



# October 2016 Newsletter



St. Luke's Lutheran Church  
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## **John 15:9: "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love."**

Family is important. We all know that. Children need parents to love and care for them. By living the way their parents taught, children give joy to their parents. Siblings help support one another in difficulty. There are many blessings each of us enjoys as a part of a family. We all can recognize that family is important: in our family we have people who are close to us and help us.

The relationship of God the Father to Jesus is even closer than that between a human father and his son. They are in perfect sync. Whatever the Father wills, Jesus does. Everything God commands, Jesus obeys. The love between God the Father and Jesus is shown in the closeness they have with each other. There is nothing that is hidden. There are no disagreements.

Jesus wants that same relationship with us. He wants us to be close to him. He wants our will and desires to match his. He wants us to obey his commands. He wants all of this because he loves us as His Father loves him. However, when it comes down to it, we find that our will and desires very often don't match his. When God commands, we rarely obey. Jesus wants that closeness, but we, as sinners, resist that closeness.

We are like the child who throws a tantrum. God says, "be holy as I am holy." We respond by stamping our feet and saying it's not fair. We don't want to be holy. Instead of remaining in God's love, we stray from it. We don't regularly receive God's blessings in Word and Sacrament. We become angry at God that his love is not what we expect or want. We pull away like disobedient children who don't realize that their parents' love is for their good.

To deal with a stubborn child, you need persistence. God's love is persistent to stubborn children who don't recognize his love. God continues to love us. He brings us close through Word and Sacrament. He shows his love in sending us a Savior from sin. He urges us to remain in that love, because it will always be there for us. God's love is great enough to remove all of our sins. God's love is persistent enough to call us back when we stray again and again.

We receive that love through our congregation: God loves us by blessing us through Word and Sacrament. Our brothers and sisters in Christ reflect His love in the way they support and encourage us. Each of us can reflect the love of God to our neighbor. Don't be far away from God's love; remain in it instead. We have a Heavenly Father who loves us persistently, in spite of our rebellion. He will keep you in that love forever, because there is nothing that can separate you from that love. God's love is constant and powerful, greater than our sin and anything that threatens us. You will remain in God's love because God's love never fails.

Vicar Timothy Leistekow

<p><b>To the members of St. Luke's</b></p> <p>Let me take this opportunity to flatter all of you. Your kindness and welcoming attitude to me as the new vicar, as well as to my wife, has been a great blessing to us both. This short note is simply to encourage you to continue in an attitude you already possess. Coming into a new or unfamiliar church can be daunting, especially if you haven't been to one in a while. Smiling faces and welcoming attitudes make that process easier. Here at St. Luke's we may be seeing some unfamiliar faces: people who are visiting our congregation and those who are looking for a new church home. It's important that those people feel welcome here. We want them to join us in hearing God's Word and singing His praise. Please continue to be as welcoming to those you don't recognize as you were with my wife and me. You never know how far a smile and a helpful attitude can go toward bringing someone nearer to the Word of God.</p>	<p><b>Worship Schedule Change</b></p> <p>There will be NO Monday evening worship service on October 3. Pastor and Vicar will be at the fall Pastor's Conference in Indian River. Please make note of this change. Regular Monday worship will resume October 10.</p>	<p><b>Can you help?</b></p> <p>The following people are counted as members of St. Luke's congregation, but we do not have contact information for them. Searching has turned up no leads, so we are asking for your help. If you recognize these names and have information that would help us find them, please speak with Kelly in the church office. We would love to reconnect with them! If no new information is found, we will remove the names from our membership list at the next Church Council meeting. Thank you for your help.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Michael Curtis Brady Hutchinson Scott Hutchinson Nicole Stevens Kristin Teschendorf</p>
<p><b>Communion Registration</b></p> <p>Please remember to announce for communion by using the cards on the desk in the narthex or by speaking to Pastor or Vicar prior to the service. This will greatly help with record keeping in the church office. Thanks!</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div>	<p><b>Mission Presentation</b></p> <p>On October 23, the Vicar and his wife will be giving a presentation on their work in China during the Bible class hour. They will talk about their experiences there and especially the ways in which they were able to show God's love to those who had never known it before. Please plan on joining us to learn more about an exciting mission field, as well as God's amazing work in that mission field.</p>	<p><b>Board of Trustees</b></p> <p>A handful of maintenance items were completed this month, the most visible being the repair of the fence along the parking lot. As the growing season winds down we thank those who maintained the church and school lawns, and those who kept the machines running smoothly. Now that we will be spending more time indoors, thank you to those who help keep those spaces clean and tidy. If you notice something that needs attention, please speak up so that it can be taken care of. Or, perhaps, since you noticed, you can pitch in and make it happen. These are our buildings, and we are privileged to take care of them. Thanks for your help!</p>

