
March Newsletter 2017

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

916 W. Huron Ave. Vassar, MI 48768
Website: www.vassarlutherans.org

989-823-7923

Repentance is a turn that God accomplishes in us

Return, Israel, to the Lord your God. Your sins have been your downfall! Take words with you and return to the Lord. Say to him: "Forgive all our sins and receive us graciously, that we may offer the fruit of our lips."
— Hosea 14:1-2

This Lenten Season we will consider what repentance is and learn to practice it. The term "repentance" means "turning." Usually we talk about a turning away from the sin that has entangled us. Stop doing the wickedness! God puts fear into our hearts by threatening judgment against us for our rebellion.

Repentance also includes another turning. When I turn away from a sin, I am not left with emptiness. Repentance is a turning to Jesus my Savior. I trust that he does forgive my sins. I know he has paid the debt completely for me. Now I want to thank him with a life that honors his name. God promises grace and every blessing and moves me to glad service.

As usual, our sinful nature tries to corrupt the good things God gives. It wants to take credit for turning away from sin and turning to Jesus. It puffs itself up by touting how much it has changed or how notable is its achievement. When repentance becomes a matter of pride, we are ripe for disappointment. How easily we fall back into the filth of our sin! And then Satan piles on, hounding us with our incompetence and making us despair of even God's love.

Our Saving God proclaims repentance to be his gracious work in us. He is the one who does the turning. He turns us away from our rebellion by his harsh law message. *"Your sins have been your downfall!"* If you read the first chapters of Hosea's prophecy, you will see how shocking are the sins of God's people (even ours today).

The LORD God of Grace also turns us to the Savior he sent. He announces forgiveness in his name. He sends his Holy Spirit so we believe the promise. He puts his word into our mouth and we give thanks. *"Forgive all our sins and receive us graciously, that we may offer the fruit of our lips."* Repentance and faith and the confidence in forgiveness is all God's gift to us.

When Satan accuses you and makes you feel there is no way God could wipe away THAT sin; when you are completely broken by another failure and the consequences that follow; when it looks like there is no escape from the cycle and habits you have formed — return to the LORD your God. He himself comforts and forgives you. He gives you strength to withstand temptation and to avoid evil. He covers you with the blood of his Son. Look at the suffering Jesus endured in your place! The Passion History is the proof that God has loved you. You are safe in his care.

Come to our special Lenten Wednesday services and grow in appreciation for what your God has done for you in Christ Jesus. He brings you repentance - both a turning away from sin and a turning to your Savior. Repentance is a precious gift from your God!

Pastor Plocher

<p>Board of Trustees</p> <p>The current project is the reconstruction of the parsonage basement bathroom. The shower had not worked for several years, and the other amenities were scary. The Trustees are working on the utilities at this time, rerouting plumbing and electrical. We hope the project will be complete by the end of March. Thanks to those men who donate their time and energy to make this possible. The new LED lights at school are almost all installed as well. Half of the school has been retrofitted at this time. The other half will be done next year, Lord willing.</p>	<p>Annual Reports</p> <p>The annual reports are being distributed, and should be in your mailbox by early in March. The elders intend to make contact with families who don't empty their mailboxes regularly. The goal is to encourage everyone to stay connected with God's gospel message. If you desire a home visit from your elder, please contact him and make the arrangements to fit both of your schedules.</p>	<p>New Hymnal Testing</p> <p>The committee that is preparing a new hymnal for WELS (it is still five to seven years away) has asked St. Luke's to test some new hymns during the Lenten Season. We will include some of them in our Sunday worship services and invite your feedback. The words and music will still support the theme from God's Word each week. These hymns may or may not be eventually included, but they are a sample of potential worship materials under consideration.</p>
<p>Repent: Turn to Jesus</p> <p>Our theme for special services this Lenten season is "Repent: Turn to Jesus." Each Wednesday evening we will see how our God reveals our sin, the need we have for a Savior. Then that Savior will be proclaimed, who suffered and died to take away our sin. Pastors from the Thumb Circuit will come to Vassar, while your pastor and vicar will travel to those congregations each week. Ash Wednesday is March 1. Worship begins at 6:30pm.</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div>	<p>The Festival of Easter</p> <p>Each year the Board of Elders hosts a breakfast for the congregation on Easter Sunday. We are busy planning for that day already. One change we intend to make this year is a change in the time of the Easter Dawn service. We will move the service time to 7:00am. Breakfast will begin after the service and continue until 9:00. The Festival Service begins at 9:30.</p> <p>We hope that this adjustment to the schedule makes it easier for those who come to the later service to also come for the breakfast. Make a note of the change, and look for reminders in the bulletin and in next month's newsletter.</p>	<p>Luther Movie</p> <p>A brand new feature length documentary has been produced for PBS called "A Return to Grace: Luther's Life and Legacy." WELS people were responsible for writing and filming the project. We are looking at the possibility of showing the film at Vassar Theater and inviting our community to view it with us. Details are still in the works, but we may be able to work together with area WELS congregations to fill the theater. It would also be an outreach tool, to help our friends and neighbors understand what "Lutheran" means. Since this is the 500th year after the beginning of the Reformation, it is a good time to undertake this effort. Look for details as they unfold!</p> <p>A shorter version of the documentary will be available to St. Luke's for use in Bible Classes. When that is released, we will also make use of it.</p>

