



St. John's Lutheran Church
New Ulm, MN

August, 2024 *Fortress*

A Mighty Fortress

I love our church! Of course I love the people that make up our church and the work we do together. But right now, what I mean is that I love the architecture of our church building! I love how it looks like a castle! The bell tower looks like a turret from which our position could be easily defended. Our church reminds me of a mighty fortress. Our church reminds me of the safety that we have in our God. Our church reminds me of Psalm 46:



¹ God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. ² Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, ³ though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging. ⁴ There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells. ⁵ God is within her, she will not fall; God will help her at break of day. ⁶ Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall; he lifts his voice, the earth melts. ⁷ The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. ⁸ Come and see the works of the LORD, the desolations he has brought on the earth. ⁹ He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth; he breaks the bow and shatters the spear, he burns the shields with fire. ¹⁰ "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth." ¹¹ The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.

Right away the Psalmist gets right to the heart of the matter. He first gives the solution, then the problem. *¹ God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. ² Therefore we will not fear...* Fear can be crippling, can't it? Fear can be a master and make you its slave. And fear robs us of confidence, peace, and strength. Fear is a major problem.

But what causes fear in your life? Do you fear the results of upcoming elections? Do you fear for the future of our nation? When you consider our economy and think about your financial security, do you grow worried, even scared? Do you fear that trip to the doctor because you're afraid of what he might say? Or because you're afraid of what she'll tell you to do? Are you afraid that your relationships will forever be strained? That you'll never reconcile? That you'll always be alone?

There are many things that cause fear. But in Matthew 6 Jesus pointed out the real cause: ***"If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?"*** (Matthew 6:30) Fear and worry really come from a lack of faith. Fear and worry say to God, "I don't really think you are my refuge. I don't really think you're my strength. I don't really think you're present. You can't really help me now."

And instead of being worried about the elections, or the economy, or our relationships, or anything in this life, we ought to be worried about our relationship with God, whom we refuse to trust. We ought

to be worried about the way we've offended him who's made such gracious promises to us. As Jesus put it in Matthew 10: ***"Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell."*** (Matthew 10:28)

And that is something that is truly worthy of our fear.

So what do we do about that fear? How can that fear be removed? The truths sung about in Psalm 46: ***"God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble."*** ***"God is within her,"***—that is, the city of God, a picture of the Church. (We know it's not just a reference to Jerusalem, because no river runs through that geographic location. So "the city of God" must be a reference to the Holy Christian Church.) ***"God is within her,"*** and so, ***"she will not fall..."*** But what kind of protection does God promise? Does he promise that he will spare his people from every calamity that may hit? Does he promise to spare them from every pain or frustration? No. Look at the context:

"Though"—or really the Hebrew says, "when" as if it were expected—***"[When] the earth give[s] way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea... Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall; he lifts his voice, the earth melts."*** ***Then,*** a clear picture of Judgment Day—when God will put an end to this earth once and for all... ***Then,*** when he will destroy it, not with water, but with fire... ***Then,*** when the earth breaks apart and the mountains are sunk... ***Then,*** we still have the confidence that, ***"The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress."***

How do we know? How do we have this quiet confidence? Well, that title for God is a good hint: ***"The God of Jacob"*** was meant to call to mind that God was the God of a promise, of an unbreakable covenant. In Genesis 28 God repeated the promise he'd made to Abraham and to his son, Isaac, now to Isaac's son, Jacob: ***"All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring..."*** referring to the One promised to Adam and Eve in the Garden, the Messiah, the Savior.

So when the Psalmist says, ***"Come and see the works of the LORD..."*** we can't help but think of the great works of the LORD that we've seen in Christ. In Christ alone my hope is found. Because of his work for me on the cross, by his grace alone, through faith alone, revealed in Scripture alone, I know without a doubt that I will go to ***"the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells"*** where the river of life will forever flow; namely, of course, to heaven. Though I may live to see the desolation of the LORD that he will bring about on Judgment Day, ***"[When] the earth give[s] way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea... [When] he lifts his voice, the earth melts..."*** I know that I will survive it. And so I have no fear.

