



Good News-Letter

St. Michael's Ev. Lutheran Church

November 2025

A Member of the WELS

"Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and will come out. Those who have done good will rise to live, but those who have practiced evil will rise to be condemned. (John 5:28, 29)"

This month we're entering that season of the church year known as End Times. During this season our thoughts naturally focus on our Savior's return and eternity. Where will we spend eternity? When Christ returns will he tell us, "Come with me, you who are blessed," or will he say, "Depart from you, you are cursed." We need to know, and this season helps us.

The first Sunday in End Times is Reformation. For us Lutherans it's a special time. Not only are we celebrating our heritage as Lutherans, but we're observing a return to the true word of God. At the time of Luther there was much confusion about the way to heaven. Some felt forgiveness could be bought. But that's not what Scripture says. By grace you are saved through faith. It's God's gift, not something you earn.

The second Sunday in End Times focuses on the final judgment. Everyone will be there. There is no escape. And look who's judging us. It's the same person who came to earth once before not to condemn, but to save us. He's the one seated at God's right hand and is pleading for us so his Father has mercy on us. The holy life God demands from us was already lived by Jesus. The punishment we deserve Jesus already endured on a cross. Because of Jesus' death and resurrection, we look forward to the day of our salvation.

The third Sunday in End Times deals with the saints triumphant. They are saints because they've been washed clean of sin in the blood of Christ. They are triumphant because they're in heaven. They are living in glory because they have safely made it through life with faith in their hearts and are with their Lord forever.

The final Sunday of the season focuses on Christ our King. We gladly want him to rule our hearts and lives because as our king Jesus went to battle for us. He defeated sin, death, Satan, and anything that would keep us away from God in heaven. He willingly took our place on Calvary's cross. All of God's punishment was waiting for him there. He endured it all so we could

could be freed and live in glory with him.

What a glorious existence that will be when we join loved ones who have gone before us. To see our Savior face to face and join the choirs in singing his praises. We can only imagine never have to face suffering and pain or any effects of sin again. It will be pure paradise.

Our thoughts during this season are on Christ and his second coming. But our Lord never told us when that day will come. We can't expect his return only on one of the Sundays in November. He told us no one knows when it will be. Sadly, some have tried to predict and have led many astray. Our Lord will return when the very last of his elect are brought to faith. Will it come immediately following a child's baptism? Will it happen when a co-worker shares his faith on the job? Imagine that being you. You tell a friend about Jesus and immediately Jesus shows us up in glory to take you and your friend to heaven.

We certainly want to stay ready. Our Lord could come at any time. But we also must be ready to leave this world before he comes. We may leave this life by death. On that day our immortal soul will leave our lifeless body to be with the Lord. God only knows when that day will be. He wants us to stay ready for it as well. How do we do that? With a steady diet of God's Word and sacrament. Just as you need to feed your body, you need to feed your soul. What if I feel I don't get much out of church? Did you confess your sins to God there and receive forgiveness from the pastor as from God himself? That's important. Did you listen to the word being read and preached. God promises his word will not return empty. It will accomplish what he desires (Is. 55:11). Can't remember what your pastor preached on? Do you always remember what you ate at previous meals. Maybe not, but you know you did eat. So show up for worship and Bible study and feed your soul.

This month we're blessed with an extra Sunday, so we'll start a new church year on Nov. 29. It's the first Sunday in Advent. Advent focuses on our Savior's coming. And the first Sunday in Advent deals with his second coming. So we end one church year with his second coming and start another with the same. God keeps us ready for Christ's return.

Strengthening WELS' backbone

The synod's recently adopted long-range strategic plan, entitled "Christ through us," establishes four main priorities for the next ten years. Those priorities are

- cultivating a gospel-driven **culture**,
- strengthening WELS' backbone in **congregations**,
- bringing Christ to the nations as our **commission**, and
- living up to our **calling** to produce workers for a growing harvest field.

In this issue of *Together*, we focus on the second priority: strengthening WELS' backbone in congregations.

Your congregation is a part of the vital foundation that supports our shared gospel ministry efforts. WELS congregations are where the light and truth of God's saving gospel is proclaimed to members and where God's truth is shared with people in the community. And, just as important, through their mission offerings, congregations support the proclamation of the gospel around the world and in newly planted congregations in the United States and Canada. Congregations are also places where members identify and encourage young people to consider preparing for a lifetime of service in the public ministry.

For all these things to happen, we need to encourage WELS members to be actively and personally engaged in the life and work of their congregation. Our goal is to better equip all members to embrace their God-given role in Christ's mission. Members will be encouraged to view their friends and neighbors as their personal mission field and their homes as places where children are led by parents to know and serve their Savior. To succeed in equipping our lay members to carry out these tasks, we intend to provide congregations with the necessary resources to enable all members to serve their Savior and his mission joyfully and confidently according to their gifts and talents.

