

Portal ght

the monthly Newsletter of West Portal Lutheran Church and School

AUGUST 2025

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**West Portal
Lutheran
Church Website:**

westportallutheran.org

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From Pastor Binz

“With faith all things are possible”
“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. For by it the people of old received their commendation” Hebrews 11:1-2.

The writer of Hebrews emphasizes that faith is what makes all the difference. Going back to the Old Testament it was those with faith that pleased God. Such as Abel, Enoch, Noah, and Abraham just to name a few. But what is faith? It is more than just the acknowledgment of facts it is trusting wholeheartedly in God and His ability to forgive your sins and give you eternal salvation. This is the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Abraham and Sarah trusted God and by faith had hope that God’s promises would be fulfilled and they were. When they were blessed even in old age with a child God carried out His will even when the possibilities seemed dire. When many thought God had given up on them and there was no hope God provided. He sent His one and only Son born of a virgin and the fulfillment of



Hebrews 11:1, KJV

God’s promises was given. Jesus born, later died and rose from the dead is where the real faith and hope are realized.

Mark records in his gospel about a father whose son had been demon possessed and when the father shares his suffering with Jesus and asks Jesus if he could heal his son. Jesus answered, “All things are possible for one who believes.” The father’s response was “I believe but help my unbelief” Mk. 9:23-24. Jesus healed that boy and Jesus heals us even when at times we struggle just like this father did.

Whatever circumstances may be happening in your life God understands your hurts, pains, and challenges. Trust in His promise to forgive your sins and

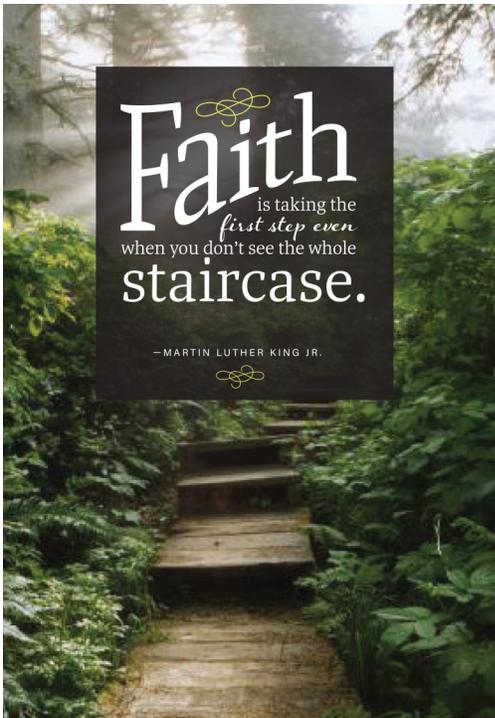
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(Continued from page 1)

give you that peace that only God is able to give. Without faith it is impossible to please God. With faith all things are possible.

May you continue in faith, hope and love as we look to Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith .

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Binz



Bible Quiz

Hebrews 11 is called the Hall of Faith because it's a partial list of ancestors who lived out their belief in God. Who is named in this chapter?

- A. Adam, Eve and Seth
- B. Abel, Enoch, Noah and Sarah
- C. Moses' parents, Moses and Rahab
- D. Deborah, Bathsheba and Huldah
- E. A and B
- F. B and C
- G. C and D



Answer: F



LET US PRAY TO THE LORD GOD for those who are ill, homebound, or recovering from recent hospitalization: Elfriede Bonfert; Charlene Bruggemann-Wong; Angie Cheung, Helen Bok's sister-in-law; Bill Eves, Virginia Ferry's cousin; Jimmy Fong, Evelyn Fong's father; Gilbert Mogyorossy; Sigrid Rogge; Ruth Stresow; Ray Toloski; 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

9:00 AM "How to Study the Bible" Class Conf. Room

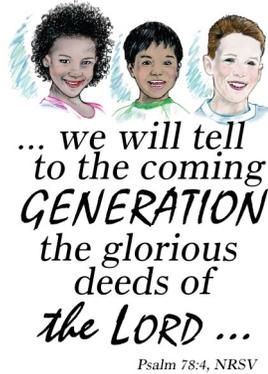
10:00 AM Sunday Worship Service-Lord's Supper

Children's Sunday School will resume in September.

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

Thoughts From Pastor Swenson

"[The] things that we have heard and known, that our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children, but tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the LORD, and his might, and the wonders that he has done." (Psalm 78:3-4 ESV)



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

This month marks the beginning of the 74th academic year at West Portal Lutheran School. The Lord has blessed several generations of our students so that the praise of His name and the knowledge of His works has spread throughout our city and communities, our state, and, even, the world. Without His grace, our school would not be standing today. We pray and trust in His continued care for our school and commend it, with its students and teachers, to Him in this upcoming year also.

