



# Shining Mountains *news*

"IT IS OUR MISSION, AS BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN CHRIST, ACCORDING TO GOD'S WORD AND COMMAND TO GROW IN HIS WORD, TO GATHER AROUND HIS WORD, AND TO GO WITH HIS WORD."

*Standing firm takes place*

## One by One

A man stood before an emperor. I can't imagine the thoughts or fear that he must have been struggling with. Behind him were people who had been drawn close to him simply by the fact that they all were in the same danger: if they held to their faith, they could be declared outlaws, stripped of all they had and imprisoned. One by one, everyone in the group gave confession to their faith.

Every year at Reformation (Oct. 31), we give thanks to God for the steadfast faith he gave to Martin Luther as he held firmly to God's Word. Only this time, it wasn't Luther.

The scene described above is "the presentation of the Augsburg Confession." Just over a decade after Luther nailed his 95 theses to the door of the Castle Church, Emperor Charles V demanded that Lutheran princes and city leaders stand before him to answer questions about their faith—the same faith that led to Luther and others being condemned. They presented a document called the Augsburg Confession—a beautiful confession of the truths of the Bible that led them to separate from the Catholic Church.

That scene always brings one question to mind: *To whom has God given the task of holding to pure doctrine?*

Perhaps the impression is given, at times, that this is the task of churches and "professional theologians" - pastors and ministers. "You want to know what I believe? Ask my pastor; he knows!"

The presentation of the Augsburg Confession is remarkable in that it was presented by laypeople, not ministers. These men realized that the task of holding to God's Word doesn't belong simply to the pastor in the pulpit, but to the single person who reads her Lord's words at night, the father and mother who pull their children up on their lap for family devotions, the grandparents who pray for and encourage the next generation.

It's such a blessing to see that living among us—when members are active in worship and Bible study, when children are brought to Sunday School, when parents look for devotional tools. Thank God for that faithfulness!

And may he help us grow in it, too. Standing firm in God's Word isn't a matter of advanced degrees in theology; it comes from the simple conviction that what God says in the Bible, he means.

We celebrate the Reformation on Nov. 4th this year. Use this time to con-



sider: How might I continue to grow in the Word? Is it renewed commitment to home devotions? Becoming more faithful in worship or Bible study? Whatever it is for you, may the Lord bless you through that—and bless many others through you.

# I believe in + the Holy Christian Church +

*In the Third Article of the Apostles' Creed, we confess our faith in "the Holy Christian Church." Throughout our newsletters in 2012, we'll examine what this means. What is the Church? What is the difference between "the Church" and "churches"? What does it matter what church you belong to? What's going on among "Lutheran" churches? God's Word will guide our discussion as we talk about these questions.*

We have much to be grateful for in the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. How could we not? Our synod correctly and earnestly confesses the truths of Scripture without compromise. This blessing, though, don't mean that the WELS is without its challenges. While the world around us certainly presents opposition to the truth, this article will focus on just a few of the challenges we face for us to be aware of and keep in our prayers.

## Worship Wars

The last decades have witnessed great changes throughout American churches. Especially within the Evangelical / non-denominational communities, the trend has been towards "contemporary", performance-driven services following a non-liturgical format derived from revivalist churches. Within the more traditionally liturgical churches, there have been efforts to reclaim more of the traditional forms of worship from years past—liturgical rites and rituals that were lost in the transition to America.

Both of these have influenced our Synod. At times, this has been a polarizing issue. Both pastors and members have been heard making such extreme statements as "Churches that follow a traditional service will never grow!" or "Using any instrument besides an organ invites the devil into church!"

May the Lord spare us from such unbiblical statements! The liturgy is a great gift to us from the Christians who have gone before us, but the Lord does not dictate which style of worship to use. What he does command is that our worship centers on Christ, faithfully proclaiming his Word and ministering his sacraments. While Christians united in faith may differ on styles, God grant that this doesn't divide us.

## Ministerial Training

Our ministerial education system offers great blessings. On a recent year, the Catholic seminary near Chicago that provided priests for thousands of parishes graduated six men—all over 40. That same year, our Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary graduated over forty pastors. The other Lutheran synods in America have also faced great troubles in bring younger people to study for the ministry. Our young men also all receive years of

grounding in the biblical languages that was not provided in the Catholic seminary, and has been becoming either optional or not even offered in other Lutheran seminaries.

