned.

The Board of Stewardship has contacted St. Paul's for promotional materials related to the next phase of the school building project slated to begin next spring. Once the materials have been received, a plan to share them with our members will be developed.

Bill Pekrul provided an Evangelism Board update. SIM Sound has made some necessary adjustments to our video recording system and installed some new equipment in the balcony to improve our audio and video recording capabilities.

An investigation of possible options to improve or replace our outdoor message board has begun.

Plans for local use of the new WELS video "To the Ends of the Earth," featured in a recent WELS Connection, are under development. C18 is a synod-wide campaign to reach one million souls with the gospel prior to and on Christmas Eve. Follow the link for more information or go to <https://wels.net/serving-you/christian-life/c18/>.

The Board of Evangelism's Fellowship Committee continues to consider different ideas that promote congregational fellowship. One of the centerpieces of the plan is regular fellowship Sundays on the second weekend of each month.

The next Church Council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 16, at 7:00 p.m.

The next quarterly voters' meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 23, at 7:00 p.m. This meeting will include consideration of the 2019 budget, congregational appointments and elections, and a motion to change evening worship service times. All voters are invited and encouraged to participate.

Steven R. Thiesfeldt
Congregational Chairman

Library News

Pastor Guenther has donated another book to our library titled "Man Up, Josiah!" It contains advice from mutual friends and acquaintances on how to become a godly man. Each writer has words of wisdom drawn from God's Word and his life experiences. It would be a good read for teenagers and also adults who want to become godly men.

Another donation to the library contained two of the books that were missing in the Mitford Years series by Jan Karon. They are "Shepherd's Abiding" and "Somewhere Safe with Somebody Good." It is best to read the books in the order in which they were written. The series has become quite popular so you may have to wait for the next book in the series to be returned. Please remember that though they contain Biblical quotations, it is fiction.

The check-out period for the library is three weeks. However, in the case of devotional books, they may be kept for a longer period.

Eleanor Runke
Church Librarian

St. Paul's Lutheran School

www.splnewulm.org/school

Opening Service School began on Tuesday, September 4th with an Opening Service. Pastor Guenther fed us spiritually in worship focusing on the theme, "We are Filled with Joy". It is based on Psalm 126:3: "The Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy."

There are a total of 274 (92 SJ 33.6% 38 Non-member 13.9% 8 Other WELS 2.9%) students enrolled in Grades K-8 bringing the total to 326 students in the school. There are presently 52 children in PreK. Two MLC students began their professional semesters as teacher candidates. Mrs. Rodriguez began in Mrs. Alissa Griebel's 7th & 8th grade classroom. Mrs. Hirsch has begun in Mrs. Schone's 1st & 2nd grade classroom. We are tentatively planning a meet & greet at St. John's on October 28th between the 9:30 and 11:00 service. Please continue to keep these candidates in your prayers as they are an answer to the prayer of the church to produce laborers for the Kingdom in our midst.

Updates at School BOCD (Bd for Child Discipleship)

Mr. Plocher continues with the STEM course “Design and Model” in grades 7-8. We are using the course through a Project Lead the Way (PLTW) component called Gateway to Technology. Equipment, training, and licensing have been paid for from our school’s curriculum and continuing education funds. Mr. Plocher is serving MLC on Monday evenings as an adjunct professor to fill in to teach an education technology course, Teaching with Technology,

Come Walk With Us – A Time to Celebrate

(St. Paul’s School Building Project)

Many supporters of St. Paul’s School visited the St. Paul’s School campus on September 8th between 3 and 6 pm to participate in many activities connected with the “Time to Celebrate” event. Those participating in the walking portion got to learn about the history of St. Paul’s School. The report in the bulletin showed gifts totaling over \$12,000 with a goal to reach \$35,000 by Thanksgiving. Up-to-date totals will be stated in the weekly bulletins. Praise God from whom all blessings flow!

Ministry Scholarship Fund Envelope If you haven’t used the envelope in your offering envelope box for Ministerial Education Scholarship Fund (September), consider using it this month. The gifts in September/October will go toward the sons and daughters of our congregation who are seniors preparing for ministry at MLC and male students who are preparing for the public ministry at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. Gifts to underclassmen are being matched through the MLC Partnership Grant Program which began last year. Gifts from congregations for these grants need to be a minimum of \$250 and can be as large as \$1,000. Last year an amount was taken out of Estate funds to reach the minimum amount to make use of this program. Please give this your prayerful consideration.

Teacher In-Service The WELS Minnesota District Teachers Conference will be held on Thursday and Friday, October 18-19. It will be held at St. Croix Lutheran Academy in West St. Paul. The theme will be “Live, Rooted and Built Up in Christ” based on Colossians 2:6-8. There will be no school on those dates

MAP Testing St. Paul’s School will be using the Measures of Academic Progress Testing again this fall to assess the academic levels of the students as they begin a new school year. Students in grades 3-8 will be using their classroom Chrome Book computers to complete the test. There is immediate feedback for teachers to see the results of the tests. This feedback will help teachers focus on the needs of their students. The testing will be given three times throughout the year. The battery of tests will include Language, Reading, and Math. We have been very blessed to have the resources to maintain a high level of learning at St. Paul’s School.

