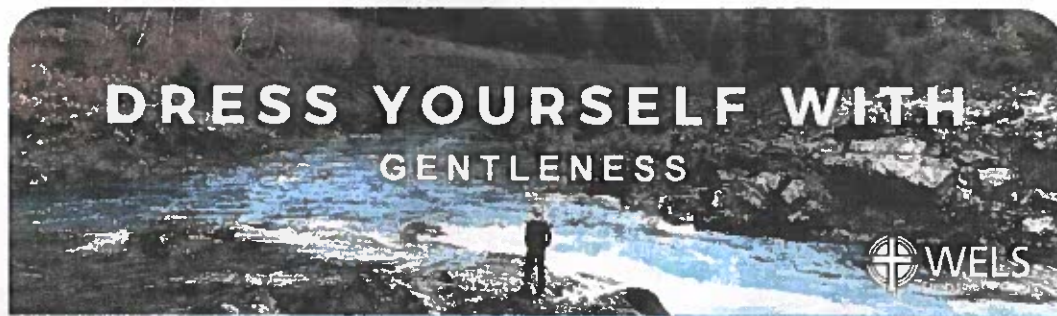


The Messenger

The Monthly Newsletter of Zion Lutheran Church, Columbus, WI



November, 2021

Dress yourself with...Gentleness. What do washing machines, dish soap, a grizzly bear named "Ben," and you have in common? You, the bear, and those other items can all be *gentle*.

St. Paul encouraged the members of one of his churches, "**Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near**" (Philippians 4:5).

Too often we associate gentleness with being a wimp. That is not true.

Washing machines can rip clothes to shreds. Soaps can irritate the skin. Bears can maul people. And just turn on the news to see what destruction human beings can do.

Nevertheless, we can be gentle. We can learn to be unselfish and considerate in all we do.

Think what the world would be like if everyone showed unselfish consideration for others! There would be no road rage. Children wouldn't fight over a particular toy. Customers and cashiers wouldn't stall checkout lines by bickering over sale prices. Divorce might even come to a halt.

Of course, we will never be able to be perfectly gentle in this life. But, Jesus was. With a word, Jesus could calm a raging sea or cause a tree to wither. Yet



he never failed to heal the sick, preach good news to the poor, and offer forgiveness to the worst of sinners.

Jesus even offers forgiveness for the times we have failed to be gentle, those times when we insisted on getting our way and didn't care whom we hurt to get it. When we think of Jesus' willingness to forgive us, it makes us want to be more like him – gentle and caring.

There was a Christian man whose very presence was a visual definition of words like *strong, tough, and thoroughly masculine*. Yet for twenty-five years he spent nearly every Sunday afternoon leading a worship service for a hundred mentally retarded

women at the state mental hospital.

That man let his gentleness be evident to all. Do you desire that same gentle spirit in your life? See and hear how as you worship and study God's Word with us!

WORSHIP TIMES

Everyone Welcome

Thursdays	6:30 pm
Sundays	8:00 and 10:30 am
Sunday School & Bible Study	9:15 am
Friday Bible Study	6:00 am

