

Portal^{Light}

the monthly Newsletter of West Portal Lutheran Church and School

AUGUST 2026

PAGE I

**West Portal
Lutheran
Church Website:**

westportallutheran.org

Inside this issue:

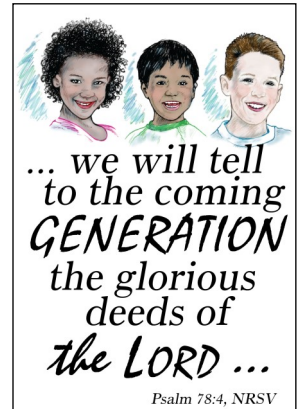
Message from Pastor Swenson, People Pray	1-2
Message from the Principal	3
Welcoming New Teachers	4-5
Calendar	6
August Birthdays and Anniversaries	7

From Pastor Swenson

"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 78:4 ESV)

It is August again already. That means, for us, the start of another school year. Truly each year is special, but this school year is our 75th. Our theme for the year is "Rooted in Christ," which is taken from St. Paul's letter to the Colossians. We give thanks to God for planting a school here in our midst and causing it to be rooted in the Lord, that His glorious deeds might be proclaimed to generations yet to come.

The start of the school year is also an opportunity for us to reflect on and reengage in our mission here. Our fathers in the faith did much hard work in building a Christian school here in San Francisco. They did it because they wanted children, their own and others', to hear the saving Gospel of Christ and grow in it. They wanted their offspring to know the love of the Lord and be influenced by it through all their words and



actions, and so that they might also share it with others.

For 75 years we have supported this ministry as a congregation and, indeed, it is our ministry. At times, however, just as in life we drift between interests, so we also do sometimes in ministry. Church members, consider your relationship with the school: the students and teachers, the parents, and all the events through the year. Are you as engaged now as you once were? Maybe your children have grown and you are now less connected to the school. School families, consider your connection to the congregation. When you join WPL, you become connected not only to other school families but to the families in the congregation who support the school with

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

prayer, work, and money. Maybe you only see church members when your children sing, perhaps not even then.

The start of a school year is an opportunity for us to reflect: what are we doing here? West Portal Lutheran School is a great blessing of God in this place. Here, within our buildings, children are hearing and learning about Jesus every day. They are hearing about the free forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ and practicing ways to model that in their lives. Through them, the Gospel of Christ will spread to our city and world. As a congregation, we get to be a part of that - and not just as spectators, but as participants. I invite you all to reinvest yourself into the school. Come to the games and events. Make a point to come to the services when the children are singing and talk to their families. Pick a class and teacher and pray for them or write them a card.

For the school families reading, you also have a part here. When there are events at the church, come. Pray for the congregation and its members. When you are here for worship, pick someone to visit with - I know it's hard, but we don't bite (I promise). Just as the

congregation members have an opportunity to be a blessing to the school, you have the opportunity to be a blessing to the congregation. In this way, we might both be together "rooted in Christ," and we and our children (and their children) will all benefit.

God bless West Portal Lutheran School in this 75th year!

Grace and Peace,

Pastor Jacob Swenson



LET US PRAY TO THE LORD GOD for those who are ill, homebound, or recovering from recent hospitalization: Michele Boyer, Charlene Bruggemann-Wong; Vivian Char; Angie Cheung, Helen Bok's sister-in-law; Wilson Cheung, Helen Bok's brother; Bill Eves, Virginia Ferry's cousin; Virginia Ferry; Mary Jo Fischl; Jimmy Fong, Evelyn Fong's father; Ray Holstead; Gilbert Mogyorossy; Bennette Nulph; Sigrid Rogge; Ruth Stresow; Diane and Ray Toloski; Elise Wen, Patrick Man's friend; Cheryl Wong; Marilyn Wong.

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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

Children's Sunday School will resume in September.

