

# MEMORIAL MESSENGER

## September 2020

*Grass withers, flowers fade ... but the Word of our God stands forever.  
Isaiah 40:7-8*

We check milk containers, bread packages, and fast food restaurant coupons carefully for the expiration date on them. Even with preservatives, milk and bread stay good only for so long. And who wants the embarrassment of being told at the drive through window, “You can’t use that coupon. It’s expired!”?

But the Word of God and the human soul last forever. They never expire. That’s no coincidence. The God who authored the Word and the God who has given life to each person sees to it that there is a crucial connection between the two. That connection is what Christian education is all about.

The people of Isaiah’s day didn’t know about refrigeration for milk or plastic in which to store bread or discounts on meals with a piece of paper. So the Holy Spirit had Isaiah contrast what happens in nature with what does *not* happen to His Word or to the crown of His creation. By mid-October the grass around here will stop growing, the flowers will have been killed by fall frost, and leaves will fall like colored snowflakes. But there’s never a season when God’s Word dies or disappears. And it’s not just the main content of the Word that will remain; *every single word* of God’s Word endures forever!

Think about that. The verses we read, the passages we study, the lessons we teach our children are what our parents and grandparents and great-grandparents have read and heard and taught! And even if we were foolishly or absent-mindedly to throw God’s Word out the window of our life, it still wouldn’t fade, fall, or disappear. In His wisdom and power, God will see to it that His Word is preached and taught elsewhere until He comes again.

If His Word contained only weather charts or virus updates or stock market figures, the claim that it will never disappear wouldn’t excite us. But His Word tells all about our sin and its punishment, about His plan of salvation and its fulfillment. When God tells us that He has forgiven our guilt through the work of His Son, we can count on it. God’s Word teaches that only those who trust in Jesus will be saved, that all who reject Jesus and His work will be damned, so that is the way it is and the way it always will be!

Some fight that. They say, “A loving God would never condemn to everlasting fire the people He created!” That may make sense in *their* view of life. But the unchanging God demands differently. Scholars scoff at the thought that man will live forever in heaven because that doesn’t fit what they see with *their* eyes. But, again!, the greatest Scholar of all has decreed that there is eternal life with Him for all who trust Jesus as their Savior. Man isn’t a cardboard box to serve a purpose for a while, then be thrown away. We aren’t biodegradable blobs that one day will only return to the dust we came from. God has made us with a body and a soul to live forever.



The Christian education efforts that are resuming this month are centered on the answers to life’s biggest questions. “What is the punishment for sin? What happens when a person dies? How do I get to heaven? What does God want from me and from my life?” God answers those questions in His Word.

Will we shrug off Bible study this fall, figuring *I’ve heard all that before!*? Dare we be indifferent about something so vital and eternal?! Join us in class. Stay in regular contact with the Word of Life, which stands forever and is the only way to heaven. Make that the

top priority for you and your children and all your family!

*Pastor Voss*



**TO PROVIDE A WORSHIP SERVICE** for those who are not ready to gather with groups inside, the Board of Elders planned for an **outdoor** worship service, weather permitting, on the fourth Sundays of August and September. We plan to hold the **10:30 service** on ***Sunday, September 27*** outdoors.

The board gave consideration to using our school grounds. But the distance to walk from a paved parking area to a morning shaded area where we would worship is too far for some of our members. For that reason, we will hold the services in the church parking lot.

The service will be at the north end of the church parking lot. ***Feel free to bring your lawn chair for the service.*** Folding chairs from inside the church will also be available. Should the weather not be conducive for outdoor worship, we will have the service in the church sanctuary. The **8:00** service on Sunday, September 27 will be inside.

*Pastor Voss apologizes that the August 20 email message was somewhat confusing about the time of worship outdoors on August 23. He apologizes especially to those who arrived at church for a 10:30 service that morning. Those members received the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and said they'd return home to watch the service on-line.*

**ON-LINE WORSHIP** To provide worship opportunities for our members who are at risk and do not yet feel it's safe for them to gather in larger groups, and for an unknown number of non-members who access our web site, we will continue to record a service each week. When we return to our regular worship schedule (see the next item), we will normally record the 8:00 service each Sunday.

Starting ***September 13*** we will record one of the Sunday morning services, since there will no longer be a Thursday evening service. ***As a result, the recorded service will not be uploaded to our YouTube channel until later in the day on Sunday.***

Our Board of Evangelism & Stewardship urges you to let unchurched family members and friends know where to find our worship services on-line!

