



March, 2020 Fortress
St. John's Lutheran Church, New Ulm, MN

Jesus Came for This Hour

"Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. ²⁸ Father, glorify your name!" Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and will glorify it again." ²⁹ The crowd that was there and heard it said it had thundered; others said an angel had spoken to him. ³⁰ Jesus said, "This voice was for your benefit, not mine. ³¹ Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. ³² But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself." ³³ He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die. (John 12:27-33)

Many times in life we anxiously wait for a particular moment. Maybe it is waiting for the show to begin. Maybe it is waiting for the phone to ring to know if you are going to get the job. Or maybe you have gone through the experience of having been awakened in the middle of the night knowing that it was time, and an anxious husband stands by at that point, trying to be supportive, waiting to see what will happen. For the mother it is an anxious time which drags on and on, full of discomfort and apprehensions. But then, the moment comes! And a new born child is brought into the world. What a glorious hour it is!

Perhaps such anxious events from our own lives can begin to give us a sample of all that Jesus endured for us. You see, Jesus was not only waiting for a particular moment, he knew exactly what he would have to go through to get there. He knew that he was about to be arrested, falsely tried, mocked, beaten, spit upon, crucified and worst of all, that he would be rejected by God and man while bearing the sins of the world on his own shoulders. However, he also knew that once he had gone through that terrible ordeal, the world would be saved from eternal death and damnation. What a glorious hour that would be!

Jesus said, "Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour." Jesus was fully human. Don't ever think that just because he is also true God that his suffering did not bother him. It was even worse for him, not necessarily because the physical pain was more intense, but because he knew exactly what was about to happen, and because his death and substitutionary sacrifice were totally foreign to his divine nature. He is immortal God, and yet he had to die. He is without sin, and yet he had to carry on his shoulders what he despised the most, the sins of the world. And yet, Jesus was willing to endure, not only death but also damnation for you and me. He was willing for he knew what he

would accomplish through his atoning work. Jesus speaks of it here when he says: ***Father, glorify your name!"***

He had come to bring glory to the name of his Heavenly Father. He did this, first of all, by living a perfect life in our place.

Jesus also brought glory to his Father's name by paying for our sins with his own blood. God created us to love him and to live in perfect fellowship with him. However, our sin destroyed that perfect relationship and separated us from God. Jesus came to reconcile us to God. When God was about to pulverize us with the club of his just anger for the wrong we have done, Jesus pushed us aside and took the punishment for us.

Jesus told the crowd that he would be lifted up from the earth, and indeed he was. He was nailed to a cross and lifted up -- to the Jews the symbol of being cursed by God. And there Jesus hung, suspended between heaven and earth, rejected by men who condemned him falsely and damned by God who condemned him justly, not because of his own sin, but because of our sin which caused him to cry out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Jesus Christ was lifted up from the earth having borne the sins of every sinner who ever walked upon the face of this sin-cursed earth.

But by that perfect death, Jesus won life for us all. He himself said: ***"The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds."*** Yes, Jesus had to die, one person for all people. And by his single life, which was perfect, by his single death in our place, and by his resurrection from death, he has given life to the world. Jesus is the one Seed who died to produce a harvest with an abundance of grain for God. We are that harvest.

St. Paul expressed it this way: Galatians 4:4-5 ***But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons.*** The time had come – God's time. All that he had promised was fulfilled when Jesus came to this earth to live and die for us.

During this season of Lent we remember the time when Jesus fully met the requirements of the Law in our place, and how he fully paid the debt for all our sins by his death in our place. The humiliation and death of our Savior means exaltation and life for you and me. As we come to worship during this Lenten season, we shall hear again the familiar story of our Lord's Passion. May we also remember and take to heart the words of our Lord who said: ***"Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name!"*** The hour of glory has come for us all. Let us bring glory to the name of the Father trusting that because Jesus was lifted up from the earth on the cursed cross, we shall be lifted up in exaltation before God's throne. We shall walk as the children of light. For though he was rejected by God on the cross, by his death he has drawn all people to himself and we are reconciled to God. The hour has come, and that hour is the hour of our victory over Satan, sin and death, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

In Christ,
Pastor Jeffrey A. Bovee

Church Library

This month, March, we will look at CD's in our library. Recently we had 4 sets donated. The titles are:

- Praying for Boys (3 cd's)
- Making Children Mind Without Losing Yours (6 cd's)
- 5 Love Languages for Children (3 cd's)
- One More Try (marriage) (3 cd's)

Three of them talk about parenting, stressing love, discipline, and praying for our children. The 4th is about making "One More Try" to keep your marriage together. "What to do when you marriage is falling apart" is the subtitle. You could listen to these in your car, if it has a CD player.