<p>364 Days of Thanksgiving</p> <p>Are you still thankful each day? Sometimes it is hard to look past the hardships we have and the pain we feel. How can there be blessing from God in my awful circumstance? The Lord does assure you that he sent his Son to forgive you. Jesus has risen from the dead and secured your victory, and no amount of suffering can change the fact. Your Savior loves you even when times are difficult. He even promises never to leave you or forsake you. When God's blessings come into clearer focus, we are thankful. I encourage you to continue writing things you are thankful for each day (and try not to repeat them!). With a thankful heart, our service to our Savior and our support of the work of our congregation will also be continual joy.</p>	<p>School of Strategic Planning</p> <p>We have begun a project that should lead us to a better understanding of our work together. The School of Strategic Planning will help St. Luke's express its goals and walk together as we approach them. Pastor Jon Hein will present to our congregation and seven others, and will direct us to work together to serve God in our particular situation. If you want to find out detailed information, look at www.welsccc.com. The date of our "school" is April 1. We are planning to be the host congregation, so details will need to be made for food and other amenities. The church council and several others will take what they learn and use it for the good of our congregation and the proclamation of the gospel in this place. This seminar and the one specifically for schools (see separate article) will give us advice and direction as we plan for the future that is before us.</p>	<p>Telling the Next Generation: Using our Schools for Outreach</p> <p>The Board of Christian Education is also attending a seminar on planning for the future of our Lutheran Elementary School. Several congregations will gather at Good Shepherd congregation in Midland for this presentation on March 11. Together with the information from the School of Strategic Planning, we hope we will come to a good understanding of our challenges and a way to approach them.</p>
<p>Lenten Suppers</p> <p>There will be three Lenten suppers this year.</p> <p>On Ash Wednesday, March 1, St. Luke's CEO will host a soup supper from 5-6:15PM.</p> <p>On Wednesday, March 22, Women Serving Christ will host a Soup and Sandwich supper from 5-6:15 PM.</p> <p>On Wednesday, April 5, the Redhawk Boys and Girls basketball teams will host a Family Favorites potluck from 5-6:15 PM.</p> <p>Mark your calendars and watch your bulletins and newsletters for more details.</p>	<p>Adult Bible Class</p> <p>Please come to our Sunday morning Bible Class entitled "Bible Symbols." We are studying some of the pictures God's Old Testament people had to learn about the coming Savior. It has been an interesting study! When we are finished with this topic, Vicar Leistekow will teach Adult Bible Class for several weeks. He will lead us in a study of the book of Galatians. The experience of writing and teaching his own Adult Class will serve him well in his future ministry. We hope many will attend!</p>	<p>School Fees</p> <p>The school fees for next year have increased by \$50 a person. This is because our enrollment is declining, and the formula we use for fees depends on the number of students. Despite the increase, it still only costs \$325 for one member student for a whole year of Lutheran Education! Of course, the regular offerings of every member, parents included, to the ministry of our congregation and school are a voluntary thanksgiving to God for his gifts. Non-member students are charged an additional tuition fee of \$2,500. We hope that any families that do come to our school will also be interested in the ministry of our congregation. We plan that they will eventually become members of St. Luke's.</p>

Scholarship Fund

St. Luke's Scholarship Committee will meet in April to distribute funds to those who have applied to our Synod Schools. At this time we have 12 students, with the possibility of a couple more. We have had to change our distribution schedule, so we ask that if you desire to make a donation to the Scholarship Fund to do it before April 1. The WELS schools are offering a matching program for congregational scholarships. The amount we give each student will be increased by the financial aid department of the schools. The catch is that we need to distribute the monies by the end of April. We will make that change, and ask you to consider it in your gifts this year as well.

Over the last 20 years, St. Luke's Scholarship Fund has awarded 160 scholarships totaling almost \$90,000. Thank you to all who donate towards this fund, and to all who consider serving the Savior in the work of his church.

Stewardship Persistence

Frustration. After careful planning and eager anticipation, things do not happen as easily as anticipated. There are obstacles and roadblocks, fears and failures. In the life of our congregation it is no different than in your home life. The unexpected happens. What seemed like a sure thing, isn't. Yet we do not give up. We adjust and adapt. We press on. More importantly, we trust our Savior. He is able to do more than we can ever ask or imagine.

As a congregation, we are in somewhat of a slump recently. The end of the year was not strong either with attendance or offerings. The new year has also not started out with a bang. It concerns the Church Council that our expenses have been several thousand dollars more than our offerings each month recently. It concerns us all that attendance is average, even with a significant bump when the MLS choir was here.

Any number of things can account for our circumstance. Weather. Health. Unexpected bills. The timing of the holidays. But excuses cannot hide the reluctance of our sinful nature to die to sin. It is there in all of us, the fear of giving up what is comfortable, what distracts us from Jesus. The answer is always Jesus and his powerful words. His Gospel forgiveness is our joy. We are determined to hear it and to proclaim it. Together as family in Christ, we pray:

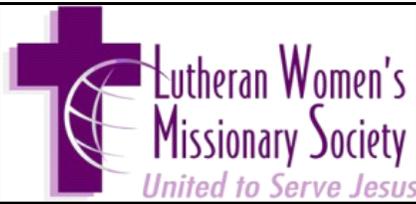
Lord, put to death in us the selfishness and the timidness and the apathy that so easily overcome us. Make us new by the blood of Jesus and renew in us a spirit of thankfulness. Draw us closer to your word and sacrament, and make our hearts eager to worship and to serve and to give. Bless us with your Holy Spirit, that we stand firm in the faith and remain faithful to your promises. May the words you give us ring out to many and give them faith and joy. Our future is in your hands, and you have made it secure in Christ. Help us walk close to you until you bring us home to your side in heaven. Amen.

