



# Good News-Letter

St. Michael's Ev. Lutheran Church

March 2026

A Member of the WELS

But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we certainly cannot take anything out. But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be satisfied. (1 Timothy 6:6-8)

There is such a thing as true godliness. It is a faith-born reverence for Christ. It is great gain for us. One mark of true godliness Paul says here is contentment. It's the opposite of greed that is so prominent in our world of materialism. In his letter to the Philippians, Paul says, "I have learned to be content" (4:11). He had been well fed; he had been hungry. He had lived in plenty; he had lived in want. Whatever the circumstances, he had learned to be content. How? He explains in 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me."

Paul explains why a life that centers around the pursuit of material gain is foolish. We carried nothing into the world. We are unable to carry anything out. Job said the same thing many years before: "Naked I came from my mother's womb and naked I will depart" (Job 1:21). To consider the accumulation of wealth as great gain is the height of foolishness.

If we have food to sustain our lives, articles of clothing to cover our bodies, and a roof over our heads, we will be satisfied with that. But what keeps us from maintaining such contentment? It's our sinful flesh. Sinful flesh always feels entitled to pursue riches and glory and make material gain our top priority. Sinful flesh never trusts in God to provide. God does bless some of us with riches more than others. But the things that we possess in this life cannot come close in value to the riches our Savior has won us.

You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might be rich (2 Corinthians 8:9). This month we're continuing to witness his poverty. Being God he chose to hide his divinity and humble himself to die on a cross. That could not be easy knowing how much he hates sin and knowing that he'd have to suffer all of God's punishment for all of mankind's sin. And the debt was paid when he breathed his last breath. And just before doing that he made an important announcement: "It is finished!" Now the sins of all people are forgiven.

*It is finished* is the theme of this year's mid-week Lenten services. What a joy to join brothers and sisters from Christ in Cochrane as well as area pastors to treasure these words and the result of our Savior's work. And what are the results. We are assured of God's forgiveness for every sin. We have lasting peace with our God. And an eternal home awaits us that is far more extravagant than any we can live in this world.

Besides the mansions that await us, is the perfect life we'll have in sinless bodies, never again flawed by sin. There won't be any hospitals in heaven either. We won't need them. No more checkups, no more medicines. We won't need any of that. We'll have perfect health and perfect relationships with everyone. No divisions, no setbacks, nothing flawed. And an inheritance awaits that can never perish, spoil, or be stolen. Simply put, it's paradise! And it is ours in Christ.

What can we do now so we remain content and keep looking ahead to future glory? Keep turning daily to God's Word. On Sunday March 1, a new quarter of Meditations devotions starts. Be sure to grab a booklet from church and faithfully set aside time each day to be in God's Word. As you do that you'll notice how the worries in life seem to disappear. You'll remain content no matter what life throws at you. You'll be able to do all things through Christ who strengthens you.

What a blessing that we end this month slowing down to follow the actual time frame of holy week. (Holy week does spill over a few days into April as well). Think about it. We've been racing through the year so far. We ended the previous year celebrating his birth. But soon came Epiphany. Then after a month and a half we started Lent which will end the first Saturday in April. But starting on March 29, we'll slow way down to the actual time frame that our Savior spent his final week around Jerusalem. On that Sunday we'll join the crowds in praising him for coming to rescue us. On Thursday that week we'll gather to celebrate the holy supper he instituted to assure us of our forgiveness. On Good Friday we'll witness his one sacrifice for all sin and praise him for his great love. We may be taking some of the thunder away from the month of April, but we'll have several weeks to celebrate Easter. We'll celebrate Easter every Sunday, even Sundays in Lent.

## Laying the groundwork for mission work in Senegal

From Feb. 15–21, 2026, WELS Director of Missions Operations Stefan Felgenhauer traveled to Dakar, Senegal, to help prepare for the placement of WELS missionaries in this new mission field—including confirming details for the language and culture immersion program that will be the first step for incoming missionaries. While there, he also explored key logistics for long-term service, including immigration guidance, housing research, and practical cost of living and medical considerations.

Missionary Dan and Karen Kroll have accepted the call to serve in Senegal, where their initial focus will be learning the Wolof language and adjusting to daily life as they prepare for longer term gospel outreach among the Wolof people, a group that has had very limited exposure to Christianity.

A central part of Stefan's week was spent at Africa Consultants International's Baobab Center, where he learned more about the immersion experience and confirmed how it would work in practice. At the center, he met with Simone, the language coordinator, and Rouba, the homestay coordinator. Together, they walked through what daily life will look like during immersion. Rather than living independently, missionaries will stay with a Senegalese host family, sharing three meals each day and using Wolof as the primary language in the home. Weekdays will also include structured language learning, with four hours each morning spent working one on one with a Wolof tutor at the center.

Stefan also observed how immersion students gather at the center's Jokkoo Kafé—Wolof for “to come together”—a space where students can debrief, build relationships, and process cultural experiences together. While there, he spoke with current students from the United States and Canada, who shared their experiences learning the language and navigating daily life in Senegal.

