



God's People Gather.

God's people gather. Notice that this is not a question: God's people gather? Nor is it a command: God's people gather! It is simply a statement of fact: *God's people gather.* This is just what they do.

God's people gather, and when they do, it is a place like no other. It is a place where you might find a high school linebacker carrying a walker up the stairs for a 90-year-old grandma. It is a place where a woman who was never able to have children of her own volunteers in the nursery so new moms can hear at least part of the service. It is a place where damaged addicts and confident young business owners sit side by side and confess their sins to God and hear the word of absolution. The gathering of God's people on earth is a unique gathering. It is a place where people who would never intentionally seek each other out come together. It is a place where those who are not welcomed anywhere else find a home.

In the very beginning after creating the heavens and the earth and making a man in his own image, God gives us his own assessment of how things were: "The Lord God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him'" (Genesis 2:18). We need God. But we also need other people. We were created as relational beings. We need connection. We need conversation. We need community. Before the fall into sin, it seems that it was common for God to come and visit with the man and woman in the garden. After all, they knew what it sounded like when he walked in the garden (Genesis 2:8). After the fall, God could have remained separate from his sin-stained creatures forever, but instead, he drew near. He was there in the wilderness with his people in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. Later, his glory rested over the tabernacle and the temple as his dwelling place. Then God himself became the temple and lived among us in Jesus Christ (John 1:14). God comes all the way down to live with us, to be one of us, to be born, to eat, to drink, to sweat, to bleed, and to suffer, die and rise again, so that our sins could be forgiven, and we could be with him forever.

As the good news of Jesus spread throughout the ancient world, believers gathered together in places separated by thousands of miles and in very different cultures. While there have been times of persecution and plague when believers have been unable to gather, they longed to do so. Even when groups were smaller or pushed underground, they gathered to comfort and console, to celebrate and to mourn, to laugh and to cry. *God's people gather.*

Now, there have always been exceptions. People have been unable to gather because of sickness, war, or disease. Others have had to live on frontiers or in isolation. In such situations we trust that the power of the gospel whether read,

or spoken, or streamed through a high-speed connection can sustain faith. However, these are exceptions. Normally, God's people gather.

The coronavirus pandemic has prevented many people from gathering in person for worship. Thankfully, some have begun to come back. Others may need more time. And still others, might need a lot of encouragement. Here are some things for us to keep in mind as we encourage our brothers and sisters in the faith.

- **Be patient and understanding** - There are many reasons that some do not want to come back yet. It is important that we deal with individuals on a case-by-case basis, and we must be careful not to bind consciences unnecessarily but show great patience and careful instruction as we encourage individuals to return to in-person worship.
- **Emphasize the blessings of in-person worship** - Online worship and other tools proved to be a blessing during the pandemic. We see God's providence in the technological advances that allowed people to be fed by God's Word and to virtually worship with each other. However, there are several reasons why gathering in person is a preference to be encouraged.

1. *Humans have a natural desire to be together.* The experience of the last year tells us that some things are better in person. When we gather in person, we can see the friendly smile on someone's face (or even in their eyes). We can sense the uncertainty or doubt in their voice. We can feel the confidence in their confession of faith. Humans are social creatures. Christians have a spirit-born desire to gather with others.
2. *Jesus gives us his body and blood as a proclamation of his death.* Bread is broken, wine is poured, Jesus is there, his death and resurrection proclaimed. This is not something that can be done individually behind a screen.
3. *When we gather we encourage one another.* Someone who is worshiping online might feel like they do not really need others to stay strong in their faith. That might be true (probably not), but others need them. When we gather together, we are spurring one another on toward love and good deeds

God's people gather. It is not a question; it is a matter of fact. God's people gather because the faith that he plants in their hearts gives them a desire to be with others who share that faith. God's people gather, and when they do, they are not only strengthened and encouraged in their faith, they send a powerful message to the world. This is important. This matters. This is the body of Christ.

Pastor Matthew Holtz

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Worship Schedule

Sunday services: 8:00 a.m. & 9:30 a.m. (Summer schedule begins Sunday, 5/30)

Monday evenings: 6:00 p.m.

Our 8am Sunday services are on facebook live and can also be heard on WNAM 1280 AM.

6/6, 6/7	Second Sunday after Pentecost – Followers of Jesus – Enjoy Sabbath Rest
6/13, 6/14	Third Sunday after Pentecost – Mission Festival: Dr. Paul – Intl. Friendship Center
6/20, 6/21	Fourth Sunday after Pentecost – Followers of Jesus – Grow in God's Word
6/27, 6/28	Fifth Sunday after Pentecost – Followers of Jesus – Look to Jesus in the Storms

Official Acts

Transfer Out:

Keith Krueger

Baptized:

Cruz Aquino, son of Jonathan & Lindsey Aquino

Forever with the Lord:

Irene Scheibe departed this life on May 13th, 2021 at the age of 94 years, 8 months, and 10 days.

