
February 2017

St. Luke's Lutheran Church
Email: stlukesvassar@sbcglobal.net

916 W. Huron Ave. Vassar, MI 48768

989-823-7923
Website: www.vassarlutherans.org

When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

It's late. The rest of the house has gone to sleep, and now it's time to put out the lights and head for bed. You flip the switch and start walking to the bedroom. You don't need the light to find your way; you're familiar enough with your own house to make it a few steps down the hall without a problem. Or so you think. Before your eyes adjust to the darkness, you walk through the door and stub your toe on the doorframe. The once peaceful house is now awakened by your frustration and pain.

We like to think that we don't need the lights on. While we might not always need them to find our way through the house, it's nice to have a light so we can avoid stubbed toes. Lights are even more important when we are in an unfamiliar place: streetlights when we drive through a new town, or a flashlight when we're outside. When we walk to our destination, we need a light to show us the way.

Jesus calls himself the light of the world. He's not the nightlight that keeps us from stubbing our toes or the flashlight that helps us find a path. Jesus is our spiritual light who shows us the way to heaven. But just like when we stub a toe on a path we've walked a hundred times, we like to think we can find the way without the light.

We can become complacent with treading the same ground again and again: I know the Bible history lessons, I know what Jesus did and what it means for me. Why do I need to hear it again and again? We remove the light from our lives, thinking that we can follow the path to heaven without the luxury of light.

When we remove the light of Christ from our lives, however, it only leads to frustration. Just like when you stub your toe and have a few choice words for the offending doorframe or furniture, walking in spiritual darkness leads to sin. Without Jesus, we wander in darkness and fail to see the sins that threaten us. We follow sinful paths, which lead only to more darkness: separation from God.

When we reject the light of God's Word, we also reject the blessings it offers. Without the light of Christ, we wander in darkness. The darkness hides obstacles and pitfalls that lead us away from God. By walking in darkness, we forfeit the guidance and security God's Word gives us. Without the light of Jesus, we have no hope of ever reaching heaven.

We need light to guide us, and Jesus is the only light that can guide us. He's not a puny nightlight, and he's not the weak beam of your flashlight. Jesus is *the* light. The only light. Only Jesus can illuminate our path so that we avoid the obstacles and the pitfalls that threaten us. Only Jesus can light the path to heaven.

Follow the light of Christ. It may be familiar, but there is no alternative. There is only one light of the world, only one path to life. Jesus walked that path ahead of us. The light of the world lived the perfect human life in our place. Jesus suffered the pain we deserve for walking in darkness. He experienced the condemnation to which the dark path of sin leads. By his suffering and death, Jesus overcame the obstacles and pitfalls which lurk in the darkness.

No darkness can conquer the light of life. Jesus rose victorious from death and ascended to God's right hand. Not only has Jesus removed the obstacles hiding in the darkness, he has opened and illuminated the path to heaven. With his Word, he leads us on that path so that we no longer walk in darkness, but instead have the light of life. Jesus gives us all the light we need, and we will reach eternal life because he has gone before us to lead us there.