Zion Lutheran Church and School

November 2021



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 First Day of American Indian Heritage Month	2 Blood Drive 7:00 pm *WELS Wind Ensemble Practice	3 7:00 am Faculty Bible Study 9:15 am Pastoral Staff Meeting 1:30 pm Pastor-Principal Meeting 4:00 pm 6-7th Grade Catechism 4:00 pm 8th Grade Catechism Class 6:30 pm Bell Choir Practice 7:30 pm Adult Choir Rehearsal	4 7:45 am Sanctuary: Weekly Cleaning 2:00 pm Ladies Aid Worship with 6:30 pm communion	5 LPS Forensics No School: Parent-Teacher Conferences 6:00 am Bible Breakfast 3:00 pm Sanctuary Reserved - Wedding Rehearsal	6 BLAC Boy's VB Tournament. St. Paul's, Ixonia Sanctuary Reserved: Wedding
7 Daylight Saving Time ends Last Judgment 8:00 am Online Worship Posted 8:00 am Worship, Communion 9:15 am Bible Study 9:15 am Sunday School 10:30 am Worship: Communion	8 6:30 pm *Board of Ed Meeting	9 BOE Observation Day 6:30 pm Stewardship Board 7:00 pm *WELS Wind Ensemble Practice	10 7:00 am Faculty Bible Study 9:15 am Pastoral Staff Meeting 1:30 pm Pastor-Principal Meeting 4:00 pm 6-7th Grade Catechism 4:00 pm 8th Grade Catechism Class 6:30 pm Bell Choir Practice 7:30 pm Adult Choir Rehearsal	11 7:45 am Sanctuary: Weekly Cleaning 10:30 am Piano Tuning 6:30 pm Worship	12 6:00 am Bible Breakfast	13 6:00 pm PATZ Social Event
14 Jr. Choir & Hand Chimes Saints Triumphant 8:00 am Online Worship Posted 8:00 am Worship 9:15 am Bible Study 9:15 am Sunday School 10:30 am Worship	15 Zion Basketball Practices Start	16 6:00 pm PATZ Meeting 7:00 pm *WELS Wind Ensemble Practice	17 7:00 am Faculty Bible Study 9:15 am Pastoral Staff Meeting 1:30 pm Pastor-Principal Meeting 4:00 pm 6-7th Grade Catechism 4:00 pm 8th Grade Catechism Class 6:30 pm Bell Choir Practice 6:30 pm Council Meeting	18 7:45 am Sanctuary: Weekly Cleaning 9:30 am Organ Tuning 6:30 pm Worship	19 6:00 am Bible Breakfast	20
21 Christ the King 8:00 am Online Worship Posted 8:00 am Worship 9:15 am Bible Study 9:15 am Sunday School 10:30 am Worship	22 9:00 am Sanctuary: Monthly Cleaning	23 7:00 pm *WELS Wind Ensemble Practice	24 7:00 am Faculty Bible Study 9:15 am Pastoral Staff Meeting 12:30 pm Early Release 5:15 pm Bell Choir Practice 7:00 pm Worship: Thanksgiving Eve	25 No School Thanksgiving Day 7:45 am Sanctuary: Weekly Cleaning Fellowship Hall reserved	26 No School Native American Heritage Day 6:00 am Bible Breakfast	27
28 Advent 1 8:00 am Online Worship Posted 8:00 am Worship, Communion 9:15 am Bible Study 9:15 am Sunday School 10:30 am Worship, Communion	29 5:00 pm Musicians' Meeting 7:00 pm Christmas Tree Set Up	30 7:00 am Faculty Meeting *WELS Wind Ensemble Practice				



By [Sheryl Cowling](#)

I bet you've seen it before. It is the iconic painting by Norman Rockwell known as *I'll Be Home for Christmas* (also known as *Freedom from Want* and *The Thanksgiving Picture*). It shows a group of smiling family and friends, young and old, seated around a dinner table about to enjoy a bountiful holiday feast. This idealized image of the American family at the holidays has a special place in the American psyche. If your family holiday table looks like this, please say an extra prayer of thanks to your heavenly Father for such a wonderful blessing.

In reality, many family holiday tables don't look much like this scene. Rather than an abundance of smiling faces, there are faces that reveal stress and sorrow. Some of the faces can't hide anger and resentment, sometimes directed toward one or more of those gathered around that very table. Such is the reality for many at the holidays.

If this second description sounds more like your family, please know that you are not alone. Because we live in a sinful and fallen world, because people are highly imperfect, and because relationships can be complex and challenging to maintain, many individuals find the holiday gathering to be a source of anxiety and depression, not happiness and joy.

If this second depiction sounds like the scene at your last family gathering, what can you do to make the most of this and every upcoming holiday season? Let's turn to God's Word for guidance about how to proceed.

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God" (2 Corinthians 1:3-4). How about using the holiday gathering as an opportunity to give a hug, share a smile, or hold the hand of someone who is hurting?

How about taking advantage of the opportunity to pray with someone who is struggling emotionally or financially or medically or relationally? How about opening your Bible to find passages of Scripture that offer comfort and encouragement? Prayerfully ask God to show you how he might use you to be a blessing to someone in need of his comfort.

"Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you" (Ephesians 4:32). Perhaps this holiday is an opportunity to extend an olive branch of forgiveness—to begin a process of healing a relationship that has been damaged by past hurtful words or actions. Maybe this starts with a compliment to a relative with whom the relationship has been strained. Maybe this starts with a friendly comment about the weather, a favorite sports team, a cherished memory. Maybe it begins with a sincere question about what is new in their lives. Maybe this leads to a conversation in which forgiveness is requested and forgiveness is offered.

You might be thinking, "That sure sounds good for other people or other families, but if you knew the dysfunction in my family, you might have very different advice"—like advice about setting limits and boundaries to keep people safe emotionally, physically, and even sexually. If there is a history of abuse or neglect, alcoholism or drug addiction, abandonment or infidelity, then setting healthy limits and boundaries is likely very important and even necessary. ***"Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it"*** (Proverbs 4:23). If such issues are a concern for your family, perhaps it would be wise to consult with a Christian mental health professional about how to go about this process in a God-pleasing way.

I pray that you and your family have a blessed and peace-filled holiday season!

Sheryl Cowling is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker with Christian Family Solutions. *If you or your family members are struggling with painful life issues and circumstances, our professional counselors can help.*



Financial Assistance is available through Zion Lutheran Church's Member Assistance Program. Call [800.438.1772](tel:800.438.1772) or [to request an appointment](#) with one of our Christian counselors.

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Council Names and Numbers

Dan Retzlaff, Chairman	920-319-0018
Matt Weidner, Vice-Chairman	920-319-6017
Nick Uebelacker, Secretary	608-225-8861
Will Penterman, Treasurer	920-750-8763
Andrew Tratar, Education	920-296-1485
Bruce Zander, Elders	920-438-4014
Nils Johansson, Outreach	608-239-5123
Jim Greiling, Property	920-948-1746
Otto Mattke, Stewardship	608-516-5279
Craig Lathrop, Family Ministry	608-770-2498

Our Mission

The mission of Zion
Evangelical Lutheran Church
and School is to preach and
teach God's saving Word in
all its truth and purity.

Get in Touch

Church/School Office

(920) 623-5180

office@zioncrusaders.com

www.zioncolumbus.org

Tim Schwartz, Pastor

(509) 480-2967

tschwartz24@gmail.com

Ben Zuberbier, Pastor

(920) 517-7940

pastorbenzuberbier@gmail.com

Alex Vandenberg, Principal

(507) 353-0719

avandenberg@zioncrusaders.com

Jim Grasby, Lakeside Principal

(920) 648-2321

Thanks
be to God
for his
incredible
gift!

2 Corinthians 9:15



November 7th

8:00am - <u>Team E4</u>	10:30am - <u>Team L7</u>
Mark Lindell (C)	Matt Huber (C)
Remington Lindell	Carter Huber
Roger Weiland (C)	Jeremy Maas
Bryce Weiland	Peter Klokow
Brett Weiland	Jack Klokow
Norman Weiland	Brady Grambsch
Eric Turnquist (C)	Michael Vertz

November 14th & November 21st

8:00am - <u>Team E5</u>	10:30am - <u>Team L1</u>
Kim Schilling (C)	Tom Schultz (C)
Ronald Knudson	Aaron Larson
John Zandler	James Kopfer
Scott Brenner	Brandon Lee
Matt Vosberg	Brian Vierck
	Andy Tratar

November 24th - Thanksgiving

7:00pm - Team L2
 Dale Schultz (C)
 Daniel Schultz
 Dylan Schultz
 Michael Hallberg
 Nathan Hallberg
 Henry Tews

November 28th & December 5th

8:00am - <u>Team E6</u>	10:30am - <u>Team L3</u>
John Brey (C)	Jim Kluetzman (C)
Jim Greiling	Gabe Uttech
Rick Gentz	AJ Uttech
Hunter Sommer	Michael Uttech
Jordan Crave	Gary Schuhmacher
	Jadon Schwartz
	Brian Baney

If you have any questions about the usher schedule, would like to be added as an usher or won't be able to serve any longer as an usher, please call Randy Koehn at (608) 296-4333.

