



St. Paul's EPISTLE

January 2018 edition

An Opportunity to Serve

By Hannah Mueller



When Hurricane Harvey hit the Gulf coast in August and the images of the destruction were released, my husband, Joey, and I looked at each other and asked ourselves how can we help? When WELS Christian Aid and Relief posted on Facebook that they were looking for volunteers we thought this was our opportunity! This was our opportunity to give back and to help our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ.

In 2011, Joey and I were blessed with the help of then WELS Committee on Relief. My school had just closed that spring, we were waiting for a call, and Joey had been laid off from his job so we had lost all of our health benefits. I was pregnant with our oldest, Lena, too sick to work, and I was on expensive blood thinner to keep us both healthy. Then my gallbladder acted up and needed to be removed while I was still pregnant. The hospital called a few days before surgery and said we would need to make a sizeable down payment for my surgery. We didn't have that money. I called my father in tears. He prayed with me, told me everything would be alright because the Lord is on our side, and said, "I think someone owes me a favor at Synod office." A few hours later, he calls me back and told me the WELS Committee on Relief would back pay for unemployment insurance to allow me to have my surgery. A few days later, my gallbladder was removed, and the rest is history.

This past October, we got the call from WELS Christian Aid and Relief asking for us to come down for a week to help rebuild homes in Houston. Joey and I were thrilled...and then I got nervous. I don't know how to do anything that has to do with construction. I can put a nail in the wall and I can paint, and that's where my expertise ends. The last thing I wanted to do was to go down there and not be helpful. But I was determined to do my best because it wasn't about me; it was about helping others who had gone through an incredibly difficult situation. And because I am capable of learning and doing the work, on November 4th we left for Houston.

Continued on pg 2

God's House.
Your Home.

- Can I lose my salvation? pg 3
- Daily Embracing the Cross of Christ pg 3
- Pine Car Derby & Other Events pg 4
- Countless Blessings, Future Blessings pg 5
- Classroom Highlights pg 6-8
- NLHS Now Accepts Vouchers pg 8
- Online Bible Study in January pg. 9

Sunday worship
at 9:00am

www.stpaulswr.org



For we are God's
handiwork,
created in Christ Jesus
to do good works,
which God prepared
in advance for us to do.
—Ephesians 2:10



Learn more about
WELS Christian Aid &
Relief on facebook or
look for their Life Line
videos on YouTube
and Vimeo.

An Opportunity to Serve continue from pg 1

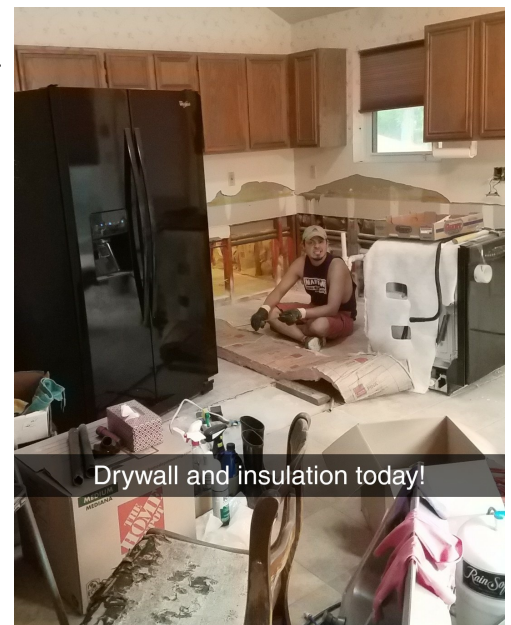
When we arrived we were greeted by the most upbeat and positive group of individuals from Maryland to southern Texas. Our home for the week was a former parsonage that had been used for storage by the congregation until WELS Christian Aid and Relief took it over and turned it into temporary housing. There were nine of us in the house at one point (with only one working shower!), but we had so much fun.

While we were in Houston, Joey and I worked on a few different homes. There were about five projects going at once, but we mainly worked in two locations. One was a parsonage that had been completely flooded with over five feet of water. The pastor that was there was in his 80's and had lost everything. The congregation had about 12 families and hadn't paid their insurance. WELS Christian Aid and Relief was there to fix and repair the property to get it ready to sell and that church would close. We worked in a WELS member's home that had less than two feet of water, but still the mess was catastrophic. We learned that it was next to impossible to find a contractor. Even if you did, there were stories of workers deciding they were going to be contractors themselves and start their own business. This led to several contractors not having anyone to help them do the work. Even finding a vehicle to drive after the flooding was next to impossible for most people, and most were drinking bottled water because they didn't have clean water to drink since it was still contaminated from the flooding.