Vicar Timothy Leistekow

<p>2016 Annual Report</p> <p>The Annual Report is a summary of the activity of the congregation over the last year. As you look through it, it may give you opportunity to personally thank those who have served behind the scenes. We do not serve for recognition, but our sincere appreciation is given to those who give of their talents and time on our behalf.</p>	<p>Annual Report Distribution</p> <p>The 2016 Annual Report is ready for distribution. After asking for your preference last year, we found that very few people desired a personal visit with their elder. Most were satisfied with having the Annual Report placed into their church mailbox. This year, we will place all the reports into mailboxes. We do want to encourage members to have a personal visit with their elder. There will be a sign up sheet on the table in the entryway (by the cards) for you to request a visit. Place your name and phone number on the list, and we will follow up to make an appointment with you. This annual visit with an elder is a way to build our fellowship and to encourage each other in love.</p>
<p>Church Directory</p> <p>At the end of the Annual Report is a directory of the members of St. Luke's congregation. Use this information to update your address book or to make a contact. We try to keep information current, so if you see an error, please call, email, or leave a note in the church office. We are looking for cell phone numbers and email addresses, too. Thank you for your cooperation.</p>	<p>Board of Elders</p> <p>In January we organized the board for its service during the year. Our new chairman is John Solgat. Thanks to Paul Schultz for his years of service in that capacity. One of the challenges before the board this year is to contact each family of the congregation during the year. This may be a word spoken after worship or at a church activity. It may be crossing paths at the grocery store or at the library. Perhaps it will take a phone call or a knock on the door. It is our hope that by intentionally making this contact with each family, we will strengthen the bonds of love that bind us to our Savior and to each other.</p>
<p>Ash Wednesday is March 1</p> <p>We begin the Lenten Season with our Ash Wednesday worship at 6:30 on March 1. Ash Wednesday is a time to consider our sinfulness and our need for a Savior. We solemnly acknowledge that God has sent his Son to be that Savior for us. Join us for worship!</p>	<p>Vacant Positions</p> <p>A couple of volunteer positions are open in the congregation. If you are willing to serve, please speak with chairman Ron Nichol. One Elder position is vacant, a three year term. A spot on the Audit Committee is open, able to be filled by any confirmed member. The Planning Committee and the Planned Giving Committee also have a vacancy each. These committees help the congregation use the gifts we have been given in a thoughtful way.</p> <p>Lenten Theme</p> <p>This year our theme for midweek services during Lent is "Repent: Turn To Jesus." Through the season we will hear the Lord's call to turn from our sin and to trust Jesus who forgives by his suffering and death in our place. Each week we will see one of the pastors from our Thumb Circuit at worship, and Pastor Plocher and Vicar Leistikow will be traveling to their congregations. Welcome these messengers of God and renew your acquaintance with them, and thank them for bringing God's</p>

364 Days of Thanksgiving

I began to fill out the Thanksgiving journal at Thanksgiving, so I am now 70 days into the routine. Each day is an opportunity to write down things for which I am thankful. The catch is that I can't repeat things for the whole year! It forces me to be specific and personal, recognizing that God does not just give generic gifts, but exactly what I need. It has opened my eyes to see God's gracious giving in ways that I had taken for granted before. Each Sunday in Bible Class we have an opportunity to tell some of our thankful things. Come, and tell us what you have written down! God bless your Thanksgiving journaling.

Bible Information Class

A new Bible Information Class did not have any takers in January. We hope to have people willing to attend the next class later in the year. If you or someone you know is interested, have speak with Pastor to arrange a schedule. The class is intended not only for those interested in joining St. Luke's, but as a refresher course for any member.

Thank You for Christmas Cards and Gifts

From Vicar and Mrs. Leistekow: thank you to all who gave us cards and gifts during the Christmas season. Your love and care are a tremendous blessing to us. May God bless you as greatly as he has blessed us through you.

St. Luke's Scholarship Fund

Your gifts to the Scholarship Fund are used to assist members of our congregation as they are encouraged along the way to the public ministry in our Synodical schools. Next year we hope to have 12 students across three of the four schools. We are asking for your gifts to be given in the first quarter this year, as we are changing the distribution schedule from July to May. This is being done because both MLS and Martin Luther College are promising to match scholarships given by local congregations before June 1. There is an envelope in your offering box for the Scholarship Fund between January and February, and another one before May. As you have the ability, consider giving your gift for this year before the end of March. Thank you for your generosity! Over the last 20 years we have given 160 scholarships totaling almost \$90,000. God has been gracious in giving his blessing!

Adult Bible Class

Pastor Plocher has been teaching Sunday morning Bible Class, teaching about some of the symbolism in the Old Testament. We have studied the sacrifices and the festivals of their worship year, as well as the significance of numbers. Future classes will cover types of Christ and the way Revelation and other apocalyptic sections of the Bible tend to picture God's promises. Come sit down for an hour and enjoy the fellowship, the food, and the fun of studying God's Word.

Board of Trustees

Jim Heidenberger is the new Trustee chairman this year. Several projects are at the top of the list. First off, we want to completely renovate the basement bathroom in the parsonage. It was leaking for several years, and currently, it is torn apart. A plan is in place to redesign it for safety and maintenance purposes. We hope to do the work ourselves, and for the cost to be under \$1,000. Pray that it can be accomplished as envisioned.

The Trustees are also busy changing fluorescent lights at school to LED ones. With a power company rebate, we should save enough on electricity for the project to fund itself before the end of the year.

As always, please consider the church and its facilities to be your own. If you see something needing attention, bring it up to the board, but also consider how you can be helpful. We are blessed with wonderful buildings for teaching and worshiping. Together we work to keep them clean and in good repair.

