

WAITING FOR GLORY

The day is coming when the church now invisible on earth will be fully visible in heaven. Don't you wonder what it will look like? who will be in it? how will it be different?

First of all, might we be surprised as to who is in God's church? John saw a "great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb" (Revelation 7:9). In heaven we will see people we know and people we have never met, people who look and speak like us, and people who are far different. From the east and the west, the north and the south, they will have come to stand before the throne and in front of the Lamb, who shed his blood for them.

Might we also be surprised at the complete unity of God's church in heaven? Here on earth there are differences and divisions. Yes, we want unity even here on earth. We pray for, long for, and work for agreement in teaching and practice. In heaven it will be so. Knowledge and understanding will be complete. Mind and faith will be made perfect. The image of God will be restored fully in each of us. And we will be as Adam and Eve once were, knowing God's will completely and following it fully.

How will God's church in heaven be different? John again gives us a hint. He writes, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away" (Revelation 21:3,4). How do we describe such perfect joy and peace? Maybe we have to do what John did and use the negative. Gone will be all that caused our tears in this world. No more sin means no more temptation. No more troubles that sin once brought into the world. No more death or mourning or crying or pain. The old has passed away. The new has come.

We can't fully imagine what standing in God's church in heaven will be like. Perhaps our first response when we get there will be to exclaim, "I can't believe what I'm seeing!"

Taken from the devotional series, *For Living Saints*, published by Northwestern Publishing House

NEW MEMBER WELCOME

We are blessed to have with us a number of new members who've yet to be officially welcomed! Well, no more! We'll officially remedy that on Sunday, November 6th after THE service. We'll enjoy ONE beautiful, outdoor worship service in the courtyard (a day after clean-up, everything should look fantastic!) and then we'll gather for a fall-festival welcome gathering. We'll provide the hamburgers and hotdogs, we simply ask that you plan to bring a salad, dessert, or something simple to share. **The service that day will be held at 9:30am** which will give us time to do a little set-up before lunch at 11:00am. Please be sure to join us for this very special day!

Daylight Savings time ends on November 6th! Don't forget to change your clocks or you will be really early for church!

READING BETWEEN THE WINES

Reading Between the Wines will discuss the final sections (Parts 4, 5 and the Epilogue) of **The Warmth of Other Suns** in Fellowship Hall on Monday, November 21st. Our meeting is from 10:00 AM until Noon, and all Hope members and guests are invited to join us.

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SUPPORT

Hi Everyone,

The fall workday is Saturday, November 5, from 8AM till noon. Please consider joining the crew, even if you can only stay a short time. There are many projects from large to small, and many hands make work light. I would like to say thank you in advance to everyone who comes out and lends a hand in keeping our church and campus looking good.

The outdoor church cross project continues. The final design is complete and now is going to the fabricator for a quote. If the council agrees on the quote, it will be made and powder coated. After that it should be installed and able to withstand the weather better.

We are still in the process of reaching out to different landscaping companies to give us estimates and ideas on sprucing up our campus.

The car gate at the entrance to the campus has been repaired and is fully operational again.

A quick update regarding Smart Start preschool. The current director and her business partner have completed the acquisition of Smart Start from Amber, and it is now called Bee Kind preschool. Other than having new owners, nothing else has changed.

As always, please consider volunteering for lawn maintenance. If you feel this is something you can do, please get ahold of me or Ted V.

God Bless
Tim A

LWMS

Five women from Hope traveled To Lodi for the Redwood Circuit Rally earlier in October. Guest speakers Gary & Beth Evans from Central African Medical Missions CAMM talked at length about the missions and their accomplishments. One thing that is very different there is the fact that all those who are going to be seen by the medical professions come to the clinic at the same time; they just wait their turn. Gary has been able to get funds and do much renovating of the facilities as well as building “Out houses”. Bricks are inexpensive but wood is expensive so those “out houses” have no seats. (We encountered this in some of the camp grounds in Europe in the 60’s.)

During the year our Circuit, made up of 13 Churches, had offerings totaling \$4,696.90. These were distributed in the following way: Central office (25%) \$1174.24, World Mission (37.5%) \$1761.33 going to Philippine’s Projects and Home Mission (37.5%) \$1761.33 going to Bible Study Material for Children & Adults. The working fund balance is \$1165.00. The working fund is primarily used to pay for speaker’s stipend & transportation.

