

*FROM THE PASTOR*

## **CAN YOU BE A CHRISTIAN WITHOUT CHURCH?**

“Look, I have my faith. I pray. I read my Bible. But I finished with churches a long time ago. I’ve decided you don’t need to belong to a church to be a Christian.

Maybe you’ve heard that kind of a statement before. Maybe you’ve even said it. A distasteful experience with organized religion sometimes brings people around to this point of view. Other times it’s a normal desire for independence, a wish to stand on your own two feet theologically.

In either case, I’ve found a good answer is, “That’s very true. You don’t need to belong to a church to be a Christian – in the same way that you don’t need to be on a team to be a baseball player.”

After all, it happens. At any given moment, a player may find himself with no team to play for, for all kinds of reasons. In the same way, all kinds of things sometimes keep Christians from finding their way into a church, or staying there.

But when a Christian sees no reason at all for church, he’s forgetting a few important things.

1. Christianity, like baseball, is a team sport. Christianity is all about the good news that Christ’s forgiveness has healed our broken relationship with God. That healing also has profound, life-altering implications for our relationships with each other. That’s the reason Christians naturally seek community with other Christians. They always have. After all, churches – communities of Christians – are where the great “one another’s” of the Bible happen: “Love one another.” “Serve one another.” “Build one another up.” “Carry one another’s burdens,” and so on. Of course, no Christian – and no church – has all the “one another’s” down perfectly. That’s why there’s a “Forgive one another” too.
2. If you’re a Christian, you need your teammates. What would you say to a ballplayer who thought he was quick enough and talented enough to win a game single-handedly, by playing all nine positions at once? He’d be demonstrating terrific ignorance about how the game is actually played, or a serious ego problem, or both. Just like players on a team, we Christians need each other. Sometimes we need encouragement. Sometimes we need instructing. Sometimes we need consoling. Occasionally, we – all of us – need a kick in the pants (lovingly administered!). But no solitary Christian can see this game through to the end, without any help from anyone. Our game is too demanding and too important for us even to try.
3. If you’re a Christian, your teammates need you. There aren’t many ballplayers so versatile that they can handle any position on the field. But in Christianity, everybody can play at least one. Everybody has some kind of contribution to make; most Christians can make several. It’s important to see churches as more than spiritual gas stations or grocery stores – places we go to get something we need. Churches are full of people who need something we have to offer. But they’re places where we can give something, too.

Can you be a Christian without a church? Can you be a player without a team? In theory, yes. The real question is: Why would you want to?

-- Pastor Kehren

## Congregational Meeting

We encourage all members to attend our regular Congregational Meeting on Sunday, January 26th at 11:45 am. Lunch will be served.

We have requested a call list from our District President to begin the call process to fill the Principal role for the next school year. If we have a list available in time, we plan on holding our call meeting at the end of the congregation meeting on January, 26th. If we do not have a list by then, we will postpone until the following week, Sunday, February 2nd.

## New Hymnal

Our church body is publishing a new hymnal, "Christian Worship" scheduled for release in the fall of 2021. The new hymnal offers a comprehensive set of resources to cultivate a rich worship life in Lutheran churches, schools, and homes. Stay tuned for more details in the coming months. You can preview the new hymnal materials now at [www.christianworship.com](http://www.christianworship.com)



## Mission Festival Sunday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>

Pastor Terry Schultz will be our guest preacher and will give a presentation between services on his work as Artistic Development Missionary for WELS Multi-language publications. He oversees the development of culturally-appropriate worship resources in our various world mission fields.

We will have a potluck lunch following the 10:30 am worship service. Please bring a main dish, salad or side. Desserts will be provided. Sign up in the church entryway.

## Lenten Worship

In addition to our regular Sunday services, we invite you to worship at our special Lenten services. Lenten worship begins Ash Wednesday, February 26th, with a 7:00 pm service with Holy Communion.

The following Wednesdays through April 1st, we will have services at 2:15 and 7:00 pm. We will have a Lenten rotation with various area WELS pastors leading us for our Wednesday services. These special services provide an opportunity for us to reflect on our Savior's love which moved him to offer his life as a sacrifice to pay for our sin and win eternal life for us.



**February 26th**

## BIBLE STUDY

Sometimes Christians mistakenly feel that they can only serve God in some official capacity in the church or that their daily lives at home and career lack spiritual value. Our study "My Vocation in Christ" reminds us that every Christian has a special calling "vocation" to serve him and our neighbor in the many roles he places us in our everyday lives. We meet in the church sanctuary at 9:15 am.

## WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY

Our study discusses the teachings of cult groups and world religions from a Lutheran perspective to better equip us to understand others and witness to them about the true message of Christ. As always, we will test every teaching in light of what God's Word says. We meet in the downstairs auditorium at 10:00 am. During Lent, we will meet at 1:00 pm (starting Wednesday, March 4).