To better understand living conditions, Stefan visited several potential host homes and met the families who have welcomed immersion students for many years. With the help of translators, they described how students often become part of the family and how those relationships sometimes continue long after the immersion experience ends.

Along the way, Stefan experienced everyday Senegalese hospitality, including a traditional meal of Yassa Poulet, hibiscus juice, and attaya, a sweet mint tea commonly shared in social settings.

Please keep Stefan's ongoing work in your prayers, and ask the Lord to bless Dan and Karen Kroll as they prepare for this next chapter of service in Senegal.

## Coffee, cribbage, and Christ

*Cindy Lendt recently accepted the call as the Women's Ministry Facilitator for the Asia-Oceania Team. Cindy participated in a women's workshop in a predominantly Hindu country in Asia coordinated through the World Missions Asia-Oceania Team.*

“Hi Cindy! Synod is looking for names of women who might be interested in teaching woman-to-woman evangelism . . . in East Asia . . .”

That text began my part in a team effort between the Asia-Oceania Team and WELS Women's Ministry for three women to lead a friendship evangelism conference in Asia. It would be for 45 local women—the most that could fit in the hosting church. The lead national pastor wanted to equip them to share their faith with non-Christian women in their lives and also to inspire the other women in their congregations to do so. The plan was that three American Christian women would present at a three-day conference with translation from the lead national pastor, and I was invited to be one of the three.

I thought: I'm the worst evangelist I know. And I've never presented at an actual conference in my life.

But I figured, if this is a door that God is opening, then I want in, and he can certainly close it if he wants. He's given me whatever skills I have, three years' experience in Asia, and most essentially, himself.

I met Alycia and Kristi, the other two women on the team, in person for the first time at the airport. We'd been collaborating online for months putting the conference together and preparing the handout to be translated and printed for the women. From there, we flew to Asia and met the local missionary, the lead national pastor who translated for us, and the 45 amazing Christian women we were going to teach to be friendship evangelists.

Which begs the question, where do you even start to teach friendship evangelism?

We grounded everything in God's Word. The Great Commission holds the reason why we share the gospel and the power to do it. Jesus' death, resurrection, and ascension are the essence of the gospel we share. Paul and Silas in Philippi's prison show how our attitudes and behaviors can lead to people asking about what we've got that they don't – yet! Lydia shows how using our gifts opens more doors. Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman models the transition from

physical to spiritual—actually sharing the gospel with someone. We practiced through role playing, small-group discussions, and large-group sharing. We sang praise, encouraged each other, and prayed together. The women were all in. They contributed their thoughts, tried out different conversations, and asked questions. Even in the last hours of the conference were seen sketching out a practice of God's Great Exchange.

For Kristi, Alycia, and me, it was three days traveling to the location, three days of the conference, and three days traveling back home: nine days packed full.

You might wonder, what does any of this have to do with the title? Well, so far, not much! Yet it sums up just how I remember this trip. The missionary, lead national pastor, Alycia, Kristi, and I got to know each other very well. Every morning of the conference, the missionary brought a fresh pot of coffee to the breakfast table—the smell of coffee still takes me back there. Then at the end of each day's work, he pulled out his cribbage board so we could relax together. Relax might not be the right word, a bit too calm, but we absolutely bonded over it.

That was the coffee and cribbage, and drawing the whole thing together was Christ. You could see Christ in the missionary's humble consideration of others. You could see Christ in the way the national pastor's experiences of setbacks and persecution couldn't block out the joy in his Savior. He practiced caution, and yet I've never seen someone personify "godliness with contentment is great gain" (1 Timothy 6:6) the way he did. That joyful smile was contagious. As for Kristi, Alycia, and me, all three of us are very driven people. You could see Christ through serving and putting others first. I experienced working with Alycia and Kristi was some of the most Christ-like teamwork I've ever been part of.

And of course, you could see Christ in the women who attended the conference, daring to step out of their comfort zones so that even one soul wandering down the path to hell might hear the powerful song of the gospel.

Some of their struggles are similar to ours in the U.S.: People think we're hypocrites. They say, "You Christians also do bad things. Why bother to be a Christian then?" God's distinction between men's and women's roles often rubs people the wrong way in their country, too. Some of their struggles are different. A teenage Christian high schooler got her cross necklace confiscated by a teacher at school, and other Christian women have faced some pretty harsh estrangement from their community. Yet these women know that

"God so loved the world" (John 3:16), and they want their loved ones to know that, too!

May Christ fill the women from this conference with daring to resist the devil's lies and share God's light with their friends and neighbors. May Christ continue to walk with the missionaries and national pastors in Asia so that the trials don't ever block out the huge hope God's given us. And may Christ give you some adventures in his kingdom, hopefully that involve coffee, cribbage, and—most definitely—Christ!

*Written by Cindy Lendt*

## WELS chaplains gather for annual meeting

Thirty-seven people attended the annual meeting of the Association of WELS Chaplains on Feb. 6 at the WELS Center for Mission and Ministry in Waukesha, Wis. The purpose was for those who have gone through the WELS Chaplain Certificate Program or are currently going through the program to grow and learn from one another.