Beyond encouraging WELS members in our congregations, our goal is to continue to help congregations enhance their ministry efforts. That can happen in a number of ways. Maybe a congregation in a changing setting can adjust its ministry plans to reach people more effectively. Perhaps a congregation can re-evaluate the mission and sustainability of its elementary schools and early childhood ministries. Some congregations will explore collaboration or even merger with other congregations to expand efforts to reach more people with the gospel.

And, of course, when we talk about congregations, we also refer to the new home mission congregations that

God will enable us to plant. One of the key strategic elements of our mission planting will be to prioritize starting new congregations—outposts for gospel proclamation—in places where our confessional Lutheran voice is not yet present. [Read more](#) about the seven new home missions that were recently approved.

But mission efforts really begin in the home as the first mission field. We recognize that the high school and college years are when many of our young members are tempted to drift away from congregational life and worship. The more that parents lay a firm foundation of faith in the home, the more our young adults will stay connected to the Savior, to worship, and to their congregations.

It all starts in the home with faithful, God-fearing parents. It continues in the congregation as the gospel works in people to strengthen their faith. And then, as we work together to take the saving message to more people in new places, God will work through us to build his church.

The "Christ through us" plan depends on all of us. We encourage you to read more about the plan—and how you can be part of it—at christthroughus.net.

Serving with you in Christ,
WELS President Mark Schroeder

7 new home mission starts approved

In September WELS Board for Home Missions met and approved seven new missions toward the synodwide goal of starting 100 new missions and enhancing 75 ministries by 2033.

"With the approval of these seven new missions, we're not just planting churches—we're expanding the reach of the gospel where there isn't a WELS presence," says Mark Gabb, Home Missions administrator. "It's also a direct step toward our synod's goals laid out in the 'Christ through us' long-range strategic plan. Our goal is to expand WELS' reach through strategic church planting so that millions more will have the opportunity to hear the gospel. This is at the heart of our 100 Missions in 10 Years initiative, and these new missions bring us closer to that milestone. We thank God for the prayers and support that make this bold outreach possible."

The seven new mission starts include:

Altoona, Wis.: Altoona is one of the fastest-growing communities in western Wisconsin. With a population nearing 10,000 and projected to grow, Altoona attracts people seeking a small-town feel with access to urban amenities, which are located in nearby Eau Claire, Wis. A core group from St. Mark, Eau Claire, has been

active hosting community events, launching monthly devotional services, and building a growing prospect list since early 2023. *(Our free-will offering taken at Mission Fest in August is going to support this mission.)*

Buffalo, N.Y.: Buffalo is one of the largest metro areas in the United States without a WELS church. The target area has about 95,000 residents within a two-mile radius. A dedicated core group has begun gathering for Bible study and outreach, laying the groundwork for a new church plant.

Naples, Fla.: Ranked among the best places to live and retire, Naples is seeing fast growth and demographic change. The district mission board and mission counselor have made multiple visits—talking with locals, meeting community leaders, and learning about the area’s needs. With strong support and a clear plan, the mission is ready to reach the many unchurched residents eager for spiritual connection.

Olathe, Kan.: Olathe, located in the southwest Kansas City metro area, has seen its population surge, and continued growth is expected. Major employers have fueled this expansion, making Olathe one of the most affordable and family-friendly cities in the nation. A dedicated core group from Mt. Olive in Overland Park, Kan., has been hosting regular Bible studies and planning meetings.

The Sandhills, N.C.: The Sandhills area of North Carolina is growing as retirees and young families move in. Its proximity to Fort Bragg also draws military personnel who often settle there permanently. A core group from Tree of Life, Cary, N.C., has begun outreach and canvassing, building momentum and a prospect list in a region where confessional Lutheran churches are few.

West Richland, Wash.: West Richland, located just outside the Tri-Cities, is experiencing rapid growth. A committed core group from Southridge, Kennewick, Wash., has been working to establish a second site in West Richland since 2024. The group has already begun outreach through community service activities and fellowship events and aims to launch regular worship and ministry activities in 2025.

Wilmington, N.C.: Wilmington is in one of the fastest-growing corners of North Carolina. A core group of 18 people from Ascension, Jacksonville, N.C., meets regularly for Bible study and planning. With no WELS church nearby and easy access along U.S. 17, the group is laying the foundation for a welcoming church that blends in-person and online worship, Bible instruction, and plenty of community service.

Learn more at wels100in10.net.

Leadership conf. registration opens

Registration is now open for the WELS National Conference on Lutheran Leadership, Jan. 19–21, 2026, at the Hilton in Chicago, Ill.

This conference is the flagship leadership event in WELS, offering called workers and lay members, men and women, and current and future leaders an opportunity to grow in their faith, learn new ministry strategies, and contemplate how they and their congregations can best reach out with the gospel in their communities.

