

THE LIFE

Our Savior's tomb is empty! He is risen!

Recently I read an article on an improved way to do CPR. We all know what that technique is, don't we? It's what to do when someone's heart has stopped beating. So far I haven't had to use this method. Hopefully I'll remember it so that when I need it, I can possibly help save someone's life.

When Jesus calls himself the life, he isn't referring to my physical life. Of course, he is also the Great Physician of my body, the One behind all the medical techniques and marvels of today. With these words, however, he is referring to spiritual life. And he plainly points this out when he continues, "I am . . . the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6). Get the point? Without Jesus, people are spiritually dead beyond the point of resuscitation. They still walk and talk, work and play, marry and bury, but as dead people. When God looks at them, he sees only spiritual corpses bound in unbelief for hell's bonfires, not people heading for his heaven.

But just think what we have in Jesus. Because of him, we know that life is more than a progression of days and months and years. It's an eternity with our loving God that begins already in part here on earth and reaches its fullness in heaven. Because of Jesus, I know that life is not just something to be lived out, but to be lived for him in loving service.

Because of Jesus, I know that my grave will have two doors, not just the one marked "Entrance" but also the one labeled "Exit." When my Savior says he is the life, he means more than that he will show me the life.

He means that he is my only source of eternal life.

How can we be sure? Doesn't the Easter season remind us so vividly? Our Savior's tomb is empty! He is risen! He is risen indeed! He has canceled our sin, conquered death, and cracked open heaven's doors for us. In our Savior's resurrection is divine proof of sin's pardon and heaven's hope. He is the life, and only in him do we have the life that counts.

We know that Jesus lives. He is the life. We marvel at his wondrous love.

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

HIS FINAL STEPS

The Lenten Series for 2023 is "His Final Steps." This series ponders the significance of the people and places on Jesus' resolute final steps to the cross and three days later, His first steps from the tomb.

March 1st His Final Steps Led to A Fig Tree
Pastor Chris Hoppe

March 8th His Final Steps Led to A Tomb
Pastor Steven Lockman

March 15th His Final Steps Led to A Dinner
Celebration
Pastor Will Kant

March 22nd His Final Steps Led to Some Greeks
Pastor Waterstradt

March 29th His Final Steps Led to His Enemies
Pastor Chris Hoppe

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READING BETWEEN THE WINES

The March book selection for Reading Between the Wines is **Harry Potter & The Prisoner of Azkaban** by J. K. Rowling. This is book three in the youth category series we are having great fun exploring. Judy C will lead our discussion on Monday, March 20th inside Fellowship Hall from 10:00 AM until Noon. As always, we invite Hope members and guests to join us!

LWMS SPRING RALLY

Spring is just around the corner and thus our LWMS Spring Rally. The Rally this spring will be held at St. Mark’s in Citrus Heights so Hope should have a good attendance. The theme is “With God all Things Are Possible” based on Ephesians 3:20. Pastor Kolander, the guest speaker will be giving a presentation on “100 Missions in 10 years” as this year 2023, is the kick off year for this project.

The ladies of St. Mark’s will begin serving a continental breakfast at 8:45. Reporters will meet at 9:30 with the Rally Opening at 10:00.

Spring Rally is when new officers are elected. Those positions open are President, Treasurer & Spiritual Growth Woman. A Spiritual Growth Pastor will also be elected. LADIES, search your hearts and pray about the possibility of accepting one of these positions.

Our Mission offerings must be sent to the present Treasurer by April 5 so if you want to contribute once more you may do so by using a church offering envelope marked LWMS & placing it in the offering plate on Sunday morning prior to the 5th of April.

MEMORIAL BOOK

This is the Red Book which is on the table, right side, in the entry and which has any memorials given for any deceased person and the designation for that gift.

As Memorial Secretary I am asking those members to please check the book if you have given a memorial in the last two years to make sure that your gifts have been added to the book. This is to make sure that your gift has been properly noted.

Thank you.
Mary Ann – Memorial Secretary

THANK YOU, THANK YOU

Dear Members of Hope,

We would like to thank all of you for your prayers and support for our son Logan and us! It has helped throughout each day on the path to recovery.

Bless you all!
Dan, Teresa, Logan and the entire Family



The Directory update is complete and available! Thank you to everyone for all the updated information! Be sure to grab a copy from the back of church.



Dear Hope,
Thank you for yet another gift from your congregation. Your continued support for my education is incredibly overwhelming.

Again, thank you so much for all of the support you have given me.

