



2017

St. John Lutheran Church
Houghton Lake, Michigan 48629

The View from Here

" Easter Accounts "



The celebration of Easter is just around the corner! Actually it's coming this Sunday! And every Sunday. Why? Because the Sundays in Lent are NOT part of the Lenten season. Look at the calendar and you'll see that there are 46 days in the 40 day season of Lent. We don't count the Sundays, because that's a celebration of the Resurrection of our Lord every week. Therefore, we call the Sundays of the Lenten season the "Sundays IN Lent" not the Sundays of Lent.

As we read the four Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, and take a close look at the story of what actually happened on that first Easter Sunday morning, it may seem that the eyewitnesses are reporting totally different events. For instance, in 1 Corinthians chapter 15 (verse 14), Saint Paul says, *"If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain."* So, how could the Bible accounts disagree on such an important, history-changing, life-changing story? Is the story of Christ's resurrection all jumbled up?

I will answer this question, but first I'd like to ask another question ... what would you or other folks say if the accounts agreed? I think they would begin by saying that there were no contradictions. That would be obvious. They might even say that God is consistent. Both true and understandable. However, think back to the time when you were a student in high school literature class and you and a fellow student turned in an essay and you both ended up with exactly the same words. I'm sure the teacher would be mighty suspicious of the possibility that the two of you had shared papers with each other. In other words, you cheated! It could also mean that one of you really knew your stuff, but the other just had good eyesight.

Now, let's suppose these Gospels agreed in every period and comma. What would people say then? Wouldn't believers be likely to say: "Look, God has inspired these writers to say exactly

the same thing in exactly the same words."? Unbelievers might say that it looks like Matthew, Mark, and Luke just copied their stuff from John or from someone else.

Now let's get back to the original question ... How come the writers don't all agree in their accounts of what happened on Resurrection Sunday morning? There is sort of an implied challenge. In other words: If the events of that morning are so earth-shakingly important as Saint Paul said they were, couldn't God inspire the writers to get it correct?

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To answer that, let me start with a bit of history. There were many people who were on the parade route way back in November of 1963 in Dallas the day President Kennedy was shot and killed. Yet, when they were asked what they saw and heard, depending on what they saw and heard, they came up with differing reports. There were, however, two things they agreed on. Everyone who was there in close proximity to the assassination said the President had been shot. And those who were at the hospital said he had died.

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John report different things concerning the events of Resurrection Sunday. They did that because one thought this was important, another reported something else because he thought that piece of information was significant. Just because they focus on different bits of the story, doesn't mean they contradict each other. The people at the hospital who said JFK was dead didn't contradict those on the street who said "he's been shot." In the same way, just because Matthew, Mark, and Luke tell us about the women going to the tomb, and John doesn't pick up the story until he and Peter go there, that doesn't mean those other events didn't happen. It just means each reported what they thought was important. And the Holy Spirit used their individual skills and pieces of knowledge to bring us a picture of what happened that day.

Is there anything the Evangelists agree on? Yes! Everybody agreed that Jesus had died, they agreed Jesus was buried, and they agreed that Jesus was now alive. And that's exactly what Paul was saying when he talked about the importance of Jesus' resurrection. We can believe it, because different writers, seeing different things, reporting different parts of the same event, are in agreement: the dead Christ did indeed come back to life. And because He lives, we are forgiven and reconciled to God.

As we approach this great celebration this and every Sunday, may the joy of Christ's life, death and resurrection permeate every fiber of your being. I can, and it will bring you comfort and peace now and forever!!...

That's the View from Here

Pastor Winter

News on Bible Studies .

Sunday Morning Adults



Bible
STUDY
Join us!

SMALL GROUP NEWS – The



SMALL GROUP

Sunday 9:30 Small

Group will continue with ***A Man Named Martin, Part 2 – The Moment*** beginning the Sunday after Easter. Here is a brief synopsis of what's coming up ...

In *A Man Named Martin - Part 2: The Moment*, viewers will witness the interplay of personalities and events that led to the Protestant Reformation. From Luther's inner struggles of conscience and faith to his call for debate with the Pope to his scathing rebuke of erroneous church practice, this installment examines the semi-scriptural and oft-times unethical teachings and doctrines of the late Medieval Church and how Luther addressed them. From purgatory, penance, and indulgences to the treasury of merits of Christ, Masses for the dead, and the institution of the Papacy, Luther – and other like-minded reformers – had a misinformation overload on their hands.

A cast of scholars and professional church workers share their expertise on the cultural and religious milieu in which Luther operated. A discussion guide, complete with numerous Internet links and helpful questions, assists viewers toward a deeper understanding of this critical period in the life of Christ's church on earth.

If you missed participating in this very interesting study on Thursday mornings, bring your coffee and join us.

PASTOR'S SUNDAY ADULT STUDY -

This entire Sunday School year we are continuing "*A Longer Look at the Lessons*", during the Adult Bible Study time at 11:00am. Many who have



attended are enjoying spending time digging deeper into the scripture lessons of each week. Come join us in the Luther Room beginning at 11:00am. Feel free to bring along your coffee, a treat, and a friend!

Ladies Bible Study Group:

Submitted by Monika Pfannes

We have finished our study on the power of words, *Keep It Shut*, and will begin a new



Bible Study by Liz Curtis Higgs (author of *Bad Girls & Really Bad Girls*) after Easter. Thank you to all of the wonderful St. John Ladies who bring

such wonderful fellowship to this group. We have laughed (loads), cried (some), prayed (daily), and loved (continuously) throughout our studies. When this group began, our prayer was that lives would be touched, and caring for each other through prayer and time spent exploring God's Word would be the result. You all have touched and enriched the lives of your group "guides" each other and those around you in church and the community. Carry on ladies – we can't wait to continue our spiritual walk with you!

~Kristi & Monika

News From the Pew –

Submitted by Arlene Shull-

Legend of the Dogwood Tree

The dogwood tree is used to signify the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Even though the bible does not talk about the type of tree on which Jesus was crucified, traditional stories or legends claim he was nailed on a dogwood tree.



According to legend, the plant used to grow into a very large tree and because of this; it was mainly used to make crosses. When the tree sensed it would be used to crucify Jesus, it was greatly distressed, which is why Jesus spoke to it saying it would no longer grow large enough to be used for cruel purposes ever again.

The tree's flowers take the shape of a cross with two long and two short petals on the sides. Right at the edge of the petals are small holes signifying the nails of the cross. A green cluster in the middle of the flowers is said to represent the crown of thorns that Jesus was given during his crucifixion.

(We attempted to verify the truth of this legend and according to the Information Center at the Ministry of Tourism in Israel, Dogwood Trees do not grow in this part of the world. It is a beautiful legend based on a 3-verse story (below) and can be used to remind us of the beauty behind the agony of Christ's passion.)

The Legend of the Dogwood

(in verse)

"When Christ was on earth, the dogwood grew
To a towering size with a lovely hue.

Its branches were strong and interwoven,
And for Christ's cross its timbers were chosen.

"Being distressed at the use of the wood,
Christ made a promise which still holds good:

'Never again shall the dogwood grow
To be large enough for a tree, and so,
Slender and twisted it shall always be,
With cross-shaped blossoms for all to see.

"The petals shall have bloodstains marked brown,
And in the blossom's center a thorny crown.

All who see it will think of me,
Nailed to a cross from a dogwood tree.
Protected and cherished this tree shall be,
A reflection to all of my agony."

News From the Branch –

Submitted by Glen Bromm-

KIDZ CHURCH

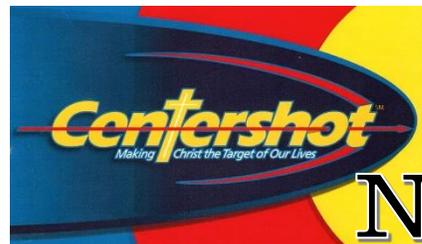
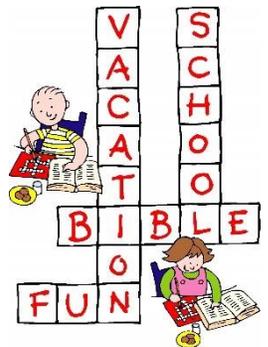
Our Kidz church continues to serve the children of our congregation. Our teachers have been working hard to provide an opportunity for the children to grow in the grace of our Lord. If you see a child carrying a project that they had completed during their class, please feel free to ask them about it and offer some encouragement.



