

PortalLight

the monthly Newsletter of West Portal Lutheran Church and School

AUGUST 2024

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**West Portal
Lutheran
Church Website:**

westportallutheran.org

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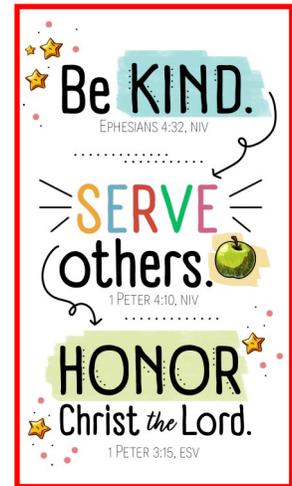
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From Pastor Binz

"Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God"
Ephesians 4:32-5:2.

It is not difficult to preach a sermon. What I find difficult is living and carrying out all that God teaches us in His word, with forgiveness being right at the top of the list of an attribute that is so difficult to carry out. I could not even imagine how difficult it would be to forgive someone who brings serious harm to a family member.

I know of two families who probably even to this day harbor grudges and hatred towards the other family. It started when a son who was driving a car one night before he was legally of age to have a license ran into a car driven by a man who was driving drunk. The young man was killed and both families blamed each other for the tragedy. The family of the young man said the man should never



have been on the road after drinking that much. The other family insisted it was the young man's fault for driving without a license. Neither family could forgive the other.

Forgiveness is so important to God that He makes it a petition or important phrase in the Lord's Prayer. *"Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us"* Mt. 6:12. How often do we forgive those who have sinned against us? *"Then Peter came up and said to Him, 'Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?'"* Jesus said to him, *"I do not say to you seven times, but seventy times seven"* Mt. 18:21-22.

(Continued on page 2)

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Because Jesus has forgiven us and taken our sins upon himself, we in turn forgive others. It doesn't mean that it easy to do, but as "imitators of God, as beloved children and walking in love" this is what we do. No matter how painful it may be for us in the long run releasing that pain to God and forgiving one another, God fills us with His peace in the midst of pain. *"Bearing with one another and if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive."* Colossians 3:13.

Because of Jesus' sacrifice for us, that "fragrant offering to God" we are forgiven. Let us therefore walk in that love of God forgiving one another because He first loved us and gave himself up for us.

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Binz



God's people pray...



LET US PRAY TO THE LORD GOD for those who are ill, homebound, or recovering from recent hospitalization: Vincent & Brigitta Ammann, Beatrice Priest's parents; Emersynn Binz; Elfriede Bonfert; Paul Brase; Charlene Bruggemann-Wong; Angie Cheung, Helen Bok's sister-in-law; Bill Eves, Virginia Ferry's cousin; Jimmy Fong, Evelyn Fong's father; Karen Goeglien, Bob Bok's cousin; Rich Hesselroth; Kenny Hioe, Julia Tom's brother-in-law; Ted Jones; Carolyn Landgrabe, Margaret Finley's sister; George Mogyorossy, Gilbert Mogyorossy's father; Sigrid Rogge; Art Spleiss, Ruth Stresow; Marilyn Tom, Stanley Tom's sister-in-law; Lisa Westermann; Cheryl Wong; Marilyn Wong; Franklin Yee.

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Rev. Curtis Binz, Senior Pastor
Rev. Jacob Swenson, Associate Pastor
May Luu, Administrative Assistant
Angie Holt, Church Secretary, PortalLight Editor
Ms. Sherise Lee, Principal
Amy Kao, Music Director

Worship Schedule

5:00 PM Saturday Worship Service-Lord's Supper
9:00 AM Sunday Adult Bible Study
10:00 AM Sunday Worship Service-Lord's Supper

West Portal Lutheran Church is a member congregation of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

Thoughts From Pastor Swenson

God's grace and peace be unto you all in Christ Jesus!

My name is Pastor Jacob Swenson. I am your new associate pastor here at West Portal Lutheran Church and School. I am both blessed and thankful to be here. I am excited for the work the Lord has for us together here and hopeful that we will see it bear fruit. I've decided for these first few articles to take the path I've chosen for our Sunday morning Bible studies. If you haven't had a chance to join us just yet, I encourage you to consider participating with us at 9am in the parish hall. It's been a great time so far, and I have already learned a little bit from some of you.