As the congregation that planted the school and continues to walk beside it, we, too, have a share in the care of it. True, we support the school with financial gifts and prayer. At times, some of us may be found laboring in the hallways and classrooms. Not all of us can do all these things, but there is something we all can do. We can speak. We can speak of the Lord's love for us and the great salvation He has worked for us through the forgiveness of our sins. We can speak that the Lord continues to dwell among us in His Word and Sacraments. We can speak that the Lord's peace extends beyond anything our students and teachers can imagine - and that it is for them.

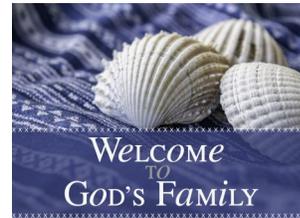
We might not all be able to physically labor in the school. We might not all be able to support it financially. If we can do these things, God be praised! But we can speak. And, to speak, we must be present. The upcoming school year presents us, church members, with many opportunities to be present in the life of our students. There will be sports games, concerts, recitals. There will be trunk-or-treating and the Christmas faire. Even more regularly, there will be the singing opportunities. Each of these is an opportunity for us to speak, if not with our students, then, especially, with their parents; and our teachers! Take a moment to learn their names and speak kindly to them. Encourage them, as appropriate, with a comforting passage from Scripture. Then, when you see them again later, say hi again.

This year we have 96 new students in our school. These are children and families who may never have been in a Christian, much less a Lutheran, school before. They may have never heard the Good News - that Jesus Christ won for them forgiveness, and gives it to them freely. Let's not hide it from them, nor anyone else. Let us speak and be present this year in the life of our school. Indeed, it is the Lord's school, His vineyard; yet, He has called us by His grace to labor in it by the strength He supplies.

The Lord be with you, and with West Portal Lutheran School.

Pastor Jacob Swenson

The Gatchalian Family Jericho was baptized on 7-27-25



The Nursery Room has been restored. There is now a peaceful haven where one can change a diaper, calm a toddler meltdown, or feed an infant. It is located in the back of the Fellowship Hall. Access is through the door marked "Nursery" and also through the Ladies Room. Please note that we want children and babies in our services and events. We don't want them separated from us, but we understand that on occasion, a space is needed for their care. It is not meant as a place for them to go and play away from us. It is meant to be a brief-use spot, for when parents need to care for their young ones. We hope you find it helpful. If you need to use it, please ask one of the ushers to open the entrance door to the Fellowship Hall.
Church Council Inreach,
Beverly Presley-Nelson



Church Event

Please **Save the Date, September 7th**, for this special occasion



NOONTIME CONCERT: WEST PORTAL LUTHERAN CHURCH & SCHOOL

Sunday, September 7, 2025, 12:00 pm
West Portal Lutheran Church Sanctuary
200 Sloat Blvd., San Francisco, CA 94132

Please join us for Sunday worship service at 10:00 am and a light reception at 11:15 am in Fellowship Hall before the concert.

PERFORMERS:
AMY KAO, HARPSICHORD
YI-HSUAN (ETHAN) LIN, VIOLIN
WPLC CHOIR
WPLCS STUDENT CHOIR

West Portal Lutheran Music Academy



Fall 2025

Private Music Lessons

Piano * Flute * Violin * 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** **Flute** **Violin** **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 amykaomusic@gmail.com

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

Dear West Portal Family of Faith:

*Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth;
break forth into joyous song and sing praises!*
(Psalm 98:4)

Resuming school might not be cause for joy for students or teachers alike, but like it or not, we rapidly approach the start of the school year in a matter of days. Our school yearly theme is "Let's Make a Joyful Noise" from Psalm 98:4. Of note, the theme is stated as a command, or invitation for us *together* to make a joyful noise until the Lord. I know that on my own, it is difficult to gravitate towards joy. I need the help of others to remind me of God's goodness and faithfulness. This is the beauty of God's people in commUNITY, remembering the works of the Lord and declaring together all that He has done. This then helps set my heart towards the eternal, shrinking the onsetting fear of a new school year beginning and all that there is to do and accomplish before its end.

Will you join me in declaring with joyful praise the wonders of our God? Indeed, He has done marvelous things, especially as we think of our 75th school anniversary rapidly approaching in 2026. It is God's past faithfulness that informs our faith in our present circumstances. Pray together with us that we may direct our hearts towards joy, teaching our students to do the same.