The other volunteers consisted of contractors and retirees that had multiple years of construction experience. Some brought their wives, so they were learning along with me. I learned how to install insulation and drywall and mud drywall seams and corners, and I did a lot of painting. Joey already knew how to do most things, but learned how to install tile and grout. The relief on the faces of the homeowners and being with those we had the privilege to volunteer with and their zeal for serving the Lord are things we will never forget.

Sometimes it takes getting out of your comfort zone to serve the Lord, but it is always possible in some way or fashion. There may be something that you don't feel you would have the talents or abilities to do but God always provides the tools necessary to do His work. So if you are approached to help serve the Lord in some capacity, please take the time to prayerfully consider and take that step out of your comfort zone to do so. It may become one of your greatest blessings.

WELS Christian Aid and Relief runs solely off of donations received. If you would like to make a contribution to WELS Christian Aid and Relief or would like to sign up to volunteer to help on one of their projects, visit <https://wels.net/serving-others/christian-aid-relief/>



Can I lose my salvation? By Pastor Mark Jeske

There has been an argument for centuries between Christians as to whether or not it is possible to lose your salvation. People who answer that it is not possible put their emphasis on God's grace—that if God has named someone his child, he could never go back on his word. His grace is unconditional; his forgiveness is total.

Scripture presents a more complicated picture—that we are saved by grace through *faith*. God's grace is indeed unconditional, but our faith, once given to us by God, now becomes part of our choice and obedience. Scripture gives us solemn warning that those who have received the knowledge of the gospel truth and then throw it away will experience an even more frightful eternity than those who never knew: "If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God" (Hebrews 10:26,27).

There are life choices that you can make that will keep you from that horrible spiritual suicide. You can respect Satan's cunning counterattacks, knowing that he will try even harder to seduce you. You can choose to go to church, to be fed by the Lord's Supper, to read the Bible, and to pray by yourself and in community.

You can choose the path of daily repentance and daily embracing the cross of Christ as your lifeline to God's favor.

From Grace Moments, January-March 2018, © 2017 Time of Grace Ministry.



Looking for an option to listen to while you walk or workout?

Timeofgrace.org Internet Radio plays Pastor Jeske's weekly messages.

Another option is podcasts on Project1517.com. They are currently looking at the book of Jonah.

Daily Embracing the Cross of Christ

You can receive daily encouragement in your faith by reading Grace Moments devotionals. Booklets are available by calling 800-661-3311 or visit timeofgrace.org. You can also have the Grace Moments devotionals sent to your email each day. Time of Grace Ministry also produces Your Time of Grace video devotions, which you can receive in your email or on facebook.



Other daily devotionals and Bible reading plans are available electronically from WELS.net. Another option is subscribing to Meditations devotional booklets from Northwestern Publishing House. You can order this by calling 800-662-6022 or visiting online.nph.net. Our church also has devotional books in our library and bookstore. No matter the means, we pray that you choose to be in contact with God's Word on a daily basis.

Study God's Word in Community

Sunday Bible Study

10:15-11:15 a.m. in the Dining Room.
Resumes Jan. 7.

Men's Bible Study

Tuesdays 6:45-7:45 a.m.
at From the Ground Up Coffee House

Women Walking in the Word

Tuesdays 9:45-11:00 a.m. in the Resource Center.
Resumes Jan. 2.

Bible Book Group

Wednesdays 6:30-8:00 p.m.
in the Resource Center. Resumes Jan. 10.

Men's Small Group

Thursdays 7:00-7:45 a.m.
at From the Ground Up Coffee House.

Pine Car Derby

Come and enjoy the fun. St. Paul's will once again be hosting their Pinecar Derby on January 28, 2018. Registration begins at 11:30 am and ends at 12:30 pm. Racing to start at 1:00 pm. It is truly a time for Lutheran fellowship. Come and enjoy the races, see the wonderful job each of the children do on their cars and just enjoy the day with us. If you want to build a car and race it please contact Tom Kulhanek (715-424-4414) for a kit and instructions.

This is a wonderful outreach opportunity for our Pioneer program (and our church family). Anyone interested in knowing more about the program or the Pinecar Derby can contact Kent Schroeder (715-421-4202) or one of our other Pioneer leaders.



