

## **Have You Made Your Summer Plans?**

Summer plans often include travel, vacation trips, outdoor recreation, kid's ball games, softball leagues, family reunions, just enjoying the outdoors with the extended daylight hours, and do some fishing of course. How much thought have you put into these kinds of plans? In our house, our family has fallen short in making exact plans. Maybe, many of us have also thought that any detailed plans are futile. We've already found out the cruel reality of that old saying "The best laid plans of mice and men often go awry".

■ **The bottom line is "OUR PLANS CHANGE!"**

Thank God! **His plans have not changed, did not change and will not change!**

Our Sunday morning Bible class has been reminded again and again of God's unchanging plan to send a Son and Savior from Abraham, so that through him "all peoples on earth will be blessed" (Genesis 12:3). Unfailingly, our God kept his plan on track. He never wavered from it, never redefined it, never adjusted it, but continually repeated it and then fulfilled it. The Gospel writer, Luke, records Jesus' unwavering resolve to do what he came to do. That was to take care of business, and to work through God's plan to perfection. "As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem" (Luke 9:51).

This accomplished fact has implications for our lives today. His control and kingship is flawless. He knows, well in advance to our shortsighted way of looking at things, how everything will work out for our eternal good. To the Children of Israel, God spoke these comforting words of promise through his prophet Jeremiah, "For I know the plans I have for, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future" (Jeremiah 29:11).

Today, we still have opportunity to react and to respond to God's loving and flawless control within our lives.

- This happens when we make plans that include an awareness and an understanding of his holy will.
- This happens when we make plans to put our worship of his holy name in the top slot on our "things-to-do" list.
- This happens when we sprinkle our conversations with expressions of God's love and forgiveness (thus directing others to this world's only source of salvation).

God's plan to save you certainly was central, foremost and of utmost importance in his plan to send us his Son, or Savior. "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost" (Luke 19:10). What a joy it is to now plan with certainty that we "will dwell in the house of the Lord forever" (Psalm 23:6).

As a final consideration, you may daily have to discard and sift through unwanted emails (junk emails). Consider signing up for devotional emails (valuable emails). These are sent out at your permission from our own WELS website. You can initiate a free email subscription for these short and pointed devotions by following the steps below:

Visit the website, [www.wels.net](http://www.wels.net)

**On the far top-right of home page click on the link, WELS Daily Devotions**

**At the far top-right of this next page will be the word, Subscribe: enter email**

**After you enter your email and hit the ARROW button, you merely provide your name and create a password. Then Christ-centered emailed devotions will come your way.**

## **ST. 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 AND SCHOOL NEWS**

### **AN OPPORTUNITY FOR FELLOWSHIP AND FOOD**

Sunday, May 22, marks the last day of our morning Bible classes and Sunday school (until September). There will be morning activities with the kids. The adult Bible Class will be abbreviated and conclude with everyone gathering to view one of the segments of the Kids' Connection. This will all conclude at 10:00 AM. After the morning worship service, a congregation potluck meal will be enjoyed. Prior to this meal our newest members will be introduced for all to get better acquainted with.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE LADIES' GUILD**

- **Used eye glasses (including sun glasses, parts of eye glasses and any cases) are again being collected. These will benefit areas of our church mission fields, where the people cannot afford such necessities.**
- **LADIES, YOU ARE INVITED! The SPRING RALLY is being held in Baxter, at Christ Lutheran. The date is April 30<sup>th</sup> from 9:30 to 2:30. All ladies are most welcome!**