For our study, we've been considering the Hymn of the Day for each Sunday. In short, the Hymn of the Day is a part of the liturgy that developed out of the Lutheran Reformation. Martin Luther, and several of his colleagues, wanted to return the Church's music to the mouths (and hearts) of the laity. Over the middle ages, the hymns and liturgy - which were often in Latin, a language unknown to most lay people - became almost the possession of the clergy and the choir. The music became performative and not always devotional in character. The congregation became spectators at the Divine Service.

Luther and others sought to correct this. They began writing hymns and tunes to be sung by the ordinary people. Luther's famous posting of the *95 Theses* occurred in 1517. Already by 1524, new hymns and hymnals were spread among the people - who embraced them joyfully. Over time, certain of these hymns rose above the others as especially speaking to the Bible texts for a Sunday. They took in not only the readings (which, at the time were only Epistle and Gospel) but also other portions of God's Word throughout the service - like the Introit, the Psalm, the Gradual,

and even the Collect of the Day. These hymns became a treasure of the Lutheran Church and by the time of Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) they received the treatment almost that of a reading. For example, on the First Sunday in Advent they would always sing, "Savior of the Nations, Come." The First Sunday in Lent was, "A Mighty Fortress is Our God." On Easter, it was, "Christ Jesus Lay in Death's Strong Bands." Bach, by the way, wrote entire Cantatas (multi-movement pieces of music) for each Sunday in the Church Year, incorporating the Hymn of the Day and the congregation in the chorale portion.

We're too far in now to consider a hymn fully, I apologize. Next month we'll take a step back and consider a prior question: Why sing? Then, perhaps, is the question, "Why hymns?" These are things I hope to explore together and I pray that it will be encouraging for both you and me. In the meantime, you are most welcome to join us for Bible Study on Sunday. I'll be leading it for the month of August. I hope to see you there. I commend to you a stanza from one familiar Hymn of the Day:



"Sing praise to God, the highest good, the author of creation, the God of love who understood Our need for His salvation. With healing balm our souls He fills And every faithless murmur stills: To God all praise and glory! "
(LSB 819)

Pastor Swenson

Church Event

**Service Installation of the Rev. Jacob Swenson
June 30, 2024**



Rev. Jacob Swenson was installed as an Associate Pastor on June 30, 2024. Bishop Jamison Hardy officiated the service and was joined by San Francisco Bay Area Lutheran pastors.



Pastor Jacob Swenson

God's peace be to you in Christ! My name is Jacob Swenson. I am happy (and blessed) to have accepted your call to serve you as associate pastor. Some of you may remember me from my time here as vicar, 2012-13. Since that was a long time ago, and because the Lord has blessed us with new members in that time, here is a short autobiography.

I was born in June 1989, the 4th of 5 sons born to Jack and Sue Swenson in St. Paul, MN. I grew up in and around the Twin Cities there. King of Kings in Roseville, MN was my home congregation. I attended the school there through 8th grade and graduated from the LCMS high school across the street.

I attended Concordia University in St. Paul and graduated December 2009 with a degree in music theory and Confessional Lutheranism. After college I began my seminary study at Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Indiana. It was there that I met my (future) wife, Faith.

My placement out of seminary was to serve two small congregations in North Dakota. I was there from 2014-2018. Prior to coming here, I served St. John's in Fairbank and Grace in Jesup, IA for just short of 6 years.



I come to you with my family: my wife, Faith; and our sons Gideon and Nicolai (3 1/2 and 8 months). In my free time, I

like to play with my sons, make music (on a variety of instruments), and ride my bicycle. I'm hoping to do a little more of that 3rd one here than I have in colder climates.

Thank you for inviting me to serve you here. I trust that the Lord will prosper our time together. May He grant us to each be a blessing to the other - me to you, and you to me.



West Portal Lutheran School: News from the Principal's Desk

Dear West Portal Family of Faith:

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. (Hebrews 12:1-3)

This summer we celebrate the Olympics as one of the most enduring sporting events in the world, but here in Hebrews we read of a race that has spanned the ages, with a great cloud of witnesses in the saints who have gone before us. What a beautiful crowd to be surrounded by as we look to run our own race, fixing our eyes evermore on the greatest example of endurance in Jesus Christ.

