

NEWSLETTER

Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church
Stetsonville, WI



*“See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone,
and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.” (1 Peter 2:6)*

MAY 2026

WARRIOR?

It was an epic battle, waged by a fearless warrior, minute after minute, hour after hour, day after day for three straight days. The warrior rose early and engaged the enemy all day long, with only brief rest periods. Finally, after three days, the warrior gave up. He could not vanquish his foe. He was resigned to defeat. Who was his enemy? Himself! Who was the fearless warrior? A male robin! For three days this robin saw his reflection in a window and proceeded to do battle, flailing against his opponent with outstretched wings and puffed out chest. Again and again and again he buffeted the window to no avail. The enemy remained proud and strong. Humorous, but sad was the battle.

Do you ever feel like that robin? Your intentions are good. You rise up early and continue the battle all day long. You go to bed exhausted, only to resume at daybreak. Like the determined robin, we often battle against ourselves. Maybe the fight is with a particular sin which keeps assailing us. Maybe the fight is with a personal characteristic which we see as a character flaw. Maybe the fight is with our own doubts or perceived weaknesses. We are determined that today will be different, and yet at the end of the day we are no farther along than we were yesterday. If only that robin had help. If only that robin had someone who could vanquish the enemy for him.

We have that help. We have that hero who can step in and defeat the “man in the mirror”. His name is Jesus and he is on our side. *“Surely God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid. The LORD, the LORD himself, is my strength and my defense; he has become my salvation.”* (Isaiah 12:2) And again, *“For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor*

demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 8:38-39) Jesus, the one who came to earth to live the perfect life and die the perfect death in our place, rose again to show he had conquered all our enemies. He is our strength. We don’t fight our daily battles alone, like the poor, hapless robin at my window.

Our enemies, the devil and our own sinful pride, would try to convince us that, “We’re good enough, we’re smart enough, and we’re strong enough.” (Stuart Smiley) Deep down we know that’s not the case. It is God who makes us “good”, “smart”, and “strong”. When we acknowledge we can’t do it on our own and ask God for help, he comes to us with help and healing. Jesus showed his humility in many ways during his earthly sojourn. We need to follow that example and admit he is our power source; he is our “generator” in stormy weather. Without him we are like a prideful robin who accomplishes nothing. With him we are conquerors who will defeat any and all enemies, including ourselves!

Baptism

On Sunday, April 19th, a young man was given *“the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit”* (Titus 3:5) in the Sacrament of Holy Baptism.

Confirmation

Six young people have completed the Confirmation course. They will be presented to take their Confirmation Vows on May 3rd.

Releases

The following were released from membership at

their request: four communicant members and two children.

Vacation

Pastor Russow will be on vacation May 6th until May 19th. In case of an emergency, please contact the Immanuel Office, 715-748-2921; Pastor Iwinski, 309-428-9680 (cell), or Pastor Spaude, 715-821-3161 (cell)

Communion Schedule

The schedule for the Lord's Supper will be altered this month. Instead of being offered on Thursday, May 14th, and Sunday, May 17th, the Lord's Supper will be offered Thursday, May 21st, and Sunday, May 24th to celebrate the Festival of Pentecost.

Cemetery

Would you consider a gift for Zion's Cemetery? The cost to mow and trim the cemetery is between \$2,500 and \$3,000 this year. Your gifts for the upkeep of the cemetery are appreciated.

Forward In Christ

The May *Forward In Christ*, entitled "*Coffee, Conversation, and Christ*," is available to pick up.

This month's issue offers tips and encouragement for telling others about Jesus and inviting them to church to learn more.

