



GOD'S ENCOURAGING WORD ... *WHEN I DEAL WITH DEATH*

Everyday tragedy bombards you. The world news scene is constantly flooded with horrible stories. Another bombing, another mass shooting, and another natural disaster fill your newsfeed. This sad and frustrating news isn't just out there. It's personal. A co-worker is diagnosed with a terminal illness. A close friend dies. You're attending the funeral of a family member.

No matter how many happy days we enjoy, these sad days come too. When faced

with death, our hearts may cry out, "It shouldn't be this way!" And we're right. It shouldn't be like this. Death is a jolting end of life. Death is a separation of body and soul. We don't want that. God doesn't want that. God didn't intend it to be like this when he created the first man and woman. Why is it then that death eventually comes to all people?

Quite simply and tragically, death comes because of sin. The first man and woman rebelled against God. When they chose to rebel, they

brought death upon themselves. And they have passed both their sin and death on to all their descendants—to you and to me. We see their rebellion in our little rebellions—in our lies, our pride, our arrogance, our hate, our sin. And where there is sin, there is death.

How much does Jesus hate sin and death? Jesus detested sin and death so much he fought and defeated them. Jesus took our sin. In our place, Jesus suffered and died. He endured the punishment we deserved. When Jesus died, his death was not a result of his sin. Jesus' death came as punishment because he shouldered the sins of the whole world—every one of your and my sins. Since Jesus dealt with the cause of death—which is sin, death lost its sting.

Jesus comforted a friend who was grieving the death of her brother by proclaiming: **"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die."** Jesus promised that because he is **"the resurrection and the life,"** all believers will be raised to eternal life too. Jesus gives eternal life to all who believe in him.

You will face death over and over again—in the relentless stream of world news and in the sad news that death is striking those you love. Listen to Jesus' words. Trust Jesus. He is the resurrection and the life. One day death will come to you. And even though you die, because you believe in Jesus you will live eternally with him in heaven.





HOLY WEEK SERVICES

Maundy Thursday – March 29 – 3:30 & 6:30 pm

Good Friday – March 30 – 1:00 & 6:30 pm



EASTER SUNDAY WORSHIP

APRIL 1

Easter Sunrise – 6:00 am

Easter Breakfast – 7:00 am

Easter Festival – 8:30 & 10:30 am



ENCOURAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The Board of Elders has implemented a new plan to encourage our members who may be in the early stages of drifting away from worship. The plan is simple: If someone hasn't attended church for 3 weeks in a row and not more than 6 weeks,

they should be receiving a phone call from one of the members of this new committee. The list for each week is generated from the information that is filled in the Friendship Registers at church.

There are several reasons for beginning this new plan.

1. This is being done because both Jesus and we have a love for souls. Jesus expresses that love for souls when he tells his disciples this parable: **“Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn't he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.’** (Luke 15:4-6)

2. We live in world that is increasingly becoming more ungodly. We need the encouragement that only Jesus can give us in His Word. We need the encouragement that we get from each other as we come together to worship. The writer of the book of Hebrews expresses it this way: **“Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope**

we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.” (Hebrews 10:23-25)

We ask for your help in several different ways:

1. Pray that the Lord will use this work to encourage our members to come and join us again for worship if they have begun to drift away.
2. If you receive a phone call, please accept it as a gentle encouragement.
3. If our records aren't accurate, please let us know. We recognize that mistakes are sometimes made.
4. If there is a health reason or some other reason that you have not been able to worship with us, please let

us know. We would like to share the Word and Sacrament with you.

If you wish to help with this committee, please talk with

a member of the Board of Elders or one of the pastors.

May the Lord the Lord bless our efforts as we work together to encourage one another.



NEW EVANGELISM INITIATIVE

Our mission statement directs us to *"reach out to the people of the world through Worship and Education by Living and Sharing the Gospel of Christ."*

For years we have done a good job of inviting our community and school families to join us for public worship where they can see and hear the living and shared Gospel of Christ. Over the past year we have averaged 22 visitor families each month. In 2017, 160 families joined us in worship for the first time. 160 families heard the Gospel in our beautiful building last year!

But, while we are doing a great job of inviting them, we are not doing a great job at following up with them.

Those 160 families worked up the nerve to walk into a new church, they sat through a worship service that may have been unfamiliar. They made the first step toward us. We can do a better job of taking the second step toward them.

In pursuit of that goal, the Board of Outreach has put together a *"Visitor Follow-Up Plan"* that seeks to increase the percentage of visitors who leave contact information and then follow-up with them in a timely, loving, unobtrusive way.

Starting very soon, a first time visitor at St. Paul's will be offered a free Christian book on the way out of church, and then (if they feel comfortable giving us their information) later that week a member will drop a simple gift (with our logo on it) and a thank you card at their house.

