

*Dedication of
God's People
&
St. John's
Early Learning Center*



Sunday, September 16, 2018

Opening Hymn: 531-Christ is Made the Sure Foundation

1 Christ is made the sure foun - da - tion, Christ, our head and
2 To this tem - ple, where we call you, Come, O Lord of
3 Grant, we pray, to all your faith - ful All the gifts they
4 Praise and hon - or to the Fa - ther, Praise and hon - or

cor - ner - stone, Cho - sen of the Lord and pre - cious,
hosts, and stay; Come with all your lov - ing - kind - ness,
ask to gain, What they gain from you for - ev - er
to the Son, Praise and hon - or to the Spir - it,

Bind - ing all the Church in one, Ho - ly Zi - on's
Hear your peo - ple as they pray, And your full - est
With the bless - ed to re - tain, And here - af - ter
Ev - er Three and ev - er One, One in might and

help for - ev - er And our con - fi - dence a - lone.
ben - e - dic - tion Speak with - in these walls to - day.
in your glo - ry Ev - er - more with you to reign.
one in glo - ry While un - end - ing a - ges run!

Invocation and Dialogue

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

C: **Amen.**

P: Today we celebrate the Lord's presence among us through his Word, we give him thanks for his countless blessings upon his people here and everywhere, and we are about to dedicate our new Early Learning Center for the continued proclamation of his name to the people of our congregation and community. With believers of old, let us lift our hearts and voices to praise the God of our salvation!

P: How lovely is your dwelling place, O LORD Almighty!

C: **My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the LORD, my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.**

P: Blessed are those who dwell in your house; they are ever praising you.

C: **Blessed are those whose strength is in you, who have set their hearts on pilgrimage.** *Psalm 84:1-2,4-5*

P: I rejoiced with those who said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD."

C: **Our feet are standing in your gates, O Jerusalem.** *Psalm 122:1-2*

P: O my people, hear my teaching; listen to the words of my mouth.

C: **I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter hidden things, things from of old.**

P: What we have heard and what our fathers have told us.

C: **We will not hide them from their children; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the LORD, his power, and the wonders he has done.**

P: So the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children.

C: **Then they would put their trust in God and would not forget his deeds but would keep his commands.** *Psalm 78:1-4,6-7*

Confession and Absolution

P: Who may ascend the hill of the LORD? Who may stand in his holy place?

C: **He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to an idol or swear by what is false.** *Psalms 24:3-4*

P: Almighty God, our heavenly Father,

C: **we have sinned against you in our thoughts, in our words, in our deeds, and in all that we have not done. Forgive us in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Deliver and restore us, that we may live in peace.**

P: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again. In his great mercy, God made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in our sins. Hear the word of Christ through his called servant: I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

Prayer of the Day

P: Let us pray.

O Almighty, Everlasting God, you have granted us grace to build this place of learning. Come and be present in our hearts and lives by your Word that it may be a workshop of your Spirit in which the promise of your Gospel is freely proclaimed.

C: **You promise that your Word will not return to you empty, and so fulfill your Word among us and grant that our proclamation of your truth may be to your glory and to the eternal good of those who hear it.**

P: We pray this through Jesus Christ, your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: **Amen. (sung)**

Old Testament Reading: Joshua 4:1-7

Faithful to his promise, the LORD brought his people into the promised land. He called on the Israelites to set up a monument to his faithfulness, and to use that monument to teach their children about the great things God had done for them. Our Early Learning Center is just a building—unless it serves the purpose of proclaiming the faithful love of our Savior-God to the next generation. God grant it in our midst!

When the whole nation had finished crossing the Jordan, the LORD said to Joshua, ² “Choose twelve men from among the people, one from each tribe, ³ and tell them to take up twelve stones from the middle of the Jordan from right where the priests stood and to carry them over with you and put them down at the place where you stay tonight.” ⁴ So Joshua called together the twelve men he had appointed from the Israelites, one from each tribe, ⁵ and said to them, “Go over before the ark of the LORD your God into the middle of the Jordan. Each of you is to take up a stone on his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the Israelites, ⁶ to serve as a sign among you. In the future, when your children ask you, ‘What do these stones mean?’ ⁷ tell them that the flow of the Jordan was cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD. When it crossed the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. These stones are to be a memorial to the people of Israel forever.”