WELS has a goal to plant 100 Missions in 10 years 203-2033. Gifts may be given to this project making the check payable to WELS and mailing to WELS, Attn: Gift Processing, N16W23377, Waukesha WI53188.

Spring Rally will be at St. Mark’s on April 15, 2023. Pastor Kolander will be the guest speaker.

Mary Ann F, Reporter

TOGETHER



News from the WELS

October 2022
Website: www.wels.net

October 5, 2022

NEW EXECUTIVE EDITOR FOR FORWARD IN CHRIST

After 16 years of faithful service as executive editor of Forward in Christ, Rev. John Braun has announced his retirement, effective Dec. 31. During those 16 years, Braun has overseen a number of improvements in the synod's official magazine. We are grateful for his service and pray for God's blessings in his retirement.

Rev. James Pope has accepted the call from the Conference of Presidents to succeed Braun as executive editor. Pope will be installed tomorrow, Wed., Oct. 5, during the regular fall meeting of the Conference of Presidents at the WELS Center for Mission and Ministry, Waukesha, Wis. Braun will continue in his role until the end of December, but Pope will begin work immediately, working with Braun to enable a smooth transition.

Pope was born and raised in Racine, Wis., the youngest of three boys. He received his education at Northwestern Prep (1973), Northwestern College (1977), and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary (1981). He and his wife, Cathy, have two grown children, Ashley and Jeremy.

Pope brings a variety of experiences to his ministry. After graduating from the seminary, he was assigned to St. Matthew, Milwaukee, where he served 7 years. After that he served 12 years at Peace, Bradenton, Fla., before taking a call to Martin Luther College (MLC), New Ulm, Minn., where he taught history, theology, and staff ministry courses. He retired from MLC in 2021.

Readers of Forward in Christ may recognize Pope's name because he served as a contributing editor to the magazine, writing the popular "Light for our path" column from 2014–2019. At the same time, he served WELS by answering questions submitted online through the synod's website.

The position of executive editor of Forward in Christ is a part-time position. Pope will also soon begin serving a six-month, part-time retirement call to St. Mark, Leesburg, Fla.

We pray that God will bless him as he carries out this important responsibility.

Serving with you in Christ,
WELS President Mark Schroeder

WELS CHRISTIAN AID AND RELIEF RESPONDS TO HURRICANE IAN

Hurricane Ian made landfall in Florida on Sept. 28 as a powerful Category 4 storm. Rev. Dan Sims, director of WELS Christian Aid and Relief, provides an update on how WELS congregations were affected and on current relief efforts in those areas.

On Oct. 3, 2022, a four-person assessment team from WELS Christian Aid and Relief arrived in Sarasota, Fla. They met with Rev. Marty Mielke, the secretary of the South Atlantic District and "point man" for disaster relief operations following Hurricane Ian. Mielke has been in regular communication with the pastors and congregational leaders in the district. He gave the team an overview of the situation in south Florida. The team plans to spend two days visiting WELS congregations in the area; assessing their needs; and planning the best ways to utilize money, volunteers, and other resources to help those who are affected.

Congregations to the north and in the immediate Tampa area received the least damage. WELS churches in Odessa, Tampa, Clearwater, Valrico, Seminole, and Parrish were largely untouched with only a few downed trees and light flooding. Risen Savior in Lakewood Ranch sustained significant roof damage. Ascension in Sarasota has some roof and soffit damage as well as a 40-foot palm tree on the roof.

Congregations and communities farther south were hit the hardest. At Prince of Peace in Englewood, the church's cupola was breached, causing water to soak the sanctuary and pews. Christ the King in Port Charlotte received roof and water damage, causing part of the ceiling to collapse. Bethany in North Fort Myers is going to need a new roof and has a large amount of downed timber and brush on the property. At Crown of Life in Fort Meyers the roof on the

gymnasium was severely damaged and water entered the sanctuary. The church and school at Abiding Love in Cape Coral sustained roof damage; water also penetrated into the offices, hallways, classrooms, kitchen, and fellowship hall. Portions of the ceilings have collapsed.

We are happy to report that among our members, no injury or loss of life has been reported. Praise God for his mercy!

