

St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church & School

711 & 805 W 5th St., Neillsville, WI 54456

Member of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

*We rejoice
confidently on the
basis of our hope
for the glory of God.*

Romans 5:2

† Lent 2 †

February 25, 2024

"Welcome Visitors & Members!"

To those who are visiting us for the first time, we extend our sincere welcome; to our friends who know us we renew our welcome; to those who seek a church home we invite you to be part of our family and enjoy fellowship with our Savior.

For further assistance in worship and information on our church, please see the back cover.

Lent: In the season of Lent, Jesus teaches things that turn the world's assumptions about religion completely upside down. We call it "Christianity." So, in this holy season, let us go straight to Christ and let him replace assumptions with truth. Jesus, help us to rethink religion!

Today is Lent 2. Our focus: Rethinking Religion: Suffering under the cross.

The church year begins here 2023

We are Here

Advent							Christmas			Epiphany							Lent				
December 2023							January 2024							February 2024							
								1	2	3	4	5	6					1	2	3	
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	5	6	7	8	9	10	
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	
24	25	26	27	28	29	30	28	29	30	31	25	26	27	28	29						
31																					
Lent							Easter							Pentecost							
March 2024							April 2024							May 2024							
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3	4	5	6	7	8	9		1	2	3	4	5	6	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
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31							28	29	30												
Season After Pentecost																					
June 2024							July 2024							August 2024							
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2	3	4	5	6	7	8	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	4	5	6	8	8	9	10	
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23	24	25	26	27	28	29	28	29	30	31	25	26	27	28	29	30	31				
30																					
September 2024							October 2024							November 2024							
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8	9	10	11	12	13	14			1	2	3	4	5							1	2
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	
29	30						20	21	22	23	24	25	26	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	
							27	28	29	30	31	24	25	26	27	28	29	30			

779

I Sing as I Arise Today



1 I sing as I a - rise to - day, I
 2 The word of God to be my speech, The
 3 The work of God to be my joy, The
 4 I sing as I a - rise to - day; I



call on my Cre - a - tor's might: The
 hand of God to be my stay, The
 house of God to be my rest, The
 cry out my Re - deem - er's name: Lord



will of God to be my guide, The
 shield of God to be my strength, The
 grace of God to be my song, The
 Je - sus Christ, my hope, my all, To -



eye of God to be my sight,
 path of God to be my way,
 praise of God to be my best.
 day and ev - er - more the same.

Text (st. 1,2): Anon.

Text (st. 3,4): Michael Schultz, b. 1963 © 2006 Michael Schultz. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

Tune: ROCKINGHAM OLD (88 88) *Second Supplement to Psalmody in Miniature*, London, 1778, adapt.

The Common Service CW 93

M: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.



CONFESSION OF SINS

M: Beloved in the Lord: let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins to God our Father, asking him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness.

C: **Holy and merciful Father, I confess that I am by nature sinful and that I have disobeyed you in my thoughts, words, and actions. I have done what is evil and failed to do what is good. For this I deserve your punishment both now and in eternity. But I am truly sorry for my sins, and trusting in my Savior Jesus Christ, I pray: Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner.**

LORD, HAVE MERCY

Kyrie

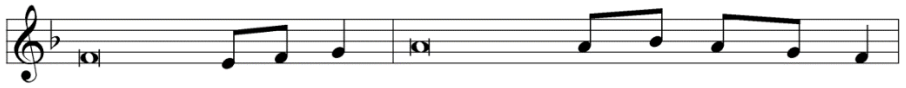


M: God, our heavenly Father, has been merciful to us and has given his only Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son (+) and of the Holy Spirit.



M: In the peace of forgiveness, let us praise the Lord.

GLORY BE TO GOD



C: Glory be to God on high, and on earth peace, good will toward men.