“People will return home from this conference with new ideas, yes, but more important, with renewed hearts,” says Jonathan Hein, director of WELS Congregational Services and part of the conference planning committee. “That’s what strengthens a congregation more than anything else.”

Strengthening congregations is one of the four main priorities of the synod’s new long-range strategic plan, “Christ through us,” which was approved at the synod convention this past summer.

“The WELS National Conference on Lutheran Leadership is where we honestly wrestle with some of the major strategic challenges in WELS,” says Hein. “For example, at this conference you will see a strong focus on the retention of young members, on the need to better engage women in the ministry of the church, and on the need for a more robust approach to cradle-to-grave discipleship.”

Four keynote presentations will touch on larger strategic and cultural issues that affect every congregation and American Christianity as a whole. Sixty-nine breakouts, divided into tracks for those who want to focus on specific topics, will offer practical ideas for participants to bring home to their congregations, helping transform a long-range vision into real-world action.

Says Hein, “I’m most excited to see what happens after the conference—when the people who attended return home with renewed purpose and their congregations begin to feel that ripple of gospel momentum.”

This conference also will have a strong emphasis on youth participation, with conference planners working to have about 10 percent of attendees be high school- and college-aged members.

The deadline to register for the leadership conference is Nov. 30. Early-bird registration, ending Nov. 15, is \$299 per person.

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

What’s going on at St. Michael’s

- Our Outreach Committee is planning on handing out Christian invitations to area residents. If you are interested in helping, join us at church on Sat. Nov. 15 at 1pm and pray for good weather.
- 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)
- Special welcome to recent new members: Samuel Westenberg from Mountain of the Lord, Wausau WI; Elliott Kozlowski by confirmation; and Ken & Patty Mayer from Living Hope, Omaha, NE.
- Pastor Westenberg continues serving the vacancy at Christ, Cochrane. A meeting of Church Councils from Christ & St. Michael's will be held Sun. Nov. 16 following Christ's worship service to discuss joint ministry.
- Pastor Westenberg has received a divine call to serve three congregations near Rhinelander, WI. They are in the process of becoming one church with two campuses. Please keep pastor in your prayers that the Lord will lead him to a decision that best serves Christ's kingdom.

Calendar Highlights

- Area Reformation Service at Luther, Sun. Nov. 2, 2pm
- Elder/Peter Plan mtg., Wed. Nov. 5, 5pm
- 19-min. Bible study, Weds. Nov. 5 & 19, 6:30pm
- Ladies Aid mtg. Sat. Nov. 8, 9am
- Long Range Planning mtg., Mon. Nov. 10, 7pm
- Luther High Delegate mtg., Wed. Nov. 12, 7:30pm
- Hand out Christmas invites, Sat. Nov. 15, 1pm
- Joint Church Council mtg./ Christ, Sun. Nov. 16, 12pm
- Outreach Committee mtg., Tue., Nov. 18, 5:30pm
- Church Council mtg., Mon., Nov. 18, 7pm
- Hunters wild game meal: Thu. Nov. 20, 5:30pm
- Hunters Worship Service: Thu. Nov. 20, 6:30pm
- Bible study at The Landing, Fri. Nov. 21, 8am
- Thanksgiving Service, Wed. Nov. 26
- Worship Planning, Sat. Nov. 29, 8am
- SS Teacher mtg., Mon. Dec. 1, 7pm

Your Council Members

Jonathan Mayer	President/Education
Ryan Ligman	Secretary
Mark Horstman	Outreach
Jim Baures	Treasurer/Stewardship

Jess Veraguth
Mike Baures

Properties
Financial Secretary/Elders

Those Who Help

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
Becky Suhr	Kyler Ernst

Money Counters for November

Harry Putz	Gerry Thaldorf
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Ushers for December

Mark Horstman	Jim Wick
Mike Baures	Asher Duerr
Paul Isakson	Dennis Wolfe
Allen Glodowski	

Altar Guild for December

Jean Burmeister	Yvonne Tamke
Marie Grossell	Cally Ligman

Money Counters for December

Roger Bechly	Kevin Buswell
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REFORMATION/GERMANY TOUR. You are invited to join a 12 day (April 20-May1, 2026) tour of Germany emphasizing sites of the Reformation. Places like Wittenberg, Worms, Wartburg, Eisleben, Erfurt are included. Non religious sites include Berlin, Mainz, Rothenburg, Rhine River cruise etc.. There is an optional 3 day extension to Munich, Oberammergau, Neushwanstin Castle etc. The tour will be hosted by retired pastor Eugene Kock who has been to Germany many times. For more info.: pastorkock@yahoo.com.

2025 WELS Night at the Bucks

November 14 @ 7:00 pm \$28-\$56 Call 414-259-4308
or Email: csc@wels.net

Join WELS members from around the Midwest for an evening of fellowship, fun, and basketball at WELS Night at the Bucks. WELS members will receive discounted tickets and be seated together within each seating category offered.

Save the date!



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