

July 31, 2005

When God's perspective becomes our perspective...

- How blessed a marriage is when the husband and wife agree. When they agree on the little things as well as the big things, it becomes even more wonderful.
- Parents learn to value the joy of seeing their children take on the values and God-fearing attitudes with which they were raised. The joy of being on the same page and walking in the same direction through life brings about a great measure of satisfaction for each loved one involved.
- Such rich rewards are also in store for those who latch onto God's way of doing things. When we adopt God's will and his love for souls, we will find ourselves blessed again and again.

God's WILL and his LOVE are clear and simple. His WILL is in short, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart with all your soul and with all your mind" (Matthew 22:37), and "God wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4).

God's LOVE is also revealed and pronounced in the ministry of his Son our Savior. "The son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45), and "The Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost" (Luke 19:10).

While we know this to be true, may we learn to apply it more firmly to every aspect of our lives, through the constant study of his Word. In this way God's perspective becomes our perspective. Ultimately, in this way we can only know for certain that we are loved and that his will is best for us. Allow me to close with the quote used some weeks ago in a Sunday Sermon. Herman Gockel is the author, and writes the following in one of his devotional books entitled, "Answer to Anxiety".

"Can there really be a God of love?"

I suppose that whether or not a person believes that God is a God of love, would depend upon what he thinks the world needs the most from God — and whether or not God has filled that need. The man who thinks that the supreme need of human life is physical health, and that there can be no gift that is greater, will find it difficult to believe in a God of love when he walks through a crowded ward at the city hospital. The man who believes that the greatest need of the human race today is international peace, and that there is no gift that is greater, will find it difficult to believe in a God of love as he sees nations poised on the brink of mutual destruction. The sweet young thing who has come to regard her beauty as the ultimate gift of God to her will find it difficult to believe in a God of love if her face is miserably scarred in an auto accident. Or the prosperous businessman who has come to regard his soaring stocks and bulging bank account as the ultimate of divine blessings will find it difficult to believe in a God of love if by a sudden stroke of misfortune he is reduced to poverty. It all depends upon what we consider the world's — and our own — greatest need, and whether or not we believe that God in His goodness has filled that need. (pages 27-28)

Your sin and my sin are clearly pronounced in our lives. The times we have put ourselves first in thought, word and action, are too numerous to count. We truly reap what we sow when pain and misery come our way. In fact, we get off quite easy when we consider the hell punishment that we truly deserve. But PRAISE be to God that he has met and fulfilled that greatest of all needs! His Son, our Savior, Christ our Lord, gained for us all that sure and certain forgiveness we desperately need. It was really accomplished by his perfect life and sacrificial death on Calvary's cross. Therefore, our gift of such forgiveness is truly full, free and final! *CONTINUED* →

You are a loved and cherished child of God as portrayed in Isaiah 40:11, "He tends his flock like a shepherd: he gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young." God's peace that surpasses all human understanding is NOW yours, as his perspective becomes your perspective.

Your shepherd under Christ,
Pastor Lon Kuether

***A WORSHIP NOTE:** "TIME OF GRACE" – WELS SERMON AND MESSAGE (from St. Marcus Church in Milwaukee) CAN BE SEEN ON SUNDAY MORNINGS at 6:30 AM on KMSP FOX (Channel 9).

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 NEWS AND NOTES

REMEMBER!!! SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP RETURNS TO 10:15 a.m., ON September 4th, 2005. This time of Sunday worship will remain from September through May. Sunday school and adult Bible class will begin Sunday, September 11.

SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 11, 2005, MISSION FESTIVAL

- Our Guest Preacher will be Rev. Arnold Lemke of Minneapolis. He is the Education Director for our WELS Life Resource Center. His Bible Study and Sermon will make us acutely aware of God's precious gift of life. Each life is truly sacred in God's sight whether we are born or yet unborn, whether disabled or highly skilled.
- Following the morning of worship, we will enjoy a special potluck/picnic meal. The church council will be sharing more details of ways in which you can help with food, set-up and clean-up.
- SUNDAY SCHOOL will also be starting September 11th. There are classes for children 4 years old all the way through high school. This a great opportunity to have your children grow closer to their Savior by worshipping and learning about Him. Please note that we will be starting 15 minutes earlier this year – at 8:45 a.m. with group singing and devotion.

