



Pastor's Message

¹⁹ "Write, therefore, what you have seen, what is now and what will take place later.

²⁰ The mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand and of the seven golden lampstands is this: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.



The Future Is the Lord's

The last time I wrote this article it highlighted the writing John did was God's writing. The Bible is God's word.

This section says the exact same thing. John is commanded to write. It was not John's idea to write *his own revelation*. It was God's idea, direction, and command to John to write these things down because this book *is a revelation about Jesus Christ*. There is no way John could know these things on his own. This book in all of its imagery, simplicity, yes...difficulty as well, and beauty of encouragement is a miracle and spiritual wellspring for the soul.

But there's a little gem in this verse that deserves a deeper look. Christ says, "**Write, therefore, what you have seen, what is now and what will take place later.**" So this book would look at past things (which is why you want to know the rest of the Bible well for this book). It would look at present things, the "what is now." But Jesus says to him *and what will take place later*. This book does talk about future things.

Do you look to God for your future? After all, the future is the Lord's.

Do you look to God to provide for you and your family? After all, the future is the Lord's.

Are there things in life that you lack or need, physical or spiritual blessings? Jesus says to ask him. After all, the future is the Lord's, and he is powerful to hear and give generously.

Are your eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of your faith? After all, the future is the Lord's, and the greatest future he can provide is to be with him eternally in heaven.

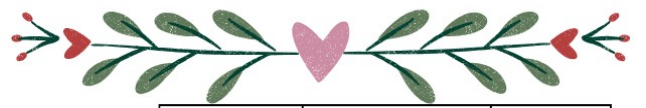
The book of Revelation pictures the future of the sinful world like the churning of the sea. It looks bleak and challenging for God's people. Sin just doesn't stop...and at times seems to spiral out of control. I wonder if John wrote some of these things down with a quivering hand as Jesus unveiled them to him because the sight of them was so heavy on his soul.

But this world isn't our home. And the ultimate revelation is that Christ reigns supreme. He rules over all these things for his church. And even as church spires crumble and fall, the light of Christ in the word of God never goes out. His promises never fade. As Peter says, "The one who trusts in him will never be put to shame." He promises his people that they will overcome all this. Let that sink in. The only one who defeated death says you will overcome all this through faith in him. He is *revealing the future to you*. And he can, because the future is the Lord's. It doesn't belong to sin, to Satan, or to death.

It belongs to our Savior. It's his to give and direct, to steer and guide. By grabbing hold of Jesus by faith, you take hold of the most blessed future, the future God always intended for you. Don't let it go!



Happy Birthday



AND GOD'S BLESSINGS!



| | | |
|------------------|------------------|--------------|
| Stephanie | Damrow | Feb 1 |
| Shirley | Brooks | Feb 1 |
| Larry | Schomberg | Feb 2 |
| Garry | Schomberg | Feb 2 |
| Elaine | Wall | Feb 2 |
| Kevin | Reinemann | Feb 2 |
| Elise | Mueller | Feb 2 |
| Shirley | Ausavich | Feb 2 |
| Allyson | Rebholz | Feb 3 |
| Laura | Wehrmann | Feb 3 |
| Joan | Wehrmann | Feb 5 |
| Lisa | Specht | Feb 5 |
| Cody | Trochta | Feb 6 |
| Sharon | Laack | Feb 6 |
| Taylor | Stange | Feb 6 |
| Elizabeth | Theobald | Feb 6 |
| Walker | Moyer | Feb 7 |
| Justin | Radue | Feb 8 |
| Katie | Schuenemann | Feb 8 |
| Melissa | Hahn | Feb 8 |
| Wendi | Eagan | Feb 8 |
| Zachary | Stauss | Feb 8 |

| | | |
|----------------|------------------|---------------|
| Crystal | Becker | Feb 8 |
| Kerry | Grunewald | Feb 9 |
| Mollie | Hermann | Feb 9 |
| Sophia | Hughes | Feb 9 |
| Luke | Clappes | Feb 11 |
| James | Truttschel | Feb 11 |
| Eric | Wehrmann | Feb 11 |
| Larry | Grunwald | Feb 11 |
| Marissa | Marten | Feb 13 |
| Melody | Coward | Feb 14 |
| Haleigh | Schelk | Feb 14 |
| Penny | Sawall | Feb 15 |
| Janice | Hoppe | Feb 16 |
| Brandon | Heilman | Feb 16 |
| Rachael | Valukas | Feb 16 |

