



St. John's Ev. Lutheran Church, New Ulm
February 2019 *Fortress*

Forgiven and Forgotten

He forgot Valentine's Day! She waited until evening, but then finally said in a flat tone, "Happy Valentine's Day, honey!" He had no excuse. There were plenty of reminders: "Should we go out to eat or to a movie for Valentine's Day next week?" and "Wouldn't that make a good gift for Valentine's Day?" But he forgot Valentine's Day. Now he would suffer the consequences.

That was five years ago. She eventually forgave him, but he still hears reminders about the year he forgot Valentine's Day. She forgave. But she hasn't forgotten. He won't make that mistake again.

Some mistakes can put even our closest relationships in jeopardy. Have you been betrayed by a close friend? Is your connection to parents or children strained because of sin? Does your marriage have forbidden subjects, subjects that you know will only reopen old wounds? Forgiveness was offered, but the hurt feelings didn't just disappear. To forgive and forget is what you *want*, but sometimes the hurt is so deep that after forgiving you still remember.

But to make matters worse, every time we hurt anyone, we also hurt God. With the strain our mistakes and our selfishness have placed on other relationships, what hope exists for a good relationship with God? If forgiveness from friends is uncertain, how can we hope for God's forgiveness?

Ah, but don't judge God by human standards! ***"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord.*** (Isaiah 55:8) The forgiveness won by Jesus' death on the cross is different. ***"As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us."*** (Psalm 103:12) ***"For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."*** (Jeremiah 31:34) Through Jesus God forgives and God forgets!

He doesn't remember the time you skipped worship just because you didn't feel like going. He can't recall the time you selfishly left the work that needed to be done left for "someone else" to do. He's forgotten the time you used your words to hurt others, the time your thoughts used another person, the time you ignored someone in need. He remembers Jesus taking those sins on himself. And he remembers Jesus paying the penalty that those sins earned. Talk about love!

Don't forget Valentine's Day this February 14th. And remember April 19th too – that's Good Friday this year. On that day we remember the full extent of God's love as we review how Jesus won full and complete forgiveness! Please join us at church in the weeks ahead as we continue to see Jesus revealed as the Son of God, our Savior, and then as we walk with him on the road to the cross on Good Friday. Come worship with us in the happy knowledge that, in Christ, God really does forgive *and* forget.

In Him,
Pastor Rob Guenther

February Sermon Texts

Feb 3	Luke 4:20-32	Jesus Revealed as One Despised and Rejected (In Hometown)
Feb 10	Luke 5:1-11	Jesus Revealed as One Worth Following (From "In Their Sandals")
Feb 17	2 Corinthians 12:7-10	Finding God's Strength in Our Weakness
Feb 24	Acts 1:15-26	The Lord Calls His Saints into Service

From Your Staff Minister

The new WELS video "To the Ends of the Earth" is available in the narthex. This video is a continuation in an evangelism outreach. If you would like a DVD copy of a videotaped service please contact me at kremde@comcast.net or 354-6744.

"But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?"

Kelly Emde

Cards of Caring

The Cards of Caring volunteers will meet Saturdays, February 9, and March 9, 2019 to make Valentine and Easter cards for our "Thinking of You," homebound, and Befriend a Mission members and families.

We meet at 403 N. Minnesota St. between 9 am and 12 pm. We welcome MLC students and members age 12 and older. Come and join us for this fun volunteer project. We greatly appreciate all the donations that have been received over the 10 years we have had our Cards of Caring group. Thank you!

Contact Lois Willems at 507-676-1230 with questions.

Archives

Annual Reports

By the time you receive this issue of the Fortress our annual meeting will have already taken place, and you should have received or picked up the 2018 Annual Report. It's not just dollars and numbers and other statistics but an indication of the work and mission of St. John's over the years. Variances in attendance figures are due to differences in the way they were reported and calculated and may make exact comparison difficult. The statistics reflect not only growth and inflation but the blessing of the Holy Spirit. Over the years a lot was spent but a lot of

people (adults and children) were served with the Word of God and the sacraments.

