



Good News-Letter

St. Michael's Ev. Lutheran Church

October 2025

A Member of the WELS

The LORD said, "Look, there is a place next to me, where you shall stand on the rock. It will happen that, while my glory passes by, I will put you in a crevice in the rock. I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by. Then I will take away my hand, and you will see my back. But my face will not be seen." (Ex. 33:21-23)

Moses had a strange request. He wanted to see God. Hearing him was not enough. When our Lord appeared earlier to Moses at the burning bush, Moses felt the need to hide his face then. But now he wanted to see God face to face. God could not just appear to Moses in his full glory. The sinner Moses would die. So God would find a way to hide him behind a rock to protect him from God's glorious presence.

Our first parents had no trouble seeing God before sin entered the world. Made in God's holy image they enjoyed a wonderful fellowship with God in the garden. They walked with him in the cool of the day. There was no need for God to hide his glorious presence from humans. They were good and he could enjoy fellowship with them.

But then the man and the woman chose to be god and reject their Creator. This loving relationship with God could be no more. They tried to hide in the garden from the all-present One. But to no avail. God showed up and confronted them. But he didn't come to annihilate these rebellious creatures. God hid himself behind a promise. The Seed of the woman would crush the serpent's head.

The Almighty One who spoke everything into existence, would now hide behind his word so mankind can survive. His saving promises were passed on from one generation to the next. But the world saw little use for God's promise. Their inclination toward evil took over their life, leaving God no other option but to destroy humanity and the world it occupied with a world-wide flood. But God kept his promise alive with Noah and his family on the ark. And a new start for humanity began when the flood waters receded.

God picked our one descendant of Noah, to carry out his saving plan. God would use the man of faith, Abraham, to fill the earth with believing descendants, as many as the stars of the sky and sands of the seashore.

Two millenia following, God would hide himself in actual flesh and blood. He came to his own, but his own did recognize him. He would live his entire life fulfilling every promise he ever made. He was the Seed of the woman who sought to crush the serpent's head. He was David's Son who would establish his rule forever. He was the suffering Servant Isaiah prophesied. He got busy with his mission of destroying the devil's work while filled with God's Spirit and his Father's approval. He drove demons out of people. He healed the sick. He saved the lost.

He showed his glory to three disciples on top of a mountain. His Father, once again voiced his approval there and commanded these men to listen to Jesus. But these men didn't listen so well when he entered his passion. On a number of occasions he told them what to expect in their final trip to Jerusalem. They could expect to see his arrest, his death, and resurrection. But when it happened just like he said, his followers were in shock. Even when the reports came in on Sunday by the women who visited his empty tomb, the disciples considered it all nonsense.

If we had been in their shoes, would we have acted differently? We get to see how Jesus carried out God's saving work. It's captured for us on the pages of Holy Scripture. But when the opportunity arises to gather around that Word in worship and study, sinful flesh finds excuses not to come. I've heard that already. I've got more important things to occupy my time.

Yet God still chooses to hide behind word and sacraments. He has to. How else can we sinners approach him? Since he remains our Good Shepherd, we must keep listening to his voice. We must keep frequenting his table where we receive the very body and blood that he gave and shed for our forgiveness. Sunday School started last month. Make sure your children and grandchildren are there to listen to their Shepherd. This month a new study begins on the 175 years of our synod's history. Join us 8:15am on Sundays. The same study is offered at Christ Lutheran in Cochrane on Tuesday mornings at 10am. A 19-minute Bible study is held the 1st and 3rd Weds. of the month. And the 3rd Fri. at 8am we meet at The Landing. Join us to learn more about our hidden God.

New long-range strategic plan in place

The delegates to the convention in July adopted a new long-range strategic plan entitled “Christ through us.” This plan outlines the priorities of what we as a synod and as congregations have adopted for the next ten years. This plan was adopted not as a “top down” directive of what the synod will do and how we will conduct our ministry. Rather, it is an outline of the prayerful priorities and goals we have as we work together to carry out the mission that God has entrusted to us.

The title of the plan, “Christ through us,” emphasizes the focus and center of this plan, which is completely on Christ and on what he has done for us and for a world of sinners. But it also emphasizes the truth that God in his grace has chosen to work through us, his people and his ambassadors. The plan, which you will hear more about in the coming months, has four basic components: culture, congregations, commission, and calling.

