

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)*

JULY 2026

EAGLES, CHICKENS AND LOONS

This 4th of July is a special celebration. It's our nation's semiquincentennial. That's another way of saying it's the 250th anniversary of the United States. The 4th of July calls to mind all kinds of images. Fireworks, picnics, the Stars and Stripes, John Phillip Sousa marches, and soaring eagles are all part of our celebration.

Eagles are part of our concept of God, as well. The Bible symbolizes God's power, protection, and guidance by comparing him to an eagle. Eagles also are known for their swiftness, strength, and ability to soar above things. You may know that the original debate over the symbol of America was between the bald eagle and the turkey! Although I love turkeys (at Thanksgiving), eagles are definitely more impressive, when it comes to national symbols. Probably one of the all-time favorite confirmation passages is Isaiah 40:31 *“...but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.”*

Another bird associated with God is a mother hen. Jesus said, *“Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those sent to her! How often I have wanted gathered your children together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing.”* (Matthew 23:37) Jesus wanted to protect his people, but they weren't interested. A soaring hawk over a farmyard will usually send chicks scurrying for mama and her protection. What an awesome picture of our reliance on our Heavenly Father! No matter the problem, no matter the sin, no matter the danger, God is not only there, but is willing to help. Trust in him. Rely on him.

Some years ago, while canoeing in a wilderness area,

our family witnessed something most people only see in paintings or photo, a loonlet (baby loon) riding on its mother's back as she swam along contentedly. No matter how big the waves or stormy the weather, that little loon felt completely safe. If you've never seen a loon up close, they are a very large bird, not an eagle or a turkey, but definitely not a chicken, either. Being a loonlet on the back of its mother is a peaceful scene.

The word “peace” is used over four hundred times in the Bible. Among all the comforts God wants us to receive from his Word, peace and love and forgiveness must be the most important. Eagles, hens, and loons can certainly be images of peace for us. Jesus repeatedly proclaimed peace to his disciples and followers after his resurrection. He desperately wanted them to know things were alright. He was there for them. His mission was accomplished. No one could pluck them out of his hand. Any storm clouds were only temporary. Any enemies were already defeated. Any waves on the sea of life wouldn't capsize the ship. He was there!

We can not only sleep soundly, we can live confidently. Our God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is looking out for us. *“God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.”* (Psalm 46:1) What an amazing comfort for us, whenever we feel threatened or frail. We will be okay. Peace!

Membership Matters

At her request the membership of a member and her children we transferred to Immanuel, Medford.

Thank You Volunteers

Thank you to those who volunteered for a brat fry during the village-wide garage sales on June 11 & 12, to procure, prepare and serve refreshments, snacks, brats,

hot dogs, hamburgers, etc. These were offered free to the public as an outreach/community service.

We thank Bonnie Prochnow; Lisa Gebert; Bill and Deana Brashear; Carl Thomsen; Dale Tauchen; John Oliver; Brian Dahl; James Kloth; Jean Pitzke; Esther Kraus; Mike Dieck; Jeff Lange; Brian Raasch and Pastor Russow. Our apologies to anyone who has been inadvertently left off this list. Please inform Pastor Russow.

While not meant to be a fund raiser, the Brat Fry raised more than \$750 for the Special Events Fund through freewill offerings.

Quarterly Congregational Report

On Sunday, July 26, 2026, Congregational chairman, Jeff Lange will give a brief report and answer questions. The report has been scheduled for following our morning worship. A written Quarterly Report will be distributed ahead of that date.

The Church Council encourages all members to attend. It also encourages all members to consider how they can volunteer to serve their congregation and their Lord on the various boards and committees.

Parsonage Windows

The parsonage windows have been replaced. Thank you to all who contributed toward this project.

The glass to repair the broken “Good Shepherd” door has been replaced. The Church Council is still working on finding a replacement image for this door

Vacation

Pastor Russow will be on vacation from through July 20th through the 26th. If an emergency arises, please contact the Immanuel Office at 715-748-2921; or Pastor Iwinski at 309-428-9680 (cell), or Pastor Spaude at 715-821-3161 (cell). Pastor Russow can still be contacted by means of his cell phone, 715-965-1782.

Pictorial Directory

If you missed getting your picture taken for the new directory, make-up pictures will be taken in July. Please see, Jeff Lange, Pastor Russow or Lisa Gebert to schedule a time.

Forward In Christ

The July *Forward In Christ*, entitled “*Answering God’s Call*,” is available to pick up. What’s inside:

In his column this month, James Pope encourages readers to thank God for his newest gifts to the church: graduates recently assigned to the teaching, preaching, and staff ministries in our synod (p. 34). The July issue provides many opportunities to meet these new full-time called workers and learn more about WELS’ ministerial education system.

View this year’s graduates from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, WI, and Martin Luther College, New Ulm, MN, as well as details of where they will serve (pp. 18-28).

Examine statistics about WELS’ current and future full-time called workers, complete with commentary about vacancies, new opportunities, and continued needs (p. 17).

Learn how the Assignment Committee makes some difficult decisions as it assigns graduates into full-time ministry (p. 29).

Meet a rancher who is now training to care for a different kind of sheep (p. 7).

See what lessons a seminary student learned while serving a congregation during his vicar year (back page).

How can congregations and their members faithfully use digital tools in their ministries (p. 10)?

Why should I pay taxes when I disagree with how the government uses my money (p. 12)?

