



August Newsletter 2016



St. Luke's Lutheran Church
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God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.
— Colossians 3:12-14

When you read the above passage, do you see the list of things you have to do? Christians need to show compassion and kindness. It doesn't take long to realize that we aren't very good at it. What is the opposite of compassion and kindness? That shows itself in our lives too often!

Humility? Instead we are proud and arrogant, pushy and manipulative. Gentleness and patience run out quickly, too. Especially when the other person keeps on with their ...

What kind of grievances do we have with each other? Were you mean? Uncaring? Were they stubborn? Selfish? Holding a grudge is destructive to our relationships, but we still relish the idea of getting even, making them hurt like we do. Yet God wants us to forgive. Does he realize how hard it is to forgive after they did what they did?

The Lord does understand forgiving better than any of us do. He sent his Son to take the place of people like us, who would just as soon forget about the Lord. Who complain about any inconvenience. Who continue to be ungrateful and who fall into more sin constantly. The Lord still forgave us, and all people, even those who remain impenitent. The debt is paid by the blood of Jesus. The benefit of forgiveness is yours by faith in him. God's love in Christ is the power, the force that is active in us. It brought us close and keeps us steadfast. Before you can even have the first desire or ability to be compassionate and kind and humble and gentle and patient and forgiving, God must come and turn your heart around.

He did, in the Sacrament of Holy Baptism. He does, through the gospel in the word. Don't miss the first words of this passage! You are God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved! The truth of God's love for you is the foundation and starting point for everything that follows. Your entire life of faith is governed by the fact that you are holy in Christ and dearly loved by him. Nothing can shake his declaration of peace to you.

So build on God's love for you. Work hard at being kind and compassionate, humble and gentle and patient and forgiving. When you fail, repent. Forgive each other as the Lord forgave you. Don't stop coming back to the Word of God for strength and guidance. Your congregation at St. Luke's is not only a place to hear gospel comfort, but a place to be encouraged in the faith and a place to practice the fruits of faith. Dear friends, let us love one another and build each other up, for we are God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved.

Pastor Plocher

Scholarship Committee

The Scholarship Committee distributed the annual gift to nine students who attend synod schools. This year the total was \$941 per person. Thank you to all who donated to the Scholarship Fund and the Scholarship Endowment Fund. In the 20 years it has been in existence, 160 students have received a total of \$90,000. The Lord has used our small effort to encourage some to consider the ministry, and he has made it have a large effect! Praise him.

The nine students from St. Luke's at Synod Schools are:

Michigan Lutheran Seminary

Morgan Einhardt
Evan Korthals
Reese VanLue
Josh Barnett
Julie Marker
Leah Plocher

Martin Luther College

Gabriel Plocher

Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary

Nathanael Plocher
Micah Plocher



Opening service for St. Luke's School

An opening service for the 26th year of St. Luke's school will be at 8:30am on Monday August 29. All are welcome to attend as we begin the school year asking for the Lord's gracious blessings.

Vicar Preparations

Vicar Tim Leistikow and his wife Calista will be arriving in Vassar the first week of August. We have secured housing for them on Cottrell Road. Thank you to those who donated items to fill their kitchen and cupboards. A potluck brunch is planned to welcome them after the installation service on August 14. Please sign up on the board at church for what you intend to bring. More information about their needs will be available when the Leistikows arrive. Each of us is eager to welcome them to St. Luke's and to Vassar.

Sunday School plans

Before you know it, Sunday School will begin again. We are in need of teachers and substitutes for the year. Calls are being extended now, and if you have not been asked to participate, speak with Pastor Plocher immediately. An initial teachers meeting is tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, August 23. A Sunday School Open House will be held on Sunday, August 28, after church. Rally Day, the first day of Sunday School, is September 11.

