

The St. John's Messenger

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Lent

Why is the cross an important symbol in our church? Because Christ died on a cross, right? Our whole faith and life are wrapped up in that cross because that is where God punished Jesus for our sins. In fact all of Scripture focuses on the events of the cross. For that reason Lent is an important season in our church year. It is in Lent, the Wednesdays of Lent in particular, that we take a closer look at our Savior's suffering and death on the cross.

For this reason Martin Luther saw value in the season of Lent. A Lutheran pastor comments:

At the time of the Reformation, some Christians wanted to eliminate Lent since Scripture didn't command it. Luther urged that it be kept, for he saw Lent as an opportunity for the strengthening of faith. "Lent, Palm Sunday, and Holy Week shall be retained, not to force anyone to fast, but to preserve the Passion history and the Gospels appointed for that season" (LW 53:90). Here Luther tells us that Lent should be preserved, in part, because it reminded Christians of the Passion (Suffering and Death) of Jesus and encouraged them to meditate upon it.¹

Luther also understood that during Lent there is also a focus on our own sin. The cross and our sin are necessarily connected. When we look at the cross we also need to look at the need for the cross. Jesus is the Savior because we needed a Savior. This combination of our sin and God's grace in Christ drives a Christian to spiritual self-improvement. In connection with Romans 12:2, "Be transformed by the renewing of your mind," Luther says,

In this way the Apostle describes progress; for he addresses those who already are Christians. The Christian life does not mean to stand still, but to move from that which is good to that which is better. St. Bernard (of Clairvaux) rightly says: 'As soon as you do not desire to become better, then you have ceased to be good.' It does not help a tree to have green leaves and flowers if it does not bear fruit beside its flowers. For this reason - (for not bearing fruit) - many perish in their flowering. [The Christian] is always in the condition of nakedness, always in the state of becoming, always in the state of potentiality, always in the condition of activity. He is always a sinner, but also always repentant and so always righteous. We are in part sinners, and in part righteous, and so nothing else than penitents.²

May your faith grow this Lenten season as you focus on the cross of Christ and what that means for you.

In Christ, our Savior,
Pastor Draper

¹ Dr. Richard Bucher, LCMS pastor (<http://www.orlutheran.com/html/lentfact.html>)

² Commentary on Romans, by Martin Luther, Translated by J. T. Mueller, Kregel Publications, Grand Rapid MI 49501, reprinted 1976, page 167-168.

St. John's Mission statement:

*The continuing purpose of this congregation is to serve all people in God's world
with the gospel of Jesus Christ on the basis of the Holy Scriptures.*

**Presidents Report to St Johns Church Council & Congregation
February 2012**

**Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.
(Hebrews12:2)**

The Lenten season will be here starting with Ash Wednesday February 22nd. This year we will have the imposition of ashes at the Ash Wednesday services if you desire it. I would ask that you read what Pastor has given us for information about it and the meaning of the action. If you are comfortable with it, join us in the rite.

Each Wednesday in Lent we have two services with supper between them. The services are a time to reflect on Jesus' time leading up to his death on the cross and resurrection. The supper can be a time of conversation for us with our fellow believers that have been saved by his death and resurrection. Please join us.

At the January 22nd voters meeting the voters approved to pave the alley along with the street improvements the city is doing on 3rd Avenue and Maple Street adjacent to our property. Consideration to pave the parking lot was deferred to the February 12th voters meeting and the voters approved that portion of the project then. We will need to consider the infrastructure needs that may be under the alley and parking lot along with our connections to the water and sewer in the street while the road is under construction. It would be sensible to assess our future needs and implement what we can now to prepare for them, such as water main upgrades for the school and bringing the building up to code. This project could facilitate any water & sewer concerns currently and future concerns for a building sprinkling system when we need to put it in. I would ask for one or two men interested in helping Mike Crabtree with the property and building improvement side of this project contact him, myself or Pastor and for several other men to consider planning for the financial side of this project to contact us also. It is important to act on this now as the project will start in the spring.

I would ask that several men consider being an elder. We are short one elder and we will need to have another to replace expiring terms of current elders. This is an important job with in our congregation that needs attention. If you are interested in talking more about what the position is see myself, Pastor or head elder Jerry Dittbenner.

In Christ,

Steve Windschitl
President, St John's Congregation

Church Council Minutes February 13, 2012

Present: Steve Windschitl, Leo Derkowski, Barry Hillmann, Jim Mielke, Andy Lochner, Jerry Dittbenner, Dan Rick, Laurell Haus and Pastor Draper.

Pastor Draper opened the meeting with devotion and a prayer.

Minutes

Andy Lochner/Laurell Haus made a motion to approve the January 2012 minutes, as corrected. Motion carried.

Pastor's Report

Up to 12 computers have connected to view the second service. Emails were sent to viewers welcoming to the Internet service.

