St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church & School

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

Member of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

"Welcome Visitors & Members!"

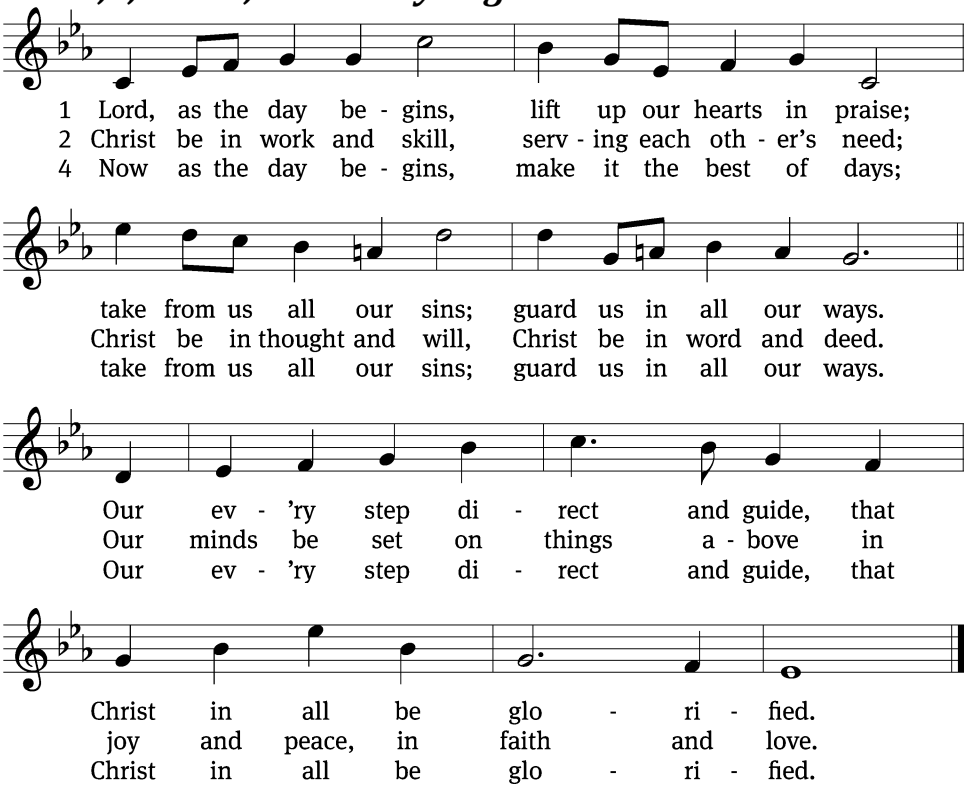
To those who are visiting us for the first time, we extend our sincere welcome; to our friends who know us we renew our welcome; to those who seek a church home we invite you to be part of our family and enjoy fellowship with our Savior.
For further assistance in worship and information on our church, please see the back cover.

19th Sunday after Pentecost

October 4, 2026

THE BEGINNING OF THE END-THE LORD GOD WILL CLAIM THE FRUITS OF HIS VINEYARD

Communion: *We will celebrate the Lord's Supper today at the rail. St. John's practices "member communion." We ask, therefore, that only those who are members of St. John's or another WELS/ELS congregation partake of the sacrament.*

781:1,2,4 Lord, as the Day Begins *CW 21*

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The Service Setting 1 CW 21

In the name of the Father and of the ✞ Son and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

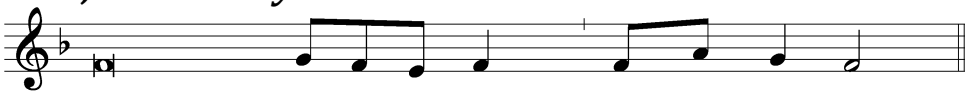
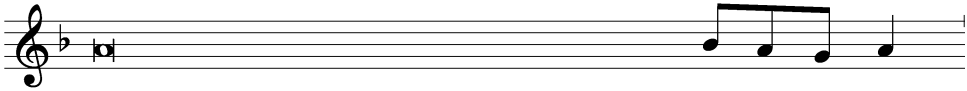
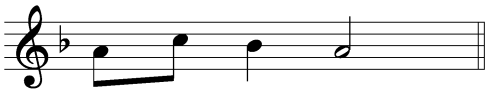
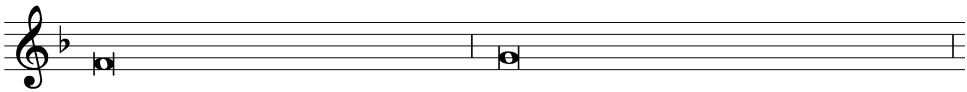
Confession

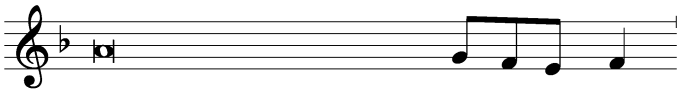
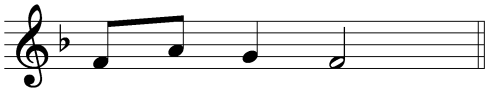
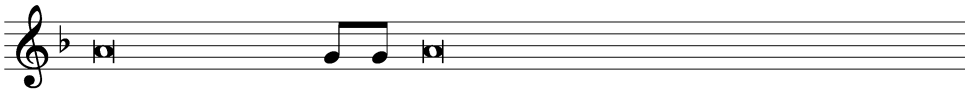
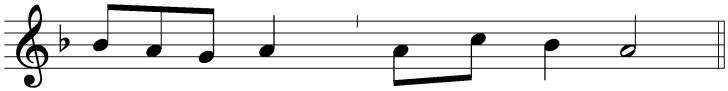
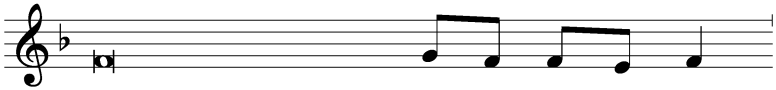
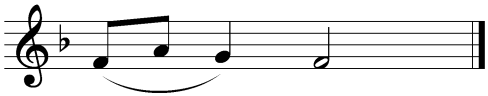
If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.
If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just
and will forgive us our sins
and purify us from all unrighteousness.