**Professional Conferences**

The Pastors of the Northern Conference of the Michigan District will meet for mutual encouragement and professional growth for two days, October 3-4. They will gather at Hope Lutheran Church in Indian River. Pastor Plocher will preach at the opening worship service. This time is important for both Pastor and Vicar to hone skills, to hear reports, and to discuss various matters in the ministry.

The Teachers of the Michigan District will meet for their annual conference over three days, October 5-7, at St. Paul's Lutheran Church and School in Livonia. Group presentations will be made and breakout sessions will cover current teaching strategies and practices. The teachers will encourage each other in their work and network regarding various situations they face. This valuable conference allows our three teachers to grow in their ministries.

**Hospitalized?**

Due to privacy regulations, area hospitals cannot share information with the church office when you or a loved one is hospitalized unless you specifically instruct them to do so. Often we do not hear that a member has been in the hospital until they or family members express disappointment at not receiving a visit. Please be proactive. Let us know in advance when at all possible. Call as soon as there is an emergency admittance. Pastor Plocher and Vicar Leistekow desire to visit and share God's Word with you and your loved ones at times like this.

**WLS Symposium**

Pastor Plocher attended a Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary on September 19-20. Hermeneutics is the study of how to approach the Bible. The papers that were given are available from Pastor, if you are interested in reading or discussing them. The time with fellow pastors was invigorating and the opportunity to be on the campus of the Seminary again was memorable. Thank you for making this continuing education opportunity available.

**College and Military Address Updates**

The church office continues to seek the current contact information for our members away at school or in the military. Family members, please submit mailing and email addresses as soon as possible. This allows us to send newsletters and other news to our members while they are away, and to notify the staff at WELS Campus Ministry and WELS Military Chaplaincy in order to best serve our members where they are. This is just another way we seek to serve our members away from home with the precious Word of Truth.

**Church Website**

Our church website: [vassarlutherans.org](http://vassarlutherans.org) is a source of information for all that is happening at church and school. You will find the most up to date calendars, as well as recent sermons and newsletters. If you have any questions or comments regarding the website, please direct them to Pastor or Vicar.

**Quarterly Voters Meeting**

On October 23 we will have our quarterly voters meeting. The agenda will be available in the church office by October 16. We will hold elections and review the work of the congregation. Put the date on the calendar! We will begin as close to noon as possible.

**Bible Information Classes**

Those interested in reviewing the basic teachings of the Bible are invited to our Bible Information Class. We have a group of nine people who are interested in learning about our congregation, and perhaps joining our confession. They meet on Thursdays at 7:00 pm in the Fellowship Hall. You are always welcome to join the conversation and Bible Study. We rejoice to have such a large class and lively discussion.

**Sunday Bible Class**

On Sundays between the services Pastor Plocher is teaching a Bible Class called "My Brother's Keeper." It shows us the importance of speaking to our family and friends who may be straying away from God's Word. That Word is the power of God for salvation, and we want as many people as possible to hear and learn it. For ourselves, we need the encouragement to be filled with the gospel and to speak out about its importance in our lives. Join us for this study of God's Word, and grow in the faith.

# Sunday School Page

## Lessons

The Sunday School lessons this year will work through an outline of Bible History stories. These lessons will serve as a foundation for our Sunday School children's knowledge of the Bible. In addition, the 7th and 8th graders are learning basic devotional skills to help them in their faith life in the future. We pray that God would bless them and their students through the study of God's Word.

## Singing Schedule

With Sunday School in full swing, we're looking forward to hearing the Sunday School children sing in our worship services. The first singing date for the Sunday School is October 6th. The lower grade children will be singing that Sunday during the late service. The upper grade children will be singing on October 27th, also during the late service.