We are grateful to our faculty and staff this joining us this school year:

Mrs. Christina Tamai-Wong (Kindergarten)
Ms. Sarah Grue (2nd Grade)
Mr. Benjamin Chung (Middle School Religion, Science)
Mr. Immanuel Moss (Middle School Religion, English, and Social Studies)
Mr. Christian Nim (Middle School Design, Innovation, and Technology)
Ms. Judy Chau (School Aide, Extended Care)

Blessings in Christ,

Sherise Lee
School Principal

Saturday, August 9th at 5 pm Worship Service



August 13th



Welcome New WPL Teachers 2025-2026

We are thrilled to introduce our new teachers who are joining our faculty this school year. They come alongside our other outstanding educators in seeing our children learn, grow, and thrive in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. At the end of last school year, we sent off Mrs. Soy (Kindergarten) and Mr. Bailey (Middle School), who relocated to Augusta, Georgia and Berkeley, California, respectively. Dr. Coss (Middle School) is also relocating back to South Bay to be near to family. Mr. Wang will return to the graphic design industry after teaching Design, Innovation, and Technology. We are grateful to be onboarding new teachers dedicated to the ministry that is West Portal Lutheran. Please join us in giving all of our new teachers a warm welcome to our commUNITY!



Christina Tamai-Wong (Mrs. Wong) Kindergarten

Hi everyone! I'm Christina Tamai-Wong, and I'm incredibly blessed to be a part of the West Portal Lutheran School family as a kindergarten teacher! Born and raised in the vibrant city of San Francisco, I spent 15 joyful years teaching preschool before God opened the door for me to join WPLS—and I couldn't be more grateful. My husband Chris and I are proud parents to two amazing little girls: Hannah (6) and Jolene (3½). Our house is always full of snacks, music, giggles/(the occasional sibling bickering), and stories. We love singing, reading, and soaking up sweet family moments together. I'm currently pursuing my Master's in Early Childhood Education at San Francisco State University, and I'm passionate about helping little ones grow in their development of knowledge and faith. When I get a moment to myself, you'll find me exercising, exploring nature trails, going on Target runs and discovering yummy coffee and boba shops—I'm always on the lookout for a new favorite spot! I'm absolutely thrilled to be part of what God is doing at WPLS, and I can't wait to see how He continues to move in our students, staff, and community.



Sarah Grue (Ms. Grue) 2nd Grade

My name is Sarah Grue and I am excited to be teaching second grade at West Portal Lutheran. I grew up on Bainbridge Island in Washington state and I moved to San Francisco in January 2025. I have been teaching since 2006 and have also had the opportunity to teach abroad in Thailand and Montenegro. I have worked with students ranging from age one up to high school. I received my teaching degree in elementary education from the University of Portland, and I am currently working on a master's degree in early childhood education. My passions are teaching Bible, literacy, and integrating art into the curriculum. When I am not teaching, I love to go for walks, listen to music, travel, drink, coffee, go to the beach, and explore the beautiful city of San Francisco and the surrounding areas.

Benjamin Chung (Mr. Chung) 6th and 7th Grade Religion, Science

Benjamin Chung is a second-generation Chinese American who has spent most of his life on the West Coast. After 14 years of serving as an Associate Pastor at SFCBC, God has led him into a new season—teaching science over the past three years. Ben has been joyfully married to his wife, Angelia, for 11 years. Together, they are raising two energetic boys, Athanasius and Ignatius. He is especially excited to be teaching at WPL—his wife’s alma mater!

1 Timothy 4:12 (NIV): “Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity.”

Immanuel Moss (Mr. Moss) 7th Grade Religion, English, and Social Studies

Greetings, my name is Immanuel Moss. I am a multilingual (fluent English/Spanish, basic Portuguese) speaking, San Francisco native, Archbishop Riordan alum, UC Berkeley: (Bachelor’s Degree in Religious Studies) graduate, California Lutheran University: (Master’s Degree in Educational Leadership) scholar, and Doctoral Degree candidate. I enjoy music, movies, sports, fine dining, and traveling... I have traveled all over the world, all continents: (North America, South America, Europe, Africa, Asia, Oceania), except Antarctica, which I’d like to visit in the near future. I’m looking forward to being part of the West Portal Lutheran School family and community. GOD Bless! (Proverbs 22:29) (Colossians 3:23-24).