New Testament Reading: Ephesians 2:8-10, 19-22

Saved by God’s undeserved love, we have been set free to serve him and our neighbor. As we do, we don’t go about our work as an island, isolated from others. Instead, we have been brought into God’s family of believers, his household, built on the one solid foundation—Christ Jesus. As a gathering of God’s people in this place, rejoice in the opportunity he’s given us to seek the lost and serve the found, together in Christ.

⁸ For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— ⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast. ¹⁰ For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. ¹⁹ Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household, ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. ²¹ In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. ²² And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

Hymn: 250-From All That Dwell Below the Skies

From all that dwell below the skies
Let the Creator's praise arise. Alleluia! Alleluia!
Let the Redeemer's name be sung
Through ev'ry land, by ev'ry tongue.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Eternal are your mercies, Lord;
Eternal is your glorious Word. Alleluia! Alleluia!
Your praise shall sound from shore to shore
Till suns shall rise and set no more.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Gospel Reading: Mark 10:13-16

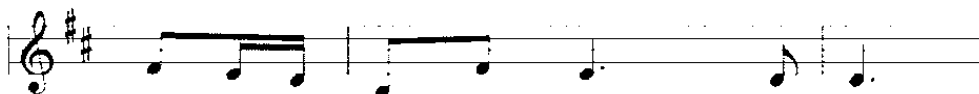
Jesus shows his patient dedication and love for what the world views as small and insignificant. God grant us such patient love to say, "Let the little children come, and do not hinder them!"

¹³ People were bringing little children to Jesus to have him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. ¹⁴ When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. ¹⁵ I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." ¹⁶ And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them.

Hymn: 752-In Christ Alone



1 In Christ a - lone my hope is found.
2 In Christ a - lone — who took on flesh,
3 There in the ground his bod - y lay,
4 No guilt in life, no fear in death,



He is my light, my strength, my song;
Full - ness of God in help - less babe.
Light of the world by dark - ness slain;
This is the pow'r of Christ in me;

This cor - ner - stone, this sol - id ground,
 This gift of love and right - eous - ness,
 Then burst - ing forth in glo - rious day
 From life's first cry to fi - nal breath,

Firm through the fierc - est drought and storm.
 Scorned by the ones he came to save.
 Up from the grave he rose a - gain!
 Je - sus com - mands my des - tin - y.

What heights of love, what depths of peace,
 Till on that cross, as Je - sus died,
 And as he stands in vic - tor - y,
 No pow'r of hell, no scheme of man

When fears are stilled, when striv - ings cease!
 The wrath of God was sat - is - fied;
 Sin's curse has lost its grip on me.
 Can ev - er pluck me from his hand;

My Com - for - ter, my all in all,
 For ev - 'ry sin on him was laid.
 For I am his and he is mine—
 Till he re - turns or calls me home,

(Fine)

Here in the love of Christ I stand.
 Here in the death of Christ I live.
 Bought with the pre - cious blood of Christ.
 Here in the pow'r of Christ I'll stand.

Sermon

The Lord's Grand Opening

O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise.

Psalm 51:15

Offering

Dedication of Ourselves to God's Glory

P: To the glory of God our Father who created and preserves us;
To the honor of his Son who loved us and gave himself for our salvation;
To the praise of the Holy Spirit who has called us by the Gospel, sanctifies us, and keeps us in the faith:

C: We dedicate ourselves.

P: To the proclamation and teaching of both the law and the gospel of Jesus Christ;
To the scriptural administration of the Sacraments of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion;
As a house of prayer for all who call on your name and worship you in spirit and in truth:

C: We dedicate ourselves.

P: For commemorating the spiritual milestones in a Christian's life and death;
For teaching the truth to the people of today, and to the generation of tomorrow;
For Christian heritage, fellowship, and friendship:

C: We dedicate ourselves.

P: For growth in faith of believers and for the conversion of the lost;
For the promotion of righteousness and godliness;
For turning the proud to repentance and for giving comfort and assurance to sinners:

C: We dedicate ourselves.

- P: In memory of those who labored in days gone by and with gratitude to those whose gifts and labors have brought us to this joyful day, we gather to dedicate this building.
- C: **We, the members of St. John's Lutheran Church, grateful for our salvation in Christ and mindful of our Christian responsibilities and opportunities, do now dedicate ourselves anew to the service of the Triune God. Amen.**

Prayer

- P: Lord, your promises are great. We are small and so, too often, is our faith. We echo the words of King David, "But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand....Our days on earth are like a shadow, without hope. Lord our God, all this abundance that we have provided for building [an Early Learning Center] for your Holy Name comes from your hand, and all of it belongs to you. I know, my God, that you test the heart and are pleased with integrity. All these things I have given willingly and with honest intent. And now I have seen with joy how willingly your people who are here have given to you. Lord...keep these desires and thoughts in the hearts of your people forever, and keep their hearts loyal to you."