- When addressing **culture**, the plan stresses the importance of developing a culture in our congregations in which all our members recognize that they are Christ’s ambassadors, each with the personal privilege & responsibility of communicating the message of Christ to the people they know. It will guide us as we work to make our congregations places where people are welcomed and participate in the life and work of the congregation.
- When addressing **congregations**, we will work to engage all members in the mission and ministry of the church. We will provide support and resources for ministry enhancement efforts in congregations. We will work to expand the synod’s gospel outreach through strategic church planting. We will elevate the home as the first mission field and provide sound Lutheran resources in discipleship, worship, outreach, and planning.
- When addressing **commission**, we will foster international ministry partnerships to expand the gospel’s reach. We will equip a global missionary force, not only by sending WELS missionaries but also by training pastors and evangelists from global sister churches and establishing confessional Lutheran seminaries in key global locations. We will foster robust mission collaboration with church bodies in full doctrinal fellowship with WELS. We will expand multi-language mission efforts and explore mission work in high-risk and unreached areas.
- When addressing **calling**, we will address the shortage of called workers by carefully expanding

pathways into gospel ministry. We will establish innovative recruitment efforts for future called workers. We will maintain the long-term stability of our ministerial education schools. We will adopt a strategy for the professional development of called workers and will support their spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being.

The “Christ through us” plan depends on all of us. We encourage you to read more about the plan at christthroughus.net.

Serving with you in Christ,
WELS President Mark Schroeder

Beacons of light across North America

Dear Christian Friend,

“We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us” (2 Corinthians 5:20).

That verse is the heartbeat of our synod’s long-range strategic plan, “Christ through us.” It’s also the heartbeat of our congregations—beacons of the light of Christ’s salvation to a world lost in the darkness of sin.

Right now, WELS congregations reach about two percent of the U.S. population—roughly 6.8 million people living within a 15-minute drive of a WELS church. But WELS Home Missions has set a bold goal with the 100 Missions in 10 Years initiative: increase that reach to three percent. That’s an additional 3.4 million souls—souls who could be within reach of a confessional Lutheran congregation proclaiming the message of reconciliation with God through the perfect life and innocent death of Jesus.

This isn’t just about planting churches. It’s about strengthening the backbone of our synod. It’s about building a network of congregations—both longstanding and newly planted—that radiate the unity and love of Christ, draw the lost into fellowship, and equip the faithful to stand firm in a fragmented world.

We’re seeing this vision come to life in places like Boston, Mass.; Erie, Colo.; Marquette, Mich.; Celina, Texas; and San Tan Valley, Ariz. These aren’t just dots on a map—they’re communities where the gospel is desperately needed. And thanks to your prayers and support, we’re seeing core groups form, Bible studies begin, and worship services launch.

But we’re also seeing the cost.

Real estate, rent, and construction expenses are rising. A single mission start may require up to \$2 million in support from Home Missions over 12+ years. Yet, we press on—not because it’s easy, but because it’s worth

it. Because Christ became poor so that we might become rich (2 Corinthians 8:9). And now, we share those riches with those who are still poor.

Will you help us reach that three percent?

Your gift today will help us

- plant new churches in underserved communities.
- support core groups already laying the groundwork.
- equip missionaries and provide resources for long-term ministry.

This is not a short burst of effort—it's the steady building of a lighthouse. Each new congregation we plant is another beacon of Christ's light in a darkening world. Together, we're constructing a network of gospel outposts—places where the lost are found, the weary are refreshed, and the faithful are equipped to shine. And with your help, we'll keep building—one light at a time, one soul at a time.

In Christ's service,

Rev. Mark Gabb

Administrator, WELS Home Missions

Outreach is a little bit like bull-riding

Outreach in a home mission congregation can be like riding a bull. Every second is precious when riding a bull. You want to hold on until the 8-second mark for maximum impact on your score. However, with an animal that unpredictable, you never truly know when the ride will end.

So it is with outreach. Every opportunity to meet new people is precious. Every second of conversation with a prospect is important, and you want it to last as long as possible for maximum impact in building a relationship. Most importantly, every opportunity is precious as you share Jesus and grow that relationship. Who knows when the encounter could end because, after all, life is unpredictable.

Opportunities for outreach are also unpredictable at times. It was the summer of 2024 and I received a phone call from a group representing a traveling rodeo that was coming to Ladysmith in July 2025. They inquired about the use of the parking lot of Our Redeemer for their rodeo. It was as if it were meant to be! We had just enlarged the parking lot, put in a big new playset, and made the property more accessible and inviting to the public.

This was great! The rodeo group wanted to pay us rent for the use of our parking lot and encouraged us to use the property to welcome their patrons. Even better, we were given the opportunity to connect with up to two

thousand people. But the best part? It would be an opportunity to share Jesus.

Remember that the bull is unpredictable. As plans were being made with the playset and bounce house, free waters and even, just maybe, horse-drawn wagon rides on the church property, the bull started bucking. Two weeks before the event, the rodeo group decided the property next to the church wouldn't be suitable, and they moved the rodeo down the road.

However, the Lord opens doors for outreach in unexpected ways. A local community group was going to be serving food for the event. They asked if we could help them. They needed help. It was the only group serving food for two thousand people. The ride was back on, and what a ride it was! Twelve members of Our Redeemer and I, all wearing our blue Our Redeemer Lutheran—Ladysmith shirts, worked nonstop in almost 100-degree heat and let the light of Christ shine.

