

THE BETHANY

# BEACON

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



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*The Christian Church has been blessed with many marvelous hymns in the last 2000 years. In recent months, Pastor Prange’s newsletter articles have been sharing insights on some the greatest hymns of Christendom and how they emphasize the great paradoxes of our Christian faith. This month we consider the triumphant hymn, Crown Him with Many Crowns.*

## **Great Paradoxes in Christian Hymns: Slain and Living Forever Crown Him with Many Crowns**

*“Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!” (Revelation 5:12).*

“The king is dead! Long live the king!” was a traditional acclamation in European countries during the last millennium. Those words were used when the king died and was succeeded, usually by his son. The phrase arose especially to emphasize the fact that sovereign power transferred immediately to this new king upon the previous monarch’s death. The ruling class wanted their subjects to believe that old kingdoms never die; they just get new kings.

History teaches us, however, that even old kingdoms die. One of history’s most famous ruling families, the Hapsburgs, reigned in Europe for about 800 years. The name became synonymous with power. Still, even this long-time kingdom finally came to an end.

So what happened to Jesus’ kingdom on Good Friday? Pilate asked Jesus whether or not he was a king. Our Savior replied, “You are right in saying I am a king,” though he assured the Roman governor, “My kingdom is not of this world” (John 18:36,37). Later that same day, our King would heave his last breath to the horror of his followers. There was no heir-apparent to take his place! No one shouted: “The king is dead! Long live the king!” With Jesus’ death, it seemed as though his kingdom had died as well.

Of course, we know better! Our victorious King rose from death three days later, proving his victory over all our enemies, the greatest of which is death. The angel herald announced the good news: The King *was* dead, but now he is alive! Long live the King! (Mark 16:6). Yes, our King was slain, yet now he lives forever. What a paradox!

“Crown Him with Many Crowns” (CW 341) glories in this magnificent paradox. Written by the nineteenth-century hymnist Matthew Bridges, this paraphrase of hymns from the book of Revelation reminds us that, while our King is the Lamb who was slain, he is now the “matchless King through all eternity” (stanza 1). We are invited to “behold his hands and side, rich wounds, yet visible above, in beauty glorified” (stanza 2). Here is the “Lord of life, who triumphed o’er the grave” (stanza 3). The King *was* dead! Long live the King!

Our Christian faith is one of paradoxes: our King was slain yet now he lives forever. His kingdom – yes, our kingdom – will never end!

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## 🎵 GRACE NOTES 🎵

### Preparing for Worship at Bethany

**Confirmation Sunday** is **Sunday, May 5**. The Rite of Confirmation will be administered at the 10:30 a.m. Kenosha service. Over the past two years, nine young Christians have successfully concluded their study of the Scriptures on the basis of Martin Luther’s *Small Catechism* and will now be received into communicant membership at Bethany. They are: Troy Dolphin, Sheyenne Kisonis, Abbie Lange, Carly Moilanen, Nadeen Nieves, Lucas Prange, Sophia Prondzinski, David Ripke, and Joey Ruiz. Due to Bethany’s practice of not celebrating Holy Communion during the confirmation service, Holy Communion will only be available that morning at the 8 a.m. service.



The **Feast of the Ascension of Our Lord** is **Thursday, May 30**. Though there will be no joint Kenosha service this year, we still do well to consider the importance of Jesus’ ascension into heaven. First and foremost, Christ’s ascension reminds us that human beings belong in heaven. That’s our final destination; heaven is our home. Besides that certain hope to which we look forward, even now we can rejoice in the fact that a human being, our Savior Jesus, rules as the King of kings over all things on our behalf (Ephesians 1:20-22). And though he left our sight on his ascension day, Jesus promised us, “And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matthew 28:20), reminding us that he has not left us as orphans. Our regular celebration of Holy Communion is a blessed reminder that he comes to us still today in a very special and real way!