Bonnie Frank departed this life on May 26th, 2021 at the age of 87 years, 4 months, and 4 days.

Children Confirmed:

Anna Dvorak, Brooklyn Frye, Ian Holmes, Eliot Kelley, Leland Morey, Gwen Pfefferle, Tabitha Potter, Austin and Hailey Rogers, Jack Schlueter, Isaac Schultz, Laura Selig, Alex Thompson, Ragen, Rowen, and Reese Volhard, William Volkman, Jason and Jack Ziglinski, and Marek Zimmerman

Financials through April 30th, 2021

	Apr.	July – Apr.
Income	\$ 153,640	\$ 1,778,755
Expense	\$ 164,867	\$ 1,742,674
Behind / Ahead	\$ -11,227	\$ +36,081

All bills are paid; all obligations are met.

School News

Mission Statement:

Using God's Word as our guide, St. Paul Lutheran School will raise up future generations of Christians in our community by assisting parents in the Christian teaching of their children and by striving for excellence in all areas of instruction.

Student Teacher Host Families Needed for Fall: We are set to have two student teachers from MLC join us for a portion of the 2021-2022 school year. If you are able to host one of them, please reach out to Mr. Kelley for details (jkelly@stpaulappletonwi.com or 733-9061).

Food Service Assistant needed for 2021-2022: St. Paul Lutheran School in Appleton is seeking applicants to fill the role of Food Service Assistant. The position would be approximately 15-20 hours per week during the school year. Pay is based on education and experience. If you are interested in more information for this position, please stop by the office or contact Principal Jason Kelley: jkelly@stpaulappletonwi.com or (920)733-9061.

Divine Call: The voters of St. Paul Lutheran Ministries issued a divine call to Mrs. Hope Loescher to serve as 1st grade teacher at St. Paul Lutheran School for the 2021-2022 school year. Her husband Martin was recently assigned as pastor at Martin Luther Church in Neenah. Please keep them in your prayers as she deliberates the divine call to serve at St. Paul. Please also reach out to Hope with your words of encouragement: hmloescher@gmail.com or (608)535-0864.

LWMS

SAVE THE DATE for two VIRTUAL mission opportunities!

2021 LWMS National Convention – June 24-27

– Register for FREE by June 7th on the LWMS.org website. Registration includes: Interactive IGNITE Sessions, Virtual Chat Rooms with missionaries, morning and evening Devotions and annual Business Meeting.

Taste of Missions – July 11-17 – Register online at TasteofMissions.com. This event, hosted by WELS Missions, will provide all WELS members an opportunity to connect with brothers and sisters in Christ from around the globe.

A message from Former Missionary John Kramer and Pastor Marty Mielke of Ascension Lutheran Church in Sarasota, Florida:

One never knows how the Holy Spirit will use everyday conversations to open doors for the gospel around the world! A simple conversation in a fast food restaurant eventually became a relationship that the Lord used to begin gospel ministry in the South American nation of Paraguay. Sherri Medico, a teacher at Ascension Preschool, in Sarasota, Florida, reached out to a young family with a little girl named Abby. By the hand of God, through that friendly conversation, LaVon and Julie Kennell enrolled Abby in preschool, and eventually became members of Ascension Church. It was immediately clear that the Kennells had a hunger to share the gospel with friends and family from Julie's hometown in Paraguay. The congregation began looking for ways to do mission work and reached out to WELS World Missions. About that time, LaVon and Julie began building a "Mission House" in a small village, a few miles outside the town of Yataity del Norte. Evangelism efforts began with missionaries John Kramer and Mike Hartman making exploratory trips to determine the best way to proceed.

During the summer of 2018, Mission Journeys teams travelled to Nueva Alianza, Paraguay, to share the message of Jesus with the people. The primary medium was through teaching English at two small rural schools, right near the Mission House. The schoolmasters were delighted to have our youth and adults in their school because knowing English is a skill that Paraguayans value. We also shared the gospel in many small and big ways. We conducted Bible studies and devotional church services, including baptisms. Pastor Marty Mielke, from Ascension Church, also took his turn at teaching English, conducting church services through a translator, and making home visits around the village, especially with the elderly and homebound.