The CD's that we already have in our library are few. They are:

- Hymn sampler for Christian Worship
- MVL choirs—Connected to Christ
- Hymns for Children
- Two others titled "Celebrate Jesus" Vol. 1 & 2 seem to be missing.

We also have two CD Roms to be played on your computer. "Why I Left the LCMS," and "God's Promise."

Please check these items out, and report back how they are. Thanks.

LeiLani Rahn,
Church librarian

Council Digest

The church council met on Tuesday, February 18. A summary of reports and action from the meeting not reported elsewhere in the Fortress follows:

- Membership changes approved
 - Releases
 - Philip Lendt
 - Katie Pansch
- Ministrations
 - Baptism
 - 7 Feb Edison James Weber
- Pastor Guenther currently is conducting a five-week Sunday morning Bible class on the St. John's mission statement. Each session includes an open forum to gather input for the Ministry Review 2020 being conducted by the church council.
- Council members previewed the March 2020 WELS Connection featuring Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary and the need to encourage more young men to train for pastoral ministry.

- Financial Secretary Mike Thom provided rationale for a new financial reporting format. Bookkeeper Wendy Lambrecht was invited to be present during the report and shared her support for the changes being implemented. He will continue to fine tune the report before the council is asked to adopt the new format at a future meeting.
- The annual Minnesota District Church Leaders' Workshop is Saturday, March 7, from 9 am-2:30 pm at NorthCross Lutheran Church in Lakeville. Pastor Guenther is planning to attend and invited other council members to join him.
- Wayne Wels and Jason Enter have completed an audit of the congregation's 2019 financial records and have found them to be in good order. The council accepted the report and will ask the voters' assembly to approve it at their April meeting.
- The new Christian Worship hymnal is planned for release during Advent of 2021. The Elders, together with the Worship Committee, were assigned the task of developing a transitional plan for our congregation's adoption of the new hymnal, including the budgeting of funds for its purchase.
- Deacon Brad Price reported that a new first aid kit has been purchased for storage in the ushers' closet along with two flashlights. The ushers have been surveyed as a part of the Ministry Review 2020 process.
- It has been four years since the last pictorial directory of our congregational members was produced. The Evangelism Board has plans in place for the next directory to be produced beginning in August.
- Reporting as a Minnesota Valley Lutheran High school delegate, Pastor Guenther noted that hiring an architect for planned renovations and additions at the high school at a cost of about \$470,000 was approved contingent upon raising at least \$1 million before the hire takes place. Site preparation, much of it necessary even if construction is delayed and much of it in the form of in kind donations, will be done this coming summer.
- Pastor Emeritus Wayne Laitinen has agreed to serve as congregational archivist. After a period of time for assimilation and assessment, a support committee will be organized to assist with the work of organizing and digitizing the archives.
- President Thiesfeldt noted that many of the boards and committees are busily involved in the work related to Ministry Review 2020. The March council meeting will be devoted to hearing reports on this work. If necessary, a second meeting will be scheduled in order to complete the reporting process on schedule and develop a congregational survey for dissemination during the month of April.
- Next Church Council meeting – Tuesday, March 17, at 7 pm.
- Next Voters' meeting—Tuesday, April 28, at 7 pm.

Submitted by Steven Thiesfeldt, congregational chairman

Our Synod at Work

2020 Wisconsin Synod Annual Report to Members

The Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod has published its annual report to members for 2020. The report is entitled “Your Gifts, God’s Blessings.” It has been traditional for this column to spend a few months pointing out the highlights of the report. As in the past, the report is divided into four sections: (1) Called to Prepare; (2) Called to Proclaim; (3) Called to Serve; and (4) Called to Support. The report also contains some basic information about the Synod in a section that is entitled “WELS in Brief.” It is that section that we will discuss in this month’s column.

That section describes the Calling of the WELS is to “nurture the faith of our members and to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the world.” We are the third largest Lutheran church body in the United States. WELS has 1,276 churches, 353,753 baptized members, and a total of 281,880 communicant members.

The WELS is divided into twelve districts that allows for more area-specific ministry, personal contacts, and member involvement.