1 Chronicles 29:14-18

- C: **We are confident of this, that he who began a good work in [us], will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.**

Philippians 1:6

- All: **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.**

The Blessing

- P:** 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:** **Amens. (sung)**

Final Hymn: God Bless Our School

(children and congregation)

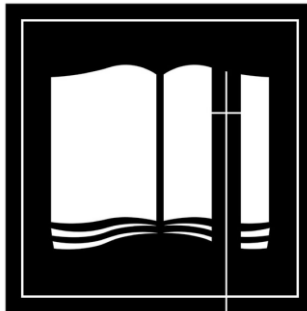
***1. Our Father, 'tis to Thee
We bring this earnest plea
God bless our school.
Thy saving Word is here
Fill us with holy fear
Make this a place most dear
God bless our school.***

***2. Our Savior from above
Guide with Thy tender love
Our Luth'ren school.
Help us our work to do
Teach us to e'er be true
Our number large or few
God bless our school.***

***3. Spirit of God so near
Our guide and Comforter
Rule in our school.
Here purify each heart
Faith, love, and hope impart
Our sanctifier Thou art
God bless our school.***

***4. Great God, blest Trinity
Thou Who art one and three
Bless this our school.
Now hear us while we pray
Take all our sins away
Meet with us every day
God bless our school.***

We will continue the Dedication Service at the ELC main entrance.



Dedication Service of Early Learning Center

P: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

P: Most High God, the heavens cannot contain you, yet you are willing to make your home in human hearts and call this place your house. We thank you for the gifts of those who have built our new addition and for the skills of all who serve in it to your glory. We pray that within these walls many will be filled with the joy and peace only you can give.

C: **Lord, hear our prayer!**

P: Almighty God, heavenly Father, no word or work of ours is worth anything without you. Bless all who use this building. Help them grow day by day in the knowledge of your will and in the grace to perform it, to the honor and praise of your name and for the good of all people, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: **Lord, hear our prayer!**

Reading of Contractors by Principal Mike Allard

Brad Goetz, Goetz Excavating
(Site work)

Dan Lenz, Kuhn's Flooring
(Flooring)

Keith Decorah, Keith Construction
(Concrete)

Ryan Schoen, RS Plumbing
(Plumbing)

Tim Voigt, Custom Heating & Cooling
(HVAC)

Tina Westra, Quality Door & Hardware
(Frames, doors, hardware)

Chad Schnitzler, Central WI Glass
(Aluminum doors)

Ryan Opelt, Ryno's Masonry
(Masonry)

Nate Ehlen, Sav-Rite Building Center
(Building materials)

Kevin Erickson, Erickson Constr.
(Building works)

Rob Wilson, Pine Valley Painting
(Painting)

Justin Dougherty, Dynamic Audio
(Network, security, PA, phone)

Harvey Churkey, H & S Protection
(Fire alarm systems)

Daniel Geenen, Lighting Design Solutions
(Electrical fixtures)

Delton Martin, Quality Foam & Fiber
(Insulation)

Kevin Kraft, American Asphalt
(Asphalt paving)

Randy Hennen, Randy's Electric
(Electrician)

Cheryl Larsen, Decorating Sew Unique
(Window treatments)

Henry Berry, Ratsch Engineering, (Engineering, Project Manager)

- P: Lord, unless you build the house, the builders labor in vain. Help us in our ministry in this place not to grow discouraged, fearful, or doubtful of your power and love. Assure us that our labors in your name are never in vain.
- C: **Lord, you promise that your Word will not return to you empty. Accomplish your purposes here in our midst. Bless the teaching of the Good News about Jesus and, if it is your will, grant that many more people—both young and old—may be brought into the flock of your Church through your Spirit and your Word.**

Children sing “Jesus Loves Me”

*Jesus loves me! This I know,
For the Bible tells me so.
Little ones to Him belong;
They are weak but He is strong.*

Refrain:

*Yes, Jesus loves me!
Yes, Jesus loves me!
Yes, Jesus loves me!
The Bible tells me so.*

*Jesus loves me! Blessings flow,
For his children here below;
Old or young are welcome there
Lambs and sheep within his care.*

