

FROM THE PASTOR

GOD'S PLANS FOR US

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Jeremiah 29:11

Another year has come and gone. As we reflect on the path we've walked in the past, we realize how God has carried us. Even with the ups and downs in this crazy year of 2020, God's children can live each day with the knowledge that "God works for the good of those who love him" (Romans 8:28). The sins we committed have been washed and forgiven in the blood of our Savior. The lives we have lived even with all the troubles have been guided and blessed by our Heavenly Father. The faith we have in our hearts has been sustained and strengthened by the Holy Spirit working through His Word and sacrament. We concluded the year at peace with the Father who sent the Christ-child to redeem us from sin, death, and the devil, and who sent his Spirit into our hearts so we could trust in his love all our days.

But what about the future? This seems somewhat cloudy, maybe even gloomy. What's going to happen with my job, my finances, my health, and my relationships? What about the trials and struggles that I've carried into the new year? What about my family members, friends, coworkers, and neighbors? What about the COVID-19 pandemic – will it ever go away or get better? What will happen to our country? What will happen to our world? It's easier to see God's hand when looking into the past, but I strain to see his guidance in the future. What does the future hold? Will God be there with his love and blessing as he was in the past?

What about the future of our congregation and school? How can we involve more members in meaningful ministry so that they can serve God and others with a willing and joyful heart? How can we keep our families close to Christ and growing in his love? How can we reach out more to our members who are straying from worship and regular Bible study? How can we keep drawing more children to our school and offer them a Christ-centered education? What can we do to bring the gospel of Jesus to our diverse and changing community with people of many different backgrounds? Shall we consider expanding our facilities so we can bring the gospel to more children? How can we keep our facilities looking nice and beautiful for the glory of God? These are some of the many questions we need to focus on as a Christian congregation.

As we move forward into the future, we can take comfort and joy in the words God spoke to the Israelites through the prophet Jeremiah. They often strayed from God's will. To call them back to himself, he allowed them to be defeated by King Nebuchadnezzar and carried off into exile in Babylon. But God's love, mercy, and guidance did not leave them. He would bring them back to their homeland, and ultimately keep his promise to bring the Savior of the world from his chosen people.

We are God's chosen people, by his grace alone through faith in Christ Jesus alone. We can hold firmly to God's love, mercy, and guidance. Even though we don't know exactly how God will work out the often-challenging situations in our personal lives and in our congregation and school, we can trust that he will work them out for our good. Our plans are in God's hands. He has promised and he does not lie. He gives us hope and a future at his side here on earth and forever in heaven.

Walking in faith and love with you,

Pastor Kehren

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

We encourage all members to attend our regular Congregational Meeting on Sunday, January 31st following the 2nd service.

No food will be offered and we will practice social distancing. It will be held in the church sanctuary.

**We welcome new members
Clarence Gildemeister and his
daughter, Bethany, to the
Jerusalem family.**

THANK YOU

Jerusalem called workers and staff thank you for the cards, gifts, well-wishes and encouragement received this Christmas. Especially at the end of this difficult year, your thoughtfulness is greatly appreciated and seen as a reflection of Christ's love.

Thank you for your generous gifts blessing those in need in our community!

Thank you for your outpouring of support to those who lost their homes during the apartment fire in our neighborhood. The families affected were very appreciative of your gifts of clothing, supplies, and donations to the Assistance Fund.

Staff at the Niles Township Food Pantry were amazed and grateful for the dozens of boxes of items collected during our food drive.

We will be better able to share the message of our Savior at our Mundelein Pregnancy Center thanks to the many donations of diapers, wipes, baggies, boots, and clothes left under the giving tree.

YEAR END GIVING OPPORTUNITY

As we come to the end of another year, we are reminded of our greatest blessing, our Savior, coming to earth as a helpless babe to pay the price for our sins and bring us the gift of free and full forgiveness and eternal life. Some of you may also be giving consideration to your financial blessings. Many of us realize a tax benefit from our gifts to the Lord. You can see in our Caring and Sharing that our church is still significantly behind budget. Please prayerfully consider how richly the Lord has blessed you, even during this very challenging year. Your gifts will enable us to continue our gospel ministry here at Jerusalem. If you want to give a gift above and beyond your regular offerings there is no need for a special envelope just add it to your regular offering. We are also able to receive online payments by credit card or donations of stock shares directly to the church. If you are giving online, just go to the church webpage, www.jerusalemchurch.org, and click on the "Donate Online" tab and follow the instructions. If you have questions please contact our church office or Patrick Ruehrdanz at Patrick.ruehrdanz@gmail.com.

OFFERING ENVELOPES

2021 Offering Envelopes are available. Please feel free to stop by any morning (from 9:00 am to noon) when school is in session to pick up your envelopes and check your church mailbox. Jerusalem School will resume on Wednesday, January 6th.

Contact the office at 847-965-4750 or secretary@jerusalemchurch.org with any questions.

IN-PERSON WORSHIP

Sunday Worship is at 8:00 am and 10:30 am.

If you are coming to Sunday worship, please register in advance by e-mail (secretary@jerusalemlutheran.org) or phone (847-965-4750). If you get the voice mail, please leave a message indicating which service you wish to attend and how many are coming.

The nursery will not be available for church services until a later date.

ONLINE WORSHIP

We livestream our Sunday 8:00 am morning service on the internet.

Here is the link to our YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCWzPzwN7HAE3BLM4ZpybHkQ>

Here is the link to our Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/JerusalemMortonGrove/>

Please also subscribe to our YouTube channel to give us more visibility on the internet. Just click the subscribe button when you are on our YouTube channel.