BOCE News

Your BOCE continues to work hard on a new Facebook page for our Lutheran Elementary School. We hope that this page will help to enhance the public knowledge of our great school and all that we do. Many people in Vassar and the surrounding area still don't know that our school exists and we want to let them know about our excellent, faith based education.

Additionally, a lot of time has been spent by our faculty working on next year's classroom assignments. As our school moves up and down with specific class sizes, the faculty works closely with the BOCE to determine the best educational structure for our students. We ask for the congregation's continued prayers as decisions are made.

Finally, we continue to see the financial account grow for our school pavilion. We are near the amount necessary to complete the school anniversary project this spring. Both the BOCE and CEO are excited for this project to take legs as it will benefit the school and congregation as a whole. Don't forget that you can use the special envelope attached to this monthly newsletter (and envelopes can also be found in the narthex of the church where you register for communion) to make a special donation or memorial to this project. May you enjoy God's richest blessings in the coming month of the Lenten season.



LUTHERAN WOMEN'S MISSIONARY SOCIETY is dedicated to serving Jesus by increasing awareness of, interest in, and support of mission outreach of the WELS. We have two rallies a year, spring and fall. We have a collection box out in the entry of the church to collect mission offerings which go toward a World and Home Mission, decided on by the Thumb LWMS Circuit. The mission box collection will be out Feb 27-March 23rd.

Our circuit is called the Thumb Circuit which is formed of six congregations: St. Luke's; St. John's, Pigeon; St Paul, Mayville; Trinity, Elkton; King of King's, Frankenmuth; and New Salem, Sebawaing.

The Spring LWMS Rally will be held at King of King's in Frankenmuth on March 25 with Pastor Norman Burger speaking on FRAN (friends, relatives, associates, neighbors) evangelism. These speakers are very interesting.

We are looking for ladies to fill the following circuit positions: Treasurer and Spiritual Growth Laywoman. Spiritual Growth laywoman takes photos of the meetings to be kept in a scrapbook and attend 4 meetings a year. Let me know if you are interested. You can also check on more information on the national level at lwms.org.

Church Library

Visit our church library for devotional materials for your family during the Lenten season. You will also find People's Bible commentaries to help you understand any portion of Scripture better as you read your Bible at home. There are even books to help you with more in depth study of many of the doctrine we learn about in sermons and Bible class. Stop by and take a look!

Pastor-Teacher Conference

On Monday, February 13 and Tuesday February 14, Pastor Plocher and Vicar Leistekow had the opportunity to attend a Pastor-Teacher conference at St. Paul's in Saginaw. While there, they heard presentations about the state of our synod and the Michigan District; our synodical schools: Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Luther Preparatory School, Martin Luther College, and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary; as well as papers about a few topics related to teaching and preaching God's Word in our churches and schools. Through those presentations, discussion, fellowship, and worship opportunities the pastors and teachers of the conference were able to encourage one another in ministry and be built up by God's Word.

Thank You

To all of you who brought food and helped with the MLS Choir dinner: **THANK YOU!**

Our congregation has a reputation of putting on a fantastic meal, and we did not disappoint. The students and their families enjoyed the meal and the fellowship at St. Luke's.

Kindergarten Registration

It's time to register for next year's Kindergarten class! *Children eligible for St. Luke's kindergarten program should be 5 years old on or before September 1.* Applications will be mailed to children on our cradle roll whose birthdate's fall on or before September 1, 2017.

Please **return your registration** application **along with** copies of your child's birth certificate and immunization record to the school office by **April 3rd**. Kindergarten registration begins early to allow for the mandatory kindergarten readiness testing. Registration for Gr. 1-8 will begin in the coming weeks.

If you have any questions about St. Luke's kindergarten program, the registration process, or you know of someone who needs registration paperwork, please contact Mr. Lange, Mrs. Einhardt, or Mrs. Lange at school (989-823-8400).

Sunday School Page

Sunday School Lessons for March

March 5	Jesus Changes Water into Wine
March 12	Jesus and Nicodemus
March 19	Rejected in Nazareth
March 26	Calling Fishers of Men

Please note: There is a slight adjustment to the schedule of our Sunday School lessons. This is to accommodate Easter Sunday, when there will be no Sunday School. An adjusted schedule has been produced for all Sunday School teachers by Vicar Leistekow.

Vacation Bible School

Theme: Build on the Rock
Dates: July 24-27

Vicar has received the materials for this year's VBS and is in the process of putting everything together. If you have the gifts to help with teaching, music, crafts, or in any other capacity, please speak with Vicar as soon as possible. This is a wonderful opportunity for us to work together as a congregation to proclaim the gospel to the children of our community and congregation.



Mission Offering

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.

Singing Schedule

The children in Gr. 1-8 of our Elementary School will sing during our Ash Wednesday service, and the LES Upper Grades 6-8 children will sing in the early service on March 26. The Sunday School lower grade (Pre-K-Gr. 2) children will sing in the late service on March 19.

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.



Mrs. Einhardt's Middle Grades Report on the Fun at MLS Cardinal for a Day

What will it be like to be a high school student? What might it be like to be a high school student at MLS in Saginaw? On Tuesday, January 24th, all the students of St. Luke's LES participated in the first ever "Cardinal for a Day" event at MLS. Students in grades 1-8 from 6 of our BALL schools gathered at MLS to experience a morning in the life of a high school student. The MLS students led groups of school age children to various stations throughout the morning. The stations were led by MLS students acting as leaders or teachers. Below are the thoughts of our LES students in grades 3-5.

