



Good News-Letter

St. Michael's Ev. Lutheran Church

November 2024

A Member of the WELS

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

This month millions of families throughout the country will gather for a meal of Thanksgiving. This is a very special day. Family members—some who may not see each other more than a couple times a year—will gather. Host moms will be up in the wee hours of the morning making sure everything is ready for when the guests arrive. When the meal is ready everyone takes their place at the table. They'll begin with a prayer—possibly a special prayer or the common table prayer. Then everyone digs in.

Thanksgiving Day is a special day. But for a Christian every day is a day of thanksgiving. No, we don't have to have the relatives over every day. We surely cannot afford the time and expense for a turkey dinner every day. But we do have so much to thank God for that one day a year could not possibly cover our thankfulness. Even our entire lifetime is too short. Thankfully our Lord has secured eternal life for us so we can spend eternity thanking him.

Everything that we own—our house, our car, our income and all we possess really belong to our God. Scripture reminds us, *"The earth is the Lord's and everything that fills it, the world and all who live in it"* (Psalm 24:1). God tells us in his word that everything is his. Even we belong to him. How does it make you feel when you've worked hard your whole life and now you don't really own a thing? Everything is God's. You don't even get a 50/50 split? It's much smaller than that. Everything is the Lord's.

So what role do we play? God in his goodness has chosen us to be caretakers of his creation. It's similar to parents who buy a car for their child to use while at school. Though the child puts all the miles on it and hopefully takes proper care of it, the car is still registered in mom and dad's names. They own it. We are thankful that God has allowed us to use his creation. We came into this world bringing nothing with us. When we leave, we'll take nothing with us as well. Unless we recognize that everything we have belongs to the Lord, we won't be able to show God the proper thankfulness that he deserves.

A second reason we should thank our Lord is that everything comes from him. The Lord gives us the abilities and skills we need to do our jobs. Moses needed to remind the Israelites of this: *You might say in your heart, "My ability and the power of my hand have earned this wealth for me." But then you are to remember that the Lord your God is the one who gives you the ability to produce wealth, to confirm his covenant that he promised to your fathers with an oath, as he does to this day* (Deuteronomy 8:17,18).

You may have worked hard your whole life and accumulated much wealth. I'm sure there is someone who has worked harder and doesn't have a penny to show for it. Wealth comes from the Lord. It's important that we recognize that. No matter how much or how little we have, it all comes from the Lord. And we need to be content with what we have. The Apostle Paul spoke about that in his letter to the Philippians: *I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, while being full or hungry, while having plenty or not enough. I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me* (Philippians 4:12, 13).

Sadly, we don't always show contentment. We get greedy. We worry. We complain. Because of our sinfulness, God should punish us forever. But God in his love could not stand to lose any sinner. *God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us* (Romans 5:8). In love God chose to punish Jesus whom he loved, with whom he was well pleased. This was the only way he could save us. Now when he looks at us through Jesus Christ he doesn't see any of our vile, dirty sinfulness. He sees the precious, pure life that Jesus lived while he was on this earth.

Salvation comes from the Lord. For this we are ever thankful. For this we will thank and praise him every day of our life. And when he takes us home to heaven, we will spend all eternity in thanksgiving.

For us Christians, every day is a day of thanksgiving. Every day we offer our lives in service to our Lord who first loved us and served us in our greatest need. O give thanks to the Lord for he is good. His mercy endures forever.

Magnify the Lord through music

Dear Friend,

Luther Preparatory School (LPS) has been part of our synod's ministerial education training on its Watertown, Wis., campus for 159 years. Today more than a hundred 14-year-olds enroll at the high school every year to consider and be prepared to serve the Savior as pastors, teachers, or staff ministers in Christ's public gospel ministry. Perhaps you know that 25 percent of the students at Martin Luther College and 40 percent of the students at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary are LPS graduates. Thank you, Lord, for blessing LPS's ministry and purpose, as only you can!