Greeter Schedule



November 7th

8:00am — E4	10:30am — L7
Delmar & Carol Vick	Bev Herold & Nicole Henning

November 14th

8:00am — E5	10:30am — L8
Emily Henning & Nancy Huebner	John & Sarah Brey

November 21st

8:00am — E6	10:30am — L9
Jim & Jenny Greiling	Nils & Lara Johansson

November 28th

8:00am — E7	10:30am — L10
Dale & Joyce Gajdosik	Aaron & Rachel Larson

If you are interested in being added as a greeter or need to be removed from the schedule, please contact Melody Krakow at (920) 210-6323.



**Church Attendance
September**

Date	Total
2/5	265
9/12	277
16/19	266
23/26	328
30	43

Membership Changes

Transfer In:

None

Transfer Out:

None

Ministrations

Baptisms:

18. Ava Nolee Willman
Baptized 9/26/2021

Deaths:

None

Marriages:

None

Confirmations:

None

Affirmations of Faith:

Ryan & Robin Freidel and children Isaac & Sutton

Messenger Deadline

Please submit your Messenger articles by November 19th.

Contact Sue Henning at (608) 225-4853 or suehenning25@gmail.com if you have any questions.



Zion's Ladies Society

The Christmas cheer boxes will be the focus of our meeting on November 4th at 2:00pm in the Fellowship Hall. Other volunteers will be needed in December for decorating the Fellowship Hall for Christmas.



May everyone have a blessed and grateful Thanksgiving for the many blessings the Lord has given us.

Hymnal: Christian Worship

As you may have seen in the August WELS Connection, a new hymnal called Christian Worship was released this summer and will be ready for us to implement in our congregation as of January 1. The total expense for our congregation is \$7,500. If you would like to contribute to the cost of the project that includes hymnals, musicians resources and electronic support you can mark "Hymnal" on a church envelope with your donation or go to our website's online giving page <http://www.zioncolumbus.org/online-giving> to contribute. You may also order personal copies for \$25. Contact our office for more details.

A hymnal is an important confession of faith as it contains worship resources that plainly show what we believe as we gather together to hear the Word, pray, and proclaim God's praises. With up-to date resources, we both connect to our spiritual heritage and reach out to the modern-day worshiper, all for the glory of God in worship. A preview of the hymnal is available for you to look at in our entryway. If you have any questions please speak with either of our pastors or Mary Kluetzman.

Update: The hymnals have arrived and an additional group order will be placed by November 1st if needed. Please contact the office for placing your order.

Pastor Appreciation

October is Pastor Appreciation Month. Please take a few moments to show your thanks and appreciation to your pastors in whatever way you feel is appropriate. That might be with a verbal message, a card, or a gift.



LLHS FEDERATION CONNECTION

920-648-2321 • info@llhs.org • 231 Woodland Beach Rd. Lake Mills, WI 53551

FROM THE



PRINCIPAL'S
PEN

O Give Thanks

“Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever” (Psalm 118:1).

Giving thanks is an art, not a science. It doesn't follow a set pattern or rules. It requires the recipient to first recognize the

gift's importance to the giver. Then, the recipient must gauge the impact of the thank you to the giver.

It's easy to say thank you as if it was a duty. When we receive “stuff,” we know that expressing gratitude is important. In a sense, it is a sign of respect to the giver. Naturally, we want to express gratitude.

But, is our thanks always *freely* given? Do we always recognize *everything* that we're given? Everything? Do we even recognize the reason behind the gift?

Gift giving is special. To truly give something, it can't be done from compulsion. Giving is freely surrendering something. It is voluntary with no expectation of return. It is freely turning over something of one's own accord.

The same may be said of giving thanks. It cannot be forced, demanded, or prescribed. It must be freely done as fits the gift and the spirit in which the gift is given.

