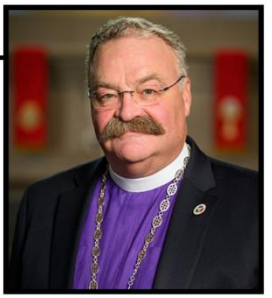
A Pastoral Word from President Harrison



Rev. Dr. Matthew Harrison,
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By Matthew C. Harrison

"For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person." (Mark 7:21–23)

"Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him." (1 John 3:15)

Charlie Kirk was a devout Christian, murdered for his conservative religious and political views by a young man who has fallen victim to the ideological demons of our time. It is becoming clear that the man who killed him had been radicalized by "anti-fascist" groupthink and rhetoric, which pervades university campuses, circles of political extremists, and especially the internet. Fellow high school students reportedly called the shooter "Reddit kid" after a particular platform known for extremism. Indeed, the man's very bullets were inscribed, "Hey fascist! Catch!"

In the wake of Mr. Kirk's unjust demise, extremists now revel in his murder, even creating media, T-shirts, etc., to celebrate the death. The depth of evil knows no bounds. As Luther wrote in the Smalcald Articles, the "hereditary sin [that resides in our hearts] is such a deep corruption of nature that no reason can understand it. Rather, it must be believed from the revelation of Scripture" (SA III I 3). I'm not such a fool as to think evil is the particular propensity of but one extreme of the ideological spectrum. "None is righteous, no, not one" (Rom. 3:10). "Whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God" (Rom. 3:19).

Pundits have crafted lists of Mr. Kirk's statements, which allegedly justify his murder. But no speech of any human being justifies his or her murder. It's also clear to me that very few who make such accusations listened to or watched his events across the country. While I do not endorse all Mr. Kirk's religious or other comments he made in his debates, I do not believe he was a racist, and certainly no hater. Pull his videos up on YouTube and judge for yourself.

It is ever perilous for a church leader to speak publicly into highly contentious cultural and political issues. The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) does not politicize the Gospel, nor do we redefine the Gospel as the liberation of oppressed peoples. The Gospel is God's saving act in Christ. Love for all is our sacred response. We confess with the sacred Scriptures, "The blood of Jesus [the man] His [God's] Son [God in the flesh] cleanses us from all sin" (1 John 1:7). Our

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sacred task is calling all to repentance and proclaiming the one eternal remedy for sin, the blessed life, death and resurrection of Jesus. As the church per se we are not finally about saving the state, engaging in political activity or even Christianizing the state. Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36). Our Augsburg Confession states that the Lutheran church does not "mix church and state." Nor do our Lutheran Confessions mandate one form of government or another. "Neither does the Gospel offer new laws about the public state" (Ap XVI 55). Our forefathers came to America seeking religious freedom from tyrannical states. We treasure a well-run and ordered state because the Gospel does not prosper where chaos reigns (Rom. 13).

At the same time, we recognize the deep Christian influence in the founding of the United States, particularly in the establishment of the reasonable and ethical authority of law, which is expressed in the Ten Commandments and sound reason. "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal" (Declaration of Independence). Here sound reason echoes the orders of creation and redemption. Indeed, every person is not only created in God's image, but worth the very blood of Christ. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). We believe in healthy patriotism.

The LCMS also strongly encourages participation by its people in honorable civic affairs of all sorts, from law enforcement to the military, judiciary and all elected positions. This accords with the New Testament. Jesus never tells a soldier or an official to stop serving the state as though doing so were improper for a Christian (Luke 7:8). But He does insist they act justly in doing so (Luke 3:14). Our Augsburg Confession wholeheartedly commends service in the secular realm by Christians.

Our churches teach that lawful civil regulations are good works of God. They teach that it is right for Christians to hold political office, to serve as judges, to judge matters by imperial laws and other existing laws, to impose just punishments, to engage in just wars, to serves as soldiers, to make legal contracts, to hold property, to take oaths when required by the magistrates, for a man to marry a wife, or a woman to be given in marriage (AC XVI).

While the LCMS does not issue political directives nor insert itself in the vast majority of social and political issues of our day, we are compelled to call out evil because the Bible does so. The murder of a man for exercising his civil right to free speech is evil. Trans ideology — to which the murderer is connected — is an evil disordering of human existence, as are all matters that disorder families and individuals. It leaves people hurt and suffering. It displaces God's design for the family with caricatures that cannot sustain society. Consider the many studies that have shown that the most progressive individuals are far less satisfied or happy in nearly all aspects of life. We are deeply concerned about and care for people who have succumbed to this disorder or are challenged by it. The church is for sinners all. We include ourselves in that number (Rom. 3:19). We do not hate. We love. We pray for the shooter's repentance and conversion to Christ, even while supporting the administration of justice by the state in accord with Romans 13:4: "[The governing authority] does not bear the sword in vain." Indeed, we pray that very justice — facing the death penalty — bring repentance and faith in Christ.

Marxism, which is pervasive on many university campuses, praises anarchy and violence because violence is the means to throw the status quo into

chaos and overthrow allegedly repressive regimes. As an atheistic paradigm of human social existence, Marxism views all law and ethics as utilitarian, indeed merely a human construct — including sexual identity itself, which has always been (Rom. 1) and is again, with an intensity never seen before, the frontier of "freedom" from Divine design. Hermann Sasse, the friend of the LCMS and great Lutheran who lived through the Hitler years in Germany, was the first publicly to reject the Aryan Paragraph of the Nazi party platform. He blew the whistle on real fascism and racism, and suffered for it. His collaborator Dietrich Bonhoeffer died for it. Last week, before our very eyes, Sasse's comment on Marxism has again been proven true: "Marxist theory has been refuted with rivers of blood." For the radicalized Marxist, if the divine mandate not to murder interferes with "progress," so be it. If an outspoken conservative Christian has to die for progress, then so be it.

Well, Charlie Kirk was such a Christian. I am such a Christian. And I know thousands more.