## Sunday School Lessons for October

Oct. 2:  
The Tower of Babel  
Oct. 9: God Calls Abram  
Oct. 16: God Answers Abraham's Prayer  
Oct. 23: The Test of Abraham's Faith  
Oct. 30:  
Isaac and Rebekah

## Mission Offering

Every Sunday, the Sunday School students will have an opportunity to give an offering. The offering is collected during the week's opening devotion. The Sunday School offering is divided between funding the needs for our Sunday School materials and a mission chosen at the beginning of the Sunday School year.

This year's designated mission is Friends of China (FoC). FoC is a group that sends WELS members to China to teach English. While there, these teachers have the opportunity to live their faith and make relationships with Chinese people who are not familiar with Christianity. During their evenings and weekends, FoC teachers use the opportunities presented them to speak about Jesus with their new friends. Vicar and Calista Leistikow spent a year in Shanghai, China with FoC and will be giving a presentation on their time there at the end of October.

## Teacher's meeting

The Sunday School teacher's meetings will be held the last Tuesday of each month. The teachers have an opportunity to meet and discuss their upcoming lessons. They will also be able to support and encourage one another and talk about their approaches to teaching the children of our congregation. We all thank our Sunday School teachers for their hard work in preparing and teaching their lessons.

## Children's Christmas Service

The Children's Christmas Service will be on December 18th at 4:30 PM this year. While Christmas is still a long way off, the Sunday School will begin preparing before too long so they have ample time to be ready. In addition to regular practices during the Sunday School hour, children will also have practices on December 10th and 17th beginning at 10:30am.

## Teen Bible Class

The teen Bible class will start again the first Sunday in November. Vicar Leistikow will be leading the class to start. The teen Bible Class will be an opportunity for the young adults of our congregation to grow in faith and be equipped with God's Word to face the challenges all Christians must face.

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

## **Quarterly Voters Meeting**

The Third Quarter meeting of the Voters will take place at noon on October 23. This will be a time for elections and membership transactions. We hope to conduct the meeting efficiently and move along the agenda quickly. The agenda will be published shortly after the council meeting on October 11 and will be available in the church office for review.

We have scheduled an Open Forum the Sunday before the voters meeting to help move things along. During the Bible Class hour on October 16, we will have opportunity to hear the reports of the various boards and committees. All are invited to ask questions so that everyone is able to know what things are happening in the congregation. No action will be taken at the Open Forum, and our intention is to present information. We hope that many will be there.

If this format of Open Forum one week, and Voters Meeting the next week is successful, we benefit in two ways. First, more people will be able to hear the activity of the congregation so they are informed and involved. Second, the voters meetings will be shorter and more focused on the actions before them rather than reports. We invite your reaction and input as we seek to work together and build each other up in the kingdom of God.

## **How are the finances?**

It is a good question to ask. We all want to know how finances are going. Perhaps our intent to see the bottom line blinds us to the great things that have been happening at St. Luke's. With the beginning of a new school year, we have 43 students in our Lutheran School. Three of them are new students this year. We have a great opportunity to bring up the next generations in the instruction of the Lord!

Sunday School has also begun, and we had over 50 children attend the first day. We have four teachers and a bevy of substitutes to teach God's Word to our children. In Confirmation Classes, Pastor and Vicar are teaching 16 seventh and eighth graders the truths of Scripture. Four are in the Public School class, and twelve are at the school. In addition, 9 non-members are attending the Bible Information Classes along with two members.

Our worship attendance slipped over the summer months, but now we are set to regain our averages. We hope to have 250 people in worship each weekend this Fall. Only you can help make that happen!

Vicar Tim Leistikow has been a welcome addition to the work at St. Luke's. He has jumped in to teach and preach and make visits. As he becomes more comfortable, he will learn your names and serve you faithfully. God has given us a great blessing, and we hope to be a blessing to him and his wife, Calista.

With all those blessings to count, have you lost track of them? There are more: people served in the hospital, those visited at their homes, projects being completed, ideas being discussed, plans being made. The Lord our God has abundantly showered us with more than we could ask or imagine.

And the finances are also his blessing to us. No, we do not have an excess of cash lying around. But we have been given enough to do the work before us. The meter always marks negative in the internal borrowing line item, but it is not an overwhelming number. Our needs have grown with the addition of the vicar. Our giving is growing to meet the needs. There is room for more growth! We can stretch and give and support more. God has not been stingy! Isn't it a great joy to be involved in the work of St. Luke's, where Jesus is our focus and his word is our activity? Thank you for your eager and generous support of gospel work. Pray that the blessings continue to increase and grow, and that you can be a blessing to many. We thank God for his never ending mercy in Christ Jesus our Lord.