| | | |
|-----------------|------------------|---------------|
| Chad | Pennings | Feb 20 |
| Lynette | Maass | Feb 20 |
| Courtney | Athorp | Feb 21 |
| Logan | Schroeder | Feb 21 |
| Lyndon | Litt | Feb 22 |
| Jayne | Dragan | Feb 22 |
| Jonathon | Probst | Feb 22 |
| Ardella | Fields | Feb 22 |
| Ashley | Sixel | Feb 22 |
| Allen | Kraemer | Feb 23 |
| Hailey | Boenisch | Feb 24 |
| Jessica | Hemenway | Feb 24 |
| Aurora | Bode | Feb 24 |
| Cheryl | Fields | Feb 24 |
| Aaron | Maass | Feb 25 |
| Cora Ann | Zarling | Feb 25 |
| Colin | Mayer | Feb 26 |
| Mary | Athorp | Feb 26 |
| Matt | Horn | Feb 27 |
| Judy | Ramey | Feb 27 |
| Jim | Stromski | Feb 27 |
| Jennifer | Stange | Feb 28 |



Happy Anniversary!



| | | |
|------------------------|---------------------|---------------|
| Dale & Jean | Wuestenhagen | Feb 23 |
| Max & Lindsey | Scheuer | Feb 25 |

"Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate." ~Mark 10:9

Council Meeting Minutes

January 3, 2024

Chairman: Eric Eickhoff
Vice President: Todd Marten
Elder Chairman: Eric Vant Hul Activities:
Elder: David Wehrmann
School Board: Zach Theobald
Treasurer: Jim Van Alstine
Financial Secretary: Jim Eick

Recording Secretary: Eric Specht
Evangelism:
Staff Minister Luther Curia
Trustees: Trevor Wehrmann
Principal Mike Wieting
Pastor Adam Bode
Pastor Aaron Mueller

The meeting was called to order by President Eric Eickhoff.
Pastor Bode opened the meeting with a devotion followed by prayer.
The Secretary's minutes from the December 6, Council Meeting were approved.

Transfer In

- Bill Hammarstrom
- Chris Brey

Adult Confirmation

- Josh Dolan
- Kelly Dolan

Profession of Faith

- Sutter Dolan

Baptism

- Bruce Wayne Tinker

Current membership:

| | |
|------------------|------------|
| Communicants = | 670 |
| Children/Other = | <u>162</u> |
| Total = | 832 |

Motion to Approve the Membership Action Motion Carried

Staff Minister Mr. Curia:

Christmas season is awesome as usual. Thank you to all who were involved. Would welcome any suggestions on the Christmas services for next year. We rented 300 chairs for \$1400. We will pursue an option to buy chairs and figure out some funding to see if this would be a better option for us. Possible change next year for Christmas at St Pauls. There was overcrowding in the gym. 350 1st and 450 2nd, and 38 in the Harvest Room. Parking was also a concern as they were parking on the grass.

Pastor Bode:

Planning for Lent rotation with pastors of area WELS churches. One of the Trinity Kiel Pastors will cover Plymouth.

We are still in need of a mid-afternoon after care worker.

Pastor Mueller:

Several Counseling items going on right now. There will be 2 MLC Students shadowing Pastor Mueller and Pastor Bode this weekend.

God blessed 2023!

January will be working on a theological paper due in April.

Thankful for all the worship services, choir, instrumentalists, AV, decorators, volunteers for the past month!

Council Meeting Minutes

January 3, 2024

Elder's Report

MLHS is updating their policy on called worker recognition. They are leaning toward asking the called worker's home congregation to host anniversary recognitions. Pastor Bode requested that the updated plan be communicated to congregations once finalized.

Principal's Report

Grades 7-8 will visit Manitowoc Lutheran High School for the Lancer for a Day event on Friday, January 12. Pre-enrollment will begin January 15 for grades 1-8 for the 2024/2025 school year. Parent/Teacher Conferences are scheduled for February 1st and February 2nd.

St. Paul's has completed its intent to participate in the Wisconsin Parental Choice Program for 2024-2025. Spirit Week is scheduled for January 15th through January 19th.

