



Good News-Letter

St. Michael's Ev. Lutheran Church

September 2026

A Member of the WELS

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ has forgiven us. Therefore, be imitators of God as his dearly loved children. And walk in love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself for us, as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. (Ephesians 4:32—5:2)

Imitating is such an important part of growing. As children we learned to talk and act by mimicking our parents and older siblings. That is a sobering thought for parents. Every parent wants to be a positive role model for his or her child. If parents are hard workers, then the child will reflect that in school. Yes, there are always exceptions, but much of a child's development comes from imitating.

The Apostle Paul wanted Ephesians believers to know that imitating is what children of God are to do. Although most of us have left behind our childish ways, God willing we will always remain children of God. In order to ensure that, Paul gave us some simple instructions that even a child can understand. So let's be imitators of God by living a Christ-like life of love.

Do you have bitterness in your life? Maybe there is someone at work who really gets under your skin. We must get rid of those feelings because they can only endanger our soul. Since the Holy Spirit is the mark or seal that determines where we spend eternity, then we don't want to do a thing that would bring a tear to his eye. How long do you think the Holy Spirit will remain in us if we are constantly grieving him with bitterness, anger, and every form of evil? As imitators of God, we must get rid of evil. We do that not by hiding it or covering it up. We get rid of evil by exposing it. We hold all our sins out before our holy God and admit we are guilty and deserving only of punishment from him because of them.

But we don't hold on to those sins for long. Instead, we leave them with our Savior. For Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. God had his Old Testament people bring a lamb with them to worship him. Each sinner would confess his or her sin with their hand on the head of the lamb. This symbolized a transfer of guilt. Then

the animal was slaughtered. After the priest sacrificed the lamb on the altar, the sinner was declared forgiven. But it wasn't the slaughter of a lamb that brought God's forgiveness. It was the innocent Lamb of God who was slaughtered on the altar of Calvary's cross that those lamb sacrifices pointed to. Christ won forgiveness for a world of sin. And now because of Christ, the Holy Spirit is pleased to dwell in us.

And what can we do to keep him happy? Paul tells us, *"Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you"* (4:32). Keeping the Holy Spirit happy comes from imitating God. Just like God, show yourself to be willing to do anything to help other people. This year's Mission Fest reminds us of that. Don't be callous or indifferent when others are hurting. Imitate God and feel for them doing all we can to relieve their pain.

Our Lord taught us an important lesson in a story about an unmerciful servant. (See Matthew 18:21-35.) If God is willing to forgive us for everything we have done against him, can we honestly find any reason to hold a grudge against another person? When we forgive others who do us wrong, then we are acting as children of God. We are imitating our God who forgives us for Jesus' sake.

If you want to know how to imitate God, then look to his Son. When was there ever a time in Jesus' life when he thought of himself first? When he gathered with his Twelve in the upper room and they stood there without as servant to wash their feet, it was Jesus who served and wash every dirty foot. He then told his disciples, *"I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you"* (John 13:15).

Being imitators of God is an essential part of life for a Christian. As God's children we rid ourselves of all evil, turning to our Lord with repentance and faith. We imitate God by forgiving each other the way God forgives us. We imitate God with a life of love the way that Christ loves us and gave his life to ransom us from sin. When we imitate God, the Holy Spirit will find a place in us where he is happy to dwell right up to the day when Christ returns to take us home to heaven.

Cultivating a culture of recruitment with ministry recruitment counselors

Steve wasn't really eating his lunch. He just pushed his steamed vegetables around his bowl over the noodles. He was searching for words. Then he said, "I know I am supposed to do more with God's Word to get it out to the world. I'm just not sure yet what that looks like. Is it being a pastor or just leading a Bible study?" Why was he telling me that over lunch? As a ministry recruitment counselor (MRC), I had recently preached at his church. It stirred thoughts in Steve about ministry. He had been having them for a long time. He is a 46-year-old man yearning to serve Christ and people in a bigger way. My job is to help him find a path. You may have heard about a new ministry recruitment project in WELS. We call it Consider Ministry.

Consider Ministry is a new initiative fielding five called workers who are MRCs. They are deployed throughout the United States with a two-fold mission:

1. Help the people in positions of influence (that is, parents, pastors, teachers, staff ministers, and lay leaders) to actively recruit people under their influence for the called worker ministry in WELS, and
2. Help create a culture of recruitment that lasts longer than their years of service!

The MRCs are carrying out the Consider Ministry initiative in support of the goals of "Christ through us" for two reasons:

1. Jesus' call to believe is also a call to serve. His heart yearns for more workers in his harvest. It pleases him each time one of his followers enters full-time ministry.
2. As a church body we have a shortage of called workers in all three fields of service. Expanding schools, mission work, and growing congregations have made ministry positions hard to fill in a timely way.

Five experienced church leaders known for their zeal for ministry have accepted calls to be ministry recruitment counselors, including me! They are: Mary Heckendorf, Mark Schroeder, David Russow, Sam McKenna, and me. We each have assigned districts in our church body to cover with recruitment efforts. We will go to WELS gatherings, churches, and schools and ask leaders about whom they might know who has gifts and/or passion for ministry. We are also looking for anyone with even a little interest in serving God more. Then we come alongside both influencers and recruits

to help them prepare for ministry. We also help churches and schools cultivate a culture of recruitment to last for decades.