Being one of 6 different schools to be the first Cardinals for a day was fun. One of my favorite classes to go to was Bible study. When we went in we learned about Paul getting arrested for telling God's Word. German class was really cool too! We learned that in German "red" is "rot." And we were read two stories in German and after every paragraph they translated the words. In gym we could play basketball, volleyball, or we could play wrestling. We got to see the dorms but the girls were only allowed to go to the girls' dorm and the boys were only allowed to go to the boys' dorms. Fortunately, we found an MLS student to show the boys to the boys' dorms and the girls to the girls' dorms. And we got to do choir. We got to learn a song in choir also. It was really cool to have a real director. And we had the real choir sing with us. At chapel, we got to sing our song we had practiced. And at the very end of the day we went to the gym and ate pizza and cookies plus there was punch and lemonade. It was really cool to be a Cardinal for a day, but what was really awesome was making friends.

Madison F.

My favorite part was Biology. In Biology, we had some jellybeans and 2 pieces of paper. One paper with colors, flavors, and numbers for the jellybeans and the other paper had in boxes at the top how to find your jellybean flavor, flavor of jellybean that you think it is, and was your guess correct? So first what you do is pick a jellybean, look at the paper that has flavors, colors, and numbers to see what flavor you come up with. To see if you followed the directions right, and to check if your jellybean is the flavor you guessed, plop it in your mouth, chew on it and think of your flavor you guessed of the jellybean in your mouth. Does it match up, write yes. If it doesn't write no on the other piece of paper in the yes or no spot. Have fun playing!

Eve S.

Our school went to MLS for a field trip. My favorite part was going to the dorms. My favorite was the 3 bunker. We got to go on the beds and sit in the desks that were in the dorms. In Biology, we had to taste vinegar and lemon juice. In German class, we learned that red was really pronounced "rot" in German. At choir we learned a song and sang it at chapel. That is what I did at MLS.

Lily W.

My favorite part about MLS was visiting the dorm rooms and game room. I saw a lot of Christmas lights in the dorms. The game room had foosball, ping pong, and air hockey tables. I played foosball in the game room. In the dorms, there were a lot of random things like clothes and blankets. The guides told us that they get room service.

Brayden S.

My favorite part of our school going to MLS is when we used the dichotomous key to classify jellybeans. I got tons of weird flavors like cappuccino margarita and pina colada. My German name is Wolfgang. That is my second favorite thing.

Brayden W.

We went to MLS for a day. My favorite part was German. We learned some new words. They read us some stories. At the end of the day, we ate lunch which was pizza. Then we came home.

Caiden B.

(MLS Cardinal for a Day continued)

Tuesday we went to MLS for a day. My favorite was music class. We all sang the Psalm we did for chapel then we went to the gym at 12:10 PM to eat pizza for lunch. Then we went to school.

Andrew C.

My favorite part at “Cardinal for a Day” was gym class. In gym class we had to pick between basketball, wrestling, and volleyball and I chose basketball. We had 20 minutes. I chose basketball for about 15 minutes. Then I did drills. Next I went to wrestling. I wrestled some kids and then went on.

Braylin Z.

First I went to Bible class, we learned about Zacchaeus. Next we went to German class and my German name was “Anja.” Then we went to go sing a song. And then we got to do Biology. I got to play volleyball. That was fun. Next I went to the commons to eat cookies. Our group went to the dorms to see the rooms. We had chapel and had pizza for lunch. Last we went right back to school. And my favorite class was German class.

Phoebe S.

On Tuesday January 24th our school went to MLS! My favorite was playing volleyball. I totally love volleyball. I met Morgan E.’s roommate Olivia. I liked Bible time. It was about Jonah and the great fish. I learned German, music, Biology. I even got to see some awesome dorms. I had a great time at MLS. Maybe someday I’ll go there. I hope to see Olivia again.

Chelsea W.

My favorite thing there was the dorms. In the one dorm you went in and went around half of the room. Then you saw beds, a beanbag, a tv, and lots of blankets. Some people in the big group of people went on the beds. That was my favorite thing there.

Caeleb P.

The whole school went to MLS for a day. We were taught by the students instead of the teachers! The first thing my group did was P.E. There you got 3 options on what to do. 1. volleyball, 2. basketball, 3. wrestling. Next, we got to do a Bible study on Jonah. Third, we did German. In German, I learned that “rot” means “red” and that “acht” means “8.” I would say that German was my favorite.

Baeli P.

Being a Cardinal for a day was so fun. Our first station was gym class. Then we had Bible class where we learned about Jonah. After that we went to German class where we translated our names into German. My name was Elisabeth. Then we went to Biology. Our lesson was about the senses. They made us taste some fresh lemon juice, vinegar, and chocolate chips. Then we had chapel with all of the students. Overall my 2 favorite things were gym class and learning German. I had so much fun.

Elisabeth L.

When our class went to MLS we got to see dorm rooms. Some people had beds stacked in three, forts, and some other neat set ups. We also went to learn some German. One person would read a German book and another person would pronounce it in English. It was a fun experience to have.

Maddie B

News around St. Luke's School – March 2017

LES Children's Mission Offering for Trimester 2 – As of the writing of this article, our thirty-eight children have gathered **\$316.15** for the ***WELS Mission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing***. The Holy Spirit has granted our children a willing spirit to donate generously to this program that allows this WELS commission to provide sign language and hearing services to many WELS members and congregations.