School Anniversary Pavilion Project

Gifts have been given sufficiently to plan to erect a small pavilion at the school in honor of the 25 years it has been around for the Christian education of our children. Paul Schultz is the project manager, and he will have the details ready for Spring construction. We hope to find congregation members who will lend their time and skills to this project. Look for details to be published as they are available.

Pastor-Teacher Conference

Each Winter the Pastors and the Teachers of our Northern Conference meet to discuss the work of our Wisconsin Synod. This month we will gather at St. Paul's in Saginaw. In addition to reports, we will study God's Word together, worship together, and encourage each other in the work of the ministry. Thank you to the congregation for supporting this important continuing education and support network.

Plochers' Thank you

We thank God for you every day, members of St. Luke's. You are encouraging and supportive of the gospel ministry, and of us personally. Many of you sent Christmas cards and gifts to us over the holidays. Thank you for your generosity, and more importantly, for your continued prayers. May God bless us all as we gather around his word together.

Pastor and Kelly Plocher

End of Year Assessment and This Year's Goals

Our hopes for December 2016 bringing us to higher financial ground did not materialize. We ended the year borrowing about \$8,000 from the Rainy Day Fund to make the line zero out. By the second week of January we already had internal borrowing of \$10,000. We have not pulled out of the tailspin yet. Pray that this is a small bump on a long road, and that we all will be able to support the work we intend to do together. Our plans for 2017 include finally pursuing the forming of our Ministry Plan. We hope to attend a seminar in Spring that will give us direction, tools, and support along the way. If you want to check out the website, look at www.welsccc.com under the School of Strategic Planning. We intend to ask for a second vicar who will be assigned in May and begin serving in August. We will say farewell to our current vicar, and send him back to Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary to conclude his schooling. An effort to visit with each family in the congregation is underway by the Board of Elders, and the Board of Christian Education is working on advertising openings in the lower grades of our school. Our faculty is eager to serve the Lord and teach the children he provides.

We have engaging and exciting things to do together under God's blessing. Behind the bigger hopes and dreams is the reality of regular hearing and learning God's Word. We will be filled with the Holy Spirit and energized to serve only when we feast on the gospel of our risen Savior. He forgives our sins! After what he has done for us, we give our all to him. Pray that our gracious God enable us to do the work before us, and that we glorify his name in the things we do.

Board of Christian Education

St. Luke's BOCE would like to wish God's richest blessings on the New Year to our congregation and the families of our Lutheran Elementary School. We continue to spend a significant amount of time discussing not only the value of advertising our faith based education and opportunities at the school, but how to cautiously craft the messages we wish to portray to the general public through Facebook (Social Media) and the Cass River Trader. We know that we have the best kept secret in Vassar and the surrounding area and want to continue the awareness of our valuable school. There is no better way to help our children grow in faith through hearing and studying God's Word daily.

The BOCE and faculty remain very committed to providing the very best education that we can for our children and are very appreciative to the congregation as a whole for the support that you provide through your offerings. One major way that the school and faculty are using your gifts is through the careful use of tutors. While only a small amount of time is used by the tutors, they provide that extra little boost to work individually with students to master subjects they are working on in school.

Lost Members—Can You Help?

The church office has a list of members for whom we have little to no contact information. Would you be able to help? Some may have been baptized children of non-members, or perhaps they have moved away and we have lost contact with them. It is difficult to serve them with the Word of God if we cannot contact them. If they have found a new church, we would be happy to transfer or release them.

Please take a look at the list below and let the church office know if you have any information (address, phone number, email address) with which we can contact the following “Lost” members of St. Luke’s:

Ryan Sulicki

Hailey Pierce

Mason Roskiewicz



The 54th Annual National LWMS Convention will be held in Orlando, FL June 22-25, 2017. The theme this year is “Around the World with Missions.” You “visit” South Carolina, Zambia, Georgia, and India in the four-day convention. You can learn more on lwms.org and consider attending the rally yourself.

St. Luke's Junior Usher Guidelines

What a wonderful blessing it is to serve our Lord in His house! The Board of Elders is looking for ways to include our younger members in worship.

Currently we plan to start a Junior Usher Program with the following guidelines:

1. We are looking to incorporate boys that are confirmation age (7-8 grade) into ushering with our current adult ushers.
2. We ask that Junior Ushers dress in a suit and tie (preferred), or dress shirt and tie with dress pants.
3. Junior Ushers would serve with adult ushers for non-communion Sundays and services only.