Bible Information Class

A new Bible Information Class will begin September 8 at 7:00pm. We review the basic teachings of the Bible in a format that encourages questions and searches the Scriptures. The class is intended for those who desire to join our congregation, but it is open to anyone who wants to come. Long time members are encouraged to attend and refresh their knowledge. It is amazing how much we don't remember! Bring a friend and come to the BIC!

Vacation Bible School

As this is being written, VBS is still in preparation mode. Our theme is "Dive In!" We hope for many children and families to participate from August 1-4. Thanks to Jenni Whitney for her work organizing the week's activities, and to all who give willingly of their time and energy. Next month's newsletter will give a recap of our activity.

Sunday School participation

In the first months of this year, the number of our children regularly attending Sunday School dropped significantly. I am sure there are plenty of reasons for it, but a reminder is also in place. God's people love to hear and learn God's Word. We want to be in worship and we enjoy the gifts God gives us there. In Bible Class and Sunday School, we have the opportunity to ask questions, to interact with the teacher, to dig deeper, and to grow more. Parents, bring your children to the feet of the Savior in Sunday School. All of us will benefit when we study the Word in Bible Class. Make it part of your regular routine, and you will be blessed!

Board of Trustees

The Summer has been productive so far! The roof at the school is completed, and it looks great. Thank you to all who have given and continue to give to pay down the debt. We were not able to cover the fascia with a permanent material as there were complications. The plan is to stain the cedar boards and preserve them that way.

The long put off project to repair the sacristy sewer was completed in July. We are waiting for a spot in the schedule of Piazza Masonry to look at the water problem in the bell tower. We are also waiting for a reply from American Sealcoating for the sealing and striping of the parking lot. The church council is discussing the best way to proceed with the landscaping at the front of church.

Trustees held a workday at school and completed many items to prepare for the new school year. The technology committee is purchasing four new computers for the school.

At the parsonage, the leaking shower in the basement was torn out. A replacement still awaits. A post in the fence needs replacing as well.

As you can see, there is plenty of work to do around the grounds! When you see your Trustees, thank them for their faithful work. If you can lend a hand, it is welcomed!

Confirmation Class

In September, the Pastor and the Vicar will begin confirmation classes for those in 7th and 8th grade who are not attending St. Luke's School. Class will begin on Thursday, September 8 at 3:45pm. Each week we will meet twice, on Thursdays after school and again on Saturdays in the morning. Parents, look for information in your mailbox at church regarding the details.

Altar Flowers

If you wish to place flowers on the altar this year, please sign up on the poster in the entry way. You are responsible for ordering the flowers for the date and making payment with the florist of choice.



Email Addresses for Members Away from Home

This fall the church office hopes to continue emailing the newsletter to our members away from home.

Please be sure to share the email address and current mailing address and phone number of your student or service person. This will allow us to keep them in touch with God's Word while they are away from St. Luke's. You may drop a note, email, or call with the information. Thanks!

Church Library

Have you looked through the church library lately? There are wonderful selections for devotions, both personal and with your children or grandchildren. Borrow a book to begin the habit of spending time in God's Word. If you already do so, take a look at our selection of People's Bible books. You will gain a new appreciation for and understanding of God's Word as you read the commentary included.



Music Participation Reminder

Any individual or group wishing to sing or add music to a worship service must first be approved by the Worship Committee. Requests to serve and participate must be made to the Worship Committee at one of their regular meetings well in advance of the anticipated participation date. The Worship Committee must have time to evaluate the proposed musical selection and method of performance. Their meetings are usually held on the third Tuesday of every month and are noted on the church calendar.



Let your light shine before men,
that they may see your good deeds
and praise your Father in heaven.
Matthew 5:16

Youth Groups and Lutheran Pioneers

Parents want their children to be involved and to have fun experiences. Sports are what many pursue. Others seek out animals and farm activity. Camping and outdoor adventures are another path to follow. At St. Luke's, we have recognized that some organizations mix religion with their activities. We do not want to devalue God's Word and encourage those whose teachings are unclear. Lutheran Pioneers and Lutheran Girl Pioneers are organizations that keep the truth of God's Word in focus while they pursue outdoor activities and learn how to use their hands and minds in God's creation. **We are looking for leaders to restart LP and LGP trains at St. Luke's.** If you are interested, speak with Pastor Plocher. Materials are provided from the National organization, and some who have served previously are able to give advice. Our children and grandchildren and their friends will benefit greatly from reactivating Pioneers!

