

## FROM THE PASTOR

### BE DIFFERENT THIS NEW YEAR

“If you could change one thing about yourself or your life what would it be?” At the heart of New Year’s resolutions sits this self-reflecting, somewhat self-motivating question. It’s the one time people are not necessarily afraid to take a hard, honest look at themselves and acknowledge what needs to change. As we all know, though, sometimes (or most of the time) resolutions are easier said than done. But at least we can feel good about ourselves for a couple of days. And then....there is always next year.

Let’s ask ourselves a different question this year, “If you could keep one good habit this year what would it be?”

Instead of focusing on our weaknesses, we could focus on the one thing that will serve us the best this year. We might call this one thing our ‘strength’ while allowing the apostle Paul to remind where this strength comes from, *“I can do everything through him who gives me strength.”* (Philippians 4:13).

The apostle Peter wasn’t necessarily writing to his Christian friends on the eve of another “New Year” celebration. He did, however, seek to help them with the same challenges, struggles, temptations and issues that you and I will face every day of this “New Year.” Pray about what Peter says at the beginning of chapter four of his first letter, *“Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because he who has suffered in his body is done with sin. As a result, he does not live the rest of his earthly life for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God.”* (1 Peter 4:1-2)

Consider what God’s will is for:

- your attitude toward worship and His Word;
- your relationship with your spouse and family;
- your habits at school and/or work;
- your attitude toward your fellow church members;
- your attitude toward your neighbors;
- your use of the talents/abilities he has given you;
- your use of the time he has given you;
- your use of the treasures he has given you;
- and the list can go on...

In some ways the new year will be no different than the old—you and I will fall into the same bad habits as we did last year. This is what Peter has to say about those ‘habits’, *“For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do-- living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry.”* (1 Peter 4:3)

Yet we can be joyful because our sinful bad habits don’t define us anymore. We have a new identity in Christ. Because Jesus lived perfectly for us and paid the penalty for our sin, we are completely forgiven and possessors of eternal life. That good news gives us the ‘strength’ we need to “be different” in our daily living. So we wisely ask God to strengthen the good habit that he has begun in us...the hearing and learning of his Word. Peter tells us why we need to stand firm in this habit, *“They think it strange that you do not plunge with them into the same flood of dissipation, and they heap abuse on you.”* (1 Peter 4:4)

It is my prayer that God grant us the strength and the joy to grow in his grace and the power to ‘be different’ through his Word in 2020 and beyond. Bringing glory to God and reflecting that glory in our day-to-day living, let us ponder these closing words from Peter, *“Therefore be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray. Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.”* (1 Peter 4:7-11) -- Pastor Kehren

## Congregational Meeting

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

## Call Returned

Pastor Kehren has declined the call to serve at Trinity in Nicollet, MN and will remain here at Jerusalem. He thanks you for your advice and encouragement. Please pray for Trinity as they wait for a pastor to accept their call.

## We welcome new members to the Jerusalem family:

Joseph Pennell

Vannessa Streiff and her daughter, Savannah

David Lukawski

## Divine Call Received

Principal Duane Vance has received a call to serve as Executive Director at Illinois Lutheran Schools, Inc. ILS operates a PreK - 6th grade campus at Trinity Lutheran Church in Crete, IL as well as a Junior and Senior High School at Zion Lutheran Church also located in Crete. Please keep both Jerusalem and Illinois Lutheran Schools in your prayers as he deliberates where to serve next school year.

## Let's Go Bowling!



Join us on January 19th at 1:30 pm for this January bowling fellowship event at Classic Bowl in Morton Grove (8530 Waukegan Road). No talent necessary. Come for fun, laughs, and competition. Come early for an optional lunch at 12:30 at Boba Burger (inside Classic Bowl) if you like. Cost of \$10.00 per person covers two games of bowling plus shoe rental. Sign-up sheet is in the narthex and pay Brian Felsing the day of the event.



## THANK YOU

Jerusalem called workers and staff thank you for the cards, gifts, well-wishes and encouragement received this Christmas. Your kindness is greatly appreciated and seen as a reflection of Christ's love.

## Thank you for your generous gifts reaching out to those in need in our community!

Our barrel for the Morton Grove Fire Department's food drive was once again filled and overflowing. Many donations were left under the Giving Tree for our Mundelein Pregnancy and Life Center.

## MATCHING GIFTS UPDATE

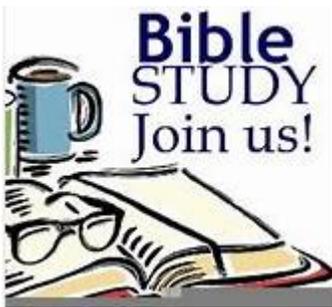
1 Timothy 6:17 tells us to put our "hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment." We prayed for Lord's blessing on our debt, and he has provided. Through the generosity of our members and friends, we have been able to wipe out the debt we incurred earlier this year. We are thankful to all of our donors who were moved by their Savior to contribute. We will start the new year with a robust offerings budget. **However, one of the drivers for our debt is still a concern.** Our school enrollment is lower than expected. We continue to be behind budget in that area. Please pray boldly that more parents will want their children to hear the TRUTH about Jesus at our school.

