



ST. MATTHEW'S MESSENGER

The New Year

On the first day of a new year many of us wish each other a "Happy New Year!" But as we begin a new year, we need more than a hopeful greeting from the people around us. We need to listen to what God told Joshua about 3,400 years ago. As Joshua was about to lead God's people into the promised land, he had reason to be afraid. He had an enormous task ahead of him, and he was well aware of the dangers that he and the people would soon be facing. He needed God's encouragement. A new year brings lots of questions: Will our health hold? Will our marriage last? Will I be able to hang on to my job? Will I get into the right school? Will I live to see the end of this year? Will the economy improve? Will there be a terrorist attack or some natural disaster that takes me or my loved ones? The Creator of the universe comes to us and says, "Don't be afraid; don't be discouraged." What happens in this coming year is not left to chance. God is in charge, and he promises to stay close: "The LORD your God will be with you wherever you go." Many years later, the Lord Jesus made the same promise when he said, "I am with you always" (Matthew 28:20). That's the reason we can wish each other a "Happy New Year!"

PASTORAL SERVICES

If our members have need of Pastoral Services due to hospitalization or other needs, please contact Pastor Silas Schmitzer at 608-457-2711, cell 608-304-9265 or email pastor.schmitzer@gmail.com

Elders

“Now fear the LORD and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your forefathers worshiped beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.” Joshua 24:14–15

Some of you who read these articles regularly may remember these verses from a previous year. I do think these are good words from Joshua as we begin the New Year. Generally at this time of year, people make New Year’s resolutions. I will not judge if these are good or not. But I will ask you to seriously meditate on these words from scripture and the following paragraphs.

The Lord is the only true God. Many may worship “gods,” but they are not real. Though we may not have idols that we bow down to, we may have other things in our lives that can or have become like an idol. Anything that takes 1st place in our lives—above God has become an “idol.” These things may not be wrong in and of themselves, but if it has become all-consuming it can be like an idol. As Joshua says here we need to rid ourselves of these. We should fear God and serve Him only. God does not want to share the throne of our hearts with anything else.

So at the beginning of this year, choose whom you will serve. We need to make that choice ourselves. God has given us that free will. We need to think of what is beneficial to us. To serve what is false or what is truth. We have to choose whether to give priority to other things or to God. It is my prayer that we say with Joshua, “But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.”

Serve the Lord by worshiping regularly. Partake of the Lord’s Supper often. Read the Bible at home. Give of your time and talents to expand God’s work here at St. Matthew’s and in the area. Choose this as your goal for the New Year.

Joyfully yours because we are His,

Your Caring Elders

Church Council

December 11, 2017

Council members present: Pastor Schmitzer, Principal James Otto, Perry Kilmer, Larry Soucheck, Jeremy Streumke, Ralph Stellick, Pastor Liggett, and Doug Miller. Guest Mike Tracy. Meeting called to order by Perry Kilmer at 6:50 pm.

Devotion read by Pastor Schmitzer based on Isaiah 40:3-4: "Advent Road Construction."

Secretary's report: attached; MSP.

Treasurer's report: attached: MSP.

Pastor's report: attached, highlights- 1. Special events Mission festival speaker Pastor John Bare. 2. Live Nativity. 3. Fire inspection walk through discussed items needed to be corrected. 4. Membership action: Lori Woodhouse transfer in from Emmanuel La Crosse, transfer in Carl and Anne and Elijah Piper from Phoenix Arizona, release Craig and Maley Remus, transfer in from Grafton WI., Mark Dumann.

Elder's report: Working with a member who wants to play the organ.

Outreach Oversight Committee: Thanksgiving dinner served over 300 and there was an offering to be presented to the food pantry.

Principal's report: attached, highlights: 1. Work to commence on ceiling over the Christmas vacation. 2. Recommendation for the January voters meeting, presentation by Mr. Otto on pre-school. 3. New family starting in January moving from Marquette MI.

School board report: included in the principles report.

Luther High School: no new report

Building and grounds: 1. Jeff Walls has been trained in asbestos inspection and will schedule an inspection. 2. Cross at the end of the church is not lighting will schedule for spring work day.

Cemetery Sextant report; flowers have been removed and stored in the storage shed at the cemetery.

Planned Giving: No report.

Old Business: Not sure if long-term disability has been purchased for Katie Alderman.

New Business: 1. MSP to have Lifetouch Church directory come in, pictures to be taken February 23rd 24th and 27th. 2. CEF fund from Lutheran Girl Pioneers authorized signature from Pastor and Principal. 3. Provisions of Section 107 of the Internal Revenue Code, The "Ministers of the Gospel" listed below may have a portion of their compensation designated as a parsonage allowance. The amount indicated shall be the designated parsonage allowance for the year 2018 and all future years unless otherwise provided. Housing for Pastor Schmitzer \$5000, and Principal James Otto \$16,800. MSP by council. 4. Council approval for Pleasant Valley temporary emergency shelter, MSP.

Next meeting: January 8, 2018

Adjourned with prayer at 8:20.

