

THE BETHANY

BEACON

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“Let your light shine before others” (Matthew 5:16)



The Christian Church has been blessed with many marvelous hymns in the last 2000 years. Over the next several months, Pastor Prange's newsletter articles will share insights on some the greatest hymns of Christendom and how they emphasize the great paradoxes of our Christian faith. This month we consider the Lenten hymn, Sing, My Tongue, the Glorious Battle.

Great Paradoxes in Christian Hymns: Cross and Glory Sing, My Tongue, the Glorious Battle

“Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Hebrew 12:2).

How does someone become the King of kings and Lord of lords? In the history of this sinful world many have become kings and lords by all manner of intrigue, deceit and conniving. Even in a democratic society, where people choose their leaders, men and women are often elected not on the basis of leadership skills but on basis of half-hearted promises or mere popularity. For those wanting to “get ahead” in the political realm, honesty and integrity are usually not high priorities.

And how do those who have grabbed power often act? Jesus once commented that “those who are regarded as rulers [in this world] lord it over” their subjects, taking advantage of their position. After sharing that insight, Jesus warned his disciples: “Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all.” (Mark 10:42-44).

Jesus himself is the epitome of this profound Christian truth and paradox: the greatest in God's Kingdom is he who becomes the least, the servant and slave of all! Nowhere is this truth more brilliantly amplified than in Jesus' cross. Though in his suffering and death Jesus might seem to be utterly defeated, the truth is his cross brings him the greatest, eternal glory. God has exalted

his Son to the highest place, that at his name every knee should bow and every tongue confess that our crucified and risen Savior is the King of kings and Lord of lords (Philippians 2:8-11).

“Sing, My Tongue, the Glorious Battle” (CW 122) is an ancient hymn that skillfully treats this paradox. Written by Venantius Fortunatus (530-609), this Lenten battle-hymn describes how Jesus “as a victim won the day” (stanza 1). After recounting the Savior’s redeeming work (stanzas 2-3), the poet reveals how Jesus’ cross – that shameful Roman implement of cruel pain and death – is for us the “true sign of triumph” as the unequaled “symbol of the world’s redemption” (stanza 4). By his cross, Jesus not only won eternal glory for himself but also for all those who trust in him!

Our Christian faith is one of paradoxes: our Savior takes up his glory by taking up his cross!

The Value of Christian Education

Principal Steve Schultz

As we go through the process of inviting parents to visit our school, I am reminded of the training that I had and which I shared with my children. What is the value of a Lutheran elementary education? Here at Bethany, we prepare students to live successful and meaningful lives in the ever-changing complex world. But our school is doing even more. We are preparing our students to share Christ today and to serve him while here on earth. More important, we are preparing students and their families to live with Christ in eternity.

There are those who say we cannot offer all the programs that are in the public schools. While this may be true in some respects, we believe that we offer much more. We teach the S.T.E.M. program to each child through Project Lead the Way. Our children excel in music both instrumentally and vocally. The individual attention that the children receive from teachers who truly care about them lets our children know they are special in God’s eyes. This individual attention is one reason why our students achieve at a high level and are so successful in high school.

We provide a moral foundation for our students that is the guiding light in all our programs. The foundation of Christ and his work of redemption will assure your child of having a purpose in all that your child does now and in the future. What price can you place on an education that lasts forever? What better guarantee can you get? God tells us in Proverbs 22:6, “Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.”

God’s Word is at the heart of our teaching, our disciplining, and activities. That powerful Word changes hearts through the working of the Holy Spirit through the Word. What value is Christian training at Bethany? It is priceless. Consider inviting a friend to join us in training their children.

🎵 GRACE NOTES 🎵

Preparing for Worship at Bethany

On the weekend of **Sunday, March 3**, Bethany will celebrate the **Feast of the Transfiguration of Our Lord** at Bethany. This festival marks the end of the season of Epiphany and leads directly into the history of Jesus' passion, as retold during the season of Lent. As happened at his Baptism in the River Jordan, so also on the Mount of Transfiguration God the Father directed words of blessing, power, and encouragement toward his Son, Jesus. "This is my Son, whom I have chosen." Jesus is this world's one and only Savior. St. Luke also recorded words that the heavenly Father directed toward us. "Listen to him," he said. (Luke 9:35). During the Epiphany season, we have seen Jesus revealed as the one who came to fulfill the Old Testament promises of a Savior. During the season of Lent, we will see that Savior faithfully carrying out his work in perfect love and willing obedience. Let us recommit ourselves during the upcoming season of Lent and beyond to listen to him.

