



First Things – November, 2022

What We Get When We Worship

It's so easy to forget who we are in Christ and what we have been given as his child.

It's so easy to give in to fear and shame and guilt, and to forget what Jesus Christ did for us with his life, his death, and his resurrection.

It's so easy – when we are facing hardships in life – to forget that nothing is powerful enough to separate us from God's love.

When we are struggling, it's so easy to forget that if God gave us his own Son, he will also give us everything else we need.

It's so easy to fail to live in light of the fact that Jesus didn't die just to take away our wretched past and to ensure our wonderful future, but also for everything that we are facing here and now.

It's so easy to forget that everything that comes into our lives is sent by a Savior who wants us to recognize that we are but strangers here and heaven is our home.

It's so easy to forget that God loves and accepts us no less on our worst days than he does on our best days.

It's so easy to feel weak in the face of temptation, so easy to wonder if God is with us and if he hears.

When life seems out of control, it's so easy to forget that Jesus Christ rules over all things for his glory and for our good.

And because it's so easy to do all these things, the Lord comes into our lives when we come together to hear his word and to worship him. It's in worship that he reminds us of what he has done for us – in Christ. In worship he reminds us of what he will do for us – in Christ. And, more blessedly than we sometimes think, it's in worship that he reminds us of what he is doing for us right now – in Christ.

And that is why the inspired writer to the Hebrews tells us:

Let us not neglect meeting together, as some have the habit of doing. Rather, let us encourage each other, and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Hebrews 10:25

Those are the blessings that we get in worship. That's why we worship.

November at First Lutheran

Sunday Worship – **Pastor Lindholm** will be preaching while I'm at Nodine on November 6. November 13 & 20 are the final Sundays of the church year – **Saints Triumphant Sunday** **Christ The King Sunday**. November 27 – is the **First Sunday in Advent**.

Sunday Bible Study will take place every Sunday, starting November 13. Currently we are studying **the different religions of the world**. This topical series will finish on the Sunday before Christmas.

Monday Bible Study is in progress. We meet in the church fellowship hall at 9:00 AM and are studying Paul's Epistle to the **Galatians**

Confirmation Class for 7th and 8th graders meets on Wednesdays at 6:30 PM

Choir rehearses on Wednesdays at 7:00 PM

Women Of the Word (WOW) - this Bible study group will resume in January

Men's Bible Study will resume in January as well

First Women is offering two meeting opportunities: The "**Early Birds**" will meet on Saturday, November 12 at 10:00 AM and the "**Night Owls**" will meet Thursday, November 17 at 6:30 PM

Special November Events

The ELC Thanksgiving Program

will take place on Monday, November 14 at 6:30 PM

Thanksgiving Worship

will also take place on Wednesday, November 23 at 6:30 PM – with a **pie social** to FOLLOW

Advent Carol Sing

will take place on Wednesday, November 30 at **6:30 PM** – with a "**supper**" to start at **5:30 PM**

Board for Lay Ministry Update

Through the month of September, offerings and other income was **\$183,523**. Through the month of September, total expenses were **\$192,677**. So, the **deficit** for the year (through the month of September) is **\$8,854**.

The refinancing of the church mortgage has taken place. The monthly mortgage payment for the 15-year loan is approximately \$2,350.

A new church sign was installed thanks to Tony Breaser. With the plaster in the church entryway having been repaired, we'll be looking at repainting that soon – volunteers, please watch for announcements. New bulletin boards and a larger "coffee bar" are in the works, as well.

Area WELS Update

Praise the Lord! **Pastor Wolf Parsons** will be installed at St. John's Lutheran Church in Nodine on Sunday, November 6 at a 3:30 PM worship service.

Pastor Gregory Pope has accepted a call to serve Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Holmen.

Other area congregations which are vacant:

- Rock of Ages in Rochester,
- Our Savior's in Kasson,
- St. John's in Caledonia is calling a second pastor as is St. John's in Lewiston
- The Rochester multi-site congregation – called Resurrection and Life – is calling a third pastor.

CrossTalk

CrossTalk, our children's ministry for K-grade 6 kids, has begun meeting after worship services once again. Thanks to all those who helped repaint and redecorate the CrossTalk room.