MEN'S DEVOTIONAL BASKETBALL



Thursdays at 5:30 p.m.
from Dec. 28 – Feb. 8

For more information,
contact Jeremy Radtke
at 715-630-0338.

ADULT CO-ED VOLLEYBALL



Sundays at 2:00-5:00 p.m.
Begins January 14

For more information,
contact Todd Wolf
at 715-697-2889

Pancake Brunch 2018

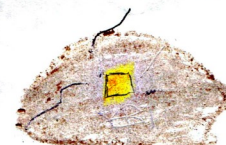


Date: January 14, 2018

Time: 10:00 am to 1:00 pm

Cost: Freewill Offering

Menu: Potato and Wheat pancakes
French Toast
Sausages
Applesauce
Pie
Coffee and Milk



Countless Blessings, Future Blessings

by Jon Engelbrecht

The Advent and Christmas season is a time of year in which we prepare for the coming of our Savior, an infant, born on Christmas morning. As Christians, we realize this is the biggest and best gift we could receive from our God. We realize this because with this gift comes forgiveness and salvation we so desperately need. As we meditate on this wonderful blessing, it is natural to think about all the different ways in which God has blessed us in our daily lives. Sometimes, we may not even realize how much God has continued to bless us.

As a congregation, we are prayerfully waiting for an answer to our 18th call for an Lead Associate Pastor to serve at St. Paul's. Our sinful nature will want us to think God is not blessing us because we are waiting so long. But, this thought is far from the truth. During the last 12 months, we have been blessed to be served by Pastor Baur in his 32nd year of ministry here at St. Paul's. Also, during this time, Pastor Mumm served us full-time through May and continues to come and preach one Sunday a month. Pastor Paul during this same time has also been preaching once a month and has taken over all the Advent services while serving on the church council leading our elders. We can obviously say, "God, surely has blessed us with these faithful men!"

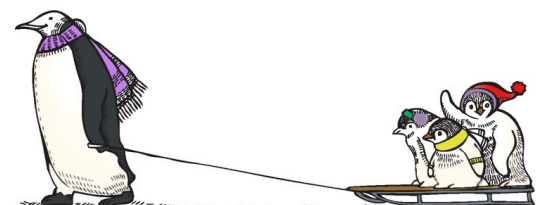
At the same time we have been struggling to call a pastor, God has continued to bless us with countless physical and financial blessings. We have received gifts of \$70,000 to help remodel the parsonage and complete other projects around the church, and \$10,000 to update the computer lab. We received a Cheerful Giver's gift of \$50,000 and another \$25,000 gift to go towards the mortgage. During the year, the faithful members continue to generously give offerings which allowed us to seal the parking lot, put up a fence around the Little Lamb's playground, and update the server. All this was done while finishing the fiscal year with a positive balance in the checkbook of \$3600.

We rejoice and thank our God for showering us with all these gifts. It is with this joy in our hearts we look to the future. In the next couple of weeks, you will see a proposal come from the church council which will be presented to the voter's at the January 8th voters' meeting to call a 3rd and 4th grade teacher for the 2018-2019 school year. We will follow up this presentation with two open forums before we bring the proposal before the voters for a vote.

Our natural reaction might be, "How are we going to afford calling another teacher?" My answer to you is to look at all the blessings we were given in the last calendar year. God provided in countless ways we never saw coming. When proposals like this are presented to the congregation, it is an opportunity for us to pray. We pray to ask God for the guidance to make the right decisions on how best to accomplish His ministry at St. Paul's. We pray to specifically ask God to financially bless us so we can carry out His ministry. But, most of all, we pray to thank God for sending His son to be our Savior, the greatest blessing we could ever receive.

Counting Our Blessings

- Opportunities to serve
- Pastor Baur, Pastor Mumm & Pastor Paul
- Forgiveness and salvation
- Special gifts that have allowed us to complete projects & upgrades
- Our growing school
- Lots of different ways to stay in God's Word



Classroom Highlights

3K & 4K - by Mrs. Hannah Mueller

This month has been all about preparation! Preparation for Christmas and our children's Christmas service but also preparation for our Savior's birth! We've been enjoying learning about Jesus' birth and singing Christmas songs. Our 4K students did such an excellent job learning their part for the Christmas service and enduring sitting for long periods of time for a whole week. Their hard work paid off!