## Principal's Address

At an early age, the children of our school learn three Latin phrases and their meanings. Those three phrases are "Sola gratia", "Sola fide", and "Sola Scriptura". They mean "by grace alone", "by faith alone", and "by the scriptures alone". These three phrases come to us by way of Martin Luther. Through Luther's instructional material (especially Luther's Small Catechism) you and I are able to understand more clearly how we may worship and serve our Savior. We know that we are saved by *grace alone* through *faith alone* in that Savior Jesus. We know that such an awesome truth can come through *God's Word alone*, and thank God for it!

October is the month of the Reformation of the church. The children of the upper grades of our school study the life of Martin Luther who lived in the 15th and 16th centuries. We marvel at the work God the Holy Spirit did through him. May we and our families realize this great gift of God to His church, and may we respond with our hearts and souls and minds to give Him the glory this Reformation Day, October 31<sup>st</sup> (celebrated at St. Luke's on Sunday, October 30<sup>th</sup> this year).

### Teacher, why do we memorize?

Each year one of my students will come up with what he or she believes is the question of the year- "Why do we have to memorize this?" As parents, I am sure that you have often been asked the same question. The circumstances may be somewhat different, but the question is still the same.

How did you answer? Did you defer the question and say, "Because your teacher has assigned it?" Or did you sight some child developmental book that explains how memorization opens brand new pathways in the brain that help a child learn? Or did you take the time to teach a valuable spiritual lesson?

We Lutherans believe and teach that memorizing God's Word can and does lead to a closer relationship to God. Our faith is strengthened and our understanding is broadened when we memorize. How many times has a Bible verse or a hymn stanza drifted into your day and stuck there reminding you of the greatness of God? A memorized verse or a catechism explanation brings answers to the why's and how's of God's plan of salvation. As we feel our sorrows, these verses give our souls healing and hope. As we struggle with sin's effects in our lives, a memorized hymn verse or the very Words of God are on our tongues and in our hearts.

It won't be very long now and we will be listening to the children recite their Christmas service parts. Once again students will be memorizing the familiar songs and the well-loved words of Luke. Old Testament promises will ring out again reminding us that God keeps every one of His promises. Years from now these same children will be listening to their own children sing and say those exact same words. Joyfully, along with the rest of us, they will whisper those same words as their children proclaim the gospel message from the front of church. Memorizing God's Word unites generations of God's people on earth as they worship their God.

Memorizing the Word - It is God's unseen but not forgotten gift to His church on earth!

**St. Luke's Lutheran School News****Enrollment for 2016-17 @ 44 Students**

Even though our opening enrollment in the last five years has dropped from 51 children in 2009 to **44 students this year**, our school still remains a Lutheran stronghold which teaches our children to live the gospel of Jesus Christ. We gained two new 6<sup>th</sup> graders this year. Both students come from non-member families. God-willing we all will experience the joy of introducing these families to the gospel message as it is taught in our Lutheran school and church. We transferred one and graduated one. To the great sadness of our mission-minded First Graders, we have no Kindergarteners at this time. Studying our cradle roll we may experience rollercoaster-like enrollments for the next two to three years. A unique off-shoot of that study, however, is that we have gained enrollment in the middle grades (Gr 3-6). We have had eleven transfers from the public schools in the last three years. What a great opportunity it is for us to serve other families who not only see St. Luke's Lutheran School as a source of a great education, but also as a place where their children can learn of Jesus every day.

Many of our sister schools in the Thumb and in our Northern Principals' Conference currently find themselves struggling with enrollment numbers. Many questions are being asked about why this is happening. The answers are **not** that these schools don't have excellent academic standards or that they are teaching something contrary to God's Word. The answers seem to be multiple in nature. The economy in Mid-Michigan is a shadow of what it once was and several of our families have moved out of the area. Families no longer have multiple children. (St. Luke's Lutheran School mirrors the national average of just over 1.5 children per family unit.) There are other worldly distractions that divert our St. Luke's families from sending their own children to their own school. (Sadly, our enrollment still represents **about one half** of St. Luke's cradle roll.) And finally, there is an apathy for the Word of God that seems to have settled into our people – less and less people seem to take the time to hear God's good news of sins forgiven regularly in our services.