And it is working! We each have lots of stories about people who are gaining interest in serving God in full-time ministry. This summer at a camp, I noticed a high school junior hanging around me more after I had led the evening fireside devotion. He told me about his daily devotions in the Bible and how he loved God's Word. Then he said, "I am not very good with people, so I won't be a pastor. I'm going to study math in college." Over the next three days I watched him as a group leader at camp and discovered he was selling himself short. As a junior camp counselor, he showed his people skills in his team leadership. A couple of times I scooted up alongside of him to say, "What you just did right there showed me you are good with people. Don't count ministry out!" At the end of camp, he came to say goodbye and with a twinkle in his eye he said, "If I ever become a pastor, it's your fault." Ministry recruitment is really just encouragement. And encouragement always works!

If you or someone you know is interested in ministry go to wels.net/consider-ministry. You will find a lot of great information and a way to get into contact with an MRC if you need help getting into ministry.

We are thankful to a donor who had the foresight to fund this important initiative for the next few years and appreciate God's continued blessings to keep this program going for many more years to come.

Contributed by Don Patterson, ministry recruitment counselor to the South Central, South Atlantic, and North Atlantic Districts

We pray for God's continued blessings on the efforts of our MRCs, the churches and families they work with, and the youth they meet and encourage.

Serving together with you in Christ,

WELS President Mark Schroeder

WELS Campus Ministry launches online resources for college students

College is one of the most significant transitions a young person faces. For many WELS students, it means moving away from home, building new friendships, and navigating life without the familiar support of their home congregation.

Staying connected to God's Word and a community of fellow believers during those years is vital. That's why WELS Campus Ministry works to connect students with local campus ministry programs, congregations,

and contact pastors near their schools while also providing resources and encouragement throughout their college experience.

To strengthen those efforts, WELS Campus Ministry has launched a new tool to make sure that distance does not mean disconnection: the WELS Campus Ministry App. The app is the centerpiece of WELS Campus Ministry Online, a new initiative designed to serve students wherever college takes them. Available now on iOS and Android devices, the free app gives students access to Bible studies, ministry resources, student connections, and other tools that support their faith throughout their college years

“One of the strengths of WELS Campus Ministry has always been helping students connect with a local church and family of believers wherever they attend school,” says Thomas Welch, member of the WELS Campus Ministry Committee and campus pastor at Peace Lutheran Church in Houghton, Michigan. “The new app gives students another way to stay connected to God’s Word throughout the week through Bible studies, resources, and other tools designed for college life. It also creates opportunities to serve students who may not have access to a local WELS campus ministry program through online Bible studies and other digital resources.”

As part of the new online initiative, WELS Campus Ministry also will begin offering a weekly online Bible study for students. The first study is scheduled for September 3 and will provide a regular opportunity for students—especially those without a WELS church nearby—to gather around God’s Word and connect with other Christians their age.

Registering helps connect students with a local campus ministry contact pastor when a campus ministry is near their school. Parents, grandparents, pastors, teachers, and friends are also encouraged to refer students and share information about the Campus Ministry app. Students are encouraged to sign up with WELS Campus Ministry at wels.net/college and download the app. It takes only a few minutes, but it can help students remain connected to Christ as they navigate the opportunities and challenges of college life.

From seminary to mission field

Aaron Bush was installed as a home missionary on July 19, 2026, to start a mission in Jarrell, Texas. Bush and his wife, Hannah, are embracing both the excitement and uncertainty of starting from the ground up. Drawn by the opportunity to share the gospel in a rapidly growing community with no Lutheran church presence, Bush is eager to build relationships and serve families with Christ’s message. Encouraged by mentors and

supported by his family, he acknowledges the challenges ahead but remains confident that there is no greater calling than proclaiming Christ crucified and helping others find their identity in him. Bush says, “I can’t think of a better thing to do with your life, with your energy, with your time. Solely focus on Christ crucified and sharing that identity with other people.”

Bush is one of several pastors that have been installed this summer to serve in congregations supported by Home Missions:

- On August 9, 2026, Jonah Schulz was installed to a new home mission in Wilmington, North Carolina.
- On July 26, 2026, Alex Dimke was installed at Redeemer in Edna, Texas.
- On July 12, 2026, Micah Neumann was installed to a new mission start in Cedar Lake, Indiana.
- On July 24, 2026, Kyle Lindemann was installed at Christ Alone in Keller, Texas.

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

WOMEN'S RETREAT AT ST. PAUL'S GRACE CHAPEL

Women of all ages are invited to attend *ROOTED*, St. Paul's Annual Women's Retreat, on Saturday, September 19 at St. Paul's Onalaska Grace Chapel. This year's program is "Get Moving" presented by Amber Albee Swenson.

