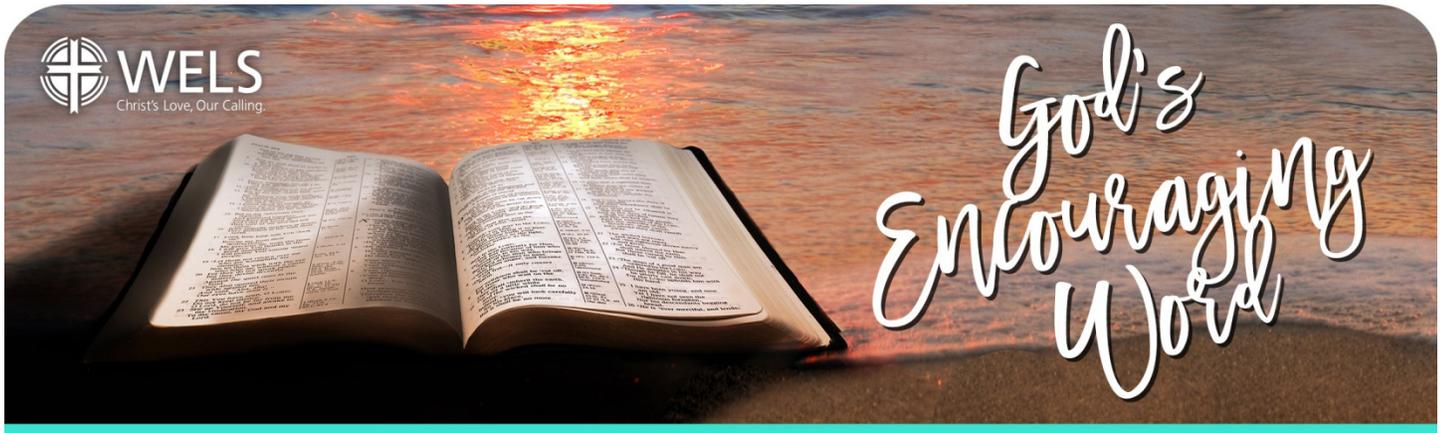


Beautiful Savior February Newsletter



God's Encouraging Word ... *when I am lonely*

Shortly after we were married, my wife and I planned a trip to Spain. In order to take advantage of some frequent-flyer miles, I decided to travel there a few days early by myself. Being young and naïve, I figured I could learn enough Spanish on the plane to get by and then find a place to stay when I got there. The flight was pleasant and we landed safely. However, by the time I got my luggage and figured out how to take the Metro into central Madrid, it was already getting late. After several hours of wandering around the city, I began to realize that 1) my Spanish was unintelligible, 2) I was not in the safest part of town, 3) it was very difficult to find anyone who spoke English, and 4) I needed a place to sleep. Finally, at around one o'clock in the morning I found a hotel manager who spoke enough English to get me a room that was about the size of a closet.

Over the course of the next several days, I have never felt more alone. I could not carry on a conversation with anyone and struggled to even do simple things like order food. Because of the language and cultural barrier, I was a stranger in a strange place.

But it doesn't take traveling to a foreign country to feel alone. Sometimes we feel alone because we miss loved ones and just want to share one more conversation or one more memory with them. Sometimes we feel alone because we just don't feel like there is anyone who understands our pain or our problems. At times we can feel all alone, even when surrounded by people, because it just seems like no one really cares about us.

It goes without saying that no one likes to feel lonely. The only thing worse than feeling lonely, is feeling lonely with the burden of shame or guilt. Thankfully, Jesus came to be with us. The truth is that each one of us deserved to be left alone, because each one of us has separated ourselves from a holy God by our sins. But instead of leaving us alone, God himself drew near to us. So near, that he took all of our sin and guilt and shame upon himself. He gave his life on the cross to take it all away, so that we would never have to be alone.

Yes, there will be times that we feel all alone here on earth. But we don't have to. Our Savior who died and rose from the dead promises, **"Surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age."** He gave his life to make it happen and his Word to guarantee it forever.

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From the pen of the Pastor. When we get to the month of February many people celebrate Valentine's Day. On this special day couples like to celebrate their love for one another. I think it is really appropriate that this month Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent, happens to fall on Valentine's Day. What a great day to celebrate the love of our Savior as he journeyed to the cross to pay for our sins. We have a special relationship with Jesus – a relationship that brings us forgiveness for our sins, life and salvation. This is a relationship to treasure because there is no greater love than the love of Christ. As you prepare to celebrate Valentine's Day – join us for a special midweek service to celebrate how Jesus loves us which enables us to love him.

Recent Membership changes. The following were released from membership in January. Patrick Kennedy, Jessica Kennedy, Mark Kennedy and Katie Becker. These members have moved from Austin and we are no longer able to serve them. We tried to contact them by letter and encouraged them to attend a church where they are now living.

Finances and attendance. For the month of January we have received \$9842 against a budgeted need of \$9336 (4 weeks) . May the Lord continue to bless us and give us a generous heart to share his blessings.

The Sunday average attendance in January was 68 compared to an average of 71 one year ago. As we look forward to beginning the church season of Lent may we renew our commitment to be refreshed by God's Word on a regular basis and take advantage of the extra worship opportunities.

WELS International Youth Rally. This is for teens graduating from 8th grade this year through teens graduating from High School this year. It will take place at Bowling Green State University located in Bowling Green, Ohio from June 26-29, 2018. This is a great opportunity for our young people to gather with other teens in our synod to be encouraged by God's word and to encourage one another. Past rallies have included over 1000 teens and chaperones. The cost is \$345 per person **before May 1, 2018** and \$370 after May 1, 2018. The cost for transportation will be \$110. If you are interested in going it will cost you **\$150** and the church will subsidize the rest of the expense for each child. We will also need a chaperone or two depending on the number of children attending. The church will cover the cost of the chaperone(s). Please let Pastor Welke know **by 2/17/2018** if you are planning to attend as that is when we will have to commit to reserving the bus transportation.

Midweek Lent services. This year we will exchange pulpits with the Rochester area pastors for our midweek services. All services will take place at 7:00 PM. The schedule is as follows:

- 2/14 (Ash Wed) - Pastor Welke
- 2/21 - Pastor Jeff Limpert (from Christ Our Rock, Rochester)
- 2/28 - Pastor Brian Semrow (from Ascension, Rochester)
- 3/7 - Pastor Ben Kempfert (from Grace, Oronoco)
- 3/14 - Pastor Brian Kom (from Ascension, Rochester)
- 3/21 - Pastor Dean Gunn (from Our Savior, Kasson)

Soup Cook Off. On Sunday, 2/18/2018, we will have our annual soup cook off. Come and join in the fun. You can bring your favorite soup or just come to eat and help pick the winner. The winner takes home the prized "Golden Ladle." We will start eating about 5:30 PM

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As You Plan Ahead:

2/14/2018 – Ash Wednesday (the beginning of Lent and midweek Lenten services)

2/18/2018 – Soup Cookoff

4/1/2018 – Easter Sunday

5/6/2018 – Confirmation

5/10/2018 – Ascension Day