You know the best thing to do when you fall into some quicksand? Keep calm. Don't panic. Don't fight to work your way out. Just be still. Lay flat. And wait for rescue to come. In a similar way, when we worry about our sin, about our guilt and shame, about Judgment Day and hell, the best move is to be still and look for God's rescue. The more I work to earn his favor, the more I sink. But when I quit struggling and look to him, I see what he's already done. I know there's nothing left for me to do. I'm safe. No fear.

This is the confidence that is ours; our safety within the castle, our mighty fortress, that drives out all fear. So the next time you see that bell tower when you come to church, remember the Mighty Fortress that is our God! Remember that we are safe within the city of God! Remember that ***"God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble."***

In Him,
Pastor Guenther

August Sermon Texts

August 4	Mark 6:45-56	Take Courage! The Lord is at Your Side!
August 11	1 Corinthians 10:1-15	Ignorance of God's Will Is Not Bliss
August 18	1 Corinthians 2:6-16	We Have the Wisdom of God
August 25	John 6:51-69	The Living God Gives Us Life

Bible Class meets in the Church Basement
The class can also be found online at bit.ly/SJBibleClass

Sundays at 10:45 am	Bible Stories Not Told in Sunday School	Pastor Rob Guenther
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Council

The Church Council met on July 16, 2024, and the voters on July 23, 2024. A summary of reports and actions from these meetings not reported elsewhere in Fortress articles follows:

Ministrations

Transfers Out

Matthias Borgwardt to Peridot, Peridot, AZ
Philip & Lisa Fischer; Zachary to Ascension, Sarasota, FL

The treasurer and financial secretary presented the financial overview for the first half of the year, indicating an improvement over the previous year, largely due to increased contributions from our members. However, we are currently facing a roughly \$10,000 budget deficit toward the end of the summer months, a period when member attendance typically drops. Despite this, a portion of our members have increased their thank offerings since last summer, which has positively impacted our overall financial health.

Thanks be to Jesus for His gifts which are too wonderful to explain. The prayer is for Him to continue to bless the congregational giving as a reflection of His love and grace, and may it be a source of blessing to others as well.

Stewardship. Recent efforts by the Stewardship Board have focused on enhancing our members' engagement and financial support for various initiatives. The Time & Talent booklet was distributed to all members, and a Time & Talent Survey was completed in July to better gauge individual involvement. We have reviewed several digital giving platforms, aiming to select one that aligns with our congregation's needs.

An Estate Planning presentation and Bible class are scheduled for Sunday, November 10th, to educate members on end-of-life planning and its spiritual significance. Additionally, the Ministerial Education Fund is supporting 11 students attending Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary and Martin Luther College. St. John's can allocate funds to MLC students' accounts, with MLC matching up to \$1,450 per student, encouraging additional contributions to this vital fund.

During the offering, Bible passages have been displayed on video monitors to enrich the worship experience.

Evangelism. There have been several outreach activities over the past quarter. On March 23, we participated in the Easter Canvas, inviting the New Ulm community to Easter services at St. John's and St. Paul's. We also evaluated the Archway Banners used for Easter and Christmas, deciding to display them every other year due to safety concerns.

The Church Campout on June 21-23, despite challenging weather, provided valuable fellowship opportunities, with approximately 55 attendees at the outdoor worship service. Going forward, we plan to recommend a specific camping weekend rather than financially sponsoring the event to avoid unused campsite costs.

On July 13, the Sleepy Eye Water Park event, a joint fellowship with St. Paul's, saw 149 attendees. We plan to continue this annual event due to its success.