WEDNESDAY ZOOM BIBLE CLASS

Wednesday Zoom bible class resumes on January 6th at 7:00 pm. An invitation to join the session and study guide will be emailed to all on our church email list each week. All are welcome to join in at any time during the study.

Our study will be "Male and Female in God's World." We will focus what God's Word says about the blessings and unique callings God has given to us in creating us as male and female.

SUNDAY BIBLE STUDY AND SUNDAY SCHOOL

Sunday morning in-person Bible class resumes on January 3rd. Class runs from 9:15 am until no later than 10:00 am. We will have 7th graders on up join the adult class. On January 3rd we will have a Christmas and Epiphany Bible study. Starting on January 10th, we will begin a study called "Politics Is Driving Me Crazy." During the recent political season, you may have struggled with your role as a citizen. This study will help us see God's principles when it comes to being a Christian citizen.

We will also have a video Sunday school class produced by NPH for any younger children who attend. If you are bringing a child to Sunday School on Sunday mornings, let us know so we know how many to prepare. NPH is also providing online Sunday School videos for parents to use at home at their convenience. A new series will begin in a few weeks. If you haven't been following these lessons, now is a good time to start! Contact the church office by phone or e-mail if you would like the at-home Sunday School materials. To find the video lessons go [Sunday School At Home \(nph.net\)](http://www.nph.net). Scroll down to find the lesson for the week. We continue the study of Old Testament stories.

READ THROUGH THE NEW TESTAMENT IN A YEAR

For your new year's resolution, how about challenging yourself to read through the New Testament in a year? Starting January 1st, Pastor Kehren will put out a weekly schedule of readings that will take us through the New Testament in a year. For those especially ambitious, he will also add Old Testaments readings to read through the whole Bible in a year. Stay tuned for an upcoming e-mail with more information.

2020 Baptisms

<i>Genevieve Marie Ceisel</i>	5/1
<i>Nathan Niyum Ceisel</i>	5/1
<i>Maggie Lynn Buetow</i>	12/5
<i>Owen Robert Buetow</i>	12/5

Saints Called Home in 2020

<i>Evelyn Ross</i>	3/3
<i>Mary Callanan</i>	8/26
<i>Clifford Schwartz</i>	11/13
<i>James Hoffman</i>	11/13

Jerusalem Preschool and Kindergarten Open House

Saturday, January 30th 9:00-11:00 AM

Invite your friends and neighbors with young children to meet our teachers and learn about our programs. Masks and temperature checks will be required and social distancing will be practiced.

Preschool Applications will be accepted through February 5th. You will be notified of your child's status by February 15th. **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 or at 847-965-4750, ext. 2.

For kindergarten, speak with Julie Epple, jepple@jerusalemchurch.org or at 847-965-4750, ext. 3.

WELSSA RE-ACCREDITATION

Jerusalem is seeking WELSSA re-accreditation during the 2021-2022 school year. WELS School Accreditation (WELSSA) is a process in which the school evaluates its current education practices and seeks sound methods to build on its strengths and determine new ways to grow and strengthen the educational ministry of the school for the benefit of the students and parents to the glory of God.

Five years ago, Jerusalem went through this process and received Exemplary Accreditation. **During the 2020-2021 school year, we are looking to repeat the process again and complete another self study of our school.** We are scheduled for an accreditation visit on April 25-27, 2022.

We are looking for both congregational members and school families to help participate on committees. You will be teamed up with other volunteers/teachers to study one aspect of our ministry at Jerusalem. Due to the current pandemic, most of the meetings and work for this self study will be done over phone calls, Zoom meetings, and email until we are able to safely gather together again.

There is NO experience necessary to help with this task. Please contact Chiseon Kim (ckim@jerusalemchurch.org) or Emily Buetow (emilysting@gmail.com) if you would like more information or would like to help serve on a committee. You can also leave a message with Linda Rosenblum in the school office at 847.965.4750. Thank you!





School News

Jerusalem faculty and staff feel blessed as we have kept our school doors open this first semester of the school year. We look forward to continuing in-person learning in the new year!

We are very grateful to our students and parents who followed our protocols to keep everyone healthy and safe. Jerusalem teachers creatively worked to provide as normal an educational experience as possible.

While students were unable to participate in many of our usual Christmas activities, we were still able to share the message of God's love to our community. Families participated in our food and pregnancy center drives. Students made Christmas cards for the Morton Grove Fire Department and congregation members.

Eagles of the week

Each week, three students are selected by faculty members to be recognized based on their Christ-like attitude and academic effort.

Congratulations to our latest Eagles of the week:

- Kajsa Ward
- Edessa Gorgis
- Jeshurun Boohene
- Aznef Esho
- Yu Han
- Joseph Georgian
- Ariel Schiop
- Teagan Slattery
- Brigid Schroeder
- Carlisle Yoo
- Sophie Freytes
- Kai Naka

Kindergarten students sing carols for their parents on the last day of school before Christmas break.



NEW SCHOOL SIGN

The new sign and software have been installed. Thank you to all who donated to our fund-raising effort. This sign will serve as the first opportunity to create awareness to neighbors about the Lord's wonderful gracious gift of salvation offered at Jerusalem Lutheran Church and School.

Jerusalem Evangelical Lutheran Church

6218 Capulina Ave
Morton Grove, IL 60053

Pastor Jonathan Kehren
Phone: 847-965-7340
Email: pastor@jerusalemlutheran.org

Worship Schedule

Sunday 8:00 am and 10:30 am
Online Worship on Facebook and YouTube

*“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.