A note especially to young Christian men

"I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one" (1 John 2:14). The rise of radical ideologies has affected you deeply. Whether your ethnicity or your sex, or perhaps your perceived social status, much of your identity has been the very bullseye of radicalism's attacks. God-given and pleasing masculinity and strength, which demonstrates itself most beautifully and profoundly in self-sacrifice (Rom. 5:7), is ceaselessly vilified. The world has been fixated on everybody else's perceived injustices but yours. You and your culture — indeed, all Western culture — are the source of all evil, they say. Young women have disproportionately rejected traditional values, particularly with respect to the family and children. DEI has cost you academic advancement and employment. The leftist attack experienced in most universities has ridiculed your biblical faith and the very values you learned from your fathers and mothers, grandparents and your Confirmation pastor — values that taught you Christ, forgiveness, love, service and vocation.

The answer is not in opposite extremes. You are called by Christ to bear up in faith at this time. You were baptized for this moment. Do not give way to racial theories that contradict basic biblical truths of human dignity and Christ's and the church's love for all peoples. Peter preached, "Truly I understand that God shows no partiality." Literally, he said, "God does not receive faces," that is, God does not judge you on how you look, on your culture or on your skin color (Acts 10:34; see also Matt. 27:32, Acts 2:10, Acts 11:20, Acts 13:1). Our ethnic genetics are all First Article gifts. The Bible calls upon men to "honor" and love their wives "as Christ loved the church" (Eph. 5:25). Relationships with women are not about power. They are about responsibility that sacrifices self for another. Go to church. Excel in your vocations. Run for office. The biblical and Lutheran Doctrine of the Two Kingdoms does not mean you do not participate in the civil and political realm. Quite the opposite. We've never needed Christians more in our civic life. Volunteer at church. Talk to your pastor. Become the man God wills you to be so that, whether or not God gives you a bride, you can be a spiritual leader in your family, church and beyond. Avoid bad places on the web. Turn off the video games and engage in physical activity. Avoid isolation. Confess the truth of Christ. Seek healthy relationships with young women who share your values on children and family. Wait on the Lord. He loves you. Think about becoming a pastor. Visit the seminary. Read through the

Scriptures. Or listen to the audio. Four chapters a day, and you'll finish in a year! And devour the Book of Concord. The paperback pocketbook version from Concordia Publishing House is cheap. Revel in the Christian family and friends God has given you.

Young women: Find the young Christian man who will use his office as husband to point and lead you to Jesus, love you, rejoice in your gifts and strengths, and treat you as the precious gift of God you are (Prov. 31). Help him become the strong man of character and faith he's meant to be in Christ. Be open to the blessing of children. If our Lord does not call you to marriage and motherhood, trust in His plans for you — "plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope" (Jer. 29:11).

Perhaps as important as anything, love those who hate you.

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven." (Matt. 5:43–45)

Charlie's debate videos are a marvelous example of this.

If you are experiencing confusing thoughts about sexuality, talk to your LCMS pastor. He loves you. Read the LCMS document on gender dysphoria: *Gender Identity Disorder or Gender Dysphoria in Christian Perspective*. Check out the Sixth Commandment treatment in your catechism.

"Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for He who is in you is greater than He who is in the world" (I John 4:4).

Our consolation is that Charlie rests in the arms of Jesus. He confessed Ephesians 2:8–9: "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."

As important as it is for Christians to participate in our national life near this 250th anniversary of our founding, it is more important that we know Jesus our Savior, and that others know Him too.

We weep for Charlie's suffering and grieving wife, children and family, and we pray Christ and His blessed resurrection be their consolation. We weep for the devastated family of the accused, who helped bring him to justice. We weep for the accused himself, another soul lost to the lies of the evil one. We pray for repentance and faith in Christ. Come Lord Jesus quickly.

And finally, a word from St. Paul to a young man named Timothy, which speaks to all of us now:

"First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time. For this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth." (1 Tim. 2:1–7)

If You're Going to Celebrate Halloween…

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. 1 Peter 2:9

Sometimes the darkness seems darker. Sometimes the darkness seems deeper. Sometimes the world seems lost-er. So much hate. So much death. So much evil.

Maybe that's why Halloween has given me greater pause this year. Don't misunderstand me. For most people Halloween is an afternoon of family, frivolity, and fun. There's laughter, silliness, and mountains of candy (which, strangely, most of us agree we don't want or need, but can't seem to stop acquiring and eating).

But for some, Halloween has a darker side, and that darkness feels all the more palpable in our current cultural climate. Our communities feature yards decorated with death, depravity, and gore, horror films glorying in deeds of darkness, and groups flirting with the paranormal and the demonic. These are dark indeed. And these are all things Christ has risen to overcome.

So if you're going to celebrate Halloween this year, bring Christ's light into the darkness. If you're going to celebrate Halloween, bring your Christian confession. Here's how Scripture speaks:

> …the Father… has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son Colossians 1:12-13

> …at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. Ephesians 5:8-11

> The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. Romans 13:12

> For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. 2 Corinthians 4:6

> Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." John 8:12

> Jesus said, "I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness." John 12:46

Meditate on these words. *Sharing in the inheritance of the saints in light… delivered from the domain of darkness… walk as children of light… take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness… cast off the works of darkness… put on the armor of light… the light of the world… the light of life.* How do you bring these words into your life?

If you're going to celebrate Halloween, bring these words into your celebration. Bring these words into your costumes, into your decorations, into your clothing and jewelry, into your conversations. The world is lost in the darkness—and this includes people in our communities. If you're going to celebrate Halloween, bring the light of life. Our communities need it.

Might I be so bold as to offer an opportunity, even a suggestion, on how Christians might do this? October 31st is a holiday of light in the church. We call it *Reformation*. It's about the light of the Gospel, about the rediscovery and recentering of this Gospel light in the church, for the church and for the world.

One of the great hymns of the Reformation, written by Martin Luther, celebrates the victory of Christ over Satan's realm of darkness.