- See how a gas station encounter and invitation lead to a man discovering his new church home (p. 7).
- Remember Jesus' call and the Holy Spirit's power as you explore practical ways to share your faith (p. 10).
- Follow a pastor on his challenge to share Jesus for 30 days in a row with someone outside his congregation (p. 12).
- Meet a 20-something and see how she connects with her peers and works to assure them of Jesus' love (p. 18).
- Gain practical advice and support for your evangelism efforts, even if you feel unprepared for the task (p. 21).
- In the final Bible study in his series, Jonathan Bourman examines the only miracle of destruction: the cursed fig tree (p. 32).
- Aaron and Hannah Bush offer wags to deal with worries in your life in this month's "Please explain" (p. 30).
- This month's "Parent conversations" highlights an

important question: Can parents be friends with their children? (p. 16).

Pictorial Directory

Photos for Zion's new Pictorial Directory are being taken Sundays following our worship service. No purchase is necessary, but we would like every Zion member to be pictured. Please schedule your photo session with Jeff Lange, 715-748-4815. Photos may be scheduled on an "as needed" basis following the Sunday, May 10th deadline.

Food Stand Outreach

An Outreach/Community Service event is being planned during the village-wide garage sales on June 11 & 12, 2026. Zion will set up a concession tent along County Road A to sell refreshments, snacks, hot dogs, etc. Volunteers to plan the event and sell concessions are being sought. Donations for the stand are welcome. The stand could be offered free to the public as an outreach/community service tool. Freewill donations could be accepted.

COP Spring Meeting

The Conference of Presidents (COP) met for its spring meeting April 8-9. Here are some of the items they discussed or decided:

The COP spent time preparing for the upcoming assignment days at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, WI, and Martin Luther College (MLC), New Ulm, MN, in May. They will be facing the continuing challenge of a shortage of called workers. The number of teacher candidates at MLC is smaller than in recent years. The class at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary is the largest in several years. The candidates are all blessings from God and will reduce—but not eliminate—the many vacancies in congregations and schools. The COP continues to encourage all members to help recruit future pastors, teachers, and staff ministers.

The COP proposed a standardized interview process and supporting evaluation tools for district presidents to use in carrying out a review of someone in pastoral, teaching, or staff ministry seeking re-entry into the ministry. The process is intended to seek increased clarity, consistency, and communication in the process.

The COP currently grants provisional minister of the gospel status to called teachers who enroll in MLC's Teaching Ministry Certification program (a program

pursued by individuals who already hold an accredited teaching degree). MLC now offers online degree programs that include both professional training and the full set of ministry certification requirements. The COP monitors these programs.

Total Congregation Mission Offering subscriptions for 2026 surpassed actual giving in 2025 (although it did not keep up with inflation).

This was the last regular meeting of the COP for four district presidents as they will be completing their time of service as district presidents at the district conventions this summer. Pastor Donald Patterson (South Central) has accepted a call, Pastor Charles Westra (South Atlantic) is not seeking reelection, and Pastors Joel Zank (Northern Wisconsin) and Douglas Free (Dakota-Montana) are retiring. We pray for God’s continued blessings and thank them for their service.

With new district presidents to be elected this summer, the COP will experience significant changes in its membership. We pray for God’s blessings as those conventions elect their leaders.

Women in world mission fields

Under the theme “Rest,” the conference included worship, devotions, Bible studies, and free time for fellowship. Guest speaker Don Patterson, WELS’ South Central district president, developed Bible studies to help the women find “Joy in the Journey.”

“Every part of the conference was planned with the idea of missionary wives connecting with God’s Word and each other,” says Linda Marquardt, who serves alongside her husband in the Asia-Oceania region. “My favorite part was seeing missionary wives from different countries connecting, having meaningful conversations, praying together, and forming lasting friendships.”

Those connections are important as these women deal with the unique situations while living in a mission field: learning local languages and customs, discovering their own vocation in their distinct setting, and finding creative ways to connect with faraway family.

“A handful of the attendees are called to serve in public mission roles, but all are the unsung heroes of the work we carry out,” says Larry Schlomer, administrator of WELS World Missions. “In unique overseas settings, they learn how to live out their faith and carry out personal ministry, often in quiet and unseen ways. At the same time, they give up US careers and familiar school

systems for their children and manage homes in places where it can feel like all the rules have changed, serving in so many ways as the backbone of mission work around the world.”