Join us for a day of worship, encouragement, fellowship, and spiritual growth as we explore what it means to live deeply rooted in Christ while confidently following His purpose for our lives.

Times to Note:

- Registration, Breakfast & Fellowship: 8:00 am.
- Worship Begins: 8:30 am.
- Retreat Concludes: 3:00 pm.

Lunch catered by Olive Garden is included with your registration. Gluten-free options will be available. Invite a friend and join us for this meaningful day of faith, connection, and encouragement.

Questions? Contact the St. Paul's Church Office at 608-783-2552 ext. 0.

Registration: <https://ameralbeeswenson.com/event.php?id=speaking-1784905847835>

What's going on at St. Michael's

- The vacancy at Christ in Cochrane continues as Pastor gets help with preaching and with shut in

visits. No calls for their next pastor yet. We'll keep you informed of anything further.

- Christian Education begins on Sun. Sept. 13 at St. Michael's with SS lessons at 8:15am in the church basement. SS teachers will be installed in the 9:30am service.
- Catechism Lessons are being offered at 3:30—5pm at St. Michael's beginning Wed. Sept. 9. Youth from St. Michael's and Christ Lutheran will be in attendance. We'll follow CFC's schedule for the weeks that we meet. Confirmation Sunday is tentatively scheduled for May 2, 2027.
- BLSA annual mtg. met at Christ, Cochrane on Sun. Aug. 16. It was decided to cover 75% of tuition costs for families at St. Matthew School and for home school families. Thank you to all who support Christian education through the Buffalo Lutheran School Association.
- Support is still needed for members affected by the April 17 storm. Your prayers, donations, & comfort are greatly appreciated. Send your gift to WELS CMM, Attn: Christian Aid and Relief, N16W23377 Stone Ridge Dr, Waukesha, WI 53188.
- A committee was recently formed and met to celebrate the 25th anniversary of our organ (installed Dec. 2, 2001). The Committee has chosen Sunday, Nov. 8 for the celebration. An organ recital by guest organist Greg Baures will be held at 9am before our 9:30am worship service. At 11am a catered meal will follow in the church basement. We hope all of you can join us in the celebration.
- With summer's warm weather, we were able to knock on the doors of several homes in and around Fountain City and offer gospel invitations to the unchurched. God-willing visits will continue to be made in September. Ask Pastor how you can help.

Calendar Highlights

- Board of Elders mtg. Wed. Sep. 2, 5pm
- 19-min. Bible study, Wed. Sep. 2 & 16, 6:30pm
- Catechism Lessons begin Wed. Sep. 9, 3:30pm
- Worship Planning mtg., Sat. Sep. 12, 8am
- Ladies Aid mtg., Sat. Sep. 12, 9am
- SS lessons begin Sun. Sep. 13, 8:15am
- 20s/30s Grp., Suncrest Pizza Farm, Fri. Sep. 18, 5pm
- Outreach mtg., Sun. Sep. 20, 5:30pm
- Church Council mtg., Sun., Sep. 20, 6:30pm
- Men's Fellowship, Win. Sports. Club, Sep. 27, 3pm
- Organ Anniversary Comm. mtg. Mon. Sep. 28, 6pm
- SS Teachers mtg. Mon. Sep. 28, 7pm

Your Council Members

Mark Horstman President/Education

Kyle Wolfe
Ben Kafer
Jim Baures
Jess Veraguth
Mike Baures

Secretary
Outreach
Treasurer/Stewardship
Properties
Financial Secretary/Elders

Those Who Help

Ushers for September

Mike Baures	Harry Putz
Mark Horstman	Zach Czaplewski
Paul Churchill	Brayden Stiehl
Brandon Churchill	

Altar Guild for September

Debbie Putz	Ruth Hohmann
Chris Buswell	Susan Suhr

Money Counters for September

Roger Bechly	Kevin Buswell
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Ushers for October

Kyle Wolfe	Richard Conradt
Ben Kafer	Darrel McCutchen
James Veraguth	Ken Mayer
Gerald Suhr	

Altar Guild for October

Laura Madsen	Sadie Baures
Jennifer Baures	Sharon Wick

Money Counters for October

Elroy Conradt	Michael Baures
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The **Coulee Region OWLS** will be holding their monthly meeting on Thursday, September 10, 2026 at First Ev. Lutheran Church, 400 West Avenue South, La Crosse, at 12 Noon with a Potluck Luncheon. Please bring a dish to pass and your own table service. Coffee will be provided. The program will be Jon Beilke, Luther High School Principal, discussing the progress of Luther High. 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 informative program. There will be a good will offering.

Save the Date—2027 National Conference on Worship, Music, and the Arts—New Ulm, MN, June 15-18, 2027 (Let us know if you plan to attend so we can budget for it at our October voter's mtg.)

Bookkeeper Position: St. Matthew's Church and School needs a bookkeeper. Duties include, but not limited to, accounting, banking, financial reporting and payroll management. This is a part-time position requiring: accounting, banking, communication, filing, and computer skills. Please email Dale Crist (dcrist@stmatthewswinona.org) for a detailed job description or to submit your resume for consideration.