Let us confess our sins to the Lord.
Holy God, gracious Father,
I am sinful by nature
and have sinned against you in my thoughts, words, and actions.
I have not loved you with my whole heart;
I have not loved others as I should.
I deserve your punishment both now and forever.
But Jesus, my Savior, paid for my sins
with his innocent suffering and death.
Trusting in him, I pray: God, have mercy on me, a sinner.

Silence for meditation and reflection

Our gracious Father in heaven has been merciful to us. He sent his only Son, Jesus Christ, who gave his life as the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. 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.
Amen.

Lord, Have Mercy





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Gloria

Glory to God in the highest!
And peace to his people on earth.

The Word

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

Prayer of the Day
Let us pray.

Almighty God, in your bountiful goodness, keep us safe from every evil of body and soul. Make us ready, with cheerful hearts, to do whatever pleases you; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
Amen.

First Reading: Isaiah 5:1–7

[1]Let me sing for my loved one a song about my loved one's vineyard.

My loved one had a vineyard on a fertile ridge.
[2]He dug it up and gathered the stones out of it.
He planted it with the best vines.
He built a tower in the middle of it.
He also cut a winepress into it.
He expected it to produce clusters of sweet grapes,
but it produced only sour grapes.

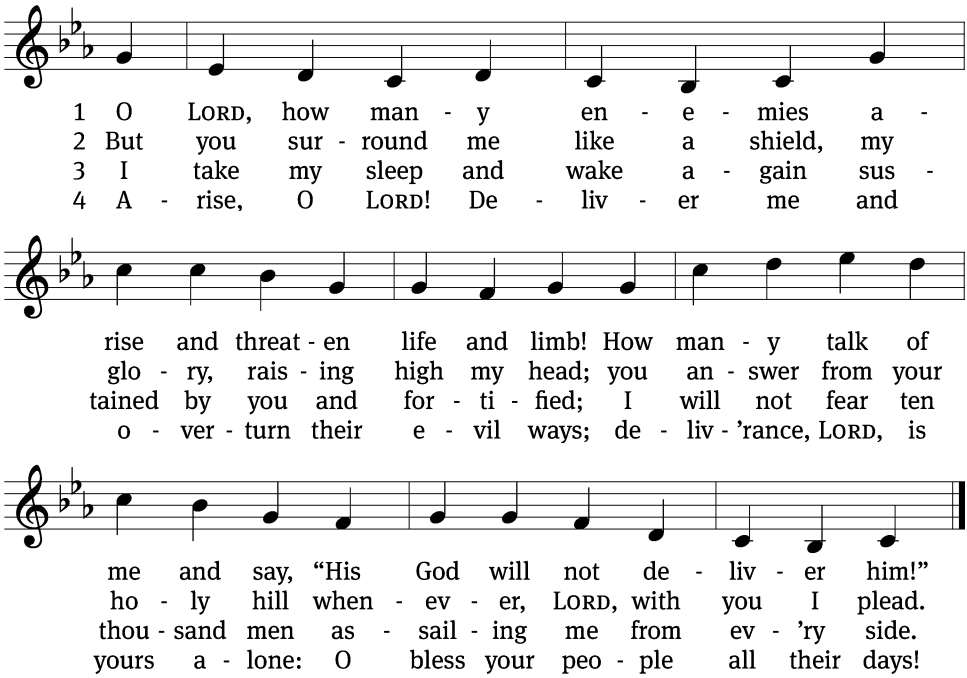
[3]"So now, you residents of Jerusalem and you men of Judah,
judge between me and my vineyard.
[4]What more could have been done for my vineyard
that I have not already done for it?
When I expected it to produce clusters of sweet grapes,
why did it produce sour grapes?
[5]Now, let me tell you what I will do to my vineyard.
I will take away its hedge, and it will become a pasture.
I will break down its wall, and it will be trampled down.

6I will make it a wasteland.
It will not be pruned or hoed.
So briers and thorns will shoot up.
I will also command the clouds not to pour rain on it."

7Yes, the vineyard of the LORD of Armies is the house of Israel,
and the men of Judah are the planting that was pleasing to him.
He expected justice, but instead there was oppression.
He expected righteousness, but there was an outcry.

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Psalm 3B — *CW 21 Psalter*



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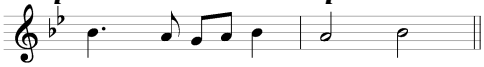
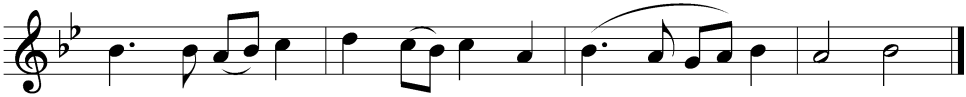
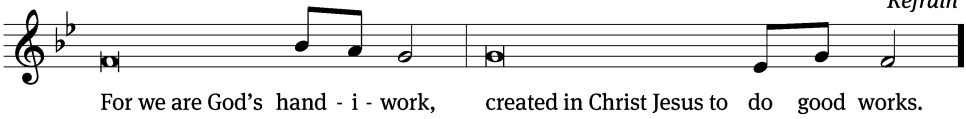
Second Reading: Philippians 3:17–21

[17]Brothers, join together in imitating me and in paying attention to those who are walking according to the pattern we gave you. [18]To be sure, many walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. I told you about them often, and now I am saying it while weeping. [19]Their end is destruction, their god is their appetite, and their glory is in their shame. They are thinking only about earthly things. [20]But our citizenship is in heaven. We are eagerly waiting for a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ. [21]By the power that enables him to subject all things to himself, he will transform our humble bodies to be like his glorious body.

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation: Ephesians 2:10

Refrain

Tone

Refrain



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Gospel Reading: Matthew 21:33–43

33"Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a winepress in it, and built a watchtower. He leased it out to some tenant farmers and went away on a journey. 34When the time approached to harvest the fruit, he sent his servants to the tenants to get his fruit. 35The tenant farmers seized his servants. They beat one, killed another, and stoned a third. 36Then the landowner sent even more servants than the first time. The tenant farmers treated them the same way. 37Finally, he sent his son to them. 'They will respect my son,' he said. 38But when the tenant farmers saw the son, they said to each other, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him and take his inheritance!' 39They took him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. 40So when the landowner comes, what will he do to those tenant farmers?"