November is the month of Thanksgiving. Being thankful is freely thanking the Lord for the “why” as well as the “what.” It means reflecting on his goodness because he freely gave us his best. It is reflecting on his blessings and finding ways to express thanks to him as a natural outgrowth of our godliness.

God blesses us abundantly with “every good and perfect gift” (James 1:17). This encompasses our physical and spiritual blessings. At Thanksgiving, we thank God for our physical blessings. But, we also want to thank him for his gift of eternal life through his one and only Son. God's gift of salvation through Christ exemplifies the art of giving. It moves us to truly thank him for his gift as well as the grace and mercy behind it.

“Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever.”



Give thanks to the Lord for He is good;
His love endures forever. Psalm 107:1

You can reach Principal Jim Grashy at 920.648.2321 or jgrasby@llhs.org

Veterans Day OBSERVANCE

We look forward to welcoming veterans and guests on November 10 for our Veterans Day observation. Lakeside Lutheran High School would like to recognize and honor veterans who have or are serving in our country's armed forces, assuring our freedoms and the ability to

provide God's blessing of a Christian secondary education to our 458 students. We invite vets (and a guest) to join us that morning when we serve a continental breakfast at 8:15 and offer an opportunity to worship in a special Veterans Day Chapel Service with our student body.

Our guest speaker is Judith A. Wade. Judy grew up in Watertown and is a member of Trinity, Watertown. She entered the Marine Corps in July 1983 and retired as a Chief Warrant Officer 4 in November 2003. She then had a career as a senior logistics manager in federal service working for the Department of Defense at Quantico, VA. Pastor Josh Martin, St. John, Jefferson, who served the WELS as a civilian chaplain to individuals, including military personnel, living in Germany, Switzerland, and England, will deliver the chapel message that morning.

Please submit your name or your loved one's name by Nov. 3. Reach out to Jess Meyer (jmeyer@llhs.org or 920/648-2321 x2230) with any questions. Register yourself or a loved one at llhs.org/apps/form/vetday2021

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN EXTENDED!

Foundation for Our Future Becomes Let Your Light Shine!

In 2019, our congregation launched a three-year capital campaign to reduce debt on the church building we dedicated in 2014. It is entitled *Foundation for Our Future*. The tagline of the campaign has been, "A campaign to eliminate our debt to provide the foundation to serve our congregation and future generations." The joyful and generous giving of our members has decreased our debt from \$1,700,000 to just over \$900,000! God be praised for the giving of his dearly loved people! You have truly let your light shine for the duration of this campaign, which ends December 31st, 2021. We now enter a new one-year campaign: *Let Your Light Shine!*



"A campaign to eliminate our debt to provide the foundation to serve our congregation and future generations."



Jesus said, "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:14-16).

Let Your Light Continue to Shine will last the whole year from January 1st, 2022 through December 31st, 2022. It is our goal to bring our total indebtedness down to \$500,000 in that time. It sounds like an ambitious plan, but we believe that God has blessed our membership with the resources, willingness, and generosity to do so.

Our main financial goal is to retire the debt we acquired from our beautiful new church building.

In mid-November, pledge cards will be mailed out to each household of Zion. We ask you to prayerfully consider committing a pledge to the building fund for next year. As you celebrate Thanksgiving on November 25th, reflect on all the blessings God has given to you and ponder how you might give thanks to him through your giving to the building fund in 2022.

During worship on Wednesday, December 1st and Sunday, December 5th, you can bring your pledge cards to the front of our worship space and lay them down on the altar. As you do this, think of your promise and your subsequent giving as “a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God” (Philippians 4:18b).

May the Lord bless you richly as we close out 2021 and move into 2022!