1958 (11th year): Pastor, Rollin Reim. Communicant membership of 349 was reported noting an increase of 10. Average total attendance (two Sunday services, morning and evening) was 348. Total expenditures for all purposes came to \$28,990 including \$4,358 for Synodical purposes. Indebtedness was listed at \$13,500. Services were being held in the basement church. The superstructure had to wait until 1966.

1968: Pastor, Frederick Nitz. Membership: 611 baptized, 410 communicants. Average total attendance was reported at 456. There were two Sunday services at 8:30 and 10:00; Sunday school at 8:30; a single 9 am service during summer months. Separate days and times are noted in the Sunday bulletins for registration for communion. Total expenditures for the year were \$49,929 including \$11,011 for Synod.

1993: Pastor, David Kolander; David Zabel, Director of Christian Education. Membership: 720 communicants. Average attendance was 234 per service: 7:00 Saturday, 8:30 and 10:30 Sunday with a single Sunday service at 9:00 during the summer. Expenses for all purposes totaled \$317,783; \$41,177 for WELS mission.

2008: Pastors, Jeffrey Bovee and Wayne Laitinen; Administrative Teacher, James Dretske. Membership: 1,003 baptized, 827 communicants. Average weekend attendance was 611. Services were held at 7 pm on Saturday; at 8, 9:30 and 11 am on Sundays except in summer—no 11 am service. Total disbursements totaled \$792,783; \$56,910 for MVL and \$74,738 for WELS Missions.

For 2018, refer to the Annual Report.

In following months we'll look at some specific occurrences for selected years of St. John's history that will review other indications of the Holy Spirit's work and blessing.

Bob Krueger

Council Digest

The church council met on Monday, January 21. A summary of reports and action from the meeting not reported elsewhere in the Fortress follows:

Membership changes approved

Transfer In

Phil and Danielle Scriver; (Rogan, Weston, Everett, Whitley) from Christ Redeemer, Aurora, CO

Ministrations

Baptisms

30 Dec Lydia Ruth Grundmeier

5 Jan Leah Ann Dummer

Pastor Guenther has visited over 330 members since last October in his quest to complete an every-member visit. Late last year, the Endowment Fund Committee made a distribution of \$11,000 to be used at the discretion of the council. The year-end report of the financial secretary for 2018 showed that all external commitments had been met with the exception of Minnesota Valley Lutheran High School. A shortfall of \$6,465 was addressed by using an equal portion of the endowment distribution. The disposition of the remaining \$3,535 will be addressed at a future meeting.

Receipts for 2018 totaled just over \$1 million. Although the treasurer's report was unofficial at the time of the meeting, it appears that the 2018 budget of \$982,742 for all purposes was underspent by at least \$50,000. Most of that was the result of a pastoral vacancy during the first half of the year. Our Congregational Mission Offering (CMO) to WELS exceeded our commitment of \$85,680 by about \$1,575.

Since the Building Fund ended 2018 with a healthy balance, the council voted to make the regular payment of

about \$6,200 plus an additional amount of \$10,000 on our loan in January. This additional payment will accelerate our progress toward paying off the church debt, originally projected for by mid-summer 2020. As that date rapidly approaches, the council is planning to appoint a committee to address our future facility needs and the continuation of the Building Fund beyond that date.

President Thiesfeldt reported that he had appointed a team to audit the financial records for 2018. Although the accounting is incomplete at this time because of the health of our bookkeeper, progress is being made and a final report is expected in the near future. Once the books for the year have been closed, the audit team will do its work. A report to the voters is anticipated at its next quarterly meeting in April.