Please encourage any eligible boys to give of their time to learn a highly sought after position with free training and full benefits effective immediately. You may contact the church office to volunteer or for more information.

Pregnancy Care Center

The Diaper Alliance has been assisting the PCC with providing diapers size 1-4 to babies in need. Larger sizes of diapers (size 5 or 6 and pull-ups 3T or larger) would be much appreciated as donations since the Diaper Alliance usually does not supply these. Thank you for all your donations and prayers for the PCC throughout the year!

Pine Car Derby 2017

Start revving up those tools and ideas for the 2017 Pine Car Derby Race. Sign up sheets will be put up on the board by the church office. Please sign up by Feb. 5 if you plan on racing. Cars will be \$5.00 per kit. Car pick up will be Feb. 12 after first or second service, where you can pay for your kit. The date of the race will take place Sunday, March 26, around 2:00. We will have a K-8 grade school race, and if there is enough interest, we can also have an adult race. This is a great way to enjoy fellowship with our church family, and spend some quality time with the youth in the experience of honing their car. Can't wait to see you there! If you have any questions please free to contact Paul Schultz 989.553.2294 or Carla 989.553.2295

Sunday School News

Singing Schedule

Our Sunday School upper graders will sing in the late service on February 5. The lower grades will next sing on March 19. God's blessings on them as they prepare to glorify our Lord in song.

Babysitting

We have child care available for parents who have children too young to attend Sunday School. This allows parents to still attend adult Bible Class if they so desire. If you have any questions, or would like to volunteer to help supervise these children, please speak to Vicar Leistekow.

How great is the love
the Father has lavished
on us, that we should be
called children of God!
And that is what we are!
1 John 3:1

February Lessons

Please note: there is a slight adjustment to the schedule of our Sunday School lessons. This is to accommodate Easter Sunday as well as Christmas and New Year's days when we did not hold Sunday School. An adjusted schedule has been produced for all Sunday School teachers by Vicar Leistekow.

February 5	The Escape to Egypt
February 12	The Twelve-Year-Old Jesus
February 19	The Baptism of Jesus
February 26	The Temptation of Jesus



Mission Offering Update

The offerings our Sunday School brings are going to support the ministry of Friends of China. This ministry serves people in China by sending teachers to teach English and share the Gospel with them. If you'd like to know more, please speak with either Vicar or Mrs. Leistekow. They are happy to provide you with any information they can about FoC.

Vacation Bible School

Theme: Build on the Rock

Dates: July 24-27

Above you see the theme and dates for this summer's Vacation Bible School. Please consider giving your time and gifts to help make this VBS a success. Please speak with Vicar Leistekow if you'd like more information or if you'd like to volunteer to help with teaching, music, crafts, or in any other capacity.

Thank you for your support of and involvement in
Christian Education at St. Luke's.

St. Luke's Lutheran School News

Current Enrollment: 1st-8th: 40

Classroom News

Mrs. Lange's Classroom: Mrs. Lange's room assignment this year is Kindergarten through second grade. However, we have no Kindergarten this year. This is due in part to an extremely small cradle roll. Each day begins with morning devotion and a Bible lesson. This is followed by the secular subjects. The first and second graders are benefiting from plenty of individualized attention.

Mrs. Einhardt's Classroom: A considerable amount of learning takes place in grades 3-5. It is to the children's benefit to have these three grade levels in the room all day. The foundations of math and English are built upon, while reading and writing skills are sharpened.

Mr. Lange's Classroom: The children of grades 6-8 once again have settled back into starting their school day in two divisions. Pastor Plocher and Vicar Liestekow are teaching catechism and Bible history five days a week. Grades 5-6 have instruction in Bible history and catechism with Mr. Lange. This religion class division is beneficial to both classroom divisions – teaching age appropriate materials to our spiritually growing teens and pre-teens.

Tutors: Beginning this fall the congregation approved the hiring of two part-time tutors to give needed support to the students of the middle and upper grades who are new to Lutheran elementary education or need remediation in specific subject areas. Our tutors are Carla Schultz and Kim Korthals, both WELS trained teachers. We are blessed and thankful that each tutor is able to help us one half day per week.