41They told him, "He will bring those wretches to a wretched end. Then he will lease out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him his fruit when it is due."

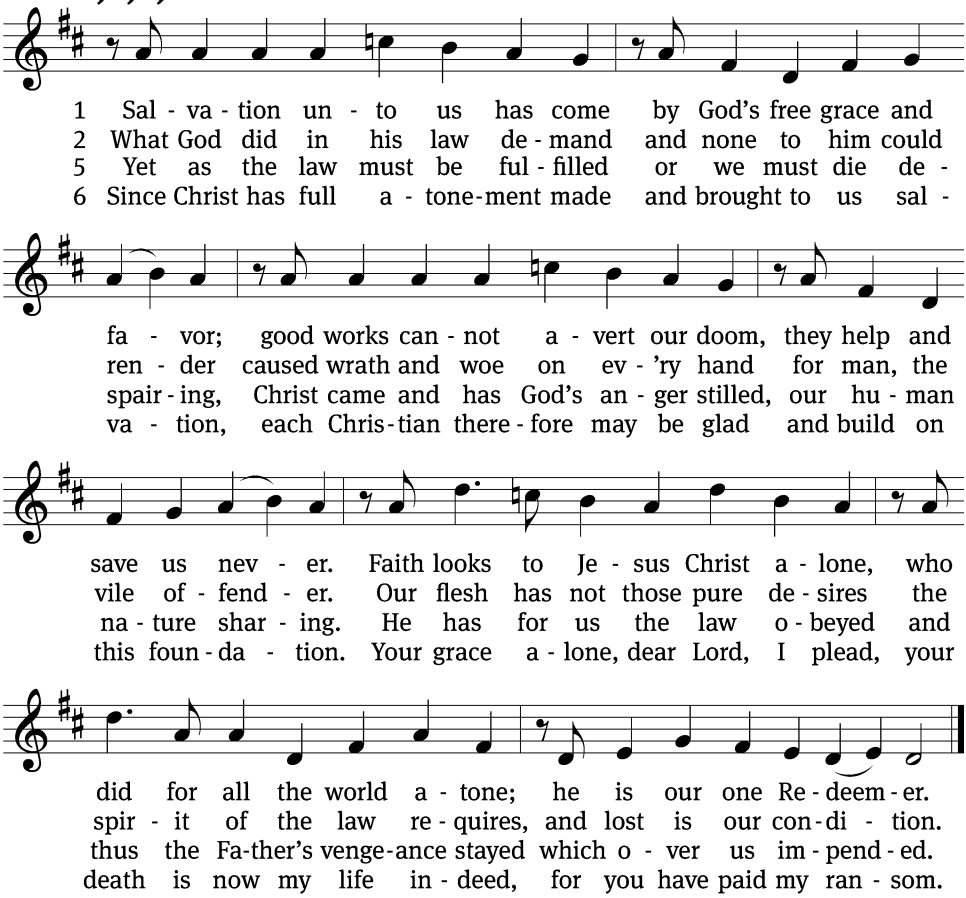
42Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures:

"The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes?

43"That is why I tell you the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces its fruit.

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise be to you, O Christ!

Children's Message

558:1,2,5,6 Salvation unto Us Has Come *CW 21*

Text: Paul Speratus, 1484–1551, abr., alt.; tr. The Lutheran Hymnal, 1941, alt.
Tune: Etlich Cristlich lider, Wittenberg, 1524
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Sermon Text: Isaiah 5:1-7
Sermon Theme: The Lord Produces a Harvest in His Vineyard

Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is,
seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary,
and became truly human.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate.
He suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who in unity with the Father and the Son
is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Prayer of the Church

Almighty God and Father, we thank you for all your mercies, especially for the gift of your Son, through whom you have revealed your gracious will. We praise you for the Holy Spirit and his working through the means of grace.
Plant your Word in our hearts, and cause it to produce fruit in our lives.

Strengthen and defend your Church, that by your Word and sacraments faith may grow and love toward all may increase.
Support all who spread the light of your truth throughout the world.

Keep our children in the grace of their baptisms. Enable their parents to train them in lives of faith.
Raise up Christians to serve you in the ministry of the Word and in all godly walks of life.

Preserve our nation in justice and honor. Guide and bless all who make, administer, and judge our laws.
Give them wisdom that they may promote justice and hinder evil.

Let your blessing rest on planting and harvest, commerce and industry, medicine and science, the arts and culture. Protect all who travel, and care for those whose work is difficult or dangerous.
Be with all who devote themselves to any useful task.

Comfort all who are in sorrow or need, sickness or adversity. Remember those who suffer persecution for the faith. Have mercy on those for whom death draws near.
Grant them your love, and take them into your tender care.

Hear us, Lord, as we pray in silence.

Silent prayer

We remember with thanksgiving those who have loved and served you, who now rest from their labors. Console those who are mourning or living with sadness.
Keep us in the true faith, and bring us at last to the joys of heaven.

