



First Things ~ July 2025

Many families aren't very sure where to start with a devotional life. It can seem intimidating to start something time-consuming and complicated, especially when you have kids busy with school, sports, music, and more! Here are five simple ways to create a family life centered around God and his gospel. I hope that you can put it to use in your own family.

Attend Worship together

At church, we are served by God as he comes to us in his gospel. The life of Christ is told week after week in poetry and prose in the hymns, prayers, readings, sermon, creed, and sacrament. We stand in the very presence of God as he speaks to us, as we speak to each other, as we sing together, and as we eat and drink the meal he has prepared for us together. The worship service is designed to make use of the best of the past 2000 years of Christian worship to serve God's people with the precious gifts he has given us. Making regular church attendance a given is the number one way to receive from God on a consistent basis what he promises to give in his Word.

Read the Bible together

When you get done with a meal, read out of the Bible at the breakfast/lunch/supper table. Or if the kids get done first, have them read the story! Read from the Bible back and forth with the kids during daily devotion time. Listen to a Bible reading while you ride in the car on a long road trip. However, you choose to do it, there are many simple ways to implement Bible reading into your daily life. It doesn't have to be a half hour of reading. 2-3 minutes is all it takes to read a parable or a classic Sunday School story.

Pray together

Teach your kids to say a prayer when they wake up and when they go to bed. Say a prayer before eating every meal. Say the Lord's Prayer at devotion time. Ask if there is anyone at school who needs a prayer during supper time. Share if there's anyone in the family or at church who needs a special prayer and pray for that person. Praying together teaches your children about the central place God holds in all your lives.

Talk about the faith together

When you start praying together, reading the Bible together, attending church together, holding family devotions together, you would be amazed at how many opportunities there are for kids to ask questions about God and his Word. Don't forget to share with your kids times when you saw the way that God worked in your life or in the life of someone you know. Even the "mundane" can be a wonderful opportunity to talk about God's role: On a nature walk, driving past a homeless person, when you or a family friend has a baby, when someone gets married, and more!

Hold family devotions together

A family devotion doesn't have to involve finding the perfect book or making up difficult prayers or reading for long periods of time. Say, "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit", speak the Apostle's Creed, Pray the Lord's Prayer, read a portion of the Bible, and sing (or listen to) a Hymn— that's it! It can be accomplished in 10 minutes or less. The trick is simply to do it every day. Want to expand? Set aside a special place in the house. Light a candle. Create a family altar board (Go here to learn how: <https://www.hausvater.org/articles/353>). Creating the routine and sticking to it will be the most helpful way to make sure that it becomes a part of your regular life. You might be surprised as the kids will become the ones holding you accountable!

Pastor Pilarski

This Summer in Scripture



Each month for the last two months we have explored and utilized a different translation: May- New International Version (NIV 2011), and June- English Standard Version (ESV). These translations were used during worship and added to worship folders to provide an opportunity to compare with NIV 1984. Currently our congregation provides the New International Version 1984 translation in the pews. This translation is no longer being printed and no longer being provided digitally. This change has created the opportunity to select a new translation that we can use in worship, catechism and bible

class instruction, and in print.

Hopefully each month you have taken a moment to look for some of the subtle, and potentially not-so-subtle, differences between the translations and familiarize yourself with them. For the month of July, you will find our weekly scripture readings with the NIV 1984 translation and the English Heritage Version. Pastor Pilarski will continue to provide additional information and insight regarding this translation. In August all three translations will be presented side by side in the worship folder.

First Steps News

We have finally planted our gardens. We were delayed due to the continuous rain showers. The gardens were provided by the Minnesota Horticultural Society. Bauers Market and Greenhouse helped with getting us the seeds and plants. We hope the squirrels and rabbits stay away!

Fellowship Opportunities and Events

Friday, July 4

Happy Independence Day!

Sunday, July 6

Campfire Devotions- On Sundays, **about 5 pm**, you are invited to Pastor's backyard for a campfire devotion! Bring a chair and stay awhile! Pastor will have hot dogs and marshmallows for roasting. You are welcome to bring a dish to pass or none at all.



Wednesday, July 9

Worship Review Committee Meeting- Worship Review: meeting here at church **at 6:30 PM**. Members looking to share their thoughts and wisdom toward our current and future Worship styles are welcome to attend.