A planning meeting on **Monday, April 10, (7:30pm)** for our VBS program in June has been set. I ask that all regular volunteers attend and any other members who would like to help out.

We have a wide variety of task to suit anyone's talents. The meeting will be on Monday April 10th at 7:30 at the church. If you have been looking for a way to serve please consider joining us in this ministry.

Yours in Christ
Glen Bromm



NEWS!

Submitted by Kaitlyne Warmack-

April 1st was our last Centershot session of this school year and we finished up the Bible Study

entitled "The Plan". We will not be holding a formal class over the summer (more about that to follow) due to a history of low attendance during summer vacation. We will be starting up our Fall Session on **Saturday, September 23, 2017**, focusing on Discipleship and then Stewardship, ending the weekend before Hunting Season begins.

Brand New for Summer 2017!!!



Come join us for our
**Open Shoot
 Summer Archery
 Session**

Every age – Every level welcome to join!

When & Where

~Saturday morning - 9:30am-11:30am
 ~Artesia Youth Park (Centershoot location)



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Questions? Call **Kaitlynn** (989-965-1960)
 or **Alekz** (989-329-7445)

We have made arrangements with Artesia Youth Park to continue meeting Saturday mornings from 9:30 – 11:30am for Open Shoot Saturdays. Anyone is welcome to come to an Open Shoot Session, even those new to archery. Instructors will be there to help all levels of archers. We look forward to helping our young archers become even more skilled, and will be improving our skills as well. Want to try your skills against other archers? – talk to an instructor! There are opportunities for us to participate in local competitions. As with all our sessions there is no financial commitment for our Open Shoot sessions. As an added bonus, this is a drop-in, come when you can activity. No sign-up necessary!

Those Who Serve...

Please submit names of those you know who are currently serving so we can print an updated, and accurate list for **2017**

News From . . .

The Board of Directors

On behalf of the St. John Board of Directors, we'd like to extend a big thank you to Carol Newman, Paula Fuller and Sally Johnson for serving as our audit committee. Not only did they volunteer, but they conducted a thorough audit utilizing the Congregational Internal Control Review worksheets provided by The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. The written report and suggestions (published on page 16-17 of this newsletter) are beneficial and appreciated. They gave generously of their time and talents to complete this task for our church.



The Praise Team

You may have noticed a piece of our equipment has been updated recently. Due to a very generous, albeit anonymous, donation, the Praise Team was able to purchase a new keyboard. This is an amazing musical instrument that will greatly enhance our musical worship in the years to come. So to the anonymous donor we send a heartfelt thank you and pray your find your worship time enriched with abundant blessings!



Thank You!



The Outreach Team

Submitted by *Barbara McIntyre*

The Outreach Team will hold the bi-monthly Community Meal next month. This regular event is for congregation members and the community at large and is intended to provide a place for fellowship as well as outreach. We would be happy to see even more familiar faces on the serving and receiving side of the table. Come and join us at our meeting **Weds., April 5, at 6:15pm.**



News From . . .



Ladies Aid & LWML



MITE BOXES

What, exactly, are "Mites"?

Where did they come from?

Why should we fill those little boxes?

What do they do?

Based on the Biblical account of the widow's mite (Luke 21:1-4), the mite box is intended for regular contributions of "mites" — offerings above and beyond the support given to congregations and the LCMS. Mite Box contributions amount to millions of dollars that fund district and national mission grants and implement the LWML program.

Mite Boxes, available from the district, zone, or LWML office, are distributed to every woman in a society, and often to each member of the congregation. Local groups submit mite box offerings to the appointed district officer.

The Widow's Mite

Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a fraction of a penny. Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth, but she, out of her poverty, put in everything — all she had to live on" ([Mark 12:41-43](#)).

Mite Boxes — How They Began

Perhaps inspired by the various "cent" or "mite" societies of the early 1800s, the Woman's Mission to Woman (Baptist) urged members in its first circular letter in 1871 to use their new mite box to raise funds. The entire family was encouraged to contribute. The garnet-colored paper box had an opening on the top and the words, "Woman's Mission to Woman," in gold letters on the side.

LWML Mite Boxes

Over the years, many Lutheran Ladies Aid societies used a box to gather funds in support of local and synod ministries. Under the original 1928 Lutheran Women's Missionary Endeavor

organizational plan, each woman in every congregation would receive a Mite Box if she participated in the Ladies Aid. Receipts from the 92 Ladies Aid societies totaled \$6651.31 in 1930.

The Lutheran Women's Missionary League, formally recognized by the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in 1942, required by the newly adopted constitution and bylaws, that 25% of all missionary contributions be given to the national organization, shared from the districts.

At the 1953 convention, delegates reaffirmed the policy of raising funds only through voluntary offerings. Instead of "mite boxes" some societies called their ingathering devices "blessing boxes" or "mission boxes" or "thank-offering boxes." The first Mite Box design had space for districts to imprint local messages. In publications and speeches, Leaguers were reminded not to just tuck their Mite Box away out of sight and then on the day of the meeting take out a dollar bill, put it in an envelope and hand it to the secretary. Among the suggestions offered were:

- Put your pennies in the box at the end of each day
- Say "thank you" with an appropriate amount whenever calamity or misfortune has been averted
- Empty all your loose change from your kitchen coin bowl into the box on meeting day

Throughout the decades, Lutheran women have stepped out in faith, setting goals and trusting God to move the hearts of His people to give generously to LWML to proclaim the Gospel.

Times and Mite Boxes Change



Mite boxes have changed in color and design over the years, but what has never changed is the dedication of freely given offerings for the purpose of reaching out to others with the

Good News of Jesus Christ. Districts still retain 75% of mite offerings for the work of the LWML at that level. National mites fund over \$1 million in mission grants.

St. Paul's Counsel on Giving



And now, brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty

welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints. And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God's will. So we urged Titus, since he had earlier made a beginning, to bring also to completion this act of grace on your part. But just as you excel in everything — in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us — see that you also excel in this grace of giving ([2 Corinthians 8:1-7](#)).



And during this Season of Lent, we will be collecting items for Project H.O.P.E. Please, if you can, bring any of the following products to one of the Midweek Services, and place it in the box(es) located under the coat rack by the restrooms.

During Lent the emphasis will be on the following items because they are not available thru government purchases:

Personal care items – Toothbrushes, toothpaste, soap, deodorant, feminine products.

Paper products – Kleenex, paper towels, toilet paper, NO diapers.

Cleaning products – detergent, dish soap, window cleaner.

Cereal – *not Oatmeal*

Side dishes – instant potatoes, rice dishes

Condiments – catsup, mustard, mayo, & relish

Hunger is real and it hurts. If you are blessed to have food on your table everyday, please remember those who are not. Thank you for your help and God Bless!

News From the Synod for Today's Families -

Power in [Water and] Word



April 2017

Water is powerful. Like, really, really powerful. It swirls up to form hurricanes, it rises and falls in waves, and it even floods the earth when it rains down from the sky. It's a force to be reckoned

with, that's for sure, and it should be no surprise that many people are actually afraid of water.

It's also no wonder that God chose to use water for some pretty impressive miracles and important events. The parting of the Red Sea and the flood come to mind, but Scripture has numerous examples of how God used water throughout salvation history. Yes, water gets things done. It kills, and at the same time it makes alive.

Of course, there is one powerful miracle with water that stands out among the others: Baptism.

It, too, kills and makes alive. There's power in that baptismal water, but as Lutheran Christians, we know that it isn't the water alone that holds the power. The Word of God – that's the *real* force to be reckoned with.

When we bring our children to be baptized, we're bringing them face-to-face with power. So how can we help them learn to remember their Baptism, remember the powerful forgiveness and salvation that continues to be given to them each day?

-  Teach your children that all water is a reminder of what took place at the baptismal font. Share the "flood prayer" from the Rite of Holy Baptism: "Through the Baptism in the Jordan of Your beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, You sanctified and instituted all waters to be a blessed flood and a lavish washing away of sin." Shower? Pool? Bathtub? They all have the potential to remind us of our Baptism.
-  Does your son or daughter like to play dress-up? Get toy armor for your child to wear to remember that Baptism is when we "put on the whole armor of God."
-  In his Small Catechism, Luther invites us to make the sign of the cross when we wake up and when we go to sleep, remembering when that same sign was made over us at our Baptism.
-  Hang your child's baptismal certificate on the wall. Or, when marking your child's baptismal anniversary each year, light the candle that was given to him or her and celebrate the day that

your child was brought into God's family.