We are at the starting line of the 2024-25 school year and our theme is "Endure." The year can feel at times like a grind, but as I'm reminded in my own experience as a runner, fixing yourself on the glory of the finish gives courage when mired in fatigue and the desire to quit. The race is far from a sprint, but rather one that requires faithful plodding towards the finish.

Pray with us we consider the West Portal Lutheran family of faith vital in spurring us to the finish line of the school year. Pray a blessing upon our faculty and staff - that they may be

encouraged in faith and grow in the grace of our Savior as they bring gospel truth to our families. And pray for our students and families - that they may know salvation in Jesus Christ and His love in full measure.

We welcome to our faculty and staff this coming school year:

Mr. David Chang (1st Grade)

Dr. Jordan Coss (Middle School Religion, English, and Social Studies)

Ms. Karmina Corpus (K-3 Design, Innovation, and Technology)

Mr. Andrew Middleton (Middle School Religion, English, and Social Studies)

Mr. Mark Pacis (Athletic Director, PE)

Mr. Nicholas Wong (School Aide, Extended Care)

Blessings in Christ,

Sherise Lee

School Principal



Some of the Hope Summer Camp helpers who worked with Mr. Holt cleaning portions of the back playground. Many of their programs participants were West Portal School students. Other participants helped throughout the school under the direction of Principal Lee.

West Portal Lutheran Music Academy



Fall 2024

Private Music Lessons

Piano * Violin * Flute * Recorder

- Our teachers will ensure each student finds enjoyment and success in personalized, weekly, one-on-one lessons
- Lessons are held on-campus, after school
- Combine intellectual challenge with physical coordination
- Perform in our Spring Recital
- All levels welcome from beginner to advanced
- Registration Fee: \$100- per child or \$150- per family
- Lessons: \$45- for 30 minutes, \$68- for 45 minutes
- *NEW* group beginner flute/recorder lessons available \$35- for 45 minutes
- Instruments and music supplies are not included with tuition
- To inquire, email program director Michelle Maruyama at wplsfmusic@gmail.com with the following information — email a picture of the completed form, or simply provide the information:

Instrument: **Piano** **Violin** **Flute** **Recorder**

Student Name: _____

Grade: _____ **Classroom Teacher:** _____

Parent's Names: _____ **email:** _____

Telephone: (h) _____ (w) _____ (c) _____

To inquire, email program director Michelle Maruyama at wplsfmusic@gmail.com

For more information: please email amy.kao@wplsf.com



Saturday, 8/3	5:00 PM	Worship Service-Lord's Supper
Sunday, 8/4	9:00 AM	Adult Bible Study-Fellowship Hall
Sunday, 8/4	10:00 AM	Worship Service-Lord's Supper & Officers Installation
Sunday, 8/4	11:15 AM	Elder's Meeting
Wednesday, 8/7	11:00 AM	Midweek Bible Class
Saturday, 8/10	5:00 PM	Worship Service & Blessing of the Backpacks
Sunday, 8/11	9:00 AM	Adult Bible Study-Fellowship Hall
Sunday, 8/11	10:00 AM	Worship Service-Lord's Supper & Faculty Installation
Wednesday, 8/14	11:00 AM	Midweek Bible Class
Saturday, 8/17	5:00 PM	Worship Service-Lord's Supper
Sunday, 8/18	9:00 AM	Adult Bible Study-Fellowship Hall
Sunday, 8/18	10:00 AM	Worship Service-Lord's Supper
Sunday, 8/18	11:15 AM	Pastor Swenson's 10th year Anniversary Ordination
Wednesday, 8/21	11:00 AM	Midweek Bible Class
Saturday, 8/24	5:00 PM	Worship Service-Lord's Supper
Sunday, 8/25	9:00 AM	Adult Bible Study-Fellowship Hall
Sunday, 8/25	10:00 AM	Worship Service-Lord's Supper
Sunday, 8/25	11:15 AM	Altar Guild Meeting

Your tithes and offerings support the mission and ministries of West Portal Lutheran Church. If you wish to make an online donation, please use the QR code below. PayPal deducts a small fee from these donations, or you may add a nominal amount to your donation by checking the box to help cover the fees.