Refrain

*Yes, Jesus loves me!
Yes, Jesus loves me!
Yes, Jesus loves me!
The Bible tells me so.*

- P: “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.” Lord Jesus, not only did you welcome those children into your embrace, but you also held them up as examples for the faith of each person, no matter how young or old. “I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.” Lord, give us such a child-like faith to trust your Word and promises.
- C: **Lord Jesus, we dedicate our Early Learning Center to you. Take possession of it that it may be a place where children are brought to you and you bless them. Teach and lead them and all of us. Give wisdom, patience, and love to those who serve here. Bless the efforts of our pastor, teachers, and staff members as they seek to bring the good news of your Gospel to children and their families.**
- P: Almighty God, we bring these and all our requests before you today, confident that you hear us for Jesus’ sake. Take all that we are and all that we have and use it for your glory. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord.
- C: **Amen.**

Closing Hymn: 390:5-6-Salvation unto Us Has Come

**Since Christ has full atonement made And brought to us salvation,
Each Christian therefore may be glad And build on this foundation.
Your grace alone, dear Lord, I plead; Your death is now my life indeed,
For you have paid my ransom.**

**All blessing, honor, thanks, and praise To Father, Son and Spirit,
The God who saved us by his grace—All glory to his merit!
O Triune God in heav’n above, You have revealed your saving love;
Your blessed name be hallowed!**

Officiants:

- Presiding Minister:** Pastor Timothy Biebert
- Preacher:** Pastor Michael Jensen, Western Wis. District President
- Organist/Pianist:** Judy Trunkel
- Choir Directors:** Ashley Urbanek (K-8) & Megan Allard (3K-2nd)
- Reading of Contractors:** Mike Allard

History of St. John's Early Learning Center

During the 2015-16 school year, St. John's saw a large increase in children wanting to attend our 3- and 4-year-old preschool program as well as families that needed childcare. This concern was brought before the church council and the council decided to put it before the voting members of the congregation at the 2016 July voters' meeting. At this meeting, the decision was made to form a committee to research and explore the option of expanding our childcare program at St. John's. The committee consisted of Megan Allard, Mary Luchterhand, Donna Sternitzky, Henry Berry, and Mike Allard. Among the group, there was a strong passion to meet the needs of the community of Neillsville and the acknowledgement of the awesome privilege to spread the Gospel that was before us.

After months of discussion and research the committee decided to involve more members from St. John's in the discussions and also members from the other two area WELS churches in Globe and Christie. The need for childcare and schooling in the community was definitely needed and the opportunity was there for our taking. Many options were discussed such as renovating a former childcare center down the street, building a new facility on the north side of the campus, or adding on to our current school. After these meetings, the decision to add on to the school was presented to the congregation, along with the renovating of another building, at the 2017 January voters' meeting. The voters decided on pursuing the idea of adding on to the school but wanted the committee to meet more and give a more detailed presentation later that spring.

More months of discussion and planning took place and the committee put together a Business Plan for the building of a new Early Learning Center addition to the current school along with a proposed balanced budget with projected enrollment and expenses. During this time, Principal Mike Allard also met numerous times with the CEO of Neillsville Memorial Medical Center about the project. Together, they decided this was necessary for the community and a partnership with the hospital now would benefit both parties. In May of 2017, Mike Allard gave a presentation to the voting members of St. John's Lutheran Church and there was discussion whether or not final approval would be given. The presentation also discussed the option of being given a loan through the WELS Church Extension Fund which would require a down payment. The congregation voted in favor of building the Early Learning Center addition with the help of the Church Extension Fund loan.

Afterwards, planning continued for the layout of the building. Many more meetings took place with larger groups discussing various ideas for the future. Donations started to be collected. An organization called The Antioch Foundation was contacted and they gave a generous grant of \$30,000 for the project. During the winter of 2017, WELS Church Extension Fund contacted us and told us that they would no longer be willing to give a loan to our church since we were not a mission congregation. Various individuals took part in meeting with banks in the community and Memorial Medical Center to try to find a funding solution for the expansion project. Many ideas were discussed but nothing seemed to fit our situation. In December, we contacted LACE (Lutheran Association for Church Extension), a WELS group that gives loans to those WELS organizations looking to build new or add on to their facilities. An application was submitted and after a few weeks LACE agreed to give us a loan for our project. The same mindset of spreading the Gospel was evident in discussions with the CEO from LACE and they did not require a down payment. The decision still had to go to the voter's in February of 2018.

