



DIVINE SAVIOR
Lutheran Church
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MESSENGER

November 2020

Hallelujah!

This month's favorite Bible verse is: **Psalm 118:1**
"Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever."

Psalm 118 is an "Hallelujah" psalm, meaning "Praise the LORD!" Long ago, God's people sang the words of this psalm toward the end of their Passover meal. It was a special occasion time for the God's people to remember how he had rescued their nation from slavery in Egypt; it was a picture of God's rescue of all people from their slavery to sin. The Passover meal reminded each generation how much God truly loved them.

Would disaster continue to interrupt their lives? Would prosperity be withheld? Would earthly death continue to pick away at their loved ones? Yes, yes, and yes. Yet the people sang out praise and thanks to their merciful God for deliverance from all these trials of life. . . and more: "Because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved" (Ephesians 2:4,5).

It is the custom in North America to gather this time of year to celebrate *Thanksgiving*. Whether you are with family, friends, or celebrating alone, take the time to give thanks to our Savior-God for his mercy and deliverance from death through Jesus. Jesus shows us that God is good. Even when times are tough, Jesus proves that his love for us endures forever.

Special Dates in November

Ladies Aid

3rd @ 1:00 p.m.

Co-or. Council Mtg.

10th @ 6:30 p.m.

Worship at the Cross

12th @ 5:30 p.m.

Thanksgiving Eve

25th @ 6:30 p.m.

No JCM Bible Study in Nov.

Food Pantry *

Thursdays
1:00– 3:00 p.m.

Choir Practice

Weds. @ 6:30 pm

Adult Bible Class

Mondays
@ 5:00 p.m.

Worship service times.

Sun. 9:00 & 10:30 a.m.

Mon. 6:30 p.m.

PARISH NEWS

Congregational Changes :

Added: Sandra Lyle from Christ Lutheran, Juneau, Alaska

Baptized:

Transferred Out: Adam Quintanilla to Bethany, Appleton; Rev. Craig & Pat Weber to Zion, Rhinelander;

Called Home to Jesus:

Current Congregational Stats: communicants: 158 souls: 171

Respecting the Governing Authorities



It's that time of year. (Really, it's been *that* year.) Elections are here! The time has come to cast your vote. Who will you vote for? What will you vote for? Your candidates have been airing ads that both explain their platform and degrade their opponents. Everything's about as clear as mud, but I'm sure by now, you know for whom you're voting. Some of you may even have voted already.

So, what's next? It's time to wait to see the results of the election. Will my candidate win? What if he/she doesn't? If your candidate loses, how will you respond? Tensions are high on either side of the fence, whether it concerns the presidential election or local elections. Either way, no matter which candidates win, someone is going to be unhappy. So . . . what if it's you?

As we begin to see the results of this election, I pray that you remember first and foremost that you are child of God. You are not first and foremost a Republican, a Democrat, or a {fill in the blank}. This is going to influence how you respond. As children of God, we know that in all things, God is in control. Paul wrote in **Romans 13**, **"Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God."** (Romans 13:1)

Note, this is talking about the positions of authority as well as those who fill them. No matter who is filling which position, we are to honor and respect them, being subject to their authority. Does this mean that everyone in authority is going to do God's will? Sadly, the answer to that is by-and-large a great big "NO!" It's very rare that there be a candidate who, not only is a believer, but also lives a Christian life, even as far as his or her political stance is concerned.

Even with this being the case, that does not give us the freedom of showing them disrespect or speaking poorly of them. It does mean that we may have to be on guard for the kinds of laws they may attempt to enact or enforce. If a law, or even a mandate, should be against God's will, we are to obey God, rather than man. If the law or mandate is not against God's will, but you disagree with it, as a believer, you are still bound to follow the commands of the authorities God has placed over you.

This does not mean that you have to agree with everything they say or do. But if it is not explicitly against God's will, then you are called to follow it. I have a couple examples from Scripture that may provide encouraging examples to help us be willingly obedient to those God has placed over us.