- When the pastor speaks the Absolution each Sunday, remind your children that God's name was similarly placed on them in Baptism

As we go about our days and remember our Baptism, and teach our children to joyfully remember theirs, we don't need to have any fear. Our Lord uses water – as powerful as it is – for our good.

He may have thrown the Egyptians into the Red Sea and cleansed the earth in the flood, but He saved the Israelites by bringing them through that water and rescued Noah and his family by preserving them in the ark. We are those Israelites and that family of Noah. We, too, are brought through the water, made alive again through the power of water and His Word.

In this world, hurricanes will still rage, waves will still crash, and floods will still destroy. But all that has nothing on what God has, does, and will continue to do through Holy Baptism. Because while all the others only have the power to kill, Baptism ultimately makes alive. No contest..

Author: Dcs. Jennifer L. Miller

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News From CEF. . .

Doesn't quite feel like spring yet, but I know I will be mowing again in about 4 weeks . . .

Paul R. Wills, Vice President of Marketing, Church Extension Fund of Michigan.



There are plenty of ways you can save for the future. One of the best is with an IRA from Church Extension Fund. You get financial peace, knowing you're investing wisely with tax advantages and competitive interest rates. And you find peace of mind knowing you're also investing in Missouri Synod Lutheran churches and schools across Michigan. Call CEF today about starting your IRA – or to roll over an existing account at 800.242.3944 or visit CEF at www.mi-cef.org.

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News From The District ...



Help! Our Pastor is Leaving! **Bridging the Gap through Intentional Interim Ministry**

What happens to a congregation when a pastor leaves? It may feel as though there is a gap that must be filled as soon as possible. After all, there are worship services to plan and carry out, Sacraments to administer, sick calls to make ... the life of the church does not stop, and congregation members scramble to keep things together. There may be a sense of urgency to find a replacement pastor but, sometimes, this hiatus can be a God-given opportunity to reevaluate and redirect ministry.

Enter an Intentional Interim Ministry (IIM) pastor on the scene. IIM pastors are trained specifically for the purpose of helping a congregation during a vacancy. For some people, the term "Intentional Interim" may bring up the notion that this type of ministry is only used when there is trouble – such as when there are contentions in the congregation that caused the pastor to leave. That can certainly be one of the uses for a specifically trained minister, but IIM pastor Jim Eggert says that *Intentional Interim pastors are used for a variety of reasons, including simply to give a congregation time to reflect on its past, sort out lessons to be learned, and plan for its future. Sometimes members are sensing a need for re-focusing, and sometimes they are not.*

What does an IIM pastor do?

Rev. Steve Schilke, an IIM pastor who finished his 5th assignment in 2015, says that intentional ministry can be used in almost any situation of vacancy. He explains: *"Sometimes, when a long-time pastor who served well leaves, there is grieving, and an IIM pastor can help transition to a new pastor and a new way of doing things; he can take care of emotional attachments and maybe smooth over rough spots."*

Rev. Gary Siefert, who began serving as an IIM pastor two years ago, says the primary task of the IIM pastor *"is the same as of the settled pastor: administration of the Means of Grace. His primary responsibility is preaching and teaching. However, because of the nature of the program, he also has the duty of leading the congregation to foresee where they would like to go into the future."*

Rev. Dr. Robert E. Kasper, Michigan District's Interim Ministry Director, further explains: *"The IIM pastor INTENTIONALLY prepares the congregation for a new beginning with their new pastor ... He makes every effort to immerse himself in the congregation's system, while staying outside the system in order to provide objective diagnosis and healing through intentional use of Law and Gospel. A trained IIM pastor 'begins with the end in mind.' He comes to the congregation knowing his is the temporary shepherd and not eligible to become the settled pastor. His sole purpose is to bring the congregation to the best outcome, which is well defined at the outset of the interim. Therefore, the congregation has everything to gain, and the IIM pastor has nothing to lose."*

Sometimes, the vacancy simply affords the congregation an opportunity to reevaluate its ministry. Rev. Siefert observes that congregations re organisms that are constantly changing: *"Whether they're growing or dying, they're always changing. It's highly advisable to get an IIM to reflect on where they've come from and they're going; whether to stay on the same path or choose a different one. The congregation and the community around it change. Every few years they should reassess ministry and purpose by asking, 'Why are we here?'"*

The Process

What does an Intentional Interim Ministry look like in practice? Even though there is no "canned" way of approaching it (since every congregation is different), there are certain steps an IIM pastor might take with the congregation. According to Rev. Siefert, the congregation has to look at its own history in order to understand where it is. Together with the IIM, the congregation explores its pastoral and growth history. Then it examines its personality and tries to answer the questions: *"Why does the congregation want to go from A to B to C?"* Rev. Siefert adds that *"the responsibility of the IIM pastor is not to take them there, but to show how they themselves can achieve that goal; to show that they should not expect any particular pastor to take them to that goal, but how they can get there on their own."*

Once a congregation goes through the process, it writes its profile, which helps determine what kind of pastor it can and should call. Ultimately, according to Rev. Siefert, the purpose of the IIM pastor is to help the congregation answer two

questions: *"Who are you going to call as a settled pastor and why?"*

Results

What do congregations have to say about IIM? Faith, Port Huron, was recently served by IIM pastor Steve Schilke. Faith's Church Council Chair, Curt Jevens, wrote on April 18, 2016: *"As a result of [Rev. Schilke's] and our work here, it appears we are receiving a new pastor hopefully in the next few months from one of our seminaries, which we are very excited and grateful for ... It has been a pleasure to get to know Pastor over this past year and we are feeling a sense of calm in our congregation, as well as a renewed sense of mission."*

In the congregation Rev. Eggert is presently serving, they had a year-end evaluation, which included responses from Elders, Church Council Members, and Interim Task Force Members. He says, *"On a five-point scale (with 5 being yes, definitely) the response average was 4.85 to this questions: 'Do you think the congregation is in a better condition for calling a pastor than it was a year ago?' I would say that attests to the value of going through a process to re-focus and set sight on a future direction in preparation for calling a pastor"* Rev. Siefert concurs: *"I'd highly encourage any vacant congregation to seriously consider an IIM pastor (...) It's a very, very rewarding ministry for both congregations and clergy who participate in it."*

News From . . .

The Church Office

On April 23, 24 & 25, Monika will be attending the 2017 Office Personnel Conference, ***Equip, Educate, Encourage – Working Heartily for the Lord***, being held for all Church Workers in the offices and schools of the Michigan District of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod; therefore the Church Office will be closed. If you have a Pastoral need, please call and leave a message on the church answering machine. Thank you!

CONTACT INFORMATION

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News From the Synod –

Article found online 27. February, 2017 by Michigan District in Healthy Congregations

The following letters tell a compelling story about a simple idea and the eternal consequences of its implementation. The first letter, sent to the District Office by Pastor Boehne (St. John, Ludington), provides the background for the story in the second letter.



Letter from Pastor Boehne

Since we came here to St. John’s, we have been so blessed, and we are so thankful. However, a few years back when my wife and a friend of hers were doing the “young youth” summer program, they came up with an idea that was a bit overwhelming for me, yet proved to be very successful, and humbly I must admit, something I, too, looked forward to week after week.



My skepticism came with the idea of having kids come to our house!! (lowest attended day was 59, highest 93). It was an open, outdoor program, and all were invited. And so often, it seemed like the whole town of kids came! This program ran week after week,

for 3 hours, and included a picnic dinner, pizza, chips, bottled water, and of course, dessert!! We rented a huge water slide park to literally set up in our front yard and our neighbor’s

yard, with a bounce house, and three water features including two huge water slides. Kids came from all around town. We blocked off the cul-de-sac we live on with our cars and cones and put up tables and had the



neighbors and volunteers help with crafts for the kids. Various groups also helped, the fire department came, Pizza Hut sent fun pizzas, House of Flavors, etc. As so many churches are very frugal, and rightfully so, we had some criticism and negative people who did not see a “return” in this program because we did not have a surplus of families joining the church. We could only answer that it was our job to plant the seed and let God take it from there. Sadly, the program ended a short year later, and new programs have replaced it. About a month ago, we received this letter. It touched us all to our very core. I wanted to share it with you and any you decide to share it with as a means of support for us all. The “return” on our investment in kids and the money spent has far surpassed any negative feedback we had received. I hope this touches you as it did all of us and reaffirms our mission in planting the seed of Jesus.