**COMMUNION OFFERED** Those who are at risk and/or are not yet comfortable with gathering in church for worship are encouraged to contact Pastor Voss for receiving Communion privately – either at home or at church. He will be delighted to do so at our earliest mutual convenience.

**OUR SUMMER WORSHIP SCHEDULE** continues. There is one Sunday service at ***9:00 AM*** beginning that morning. There is also a ***Thursday evening service at 7:00*** which will be the same as the following Sunday's service. This summer schedule will continue through Labor Day weekend.

**WE RETURN TO OUR REGULAR WORSHIP SCHEDULE** on ***Sunday, September 13.*** Worship services will be held at ***8:00*** and ***10:30*** Sunday mornings beginning with that date. Join us!



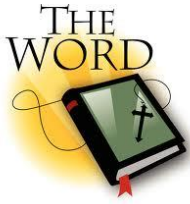
**SUNDAY SCHOOL** sessions begin ***September 13.***

At its August meeting our Board of Christian Education decided Sunday School classes for students will be conducted via recorded lessons, at least to start this school year.

Beginning Sunday, September 13, **lessons taught by experienced WELS teachers will be available free via YouTube.** The engaging and age-appropriate Lesson Videos present an easy yet meaningful way for you to encourage your child's faith in Christ.

To see a preview of the Sunday, September 13 Lesson Video and Student Lesson, visit [nph.net/ss-at-home](http://nph.net/ss-at-home).

May God bless your child as we together continue to teach and share His love!



**BIBLE CLASS** sessions also begin *September 13*.

Our Board also decided we have in-person Bible Class sessions for those who are comfortable attending them. Bible Class will meet at **9:15 Sunday mornings**. Still to be determined is whether we can record those classes with decent sound quality for those of you who aren't gathering at church right now. There is also a possibility that the Bible Class material will be offered via Zoom during the week.

**OUR LUTHERAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL 2020-21** school year began with a worship service at our school Monday, August 24.

We have submitted to the state, have provided for parents of our students, and have posted on our web site the document we are required to have for safely starting the school year.

May the Lord of the Church bless the instruction from His Word and in secular subjects provided by our faculty to the students! May our gracious God keep parents and grandparents safe as they transport their children and grandchildren to and from our school each day!



**CONFIRMATION SUNDAY** will be *September 20*. Our two youth confirmation candidates are **James Dawley** and **Jessie Every**. They will be received into communicant membership during the 10:30 service September 20.

**MEDITATIONS** The shipment of *Meditations* has arrived. You will find copies of the devotions for September, October, and November in the church narthex. Take a copy and use it daily!

If you are unable or feel uncomfortable with traveling to church to pick up your copy, please contact Pastor Voss. He will be happy to deliver it to you at home.



**LADIES FELLOWSHIP** The Ladies Fellowship Group will not meet this month.

**COLLEGE STUDENTS**, please submit your campus address, phone number, and e-mail address to Pastor Voss. If he has your e-mail address, he would be happy to send a copy of week's sermon to you electronically.

Even if you have previously submitted a college e-mail address to Pastor Voss, please do so once again so that we can be sure to have up-to-date information. Pastor Voss' e-mail address is [revdavoss@gmail.com](mailto:revdavoss@gmail.com).

We wish you God's richest blessings on your studies!

**THE CHURCH PICNIC** usually held the Sunday in September when we begin Sunday School and Bible Class sessions will not be held this year. The Board of Evangelism & Stewardship reached that decision because of concerns about people gathering inside for a meal.

## CHURCH COUNCIL REPORTS

**PASTOR'S REPORT** – *WELS news*: WELS Congregation Mission Offerings (CMO) continue to be strong across our Synod, especially given the uncertainty that has gripped all facets of our nation the past five months. CMO from congregations throughout WELS are more than \$113,000 above CMO at this point last year, and are almost \$300,000 over pro-rated subscribed amounts. CMO from Michigan District congregations are *down* \$100,000 from the same time last year, but are now \$15,000 *above* the subscribed amount.

Attendance at the summer Thursday evening summer worship services June 4 – July 30 (no service July 23): 25, 21, 19, 15, 10, 17, 11, 8.

**BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION – School Promotion** Due to Williamston Public Schools decision to begin the school year online we have received multiple inquiries about enrollment.

**Classroom Grades 1-5** Discussed removing some items / furnishings from the classroom to allow for additional spacing between desks. Discussed the maximum capacity to allow for some distancing this school year, and decided we will cap the number at 20 in Mrs. Domke’s classroom.