Administrative Assistant: Our teachers are being aided by the faithful work of Mrs. Plocher who serves as our administrative assistant in the school office Tuesday through Thursday mornings. Not only does she coordinate important and not-so-important office work for Mr. Lange, but she often steps in to coordinate our multiple volunteers. She's also been called on to give needed assistance to our students in study hall and spelling tests. We also have a very fine crew of volunteers who faithfully come in throughout the week. Our teachers could not function as efficiently without these hard workers. Thanks, everyone!

Athletics

Basketball - St. Luke's Redhawks once again returned to the basketball court this fall and early winter with the girls' and boys' basketball teams. The teams continue to enjoy success on the court as they develop proper God-pleasing, Christ-centered sportsmanship.

Fall Season - The girls' basketball B-team season was a rough one for the girls. The team, made up of girls from grades 4-6, was plucky though often out matched. They had grit and determination, and, in all games, performed well in front their fans. They even participated in the MLS A-team tournament – their choice! Our team was coached by Andrea Baker and Carla Schultz. Thanks, coaches!

Winter Season - The boys' A and B teams have just taken the court. This year we are once again able to field two boys' teams comprised of grades 4-8. Friday, January 6, our boys A-team had a rather easy home-opener victory over Emanuel, Tawas City, a team whose school is dealing with much lower enrollment. This year due to the larger number of boys on the A-team, we will play St. John's and Trinity of Bay City twice giving are boys an additional opportunity to sharpen their skills. Our teams are coached by John Korthals and Brad Main. Thank you, gentlemen.

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Our cheer squad of six girls from grades 4-7 leads the fans with their cheers from the courtside. Their positive cheer routines are appreciated and keep us motivated to cheer “for” the good play of both teams! Thanks, Coach Janice Finkbeiner and Assistant Hailleigh Morse, for your patience and persistence!

We wish to thank the many parents of the school who donate their time for coaching, score keeping, and running the concession stand. Your help allows us to provide a solid sports program in soccer, girls’ basketball, boys’ basketball, coed volleyball, and track and field. We are always looking for the next generation of coaches as often our current parents “graduate” with their children into high school sports. Please consider coaching as a further way to serve your Lord in His church and school.

Physical Plant and Conditions

Currently most of the children’s physical needs are being met by the school facility. The children are able to learn in a well-heated, well-lit building under clean conditions. Our school received a very attractive new metal roof this year. The school families appreciate the efforts made by the congregation to enhance the beauty of the building by selecting this roof style. Currently, the fluorescent light fixtures are being replaced with LED bulbs. These LEDs will last longer, are more cost-efficient, and are environmentally friendly.

However, the school is showing some of its age. Its carpets are well-worn, the walls need painting, and the lockers are rusting. Hopefully we will be able to address these cosmetic issues this summer. Thankfully, most of the regular maintenance work and repair projects are being done economically by congregation members under the guidance of the Trustees.

Pastor Plocher is a great liaison to our very active Board of Trustees as he communicates the school’s physical needs to that Board. The faculty feels that we are in the capable hands of a caring Board of Trustees who will do their best to stay on top of any problems.

Christian Education Organization (CEO)

The CEO, as we have nicknamed it, has been quite busy this year. Apart from its usual service and fellowship activities (like the Soup Supper, Book Fairs, and Operations Giving Thanks and J.O.Y.), this school year the CEO has sponsored tuition grants for the outdoor education classes of grades 5-8 totaling \$1000 so far. They also hosted the ever-popular Harvest Festival. The members of the CEO are always looking for more family members to attend meetings and activities. Please consider joining the group.

Working with the Board of Christian Education (BOCE)

The members of the Board of Christian Education are Marc Augsburg (chairman), Justin Whitney (treasurer), Steve Walker (secretary), Dustin Mecham (sister congregation contact), and Aaron Stallings (member at large).

This year the BOCE, in recognizing a much smaller cradle roll, will focus its main attention on using social media to advertise the school to the public. Members of the BOCE are currently creating an official Facebook Page, reviewing social media use policy, and researching the costs of localized advertisement on Facebook. It is their hope that more families from the area learn of St. Luke’s Lutheran School and come to use it as a means to educate their children about Jesus while at the same time getting a quality secular education.

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The members will also be contacting congregation members who have children of school age to encourage them to consider sending their children to our school. Their efforts will begin with the ***Cradle Roll*** families and continue through the elementary grades. The BOCE sees the health and growth of our congregation's Lutheran elementary school starting with a firm foundation consisting of our own members in the school. Therefore, we will begin our recruitment at home - in St. Luke's congregation. Currently, **approximately 50%** of our congregation's children are attending our school.