JESUS CARES STARTS THE THIRD SATURDAY OF SEPTEMBER. Our first meeting is September 17, 2005. Speak with Belinda Baumann or Pastor Kuether if you have an interest in helping and a genuine care for the developmentally disabled people of our community. The set schedule for these Jesus Cares Bible Classes will be on the first and third Saturdays, from October through May, at 10:00 until 11:15 a.m.

YOU ARE INVITED AND WELCOME:

- To participate in the annual church and school cleaning. This will happen on Saturday, August 6th and August 13th. Just meet here at St. Mark's Church at or around 9:00 a.m., and contribute a few hours of your time to help in keeping God's house attractive and inviting to visitors.
- To attend the wedding of our member, Sam Schroeder. Sam will be marrying Natalie Halstenggaard on August 6th at 4:00 p.m. This wedding will take place at our sister congregation in Moorhead, MN. The church is Ascension Evangelical Lutheran Church. (More details are posted on the church bulletin board.)
- For the ladies of our congregation to attend a wedding shower for Sam and Natalie, on August 14th at 2:00 p.m. Those wishing to attend and to help with this shower may be interested to know that they are registered at Target and at Bed, Bath and Beyond.
- To attend the Sunday morning Adult Bible Class on September 18th, at 9:00 a.m. Our topic of study will be the Augsburg Confession. June 25th marked the 475th anniversary of this document still embraced by all true Lutherans. This course of study will carry us into the Christmas season. You've already studied Luther's Small Catechism. Here is your opportunity to take your study of God's Word to another level.

WHILE PASTOR AND HIS FAMILY ARE ON VACATION ...

Pastor will be out of town from August 9th through the 22nd. He looks forward to sitting on the other side of the pulpit for a couple of weeks. Together the Kuether family will gather one weekend with Pastor's parents and the next weekend with Kris's parents. You too will have the opportunity to see a different face in the pulpit for those two weeks. On the first weekend of Pastor's absence, Mr. Boyd Longshore will conduct our services on August 14th and 15th. He is a seminary student from Bethany in Mankato. We are also grateful for the Kranich's to accommodate him during his brief time in Bemidji. On August 21st, Pastor Fred Fallen from St. Paul, MN, has agreed to conduct our worship services. And on Monday August 22nd, Pastor Shawn Stafford will lead that Monday evening worship service. God bless your time at the feet of Jesus' messengers. During this span of time Pastor Stafford of Lengby and Pastor Falck of Grand Rapids have agreed take care of any pastoral calls as needed.

IN APPRECIATION TO THE ANONYMOUS DONOR!

The Christian flag that now stands before our church was a gift from within our membership. We are grateful to that person to help us keep before our eyes the dual citizenship that God's people have and possess. Indeed, while we are here on earth for such a short time, our citizenship is also in heaven. In the words of the great hymn writer "Heaven is our Home!"

SOME SCHOOL NEWS:

MONDAY, AUGUST 29th, will mark a new school year. The day will open with a worship service at 8:40 a.m. All are welcome to attend.

WAYS TO HELP OUT YOUR SCHOOL

Pray for the school children and workers

Give regular first-fruit offerings to your church

School Special Project Fund

There is a fund within the church budget that is designated School Special Project Fund. This fund is to be used by the Church Council for school related items that do not fall within the normal budget of the school. Purchases in the past that have been made using this fund are the carpet in the fellowship hall and school area, a laminator, two computers, computer software, and renovating the playground. There are a number of ways that a member can contribute to this fund:

- 1) A donation that is specifically designated for the School Special Project Fund.
- 2) Using the matching gift program of Thrivent, called "The GivingPlus Program". Up to \$600 can be give to the school's operation (the overall general fund), then .50 cents for every dollar will be donated (going into the School Special Project Fund). For more information on this program or to get a form to participate in this program, please contact Nathan Bitter or Deb Newell.
- 3) Clip "Box Tops for Education" symbols off of General Mills products and Betty Crocker products and give them to Mr. Bitter. The school receives 10 cents for each one that it redeems.