Think of King David. Before he was king, he served Saul, an unfaithful king. God spoke to Saul through the prophet Samuel, saying, **"You have not kept the command the LORD your God gave you; if you had, he would have established your kingdom over Israel for all time. ¹⁴ But now your kingdom will not endure; the LORD has sought out a man after his own heart and appointed him ruler of his people, because you have not kept the LORD's command."** (1 Samuel 13:13-14) King Saul did not do the will of God. He did not lead the people faithfully. And yet, he was the anointed (chosen) leader of God's people.

David understood this. Though David was chosen to succeed Saul, he knew that it would not be right to speak or act against the authority God had established. While Saul hunted David, David found himself with the opportunity to kill Saul. His men encouraged him to do so, but David responded to them, **"The LORD forbid that I should do such a thing to my master, the LORD's anointed, or lay my hand on him; for he is the anointed of the LORD."** ⁷ With these words David sharply rebuked his men and did not allow them to attack Saul. (1 Samuel 24:6-7) David fully understood that though Saul was an ungodly leader and was trying to kill him, he, David, was still subject to Saul's authority.

The apostle Paul provides a New Testament example. After being arrested for sharing the gospel, he was brought before the Sanhedrin for questioning. **Paul looked straight at the Sanhedrin and said, "My brothers, I have fulfilled my duty to God in all good conscience to this day."** ² At this the high priest Ananias ordered those standing near Paul to strike him on the mouth. ³ Then Paul said to him, **"God will strike you, you whitewashed wall! You sit there to**

(Continued on page 3)

judge me according to the law, yet you yourself violate the law by commanding that I be struck!”

⁴Those who were standing near Paul said, “How dare you insult God’s high priest!”

⁵Paul replied, “Brothers, I did not realize that he was the high priest; for it is written: ‘Do not speak evil about the ruler of your people.’” (Acts 23:1-5)

Though Paul was doing what the Lord had commanded him to do, he was falsely arrested, and the leaders broke the law of the governing authority by striking him. (It was illegal to strike a Roman citizen when he was not found guilty of a crime.) Paul rebuked them. To be clear, it is good and right to rebuke any who sin, but it must be done with gentleness and love. **“Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted.”** (Galatians 6:1)

Paul did not rebuke them gently, but fell in to sin by lashing out at and speaking evil against the authority God had placed over him. When he realized this, he repented.

I’ve provided these two examples to help us remember that though our authorities may not act according to God’s will, it is still his will that we honor and respect them. It is his will that our actions as Christians will shine forth and give praise to God, even in this area. We do so, not just because it is a command from God, but because we know that great things God has done for us.

He sent Jesus to bear our sins on the cross. That includes even when we sin against our governing (or other) authorities. When we sin, the Spirit moves us to repent of our sins, as Paul did, and know that they have been forgiven in Christ Jesus. May God help us remember such great blessings! Yes, they await us in heave, but they also are ours now. May God help us to serve him faithfully by being obedient and respectful to the earthly authorities he has placed over us. And in all this, may he grant us authorities who are faithful to his Word and his will. God, move our hearts that we remember that we are your children first, and earthly citizens second. Let that motivate us to graciously honor and respect all those in authority. Amen

In Christian love,

Pastor Wolf B. Parsons

Announcements from Pastor:

Reminder of dates the choir will be singing:

November 1st, 15th, 25th, and 29th; December 13th and 24th

Midweek Services Coming Up.

Reminder: Whenever there is a special midweek service, there is no Monday night worship. We are blessed to have 8 special opportunities to worship these next two months (**Thanksgiving Eve Worship at 6:30pm, Midweek Advent services at 4:30pm, Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship at 6:30pm, Christmas Festival Service at 9:00am, and New Year’s Eve service at 6:30pm**). This means that their will not be Monday night worship beginning November 23rd. We will resume Monday night worship on January 4, 2021.

Extra Opportunities to Worship, not to replace one worship service with another:

When we have special midweek services, we encourage you to take advantage of all these special opportunities to worship, above and beyond Sunday morning worship when you are able. They are different services and provide opportunities to focus on different parts of God’s Word, and we hope you are able to join for both Sunday and midweek services.