MLS Registration and Opening Service

MLS will begin its new school year with registration beginning at 8AM on Saturday, August 20. The school year will open with a "Thanksgiving for Ministry Service" at 3:30 PM that day. All members of St. Luke's are invited to attend.



Stewardship

Half the year has gone by already. We have been through a roller coaster but have come out in one piece. At the end of June, our offerings met our expenses almost to the dollar. Thanks to God for his generous gifts to us! We are grateful for the undeserved mercy that is ours in Christ Jesus.

Looking ahead to the next six months, we have challenges to meet. Our expenses will increase with the coming of the vicar. We will need to pay down the loan on the school roof. Our ministry needs will not shrink nor will our determination to give thanks to our God for his grace. A six month revised budget is being presented at the voters meeting. It shows that we will need \$7,604 per week. Our actual giving through June was \$7,004 per week. Consider how you will be able to give thanks to God with your offerings in the coming months. His generosity will never fail.

Pastoral Acts

Adult Confirmation:

Missy Augsburger
7-31-16

Christian Marriages:

Bridget Mistura & Matthew Bess
6-18-16

Micah Plocher & Megan Wohlrabe
7-16-16

Reinstatement:

Tom & Susan Whitney
7-12-16

Transfer in:

Mary Campbell, Andrew & Johannah from St. Paul, Mayville, MI
7-12-16

Pastor James & Deb Gorsegrner from St. John, Pigeon, MI
7-12-16

Release by request:

William Martin
7-12-16

Remove, unable to contact:

Victor Brunner
Janelle Jones
James Owensby
Jimmie Roberts
Jessica Zimmerman
Joshua Zimmerman
George Zirkle
7-12-16



Teaching Twenty-six Years in God's Grace

Principal's Summer Report for St. Luke's Lutheran School July 2016
Soli Deo gloria – "Glory to God alone"

Projected Opening Enrollment for 2016-17: 42 students

Teachers and Staff & Summertime Activities

Teachers - Our teachers are coming to the end of their "more relaxed" summer schedules. During the weeks leading up to, during, and immediately following the school year, our teachers' schedules are quite frantic. It is during our summer months that they begin to recoup some of the personal time lost during the school year. Please pray for your teachers and pastor as they "recharge their teaching batteries" with the time that remains this summer. May their strength and zeal be renewed in preparation for the coming school year

Volunteers – Our faculty offers their thanks to everyone who volunteered this past school year. Sharing your time has lightened the load of our calls to serve you in our multi-age, multi-grade classrooms. You aid us in offering an excellent education to all the children of our school.

Administrative Assistant – For the tenth year, our school was blessed with the part-time help of Mrs. Kelly Plocher, our administrative assistant. Her work relieved our principal's schedule of many office-related clerical duties, while also serving as the coordinator of our school communications network (calendar, classroom notes, athletic scheduling, etc.) Her work of placing the annual book order has actually saved our church/school budget many dollars – effectively helping to pay part of her own wage. The faculty is especially thankful for her hard work and dedication in the office.

The entire faculty and staff ask for your **prayers and support** as we begin the preparation for our **26th year starting on August 29th**.

Needs of the School During the curriculum studies performed by your faculty, it has become clear that education has become very digital. More and more households have purchased tablets and laptops in order to communicate with friends, family, business and school. Many online sources have been created to aid parents and students academic endeavors at home.

