

The Power of Habit: Prayer

from WELS Teen Devotions

The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective. Elijah was a human being, even as we are. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops. (James 5:16-18)

Why we don't pray more? I can only speak for myself, but I sometimes don't pray more because I think I can get more done if I actually "do" it than if I pray about it first. I think that my thinking, my working, my worrying, and my planning are more powerful than actually praying about it.

When I write it down it sounds pretty foolish, doesn't it? But our lack of prayer says just that. Our lack of praying says to God that our activity and our working is more important than asking him to act and work and do.

James inspires us to believe that prayer is a powerful thing. He tells us that our prayers are powerful and effective. Our prayers matter. Our prayers change things. Our prayers make a difference.

If you believed that something was powerful, would you do it? Of course. If you thought something would make all the difference in the world, you would make sure it happened. If you thought something mattered, you would make time for it, intentionally, purposefully, regularly. That's what we do for things that make a difference and matter to us.

James gives an example of an effective prayer. He reminds us of the story of Elijah in 1 Kings 17 and 18. Elijah prayed that it would not rain—and it didn't rain. God withheld rain for three and a half years because of Elijah's prayer. Then Elijah prayed again that it would rain—and God sent rain.

Prayer works. Prayer matters. It is powerful and effective, not because of the person who is praying, but because the person praying invokes God's powerful name and humbly relies on God's gracious promises and saving will. The story of Elijah—and many other stories throughout the Bible—show us that this is true.

So pray. Make a habit of it. Your Father in heaven loves you. He has forgiven all your sins, and he now invites you to call on him in prayer. In his love for you, he hears your prayers and works powerfully for you and for the world.

Prayer: *Lord God, you teach me that prayer is a powerful thing. In your grace, Father, you invite me to pray. Help me to understand how powerful prayer is so that I make it a part of the very fiber of my life. Yes, Lord Jesus, teach me to pray without stopping. Amen.*

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Sunday School and Adult Bible Classes

Join us to grow in God's grace every Sunday beginning at 7:45 in the sanctuary. There is a 5-minute devotion with fellowship time and refreshments before heading to the various classes. Parents, please don't drop your children off outside or in the Sunday school room as there will be no supervision there. Bring them into the sanctuary. Thanks! If you happen to worship on Thursday, come just for the fellowship and growth on Sunday.

Adopted Seminary Family

Our family at Immanuel is once again adopting a family from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. We are supporting seminary student Dominick Olson, his wife Bethany, and a member of their family due to arrive at the end of January. Please see the display in the hallway for more information about this family, what their needs are, and an envelope to give gifts to help support them and send words of encouragement. Thank you!

Note from the Chairman

We'd like to leave the first four pews in front of the care room open for families with small children and visitors. We don't want a mom or a dad carrying a baby, a diaper bag, and a car seat to have to go up and down the balcony stairs to get to the care room. We don't want them to have to sit in the front of church either. And we certainly don't want to make our visitors uncomfortable this way. Please consider choosing a pew besides the four in front of the care room.

Grace-Hmong Outreach in Vietnam

Our synod has an amazing opportunity! We have been asked by a large Christian group in Vietnam to teach and train pastors. We have been invited by the government to build a theological training facility in the city of Hanoi. Our goal is to raise \$2 million by the end of June to build the facility and cover operating expenses for the first two years. Please prayerfully consider being a part of this enormous outreach opportunity! There is a designated giving envelope in the informational booklet about the Grace-Hmong Outreach which will be handed out **December 27 & 30** and be available in the main hallway thereafter. Thank you!

Organization of WELS Seniors

The next OWLS meeting will be on **January 15** at 1:30 pm at St. John Lutheran Church in Juneau. Rev. Jonathan Bilitz will speak about the Wisconsin Lutheran UW Student Chapel in Madison. Refreshments will be provided. OWLS provides meaningful activity for those who are retired and/or 50 years and older. Here is a wonderful opportunity for seniors to grow spiritually and enjoy the fellowship of neighboring WELS and ELS members. All are welcome.

Servicemen/women

Do you know a serviceman or woman serving on our behalf? Go to www.wels.net/refer to register them for free resources.



Worship Service DVDs

Do you know someone who'd be interested in regularly receiving DVDs of our worship services? Please let Pastor know. We'll mail them out to them. Extra DVDs are next to past bulletins in the entryway and available for anyone now.

Lord's Prayer

Following input received at the semi-annual voters' meeting, the Worship Committee recommended to the Council that we start using the current Lord's Prayer in the 2nd and 4th weekend services. The Council approved this recommendation and to begin this schedule in November. Feedback will be appreciated at our annual voters' meeting January 27.

THE ROC Youth Center



As many organizations and groups invite us to give at this time of year, it is important that we avoid becoming frustrated and upset and that, with God's grace, our gifts are given freely and willingly. For God tells us he loves it when we give cheerfully. To help us give cheerfully to our ROC Youth Center, we want you to know that eternal life through Christ alone is daily shared with so many teens who haven't heard the clear Gospel before. May God's love in Christ fill our hearts with joy that overflows. Please don't forget THE ROC Youth Center as you make your cheerful giving plans. Your gifts are appreciated and needed.