Reporting for the Board of Youth and Education, Heath Dobberpuhl indicated that a summer soccer camp is planned in addition to Vacation Bible School. Since a recent survey conducted by the board showed a strong desire to have our pastors conduct Sunday morning Bible class at 9:30 am, the practice will continue in the new year. The 5-6th grade Sunday school class is meeting in the home at 601 S. Washington, providing some relief to the crowded conditions experienced during the first semester of the program.

Elders chair Bill Dinse reported that St. John's member and MLC student Benjamin Ristow will do his staff minister internship at St. John's from August through December 2019. Following a trial run of midweek Advent services at 4 and 6:30 pm this past year, a recommendation from the Elders to continue the practice for upcoming midweek Lenten services was endorsed.

Bill Pekrul, reporting for the Board of Evangelism, spoke of plans to develop clearer protocols for the coordination and use of volunteers at St. John's. Another major initiative is the establishment of a stronger WELS identity in the community by coordinating outreach efforts for all of our ministries and their various facets—St. Paul's, MVL, MLC, and St. John's. One example would be a community screening of the new WELS video "To the Ends of the Earth" in March followed by an MLC-sponsored Evangelism Action Day on April 10. Watch for details in the near future.

After a year-long vacancy, the Stewardship Board has a new chairman in the person of Dan Borgwardt. The board is recommending that the council be more proactive in keeping MVL delegates from St. John's apprised of congregational perspectives as they represent our congregation in matters upon which they vote at the high school. The recent addition of Jerry Plagge means that all positional roles on the board are now filled (his appointment by the council was ratified by the voters one night later).

Scott Deters, reporting for the Board of Trustees, provided an update on two items: the back entry door to the church office area has been modified to accommodate deliveries and includes an inner locked door for security purposes; a remotely-controlled thermostat has been installed in the 601 S. Washington property to facilitate control of the temperature for its use as a Sunday School classroom.

Next Church Council meeting – Monday, February 18, at 7:00 pm.

The annual voters' meeting was held on January 22 with 32 voters in attendance. A summary of reports and action follows.

Reports on the work of the various boards, officers, and committees and from our called workers over the past year were received. These reports were included in a draft copy of the 2018 Annual Report distributed at the meeting. A final draft will be compiled in the coming weeks and distributed to each family unit in our congregation once it has been printed.

Archivist Robert Krueger requested assistance with the filing and maintenance of our church records. Interested volunteers are asked to contact congregational chair Steve Thiesfeldt.

Lighting, Audio-Visual and Acoustics (LAVA) chair John Paulsen indicated that the committee is working with the Evangelism Board to investigate the possibility of installing two large flat screen television sets in the front of the church near the areas currently occupied by the hymn boards. If the investigation shows the project to be feasible, a proposal will be prepared for consideration by the council and the voters before moving ahead.

Next Voters' meeting—Tuesday, April 23, at 7:00 pm.

Submitted by Steven Thiesfeldt,
Congregational chairman

Women of St. John's

The Women of St John's met on January 8, 2019. Pastor Guenther conducted a devotion based on the oracle of Balaam (Num.24:17) which predicted the star at Jesus' birth. When the Magi followed the star, they met with Herod before they reached Bethlehem. The news of their search truly frightened Herod who then sought to kill Jesus. Like Herod, we often find Jesus to be a threat to our comfort, schedules, pride or for other reasons. The Magi knew that Jesus was not a threat to mankind, but came to remove the threat of sin, death, and hell. The Magi are our example to let our gratitude overflow daily.

The women were reminded that our church will be hosting the LWMS Fall Circuit Rally. Discussion continued about electing a new president. We encourage everyone to consider putting their name forward.. We are looking for ideas that may help make this position more feasible for those who wish to serve. One suggestion at the meeting was to consider co-leaders.

Childcare was discussed for young mothers who would like to attend the meetings. Various ways of enactment and payment were considered.