The faculty has suggested to our Board of Education that they ***promote the idea of parents equipping their homes with computers with standard software and internet for their children's integrated use.*** This will better enable our school families closer communication and interaction with the school. Parents, you may ask your child's teacher what word processor program they use in their classroom. Essay work done at home may then be saved and emailed to school to be reviewed, printed, and graded by your child's teacher.

Annual School Mission Offerings for 2015-16

Home mission project: *Saginaw Pregnancy Counseling Center* (\$363.55 given)

St. Luke's project: Design and construction of lighted sign at church (\$274.96 given)

World mission project: WELS Multi-Language Publications - Russia translations (\$292.40 given)

Totals: \$930.91 compared to an all-time high of \$1183.43 in 2013-14)

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Regular, Weekly Volunteers at the School We are thankful for the many people who have been our volunteers in past years. Again this year we will be **looking for a few good folks** to do work at school. The volunteer work can be anything from the coordinating of field trips to helping serve hot lunches once a week. You may also enjoy giving spelling testing and/or correcting work-books for the upper grade teacher – the sky is the limit. If you would like to join the corps of dedicated people serving their Lord through volunteering at the school, talk to one of the faculty members **VERY SOON**. *Reminder: each volunteer is required to have an ICHAT background check.*

Sports Program at St. Luke's Lutheran School – Our families, faculty, and athletic director would like to thank those of you who served as coaches, score keepers, facility clean-up people, and concession sales people this past year! You have made our small program a very competitive and capable athletic program - one in which our children succeed and flourish.

Coaches - Currently, Mr. Lange has begun the confirmation process for the new year. He is contacting last year's coaches in soccer, girls' and boys' basketball, girls cheerleading, and volleyball to see if they will be willing to serve in their former capacity as coach. If you would like to participate or assist in coaching please speak to Mr. Lange. Coaches and their assistants are required to have an ICHAT background check performed on them each year.

MLS Track and Field Invitational – This year St. Luke's upper graders **repeated** as the Division 2 champions of the MLS Invitational. It was good to have our team work together so well and to repeat a goal that up until last year had eluded us for the past six years.

Final Sports Note - We are pleased to report that our graduates are **well-prepared as athletes** who are able to compete at the high school level if they have the potential and desire to do so. And while some students may never go on to compete in another inter-scholastic sport; they will always have the great training from dedicated coaches on whose example they can draw upon for situations in their lives to come.

Physical Plant and Conditions Thanks to a **dedicated janitor** and a **hard-working Board of Trustees** our building has provided a good learning environment for our students. This summer the carpets in the building were cleaned and the tile floors refinished. The week of July 11 the 25 year old roof was replaced. (Come out and see the professional job that was done.) On July 23 the Trustees held a work day at school to complete their Summertime School List. Our goal is to have the building ready by the end of July so the teachers can be back in their rooms preparing for the school year.

Mowing & Weeding - Thanks to all the volunteers who mow our grass regularly. We need **additional volunteers** to come up to the campus to **WEED** the landscape around the building. Weeds don't stop growing during times of limited rain! Much of the maintenance and care of the landscaping has fallen on the Trustees or your principal. These men do have other responsibilities to the school and church. Your volunteer help can make the work load lighter for them!

CEO-sponsored On-Campus Workday is scheduled for **Saturday, August 20**. This is the annual CEO-sponsored indoor/outdoor August campus clean-up. The event runs from 9 until noon. We hope many volunteers will come to help prepare the school grounds for a new year. Thanks to all of you who will help! Many hands make the work light!

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Spiritual Condition – As you have just read, our children have a wonderful, clean place to learn and grow. That is especially true when it comes to their spiritual growth and stature. Every day, each classroom begins with a devotion and the study of God’s Word. Every day, there is a midday break in the schedule for devotion and prayer. Every day, the students of the school hear of the love of Jesus shown through His victory over sin, death, and the devil. Every day, each subject is taught in the light of God’s Word – letting God’s Word be the final say on what we teach and how we teach it. Each day, we close our school day in the name of Him who loves us. And every day, God, the Holy Spirit, blesses and strengthens the faith of the children and teachers who work with His Word. To God be the glory!