- 4) If you have a Target credit card, please designate St. Mark Lutheran School as your school choice in the "Take Charge of Education" program. The school receives 1% of any purchase you do with that card in Target stores. The school receives ½% of any purchase you do with that card outside of a Target store. Talk to Mr. Bitter if you would like to designate your card for St. Mark.
- 5) Give your Kemps milk caps to that have a sticker on them that says they are worth 5 cents. The school can redeem these caps as part of the "Give 'Em Five" Program that Kemps is sponsoring.

Friends for Christian Education

Friends for Christian Education is an organization within the church. They use the "We Care" sticker program at Marketplace to help with special projects by the VBS, Sunday School, and the day school. Talk to Deb Newell about this program.



NEWS FROM THE WELS

Minnesota District
Commission for Communication on Financial Support

MEMBERS CONTRIBUTE GENEROUSLY TOWARDS WALKING TOGETHER

In mid-April, materials including a video and brochures were mailed out to the approximately 1,200 synod congregations, encouraging them to hold a Walking Together Sunday on or around May 1. The service was intended to inform members of the work that WELS carries out as a synod and to celebrate what has been accomplished up to now by the grace of God.

As of mid-June, love for Christ compelled offerings of nearly \$522,000 among WELS members. About \$404,000 of that amount was given through 423 congregations and there are high expectations of still hearing from most of the 800 others. The remaining gifts came from individuals, many of whom learned about Walking Together through WELS Planned Giving mailings and staff.

In addition, WELS has received plenty of helpful feedback about the service. A large majority of the 70 people polled online by Planned Giving said they either learned from the service, were motivated by the Christian message or both. A number of bloggers contributed their input as well at <www.wels.net/imprint>:

“It is our powerful and loving God who has blessed our humble efforts to remain faithful to the true Word! Let us rejoice at how richly and broadly he has expanded our efforts! We truly have a treasure in our church body,” wrote a blogger identified as “Naomi.”

Another blogger, a pastor’s wife named Shanna wrote: “Personally, I enjoyed hearing an example of the Holy Spirit working . . . that is always very encouraging.”

Finally, Dick Gleich, a member at St. Peter’s in Savanna, IL, submitted the following e-mail describing his congregation’s creative twist on the Walking Together service:

In honor of the event, volunteers from the church participated in a morning walk from the church to the river in downtown Savanna. They visited the riverfront green space where some of them had helped plant trees the day before. By walking together and working together in service to God they hoped to demonstrate their partnership in carrying out the mission of the church.

“I’ve been a WELS member all my life,” said Ron Roth, administrator of WELS Communication on Financial Support who directed Walking Together. “I’ve served as a parish pastor for 24 years and as a synod administrator for 17 years. And still I have those ‘Oh, wow!’ moments when I learn something new about our synod’s ministry. I pray that our Walking Together Sunday emphasis has been an ‘Oh, wow!’ experience for all of us and that we will be moved to support his work of the Lord in thankfulness and joy!”

WELS SCHOOLS ACCREDITATION RECEIVES APPROVAL

On June 13, 2005, the WELS School Accreditation (WELSSA) process was approved by the National Council for Private School Accreditation (NCPSA). Jeff Inniger, Commission on Parish Schools associate administrator and WELSSA executive director, was in attendance to receive this national endorsement.

Prior to the NCPSA approval, the Commission on Parish Schools had in place 10 standards for WELS schools and a self-study evaluation process. However, as WELS schools continued to grow, the need for a more formal and rigorous accreditation process became apparent.

"It's a really important endorsement that NCPSA has approved us. It means, really, that any WELS School that becomes accredited through WELSSA can also be accredited through other regional accrediting bodies because we are a member of NCPSA," says James Brandt, Commission on Parish Schools administrator.