Pastor Mielke's congregation has organized their mission efforts under the name Solo Cristo. Solo Cristo has developed a working agreement with the WELS Latin American Mission Team to coordinate their efforts and to help support the Academia Cristo ministry. In addition, Solo Cristo has dedicated resources to the work in Nueva Alianza, making this a central part of their Great Commission effort. Many more mission opportunities await their continued efforts at sharing the gospel with the people of Paraguay. Thanks to help from Martin Luther College and Mission Journeys, a number of groups are already in queue to further the efforts in Nueva Alianza through English as a second language and other gospel and compassion ministries.

*Former Missionary John Kramer & Pastor Marty Mielke,
Ascension Lutheran Church, Sarasota, Florida*

Summer Office Hours

Beginning June 1st, the office will be open from 7:30am – noon Monday through Thursday, closed on Fridays. We

are also closed on Memorial and Labor Day and Monday, July 5th.

Summer Wednesday Bible study

The Gospel of Luke, *Beginning June 2, 6:30 pm*. The life of Jesus as recorded by Luke. Written from the perspective of a Greek outsider for people in the Greek culture of the First Century. This is a continuation of the Sunday morning Bible Class.

A Note from the Bargain Garden

We are in need of additional volunteers (both men and women) from the Federation congregations, specifically sorters and intake people:

- Intake people monitor the donation door, accepting or not accepting items according to posted guidelines.
- Sorters go through the clothing that is donated.
- Donations are then checked for defects, separating the donations into sellable and non-sellable groups.

Stop in at the store (2725 N. Meade Street, Appleton) to pick up a volunteer form. While you are there, shop around for some good bargains. In doing so, you will be supporting the teen ministry at Fox Valley Lutheran High School.

Baby Grand Piano GOAL MET!

We are excited to announce that the piano has been completely funded by our congregation, largely in part by an anonymous donor who wishes to note the following: *"In loving tribute to all devout Lutheran moms that love the piano and all the children that played it - Soli Deo Gloria, 2021"* **Soli Deo Gloria** is a Latin term for Glory to God alone. It has been used by artists like Johann Sebastian Bach, George Frideric Handel, and Christoph Graupner to signify that the work was produced for the sake of praising God. *THANK YOU to all who have contributed to this beautiful instrument.*

ECC Update

The ECC is so excited for all of the changes this summer will bring. Of course we are excited for the construction that has already begun in the basement. Seeing the framing go up and things taking shape makes us all eager to see more. These aren't the only changes happening this summer. Several of our children are switching classrooms because it is time to move them up. Some of our 3K students are moving up to the 4K room while others are leaving our fold to pursue school at their church or in their local community. Several of our 4K students are now ready and eligible for kindergarten in the fall. TEN of these students are intending to move on to our school for kindergarten next year. Of those 10, three are new families to our school and are considered mission prospects! We

relish the opportunity we've had to share the good news of Jesus with all of the children and we rejoice in the news that some children will continue to learn more. We are like farmers, planting the seeds of God's word in these little ones. We help these seeds sprout and get their start. We don't know what happens next, but we know that those tender sprouts will continue to be nurtured in our school for as long as we are allowed to care for them. We pray that all of the tender sprouts that come through our program have the opportunity for continued nurturing and growth. God's blessings to all of you this summer!

St. Paul Ev. Lutheran Church and School Project Wish List

- | | | |
|----|---------------------------|-----------|
| 1. | Push Bars for Door | \$2,500 |
| 2. | Playground Improvements | \$10,000+ |
| 3. | Classroom Doors | \$29,000 |
| 4. | WELS Hymnology Curriculum | \$800 |
| 5. | STEM/Media Center | \$144,000 |

Any donations (large or small) given toward these items is greatly appreciated. Some of these items/projects have been purchased/completed and we are looking for members to help in covering any part of the costs involved. For a closer look at these items as well as giving options, including 'Easy Tithe', please follow this link: [Wish List Giving](#).

We've been blessed to receive donations to fully fund the items shown below, totaling \$337,114. They have been removed from the active Wish List and will be completed as soon as possible.

1. Hymnals
2. ECC Loan
3. Security Cameras
4. ECC & School Construction Project
5. Vex Robotic Program
6. Baby Grand Piano

Thank you to everyone for your generous donations towards these items!

FVL News

Registration for FVL Youth Sports & Summer Camps remains open. Sign up at fvlhs.org/youth-sports
International host families are needed! Applications are coming, and we are currently limited with housing options. Can you help? A stipend is offered to help with expenses. Contact Monica Uhlenbrauck (muhlenbrauck@fvlhs.org) for details.

FVL Time & Talent Day will be Saturday, June 12 - 8 AM-noon. A variety of jobs around campus will be tackled. See the job list and sign up at fvlhs.org/volunteer