Our goal is to get this plan up and running for Easter 2018. Here's how you can help.

1) Pray. Pray that God would continue to bring visitors walking in our front doors asking us to tell them about Jesus! Pray that we would have more opportunities after that first encounter to share Jesus with them more.

2) Fill out the Friendship Registers entirely, every Sunday. What if I told you that with a 30 second investment of time each week you could prove an integral part of bringing one soul to heaven? Would you do it? Right now less than 25% of our visitors leave their contact information. We

want to get that number higher. One simple step is to encourage you, our members, to fill out the Friendship Registers entirely, every week. The simple fact is that many visitors will do what they see everyone else doing (they, understandably, don't want to stand out!). If they get the friendship register and everyone is just writing their first and last name, many visitors will do the exact same thing. Yes, we already know your address. Yes, we already have your phone number and email. Yes, writing that information every week may feel like a waste of time. But what if just one visitor saw you do that and copied you? What if we, able to follow up with them, got to tell them about Jesus again? What if that simple act was an integral step in their relationship with God?

3) Consider volunteering. There are two volunteer opportunities with this new plan. First, we will need people to man a welcome desk in the narthex to hand

out the books to first time visitors. Second, we need people to deliver the thank you packages (nothing more than ringing the door bell, saying "thank you", giving the gift, "we hope to see you again soon.").

If you have any questions or are interested in helping get this up and running please contact Pastor Hoff. You may also talk to any of the members of the Board of Outreach.



PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

Happy Easter from St. Paul's Lutheran School! This time of year in the school is full of activity and is also a time for planning for the future. We are blessed to have talented students and the opportunities for them to continue to develop and practice those talents.

This March we have had students represent our school in a Spelling Bee, a Math competition, and a Forensics contest at Wisconsin Lutheran High School. Here at St. Paul's we have hosted Grandparents for a morning to share in a school day with our students, and also put

on display the art from all of our students.

In April we are hosting our Auction Gala on April 14 to raise money for our technology costs so that our students can continue to learn with technology in a technological age.

And at the end of the month, April 27-28, the upper grades will put on a play written by former St. Paul's Principal Gary Wille entitled I was a Teenage Nerd.

As the end of the school year approaches we have begun our plans for the future. We have been enrolling for the upcoming

year, and at this time have nearly full Pre-K morning programs, projecting a larger Kindergarten class, and looking forward to our

returning families in the fall. We have truly been blessed and I ask for your continued support and prayers.

TOGETHER

WELS NEWS

New World Mission start in South America

This summer two missionaries from the One Latin America mission team (1LA) will be moving to Ecuador. This will be the first time WELS will have an active mission presence in the South American country. Rev. Nathan Schulte and Rev. Phil Strackbein have begun making arrangements to make the move. Schulte currently serves in Mexico, and Strackbein serves in Bolivia. Schulte, a member of the 1LA team, explains, "In the beginning of November all the 1LA missionaries met in Mexico City to discuss a major training program we are developing and the relocation of different missionaries to best accomplish our goals as a team. We want to reach as many people as possible and to train people to be leaders in their own multiplying groups.

The team had done extensive research on a number of major cities in Latin America. Quito, Ecuador, eventually came to the top of the list for a number of reasons." One of the main contributing factors to the decision was the large number of Facebook users in Ecuador, more than 60,000, following Academia Cristo online. Academia Cristo is a WELS Spanish language website with videos and audio Bible studies to reach out to non-Christians as well as to train Latin American church members how to share their faith. A second contributing factor is that with a location in Ecuador, it puts the missionaries closer to other countries in South America where WELS can't permanently locate a missionary for safety or political reasons, but where interest in the gospel message has been demonstrated

through active use of the Academia Cristo website. And a third reason is, while WELS has never officially had a mission in Ecuador, Martin Luther College Spanish Professor Paul Bases has been taking groups of students there for years to teach English, and through that work, valuable connections have already been made.

Rev. Larry Schlomer, administrator of WELS World Missions, says the main goal of the missionaries is to “facilitate the planting of small group churches in Quito and beyond.” He says, “The idea is that in a short time, to connect Ecuadorean Christians to the online materials and relationships so that they’re able to keep the ministry rolling even after our missionaries might leave.” Schulte says, “I love the fact that, from the start, we are focused on training Ecuadorians to study God’s Word and to share it with others. They know their culture and situations better than I ever will and God has already placed them in their own unique contexts with their own connections and opportunities. I’m really looking forward to working to help

them to do just that—share God’s grace with others.”