Yet in opposition to all these challenges, God the Holy Spirit still works through our Lutheran elementary schools, just as He does through our very own school. In preparing congregation members and future church leaders who will know God's Word well, God's Word will be taught each day in St. Luke's classrooms, and our parents' desire for their children to receive a Lutheran elementary education will be fulfilled.

We pray that more of St. Luke's families will bring their children to our school where they learn of God's great love for us and hear of His preserving power evident in the secular subjects. Our Lord has not only given us much more work to do among our own people, but He has placed us in such a position in our community to tell others about the learning that takes place at our school. Dear families of St. Luke's, speak to those who do not send their children to St. Luke's Lutheran School. Encourage them to consider their school for their children. You are our best advertisers!

**Tutors hired at St. Luke's School**

One of the blessings we received with the many new students to our school is the opportunity to teach them the Word of God. These students are very new to the Lutheran parochial school system and are proving that they need additional time and help to rise to the academic standards of our school.

Your Board of Christian Education (BOCE) has agreed, that in order to maintain our high standard of religious and academic excellence, we needed to provide tutors for our students. They recognized that our teacher time is very limited and that to insure more success in assimilating our new students, additional help was needed – immediately. In a special BOCE meeting the men of the Board decided to hire our two WELS certified substitutes. They provide two ½ days of instruction each week. Along with our teachers, their goal is to help develop and carry out a plan to tutor any of the middle or upper grade students needing additional instruction. Your

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church council voted in its September meeting to add \$3000 to the substitute budget to provide for this new service to our children. By doing this, all other originally-budgeted substitute monies were kept intact so that they may continue to give principal release and conference time, provide substitutes for our outdoor education programs, and secure professional and personal substitute time for our three teachers.

This action will be reviewed by the congregation's strategic planning committee as it looks at our congregation's one- and five-year ministry plans. This additional aid will give us the planning time and physical assistance needed to enable our school to serve all of our families - those who are long-standing members of our school and those newly acquired – with the very best Lutheran elementary school education can this congregation can give.

### **Mission Offerings for 2016-17**

This year our school chapel offerings will go to three distinct locations. Collection for the first trimester (3 month period) has already begun. It has been designated for the *Friends of China* outreach program. Vicar and Mrs. Leistekow have traveled to China. We hope they will be able to make a Friday chapel presentation about the work that goes on in world's most populous country. Our current trimester offering has already exceeded the \$100 mark. The children really seem motivated this year to help with their offerings. We are well on our way to reach our goal of \$300 per trimester.

The second mission offering will go to the WELS *Mission to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing*. This is the branch of our synod that helps those in our synod with this disability with teaching sign language, printing large print materials, and creating services specially designed for outreach to this unique group of believers.

The third offering will go to **St. Luke's Congregation – folding chairs**. This offering will allow our school children the opportunity to contribute chairs to replace many of the older chairs at church.

God grant us willing spirits to generously give to these funds. May these offerings be greatly blessed by the Lord. May we, in bringing them, give God all glory and praise!

### **Standardized Tests Take Place**

Late September and early October is the season for the WELS annual standardized testing. St. Luke's Lutheran School joins the majority of our synod's elementary schools in taking the Terra Nova 3 Standardized Tests. This testing provides feedback to our school families, the Board of Christian Education (BOCE), the faculty, and our synod on the progress our children are making in their academic careers. Our parents use the tests to encourage their children in their learning and to discuss their children's progress with our teachers. The BOCE uses the test results to monitor the strength of the school' curriculum and instruction. Our teachers use the test results as a diagnostic tool for lesson and curriculum preparation and as talking points with parents.

### **In Christ Alone the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gift**

Still celebrating God's great love for us, renewed efforts have been made to complete the offering for school campus pavilion. Enough monies have been gathered (\$3343.55) for us to make more a careful study about placement and size of such a pavilion which will not only be a gathering place for our children during the school year, but will also be a place to share with congregation members at Harvest Festival, School Picnic, and other congregation events.

Please watch for more information coming out in the next six months about ways you can get involved with the construction and completion of the building project.

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**Fall Sports**

**Soccer** - Our fall sports are underway. Under the guidance of head coach Carla Schultz and her assistant Jess VanLue, the team has battled to a record of one and one – with three games left in the BALL League.

