



Good News-Letter

St. Michael's Ev. Lutheran Church

April 2026

A Member of the WELS

He was handed over to death because of our trespasses and was raised to life because of our justification. (Romans 4:25)

Below is a devotional study from our seminary's Grow in Grace—a monthly study for us pastors. You might appreciate it as with begin this month with holy week.

God taught his people throughout the ages how he would rescue us from sin. Abraham's "sacrifice" of Isaac in Genesis 22 is just such an example where a father and son carried out a dress rehearsal on Mount Moriah for the main event that would take place years later on Mount Calvary.

God told him to sacrifice his own son as a whole burnt offering dedicated to God. God would show Abraham the exact location for this sacrifice in the region of Moriah, some 50 miles from where he had been living in Beersheba.

God command him: "Take your son, your only son, whom you love—Isaac"—specific terms for Abraham's son of the promise.

While Isaac carried the wood, he inquired about not having an animal to sacrifice. Abraham assured him that God would see to it and provide the lamb.

Father Abraham carried the knife in his hand, bound Isaac, and lifted the knife to slay his own son before the angel of the Lord stopped him.

In the end, the one sentenced to die got to go free because the ram caught in the thicket was sacrificed instead. Think of the intense relief both Abraham and Isaac would have felt as the ram was killed and burned instead of Isaac!

Years later, the temple was built in the region of Mount Moriah (2 Chronicles 3:1). Through the Old Testament ceremonial laws, God showed his people that a bloody sacrifice would be required to have any access to God. But it ultimately wouldn't be by the blood of rams or bulls. The world would be set free from sin by the substitutionary sacrifice of God's own Son.

Consider similar terms to describe the great Son of the promise: God's Son (John 19:7), his one and only Son

(John 3:16), whom he loves (Matthew 3:17), Jesus ("the Lord saves;" cf. Matthew 1:21). Though he inquired of his Father if there might be another way, this Son was bound and then carried the wooden cross in the region of Moriah to Calvary. From the cross he shouted to the Father, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" The Father didn't withhold the knife of judgment as the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all (Isaiah 53:6). We, who were sentenced to die, go free as the innocent Lamb of God was slain in our place. And what relief we experience to know that it was Jesus on the altar of the cross in our place!

Not every detail in Genesis 22 needs to line up exactly to Jesus' passion, suffering, and death. But this event clearly foreshadows the great, final, substitutionary sacrifice by which we can live forever. The angel of the Lord stopped the dress rehearsal with Abraham and Isaac because he would come back for the real thing 2,000 years later.

On the mountain of the Lord, it was provided!

The Fox channel has been showing a three-week series called *The Faithful*. Each episode covers an Old Testament woman of faith. The first woman was Sarah, Abraham's wife. This past Sunday, they covered Rebekah, Isaac's wife. In this account the writers depict Isaac as an emotionally scarred person who held a grudge against his father for his attempt to sacrifice him on the mountain. Of course, God provided the ram for the actual sacrifice. The irony displayed in *The Faithful* was that Rebekah as a girl had raised that ram from a lamb until it mysteriously escaped in a storm. It sounds interesting but it's found nowhere in Scripture.

What is found in Scripture is how God carried out his saving plan. Descended from Abraham and Isaac, God sent his Son into the world to rescue us all from sin. It would take a bloody sacrifice to appease our holy God. Jesus would make that sacrifice from a cross where he offered himself as payment for all sin. God showed his satisfaction with his Son's payment by raising him to life on Easter. In God's court we are now justified, declared "not guilty" because our Savior took our guilt and paid the price for every one of us. Enjoy Easter knowing you are at peace with God.

God's work in Ukraine continues

Our sister church the Ukrainian Lutheran Church (ULC), along with all the citizens of Ukraine, has been experiencing the hardship and suffering caused by four years of a terrible and destructive war. Families have had to flee to safer locations, homes have been destroyed, and some pastors have had to relocate to areas away from the war zones.

When the war began, WELS members responded with their own personal prayers and with prayers in their congregations. They also responded generously with gifts and offerings. Those gifts, regularly forwarded to the ULC, have been faithfully used to provide food, fuel, transportation, medicine, and clothing. And the members of the ULC did not keep those gifts for themselves. They have responded to our generosity with generosity of their own, making needed supplies available to many people in their communities who have been affected by the brutality and scarcity of war.

Vyacheslav Horpynchuk, the bishop of the Ukrainian Lutheran Church, tells the story far better than I can. This is what he writes:

Here the fifth year of the full-scale Russian invasion began. Thanks be to God this winter is coming to an end. It has been the most severe winter in the recent decades: lots of snow, very low below freezing temperatures and very heavy bombardments of our electrical, heating systems and residential areas of Kyiv, Kharkiv, Odesa, as well as smaller cities and villages. Lord, have mercy.