Suggested Pledge Plans (One-Year Pledges)

Total Gift	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Quarterly	Semi-Annually
\$250,000	\$685	\$4,808	\$20,833	\$62,500	\$125,000
\$100,000	\$274	\$1,923	\$8,333	\$25,000	\$50,000
\$75,000	\$206	\$1,442	\$6,250	\$18,750	\$37,500
\$50,000	\$137	\$962	\$4,167	\$12,500	\$25,000
\$35,000	\$96	\$673	\$2,917	\$8,750	\$17,500
\$25,000	\$69	\$481	\$2,083	\$6,250	\$12,500
\$20,000	\$55	\$385	\$1,667	\$5,000	\$10,000
\$15,000	\$41	\$288	\$1,250	\$3,750	\$7,500
\$10,000	\$27	\$192	\$833	\$2,500	\$5,000
\$7,500	\$21	\$144	\$625	\$1,875	\$3,750
\$5,000	\$14	\$96	\$417	\$1,250	\$2,500
\$3,500	\$9.59	\$67	\$292	\$875	\$1,750
\$2,500	\$6.85	\$48	\$208	\$625	\$1,250
\$2,000	\$5.48	\$38	\$167	\$500	\$1,000
\$1,500	\$4.11	\$29	\$125	\$375	\$750
\$1,000	\$2.74	\$19	\$83	\$250	\$500
\$750	\$2.05	\$14	\$63	\$188	\$375
\$500	\$1.37	\$10	\$42	\$125	\$250
\$250	\$0.68	\$5	\$21	\$63	\$125
\$100	\$0.27	\$1.92	\$8.33	\$25	\$50

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. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich” (2 Corinthians 8:7,9).

Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church Financial Statement

	Sep 21	Jul - Sep 21
Ordinary Income/Expense		
Income		
Extended Care Reimbursement	598.59	598.59
Extra Synod Missions Income	199.50	568.50
General Fund Offerings	54,921.20	169,691.38
Gifts to Payoff Bank Loan	100.00	394.00
LLHS Building Income	100.00	100.00
Money Borrowed from FMUB	28,000.00	38,000.00
Other Donations	-5,087.56	50.00
Other Reciepts	25.00	501.41
Total Income	78,856.73	209,903.88
Gross Profit	78,856.73	209,903.88
Expense		
Called Workers Salaries & Taxes	33,036.77	96,891.93
Church Supplies	347.33	225.62
Convention/Cont' Education	0.00	560.00
Copier	0.00	488.99
Extended Care Expense	989.89	1,135.88
Family Ministry Board	0.00	-124.05
Guest Pastor	0.00	366.00
Health Insurance	8,418.39	25,255.17
HRA Savings	2,000.00	6,000.00
Interest Expense	35.72	161.32
Janitors	2,009.26	5,763.63
LLHS Expense	2,950.00	8,650.00
Maintenance	2,131.11	7,822.73
Meditations	0.00	375.00
Mileage	0.00	133.00
Organists	452.51	1,459.67
Outreach Board	0.00	220.52
Payroll Expenses	254.25	740.00
Pension Insurance	9,822.00	10,222.00
Postage and Delivery	88.05	286.11
Secretaries	2,747.06	6,738.52
Stewardship Board	264.48	1,242.46
Substitute Teaching	48.95	48.95
Sunday School/VBS	131.93	131.93
Synod Mission Expense	5,899.50	17,618.50
Telephone & Internet Expense	279.95	839.85
Utilities	5,032.02	14,164.76
Worker Comp/Liability Insurance	0.00	75.00
Worship	338.55	3,939.34
Total Expense	77,277.72	211,432.83
Net Ordinary Income	1,579.01	-1,528.95
Net Income	1,579.01	-1,528.95

Zion Lutheran Church - Estate Funds Report

Report for the Month of:

September 2021

Previous Month Assets	\$90,805.36
Total Transactions	\$3,076.37
Total Current Assets	\$93,881.73

	\$85,594.67	New Church/School Total
		checking/savings

	Undesignated		Monthly Statements		NEW Church/School	
	Checking	Savings	Fund Savings	Deposits	Checking	Savings
Accounts						
Previous Balance	\$645.96	\$7,668.64	\$7,287.06		\$25,203.70	
Monthly Transactions*	(\$149.97)	\$122.43	(\$6,814.59)		\$9,918.50	
Current Balance	\$495.99	\$7,791.07	\$50,472.47		\$35,122.20	
Transactions	(\$150.00) Jean Malik	\$120.00 9-10 Deposit		\$4,012.00 Deposits	\$6,201.56 9-8 Deposit	
	\$0.03 Interest	\$2.43 9-30 Interest		(\$5,425.00) 9-14 Mortgage	\$1,297.16 9-16 Deposit	
				(\$5,425.00) 9-28 Mortgage	\$2,419.78 9-29 Deposit	
				\$23.41 9-30 Interest		
Monthly Transactions TOTAL	(\$149.97)	\$122.43	(\$6,814.59)		\$9,918.50	
TOTAL TRANSACTIONS	\$3,076.37					