The Chaplain Certificate Program is designed to equip called workers and lay members (both male and female) to bring the gospel to places outside the church, such as healthcare facilities, correctional institutions, military installations, and public safety agencies. Online courses offered through Martin Luther College apply biblical truths to issues encountered by chaplains.

The work of WELS chaplains was recently highlighted in both *WELS Connection* and *Forward in Christ*.

*The above items recently appeared on our synod's webpage: [www.wels.net](http://www.wels.net).*

## What's going on at St. Michael's

- The Peter Plan continues at St. Michael's in a prayerful effort to bring back inactive members. We're currently reaching out to members outside our ministry area in an effort to connect them to a church close by. Keep circling your name as you attend worship so we have an accurate record helping us reach members in need of additional 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." (Hebrews 10:25)
- Pastor and Ann Westenberg attended the WELS Leadership Conference. They will share what they learned on Sun. Mar. 8 at 8:15am/church basement.
- The season of Lent continues this month at St. Michael's and at Christ, Cochrane We'll gather at St. Michael for mid-weeks 3 & 5 (Mar. 4 & 18) and

weeks 4 & 6 (Mar. 11 & 25) we'll gather at Christ Lutheran in Cochrane. Lenten meals will be held at both congregations at 5:30pm before each service. Please join us at both sites. Pastor Westenberg rotates with Pastors Snyder & Schrimpf from St. John's, Lewiston and Jehovah, Altura.

- The St. Michael's Easter Orchestra will practice on Saturday, 3/28/26 and Saturday, 4/4/26 at 8:00am. Please request music from Chris Buswell or Nathan Burmeister if you are interested in participating.

Calendar Highlights

- Lent—5:30pm meal; 6:30pm worship, Wed. Mar. 4 & 18 at St. Michael's
- Bd. of Elders mtg., Wed. Mar. 4, 5pm
- Worship Planning mtg., Sat. Mar. 7, 8am
- Outreach Committee mtg., Sun., Mar. 8, 5:30pm
- Church Council mtg., Sun., Mar. 8, 6:30pm
- Lent—5:30pm meal; 6:30pm worship Wed. Mar. 11 & 25 at Cochrane.
- Candelabra Cleaning, Fri. Mar. 13, 9am
- Ladies Aid mtg., Sat. Mar. 14, 9am
- BLSA semi-annual mtg. Sun. Mar. 15, 12pm/Christ
- Bible study at The Landing, Fri. Mar. 20, 8am
- Easter Orchestra practice, Sat. Mar. 28, 8am
- SS Teachers mtg., Mon. Mar. 30, 7pm

*Your Council Members*

Mark Horstman	President/Education
Kyle Wolfe	Secretary
Ben Kafer	Outreach
Jim Baures	Treasurer/Stewardship
Jess Veraguth	Properties
Mike Baures	Financial Secretary/Elders

*Those Who Help*

**Ushers for March**

Mike Baures	Charles Heller
Mark Horstman	Ryan Ligman
Travis Grossell	Jeremy Duerr
Brian Putz	

**Altar Guild for March**

Judy Putz	Tera Parnow
Tamie Klinger	Hannah Parnow
Kelly Shaver	Hope Parnow

**Money Counters for March**

Roger Bechly	Kevin Buswell
--------------	---------------

**Ushers for April**

Kyle Wolfe	Eric Moe
Ben Kafer	Roger Bechly
Steven Doebbert	Jonathan Mayer
Brad Veraguth	Gabriel Mayer

**Altar Guild for April**

Janessa Horstman	Linda Monson
Sheila Becker	Katie Duerr
Lindsay Thewis	

**Money Counters for April**

Elroy Conradt	Mike Baures
---------------	-------------

**WELS Coulee Women's Retreat 2026**

Ladies, mark your calendars! You're invited to the WELS Coulee Women's Retreat for a day of faith, fellowship, and inspiration. Join us on Saturday, April 25, 2026, from 8am to 3pm at Luther High School.

The day will be filled with uplifting sessions, including:

- **Self-Esteem vs. Christ Esteem** with Jes Woller
- **Biblical Hospitality** with Naomi Schmidt
- **Visible Faith — My Weakness, Christ's Power** with Keynote Speaker Linda Buxa

For more information and to register,

visit [welscwr.wix.com/retreat](http://welscwr.wix.com/retreat).

Email [welscwr@gmail.com](mailto:welscwr@gmail.com) with any questions.

We look forward to seeing you there!

REFORMATION/GERMANY TOUR. You are invited to join a 12-day (April 20-May 1, 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](mailto:pastorkock@yahoo.com).

**2026 WELS Youth Rally**

**CHRIST THROUGH US**

2 Corinthians 5:18-20

July 14-17, 2026

Bowling Green State University  
Bowling Green, Ohio

Registration Runs March—May

\$450 Early Bird Rate until April 30

\$475 May 1-29