



St. Paul's EPISTLE

February 2017 edition

Happy Valentine's Day, Lord

By Pastor Baur

A young man was sharing his insight into Valentine's Day. According to him, this celebration of roses, red hearts and chocolate candies was just another contrived marketing ploy of the retail world. He felt these expressions of love were coerced instead of being the natural and spontaneous result of a heart filled with love. Besides all that, wasn't true love to be expressed all year long? These are just some of the reasons he gave for not participating in Valentine's Day. Now I suppose one could argue those points, but perhaps that discussion is best left between him and the one he says that he loves. Yet, there is an element of truth in what he said. There are other insights we can glean.



When it comes to God's love for us, understand it started in the very heart of God himself. A heart that was so big that he was moved to give mankind what was needed most. What mankind needed was not roses, red hearts and chocolate candies. What each person longed for was to be in love with God again, and so God sent the first valentine in the person of Jesus Christ. He was the one who spread his arms out

on the cross and said I love you this much and then he bowed his head and he died. It was that act of love that brought us into a loving relationship with the almighty God. This is God's valentine to us. This love was not coerced. He was under no pressure to do anything. He loved because of who he is. God is love. And once again, this is not a message he has for only one day of every year. It is a love that is expressed day after day.

Our response to God's love for us is our love for him. This love is not coerced. We are not pressured to return that love. But it comes from a heart on which God has written these words, "I love you." Our love is a response to his love. It is a heart that is moved to write a valentine to him. No one has to tell us to write it, no one has set up a certain day to do it. Our lives are the written valentine we give to our Lord. In fact, you could easily say every portion of our life, every action included in our day, is done to say, "I love you, Lord." This is not an obligation, love never is. It's what we do when we love someone.

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God's House.
Your Home.

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Sunday worship
at 8:00 & 10:30am

www.stpaulswr.org

How Can You Help with the National Handbell Festival Coming to Rapids?

By Kristi Perry



Informational meeting
in the cafeteria
before Bible study
on Sunday, Feb 12
at 9:15 a.m.

St. Paul's has the honor of hosting the National Handbell Festival April 29 & 30. On Saturday the 29th, over 20 handbell choirs will converge on the Lincoln High School gym for a day of rehearsing and fellowship. Choirs join together to play easy, medium or more difficult level music and also play along with everyone in mass selections. On Sunday the 30th, the choirs will perform a sacred concert in the afternoon. Some numbers include organ or piano, instrumentalists and a choir as well.

A national festival only takes place every three years. WELS handbell choirs split themselves into three regions and attend regional festivals on the other years. Each region takes a turn hosting the national festival. The last national festival was at MLC in New Ulm, MN and the one previous to that was at WLC in Milwaukee. So it has been awhile since the national festival has even been this region and the first time Rapids has hosted. What an exciting opportunity for us! This is a big deal!

The members of our handbell group have taken charge to do the initial planning and organizing, but we need your help. This is a great opportunity for our congregation to pitch in and accomplish something great together. There are lots of different ways to get involved. We need help **setting up the gym on Friday** and **packing up on Sunday** after the concert. We need help **collecting the offering** during the concert. We need help **directing traffic**. The choirs need help **unloading and later reloading their bells** and equipment. On Saturday, the choirs will receive breakfast, lunch, and snacks. Some of this will be catered, but we need **donations of coffee, juice, fruit, cookies, bars**, and the like as well. We have also been contacted by MLC. They are sending their group and need **housing for their ringers** that weekend. If you like to sing, we have room for you in the **vocal choir**. Other possibilities for assistance are sure to present themselves as well.

If you have any questions, you can contact Marilyn Foley at mmfoley@solarus.net or (715) 697-1511 or Kristi Perry at kristi_joy@hotmail.com or (715) 423-6023. There will also be an informational meeting in the cafeteria before Bible study on Sunday, Feb 12 at 9:15 a.m.

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God's love for us is not a ploy that he uses to get us to give him a valentine. We are not pressured into giving something. It is the response to the greatest love there is. This valentine is not about roses, red hearts and chocolate candies. It is the daily evidence of our love for the one who first loved us. On the one hand, it will not cost you anything, but at the same time it costs you everything. Happy Valentine's Day, Lord.

God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him.
- 1 John 4:16b

St. Paul's School News

Preschool News – by Mrs. Hannah Mueller

Welcome back! We hope everyone had a wonderful vacation and enjoyed their celebration of our Savior's birth. We've been getting back into the routine after break. We have been busy reviewing the letters we've learned so far this year. We even practiced writing them in various ways. We focused on gross-motor (large movement) skills by dancing and moving to songs and doing yoga. We started working on our shapes and will continue working on writing our first and last names.