MLC Matching

Every year we have the opportunity to take advantage of MLC's matching grant program, where MLC matches gifts we give to support our students preparing for the public ministry there. We currently have two students attending. If you'd like to give a gift of support, please indicate "MLC Matching" on your check.

Building Improvements

Would you like to help with building improvements? Please use the envelope in your box of envelopes, one of the envelopes kept at church, or simply indicate on your check that your gift is to go towards "building improvements." Check out our fundraising progress on the poster on the north wall of the hallway. Thank you!

Family Usher Teams

The idea behind Family Usher Teams is to have ushers representing who we are—a family, to have guests welcomed by folks just like them—a mom, a grandpa. Imagine the impact when a young mother comes to our church for the first time with her baby in her arms, a little nervous as it's her first time to any church in a while, and another young mother opens the door for her and calms her nerves, tells her where things are. Or a grandpa with his granddaughter going out to open the car door of an elderly woman who needs help with her walker. Everyone in our church can help make such an



impact. Please ask others to help you make a team. We'd like at least four people on each one, and you don't even have to be of the same family (we're all family in Christ). See the schedule in the main hallway and sign up for a date today!!

Register for Holy Communion

Please remember to fill out a registration card for the Lord's Supper. These cards are used by our Inreach Team to encourage faithfulness in worship. Thank you!



Electronic Giving

Did you know you can give your offerings electronically? Whether you're able to make it to church or not, you can always make sure your offering arrives. It's a safe, convenient way to give your firstfruits every week. Ask Carla for more information.

Large Print Editions

Could you benefit from a large print edition of our weekly worship folder, the *Meditations* devotional booklet, or the *Forward in Christ* magazine? We'll gladly make these available if you'd like. Please let Pastor or Carla know. Thanks.

Wine or Grape Juice?

It's been the practice of our church for some time to offer grape juice as an alternative to wine in Holy Communion. Since Jesus instituted his Holy Supper using wine and unleavened bread, however, and because of our desire to remain true to Scripture, we'd like to offer an acceptable alternative only in cases where it's absolutely necessary. Please contact Pastor if you can't receive wine. Thank you.

My Bible Bags

These are activity bags for children to use during the worship service. They have a Children's Bulletin for the kids to work on as well as other fun items for them to use. When the service is done, please return the items to the bag and hang it back on the rack on your way out. We hope these bags will be a blessing to you and your children!

Offerings vs. Budget as of 11/30/2018

Offerings: \$297,776.78 Budget: \$289,307.33 Difference: \$8,469.45

Sunday Usher Teams

Jan. 6 Braunschweig Family
Jan. 13 Altreuter Family
Jan. 20 Snyders/D.Sellnow/PC Schultz
Jan. 27 Jerry Schultz Family



Couple	Date	Years
Troy & Tracie Naatz	1/9	18

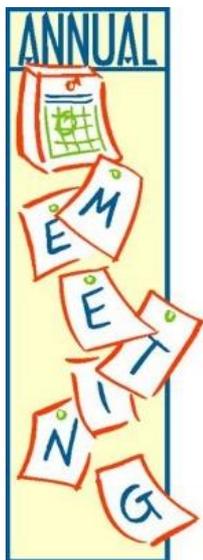




JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

Alissa Heald, 1/1
Bailey Kerr, 1/3
Joshua Snyder, 1/3
Amber Kruesel, 1/4
Ronald Milbrath, 1/4
Jackie Higgins, 1/5
Brad Meinel, 1/5
Scott Sukow, 1/6
Lee Braatz, 1/7
Donald Genz, 1/8
Richard Jr Draeger, 1/10
Joseph Metzger, 1/12
Eunice Wrench, 1/12
Kaitlin Burk, 1/14
Norman Matzinger, 1/14
Abby Gaulke, 1/16
Laikin Guenterberg, 1/16
Brenda Killips, 1/17
Tori Buglass, 1/19
Levi Christian, 1/19
Kathleen Crawford, 1/19
Brittany Joseph, 1/21

Aaron Sellnow, 1/21
Layla Olszewski, 1/21
Kyle Genz, 1/22
Ruth Schmidt, 1/22
Jessica Fletcher, 1/23
Sue Henselin, 1/23
Ian Schultz, 1/23
Courtney Schultz, 1/24
Rhonda Emrath, 1/25
Jameison Guld, 1/25
Rodney Wildes, 1/26
Kristine DeBlare, 1/27
Erin Guenterberg, 1/27
Lawrence Mohr, 1/27
Nathan Reinke, 1/28
Hayden Trimborn, 1/28
Vickie Genz, 1/30
Dean Staude, 1/30
Taylor Emrath, 1/31
McKenna Lamp, 1/31
Rocky Lamp, 1/31
Michael Sukow, 1/31



Annual Meeting

Our annual meeting will be **January 27, 2019**, right after the worship service. Food and beverage will be provided. Please come so you can offer your input on things you might be interested in, like: the new budget, the election of a replacement council member, worship times, the Lord's Prayer, building renovations, etc. Even though only our 18-year-old and older male members vote, they will surely benefit from hearing from all of our members.



WELS

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