Upcoming activities include the Church Picnic on August 11 at Hermann Heights Park, where SJNU/BoEV will provide the main food items, and attendees are encouraged to bring sides or desserts. On August 22, we will jointly staff a table with St. Paul's at MLC Orientation to welcome students and parents. The Summer Send-off on September 7, 2024, featuring activities like a bounce house and lawn games, and will culminate with an outdoor worship service and Hermann Fest fireworks.

Properties. The final items with the sanctuary renovations had significant discussions. The pews and chairs are complete, and the flexible seating is already accommodating people with different needs. The nave floor provides a uniform look to draw attention to the cross in front of the sanctuary. Issues with the chancel floor and stairs are being addressed before the registers are returned. A clear timeline for these final repairs is being developed. The solutions to address these include hiring a different installer and/or deducting repair costs from the current bill.

The Board of Properties is also addressing parking lot maintenance, with quotes from MR Paving for sealing and crack repair. \$20,000 was approved by the voters for these repairs. A generous \$10,000 donation has been offered toward the project which will greatly reduce the cost to the church. Additionally, a deteriorating front entry sign requires a restoration plan, and a committee may be formed for this task.

Mike Goeglein will explore the implementation of a FOB system for enhanced security. Various paint touch-ups and minor repairs are also planned, and we are awaiting further details on these projects.

Education. The tuition assistance model is in place with the FACTS form ready for processing. The plan includes using \$38,000 for financial assistance. Considerations are being given to additional questions about spiritual growth in future applications.

Adult Bible Study and Sunday School programs are being reviewed, with Joel Thomford working on a mission statement for Sunday School. Fall semester preaching and Bible study schedules are set, and we are seeking MLC professors to teach additional classes. Pastor Guenther will reach out to MLC students starting August 22 about involvement opportunities at St. John's.

The summer education and outreach camps have been successful, with a positive outcome from the soccer camp. VBS is scheduled for August 6-8. Ministerial Education Fund contributions have been applied to student accounts, and we are filling two vacant positions on the Board of Youth Education.

Elders. The Elders have managed various aspects of member care and benevolence. Aldi cards have been purchased, and benevolence funds were approved to provide support for a member facing significant medical expenses and another's living expenses. The Elders anticipate future needs and are also coordinating support and encouragement for St. John's called workers.

Overseeing worship includes updates from the Worship Committee, with Adrian Smith taking on Choir Director duties. Pastors are providing services at assisted living facilities. The work of reaching out to inactive members continues and discussions have begun on improving the transition from Confirmation into active membership and leadership.

For young adults, the Elders are gathering feedback, considering additional activities and opportunities, and assessing various ways for confirmands to serve. Other next steps include handling a \$100 request for baptism blankets and being prepared to assist with Pastor Kuehl's transition to New Ulm. Pastor Guenther is helping by teaching an MVL class during the first semester.

A proposal as host for the Fall 2024 Staff Ministry Conference in September will be discussed further in August.

Announcements

The following schedule is currently set for future meetings:

Next council meeting – Tuesday, August 20, at 7 pm.

Next voters' meeting – Tuesday, October 22, at 7 pm.

Next joint council meeting with St. Paul's – Tuesday, November 19, at 6 pm.

Submitted by Jon Schaefer, Congregational President

Church Potluck Picnic

Join us for the annual church picnic at Hermann Heights Park on Sunday, August 11th, starting at 5 pm. We have both pavilions rented at the park.



We ask those attending to bring a side dish or dessert if possible to supplement the main dish. We also encourage you to bring beverages of your choosing should you want something other than water.

St. John's will be providing the main dish of brats and hot dogs as in previous years. We will also be providing the paperware/plasticware for the picnic and will have jugs of water.

Any questions can be directed to Jesse Zahrt at evangelism@stjohnsnewulm.com.

Confirmation Family Meeting

All parents of both 7th and 8th grade students (of St. Paul's School, public school, and homeschool students) are invited to attend an informational meeting **Sunday, August 18th, at 6 pm** in the church

basement.

