

August 1, 2004

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**Matthew 18:5, 6**

*(Jesus said the following to his disciples.) "Whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me. But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea."*

**"Handle With Care!"** (Printed in Saturday's Buy Line, 7-31-04, in an abridge format.)

The postal carrier takes special notice of a package with those words boldly imprinted upon the package, "Handle With Care!" We are careful to not drop such a package, whether delivered or boxed up for us at the department store, also bearing those words, "Handle With Care!" Although God sends us children without these same words imprinted upon every child's forehead, he nonetheless wants us to be aware of their fragile nature. The life of a child alone is not just fragile. That child's development, in character and in their relationship with God, is also fragile when it is our job to mentor and rear them. This is a primary form of influence by parents. This will affect how they view God, along with how they honor his holy will.

Children are blessings from God.

Children are gifts from the Almighty.

Children are valuable treasures from a loving Lord.

Noticeably, the Bible frequently refers to children as blessings and never as curses. Sad but true, attitudes of selfishness on the part of both parents and children make childrearing a real challenge. But Jesus remains bigger than such barriers. He alone could and did pay for our every sin. Yet he still does even more. He also speaks to this important topic of childrearing. His message is a message of guidance and love. Jesus said to his disciples, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these" (Luke 18:16). Jesus urges every parent to bring their children to Jesus and to have Jesus bless them with his Word of promise.

Jesus is still reaching out to little children through Holy Baptism and his Holy Word. Jesus equips both the child and the parent for faithful service to our Savior God. Better than any "How To" book, the Bible tells us "How Jesus already did it all, in our place, as our Substitute, and as our Savior." The Bible also tells parents to bring up their children "in the training and instruction of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). Saint Mark's Lutheran Church gladly and willingly assists parents in these ways through our upcoming Vacation Bible School (as well as our weekly Sunday School classes). Our God does not want you to do this childrearing alone. He wants to be there as a part of your family. And he will remain the most valuable member and the primary source of strength. Yes, Jesus clearly instructs us how to handle our children with great care, but as Christian parents we will surely see the daily need to also handle them with prayer!

# SCHOOL NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

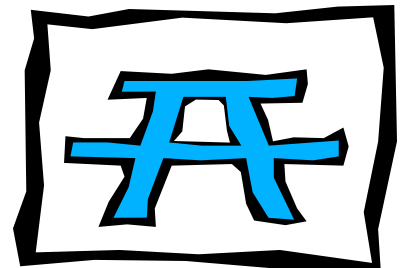
**School starts September 1<sup>st</sup>**, the Wednesday before Labor Day. We also are not following the public school calendar exactly this year. Therefore there will be days that St. Mark's is in session while the public school is on break, and there are days that we will not be having school even though the public school is in session. These changes have been approved by the St. Mark's Board of Christian Ed.

**Registration Day at St. Mark's is August 9<sup>th</sup>**. Principal Bitter will be at school from 6:30 a.m. till 5:30 p.m. Parents will need to stop in on that day to pay their registration fee (\$125/child) and lunch fee (\$12/child), and sign up for your school cleanings (the first 5 families will have to sign up for 5 weeks, the last 3 families will have to sign up for 4 weeks). Each family will also sponsor a hot lunch day for one month. Finally, please fill out the Emergency Contact forms and the Pupil Aid documents. If you cannot make it on August 9<sup>th</sup>, you will have to arrange a time to meet with our principal after the 9<sup>th</sup>.

## **Church Picnic-**

**This will be on Sunday, August 8, at the picnic shelter near the beach of Lake Bemidji State Park.**

- We are having the worship service at 9:30, so that those who may mistakenly come to St. Mark's Church at 9:00 will still have time to arrive at the Bemidji State Park.
- Those attending this special worship service will be asked to sign-in at the park's gate. Then our treasurer will pay the \$5.00 day pass per vehicle (which is a special group rate). If you already have the annual pass you will not need to sign-in. If you wish to cover the \$5.00 cost for the day pass simply add this amount to your regular offering.
- Some Food for the picnic will be provided by St. Mark's. Turkey will be the main dish. But each member family is being asked to bring either a salad dish or a dessert to pass. We should start eating by 11:30 a.m.
- For games and activities, those in attendance can swim (note: there is no lifeguard). Bike trails, hiking trails and volleyball are also available for use.



## **SAINT MARK'S MISSION STATEMENT**

**Because Jesus directs us, "Go and make disciples of all nations . . ." (Matthew 28:19), our mission at St. Mark's is to nurture believers with the Word and Sacraments, preparing them for a life of service to the Triune God; and to spread the good news of Jesus and his forgiveness to our community and beyond.**

## **CHURCH NEWS AND NOTES**

**SUMMER EVENING ADULT BIBLE CLASSES:** The next summer classes will be on Monday, August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, and 30<sup>th</sup>. Each class will start promptly at 6:30 p.m. The class will end in time for our 7:30 worship service. This summer's course of study will be concerning "The Parables of Jesus". (*Make this note on your church calendar!*)

**A SUNDAY ADULT BIBLE CLASS:** The first class for this coming fall will begin on September 12<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 a.m. (Please give Pastor Kuether any requests or suggests for a Bible Class topic.)

**SUNDAY SCHOOL:** The first class for this coming fall will also begin on September 12<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 a.m.

REMEMBER, ON THE FIRST SUNDAY OF SEPTEMBER, OUR SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP SCHEDULE WILL CHANGE! Through August 29, our Summer Sunday Worship Schedule will remain at 9:00 a.m. On September 5, the Sunday Worship Schedule will change to 10:15 a.m.