Notes:

Interest Received

TOGETHER



October 19, 2021

An update from Vietnam

WELS Director of Missions Operations Mr. Sean Young just returned from a month-long visit to Vietnam to discuss next steps for the theological education center in Hanoi. Hmong Asia Ministry Coordinator Rev. Bounkeo Lor accompanied him. The Board for World Missions released this report about the trip:


From the beginning of this initiative, WELS has known that that there would be potential challenges and unexpected setbacks due to this being a brand new mission field in an unfamiliar country. COVID also complicated the process, but we're thankful that the Lord continues to guide these efforts and "work all things for the good of those who love him" (Romans 8:28).

This was the first visit to Vietnam since COVID-19 shut down international travel in March 2020. Certain conversations and building plan discussions were held via Zoom, but concrete plans for the next steps needed to be discussed in-person. Conversations with the Hmong Fellowship Church leadership went well and continue at the time of this writing. If all goes as planned, it is WELS World Missions' goal to have the theological education center open by Easter 2022, pending no other COVID-19 complications.

Rev. Dr. Terry Schultz from Multi-Language Productions and Rev. Ger Lor from Grace Hmong Lutheran Church in Kansas City, Kan., accompanied Rev. Bounkeo Lor and Mr. Sean Young on the trip. Schultz trained Hmong Fellowship Church leaders how to use evangelism materials he created to train their members, and he gained valuable insight into the Hmong culture for the creation of future materials. Multi-Language Productions will be purchasing flip-book versions of these visual teaching aids. They also identified three Hmong Fellowship Church students with drawing skills who potentially could help develop future educational resources.

In the meantime, the second wave of visiting professors are currently in Vietnam to have their religious visas renewed/approved and conduct training. Rev. Joel Nitz is there for the first time since being called to serve the Hmong in Vietnam in February 2020. Training continues, in-person (thank the Lord!) and via Zoom, for the first 60 men who will prayerfully be ordained as pastors. These men also continue to lead rural training workshops throughout the 13 districts to share what they are learning with other Hmong Fellowship Church members.

The Hmong Fellowship Church grew by 12,000 people in 2020, and the church body now numbers 138,000 members. Stay updated on progress and learn more about Hmong outreach in Vietnam at wels.net/vietnamhmongoutreach.

Serving with you in Christ,
President Mark Schroeder 

Conference of Presidents Fall 2021 meeting

At its October meeting, the Conference of Presidents (COP) received and discussed the following reports and topics:

Mr. Bill Ziche, president of Northwestern Publishing House (NPH), provided an update on the new hymnal. Already 325 churches have placed orders for the hymnal, a pace that NPH considers encouraging. NPH is also in the early stages of developing a new religion curriculum for pre-school through high school.

President Richard Gurgel of Martin Luther College (MLC), New Ulm, Minn., provided an overview of the strategic planning effort that has already begun at MLC.

WELS Benefit Plans director Mr. Josh Peterman provided an overview of the materials that will be used to introduce the new retirement plan to congregations and called workers. The change in the retirement plan takes effect on Jan. 1, 2022.

There are 136 vacancies in pastor-trained positions. This includes positions in world missions, schools, and administration.

The COP discussed the issue of called and hired workers in our early childhood ministries. More study will take place on developing principles and guidelines for congregations to consider as they staff these schools.

The COP formally expressed thanks to the members of the WELS Hymnal Project for their many years of faithful service.

- The COP resolved that the on-campus requirement for staff ministry certification be the same as the practice now in place for teacher certification. As is the case with teachers, someone enrolled in the staff ministry certification program and serving in a call will be considered provisionally ministry certified.