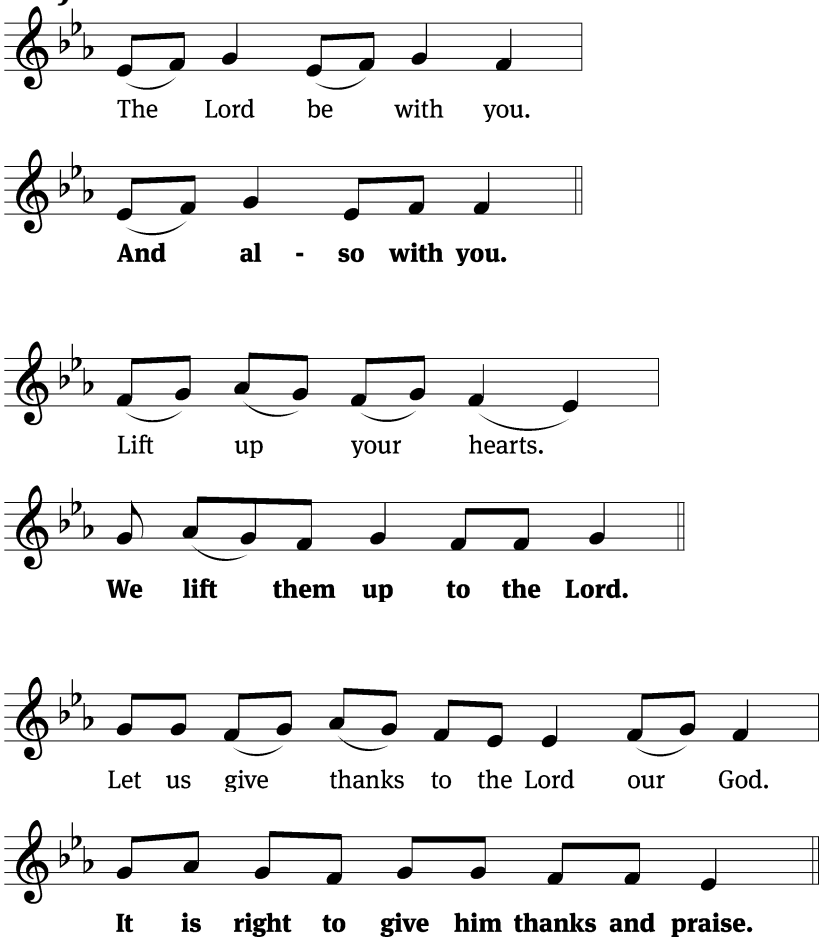
Grant us these things, Father, for the sake of Jesus, who died and rose again.
Amen.

OFFERING - *The members of St. John's have joined together, in gratitude for God's grace in Jesus, to do the Lord's work in this community and around the world and support this gospel ministry with their time, talents, and treasures. 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.*

Friendship Registers: *Please take a few moments before church or during the offering to mark down your attendance at worship by signing the friendship registers we have placed back in the racks at the end of each pew. Thanks!*

The Sacrament

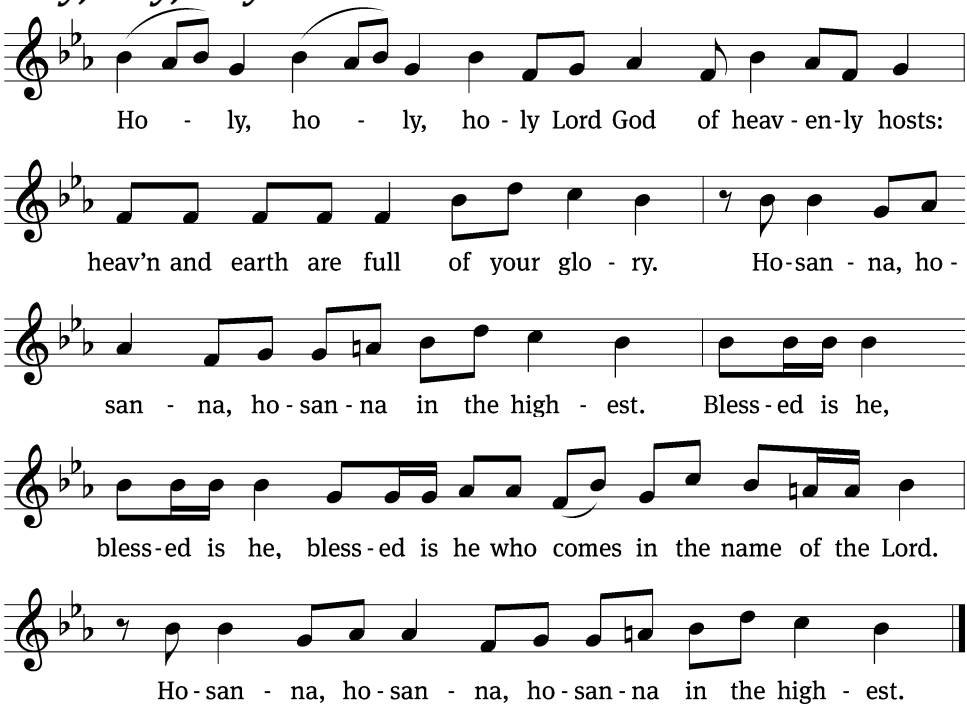
Preface



It is truly good and right that we should at all times and in all places give you thanks, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, through Jesus Christ our Lord,

who promised that wherever two or three come together in his name, there he is with them to shepherd his flock until he comes again in glory.

Therefore, with all the saints on earth and hosts of heaven, we praise your holy name and join their glorious song:

Holy, Holy, Holy

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Blessed are you, O Lord of heaven and earth. We praise and thank you for sending your Son, Jesus Christ, and we remember the great acts of love through which he has ransomed us from sin, death, and the devil's power.

By his incarnation, he became one with us.
By his perfect life, he fulfilled your holy will.
By his innocent death, he overcame hell.
By his rising from the grave, he opened heaven.

Invited by your grace and instructed by your Word, we approach your table with repentant and joyful hearts. Strengthen us through Christ's body and blood, and preserve us in the true faith until we feast with him and all his ransomed people in glory everlasting.
Amen.

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.