A special gift to the Nigerian mission was collected on February 24 for building projects on the Nigerian mission field. The children responded well to this one-time gift.

The final trimester's offering will be to fund the replacement of folding chairs in the church fellowship hall. More information on this project will be published in future classroom and church newsletters.

Board of Christian Education (BOCE) Members, Their Duties and Responsibilities –

Please meet the five men who will serve on the BOCE this year. God bless their work and interest in the congregation's full and part-time education agencies.

Marc Augsburg - chairman

Steve Walker - secretary

Justin Whitney - treasurer

Aaron Stallings - CEO contact man

Dustin Mecham - sister congregation contact man

These men have each been assigned certain school families to contact in order to foster open communication between home and school. They also have been assigned to contact congregation families who have prospective LES students. Please welcome their calls and contacts.

Academics and the Terra Nova 3 Synod Standardized Test - We have just received the annual standardized test results for grades 3-8. This fall our thirty-three students from grades 3-8 joined with the other students of our synod and the nation to take the Terra Nova₃ standardized test. The test results show that our children are **scored above** the national average in **30 out of 30** test categories in grades 3-8. They also **scored at or above** the synod's average in **24 out of the 30** categories. There are five major categories that were reported: reading, mathematics, language, social studies, and science. We are pleased to see such strength of talent being shown. It also lends credence to the quality education received by the children of St. Luke's Lutheran School and the Wisconsin Synod in its parochial school system.

(continued on next page)

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

The faculty uses these standardized tests as a student progress report. This annual tool is used to help parents and teachers see strengths and weaknesses in our children. Proper remediation can then follow. Your faculty is dedicated to continue its fine academic standard. It is currently engaged in its second year of a more purposeful review of their addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division tables after reviewing our academic need via these test results. Mathematics will be a major tool our students will use in their future academic years, as well as, their vocations and careers as adults. Parents, we ask that you take an active role in helping us help your children strengthen this skill. Ask the parents of the upper grade students. Having a solid elementary math foundation will greatly aid your children in later elementary math, Pre-Algebra, and Algebra. Parent reports have been generated and sent home. *The faculty encourages any parents with questions or concerns to schedule a conference with their child's teacher.*

Pre-Registration Coming Soon - The Board of Christian Education (BOCE), in their February meeting, adopted the school fees and tuition for 2017-2018. Prices will be noticeably higher this year due to lower projected enrollment. The school office is now preparing to publish the pre-registration materials for all of next year's students – Kindergarten and Grades 1-8. School fees will be posted in the family packets. The packets will be sent out during the first weeks of March and have a May 15 deadline. All families are to respond with their family forms and pre-registration payments by May 15. We also ask that one half of the school fees be paid on or before May 15. If you have financial or payment questions, please call BOCE Treasurer Justin Whitney at 989-882-5256.

SPECIAL NOTE: KINDERGARTEN APPLICATIONS (but not fees) are due at the school office by **April 3** to allow for the Kindergarten Readiness Screening.

Prospective Enrollment for the 2017-18 School Year - Prospective enrollment for the 2017-18 school year stands at **31 students**. We will be graduating seven eighth graders this spring. With no solid Kindergarten prospects at this time, the faculty and BOCE are studying the teaching assignments and classroom arrangements for the coming year.

Boys Basketball The members of the boys B-team have completed their season of play. Under the coaching of Brad Main and John Korthals, the boys had a solid regular season finishing 4 and 2 in league play.

The A-team had quite a year! The talented A-team fought hard ending BALL League play undefeated. In the MLS Tournament the team took **1st** place in Class A of the Large School Division. In the BALL Invitational Tournament on February 24-25, our team was seeded first. With league and tournament play, our boys are currently at 9-0! The team always gave the crowd something to cheer about! Kudos to our fans for motivating our Redhawk boys to play their best!

(continued on next page)

Basketball Fan Game The fan game and awards ceremony for girls and boys basketball teams is scheduled for March 18 at Immanuel, Frankentrost at 4:30-6:30 PM. Awards and a meal follow the game. Please sign up for the meal with Kim Korthals.

Volleyball The co-ed volleyball season was cancelled due to a lack of participants.

BALL League Tournament On March 10 the athletic directors of the eight Bay Area WELS schools will meet to discuss the 2017-18 seasons. One main topic of discussion will be the lower enrolments in most schools of the BALL and how it will affect the number of teams in each sport and the makeup of those teams. Any comments or questions about league rules, traditions, or activities should be directed to the BALL League through Mr. Lange

BALL Track and Field Day This May 26, St. Luke's completes its two year cycle of hosting the BALL Track and Field Day at Garber High School in Essexville. Looking ahead – even in the dead of winter, it seems we will need some extra help with hosting! We are in need of parents who would be ready to do work in the press box taking in and posting event results. We will need an announcer for the day who will broadcast the results to the fans and “keep the day going” with public address announcements and motivational music. Finally, we may even need a parent or two to come down to the field and serve as helpers for the track and field events. If you have the Friday before Memorial Day (5/26) off and would like to serve, please give Mr. Lange a call or send an email offering your services.

Fine Arts Fairs at MLS and St. Luke's A long-standing tradition continues this month when the children of our school enter their science and art projects for judging at the MLS Fine Arts Fair on **March 4**. The science and art projects are then presented to the congregation for viewing in our fellowship hall from March 4 - March 12. Please take time to view these projects in the fellowship hall throughout the week. Special thanks to the families for the extra hard work done in accommodating the early MLS Fine Arts Fair!