We also understand that this year, there is the added factor of COVID-19. In the past, we did not record most of our midweek services. This year, we will record every service, and it will be available online for those who wish to join us virtually in worship for this upcoming Advent season. (divinesaviorshawano.org/sermons)

News Bits and Pieces

Michigan Flood Follow-up

The July issue of *MESSENGER* reported on how WELS Christian Aid and Relief was involved in providing assistance to Holy Scripture Lutheran Church in Midland, MI, where Pastor Paul Schneider serves. Pastor Schneider had previously served St. Martin Lutheran Church, our neighbor in Belle Plaine.

While Holy Scripture is a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, WELS Christian Aid and Relief along with the leadership team of Good Shepherd Lutheran, the WELS congregation in Midland, along with nearly 100 volunteers became actively involved in cleaning out and sanitizing homes. Multiple other WELS congregations assisted their Midland brothers and sisters by donating replacement hymnals and Bibles and even vehicles and appliances.

In mid-October Su Hanson spoke with Pastor and Mrs. Schneider, who reported that flood water had filled the church basement and sanctuary up to the window sills. Pews, Bibles, and hymnals were all ruined or severely damaged. The appliances in the basement were all ruined and need to be replaced. Barb Schneider commented, "It's cold in church."

Since the church was not situated in a flood plain, there was no flood insurance. However, when heavy rains caused two dams to fail releasing the water from two lakes upstream from Midland, a huge tsunami cascaded downstream flooding otherwise flood-safe areas.

At this time Holy Scripture Lutheran Church can use financial support to help restore and replace what was lost in the flood. What complicates the current problem is that contractors are heavily engaged in restoring and replacing a lot of damaged properties and equipment, which makes both workers and replacement equipment scarce.

Interested people should keep alert for additional information about the Midland situation. There may be ways in which Divine Savior members can help.

The Future of the 10:30 Service

Some members have been wondering how long there will continue to be a 10:30 service on Sundays. At present there is no answer to the question other than to say it depends upon how long the current

COVID-19 health concern continues. The question appears on each month's Church Coordinating Council agenda so that the issue is not overlooked. However, until the health concerns are significantly reduced, the 10:30 Sunday morning service will likely remain.

Nine-Month Financial Picture

Three-quarters of 2020 are now in the books, and we continue to underfund the Unified Budget. Still, donations totaling \$135,380 have exceeded expenses by \$7,067. We have spent \$128,314. By comparison, three-quarters of the budget equals \$146,298. Thus, we underspent the budget by \$17,984.

A comparison of the first nine months of 2020 income and expenses with 2019 is interesting because 2019 might be considered "normal" while 2020 is very different.

	<u>Income</u>	<u>Expenses</u>	<u>Difference</u>
2019	138,779	126,440	12,339
2020	135,380	128,314	7,066

Endowment Funds Update

On October 7th the Endowment Funds Committee met to consider how much money will be available for grants from Fiscal Year 2020 earnings of slightly less than \$9,000. Both Student Assistance and Project grant applications become available in early November and must be completed and submitted by the first Sunday in January in order to be considered by the committee. Members of Divine Savior are eligible to apply either individually or as organizations such as the food pantry or Ladies Aid, for example.

Recently, a question was raised about the Endowment Funds plaques displayed in the hallway across from the entrance to the Fellowship Hall. The question: What is required to receive an engraved plate on the plaques? The answer: Memorials or gifts of \$100 or more are commemorated with an engraved plate on one of the plaques. Additional donations of \$100 or more for the same purpose are noted with a cross being added to the plate for up to a maximum of six crosses. The \$100 donations have to be made at one time; they cannot be an accumulation of smaller gifts over a period of time that ultimately total \$100 or more.

Selections from WELS TOGETHER

Forward in Christ Highlights God's Guidance in Life

A new series in *Forward in Christ* magazine (FIC) is highlighting how God works in the lives of everyday Christians.

"My Christian life" focuses on real-life blessings and challenges of WELS members and how God helps Christians through whatever circumstances they find themselves in.

Articles this year have highlighted adoption, mental illness, cancer, and tragic accidents as well as looked at how Christians share their faith through various vocations.