I would like to thank all the brothers and sisters in WELS who came to help us. Many people did not have any extra warm blankets, and some people requested some help to survive that cold. We provided all our congregation members in need with extra warm blankets to survive the cold in apartments with no heat or with very little heat. We also continued to provide all the needy with thermal wear. All of them send their gratitude to all in WELS for your generous help. Thank you very much!

Yet even in these terrible times, God finds ways not only to bless his people but also to create opportunities for God's people to carry out his mission. Through the works of love done by the members of the ULC, God has brought many non-Christians into contact with Christian love in action, but more important, with the saving gospel of Jesus and the comforting power of his Word. Many have begun to worship regularly in ULC congregations, and dozens of people have been instructed and confirmed.

Roger Neumann, our WELS liaison to the ULC, adds some of his observations:

While the war rages on and people deal with the elements of nature, the gospel ministry is not stopped. I'm very thankful to our Lord for the faith he has given our brothers and sisters in Christ in Ukraine. The ULC pastors continue to preach the gospel, help those who are in desperate need, and offer encouragement and friendship to many people. So many people suffer from depression and anxiety, not certain if they will survive this ordeal or what their futures will be like. The pastors bring them the reassurance that the Lord loves them and will continue to bless them. They also encourage the people to pay more attention to the spiritual blessings that they have in Christ and not focus on the physical needs that are lacking at this time.

While most ULC churches have lost members who have fled from the war and taken refuge in neighboring countries, there are, nevertheless, four new mission sites. Pictured below is mission work being done in one of those sites in Snihurivka.

People in those towns have welcomed pastors to share the gospel with them. In addition, a number of ULC members have taken refuge near Poznan, Poland. Bishop Horpynchuk will be making a trip there, and it's hoped that a new mission can be started. God is certainly opening new doors and opportunities, despite the war and adversity. God be praised!

I want to thank all of you who have already responded to this need in Ukraine with your generous gifts and prayers. With the end of the war still not in sight, the need continues. Learn more about the Ukrainian Lutheran Church and how you can support it at wels.net/ukraine.

Serving with you in Christ,

WELS President Mark Schroeder

Support for Asia-Oceania ministries

In late January and early February 2026, Daniel Sims, director of WELS Christian Aid and Relief, and Paul Biedenbender, pastor at Christ, Denver, Colo., and a member of the WELS Christian Aid and Relief Commission, traveled to Thailand to meet with WELS missionaries, administrators, and other church leaders from the Asia-Oceania Team. WELS Christian Aid and Relief works with WELS missionaries in this large mission field by providing funding for humanitarian aid and disaster relief programs.

While there, Sims and Biedenbender also attended the dedication of the new training facility for Thai

Village in Chiang Mai. More than two hundred friends, artisans, donors, and partners gathered at the dedication to support Thai Village's mission to train and employ low-income people; support Christian outreach and education; and create opportunities to share God's love in the community. Thai Village, an independent nonprofit organization, is a WELS-affiliated ministry that works closely with the Asia-Oceania Team.

WELS Christian Aid and Relief contributed funding for the outreach pavilion at the new facility—the place most used by the community. Sims shares, “We support this mission wholeheartedly! It was a joy to meet their artisans and hear their testimonies about how Thai Village and the gospel shared there changed their lives.”

French connects them. The gospel unites us.

Dear Fellow Member of WELS,

Easter reminds us that when everything seemed finished—when the stone was sealed, and hope looked lost—the risen Christ was already at work. Because Jesus lives, his gospel keeps moving forward, often in ways we don't expect. That's what we see happening through the work of WELS World Missions today.

Across French-speaking regions of Africa, people are reaching out to WELS asking for help with God's Word. And by God's grace, we can respond.

French is an official language in 29 countries worldwide, and remarkably, 21 of them are in Africa. That shared language makes French a key connection point for gospel outreach across borders and cultures. In many of these places, faithful, Bible-based teaching is hard to find. That's why these contacts matter—and why the opportunities before us are significant.

One example comes from a French-speaking church body called Mission Évangélique Luthérienne au Congo (MELC). Its leaders searched for theological support, found WELS, and reached out because they wanted clarity grounded firmly in Scripture. They see the challenges around them—especially the spread of false teaching—and they want to grow in the truth of God's Word.

Faithful mission work in situations like this isn't rushed. It involves careful doctrinal conversations, opening Scripture together, verifying unity in teaching and practice, and walking patiently with those who want to learn. This kind of work doesn't always draw attention, but it is essential if the gospel of the risen Christ is to be proclaimed clearly and faithfully.

The work also requires flexibility. Because of political unrest, WELS missionaries cannot currently travel into

parts of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Rather than stopping, conversations continue just across the border in Zambia, where it is safer to meet. There, missionaries and church leaders are able to build relationships, study doctrine together, and plan next steps. Trusting the Lord's guidance, the work continues.

