

St. John's Newsletter – Fall 2013

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From His Word ...

As the air conditioner hums away and the dog days of summer beat down on us, writing the “Fall” newsletter seems out of sync. But fall is coming. Leaves are yellowing. Golden tassels crown the corn fields. The smack of football pads sounds from the practice field. Colleges have started and soon our school year will begin as well.

Falls brings to my mind the words of the hymn writer, Henry Lyte, “Change and decay in all around I see; O thou who changest not, abide with me! (Christian Worship 588:2). What comfort when the Scriptures declare: “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever” (Hebrews 13:8 NIV84). The same Jesus, who went to the cross for you, reigns over all for you, now and forever. No matter what change and decay falls around us, your Jesus is the same.

The picture to the right was the logo for the WELS Convention this summer. In Christ alone is our unchanging hope. For he alone died for us and rose in glory. He alone is the Sacrifice that paid for sin and the King who reigns over all. He does not change but is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

As a new school year starts with its challenges and opportunities, remember your Jesus reigns.

As the uncertainties and fluctuations in the annual harvest approach, remember your Jesus reigns.

As the news media speculates about new U.S. military action in the Middle East, remember your Jesus reigns.

As the autumn years of life grow more difficult, remember your Jesus reigns.

Soon we return to the school-year worship schedule, Bible class, and Sunday school. Include them in your weekly schedule, so that we can come together and worship our King. What stability he gives you and me in this world full of change and decay! Abide with

him as you take to heart his word, for he abides with you.

WELS Convention

In the “Together” inserts, you have received summaries of what took place at the WELS convention this last July. Here are a few highlights that struck me as I attended.

The tone of the convention was positive and brotherly, centered on Christ. The overall emphasis stressed missions: spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ at home and abroad. “Christ alone” is the only message that saves.

No official Bible translation was chosen for Northwestern Publishing House, and the synod will not try to produce its own translation. Rather the WELS will have a standing committee to make recommendations to some of the existing translation committees for improvements

God has blessed our synod with pastors trained in the original languages of the Bible. They are not tied to the limitations of any one translation as they teach and preach. What about our members, who need to use an English translation? God has blessed our age with several good English translations, including the NIV, KJV, NKJV, AAT, ESV, NASB. Rather than worrying about which one might be better, the best thing to do is to be reading the Bible. If you want to do a more in depth study in your private devotional life, then comparing two or three translations can help you see past some of the shortcomings all translations suffer from. (And don't forget that God has given you a pastor to preach, teach, and address any questions you may have.)

Finally, over the next two years the synod plans to continue its current world missions and worker training system and also to open ten new home missions per year. This calls for a 4% increase in the WELS budget each year. Keep this in your prayers as we set our Congregational Mission Offering.



Fall Schedule

On September 8 we return to the regular fall schedule:

- 9:15 Sunday School
- 9:30 Youth Group and Bible Class
- 10:30 Divine Service

Sunday School

On September 8 at 9:15 a new Sunday school year starts for us. The Christ-Light lessons have been revised so that we will cover important lessons in both the Old and New Testaments each year. Children as young as three may start Sunday school, if parents feel they are ready. Judy Lubenow is teaching preschool and kindergarten. Mackensie Rohloff is teaching 1st and 2nd grade. Lisa Nelson is teaching 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade. Leah Nelson will be doing music with the children again this year. *We are still looking for teachers and substitutes. If you're willing to help, please let Pastor Bitter know.*

Youth Group

The youth group (grades 6-12) will meet Sunday mornings starting on September 8 at 9:30. (6th, 7th, and 8th graders are asked to still come to music at 9:15 until they are confirmed.) Bridget Joos will be leading a Bible study and Leah Nelson will meet with the group once a month to plan activities and services.

Bible Class

Also on September 8, we begin Bible class at 9:30. For the first several weeks, we'll look at Puzzling Sayings of Jesus. As you read through the Gospel, Jesus at times chose very striking words to teach God's truth. On September 8 we will look at Mark 9:43-48 - "If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off ..." What's Jesus talking about? It sounds like self-mutilation, but is it?

What sayings of Jesus will we cover in the following weeks? That's up to you. Which

words of Jesus would you like to look at? Let me know. Even if you don't know the reference but only the general thought, we'll be able to find it. So just call, email, or tell pastor your request.

LWMS

The Crow River Conference of the the Lutheran Women Missionary Society invites all the women of St. John's to attend the Fall Rally at Calvary, Glenwood on Saturday, September 14. Registration opens at 10:30 and opening devotion is at 11:00. A light lunch will be served before the presentation. The rally will wrap up around 3:00.

Mission Festival

Mission Festival is scheduled for September 15. Pastor Michael Hatzung will be here that day to share with us some of the work we are doing together as the WELS. He is a Christian giving counselor that helps with Christian estate planning.