### **NEWS FROM THE RECENTLY HELD VOTERS' MEETING**

- **Our Building Financing Committee** reported that 18 of the 90 family units in the St. Mark's congregation have submitted their BUILDING PROJECT COMMITMENT forms. There still is time to carry through on those good intentions. So if you have not filled one out, do so soon. **THERE IS NO DEMAND OR REQUIREMENT FOR MONETARY FUNDS. THE FORM INCLUDES THE PRIVILEGE TO PRAY FOR ITS SUCCESS. IT FURTHER INCLUDES TO OPTION OF GIVING FORTH THE SUPPORT OF MANUAL LABOR, IN ORDER TO SHAVE OFF SOME OF THE BUILDING PROJECT EXPENSE.** Let's encourage the submission of 90 Commitment Forms.
- **THE GOOD NEWS OF GETTING FULL HOOK-UP TO CITY WATER AND SEWAGE WAS REPORTED. This is good news for various reasons:** 1. It will free up land around the church for future building expansion. 2. It will assure us that our school will have safe water without the annual need for testing the water from our own well. 3. It further tells us that the residential lots across the street will be ready for new construction. And new construction means new homes. And new homes means new families, close to our church. And this means there will be souls in need of salvation through Jesus Christ alone. And, **THAT IS WHY WE ARE HERE AND WHY WE EXIST IN THE FIRST PLACE!** However, this good news will be coming at a price. To bring these utilities to the edge of our property, will cost \$26,000. Additional costs for hookup will bring that total beyond \$35,000. This, of course, was not in our annual budget. There is not a choice to refuse or to accept these utilities. So any gifts of support towards this project will surely be appreciated. Thank-you for your prayerful consideration.

**CAMP CROIX APPLICATION FORMS ARE AVAILABLE!**

- They now have a website up and running. This provides information and dates for their upcoming summer activities. It also provides pictures of their facilities, located along a fine lake. You can find them on the web at: [www.campcroix.com](http://www.campcroix.com)
- Pastor Kuether has copies of the application forms for the youth campers. Boys and girls of St. Mark's are eligible campers, who are also ages 9-14.
- Camp Croix Staff volunteers are also needed. Dependable teenagers along with parents are eligible. Pastor Kuether also has these forms for any volunteer eager to serve. There is especially a need for certified lifeguards, and Register Nurses. The RN's receive monetary compensation.

**A FEW ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM SAINT MARK'S SCHOOL**

**\* ANY "WE CARE" RECEIPTS SHOULD NOW BE TURNED IN!**

These are the specially stamped Marketplace grocery receipts. That corporation will give 1% of the dollar amount totals on these receipts directly to St. Mark's School. Deb Newell will be submitting these receipts during the last week of April. Thank you so much for you cooperation!

**\* MILK CAPS ALSO MAY BE TURNED IN AT THE SCHOOL!**

These caps from KEMP'S milk bottles will be collected till the end of April. We currently have just over 2700 caps. Please bring them in and put them in the container by the window in the fellowship hall.

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**WELS news release**

**April 13, 2005**

*This gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.*  
Matthew 24:14

**North American Outreach Update**

The first phase of WELS' North American Outreach emphasis saw district leaders visiting congregations with materials to encourage, equip, and involve members in personal and community outreach. The visits began in September 2004, and some are still taking place.

Each visit included a viewing of the Proclaim Peace through Jesus video that highlights God's grace and the mission that he gives each Christian to go and tell more people about Jesus. Responses to the video and other materials shared at these visits have been exceptionally positive.

**As the North American Outreach emphasis continues, here are some things happening in our congregations in the Pacific Northwest District:**

- **Portland, Ore.** The congregation found the presentation fascinating, leading to further study, analysis, and inspiration for outreach and hoping for continuing emphasis on North American Outreach.
- **Eugene, Ore.** The emphasis led to a good discussion during the Bible class and thanks to God for blessings: people in the Bible information class who also attend worship, 15 percent of offerings going to the worldwide mission and ministry of WELS with a goal of 25 percent, a tourist attracted to attend worship by a WELS bumper sticker.
- **Bremerton, Wash.** The North American Outreach emphasis inspired the congregation to double its budget for evangelism. Members were impressed with the video that they bought a new projector to show it. People realized they need to attend Bible information classes and bring others along.
- **Olympia, Wash.** The lay leader for evangelism presented the video and led the discussion, illustrating how he is able to witness to his customers at a hair salon. Members discussed how to improve personal, congregational, and synod outreach. One member was inspired to write a Christmas program with an outreach emphasis.

So far 61 percent of WELS congregations have ordered materials available from the Board for Parish Services to help promote North American Outreach. The following chart shows the involvement to date by district. Although the first phase of this effort has passed, it is still our prayer that 100 percent of our congregations will be active in telling more people about Jesus.