The Pizza Prayer

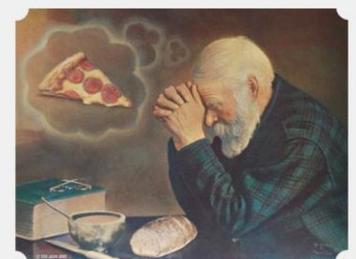
Letter from a Mom

January, 2016 – Dear Friends, I have no right to call you this, and yet, the gift you gave my family deserves nothing less.

I want to share this “testimonial” with you, selfishly, for myself, and for yourselves, because you unknowingly touch many lives.

A few years back, we lived on Timberland, the street behind your church residence. Week after week in the summer, our sons Ricky and Josh would hear the excitement echoing through the subdivision. We drove around the block, and the street was blockaded by cars and cones, so we assumed it was a private gathering. There were so many kids, water slides, and unbounded excitement, that my boys just couldn’t let it go. They wandered together through the small woods that separated the streets and met with a tall man, who they presumed to be “in charge.” He laughed at that assumption and told the boys to go get their swimsuits, that they were “more than welcome.”

My husband, Rob, who we will affectionately refer to as Mr. Skeptic, was sure this was a grand “ploy” to get church attendance out of us, or worse yet, pry into our personal information to plague us with



*INTENTIONALLY
LEFT
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(See next page)



literature and calls. He was so wrong. He walked the boys over and they took him straight to the "really nice tall man." (Rob and I were not raised in faith, so we had little knowledge, and were determined to let our boys chose their own way when they matured. Reverend Boehne was so hospitable and bounteous. He even invited my husband to join for pizza. He declined, but wanted to "register" the boys. The Reverend assured my husband that all they needed was an emergency number, which shocked Mr. Skeptic. But it was true.

Week after week, we could not contain our boys. Their motivation to get over there each week was uncontainable. We waited week after week for the boys to come home laden with their trove of projects that they had diligently worked on. Eager to hear about the water fun, the games, and the experiences that would, unbeknownst to us, shape our boys.

The learned the "pizza prayer" which we affectionately termed it. Even at home, the boys insisted that they had to say this prayer before eating pizza. It stayed with us to this day. We all learned it, and we will always say it.

They learned that they could talk to Jesus without a formal prayer. That He was their friend. Mr. Skeptic, Rob, was beside himself that especially Ricky felt comfortable talking out loud to Jesus. He would say, "Connie, people are going to label him a freak, and think he has an imaginary friend." It stuck, though. Ricky would have to scoop dog dodo and complain to his friend out loud. He would play soccer, and yell for help with a goal on the field. My poor husband would cringe and wait for the aftermath.



The learned to say "God bless you" when someone sneezed.

They learned that glitter and stick-on décor was not just for girls. My husband nicknamed the two "sisters" who ran the program as the "blingy dingys." He partially felt they deserved this because they encouraged all the kids to go crazy with their imaginations and "bling" when doing these projects.

They learned that playpens were not just for babies, as one day they were leashing our dog Pelican to join them at their "awesome day." My husband stopped them and they eagerly told him that the dogs could go in the playpen and watch all the kids. Pelican is a boxer shepherd mix, and Rob insisted they did not have a pen big enough.

They learned that they were loved. The "sisters" who ran the program hugged and encouraged and teased and laughed with the kids.

They learned that the fire department could make rain, as the big truck came and made a shower for the

kids, and then with the help of some of the wonderful neighbors, each of our sons got to use the fire hose, and climb the truck. "And guess what Mom, the firemen ate pizza with us, AND knew the pizza prayer."

The boys followed that group into fall, and would prefer going to their activities rather than sports, family gatherings, anything else. They were invited to participate in a Christmas program. Mr. Skeptic said, "Here it is, Connie, here's where they try to hook us." But



nothing could be further from the truth. You welcomed us with open arms and hearts. Again, poor Rob was afraid because it was standing-room only in the church, but you made room for us. Rob was

astonished to see his sons come down the main aisle, dressed in "rags" and with fake beards. Ricky leaned in and said, "Dad, isn't this the greatest, I'm a shepherd, and I have a cork beard!" His excitement was so great. We beamed with pride as he and Josh read their parts while balancing a tall cane. The Reverend allowed the children to be the focus of the church service and, talking to him after, we realized that there was no agenda. You truly were a group of people who just cared about children.

Rob took a transfer almost immediately after the Christmas program and instead of being sad to leave their friends, schools, etc., our boys were sad to leave this group of kids and the "blingy dingys." Rob affectionately said, "Hey, we are bailing at the right time, who knows what they would come up with for Easter," but the boys found no humor.

I have gone on too long, and I apologize, but now I will get to the core of this communication. Seven weeks ago, our life changed so dramatically, I have to include you. You, my friends, are the reason we have found peace and faith. Ricky and I were in a horrific car accident. A truck driver ran a light and hit us broadside. Ricky was trapped in the car. The police officers were waiting for the "jaws of life" and Ricky said, "Mom, I think we need a prayers." He took my hand and the police officer's, and recited the only formal prayer he ever learned: "Come Lord Jesus, be our guest, and let these gifts to us be blessed." The pizza prayer! Ricky said, "Mom, I think it's OK to say it without pizza too."

Successfully, Ricky was removed from the mangled car, and when Rob got to the emergency room he held Rick in his arms. Ricky said, "Daddy, Jesus isn't imaginary," and with that he died.

How I longed to be in your church, have you comfort me, because although we were strangers, you made us feel like family. I longed to have Rev. Boehne console us and speak to our



Come
Lord Jesus,
be our guest
..... and let
these gifts
to us be
blessed.

Amen.

family and friends to put some sort of calm to this heartbreak. But we were ashamed to call. You see, Rob felt that we would be the ones with the ulterior motive. So instead, I told this story of our summers and shepherds and faith. And we ended with the "pizza prayer."



Last week, while in Ricky's room, the sun hit his shelf just right and there gleamed his treasure chest that he had made the last summer we were there for the kids' programs. It was piled with "bling." I opened it and there

was a sticker that read, "I am Jesus' treasure." At that moment I knew. I knew what Ricky knew all along. I thank you for giving our sons the peace and security of Jesus. I thank you for the "pizza prayer" and for reaching out and touching total strangers, expecting nothing in return.

My little boy was not afraid when he lay dying. He knew Jesus, thanks to you.

Comfortingly, Ricky's Mom.

In January of 2017, Mrs. Boehne told us that the family came to church on Easter Sunday, 2016 (after having sent the letter). They were moving away because there were too many memories in Michigan, but felt like they had to stop by the church one more time to say thanks. The dad said he was your "typical doubting Thomas" - and he knew it because he was now reading the Bible. He said he was a skeptical, always waiting for someone to ask for a large donation, but instead they received the best gift ever - knowing their son had faith in Jesus as Savior before dying. He said, "I have more peace than you'll ever know."

The Boehnes' conclusion: "Our obligation isn't to bring them to church, but to introduce them to Jesus, sharing God's Word and love - you never know what impact you may have on just one life. Just move forward in faith."



malnourished & dead. His soul & conscience had flat-lined, evidenced by an obvious lack of concern for his neighbor in need. Nothing happened to him, of course - until he died. Then oh how he wished that God would send Abraham back from the dead to warn his brothers! "Nothing doing," to paraphrase the response. **"They have Moses & the Prophets; let them hear them"** (Luke 16:29)

The apostle Paul testified before Felix & Drusilla at Caesarea. They had front-row seats in an opportunity of a lifetime but brushed aside the invitation & call to repentance. **"Go away for the present. When I get an opportunity I will summon you"** (Acts 24:25). As far as we know, nothing happened: no further discussion, no repentance, and no faith. Nothing.