Field Trip to DC is progressing and all paperwork has been approved. 8 of 9 children are going.

School Board Report

The cost for educating a student at St. Paul's Lutheran Preschool is approximately \$6600.

3K/4K Tuition for 2024/2025

| | |
|---------------|--------|
| 5 Days (Full) | \$5000 |
| 5 Days (Half) | \$2500 |
| 4 Days (Full) | \$4000 |
| 4 Days (Half) | \$2000 |
| 3 Days (Full) | \$3000 |
| 3 Days (Half) | \$1500 |
| 2 Days (Half) | \$1000 |

Motion to accept the tuition for 3K/4K as presented after discussion the motion carried.

K-8 Tuition 2024/2025

The cost for educating a student at St. Paul's Lutheran School is approximately \$8200.

Member Families of St. Paul's, Howards Grove

\$875 per child (1st and 2nd child)

\$425 per child (3rd child and each subsequent child)

Sister Congregation Families (Members at Another WELS/ELS Church)

| | Grandfathered | New Enrollees (24/25 School Year) |
|------------|---------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1st Child | \$1300 | \$2600 |
| 2nd Child | \$1250 | \$2500 |
| 3rd Child | \$1200 | \$2400 |
| Family Cap | \$3750 | \$7500 |

Non-WELS/ELS Families (Please speak with the principal for more information.)

Motion to accept K-8 tuition as presented after some discussion, motion carried.

Officers will look into if we need to offer health insurance to aides that are working an average of 30 hrs a week.

Motion to approve Flex Gardening for Mr. Dias, motion carried.

Council Meeting Minutes

January 3, 2024

Treasurer Report

Financial Results to Budget

Revenue

Offerings for the month of December (5 Sundays & Christmas) totaled \$94,100 (averaging \$18,800 per week) up from November (4 Sundays & Thanksgiving), which totaled \$65,200 (averaging \$16,300 per week and compared to last year December-2022 (4 Sundays) totaled \$85,300. The 2023-24 budget forecasted a 15% increase in donations to result in a (\$88,325) deficit. So far, offerings are on-pace with a 15% increase over the same 6-month period 2022. Expenses are \$43,900 under budget so far this year. If savings continue this year, we may see a result better than budget.

\$14,300 in tuition was received in December. \$8,000 of K-8 tuition, \$5,000 K3 & K4 tuition. After Care fees, mostly from 3K students, is \$14,700 compared to a budget of \$2,600.

Special donations received in December were:

- We received an additional \$52,200 for Growing Forward.
- \$2,336 for the School Fund
- \$757 for MLHS on the Lancer Singers Sunday
- \$370 for the Memorial Fund
- \$250 for Faith for the Future.

Expenses

Church Expenses are \$7,934 under budget mostly due to lower medical expenses and music/worship supplies.

School expenses are running \$16,570 over budget due to more hours and higher wages for School Aides and extra Hot Lunch Helper. We are seeing higher expenses for textbooks and supplies with the startup of school. The first three School Choice Audits were completed and billed so far this year resulting in higher cost than budget.

Property / shared expenses are running \$22,800 under budget. With the added school space, custodian wages are running higher than budget. We are still seeing lower utility costs so far. Property & Casualty insurance are under budget When insurance charges for the building expansion were quoted, they are much lower than budgeted.

Missions: Monthly payments to WELS and MLHS were made to budgeted amounts.

The Total Expenses are \$43,900 under budget while revenue is \$13,400 under budget resulting in a Net Result of (\$30,000), compared to a planned (\$51,500) loss.

Building Expansion:

A final construction bill of \$47,341 was paid in December as all construction issues are settled. Construction borrowing remains at \$2,873,872.

At the end of December, outstanding pledges for Growing Forward stand at \$206,700.

Council Meeting Minutes

January 3, 2024

Trustee's Report

Still waiting for the new float switch for the underground fire supply tank. One of the refrigerators' compressors failed in the new kitchen; it was repaired by Bitter-Neuman.

All Keys have been organized. If you need a key please see Erin R. or Trevor W.

Organizing storage rooms in the new building if you need to store something please see Trustees.

Evangelism Report

Congregational hospitality coming up.

Sue V will be attending the next meeting to see if living nativity can partner with Evangelism.