We praise you, we bless you, we worship you, we glorify you,



we give thanks to you, for your great glory, O Lord God, heav'n-ly King,



God the Fa-ther al - mighty. O Lord, the only begotten Son, Je-sus Christ;



O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the



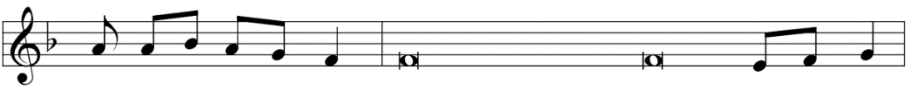
sin of the world; have mercy on us. You take away the



sin of the world; re - ceive our prayer. You sit at the right hand of



God the Father; have mercy on us. For you on-ly are holy;



you on - ly are the Lord. You only, O Christ, with the Ho - ly Spirit,



are most high in the glory of God the Father. A - men.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

M: The Lord be with you.



C: And al - so with you.

M: Let us pray.

Almighty God, you see that we have no power to defend ourselves. Guard and keep us both outwardly and inwardly from all adversities that may happen to the body and from all evil thoughts that may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.



C: A - men.

Old Testament Lesson: Genesis 28:10-17

¹⁰Jacob set out from Beersheba and traveled toward Haran. ¹¹He came to a certain place and decided to spend the night there, because the sun had set. He took one of the stones from that place, put it under his head, and lay down to sleep in that place. ¹²He had a dream in which he saw a stairway set up on the earth with its top reaching to heaven. There were angels of God ascending and descending on it. ¹³There at the top stood the LORD, who said, "I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. The land on which you are lying, I give to you and to your descendants. ¹⁴Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south. In you and in your seed all the families of the earth will be blessed. ¹⁵Now, I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back again into this land. Indeed, I will not leave you, until I have done what I have promised to you."

¹⁶Jacob woke up from his sleep, and he said, "Certainly the LORD is in this place, and I was not aware of it." ¹⁷He was afraid and he said, "How awe-inspiring is this place! This is nothing other than the house of God, and this is the gate to heaven."

Psalm 73 CW 93

Refrain

Sure-ly, it is God who saves me; I will trust in him and
not be a - fraid. For the Lord is my strong-hold and my
sure de-fense, and he will be my Sav - ior.

Psalm tone

*

I am always with you, O LORD;*
you hold me by my right hand.

You guide me with your counsel,*
and afterward you will take me into glory.

Whom have I in heaven but you?*

And earth has nothing I desire besides you.

My flesh and my heart may fail,*
but God is the strength of my heart
and my portion forever.

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son*
and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning,*
is now, and will be forever. Amen. Refrain**

Refrain Tune: Jack Noble White. © 1976 Belwin-Mills Publishing Corp., (admin. Alfred Publishing Co.). All rights reserved. Used by permission.

New Testament Lesson: Romans 5:1-11

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. ²Through him we also have obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand. And we rejoice confidently on the basis of our hope for the glory of God.

³Not only this, but we also rejoice confidently in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces patient endurance, ⁴and patient endurance produces tested character, and tested character produces hope. ⁵And hope will not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, who was given to us.

⁶For at the appointed time, while we were still helpless, Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷It is rare indeed that someone will die for a righteous person. Perhaps someone might actually go so far as to die for a person who has been good to him. ⁸But God shows his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

⁹Therefore, since we have now been justified by his blood, it is even more certain that we will be saved from God's wrath through him.

¹⁰For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, it is even more certain that, since we have been reconciled, we will be saved by his life. ¹¹And not only is this so, but we also go on rejoicing confidently in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received this reconciliation.

Verse of the Day: Philippians 2:8b

Jesus humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross.

Gospel Lesson: Mark 8:31-38



C: Glo - ry be to you, O Lord!

³¹Jesus began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things; be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the experts in the law; be killed; and after three days rise again. ³²He was speaking plainly to them. Then Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. ³³But after turning around and looking at his disciples, Jesus rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! You do not have your mind set on the things of God, but the things of men."

³⁴He called the crowd and his disciples together and said to them, "If anyone wants to follow me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. ³⁵For whoever wants to save his life will lose it. But whoever loses his life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. ³⁶After all, what good is it for a man to gain the whole world and yet forfeit his soul? ³⁷Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul? ³⁸In fact, whoever is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."



C: Praise be to you, O Christ!

APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended into hell.

The third day he rose again from the dead.

He ascended into heaven

and is seated at the right hand of God the Father
almighty.

From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

(Please notice that Hymn 434 is found on pages 10-11.)