This group of Christians made a maximum impact as they worked and served and did whatever was asked of them to help at the rodeo. Some also made maximum impact by sharing Jesus that day with those they interacted with. Standing next to the fryer waiting for the French fries to cook allows some downtime for evangelism. The very next day at 8 a.m. worship, two people from the community group the day before were in our church wanting to hear more about Jesus.

That's outreach in our communities today. It's like riding a bull, unpredictable. But we have the assurance that when things don't go as expected or we feel like we have failed, the Lord opens another gate. We pray that we are always prepared for another opportunity to give an answer for the hope that we have in Jesus. It is our joy to do what our Savior has called us to do—share the gospel!

Written by Christian Christenson, home missionary at Our Redeemer Lutheran Church in Ladysmith, Wis.

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

What's going on at St. Michael's

- Outreach visits are not scheduled this month. If our Lord gives us nice weather and you have the time, contact Pastor W. about offering gospel invites to prospective members in our area.
- The Peter Plan continues at St. Michael's in a prayerful effort to bring back inactive members. Volunteers are still needed for contacting them. Keep circling your name each time you attend worship so we can have an accurate record to help

us reach members in need of encouragement—“*Let us not neglect meeting together, as some have the habit of doing. Rather, let us encourage each other, and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*” (He 10:25)

- Our search for custodial care at St. Michael’s has led us to hire Eric Moe. We thank Eric for his willingness to serve us.
- This month Men’s Fellowship meets on Oct. 12 and our annual Talent Night is held Fri., Oct. 24.
- Pastor Westenberg continues serving the vacancy at Christ, Cochrane. Pray that they receive a pastor soon.

Calendar Highlights

- Elder/Peter Plan mtg., Wed. Oct. 1, 5pm
- 19-min. Bible study, Weds. Oct. 1 & 15, 6:30pm
- Long Range Planning mtg., Mon. Oct. 6, 7pm
- Stewardship Committee mtg., Sun. Oct. 8, 6pm
- Ladies Aid mtg. Sat. Oct. 11, 9am
- Circuit Partnership Conference, Sat. Oct. 11, 9am
- Men’s Fellowship/Dodge park, Sun. Oct. 12, 4pm
- Bible study at The Landing, Fri. Oct. 17, 8am
- LWMS Fall Rally/St. Mt. Winona, Sat. Oct. 18, 9am
- Outreach Committee mtg., Mon., Oct. 16, 5:30pm
- Church Council mtg., Mon., Oct. 16, 7pm,
- SS Teacher mtg., Mon. Sep. 29, 7pm

Your Council Members

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

Those Who Help

Ushers for October

Ryan Ligman	Richard Conrad
Jonathan Mayer	Darrel McCutchen
James Veraguth	David Herzberg
Gerald Suhr	

Altar Guild for October

Sharon Wick	Sadie Baures
Jennifer Baures	Laura Madsen

Money Counters for October

Elroy Conradt	Mike Baures
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Ushers for November

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

Altar Guild for November

Renata Wojchik	Donna Ernst
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Becky Suhr

Kyler Ernst

Money Counters for November

Harry Putz

Gerry Thaldorf

The Coulee Region OWLS will be holding their regular monthly meeting on Thursday, October 9, 2025 at First Ev. Lutheran Church, 400 West Avenue South, La Crosse, WI at Noon for a Potluck Luncheon. Please bring a dish to pass and your own table service. Coffee will be provided. The Program will be “ Campus Ministry” given by Garrett Alford from Winona State University. Quinn Bilitz who is involved with Campus Ministry at Luther High School will be our guest. All Church members- men and women age 55 or older – are welcome. Please come for a visit, enjoy the friends you meet, a good lunch, and an excellent program. There will be a free will offering. This will be our last meeting until April 2026.

Special 175th Anniversary—The psalmist urges us to “tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, his power, and the wonders he has done” (Ps 78:4). This includes the gracious work our God has done in the history of his church. In fact, Psalm 78 devotes over 60 verses to recounting the various episodes from Israel’s history. This year, as we mark the 175th anniversary of the founding of the Wisconsin Synod, resources have been produced to help us remember and tell the praiseworthy deeds our gracious God has done for and through WELS.

- *Christ Through Us: A Pictorial History of the Wisconsin Synod, 1850-2025*
- *The Wisconsin Synod Lutherans, Second Edition*, the updated telling of the synod’s history
- A Bible study on WELS history is now available that coordinates with *Christ Through Us: A Pictorial History of the Wisconsin Synod, 1850-2025* (This study will be offered at St. Michael’s at 8:15am beginning Sundays in October)
- Upcoming presentation related to our synod’s history include the following:
 - October 19 at 3:00pm at Luther Preparatory School in Watertown and available through livestream - *The History of Our Watertown Preparatory Schools* by President Mark Schroeder.

Save the date!



The next WELS National Conference on Lutheran Leadership will be held January 19-21, 2026.