## SUNDAY SCHOOL

Sunday School for children age 3 through 6th grade starts at 9:15 am. Students meet in the kindergarten classroom for music before dispersing to their classrooms. The teen group (7th-12th grade) meets in the 5th-6th grade classroom.

"Toddlin' to Jesus" is a new class this year during Sunday school hour for our youngest children - newborn through age two with a parent. The class will include a short bible story, music, games, and a snack. This class meets in Ms. Tanya's 4K room.



The Conference of Presidents, one of the two primary leadership groups in WELS, is responsible for encouraging and equipping WELS to carry out its mission of sharing Christ's love with the world

The Conference of Presidents (COP) met for its winter meeting on Jan. 6-9. The COP meeting addressed many topics, including:

- The COP received with thanks the news that Congregation Mission Offerings (CMO) for 2019 were \$330,000 higher than what congregations had committed. CMO subscriptions for 2020 are now being gathered, with the prayer that congregations will be able to increase their subscriptions to provide additional support for WELS missions and ministry. Looking ahead to 2021, the COP will prepare an encouragement video highlighting the blessings that Congregation Mission Offerings have made possible.
- The COP approved a proposal that congregations will be encouraged to designate one Sunday in 2021 as a "WELS Mission and Ministry Sunday" as a way of highlighting the work we do together. Informational and worship materials will be provided.
- The COP has overseen a restatement of the synod's doctrinal position on the roles of men and women, entitled "Male and Female in God's World." The restatement does not reflect a change in our teaching; rather, it was intended to clarify and update the current doctrinal statement. The restatement will be reviewed by pastor and teacher conferences. In addition, an accompanying Bible study is available for use in congregations. The districts will be asked to provide reaction and input before a final draft is presented to the synod convention in 2021.
- The COP has also developed a "Statement on Human Sexuality," which presents a biblical perspective on the transgender issue.
- Asia Lutheran Seminary has enrolled several American students who will soon graduate. To prepare these students for serving in stateside ministry, the COP approved Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary's plan to provide these graduates with a year of stateside vicar experience and with two semesters of additional instruction at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis.
- The COP issued a divine call to Prof. John Hartwig to serve as a civilian chaplain in Europe and to Mr. James Sievert to serve as a part-time assistant consultant for the Commission on Lutheran Schools.

Serving with you in Christ,  
WELS President Mark Schroeder



### 2020 WELS International Youth Rally

"Vision 2020" *June 23-26, 2020*

Location: University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Registration Information: Coming Soon

Registration runs March 2-May 29

- See yourself through the lens of Christ's love
- Learn how to serve Christ boldly
- Hang out with 2,000 peers who share your faith
- Listen to speakers with stories of faith and hope from around the world
- Experience lifting your voice in worship with thousands
- Attend a variety of workshops with a biblical perspective on timely teen topics

Excursion opportunities (additional fee): Anakeesta Theme Park, river tubing, paintball, and more

# School News



## Jerusalem Preschool and Kindergarten Open House

**Friday, February 7th 9:00-11:00 AM**

Invite your friends and neighbors with young children to meet our teachers and learn about our programs. Applications are being accepted.

If you have any questions about preschool, please contact Vicki Burger, [vburger@jerusalemlutheran.org](mailto:vburger@jerusalemlutheran.org) or at 847-965-4750, ext. 2.

For kindergarten, speak with Julie Epple, [jepple@jerusalemlutheran.org](mailto:jepple@jerusalemlutheran.org) or at 847-965-4750, ext. 3.

## Eagles of the Week

PK-8th grade students are recognized each week for their Christ-like attitude and academic effort. January Eagles of the week were:

Carter Le  
Sebastian Miner  
Lani Naka  
Yahao Zhao  
Leah Jackson  
Yul Sohn  
Hailey Ju  
Joseph Georgian  
Giovanni Ceisel



## You Can Help Our Kindergarteners!

The kindergarten students are starting to read full sentences and short books. They also read aloud better when they have an “audience” that gives them lots of praise. We would love it if you could come to school to listen to them read on Tuesday or Thursday afternoons from 2:00–2:30 pm. Sign-up sheets are available in the church entryway. Please check the available dates and see if you could help us out.

# Jerusalem Evangelical Lutheran Church

6218 Capulina Ave  
Morton Grove, IL 60053

Pastor Jonathan Kehren  
Phone: 847-965-7340  
Email: [pastor@jerusalemchurch.org](mailto:pastor@jerusalemchurch.org)

**Worship Schedule**  
Sunday 8:00 and 10:30 am

*“Our purpose is to serve all people  
with the gospel of Jesus Christ on  
the basis of Holy Scripture”*

## JERUSALEM SOCCER AND S.T.E.A.M CAMPS

Mark your summer calendar for soccer camp June 15<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> and S.T.E.A.M.  
(Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Math) camp from July 13<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup>.  
Camps are open for children entering kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade.  
Invite your friends and neighbors to join us.