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

Dear West Portal Family of Faith:



Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. (Colossians 2:6-7)

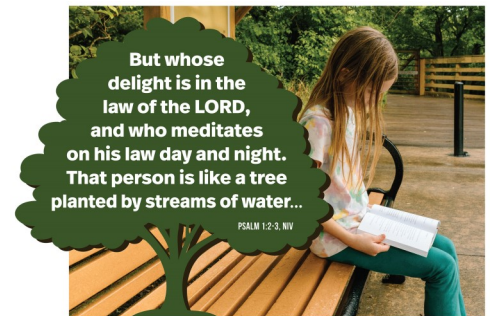
As we begin our 75th school year, our theme is "Rooted in Christ." While roots are ordinarily something we think of as underground, I've learned by keeping a set of air plants at home that there are also aerial roots that the plant can grow to secure or anchor itself to tree branches in the wild. These roots seem a lot flimsier to me than the roots of a tree like the redwood tree that spread themselves out upwards of 100 feet. Regardless of the type of root, all roots bear a similar function - to keep the plant alive and thriving.

When we speak of being rooted in Christ, that same imagery bears true to how Christ gives life and abundance to all who believe in Him. Each time I feel my roots are being

pried away by hardships or challenges, the Holy Spirit mercifully guides me back to remember as a child of God, I am rooted in Christ, which then recalls to me the beautiful imagery of Psalm 1:

*He is like a tree
planted by
streams of water
that yields its
fruit in its
season, and its
leaf does not with-*

*er. In all that he
does, he prospers. The wicked are not so, but are like
chaff that the wind drives away. (Psalm 1:3-4)*



Pray with us as we begin this new school year - that our school and church community would be further rooted and established in Christ Jesus, planted by streams of living water that allow beautiful fruit to be born in season. To those who do not know the saving gospel message in Jesus Christ of forgiveness of sin and life eternal, we pray this good news may be received in faith towards new life in Him.

Join me as we welcome our faculty and staff this joining us this school year:

Ms. Breanna Betancourt (5th Grade)

Mrs. Maria Kitagawa (School Aide, Extended Care)

Mrs. Michelle Ling (3rd Grade)

Ms. Noreen Lum (School Aide, Extended Care)
Blessings in Christ,

Sherise Lee

School Principal

Welcome New WPL Teachers 2026-2027

We are truly grateful for our entire faculty who are committed to seeing your children positive, healthy, and whole. This year, we are thrilled to introduce our new teachers who come alongside our other outstanding educators in seeing our children learn, grow, and thrive in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Please scroll down to read more about them below.



In addition to these new teachers, we are excited to welcome back **Mr. Andrew Bailey** as our 7th Grade English and Social Studies teacher. **Ms. Nina Davis** also returns to us in a new role, as our Admissions and Marketing Coordinator.

We also have new support staff to welcome - **Mrs. Maria Kitagawa** (Sloat Campus School Day Support and Extended Care) and **Ms. Noreen Lum** (Sunset Campus School Day Support and Extended Care)

Please join us in giving all of our new teachers a warm welcome to our commUNITY!

Michelle Ling (Mrs. Ling), 3rd Grade



I'm Michelle Ling and I am truly grateful to be joining the WPLS team as a Third grade teacher. I have taught in public and private schools for over 19 years; from Transitional Kindergarten to Second Grade. I look forward to the great adventure that Third grade will bring; partnering with staff and families to help students grow academically, socially, and spiritually. My goal is to create a safe classroom environment where every child knows they are valued. I believe that every child who enters my room is "bright" and I will encourage students to be curious, engaged, and hopefully learn how deeply loved they are by God. Outside of the classroom, I enjoy spending time with my family, hiking, crafting, and reading Science Fiction books. I also love thinking of and finding creative ways to bring Poetry and Art into learning that makes it meaningful and fun for my students. I am looking forward to getting to know each child and family and am excited to see

all that God has planned for this school year. My hope is that together we can learn and grow this school year and celebrate, together, the many blessings God provides.