We are investigating the possibility of purchasing a smart TV for the CrossTalk room so that we can use multi-media presentations more easily.

Mega thanks to all those who are helping with this ministry.

Live Nativity & Rotary Lights

Set Up for the Live Nativity and Rotary Lights started last Saturday, October 29, but continues on Saturdays, November 5, 12 & 19. Call **George Italiano** (608-317-0271) if you have questions.

Characters are needed for Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, November 25-27 – **sign up sheets** are in the church entryway.

Food for Live Nativity - First Lutheran and St. John's in Caledonia provide food for the Live Nativity on Friday, November 25. The main need is **baked good & snacks**. Please **sign up** in the church entryway.

If you prefer, you may make a cash donation which will be used to purchase meat and buns for hot sandwiches.

Mark Your December Calendars!

Sunday, December 18

Worship with the First
Children participating –
9:00 AM

Saturday, December 24

Christmas Eve Worship –
6:30 PM

Sunday, December 25

Christmas Day Worship
– 9:00 AM

Saturday, December 31

New Year's Eve Worship –
6:30 PM

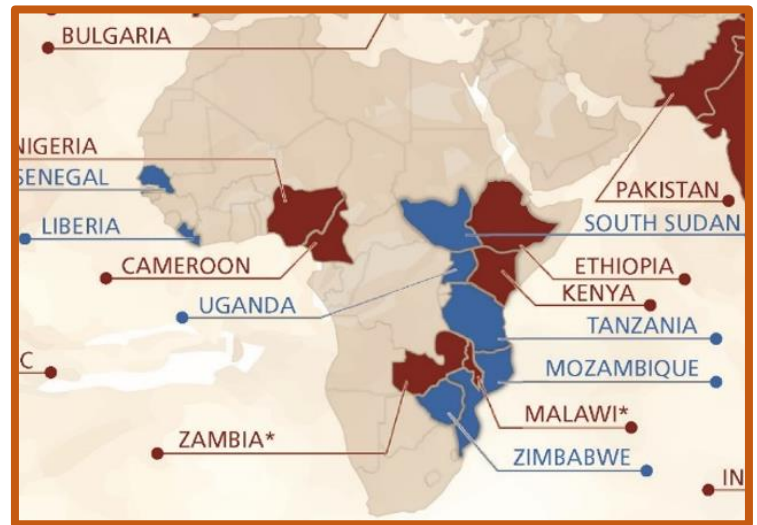
WELS Mission Work In Africa



The Wisconsin Synod has had missionaries on the ground in Africa since 1953. Over the years, most missionaries (including myself), lived and worked in Zambia and Malawi. They started and served congregations until there were African workers to take over the work. As a result, the Lutheran Church of Central Africa in Zambia and Malawi now has 65,000 souls.

Since 2017, the WELS missionaries in Zambia and Malawi have handed their congregational duties over to their African counterparts. Today, these missionaries – called the One Africa Team (OAT) – helps new “partners” throughout the continent of Africa to develop.

1. In **Nigeria**, OAT works with leaders of Christ the King Lutheran Church (2,500 souls) and All Saints Lutheran Church (1,700 souls)
2. In **Cameroon**, OAT works with the leaders of the Lutheran Church of Cameroon which has 800 souls
3. The OAT partner in **Ethiopia** is the Lutheran Church of Ethiopia and its 500 souls
4. The OAT partner in **Kenya** is the Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ – Kenya with 3,500 souls
5. At the 2023 WELS convention, the WELS will likely enter into formal fellowship with the 750 souls of the Obadiah Lutheran Synod of **Uganda**
6. OAT is doing new work with the 5,000 souls of the Confessional Lutheran Church of **Liberia**
7. More exploratory work is being done with the 75 congregations of the Africa Missions Evangelical Church in **Tanzania**.
8. The OAT is also taking over outreach work with **South Sudanese refugees** who live in refugee camps in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda



With the congregation’s permission, I now serve on the Administrative Committee for Africa which oversees WELS work in Africa. On Monday, October 24 the Administrative Committee for Africa called **Pastor James Douglas** of Monroe, North Carolina to serve as part of the One Africa Team.

God Bless,

Pastor Mark