Many offers of help have come in from individuals and organizations across the synod. Thank you so much! Again, we ask for your patience as we prioritize and plan. The best way for you to help at this time is to give a financial gift. You can do that by going to wels.net/CARgift or mailing a check to WELS, N16W23377 Stone Ridge Drive, Waukesha, WI 53188, and designating your gift to “Disaster Relief.”

Small, local efforts to provide needed supplies and clear debris have begun. Christian Aid and Relief has already provided \$10,000 to the South Atlantic District to purchase supplies, generators, and tarps.

It would be easy to look at this disaster as only that—a terrible storm that caused tremendous damage and loss. If we take a closer look, we will see that the Lord is using Ian to remind us of what’s really important and to give us the opportunity to imitate the compassion of Christ as we love and serve one another and those around us. Please continue to pray.

WISCONSIN LUTHERAN SEMINARY ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM HELD

Nearly 400 people attended Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary’s (WLS) annual fall symposium on Sept. 19-20, either virtually or on campus in Mequon, Wis. Attendees heard three papers presented on the topic of compassion ministry.

Dr. Keith Wessel, professor at Martin Luther College, presented an essay on the biblical basis for Christian compassion. Christ’s compassion for sinners, demonstrated in the sacrifice he offered for all, moved early Christians to love and serve their fellow believers. They may not have established a highly organized ministry of compassion, but their sincere love took concrete action to help those in need.

Dr. Glen Thompson, professor emeritus at Asia Lutheran Seminary, presented a historical overview of Christian compassion through the centuries—from Constantine to the present time. The Christian church historically showed compassion for the hurting because of Christ’s love for them, and not exclusively, or even primarily, as an opportunity to share the gospel with them. Too often, compassion ministry has been considered valuable only insofar as it serves as “a bridge to telling others about the Savior.” It may be that, but a Christian congregation wants to serve out of love for the neighbor, to the glory of God.

Rev. Ryan Kolander, pastor at Palabra de Vida Lutheran Church, Detroit, Mich., presented an essay on creating a balanced culture of compassion in today’s current contexts of ministry. He addressed the pitfalls and fears facing those who desire to help the hurting in their community. Compassion ministry begins with listening to people and serving them in a responsible and meaningful way. The Lord has given us the opportunity to love others as he has loved us.

The archive of the Symposium essays is available at wisluthsem.org.

A LOOK AT THE WELS NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON LUTHERAN LEADERSHIP

Hear from students at Carroll University Campus Ministry as they are interviewed by Rev. Donn Dobberstein on roadblocks they run into, challenges to their faith, and possible things congregations could be doing to support them.

Come to the WELS National Conference on Lutheran Leadership this January to talk more about topics like faith challenges for our young people today. Young adults are encouraged to attend and join in the discussion. Learn more at lutheranleadership.com.

GOD is here

By Pastor Mike Novotny

January 8, 2020

The other day I asked my friend Katie, “Who would be the most life-changing person to walk through that door and be here with us?” Katie leaned in and muttered, “I’m supposed to say Jesus, right? . . .

Because I'm thinking about someone delivering sushi. . . . But I love dolphins too. Can a dolphin show up?" "You bet," I said. "How about a dolphin swims through that door with a rainbow roll on its dorsal fin?" And Katie beamed with excitement.

I have the same spiritual problem as Katie. I know the technical answer to my question—the greatest joy and peace and rest are found in Jesus. But what really gets my heart going is something else. In other words, I believe God is here, but I forget that *GOD* is here. I bet you forget that too.

Which is why we need to eavesdrop on the angels. In Isaiah 6:3, the angels shouted, "**Holy! Holy! Holy.**" *Holy* means "set apart," "wonderfully different." The angels preached, "You think sunsets are good? and babies smiling? and puppy videos? and last-second field goals? and a new boat? You should see GOD! GOD is holy! He's even better! This is the GOD of love, of forgiveness, of mercy, the GOD who came into the world to show us grace. This is the GOD who created mountains and sunsets and water and waves. This is the GOD who invented colors and sound and taste buds. This is not some dusty God from a theological textbook. This is the GOD of glory! And, because of the cross of Jesus, this GOD is here with us!

Timeofgrace.org