434 Lord, You I Love with All My Heart



1 Lord, you I love with all my heart; I pray you ne'er from
2 Lord God, 'twas your rich boun-ty gave My bod-y, soul, and
3 Lord, let at last your an-gels come; To A-bram's bos-om



me de-part; With ten-der mer-cies cheer me. Earth has no
all I have In this poor life of la-lor. Lord, grant that
bear me home That I may die un-fear-ing. And in its



plea-sure I would share; Heav-en it-self were void and bare
I in ev-'ry place May glo-ri-fy your lav-ish grace
nar-row cham-ber keep My bod-y safe in peace-ful sleep



If you, Lord, were not near me. And should my heart for
 And serve and help my neigh - bor. Let no false doc - trine
 Un - til your re - ap - pear - ing. And then from death a -



sor - row break, My trust in you no one could shake.
 me be - guile; Let Sa - tan not my soul de - file.
 wak - en me That my own eyes with joy may see,



You are the trea - sure I have sought; Your pre - cious blood my
 Give strength and pa - tience un - to me To bear my cross - es
 O Son of God, your glo - rious face, My Sav - ior and my



soul has bought. Lord Je - sus Christ, My God and Lord,
 will - ing - ly. Lord Je - sus Christ, My God and Lord,
 Fount of grace. Lord Je - sus Christ, My prayer at - tend,



my God and Lord, For - sake me not! I trust your Word.
 my God and Lord, For - sake me not! I trust your Word.
 my prayer at - tend, And I will praise you with - out end.

Text: Martin M. Schalling, 1532–1608; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–78, alt.

Tune: HERZLICH LIEB HAB ICH DICH, O HERR (887 887 88 88 488) *Zwey Bücher . . . Tabulatur*, Strassburg, 1577, alt.

SERMON TEXT: Romans 5:1-11
IS TODAY A GOOD DAY?

C: Cre - ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re -
 new a right spir - it with - in me. Cast me not a -
 way from your pres - ence, and take not your Ho - ly Spir - it
 from me. Re - store un - to me the joy of your sal - va -
 tion, and up - hold me with your free Spir - it. A - men.



OFFERING-*The members of St. John's have joined together to do the Lord's work in this community and around the world. Guests need not feel obligated to participate in this offering which supports our ministry, but please use this QR code to fill out a short form giving us a digital record of your attendance. Visitors may also fill out our guest register by the drinking fountain in the entryway.*

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

LORD'S PRAYER

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done
on earth as in heaven.**

Give us today our daily bread.

**Forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those
who sin against us.**

**Lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.**

M: The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look on you with favor and (+) give you peace.



C: A - men. A - men. A - men.

718 *Though Thoughtless Thousands* CW 21



1 Though thought-less thou - sands choose the road that leads the
2 In Christ, by faith, I wish to live, from him my
3 Christ is my ev - er - last - ing all, to him I
4 Soon will the Lord, my life, ap - pear; soon shall I
5 Soon will the saints in glo - ry meet, soon walk through



soul a - way from God, this hap - pi - ness, dear
life, my all, re - ceive, to him de - vote my
look, on him I call; he will my ev - 'ry
end my tri - als here, leave sin and sor - row,
ev - 'ry gold - en street and sing on ev - 'ry



Lord, be mine: to live and die en - tire - ly thine.
fleet - ing hours, serve him a - lone with all my pow'rs.
need sup - ply in time and through e - ter - ni - ty.
death and pain. To live is Christ; to die is gain.
bliss - ful plain, "To live is Christ; to die is gain."

Text: Joseph Hoskins, 1745–1788, alt.

Tune: William Knapp, 1698–1786

Text and tune: Public domain

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This Week at St. John's: Feb 25, 2024