Throughout its history, thousands upon thousands of WELS members have been supporting the worldwide preaching and teaching of the gospel by supporting Luther Prep's ministry. Everything Luther Prep possesses—from the buildings to the bleachers to the beds in the dormitories—has come from the gracious hand of God through the gifts of his people. Thank you, dear WELS members!

LPS has not built a new stand-alone building in more than 50 years. In 1971 a new gym replaced the one built in 1912. Since then, that 1912 building has been serving as Luther Prep's music auditorium. As the student body and number of programs have increased, this space has been creatively adapted to accommodate practices for large and small choral and instrumental groups, storage, and set construction. We have come to the point where we have maximized our ability to adapt. Sharing space is no longer an option.

Worship and all of its components are the heartbeat of WELS Lutherans' lives. As a synod ministerial education high school it follows that music is a most essential ingredient of LPS's ministry preparation. Every student takes a music class all four years. Approximately 90 percent of our students participate in choir and take piano lessons. LPS has a flourishing band program and produces more organists than any other high school in North America. Music permeates Luther Prep's campus and is a blessing to our students and our church body both now and into eternity. As Martin Luther wrote, "Next to the Word of God, music deserves the highest praise. The gift of language combined with the gift of song was given to us that we should proclaim the Word of God through music."

Luther Prep is embarking on a once-in-a-generation project for the good of our students and Christ's Church. We desire to build a music center that will have a performing arts theater with sloped seating and 100 additional seats, designated band and choir rooms, right-sized classrooms with the latest technology, piano

studios, practice rooms, adequate restrooms, etc. The estimated cost at this time ranges between \$10-\$15 million. Lord-willing, a new music center might endure for a century or more as the last one has. A blessed side effect will be the modest repurposing of the 112-year-old current music auditorium to its original purpose as a much-needed second gym. Through the generosity of God's people, Luther Prep has already received gifts and designated assets totaling more than \$2 million for this endeavor. Will you please consider investing your interest, prayers, and resources to help us receive the gifts we desire to fully fund this project?

Thank you, Lord, for giving Luther Prep everything for 159 years. All of LPS's needs have been met. Thank you, dear WELS member, for considering an initial gift (wels.net/nxt-lps-music-center/) to a music center at your synodical school.

Grace and peace,

Matt Crass

President, Luther Preparatory School

Partnerships lead to progress

"I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now." (Philippians 1:3-4)

I love this verse from Paul's letter to the Philippians. Paul was known as the great missionary who took the gospel throughout the known world at the time. Yet, in these verses, God reminds us that Paul didn't go alone; he had partners—those who supported him financially, prayed for him, sent him care packages, and shared the gospel themselves. Paul's stories were their stories. Ministry is all about partnerships in the gospel.

I can still hear President Schroeder on assignment day in May 2015: "Stephen Apt. New mission start. Liberty Hill, Texas. South Central District." I was so excited to be going to Texas, starting a mission church and telling people about Jesus. I quickly found out that we had one other family in our core group: Jerry, Laura, and their second-grade son, Christian. That made five of us. We rented space in a commercial storefront property where our nearest neighbors were a gas station, a survivalist store, and a BBQ restaurant. It seemed like a daunting task to start a church with just the five of us, but we had big dreams and an even bigger God.

Fast forward nine years, and our church now worships an average of 153 souls each Sunday. We have 83 adults growing in the Word during the week, whether in Sunday morning Bible study or in our small groups, along with 50 youth and teens in our teen ministries and 56 in our children's ministries. In addition to our

church, we have a school with an enrollment of 370 students, and we've completed two building projects. How did all of this happen? Through partnerships.

We have the amazing opportunity to share the gospel with many people from diverse backgrounds—some who didn't know Jesus at all and others who have been away from the church for a long time. We've had the privilege to share Jesus with people who haven't had a good walk with the Lord in the past, including Terri and her husband, Todd.