Started in 2017, this conference occurs every 3 years. “Before having these conferences, we might know the few other missionary wives in our region or meet some others at Lutheran Women’s Missionary Society conventions, but now we have friendships with other sisters in Christ around the world,” says Marquardt.

Between the conferences, missionary wives support and encourage one another in monthly Zoom meetings.

Storm update

Over the past week, severe weather in the Midwest has impacted many WELS congregations as well as their members and neighbors.

Pastor Dan Sims, director, WELS Christian Aid and Relief, is in contact with area district presidents and is assessing the damage in the flooded areas. One of these is New London, WI, where Emanuel Lutheran Church and School is located.

Once needs are determined, WELS Christian Aid and Relief may issue a call for volunteers for a New London deployment. To be a volunteer, you must be registered via the WELS Disaster Relief website. Registered volunteers will receive more details regarding deployment.

Monetary donations are being collected for those impacted throughout the Midwest. Donations can be made online, or checks can be mailed to: WELS CMM, Attn: Christian Aid and Relief, N16W23377 Stone Ridge Dr, Waukesha, WI 53188.

☺ *For A Smile* ☺

Pastor from the pulpit: “I asked my wife to look over my notes for today’s sermon and mark out everything dull; so in conclusion...”

Her youngest son asked her how old she was. She answered, “39 and holding.” He thought for a moment and then asked, “And how old would you be if you let go?”

May

1. Luke 21:1-24
2. Lk. 21:25-38
3. Lk. 22:1-13
4. Lk. 22:14-30
5. Lk. 22:31-46
6. Lk. 22:47-62
7. Lk. 22:63-23:12
8. Lk. 23:13-25
9. Lk. 23:26-43
10. Lk. 23:44-56
11. Lk. 24:1-12
12. Lk. 24:13-35
13. Lk. 24:36-53
14. Psalms 1, 2
15. Ps. 3, 4
16. Ps. 5
17. Ps. 6
18. Ps. 7, 8
19. Ps. 9, 10
20. Ps. 11, 12
21. Acts 1:1-11
22. Ac. 1:12-26
23. Ac. 2:1-13
24. Ac. 2:14-36
25. Ac. 2:37-47
26. Ac. 3
27. Ac. 4:1-31
28. Ac. 4:32-5:16
29. Ac. 5:17-42
30. Ac. 6
31. Ac. 7:1-43

Through My Bible

In 3 Years

To the left is a Bible Reading schedule for the month of May. It is hoped that such a schedule will help each of us “*grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*” (2 Peter 3:18) As we grow in God’s Word, we will be anchored securely on the solid foundation of Christ crucified and arisen. Also, we will be better prepared to give the reason for the hope that we have. (1 Peter 3:15)

Hospital

Please notify Pastor Russow of your hospital stay. By notifying Pastor Russow, he can visit you and include you in his private prayers, and in the Prayer of the Church in worship, if you so desire.

Kwik Trip Scrip

The Ladies of Zion (LOZ) thank you for your continued support of their Kwik Trip Scrip fund raising program. Kwik Trip gift cards for the purchase of fuel or

in store purchases in various denominations. Scrip cards may be purchased from one of the Ladies of Zion.

Private Communion

If physical problems prevent you from attending services and you desire private Communion, please schedule a visit with Pastor Russow. To contact Pastor Russow, please call: (Office): 715-678-2208; (Home): 715-678-2204; or (Cell): 715-965-1782.

Address or Phone Change?

Please inform Pastor Russow of any address or phone change you make. Please update your address with the church. If you no longer have a land line, or a cell phone is the best way to contact you, please inform Pastor Russow.

Offerings

Please remember the ongoing financial needs of the church. If travel, illness or other reasons keep you from attending, remember God’s amazing grace in daily forgiveness and in supplying your daily bread. Our offerings are part of how we thank Him.