On that night Pastors Bovee and Guenther will be giving out schedules, passing out materials, and disseminating other information for the upcoming year. Check your email for more information. Contact the church office at office@stjohnsnewulm.com if you didn't receive the email.

Time and Talent Survey

The Board of Stewardship is requesting the help of all members by having them fill out a Time & Talent Survey to indicate their interest in various ministries.

This survey is not intended to sign you up for various groups, but to allow those who currently serve in these areas to call on interested people for help when needed.

The survey follows the order of ministries as printed in the 2024 Time & Talents Booklet that has been placed in your church mailbox. Use the booklet and survey together to get the best understanding of what each ministry entails.

Both the book and survey can be found online. Please fill out as soon as possible.

Booklet: bit.ly/SJTandTBooklet2024 | Survey: bit.ly/SJTandTSurvey

Cancer Journey Group

St. John's Cancer Journey Group will meet on Sunday, September 8 at 3 pm in the lower-level fellowship area. Anyone whose life has been touched by cancer is encouraged to attend, whether they themselves have had a cancer diagnosis at any time in their life, are an adult family member of someone who has had a cancer diagnosis, or are supportive friends.

If you know of someone who is not a St. John's member but might be interested in attending, invite and come with them! Our purpose is to receive encouragement from God's Word and each other.

Snacks will be provided. Retired Christian counselor Dan Loe will lead a short discussion about organizing personal information and preferences for others to use when we are not able to speak for ourselves.



Board of Youth and Education

The Blessing of Sunday School and the Need for Teachers

St. John's, New Ulm is blessed with Christian education that is offered from pre-school through college. We encourage parents to take advantage of all the opportunities that are available to them so that they can train their children in the Word of God.



When I was growing up, I did not attend a Lutheran Elementary School. However, the congregation I attended had a very strong Sunday School program. We learned Bible verses and Luther's Small Catechism. It was a great blessing to me and many others.

Sunday School is perhaps overlooked at times since we do have Christian day school. But Sunday School is still important for a number of reasons. First of all, it gives students yet one more opportunity to hear the Word of God. Second, it brings students together on a regular basis in a setting that is not school. Third, it becomes part of the routine that is instilled in students to make Sunday a time set apart for worshipping God, as we learn in the Third Commandment, and as we learn in Hebrews 10:25 Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another-- and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

To that end, we encourage you as parents to send your children to Sunday School, even if they are enrolled at St. Paul's School. If they are enrolled at Minnesota Valley Lutheran High School or Martin Luther College, you might encourage them to become Sunday School teachers or helpers.

An Appeal for More Sunday School Teachers

We are blessed to have Martin Luther College in our backyard, and that quite literally. The students from MLC have been a great asset to our congregation in many ways, and Sunday School is no exception. In fact, this past year ALL our Sunday School teachers are or were MLC students. They were great!

However, it also poses a special problem for St. John's. Due to the fact that MLC has now begun something called a "J Term" these students are not available during almost the entire month of January. There are also other times, such as spring break, when they may also not be available.

As a result, we are looking for more Sunday School teachers from within the congregation. We have always endeavored to have at least two teachers for each grade. That way, teachers can tag-team and not have to teach every Sunday. And even though we do not want to discourage MLC students from teaching for us, ideally it works best that if one of the teachers happens to be an MLC student, we would like to have the other person to be a member of the congregation so that they can cover those Sundays when the MLC student is not able to be there.

St. John's members, please consider being Sunday School teachers or to be placed on a substitute list, because there are times we need subs as well. Your service to the congregation and to God's Kingdom at large would be deeply appreciated.

If you are interested, contact Pastor Bovee or Prof. Joel Thomford.