Is it fine to worship online (p. 14)?

Five new district presidents elected

5 new district presidents were elected during the 12 WELS district conventions held this June. Each WELS district holds a convention once every two years, in the year between synod conventions. These conventions allow delegates to consider local ministry topics and issues that apply to the synod at large and to hold elections for district officers and committee members.

The new district presidents elected by the convention delegates will join the other district presidents reelected to their positions, the synod president, and the two synod vice presidents to form WELS’ Conference of Presidents, which maintains the synod’s doctrine and practice and is responsible for funding the synod budget. The new district presidents are Paul Seager, South Central District; Stephen Helwig, Nebraska District; Kevin Westra, Northern Wisconsin District; Jonathan Schroeder, South Atlantic

District; and Benjamin Tomczak, Dakota-Montana District.

The districts in which new presidents were elected all knew that they would be electing a new district president because the presidents in those districts did not stand for reelection or, could not stand for reelection because of a new call. “We thank God and these men for their faithful service and pray for God’s continued blessing on their ministry,” says WELS President Mark Schroeder. “We pray for the Spirit’s wisdom and guidance on the five brothers in Christ as they begin serving their districts and their synod in this new role.”

At the recent Western Wisconsin District Convention elections were held. The elected members of Presidium of the Western Wisconsin District are: President: Pastor Michael Jensen, St. Mark’s, Watertown, WI; First Vice-President: Pastor Brett Brauer, Trinity, Watertown, WI; Second Vice-President: Pastor Jon Bauer, Good News, Mt. Horeb, WI; Secretary: Pastor Daniel Naumann, St. Matthew, Janesville, WI. Our Northern Circuit Pastor is Pastor Neal Behm, Christ, Merrill, WI.

A twofold celebration in Germany

On Sunday, June 14, WELS President Mark Schroeder had the privilege of attending the 150th anniversary of our sister synod, the Evangelical Lutheran Free Church of Germany (Evangelisch-Lutherische Freikirche or ELFK). This was not just a celebration of the synod’s founding but also a celebration of 150 years of fellowship with the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. That means it is the longest fellowship relationship that our synod has.

The history of the ELFK is amazing. It was founded at a time when the official state church in Germany had become extremely liberal in its teachings and had wandered far from confessional Lutheranism. There were those in the region of Saxony (the home of Lutheranism) who recognized this unfaithfulness to God’s Word. Especially faithful laypeople decided they could no longer be a part of the state church. In 1876, they, along with five pastors, established five new congregations and formed their own new synod called the Evangelical Lutheran Free Church. It was called a free church because they were free and independent of the state church and its false teachings.

From the start, the ELFK received help and support,

especially in theological training, from the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. ELFK pastors were for the most part trained at the Missouri Synod seminary in St. Louis. Some Missouri Synod pastors also accepted calls to serve congregations of the ELFK.

Since the Wisconsin and Missouri Synods were in fellowship at that time, the fellowship relationship that the ELFK enjoyed with the Missouri Synod from its founding also brought the ELFK into fellowship with the Wisconsin Synod. We have remained together since then.

God has done amazing things in the ELFK. From the original five congregations, the ELFK has grown to 17 and has expanded beyond Saxony to several other regions. Today it has 22 pastors, most of whom have been trained at their seminary in Leipzig. It also operates an elementary school in Zwickau with 150 students and a publishing house and bookstore, also in Zwickau.

ELFK has endured many challenges over the years; the most difficult was during the time of Communist control. The churches were under some severe restrictions, especially when it came to communicating with and traveling to the outside world. The end of that rule and the fall of the Berlin Wall was a special blessing.

Today the ELFK continues to hold on to the truth of God’s Word. It is committed to planting new missions in the northern and southern part of Germany and generously supports the work being done by sister synods in other countries.

Keep our German brothers and sisters in your prayers!

☺ *For A Smile* ☺

It was his turn to prepare dinner so he asked his wife to buy some organic vegetables at the local market. She came back rather upset. When he asked her what was wrong, she said, “I don’t think I like that produce guy. I went and looked around for your organic vegetables and I couldn’t find any. I asked him where the organic vegetables were. He didn’t know what I was talking about. So I said, ‘These vegetables are for my husband. Have they been sprayed with any poisonous chemicals?’ He said, ‘No, ma’am. You’ll have to do that yourself.’”

**Year three
July**

1. Acts 15:1-12
2. Acts 15:13-34
3. Acts 15:35-16:5
4. Acts 16:6-15
5. Acts 16:16-40
6. Acts 17:1-15
7. Acts 17:16-34
8. Acts 18:1-17
9. Acts 18:18-28
10. Acts 19:1-20
11. Acts 19:21-41
12. Acts 20:1-16
13. Acts 20:17-38
14. Acts 21:1-16
15. Acts 21:17-36
16. Acts 21:37-22:16
17. Acts 22:17-29
18. Acts 22:30-23:10
19. Acts 23:11-35
20. Acts 24:1-21
21. Acts 24:22-25:12
22. Acts 25:13-27
23. Acts 26:1-18
24. Acts 26:19-32
25. Acts 27:1-20
26. Acts 27:21-44
27. Acts 28:1-16
28. Acts 28:17-31
29. Amos 1, 2
30. Amos 3, 4
31. Amos 5, 6

Through My Bible

In 3 Years

To the left is a Bible Reading schedule for the month of July. 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.