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On **Wednesday, March 6**, we will commemorate the beginning of the **season of Lent** with **Ash Wednesday worship at 3:30 p.m. (Kenosha) and 6:30 p.m. (Somers)**. Both services will include a celebration of Holy Communion. Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the 40-day period of repentance and reflection that precedes our celebration of Jesus' resurrection from the dead on Easter morning.

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Unity Sunday is March 10. There will only be ONE service that weekend, a 10 a.m. Sunday service at Shoreland. Our WINGS group is also organizing a **potluck meal** following the service.

Members whose last name ends with A-M are asked to bring a main dish and a dessert. Members whose last name ends with N-Z are asked to bring a main dish and a side. Setup will take place at Shoreland on Saturday, March 9 at a yet-to-be determined time.

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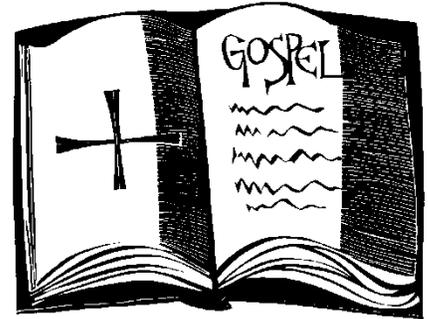
Midweek Lenten Vespers begin **Wednesday, March 13** and will focus on the theme "**Three Words of Truth.**" The pastors from Bethany and other Kenosha WELS congregations will lead us through a series of three word phrases from the Passion history that teach us about the salvation Jesus has won for the world. Services will be held at **Kenosha (3:30 p.m.) and Somers (6:30 p.m.) through April 10.**

PARISH EDUCATION

Grow in the Grace and Knowledge of Our Lord Jesus Christ

- Pastor Prange will continue his eight-lesson study of Acts 1-12 entitled **How Does the Christian Church Grow?** We can learn much from St. Luke's historical account of the first Christians about how the Church grows with God's blessing, and you might be surprised what you'll learn.
- Pastor Pagel will be conducting a one-lesson study of Philippians 2:1-11 on March 3 (Somers) and March 17 (Kenosha) entitled, **"The Importance of Pulling Together."**

- **Studying the Sunday Scriptures** takes place at Somers every Wednesday at 10:30 a.m. Pastor Prange leads this weekly study that helps prepare you for weekend worship. Attendees have commented how much more they now get out of worship because they've studied the gospel and lessons first. Our group has grown in numbers and knowledge. Join us for this informative study.



- The **Wednesday Evening Bible Study** will be in recess for Lent effective March 6. Meetings will resume May 1. Have a prayerful Lent and a joyous Easter. Contact Larry or Deb Dubis at 262-948-3269 or via e-mail ldubis@wi.rr.com for information about the Wednesday Evening Study.
- On **Monday March 25**, we will conclude a study of the Nicene Creed entitled **"I Believe"** in our **Somers Evening Seminar Series**. Pastor Prange will lead an exploration of the person and work of the third person of the Holy Trinity, the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is often underappreciated and misunderstood even by God's people, and many false teachings have developed over the centuries as a result. Come and find out what the Christian Church actually confesses about the Holy Spirit on the basis of the Holy Scripture.
- A group meets with Pastor Pagel for **Breakfast Bible Study** at Perkins in Pleasant Prairie at 8:15 a.m. The group is currently studying the miracles of Jesus. Normally on the last Wednesday of every month, the group will meet on March 6 this month, and then have its regular meetings on April 24 and May 29.
- The **Saturday Morning Bible Study** meets every other Saturday at 9 a.m in the home of Gary and Rudee Koepke (3327 86th Street, Kenosha). This month they will be meeting on March 9 & 23 and continue their study of the book of Joshua.

