



St. John's Lutheran Church, New Ulm
May, 2020 *Fortress*

JESUS WILL LEAD JUSTICE TO VICTORY

Matthew 12:14-21 But the Pharisees went out and plotted how they might kill Jesus. ¹⁵ Aware of this, Jesus withdrew from that place. Many followed him, and he healed all their sick, ¹⁶ warning them not to tell who he was. ¹⁷ This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: ¹⁸ "Here is my servant whom I have chosen, the one I love, in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will proclaim justice to the nations. ¹⁹ He will not quarrel or cry out; no one will hear his voice in the streets. ²⁰ A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out, till he leads justice to victory. ²¹ In his name the nations will put their hope."

We are now in the Easter season. We have gone beyond Golgotha and the blood-stained cross to the empty tomb. We continue to celebrate the Resurrection.

But even as we look to new life and the joys of Easter, we still look back. We have to. We still need to see the three crosses planted on the Place of the Skull. We still gaze with awe on the cross in the center, stained with the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are reminded that our salvation, although a free gift to us, was not something obtained for free by Jesus. He paid for it dearly. He gave his own life for it. Perfect God became a sinner for us to take away our sin. Immortal God died in our place so that by death he might conquer death for us. For so it had to be. Jesus had to satisfy God's perfect justice by becoming a perfect sacrifice for all sinners for all time.

And so, even now, we are reminded by one of our most cherished Lenten hymns: *"Many hands were raised to wound him, none would intervene to save; but the deepest stroke that pierced him was the stroke that Justice gave."* Justice – the righteousness of God had to be fulfilled by Jesus. Justice, the perfection Jesus conveyed and upheld by the impeccable life he led, had become his most bitter enemy as he was nailed to the cross.

But the glory of the Gospel message is the great truth that Justice did not remain the enemy of Christ. For though Jesus had to become a sinner for us by taking our sin on himself and took the punishment we deserved, he conquered sin when he died on the cross. After having been separated from God by the damning burden of our sin, which was laid upon him, he was then reconciled to God. He commended into the hands of his Heavenly Father his spirit. As he did so, Justice became, not only the ally of Christ, but our ally as well. Yes, at one time justice would have condemned us, because we are sinners by nature. But Jesus has removed our guilt. The innocent Jesus has put his own righteousness to our credit. So that when God looks upon us in Christ, he no longer sees a sinner, but he sees Christ in us.

If God is just, he must damn the sinner. And if God is perfect, he must accept those who are perfect. We are saved by perfection. We will go to heaven because of a perfect life. The perfect life is not the one we have lived however. It is the perfect life of Jesus who leads Justice to victory.

Justice, which dealt the deathblow to Jesus on the cross, now, in Christ, proclaims life to you and me. The righteousness of God has been fulfilled in us through Christ our Lord. We are saved by Justice. All is well between God and us because of Christ.

That was Jesus' mission, as Isaiah had written: **"Here is my servant whom I have chosen, the one I love, in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will proclaim justice to the nations. He will not quarrel or cry out; no one will hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out, till he leads justice to victory. In his name the nations will put their hope."** He came here, not to condemn us, but to take the weakest flicker of faith and fan it into a flame of confidence. He came to take the frailest tottering Christian with faith as weak as a cattail hanging by a few fibers, swaying in the wind, and mend it, making him as strong as a granite pillar. He has come to proclaim justice, says Isaiah. He came to lead justice to victory.

Today we have victory in Jesus. It is the victory over sin and its condemnation. It is the victory of knowing that in Jesus we have eternal life forever. It is the victory of the empty tomb which failed to keep our Lord enclosed. Amen.

PRAYER

We pray: Almighty God, by your justice you condemned the world. But we praise you, that by the atonement of your Son Jesus Christ justice now acquits the world of sin. For in Jesus we are now perfect in your sight by grace. As we serve Christ, we move on victoriously, knowing that in Jesus the justice of God has been met for us. Teach us to rely solely, dear Lord, on your righteousness, strength and forgiveness; for in you alone are we saved. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

In Christ,
Pastor Jeffrey A. Bovee

Council Digest

The church council met on Tuesday, April 14. A summary of reports and action from the meeting not reported elsewhere in the *Fortress* follows:

Ministrations

Baptism

29 Mar Lydia Elaine Ristow

Marriage

27 Mar Sarah Dinse and Myles Merseth

President Thiesfeldt provided an update on the progress of our *Ministry Review 2020*. The next step is to develop an every-member survey that will seek feedback on various aspects of our ministry at St. John's. The survey should be available for distribution to our members by email during the first two weeks of May.