Both Brandt and Inniger stress that the accreditation process is important to WELS schools in three ways. First, it provides quality assurance, not only for the school's own supporting congregation, but also for the community at large. As schools are increasingly used as outreach tools, this endorsement shows communities that WELS schools are high quality schools. Second, it assists in creating a school improvement plan and goal setting initiative. Finally, it acts as a development tool to help schools plan for the future.

WELS "NOT-SO-TRIVIA" ...

Did you know the largest WELS church in our South Atlantic District isn't in the United States, but on the island nation of Antigua, in the British West Indies?

St. John's Lutheran Church in Antigua numbers over 600 members and about 175 students in their K-6th grade school.

of the work that they do, but also because the synod (all of us) provides most of the support for the church. This year we will provide more than \$250,000.00 in financial support for the work of the Lord in Antigua.

The ministry at St. John's is broken down into four basic parts, each serving the Lord in their unique way.

1. St. John's Lutheran school, which is supported by the tuition students pay to attend the school. The school is staffed by all Antiguan teachers, except for one American, Mr. Jeff Schultz, who currently teaches 6th grade.
2. St. John's has a Spanish ministry led by Pastor Tim Satorius who is bi-lingual. Each Sunday Spanish worship services are held along with Spanish bible study and Sunday school. As in the United States, the Spanish speaking population in Antigua is growing rapidly.
3. Pastor Ken Cherney arrived on the island last summer to begin the Caribbean Christian Training Institute. The purpose of the institute is to provide training to both men and women to become lay leaders in Antigua. It is the prayer of St. John's that eventually elders and pastors will be trained in Antigua and they will then serve the Lord in the Caribbean.
4. Pastor Josh Sternhagen leads the "traditional" portion of the ministry. If, however, you attended the worship services at St. John's you quickly find that they are anything but traditional. By most WELS standards, the services are casual and music plays a dominant role in their worship services. ... Pastor Sternhagen and the St. John's members loudly sing praises to the Lord with their hymns. It is a wonderful worship service to attend. You come away knowing the members of St. John's love their Lord.

Next time you are in Antigua, be sure to stop (while driving on the left) at St. John's for a worship service. It will be an experience in praising the Lord that will remain with you forever.

– Mr. Jay White, South Atlantic District Mission Board



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

<p>PASSAGE TO</p>	<p>REACH OUT</p>
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Sharing my Friend with my Friends

Some of the best opportunities that we have for witnessing about Jesus are with those people we know. Identify those people among your friends, relatives, acquaintances, and neighbors who don't know Jesus as their Savior. They may be people who have never believed, or they might be those who were once Jesus' followers, but have strayed away from the Shepherd of their souls.

On a piece of paper write the names of your friends who need Jesus. Put that list in a place where you will see it everyday: by your desk, on the refrigerator, or in your Bible. As you look at that list each day, pray for those precious souls specifically by name. Pray that God will give you opportunities to speak to them about Jesus who is their Savior from death and Way to eternal life. That could be a challenging prayer because when God answers it, you have opportunity to speak about Jesus to those people you know and love. Be ready! Tell them what a wonderful friend Jesus is.

Use the [Friends Who Need Jesus](#) form to help you focus on those who don't know Jesus as their Savior.

PREPARE YOURSELF

But what do I say when they say . . . *"If there is a God in heaven, why does he allow men to suffer and have so many troubles and problems?"*

Remember this verse . . . Psalm 50: 15 *"Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honor me."*

And say . . . Troubles and problems are a part of our lives because of sin. The greatest consequence of sin is death. In his love for the world, God sent Jesus who died to free us from the hold of eternal death. Therefore, believers in Jesus will not be separated from God through death, but have everlasting life with God. Even the bad experiences of life serve God's loving purpose for us. Our faith is strengthened in God our Savior as he answers our prayers to help us through times of difficulty and to defend us from trouble. We are led to praise God who always guards and protects his precious children who will live with him forever in heaven.