Calendar

Sep 24-Oct 5 MAP Testing
Oct 6 Grades 5-8 sing at 7 pm
Oct 18-19 NO School: Teachers’ Conference
Oct 26 Kindergarten begins classes on Fridays
Oct 28 Grades K-4 sing at 8 am
Nov 4 Grades 5-8 sing at 9:30 and 11 am
Nov 5 NO School: Teacher In-Service

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

MLC Ladies' Auxiliary

The annual auxiliary meeting will be held on Saturday, October 6th on the MLC campus. Registration will begin at 8 am in the Luther Student Center. The meeting will begin at 9 am in the auditorium in the Wittenberg Collegiate Center. Morning treats and lunch can be purchased for \$8.

Food donations for the MLC Food Shelf and donations of quilts/blankets for Bingo Night can be dropped off at the registration site.

A variety of presentations and workshops will provide attendees with a greater understanding and appreciation of MLC's ministry, including the Spanish Immersion program and the Music Education programs.

The closing devotion will be in the Chapel of the Christ at 3:15 pm.

You are invited to take part in a day of support for our WELS College of Ministry.

Jeneane Thiesfeldt
507-240-4523 or thiesfjm@gmail.com

Women of St. John's

The Women of St. John's met on September 4, 2018 at 7 pm. We began with the singing of hymn 245 "Sing a New Song to the Lord." Pastor Bovee's devotion was based on Psalm 33, a psalm of praise, which says, "Sing to him a *new* song." The words "new song" here mean "different from the old song." The old song was the song of the law, what God demanded of us. The word "new" is used when talking of Jesus. We now have the new covenant.

Our topic for the evening was "Let's Get to Know Each Other." Thirty-four women participated in the fun. Carol Laitinen and Denise Karstens planned the activities. First, we broke into two groups. Each group had to try to quickly put themselves in alphabetical order by first name. We then paired up with one other person that we did not know or did not know well and tried to find connections or similarities in our lives. We completed this activity while enjoying some scrumptious snacks prepared by Helen Black and Jeanine Sather, our hostesses for the evening. The pair that appeared to share the most similarities consisted of two former "southern women", Nancy and Brandy, who treated us to their southern drawl. It wasn't until both found our WELS church body that they felt at home and in agreement with a church. We had a lot of fun!

The Women of St. John's are invited to participate in a Ladies' Night Out on Tuesday, October 2, beginning at 6 pm at the New Ulm Country Club's Cottonwood Grill. The entree choices for the evening are their pecan-crusted chicken salad ("Pecan crusted breast of chicken, red onion, mandarin oranges, dried cranberries, mixed greens and honey mustard dressing") or the Guggisburger ("A burger patty topped with bacon and cheese curds then drizzled with ranch. Then we threw in a side of marinara just because!") The cost per person including tax and gratuity is \$13.50 which can be paid that evening.

Please sign up in the narthex and indicate which entree you'd prefer. Child care will be arranged at St. John's; please indicate that when you sign up as well.

2018 Men of His Word Conference

Have you seen the news lately? It's crazy out there. The world attacks our Christian values from every direction on a daily basis. To counter these attacks, the MOHW Conference provides opportunities and resources for men to grow spiritually, using God's Word to empower and equip men to carry out their God-given mission in their homes, churches, communities and the world. This year's theme is "GET OUT OF THE BOAT."

Whether you attend for the keynote speaker (Pastor Jared Oldenburg from Eternal Rock in Castle Rock, Colorado), the relevant, thought-provoking breakout sessions (12 to choose from), or the worship experience with 300 other men (with Koine', the worship band), God's Word will speak to you.

The 4th annual MOHW Conference will be held at the Kahler Hotel and Conference Center in Rochester, MN on Saturday, October 27, 2018. Additional details and registration are available at www.menofhisword.org for the first 300 men (\$50 by October 14th; \$60 from October 15th – 21st).

Cards of Caring

The "Cards of Caring" volunteers continue to make cards to send to members who are on our church's homebound or "thinking of you" list.

We send cards for birthdays, anniversaries, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Winter/Valentine's and Easter. We also make cards for our confirmands and for our LWMS Befriend a Mission families.

We plan to meet Saturdays, October 20 and November 10, (*Note date change*). We will continue to meet at 403 N. Minnesota St. between the hours of 9 am and noon. Come as your schedule allows.

Assistance is needed with creating cards from recycled cards or using decorative stamps, writing greetings in the cards, applying Scripture verse stamps, seals, and prepping envelopes.

Everyone is welcome from age 12 and older to come for fun and fellowship. We also welcome all MLC students. For information contact Lois Willems at 507-676-1230.