



St. John's Ev. Lutheran Church, New Ulm, MN

November, 2022 *Fortress*

### Overflowing!

There is such a thing as too much of a good thing, isn't there? Too much candy after Halloween can leave kids with a stomach ache. Too much water will drown you. Too much money will shift your focus from what really matters. Too much stuff might feel "stuff-ocating."



While a lot of things are bad for us in large quantities, there's one thing that we can never get too much of: God's grace to us in Christ. **"God is able to make all grace overflow to you..."** wrote Paul. (2 Corinthians 9:8 EHV) God's grace will overflow to us. It will fill our cup, our glass, our bucket, our pool, and will pour over the sides, no matter how big the container. And if we're honest, we know that that's exactly how much we need... overflowing grace. We can never get enough grace because we keep on sinning each day. By our ingratitude, by our apathy toward his Word, by our pride and arrogance, greed and covetousness, by sin after sin after sin, we show our need for grace and more grace and more grace.

So thank God that he **"is able to make all grace overflow to you..."** God opened the floodgates of his grace when he sent his own son, Jesus, to live a perfect life in your place, to die an innocent death on a cross, to pay for every one of your sins, to give you credit for his perfect life. And because Jesus is God, that grace is enough to cover not only every one of your sins, but every sin of every person who ever lived! Talk about overflowing grace! And we can never have too much of this good thing!

But what's the impact that God's grace has on us? Paul goes on... **"God is able to make all grace overflow to you, so that in all things, at all times, having all that you need, you will overflow in every good work."** (2 Corinthians 9:8 EHV)

God's grace overflows to us. And that grace that overflows to us, causes us to overflow too. We overflow with thanksgiving to God that spills out into every aspect of our lives and spills out into the lives of others. Full of gratitude for all that God has done for us, we can't help but live for him in thanks and live for our neighbor. Paul goes on... **"You will be made rich in every way so that you may be generous in every way, which produces thanksgiving to God through us."** (2 Corinthians 9:11 EHV)

This month we celebrate "Thanksgiving Day." But really *every* day of the year should be "Thanksgiving Day" to us Christians. We have been made truly rich in every way by God's grace upon grace given to us each day. And that grace produces thanksgiving to God that expresses itself in generosity to others. God's overflowing grace to us overflows from us to others. It makes us eager to use the blessings that he's given us to serve others, that we might share with them the message of God's overflowing grace.

May God continue to bless us richly so that we might continue to be a rich blessing to many others as his grace overflows through us.