Our presenter was Karen Grunwald. She gave an informative and enthusiastic explanation of Purposeful Movement for Children and how it enhances their learning abilities. Basic movements are not something every child can do, so Karen demonstrated assorted exercises that can be done easily each day. Many children need to learn how to connect their body movements in order to be able to sit and concentrate. She pointed out that this is helpful to teachers, parents, and grandparents.

Ruth Aufderheide,
Secretary

MLC Ladies' Auxiliary

MLC Ladies Auxiliary is once again sponsoring a BINGO Night for all MLC students. This highly anticipated event will be held on Thursday, February 21, 2019, in MLC's cafeteria Conference Center.

In addition to snacks, the ladies will also be providing a variety of gifts that will be given to the young people as prizes. The most coveted prizes are the homemade items such as pies, cookies and bars. Equally appreciated are quilts and the many gift cards donated or purchased through cash donations.

If you wish to contribute, you may email mlcauxiliary@mlc-wels.edu or call 507-354-8221 for more information. The auxiliary requests that all donations except baked goods be submitted no later than Friday, February 15th. You may also offer to help at the event. THANK YOU for participating in this event.

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

St. Paul's Lutheran School

www.splnewulm.org/school

BOCD Actions:

2019-20 Enhancement Budget Priorities: The BoCD did not recommend additional items to be added to the Budget Priorities process for enhancements for the school due to the increases expected as a result of having a larger building and possibly added staff beginning with the 2019-20 School year. There was a request that a Technology line item be added to the church budget to help fund repairs of current technology. This will be considered by the SP Church Council

Student Teachers

Three MLC teacher candidates began their student teaching work in January. Ms. Cheryl Persaud is working with Mrs. Grunwald's grade 5th-6th classroom; Mrs. Brittany Brassow is working with Mrs. Morgan's 3rd-4th classroom, and Ms. Taylor James is working with Mrs. Wolf's Kindergarten room. We are blessed to have these faithful candidates among us. The plan is that all these candidates will greet members after the 9:30 service on Sunday, February 24.



Ms. Cheryl Persaud



Mrs. Brittany Brassow



Ms. Taylor James

Patriots Pen Winners

In January, Mr. Will Burdorf from the local VFW Post announced the St. Paul's winners of the Patriot's Pen essay contest. Six of our students were recognized as winners. They were Austin Enter, Alex Jones, Dora Grubbs, Natalie Hennig, Ella Friederich, Amber Toltzman, and Ashanti Sitting Crow. Congratulations!



Kindergarten Round-up

Parents with children anticipating a Kindergarten start in the 2019-20 school year should have received information for the K Round-up to be held on Tuesday and Thursday evenings on February 26 and 28. If you have not received the information, but feel your child may be ready for a start this fall, please contact the school office at 507-354-2326.

Milk Moola Discontinuing

Kwik Trip's Milk Moola program will be discontinued. All Milk Moola redemptions will need to be postmarked 3/31/19 to receive payment. Anything after that date will not be processed. Please turn them in by March 1. This program has been a wonderful blessing to our school. We thank Kwik Trip for providing this opportunity to us! We pray that all our supporters will find other ways to support our school in the future.

Raider Choir Musical

Hold the Dates! The Raider Choir will be presenting, "Princess Whatsername" on Friday and Saturday, March 15-16, at 7:00 pm in the school gymnasium.

Calendar

Feb 10	PreK-8 sing: 11 am
Feb 11-16	Lutheran Schools Week
Feb 15-18	NO School: Mid-Winter Break
Feb 22	NO MVL Busing
Feb 24	Jr. Choir sings: 8 am
Feb 26 & 28	Kindergarten Round-Up
Mar 2	MVL Music Festival

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

Our Synod at Work

MULTI-LANGUAGE PUBLICATIONS

This month we will summarize a flyer put out by Multi-Language Publications that provides updates on efforts in East Asia, Latin America, and Africa.