Treasurer's Report

Andy Lochner /Barry Hillmann made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report. Motion carried.

President's Report

At the January 22 voters meeting the voters approved the city assessment for street work and to pave the alley.

We should review and do any infrastructure work that may need to be done under the areas to be paved.

We need at least one Elder and more when current terms expire. Please consider serving.

Board of Elders

Jerry Dittbenner/Barry Hillmann made a motion to release Joan Kiecker and her four daughters from membership. They are attending Trinity Lutheran. Motion carried.

Principal & Board of Education

Sleepy Eye Public School voted to go to a four day school week and are awaiting state approval. We are getting feedback from the parent of our students about what they would prefer. We are leaning toward staying with the five-day school week.

Our school will join the Minnesota Independent Schools Forum.

February 27 to March 2 is WELS School Week.

March 1 is the date for parents' day and the school play. March 2 is grandparents' day and March 4 the congregation is invited to see the play.

The dates for the field trip to Milwaukee are May 7-11.

Leo Derkowski/Jerry Dittbenner made a motion to approve the position of PreK/K teacher's aid for Wednesday and Friday mornings at the rate of \$35 per day, \$70 per week. Motion carried.

Worship Committee

Ash Wednesday is February 22, 2012. Imposition of ashes, a church tradition, is optional. A soup supper will be held between Lenten services each Wednesday.

Maintenance Committee

Laurell Haus/Jerry Dittbenner made a motion to appoint Mike Crabtree as chairman of the alley improvement project. Motion carried.

Outreach

No report.

Stewardship

No report.

MVL/WELS

No report.

Endowment and Trust Fund Committee

No activity.

Old Business

None

New Business

None

The next scheduled council meeting: 7:30 Monday, March 12, 2012.

Jerry Dittbenner/Barry Hillmann made a motion to adjourn. Motion carried.

The meeting closed with The Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted
Leo Derkowski, Secretary

St John's Lutheran Special Voters Meeting February 12, 2012

The meeting opened with devotion and a prayer.

15 voters signed the attendance sheet.

The meeting was called to order by President Steve Windschitl. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss paving the parking lot between the school and the church.

Mike Crabtree/Robert Maas made a motion to pave the parking lot using the same contractor as the city for the work they will do in the alley, with four-inch thick paving material in an amount not to exceed \$12,000.00. Motion carried.

The meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Leo Derkowski
Secretary

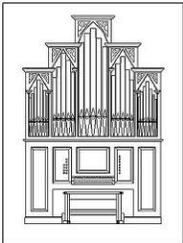


Ladies Aid

The Ladies Aid meet on Wednesday, February 1st at 2 p.m. For their regular monthly meeting. President Marlys Lochner presided. For our devotion, led by Pastor Draper, we looked at Ephesians 1:3-14, God's plan for our salvation. We were chosen by God the Father before the creation of the world.

We received a thank you from CAMM (Central African Medical Mission) for our recent donation of \$50.00.

The Ladies Aid Chair Fund has reached the amount of \$385.00 on February 1st. Ten new gray stacking chairs have been ordered from Kempske and will arrive soon.



A report was given by Pastor Draper on the renovation of the organ. Work will start sometime this year and be completed later in the year. Less than \$4,000.00 is needed to complete the work.

A motion was made, seconded and passed to give \$100.00 to the Church's Scholarship Fund.

Our next meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 7th at 2 p.m. Come join us!

Marilyn Deibele, Secretary

NEW from WELS Kingdom Workers

Introducing..... a memorial envelope for our MN Valley WELS Kingdom Workers. If you desire to give a memorial to support any of the chapter's area outreach projects, you may use this new envelope, which can be found in the tract rack of the church narthex. It can also be used for memorials at funerals, and is available at area funeral homes. Hispanic Outreach and teen mission trips are two of the major projects in our chapter.



News from Mrs. Shrum's Classroom Pre-K/K

PRESCHOOL:

During the month of February the Preschool students have been learning about the letters: L, V, and Q. They are all growing so much and are getting more involved in the daily routines and lessons. Many are perfecting how to write their names and already know many letter sounds.

KINDERGARTEN:

The Kindergarten class is just booming in their reading classes. All three girls are excellent readers and show it by helping Mrs. Shrum by reading to some of the Preschoolers. They have enjoyed their Starfall curriculum online that has taught them many reading concepts in very fun ways.

MRS. SHRUM'S CLASS:

As a whole class we would like to thank everyone who wrote to us for our 100 days celebration. We received 167 letters and postcards in all! What a success!

Now we are concentrating on our parts for the school musical, "The Trial of the Big, Bad Wolf". We invite you all to come and watch our performance on Sunday, March 4th.