In Him,  
Pastor Guenther

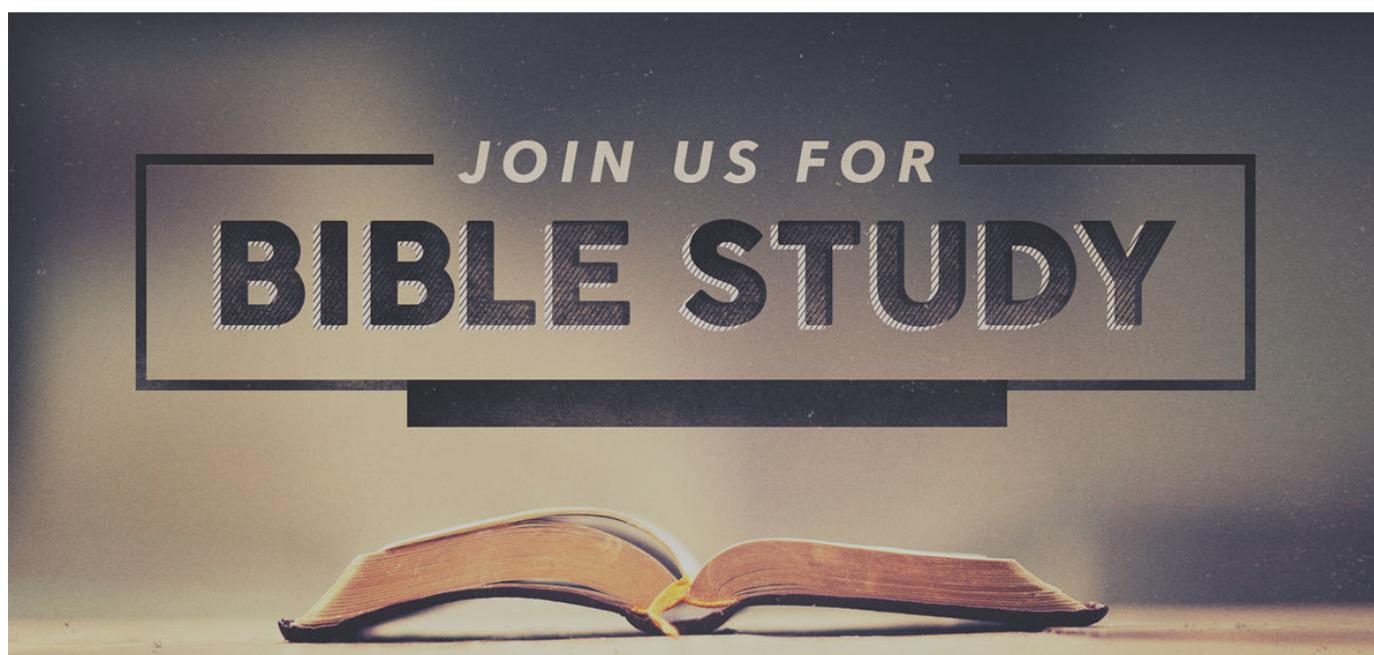
## November Sermon Texts

November 6	Isaiah 65:17-25	Look, Everything is New!
November 13	Malachi 4	Surely the Day is Coming
November 20	Habakkuk 1:1-3; 2:1	We Live by Faith
November 24	Philippians 4:10-20	The Secret to Being Content
November 27	Isaiah 2:1-5	Come All Nations to the Mountain of the Lord



**Bible Classes meet in the Church Basement**  
The class can also be found online at [bit.ly/SJBibleClass](http://bit.ly/SJBibleClass)

Sundays at 9:30 am	Gospel of Mark	Pastor Rob Guenther
Thursdays at 10:30 am	Great Prayers of the Bible	Pastor Rob Guenther
Thursdays at 7 pm	Minor Prophets	Pastor Jeff Bovee
Fridays at 9:30 am	Women's Class: <i>The Screentape Letters</i>	Pastor Rob Guenther



## Council Digest

The St. John's Church Council met on October 20th. A summary of reports and actions not reported elsewhere in the *Fortress* follows:

### Ministrations

#### Transfers Out

John and Lynda Bauer to Christ Lutheran, Hugo, MN  
Brianna Fenske to Life Lutheran, Rochester, MN  
Samantha Olson to Christ Lutheran, Eden Prairie, MN

## **Pastoral Acts**

### **Baptisms**

9 Oct Caylee Ann Iverson

### **Weddings**

2 Oct Macy Wagner and Alex Ollreich

The president reported that nominations for the various boards and committees are being compiled. Invitations and literature will be sent during the first part of November.

An agenda for a local council retreat was adopted as part of the president's report. The goal for the retreat was to begin clarifying where we are headed over the next several years in four areas: facilities, worship, technology, and student support.

Deacon Brad Price reported September attendance numbers, including the return of Martin Luther College students. The online attendance averaged 81.5 per week.

All the St. John's boards worked with bookkeeper Mike Thom to compile the 2023 St. John's budget. In addition, a couple of boards reported on their additional work.

Evangelism Board chair Jesse Zahrt updated the council members on the activities and work with the prospect database. They have taken a new initiative for 2023 to focus on building a deliberate plan to utilize the prospect database generated through outreach events and visitor sign-ins.

The Elders Board chair Jason Mohror updated the council on how the Elders Chairman will take on the role of St. John's employee reviews. The annual assessment will include the custodian, secretary, bookkeeper, pastors, and staff minister. Tools for current and future Elders to use have been drafted. Procedures for implementation will be discussed soon for the 2023 calendar year.

The council recommended to the voters the 2023 budget, which provided transparency with the boards' budgets. The compiled budgets provided a complete picture of St. John's budget. This includes the kitchen project and an invitation for additional contributions toward it.

The council also provided input and guidance for a small group meeting between St. John's and St. Paul's to discuss a joint school agreement for the support of St. John's students and the ministry of St. Paul's Lutheran School. This meeting is scheduled for 7:30 pm on November 1. Results of the meeting will be brought to St. John's/St. Paul's joint council meeting.

