



# 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."

*Giving Thanks to God for the support of*

## A family of faith

Of all the words that may come to your mind when you think about the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod—the church body we're a part of—I doubt that "family" is the first word that comes to your mind. We're a "synod" (from a Greek word meaning "walking together"). We're an organization that operates administrative buildings and institutions for Christian education. We're a missionary body that sends evangelists around the world.

We're also imperfect. Perhaps you can think of individuals—pastors, church members, administrators—who have hurt or disappointed you. Some who have long roots in our congregation remember struggles with the mission board as we looked for loans or sought to find the right property for a church home. Our congregation is certainly a family, but can you say the same of our Synod?

A few months ago, I read the official magazine of another Lutheran church body asking what value there is to having "synods" anymore. The magazine came up with a number of reasons: It's nice to have a historical connection to our ethnic heritage (most early synods were formed by people from similar cultural backgrounds); it allows members to have a larger impact on social issues; it's easier to operate schools

and other institutions. Not once was unity in God's Word mentioned. And not surprisingly—sadly, that church body had "agreed to disagree" on issues of God's Word long ago.

While at a pastors' conference in Billings, I was blessed to find a different experience. At the conference, we discussed which translation we'd like to see our Synod use. The discussions at times were intense, with disagreements on what translation was best—but every last person in the room confessed faith in the Bible as the Word of God and complete unity in what the Bible teaches. We joined in study of sections of the Old Testament (the book of Nehemiah) and the New Testament (1 Peter 3), rejoicing in the Word of God. We attended presentations on adult education—seeking to grow in the way we share God's Word with his people. We prayed for congregations in need, and asked the Lord to open up new mission fields (in particular, he seems to be opening doors for us in the oil fields of eastern Montana and the Dakotas).

Not for a moment could I tell you that that room was full of perfect people. Nor could I try to argue that every earthly decision that our church body has ever made was the best one—the Lord gives us great leeway to disagree in earthly matters. And I would be a



# WELS

Christ's Love, Our Calling.

fool to pretend that any sin or failure by a pastor, teacher, administrator, or WELS member could somehow be excused by the good that's also been done.

But I treasure—and would ask you to treasure—the family of faith that we're a part of for this reason: It seeks to have its firm foundation in the Word of God's grace and love. May he so bless us that as a synod, a church, and believing members we constantly grow in the ways we put that love into action.

# Building project update

We've been blessed with a number of important developments as we work towards a new church home. A summary of them is given below.

## Parsonage update

The sale of the parsonage has now been completed. This means that the congregation is debt free as it moves towards a building project and has added an additional \$20,000+ to our general operating fund.

## Valley Center land

The land the congregation owns on Valley Center road is technically two parcels. Both parcels are now under contract (as a 6 acre lot and a one acre lot with the house), pending a successful realignment of common boundary at the County level. That realignment is currently in process. Lord-willing, the sale on the six acres will close in the next 6-8 weeks. The remaining acre and house will be leased out for an additional 6-12 months to the new buyer before officially closing.

## Grants and other financial news

As previous reported, Shining Mountains was the recipient of a \$45,000 grant in December and has been assured of a grant of roughly 20% of the cost of a new building from WELS CEF. We've also been assured of a new loan at an interest rate 4% - fifty percent less than the loan that we had been carrying.

## Land search

Pastor Seifert recently met with the development group that owns the property on the corner of Baxter and Davis that the congregation has expressed interest in. The owners expressed a great deal of interest in working with us. They have currently commissioned an overall land-use study for their acreage and should be communicating with our church within the next month or so.

## What does all of this mean?

It's hard to say what the result of all of these developments will be. Certainly, the Lord has allowed many key pieces to fall into place lately. The largest remaining issue is that of a new location that's suitable for our members and reaching out to the community. Our realtor is aggressively exploring what is available right now—please feel free to forward your recommendations to the Council as well. Should the Lord allow us to find the right piece of land in the next six months, it's entirely possible for our congregation to break ground within the next year. May the Lord grant us patience and diligence as we see what he has in mind for his flock here.

## A note of thanks

The entire Council has devoted a great deal of time to navigating these waters. Special thanks are due, however, to both Lance and John. Both of these men have repeatedly rearranged their work and personal schedules in order to sign documents and attend meetings as we make the necessarily real estate transactions. Please thank not only them, but thank the Lord for the gift they are to our congregation.

Your thoughts are welcome and can be directed to Pastor or the Council. Your prayers are requested. Your presence and input at meetings is a great gift in our work. May the Lord continue to bless us!



## SUNDAY MORNING: CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

For the next two months our Sunday morning class (9:20 am) studies what God's Word says about the way we worship him best. Throughout our study, we'll make applications to how these truths would be expressed in a new church building.

## FRIDAY MORNING: WISDOM LITERATURE

Our *weekly* morning Bible study at Shining Mountains meets Friday mornings at 9:00am. We explore the Old Testament books classified as *wisdom literature*. These unique books of the Bible (Ecclesiastes, Proverbs, Song of Songs and Job) force us to wrestle with difficult concepts as we put God's wisdom into practice in our daily lives. Throughout May, we'll focus on the book of Proverbs.

## MONTHLY: LET THERE BE LIGHT!

Our monthly Bible study next meets on Thursday, May 31st at 7:00 pm. As we continue our walk through the five books of Moses, we'll focus on the Exodus and wanderings in the wilderness.

# 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.*

"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."

Did you know that that is the mission statement of our congregation? It's a good one. And it's similar to the mission statements found in many of our WELS churches (and, no doubt, many other Christian denominations). It emphasizes what we'd expect—nurturing the found and seeking the lost.

It's worth thinking about—and not just for our worship life together. A church isn't just an organization or a building. It's a group of people. That means we should know the purpose that God gives to each of our lives.