In Christ,

Pastor Jeffrey A. Bovee
507-217-6364
revbovee@gmail.com

Prof. Joel Thomford
507-217-3714
jwthomford@gmail.com

St. Paul's School

Tuition Assistance Awards Granted

A team of five people recently met to determine our congregation's tuition assistance awards. This year, we received applications from approximately 20 families seeking support to provide their children with the quality Christian education St. Paul's offers. After careful deliberation, the team awarded these families tuition assistance ranging from \$350 to \$1950.

The congregation's support through envelope offerings, special gifts, and offerings at the school's closing service makes this assistance possible. Your generosity ensures that finances do not hinder these children's opportunity to attend St. Paul's. Every contribution helps in making our school's mission a reality.

Our mission is to assist families in providing an excellent Christian education for their children. By supporting our tuition assistance program, you help us uphold this mission, making a profound difference in the lives of our students and their families. This commitment to educational excellence and Christian values sets our school apart and provides a nurturing environment for our children.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who has contributed. Your support directly impacts the lives of our students and their families, fostering a strong community committed to our mission. Through your generosity, we are building a brighter future for our children, where they can grow academically and spiritually in a supportive and loving school. If you would like to contribute to the tuition assistance fund, please use the envelope in your packet, donate online, or drop off your gift in the church office. If you are a family needing assistance, please talk with our principal, Pete Markgraf, or your congregation representative.

Point 5K School Campaign Event

Join us for the Point 5k Family Fun-raiser on Sunday, August 18, at Kegel Klub, open-house style, from 12 - 4 pm. With a silly .5K "race" great for any age, a bean bag tournament, bowling, food, and "burpee" contest, there is something for everyone! Join one or more of the activities in support of the St. Paul's School Building Project. More information, advance tickets, and registration information can be found at <https://buytickets.at/point5k2024>. If you're available to help with the event, we'd love for you to get involved by signing up here: <https://signup.com/go/FCZjVUy>

Church Library

August means that summer is going fast. Back-to-school sales are a reminder that soon our children will be busy again.

We have a non-fiction book by David Thompson to introduce to our church library this month. "What in the World is Going On?" is the book. "Identifying hollow and deceptive worldviews" is how it is described. So, what is a worldview? It is how we view the world, such as, do we see it as created by God and saved by Jesus? Or do we see other things? The author is an ELS pastor and

professor who studied world views. Some views are Modernism, and Post-modernism, and Spiritualism (among others). These all see Man as the center of the universe, and no hope of heaven. There are many variations of these beliefs, and each person can have a different view. These ideas show up in the media, in college lectures, and even children's books. We all must be discerning.

We also have been blessed with a complete set of The People's Bible. We have had a complete set for a few years, but some had white covers and some green covers. Now they all have green covers. I left the old cards in the newer books. So far, the most used is the book Genesis. If you do not have a complete set of your own, you can check out our books for short term use. They all give the reader an in-depth help to understand each book of the Bible, to answer questions he/she might have. These books fit just right on one of our shelves.

We pray that you finish your summer well and are geared up for the new school year coming. Happy Reading.

LeiLani Rahn, church librarian

Staff Minister

Sanctuary Renovation Projects – There were some issues with the installation of the chancel area flooring as well as need of materials for the steps in various areas, so the “**all-church cleaning**” is being suspended until the work is complete. The “all-church cleaning” date will hopefully fit into August. Watch the bulletins for details. We pray for a large crowd to clean the church as there will be a fair amount of construction dust throughout the church.

Stewardship Time & Talents ~ With the distribution of these booklets and surveys, the Stewardship Board expresses encouragement for every member to fill out a T&T survey, either paper or online, to update or indicate areas of ministry that interest you to support the work of our congregation. There are many opportunities for ministry at St. John's! Read through the booklet, see what opportunities the Holy Spirit opens up for you and fill out the survey. “For it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose” (Philippians 2:13) <https://bit.ly/SJTandTBooklet2024> and bit.ly/SJTandTSurvey Thanks for your participation.