Our biggest news this month is that our interactive projector is officially up and running! A big "Thank you!" to everyone who helped install ALL of the various parts, getting all of the set-backs figured out, and to Mr. Mueller for coming in on his day off and finishing things up! We've been using it every day and I look forward to utilizing it in our curriculum!

God's blessings to you and your family during this Christmas season and in the New Year!



Kindergarten News – by Mrs. Trisha Engelbrecht

Whew! We did it! We shared the Christmas message, and enjoyed doing so. (Mr. E. had to teach us how to curb our gusto during practice.) It is such a privilege to be a part of the faith of a child. Not only did they want to share the message from the angels and shepherds, they also wanted to share a gift with a child from our community. They understand that when you do something for, "the least of these brothers and sisters," you did it for Jesus. They are such little stars.

Speaking of stars (like my transition?), we have been learning about the wonders of the universe God created, from the special star that first Christmas night to the sun that we need to sustain our life. The class was particularly interested in the planets, and had a special place in their hearts for the dwarf planet Pluto (don't we all?). We learned about planetary motion, the moon and its orbit, moon phases, and asteroids (aka shooting stars).



Classroom Highlights

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

It is hard to believe it is already mid-December. We had a great opportunity as a class to sponsor an 8 yr old boy from the Giving Tree. What a great response from the families of the first and second graders. We talked about God sending his Son to die on the cross. His free gift doesn't cost us anything, and we can give to others and spread the good news about our Savior.

The 2nd graders have been hard at work learning about the different parts of speech. The 1st graders are also starting to understand what verbs, adjectives, and nouns are. I have seen so much growth in the past few months. In Social Studies, we have been learning about the different parts of our government.

The students have been working extremely hard at the school Christmas Program this past month. We are always very excited to share the message of Jesus' salvation to so many people. The students did an amazing job, and I am blessed to have such a wonderful group of students to work with.

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

If you saw a student walking down the hall this month with a protractor and a ping pong ball attached to it with a piece of string, you could bet it was a 5th and 6th grader. As part of their science unit on weather, the students made their own anemometers (instruments to measure wind speed). Each day they went outside, took a wind speed reading, and observed cloud types and general weather conditions. And if they didn't lock themselves out of the building, they returned to the classroom to record their observations and calculate their wind speed results.

In the classroom, the tree is up and decorated. We will be having our annual "white elephant gift exchange during our Christmas party. I'm looking forward to receiving another small tube of toothpaste!

We also have two game tables set up in our classroom. During their free time, the students can play chess, math games, measurement golf, and a logic game called Othello.

Most of December has been spent preparing for the Children's Christmas service. The students were thankful for the opportunity to share the miraculous story of Jesus's birth in word and song with the congregation again this year. A most blessed Christmas and happy new year to you all!



Classroom Highlights

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

Well, folks, may we be the first to wish you and yours a very Merry Christmas and a joyous New Year. As we have reached the final week of the 2017 portion of our school year, we were once again blessed to witness the tremendous effort put forth by our 7th-8th grade students. Per usual, they did an outstanding job of giving God the glory as they narrated their way through the Children's Christmas Service. May the good Lord bless their efforts (as well as those of grades 4K-6) in touching the hearts and lives of those who witnessed our service.

Well, it's official; we are full-swing into the basketball portion of our sports program. Our season has begun with the Coed A team picking up a road win at Our Savior's of Wausau, followed up by a second "W" at home vs St. Peter's of Schofield. The Coed B team has fallen short in both of their games, but hope to bounce back after the holiday break. Be sure to look forward to more action in 2018 as we will be hosting Our Saviors of Wausau on Friday, January 26th. If you get the opportunity, come out and support our Panther teams.

December finds a very busy time in our classroom as well. We have just begun our Christ Light portion of our religion class for grades 6-8. Factoring polynomials in algebra and discovering how many mpg our parents' vehicle can achieve on the way to grandma's house has kept us intrigued in math. In history, we are battling the British and Loyalists (do they really live just a short drive from Marshfield) in the War for Independence, and science found us breaking into cells (not out of them – thank goodness!)

As 2017 draws to a close, we give thanks to God almighty that he gave up His one and only Son that we might be saved! May this joy keep your hearts focused on Him this Advent season as we prepare not only for His first coming, but for when He returns again to take us to be with Him and all the saints in our heavenly home. Merry Christmas everyone and a most blessed New Year!