Our Forensics Team Attends a Forensics Meet – This is the eighth year for our forensics team under the leadership of Mrs. Einhardt. The district-wide competition will take place during the MLS's Fine Arts Fair on March 5. Kids, thanks for demonstrating your confidence and abilities in these meets! Mrs. Einhardt thank you for the training you gave the children in developing their speaking skills. Well done, everyone!

Children's Special Choir Singing Date – Currently, Mrs. Lange is seeking volunteers for a special Palm Sunday Children's Choir from grades 3-8. Due to conflicts in scheduling this will be the only Special Choir opportunity this spring. The choir will be singing the song “Chantez Alleluia” (Sing Alleluia) in BOTH Palm Sunday services. Parents, please encourage your children to participate in this choir. Members of the congregation, please join us in the Palm Sunday services singing the praises of our King of Kings as he enters Jerusalem on the week of his passion.

(continued on next page)

Grade 7-8 Wolverine Camps Trip – The children of our 7-8th grades attended Wolverine Camps on February 13-17, 2017. Wolverine Camps are located in the northwoods of the lower peninsula. This year the children were joined by four other Bay area WELS schools. Outdoor class activities included cross country skiing, Indian life, pioneer tools, muzzle loading, confidence course, teams course, and advanced survival. Option time allowed the kids to make candles, go tubing, play a predator/prey game, icefish, and raft down the Sturgeon River. We had eight parent chaperones and four teachers accompanying the kids. The four male teachers served as devotion leaders for the five day event.

Wolverine Can Fund – Thank you for supporting the children of the upper grade with your cans and bottles for deposit. The monies collected reduced the final price paid by each child. At the time of the trip the fund stood at **\$114.60**. This money allowed our children and their drivers a noon meal at Ponderosa. Special thanks to Mrs. Jennifer Santoviz for processing the bottles and cans for the trip!

A Final Thought – Parents, thank you for keeping up with your faithful God-given responsibilities in raising your children. They have an effect! “Although peers sometimes do exercise more control over an adolescent’s choice of dress, music, entertainment, etc., only when parents are extremely negligent do peers exercise more control over the teens choices of beliefs and relational styles than the parents do. In the vast majority of cases, parents remain the single most influence in the development of an adolescent’s personality.” Benson, *Effective Christian Education*.

Amazon Smile

St. Luke’s Lutheran Church continues to receive donations from AmazonSmile. If you shop online and would like to contribute to St. Luke’s when you make purchases on Amazon.com, you can do so by bookmarking the link: <http://smile.amazon.com/ch/38-2334784>.

This allows a percentage of your Amazon purchases to benefit our church and school.

Teen Bible Class

The Teen Bible Class is continuing their 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!

Youth Rally

July 17-20, a regional youth rally will be held at Xavier University in Cincinnati, OH. 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.

**Train up a child in the way he should go
and when he is old he will not depart from it.
Proverbs 22:6**

MLS NEWS

High School Placement Testing at MLS

MLS is offering HSPT for 2017-2018 incoming freshman on Saturday, March 11. Registration begins at 9:45 AM. The test begins at 10 AM. To help planning, MLS kindly asks that attendees RSVP in advance at www.mlsem.org. If applicants are unable to attend this testing date, please let MLS know with the online link. Alternate arrangements for taking the can be arranged.

MLS Children’s Theater

You are invited to the MLS Children’s Theater performance of “Aesop’s (Oh, So Slightly Updated) Fables” on Saturday, March 11 at 7PM in the chapel/auditorium. St. Luke’s member, Leah Plocher is a cast member of this production. No tickets are required. However, there will be a free-will offering taken to defray script and royalty expenses. Everyone is welcome to attend and support the drama program at MLS.

Volunteer Appreciation

MLS will hold a volunteer appreciation dinner on Saturday, March 11 beginning at 5 PM. Anyone who has volunteered at MLS or who is interested in learning more about volunteering may RSVP for the dinner at www.mlsem.org.

3 on 3 Basketball Tournament

The MLS Booster Club is hosting a 3 on 3 basketball tournament for students in Gr. 5-8 on Saturday, April 1. See the poster on the church bulletin board for more information. Register by March 17 by visiting www.mlsem.org or by contacting Rick Wall at 989-385-0767 or steeliercw@msn.com.

MLS Summer Sports Camps

MLS offers a number of summer sports camps for grade school students. These camps emphasize teaching fundamentals, skills, and knowledge of the game in a positive Christian setting. The coaching staffs at each camp are made up of members of the MLS athletic staff, assisted by MLS alumni and current MLS students. (Note that the grade listings are for the coming 2017-2018 school year.)

Girls Basketball Camp
For Girls in Gr. 5-9
June 11-14
Cost: \$125

Girls’ Volleyball Camp
For Girls in Gr. 6-9
June 14-15
Cost: \$50

Boys Basketball Camp
For Boys in Gr. 7-9
June 18-21
Cost: \$125

Boys’ Basketball Camp
For Boys in Gr. 5-7
June 21-23
Cost: \$100

Boys’ Football Camp
For Boys in Gr. 7-9
June 21-23
Cost: \$100

Father/Son Football Camp
For Boys in Gr. 4-6
June 24
Cost: \$35

**Visit www.mlsem.org
for more information.**



**Financial Update
January 2017**

Income \$ 33,800
Expenses \$ 37,624
 -\$ 3,824

Monthly budgeted need is \$36,914.