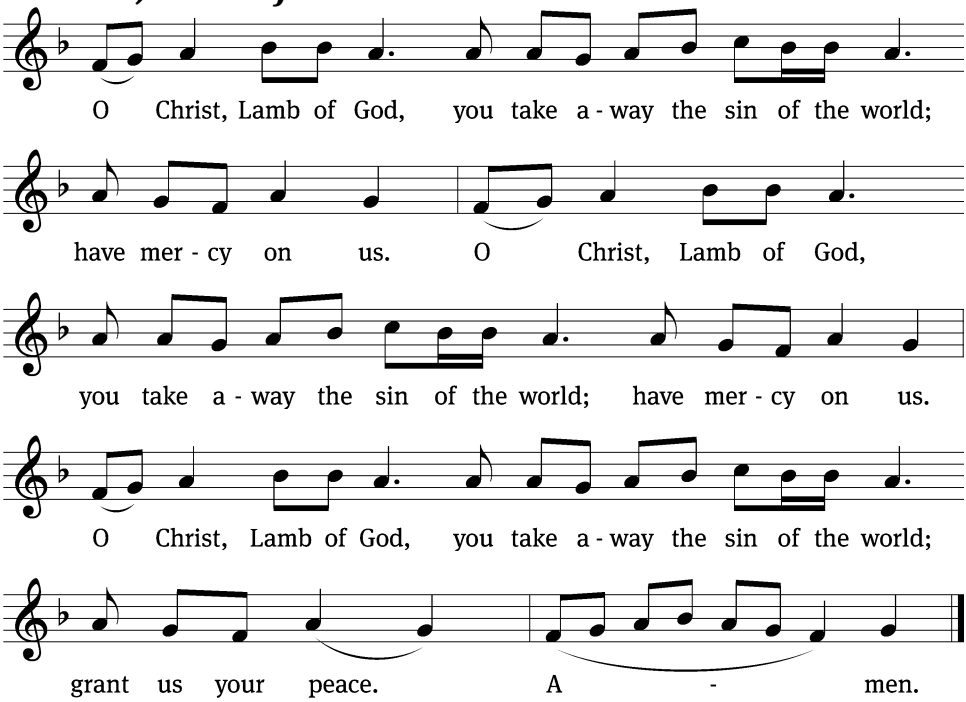
Words of Institution

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my ✞ body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; this is my ✞ blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

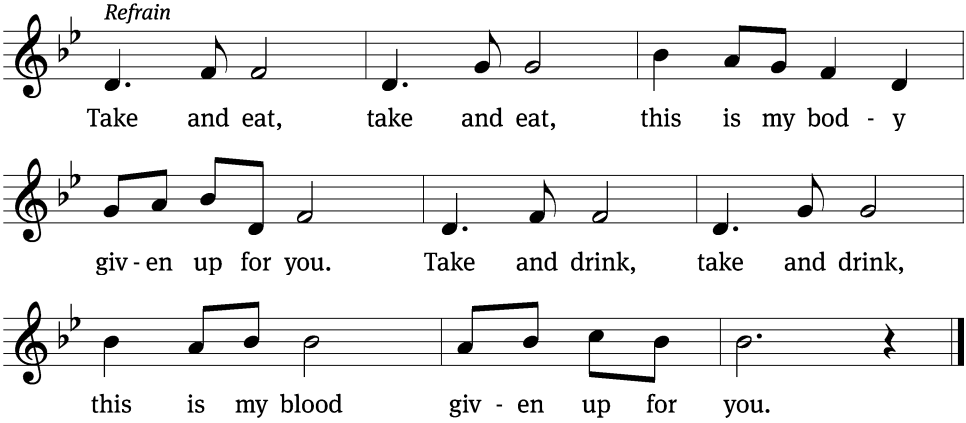
The peace of the Lord be with you always.
Amen.

O Christ, Lamb of God

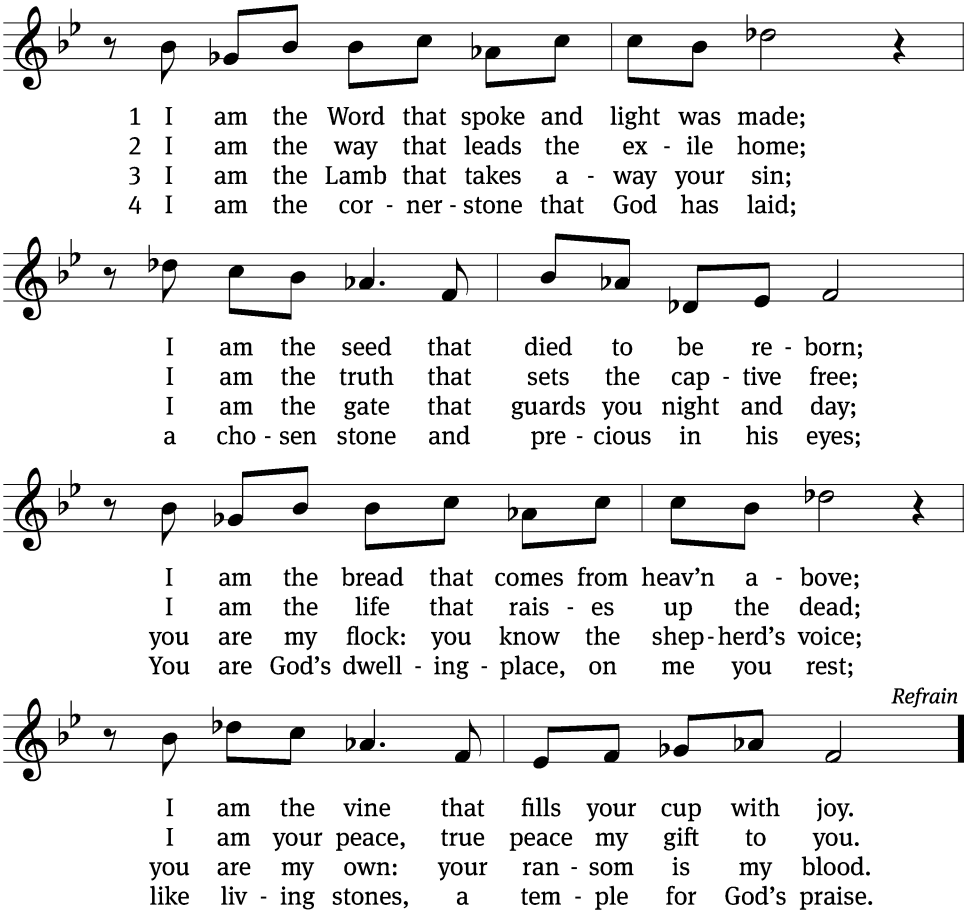


Distribution

676 Take and Eat *CW 21*



(Hymn verses are on page 17)



5 I am the light that came into the world;
I am the light that darkness cannot hide;
I am the Morning Star that never sets;
lift up your face, in you my light will shine. (Refrain)

6 I am the first and last, the Living One;
I am the Lord who died that you might live;
I am the bridegroom, this my wedding song;
you are my bride, come to the marriage feast. (Refrain)

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Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
his mercy endures forever.