> Though hordes of devils fill the land
> All threat'ning to devour us,
> We tremble not, unmoved we stand;
> They cannot overpow'r us.
> Let this world's tyrant rage;
> In battle we'll engage.
> His might is doomed to fail;
> God's judgment must prevail!
> One little word subdues him.
> - *A Mighty Fortress is Our God*

This is a bold hymn of confidence and victory in Christ in the face of the darkness. Isn't this a confession we and our children need? Don't our communities need it too?

Reformation, however, has an older name, one many have forgotten. Historically, October 31 was called *All Hallows Eve*.† It was the eve of the great festival of All Saints' Day. All Saints' Day (November 1) is the day the church pauses to remember and to celebrate the redeemed of God who have gone before us into Christ's presence.

Historically, the eve of the great celebration was marked by candlelight vigils and prayers. Martin Luther nailed his 95 Theses on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenburg on All Hallows Eve because he knew the festival of All Saints' Day the next morning would draw large crowds, and Luther was hoping to invite conversation on the points he highlighted in his theses.‡ Luther succeeded in sparking conversation. In fact, Luther sparked a reformation! This reformation restored the pure Gospel of Jesus to the church and we continue to celebrate it today.

What we want to appreciate right now, though, is the light we celebrate on All Saints' Day. The hymn "For All the Saints" masterfully expresses it. As it gives glory to God for the goodness He has shown to the saints who have come before us, it confesses:

> Thou wast their rock, their fortress, and their might;
> Thou, Lord, their captain in the well-fought fight;
> Thou, in the darkness drear, their one true light.
> Alleluia! Alleluia!

In the darkness, Christ was their light. In the darkness, Christ is our light. He is the light we need and the light our communities need. For many, Halloween is a time of darkness. So if you're going to celebrate Halloween this year, bring this light.

– Pastor Conner

† You can see how *All Hallows Eve* became *Hallowe'en* and then *Halloween*.

‡ Turn to page 7 to read more on Luther's 95 Theses.

95 Theses to Elucidate the Truth

Martin Luther could remain silent no more. Truth was being trampled and souls were being misled – *by the Church!* Through the sale of indulgences, money and religion were being mixed in a toxic way, poisoning the Gospel and the faith. The Church taught that Christians were expected to demonstrate contrition (sorrow or regret) for their sins, confess them to a priest, and then to do penance (also called "works of satisfaction") to make satisfaction for their sins and complete the work of absolution. Indulgences involved a complicated system of merit sharing in which a penitent sinner could purchase merits from a heavenly treasury of merits that could be applied to his personal account or to a loved one's. These indulgences reduced or removed altogether the prescribed works of satisfaction necessary to make up for sin.

Not only was the whole system inherently off track, a point Luther would later realize, but it was susceptible to abuse. And that's precisely what happened. In 1515, Pope Leo X commissioned Albert of Mainz to employ the Dominican order of monks to sell special indulgences in Germany—a sale that would benefit Albert and Leo. Albert owed a significant sum of money to certain bankers. He had borrowed it to make a large contribution to the Church. His contribution (a more honest assessment would call it a bribe) expedited his application to become what we might call an ecclesiastical prince over three German territories (a position that brought power and influence). In order to pay back his debt to the German bankers, Albert, with Pope Leo's blessing, commissioned the Dominican monk John Tetzel to sell indulgences in Germany, with half of the proceeds going to the banking family and half going to Pope Leo.

Tetzel embraced his commission with gusto. As he approached a town, he would send ahead several horsemen, drummers, and trumpeters to announce his coming. Tetzel would then arrive accompanied by an armed guard under grand symbols of the papacy and Pope Leo X's coat of arms. Then, attached to a large cross, would be a copy of the indulgence Tetzel was selling. And he would preach, "Will you not then for a quarter of a florin receive these letters of indulgence through which you are able to lead a divine and immortal soul safely and securely into the homeland of paradise?" Finally, Tetzel, standing next to a large treasure chest, would build his sales pitch to its climax and announce, "As soon as the coin in the coffer rings, a soul from purgatory springs."

Luther could not tolerate the abuse. So, as he would write in his 95 Theses, "out of love for the truth from desire to elucidate it," he picked up his pen and called for a public disputation on 95 statements (or theses) on the power and efficacy of indulgences. He posted them on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg on October 31, 1517. Being All Hallows Eve, the day before All Saints' Day, Luther knew large crowds would attend worship the following morning and he hoped a public disputation over the matter would soon be scheduled.

The disputation never happened. What happened was the Reformation. Our church remembers the initiation of the Reformation on October 31. While most people have heard of the 95 Theses, few have read them. Included below, then, is a selection of Luther's 95 Theses to give you an appreciation for the substance of his critique and for the spark that ignited the Reformation.

1. When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said, ``Repent'' (Mt 4:17), he willed the entire life of believers to be one of repentance.
2. This word cannot be understood as referring to the sacrament of penance, that is, confession and satisfaction, as administered by the clergy.

21. Thus those indulgence preachers are in error who say that a man is absolved from every penalty and saved by papal indulgences.

27. They preach only human doctrines who say that as soon as the money clinks into the money chest, the soul flies out of purgatory.

32. Those who believe that they can be certain of their salvation because they have indulgence letters will be eternally damned, together with their teachers.
33. Men must especially be on guard against those who say that the pope's pardons are that inestimable gift of God by which man is reconciled to him.
34. For the graces of indulgences are concerned only with the penalties of sacramental satisfaction established by man.
35. They who teach that contrition is not necessary on the part of those who intend to buy souls out of purgatory or to buy confessional privileges preach unchristian doctrine.
36. Any truly repentant Christian has a right to full remission of penalty and guilt, even without indulgence letters.
37. Any true Christian, whether living or dead, participates in all the blessings of Christ and the church; and this is granted him by God, even without indulgence letters.