**Thank you, coaches, for teaching us and training us in the “other” fall sport!**

**Cross Country** - Michigan Lutheran Seminary hosted a cross country meet on Wednesday, September 14 at Wickes Park in Saginaw. Eight children from our school participated in three student divisions: grades 3-4 (1/2 mile), 5-6 (1 mile), and 7-8 (1 ½ mile). Four of the seven placed in the **top three in their divisions**.

Here are the results: Collin Fall 1<sup>st</sup> place, Sam Korthals 2<sup>nd</sup> place, and Carter Korthals 3<sup>rd</sup> place for the Boys 7-8<sup>th</sup> Grade 2400 meter run. Silas Schultz 3<sup>rd</sup> place for the Boys 5-6<sup>th</sup> Grade 1600 meter run. Brayden Strunk 2<sup>nd</sup> place and Caiden Bragg 5<sup>th</sup> place in the Boys 3-4<sup>th</sup> Grade 800 meter run. Sara Finkbeiner 5<sup>th</sup> place for the Girls 7-8<sup>th</sup> Grade 2400 meter run. Haley Strunk 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the Girls 5-6<sup>th</sup> Grade 1600 meter run. Eve Schultz 5<sup>th</sup> place and Phoebe Schultz 6<sup>th</sup> place in the Girls 3-4<sup>th</sup> Grade 800 meter run. Thanks team for representing our school in this great sport! Thanks to the parents who went to cheer on our athletes!

**Girls' Basketball** - The girls will soon begin their practices for the 2016 basketball season which runs from early-October through mid-December. Contrary to the Michigan high school season, our Bay Area Athletic League has chosen to stay with the old system of sports, scheduling girls' basketball in the fall and coed volleyball season in the late winter / early spring. By doing this, the league hopes to avoid the competition in scheduling refs and gyms during the heavy winter basketball season. The alternative season would force us to have our boys and girls playing four games a night. So far, our League's current scheduling does not seem to affect our girls' basketball program.

**We are currently in search of a girls' B-team basketball coach.** If you are a member of St. Luke's church, in good standing and consider yourself a person who can take on the unique challenge of teaching 4-7<sup>th</sup> graders the sport of basketball while coaching with Christian values, give Mr. Lange a call. We need you.

The girls will have only a B team this year due to the limited number of older girls. They will have two home games, a long road trip to Emanuel, Tawas, as part of their three away games, and a B-team tournament on their schedule. Our school office is still working on getting the gym rented for the games so please watch your bulletin for updates on the dates and times. Come out and cheer for the Lady Redhawks!

**Boys' Basketball** - Looking ahead to the boys' basketball season we will be fielding A and B-teams this year comprised of 4-8<sup>th</sup> grades. Coaches John Korthals and Brad Main will be coaching our teams again. We have cycled a fine group of boys onto the A-team this year – good talent, good leadership, and great attitudes. It should be a great season when it starts in January. We have many younger boys anxious to continue their basketball careers as 4-6<sup>th</sup> graders so B-team ball should be really fun this year, too!

**Cheerleading** – In December we will take a survey of our Grades 4-8 girls to see if we have enough interest among the girls to form a cheer squad this year. Mrs. Lange is available to discuss the responsibilities that go along with being a participant or coach of this team.

**Thanks to God for Volunteers**

Your faculty would like to thank all of you who volunteer at the school. From the man who takes water samples for the State of Michigan to the man who makes sure we have a functioning hot water heater, from the woman who weed-eats the playground to the man who sharpens the mower blades, from the grandma who waters our new trees to those who work pulling weeds on their hands and knees, to the man who retrofits desks to the woman who runs errands for the school, **we couldn't have such a great school without you!**

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**Your Prayers Requested**

Finally, thank you for your prayers! Prayers for the parents who bring their children to our school, for those very precious souls who learn here, for the teachers who teach here, for the volunteers who aid us in instruction, for those who run the school office, for those who run the Board of Christian Education and the Christian Education Organization, for all whose hearts are set on Christian education. Pray that they remain firm in the Lord, strong in their resolve, and faithful to their service to Him. AMEN.

**World Mission News – Russian Mission Update September 2016**

Happy New Year! Each fall is a new beginning. For the Wolfgramms it is especially busy. Missionary Ben Foxen took a call back to the United States in a home mission setting in Peoria, AZ, and the Board for World Missions (BWM) has decided not to send a second missionary back onto the Siberian mission field. The BWM wants to concentrate more of their mission dollars on training the next generation of Russian pastors and securing a single, more permanent place of worship for the Akademgorodok and Novosibirsk congregations.