The BOCE has also asked the faculty to study the shifting student census in the various grades in order to effectively use the three teachers on the staff to best meet the needs of their students. Their preliminary report will be ready for the February 1 BOCE meeting.

The BOCE continues to work with the Primary and Intermediate grade teachers and the administrative assistant to organize a ***Staying Connected with Pre-K Families*** program with our Pre-Kindergarten-aged children and their parents to remind them that St. Luke's Kindergarten eagerly awaits them. Early student introduction meetings for Pre-Kindergarten-aged children and parent surveys conducted by the BOCE are just two means to be used this semester to disseminate information to our congregation's families. The greatest way you can help in this effort is by encouraging members of your own families and friends to consider sending their children to our school. Our cradle roll is currently small. Please encourage young families who may be interested in our church to check us out – visit for the day, speak with the principal or faculty. We must have the parents of the next generation bring their children to our school if the school is to remain viable and able to produce well-founded church leaders for the next generation.

Please welcome any contact that our BOCE members may make to your family. Respond truthfully and openly so that our congregation may have the best Lutheran elementary school possible.

The BOCE will soon be involved in its annual review of the school fees that each school family pays so that by March we can begin the process of pre-registration for Kindergarten and Grades 1-8.

Mission Offerings (3 trimesters)

Our children continue to gather their mission offerings in our chapel service each week. Here are the projects on which we are currently working. To God alone be the glory!

World mission project: *Friends of China* (\$300 given)

Home mission project: *WELS Mission for Deaf and Hard of Hear* (Currently \$180 +)

St. Luke's project: Folding Chairs for the Church Fellowship Hall

Other Things in the Works

2017-18 School Calendar

Pre-registration for 2017-18

WELS Standardized Testing Report

Using social media to Advertise (BOCE)

2017-18 School & Classroom Census

Putting the new laptops into use (Technology Committee)

Member/ non-member Recruitment

MLS Recruitment

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From “Siberia with Love”

With the work in which Mr. Lange is involved, he has regular contact with our one American missionary in Russia, Luke Wolfgramm. Missionary Foxen took a call to Peoria, Arizona last spring. Twice a month Mr. and Mrs. Lange speak with Missionary Wolfgramm and his wife Jennifer talking about the challenges and the joys of the ministry in Siberia. The Langes feel that this is one small way that they can “hold up the prophets hands” in that mission field. Mr. Lange is also responsible for making monthly stateside contacts with our synod offices and the members of the Board for World Missions to coordinate the work of our missionaries with our Wisconsin Synod. Mr. Lange has often commented on how his work with our foreign missionaries has affected his own ministry and the teaching he does with his students. He is grateful for this opportunity to serve our synod and our God in this way.

The Wolfgramms send their greetings and love to you. They ask you and all the members of our synod pray that the Holy Spirit works through their work so that many more people of Siberia come to know the true gospel joy found in Jesus.

Teen Bible Class

As of January 22, the Teen Bible Class has begun a study of Paul’s letters to the Thessalonians. Our goal is to use the Teen Bible Class for mutual support in our devotional lives. To that end, we have decided to read one chapter from these letters each week and then discuss our reading on Sunday morning. We meet in the Mother’s Room at 9:30 every Sunday. All teens are welcome!

Regional Youth Rally

July 17-20, a regional youth rally will be held at Xavier University in Cincinnati. All teens who have completed 8th grade (up to those who have just graduated high school) are welcome to attend. Depending on interest, the St. Luke’s teens can go as their own group, or we can piggyback with another congregation. For more information, speak with Vicar Leis-tekow or visit welscyd.net.

Altar Flowers

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



For God so loved the world
that he gave his one and only Son,
that whoever believes in him should
not perish but have eternal life.

John 3:16

Lutheran Mobile Clinic (CAMM – Malawi, Africa) January 2017

Psalm 126:2 “Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy; then they said among the nations, “The Lord has done great things for them.”

Imagine never receiving any education about brushing your teeth. Imagine never being aware that you shouldn't use regular soap to brush your teeth. Imagine never having a toothbrush. Imagine the pain of a toothache with only Tylenol to relieve the pain. Imagine the 2-3 hour ride in a crowded bus to get to the hospital so you can see a dentist. This is the situation many Malawians face concerning their dental hygiene.