If you were to ask Terri and Todd about their walk with God prior to our church, they would say it wasn't very good. But one day, they decided to give our church a try. They attended our Starting Point class and learned all about Jesus and what he has done for them. Four years later, Todd and Terri are now partners in our ministry. Todd serves as our church's head usher, and Terri is currently taking classes to become synod certified to teach in our school. Terri recently said, "I feel so much closer to God than I ever have in my entire life."

As I type this from my desk in Liberty Hill, Texas, I can't help but feel thankful—not only for all that God has done but also for our partners in the gospel. These stories are not just my story, nor are they solely Divine Savior's stories; they are your stories as well. The ministry and the gospel work here have only been possible because of the partnership of WELS supporting our mission in Texas. I am grateful for your partnership as you support the spread of the gospel ministry through the Board of Home Missions with your prayers, service, and offerings. Ministry is best accomplished through partnerships. Thank you for your partnership from the first day until now.

Written by Rev. Stephen Apt, home missionary at Divine Savior Church in Liberty Hill, Texas.

Sing a New (Old) Song to the Lord

In the closing days of August, Rev. Dr. Terry Schultz from Multi-Language Productions (MLP) and Rev. Ben Foxen of the One Africa Team traveled to Uganda.

The goal? Fulfill a request made by our brothers and sisters in the Obadiah Lutheran Synod (OLS) to help them create new songs with Christ-centered lyrics.

Thanks to funding provided by MLP, we were able to gather about 20 musicians from the various districts of the OLS in one place for 5 days of training, encouragement, and hands-on work composing and performing songs. MLP also provided funds for the purchase of some equipment that will be used by the OLS to train future musicians in their church body.

In the time spent in this workshop, we were continually amazed at the musical talent and creativity that had been assembled. In a short time, these men and women composed and recorded 68 new songs that showed incredible diversity. Since the composers came from different parts of the country, they composed in no less than seven different languages. The musical styles differed as well, ranging from traditional Ugandan beats, to more of a hip-hop style, to chants and chorales. It was eye-opening to witness how the people of OLS sought to incorporate all these different styles, showing that all of them are now a part of their cultural heritage.

The content of these songs also differed, some focusing on themes of praise and thanksgiving (among them my personally favorite melody, "Nebaza Musumba Wange," or "I thank you, my Shepherd"); others focusing on the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus; others on sin and repentance; and others a recasting of the timeless songs of the liturgy.

One of the goals of this workshop was to preserve any music that was produced. So, a handheld recording device was used to capture the compositions as they were performed for the group, and handwritten lyrics were transcribed into a Microsoft Word document. Both were then transferred to SD cards that can be shared with all the congregations of the OLS, so that the entire church will be able to benefit from what was produced at the workshop.

OLS leaders have plans to take this project further. They want these composers to continue their work in producing new melodies and lyrics, focusing their talents on the various seasons of the church year, so that in time an entire OLS hymnbook might be produced and digitally recorded. It's an ambitious project, but one they certainly have the talent to accomplish.

Through it all, we rejoice in the amazing gifts that God has given to his people. Throughout the ages, new songs have always been created to praise and glorify our God and teach people about his amazing deeds and love. The OLS may be singing some new songs to the Lord now, but they're also singing the same song that God's people have always sung—Christ for us, and Christ in us. All glory and praise be to his name, in whatever melody you sing it!

Written by Rev. Benjamin Foxen, world missionary on the One Africa Team.

The above items recently appeared on our synod's webpage: www.wels.net.

What's going on at St. Michael's

- The Bible study *Let's Go* continues to be offered on Sundays at 8:15am for all members. St Michael's

leadership is looking into activities that will make all of St. Michael's members more outreach minded.