Coming up is our annual Scholastic Book Fair during Christian Education Week (Jan. 29-Feb.5). More information will come out soon. Proceeds will go towards purchasing new items for our Little Lambs playground expansion. Our goal is to make at least \$2500 in sales to qualify for the cash option.

Kindergarten News – by Mrs. Trisha Engelbrecht

During this often brutally cold season, I like to share some "warm, fuzzy" moments. This picture qualified for me. It is a photo of our lost and found table at school with a dollar bill crumpled on top. I love the fact that at our school found money would end up there. I love that our students help each other take care of God's stuff instead of them claiming the annoying "finders keepers, losers weepers" motto.

Some other moments are (sans photos): the class cheering for the gym class winner when by default that makes them a loser, a student peeling off their sweater for a chilly classmate, a classmate making a step out of their knee so a shorter classmate can reach the raised swing, a classmate sharing their loved Oreos with someone who forgot to bring a snack, and a caring classmate playing nurse running down the hall to get a fresh, cold ice pack for the latest bump.

I'm sure I will be adding to our collection, daily. It is one of my job perks. The beautiful thing is the reason behind all this kindness, we are following our wise God's example and directions for our lives.



1st-2nd Grade News – by Mrs. Karen Obsuszt

We are now back into the swing of things after Christmas break. We have just finished the 2nd quarter. We are halfway through the year. Time flies when we are having fun and learning as we go.

The 2nd graders are working hard on writing 2pt. paragraphs. This is where they organize their thoughts very specifically on two points like their favorite animals or foods. They also are learning to use supporting detail sentences in their paragraphs. The 2nd graders have also completed their first book report. We also have been learning how to use a glossary and how a glossary can be useful.

The 1st graders are working on using an information web and writing details around the web. Then they take the information in the web and turn it into a paragraph. Then the students get to illustrate their paragraph. We also have been learning the difference between common and proper nouns.

We just finished up our Social Studies for the first 2 quarters of the year. We now will be moving into Science for the 3rd and 4th quarter. We will be starting with the history of the earth.

We will be participating in the Zaner-Bloser Handwriting competition this month. The students have been working hard all year on their handwriting and this is a way to let their hard work shine.

3rd - 4th Grade News – by Mr. Jon Engelbrecht

Happy New Year! With the New Year off and running, it is time for a little transition in our classroom. We are finished with the science part of our year. We finished looking at the different properties of light. A really fun part of studying light is getting to see how God created our eyes, how we see, and how we see different colors. We now move on to Wisconsin state history. Math class is getting more and more challenging. The multiplication facts are flying around the room fast since they are being chased by division facts. Compound that with two step equations and our heads are starting to spin. Keep your eyes open for the upcoming activities during Christian Education Week at the end of January.

5th-6th Grade News – by Mr. John Quint

During the first two weeks of December, our fifth through eighth grade students participated in the first annual Helen Kroening Memorial Poetry Contest. Our thanks go to Mrs. Kroening's family for donating the prize money and for judging the entries. The winners of the first prize of \$50 each were Layla Matthews (grades 5 and 6) and Mia Tristan (grades 7 and 8).

"Untitled" by Layla Matthews

He lay there suddenly awake,
To see the shepherd's face,
And know that this was not his home.
Arms reached to pick him up,
To hold him close and to show love.
His mother, Mary, gentle and sweet,
Would help him on his journey,
But right now he was just an infant,
All he could do was giggle and cry.
But as the years passed,
And he grew and grew,
The time soon came for him to teach.
The disciples he would soon meet.
When he found the disciples,
Some of them were old
and some of them were young,
And he knew he would have to tell them
What was going to be done.
The years passed and the time grew near
When he would soon have to depart from here.
They came one night to take him away
And led him to the cross where he would pay
For all the sins that we had made.
He died that afternoon on that tree,
But there was no time for mourning,
Because in several days,
He arose from the grave,
And now we can all be saved.

"Love" by Mia Tristan

Love is strong,
Sometimes it's long.
Our Lord above,
Can't explain his love.
God sent his Son, he said "It's done."
For he was expected,
To save the rejected.
He will come again,
To save all of men.
Faith in God always grows,
In our heart one always knows.