There are real challenges facing our education system, though. With education and insurance costs rising, our system isn't cheap. Rising synodical costs have led to cuts in funding to student aid. Our Martin Luther College now costs considerably more to attend than most public colleges (with synod teachers generally making 20-30% less than their public counterparts). Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary—which once offered free tuition to all future pastors—is nearly as expensive. This not only presents students with a financial challenge; it also tempts many to jeopardize their education by working too many hours to pay for it.



With the majority of our synod grade schools and high schools in the Midwest, a great majority of our future ministers come from that area of the country as well. There would be great blessing in having a ministerium that draws from all areas of our country. That challenge dovetails with another issue: our current enrollment trend is likely to leave us with a shortage of pastors for the foreseeable future. May the Lord grant us many students eager to share the gospel from all parts of the country and all demographics!

## Sin

Most of the greatest challenges come simply from the ways we fail to take God's Word to heart. Pastors who act like tyrants or are unfaithful with the Word. Teachers who don't treasure their tasks and teach to the best of their abilities. Members who fail to support the gospel or let personal issues divide and plague the church.

What do we do with challenges like this? Take them seriously! The truth of God's Word and the hope of heaven demands that we do no less than that! And as we take them seriously, we remember Jesus' words, too: "*In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world*" (John 16:33). May the Lord continue to bless our church body that we might face our challenges honestly and hold to his Word fearlessly!

January	<i>I believe in the <u>Holy</u> Christian Church</i>
February	<i>I believe in the Holy <u>Christian</u> Church</i>
March	<i>I believe in the Holy Christian <u>Church</u></i>
April	<i>The joy of the Church</i>
May	<i>The mission of the Church</i>
June	<i>Orthodox and Heterodox churches</i>

July	<i>Do denominations really matter?</i>
August	<i>"So what if they're not WELS?"</i>
September	<i>What's going on among the Lutherans?</i>
October	<i>WELS: The confession we share</i>
November	<i>WELS: The challenges we share</i>
December	<i>WELS: The mission we share</i>



# Bible Study



God promises us every blessing as we grow in His Word. Consider taking advantage of the following opportunities to study with your fellow believers:

## SUNDAY MORNING: THE BOOK OF JOB

### *Hope and Suffering*

In November, our Sunday morning study continues to dig into the book of Job. In its pages, God brings us face to face with the reality of terrible suffering in this world. He teaches us how to wrestle with it as believers and how to (and how *not* to!) speak to those who are going through suffering of their own. Each week, participants will be asked to do a few chapters of reading at home for discussion. Bring your Bible and join us at 9:20 am!

## MISSION PRESENTATIONS: CAMM AND ZAPE

### *Our congregation's efforts to help those in need*

The Lord calls us to be blessings to the world around us and witnesses to his love. Our Ladies Fellowship group is putting that love into action on behalf of our congregation in two special ways: through support to the Central African Medical Mission and the ZAPE orphanage in Kinshasa (Democratic Republic of Congo).

Two representatives of Ladies Fellowship will give brief presentations on both of these opportunities during the first portion of the Bible class hour on October 28 and November 4. Join us at 9:20 to hear about the ways we're reaching out in love!

## MINISTRY PLANNING MEETINGS

### *Serving our family + Sharing the Word*

Christ compares his Church to a body—he places each and every one of us in a way that can serve others and be served by them. On two Sundays in November, we look at ways we can grow in our ability to do so.

Join us on Nov. 11 & 18th at 9:20 am. We'll start with a brief Bible study, and then turn our focus to identifying what our strengths are as a congregation and ways we might grow in serving each other and reaching out with God's Word. Bring your ideas and thoughts for ways we've served well in the past and ministries you've seen elsewhere, as well as the unique opportunities we have here. May the Lord bless our efforts!

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## Building project update: LAND SEARCH

Not much of an update this month. On behalf of the congregation, the Council is working behind the scenes to get as much information as possible on the parcels of land the congregation has discussed in our meetings. Lord-willing, this will soon lead to a voters' meeting in which we can have final discussions on where we'd like to plant a new church and decide to make an offer.