SERVING US TODAY

Greeters: Joan Zickert & Jean Goetz

Ushers: Team 4-Rex Roehl's team

Altar Guild: Charlene Siebert

Donating Bulletins: Ritajane Moeller

February Website: Ray & Sharon Wetzal in thankfulness for our Savior

SERVING US WEDNESDAY

Greeters: Ed & Jenn Schmid

Ushers: Team 2-Verlyn Shaw's team

Altar Guild: Charlene Siebert

SERVING US NEXT SUNDAY

Greeters: Linda Biebert & Jenny Pagenkopf

Ushers: Team 1-Joel Zschernitz' team

Altar Guild: Pat Strangfeld

~OPPORTUNITIES TO GROW & SERVE~

TODAY

9:00 AM Worship Service

10:15 AM Sunday School & Bible Class

MONDAY

9:00-11:00 AM Shut-In Visits

2:00-4:00 PM Shut-In Visits

4:00 PM Adult Instruction Class

TUESDAY

9:30 AM Shut-In Visit

1:15-4:00 PM Shut-In Visits

WEDNESDAY

8:20 AM Chapel

3:45 PM Confirmation Class

6:00 PM Choir/Band serve supper

7:00 PM Lenten Worship

THURSDAY

3:15 PM Bible Study

6:30 PM Choir

NEXT SUNDAY

9:00 AM Communion Service

10:15 AM Sunday School & Bible Class

11:30 AM Sunday School Teachers Meeting

5:00 PM Living Stones Meeting

CHURCH NEWS

Bible Class: Join us in the church basement for Bible Class after the worship service today, as we continue our study of 1 Peter. All are invited!

Sunday School: Sunday School classes will be held today after the worship service for children age 3 through 8th grade.

Supper: Our choir and church band groups will be serving supper this Wednesday, starting at 6:00 p.m. in the school gym. The menu includes BBQ and plain pulled pork sandwiches, cheesy hashbrowns, and all the extras! All of you are invited to attend.

Lent: We will have a Lenten worship service at 7:00 p.m. this Wednesday. Our Lenten series this year is called "God on Trial." This series takes us back to the moments when God was literally on trial before men in the person of Christ. In these inspired episodes, we find forgiveness for us and all people, love for our enemies, strength for our faith, and courage to testify to the truth. **This Wednesday our particular focus will be "Testimony."**

Pastor Nathan Wilke of Globe & Christie will be leading our worship service. Pastor Biebert will be leading the service at Trinity, Marshfield.

Gifts given in your special "Lent" envelopes will go toward Home. We hope to see many of you as we continue our Lenten journey and see the depth of our Savior's love as he goes to the cross for us.

Thursday Bible Study: Thursday Bible Study will be held this week. Because of the basketball game schedule, we will meet at 3:15 in the school conference room. Join us as we continue our study of the book of Romans.

Basketball: At our basketball games this past Thursday, the B Team lost in overtime and the A Team won a close game.

We have home games this coming Thursday against Trinity of Marshfield. The B Team will play at 4:00, and the A Team will play at 5:00. Come and cheer for the Hornets!

Meditations: The new Meditation devotional booklets are available in the rack by the front doors. Please consider a \$3.50 donation to help our GPS group cover the cost. Thanks!

FIC: The March edition of "Forward In Christ" is available in the entryway.

Easter Flowers: If you would like to purchase flowers to help beautify our worship services on Easter Sunday, please sign up on the sheet on the table in the entryway. Orders and payment must be received by Sunday, March 24.

Calendars: March calendars are available in the entryway.

GPS Supper: Thank you to all who supported our GPS group by providing food, help, monetary contributions and moral support. All was greatly appreciated!

Youth Group: St. John's Living Stones Youth Group will have a meeting on Sunday, March 3, at 5:00 p.m. at the parsonage. Teens in grades 8-12 are welcome. Tacos, Bible study, and planning future activities (including International Youth Rally details) are on the evening's agenda. If you plan to come, or have questions, contact Linda Biebert at 715-743-3015 so there will be enough food.

School Band Online Voting Contest: Heid's Music from Stevens Point does a "Big 10 Contest" each year that awards prizes for school music programs. We are participating this year to benefit our school's new music program. You can vote once a day to support our school. This contest goes through the month of March.

Last year, we participated in this contest and took 11th out of over 150 different schools/groups. With a limited choice of options, we chose to get an electric violin. We are going to sell that instrument in hopes to get other instruments we can eventually use.

To vote, you will need to go to the link below. Then you will scroll down the page to the section "Vote For Your Favorite Photo." There you will enter your email address, first and last name. As you scroll down, please find the picture of our school students and vote. <https://www.heidmusic.com/big10plus/>

This being our third year of giving instrumental lessons, we currently have seven students learning and using their God

given gifts and abilities to serve the Lord; what a blessing! On behalf of our beginning and returning instrumentalists we thank you for your support. God is good, all the time!