Events Beginning the New School Year - There are a few dates that stand out as days that will prepare our families for the new year. The first is **August 1**. On this date the **school registration packets** will be in the family mail boxes at church. Inside these envelopes you will find instructions on how to best complete the school registration process and pay your school fees. (The church's web-site already has a link to this year's school calendar, school supplies, and down-loadable/printable registration sheets. Just go to ***www.vassarlutherans.org*** and click on the **The School link**.)

On **Sunday, August 21**, immediately following our Sunday 9:15 AM church service, the Board of Christian Education will sponsor the annual school registration. Once again our new stream-lined registration process will allow our school families to pick up their family information packets, update their school directory entries, sign up for this year’s Christian Education Organization’s (CEO) activities and programs, pay their final school fees, and turn in their children’s school emergency contact forms. Our CEO will host refreshments to encourage our fellowship during this process. We ask at least one representative from each family be present for registration.

There is NO SIT-DOWN MEETING with this stream-lined process. However, Board members, faculty, and staff will be available to answer any questions you may have.

Finally, on **August 29**, St. Luke's Lutheran School will begin its 26th year of service to the Lord with a half day student orientation. This orientation day will begin at school at **8:20 AM** and continues at church at **8:45** with an opening service. Dismissal will be at **11:30 AM** - the first full day of school will then be August 30. Vassar bus service will begin on **Tuesday, September 6** with morning rides to school; Wednesday, September 7 will be the first round-trip bus route day.

Siberian News – Missionary Ben Foxen has taken a call to Peoria, AZ to serve a congregation that is attempting to establish a daughter congregation in a new planned community near by. Plans are for the Foxens to begin their Arizona mission work in early September. This will leave the Luke Wolfgramm and family as the only American WELS missionary team on the Siberian (Russian) field.

A new religious tolerance law was passed in Russia this past month and went into effect on July 20. The gist of the law is to restrict the open evangelizing of the Russian people especially by foreign church bodies (or sects). This law was initially passed by the Russian дума to deal with the growing concern over radical Muslim terrorism. Russia has a long border with the Muslim world, and their terrorism concern, like ours continues to grow. This law also seems to have been misused by the Eastern Orthodox Church with the hopes to eliminate any other church body from the country. With Vladimir Putin and the strong Russian nationalism movement, it seems this law has a good chance of being very successful for the Russian government to restrict any influence from the “outside world”. *According to our lone missionary Luke Wolfgramm, the law initially means more paperwork for*

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our Russian congregations. They will need to register every member of the congregation and provide them with a card which will permit them to talk about their church outside of the physical church building. Luke also said that this may be another step closer to a time when all foreign missionaries are refused work or visit visas to enter Russia. For the time being, he is committed to “work for it is still daylight” to spread the gospel and prepare the Russian Lutheran Church for the day when they can exist without our WELS presence

Finally, I want to thank the congregation for the opportunity it allows me to work with the WELS Board for World Missions and the Wolfgramm family on the Russian mission field. The work Cynthia and I do to encourage our missionaries is greatly appreciated. I imagine this will even more important in the light of the two new items I posted above. Please remember Missionary Wolfgramm and his family in your prayers this coming year. There are many uncertainties that remain for them.

Thank you for allowing me the time to dedicate to this wonderful mission field. – JFLange

A New Quarter Century As we looked back at a very tumultuous 25th anniversary school year, one might wonder where the joy in teaching the gospel fit in to the year. Honestly, it was the only thing that really propelled us forward each day. In a year when it seemed the devil had so distracted us from our objective, the Lord continued to bless us with faith and the resolve to carry on through the difficulties and distraction. For each day our school doors were open and our church held Bible classes and services, God the Holy Spirit was there with his word of comfort and guidance convincing us that He would never leave us and would always bless us – no matter what happened today in this sin-filled world.