Lutheran Mobile Clinic sees many cases of toothaches and other dental issues and the only thing we can do at our clinic sites is to prescribe Tylenol and refer them to a hospital about 2-3 hours away. Because of this issue, LMC decided to collaborate with an international dental organization called TeethSavers to bring dental education and screenings to the patients we serve at our four clinic sites in rural Lilongwe.

Each clinic started off with a devotion lead by a church elder, as we do every other clinic day. Our usual health education was replaced by oral hygiene education provided by a TeethSavers representative. They discussed the proper technique for brushing teeth, how often to brush, what they should use to brush and when to seek further dental care. TeethSavers then answered questions by the patients. During the education portion of the presentation, children and young adults were separated from the larger group to receive a slightly modified health talk. After their education, they received a toothbrush and were screened for other needed services like teeth cleanings, fillings, and tooth extraction or removals. TeethSavers aims to save the 6-year molars and therefore targets children 6-18 and young adults. All other patients received a toothbrush and the education.

The response from our patients was overwhelming. They were so happy to receive new information, screenings, and a toothbrush. I saw so many smiles and heard many kind words from the patients we saw. I had a Malawian man from Suzi come up to me and personally thank me for bringing such a great service to them. The passage from Psalms reminds me that it wasn't me that brought this service, but it is the Lord providing this blessing to them.

One of the highlights of the week was when Chief Kamkadzule of Suzi told TeethSavers and myself that, “This is my first time since my birth to receive such kind of health instructions. I didn't know anything about oral hygiene.” After the distribution of toothbrushes, he also took some time to talk to the smaller group of children and young adults. He encouraged them to use the information they learned to help them keep their teeth healthy. Having the chief present says a lot about the work the Lutheran Mobile Clinic and TeethSavers are doing together.

In total over 1,300 people received toothbrushes and screenings! TeethSavers was so impressed with the turnout. We plan to continue the collaboration in 6 months and hope to continue growing the services provided. We look forward to sharing the gospel message with those coming to receive our regular care and our new dental services when TeethSavers visit. We thank the many ladies groups and schools that collected over 20,000 toothbrushes and those that helped donate toward the postage to get them to us in Malawi. This generosity assures the program stability for several years. May our mouths be filled with laughter and our tongues shout for joy all the great things the Lord has done for us!

Your Sister in Christ,
Amanda Oswalt

**Financial Update
December 2016**

Income	\$ 33,950
Expenses	<u>\$ 36,485</u>
	\$ -2,535

*Monthly budgeted need is \$35,910

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—This fund is intended for the replacement of the school roof this coming summer.

Memorials

A memorial was given in loving memory of Jerry Solgat: to the General Fund by Bill & Jeanette Dudewicz; and to the Roof Fund by Jim & Bonnie Heidenberger.

A memorial was given to the Roof Fund in loving memory of Karen Young Evans by Dorothy Martini.

Memorials were given in loving memory of Laurie Morse: to the School Pavilion Fund by Hallie & Pat Greenwood, Walt & Sandy Keyes, & Harrietta Botkins.

A memorial was given to the School Pavilion Fund in loving memory of Frank Revesz by Harrietta Botkins.

A memorial was given to the Rainy Day Fund in loving memory of Charles Olmstead, Jr. and Laurie Morse by Marilyn Graubner.

A memorial was given to the Roof Fund in loving memory of Ruth Zehnder by Jim & Sally Zoellner.

A memorial was given to the Rainy Day Fund in loving memory of Matthew Kunderinger by Ed & Linda Jaskan.

Pastoral Acts

Baptisms:

Ayden Michael Schmitzer
1-5-17

Rachel Whitney (Adult)
Jennifer Turner (Adult)
Sydnie Baker
Adorabella Baker
1-8-17

Adult Confirmations:

Rachel Whitney
Jennifer Turner
1-15-17

Transfer Out:

Zachary Lange to St. John’s, Newburg, WI 1-10-17

Treasurer’s Report

Budgetary Offerings: \$33,949.64
Budgetary Expense: \$36,485.17
Net Income: -\$2535.53

For the Year 2016:

Budgetary Income: \$375,827.14
Budgetary Expense: \$613,622.69,
this number includes the paying off the second parsonage and the school roof loan.