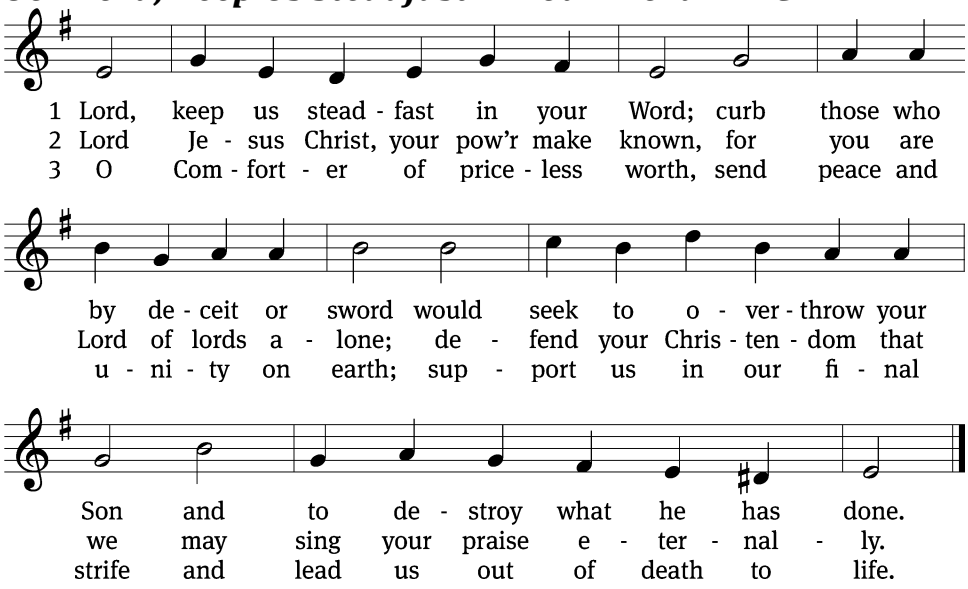
Whenever we eat this bread and drink this cup,
we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

We give thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us with this saving gift. We pray that through it you will strengthen our faith in you and increase our love for one another. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
Amen.

Blessing

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.
Amen.

862 Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word CW 21



Text: Martin Luther, 1483–1546; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–1878, alt.
Tune: Geistliche Lieder zu Wittemberg, Wittenberg, 1543, ed. Joseph Klug
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This Week at St. John's: Oct 4, 2026

SERVING US TODAY

Greeters: Joel & Darlene Zschernitz
Ushers: Team 4-Rex Roehl's team
Altar Guild: Judy Quicker
Bulletins: Betty Nemitz in memory of Herb's birthday (10/5)
Oct Website: Doug Zank in celebration of Jane going Home

SERVING US NEXT SUNDAY

Greeters: Ron & Linda Rogus
Ushers: Team 1-Joel Zschernitz' team
Altar Guild: Judy Quicker

~OPPORTUNITIES TO GROW & SERVE~

TODAY	9:00 AM Communion Service
	10:30 AM Sunday School & Bible Study
	6:00 PM Pioneers
MON-TUES	Pastors' Conference
MONDAY	School Picture Day
	No Adult Instruction Class
TUESDAY	4:00 PM Church Band
WEDNESDAY	Walk to School Day
	8:20 AM Chapel
	6:00 PM Choir
	7:00 PM Handbells
SUNDAY	9:00 AM Communion Service
	10:30 AM Sunday School & Bible Study
	1:00 PM Youth Group Hiking

Worship the Lord with Gladness:
Last Sunday: 148

Worship with Our Care of God's Wealth:
Thankoffering Given Last Week:
$4,814.00 (Home); $297.00 (Missions)
Needed per week for Home: $9,035.00

Owed on line of credit: $57,933.66

CHURCH NEWS

Sunday Bible Study: *Sunday Bible study continues today after church. We will be studying "Christian Doctrine Two: 8 Studies on Deeper Christian Teachings." All are invited to join us in the church basement.*

Sunday School: *Sunday School continues today for preschool through 6th grade students. Preschool-Kindergarten students will meet in the church basement; Grades 1-6 will meet in the school. All children are invited! We encourage 7th & 8th grade students to attend Sunday Bible Study.*

Pioneers: *The first Pioneer meeting of the school year will be held this evening at 6:00 p.m. in the school gym. All children in grades K-8 are invited. The children will meet one Sunday afternoon each month to learn real-life skills like fire-starting, knot-tying, building a survival shelter, navigation, safe knife handling, and more—all while growing in faith and fellowship!* ***Come explore. Come learn. Come be a Pioneer!***

Pastor Gone: *Pastor Tim will be gone tomorrow and part of the day on Tuesday attending the fall pastors' conference.*

Because of the conference, there will be no adult instruction class tomorrow evening.

Football Games: *Tomorrow we will travel to Messiah in Eau Claire. Our games will be play at 4:00 vs Messiah and 5:00 vs St. Mark.*

Church Band: *We will have practice this Tuesday at 4:00 p.m. in the church balcony. All instrumentalists are welcome!*

Volleyball Games: *On Tuesday we will play @ Home vs St. Mark. The B Team plays at 4:30, and the A Team plays at 5:30. Come and cheer for the Hornets!*

Walk to School Day: *Walk to School Day is this Wednesday, October 7th. Wear black and yellow or Hornet gear and meet at IGA by 7:30 Wednesday morning. Adults are welcome to walk along, and there will be other volunteer chaperones as well. In the event of lightning, heavy rain, or strong wind, Walk to School Day will be canceled.*

Fire Department Trip: *On Thursday, October 8th, Grades 3K-2nd will be walking to the Neillsville Fire Department to learn more about fire safety and prevention.*

Youth Group: *8th-12th graders are invited to a hiking outing next Sunday, October 11th. We will meet here at St. John's at 1:00. Bring along a picnic lunch. We will have a devotion, play games, and go hiking at Wildcat Mound. Because of youth hunting going on that weekend, please wear bright orange and/or pink. (There is no hunting allowed at Wildcat Mound, but we just want to exercise caution.)*