43. Christians are to be taught that the pope does not intend that the buying of indulgences should in any way be compared with works of mercy.
44. Christians are to be taught that he who gives to the poor or lends to the needy does a better deed than he who buys indulgences.
46. Christians are to be taught that he who sees a needy man and passes him by, yet gives his money for indulgences, does not buy papal indulgences but God's wrath.
47. Christians are to be taught that, unless they have more than they need, they must reserve enough for their family needs and by no means squander it on indulgences.
48. Christians are to be taught that they buying of indulgences is a matter of free choice, not commanded.
49. Christians are to be taught that the pope, in granting indulgences, needs and thus desires their devout prayer more than their money.
50. Christians are to be taught that papal indulgences are useful only if they do not put their trust in them, but very harmful if they lose their fear of God because of them.
51. Christians are to be taught that if the pope knew the exactions of the indulgence preachers, he would rather that the basilica of St. Peter were burned to ashes than built up with the skin, flesh, and bones of his sheep.
52. Christians are to be taught that the pope would and should wish to give of his own money, even though he had to sell the basilica of St. Peter, to many of those from whom certain hawkers of indulgences cajole money.
53. It is vain to trust in salvation by indulgence letters, even though the indulgence commissary, or even the pope, were to offer his soul as security.
54. They are the enemies of Christ and the pope who forbid altogether the preaching of the Word of God in some churches in order that indulgences may be preached in others.
55. Injury is done to the Word of God when, in the same sermon, an equal or larger amount of time is devoted to indulgences than to the Word.

62. The true treasure of the church is the most holy gospel of the glory and grace of God.

81. This unbridled preaching of indulgences makes it difficult even for learned men to rescue the reverence which is due the pope from slander or from the shrewd questions of the laity.
82. Such as: ``Why does not the pope empty purgatory for the sake of holy love and the dire need of the souls that are there if he redeems an infinite number of souls for the sake of miserable money with which to build a church?" The former reason would be most just; the latter is most trivial.

84. Again, ``What is this new piety of God and the pope that for a consideration of money they permit a man who is impious and their enemy to buy out of purgatory the pious soul of a friend of God and do not rather, because of the need of that pious and beloved soul, free it for pure love's sake?"

86. Again, ``Why does not the pope, whose wealth is today greater than the wealth of the richest Crassus (a wealthy Roman nicknamed “Fats” who died in 53 BC), build this one basilica of St. Peter with his own money rather than with the money of poor believers?"
88. Again, ``What greater blessing could come to the church than if the pope were to bestow these remissions and blessings on every believer a hundred times a day, as he now does but once?"
89. ``Since the pope seeks the salvation of souls rather than money by his indulgences, why does he suspend the indulgences and pardons previously granted when they have equal efficacy?"
90. To repress these very sharp arguments of the laity by force alone, and not to resolve them by giving reasons, is to expose the church and the pope to the ridicule of their enemies and to make Christians unhappy.
91. If, therefore, indulgences were preached according to the spirit and intention of the pope, all these doubts would be readily resolved. Indeed, they would not exist.
92. Away, then, with all those prophets who say to the people of Christ, ``Peace, peace," and there is no peace! (Jer 6:14)
93. Blessed be all those prophets who say to the people of Christ, ``Cross, cross," and there is no cross!
94. Christians should be exhorted to be diligent in following Christ, their Head, through penalties, death and hell.
95. And thus be confident of entering into heaven through many tribulations rather than through the false security of peace (Acts 14:22).

Much to Luther’s surprise, his theses ignited a firestorm. Not only did Albert and Leo fail to correct the abuses, as Luther naively believed they would, but they turned their ire against Luther! Luther faced increased pressure to recant his writings and to refrain from further public teaching on the matter. Luther offered to comply if Roman Catholic leaders could simply show him from Scripture or plain reason where he was in error. They didn’t, and so Luther didn’t comply.

And the story only gets more interesting and nail-biting from here, including a clandestine escape through a hole in the city wall, a rigged trial, a bold stand and confession, a staged kidnapping, and a temporarily assumed alternative identity. Want to find out more? Check out www.lutheranreformation.org or ask Pastor Conner about excellent books on the subject.

- Pastor Conner

Set Time Aside to Rest in the Lord

Reading: Matthew 11:28 **"Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."**

A busy season is upon us with harvest and school and football and volleyball and cross country and much more.

During busy seasons in life, it is easy to become overwhelmed. It is easy to become blinded by the things you are required to do. It is easy to become stressed out.

When life seems to be the busiest, that is when many people show their true colors. Some will crack under pressure, some will break down entirely, and still some others will endure.

During a busy season, people reveal how they really want to relax/decompress/rest.

And, oftentimes, if they are not allowed their specific relaxation, they become more irritable than ever.

The question becomes: "What if going to church occurs during a time when you could relax the way you want to relax?"

Will this busy season become a time when excuses cover up your bad habits of relaxation, or will you decide today to believe Jesus at His word when He calls you out of the field and out of your armchair and out of your bed saying, **"Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."**

It is time to change your relaxation habits and decompression activities to include true rest.

True rest is only found when we hear the words of Jesus and keep them as He says, **"Come to Me"** We come to Jesus at all times and in all places through prayer. And it is there on your knees that you talk to God your Heavenly Father and find the chaos and business of life to be completely in order and under His perfect care.

It is on our knees that we recognize the need of a Savior, and it is on our knees that we pray for forgiveness. It is on our knees that we speak with God and desire to be with Him.

And, on your knees, you will recognize that you cannot accomplish the tasks at hand because you are truly weak and heavy laden.

And you will recognize the words of the Psalmist saying, **"Cast your burden on the Lord, and He will sustain you"(Ps. 55:22).**

So, the answer to true rest becomes a better question: "How can I come to the Lord because He is the one who gives me rest?"

If you would be interested in knowing the opportunities and ways you might come to the Lord and receive His benefits or rest, life and salvation, feel free to contact me, Pastor Conner, or your local pastor.

There is truly nothing in all of creation like coming to Church when you are completely tired and receiving rest for your soul.
-Pastor Staehr

Preschool Praises for September

We've had a wonderful first month together in preschool! The children have been busy learning, exploring, and building friendships.In chapel with Pastor Conner, we began hearing about the story of creation. We learned how God made light on Day 1, separated the sky from the water on Day 2, and created dry land and plants on Day 3. Pastor even showed us some plants from his own home—including a very tall one called broom grass! Each week, the children are reminded that God's word is powerful and that He made everything.