The COVID-19 pandemic quarantine continues to have far-reaching effects that impact even our churches. Following communication from WELS Director of Human Resources Dennis Mauer on federal legislation initiating the CARES Act and from WELS President Mark Schroeder on the related Payroll Protection Plan (PPP), various individuals led by Secretary Mike Thom filed an application on behalf of St. John's for a forgivable loan. Late last week the loan was approved and \$95,000 has since been deposited in our account at Citizens Bank. The funds will be used primarily for payroll relief. As long as the conditions of the loan are met, the council expects that most or all of the debt will be forgiven.

Board of Youth and Education Chair Heath Dobberpuhl reported that teacher Jean Schroeder will retire at the end. A retirement recognition event is being planned for May 17, but details are tentative because of current shelter in place restrictions.

Pastor Guenther, reporting as a delegate of Minnesota Valley Lutheran High School, noted that the MVL capital campaign *Building Upon the Rock* has been suspended because of the COVID-19 situation and related impact upon the economy. The calling of a technology director has also been suspended.

The bulk of the meeting was used to prepare for the first quarter voters' meeting on April 28 and the preparation of recommendations to extend two one-year calls at the meeting: 1) to Mr. James Dretske to be our full-time staff minister, and 2) to Mrs. Emily Stoering to be our 5-6th grade teacher at St. Paul's School. Both calls would be for the period of July 1, 2020, to June 30, 2021.

The following schedule was set for future meetings:

Next joint council meeting with St. Paul's – Tuesday, May 19, 6:00 p.m.

Next regular council meeting - Tuesday, May 19,
7:30 p.m.

Next voters' meeting – Tuesday, July 28, 7:00 p.m.

Submitted by Steven Thiesfeldt,
Congregational president

Memorials

<i>Gary Carmichael</i>	Undesignated Endowment Fund	\$65 \$20
<i>Edgar Peehler</i>	Endowment Fund	\$100
<i>Doreen Besemer</i>	MVL	\$45
<i>LeRoy Kramer</i>	Endowment Fund	\$20

May Sermon Texts

May 5	Acts 6:1-9; 7:2a, 51-60	Inspired Sermons: Put to Sleep by the Truth
May 10	Acts 17:1-12	Inspired Sermons: Paul 1 Search the Scriptures
May 17	Acts 17:22-31	Inspired Sermons: Paul 2
May 21	Luke 24:44-53	Inspired Sermons: Luke Small Expectations but Great Fulfillment
May 24	Acts 1:1-14	Inspired Sermons: Luke
May 31	Luke 1:39-55	Inspired Sermons: Luke My Soul Rejoices in God My Savior - The Magnificat

Upcoming Bible Classes

Sundays at 9:30 am	Book of Isaiah	Paul Koelpin
Thursdays at 10:30 am	Colossians	Pastor Jeffrey Bovee
Thursdays at 7:00 pm	2 Kings	Pastor Rob Guenther
Fridays at 8:00 pm	I Apologize	Pastor Rob Guenther

Sending Offerings through Bill Pay

Several members of St. John's have asked if there is a way for them to make their weekly offerings automatically either online or by an automatic bank transaction.

St. John's is investigating our online giving options, but are not yet ready to receive online gifts. For the time being, we suggest that our members consider using your bank's online Bill Pay service to make weekly or monthly gifts to St. John's.

If you have questions about using Bill Pay to make donations, please contact Financial Secretary Mike Thom at 507-217-7671.

Our Synod at Work

2020 WELS Annual Report to Members: Called to Proclaim

This month we will continue to highlight portions of the WELS Annual Report to their Members for 2020. Our focus for this column will be on the section entitled “Called to Proclaim.”

As many know, in 2018 the communist government in Vietnam invited WELS to build a theological education facility in the City of Hanoi that would train leaders of the Hmong Fellowship Church. WELS World Missions started a synod-wide campaign to raise \$2 million to pay for the land, building construction, and first two years of operating expenses. In December of 2019, the goal was met. This will allow WELS to provide seminary-level education for 350 pastors and catechism training for an additional 2,500 leaders.

Actually, WELS World Missions conducts gospel outreach in 40 foreign countries and is exploring outreach opportunities in 14 prospective new mission fields. Forty-two world missionaries partner with more than 400 national pastors to conduct outreach and train more than 250 seminary students.