Breanna Betancourt (Ms. Betancourt), 5th Grade



Hi! I'm Breanna Betancourt, or Miss Betancourt. I'm originally from Tulare, California, and moved to the Bay Area in 2020 to attend San José State University, where I earned my degree in Liberal Studies Teaching Preparation. In 2020, I accepted Christ through campus ministry at SJSU, and during my four years there I was involved with Cru and Destino. After graduating, I served on staff with Destino for two years. That season deepened my faith and shaped my passion for supporting students in both their academic and spiritual growth. I'm so excited to be joining the WPLS family and meeting my very first class of students! I'll be living in San Francisco with my dog, Melody, who you will probably hear plenty about this year! I'm also proud of my Puerto Rican, Italian, and Portuguese heritage, which has shaped my love for family, culture, and food.

In my free time, I enjoy trying new coffee shops, traveling, cooking, watching baseball and soccer, listening to Latin music, and spending time with family and friends.



Saturday, August 8th at 5 pm Worship Service

**BLESSING OF THE
BACKPACKS**



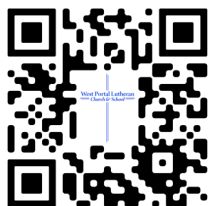
Wednesday,
August 12th





Saturday, 8/1	10:00 AM	Quilt Class - Fellowship Hall
Saturday, 8/1	5:00 PM	Worship Service-Lord's Supper
Sunday, 8/2	9:00 AM	Adult Bible Study-Fellowship Hall
Sunday, 8/2	10:00 AM	Worship Service-Lord's Supper
Sunday, 8/2	11:15 AM	Elders' Meeting
Monday, 8/3	6:00 PM	Membership Class-Church Library
Wednesday, 8/5	11:00 AM	Midweek Bible Class
Saturday, 8/8	5:00 PM	Worship Service & Blessing of the Backpacks
Sunday, 8/9	9:00 AM	Adult Bible Study-Fellowship Hall
Sunday, 8/9	10:00 AM	Worship Service-Lord's Supper & Faculty and Staff Installation
Monday, 8/10	6:00 PM	Membership Class-Church Library
Wednesday, 8/12		First Day of School
Wednesday, 8/12	11:00 AM	Midweek Bible Class
Saturday, 8/15	5:00 PM	Worship Service-Lord's Supper
Sunday, 8/16	9:00 AM	Adult Bible Study-Fellowship Hall
Sunday, 8/16	10:00 AM	Worship Service-Lord's Supper
Monday, 8/17	6:00 PM	Membership Class-Church Library
Wednesday, 8/20	11:00 AM	Midweek Bible Class
Saturday, 8/22	5:00 PM	Worship Service-Lord's Supper
Sunday, 8/23	9:00 AM	Adult Bible Study-Fellowship Hall
Sunday, 8/23	10:00 AM	Worship Service-Lord's Supper
Sunday, 8/23	11:15 AM	Altar Guild Meeting
Monday, 8/24	6:00 PM	Membership Class-Church Library
Wednesday, 8/26	11:00 AM	Midweek Bible Class
Saturday, 8/29	5:00 PM	Worship Service-Lord's Supper
Sunday, 8/30	9:00 AM	Adult Bible Study-Fellowship Hall
Sunday, 8/30	10:00 AM	Worship Service-Lord's Supper
Monday, 8/31	6:00 PM	Membership Class-Church Library

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

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



You are cordially invited to join us in celebrating a momentous occasion: West Portal Lutheran School's 75th Anniversary on September 26, 2026! This is an open-house event featuring a look back at God's faithfulness at our school with savory and sweet bites starting at 1:30 pm followed by a special worship service at 5:00 pm. **Please register by September 5th.** Entry is **FREE** of charge, but if you would like to make a donation, please enter an amount on your registration.

<https://www.wplsf.com/anniversary>

Please reach out to: Antonella Demartini (speedyantonnella@yahoo.com) with any questions.

We very much hope to see you there!

Purple Heart Day is August 7th



NATIONAL
**PURPLE
HEART**
Day