This year Luke has a lot of administrative work: helping congregations with their budgets and other planning, figuring out how to train future seminary students as head of the seminary, resolving legal and property issues, dealing with the new religious laws of the country, parsing the mission finances, and finding helpful ways *Daylight in Russia* helpers can serve. He'll continue to assist Pastor Viktor (Sevastopol, Crimea) in his ministry. He'll begin his program of encouragement and assistance with Pastor Vladimir (Chelyabinsk, Russia). He'll spend a lot of time listening to and encouraging congregational presidents, pastors, deaconesses, lay leaders, and others as they study the exciting possibility of a two congregation amalgamation and building project. Jennifer manages Luke's frenetic schedule along with the children's busy activities calendar – she is a very special gift from God to the mission field!

The kids have begun another year of school. Christina is in 11<sup>th</sup> grade (her last year before heading back to the States to attend Martin Luther College); Katie in 10<sup>th</sup>; Peter in 5<sup>th</sup>. Luke and Peter were bachelors for the latter part of August and early September while both girls took their ACTs back in Nebraska. Everyone is now "back home" and the new Russian school year is off to a good start. Our entire mission team is thankful for the wonderful school and teachers the Wolfgramm children work with in Berdsk.

**Prayer Requests:**

Please pray for our Russian pastors, deaconesses, congregational presidents, and other leaders.

Please pray for Wolfgramms who are once again the only ex-patriots on the Russian mission field.

Please pray for our new *Daylight in Russia* teachers.

Please pray for the two new seminary students who will begin their formal study under Missionary Luke Wolfgramm

Please pray for the children of our Iskitim congregation.

Please pray that the political situation would improve between the United States and Russia.

Pray that we would be allowed to continue our work in peace and quiet.

Please pray for the Sevastopol congregation, Pastor Viktor, and his wife.

Pray for the new Chelyabinsk congregation as it enters the Russian Lutheran Church.

## CEO Happenings

Happy fall, y'all! School is back in the swing of things and the CEO is ready to host fun events and run programs for the school year. Every year the parents of our school, as part of the CEO (Christian Education Organization), volunteer their time & talents to make our school year a success. Keep an eye in the coming church newsletter for all the fun we will be having over on WELS Lane.

To get our school year started off, we will be running our first service "operation" called Operation Giving Thanks. Kelli Wilson, Missy Augsburger, and Mary Campbell will be heading up this event where we collect items for the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Student Food Bank. Our Scholastic Fall Book Fair will also be held in Room 4 of the school the week of October 24-28th. And one last fun event will be our annual Fall Harvest Fest! Be on the lookout for more information on all these fun October happenings!

## School Anniversary Project Reminder

The Board of Christian Education and the CEO would like to take a moment to remind everyone that we do not want to forget that we continue to work on an awesome project which needs your help! Funds continue to be collected for the school pavilion that we'd really love to get started yet this fall. We need about \$3,000 more to fund the project as we are over half way there.

As you may recall, the school pavilion was recommended and approved to be built after the funds were raised in honor of last year's St. Luke's Lutheran Elementary School (LES) 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The pavilion will add additional beautification and functionality to our school campus. You can easily make a donation towards the project by using the Special Donation Envelope attached to this newsletter, writing in your wishes in the blank line at the bottom. If you have any questions about the pavilion, please see Mr. Lange or Marc Augsburger.

## Altar Flowers

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



## Synod School Happenings

Tune in to [www.mlc-wels.edu](http://www.mlc-wels.edu) on **Sunday, Oct. 2 at 4PM** to view the **MLC Wind Symphony** concert online.

**You can regularly view chapel services at synod schools at the following websites:**

[www.mlsem.org](http://www.mlsem.org) at 9:23 AM weekdays

[www.mlc-wels.edu](http://www.mlc-wels.edu) in the 11:30 AM and 8:15 PM each weekday.

[www.wls.net](http://www.wls.net) at 10:20 AM weekdays

All chapel services are archived at these sites to be viewed at your convenience.

Sporting events and concerts are also livestreamed regularly. Check out the websites and support the students considering full-time ministry in our churches and schools.