World Missions supports mission work in the following locations:

1. Apache Reservations in Arizona. More than 3,500 Native Americans are hearing the gospel through nine congregations and two schools.
2. Africa. Exploration of mission work is being done in countries such as Uganda, Liberia, and Mozambique.
3. The Asia-Pacific Rim. Training of national pastors is opening gospel outreach in the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, and Vietnam.
4. Latin America. The Academia Cristo Facebook page and training resources reach more than 1.3 million people.
5. East Asia. 900 people gather each week to hear the gospel. The Asia Lutheran Seminary is training more than 30 Chinese nationals for ministry.
6. Europe. National churches are partnering with WELS missionaries and the Pastoral Studies Institute to train church leaders.
7. South Asia. Although security is a concern, the gospel message is shared through hundreds of churches in Pakistan, Nepal, and India.
8. Multi-Language Publications. It is producing print items, audio and video resources, and online training resources in more than 53 languages.

WELS Home Missions is called to proclaim God’s Word to those in the United States, Canada, and the English-speaking West Indies. It also supports campus ministries, cross-cultural ministries, and other outreach activities in North America. In 2019, the Board for Home Missions authorized one new mission (Hope in Houston, Texas) and approved funding for one ministry enhancement.

There are home missions in 36 states and there are 32 campus ministries. There was \$4.5 million in approved grants from the WELS Church Extension Fund to home missions.

Gerald Woodley

St. Paul's Lutheran School

splnewulm.org/school/

BoCD Work (SP Board of Child Discipleship)

Distance Learning

The faculty used the first week of the governor's shut down to develop a plan for distance learning. School "from a distance" resumed on March 30 and will now continue for the rest of the school year. Faculty and parents are working together to make a positive impact on learning for the children. God has blessed this time away from school, yet we look forward to a time when school can be back in session.

Tuition Deferment

The BOCD has made a recommendation to defer a school tuition payment for parents who are struggling. A notice was sent to school parents with details.

Raider Kids Care

The Raider Kids Care, the After School Care program which had been used to provide care for Tier I and Tier II working parent. The RKC was closed in late April due to extremely low numbers.

Building Project "loose ends"

There are a number of projects to complete this spring/summer as a result of the building project that finished over the winter. The BOCD is looking at the following projects with varying degrees of urgency: Hydro seeding—PreK play area—Updating road signs for one way traffic—School Sign for the main entrance.

An outdoor basketball court is being added south of the parking lot and current playground area to replace at least a portion of the area that was available before construction. Once the BB court is completed, the parking lot will receive the final layer of asphalt and lot striping.

Please continue to keep the building project in your prayers. Although the main building is complete, it will take the support of many to continue to fulfill the financial obligation that has been set up. We are blessed at St. John's to have St. Paul's School available for the Christ-Centered education of our youth, the tender lambs in the Lord's kingdom. May we recognize this gift in our midst and prayerfully and financially support it.

Call

Mr. Nick Kressin, SPL Athletic director and 5/6 teacher received a call in March to teach at St. John Lutheran School in Milwaukee, WI. He has now returned the call. We thank God for continuing to provide workers for his kingdom according to his plan. We pray that those congregations and schools that are in need of teachers will soon receive words of fulfillment for their needs.

School Calendar 20-21

The BOCD has discussed the calendar for the new school year and is proposing a September 1st start. The BOCD will continue to monitor the national situation and adapt the current plan as necessary.

Calendar

TBD as things begin to open up

Respectfully Submitted, James Dretske,
SJ Administrative Teacher
jdretske@splnewulm.org

Church Library News

How many books have you read during this time of staying home? And how are you doing on reading through the Bible?

We have received some new books recently. Two are written by W. Phillip Keller. He has been a real shepherd at some point in his life, so he can draw insights that we here don't see. One book is "A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23." The second book is "A Layman Looks at the Lamb of God". The church Library already has another book written by him, "A Shepherd Looks at the Good Shepherd." Each book gives different looks at sheep, shepherds, and how Jesus uses them to explain things in the New Testament. We all are like sheep that easily go astray, and Jesus is the Good Shepherd who watches over us.

We have also received several Flashback's (MVL Yearbooks) recently. (Thanks, Paul and Lois.) So checking the lists that we have of all of our books, it seems we are missing only 4 books out of a possible 40 Flashbacks. The missing years are 1982, 1983, 1986, and 2015. Does anyone have a Flashback from these years that you do not need anymore?

Remember that the newest and seasonal books are on the wheeled book shelf. And the church is usually open during the day.

LeiLani Rahn,
Church Librarian