Miss Kathryn started to teach the kids some fun songs they will be able to sing at Mom's Day and at the Pancake Breakfast service in October. The children are catching on quickly and enjoying the songs. In the classroom, we've been working on our rules—keeping it safe, showing God's love, and remembering our green choices. The children have been learning how to use their school supplies properly, like glue, markers, and paint, and we've been working on listening and sitting nicely during circle time.

This month, we also began our letter learning with the letter O. O is for Ollie the Owl, our friend from the Wonder Clubhouse who helps us learn about Jesus and the Bible. The children also enjoyed working on fine motor skills through play-doh, stickers, puzzles, painting, and coloring. We spent time learning about safety, too. We talked about what to do during a fire drill and where our meeting spot was. We also discussed our tornado drill and where we go to stay safe in case of a tornado.

The change of seasons brought extra excitement! We painted colorful leaves, sorted fall leaves by color, and read the silly story about the old lady who swallowed some leaves—only to end up with a scarecrow! The children had fun celebrating the start of fall. We started sharing our All About Me bags. The children have loved showing special things from home and learning more about one another's families, favorites, and interests. We're looking forward to meeting Tucker the Turtle soon, who will help us learn strategies for handling big emotions like frustration when it's hard to share or take turns.

It has been a full, fun month of learning and growing together—we can't wait to see what next month will bring! Make sure to join us on Sunday, October 12th for our annual Pancake Breakfast Fundraiser. Zion preschoolers will be singing at 8 AM service with Chris Cakes pancakes following. Breakfast will be served from 9 AM-12 PM in the fellowship hall or through drive-thru. Enter the south entrance for the drive-thru.

Thank you to those who donated baked goods or stopped by our bake sale a few weeks ago. With your support, we were able to raise over $650 to put towards supplies for upcoming events and classroom snacks! Also, thank you to everyone that donated to our snack collection and help fill up our snack cupboard! We are grateful for your continued support.

Blessings,
Miss Amy & Miss Melanie

Thank you for loving these children and enabling Zion to share the love of Jesus with them and their families!

ZION Lutheran Preschool Manning, Iowa
Christ Centered... Child Focused... Family Connecting

Zion Family &
Friends
Hayride

TRINITY'S
SEPTEMBER
Woes: Marian Drake entered into her heavenly rest on September 22, 2025
Celebrations: On September 7th, Trinity began their Fall 2025 Sunday School . September 20th, Trinity celebrated the wedding of Drew and Lexy Ferry! Spetember 27th, Klay Steven Karsten was Baptized and Josh and Mya Ertz were confirmed.

We Will Feast & Find the Light

– DCE Kathryn

The smell of lamb slowly roasting smothered in garlic and freshly snipped rosemary from the garden filled our home. Awaking through its scent the nostalgic smells of my childhood and family feasts at my grandparents' farm. Laughter rang loudly in my ears as I listened to the sounds of my boys working on one project or another with their dad at our dining room table, while a record played softly in the background. I spent the slow Saturday lingering over a slow home cooked meal, along with making loaves of fresh baked almond and elderberry babka. Little hands helped stir dough, tiny feet ran to relay important stories of the adventures of the day both indoors and out. The day moved slowly and quietly and I lingered. I watched the clouds and used my imagination inspired by my three-year-old to see ducks and dragons as we took turns peering through our make shift toilet-paper-roll telescope. The days and weeks events of the world slowly fading. I told John, "I feel like the darkness is so heavy and my one small act of rebellion is cooking for my family, it's choosing to love." Loving my family and pouring into our home. Feasting and for just a moment forgetting the world outside our little neck of the woods.

Darkness has been getting too loud. Our world of late has been too dark, to filled with death, destruction and distraction. It seems with each new day some fresh horror of evil appears to be winning the day popping up to rear its horrid head screaming for our hearts and rendering each of us overwhelmed and downtrodden. I couldn't take it anymore. I couldn't hear one more angry speech, reel, rumor of war, school shooting, assassination, hate, anger or evil. I felt at a lose for what to do, what to say, what to feel and frankly where to turn.

And so, I chose to unplug and feast. While discussing what I called my small act of rebellion John told me it reminded him of one of the lyrics from an album we like to listen to by the Arcadian Wild. The song is called Welcome. The lyrics John was referring to goes as such:

"This our meal
It is an act of war
We'll settle the score and raise a toast

Dark and death
They've had their part to play
They will make way for another host

Whatever you brought here tonight
We will feast and find the light
Draining every cup of joy and grief

Only God knows why we all
Stumbled in this dining hall
Searching for the food that we all need
Let us gather round the table
Come and eat."

It appears this song may directly be pulling from one of Douglas Kaine McKelvey's liturgies in *Every Moment Holy* (you may recall I've referenced this book before) entitled, "A Liturgy for Feasting with Friends." Which begins with these words:

"To gather joyfully is indeed a serious affair,
for feasting and all enjoyments gratefully
taken are, at their heart, acts of war.

In celebrating this feast,
we declare that
evil and death,
suffering and loss,
sorrow and tears,
will not have the final word."
(McKelvey, 119).

The food, the drinks, the laughter is a foretaste of the feast to come. A little glimpse of eternity. It's an act of defiance in the dark day that we can in the face of death choose to still gather together. To delight, to linger over warm cups, around tables spread with lush foods and good things, to allow our senses to be filled with savory aromas and to take the time to *"taste and see that the Lord is good." Psalm 34:8.* It sparks hope that not all is bad, lost, or broken. And can light a spark to remind us that we are called to take heart!

"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I (Jesus) have overcome the world." John 16:33.

Jesus has already defeated sin, death and the devil. Our God is not dead. He is alive! And He is coming back. Though it seems dark, though it is dark, we are children of the light. In our feastings, in our families, in our gathering together we are allowed a glimpse into the great celebration that will one day be ours in heaven with Christ Jesus. We are reminded that we are not alone… *"For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I (Jesus) among them." Matthew 18:20.*
And so we sit.
We light candles.
We pray.
"Come Lord Jesus be our guest."
We join in conversation.