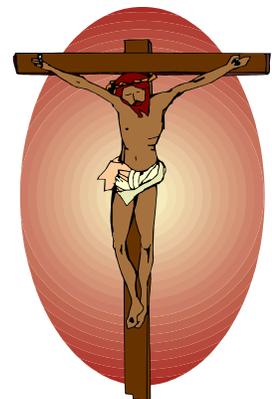
Net Income for the year:
-\$61,817.40

The General Budget Checkbook Balance as of 1/15/17 is -\$9,323.37 which reflects our internal borrowing.

The balance on the roof loan is \$23,814

The Treasurer moved \$12,974.40 from the RDF Savings to GB Checking on Dec. 31 to close the year with a zero balance. January 2nd, I transferred the monies from Dec. 31, 2016 back into the RDF savings (\$4098.00), so the net debt at the end of the year was actually -\$8876.40

Respectfully submitted,
Bill Dudewicz, Treasurer



St. Luke's Lutheran Church, Vassar, MI

February 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 LES Shop Rite Lunch Circuit Pastor Meeting @ Maumee, OH 3:45 pm LES BBB practice @ Wolverine 6:00 pm BOCE Mtg in RM 4 6:30 pm Choir rehearsal 7:00 & 9:00 pm Faith online Bible study	2 3:30 pm LES Cheer practice in Rm 4 3:45 pm PS Catechism	3 6:30 pm LES BBB Game @ Trinity, BC	4 9:00 am PS Catechism
5 8:15 am Comm. Worship 9:30 am Bible Classes & SS 10:45 am Comm. Worship 10:45 am SS Gr. 3-8 sing	6 10:00 am Saginaw Study Club 3:30 pm LES Cheer practice in Rm 4 3:45 pm LES BBB practice @ Wolverine 7:15 pm Worship 8:15 pm Trustees	7 3:45 pm Faculty Meeting	8 LES Finish Line Hot Lunch 3:45 pm LES BBB practice @ Wolverine 6:30 pm Choir rehearsal 6:30 pm Elders Mtg 7:00 & 9:00 pm Interactive Faith online Bible study	9 3:30 pm LES Cheer practice in Rm 4 3:45 pm PS Catechism	10	11 9:00 am PS Catechism
12 8:15 am Worship 9:30 am Bible Classes & SS 10:45 am Worship 12:00 pm New Member Dinner	13 LES NO School - Pastor - Teacher Conf. @ St. Paul, Saginaw 7:15 pm Comm. Worship	14 LES CARPOOL HOME Pastor-Teacher Conference @ St. Paul, Saginaw 6:30 pm Church Council	15 LES McDonald's Hot Lunch 6:30 pm Choir rehearsal 7:00 & 9:00 pm Interactive Faith online Bible study	16 3:45 pm PS Catechism	17 LES Chapel: Pastor Willitz	18 9:00 am Men Alive Rally in Bay City PS Catechism
LES Gr. 7-8 to Camp Wolverine Feb. 13-17						
19 Church Newsletter deadline MLS Foundation Dinner Auction 8:15 am Comm. Worship 9:30 am Bible Classes & SS 10:45 am Comm. Worship 12:00 pm Usher's Meeting	20 LES CARPOOL DAY 3:30 pm LES Cheer practice in Rm 4 3:45 pm LES BBB practice @ Wolverine 7:15 pm Worship	21 7:30 pm Worship Committee	22 3:45 pm LES Shop Rite Lunch LES BBB practice @ Wolverine 6:30 pm Choir rehearsal 7:00 & 9:00 pm Interactive Faith online Bible study	23 3:30 pm LES Cheer practice in Rm 4 3:45 pm PS Catechism	24 LES CARPOOL HOME 9:00 am NL Committee 11:30 am LES Early Dismissal	25 9:00 am LES BALL BBB Tourney @ St. John's, BC PS Catechism
26 8:15 am Worship 9:30 am Bible Classes & SS 10:45 am Worship 12:00 pm MLS Booster Club VB Tourney	27 LES Progress Reports 7:15 pm Comm. Worship	28 LES Upper Grade Written Book Report due	Ushers 8:15 AM Ron Nichol Al Sugden Steve Walsh Bob Ziegler Altar: Cynthia Lange & Debby Hubbard	10:45 AM Brandon Frank Walt Lemke Chris Whitney Jacob Zieroff	Monday: Ray Cobb Finance: Dennis Thurston* Pat Weber Jim List Elder: John Solgat	