

**John 8:31-36** To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. <sup>32</sup>Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." <sup>33</sup>They answered him, "We are Abraham's descendants and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free?" <sup>34</sup>Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. <sup>35</sup>Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. <sup>36</sup>So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

The month of July is for Americans, the celebration of our freedom. July 4th commemorates the signing of the Declaration of Independence. The Declaration of Independence, signed by the founding fathers of this country has gone down into history as one the most important documents our nation has.

For those who know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, the greatest document given to the citizens of God's kingdom is the Bible. For there we find more than freedom from mere earthly enemies, but freedom from the enemies of the soul -- Satan, sin, and death.

Jesus told the people of his day: **"If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. <sup>32</sup>Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."** Jesus was speaking real, genuine freedom. He spoke of liberty from the bondage of Satan and sin which enslaved every man, woman, and child. It bestowed on every sinful human being the promise that our guilt was removed by Jesus who took our place on the cross to pay our debt. He told the people that his teaching, the Word of God, was the key to it all. There God himself gives the promise that we have been set free.

Furthermore, the certainty of our freedom is not based on signatures of men written in ink, but in the signature of Christ, which was written indelibly with his own blood shed on the cross. The declaration of our Christian independence is the message that we have been saved by God's grace alone through faith in Jesus Christ.

May this be our source of joy and the reason for our celebration of liberty as we lift our voices in prayer and praise to the God who has set us free. We know that truth, and it has set us free – free to live for the living God who saved us and changed our status from being slaves his sons and daughters to become his sons and daughters through faith in his name.

In Christ,  
Pastor Jeffrey A. Bovee

## Your Synod at Work

### Called to Proclaim

This is the last column that we will devote to a review of the 2016 WELS Annual Report to Members. We will end our summary columns with the section entitled "Called to Proclaim." The section emphasizes the work of both Home Missions and World Missions.

WELS World Missions has a presence in 23 different countries and serves 79,780 baptized members in Lutheran churches. It serves 60,000 more through correspondence and workshops and is training more than 160 men to become pastors in their own countries. In addition, they are exploring outreach possibilities in fourteen additional countries. They support 38 missionaries, 9 teachers, and more than 60 lay workers in our missions.

The report discusses some specific projects. WELS began its mission efforts in Nigeria in 1936 and currently there are 26 Nigerian pastors and more than 50 lay leaders who serve about 5,300 baptized members. In 2016, the Lutheran Church of Cameroon took a step toward becoming an independent church body by calling its first full-time Cameroonian teacher and dean of students for its worker-training program.

WELS Home Missions is called to proclaim God's Word to those in the United States and English-speaking North America. Last year the Board for home Missions authorized eight new mission starts, three ministry enhancements, and one relocation.

1. A multi-site mission in Rockwall, Texas, will have two locations for worship but one leadership team.
2. A second pastor is needed to serve in Victoria, Texas, a multi-site mission of Redeemer in Edna, Texas.
3. In 2015, a second pastor was called by Divine Word in Plover, Wisconsin, to focus on campus ministry and outreach. They have purchased a building for a campus center and second worship site.
4. Cross of Christ in Boise, Idaho, is starting a multi-site mission to serve families living in Meridan, Idaho.
5. Members of St. Matthew in Spokane, Washington, will support a mission in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho—located about 35 miles away.
6. Prince of Peace in Salt Lake City is starting a mission in Lehi, Utah, an area that has a strong Mormon presence.
7. Members from Trinity in Woodbridge, Virginia, are excited to start a mission in the growing community of Fredericksburg, Virginia—about 40 miles away.
8. Atlanta, Georgia, is ringed by seven WELS churches, and over the past two years members have been holding Bible studies in the city and have been able to establish a core group.

Next month we'll start looking at some of the reports contained in the 2017 Book of Reports and Memorials that was prepared for the 64<sup>th</sup> Biennial Contention of WELS.

Gerald Woodley

## **From Your Staff Minister**

Vacation Bible School will be held at St. John's from July 25-27. St. Paul's will be joining us this year in presenting VBS. It will be for children who are four years old to going into 6th grade. For those who would like to assist with VBS we are looking for those going into 7th grade and older.