(At our table one boy will inevitably ask, "So, how was your good day?" Good was added to the sentence by them long ago as they found when the question was asked "*good"* was always the reply. Therefore, every day is good and it should be added to the question. I find this as a small reminder that even on the bad days there is some good to find and be thankful for. But I digress…)

We share our joys and our burdens.
We raise our glasses.
We cheers.
We share stories.
We dream.
We laugh.
We linger.

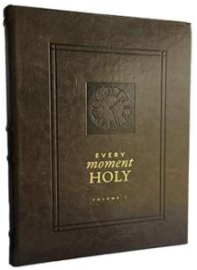
And in that small moment we find the light.

"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not over come it." John 1:5.

Dear reader, I have long wondered what to speak into these times we are all living in. And this is it. My small act of rebellion and war. Feasting on the goodness of God. I don't have all the answers. But God does. I don't have the right plans for processing the times. But God does. And I don't always know where else to turn, but toward God. And so, I turn to the one who has won the day. Where truth, light, love and victory is found. In the blood of the lamb poured out for you and for me on the cross. Instead of anger, hate, tears and fear I turn to Christ. Reading the Word of God. Going to church. And pouring into the blessings He has so graciously lavished on me in my family. Reminding the very depths of my soul that all is not lost, that victory is already won and that I can take the time, that I must take the time to… "*taste*

and see that the Lord is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!" Psalm 34:8 [§]

Resources:



I would be remiss to not mention as my resources for you to check out this month the book I've mentioned a few times now *Every Moment Holy* by Douglas Kaine McKelvey.

And also, the band the Arcadian Wild. We own two of their albums. "Welcome" & "Principium" You can listen to them on Spotify or YouTube. I highly recommend the song "Dopamine" although I'd say you also need to look up and read the lyrics as you listen to it, as there are multiple parts singing over each other at once, by design, but it makes it rather hard to catch all the lyrics. We simply love their music and if you're fans of the *Wingfeather Saga* on Angels studio (based off the books which I've recommended in the past) the band plays the soundtrack music you hear in the show.

Lastly, I feel as though I should also pass along a recipe to encourage you to join my family in feasting and tasting the goodness of God. To encourage you to gather around the table, raise your glass, to laugh, to linger, to love, and to take heart! So, I'd like to share a favorite recipe in our home. And bonus if you grow basil and yours is currently plentiful like mine, you'll love this!!

Basil Pesto *– DCE Kathryn (adapted from my friend Chris' recipe)*
½ cup olive oil
2-3 cloves of fresh garlic
3 cups lightly packed fresh basil leaves
1/3 cup shelled pistachios
½ cup freshly grated parmesan cheese
¼ tsp. salt
¼ tsp. fresh ground pepper
a dash of cayenne pepper or red pepper flakes if you like spicy
Add oil, garlic, & basil to blender. Pulse a few times until roughly chopped add remaining ingredients in order listed & blend again pulsing 4-6 times or until you reach your desired texture. Pesto will keep in the fridge covered air tight for 3 days. Freezes well. Tips for best results: Fresh ingredients and the best olive oil and parm cheese you can afford make all the difference. We enjoy it on noodles and frankly I'll eat it straight out of the jar by the spoon full or on a piece of sourdough toast by itself, it's so yummy!

My homemade pesto is one of our favorites but our families all-time favorite is John's Christmas Alfredo. But I'm not sure I'm allowed to share that recipe. Well, eat hearty!

---

[1] McKelvey, D. K. (2017). *Every moment holy: Volume I* (p. 119). Rabbit Room Press.
The Arcadian Wild. (2023). *Welcome* [Album]. Vere Music.
The Holy Bible, English Standard Version. (2001). Crossway. (Psalm 34:8; John 16:33; Matthew 18:20; John 1:5)

Need a pastoral visit?

Let us know!

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Text:
833-421-4564

Artificial Intelligence
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A Six Week Series in
Family Bible Class
Resumes October 5

ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH
MANNING, IOWA
Celebrating and Sharing Christ's Redeeming Love

ZION
Lutheran Preschool
Manning, Iowa
Cross Centered... Child Focused... Family Connecting

PRESCHOOL PANCAKE BREAKFAST

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 12

9:00-NOON

WORSHIP AT 8:00

HOLY COMMUNION WILL BE ON THE 19

LWML
Lutheran Women *in* Mission

Noisy Offering at Zion!

Sunday, Oct. 5

Bring your loose change and make noise for missions as we celebrate the work of LWML!

Life Chain

Celebrate Life!
Manning area life group

Oct. 5 - 12:30-1:30 pm

Manning City Park

Life Chain

Not a protest.
A peaceful, prayerful
presence for life.

OLIVERS LATEST TWIST

June-August 2025

SERVING THE LORD IN Taiwan

MISSION OF CHRIST Network

Mission of Christ Network & Lutheran Bible Translators had their biggest ever combined summer conference (Concordia Mission Institute) in Concordia, Missouri this summer with over 200 participants. Maggie, Ginny and I were blessed to attend for our first time. 20 people there were "Mission Explorers," interested in exploring the possibility of doing mission work with MCN.

Laypeople and women spread their wings in mission work among us (yes, there are a few of us ordained pastors in the mix and some well-seasoned missionaries). I was joyfully surprised to see how many young and vibrant souls are spreading their mission wings among us, including fresh graduates from our universities, pastor & missionary daughters, and the future leaders of our church! MCN & LBT support a total of about 50 missionaries/mission partners each, with budgets last year of $2.2 million and $7.5 million respectively. The reason MCN's budget can be so low is that the young vibrant staff work from their homes all over the U.S. and many of the mission partners teach at schools around the world where they receive small stipends. MCN uses the title "mission partner" to emphasize that we are partnering with Christian schools and other entities to help fulfill their global mission goals of proclaiming the Gospel to people for their salvation. Two of these entities are the 12,000 member Lutheran Church, Hong Kong Synod and the 12-million-member Mekane Yesu Church in Ethiopia.