**Planning Ahead**

The Church Council will be meeting to extend our plans for the future as we prepare a budget for 2017. The biggest items have not changed: what will we do with the pastoral work of our congregation? Will we help our pastor with the vicar program for another year? Are there retired men who could assist with our needs? Can we call for a second pastor? We also have increasing needs at our school with new students and the instruction each individual desires.

We need to have a plan in place very shortly for how to approach our needs and a direction to walk together. Hopefully initial information will be available at the October Open Forum and Voters Meeting. We seek to walk together in unity as we serve our God in the best ways possible.



The Lutheran mobile clinic in Africa is teaming up with Teethsavers, a Christian non-profit, which comes to the Malawi clinic sites to provide free dental checks for children under 6 years. They also provide toothpaste, but no toothbrushes. We will collect toothbrushes until Oct. 18th. There is a box on the card table.

The Fall Rally for LWMS is Oct. 22nd at St. Paul's, Mayville. We will be collecting for LWMS World and Home Missions starting Sept 25th until Oct 18th.

The Thumb circuit LWMS is promoting the 2017 Prayer Calendar. A brochure is hanging on the bulletin board. You may order on your own or give me your name and the Spiritual Growth Laywoman will send in an order with all the other churches after the rally.

**Church Library**

During October we celebrate the Reformation. There are a number of books in our church library for you to borrow as you review the life and writings of Martin Luther. Please check them out and enjoy!

We are still looking for a few missing books. Please check your shelves at home to make sure you have returned any borrowed books. We will be trying to replace those which are permanently missing. Donations for that purpose are greatly appreciated!



**Christian Aid and Relief**

You will notice a special envelope in your box of weekly offering envelopes. The WELS group Christian Aid and Relief sends emergency funds to places hit by floods or tornadoes or other natural disasters. They also help individuals who are in great need. The goal of their work is to bring people closer to God's Word, so the funds are used by local congregations to reach out to their neighbors with physical help in a time of need, and to build connections for the proclamation of the gospel for their spiritual need. Your donations will be sent to Christian Aid and Relief for use at their discretion.

**Bill Pay Option**

When you consider how you will give your regular and generous gifts to the Lord, you have electronic options. You can use Bill Pay from your financial institution to send your offerings to St. Luke's. Just put in the mailing address and a date, and they will mail a check to us. When it comes, it will be placed in the safe and counted with the next Sunday's offering. This way you can be regular with your gifts and avoid the hassle of writing a check and remembering the envelope.

**Financial Update  
August 2016**

Income           \$ 35,482  
Expenses       \$ 31,209  
                      \$ 4,273

\*Monthly budgeted need is \$36,865.

**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.
- St. Luke’s Roof Fund—This fund allows the congregation to pay off the loan at Frankenmuth Credit Union for the new church roof.

**Pastoral Acts**

**Received by Profession of Faith:**  
Cindy Reed  
9-13-16

**Transfer In:**  
Timothy and Calista Leistekow from Trinity, South Mequon, WI  
9-13-16

**Transfer Out:**  
Micah Plocher to Abiding Grace, Covington, GA  
9-13-16

**Release by request:**  
Jason Vincent (Rhea, Asher, Lyvia)  
Victor Brunner  
9-13-16

**Remove (No address):**  
Lori and Serena Kukulski  
Clifford Aulbert  
9-13-16

**Remove (No contact):**  
Heidi Best (Josie)  
Tyler Best  
Jonathan Briggs  
Sandra Cobb  
Kyle Cypher  
Rachel Engelhart-Gray  
Rosalee Fox  
Jason Gray  
Jeremy Hood  
Joshua Hood  
Kevin Jobson  
Todd Kukulski  
Darcy Letts (Alexis Bigelow, Destinee Greer)  
Howard Perry  
Laurene Sabo  
Larry Smith, Sr.  
Larry Smith, Jr. (Dawson)  
9-13-16

**Treasurer's Update  
August 2016**

Budgetary Offerings: \$35,481.63  
Budgetary Expenses: \$31,208.50  
Net Income: \$4,273.13

Our General Budget Checkbook Balance as of 9/15/2016: -\$8,622.70, which reflects our internal borrowing.

The Rainy Day Fund Balance: \$15,349.00

The School Roof Loan Balance: \$37,656.00

Respectfully submitted,  
Bill Dudewicz, Treasurer

**Memorials and Special Gifts**

A memorial was received for the Rainy Day Fund in loving memory of Ralph Muter from David & Theresa Atkins.