Thanksgiving Service: *We are considering a change in our Thanksgiving worship schedule. Because a Thanksgiving Day service is currently offered at Globe/Christie, Pastor Tim and Brian Thell are considering offering a Thanksgiving Eve service at St. John's. Please share any thoughts about this proposal with them.*

Homebound Ministry: *Pastor Tim is looking for volunteers to assist in making regular visits on our homebound members. Please contact him if you have interest.*

Fall Mission Fest: *Our Fall Mission Fest will be held on Sunday, October 18th. Our guest speaker will be Rev. Chris Christenson, who will be presenting on Home Mission work at Our Redeemer, Ladysmith, WI. In addition to preaching, he will be giving a special presentation in place of Bible Class after the worship service.*

Fall Dinner: *The Friends of St. John's will be sponsoring their annual Fall Dinner on Sunday, Oct. 18th, following our special Mission Fest presentation. Every year the Friends of St. John's chooses someone to be their honored guest at the Fall Dinner. This year our honorees are Henry & Julie Berry.*

In addition to honoring the Berrys, we would also like to verbally recognize at the meal the previous Fall Dinner honored guests we have had over the last 30 years.

Proceeds from the Fall Dinner will go toward replacing a broken slide on the older kids' playground. (That older playground equipment was installed in 1996.)

FIC & Calendar: *The October edition of "Forward In Christ" and the October calendars are available in the entryway.*

Candy Bags: *We would once again like to fill candy bags to give to the children after their Christmas program in December. We are in need of cash donations to help cover the cost of the candy and other items. Please mark your donation "candy bags" and place your gift in the offering basket or turn in at the school office. Thanks!*

Trunk or Treat: *Trunk or Treat will be held on Sunday, October 25, from 2:00-4:00.*

Children are encouraged to dress up in costumes if they wish.

We are in need of volunteers who would be willing to decorate their trunks and bring treats to be handed out. If you would like to participate or have questions, please contact Mrs. Shadrick at 715-897-0903.

Grandparents Program: *Grades 3K-5th will be putting on a program for grandparents (and aunts, uncles, parents, etc.) on Wednesday, October 28th.*

We will have chapel at 9:00 that morning, and following chapel will continue with the activities being planned.

All grandparents and other relatives are invited to join us for chapel at 9:00 and for the activities/program, which will be done at 11:00.

Student of the Week: *The student of the week is Lily Harder. Lily is in 5th Grade. She is polite and respectful, has been working hard, gets her work done well, is a good helper in the classroom, and has been setting a great example in the classroom and on the athletic field. Congratulations Lily!*

Men of His Word Conference: *Join hundreds of men for a day of powerful teaching, engaging breakout sessions, and meaningful fellowship. Forge new connections. Strengthen your faith. Leave equipped and encouraged. This year's theme is "Courage Under Fire". The conference is October 24th at the Mayo Civic Center in Rochester, MN. The early bird registration rate is $85 through October 11, 2026, after which regular registration pricing begins. Register at menofhisword.org/locations/rochester.*

Thrivent: *As we start another school year, we want to encourage you to consider using your Thrivent Action Teams to help provide needed school supplies and resources for our students. For those who have Thrivent, Thrivent Action Teams offer an opportunity for members to make a positive difference by organizing a service project or supporting a need within our school community. To do so, please submit an action team online and label it "Education Supplies." By working together and using these opportunities to purchase classroom supplies, educational materials, or other needed items, we can help support our school while being good stewards of the blessings God has provided.*

If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact Mr. Leiterman.

School Boiler: *The cost of the school boiler replacement has been completely covered by an anonymous donor. Thank God for this blessing, given through the generous goodwill of his people!*

As we have a little extra in donations ($900), we felt that extra could be set aside into a special fund to help cover yearly maintenance on the new boilers by RC Heating and Cooling. Thanks to everyone who donated toward this project!

Acknowledgments

Setting One from Christian Worship
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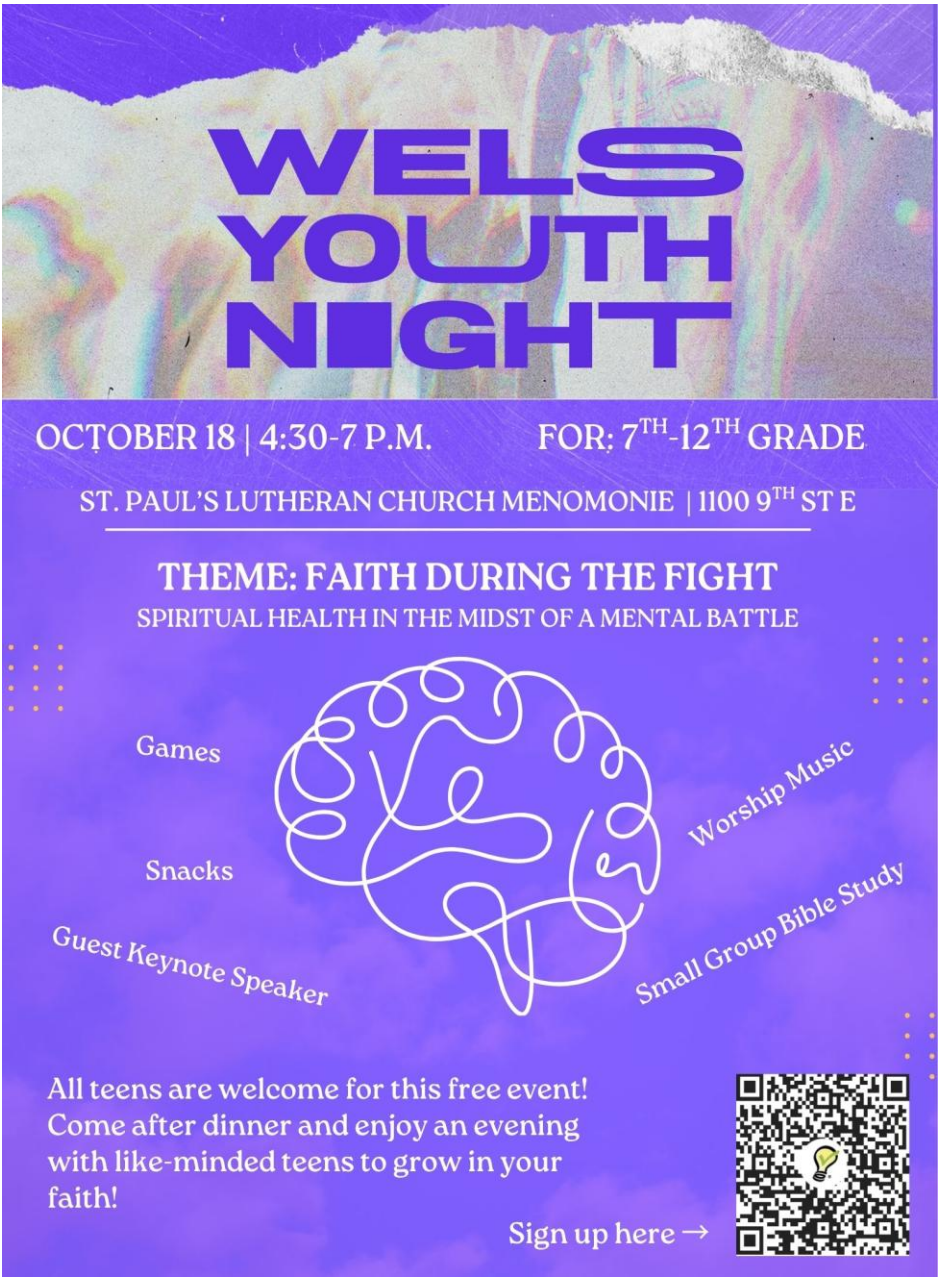
Youth Night: *Sign up for Youth Night at St. Paul's in Menomonie on October 18th is now open. Registration closes on Tuesday, October 15th. See details below.*