The Council is continuing to get the details of each property before bringing recommendations before the congregation. That includes getting as much input from the congregation as possible. Any thoughts or questions can be directed to Lance Baker, John Newton, Aaron Pruitt, Dan Gustafson, Michael Joecks, Jim Lauersdorf or Pastor Seifert.

# Growing in Christ

Shining Mountains provides a Sunday School program to partner with parents in raising our children in the truth of God's Word. Each month, parents can look to this page of the newsletter and see their student's upcoming lessons, memory work, and updates about when the children will next sing in our worship services.

Date	Lower grades (Miss Newton)	Middle grades (Mrs. Giese)	Upper grades (Miss Blackstad)
11/4	<b>Joseph becomes ruler in Egypt</b> <i>God works for the good of those who love him (Ro 8:28)</i>	<b>The Baptism of Jesus</b> <i>Psalm 119:105 Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path</i>	<b>The Baptism of Jesus</b> <i>Psalm 119:105 Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path</i>
11/11	<b>Joseph forgives his brothers</b> <i>Forgive as the Lord forgave you (Col 3:13)</i>	<b>The Temptation of Jesus</b> <i>1 Peter 5:8b Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.</i>	<b>The Temptation of Jesus</b> <i>1 Peter 5:8 Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.</i>
11/18	<b>God takes care of baby Moses</b> <i>I am with you always (Mt 28:20)</i>	<b>Jesus Changes Water into Wine</b> <i>1 Peter 5:7 Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.</i>	<b>Jesus Changes Water into Wine</b> <i>1 Timothy 2:5 For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,</i>
11/25	<b>God leads his people through the Red Sea</b> <i>Call upon me in the day of trouble (Ps 50:15)</i>	<b>Jesus Heals the Official's Son</b> <i>Hymn 411, v. 1</i>	<b>Jesus Heals the Official's Son</b> <i>Psalm 124:8 Our help is in the name of the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth.</i>

## Next Sunday School Singing Date:

Our Sunday School students will be singing the first part of *A Mighty Fortress* in our worship as we celebrate *Reformation Sunday* on November 4th. Parents, please help out by remembering to have your children in the sanctuary for Sunday School music hour by no later than 9:15 am on Sunday morning so that all the students can practice together. Thank you!  
 After Reformation, we'll begin our work on music for our Christmas Eve worship services.

## Serving Us in November *Thank you to those who served in October!*

	<u>Ushers</u>	<u>Refreshments</u>	<u>Flowers</u>	<u>Cleaners</u>
11/4	J Kohler / open	open	Gentry, B	Seifert / Stubbs (11/5-11/10)
11/11	J Thiede / D Thiede	Parks, B	open	Thiede (11/12-11/17)
11/18	J Becker / S McGough	open	(see next page)	Agenten (11/19-11/24)
11/21	L Baker / B Ballard	(Thanksgiving Eve worship; Wednesday night, 7pm)		
11/25	A Pruitt / T Franck	open	open	Baker, E (11/26-12/1)

Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere; I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked.  
**Psalm 84:10**



# Altar Flowers for Saints Triumphant

+Remembering those who stand in glory+

On Sunday, November 18th, we celebrate the Sunday of Saints Triumphant. It's the Sunday when we give special focus to remembering that those who die in Christ live with him in heaven. Our readings and hymns focus us on that truth. We also take time during our worship to read the names of our members who have gone home to heaven over the last five years, reminding us that we'll see them again.

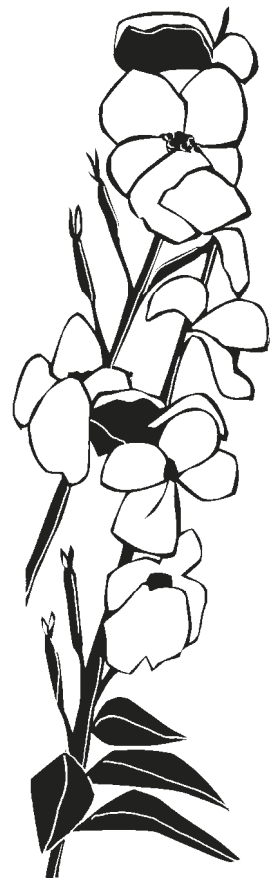
This year, the congregation is invited to remember your loved ones who've been taken home to heaven in a special way. On November 18th, we'll look to cover our altar with white flower in remembrance of those we love. Anyone is welcome to sponsor a flower in memory of a Christian loved one whose passed away; the names of those represented by the flowers will be printed on the back page of the bulletin.