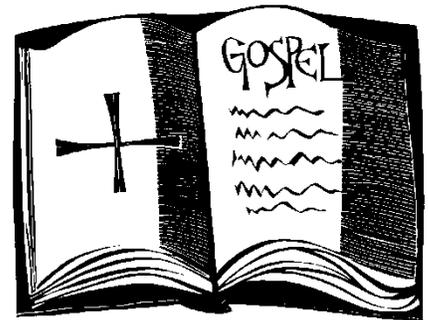
The **Summer Worship Schedule** will begin on Memorial Day weekend (May 25-26). Saturday evening worship will continue to take place at Kenosha beginning at 5:30 p.m. As is our normal practice, Holy Communion will be celebrated on the second and fourth Saturdays of every month. On Sundays from Memorial Day weekend to Labor Day weekend there will be just one Sunday service at Kenosha beginning at 8 a.m. Communion will be celebrated on the first and third Sundays at Kenosha. There will also be a 10 a.m. service at Somers with Communion being celebrated on the second and fourth Sundays. Then in the months of June, July, and August, we will add a Wednesday evening service at our Somers location beginning at 6:30 p.m. This will be a slightly shortened service and will include a weekly celebration of Holy Communion. Please note that there is no Wednesday service on May 29 or September 4. This midweek service will only take place on the Wednesdays of June, July, and August.

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## PARISH EDUCATION

*Grow in the Grace and Knowledge of Our Lord Jesus Christ*

- Pastor Prange will conclude 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.
- **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** resumes meeting May 1 with the "Life and Ministry of the Messiah – Misguided Faith." The Wednesday Evening Bible study meets every Wednesday at 6:30 at the Dubis' residence, 8686 122<sup>nd</sup> Street, Pleasant Prairie. Please contact Larry or Deb Dubis at 262-948-3269 or via e-mail [ldubis@wi.rr.com](mailto:ldubis@wi.rr.com) for additional info or if you have any questions. This session will conclude on May 15.
- 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 May 29.



- The **Saturday Morning Bible Study** meets every other Saturday at 9 a.m in the home of Gary and Rudee Koepke (3327 86<sup>th</sup> Street, Kenosha). This month they will be meeting on May 11 and continue their study of the book of Joshua.
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## WINGS CORNER

### *Women in God's Service*

This month has brought three opportunities for us to gather together. Our normal meeting, the Circuit Rally at Mt. Zion, and an evening of fun painting! So thankful for all who could join us!



In our circuit we are part of Befriend a Mission (BAM). We are assigned one home and one world mission to pray for and assist. Over the next year and a half we will be supporting Pastor Kirk Massey in Arizona with the Apache mission and Pastor Michael Quandt at Redemption Lutheran Church in St. George, Utah. Please keep them in your prayers and look in future Beacon newsletters for more about their missions!

Our next meeting will be Thursday, May 2 at 6:30 p.m. at our Kenosha location. We will be voting for the LWMS national mission for the next year. Every woman in the church has a vote with LWMS so please consider joining us this week.

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# 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](mailto:blsoffice@bethanykenosha.org)) to be included on our e-mailing 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.

### **BETHANY LUTHERAN SCHOOL CELEBRATES GRADUATING STUDENTS**

Bethany Lutheran School's **Eighth Grade Graduation** is scheduled for **Thursday, May 23 at 6:30 p.m.** in the Kenosha sanctuary. **Kindergarten Promotion** will take place on **Wednesday, May 22 at 6 p.m.** in the lower level of the school.

### **55+ BETTER GROUP POTLUCK AT SOMERS**

The 55+ Better group will be gathering for a potluck meal at Bethany-Somers on **Thursday, May 23** beginning at 4:30 p.m. Attendees are invited to bring their favorite beverage, a dish to pass, and a friend. Please RSVP to Kathy Becker (818-2901) by May 21.

### **CONGREGATION APPROVES NEW SCHOOL FLOORING**

At a special congregational meeting on April 14, the congregation approved a proposal to replace the flooring in the school classrooms and stairways that lead to the lower level. This project will be completed over the summer months, which will make it impossible to hold a Vacation Bible School this summer.