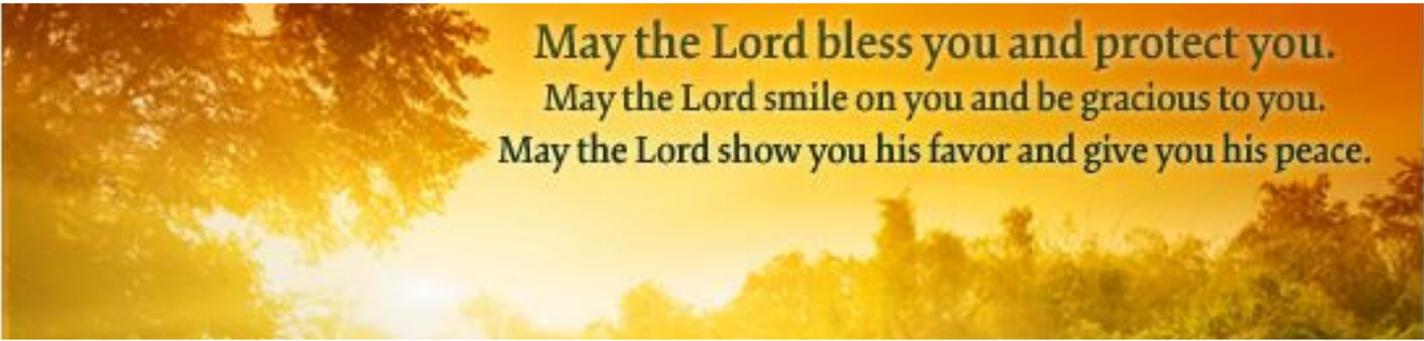
### **Future meetings:**

Next joint council meeting - Potentially, November 15, 2022, at 6 pm (food at 5:30 pm)

Next regular council meeting - November 15, 2022, at 7 pm

Next regular voters' meeting, elections - December 19, 2022, at 7 pm

Submitted by Jon Schaefer,  
Congregational President



May the Lord bless you and protect you.  
May the Lord smile on you and be gracious to you.  
May the Lord show you his favor and give you his peace.

## Staff Minister

**Church Directory: Easy as 1, 2, 3** ~ Many of our members had submitted pictures for our 2022 edition. I am anticipating that many of those will keep the same photo. We have the option to update pictures, either 1) on your own through the Mobile or Computer App, 2) submitting a picture to me via email, or 3) having me take a new picture of your family between services. I'm looking for pictures from three various groups: 1) New Members, 2) Families which have changed in number or in appearance, or 3) those who had not submitted photos in the 2022 edition.

In hopes to print an updated edition of our Church Directory in January 2023, please 1) Submit a picture via email to [sm.dretske@stjohnsnewulm.com](mailto:sm.dretske@stjohnsnewulm.com) 2) Look for me before or after services. I can take your picture and add it to the next printing, or 3) Download the Apps at [www.instantchurchdirectory.com](http://www.instantchurchdirectory.com).

If you have a changed address, phone numbers, or have children now in college or military, please fill out and update information on sheets available on the table in the new narthex and drop it off in the office. Thank you!

**Visiting the Homebound** -I continue to have the privilege of joining the pastors in visits to members who are homebound—sharing the Gospel in Word and Sacrament. If you are not on our list to be visited but would like to be included, please call the church office or me at 507-217-7604 to get on the list.

Did you know that the pastors from St. John's, St. Paul's and Zion, Brighton/Courtland provide a chapel service to the residents of Oak Hills every week? Attendance is between 15 and 20 weekly at services. Six Volunteers from St. John's help out every other week to bring residents to the chapel service and return them to their rooms after. If you are available from 3:30 until 5:00 on Tuesdays, consider adding your name to the list of helpers. Call me or put a note in my box. Thank you Volunteers for your help!

**Streamed/Recorded Services** – This is a reminder to hit SUBSCRIBE if you are watching on YouTube, please. This does not involve monthly fee. It only means that our St. John's New Ulm "Channel" will show up under your Subscribed Channels in the YouTube App to access it easily. If you choose to accept notifications, you will receive a notification on your computer or mobile phone whenever St. John's New Ulm uploads or streams a new video. St. John's streams each 8:00 service on the weekends. You can either watch LIVE or watch it anytime after as an archived recording on YouTube. Thanks for watching our services and subscribing to the St. John's New

Ulm YouTube channel. If we have trouble with a streamed service, we will try to upload a recording of the intended service. It will then show up under “Videos” rather than the “Live” recordings.