As they passed through Samaria, James & John earned their nickname, "Sons of Thunder," for wanting to call down fire from heaven. The target was a village of Samaritans who did not care to welcome Jesus to their town. "If that's how they feel," the two surmised, "then allow us to give them the judgment they deserve." But no fire flashed from the sky. No plague ravaged that community. Instead, nothing happened at all. Jesus simply bypassed the town. No miracles were performed. No Gospel was preached. No sinners were saved (Luke 9:54-56).

Where nothing happens, there is no spiritual growth. Where there is no spiritual growth, there is spiritual atrophy. Some will remember the days when having a baby landed the mother in the hospital for 2 weeks. Total bedrest seemed like the best treatment after the rigors of labor. Today we know that it was the worst thing to do. When the new mom finally got out of the hospital, she was so weakened by the days of doing nothing that she could barely handle the duties of motherhood.

Faith grows through the Gospel. Where Christ is preached, hearers are blessed and made stronger. It works that way, not because the preacher is so dynamic or the music so uplifting, but because God operates through His Word & Sacraments. These are the tools He supplies for our spiritual good. If you knew that Jesus would be in your church on Sunday to bless your children, to put His hand on your shoulder, to personally assure you of His forgiveness and love, would you be there? He is there, and He does that through the Gospel.

What if you can't make it on a Sunday? What if your ox falls in a pit and you need to get it out? (Luke 14:5). Then get it out. But, as the old joke goes, "If it falls in the pit every Sunday, you'd better either fill in the pit, or get a new ox."

If you can't come to church, ask your pastor about ways the church might come to you: video recordings, printed sermons, online services, and so forth - but do it before nothing happens.

News From Lutherans For Life -

From the Spring 2017 issue of LifeDate, A quarterly journal of news & commentary from Lutherans for Life

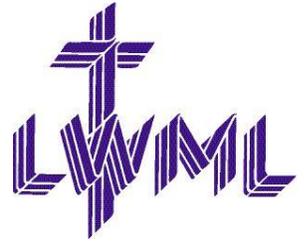
What Will Happen to Me If I Don't Attend Church?

By Rev. James Albrecht, pastor of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Okabena, MN (July 2015, The Lutheran Spokesman)



Short answer: nothing. No lightning bolt will fall from the sky warning you about spiritual danger. No one will return from the dead to plead with you about using your time of grace wisely. Nothing visibly upsetting may happen at all. In time, your conscience problems will go away, as well. Soon, there will be enough of a callus that you won't feel a thing.

Jesus shared the account of the rich man & Lazarus in order to bring focus to this very issue. The man who "fared sumptuously every day" failed to realize that while he felt alive & well-satisfied, he was severely



LADIES AID/LWML MEETING – MARCH 2, 2017

At 1:00 P.M. our meeting was called to order. Pastor's devotion, Good Judgement, was based on Romans 2 1-4.

Roll call was taken with 8 members present. (It was a bad weather day.)

A motion was made – by Erma Stevens and second by Eleanor Rabideau to accept the minutes for February as presented. Motion passed.

Treasurer's report – beginning balance \$4879.55, income \$29.09, expenses -0-, ending balance \$4,908.64, CEF \$3,213.94, petty cash \$2.70.

Happy March birthday to Betty DeWitt, Connie Dusseau, Naomi Mason and Erma Stevens.

Sonja Springer – will be speaking to us about the Keyrx Prison Ministry at our meeting in Aril.

OLD BUSINESS – None today.

NEW BUSINESS – Ladies Aid will be hosting the March 29 Lenten meal which will be a potluck.

LWML

Treasurer's report – not available.

Mite boxes - We were requested to take a mite box home, if we didn't have one, as donations are down.

Toothbrushes – A gift of toothbrushes was given for Personal Care Kits.

Bakers – for LWML coffee hour on Sunday, March 19, will be Arlene Shull, Aileen Singbiel, Erma Stevens and Sylvia Tumath.

Servers – will be Betty DeWitt and Barbara Duwe.

Quilting – will be on March 16 beginning at 9:00 A.M. until 2:00 P.M. Please bring a sack lunch.

Spring Rally – will be held on Saturday, May 6 in Oscoda. Speaker will be Barbara Hoffmeier.

Fall Rally – will be held on October 5 in Hale.

We closed at 1:20 P.M. with the Lord's Prayer.

Our next meeting will be held on April 6. Please come to enjoy fellowship and your sack lunch, with dessert provided, between 12:00 – 1:00 P.M. and meeting beginning at 1:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Andrews

Minutes subject to approval.

**St. John Lutheran Church Board of Directors
Meeting Minutes of March 8, 2017**

Members Present:	President – Jim Mueller	Absent:	
	Vice-President – Jeff Krentz		Barbara McIntyre – Evangelism
	Treasurer – Erma Stevens		
	Secretary – Jane Radulski		
	Board of Christian Education – Glen Bromm		
	Board of Elders – Peter Daellenbach		
	Board of Evangelism – Jerry Andrews for Barb McIntyre		
	Board of Stewardship – Jim French		
	Board of Social Welfare – Paul Reda		
	Board of Trustees – Marlin Shull		
	Spiritual Leadership – Pastor Winter		

Guests: Kaitlynn Warmack

President Jim Mueller called the meeting to order at 7:50 pm.

Pastor Winter opened the meeting with a prayer.

Secretary's Report: A motion was made by Glen Bromm and seconded by Erma Stevens to accept the previous month's minutes as presented. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report – A motion was made by Paul Reda and seconded by Jim French to accept the previous month's Treasurer's Report as presented. Motion carried.

Board Reports:

Board of Christian Education: Sunday School is doing well. There are now enough instructors. Lynn Tate is assisting with the teen class. St. John will send a check to the Roscommon Baptist Church to cover expenses for the Centershot Program. This will clear the budget item.

Board of Elders: The elders presented a resolution to allow Glen Bromm to work with Pastor Winter in order to gain field experience as a deacon (see Old Business).

Board of Evangelism: No report.

Board of Stewardship: A discussion of the proposed budget will be addressed in a closed session at the end of the meeting.

Board of Social Welfare: No Assistance Requests were received during the past month.

Board of Trustees: Marlin Shull reported that the washing machine in the parsonage is not working and the repair estimate is in excess of \$300. There is no warranty to cover the needed repair. Rather than spend that much money on repairs, it was decided to purchase a new machine. A motion was made by Erma Stevens, second by Glen Bromm, to purchase a new washing machine, up to a cost of \$700, out of the parsonage account. Motion carried.

Pastor Winter reported that he will be gone on March 19th. Glen Bromm will lead services.

Old Business:

- *Kitchen* – Those members who work in the kitchen are aware that the commercial stove is unsafe, beyond repair, and should not be used. A discussion followed concerning buying a replacement: Do we need a commercial stove? Would two (2) non-commercial units be satisfactory? Marlin Shull noted that with replacement of a vent, the current ventilation system is fine and needs no additional up-grading. A motion was made by Glen Bromm, second by Paul Reda, to have the Trustees look into getting bids and prices for this project by the next BOD meeting. Motion carried.
- *Basement* – Marlin Shull stated that the basement cleanup will begin next month.

New Business:

- *CEF Certificate* – The CEF 24-month note has expired – Erma Stevens asked if we should take the money out of CEF or roll it over to a new CD? After some discussion, a motion was made by Erma Stevens, second by Jeff Krentz, to take the money out now and decide what to do with it at a later date. Motion carried.
- *Katie Conference* – The Katie Conference for wives/widows of church workers is being held in Bay City on April 21 – April 23. In the past we have sent them \$200 for their endowment fund. As Judy Winter is unable to attend this year, no further donation will be made.
- *Deacon-In-Training* – Based on the resolution presented by the Elders that Glen Bromm serve in a training capacity with Pastor Winter, a discussion on funding followed. Could some of our financial gift to Glen's education be returned to the church in the form of service? Glen stated that at this time he does not expect remuneration for his service to the church, and he wishes to serve under Pastor Winter. Peter did suggest that consideration be given to reimbursing Glen for mileage on any sick calls, etc., that he makes. Discussion on this issue will continue.
- *Pastor Winter Retirement Party* – Kaitlynn Warmack reported that plans for Pastor's retirement party are proceeding although nothing definite has been decided.
- *Budget* – The BOD excused Pastor Winter at this time and proceeded to review the Preliminary Budget. It was accepted with two changes: 1) an increase in the Major Repairs line item, and 2) an increase to the Outreach Team line item. Copies of the proposed budget will be provided to Congregational Members prior to the May 10, 2017, Board of Directors meeting when Congregational Members are invited to provide their input.