Thanks
for your
participation

LOOKING AHEAD:



March is READING month. We would like to give our St. John's family and friends the opportunity to take part in this month long celebration. If anyone would enjoy coming into our classroom and reading to us during a school day, please sign up in the church office with Mrs. Hillmann

during the week or in back of church on Sundays. Bring your favorite children's book from your childhood along or talk to Mrs. Shrum ahead of time and she'll help you find a book. We can't wait to read with all of you!!



News from Mrs. Halvorson's Classroom Grades 1-3

During Lent, we turn our thoughts to our Savior's great love for us through his suffering and death. We will hear devotions with "Resurrection Eggs." Each of the twelve eggs contains a symbol of Jesus' suffering and death and helps us better understand our Lord's great sacrifice for us.



"Lutheran Schools Week" will be celebrated by our area WELS Lutheran schools from February 26th - March 4th. Movie afternoons and all school bowling will begin the fun early in the week. Parents Day and Grandparents' Day round out the week complete with entertainment by the children. The children will perform their play "The Trial Of The Big Bad Wolf" again on Sunday, March 4th for anyone who would like to come. You won't want to miss this fun presentation!

Math will keep us busy this month. Grade One will learn about congruent shapes, trading dimes for pennies, telling time to the half hour, and fourths and halves. Grade Two will learn about subtraction fact families, telling time to 5 minute intervals, estimation, writing numbers in expanded form, and measurement of height and inches. Grade 4 will cover improper fractions and whole and mixed numbers, averaging, and sales tax.

In Science the 3-4th graders are learning about Simple Machines. We are surprised to learn of the many everyday things we use that are actually simple machines

Grades 1-2 are studying the countries of China and Japan in their Social Studies unit. They are learning about the major contributions of these societies.

As the days get longer and move toward Spring, we are reminded of God's constant love and care for us through every season!

News from Mr. Rick's Classroom Grades 4-8

Greetings from the upper grades classroom! We hope your warm, winter season has been a blessing! The 3rd quarter is almost finished and the students are continuing to working hard. Here is a list of what we have been studying in the past weeks:

Christ Light – (4-8) Bible stories of Gideon, Samson, and Ruth

Math – (4) Sales Tax and Mixed Numbers, (5) Mental Math, (6) Capacity and Prisms, (8) Mean, Median, Mode, and Range

Science – (4-6) Potential and Kinetic Energy, (8) Magnetism and Electricity

Social Studies – (5-6) Judaism and Hebrews, (8) Europeans Reach America

English – (4-8) Adjectives and Adverbs

February was the start of a very busy month with many student events. MathCounts did a tremendous job in their competitions. Thank you for your hard work! Grades 5-8 have one more Meet Math competition before the final results are posted. Grades 5-6 as a team is currently in 4th place out of 16 teams. Every student in the upper grades classroom was involved in a sport this winter season. Eight students played basketball and three students were cheerleaders. Many students are also involved in piano and instrument lessons. We are blessed to have many talents in our classroom. To God be the glory!

All the students at St. John's were involved in the school play *The Trial of the Big Bad Wolf*. All of them worked hard at their lines and actions. We hope you enjoyed the show!

For more information about the upper grades, look at our webpage on the school website.



Thank You!

Thank you to everyone who supported the St. John's basketball and cheerleading teams this winter season. We have great fans here at St. John's! Thank you also for your Christian sportsmanship and encouragement to all the children who participated.

Thanks
for your participation

Mr. Rick, Mrs. Shrum, & Mrs. Silfies

Thank You!

Thank you to those members who gave an anonymous gift of money for a pizza party to the basketball team. We had a great time at Happy Joe's joining in Christian friendship and celebration.

Dan Rick



CAMP SHETEK
The Minnesota Valley
Lutheran Camp Federation

invites you
to join them this Summer

June 24 – June 30, 2012

at
Lake Shetek State Park
Currie, MN



If you have finished 3rd through 8th grade this Spring, you are eligible to enroll as a camper. Please contact the school office for a registration form or go to www.welsmn.org and click on "Events and Registration".


Worship the
LORD in the
beauty of
holiness.

1 Chronicles 16:29

MLC Food Bank

Dear Members of St. John's,

On behalf of the MLC students who use the Food Bank, we would like to thank you for the donations you gave for their benefit. This semester, eighteen families are eligible to use the Food Bank and can plan to receive groceries with no cost to them. The students look to God as the source of their blessings, they recognize God's hand in your concern for them, and they are grateful.

Your continued prayers and support will be greatly appreciated.

Yours in Christ,
The MLC Food Bank Committee
Mrs. Judy Gosdeck, Mrs. Edie Ash, Mrs. Linda Schmidt, and Mrs. Michelle Grubbs



Memorials & Gifts

In Memory of
George Radke
Joyce Bloemke's father

Organ Fund
Family & Friends - \$100.00