Visiting the Homebound - Our pastors are now joining the pastors of St. Paul's in a rotation of Sunset Apartments, Highland Regency, Ridgeway on German, Ridgeway on 23rd, and Orchard Hills as we continue to have a number of residents at each facility. If you are a resident or have a loved one who resides at one of these, please attend these special short services to feast on the Word of God, especially if residents cannot attend worship services at St. John's. The Lord's Supper is usually offered during these special services. Pastors also rotate to offer a special chapel service each Tuesday afternoon at Oak Hills for Lutherans who have indicated their church affiliation to their staff. This opportunity to worship is enjoyed by nearly thirty residents each week. Know that this service is available to you even if you are only at Oak Hills for rehabilitation. WELS/ELS members are communed on the third Tuesday of each month at Oak Hills. Others living at home, if you are not on our list to be visited but would like to be included during a period of need, please call or text me at **507-217-7604** or email me to get on the list.

St. John's Tech Services - Use the following links or internet address shortcuts to reach our online resources.

- 1) <https://stjohnsnewulm.com> - Our church's Website - Check it out!
- 2) <bit.ly/SJNUPodcast> to listen again to the pastor's sermon message on your phone.
- 3) <bit.ly/SJyoutube> - St. John's YouTube Channel- Watch services again at your convenience.
- 4) <bit.ly/SJBibleClass> - Online Bible Class sign in with Google Meet
- 5) <bit.ly/CommunionQuestions> - Prepare for Communion watching this 6 minute video (SJ Maundy Thursday 2023)

Respectfully submitted, Jim Dretske sm.dretske@stjohnsnewulm.com

LWMS

The 61st annual LWMS convention has come and gone...and what a delight it was. It was held in Sioux Falls, SD, June 27-30, 2024. The theme "Being Built Into a Spiritual House" was carried out through countless mission presentations, workshops, and devotions.

Attendance at the opening/communion service on Thursday was 1,062. Offerings taken at the opening and closing service and offerings given on line was \$69,814.00. This amount was divided between the Home and World projects not chosen by member congregations. So there are no losers. The projects chosen each received \$50,182.63...Home Missions –Equipment Fund, World Missions \$50,182.62...Native American Special Projects. Remember that this over \$100,000.00 is only 25%of the monies collected over the year.

Our LWMS circuits use the other 75% for mission projects we choose at our rallies. This is a good reminder to use your LWMS envelopes in your church envelope boxes twice a year. The children also have an opportunity to give money to missions. Many Christian Day Schools and Sunday schools support Kids C.A.R.E. This year they gave \$43,011.46 For Missionary Kids Retreat. Carrie Schaefer or Jackie Hieb will gladly tell you what that is.

I can't possibly cover all the mission work going on in the WELS, but the depth and breadth of this work is huge. A reminder of how far reaching is when on Friday morning 71 flags were presented representing the countries where the WELS has a mission presence. New flags are from Australia, New Zealand and Senegal.

Please consider attending the 2025 convention in Tulsa Oklahoma. A teaser for 2026 ..it will be in a city named after a president, situated between two beautiful lakes and is well known for its bicycle culture, beautiful buildings, and badgers.

In Christ's Service,
Marley Kuckhahn - convention delegate



Being Built Into a Spiritual House

61st Annual LWMS Convention

Sioux Falls, South Dakota, June 27-30, 2024

Quick Facts-(abbreviated) For the complete list

<https://61.lwms.org/> Scroll down to Quick Facts

Attendance

- ❖ Registered attendees: 969 + 49 weekend only attendees, for a total of 1,018 mission supporters!
- ❖ 58 of the 60 circuits were represented.