PRAYERS

1. **Isaac** – pray for his health, protection, wisdom, spiritual growth and good studies in his freshmen year at **university** in Texas.
2. **Stephen** – pray for my class preparation and **teaching** (courses: Greek, NT Introduction, and Luther & The Bible [online – CTS Hong Kong]).
3. **Students** of China Lutheran Seminary and Concordia Theological Seminary Hong Kong – this is their **formation and learning** for various kinds of service in Chinese mission & ministries. Pray for spiritual strength, wisdom, understanding, insight, humility, protection, health and faith.
4. **Maggie** – she cares for the **family**, participates in **fellowship & reading** groups, and takes CLS **courses**. Pray for her health, strength in spirit, fulfillment in these activities, parental wisdom, and strong faith.
5. **Gary & Ginny** – pray for their **High School** studies at Morrison Academy, music, sports, art and activities. Pray for their health, discipline, good spirits, preparation for the future, friendships and fulfilling church involvement.
6. **Book** – pray about the theological **textbook I'm writing** about entering theological study with a sound thought-world and theological research skills. Pray for God's wisdom, love and faith in writing.

Pastor Ostebee and I are at Our Savior in Walnut, Iowa where I not only preached and presented but Ginny and I also enjoyed a downhome potluck dinner.

To read all of Prof. Oliver's quarterly newsletter request a copy from Zion.

!AMIGOS EN CRISTO and GRACIA!

News from ***Las Iglesias Evangélicas Luteranas***
Amigos en Cristo in Denison and Gracia in Storm Lake
Pastor Pedro Lopez

Greetings and blessings to you from your Hispanic ministries of the IDW. We are ready and excited to start our ESL classes again. To all our volunteers and students, we would like to let you know how thankful we are for you and for all you do.

We ask you all for prayers, especially for our ESL class so that the Lord allows us to meet new people and not only help them by teaching them English, but for them to hear the word of God that we share through this program so that they can join our congregation at any of our sites. Our schedule continues to be the same for praise, prayer, bible study and for the Sunday worship services.

At St. Paul in Carroll, our ESL class will begin on September 30. We want to thank Joe, Vicar Aaron and Jeronimo for helping to pass out flyers about the class. Here we continue our Saturday prayer and praise Bible Study. We are also very excited that Abby is working with St. Paul youth and has extended the invitation to our kids. Emily and her sister Belen assisted with the youth program that started the first week of September.

Rev. Pedro Lopez, Asst. to the President
Missionary at Large,
pedro@iowadistrictwest.org,
571-606-7600

We are happy to share that We gave away about 40 backpacks and met many families at the back-toschool event at Faith-Deloit. We asked if they were interested in attending an English class at Faith and received a positive response. We met with Faith members who want to reach out to the growing Hispanic population in their town and are excited to let you know that ESL will take place there. We plan to start on October 1. The class will be held on Mondays and Wednesdays from 6:30 – 8:30pm. If would like to volunteer, please give Pastor Lopez a call at 571-606- 7600.

At St. John-Storm Lake, we continue to help with the swaddling clothes program they offer on the second Saturday of every month. They are doing such a great job with that, and we are glad to participate as this gives us an opportunity to meet new Spanish speaking people and invite them to our church.

Prayer Requests

- Our current ministries at Grace and St. John-Storm Lake, St. Paul- Carroll, St. PaulHartley and Amigos en Cristo- Denison
- For our upcoming ESL classes in different areas.
- Cesar, a friend at our church with a personal challenge.
- Noel, who is now back in Nicaragua
- Adrian who has moved to Indiana.
- For me, that the Lord continues to bless me and give me what I need to continue his work.

Bendiciones, Pastor Lopez

Zion Fellowship Club—October 2025

The theme of "Praises: Past and Present" will continue at the October 13 (1:30 p.m.) Fellowship Club Meeting at Zion. The Reformation emphasis of the month will be the focus of the Bible study and hymn study.

During the Reformation, Martin Luther found great strength and comfort in Psalm 46. The message of the Psalm shapes the Hymn of the Reformation, "A Mighty Fortress is Our God." Martin Luther composed the familiar hymn. The Psalm and hymn provide instruction and inspiration of us in times of trouble.

Members and friends of Zion are welcome to join (or just visit) the Fellowship Club. Together we support the mission of Zion, Orphan Grain Train, Lutheran Hour Ministries, Garuna Ministries and local ministries (Food Pantry).

THANK YOU

The Riggert family thanks the Zion family for their prayer support, generous financial gift, and words of encouragement during the hospitalization and continuing recovery of Rev. Jonathan Riggert.

Orphan Grain Train Clothing Collection

Cleaning out the closet? Transitioning from summer to fall clothing? The Fellowship Club is again facilitating a clothing collection for Orphan Grain Train. Beginning Sunday, October 26, a collection trailer will be parked on the east edge of the Zion parking lot. Clothing items can be put in the trailer at any time. The items will be delivered to the Ida Grove warehouse in early November.

Good, clean clothing items—all sizes and all seasons, men's, women's, children's—are appreciated. New items (especially new underwear and socks) are also appreciated. Good, clean shoes can also be brought (low heel). Orphan Grain Train (OGT) sends the clothing items to impoverished and disaster affected areas around the world. OGT is one of the mission outreaches of the Fellowship Club.

Please share this donation opportunity with your friends and neighbors in the community.

The regular meeting of the ladies guild was held on Sept. 10, 2025 at 1pm with Pastor Conner reading, discussing Psalm 19, with opening prayer to follow. Meeting called to order by Pres. Nancy Muhlbauer, League Pledge read. September Anniversaries and Birthdays announced. 16 members present.

June secretary report approved as read. No July minutes for salad luncheon. Mite box passed and prayer recited. Financial reports available for reading.

Committee reports: Human Care donated 2 quilts to Dennis Croghan benefit
Quilt tops were made by Marjorie Jurgensen. Quilted by Zion quilting ladies.