Blessings, Titus Doletzky

Note: Titus tells us about himself in his letter. Be sure to read it – it is hanging on the bulletin board by the Ladies Room in the Fellowship Hall.

TOGETHER



News from the WELS

February 2023
Website: www.wels.net

February 7, 2023

UPDATE ON THE UKRAINIAN LUTHERAN CHURCH

The situation in Ukraine remains very challenging and difficult for our brothers and sisters of the Ukrainian Lutheran Church (ULC). Rev. Roger Neumann serves as the WELS liaison to the ULC and is in almost daily contact with Bishop Vyacheslav Horpynchuk, the head of the ULC. Neumann provides regular updates with information provided by Horpynchuk.

Horpynchuk often reports of the situation on the ground in Ukraine. Heavy shelling of populated areas continues. Even though there are widespread power outages and a lack of heat and sometimes even water, the congregations of the ULC continue to meet for worship (dressed in winter clothing) whenever possible. Pastors continue to be faithful to their callings by preaching, teaching, calling on members, and distributing food and medicine to their members, refugees, and communities. Many members have had to flee from their hometowns, but those people are often served by pastors in congregations where the danger is less intense.

Even when it seems safe, often it is not. Last Sunday one worship service was interrupted by a shell that fell 800 meters from the church, shaking the building

and breaking some windows. Members in Kiev try to go about their normal life, using public transportation to travel. But when an air raid siren sounds, all public transportation stops. Subways can be stopped for two or more hours. Sometimes people need to remain in bomb shelters for up to seven hours. At night, when missile strikes shake their apartments, they wake up in fear and anxiety, wondering when the next missile will hit. Whenever families are separated by work, school, or buying groceries, they are in constant fear for one another's safety. Yet they are quick to confess that they believe that the Lord will watch over them and that they await an enduring kingdom that is secured by our Lord Jesus, a kingdom where they will be safe eternally.

Plans for new church buildings have been put on hold, but there is every intention to continue those projects when the war is over. In the meantime, even small temporary places of worship become places of refuge and comfort as God's Word is preached and his promises proclaimed.

Because of your generous gifts, WELS continues to provide financial support to the ULC. The pastors and people are using those funds carefully and wisely, providing food, clothing, medicine, and transportation to those who need it. Thank you for your generous gifts!

Please continue to keep our brothers and sisters in your prayers. Thank God that they continue to worship and hear his Word. Thank God that he has kept them safe. Pray that God would continue to bless them with his loving protection and that peace will soon be restored throughout Ukraine.

Serving with you in Christ,
WELS President Mark Schroeder

TRAINING THE NEXT GENERATION OF LEADERS

For the first time, WELS high school students were specially invited to attend the WELS National Conference on Lutheran Leadership in Chicago this past January. Sixty-one teenagers from ten area Lutheran high schools attended keynotes and breakout sessions, participated in mixers, and went to Navy Pier for an evening of teen-only fun and fellowship. One of the breakout sessions even featured a panel of high school students discussing their experiences and views.

"[Our church body] is hemorrhaging young adults, and you often hear people my age (or even older) speculating on why that is the case. So we wanted to have some presentations where we actually listened to young people," says Rev. Jonathan Hein, convention coordinator and coordinator of WELS Congregational Services. "What are *their* views on why their generation is quitting church? What do *they* think we can do better to attempt to retain and reach young people today?"

He continues, "It was one of the most highly attended breakouts. In my work, I hear a lot of young people who say that they don't really have much of a voice. They certainly had one at the conference."

Natalie Hatzung, a student at Wisconsin Lutheran High School, Milwaukee, Wis., was one of the teen panelists. "After we spoke, I heard so many compliments and so much appreciation," she says. "People were coming up to me who had no idea who I am—they just noticed I'm a teen, and they said, 'Thank you for being here.' Parents and teachers came up [to me] and said, 'This is really eye-opening. I appreciate your input.'"

The fact that so many adults cared deeply about their input and experience left a huge impression on this next generation of Lutheran leaders. WELS teens desire to be respected and valued by the adults in their lives. Hein adds, "They want to have a role to play. . . . They want to be more than consumers of gospel ministry. They want to be doers of gospel ministry." The conference exposed them to some of the very real conversations happening in the synod surrounding leadership, ministry, and outreach.

On the final day of the conference, Rev. Phil Huebner, campus pastor at Wisconsin Lutheran High School, gathered the high school attendees together for a closing discussion about the conference. Favorite moments included the trip to Navy Pier, worshiping and communing with more than one thousand other WELS members, meeting teens from other schools, and engaging in conversation with the adults in attendance.