**Classroom Pre-school and Kindergarten** Discussed the maximum capacity to allow for some distancing this school year, and decided we will cap the number at 15 in the Pre-K and K class.

**General School items** Discussed installing in-room lock-out devices: Night Lock.

**PTO Meeting moved to August 25 at 7:00** to get information to parents about our plan for school safety during the pandemic, distance learning plans (if needed), and playground project.

**Sunday School** At least two of our teachers are not comfortable with in-person classes. We heard about on-line Christ Light lessons provided via video by WELS’ Northwestern Publishing House. Based on teachers’ replies to the board, we will not have face to face Sunday School to begin the year.

**New playground equipment** Construction date to be decided by PTO on August 25.

**VBS 2020** 20 different students attended our limited 3-day session to study God’s Word. The board thanks our teachers (Pastor, Karla and Judy) for their efforts, along with our teen helpers.

**2020-2021 School Year –**

a. Scheduled to start Monday August 24. In-person classes.

b. Faculty and board discussed technology needs, will purchase (from PTO funds) 2 Chromebooks to pilot, one in each classroom. We are limited by lack of high speed internet access.

c. PTO purchased 2 no-touch thermometers to monitor faculty and aides temperatures before entry to school each day; possibly students, too. A reading over 100.4 will not be permitted in.

d. Discussed use of cell phones as hot spot to increase internet functionality at school.

e. Discussed the installation of 4 portable hand sanitizer stations in the school.

f. Parents will be asked to drop off their students inside the double doors at the lobby entrance, but will not be permitted beyond that. Teachers or aides will be there for the Pre-school and K students to lead them to the classroom. Older students will not need an escort.

**2020-2021 School Year Re-opening plan –** We are finalizing the document that is required to be approved by our board, submitted to the state, distributed to parents, and posted on our web site.

**BOARD OF ELDERS –** The Michigan Lutheran Seminary Concert Choir will be here on Sunday, October 18. We will have one service at 10:00 AM that morning. We will discuss with the MLS Choir Director the possibility of having this service at our school to better allow for social distancing with the choir members and potential of additional worshippers in attendance that day. It’s possible that not having an organ and piano at school for the Concert Choir’s music would be a reason the service couldn’t be held there.

The Elders spent a lot of time discussing our worship services since resuming in-person worship. The decision of July 19 to wear masks during worship was discussed; the Elders intend for this practice to continue for the time being. The Elders will continue to monitor our worship practices and will re-evaluate as needed.

The board and Pastor Voss will arrange for and announce outdoor worship services the fourth Sunday of the month in August and September. The service will be held in the church parking lot at the north end. If the weather does not cooperate, we will move the service back inside the church.

**BOARD OF EVANGELISM AND STEWARDSHIP –** We still urge members to share service links with others.

We discussed equipment and costs associated with continuing recording services.

The board decided to cancel the church picnic scheduled for Sunday, September 13.

A camera will be purchased and music licenses secured this month. We are shooting for Thursday, August 20 or Thursday, August 27 as the first service to be recorded using the camera set up in the balcony.

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES –** Discussed the donations received and what needs to be maintained or replaced:

a. Heating units in old class rooms

- b. Wooden playground structure – it does not meet state codes for children’s playground equipment,
- c. Possibly replacing the current school boiler
- d. Parsonage basement B-Dry
- e. Parsonage roof – might have 5 to 10 years of life left
- f. Roof top units still leak when it rains.

On a budget item we discussed more cleaning will be need when school opens, and the current janitor will need to be putting in more hours.

The water line at the parsonage was inspected by the city of Williamston.

Pastor & Laurie really like the new windows and feel they are so much more energy efficient!

**SERVING OUR LORD FOR OUR SEPTEMBER SERVICES:**

	<u>8:00</u>	<u>10:30</u>	<u>Altar Guild</u>	<u>Greeter(s)</u>	<u>Cleaners</u>
9/06 -	#6 C. Rhodea		K. Ward	T&L Loeffler	C&A Rhodea
9/13 -	#7 D. Kasischke	#4 J. Zoran	S. Unruh	J&M Zoran	N. Russell
9/20 -	#2 V. Domke	#1 T. Marion	K. Unruh	M. Bennett	J&J Staffeld
9/27 -	#5 S. Houser	#3 J. Janecke	T. Wood	C&K Collins	J&M Stiefel