"Every Christian is on a journey through life, trusting Jesus to guide, strengthen, and comfort them," says Rev. John Braun, FIC's executive editor. "We want to share the stories of Christians who faced challenges along the way to encourage us all. Jesus does not abandon us even in life's difficult days. We hope this series reminds us all of the Lord's promises to be with us and sustain us."

"My Christian life" is just one of the new features introduced by *Forward in Christ* in its redesign launched in January 2020. A Q&A column with accompanying Bible study, an expanded "Confessions of faith" feature, and a monthly photo montage highlighting pictures from our readers join other stories of faith and articles designed to address important issues facing Christians today as well as provide in-depth looks at important biblical truths. As WELS' official magazine, FIC also shares news from its congregations, schools, ministry affiliates, and synodical areas of ministry.

This year, FIC launched a new website, forwardinchrist.net, and a free weekly e-newsletter that includes articles, photos, and special sneakpeeks. Readers also can engage with the magazine through its social media sites on Facebook and Instagram.

Read this month's "My Christian life" article on a WELS nurse.

To read a "My Christian Life" article as well as many other great articles, visit forwardinchrist.net.

(Note: Each month 25 copies of Forward in Christ are put on the hallway table across from the church office for members to take at no cost. Try one. You might like it.)

News from WELS Benefit Plans

The WELS VEBA Commission has announced the 2021 premium rates for WELS VEBA medical benefits will not change from the 2020 rates. The commission is pleased to provide this rate stability to help support WELS ministry efforts.

"WELS VEBA is purposefully designed for workers serving at WELS and Evangelical Lutheran Synod ministries. As a plan sponsored by a religious organization, WELS VEBA is uniquely consistent with both God's Word and the law," says Mr. Joshua Peterman, director of WELS Benefit Plans.

In addition to steady health care rates, the WELS Benefits Plans Office has implemented a Pension Plan contribution holiday underway during the October 2020 quarter. No contributions were charged to calling bodies for pension benefits this quarter. Peterman says this is a savings of \$1,132 per full-time called worker and a total of about \$5 million in savings across all of WELS. In a difficult year for many WELS schools and churches, WELS Benefit Plans is able to offer this small relief to ministry work.

The Conference of Presidents Meets

(Note: The synod's 12 District Presidents meet periodically to consider a wide range of topics relating to doctrine, congregations, and called workers.)

The Conference of Presidents (COP) met at the WELS Center for Mission and Ministry, Waukesha, Wis., during the second week of October. This was the first face-to-face meeting of the COP since January. Other meetings, including the assignment of graduates from Martin Luther College and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, have been held via Zoom video conference.

During the meeting the COP...

- Received an encouraging financial update from Chief Financial Officer Mr. Kyle Egan. Egan's report showed the synod ended the last fiscal year in good financial shape due to better-than-expected offerings and significantly lower expenditures. The report also included the good news that Congregation Mission Offerings for the year continue to be higher than planned.

Selections from WELS TOGETHER

COP Meeting (continued)

- Chose “Here We Stand” as the theme of the 2021 synod convention. On the 500th anniversary of Luther’s bold confession at the Diet of Worms, this theme reminds us of the importance of continuing to stand on the truth of Scripture.

- Reviewed a new video that reminds congregations of the importance of Congregation Mission Offerings. The district presidents will be strongly encouraging all congregations to make this video available to their leaders and members.

Home missions faithfully moving forward

Two young WELS mission congregations launched their first public worship services in September.

“Even in the face of the difficulties of COVID-19, our home missionaries and members are faithfully sharing God’s Word in weekly worship following appropriate health guidelines,” says Rev. Keith Free, administrator of WELS Home Missions. “Extra efforts are worth it so that we have more opportunities to tell people about Jesus Christ.”

On Sept. 13, Hope, Houston, Texas, held its opening service in a local dance studio. WELS Board for Home Missions authorized funding for this new mission in a growing urban neighborhood in Houston in May 2019. Rev. Andrew Nemmers was assigned to serve the congregation, which is made up of a dedicated group of core members that have been meeting monthly for Bible study since 2015.

Nemmers notes, “Even though this was not how we anticipated starting worship—several core group families unable to join in person, everyone wearing masks, and social distancing—our first service was definitely successful! After months of not being able to gather in person, it was incredibly uplifting to be able to gather together around the Word again. We are excited to see what God has in store for us as we continue worshipping together and reaching out to our community.”