### **MEETINGS CONTINUE ON THE POSSIBLE RE-COMBINING OF KENOSHA CONGREGATIONAL MINISTRIES**

Over the past month, the church councils of the four WELS Kenosha congregations have had an opportunity to react to a rationale for considering the re-combining of congregational ministries in an effort to serve the greater Kenosha area with the gospel more effectively and efficiently.

While it is a blessing that all four congregations share the same faith and confession, it is also important to recall and celebrate the fact that our congregational histories are intimately connected. All four congregations were established by faithful Lutherans who began arriving in Kenosha in the 1840s. In 1853 the first Kenosha Lutherans started to worship together under the pastoral leadership of Rev. John Weinmann, who made biweekly visits to Kenosha from his parish at First Evangelical Lutheran Church in Racine. Friedens was eventually founded in 1856. Later, under the influential leadership of Rev. Carl Buenger, the longtime Friedens pastor (1902-1948) and District President, the Friedens congregation resolved to expand gospel ministry

work in Kenosha by supporting new congregational starts at St. Luke (1914), Bethany (1917), and Mt. Zion (1945), the first two also establishing schools. In just thirty years, one Kenosha congregation grew into four independent congregations.

Especially during the post-World War II baby boom, the decision to establish a multi-congregational arrangement in Kenosha seemed to be justified. Even though they were in close proximity to one another (within a 2.5 mile radius), all four churches and three schools were largely filled and able to maximize ministry opportunities in their neighborhoods independently.

Beginning in the mid-1960s, however, congregational membership and school enrollments began to decline steadily. In 1963, the four congregations had more than 5,000 members combined; now they have about 2,300. In 1968, the combined school enrollment was 566; now it is 187.

There are many factors that have led to this decline, including a population shift to the west side of Kenosha. The question for us to struggle with is this: Are the Kenosha congregations better off facing these new realities by themselves, or would it be wiser to find a way to tackle them together.

We pray that with our Savior's guidance, we might develop a plan to face these challenges together and take advantage of new gospel ministry opportunities as partners rather than as unnecessary rivals. Meetings will continue over the summer to explore the possibilities.

#### **MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING SIGNED IN HANOI, VIETNAM**

On April 24, WELS President Mark Schroeder, World Missions Administrator Rev. Larry Schlomer, and Director of Missions Operations Mr. Sean Young reported exciting news during the visit to Hanoi, Vietnam. After surveying the land chosen for the theological education center, a memorandum of understanding was signed by WELS and Vietnamese Fellowship Church (VFC) representatives confirming we can move forward with all land purchase, construction, and training plans.

It all started when Zang Lou, a leader within the Hmong Fellowship Church (HFC) in Vietnam, viewed an online sermon by WELS Pastor Bounkeo Lor in 2011. The clear proclamation of law and gospel and the message of pure grace through Jesus Christ was something he had never heard before . . . and he wanted to learn more. That same year, Zang Lou invited Lor to come to Vietnam to train the HFC in the truth of the gospel. Lor made his first training visit in 2012. Since that time, Lor has made over 24 different trips to Hanoi, Vietnam.

With every visit Lor has made to conduct training in Hanoi, approximately 60 church leaders have attended to learn more about the truths of the Bible. These same 60 leaders have been taking the message back to their rural congregations, preaching the message of salvation by faith, not by works – something the members had never heard before. The HFC was a church body of 55,000 members when Zang Lou first reached out to WELS. In the years WELS has provided training, the HFC has grown from 55,000 to over 100,000 members and formed many new churches. HFC leaders have seen the growth and the joy that Lutheran teaching has

brought to their congregations and have expressed a desire to become a confessional Lutheran church body.

Please continue to pray for this amazing mission opportunity and consider supporting it with your financial gifts. Learn more at [wels.net/vietnamhmongoutreach](http://wels.net/vietnamhmongoutreach).

### **SEMINARY ENROLLMENT TO GROW**

The WELS Conference of Presidents learned from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary that next year's entering class promises to be much larger than classes in recent years. Current class sizes at the seminary are in the mid-30s. Next year's incoming class could be as large as 50. If classes continue to be that large, we could anticipate an easing of the pastoral vacancy situation four years from now.