Old business: we have some members that are stepping back and we are looking for new members to join us.
New business: Carroll Zone is retaining the same officers for our zone; fall rally dates have not been released. Clothing drive for Zion will be the last week of October. When placing items in the trailer, please take to the front of the trailer so the back end is open for others to get their donation in without having to move previous items dropped off.

Table prayer and Lord's prayer recited and meeting was dismissed. Lunch served by Becki Ehlers and Cindy Leslie.

Next meeting is October 8, 2025 at 1pm. Any member interested in joining the guild is welcome to come.
Sec. Gloria Ewoldt

WORD HOPE

Redeeming Grace Retreat

Seeking peace and healing after abortion?

The Redeeming Grace Retreat, held **November 13–16, 2025, in St. Charles, Iowa**, offers a confidential, Christ-centered experience for women seeking hope, forgiveness, and emotional healing after abortion.

Learn more at word-ofhope.org/rgr.

RETREAT PARTNERS

LUTHERANS FOR LIFE

Lutheran Family Service

Snapshots of Zion

Zion welcomes new members. From the left: Chris Reis, Katie and Eric Fara and their son Wes.

Pastor Ferry shares the need for missionaries and the joy of being a missionary with the children of Zion.

The children and youth of Zion pray for our Sunday School teachers and administrators.

Amy B. leads circle time for preschool and Pastor Conner leads chapel (here celebrating the plants God made on Day 3.

Pastor Ferry and Pastor Conner celebrate Zion's partnership in mission.

Residents of Assisted Living say thank you for Zion's twice monthly worship service.

Upcoming Events @ ZION & TRINITY

Please Note! All times and events are subject to change

	Bible Study	**Sunday mornings @ Zion following worship** **(AI & the Need for Real Wisdom)**
	October 5	**3rd Graders Receive their Bibles in worship**
	October 5	**Life Chain 12:30 – 1:30 p.m. Manning City Park**
	October 5	**Wolfpack for Hunger at Trestle Park** **2:00-6:00 Walk** **4:00-6:30 Soup Supper**
	October 12	**Preschool Pancake Breakfast (9-Noon)** **Worship @ 8:00 a.m.**
	October 16	**Afternoon Communion Service at Zion (1:30 p.m.)**
	October 22	**Family Discipling Event at Zion (6:00 – 7:30)**
	October 25 & 26 Reformation Celebrations at Trinity and Zion	
	November 1 & 2	**All Saints' Day Celebrations at Trinity and Zion**

October Birthdays and Anniversaries @ Zion & Trinity

Birthdays (T = Trinity)

1 James Mullenger
2 Norah Vetter (T)
3 Marcus Borkowski
Alan Morris
4 Amy Blackwell
Robert Ehlers
Chelsey Jensen
Camden Morris
5 Brian Birks (T)
Bennett Riesberg
6 Haleigh Alexander
Harrison Hargens
Benjamin Ramsey
Richard Zinke
8 Marlene Borkowski
Juanita Kurth
9 Vivian Blackford
Susan Mahnke (T)
Richard Mundt
Lindsey Schumann (T)
Amelia Vetter (T)
Bonnie Witt
10 Aspen Wiig
11 Houston Alexander
Kimber Arp
Drew Doyel
Lynn Kruse
Skyler Sandage
12 Brody Kirsch (T)
Weston Stribe
13 Lillian Sease
14 Wendy Ahrendsen
Lance Gruhn
15 Justin Frank
Lori Lenz
Kaylyn Nelson
Jodi Ramsey
Betty Schroeder
Sandra Sextro
David Weller
16 Miranda Benton
Mya Gaskill (T)
17 Haven Reese
18 Kate Greving
Don Lamb
19 Gloria Ewoldt
Owen Havick
Sonia Kuchel
Julie Weller
20 Steve Borkowski
Andrea Schwery
21 Rodney Borkowski
Pam Kusel
Nancy Walters
22 Luella Borkowski
Cynthia Genzen
24 Diana Eddy
Wyatt Grabill
25 Trevor Booth
Grace Eddy
26 Max Beck
Zach Rasmussen (T)
27 Brody Blom (T)
Bobby Doyel
Randy Dreher
Amos Olson (T)
Daniel Tibben
29 Christopher Dreher
Louis Dreher
Ashley Lorenzen
30 Claire Behrens
Mallory Dreier
Justin Segebart (T)
31 Abel Hinners
Dean Hoffmann
Callan Stribe

If we missed or misspelled your name, please inform

Anniversaries

1 Robin & Jenny Bunker
Cody & Kourtney Jimmerson
9 Ryan & Bobby Doyel
13 Howard & Audrey Roe
14 David & Julie Weller
16 Dale & Karen Reinke
17 Dixon & Karie Cole
20 Tom & Donna Porter
31 Greg & Leesa Christensen

Official Acts

Funerals
Harold John Jurgensen, Died September 3, Funeral September 11, Pastor Jonathan Conner
Marian Drake, Funeral September 26, Pastor Zachary Staehr, (Manilla)

Weddings
Drew and Lexi Ferry, by Pastor Staehr (Manilla)

Baptisms
Koreics Lee Corbin, daughter of Austin & Kamaya (Jacobsen) Corbin, September 27, Pastor Jonathan Conner
Klay Karsten, son of Mackenzie & Casey Karsten, September 27, Pastor Zachary Staehr (Manilla)

Adult Confirmations
Eric & Katie Fara & son Wes, September 21
Chris Reis, September 21
Josh & Mya Ertz, September 27 (Manilla)

In Our Prayers

Bruce Rutz, Steve Rutz, Athena Bess, Kaui Meyer, Jim Deevers, Rick Spack, Sherri Steffes, Judy Reinke (Ernie's sister-in-law), Karen Vollstedt, Stacey Rolenz and Ashley Myers (daughters of Shelly Helmich), Gene Mahnke, Gary & Joyce Schroeder, Martin Wanninger, Jon Riggert, Darlene Vollstedt