WELS congregations—either individually or as federations—operates one of the largest parochial school systems in the United States. There are 304 Lutheran elementary schools, 393 early childhood ministries, and a total of 27 area Lutheran high schools. WELS also maintains four schools for the education of our pastors, teachers, and staff ministers. They are:

(1) Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, which is located in Mequon, Wisconsin; (2) Martin Luther College, located right here in New Ulm; (3) Luther Preparatory School, which is in Watertown, Wisconsin; and (4) Michigan Lutheran Seminary, located in Saginaw, Michigan.

WELS is a member of the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference. That conference is an organization of 32 confessional church bodies located throughout the world. Also, there are five separately incorporated entities that work closely with the WELS to provide resources necessary to carry out the ministry of WELS.

The synod’s headquarters, known as the WELS Center for Mission and Ministry, is located in Waukesha, Wisconsin. During 2019 they welcomed 46 scheduled tour groups. During the tours the guests learned more about the work of the synod in its visitor’s center. The visitor’s center includes a visual timeline of the history of WELS as well as informational kiosks on areas of ministry. There are also materials from the archives that are on display. Guests are shown a video highlighting WELS’ ministry and they receive a tour of the synod’s headquarters.

We will continue pointing out highlights from the 2020 Annual Report in next month’s column.

Gerald Woodley

St. John's Mugs

Newly ordered St. John's coffee mugs are used by our prospective member visitation team as a gift to help our new friends remember our local congregation.

Perhaps you wish you had your own St. John's mug to help you remember to pray for our ministry during your morning java. Your wish has been granted!

Stop by the display table in the narthex to pick up one of these stylish mugs for only \$5 each! Just leave your payment - cash or check to St John's - in the box provided.



Church Cleaning

Church cleaning is scheduled for Saturday, March 14th from 9-11 am.

Please note that it is a come and go event. Stay for as long or as little as you can.

Men, women and children are needed to get our church cleaned and ready for Easter.

All cleaning supplies will be provided. Many hands make light work!

Pie Donations

MVL has made a request of all congregations within the association to donate pies for the auction on Saturday, March 28th.



Worship Committee

Rejoice! Again I Say Rejoice! Through generous gifts and memorials, three items that were on the Wish List have now been purchased, delivered, installed, and/or ready to go.

We are talking about three items that the Worship Committee has been working on obtaining, namely,

- 1) Handbells,
- 2) Memory for the church organ, and
- 3) a set of three timpani.

The Handbells include everything that is needed to start the Handbell Choir including tables, pads, music, stands, tone chimes and other equipment that can be used by choir ringers. See information in the bulletin and this newsletter about joining the choir.

The organ memory will allow our many organists to preset their own registrations for their own music. This will come in handy as we encounter multiple services with a number of organist overlapping the need to set registrations for various settings. This work was completed in February.

The set of three timpani also arrived in February. The choir and other musicians are looking forward to using our own timpani rather than borrowing from MLC and having to transport each time we want to use them.

Join us in praising God!
The Worship Committee

St. Paul's Lutheran School

splnewulm.org/school/

BoCD Work (SP Board of Child Discipleship)

1. **Wellness Policy** - The board approved a new Wellness Policy which was needed to receive government pricing and subsidy products for the food program at a reduced price.
2. **PreK Tuition Change** – The board reviewed the initial pricing recommendation and lowered the fee for parents to enroll in the full-time program at a cost more in line with what other care facilities are charging in the New Ulm area. A recommendation is being sent to the SP Church Council to approve the calling of a full-time teacher for leading the full-time PreK program as the enrollment warrants.
3. **Cafeteria Tables** – After fifty years of use, some of the tables are wearing out and the board is recommending to the SP Council to use Thrivent Choice Dollars to purchase refurbished tables if available at a reduced price. The BOCD will continue to replace older tables on an annual schedule.
4. **Fob Usage** – Following the Safety Committee's recommendation, parents coming into the school will need to register in the office where they will be granted access to areas needed. Access into the office area is open during school hours. A door bell system is being considered

when the school secretary is not in the office. This would include times such as for Raider Kids Care after school. Temporary fobs that only access during RKC hours may be used for parents using the after school program until a door-bell is installed. Decisions were made in the interest of school safety for all children.

MLC Basketball Tournament

The basketball season was highlighted with the MLC Tournament on February 14-16. The 7th/8th Girls team finished with the Third Place Trophy winning the final game against Crown of Life, W. St. Paul, 29-25. The 8th grade Boys team lost 39-34 in the Championship game against Bloomington. Thanks to all who support the St. Paul's Raiders!