Blessings to all as we enter the festive part of the church year! Let me know if you have any needs or ideas that I can take to the appropriate boards. You are an important part of our ministry here at St. John’s and we can all benefit from the work of many!

Jim Dretske,  
Staff Minister

## Youth Group

Happy Fall! Once again it is time for our *Annual Youth Group Leaf Raking Event*. The date for this event will be Saturday, November 5th. The date will be moved to November 4th or 6th depending on the weather.

If you or anyone you know from our congregation is in need of this service please contact Kristin Ulicky at [kru8880@gmail.com](mailto:kru8880@gmail.com) or 507-217-6345 and leave a message.

On Friday, November 11 there will be a *Game Night* in the church basement from 6 - 9 pm.

The *WELS Youth Night* is Sunday, November 20 from 6 - 8 pm. This is for grades 9-12 at The Beacon Lutheran Campus Center at Minnesota State University, Mankato. There are posters in the church narthex with a QR code. Scan to win a gift card!  
Sign up at [HTTPS://FORMS.GLE/YBY2I4N8MBPMQ6CN9](https://forms.gle/YBY2I4N8MBPMQ6CN9)

Watch for more details in your email and facebook!

The new Instagram page is coming soon!



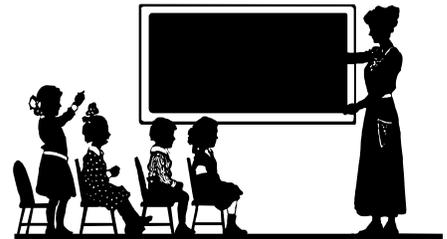
## St. Paul's School

One of the countless blessings of being a teacher is working with student teachers from MLC. Many of our teachers at St. Paul's have a state teaching license that allows them to work with student teachers.

Over my years as a teacher I have been blessed to be able to share my classroom with numerous student teachers. There are few things more exciting than watching the thrill of a student teacher when a lesson goes well or when they are a part of that "lightbulb just went on" moment with a student. Being a part of encouraging a person to become a teacher is a blessing. Being a part of a person's journey to use their gifts to serve their Savior as a classroom teacher is rewarding.

A student teacher has many responsibilities. They have endless hours of lesson planning and prepping. They learn very quickly that your work day usually starts very early in the morning and is never done at 3 pm. They also learn that staying organized and working ahead on everything is worth the time and effort. The faculty meetings, classroom teacher conversations, copies to be made, papers to grade, and Scrabble tiles to cut out for that spelling activity fill up the hours when they are not in front of the students.

At the beginning of each year, St. Paul's students ask when and not if we will have a student teacher. Our students and staff have been richly blessed by the time, talents, and treasures of the MLC student teaching program.



Teacher Alissa Griebel

## MLC Ladies' Auxiliary

St. John's is looking for someone to be the contact person for the MLC Ladies' Auxiliary.

### Who We Are

The Martin Luther College Ladies Auxiliary is composed of women who are communicant members of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod and those in Synodical fellowship.

### Our Mission

The MLC Ladies Auxiliary exists to support and enhance student life at Martin Luther College in New Ulm, MN.

### Our Purpose

Our purpose is fourfold:

- To promote greater interest in Martin Luther College.
- To promote Christian fellowship among women of WELS and those in Synodical fellowship
- To give financial support to MLC by supplying funds for needed projects which are not included in the Synod budget.

- To support MLC and its students through prayer

The contact lady would be responsible for sharing information from the Auxiliary with her congregation.

### **The Auxiliary Board**

The Executive Committee along with the Pastoral Advisor, the Faculty Representative, a Representative from the Board of Control, Projects Committee members, Promotion Committee members, and two representatives from each conference make up the Auxiliary Board.

### **Committees**

- Program — The Faculty Representative assists in planning the program for the annual meeting.
- Promotion — Three elected conference representatives, the First and Second Vice Presidents, and the Faculty Representative coordinate all promotional activities of the Auxiliary.
- Projects — Three elected area representatives, along with the Faculty Representative, coordinate all activities related to the selection and funding of projects.