The missionaries’ first priorities will be to find a location for a Christian training center while also settling in themselves and doing boots-on-the-ground work, meeting their neighbors and learning more about the community. To help this effort, two congregations, St. Matthew, Oconomowoc, Wis., and Goodview Trinity, Goodview, Minn., will be sending volunteers in May and June to host introduction workshops open to the Quito community. These two volunteer groups are the inaugural groups for the new WELS Missions Journeys program, which is starting to help coordinate opportunities and WELS members who want to volunteer in a WELS mission field. Schulte says, “Ecuador, like all Latin America, is in desperate need of God’s grace. It is grace-starved. Even in many churches and Christian groups, the emphasis is not on Jesus and what he has done for us in our salvation. We want to bring people to the source of that grace—the Bible, to teach them to learn from it and to share it with others.” Learn more about WELS Missions at

wels.net/missions and check out Academia Cristo at academiacristo.com.

WELS Night at Miller Park

Join thousands of fellow WELS members for the Milwaukee Brewers’ game against the Colorado Rockies on Fri., Aug. 3, 2018, at 7:10 p.m. For the second year, WELS Night t-shirts are available to order for \$5. The Brewers are again offering WELS members up to 50 percent off the price of tickets. Watch for more information.

WELS International Youth Rally

Registration is now open for the 2018 WELS International Youth Rally, June 26-29, in Bowling Green, Ohio. WELS teens from around the country and the world will meet under the theme “Never Alone,” based on Matthew 28:20, to learn about how God’s Word applies to their lives and to meet fellow Christian youth. Rev. Donn Dobberstein, WELS director of discipleship, says, “Our church body can never over-invest the time spent with the youth of our congregations. In a day and age that makes it increasingly easy to ‘drift away’ from faith or the church, a youth rally experience gathers

WELS teens together to see undisputable proof—they are not alone in their faith! It’s an event that personally encourages WELS teens to confront their doubts in faith and understand better how they truly are a highly-valued part of Christ’s church.” If congregations haven’t already, it’s time to get a group together

to attend. To register, each group needs a contact youth leader who will be the main point of communication prior to and during the rally. The contact youth leader registers first, and once the university processes their registration, the rest of the group can register individually. New this year, every youth leader must submit information for a background check. Also, the cost went down this year. The registration fee is \$345 per person until April 30 and then \$370 until May 31 when registration closes.

The theme, “Never Alone,” seems an important message now more than ever. Mrs. Kris Snyder, the youth rally planner, says, “From social media to politics, random violence to racial tensions, we are constantly on edge. We are surrounded by a tornado of information and activity, yet we

can feel isolated. What a comfort to know that God remains in control. He sent Jesus to make us God's children. And Jesus promises, 'I am with you always, to the very end of the age' (Matthew 28:20)." Attendees will participate in worship services with 2,000 of their peers as well as choose from a range of workshops with topics relevant to their lives, including "Can I be a ninja when I grow up?", "not awkward: dating and relationships," "Got self-esteem?", "Discover your mission," and more. In addition to the spiritual workshops for teens, recreational workshops will also be offered as well as workshops for the youth leaders. Snyder says, "Bowling Green State University (BGSU) is an excellent campus for the 2018 WELS International Youth Rally. It's self-contained and compact, no more than a ten-minute walk from one end to the other, and no major streets to cross. BGSU has a wide variety of recreational buildings including an ice rink and indoor facility with artificial turf in addition to the rock climbing wall, large pool, and several basketball courts. They

also have a great deal of green space to fill with inflatables, bands, and fun!" Dobberstein says, "My hopeful prayer is that on the return trip home, our youth are challenged to see themselves as called and equipped by Christ for meaningful works of service in their churches. The way the gospel is unleashed is through THEM as they carry Christ's light into their homes, their schools, their places of work, and their neighborhoods. WELS teens are vital to the mission of our churches. Let them participate actively in it! Learn more and register at wels.net/2018youthrally.

Did you know...WELS has a Facebook page?

facebook.com/welslutherans

WELS has Twitter?

twitter.com/welstweets

WELS has Instagram?

instagram.com/welslutherans

WELS has an app?

WELS offers a mobile application for iOS and Android. Get the WELS Mobile app at iTunes and Google Play.

 Go

- Home
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- Calendar

WORSHIP SERVICES ONLINE

Just a reminder that we post our worship services online. Check out our website at: stpaulsfranklin.org. The link is on the home page for the weekly worship services.

EAT DRINK and be
Giving

St. Paul's 2018 Gala

Saturday, April 14, 2018, 5 pm

\$40 per person/ \$75 per couple

More information & Tickets for sale at:
www.bidpal.net/stpaulsgala/welcome

Telephone: (414) 421-1930 – School Office