Members of Sure Foundation, Brandon, S.D., opened their ministry center on Sept. 18 and then held their grand opening worship service at a local hotel on Sept. 20.

“After a year of meeting, working, connecting, and planning, there was a great deal of excitement

from the core group of Sure Foundation as well as some prospects from the Brandon community,” says Rev. Craig Wilke, Sure Foundation’s home missionary. “We are incredibly excited to continue to reach out to the community of Brandon and to proclaim the comforting message of our Sure Foundation, Jesus.”

Two other home mission congregations celebrated milestones on Sept. 27. Christ the Rock, Hutto, Texas, and St. Paul, Adams-Friendship, Wis., both dedicated their new worship facilities. WELS Church Extension Fund, Inc., helped provide funding for both locations.

For more information on WELS Home Missions, visit wels.net/homemissions

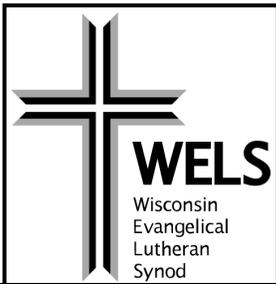
MLC Celebrates 25th Anniversary

Twenty-five years ago when Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., was about to open its doors for the first time, there were so many questions. What will this new college be like? How will it be organized? What will the curriculum be? Will it be able to continue to produce the number of candidates for ministry needed by the synod? Will the members of the synod embrace this new school?

Now, after 25 years, these questions have been answered. And, we thank God that they have been answered in a way that demonstrates God’s rich blessings on this school and on our synod. Today, MLC has been embraced and supported by the people of our synod as OUR WELS college of ministry. Enrollment at MLC continues to be strong. Having future pastors, teachers, and staff ministers studying and working together on one campus builds relationships that will last a lifetime.

MLC used homecoming weekend as a time to mark its 25th anniversary. A special worship service including special music and choirs was held on October 4, followed by a concert in the afternoon.

This anniversary is a time to thank God for blessing this school and enabling it to carry out its purpose faithfully. We thank the faculty and staff of MLC for 25 years of faithful and dedicated service. We thank the students of MLC, now and in years past, for coming to MLC and saying, “Here am I, send me!” And we thank the members of our synod who have embraced and supported this school with their prayers and offerings.



2020

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
<p>1 Worship @ 9:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.</p>	<p>2 ** Worship 6:30 p.m.</p>	<p>3 Ladies Aid @ 1:00 p.m. Pray & Play 3:00 p.m.</p>	<p>4 Choir Practice 6:30 p.m.</p>	<p>5 Food Pantry 1:00-3:00 p.m.</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>7 .</p>
<p>8 Worship w/ communion @ 9:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.</p>	<p>9 ** Divine Savior Worship w/communion @ 6:30 p.m.</p>	<p>10 Pray & Play 3:00 p.m. Co-ord. Council Meeting 6:30 p.m.</p>	<p>11 Choir Practice 6:30 p.m.</p>	<p>12 Food Pantry 1:00-3:00 p.m. WATC 5:30 p.m.</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14</p>
<p>15 Worship @ 9:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.</p>	<p>16 ** Worship 6:30 p.m.</p>	<p>17 Pray & Play 3:00 p.m.</p>	<p>18 1:00 Communi- cation Comm. Mtg. Choir Practice 6:30 p.m.</p>	<p>19 Food Pantry 1:00-3:00 p.m.</p>	<p>20</p>	<p>21</p>
<p>22 Worship w/communion @ 9:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.</p>	<p>23 ** Newsletter ar- ticles due No Monday Night Service</p>	<p>24 Pray & Play 3:00 p.m.</p>	<p>25 Thanksgiving Eve. Service @ 6:30 p.m. w/comm.</p>	<p>26 Thanksgiving NO Food Pantry NO JCM Tonight</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28</p>
<p>29 Worship @ 9:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.</p>	<p>30 ** No Monday Night Service</p>			<p>**NOTE: All Mondays Adult Bible Class at 5:00 p.m.</p>		