Thursday, July 10

St. John's Ladies Picnic- The ladies of St. John- Nodine invite you to a "Good Steward" Fashion Show! Come and hear more about the Good Steward Store from our guest speaker, Jeff Essig Our Mission Collection: CAMM- Central African Medical Mission Please join us for food, fun, and fellowship Thursday, July 10, starting **at 6:00 PM**. *Meet in Church Parking lot to Carpool at 5:15 PM*



Friday, July 11

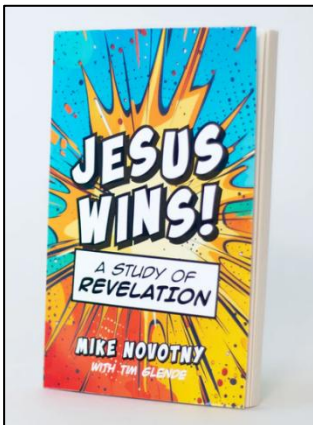
WELS Night at the Brewers- Ready for some baseball? WELS Night at the Brewers is Friday, July 11 a 7:10 PM game against the Washington Nationals. Visit <https://www.mlb.com/brewers/tickets/specials/wels> for more ticket information.

Friday, July 18

Food Truck Friday with Chef's Table- Chef's Table food truck will be here Friday, July 18, at 5 PM. This food truck is in connection with our members the Dahlgren family. *This event is not a fundraiser of any kind, just a delicious opportunity.*

Tues-Thurs, July 22 – 24

Evening Vacation Bible Study on Revelation- Come enjoy a mini "VBS" beginning **at 5:45**. A light supper will be provided, and then we get to delve into the book "Jesus Wins! A Study of Revelation" from timeofgrace.org. 10 books will be purchased to share throughout the VBS. If you happen to have your own copy, please bring it. Come one day or all 3. We want you to come! If able, please sign up, but if unable to commit, we'd rather you join us even if signing up didn't occur.



We encourage everyone to further enjoy the book of Revelation by going to timeofgrace.org to listen to these sermons, based on the book we're using in VBS. (Which came first, the book or the sermon?? haha) Search for : Revelation: When the World Hates You, How to Defeat the Devil, and A perfect Ending for You

Sunday, July 27

Quarterly Voters' Meeting: Will be held in the church sanctuary after Worship.

May

Summary of Financial Information 2025

Financial Summary				
	YTD Actual	YTD Budget	Difference	Comments
Net Income (Loss) Church	(\$8,398)	\$0	(\$8,398)	
Net Income (Loss) ELC	\$13,780	\$6,353	\$7,427	
Total	\$5,383	\$6,353	(\$970)	
Grants (net)	(\$8,697)	(\$6,606)	(\$2,091)	
Without Grants	(\$3,314)	(\$253)	(\$3,061)	

Total Deficit of ELC	
2018	(\$17,051)
2019	(\$23,087)
2020	(\$2,544)
2021	\$39,832
2022	(\$10,484)
2023	(\$8,202)
2024	\$10,716
2025	\$13,780
	<u>\$2,960</u>

Giving Summary				
	YTD Actual	YTD Budget	Difference	Comments
Offerings	\$90,358	\$101,030	(\$10,672)	89.4%
Debt Reduction	\$0	\$0	\$0	
Total	\$90,358	\$101,030	(\$10,672)	

Assets				
	2024 December	2025 May	Change	Comments
Checking Account	\$61,664	\$62,157	\$492	
Money Market	\$51,540	\$52,436	\$897	
Total	\$113,204	\$114,593	\$1,389	Net increase in cash balance

Liabilities & Equity				
	2024 December	2025 May	Change	Comments
Dedicated Funds Total	\$87,041	\$82,688	(\$4,353)	
Other Liabilities	\$1,830	\$2,189	\$359	
Assets less Liabilities	\$24,334	\$29,716	\$5,383	Net increase in equity
Mortgage Balance	\$263,309		Interest Rate	6.34%
Balloon Payment Due	11/1/2027		Monthly Payment	\$2,587.01

Basement Floor Project	
Total Cost	\$15,376
Donations to Date	\$15,376
Amount Needed	<u>\$0</u>
As of June 30	

Required Offerings			
June Offerings Needed	21,930		
June Offerings Received	21,374		
July Offerings Needed		17,046	