NLHS Now Accepts Vouchers

Northland Lutheran High School is now part of the Private School Choice Program. This means that families who qualify can receive a voucher to have their son/daughter attend Northland for free. These vouchers are open to next year's freshmen, to any homeschool students who transfer to Northland (any grade), and to any public school students who transfer to Northland (any grade). Please don't dismiss who may qualify. For example, a married couple with three kids qualifies if the family's adjusted gross income (line 37 of form 1040) is \$70,316 or less. Northland would appreciate the opportunity to speak with the family of every student who will be a high school freshman, sophomore, junior, or senior next year. To contact them, call 715-359-3400 or email nlhsoffice@nlhs.org. This is an amazing opportunity.

Online Bible Study in January

Daniel Habben, pastor at St. John, St. John's, Antigua, will lead the next interactive faith Bible study starting in January. Entitled "Isaiah: God confronts and comforts his people," the study will cover the first 12 chapters of Isaiah. "A virgin will be with child... and he was pierced for our transgressions." Seven hundred years before the arrival of God's Son into our world, the Holy Spirit worked especially hard through the prophet Isaiah to get the people of his day to turn from their sin and embrace their Savior-God. Through the words of Isaiah, God still confronts and comforts his people. The study will be streamed Wednesdays at 6:00 and 8:00 p.m., from Jan. 10–Feb. 7. To view the study or to download the study guide, visits wels.net/interactivefaith. Study guides will be available in January.



Martin Luther Film to Air on Netflix

A version of the Martin Luther film *A Return to Grace: Luther's Life and Legacy* will stream on Netflix beginning January 1, 2018. The filmmakers have worked with Netflix to localize the production by adding subtitles and foreign language dubbing to ensure maximum viewership. Netflix has more than 110 million subscribers in 190 countries.

Special Gifts and Memorials

Through December 17, 2017

Current

- In memory of Darlene Fanning given by Mike & Marilyn Foley, Larry & Veronica Klish, Linda Pollnow, David & Robin Koeshall,
- In memory of AJ Zdroik given by his grandmother, Cheri Weiss
- In memory of Benson Bottensek & Norma Hogan given by Sue Bobrowski
- In memory of Joe Feaster on his Dec 18 birthday given by his mother Pat DeBoer and her husband Randy

Cheerful Givers

- In memory of Benny Bottensek given by Ron & Georgene Provost, Jack & Pat Fluno, Dick & Linda Lucht, Friends and Family
- In memory of Marilyn Smolarek given by Ron & Georgene Provost, Marilyn Barta, Joan & Terry Collins, Jack & Pat Fluno, Judy & Pam Evenson, Jim & Jeanne Jackson, Mark & Hilde Henkel, David & Robin Koeshall, Shelly Smolarek, Ruth Tagatz, Friends & Family
- In memory of Doug Schill and Pam Anderson given by Kathy Jackson
- In memory of Jim Kubisiak given by Kathy Jackson

Missions

- In memory of Kari Vollert's father, Doug Schill, given by Bill & Elaine Wittrock
- In memory of Mildres Cordes, Elaine Wittrock's cousin, given by Bill & Elaine Wittrock
- In memory of Herb Helle, Elaine Wittrock's cousin, given by Bill & Elaine Wittrock

St. Paul's School Tuition Assistance Fund

- In memory of Anthony AJ Zdroik given by Cheri Weiss
- In memory of Norma Hogan given by Edna Haferman

Pastor/Teacher Assistance Fund

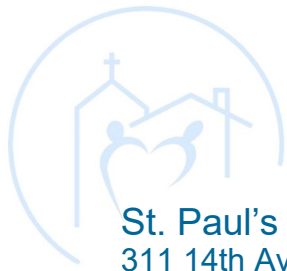
- In memory of Mildred Cordes given by her cousin, Edna Haferman

School

- In memory of Kari Vollert's father, Doug Schill, given by Sue Bobrowski

Decorating Committee

- In memory of Ben Bottensek given by Larry & Veronica Klish



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Phone: 715-421-3634
E-mail: churchoffice@stpaulswr.org
January 2018 edition

Upcoming Events

Men's Devotional Basketball
Begins Dec. 28 at 5:30 p.m.

Sunday School & Bible Study
Resume January 7

Pioneer Pancake Brunch
Sunday, Jan. 14 at 10:15 a.m.

Adult Co-ed Volleyball
Begins Jan. 14 at 2:00 p.m.

There is surely a future hope
for you, and your hope will
not be cut off. - Proverbs 23:18

HAPPY!
2018!

Pastor Martin Baur · 715-421-1424