Christian Education Week

Jan. 29-Feb. 5

Sunday, Jan. 29

Children singing in Church 10:30am
Pioneer Pine Car Derby 1:00pm

Wednesday, Feb. 1

Story Time Night 6:00pm

Friday, Feb. 3

HOME Basketball games 5:00pm

Little Lamb Book Fair—All week

7th-8th Grade News – by Mr. Randy Pahl

Happy (and chilly and snowy and icy) New Year everyone! Well, as Jimmy Johnson used to say, "How 'bout dem Cowboys!" (Or should we say Packers!!!) At the time of the writing of this article, the Packers are headed to the NFC Championship game. Let's hope we have a repeat run of the 2010-11 season, and not of that game in Seattle (or Arizona for that matter)!!!

January also brings us to the halfway mark of the school year and finds us with less than one month remaining in the basketball season. We still have one home game to go, which is scheduled for February 3rd. This is the culmination of "Christian Education Week" with two games to be played against Our Saviors of Wausau at 5:00 and 6:00 pm. Everyone is invited to watch the Panthers and Mustangs do battle, as well as listen to a live performance by St. Paul's band and maybe even participate in some between-games activities!

As we look back at the "old" year we can't help but recall the wonderful job our 7th-8th grade students did as narrators for our children's Christmas service (even with the extra day in-between due to the anticipated snowstorm). To God be the glory! With the numerous activities that will be taking place both inside the classroom and out, we are certain that it won't be long until we are looking back at January and forward to March. May our gracious God be with us and bless us in this New Year!



We will not hide them from their children;
we will tell the next generation
the praiseworthy deeds of the LORD,
his power, and the wonders he has done.
-Psalm 78:4

Get a Tax Deduction for Shopping

In 2016, our St. Paul's School Scrip Program had total card sales of \$190,660. Through these sales, families earned a total of \$2,297.90 toward school and preschool tuition. We paid off \$4,296.57 on the line of credit loan and added \$1,071.73 to the Student Assistance Fund. Some of the scrip rebate funds also pay for shipping and other expenses connected with the program.

Did you know that using scrip gives you an additional tax deduction? Even if you use scrip to earn tuition, half of your scrip rebates are tax deductible. If you designate your rebates for the line of credit loan or the Student Assistance Fund, those rebates are fully deductible... just like giving a cash gift! To get a statement for your 2016 taxes, log on to www.shopwithscrip.com and select "Dashboard" and then "Reports." Or you can contact Deb DeWilde (stpaulsscripwr@gmail.com or 715-569-4018), who will print a report for you.

If you would like more information on using scrip, you can contact Deb Dewilde (see above) or the church office, you can talk to someone at the scrip table on Sunday morning, or you can visit stpaulswr.org/school and tap on "Support Your School."

It's Retreat Season

There are several retreats for men and women this February and March. Invite a friend for a weekend getaway and some great encouragement from God's Word.

Retreats for Women:

Heaven Is My Home.

St. Lucas Women's Retreat in Kewauskum, WI - Feb. 25.

For more information, visit stlucaswels.org

A Heart at Peace.

Pathways to Christ Women's Retreat in OshKosh, WI - March 10-12.

Visit pathwaystochrist.org

Do Not Fear.

Christian Woman Today Retreat in Brookfield, WI - March 17-19.

Visit christianwomantoday.org

Retreats for Men:

Be Strong and Courageous.

Men of His Word Conference in Oshkosh, WI - Feb. 11

Visit menofhisword.org

The Best Is Yet to Come.

Ironmen of God Conference in Ixonia, WI - Mar. 25.

Visit ironmenofgodwi.org



Online Mysterious Marriage Study

Couples will learn to build their marriage on the gospel of Jesus through the next Interactive Faith Bible study on the WELS website. This study, entitled Mysterious Marriage, is led by Pastor Randy Hunter, who conducts marriage enrichment workshops around the country. The four-week study will examine how the gospel gives you power to be married and how marriage gives you a way to show the gospel. The study will be streamed twice every Wednesday in February, at 6:00 and 8:00 p.m. To learn more or to join the study, go to wels.net/interactivefaith.