WINGS CORNER

Women in God's Service

Who are we? Our mission statement is: The Women in God's Service / Lutheran Women's Missionary Society (LWMS) of Bethany Lutheran Church exists to provide women with opportunities to grow spiritually through Bible study, do service projects for the congregation, and to support the efforts of the WELS LWMS in home and world missions projects. WINGS/LWMS will also create opportunities for fellowship with women in our congregation, the LWMS Lake Shore Circuit rallies and the WELS national LWMS conventions.

As part of the Lake Shore Circuit, we join together with nine sister churches in our area. We gather twice a year at a Circuit Rally, gathering for Bible Study, food & fellowship, and selecting the new mission that we will support for the following six months. Our upcoming Rally will be here in Kenosha at Mt. Zion on April 6. We will be giving all of the money that was donated for the WELS Pakistan mission. Please consider helping us support this mission where they put their lives on the line each day to help spread God's saving grace! There are envelopes in the back of church available or simply make a check out to WINGS and place in the offering basket. We also ask that you please keep this mission in your prayers.

Our next meeting will be held **Thursday, March 7 at 6:30 p.m.** at Bethany-Kenosha in the church basement. We would love to have you join us!

CARING AND SHARING

News from Bethany and Beyond

Subscribe to the Bethany E-News and Notes

If you'd like to receive a weekly email in your inbox with all the Bethany News & Notes, please send an email to the Bethany office (blsoffice@bethanykenosha.org) to be included on our emailing list. The E-News & Notes will include the full range of news from Bethany Church and School and elsewhere, including Shoreland and WELS info, all at your fingertips.

WELS Kenosha-Area Pastors Meet to Discuss Potential Joint Work

As proposed by Bethany's Long-Range Plan adopted in October 2018, the pastors of the four Kenosha WELS congregations (Bethany, Friedens, Mt. Zion, and St. Luke) have met twice in 2019 to discuss the possibility and desirability of working together more closely than we already do in our efforts to the serve the greater Kenosha area with the gospel more effectively and efficiently. At their most recent meeting, the pastors resolved to produce a joint vision document that would lay out the rationale for working together within a united congregational structure with multiple locations in the Kenosha area and the potential benefits of such an

arrangement. This document will be shared with the church councils of the congregations after Easter for initial reaction and feedback.

New Pictorial Directory Published

Member pictures were taken and submitted in 2018, and the process of putting together the 2018 pictorial directory is now complete. The new directory began rolling off the presses in late February, and copies will be produced and distributed beginning in March. We pray that this directory will be a blessing to the congregation, as we seek ways to know one another better and to work together for the mission and ministry of the congregation. Grab one as they are made available and use it often!

Art Strehlow with the Lord Jesus

Bethany member Art Strehlow was called to his heavenly home on February 21 after another recent bout with cancer. Christian funeral will be held on Thursday, February 28. Now Art's body eagerly awaits the sound of Jesus' voice on the Last Day. We pray God's comfort for the entire Strehlow family. Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord!

Memorial Fund Blessings

Over the years, Bethany has benefitted greatly from monetary memorial gifts to the congregation. Last year, the congregation received a \$25,000 gift from the estate of longtime Bethany member Dolores Zaionc. This gift has enabled Bethany to purchase a new, high-resolution sign for our Kenosha campus that will be installed in the spring of 2019. It also allowed for the purchase a new large screen TV and accessories for the Kenosha sanctuary that will be used for audio-visual presentations in worship, Bible study, and meetings. We pray that our congregation will benefit for many years from these memorial fund purchases and serve as a wonderful legacy to Doroles' generous Christian spirit. Please consider how your designated gifts to Bethany's memorial fund will serve and benefit the congregation's gospel ministry for years to come!

WELS CONGREGATIONAL MISSION OFFERINGS FALL SHORT

Congregation Mission Offerings (CMO) received in 2018 totaled \$21,111,878. We are grateful for this generous support our synod's mission and ministry. The total, however, was \$246,000 (1.2%) below the offerings received in 2017 and \$148,000 (0.7%) less than what congregations had indicated in their CMO subscriptions for the year. More than a decade of flat, and now even decreasing, CMO has made it increasingly challenging to maintain our current level of ministry, not to mention to seize some of the many gospel opportunities that God is graciously placing before us.