In East Asia, Multi-Language Publications supports world mission fields with translations of existing English books into Chinese for training and outreach. There is a new initiative that is underway to work with local writers and artists to develop culturally fitting materials with an appealing Asian flavor that will engage educated, young adults living in heavily populated cities throughout East Asia. These materials are designed to reach an educated, urbanite demographic in new ways, but, of course, with the same saving message of the gospel. Distributing the pure gospel becomes more urgent as East Asia's regulations and censorship of outside influences of Christianity grow tighter each day.

In Latin America Multi-Language Publications and the WELS world mission field are celebrating the three year anniversary for the Academia Cristo online training and church multiplication program. Academia Cristo has more than one million followers on Facebook. This collaborative effort reaching this three year milestone is especially encouraging because it has resulted in potential leaders to start churches in areas where there is no WELS presence. Academia Cristo is globally connecting Spanish-speaking men who will be equipped to start churches to faithfully proclaim God's Word. WELS missionaries and Academia Cristo teachers recently met with sixteen men in Latin America interested in further training, including leaders in five countries outside the current reach of WELS world missions.

In Africa, Multi-Language Publications is partnering with World Mission's One Africa Team to provide an opportunity for translators to improve their skills. Those from Africa, Nepal, and India who were seeking training were able to attend a once-in-a-general workshop in July of 2018. The ten-day workshop in Lusaka, Zambia, was conducted by Dr. Ernst R. Wendland. The coursework included hands on practice of translating texts from English into local languages, as well as insights into simplifying English texts prior to translating them.

Pray for all of the staff and volunteers who help produce confessional Christian literature and other mass media to share with the world. There is an online newsletter that is available from wels.net/mlp.

Gerald Woodley

Church Library

Here is a New Year's Resolution. Read More!! And let the church library help you out. We have many interesting books, even inspirational fiction, which can have some doctrinal wording that we do not agree with, but is still fun to read. The popular ones at the moment are in the series by Jan Karon about Father Tim, an Episcopal pastor, and his many interesting parishioners.

Another series is the People's Bible. This was commissioned by Northwestern Publishing House about 30 years ago. The 40 volumes have covered all books of the Bible. They were written by WELS professors and pastors, to help us better understand the Bible. These have green covers (mostly). The series next to it on the shelf has white covers. These are the People's Bible Teachings and the about 20 books cover such subjects as Christ, End Times, Heaven and Hell, Law and Gospel, Lord's Supper, and Four Centuries Before Christ. A third Series from NPH is called the Bible Discovery Series (in various colors), and has such titles as Times Between the Testaments, Grand Themes and Key Words, and Life in New Testament Times.

Don't forget about the children. We have many books for children of all ages, as well as some DVDs. We even have Veggie Tales on video tapes.

Happy reading.
LeiLani Rahn,
Church librarian

Men of Truth

Come and join the Men of Truth at their 2019 conference, Man of God. The conference will be held at MLC in the Auditorium on March 23rd, 2019.

Worship begins the conference with Jonah Backus and the Conquerors, with Pastor Nate Scharf leading the opening devotion.

We are pleased to have five engaging speakers with us this year to address various topics important to the Man of God:

Answers to Anxiety for the Man of God – Clinical and Biblical – Dr. Joshua Mears (Christian Family Solutions)

Godly Men Among Us – Things I Wish I Knew in My 20's, 30's, 40's, and 50's - Pastor Rob Guenther, Professor Roger Klockziem, and Mr. Mark Wrightsman

What Women Look for in a Godly Man – Ms. Naomi Schmidt (WELS Women's Ministry)

More information can be found at www.menoftruth.org. Middle school through college students are free. Continental breakfast in the auditorium and buffet lunch at the MLC Cafeteria included with registration. Registration is open now!

Youth Group

The plan for January had to be changed due to the severe cold. We would like to try again.

TUBING AT MT. KATO

Saturday, February 23
Meet at church at 10:30 am

After tubing there will be chili and hot dogs
in the church basement.

Bring \$15 for the price of the lift ticket.