MVL Music Festival

Some of our young musicians will be participating at the MVL Music Festival on Saturday, March 7. This is not a competition, but the participants will perform before a judge. Afterwards, the judges will meet with the students to discuss their performance.

Two SPL Musical Events

The Raider Choir will be performing the musical, "Rockin' Robinhood" on the evenings of March 20-21 at 7:00 pm. Grades 3 & 4 will be performing their musical, "E-I-E-I Oops!" on Tuesday, March 24 at 6:00 pm. Come and join us for evenings of music. The musicals are open to the public and will be funded through a free-will collection. All proceeds benefit the music programs and will be used to cover their production expenses.

Calendar

Mar. 4 Gr. K-4 sing at 4 pm Lenten Service
Mar. 6-11 NO Dist. 88 Busing
Mar. 7 MVL Music Festival
Mar. 12-13 NO School: Spring Break
Mar. 20-21 Raider Musical: 7 pm
Mar. 24 Grades 3-4 Musical: 6:30 pm
Mar. 25 Gr. 5-8 sing at 4 pm Lenten Service

Respectfully Submitted,
James Dretske
jdretske@splnewulm.org

Cards of Caring

The St. John's Cards of Caring volunteers will meet on Saturday, March 14th to make Easter cards for our homebound and thinking of you members and Befriend a Mission families.

You are welcome between the hours of 9 am and noon at 403 N. Minnesota St. (enter on 4th North). Besides fellowship, this is a way for volunteers to serve the Lord.

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

Handbell Choir

If you'd like to be a part of something musical but you have limited vocal ability, then the new Handbell Choir is for you! If you're not good at reading notes or rhythm, I can teach you!

Practices will be in the church basement beginning at 6-7 pm on Wednesdays.

Please indicate your willingness to join the Handbell Choir by email to Becky Berg:
rberg@mvlhs.org

Youth Group

The Youth Group will be hosting a Midweek Lenten Meal. Our day is Wednesday, March 11.

Please sign up at: bit.ly/March11Meal.

There will be choices to set-up and serve, donating food and to serve and clean-up.

Upcoming Events:

Decorate at St. Paul's School for Easter for Kids: Friday, April 3

Help with Easter for Kids: Saturday, April 4

Decorate the church basement for Easter: Saturday, April 11

Help serve Easter Brunch: Sunday, April 12

Cancer Journey Fellowship

Have you or someone in your immediate family had a cancer diagnosis? Many of us have. Maybe it was yourself, your spouse, a child, or a parent. It might be a recent diagnosis, or the person may already be undergoing treatment, be in post-treatment, or be in remission.

If this is the case, a gathering for fellowship and Scripture-based encouragement is being planned for you on Sunday, March 8, at 4 pm at church in the lower level fellowship area. Light refreshments will be provided. One of our pastors will lead a devotion or short Bible study. There will be time for conversations.

We hope to serve those among us who either themselves or whose immediate family member has at any time experienced a cancer diagnosis. We welcome and encourage you to come. You don't need to sign up or bring anything.

Women of St. John's

The Women of St. John's met on February 4, 2020. Pastor Guenther opened with a devotion from I Samuel 1. We often have a friend who “out-gifts” us, but we can't “out-gift” God. You can give God your car or house or your child for a burnt offering, but we can't “out-gift” God. Hannah gave her only son, but God gave Hannah (and us) His only Son and eternal life. Our response should be to use our time, talent, energy and wealth to respond to His love.

Liz Wessel introduced Prof. Jon Roux as our presenter. Prof. Roux has taught Religion, Spelling and Handwriting, but now teaches Reading, Writing and Children's Literature. We learned that books teach children to create and help develop all of their senses. There have been many new developments in children's literature. The professor stressed the importance of reading aloud to children to increase comprehension and fluency. He read some of the books to the group and then had volunteers help to read books designed to be read together by 2 to 4 people.

Due to time constraints, there was an abbreviated Business Meeting. The Treasurer reported a balance of \$371.39.

Donna Dose explained that the pots for coffee and spouts are color coded. Marley Kuckhahn gave a reported on LWMS. She is planning to go to the National Convention. Others are welcome to attend and can room together. She also reported on the Brazilian Flunker missionaries.

Lois Willems reminded us that during the March 3rd meeting, which will be held in the new narthex, we will decorate Easter eggs. Everyone is requested to bring scissors.

Refreshments were served by Grace Bases and Linda Schmidt.

Ruth Aufderheide, Secretary