Serving You In Christ-Mr. Brandon Leiterman

Soup, Pie & Ice Cream: *Our Friends of St. John's group will be serving a supper of homemade soup, pie and ice cream on Wednesday, March 6th, at 6:00 p.m. in the school gym. We are in need of pie donations. If you can help by donating any pies or other needed items, please return the donation slips that are included in your bulletins this morning. Thanks!*

Lights, Camera, Action! *This year, our 3K-4K classes and our K-3 group will be putting on some school plays in the St. John's gym. The 3K-4K will be presenting "The Very Hungry Caterpillar." The K-3 classes will be putting on the play "Stone Soup" (a fantastic fable about the great gift of sharing).*

Invite your friends and family to our play night, which is Friday, March 15, starting at 6:00 p.m. in the school gym.

Coffee Fundraiser: *We are once again selling Berres Brothers coffee. Order forms are available on the table in the church entryway. Proceeds from coffee sales will go into our Camp Phillip tuition assistance fund. Order forms and money should be turned in to the school office by Friday, March 15th. The coffee should be here and ready to be picked up early in April.*

Penny Wars: *Penny Wars has started up again. This will go until Easter Sunday. We will have the money containers at church on Sundays, and you can stop in at school any time during the week if you'd like to drop off coins (or bills). Funds raised will go toward the school bathroom project.*



Student of the Week: The student of the week is Vada Schoen. Vada is in 6th Grade. She has been working hard on her assignments, has a good attitude about her schoolwork, is friendly and polite, and participates in class. **Congratulations Vada!**

Hospitalized: **Jane Zank** is hospitalized at the Black River Falls hospital (Rm 2221), where she continues to recuperate. **Erland Greeler** is receiving therapy at Three Oaks in Marshfield. Let's keep them in our prayers.

Help Needed: One of our members, Luzia Gustavson, was brought to church on a regular basis by David Meyer, who is now in heaven. Is there someone else who would be able to bring Luzia to church and take her home again, either on a regular basis, sharing the opportunity with others, or periodically when needed? Luzia lives 13 miles south of Neillsville on Grand Ave. If you would be willing to help out, please contact Linda Biebert at 715-743-3015. Thanks!

Annual Report: The 2023 annual reports, which include an updated church directory, are available on the table in the entryway.

Thrivent Choice: In 2023 we received \$2,200 in Thrivent Choice Dollars for the church, and \$239 for the school. We thank all those who donated in this way. Just a reminder, you have until March 31 to direct any remaining 2023 choice dollars.

FUNDrive: Clear your clutter for a cause! Please bring your bags and covered boxes of unwanted household items to the collection trailer in the St. John's Lutheran School parking lot. Regular collection times are Monday, April 22, through Friday, April 26, 7:30 a.m. - 8:15 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. Proceeds help make our original school bathrooms handicap accessible!

We Are Collecting Clothes

men's, women's, & children's clothes, coats, shoes, scarves, handbags, wallets, fashion accessories, belts, backpacks, etc.

Household Textiles

bedding, comforters, blankets, sheets, towels, linen, tablecloths, curtains, pillows, etc.

Small Household Goods

kitchen items (such as pots/pans, dishes, silverware, glasses, serving pieces and hand-held appliances), home decorative items, knick-knacks, toys, games, and small electronics

Books & Media

*paperback, magazines, hard cover - all genres; *media needs to be boxed separately *no encyclopedias or text books*

Please use bags for clothes and textiles and tightly pack boxes of small household goods. Separate books from household goods and media. All items must be clean and in sellable condition.

SAVE THE DATE & SPREAD THE WORD

3K/4K-Kindergarten Open House: *We will have an open house for those families who have children who will be entering 3K, 4K, or Kindergarten in the fall of 2024. Open House will be held Saturday, March 16th from 10:00 to noon. More information will be sent home to those families.*

Kindergarten Round-Up: *Kindergarten Round-Up will be held on Thursday, March 21st, from 8:30-11:00. All current 4K students are invited. More information will be sent home to those families.*

If you know of a friend, neighbor, or family member interested in a Christian education for their child tell them about these events!