*We want to hear your stories. Tell us about your congregation's plans for outreach or how you personally are sharing the gospel with those in your neighborhood. Go to [www.wels.net/nao](http://www.wels.net/nao) for more information about the North American Outreach emphasis. You will also find resources to help you share your faith and forms so you can tell us how you've seen the Holy Spirit work through your gospel witness.*



**PROCLAIM!**  
*Equipping God's messengers to tell more people about  
 Jesus*

## REACH OUT

*When witnessing remember the three R's of outreach!*

**1 Peter 2:9** - *"You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light."*

**RUINED** - Sin has ruined our lives and the lives around us. The evidence is all around us. "Ruined" brings to mind the words of **Romans 3:23** *"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."* Our efforts to save ourselves are futile.

**REDEEMED** - We have been redeemed through the blood of Jesus. God's righteous justice has been satisfied by Jesus' death. **John 3:16** *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."*

**RENEWED** - Such God-given faith in Jesus changes our whole life. We see life God's way and in thankfulness want to live for Him. We are RENEWED by the Holy Spirit. There is new joy amid the old, depressing problems. There is new strength to cope with old headaches and temptations. The fruit of the Spirit are many and varied. Some are listed in **Galatians 5:22,23**

## PREPARE YOURSELF

**But what do I say when they say . . .** *"I've always found churches so cold. I get the impression that no one cares whether I'm there or not."*

**Remember this verse . . .** **Luke 15:10** *"There is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."*

**And say . . .** "God has a personal interest in your soul. The angels of heaven rejoice when you trust Christ as your Savior. Our congregation is also vitally interested in your spiritual welfare, but unfortunately, at times we don't express this love and concern as perfectly as we should. We ask you to forgive these human failings and take the fact that we are here inviting you as proof that this congregation is interested in you."

## PLEASE PRAY FOR . . .

Crown of Life Lutheran in Cadillac, Mich. Crown of Life is a daughter congregation of Prince of Peace in Traverse City and Redeemer in Big Rapids, Mich. Crown of Life has purchased a church building and a parsonage as it begins to reach out with the good news of salvation to the people in Cadillac, Mich.



**EQUIPPING GOD'S PEOPLE TO TELL MORE PEOPLE ABOUT JESUS!**

## REACH OUT

### *TEST YOUR I.Q.!*

Here's a test that measures not your intelligence quotient, but rather your *Invitation Quotient*. Use this as a guide and encouragement in your willing response to the gospel.

Since your worship services last Sunday, have you spoken to anyone about Jesus and his forgiveness? - **Hebrews 13:15**.

Have you invited a newcomer in the neighborhood to your church anytime within the past four months? The past year? - **1 Peter 3:13-16**

During the past month have you introduced yourself before or after worship to anyone you did not know and extended your personal word of greeting and welcome? - **Galatians 6:10**

Do you pray for the ability to use opportunities God presents to you? - **Ephesians 2:10**

Do you pray that the Holy Spirit will guide you in your outreach concerns? - **Romans 8:26,27**

What is your Invitation Quotient? May the Spirit who leads our hearts to believe that we are justified also move our mouths to confess our salvation! - **Romans 10:10**

## PASSAGE TO PONDER

**Isaiah 52:7** - *How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, "Your God reigns!"*

## PREPARE YOURSELF

**But what do I say when they say . . .** "*There are too many hypocrites who pretend to be such good church members.*"

**Remember this verse . . . Matthew 13:47-49** "*Once again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. Then they sat down and collected the good fish in baskets, but threw the bad away. This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous.*"

**And say . . .** "You are correct when you say that there may be hypocrites in a Christian congregation, but this fact should not surprise you. Christ even had a hypocrite among His twelve

disciples. The Lord tells us that there will be hypocrites as long as the church carries on its work on earth. They are the result of the devil's work and efforts to frustrate the work of God's kingdom on earth. Don't give the devil's forces another victory by allowing these hypocrites to prevent the kingdom of God from coming to you. Come to church with me. Perhaps the Lord even intends to use you as the tool with which he'll change some of these hypocrites into true believers.'"

**PLEASE PRAY FOR . . .**

Faith Ev. Lutheran in Anchorage, Alaska is reaching out to the Hispanic population in their community. Pray that the Lord would bless the congregation's work by bringing more Hispanic people through their doors and in touch with the saving gospel message.