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—We are repaying the loan for the new roof on our school building

Treasurer’s Summary for January 2017

Budgetary Offerings: \$33,799.81
Budgetary Expenses: \$37,623.51

We budget \$36,914 per month to fully fund the work that we do at St. Luke’s.

Our General Budget Checking Balance is -\$18,535.22 as of 2/15/17. This deficit is extremely large when considering we are only 6 weeks into the new year. This represents our internal borrowing.

The Rainy Day Fund Balance is \$10,357.51

The Roof Loan Balance is \$23,202.74

Respectfully submitted,
Bill Dudewicz
Treasurer

Memorials

A memorial was given to the Rainy Day Fund in loving memory of Laurie Morse by Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth Jammer.

Memorial were given to the Roof Fund in loving memory of Laurie Morse by Mrs. Pat King and Jim & Bonnie Heidenberger.

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

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

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

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

A memorial was given to the School Pavilion Fund in loving memory of Laurie Morse by Hallie & Pat Greenwood and Walter and Sandy Keyes.

A memorial was given to the Roof Fund in loving memory of Frank Revesz, Jr. by Dorothy Martini.

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



Pastoral Acts

Removal:
Hailey Pierce
2-14-17

Lutheran Mobile Clinic (CAMM)**Lilongwe, Malawi****February, 2017**

In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And He who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will.

Romans 8: 26-27

Greetings from the warm heart of Africa,

Failures in communication are frustrating, aren't they? Just when you think you have selected the exact words you would like to say, the words that actually come out of your mouth are not at all what you had planned to say. Do you struggle to find the right words for a given situation and instead keep silent?

Communication gaps and failures are all too common for me these days, as I am learning to speak Chichewa. Studying a book, using flashcards and practicing conversations with my teacher are indeed helpful, but all too often I find myself lacking the appropriate vocabulary and frustrated that I can't seem to make myself understood. On more than one occasion I have wished I had my teacher with me so she could fill in the gaps of my broken Chichewa sentences!

Fortunately, I have found that many Malawians are delighted that I am trying to speak Chichewa and are quick to use any English they know when I say, "*Pepani. Sindi kumvetsa*" (I'm sorry. I don't understand).

Do you ever wonder if your prayers are hung up in communication gaps with God? Perhaps you have prayed the same prayer year after year but the Lord sends something else. You thought your carefully selected vocabulary was clear, but it seems God misunderstood. Could it be that our thoughts and pleadings are not up to the standard of the Most High? Or maybe you're not sure what to pray for and you wonder if the Lord would rather you keep silent until you can offer up a well-crafted prayer. If only there was an interpreter to fill in the gaps of our unfocused thoughts and broken sentences!

We can rejoice and take comfort that our prayers are neither lost in translation nor misinterpreted, because our God operates beyond the confines of our narrow thoughts and limited vocabulary. There is no reason to fear that our imperfectly crafted prayers will not be understood by our Father, because Jesus died to win us the privilege of prayer, and the Spirit is actively filling in all of the gaps. There is no communication failure, because the Father sees into our very hearts and knows us better than we know ourselves. He knows what we can bear and what is best for us and "we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28). Through Jesus, our God is delighted to hear from us in prayer and always sends what we truly need exactly when we truly need it. Always!

Your sister in Christ,

Amanda Artz, Clinic Administrator
Lutheran Mobile Clinic

Lutheran Mobile Clinic (Malawi) and Lutheran Mission Rural Health Centre (Zambia)
Central Africa Medical Mission Spring 2017

“Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord’s people who are in need.” Romans 12:12-13

During the past few months, the Zambia Ministry of Health and the Malawi Ministry of Health have each passed a mandate that all government subsidized health clinics must be open to provide medical services 24 hrs a day/7 days a week. Although the mandate is the same for both countries, its impact has been dramatically different for CAMM. In both instances, the overall implications are just starting to unfold. If CAMM is/was to receive continued benefits from the Ministry of Health, significant changes are required.

The story of two different CAMM clinic situations and the impact of this mandate-

Lutheran Mission Rural Health Centre (Zambia) - Last year, it was mandated that all birthing deliveries must be conducted at an approved medical centre such as the Lutheran Rural Mission Health Centre and services must be available 24/7; Jackson Kalekwa, our Chief Clinical Officer, has been providing those services. Mothers in labor travel to a clinic facility either with a traditional birth attendant (TBA) or by themselves as it is now illegal for the TBA to assist in the birth in the village. In February 2017, a new mandate will require all medical services be available. Because our building is stationery and has electrical power, it makes sense to comply with this mandate. The details of this mandate are just being released. Additional personnel will be necessary as our staff cannot be expected to be available 365 days a year. We will not know the financial implications of this new mandate for months.

Recently, however, the Zambian Ministry of Health also mandated a 50% increase for all certified medical staff salaries. This impacts CAMM greatly. We are responsible for most of the payroll costs and are required to pay pensions to all staff members (equivalent to 3 or 4 months salary). An increase in base pay multiplies with pensions.

While we continue to face multiple challenges, we are very blessed that Martin Luther Church is adjacent to our clinic. So many opportunities to share God’s word. There are several LCCA members currently completing studies for nursing degrees and lab tech certification and another entering clinical officer training. We pray the newly mandated positions to handle the additional hours and patients at our clinic may be filled with LCCA members.

Lutheran Mobile Clinic (Malawi) – Malawi’s Ministry of Health passed their mandate for 24/7 services last June. When this mandate was put into effect, our clinics were unable to adhere to the requirements. In Malawi, our clinics are churches on Sundays and our staff is mobile. We would not compromise our mission for Gospel outreach. As a result, all of our payroll subsidies and a majority of the free medications were quickly terminated (July 1st).