Worship the Lord with Gladness:

Last Sunday: 105

Last Wednesday: 140

Worship with Our Care of God's Wealth:

Thankoffering Given Last Sunday:

\$8,496.70 (Home); \$308.00 (Missions)

Needed per week for Home: \$8,400.00

TOGETHER



February 20, 2024

Update on the Ministry Recruitment Task Force

The Ministry Recruitment Task Force (MRTF) was formed as a result of a resolution passed by the 2023 synod convention, due to the significant shortage of pastors, teachers, and staff ministers. Its assignment is to look at all factors that impact the recruitment of called workers and to bring recommendations to the 2025 convention for an ongoing synodwide effort to recruit and train more called workers. Rev. Paul Prange, administrator of Ministerial Education, chairs the group.

The MRTF began its work by building on the good work done by the Teacher Shortage Task Force in identifying the reasons for the current teacher shortage. The MRTF then identified the reasons for the current pastor shortage.

The MRTF worked on estimating the expected supply of pastors and teachers in the near future and more than a decade from now. It did that with the knowledge that the future of the church and her needs is in the hands of our living Lord and that our predictions have proven inaccurate in the past. Nevertheless, the MRTF believes that it is a matter of good stewardship to make plans based on our best predictions.


The task force received about 30 suggestions for addressing the shortage. The suggestions related to the high school supply of candidates were easy to consider, since the prep schools and area Lutheran high schools are constantly working on supplying candidates to Martin Luther College (MLC) and MLC has already begun to improve its recruitment of public high school students.

Alternative pathways for nontraditional seminary students were also easy to consider, since Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary and its Pastoral Studies Institute have worked out courses and delivery models for nearly every life situation.

It is more complicated to consider all the suggestions for the college level. MLC has recently added a number of programs for early childhood workers at all stages of professional and ministerial certification, and those programs are just being promoted for the first time. MLC is also developing a Competency Based Education program, which provides an alternative pathway to the teaching ministry for WELS second-career adults who are unable to move to New Ulm for a traditional on-campus program.

In addition, U.S. colleges are changing rapidly because of changing demographics and funding sources. How will those changes affect the ability of MLC to meet the public ministry needs of WELS? The MRTF is discussing those issues.

The task force plans to issue the first draft of its report in April. It will include preliminary recommendations that can be discussed synodwide prior to the presentation of the final report at the 2025 synod convention.

Serving with you in Christ,
WELS President Mark Schroeder 

Meeting the spiritual needs of WELS members in the military

In early February, WELS Military Services National Civilian Chaplain Rev. Paul Horn completed a trip to the southeastern United States to visit military bases and WELS congregations to learn more about life in the military and present information about WELS Military Services and how it serves WELS members in the military. As the national civilian chaplain, Horn's role is to serve as the liaison to the military as well as orient, train, and mentor WELS military contact pastors around the country.

Horn's first stop was Abiding Grace, Mobile, Ala., which is close to a Coast Guard pilot training center. Abiding Grace is home to many veterans and actively serving military members. Abiding Grace's pastor, Rev. Tom Spiegelberg, serves as a military contact pastor to WELS members on base.

After a stop at Zion, Gainesville, Fla., to present at a circuit meeting that included two military contact pastors, Horn made his way to Savannah, Ga., where he toured the US Army Ranger training facilities. While in Georgia, Horn was able to shadow WELS member LTC Michael Hefti, battalion commander at Fort Stewart, for a day, opening his eyes to the stressors a military family faces.

Horn's final stop was Hope, Irmo, S.C. While at Hope, Horn met with an Air Force veteran for Distinctive Religious Group Leader (DRGL) training, a program that allows lay members or civilian clergy the opportunity to represent their faith group and serve their people through Word and sacrament. With this training, this

veteran will be able to lead Lutheran worship and Bible studies for the Army recruits at Fort Jackson, S.C.

"One of the ways the military allows WELS to provide Word and sacrament to members on bases is to train WELS pastors and laypeople to be religious lay leaders," says Horn. "While they don't always have full access to WELS military members—it depends on the installation, the chaplain, or commanding officer—it is a foot in the door in meeting the spiritual needs of WELS members in the military."