## The Church Has One Purpose

As much as I like our mission statement, there's something that's missing. In the truest sense, the Church of Christ has one real purpose: to declare the praises of him who called us out of darkness and into his wonderful light (1 Peter 2:9). That's why he saved us. That's our purpose.

The saints in heaven do that. In St. John's Revelation (ch. 7), we see the saints busy at their purpose—joyfully praising God. Everything they do worships him!

## The Church Militant and the Church Triumphant

That's not just the purpose of those in heaven. We call the saints in heaven "the Church Triumphant." They've reached the goal of our faith. Believers on earth are part of "the Church Militant" - we're still here in a sinful world where the fight is fierce and the warfare long. But we're all part of the one Church of Christ.

That means we have the same purpose—glorifying Jesus. We just carry it out in different ways, at times. You glorify God when you come to church and sing hymns; you do that when you bring your offerings. But that's not the only way. You bring him glory when you hold to the truth of his Word, even when the world rejects it (or rejects you!). You bring him glory when you're a faithful spouse or obedient son or daughter. Your life is a song of praise to God when you show kindness to the widow and orphan, mercy to your enemies, or joy in tribulation.

Here's why that matters: Sometimes we can evaluate our work the wrong way. If the mission of the church is *just* to make disciples or come to church, then *if* we don't make many disciples or have as many people come to church, we must be failing! And *if* we see many people joining us in membership and worship, we *must* be succeeding! And we ought to pour out our efforts to make those things happen.

But that's not quite what God says. Our purpose is to glorify him. How do you glorify him best? By believing his Word and living his Word. Do you want to bring him glory? Don't just come to worship; believe and take to heart the Word of God that's found there. Don't just share Jesus with a friend in the hopes of bringing him to faith (as wonderful as that is!), but share Jesus because he's glorified whenever his truth is spoken. Don't just care for your children because you love them; let your care for your family be a doxology of joy for your Savior.

Sometimes God will bless that work with great growth. God grant that among us! Sometimes that work bears the opposite truth. Praise God for preserving his Church in those days! But God grant that in all we do as a church and all you do in your life, we're able to rejoice in the opportunity to give all glory to our Savior.



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>

# 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 (Mrs. Baker)
5/6	<b>Jesus comes back to Life</b> Jesus died and rose again. (1 Th 4:14)	<b>Doubting Thomas</b> God our Savior wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. (1 Timothy 2:3,4)	<b>Doubting Thomas</b> I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief! (Mk 9:24)
5/13	<b>Jesus goes back to Heaven</b> I am with you always. (Mt 28:20)	<b>Jesus’ ascension</b> Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age (Matthew 28:20)	<b>Jesus’ ascension</b> Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age. (Matthew 28:19,20)
5/20	<b>The Holy Spirit comes to Jesus’ friends</b> Hear the Word of God. (Lk 11:28)	<b>The gift of the Holy Spirit</b> Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the Word of Christ (Ro 10:17)	<b>The gift of the Holy Spirit</b> Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ (Romans 10:17)
5/27	<b>Philip tells a man about Jesus</b> Preach the good news. (Mk 16:15)	<b>Saul’s conversion</b> God our Savior wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. (1 Timothy 2:3,4)	<b>Saul’s conversion</b> I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes (Ro 1:16)

*The Sunday School children next sing in worship on Sunday, May 20th as we celebrate the confirmation of our youth. The song they’re working on for that day is I Am Jesus’ Little Lamb.*

## Serving Us in May *Thank you to those who served in April!*

	<u>Ushers</u>	<u>Refreshments</u>	<u>Flowers</u>	<u>Cleaners</u>
5/6	T Linn / P Marozick	<i>open</i>	L Baker	Linn (5/7-5/12)
5/13	D Pruitt / M Joecks	<i>open</i>	D&B Gentry	Marozick (5/14-5/19)
5/20	J Kohler / T Armbrecht	<i>open</i>	Linn	McGough (5/21-5/26)
5/27	J Thiede / D Thiede	<i>open</i>	<i>open</i>	Miller (5/28-6/3)

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**



# May 2012

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
		6:30 pm Confirmation Class		7pm Let There Be Light study on Exodus 1-20	9am Wisdom Literature Bible Study (Proverbs)	1 pm VBS Planning Meeting
<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>
9:15 Sunday School 9:20 Bible class 10:30 Worship w/ H.C (examination of catechumens)		6:30 pm Confirmation Class	6:00 pm Church Council		9am Wisdom Literature Bible Study (Proverbs)	
<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>
9:15 Sunday School 9:20 Bible class 10:30 Worship	10am MT Pastors' circuit study (Bozeman)	6:30 pm Confirmation Class (last day of class)		7:00 pm Ascension dinner and new member welcome	9am Wisdom Literature Bible Study (Proverbs)	
<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>
9:15 Sunday School 9:20 Bible class 10:30 Worship w/ H.C Confirmation of catechumens					9am Wisdom Literature Bible Study (Job)	
<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>		
9:15 Sunday School 9:20 Bible class 10:30 Worship w/ H.C	Memorial Day			7pm Let There Be Light study		

# Upcoming Messages

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In the month of May we bring the Easter season to a close. May the following schedule help you as you prepare for worship or look for opportunities to invite a friend!

## *Sundays in May*

May 6: The Fifth Sunday of Easter (Examination of Confirmands) *The Vine Gives Life to the Branches*

May 13: The Sixth Sunday of Easter: *Believing in Christ* for us *results in a life that shows Christ* in us

May 20: The Seventh Sunday of Easter (Confirmation Day): *Jesus prays for us on earth and in heaven*

May 27: The Festival of Pentecost: *Jesus is closer to his people than ever!*