On January 24th, 2017, Nurse in Charge Amanda Oswalt emailed that “I was at the District Health Office (DHO) yesterday morning and I was turned away. The Medical Officers have stated that the District Health Office will not be distributing to any non-government health centers. There was no advance notice.” According to the *Malawi Star*, the government prohibits DHO officials from leaking plights about the severe medication shortages to the media. It is predicted there may only be enough inventory for a few months – mostly due to corruption. Our staff in Malawi continues to network with other international agencies such as USAID and the UN World Food Programme. Unfortunately, only the government provides supplies at no cost. Amanda Oswalt and Amanda Artz, our Clinic Administrator, strive to get the needed supplies for little or no cost. Unfortunately we must now use your donations to purchase the medications. If we choose not to purchase them, we will be like the government facilities without supplies and no longer trusted in the villages.

The termination has allowed our ex-pat staff, however, to make cost saving changes in practices and staffing. CAMM is grateful to Christian Aid and Relief, numerous individuals and groups such as yourselves that contribute financially. Obviously without your help, we would be closing our clinics. You allow God’s word to be preached to those most in need in both Zambia and Malawi.

2017-2018 will be a time for everyone associated with Central Africa Medical Mission to turn to the Lord in prayer for strength, patience and guidance. We give thanks for you and our dedicated staffs in Zambia and Malawi.

Linda Liesener (CAMM committee chair)

Angela Sievert (CAMM Contact Woman Coordinator)

St. Luke's Lutheran Church, Vassar, MI

March 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Ushers: 8:15 AM Paul Schultz* Mason Morley Bryan Troike Tom Borcharding Elder: Mike Clinesmith Altar: Katie Denniston & VACANT	10:45 AM Brad Rupprecht* Eric Korthals Paul Graubner Adam Sayles	Mondays David Atkins Finance: Tom Barnett* Ed Newsome Phil Pellar	1 Ash Wednesday CEO Operation Good News begins LES Taco Hot Lunch 5:00 pm CEO Soup Supper 6:30 pm LES Gr. K-8 sing 6:30 pm Lenten Worship 7:30 pm Choir rehearsal	2 12:20 pm 8th Graders to Tuscola Tech: leave school at 11:45 am 3:45 pm PS Catechism	3 LES Chapel w/MLS Staff Principals' Conference @ New Salem, Sebawaing CEO Fine Arts Fair set up	4 MLS Science & Fine Arts Fair PS Catechism 9:00 am
5 8:15 am Comm. Worship 9:30 am Bible Classes & SS 10:45 am Comm. Worship 12:00 pm MLS Booster Club VB Tourney 4:00 pm Bay Area Children's Choir Concert @ MLS	6 7:15 pm Comm. Worship 8:15 pm Trustees	7 3:45 pm Faculty Meeting 6:30 pm BOCE Mtg in RM 4	8 LES McDonald's Hot Lunch Lenten Worship Choir rehearsal 6:30 pm 7:30 pm	9 3:45 pm PS Catechism 6:30 pm Elders Mtg	10 BALL AD Meeting LES Chapel w/Pastor Balogh MLS Children's Theater	11 Telling the Next Generation Workshop @ Good Shepherd, Midland 9:00 am PS Catechism 9:45 am MLS High School Placement Testing 5:00 pm MLS Volunteer Appreciation Dinner 7:00 pm MLS Children's Theater
LES Science & Fine Arts Fair in the fellowship hall March 5-12						
12 LES Science & Art Fair in the Fellowship Hall ends today 8:15 am Worship 9:30 am Bible Classes & SS 10:45 am Worship	13 LES NO School - Mid-Winter Break 10:00 am Saginaw Study Club 7:15 pm Worship	14 6:30 pm Church Council	15 LES Chicken Tender Hot Lunch Lenten Worship Choir rehearsal 6:30 pm 7:30 pm	16 3:45 pm PS Catechism	17	18 9:00 am PS Catechism 4:30 pm LES BBB & Cheer Fan Game & Awards at Immanuel, Frankentrost
19 Door Offering - MLS College Tour Comm. Worship Bible Classes & SS Comm. Worship SS Nursery - Gr. 2 sing Church Newsletter deadline	20 7:15 pm Comm. Worship	21 7:30 pm Worship Committee	22 LES Pizza Hot Lunch WSC Soup & Sandwich Supper Lenten Worship Choir rehearsal 5:00 pm 6:30 pm 7:30 pm	23 3:45 pm PS Catechism	24 LES CARPOOL HOME LES Qtr 3 ends w/44 days 9:00 am NL Committee 11:30 am LES Early Dismissal	25 9:00 am LWMS Rally @ King of Kings, Frankentrost 9:00 am PS Catechism
26 8:15 am LES Gr. 6-8 sing 8:15 am Worship 9:30 am Bible Classes & SS 10:45 am Worship 2:00 pm Pinecar Derby @ church	27 LES Report Cards 10:00 am Thumb Circuit mtg at King of Kings, Frankentrost 7:15 pm Worship	28 6:30 pm CEO Mtg in RM 4	29 LES McDonald's Hot Lunch Lenten Worship Choir rehearsal 6:30 pm 7:30 pm	30 3:45 pm PS Catechism	31 Today's Christian Women's Retreat Mar. 31-Apr. 2	
LES CARPOOL ALL WEEK March 27-31						