Work continues to clarify the synod bylaws dealing with the discipline and appeal process for called workers.

The next COP meeting takes place in January. 🌟

New and upcoming Prison Ministry resources

WELS Prison Ministry works to reach those impacted by incarceration with the saving message of God's grace. It does this through a vigorous ministry-by-mail program that has two components. One is mailing Bible studies to inmates that include a test to complete and mail back; it then gets reviewed by volunteers and sent back with words of encouragement. The other is an active pen pal program, composed of WELS volunteers who correspond with inmates via letters to share Christ's love.

In addition to reaching the incarcerated, WELS Prison Ministry also seeks to equip members and congregations to help those who have been released from prison or jail. Through the faithful and generous support from WELS members in addition to a generous grant, Prison Ministry has a range of resources that were recently released or are in the planning stages.

Mentoring a Returning Citizen is a video-based training resource that helps church leaders prepare their members to mentor people returning to the community from incarceration. It can be found at welscongregationalervices.net/mentoring-a-returning-citizen.

Two resources to help promote awareness of Prison Ministry's work are also available. Worship planning resources for a Prison Ministry Sunday include suggested hymns, psalm, and prayers together with a sermon on 2 Corinthians 5:16,17. A few stories and comments from inmates who have benefited from Prison Ministry's Bible studies are included at the end of the sermon sheet.

A Sunday school/Lutheran elementary school lesson based on Onesimus and Philemon emphasizes the importance of welcoming those with troubled backgrounds into God's family. The lesson contains student and leader sheets for four grade levels (PreK- Grade 6). These resources can be found online at welscongregationalervices.net/prison-ministry-awareness.


Looking ahead, the WELS Prison Ministry committee is examining ways to reach inmates as communication methods change. "Methods used to deliver the gospel to inmates are changing. Inmates are communicating less frequently via U.S. Mail. More inmates are being given access to electronic communication (similar to e-mail) as well as other services such as book or music downloads to tablets that the inmates own. Our ministry needs to adapt to this new environment. Frequent opportunities to share law and gospel with many more inmates nationwide are

available if we can adapt our efforts to this new reality," explains Mr. Dave Hochmuth, WELS Prison Ministry administrator.

There are three components to this new effort:

- Produce devotions that support outreach to people with little if any biblical knowledge.
- Implement a system for distributing the devotions using electronic messaging services to inmates.
- Test and implement a system using electronic messaging services to collect Bible study tests, return corrected tests, and exchange pen pal letters with inmates.

Hochmuth says, "With changes in the environment of our ministry, we are grateful that the Lord continues to provide generous gifts from donors and organizations to meet the new opportunities for outreach right now."

Learn how to support or get involved with WELS Prison Ministry at wels.net/prison-ministry. 

Free conference highlights innovative gospel outreach with media

The Gospel Outreach With Media (GOWM) online conference opened Monday, Oct. 18.

Presentations in this international three-week conference highlight various types of media—including stained-glass windows, virtual reality, the creative visual arts, toys, and the Internet—and how they can be used to spread the gospel.

"People normally think about technology when talking about

media,” says Mr. Tom Kuster, executive director of the Christ in Media Institute, which hosts the conference, “but we highlight other media as well.” He shares that media really is whatever channel carries the message from the speaker to the audience.

Kuster says the goal of the conference is to “tickle people’s awareness” of innovative ways of using different media so they start thinking how they can get involved in outreach, no matter what their skill set or vocation. A secondary goal is to connect people with mutual interests for future collaboration on gospel-outreach projects.

This is the seventh annual GOWM conference hosted by Christ in Media Institute. The institute started in 2009 as an educational arm of Bethany Lutheran College, Mankato, Minn., to promote research and education focused on employing God’s gift of mass media to bring the pure gospel message to vast audiences in the U.S. and abroad. It is a part of WELS’ sister synod, the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

Anyone can participate in this free online conference. Presentations are available to read or watch; online discussion will be open until Nov. 8 before the conference closes and is archived. Past conference presentations are always available.

Participate now at gowm.org. 

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