### **SUPPORT FOR CALLED WORKER CONTINUING EDUCATION**

The support of congregations and their leaders is a critical element of encouraging spiritual and professional growth among pastors and other called workers in all their God-given callings (spouse, parent, friend, neighbor, etc.). Providing such encouragement is an important investment in gospel ministry.

If you were to say the words "continuing education for my pastor" you may think of only formal learning that is offered by Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary or Martin Luther College, but continuing education is much broader than that. Yes, there can be tremendous benefit and encouragement gained by following a more formal course of study, including pursuing a degree. What is more, when called workers gather in the same place for study something special happens—learning and encouragement occur outside the classroom as well as within it. Iron sharpening iron.

As vital as these formal educational resources are, continuing education is more than credits and classrooms, diplomas and degrees. It means making the most of conferences and circuit meetings or forming small study groups to work together on preaching and teaching or other ministry challenges.

Most important, for called workers, continuing education includes spiritual growth through regular study of the Word. That is the keystone. That same Word they preach and teach to others provides the Water of Life to them too. It is a dangerous activity to offer that Water of Life to others if one is not drinking the Water deeply and personally.

Imagine needing emergency surgery and learning that your surgeon graduated from medical school over 25 years ago and has never opened a book since graduation; never discussed challenges with other surgeons; never attended any class seminar or conference for further training. He is unfamiliar with many of the latest surgical procedures that could speed your recovery. How much better you would feel if that surgeon not only had the benefit of years of experience but also had stayed current with advances in surgery and follow-up care.

So it is with those we call to care for our souls. Continuing education sharpens faith, deepens their understanding of God’s powerful Word, and encourages pastors to meet the needs of eternal souls in congregations and schools. It provides pastors with the spiritual power of the gospel and broadens them through the experiences, reading, and insight of others.

Partnering with pastors and teachers in helping them to consider where growth would bring the greatest blessing for their gospel ministry is one role to play when it comes to encouragement. In order to meet new ministry challenges, it is critical for pastors and teachers to grow in their ministry. Praying for spiritual and professional growth for them is another beneficial way to give the gift of encouragement.

Continuing education is not vacation time, but rather time for a pastor to focus his time into the reading, writing, and other course work. Congregations who understand this and allow for both rest and growth will reap the benefits when their called workers return refreshed and strengthened by the Word.

By contributing to a congregational budget designated for continuing education, your called workers will be more likely to participate in some type of CE. For this reason, Bethany has a yearly budget to support their called workers’ continuing education

### **2019 BREWERS’ WELS NIGHT TICKETS NOW AVAILABLE**

Tickets are now on sale for the sixth annual WELS Night at Miller Park. Plan to join thousands of WELS members for the Milwaukee Brewers’ game against the San Francisco Giants on Fri., July 12, 2019. Game time is 7:10 p.m.

The Brewers are offering WELS members up to 50 percent off the price of tickets. The pricing is Field Outfield Box, Sections 128-131 for \$21/ticket, Loge Outfield Box, Sections 229-232 for \$17/ticket, or Terrace Reserved, Sections 436-437 for \$9/ticket. All seats are on the third base side. Discounted tickets are now available to purchase online at [brewers.com/wels](http://brewers.com/wels).

Last year more than 2,400 WELS witnessed a dramatic walk-off home run as the Brewers defeated the Rockies in the bottom of the ninth inning. The epic three-run blast topped off a wonderful evening of fun and fellowship for the fifth annual WELS night at Miller Park. “Since several seating sections were filled with members wearing the royal blue WELS Night at Miller Park t-shirts, we have decided to offer the same shirt again this year in youth and adult sizes,” says Lee Hitter, WELS Director of Communications.

Shirt orders will be available soon. Visit [wels.net/brewers2019](http://wels.net/brewers2019) to learn more.

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### **BETHANY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH AND SCHOOL**

**2100 75<sup>th</sup> Street Kenosha, Wisconsin  
262.652.3574**

**1520 Green Bay Road Somers, Wisconsin  
[www.bethanykenosha.org](http://www.bethanykenosha.org)**