Respectfully submitted,
Doug Miller, Secretary

Ladies Aid

Our Ladies Aid Christmas party was held Wednesday, December 13th.

We went on a guided tour of the Hixon House in La Crosse in place of having a gift exchange. It was a fascinating tour of the beautiful home.

We then had lunch at Houghton's in Lacrosse. There were 13 members present. Pastor and his family did not attend as they were having their baby on Thursday morning.

We are thinking we should have a couple more of these outings as a group throughout the year.

Our next meeting is our annual meeting on Jan 17th at noon. It will be a potluck, elections of Treasurer and President, and the reading of our constitution.

We welcome all guests and anyone thinking of joining your Ladies Aid.

Hope to see you there!

President: Donna Shepherd 608 804-0025

Treasurer: Elaine Wrobel 608 457-2242

Vice President: Ardell Helke 608 457-2502 or 608 406-1444

Secretary: Karel Leisso 608 457-2287

Staff Contact List

President - Perry Kilmer 608-457-2574

Vice President - Dave Liggett

Secretary - Doug Miller 608 386-9803

Treasurer - Bruce Harle 608-397-1306

Miss Sonja Oldre 507-359-2341 _____ email: soldre@stmatthews-wels.com

Mr. James Otto 608-804-0474 _____ email: jotto@stmatthews-wels.com

Mrs. Jackie Otto 989-992-4623 _____ email: jacalynotto@stmatthews-wels.com

Mrs. Katie Alderman _____ email: kalderman@stmatthews-wels.com



You are invited to

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Capture Memories for a Lifetime

February 23, 24 & 27

Be a part of our new family directory program. Our goal is to include everyone!



We are partnering with Lifetouch for professional photography that will connect our families.

Create treasured keepsakes

More information will be coming soon about scheduling your photography session.

Convenient

Lifetouch will photograph at our location.

In your one-hour session you will:

- Be professionally photographed
- Immediately view your photographs
- Be able to purchase photography gifts



Each family will receive a complimentary 8x10 photograph & directory for participating



Exclusive products for your cherished memories

WELS

Luther movie to stream on Netflix

A Return to Grace: Luther's Life and Legacy, the Martin Luther film produced by Boettcher+Trinklein Television, Inc., for the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation, will continue to share the history and truths of the Reformation to an even broader audience.

The PBS version of the film (Martin Luther: The Idea that Changed the World) will begin streaming on Netflix on Jan. 1, 2018.

"The Lord has richly blessed this film project," says Mr. Lee Hitter, director of WELS Communication Services. "The Luther film has been seen by hundreds of thousands of people, with more than 1,000 screenings at local theaters, a national audience in a PBS showing that doubled its normal viewership, Marcus Corporation agreeing to show the film to a general audience in every theater they own in eight states, and now a two-year run on Netflix."

The filmmakers have worked with Netflix to localize the production by adding subtitles and foreign language dubbing to ensure maximum viewership. Netflix has more than 110 million subscribers in 190 countries.

DVDs of A Return to Grace are also still available for purchase at nph.net.

New movie focuses on outreach

Filming starts in January for the final movie in a series of four outreach movies that are a collaboration between WELS Commission on Evangelism, Northwestern Publishing House, WELS Multi-Language Publications, and Boettcher+Trinklein Television, Inc.

Rev. Mike Hintz, director of WELS Evangelism, says that while the first three movies—Road to Emmaus, Come Follow Me, and My Son, My Savior—focused on the life and ministry of Jesus, the final movie will follow the apostle Paul and his work in Philippi. "Our goal for this movie is to show in a dramatic way how the gospel is spread into the world following the command of Jesus and to show how it impacted people's lives," says Hintz.

The title, To the Ends of the Earth, is taken directly from Jesus' command to his disciples at his Ascension: "You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

The goal is to complete the movie by the end of summer 2018 in time for congregations to use the film and accompanying materials in the fall for a special mission emphasis Sunday.

Hintz says the movie would not be possible except for funding help from Church Mutual Insurance Company Foundation; WELS Foundation's Shared Blessings donor advised fund; Multi-Language Publications; and gifts from groups, congregations, and individuals.

"In the end, the movie is to help us see that this continues to be a wonderful privilege for us to continue this work of sharing the Word so that many more can come to faith," say Hintz.

The other outreach movies—Road to Emmaus, Come Follow Me, and My Son, My Savior—have had more than a million viewers through TV, DVDs, and online media and have been translated into a dozen different languages. All three movies are still available from Northwestern Publishing House, nph.net. Right now there also is a limited time offer of free shipping on quantity orders of My Son, My Savior. Learn more at MySonMySavior.com

WELS

whataboutjesus.com

Born of a virgin

in His Life, Jesus Who

“If you could pick the ultimate boss, what would that person be like?” We’d want our boss to be smart, to have clout. Additionally, we’d like our boss to be “one of us,” to have worked the job we have so that he/she could understand our particular challenges. Certainly we’d want a boss who “had a heart” for the employees, so that our best interests would be served.

Then we had suggested: “Wouldn’t we want our Savior to have similar qualities?” Of course! Since Jesus is truly God, we know that he’s smart, incredibly so. And talk about clout – wow!