To support this growing outreach, we've made a focused investment in people and preparation. Missionary Jake Vilhauer, serving with the One Africa Team, received intensive French language immersion—including time living and studying in France and Cameroon. Because of that training, when French-speaking contacts across Africa reach out, we are ready to respond with clarity, compassion, and confidence in the gospel.

This is where you come in. We ask you to prayerfully consider supporting this work with a special gift. Your support makes it possible for WELS World Missions to carry out this work on the ground: engaging in careful doctrinal study, maintaining ongoing communication, and meeting face to face when those conversations matter most. And this need is not limited to one place. We are seeing similar requests for collaboration and support coming from countries like Burkina Faso, Cameroon, the Republic of the Congo, and beyond—all from people asking for faithful Lutheran teaching rooted in God's Word.

As we celebrate Easter, we rejoice that Christ is risen—and that his living gospel continues to open doors in places near and far. Thank you for standing with WELS World Missions as we share that message throughout Africa.

In Christ's service,
Larry Schlomer
Administrator, Board for World Missions

2026 International Youth Rally

Registration is open for the 2026 WELS International Youth Rally, July 14-17, at Bowling Green State University, Ohio. The cost is \$450 if attendees register by April 30 and \$475 from May 1-29.

The rally is open to all WELS teens heading into their freshman year of high school through seniors graduating this spring. Teens from across the country will gather to discover ways to lead and serve, worship with thousands, and attend workshops to share the saving gospel.

The theme for the 2026 rally is “Christ through us,” inspired by 2 Corinthians 5:18-20 and the synod's ten-year plan, which calls each of us to be Christ's ambassadors.

Learn more about the workshops, recreational excursions, and the rally—and register— at welsyouthrally.net.

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

What's going on at St. Michael's

- Holy Week services include a joint Maundy Thursday Communion Service with members of Christ at 6:30pm, a 1pm Good Friday Communion Service; Easter offers a 7am Communion Service and a Service of Lesson & Carols at 9:30am.
- St. Michael's Outreach Committee is hosting an Event Planning mtg. on Wed. Apr. 15 at 6:30pm to schedule fellowship events that reach out to ALL of St. Michael's membership.
- The vacancy at Christ, Cochrane is entering it's 10th month. According to Christ's Council President, our district president is planning to meet with them toward the end of April to discuss their future ministry. We'll keep you informed of any decisions involving St. Michael's.

Calendar Highlights

- Board of Elders mtg., Wed. Apr. 1, 5pm
- Maundy Thu. Communion Service, Apr. 2, 6:30pm
- Good Fri. Communion Service, Apr. 3, 1pm
- Easter Orchestra Practice, Sat. Apr. 4, 8am
- Easter Service Practice, Sat. Apr. 4, 9:30am
- Easter Festival Communion Service, Apr. 5, 7am
- Easter Breakfast, Apr. 5, 8am
- Easter Egg Hunt, Apr. 5, 8:30am
- Easter Orchestra Performs, Apr. 5, 9am
- Easter Service of Lessons & Carols, Apr. 5, 9:30am
- Stewardship Committee mtg., Wed. Apr. 8, 6pm
- Thu. Worship begins, Apr. 9, 6:30pm
- Ladies Aid mtg., Sat. Apr. 11, 9am
- Worship Planning mtg., Sat. Apr. 11, 10:30am
- Outreach Committee mtg., Sun. Apr. 12, 5:30pm
- Church Council mtg., Sun., Apr. 12, 6:30pm
- Event Planning mtg., Wed. Apr. 15, 6:30pm
- Bible study at The Landing, Fri. Mar. 20, 8am
- LWMS Rally, St. Paul, Onalaska, Sat. Apr. 18, 9am
- SS Teachers mtg., Mon. Apr. 27, 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 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
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Ushers for May

Jim Baures	Benjamin Suhr
Jess Veraguth	Dave Ernst
Nick Suhr	Chance Ernst
Richard Baures	Daniel Wantock

Altar Guild for May

Sandy Daily	Jill Thomas
Jessica Heuer	Jenni Burt
Marie Grossell	Natasha Isakson
Marjean Conradt	

Money Counters for May

Harry Putz	Gerry Thaldorf
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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.

For more information and to register, visit welscwr.wix.com/retreat. Email welscwr@gmail.com with any questions. We look forward to seeing you there!

Dear Friend of Missions,

We invite you to join us on **Saturday, June 13**, for a day that begins with worship and the commissioning of missionaries and continues with stories, conversations, and connections from across WELS missions.

Date: Saturday, June 13, 2026

Time: 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Location: Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis. OR online!

If you're attending in person and would like food tickets, registration is \$15 per person. Children 13 and under attend for free. Can't make it to Mequon? Please join us online through the livestream.