

FIRST EV. LUTHERAN CONGREGATION

400 West Ave. S.
La Crosse, WI 54601

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

- Pastors -

*Rev. Roger Sachs, Rev. Richard Pamperin
Rev. Benjamin Schmudlach*

- Principal -

Matt Meitner

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SEEK YE **First**

the kingdom of God and His righteousness



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Web Site www.firstlacrosse.org

ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting of First Ev. Lutheran Congregation was held in the church social room on January 17, 2017. Twenty-three voters were present Chairman Mick Schwedler presented a president's report based on the words, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and all these things will be added unto you" (Luke 12:31).

Outreach Committee reported on proposed changes in the diorama, including the possibility that our WELS churches would provide staff for two rather than four weekends. The committee also recommended using \$2500 from the Simmons estate for our summer music program. The motion passed. An additional \$2500 will come from other non-budgetary sources to fund this project.

Education Committee reported the following fee schedule for students: First Lutheran- \$500, Other WELS- \$2100, Non-WELS- \$3650. The principal reported on initiatives to reach out to the community with the blessings of our school.

Luther High School- The voters approved the following tuition schedule for students from First Lutheran who attend Luther High School: 1st child- \$1200, 2nd child- \$840, 3rd child- \$600. Tuition for students at Luther for the 2017-2018 school year is: 1st child- \$6298, 2nd child- \$4557, 3rd child- \$2814. Mr. Jay McNamara was elected as a delegate to the Luther High Conference to replace Mr. Charles Handy who has served two terms.

Special Gifts Committee- The voters accepted the recommendation from the committee for the use of \$19,905.38 received from the Schreiber estate: Undesignated Gifts- \$9,905.38, Organ Fund- \$5,000, Student Scholarship Fund- \$5000. Mr. John Roberts was elected to a four year term on the Special Gifts Committee.

We want to thank the men whose terms on the Church Council have ended: Terry Baier, Mick Schwedler, Aaron Bolstad, Ed Kondracki Sr. Elected to three year terms on the Council were Ben Potaracke, Brad Teske and Karl Tillman. The Nominating Committee will continue to seek another man to complete the Council.

After the Annual Meeting the Church Council met to reorganize. The officers of the congregation for 2017 are:

*President- Robert Young
Vice-President- David Johnson
Treasurer- Lee Burge
Recording Secretary- Karl Tillman
Financial Secretary- Ben Berg*

Please remember these men and all of the Church Council in your prayers. Please speak to them if you have questions or concerns about the church.

Copies of the church's Annual Report for 2016 are available in the church narthex and social room.

CHINA MISSION

Special offering envelopes for the month of February will support mission work that is being done in the country of China. China is the most populous country in the entire world. However, the large majority of the people are not Christian. Most studies show that only 2%-5% of the country believes in Jesus as their Savior. The money we raise will be divided between two different organizations, Friends of China and 316NOW. Together these groups have combined to send hundreds of people to China. Their goal is to develop relationships by teaching English classes and to raise leaders for the Christian Church in China. Help support this huge opportunity!

11. *Martin Luther- Man of God-* by M. Schroeder (see left)

Our publishing house also has two newer biographies of Luther for sale. A new movie on Luther will be available soon. The public library also has books on Luther. Our church library has a complete set (55 volumes) of Luther's writings in English. We believe that this is a good time to read about Luther and to read his writings.

Martin Luther...Continued from Page 3



Exaltation Singers and Youth went caroling to Hillview Nursing home for Family Youth Night. Another visit is planned for February 15th to Bethany Riverside. All are welcome!



MEN OF HIS WORD

The 8th annual Men of His Word Conference is being held at the Oshkosh Best Western Premier Waterfront Convention Center on February 11. Come join hundreds of your brothers in Christ and share in Word and song and fellowship. You can choose from 20 different sessions to attend. Session topics include being a Christian father, being the spiritual leader of the family, seeing sex as God sees it, leading a fulfilling retirement, domestic abuse, and dealing with homosexuality in your family. Worship will be led by Koine. If you are interested in attending this day of spiritual growth, you can register online at www.menofhisword.org.

SYNOD CAPITOL DEBT RETIRED

 Members of First may remember that a special effort was made to eliminate the synod's debt last year. Here is an update from the synod president:

"Last month the final payment was made on the synod's capital debt. The retirement of the debt took place nearly a year and a half ahead of schedule. Efforts to repay the debt began in 2009 after various synodical debts were combined into a single debt of \$22.4 million. Last year, with the desire to retire the debt ahead of schedule, the Conference of Presidents authorized a special offering called the "One in Christ" offering. The synod is now completely debt-free. Dollars previously set aside for debt payment can now be used to support the mission and ministry of the synod. We humbly acknowledge that it happened only by God's grace and by the power of the gospel working in the hearts of his people. Thanks to all who gave their gifts of love for this effort, and thanks to our gracious God for making it happen!"