WELS President Karl R. Gurgel Home In Heaven: *Karl R. Gurgel, the tenth man to serve as president of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, was called home to heaven on September 13, surrounded by his wife, Barbara, (pictured with him) and other loved ones. Gurgel, who served as WELS president from 1993-2007, was 84.*

Like his father who also served as a pastor, Gurgel concluded his sermons with the words of Philippians 4:7, "And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

His family noted in his obituary, "We rejoice that this beloved child of the heavenly Father now fully and completely understands the peace of God through his Savior, Jesus!"

Karl Gurgel's funeral service will be held at St. Matthew's, Winona, Minn., on September 25, at noon.

To read more about Gurgel's life and ministry, visit welshistoricalinstitute.org/histories/personal/president/1993-2007-gurgel.

They Do Not Walk Alone: *God has entrusted the young people of our synod to the spiritual care of Christian parents, pastors, teachers, youth leaders, and fellow believers. At a time when many teenagers and young adults can feel isolated or disconnected, we have the privilege of surrounding them with God's Word and with relationships that remind them they belong to Christ and his church. In the following article, Rev. Donn Dobberstein encourages us to consider how each of us can help young people know that they do not walk alone.*

Consider two 18-year-olds, both confirmed together, both participants in the church youth group. Five years later, one is still connected to church. The other has not attended since high school graduation.

What made the difference? I posed that question at a WELS youth leader breakout. The responses were fascinating and revealing. They showed that someone had taken a personal interest in the young person who remained connected. Someone showed up at a game. Someone listened. Someone invited that teenager to participate in the congregation's ministry—not simply attend a program in the youth room.

Programs end. Relationships do not.

At a synod or area youth gathering, I watch teenagers connect with one another. A young person who may be one of a few teens in the home congregation enters a room filled with Christians his or her own age.

The message is immediate: "I am not the only one who believes this. I am not alone walking with Christ."

The number of WELS members ages 14 through 24 declined from 48,183 in 2015 to 41,701 in 2025—a decrease of 13.5 percent. The reasons are complex, and the implication is clear: We dare not assume young people will remain connected to Christ and his church without intentional spiritual care.

Young adults need Christians who know their names, listen to them, open Scripture with them, and model a lifelong walk with Christ. Christian relationships allow us to keep placing a better message before them: "You are a baptized child of God. You belong to Christ."

How can we help them develop healthy independence without severing their connection to their faith and church? Part of the answer is greater spiritual mentorship. The relationships of the Christian home and congregation widen the circle of encouragement surrounding a young person.

That emphasis is reflected in "Christ through us," WELS' long-range plan. It calls us to build deep Christian community, engage all God's people in ministry, provide sound Lutheran resources, and elevate the home as the first mission field. WELS supports that work through resources for parents and congregations, training for youth leaders, online Bible studies, Youth Nights, and the WELS International Youth Rally. These efforts provide another opportunity to place young people within reach of God's promises—and among God's people.

Our teenagers are not merely the future of the church. They are Christ's people today and Christ's ambassadors now.

So, learn a teenager's name. Ask a thoughtful question—and listen to the answer. Encourage a parent or youth leader. Invite young people to serve. Above all, keep bringing them to Jesus and his promises.

Programs end. Relationships do not. Through us, Christ continues to assure another generation: "You belong to me. You do not walk alone."

Rev. Donn Dobberstein, WELS Director of Discipleship

We pray for the young people of our synod. Keep them close to you and your Word. Give Christian parents, pastors, teachers, youth leaders, and congregation members wisdom, patience, and genuine love as they listen to, encourage, and walk alongside the next generation. Use our homes and congregations to assure young people that they belong to Christ and that, in him, they never walk alone.

Serving together with you in Christ,

WELS President Mark Schroeder

Missionaries Begin Work in Senegal: *In late August, Daniel Kroll and Stephen Gerling and their families arrived in Dakar, Senegal. They are the first WELS missionaries to serve in this area.*

As WELS works to establish this new mission field, the first step for the Gerlings and Krolls is a six-month immersion experience designed to prepare them for life and ministry among the Wolof people.

In six months, WELS World Missions leaders will meet with the Gerlings and Krolls to determine what makes sense for the mission as a next step after the missionaries have learned more about the Wolof people.

"We ask for prayers for wisdom, endurance, and patience," says Kroll. "This is so much in God's hands."

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

Worship Schedule
Sunday-9:00 a.m.