Because WELS does not endorse chaplains, technically WELS is not a Distinctive Religious Group as recognized by the Department of Defense, but when WELS members enlist or commission as officers, they can indicate their religious preference. If WELS is the designated religious preference and religious accommodation is requested, it's possible to access WELS worship.

Horn emphasizes that it is also important for military members to sign up with WELS Military Services at wels.net/refer. Once a service member signs up, they'll be put in contact with the nearest WELS church and pastor.

Religious accommodation in action

Our Savior in San Antonio, Texas, is an example of a congregation that makes use of the religious accommodations on base. The congregation is near the Air Force base that conducts all the Air Force basic training. Rev. Micah Koelpin, pastor of Our Savior's west campus, and Mr. David Kasischke, Our Savior's staff minister, share the duties of once-per-month WELS worship services on base.

Kasischke shares what worship on base is like:

“The worship services we conduct are currently held on JBSA-Lackland here in San Antonio, in the Gateway Chapel’s conference room. We are billed as ‘Evangelical Lutheran (Wisconsin Synod),’ and we meet on the third Sunday of every month at 3:30 p.m. I use an order of service from our hymnal to ensure the worshipers, Air Force basic trainees, get the evangelical Lutheran experience. Usually, the ratio of non-WELS versus WELS is high . . . there are many more non-WELS people who attend. Some are curious about what an ‘evangelical Lutheran’ service looks like, and some are attending because they are ‘wingmen’—the escort that is required because basic trainees do not go anywhere unaccompanied. Attendance is always unpredictable. My largest group was 19; then there have been times where it has only been a small handful. I always have the Lord’s Supper ready for any WELS member who attends. We practice close communion, but I explain why we do it this way and invite people to stay and participate in the other parts of the short communion service that I lead afterward. These services bring in people from all walks of faith life—unbelievers, doubters, curiosity-seekers, people who identify as ‘Christian’ but really know very little about their faith as well as Lutherans of other synods and members of other Christian denominations. I always take time to walk through the worship service and explain what each

part is and why we do it when we do it in the worship service. I also leave time for questions after the service, about the worship itself or faith in general. I have found the questions are thoughtful and heartfelt.”

Opportunities to worship together and receive the sacrament are vitally important, says Kasischke. “What I have gathered from my conversations with these young people is that despite how well prepared you are, there is an adjustment to being away from home, loved ones, and the entire support network you are used to.” ☩

Did you know...

WELS has a Facebook page?
facebook.com/welslutherans

WELS has Instagram?
instagram.com/welslutherans

***Forward in Christ* magazine has a Facebook page?**
facebook.com/forwardinchristmagazine

***Forward in Christ* magazine has Instagram?**
instagram.com/forward_in_christ_magazine/



To sign up for the e-mail version, visit wels.net/together.

To assist you in worship:

- ✚ Personal listening devices are available for anyone to use. Please talk to the ushers for assistance.
- ✚ Large-print bulletins available in the entryway.
- ✚ Personal Prayers: Red Hymnal (pp. 10-11); Blue Hymnal (inside front cover)
- ✚ Preparation for Lord's Supper: Red Hymnal (p. 156); Blue Hymnal (pp. 295-296)
- ✚ Luther's Small Catechism: Blue Hymnal (pp. 286-293)

We love seeing young children in church as we want families to worship together. We also love to hear children making a "joyful noise to the Lord." If you need some privacy for feeding an infant or changing a diaper, please make use of our parents' room off the north side of the entryway where you can still listen to the service.

Visitors, if you would like to know more about our church or school, please introduce yourself to our pastor. He would be delighted to speak with you and serve you in whatever way he can.

St. John's Lutheran Church & School 711 & 805 W 5th St., Neillsville, WI 54456

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- John Hagedorn, Chairman: hagedornjohnw2@gmail.com
715-743-4653 (home)

- Website: www.stjohnsneillsville.com
- Facebook (church): www.facebook.com/stjohnsneillsville/
- Facebook (school): www.facebook.com/stjohnshornets/

Worship Schedule

- Sunday-9:00 a.m. (Year-Round)
- Tuesday-6:00 p.m. (After Easter through November)