Serving in Christ,
President Mark Schroeder

KIDS BIBLE HOUR

In Kids' Bible Hour we are studying the beginning of Jesus' ministry starting with his baptism and temptation. We will also witness Jesus' almighty power as we learn about his first miracle. Through these lessons we learn that Jesus is True God and True Man and our Savior. If you haven't had a chance to check out Kids' Bible Hour, please join us on Sundays from 9:10 – 10:00 in the school basement. Preschool – 6th grades are invited to join us – we'd love to have you come and learn more about our Savior!



THE PATH

King David assures us that the Lord God is our Shepherd who "guides us along the right paths" (Psalm 23:3). During the month of February our church's Path services will continue to travel along the path which leads to the conclusion of I Peter. We invite everyone to join us on this path during the month of February in the church social room on Sunday evening at 5:30 p.m. A meal is served before the service at 5:30 p.m. on the second Sunday of the month. Holy Communion is celebrated in the service on the third Sunday of the month.

WOMEN OF THE WORD

Words are powerful. They can build up or tear down. They can affirm and teach or criticize and condemn. By God's grace, a "mouth makeover" can improve our relationships and affect our attitude toward life. Our words can enrich our connection to God as we spend more time in prayer and praise. Most importantly, God desires that we use the gift of speech to give Him praise, encourage others, and verbalize our faith in Christ as Lord and Savior.

To study the impact of our words, our Women of the Word Bible class will be studying the book "Bless These Lips: 40 Days of Spiritual Renewal." Each chapter draws on lip product analogies and uses humor, anecdotes, and observations to introduce Scripture passages that address common behavior and attitudes. Each day's reading includes Bible study questions and suggestions for personal reflection.

This Bible study will be held in the First Lutheran Church Fellowship Room (the basement of church) on Thursday nights beginning February 23. Study usually runs from 6:30-8:00 p.m. To order a copy of the book contact Jen Schwedler (mjschwedler@gmail.com H: (608) 782-3910 C: (608) 780-0081).

A GOOD TIME TO READ

Many people inside and outside of the Lutheran Church are aware of the fact that the year 2017 is the five hundredth anniversary of the beginning of the Lutheran Reformation. The true Lutheran Church does not worship, venerate or adore Martin Luther. But we do recognize and give thanks to God for the great things which He accomplished through Luther. God used this man to restore to His Church the basic truth that the Holy Scripture is the only source for Christian teaching. God used this man to restore to His Church the most important teaching that we are saved by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ, and not by anything that we have done.

Although it is Luther's teaching that is important to us, it is also true that Martin Luther was one of the most important people who ever lived on this earth. It would seem that this anniversary year would be a good time for our members to read a biography about this great man of God. In our church library there are six biographies of Luther. Pastor Sachs also has eleven biographies of Luther, which he would be happy to loan to members. (Some of his books have notes and underlining in them.)

The following is a short description of these books.

A. In the Church library

1. *Luther and His Times*– By E. Schwiebert- 752 pages– one of the most complete biographies.
2. *Luther*– by F. Noll– 213 pages– This is the book version of the Luther movies shown in the theater several years ago (2 copies available)
3. *The Life of Martin Luther*– by A. Fehlauer– 129 pages– a short, easy to read book by a WELS teacher.
4. *Here I Stand– A Life of Martin Luther*– by R. Bainton, a Yale Professor– 302 pages, an older, but excellent and very popular book.
5. *Martin Luther– Man of God*– by M. Schroeder, a former MLC professor– 104 pages, half of which are full page pictures.
6. *Martin Luther and the Long Reformation*—by J. Kiecker, a WELS teacher, 231 pages.

B. From Pastor Sachs

1. *Luther*– By F. Noll– 213 pages (see above)
2. *Luther the Reformer*– by J. Kittelson– 300 pages, one of the best biographies, used in synod colleges.



3. *Martin Luther– Road to the Reformation*– by H. Boehmer– 433 pages– an excellent study of Luther's early life by a German scholar.

4. *This Is Luther*– by E. Plass– 384 pages– an interesting, easy to read book by an American Lutheran scholar.

5. *Here I Stand– A Life of Martin Luther*– 302 pages (see left)- 3 copies available.

6. *The Life of Martin Luther*– by A. Fehlauer– 129 pages (see left)

7. *Martin of Mansfeld*– by M. Seebach– 223 pages, an older book on Luther's early years.

8. *Martin Luther: Reformer*– by A. Schuetze– 105 pages, a short but good book by a WELS professor.

9. *Luther's Progress to the diet of Worms*– by G. Rupp– 188 pages– focuses on Luther's early life.

10. *Martin Luther and the Birth of Protestantism*– by J. Atkinson– 331 pages– a scholarly work.