Kelly Emde

“All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one know the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him.” (Mt. 11:27)

## Archives

### Miscellany

Like previous months, some more items from service bulletins, newsletters, and council and congregational minutes from 60, 50, 25, 10, and 1 years ago. Hope you will find them interesting. Comments, questions, suggestions and even corrections are welcome at [kruegerh@mlc-wels.edu](mailto:kruegerh@mlc-wels.edu).

**1957, Pastor was Rollin Reim.** In May, a service folder notes a family night with a program sponsored by the Young Peoples Society. Guests of honor included new members: “Especially the group that is transferring to St. John’s from the disbanding Essig congregation.”

**1967, Pastor was Frederick Nitz.** April appears to mark the beginning of the Altar Guild as ladies were invited to join.

**1992, Pastor was David Kolander; David Zabel was Director of Christian Education.** A report on the Minnesota District convention noted discussion at the coming synod convention regarding the future location and possible relocation of Synod academies and colleges including combining pastor and teacher training at DMLC in New Ulm and combining Martin Luther Prep in Prairie du Chien, WI, with Northwestern Prep in Watertown, WI.

**2007, Pastors were Jeffrey Bovee and Wayne Laitinen; Administrative Teacher was James Dretske.** A report on the Synod convention noted the election of Rev. Mark Schroeder as the new Synod President replacing Rev. Karl Gurgel, who stepped down after 14 years of service.

**2016, Pastors were Jeffrey Bovee and Wayne Laitinen; Administrative Teacher was James Dretske.** In October, a call was extended for a pastor to replace Pastor Laitinen who had announced his intention to retire at of the end of the calendar year. It was returned in December and another call was issued.

That’s the end of miscellany for now. Articles for the next few months will review some other categories of past years.

Bob Krueger

## Library News

Recently Pastor Mark Cares gave a presentation about the Truth in Love Ministry during a Sunday morning Bible class. He has authored a second edition of "Speaking the Truth in Love to Mormons" which we've added to the library. He writes of some of the changes in Mormonism and compares their teachings with our Christian doctrines. He encourages us to reach out to Mormons with the wonderful message of salvation through our Savior Jesus.

Since this is the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, Pastor John Braun has written a book titled "Luther's Protest - from the 95 Theses to Reformation." Pastor Braun has served as an editor at Northwestern Publishing House and the executive editor of "Forward in Christ." He uses church history to explain why Martin Luther was driven to return the church and all believers to the foundation of their faith, Jesus Christ. Included in his book is a timeline of events during the Reformation.

Please check your home library for materials from our church library and place them in the Return box. You can check out materials from the library any time the church is open during the summer. The directions are on the pink sheet on the credenza.

Eleanor Runke  
Church Librarian

## Women's Summer Devotions in the Park

The Friday morning women's Bible study group invites all women and moms to join them during the summer months for devotions in the park. We meet at 10 am at the listed park and read a devotion followed by free play and a picnic lunch (optional). Feel free to bring a friend! If you have any questions please contact Sarah Strackbein.

July 7	Nehl's Park
14	Hermann Heights Park
21	South Park
28	German Park

August 4	Hermann Heights Park
11	Lincoln Park
18	Harman Park
25	Highland Park

## Women of St. John's

Our June meeting was a fun, fellowship meal in the church basement. Pastor Bovee gave a devotion based on Psalm 143:10. The work of the three persons of the Trinity overlaps. The Holy Spirit is the "shy" person of the Trinity because the Holy Spirit does not speak about himself but about Christ. The Holy Spirit works to convict the hearts of sinners before comforting them. He creates and sustains faith. We believers pray that the Holy Spirit will teach and lead us day by day.

We then sang hymn 576, *Spread, Oh, Spread, the Mighty Word*. Following the devotion a meal was served by hostesses Donna Dose, Mary Thom and Dr. Ann Vogel. After the meal, Mary Hussman led the group in playing Bunco.

Our next meeting will take place on Tuesday, September 5. Watch for more details in August.

Christine Baganz

## MLC Ladies' Auxiliary

Please remember to pray for our MLC students while they are working and/or traveling this summer. The Food Bank welcomes donations year round. The list of needed items can be found in the old narthex near the donation box. Or you may contact Judy Gosdeck for information.

Thank you.

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