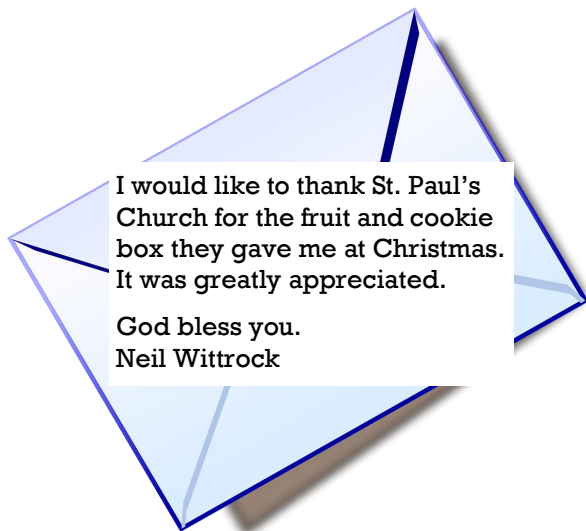
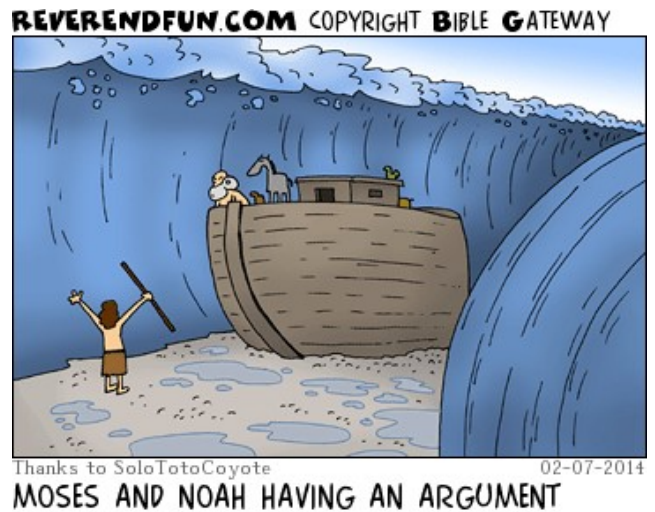
The Birth of the Wisconsin Synod

On Feb. 22 at 7:00 p.m., the WELS Historical Institute will livestream a presentation by Prof. John Brenner entitled, "From Federation to Merger: The Birth of the Wisconsin Synod as We Know It Today." In 1892 the Wisconsin Synod, Minnesota Synod, and Michigan Synod formed a federation to carry out ministerial work more efficiently. In 1917, these three synods together with the Nebraska Synod merged to form the Wisconsin Synod with the basic synodical structure that we know today. On this 100th anniversary of the merger, Brenner will look at the eventful 25 years from the establishment of the federation to the final merger with an eye to understanding our synodical roots and to learning lessons from a sometimes tumultuous history. Watch it live at livestream.com/welslive. For more information visit welshistory.org.



Take an Ark Encounter Trip

The MLC Alumni Association is sponsoring a group tour of the Ark Encounter, the Creation Museum, and other sites in Kentucky June 16-25. All WELS members are invited. The coach buses leave from New Ulm on the 16th, but you can join the tour in Milwaukee on the 17th for a discounted price. Plus, you can park for free at St. John's Lutheran Church in Oak Creek. The buses are filling fast, so visit the tour website <http://mclalumni.wixsite.com/tours> or contact Steve Balza at 507-217-1731 for more information.



I would like to thank St. Paul's Church for the fruit and cookie box they gave me at Christmas. It was greatly appreciated.
 God bless you.
 Neil Wittrock

Counting Our Blessings

- God loves us.
- Christian Education.
- The line of credit loan is paid off!
- Husbands, wives, and other valentines.



Special Gifts and Memorials

Through January 15, 2017

Current Ministry

- In memory of Joe Feaster given by Randy & Pat DeBoer

Cheerful Givers

- In memory of Helen Kroening given by Sherri Bukowski
- In memory of Tim Olari's father given by Barb Manz

Pastor Teacher Assistance Fund

- In memory of Lyle Lange given by Edna Haferman

Student Assistance Fund

- In memory of Mary Lou Fisher given by Edna Haferman



Martin Luther College Choir Concerts

Friday, Feb. 17, at 7:00 p.m.
 at St. Paul Lutheran Church
 in Mauston.

Saturday, Feb. 18 at 3:00 p.m.
 at St. John's Lutheran Church
 in Neilsville.



St. Paul's Ev. Lutheran Church
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Phone: 715-421-3634
E-mail: churchoffice@stpaulswr.org
February 2017 edition

Upcoming Events

Little Lambs Book Fair
Jan. 29–Feb. 5

District Pioneers Pine Car Derby
at St. Paul's
Saturday, February 11

National WELS Handbell Festival
April 29 & 30
at Lincoln High in Wisc. Rapids



Pastor Martin Baur · 715-421-1424 · Pastor James Mumm · 608-780-7106