Correspondence: A thank you card was received from the family of Bob Leedy.

Marlin Shull made a motion to adjourn, second by Jerry Andrews. The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 pm following the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jane Radulski

Minutes are subject to approval at the next meeting.

February 6, 2017

St. John Lutheran Church
2888 W. Houghton Lake Dr.
Houghton Lake, MI 48629

To The Board of Directors:

The Audit committee met with the treasurer to review all the responsibilities. The month of December 2016 was audited. We followed the Congregational Internal Control Review work sheets from The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. We encountered no difficulties in performing and completing the audit. The cash receipts, cash disbursements and journal entries all balanced. All payroll and government deductions were properly completed.

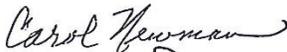
We met with the church secretary and a trustee to discuss who keeps church records and their responsibilities.

We were not required to audit everything within the church, and therefore chose what we felt was important. We found the treasurer to be thorough and accurate.

Attached, is a work sheet with our suggestions along with the Congregational Internal Control Review worksheets.

Sincerely,

The Audit Committee:

Carol Newman 

Paula Fuller 

Sally Johnson 

SUGGESTIONS

- Stewardship chairman and treasurer on check signature cards and safe deposit box.
 - Money counters must sign the count sheet and date it.
 - Job descriptions for treasurer, bookkeeper, secretary and counters.
 - Should counters, treasurer and stewardship chairman be bonded?
 - All treasurer files kept on computer in the future.
 - Inventory of church personal property:
 1. Ladies Aid – kitchen small appliances, dishes, etc.
 2. Altar Guild - Everything associated with communion, altar, candles, Christmas decorations, manger statues, wall hangings.
 3. Puppets - Mary Vest
 4. Organists, Bell Choir and Praise Team: Music files, organ, pianos, key board, choir robes, bells & equipment, etc.
 5. Trustees: Lawn equipment, parsonage, Reserve Road property, outdoor signs, pews, chairs & tables, etc., in church.
 6. Pastor & Secretary: Office equipment,
 7. Janitor: equipment & supplies
 8. Library:
 9. Education:
 10. All of the above inventory filed in church office.
 11. Take pictures of everything, keep in safety deposit box.
-

St. John Lutheran Church
Fiscal Year 2014-2015
July 1, 2016 - June 30, 2017
Month Ending February 28, 2017

SALARIES

	<u>Feb 2017</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>	<u>Budget</u>
Pastor's Salary	\$ 4,540.00	\$ 36,314.00	\$ 54,474.00
Pastor's Housing Subsidy	600.00	4,800.00	\$ 7,200.00
Pastor's Retirement & Ins.	2,431.96	19,074.93	\$ 29,382.00
Pastor's Social Security	-	4,168.00	\$ 8,334.00
Car Displacement	400.00	3,200.00	\$ 4,800.00
Car Expense	37.58	637.32	\$ 2,000.00
Employees Social Security	-	1,700.44	\$ 3,050.00
Organists	295.52	3,630.60	\$ 7,500.00
Secretary	1,004.17	10,742.63	\$ 15,450.00
Custodian	540.79	6,109.81	\$ 8,975.00
Guest Preachers	-	-	\$ 1,000.00
Total Salaries	\$ 9,850.02	\$ 90,377.73	\$ 142,165.00

PROPERTY

New Property Expense/Improvement	\$ 22.57	\$ 432.81	\$ 1,000.00
Equipment Purchases	-	1,574.99	\$ 3,000.00
Supplies Lawn & Repairs & Snow plowing	705.97	5,164.91	\$ 7,000.00
Electricity	459.11	3,748.54	\$ 5,500.00
Telephone	-	1,114.38	\$ 2,200.00
Fuel-DTE Gas	216.00	1,728.00	\$ 4,750.00
Sewer Usage	-	594.00	\$ 800.00
Disposal	86.80	684.18	\$ 1,050.00
Insurance	4,268.00	4,268.00	\$ 5,000.00
Total Property	\$ 5,758.45	\$ 19,309.81	\$ 30,300.00

Charities

Synod's Work	\$ -	\$ 5,600.00	\$ 9,600.00
T.I.M. (Pastor Mahlburg)	-	1,500.00	\$ 3,000.00
Lutheran Home & Family Services	-	-	\$ 500.00
Social Welfare	-	126.91	\$ 1,000.00
Community Fund	-	-	\$ 200.00
Lutheran World Relief	-	500.00	\$ 500.00
Katie Conference Endowment Fund	-	200.00	\$ 200.00
Local Charities	-	-	\$ 500.00
Lutheran Hour Ministries	-	500.00	\$ 500.00
Sowers Fund	-	-	\$ 500.00
Miscellaneous Charities	-	50.00	\$ 500.00
Veterans of the Cross	-	-	\$ 500.00
L.A.M.P.	-	-	\$ 500.00
Roscommon County "I AM" 4 Life	-	-	\$ 500.00
Lutherans for Life	-	500.00	\$ 500.00
Total Charities	\$ -	\$ 8,976.91	\$ 19,000.00

Special Projects

Major Repairs	0	0	\$ 2,000.00
Total Special Projects	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,000.00

CHURCH SUPPLIES

	Feb 2017	Year to Date	Budget
Bulletins & Worship Aids	\$ 41.00	\$ 3,304.34	\$ 4,800.00
Altar Guild	270.00	1,075.30	\$ 2,000.00
Postage	147.00	435.96	\$ 750.00
Office Supplies	864.01	9,101.67	\$ 12,500.00
Portals of Prayer	-	432.00	\$ 900.00
Confirmation Materials	-	220.00	\$ 600.00
Sunday School & VBS	-	387.88	\$ 3,000.00
Puppet Ministry	-	146.86	\$ 500.00
Praise Team	-	-	\$ 600.00
Total Church Supplies	\$ 1,322.01	\$ 15,104.01	\$ 25,650.00

MISCELLANEOUS

Conferences	\$ 50.00	\$ 896.17	\$ 2,000.00
Evangelism	67.70	784.63	\$ 1,000.00
Outreach	-	966.67	\$ 1,000.00
Centershot Ministries	90.05	90.05	\$ 1,000.00
Coffee & Donuts	189.50	1,247.50	\$ 2,400.00
Other Miscellaneous	-	2,756.03	\$ 4,500.00
TOTAL MISCELLANEOUS	\$ 397.25	\$ 6,741.05	\$ 11,900.00

TOTALS - MONTH / YEAR TO DATE / BUDGET

\$ 17,327.73	\$ 140,509.51	\$ 231,015.00
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INCOME SUMMARY

Worship Services	\$ 14,005.06	\$ 132,822.56	Income / Expense Comparison Current Month \$3,115.92 Year To Date \$5,449.14
Coffee & Donuts	148.36	1,299.72	
Interest	0.39	3.28	
Donations	50.00	865.00	
Miscellaneous	8.00	69.81	
TOTAL INCOME	\$ 14,211.81	\$ 135,060.37	

CHECKING ACCOUNT

	Previous Balance	Income	Expenditures	Balance
General Fund	\$ 20,641.96	\$ 14,211.81	\$ 17,327.73	\$ 17,526.04

SPECIAL ACCOUNTS

	Income	Expenditures	Balance
General Fund Savings	\$ 9.23	\$ -	\$ 81,517.73
Teddy Bear Fund	\$ 0.24	\$ -	\$ 2,879.84
Improvement Fund	\$ 60.57	\$ -	\$ 6,868.07
Memorial Fund	\$ 500.63	\$ -	\$ 8,038.07
Univ/Sem Ed Fund	\$ 0.28	\$ -	\$ 3,286.28
Youth Fund	\$ 2.75	\$ -	\$ 5,040.75
Bell Choir Fund	\$ 0.19	\$ -	\$ 2,311.67
Flower Fund	\$ 75.04	\$ 290.00	\$ 239.33
Parsonage	\$ 1,401.68	\$ 231.37	\$ 21,057.92
School Bldg. Fund	\$ 0.17	\$ -	\$ 1,999.05
Thrivent Choice Funds	\$ 0.42	\$ -	\$ 5,014.85
Choir Fund	\$ 0.05	\$ -	\$ 552.10
Kidz Church/VBS	\$ 0.01	\$ -	\$ 157.85
Together In Mission (T.I.M.)	\$ 555.11	\$ -	\$ 1,868.72
Praise Team Fund	\$ 0.01	\$ -	\$ 180.31
Centershot Ministries	\$ 0.06	\$ -	\$ 753.76
Outreach Team	\$ 0.07	\$ -	\$ 828.53
Building Fund	\$ 0.50	\$ -	\$ 6,030.16