If you're interested in sponsoring a flower, please sign up on the sheet on the bulletin board in the entry way. List your name, the name of the person represented by the flower, and choose the type of flower you'd like. The options are:

- White carnation
- White snapdragon
- White spider mum

The cost of each flower sponsored is \$5, and the deadline for signing up is November 11th.

May the Lord continue to keep us living in the hope of the resurrection!





### **An update from SMLC's Ladies Fellowship**

On September 28-30<sup>th</sup>, three ladies from Shining Mountains met together with about 25 other WELS women from throughout the state and beyond. Four Montana congregations were represented at the WELS Women's Retreat at Fairmont Hot Springs. There are a lot of adjectives that come to mind when looking back at the retreat: high-energy, informative, uplifting, thought-provoking, and fun.

It was a nice opportunity to step away from the busyness of daily life and spend some time focusing on God and his Word. As Christian women, we were able to gather around God's Word and talk openly about troubles and opportunities that each congregation faces. Friday evening opened the retreat with a couple of icebreakers and an evening devotion. I will just say that the participants were not afraid to laugh. On Saturday, we spent the day switching between breaking into smaller groups to brainstorm and coming back together to share our ideas with the whole group. Some of the topics that we discussed with were:

- 1) What are the strengths and gifts that God has given your women's ministry?
- 2) What are some of the battles that face your women's ministry?
- 3) What WELS resources are available to your women's ministry?
- 4) What new ideas would you like to incorporate into your women's ministry?

Towards the end of the day, we broke into groups again to plan and prepare for the morning worship service on Sunday. On Sunday, we had a worship service full of Christian ladies. It was unusual to hear a "choir" of all female voices.

It was an amazing event and when it is scheduled again, I strongly recommend that you all attend. In the meanwhile, we have a great group of Christian ladies at Shining Mountains too. We don't have to run off to Fairmont to have the same discussions.

**On Saturday, November 3<sup>rd</sup> from 1-4pm, we will have the chance to get together as the women of Shining Mountains. We will gather around the God's Word with a Bible Study, brainstorm about our church/ women's ministry and incorporate new ideas into our ministry. Please take the time out of your hectic schedules to join us in this fun and uplifting brainstorming session.**

# November 2012

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
9:15 Sunday School 9:20 Bible Class 10:30 Worship w/ Holy Communion	7:00pm Mon Eve Worship	6:45pm Catechism class		6:30 pm Church Council		1-4pm Ladies Fellowship meeting at Bakers' house
Reformation Sunday						
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
9:15 Sunday School 9:20 Ministry planning 10:30 Worship 11:45 Ladies Fellowship meeting	10-2pm Pastors' study club in Bozeman 7:00pm Mon Eve Worship	6:45pm Catechism class				
Sun. of Last Judgment						
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
9:15 Sunday School 9:20 Ministry planning meeting 10:30 Worship w/ Holy Communion			7:00 pm Thanksgiving Worship			
Saints Triumphant						
25	26	27	28	29	30	
9:15 Sunday School 9:20 Bible Class 10:30 Worship		6:45pm Catechism class				
Christ the King						

# Upcoming Messages

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In November, we enter the season of EndTimes. Our readings from God's Word focus us on the truth that neither this world nor our lives last forever. Since this is true, may the Lord keep us steadfast in his Word, keep us confidence of our triumph on the Last Day, and gather us around the words of Christ our King.

May the following schedule help you as you prepare for worship or look for opportunities to invite a friend.

## *Worship in November*

Nov 4 The Festival of the Reformation of the Church

Nov 11 The Sunday of the Last Judgment

Nov 18 The Sunday of Saints Triumphant

Nov 25 The Sunday of Christ the King