Mission Presentations

- ❖ “Build On; Build Up, Build Out” by Rev. Craig Wilke, Sure Foundation, Brandon, South Dakota
- ❖ “The Antidote to Secular Life” by Rev. Conifer Berg, London, England
- ❖ “Make Hay While the Sun Shines!” by Rev. Brian Schmidt, West Des Moines, Iowa
- ❖ “Living Stones” by Rev. John Holtz, Native Christians Network

Workshops

- ❖ The Impact of Indigenous Art and Music on Missions by Dr. Terry Schultz, Multi-Language Productions
- ❖ Trends in Engaging Your Community by Rev. Mark Birkholz, Mission Counselor
- ❖ Navigating Changes with an Unchanging God by Rev. Ben Foxen, One Africa Team
- ❖ The Real Missionary Wives featuring Anna Bartsch, Connie Bey, Rebecca Foxen, and Sue Rieke
- ❖ “The Lord is with you, mighty warrior” – Church Planting

Business Meeting 174 delegates decided unanimously: the LWMS Awareness Committee is now recognized as a regular standing committee!

Seventy-one mission flags were presented on Friday morning, including new flags from Australia, New Zealand, and Senegal.

Mission Projects Selected for 2023/24

Project #HM-2022-02: Equipment Fund

Project #WM-2022-25: Native American Special Projects

Mission Offerings: Total distributed-\$100,365.25 between the selected projects.

Mission Projects Not Selected for 2023/24

Project #HM-2022-17: 100 Missions in 10 Years

Project #WM-2022-18: Europe Special Projects

Worship Service Offerings-\$69,814-distributed between the projects not selected

kids c.a.r.e.

Project #WM-2024-03: Repatriation Conferences-Missionary Kids Retreats-\$43,011.46 gathered and distributed.

Jackie Hieb - alternate delegate

OWLS

Our local MN Valley Chapter 13 OWLS (Organization of WELS Lutheran Seniors) will be gathering on Monday afternoon/evening, August 19, for our annual picnic at the home of Gary and Geri Steffen (1415 N. Minnesota St.).

Fellowship begins about 4 pm and the picnic meal at 5 pm. The cost of the meal will be covered with Thrivent Action Team moneys.

A meal count is needed. Contact Myron Fluegge via email at flueggemtj@hotmail.com or call 507-359-2424 by Wednesday noon, August 14, if you did not sign up earlier. Hope you are interested.

Our Synod at Work

WELS Annual Report: Called to Serve

This month we will review some of the highlights of the 2024 WELS Annual Report to Members section that is entitled “Called to Serve.” The section looks at a number of areas, including WELS Christian Aid and Relief, Congregational Services, and a Leadership Conference that was held in Chicago.

WELS Christian Aid and Relief reflects Christ’s love and compassion to those suffering as the result of disasters or other hardships as well as through humanitarian aid distributed by WELS’ home and world missions.

Leaders from WELS Christian Aid and Relief traveled to a predominantly Hindu county in South Asia early in 2023 to see how humanitarian aid grant money is being used there. They attended a number of humanitarian aid events, including: (1) Sewing schools that provide women with a skill that enables them to set up a small business in their village; (2) free medical camps that serve about 500 people and offer basic dental, medical, and vision care; (3) education for young mothers with infants and toddlers that include information about proper nutrition; and (4) smokeless stove distribution so that families do not have to cook their meals over open fires inside their homes.

In the United States, WELS Christian Aid and Relief provide matching grants of up to \$2,500 to self-supporting WELS congregations once a year to carry out compassion ministry in their communities.

Congregational Services WELS has been working on consolidation, where multiple churches merge into one. In 2022, WELS had almost 460 congregations with an average weekly worship attendance under 50. A little more than half of those congregations are within a 10-minute drive of another WELS congregation, many in a similar worship attendance situation. Consolidation efforts can allow the same number of people to be served by one pastor instead of two or three. In 2022 WELS had almost exactly the same number of active pastors as it did in 1990, but had almost 91,000 fewer members than in 1990.