Church Extension Fund-Dedicated Fund Balance	\$ 1,417.30
Church Extension Fund-One Year Fixed Rate Note	\$ 16,432.91
Church Extension Fund-One Year Fixed Rate Note	\$ 23,835.15
CEF 24 Month Step-up Note	\$ 46,324.00
Credit Union Savings Account	\$ 2,113.02
2 Year Fixed Rate Note	\$ 49,296.73

April 2017

Events & Happenings

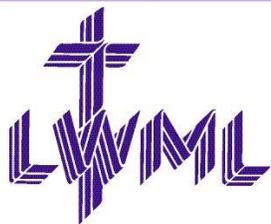
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
2 God Digs Deep 8:00 - Blended Service 9:30 - Divine with Communion Kidz Church 11:00 - Adult & Teen /Bible Study	3 10:00 - AA 6:00 - Handbell Choir	4 10:00 - AA 6:00 - Handbell Choir	5 5:30 Lenten Supper 7:00 Midweek Service	6 12:00 - Ladies Aid/LWML 4:15 - Confirmation 4:45 - TOPS 6:00 - Praise Team 7:00 - Elders	7	8 10:00 - AA
9 A Hero? No! A Savior! 8:00 - Blended with Communion 9:30 - Divine Service Kidz Church 11:00 - Adult & Teen /Bible Study <i>Palm Sunday</i>	10    HOLY WEEK	11 10:00 - AA 6:00 - Handbells	12 9:00 Trustees 7:00 Board of Directors Meeting	13 4:15 - Confirmation 5:30 - Pancake Supper 7:00 - Maundy Thursday Service w/HC "Covenant Meal"	14 Good Friday Service  7:00 pm	15 10:00 - AA 
16 Feast of Victory 7:00 - Sunrise Service 9:30 - Divine Service with HC Mini Easter Brunch after services <i>Easter Sunday - He Is Risen!</i>	17	18 10:00 - AA	19 9:00 Trustees	20 9:00 - Bible Study 4:15 - Confirmation 4:45 - TOPS 6:00 - Praise Team	21	22 10:00 - AA
23 What Will It Take? 8:00 - Blended with Communion 9:30 - Divine Service Kidz Church 11:00 - Adult & Teen /Bible Study	24	25 9:00 - Pastors' Wink 10:00 - AA	26 9:00 Trustees	27 9:00 - Bible Study 4:15 - Confirmation 4:45 - TOPS 6:30 - Ladies Bible Study	28	29
30 Live Life - Traveling Well 8:00 - Blended 9:30 - Divine Service with HC Kidz Church 11:00 - Adult & Teen /Bible Study						

2017



Birthdays & Anniversaries

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 Chloe Britton - 7 yrs Bob Collison Lynne Fossitt Janice Holbrook
2 Leigh Vest Clarence Michela	3 Ed & Carolyn Bowman - 30 yrs	4 Joan Morley	5	6 Conrad Seidel	7 Art Dwojakowski	8 Bob & Sylvia Tarvis - 54 yrs
9	10 Arden Mead	11 Daniel Pontillo Rick Radulski	12	13	14 Cami Hamina - 8 yrs	15 Pam Meier Donna Michela Penny Stroh
16 Roxanne Manifold	17 Michael Gottschling Marie Grenell	18 Kathryn Ketelhut Jeanette Robinson	19 Mindyo Burtis Barbara Everett	20 Sonya Springer	21 David Blanchard Elaine Engel Alice Mandley Dan Nagy David Schultz	22 Caroline Hebl
23	24 Beth Christler Jerry Hebl Celeste Mueller Gary Pedersen Aileen Singbiel	25 Eric Chambers Denise Reda	26	27 Carol Schmidt James Zabel Jerry & Naomi Mason - 54 yrs	28	29 Freda Akin Glenn Ruhlig Jerry & Caroline Hebl - 50 yrs Cory & Nicole King - 11 yrs Pastor & Judy Winter - 38 yrs
30 Michael & Eleanor Rabideau - 52 yrs						



TIMBERLINE SPRING RALLY

SATURDAY, MAY 6, 2017

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH

5625 N. US 23

989-739-9292

REGISTRATION/COFFEE: 9-10:00AM

RALLY: 10:00-3:30PM

SPEAKER:

BARBARA HOFFMEIER

LUTHERAN BRAILLE WORKERS

INGATHERING FOR LUTHERAN BRAILLE WORKERS:

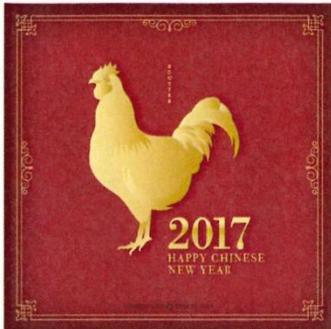
MONETARY DONATIONS

SKIT BY HALE



News from the Mahlburg family serving the Lord in Macau

smahlburg@yahoo.com



新年快樂
san nin faai lok
Happy New Year



To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

1 Timothy 1:17

Happy New Year

The biggest holiday in Macau is Chinese New Year. Culturally, Chinese New Year is the equivalent of our Christmas. This holiday is based on the lunar calendar rather than the solar calendar. This means that the date changes. This year Chinese New Year was on January 28th. The celebration lasts from 1-2 weeks. Many businesses close and people travel to spend time with their families. They have fireworks and parades.



Happy Birthday

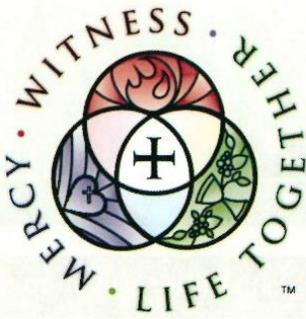
The Christian Fellowship group from Concordia School for Special Education in Macau celebrated birthdays from the past several months. They made cards as part of their celebration. Pr. Michael Wu leads this group.



This is a picture of Concordia Lutheran Preaching Station at Christmas.



Concordia was meeting at the English Center where we teach English as a second language. Due to budgetary constraints, the English Center no longer rents this space. St. Peter Lutheran Church, a Hong Kong Synod congregation in Macau is allowing us to use their facilities.



Deployment Update

God is giving us a lesson in patience. As I mentioned in our last newsletter, we are pursuing a different route for applying for visas. The necessary people met in December and gave the go ahead. Now, there are several steps that need to be followed carefully and deliberately to make sure that we are in compliance with the laws. This is all taking quite a bit of time, and the Lord is teaching us patience.

Thank you for your prayers and support. Please keep us and the mission work in Macau in your prayers.

Prayer Requests

- For repentance and humility to trust in the Lord and not ourselves.
- For success in applying for a visa in Macau.
- That we can move to Macau soon.
- For health during this flu and cold season.
- Thanks for our brothers and sisters in Christ committed to spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ.
- For the Lord to touch people's hearts to partner with us to make a difference in Macau.



Steve & Martha pick up BBQ for Steve's birthday dinner on January 27.

Members of the Christians Fellowship making cards at their birthday celebration.



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Three Cheers for the Emmanuel LWML of Cadillac, MI for printing and sending this newsletter the old-fashioned way classic way.

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To support the LCMS through the work of Steven Mahlburg, you may send a tax-deductible gift to:

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
P.O. Box 66861
St. Louis, MO 63166-6861

Make checks payable to: **The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod or LCMS.** Include “**Mahlburg-Macau Support**” in the memo line.

—or—

Call 1-888-843-5267

—or—

Make a secure online donation at www.lcms.org/givenow/mahlburg.



March-
April
2017

News from the Mahlburg family serving the Lord in Asia

smahlburg@yahoo.com



From Macau to Where?



Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas. Acts 16:6-8

Why did the Holy Spirit prevent Paul from going to the province of Asia or into Bithynia? I do not know, but I do relate. For those who have partnered with us from early on, you know that our original destination was in a part of Asia that I could not write about. Then our destination was switched to Macau. We did not know the problems we would face in obtaining a visa for Macau. At this point in time, there does not seem to be viable option for us to receive a visa to do the work I was assigned to do there. For whatever reason, the Holy Spirit has prevented me from preaching the word in Macau.

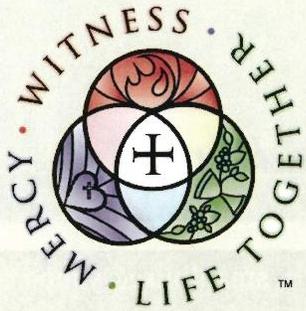
With heavy hearts and considerable prayer, we realize that Macau is not an option at this time. We are saddened and disappointed that we will not be able to serve God in His mission work in Macau. We were looking forward to living among the people of Macau, building friendships, and spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them. Acts 16:9-10



There are other places in Asia asking The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod to send missionaries. Our mission leaders are praying about these mission opportunities and seeking God's wisdom about which place to send us. Due to the sensitive nature of placing missionaries, it would not be appropriate to announce which places are under consideration. A decision will be made soon and we hope to be able to announce the location in our next newsletter. Please pray the Holy Spirit would guide our mission leaders in this decision.

Continued on back...



Prayer Requests

- For repentance and humility to trust in the Lord and not ourselves.
- For wisdom and guidance for our mission leaders.
- For the spread of the Gospel in Macau
- For patience
- Thanks for our brothers and sisters in Christ committed to spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ.
- For the Lord to touch people's hearts to partner with us to make a difference in Asia.

...continued from front

We are excited that we will be able to serve God's mission overseas. Sometimes, we find it difficult not knowing what God has in store for us. We must remind ourselves that God is in control. He is doing what is best for His mission work. His plan is far greater than we can imagine.

We do expect to deploy to our new field of service in June. This will allow our children to complete the school year. Also, this will give us some time to complete all the last minute details necessary when moving overseas.

Thank you for prayers and your partnership in God's mission work. Thank you for your patience, your kind words, your notes, and your cards. God uses you to give us strength and patience. It is because of your partnership that we are able to proclaim the Gospel overseas. Thank you.



We celebrated
Rose's 12th birthday
on March 19th.



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*"But we have this treasure in jars of clay,
to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us." 2 Cor 4:7*



Visits to East Africa

In January/February, Dale was able to visit our missionaries in Tanzania and get acquainted with a new mission undertaking beginning in Ethiopia.



(In February/March he was able to visit missionaries in Guinea. That will come in the next newsletter.)

Dear Supporters,

I apologize about the delay in getting out this newsletter. It was supposed to come out in February. Unfortunately it is now late in March.

I want to assure you that the delay does not represent a lack of appreciation for your prayers and support.

You are so very much appreciated! We couldn't do our work without you.

I am just very challenged when it comes to composing a newsletter in a reasonably short time.

Ordained . . . into service

"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve ..." (Mark 10:45).

As God calls people to be servants in the office of the Ministry of Word, the Church of God affirms that call publicly by a service of ordination in which the servant is committed to that office with the laying on of hands and prayer.

Those of you who have supported our ministry with GLO are long familiar with Dixon Gbeanquoi and his wife Christiana. Dixon came to faith in a Lutheran

church in Liberia, fled as a refugee to Ghana, was active in a Lutheran church in the refugee camp, was sent to Nigeria to study evangelism, and then pastoral ministry, and eventually completed a masters degree in systematic theology. With his history in different Lutheran churches, his path to ordination was a bit more complicated. With a passion for mission outreach, as he was concluding his training in Nigeria he was happy to learn of the opportunity to serve with GLO. One of the questions Dixon wrestled with was in what country and under which Lutheran church to finish the vicarage or internship portion of his preparation.

One option we considered was that he could finish qualification for ordination in a church in yet *another* country -- one where he would begin missionary service. And that is what happened.



Dixon and Christy started missionary service in Tanzania 2 years ago. The Bishop was happy to work with him to complete a vicarage together with others in their diocese (district) while Dixon served in a mission congregation. In January, 9 pastors were ordained—and one spoke Swahili with a Liberian-Nigerian accent!

We thank God for Dixon's willingness to answer God's call and, together with Christiana, to commit himself to humbly and faithfully serve His Lord and Savior. We especially rejoice that God's Word is bearing fruit in Kisesa, building up the congregation and reaching the lost, as Dixon preaches, teaches and serves under Christ.



Contact us: datalsma@gmail.com, +1 260-804-8460
+234 80 59 764 739

Resuming service

In January, the Funkes resumed their ministries in Tanzania after furlough where son Michael got to meet his US family for the first time.

Those who follow the Funkes know how God is using them to bolster the ministries of the Lutheran church in the Shinyanga diocese. Rev. Nzelu, headmaster of the Lutheran High School in Mwadui, expressed to me his great appreciation for the many ways in which Eric and Linda have been able to help develop the school into a leading school, committed to Christian nurture, while keeping it affordable to families of minimal resources. With their supporters, they have helped develop a computer lab where Eric is teacher and IT expert, and has even assists the wider Tanzanian education system. In addition to conducting guidance courses for students, Linda encourages and supports fellow deaconesses, and is also helping the diocese launch a Christian Health Evangelism program through the congregations.



They returned to Tanzania in time to be part of the GLO contingent at Dixon's ordination.

Training leaders for service

I met up with Rev. Lumembo Tshiswaka in Addis Ababa for a get-acquainted visit to the Onesimos Nesib Seminary of the Ethiopian Lutheran church known as Mekane Yesus. Rev. Tadesse Disasa (principal) met us in Addis Ababa for the 11 hour bus ride to Aira in western Ethiopia. Lumembo and his wife Kalangu are preparing to move there where Lumembo will join the faculty. This visit enabled both parties to map out preparations needed on both ends.



Lumembo (L) and Principal Disasa (center) at the seminary

For the Tshiswakas, the most immediate need is a support team to enable them to go. Pray for them in this first stage of missionary service.

Update on the fire

In our last newsletter we shared how the Gbeanquois' house was destroyed by fire and Eliseo was burned.

- 1) We thank God Eliseo is doing much better!
- 2) The Gbeanquois have rented a new house and have begun to refurbish it with help from several supporters.
- 3) The diocese is working to resolve the legal issues of culpability. Pray that this can be handled in a way that gives glory to God.

The WHERE and HOW of mission

With most of the world still "separate from Christ ... without hope and without God in the world" (Eph. 2:12), and with most of the unreached living where Christians are a small marginalized minority, it is natural to think mission outreach should focus on such least reached places. So we may wonder: Why should missionaries go to serve in two of the fastest growing Lutheran churches in the world (i.e., Ethiopia and Tanzania)?

- 1 Fast growing churches need lots of workers and trainers to keep moving outward (there remain millions who still need the Gospel) and to grow believers in maturity.
 - 2 In addition, the global, multi-ethnic Body of Christ benefits from the cross-fertilization of members from different nations – **learning from each other**, bringing unique gifts and understandings.
 - 3 These churches are also beginning to be **senders** of missionaries to other countries, and GLO, by design and commitment, would like to encourage and enhance those opportunities, as God leads.
- ! But most important is to **leave it to the Lord of the Harvest!** We can plan and strategize, but ultimately it is God who is carrying out HIS plan, and we wouldn't want to be part of any other!

Join us in prayer

- Thanksgiving for Eliseo's recovery from the burns.
- For Dixon, as a called and ordained servant of the Word, to be kept and guided by the Spirit to serve faithfully, reflecting Christ's love with all humility.
- God's provision of mission partners for the Tshiswakas for the work in Ethiopia.

...in Jesus' name.

If you are able and as God leads, please consider helping us continue this work.

Checks can be mailed to:
Global Lutheran Outreach,
6709 Ficus Drive, Miramar, FL 33023.

(Make check out to: "Global Lutheran Outreach" with "Talsma" on memo line.)

To donate online, go to:
www.globallutheranoutreach.com and click "Give"

Thank you so much!

In Christ,

Dale and Cheri Talsma