So we focus our attention on a new school year – turning the page on last year and setting our sights on the new year to come. God-willing, this year marks our next 25 years of gospel education in God’s grace at St. Luke’s Lutheran School. Through the Word this work has the only dividend that pays eternal return. Be encouraged and courageous in your work to support the school. “Have no fear little flock, have no fear little flock, for the Father has chosen to give you the kingdom – have no fear little flock! (CW 442 st. 1 by Marjorie A. Jillson)

And finally ...I thank you for remembering our school and its success in your prayers. It doesn’t take much time is observing the dangerous and confusing world around us to realize the importance of giving our children the opportunity to be well-equipped spiritually to live in this evil world. Equip them with the greatest defensive and offensive armament known to man - God’s Almighty Word. Through His Word, God sees to it that the challenges we face in this life and in this congregation are not insurmountable. Together, with the Lord’s help and blessing, we will continue to provide our children with the best Lutheran elementary education possible here at St. Luke’s.

May God grant us His every grace and blessing in this twenty-sixth year of our school’s operation.

I am your brother in Christ,
Principal John F. Lange

**Financial Update
June 2016**

Income \$ 26,246
Expenses \$ 37,324
 -\$11,078

*Monthly budgeted need is \$34,879.00.

Special Envelope

Contributions can be made to any of the funds below by using the special offering envelopes in the narthex or included with this newsletter. Be sure to name the fund on the envelope before you put it into the offering plate.

- Property Maintenance and Improvement Trust Fund—funds will be used for unexpected upkeep on our properties
- Scholarship Fund – distributed each year to students attending synod schools.
- Scholarship Endowment Fund – proceeds supplement the Scholarship Fund annually.
- Building Trust Fund – To pay for future building projects.
- St. Luke’s Rainy Day Fund – this fund helps the congregation when cash flow is slow. Repayment of the loan to ourselves is made through your generous gifts to the General Fund and/or special gifts to this line item.
- Roof Fund—repaying the loan back early. Principal balance began at \$42,000.

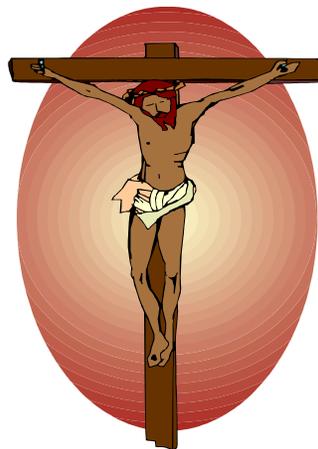
Memorials and Special Gifts

A memorial was given to the Rainy Day Fund in loving memory of Carol Baker by Marilyn Graubner.

A memorial was given to the Rainy Day Fund in loving memory of Dianne Haubenstricker by Jim & Sally Zoellner.

Memorials were given to the Roof Fund in loving memory of Dick LaGruth and Kris Tanner by Jim & Sally Zoellner.

A memorial was given to the Roof Fund in loving memory of Jonathon DeCoe by Nancy Klopff.



**Treasurer’s Update,
June 2016**

Budgetary offerings: \$26,246.30

General Budget Checkbook Balance: -\$11,077.81 as of 7/12/16, which reflects our internal borrowing.

For the first 2 quarters of 2016, our budgetary offerings are -\$43,960.29 as compared to our budgetary requirements.

The Rainy Day Fund Balance: \$14,953.91 as of 7/12/16.

Reminder: We are a member of Amazon Smile, a rebate program for purchases made through Amazon !!

A revised Budget for the second half of 2016 is available for review, which is a more accurate reflection of our needs since the sale of the Saginaw St. parsonage, and the costs associated with the Vicar program.

Respectfully submitted,
Bill Dudewicz, Treasurer

**Christ died for sins
once for all,
the righteous for
the unrighteous,
to bring you to God.
1 Peter 3:18**