Leadership Conference More than 1,300 WELS members gathered in Chicago in January of last year for the WELS National Conference on Lutheran Leadership. For three days they dedicated themselves to learning about leading in the congregation and community as well as enjoying worship and fellowship. The conference included both called workers and laypeople, both men and women of all ages. About 47 percent of attendees were called workers, 44 percent were lay members, and 9 percent were high school or college students.

Other Activities A number of other activities were scheduled for this summer. They included a WELS International Youth Rally in Fort Collins that was held on June 25-28, a WELS Women’s Ministry Conference in Pewaukee on July 28-30, and a National Worship Conference in Kenosha on July 30 through August 2.

Gerald Woodley

In Loving Memory

<i>Merlyn Bruns</i>	Undesignated	\$25
<i>Norine Metzger</i>	Undesignated	\$25
<i>Paul Fritze</i>	Building Fund Education Fund	\$100 \$20

Lutheran Military Support Group

Hello Members of St. John's,

Thank you for supporting our mission to WELS and ELS military Service Members, Veterans, and their Families with your generous financial gift to our Ammo Can Campaign during Military Appreciation Month. Your gift of \$510.00 on 5/30/2024 directly impacts Christian Warriors and their Families. Let me share with you how your support is making a difference so far this year.



Our first workshop for Veterans and First Responders was held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in

partnership with Institutional Ministries (IM.life). This workshop addressed the effects of moral injury and how the Holy Spirit prepares us for our roles as protectors. Our second workshop for Veterans and First Responders will be held in Tacoma, Washington this July. These workshops provide Christian Warriors and their support networks with resources and connection.

Four Military Contact Pastors were awarded our Chaplaincy Scholarship for chaplaincy courses offered at Martin Luther College. These and other courses provide pastors with a better foundation to assist military families in their congregations and community.

Building Bridges, our 5th annual Spiritual Retreat for Christian Warriors will be in Texas this November. This retreat will focus on the spiritual and mental health effects of combat deployments including processing grief, anger management, and self-forgiveness. Your financial support allows us to offer this four-day retreat to our Christian Warriors at no cost and to assist with travel, when needed.

These are several examples of how your gift is making an impact for the Christian Warriors and their Families across our Nation. Thank you for standing Shoulder to Shoulder in Service with us through your prayers, encouragement, and support.

He Reigns,
Brad Price
President and CEO

Central Africa Medical Mission

Then you will know the truth and the truth shall set you free. John 8: 32

I hope you had a wonderful Independence Day celebration earlier this month. Each year on the 4th of July, I am reminded about what freedom really means for a Christian. Thanks to the sacrifice of my savior, Jesus, I can live with freedom and peace knowing that I have a place in heaven and so do you. We have the freedom to worship God and love one another as he taught us all to love. I encourage you to share that peace and love with someone this month. Invite someone to church, find a new way to serve your community, or maybe just remind yourself of that freedom and peace that Jesus has already earned for you.



Many of you recently also celebrated together at the LWMS Convention held in Sioux Falls, SD. CAMM committee members were thankful to meet some of our wonderful Contact Women from across the country. Some questions came up about needs in the field and shipping instructions and I thought it would be nice to offer some updates and reminders for those of you thinking about how to help CAMM in the coming months.

Ongoing needs for supplies at both the Zambia and Malawi clinics

- Sunscreen lotion (SPF 50)
- Sun hats (infant - adult) Pill bottles
- Onesies (infant - 2 years)
- Pants/leggings (infant - 2 years)

- Booties/socks
- Washcloths
- Baby blankets
- XL Ziploc bags
- AA and AAA alkaline batteries

Address Boxes for Malawi

Lutheran Mobile Clinic
PO Box 30339
Lilongwe 3, Malawi, Africa

Address Boxes for Zambia

Lutheran Mission Rural Health Center Mwembezh
PO Box 31005
Chelston Lusaka, Zambia, Africa

Additional shipping information and tips can be found on our website: camm.us/howtohelp/

You can find the full newsletter in the narthex.