We are planning an abbreviated liturgy for that Sunday to allow time for Pastor Hatzung presentation. The Lord's Supper will be celebrated the following week. Here is the schedule:

September 15, 2013

- 9:15 Sunday School
- 9:30 Youth Group and Bible Class
- 10:30 Divine Service
- 11:15 Christian Estate Planning
- 12:00 Potluck

Christian Estate Planning

Is it for you?

Most people know they need to do some estate planning. Did you know that only one out of every three people has a will?

How about you? Of all people, Christians ought to have wills.

Our church has invited a Christian giving counselor, Pastor Michael Hatzung, for mission festival on September 15, since one part of a Christian estate plan is your will.

Come and learn how a will can be made that reflects what's in your heart. You will also have an opportunity to schedule a private consultation with a Christian giving counselor to have your questions answered. This is a service offered to you by our synod. It is confidential and at no cost.

Find answers to questions like these:

- ✓ Why is it so important for a Christian to have a will? What is a Christian preamble?
- ✓ Do I need a will if I have a living trust?
- ✓ Does a single person need a will? Who will take care of things when I die?
- ✓ If both parents die what happens to the minor children? Who will raise them? How will they manage their inheritance? Will they receive their inheritance at age 18 or can it be paid to them over a period of years?
- ✓ How can I provide for my family? How much should I leave my children? How much is too much?
- ✓ How can I make a gift to my church through my will?
- ✓ What happens if I die without a will? What is a trust?
- ✓ Can I reduce the costs of probate and taxes with an estate plan?
- ✓ Where do I begin? How much time will it take? How much will it cost?

Projector

Our mission festival speaker needs a projector for his presentation on September 15. If anyone has access to one we could borrow for that morning, please let Pastor Bitter know.

Lord's Supper

Please note that in September, we will celebrate the Lord's Supper on the first (Sept. 1) and fourth (Sept. 22) Sundays. This will allow more time for our mission speaker and presentation on the third Sunday (Sept. 15).

Life Sunday

Pastor Arnold Lemke, Education Director at Christian Life Ministries of the Twin Cities, will be at St. John's for a special Life Sunday service on Sept. 22. The focus of his message for the day will be: "Friends - Don't Forget Your Influence."

Christian Life Ministries is an organization sponsored by people of the WELS and ELS that offers education and counseling services on life issues to churches, schools and other



groups. It provides life-orientated counseling to those with unplanned pregnancies, and a mentoring program to help its clients and their newborn children adjust to and re-enter life in their communities. CLM in the past has helped to sponsor a pro-life Choices program for students at the University of Minnesota, and has various programs related to the needs of teens. It also makes speakers available for presentations from a Christian perspective on various topical issues of interest in our day such as stem cell research, cloning, sexuality, abortion, end-of-life issues, and health care declarations.

A door offering will be taken after the service to support the work of Christian Life Ministries.

Life Issues

A biblical study on life issues will be led by Pastor Lemke on September 22 for Bible class at 9:30 a.m. Our world is continually redefining the morality on life issues from beginning to end. How beneficial to reinforce God's un-

changing truths! There will also be an opportunity to talk about the Health Care Directive.

Fair Booth

We once again staffed a fair booth with St. Paul's at the Steven County Fair. Thank you to Duane & Bonnie Hausmann, Dick and Judy Lubenow, and Dave and Connie Paul for helping to staff the booth.

Memorial Book

The Memorial Book is being updated and arranged in alphabetical order by last name. When it's finished, please take a look to see if there are any additions or corrections that need to be made.

Old Items

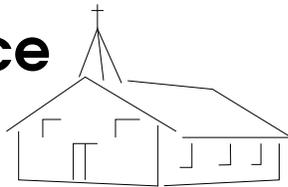
We've been cleaning out the storage rooms and cupboards. Many items have been set out on the tables in the narthex in case anyone would like them. Up until now most of them have been books and pamphlets. However some recently added items include 100th anniversary plates and key chains, film strip projector and film strips, reel-to-reel projector, and more.

Church Cleaning

We plan to do the annual church cleaning in October this year. Similar assignments will be made as in previous years. If you have any changes or requests, please talk with Gloria Zeltwanger (392-5985) as soon as possible.

Maintenance Updates

The new roofs have held up well this summer. We are still paying ourselves back for the portion of the roofs not covered by insurance. As of August 17 there was still a \$3167 deficit in the roof fund.



The toilets in the church were not flushing and after much investigation it was discovered that the sewer pipes underneath the sidewalk were not matching up right. Although the toilets are working for now, the sewer pipes need to be dug up to prevent the problem from happening again.

A new light has been installed for the organist.

Blessings of WELS Membership

What benefits does our congregation receive by being a member of WELS?

1. Identification
2. Training
3. Oversight
4. Missions
5. Finances
6. Publishing
7. Congregational Support
8. Called Worker Support



Over the next several weeks, a short paragraph in the bulletin will explain each of these eight items in turn.

God gives us the privilege of reaching out to the world in his name, and his Holy Spirit works generosity in our hearts, so that these and other ministries can exist. Our congregational offerings are, year after year, the main source for funding the proclamation of Christ's love to us and to all the world.