But what about those other qualities—being one of us, having a heart for us—does Jesus have those qualities? Well he would ... if he’s one of us. If he’s a human being, like us, then he would completely understand us; he would understand our challenges, stresses, hopes, fears, dreams, goals. All of that would be true ... if Jesus is a real human being.

Listen! “While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son” (Luke 2:6-7). Jesus was BORN! Like you were born, like I was born—he was born. Which means what? It means that Jesus is a REAL human being—like you, like me. And that’s great! Since Jesus is a real human being, he understands what it’s like to be human. He understands what it’s like to get hungry and thirsty, to get tired and stressed. He understands what it’s like to have friends turn against you, to lose loved ones, etc. He understands, because as a human being, he has experienced all these things!

But remember, Jesus is also true God, conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary. So put those two thoughts—that Jesus is both true man and true God—together. Since Jesus is truly human, he understands us. He has a heart for us because he’s one of us. But since Jesus is God, he can DO things for us! And since he’s God, he’s “really smart,” so the things he does will be the things which make sense for us. In Jesus we find exactly what we need—a Savior who is truly man, but also truly God. As a human being, he understands us. He “gets it.” But as true God, he can do something about it! Most importantly, he can do what we really need—he can save us from our sins.

Month of January Church History

904 Sergius III came out of retirement to take over the papacy from the deposed antipope Christopher.

993 Ulric (890–973), bishop of Augsburg from 923, was formally canonized by Pope John XV, the first recorded canonization by a pope.

1336 Pope Benedict XII (ca. 1280–1342) issued the bull *Benedictus Deus*, which decided the dispute regarding the Beatific Vision.

1499 Katharina von Bora, wife of Martin Luther, was born near Leipzig (d. 20 December 1552).

1523 Huldrych Zwingli (1484–1531) defended his 67 theses before an audience of more than six hundred people gathered at the first Zurich Disputation.

1535 The French royal family, church officials and many other dignitaries joined in an immense torch-lit procession from the Louvre to Notre Dame in an attempt to purge Paris from the defilement caused by overzealous Protestants and their placards.

1597 Elias Ammerbach, German organist and arranger of organ music of the Renaissance, who published the earliest printed book of organ music in Germany, died (b. ca. 1530).

1688 Emanuel Swedenborg, Swedish mystic and scientist, was born in Stockholm, Sweden (d. 29 March 1772).

1718 Paul Rabaut, French Huguenot pastor, was born (d. 25 September 1794).

1739 Thomas Shepherd (b. 1665), nonconformist English clergyman and hymnist, died.

1815 Thomas Jefferson (1743–1826) wrote to Charles Clay about "the loathesome combination of Church and State."

1824 Nils Olsen Brandt, professor at Luther College (Decorah, Iowa), an editor and an organizer of the Norwegian Synod, was born in Norway (d. 1921).

1850 Rufus H. McDaniel, American Christian Church clergyman and hymnist, was born in Brown County, Ohio (d. 13 February 1940, Dayton, Ohio).

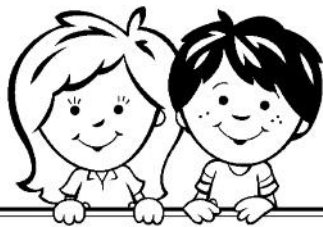
1851 Andreas Schroedel, president of the Minnesota District of the Wisconsin Synod, was born in Neustadt, Bavaria, Germany (d. 21 November 1909). He came to America in 1853 and was educated at Northwestern College (Watertown, Wisconsin) and Concordia Seminary (Saint Louis). He served as pastor at Naugart and Ridgeville (serving also Norwalk and Tomah), Wisconsin. He became a professor at Northwestern College in 1889, then returned to the parish as a pastor in Saint Paul, Minnesota, in 1893. He was president of the Minnesota District from 1906 to 1909.

1854 Ernst Carl Ludwig Schulze, president of the Atlantic District of the Missouri Synod, was born in Huellhorst, Rheinberg, Westphalia (d. 9/10 October 1918).

1860 Ernst Moritz Arndt, historian, hymnist and poet, died (b. 26 December 1769).

1866 The English church worker Katherine Hankey (1834–1911) penned the words to the Gospel song "Tell Me the Old, Old Story."

1880 Frederick Oakeley (b. 5 September 1802), one of the Tractarian authors during the Oxford Movement in England, died.



KIDS PAGE



A NEW CREATION



The apostle Paul says everyone who believes in Jesus becomes brand new.



Directions: Cross out every third letter. Then write the remaining letters in the blanks to complete 2 Corinthians 5:17, NIV.

T H I E R O E F Q O R X E I D F A M N Y A O N
 S E I L S I T N C V H R K I S D T T B H E W N E
 Q W C D R E Y A T M I O C N H F A S W C O R
 M E G T H W E O F L D X H A S S G Z O N L
 E T J H E W N E Q W I D S H R E R O E

_____ ! 2 CORINTHIANS 5:17, NIV

Answer: Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! 2 Corinthians 5:17, NIV

Coloring Page