Christian Nim (Mr. Nim) 6th, 7th, 8th Grade Design, Innovation, and Technology

My name is Christian Nim and I am excited to be joining WPL (again)! I taught at WPL from 2016-2018 as the previous Computer Teacher before transitioning to a technology focused role. I have since worked for Fitbit and Google, but have felt God’s calling to return to education. I was born and raised in San Francisco, attending elementary, high school, and college here as well. I am married to a 3rd Grade teacher and we have an energetic 3 year old daughter. I enjoy all things tech (mostly building computers and keyboards) and going to Disneyland! I look forward to what this school year holds!



| | | |
|-----------------|----------|--|
| Saturday, 8/2 | 5:00 PM | Worship Service-Lord's Supper |
| Sunday, 8/3 | 9:00 AM | Adult Bible Study-Fellowship Hall |
| Sunday, 8/3 | 9:00 AM | Adult Bible Study "How to Study the Bible" led by Pastor Binz |
| Sunday, 8/3 | 10:00 AM | Worship Service-Lord's Supper |
| Sunday, 8/3 | 11:15 AM | Elder's Meeting |
| Wednesday, 8/6 | 11:00 AM | Midweek Bible Class |
| Saturday, 8/9 | 5:00 PM | Worship Service & Blessing of the Backpacks |
| Sunday, 8/10 | 9:00 AM | Adult Bible Study-Fellowship Hall |
| Sunday, 8/10 | 9:00 AM | Adult Bible Study "How to Study the Bible" led by Pastor Binz |
| Sunday, 8/10 | 10:00 AM | Worship Service-Lord's Supper & Faculty Installation |
| Sunday, 8/10 | 11:15AM | Church Council Meeting |
| Wednesday, 8/13 | 11:00 AM | Midweek Bible Class |
| Saturday, 8/16 | 5:00 PM | Worship Service-Lord's Supper |
| Sunday, 8/17 | 9:00 AM | Adult Bible Study-Fellowship Hall |
| Sunday, 8/17 | 9:00 AM | Adult Bible Study--"How to Study the Bible" led by Pastor Binz |
| Sunday, 8/17 | 10:00 AM | Worship Service-Lord's Supper |
| Wednesday, 8/20 | 11:00 AM | Midweek Bible Class |
| Saturday, 8/23 | 5:00 PM | Worship Service-Lord's Supper |
| Sunday, 8/24 | 9:00 AM | Adult Bible Study-Fellowship Hall |
| Sunday, 8/24 | 9:00 AM | Adult Bible Study--"How to Study the Bible" led by Pastor Binz |
| Sunday, 8/24 | 10:00 AM | Worship Service-Lord's Supper |
| Sunday, 8/24 | 11:15 AM | Altar Guild Meeting |
| Wednesday, 8/27 | 11:00 AM | Midweek Bible Class |
| Saturday, 8/30 | 5:00 PM | Worship Service-Lord's Supper |
| Sunday, 8/31 | 9:00 AM | Adult Bible Study-Fellowship Hall |
| Sunday, 8/31 | 9:00 AM | Adult Bible Study--"How to Study the Bible" led by Pastor Binz |
| Sunday, 8/31 | 10:00 AM | Worship Service-Lord's Supper |

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.





August

BIRTHDAYS



August

ANNIVERSARIES

| | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 2nd Robert Nixdorf | 16th Caleb Kriger | 2nd Tom & Georgeanne Wedergren |
| 2nd Faith Swenson | 16th Tiffany Chen | 6th Fernando Robleto & Dottie Bridge |
| 2nd Alyssa Wong | 17th David Stranahan | 8th Dan & Angie Holt |
| 3rd Jeremy Aymard | 17th Ashton Yon | 8th Hendrick & Suzie Wong |
| 3rd Grace Soper | 18th Kristina Huey | 9th Bob & Helen Bok |
| 3rd Natalie Soper | 18th Chelsea Lee | 10th Art & Louise Jann |
| 4th Betty Lee | 19th Susan Tang | 10th George & Barbara Moore |
| 5th Gerhard Dost | 19th Jenny Huey | 13th David & Jacqueline Kwok |
| 5th Dottie Bridge | 21st Hailey Westall | 17th Frank & Kristin Schober |
| 5th Peter Traub | 22nd Blake Liu | 18th Patrick & Laurie Rostrata |
| 5th Lauren Ji | 22nd Ryan Leung | |
| 6th Bill Luebkehan | 23rd Janice Mason | |
| 7th Eileen Lai | 23rd Kimberly Fung | |
| 8th Danielle Yee | 24th Robert Bok | |
| 8th Amelia Kang | 24th Giovanna Fong | |
| 9th Lorenzo Robleto | 25th Markus Nixdorf | |
| 10th Philip Go | 26th Elfriede Bonfert | |
| 10th Aaron Romero | 26th Patty Tang-Almuete | |
| 10th Beverly Dye | 26th Samuel Wang | |
| 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 | | |

"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.



NATIONAL
**PURPLE
HEART**
Day



Purple Heart Day is August 7th