What was abundantly clear from that discussion is that these young people are compassionate and enthusiastic, with hearts for sharing the gospel. Moreover, many were open and vulnerable enough to reveal that they're also nervous about the impact college might have on their faith.

But as Huebner explains, by inviting teens to this conference, we are showing them that they matter. We are making an effort "not just to talk about teens but rather include them and train up the next generation of leaders," he says.

February 21, 2023

REFLECTING ON THE WELS NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON LUTHERAN LEADERSHIP

Last month more than 1,300 men and women attended the second WELS National Conference on Lutheran Leadership in Chicago. Fifty-two percent of those who attended were laypeople. More than 100 attendees were high school and college students.

The conference featured a worship service with communion, as well as devotions. Five keynote presentations addressed a variety of timely issues facing the church today. Keynote topics were "Our Lutheran Moment: Why Now Is a Good Time for Us to Be Doing What We Do Best," "Lutheran Leadership—What It Is and Why It's Important," "Shaping a God-Pleasing Congregational Culture," "A Courageous Conversation on Modeling Gospel-Centered Unity," and "Thinking Differently: On How the Next Generation Thinks, and On How to Help Them Think."

Attendees could also choose to attend five breakout sessions (from 47 that were offered). The breakout sessions dealt with a wide range of issues, including congregational planning, dealing with current cultural issues, outreach and evangelism strategies, Lutheran worship, carrying out our Christian vocation in a secular workplace, and much more. A number of these were geared specifically for the young people in attendance.

It was very encouraging to see so many called workers and laypeople take time away from busy schedules to become better equipped to carry out the work that they do in their congregations. The information presented was practical, timely, encouraging, and spiritually edifying. I know that I benefited greatly from the presentations, and I can't tell you how many people commented on how much they enjoyed the conference and were blessed to be a part of it. Called workers, laymen and women, and young people left the conference spiritually uplifted and full of ideas on how they and their congregations can better serve their Savior.

If you did not have the opportunity to attend, you can view video recordings of some of the presentations by visiting lutheranleadership.com. Select presentation videos will be released throughout the year.

We can pray that God will use this conference as a way to strengthen WELS members, called workers, and congregations as they carry out the mission God has given to us. The next National Conference on Lutheran Leadership is tentatively scheduled for January 2026.

Serving with you in Christ,
WELS President Mark Schroeder

SEMINARY HOLDS ANNUAL MISSION AND MINISTRY FOR STUDENTS

Students at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis., participated in Mission and Ministry, an annual three-day event organized by a student committee, Feb. 7-9. Under the theme “Go!” based on Matthew 28:19, this event highlighted the worldwide work of WELS.

Each day featured a worship service, an overview of ministry highlights by WELS leaders, an encouraging keynote address by a worker in the field, and the opportunity to attend three breakout sessions of interest. Presenters encouraged students with the Lord’s promise to be with his people always, no matter where they serve, whom they serve, or in what role they serve, giving them the strength to carry out his Great Commission.

The student committee arranged for 24 breakout sessions on different topics. These sessions included presentations on world missions building bridges across cultures, leveraging the internet to reach people around the world through TELL, starting a new home mission, urban ministry in the United States, renewing expectations of church membership since the pandemic, and how our churches support people with disabilities and their families. All presenters shared how their work carries out the Savior’s commission with the help of the Savior’s promise. WELS organizations also set up displays to share information about their work in God’s kingdom.

The seminary family was blessed to have visitors each day: the pastor-track juniors from Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., participated on the first day, and students from Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary, Mankato, Minn., participated

on days two and three. Another special guest was Rev. Holger Weiss, president of the seminary for our sister synod in Germany, the Evangelical Lutheran Free Church. Weiss served as preacher in the opening service and shared blessings and challenges of mission work in Germany during a breakout session.

REGISTER FOR TASTE OF MISSIONS 2023!

Registration is now open for Taste of Missions, a hybrid event that will be held on Saturday, June 10, 2023! Join us in person at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in Mequon, Wis., and online, as we give all WELS members a “taste of missions” no matter where you might be around the world. We’re looking forward to a fun day of worship, ethnic food offerings, and family-friendly fellowship with our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Registration is \$15 per person, with children 13 and under attending for free. Those attending in person will receive food tickets to sample ethnic food and will have the ability to purchase additional food from the food trucks. Or attend virtually for free! Sign up today at tasteofmissions.com/register!