Adding to that challenge is the fact that subscriptions (i.e. congregational pledges) for 2019 are \$20,913,700, nearly 1% less than 2018 receipts. Bethany's subscription for 2019 is \$32,000. Since synod planning forecasted that subscriptions would be met in 2018 and that subscriptions for 2019 would increase by 0.5%, the task to maintain and expand ministry has become even more difficult. The results for 2018 and subscriptions for 2019 are \$350,000 less than the

forecast and compound to reductions from what was used for planning the next biennium of \$454,000 and \$456,000 for Fiscal Year 20 and Fiscal Year 21, respectively. One bit of good news is that offerings for January 2019 were 6.4% higher than the January offerings in 2018.

At its February meeting, the Synodical Council adopted a Ministry Financial Plan that recognizes these financial realities. All areas of ministry have been asked to look for ways to economize and to plan for less spending than what had been anticipated. Once a plan for the next two years is adopted by the Synodical Council, it will be forwarded to the synod convention this summer for approval. As the economy improves, we pray that God will enable congregations to meet—and even exceed—their CMO subscriptions in 2019.

BIG STEPS FOR THE WELS HYMNAL PROJECT IN 2019

The development of the new WELS hymnal and its supplementary products is making significant progress this year in anticipation of the final release scheduled for Advent 2021. A preview of the new hymnal will be available in 2020.

“It’s really wrapping up,” said Hymnal Project Director Rev. Michael Schultz. “Almost every aspect of the main content is going to be finished at the end of the calendar year.”

The Executive Committee of the Hymnal Project reviews and finalizes all content. Several specialized subcommittees lead the design of certain elements or worship resources that serve the specific needs of churchgoers, musicians, and pastors.

For example, the Hymnody Committee evaluates which hymns to include in the new hymnal. Similarly, the Psalmody Committee is completing the text of the Psalter, a resource containing the full text of all 150 psalms with multiple musical settings for each. Other subcommittees focus on rites and Scripture as well as the technology for and communication of the project.

The pew edition of the new hymnal will be designed to make the text and music on the page clear and intuitive for all worshipers. Separate accompaniment editions for liturgy, psalms, psalter, and hymns will provide a robust resource for organists and pianists. Three settings of the main communion service will be included in the hymnal pew edition, each following similar worship structures while varying the musical style. Several additional musical settings are in development and will be made available digitally.

In addition to performance guidelines like tempo markings, the “Accompaniment for the Hymns” edition will include additional musical options for many hymns. A team within the Hymnal Project called the Musicians’ Resource Group is gathering even more arrangements for other instruments not included in the accompaniment edition, such as brass, flute, and guitar.

After four years of development, the updated lectionary for the new hymnal was recently completed. Each Sunday, the three Scripture readings, Prayer of the Day, Psalm of the Day, and Verse of the Day will now fall under one theme. The new Commentary on the Propers will help leaders plan their worship around these integrated service themes.



Each of these elements contributes to the Hymnal Project's overall mission, which reads, "We begin our task so that worshipers now and long into the future can both hear for themselves and proclaim to God and the people around them the saving work of Jesus Christ."

If you would like to learn more about the Hymnal Project and stay up to date on its continued progress, visit welshymnal.com and subscribe to the e-mail newsletter.

CHURCH DEDICATION IN PUERTO RICO

On Sept. 20, 2017, Hurricane Maria swept over the island of Puerto Rico causing great devastation and destruction.



WELS members responded generously with gifts to WELS Christian Aid and Relief. But the devastation caused by the storm made communication with fellow Christians in Puerto Rico difficult. It was hard to know what needed to be done to help and how that help could be delivered.

Early last summer WELS Christian Aid and Relief sent retired missionary Rev. Larry Schlomer Sr. to the island. He was asked to stay for up to a year to help the church leaders determine what needed to be done and then to help organize relief and rebuilding efforts.

God has graciously taken care of the people of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Puerto Rico and restored their church in Humacao. On February 10, this church celebrated the completion of the rebuilt church with a dedication service. Many of the national pastors were in attendance along with Rev. Larry Schlomer Sr., WELS President Rev. Mark Schroeder, and Rev. Tim Satorius.

BETHANY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH AND SCHOOL

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