### **Ladies Guild-**

The officers of the Ladies Guild are working on the formation of Hospitality Units. These units are going to work on a rotating basis to serve for funerals, weddings, and showers. If you wish to offer input, contact the officers (Laurie Quint, Jean Mathweg, Carol Kranich, or Kiki Schnackenberg).

### **NPH Book Sale! This special Inventory Reduction Sale will run until August 31. -**

The sale items are posted. Write down what you wish to order and Pastor can include that with his next order from NPH. (NPH is Northwestern Publishing House, our Church Body's own Christian Book Store.)



## **THE WELS CONNECTION**

Minnesota District  
Commission for Communication on Financial Support

## **NORTH AMERICAN OUTREACH**

### **One reason for our existence**

When it comes right down to it, once God has worked faith in our hearts there is really only one reason for our existence. God has a unique plan for each one of us. We who know of this great and loving God have a mission and a great responsibility to tell more and more people about the peace we have through Jesus, our Savior. At the end of our days, that will be the reason God placed us on this earth.

### **Off the drawing board**

During the month of June, our synod's districts had the opportunity to meet in convention. One message that was common in each district was the message to these district representatives that *Proclaim Peace through Jesus* is off the drawing board and heading for each local congregation. This is the theme for the next four years in our outreach to North America, and this is the theme for each WELS member, congregation, and our synod.

### **Visits of encouragement**

Beginning in September visitors will be invited to your congregation. These will be visits of encouragement as each individual member of WELS finds new ways to tell more people about Jesus – in their homes, in their communities, and, in tandem with their congregation and synod, to the far reaches of North America and the world.

You may see these visitors in your church service, or you may see them in a Bible study or leadership meeting. Watch for them to arrive and welcome them. They want to share with you the joy of finding unique ways of reaching out to everyone around you and sharing with others the peace you have.

## **WHEN IT COMES RIGHT DOWN TO IT, WHAT ELSE IS THERE THAT MATTERS MORE?**

### **Financial Outlook**

The long-range view of WELS finances is cautiously optimistic. We are looking for growth in our Congregation Mission Offerings, the Schwan gift, and Mission Partner gifts. North American Outreach will provide new focus and motive for our congregational and synod ministries to reach out with the gospel. In the next budget biennium there may well be some restoration and growth. Our future is in God's hands.

### **Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Graduates**

At the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary graduation service on May 21st, 37 graduates received diplomas for successfully completing their seminary studies. (Their photos and assignments may be found in the July edition of *Forward in Christ*.) Keep praying for more young men to become laborers in the ripening fields!

### **Martin Luther College Graduates**

On May 15th, MLC graduated 195 seniors. Of this group, 54 completed the Studies in Pastoral Ministry; 88 completed the elementary education program; 28 completed the Secondary-Elementary program; 15 finished the Early Childhood program, and 10 fulfilled their Staff Ministry requirements.

## **Multi-Language Publications Update**

*Bible Stories in Pictures* has now been published in the Russian language! This is a major achievement that took several years to complete. Nearly 5,000 copies have been printed and we expect that this publication will prove popular in the Russian language as it has in other languages. To date the 388-page book that contains 92 illustrations is also available in English, Spanish, Albanian, Swedish and Telugu. Work continues on the Hindi, Indonesian and Portuguese editions.

### **From Scandinavia**

Pastor John Vogt tells us about an email message he received: "God is crazy about you! He sends you flowers every spring and a sunrise every morning. Whenever you want to talk, he'll listen. He can live anywhere in the universe, and he chose your heart." Gives us something to smile about, doesn't it!

Vogt also requests prayers for the seven current pastors of the Lutheran Confessional Church of Norway and Sweden (our sister church) who must juggle their pastoral duties, their seminary teaching responsibilities, their families, and in many cases, a secular job. May God continue to give them energy and faithfulness.

### **From Gravatai, Brazil**

Missionary David Bivens reports: "God has blessed us with some exciting news. A few weeks ago a former Lutheran pastor passed by the front of our church and decided to stop in the following Sunday. It turns out that he has a theological education from a large Lutheran church body but properly left for doctrinal concerns. He has expressed interest in learning more about our doctrines and we have enjoyed studying with him. While we leave the results of our meetings in God's hand, we are grateful for this current opportunity!"

## **MISSION PARTNERS UPDATE**

As of May 31, 2004 we have received **Mission Partner gifts of \$1,561,673.** (This number does not include the many on-going commitments we continually receive.)

Interested in finding out more? Request a Mission Partners Information Packet by contacting us at 800-827-5482 or email [loryy@sab.wels.net](mailto:loryy@sab.wels.net). On line you'll find information on nearly all of the projects at [www.wels.net/mpg](http://www.wels.net/mpg) *On this site you'll also notice how easy it is to make a donation by credit card.* Take a look!

**ONE MORE TIME . . . THROUGH A PREAMBLE TO YOUR WILL:** Your Christian will is your opportunity to "get in the last word." WELS gift planning counselors assist WELS members to develop a preamble for their wills so that members can express one more time the Christian faith by which they lived and died. Family members hear those words read at a time of serious reflection; they listen attentively to the final encouragement of a departed loved one to hold on to Christ.

In the last twelve months 104 WELS families have completed Christian wills and living trusts containing such preambles. These same families also provided \$19,460,393 in future gifts for the Lord's work in their congregations, synod and WELS agencies. For information about updating or establishing your Christian will, please contact us at 800-827-5482 or email [loryy@sab.wels.net](mailto:loryy@sab.wels.net) or online [www.wels.net/mpg](http://www.wels.net/mpg). Click on the Estate Planning picture.