To learn more, go to [mlc-wels.edu/ladies-auxiliary/](http://mlc-wels.edu/ladies-auxiliary/)

## **Church Library**

The month of November ends with Thanksgiving. But we should be thankful every day of the year, for everything God provides, all our life.

We had four non-fiction smaller books donated recently. Two of them are concerning death and funerals. The first one is “God’s Children Never Die” by Richard Lauersdorf, a retired WELS pastor. He wrote 25 devotions with “words of comfort as I face the end of my life.”

The second book is a Thrivent gift called “Step by Step” and is a quick reference guide for preparing for a funeral, completing administrative tasks, and settling the estate.

The third book is called “The 3D Gospel” by Jayson Georges. He is concerned with ministry in guilt, shame, and fear culture. These are cultures different from our Western culture. One is shame/honor cultures where people are shamed before their community and seek to restore their honor. Another is fear/power cultures that are animistic where people are afraid of evil and harm and pursue power of the spirit world through magic rituals. The third culture is guilt/innocence cultures where people who break laws are guilty and seek forgiveness. This is Western culture. God and Jesus are the answer to all of them, and understanding them helps when ministering to them.

The last non-fiction book is “One More Try” by Gary Chapman. He has written other counseling books. This one considers trying once more to keep you marriage intact. What to do when your marriage is falling apart. The chapters cover various things to consider, such as tough love, anger, loneliness, and changing yourself. Is your marriage worth fighting for?

There is also a fiction book new this month. Bodie and Brock Thoene (husband and wife) wrote the Jerusalem Chronicles, and this is book one, “When Jesus Wept.” Set in the first century A.D., it is a novelization of Lazarus and his friendship with Jesus before and after Jesus raised him from the dead.

Check out the church library as you walk past, on your way to Bible Class and Sunday School. The basket there has many bookmarks that are free for the taking.

LeiLani Rahn,  
Church librarian



## Women of St. John's

The November Meeting of the WSJ will be held on Tuesday, November 1st at 7 pm in the church basement.

We welcome all ladies to an evening of crafting with our very own Annette Hartzell! Please bring a sharp scissors and \$2 for supplies.

We will also be doing a short meeting which will include election of officers. Please join us for food, fun and fellowship!

## Cards of Caring

St. John's Cards of Caring group meets to make cards for our homebound members, Befriend a Mission LWMS families, members age 85 years or older and other as requested.

We welcome anyone ages 7th grade and older including MLC students. No skills are needed. Cards are made using recycled cards and stamp sets. Supplies are furnished.

Our next fall meeting is scheduled for Saturday, November 19. Come and go as your schedule allows between 9 am - noon.

We meet at 403 N. Minnesota St. (across from the Glockenspiel). This is an opportunity for fellowship and service to the Lord.

Contact Lois Willems at  
507-676-1230 with questions.

# Our Synod at Work

## Home Mission Enhancements in 2022

We have mentioned previously in this column that WELS Home Missions is launching a new initiative to plant 100 new home mission churches and enhance 75 existing ministries from 2023 through 2033. This month we will look at some of the mission enhancements that are taking place this year.

1. Cross of Glory in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Cross of Glory will receive short-term financial support as they continue to build on the outreach momentum that began when their pastor arrived in 2017. They're currently the only WELS church able to reach the 750,000 people living in the parishes in and around Baton Rouge.
2. St. John in St. Paul, Minnesota. St. John has called a bilingual pastor to serve the sizable Hispanic population in the area. The church is located right next to the Mexican Consulate; a portion of their facility is being rented by a Latino service organization; and there is already a Spanish women's Bible study being led by a pastor's wife who also works for a pregnancy resource center that's housed there.
3. Divine Savior in Delray Beach, Florida. Divine Savior plans to call a full-time staff minister to assist in school outreach, discipleship training, and connecting new member with various volunteer opportunities. 120 students are enrolled in their school that started in 2018, with 230 expected this school year. That school growth is leading to church growth, and they expect to add around 50 members in the next few months based on current Bible information class attendance.
4. Abiding Savior in Killeen, Texas. Abiding Savior is located near Fort Hood, one of the nation's largest military bases. The church got a new pastor in 2019, added 13 new members in 2021, and is expected to continue growing with Home Missions support in the years to come.
5. Our Savior in Burlington, Iowa. Our Savior has been without a full-time shepherd for 12 years. They are currently being served by pastors from two other WELS churches, with elders leading services when pastors are unavailable. The 17-member core group is committed to outreach with support from a new home missionary.