### 2019 Baptisms

<i>Vincent James Dastice</i>	2/2
<i>Lincoln Anthony Reese</i>	3/7
<i>Henry Pelligrino McGuire</i>	9/29

### Saints Called Home in 2019

<i>Jeanette Daus</i>	1/10
<i>Ruth Klouthis</i>	5/10
<i>George Smolinski</i>	7/17
<i>Richard Norton</i>	8/22
<i>Jean Mayer</i>	9/27
<i>Gertraud Weber</i>	10/6



### BIBLE STUDY

No Sunday School or Bible class on Sunday, December 29<sup>th</sup>. Sunday School and Bible class will resume on Sunday, January 5<sup>th</sup>. Join us in the church sanctuary at 9:15 am for Adult Bible class.

### 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 are off over the Christmas break and our next class will resume on Wednesday, January 8<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 am. No class on January 22<sup>nd</sup>.

### SUNDAY SCHOOL

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

### 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 starting Tuesday, January 14<sup>th</sup>. Sign-up sheets will soon be available in the church entryway. Please check the available dates and see if you could help us out.



In 2018, God's grace opened the door to an unprecedented mission opportunity for our synod. The communist Vietnamese government invited WELS to build a theological education facility in the capital city of Hanoi to train leaders of the Hmong Fellowship Church.

In December 2018, we embarked on a synod wide campaign with the goal of receiving \$2 million to pay for the land, building construction, and first two years of operating expenses. WELS members quickly responded with their prayers and financial gifts.

We are overjoyed to report that our Lord blessed this opportunity and moved his people to contribute or commit offerings totaling *more* than \$2 million. **Praise Jesus! Thank you to all WELS members and congregations for your generous support!** Please continue to pray for God's blessings on the upcoming construction process.

This is just the beginning. There are more than 120,000 members of the Hmong Fellowship Church in Vietnam and 2 million Hmong people throughout Southeast Asia. Imagine what the Holy Spirit can accomplish through the 2,800+ pastors and leaders who will be equipped to share the truth of God's grace with their 2 million Hmong brothers and sisters. Rejoice with us as we watch the Holy Spirit change earthly lives and open the door to eternal life for our Hmong brothers and sisters on the other side of the world!

## Keeping Us Safe at Church

As you have seen in the news, there have been more safety issues at churches across the country in recent years. In Psalm 3 David wrote "I will not fear though tens of thousands assail me on every side". We ultimately trust in the Lord, but we do not want to be unprepared for what the sinful world may throw our way. Jerusalem stays in regular contact with the Morton Grove Police Department (MGPD) to ensure we are aware of any threats and best practices to keep our school and church safe. Our liaison officers at MGPD have graciously volunteered to give a presentation on ways to handle a threatening situation that might occur during a church service. This is scheduled for Monday, January 6th at 3:00 pm in the sanctuary. **Only adults are invited.** We understand that many people will not be able to attend this during work day hours, so we will schedule a follow up meeting to share a summary of what was covered on a Saturday morning at a later date.

## 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.

***Preschool Applications will be accepted through February 7th. You will be notified of your child's status the following week. Please give all applications to Mrs. Burger.***

Applications for Kindergarten will continue to be accepted until the class limit has been reached.

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

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



# School News

## Eagles of the Week

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

- Eric Hoffman
- Jinyoung Lee
- Abigail Klm
- Natalya Miner
- Benny Bagus
- Emerson Taber
- Ethan Kim
- Rachel Felsing
- Ahri Koh

Come and Cheer on the Eagles at their first home basketball game of the season.

Friday, January 24<sup>th</sup> vs. Resurrection. B team plays at 6:30 and A team at 7:30 pm. Home games are held in the main gym at Park View School in Morton Grove.

## A few HOLIDAY EVENTS

Preschoolers walked to the Morton Grove Police Station to deliver Toys for Tots.



Grades 1-8 performed Christmas songs from their service and sang carols with the residents at the Homestead in Morton Grove.

The 5th-8th graders attended a performance of "The Nutcracker" performed by the Joffrey Ballet at Chicago's historic Auditorium Theatre.



# Jerusalem Evangelical Lutheran Church

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Pastor Jonathan Kehren  
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Email: [pastor@jerusalemlutheran.org](mailto:pastor@jerusalemlutheran.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”*



We give thanks to God for the many blessings he has given us during the past year. We look forward with faith in God's grace and promises, trusting that God will continue to bless us as he has in the past.

May our God of grace be with you in the new year.