Purple Heart Day is August 7th





August

BIRTHDAYS



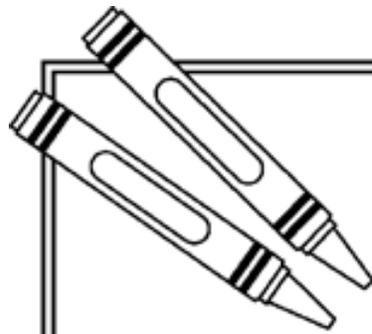
August

ANNIVERSARIES

2nd Robert Nixdorf	16th Chen, Tiffany	2nd Tom & Georgeanne Wedergren
2nd Alyssa Wong	17th David Stranahan	6th Fernando Robleto & Dottie Bridge
3rd Jeremy Aymard	18th Kristina Huey	8th Dan & Angie Holt
3rd Grace Soper	18th Marilyn Kerr	8th Hendrick & Suzie Wong
3rd Natalie Soper	18th Chelsea Lee	9th Bob & Helen Bok
4th Betty Lee	19th Susan Tang	10th Art & Louise Jann
5th Amber Parnian	19th Jenny Huey	10th George & Barbara Moore
5th Gerhard Dost	21st Hailey Westall	13th David & Jacqueline Kwok
5th Dottie Bridge	22nd Blake Liu	17th Frank & Kristin Schober
5th Peter Traub	22nd Ryan Leung	18th Patrick & Laurie Rostrata
5th Lauren Jung	23rd Janice Mason	
6th Bill Luebkehan	23rd Kimberly Fung	
7th Eileen Lai	24th Robert Bok	
8th Danielle Yee	24th Giovanna Fong	
8th Amelia Kang	25th Markus Nixdorf	
9th Lorenzo Robleto	26th Elfriede Bonfert	
10th Philip Go	26th Patty Tang-Almuete	
10th Aaron Romero	26th Samuel Wang	
10th Beverly Dye	28th Matthew Valazza	
10th Delilah Esposto	29th Brandon Lee	
10th Lucas Mai	30th Kristin Schober	
11th Jenna Hwong	30th Peter Traub, Jr.	
12th Vincent Quan	30th Amy Wong	
14th Ronald Soper	31st Eliza Latimore	
14th Cheryl Leong	31st Emily Michaud	
15th Frank Schober	31st Taye Arikawa	
16th Maggie Aymard		
16th Caleb Kriger		

"Pray for one another" (James 5:16)

Let us follow this command of God's Word. Use the birthdays and anniversaries list each month to hold up one another to the Lord in prayer. You may wish to keep this list on your refrigerator, in your Bible, in your Portals of Prayer, or in some convenient place. What strength we receive from Almighty God when we sincerely pray for one another! And in these "interesting times," a call to a member wishing him/her birthday or anniversary greetings would certainly be appreciated. It's particularly important that we keep in contact with each other these days.



Just for KIDS

How to Treat Others

How does God want us to get along with other people? Ephesians 4:32 tells us. To find out what it says, use the code to fill in the blanks.

CODE:

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14												

"

1,2 3 6 5 7,8 2,3 1 7,8 2,3

2 8 7 8,9 1 10 10 5 8 7,8 1 10,11 3

10,11 8 8 7,8 3 1 7,8 8 10,11 4,5 3 9,10'

3,4 8 9,10 4 5 11,12 5 7,8 4 3 1 2 4,5

8 10,11 4,5 3 9,10' 5,6 11 10 10,11 1 10

5 7,8 2 4,5 9,10 5 10 10,11 4 8 2,3

3,4 8 9,10 4 1 11,12 3 13 8 11"

Answer: "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you."

Puzzle!

Complete this Bible passage by adding the missing vowels.



Th_r_for_

_s G_d's ch_s_n p__pl_

h_ly _nd d__rly l_v_d, cl_th_

y__rs_lv_s w_th c_mp_ss__n,

k_ndn_ss, h_m_l_ty, g_ntl_n_ss

_nd p_t__nc_. B__r w_th

__ch __th_r __nd f_rg_v__n_

_n_th_r __f __ny __f y__ h_s _

gr__v_nc__ __g__nst s_m__n_.

F_rg_v__s th_ L_rd f_rg_v__y__.

C_l_ss__ns 3:12-13, N_V

Answer: Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. Colossians 3:12-13, NIV