Activities Report

Axe Throwing on 1/19 from 6:30-8:30 pm

Officer's Report

The transition to Wels Veba seems to be going well. A draft of the Emergency Preparedness Plan was provided to the officers to read through for a discussion at our next meeting.

Working through the Facility use policies. Long Range Planning will be meeting January 16th.

(Will work on a 5 year outlook plan.)

WELS Report

The Synodical Council (SC) held its fall meeting in November. Here are some of the highlights:

President's report

In my regular report to the SC, I shared the following information:

- The Conference of Presidents has begun to carry out a resolution by the synod convention to prepare a pastoral brief on "critical theory." This brief will be intended to provide called workers and members information that they will need to understand and to deal with an important issue affecting our churches and members.
- A task force has been formed to carry out a synod resolution calling for a wide-ranging effort to address the shortage of called workers.
- Two gifts (of approximately \$800,000 and \$500,000) have been given to the synod by congregations that have decided to close. The purpose of these gifts is to provide support for ongoing and expanded mission work.
- Northwestern Publishing House will use a special grant from the Schwan Foundation to enable the inclusion of the Evangelical Heritage Version, the English Standard Version, and the Christian Standard Bible translations in the Service Builder software for the new hymnal. The new hymnal has been adopted by approximately 75 percent of WELS congregations.
- A newly appointed committee has begun planning for the celebration of the synod's 175th anniversary in 2025.

Council Meeting Minutes

January 3, 2024

WELS Report

Updates

The SC received detailed updates from the areas of ministry, the synod's subsidiaries, and the various departments of the synod. Highlights include:

- The Board for World Missions is considering new mission efforts in several foreign mission fields, including Senegal and Australia. God continues to bless the work around the world.
- The Board for Home Missions has approved the establishment of 10 new home missions and 10 mission enhancements this year, in keeping with the "100 missions in 10 years" initiative.
- Reports from WELS Investment Funds, WELS Foundation, WELS Church Extension Fund, Benefit Plans, and Northwestern Publishing House all indicate a solid financial condition for all these subsidiaries.
- WELS Communication Services has produced a video, "Doing More Together," that provides guidance and encouragement to congregations as they establish their 2024 Congregation Mission Offering (CMO) subscriptions
- WELS Technology continues to focus on ensuring security and privacy in the IT systems at the WELS Center for Mission and Ministry and at the synodical schools. Video surveillance cameras are being installed at the WELS Center for Mission and Ministry in keeping with a recommendation from a recent security audit.
- The Ministry of Christian Giving reported that 2023 Congregation Mission Offerings through October are slightly higher than last year and are ahead of projections. Gifts of \$521,000 have been received for the Competency-Based Education program at Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., This program provides an alternative pathway to the teaching ministry for WELS second-career adults who are unable to move to New Ulm for a traditional on-campus program. The "100 missions in 10 years" initiative has received \$2.66 million in gifts.
- Chief Financial Officer Kyle Egan reported that the accounting firm of Baker Tilly has completed the audit of the June 30, 2023, financial statements and has issued an unmodified opinion (the best that can be received). With that information, the SC approved the June 30, 2023, Consolidated Financial Statements.
- Egan also reported that the first quarter financial results are in line with planned levels for both revenues and expenditures. WELS remains in a strong and stable financial position.
- Over 800 WELS congregations, schools, and affiliated organizations are part of the WELS Group Property and Casualty Program from Church Mutual. Because of their efforts to focus on risk management and loss control, the WELS group has again qualified for a safety dividend totaling just under \$200,000 for calendar year 2021 premiums. Participating organizations can expect to receive a dividend check in the mail for their portion of the dividend from Church Mutual by the end of calendar year 2023.
- WELS Christian Aid and Relief continues to provide assistance to congregations and sister church bodies in times of natural and man-made disasters. It is also eager to help individuals who are facing difficult financial or health situations.