In addition, Home Missions also approved unsubsidized mission status for Mt. Calvary in Redding/Anderson, California and Living Faith in Midlothian, Texas. Home Missions provides assistance to unsubsidized mission congregations through its district mission boards, mission counselors, and synodical support staff, but does not provide direct financial support. Unsubsidized home mission congregations also have access to loans and grants from WELS Church Extension Fund and Home Missions.

Gerald Woodley

## **Cancer Journey Group**

We met on September 26 in the church fellowship area, with over twenty persons attending. In addition to St. John's members, several St. Paul's members joined with us.

Pastor Guenther opened our meeting with a short devotion. We then enjoyed apple-themed desserts. We shared blessings and challenges as we updated our personal journeys. Licensed Professional Counselor Rev. Edward Frey from Christian Family Solutions (WLCFS) gave a presentation titled Understanding Big Feelings. He encouraged us to identify and respect our feelings/emotions, not avoid them. How we respond to them and live with them is important. In Christ we have the present as well as ultimate and eternal answer to our feelings.

We also have the community of others on a cancer journey and of fellow believers who can support and encourage us.

The Cancer Journey Group hopes to continue to meet about every 3 months, with our next gathering anticipated in January 2023. The date and details will be announced in weekend bulletins. Consider joining us if you have experienced a cancer diagnosis of any kind, whether recently or in the past. Our gatherings are not just for the person diagnosed with cancer. Spouses, adult family members, or a caring guest are also very welcomed to attend.

Submitted by Wayne Wagner

## **We Honor our Veterans**

Each November, our country recognizes those who serve or have served in the God-pleasing vocation of Warrior. They serve with honor, dignity, and respect despite the challenges associated with this vocation. As a Nation, we benefit from these Warriors' sacrifices; it is appropriate to honor them this Veteran's Day.

Our Warriors are not spared from the repercussions of their vocation as the Sword of their Nation. Many service members and their families have worked to manage the effects of deployments. Still, others remain affected by multiple deployments and their experiences while in their service. They are changed mentally and physically. Supporting those members in our pews who struggle with PTS has always been important to LMSG Leadership. For several years, LMSG has offered our Spiritual Retreat for Christian Warriors to ELS and WELS service members who deal with posttraumatic stress. Our Leadership team has renewed its commitment to continue serving families who deal with PTS by approving additional retreats designed for couples.

Lutheran Military Support Group recognizes the blessings that prior service military personnel bring to our congregations as called workers. LMSG continues to offer financial grants to ELS and WELS veterans who attend Bethany Lutheran College, Martin Luther College, or Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in preparation for public ministry. Pastors serving in communities with a significant

military presence are eligible for grants to complete their chaplaincy certification. This past year, we have been privileged to provide financial assistance to four men in pre-seminary and chaplaincy programs.

Lutheran Military Support Group's mission is to provide Christ-centered support to WELS/ELS military service members, veterans, and their families. Our primary method to raise funds is through our Ammo Can Campaigns held in May and November. We humbly request your continued support of Lutheran Military Support Group.



We extend our appreciation for your prayers, encouragement, and support of our military. Together we stand Shoulder to Shoulder in support of our Lutheran Warriors and their families.

He Reigns,

Brad Price  
LMSG President/CEO

## 2022 Advent and Christmas Schedule

### *Midweek Advent*

Wednesday, November 30, December 7 & 14 at 11 am, 4 and 6:30 pm

### *Sunday School Christmas*

Sunday, December 18 at 11 am (no Communion)

### *Christmas Eve*

Saturday, December 24  
4 pm St. Paul's School Christmas Service  
7 pm Candlelight Christmas Eve Service

### *Christmas Day*

Sunday, December 25 at 8 & 9:30 am

### *New Year's Eve*

Saturday, December 31 at 6:30 pm

### *New Year's Day*

Sunday, January 1, 2023 at 8 & 9:30 am