At that February meeting, voters again listened to a presentation from Mike Allard and also LACE CEO Don Krueger about the potential partnership with LACE. Going ahead with LACE would involve rolling the existing line of credit and mortgage that the church was paying into the loan for the ELC addition. After doing this, the required monthly loan payments would still be within the proposed budget for the Early Learning Center found in the Business Plan. The voters decided to go ahead with using LACE for the funding of our Early Learning Center addition. The process of collecting bids from contractors for the project started immediately. The goal was to open the doors to the addition by the first day of school for the 2018-19 year which was only 6 ½ months away. A groundbreaking service was scheduled for April 15 in combination with the church's Mission Fest. However, the good Lord had other plans and dumped over a foot of snow on Western Wisconsin that weekend. Church was canceled and the groundbreaking service was pushed back two weeks. On April 29, after the confirmation of 8th graders, members and visitors went to the back of the parking lot for a groundbreaking service. It was beautiful weather and was very well attended.

Work began the next day with excavation and the removal of old exterior items on the school. It was a noisy last month of school but it was well worth it. Contractors worked through the summer, many long hard hours to get their jobs done well and on time. The work done by everyone involved with the project was incredible and the project would not have been successful without everyone involved. There were a few minor setbacks throughout the summer due to weather but nothing serious. The decision was made to push back the opening of the Early Learning Center until September 4 to give more time for contractors to finish and materials to come in.

On Monday August 27, parents from our church and community gathered for an ELC Orientation night to meet teachers and aides and to walk through the brand-new building. The gymnasium was packed with lots of new faces that we would have the opportunity to spread the Gospel message to. Before the doors could open, all of the materials in other rooms that were purchased, donated or already here in classrooms had to be moved into the proper rooms. Many people worked hard hours over the Labor Day weekend to get the building ready for the opening day on September 4th.

The addition to the old school building includes 3 new offices and a conference room for meetings and tutoring. It also includes handicap accessible bathrooms. It has 4 new classrooms that each includes a bathroom and a sink in the classroom portion. The new addition has in-floor heating and central air. There will also be a flowing baptismal font in the entryway that will remind students, staff and others of the day they became a child of God. We anxiously await the day for the first baptism to take place there. The old school got a facelift with new siding, gutters and the suspended ceiling. Drainage was also improved throughout the grounds around the school. The parking lot has been expanded into the north field. Internet, phone and security have been improved tremendously and the whole campus is wired together. The playground has been fenced in to provide a safer spot for younger children and old equipment has been removed.

Throughout this process our gracious Lord has been showering blessings on us. He truly has opened the floodgates! This expansion did not come without problems. The devil certainly is working to stop the spread of the Gospel here and everywhere. We boldly lean on God and His promises to keep us safe and continue spreading the message of Jesus to our church and the community of Neillsville.

Serving you In Christ, Mike Allard, Principal @ St. John's

Show Me the Numbers!

\$972,000

The original loan amount requested from LACE. This includes the church mortgage and line of credit that was rolled into it. Total requested so far has come in at around \$100,000 less!

\$30,000

Grant total from The Antioch Foundation that is being used to completely furnish our new building. This along with donations from Memorial Medical Center, Marshfield Clinic and our members has helped us furnish with no cost.

\$80,000

Amount of dollars raised by our congregation and other churches to support the spreading of the Gospel in the Early Learning Center. This is currently in a savings account.

11

The number of teachers and aides who work in the Early Learning Center and the elementary school right now. They serve their Savior gladly each day and enjoy this opportunity.

52

Number of students who come to the Early Learning Center throughout the week. This includes infants, toddlers, 3 and 4-year-olds and before/after care.

6

Number of Infants currently enrolled with 2 more coming by the end of January!

12

Number of Toddlers currently enrolled!

12 & 10

Numbers of students in our 3K and 4K Preschool program!

51

Number of students in the Elementary School (K-8). This is our largest number in many years. We are very bottom heavy and have split the K-2 classroom up with an aide/K teacher in the afternoon which is being paid for by our Endowment Fund.

11 & 9

Number of students in Kindergarten and 1st grade this year. We are seeing a strong transition from our preschool program into our elementary school. Based on numbers in preschool this will continue. God willing our school will be even larger next year!

100+

Number of Jesus' lambs that walk through our doors every day that have the opportunity to hear the saving truths found in the Gospel. This is **truly priceless!**