- Consider making a special donation to help cover costs of resurfacing our parking lot and the new parsonage windows.
- The first two Wednesdays of this month training is being offered for Peter Plan volunteers to get all of St. Michael's members active in worship.
- Several of St. Michael's members participated in the synods online study *When Politics Drives You Crazy* at 7:30pm on Thursdays in October. The shortened service on Thursday made it possible for many to enjoy the study.
- Our Long Range Planning committee has been meeting monthly to discuss St. Michael's strengths and weaknesses and make suggestions to our church council for possible improvements. Have any suggestions? Contact Jonathan Mayer at 402-470-7138 or jonathanpaulmayer@hotmail.com.
- Several of St. Michael's members attended and participated in the area Reformation service at St. Matthew, Winona on Sunday, October 27. Synod President Mark Schroeder gave an edifying sermon. Dale Hampton and four of St. Michael's brass players accompanied the worship. Emily Mayer directed the adult choir. The Luther choir added praise to our worship as did children from area WELS schools. The offering taken goes to WELS Christian Aid and Relief to help hurricane victims.

Calendar Highlights

- Worship Planning mtg., Mon. Nov. 4, 7pm
- Long range planning mtg., Tue. Nov. 5, 7pm
- 19-min Bible study, Wed., Nov. 6 & 20, 6:30pm
- Peter Plan Training, Wed., Nov. 6 & 13, 7pm
- Ladies Aid mtg., Sat., Nov. 9, 9am
- Perkins Bible study, Fri., Nov. 15, 7am
- BLSA Bd. mtg. Sun., Nov. 17, 11am
- Bd. of Elders mtg., Tue., Nov. 19, 4pm
- Outreach Committee mtg., Tue., Nov. 19, 5:30pm
- Church Council mtg., Tue. Nov. 19, 7pm
- Hunters service, Thu., Nov. 21, 7pm
- SS Teachers mtg., Mon. Nov. 25, 7pm
- Thanksgiving worship, Wed., Nov. 27, 7pm

Your Council Members

Jonathan Mayer	President/Education
Ryan Ligman	Secretary
Eric Horstman	Outreach
Jim Baures	Treasurer/Stewardship
Jess Veraguth	Properties
Mike Baures	Financial Secretary/Elders

Those Who Help

Ushers for November

Jim Baures	Matthew Baures
Jess Veraguth	Gerald Thaldorf
Richard Falls	Kyle Wolfe
Jordan Suhr	

Altar Guild for November

Becky Suhr	Jan Schaffner
Donna Ernst	Kyler Ernst
Renata Wojchik	

Money Counters for November

Harry Putz	Gerald Thaldorf
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Ushers for December

Eric Horstman	Jim Wick
Michael Baures	Asher Duerr
Paul Isakson	Evan Osborn
Allen Glodowski	

Altar Guild for December

Yvonne Tamke	Cally Ligman
Jean Burmeister	Marie Grossell

Money Counters for December

Roger Beckly	Kevin Buswell
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This month we recognize our veterans and thank them for their service:

Cole Anderson – National Guard
 Michael Baures – Navy
 Richard Burmeister – Army
 Richard Falls – Army
 Joshua Isakson – National Guard
 Merlyn Klebig – Army
 Hale Madsen – Air Force
 Harry Putz – Army
 John Schlesselman – Army
 Jess Veraguth – Air Force

Coulee Chorale is Back!

Coulee Chorale is back for its 2024 Christmas season under the direction of Mr. Paul Adickes, Mr. Gregory Baures, and Miss Emily Schmidt! You are invited to join this group of Christians as we praise God through His gift of music! Rehearsals will be held at Luther High School from 6:00–8:00 p.m. on November 10th, 17th, 24th, and December 1st, and from 9:00–11:00 a.m. on December 7th to prepare for our concert on December 8th at 2:00 p.m. Sign up to sing today at <https://forms.gle/bQffFefMBayytA548>! Questions? Contact Paul Adickes at adicpaul@luther.k12.wi.us or 608-783-5435, ext. 1340.