Council Meeting Minutes

January 3, 2024

Decisions

- The SC approved a request by Luther Preparatory School, Watertown, Wis., to add a full-time employee to its recruitment staff. This position will not require additional synod operating support.
- The SC approved a request from Martin Luther College to proceed with the first phase of the build-out of additional music space in the unfinished basement of the chapel. The \$250,000 project will be funded with gifts received and designated for that purpose and will require no additional synod operating support.
- The SC transferred \$2 million from the Financial Stabilization Fund (FSF) to the synod's Capital Projects Fund. The SC also amended the FSF policy to provide for an annual \$1 million to be transferred to the Capital Projects Fund. The Capital Projects Fund is intended to be a source of support for planned synodical building projects in the future.
- The SC approved the sale of an office condo in St. Paul, Minn., used by the WELS Mission for the Visually Impaired (MVI). Proceeds from the sale will be placed into the special funds of Congregational Services. MVI is planning on a partnership with a local congregation in the Twin Cities area for its ministry work.
- The SC continued to discuss the inflationary environment and called worker compensation and referred the matter to the Compensation Review Committee for continued review. The SC also reminds self-supporting congregations that each calling body has the flexibility and latitude to provide called workers with increases greater than the 2.5 percent increase included in the synod compensation matrix as they consider individual circumstances, local circumstances, or other relevant factors. In addition, the SC encourages congregations that are providing compensation less than the synod guidelines to strive to increase compensation to meet those guidelines.
- The SC determined that from now on it would meet in November and in April, with the ability to meet also in February if necessary.

MLHS Report

Click [here](#) for the Lancer Express, a weekly video update.

Calls

Pastor Jason Hacker is transitioning into his role as MLHS President.

Pastor Paul Cerny from Campbellsport, WI is deliberating the call to teach theology at MLHS.

Abbie Bosin has a call to Arizona Lutheran Academy.

Keturah Hochmuth has a call to Watertown SD.

Matthew Meitner declined the call to teach English, ESL, and be assistant international coordinator.

Carrie Ungemach accepted the call to teach art, foods, and photography.

Campaign update - Info [at this link](#).

St. Paul's federation delegates to MLHS are Pastor Mueller, Pastor Bode, Principal Michael Wieting, Jim Van Alstine, Will Belitz, Kevin Mueller, Mike Heilman, and Tom Sawall.

Council Meeting Minutes

January 3, 2024

Old Business:

Nominations are set for Council Elections

Annual Meeting Agenda

Please have reports to Erin by the 10th and please include a list of everyone serving on the committee.

New Business:

Leadership training and devotion will be held on January 27, 2024 at 9:00 am with a light breakfast.

Motion to close the meeting, motion carried

Pastor Bode closed the meeting with the Blessing.

Respectfully submitted by Eric Specht

February 2024

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesd | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|--|--------------------------------|---|---|--|---|
| | | | | 1 | 2 5pm Harvest Rm Reserved | 3 10am JAM—Stuck on Jesus 7pm Herd Game in Oshkosh |
| 4 8am Worship 9:15am Family Bible Hour 10:30am Worship 11:45am Youth Rally Mtg | 5 6pm BIC 6pm Worship 7pm Adult Choir Practice | 6 | 7 Early Childhood Open House 9am Bible Study 4:15pm P.S. Catechism 6:30pm Council | 8 NO SCHOOL 1:30pm Ladies Aid | 9 NO SCHOOL | 10 |
| 11 8am Worship 9:15am Family Bible Hour 10:30am Worship | 12 9:30am Pastor Circuit 6pm BIC 6pm Worship 7pm Adult Choir Practice | 13 6:30pm Evangelism | 14 Adult Choir Sings 9am Bible Study 4:15pm P.S. Catechism 6:30pm Ash Wednesday Worship | 15 | 16 | 17 |
| 18 3K-4K Sing 10:30 Service 8am Worship 9:15am Family Bible Hour 10:30am Worship | 19 6pm BIC 6pm Worship 7pm Adult Choir Practice | 20 | 21 K-1st Sing 9am Bible Study 4:15pm P.S. Catechism 6:30pm Lent Worship 7:30pm School Board 7:30pm Officers | 22 6pm PTF Mtg | 23 12pm Pizza Assembly Setup | 24 7am Pizza Assembly Day |
| 25 8am Worship 9:15am Family Bible Hour 10:30am Worship | 26 4:30pm Trustees 6pm BIC 6pm Worship 7pm Adult Choir Practice | 27 | 28 5th-8th Sing 9am Bible Study 4:15pm P.S. Catechism 6:30pm Lent Worship 7:30pm Elders | 29 5pm Harvest Room Reserved | | |