

NATIONAL LUTHERAN SCHOOLS WEEK



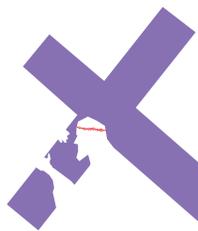
Sent to Serve

The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many (MATT. 20:28).

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Welcome Letter

DEAR FRIENDS IN CHRIST,

It's here! National Lutheran Schools Week (NLSW) is the opportunity to celebrate with nearly 2,000 schools nationwide and to give thanks for the gift of Lutheran schools for students, families and communities. Churches and schools rejoice in their partnership with a shared vision for proclaiming God's grace and mercy to equip the next generation of faithful Christian servants. We give thanks to God for the opportunity to touch the lives of thousands and thousands of children and families who attend Lutheran schools.

The NLSW theme this year is "Sent to Serve" and is inspired by Matthew 20:28: "Even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." Jesus served through His suffering, death and resurrection — and paid the price with His own life to free each of us from the slavery of sin.

We make ourselves known as followers of Jesus by following His example. It's the message that is taught and lived daily in classrooms in Lutheran schools across the nation and world. Our faithful service is our response. God calls us into specific ministry roles in our church and school and has chosen each of us to be a servant in this time and place. This message of Christ's death and resurrection is the message that Lutheran schools have shared with children and families for generations.

We are rich with examples of servants following Jesus in our Lutheran schools. We have experienced how social distancing impacted education in classrooms, challenging every educator to design a system of remote learning. Teachers responded digitally with creative solutions and developed innovative ways to connect meaningfully with students and their families. Chapel services with words of encouragement continued with online platforms, enabling the beautiful Gospel message of the forgiveness of sin through faith in Jesus Christ to be proclaimed.

Students look forward to NLSW every year. In the mix of spirit days, crazy socks, special guests, service-learning experiences, open houses, community projects and the many creative ways schools celebrate this special week, we have great joy with the promise of eternal life, as we live in His victory and share the Good News with one another and the world.

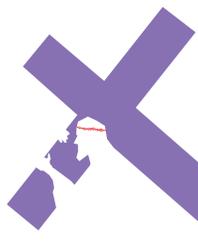
In His service and yours,

Dr. Rebecca Schmidt

DIRECTOR, LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod





Presidential Proclamation

2021 NATIONAL LUTHERAN SCHOOLS WEEK

Whereas, God loves us and sent His Son to be our Savior; and

Whereas, “The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Matt. 20:28); and

Whereas, Lutheran school teachers and students rejoice in this Good News of God’s love in Christ Jesus; and

Whereas, We are all called to “serve one another” through love (Gal. 5:13); and

Whereas, Lutheran schools prepare children for their individual callings to serve God and their neighbor; and

Whereas, Each baptized child of God is sent forth to serve their neighbor with the love of God in Christ; and

Whereas, Christ’s love compels us to live for others (2 Cor. 5:14-15); and

Whereas, God’s gifts of creation are given to us for the benefit of our neighbor; and

Whereas, Lutheran schools instruct people to serve God and His people with those gifts; and

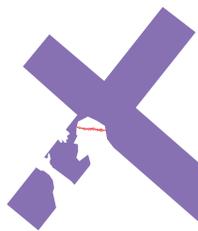
Whereas, During National Lutheran Schools Week, we rejoice that we are all “Sent to Serve”; therefore, be it

Resolved, That Jan. 24–30, 2021, be officially proclaimed as National Lutheran Schools Week in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison

PRESIDENT, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod





Introduction

LUTHERAN SCHOOLS ARE “SENT TO SERVE.” Lutheran schools serve a diverse population of children, from preschool through high school. Lutheran schools serve as a partner with Christian families in nurturing the faith of children. Lutheran schools serve local Lutheran congregations by being mission outposts to their communities. Lutheran schools serve the world with the Gospel.

They also serve in the name of Jesus. The National Lutheran Schools Week theme, “Sent to Serve,” is guided by Matthew 20:28: *“Even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”* Lutheran schools serve every day and in every context because Jesus was “Sent to Serve” as our Savior. Jesus’ saving service brings us forgiveness of sins, life and salvation.

In 2019, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod’s Youth Ministry office developed and published “7 Practices of Healthy Youth Ministry.” One of the practices noted was “Serve and Lead.” Service does not begin with the Rite of Confirmation. Service begins at the Sacrament of Holy Baptism. Service is not limited to youth or adults; instead, it is the response of all children of God.

Lutheran schools are centers of service. Lutheran schools are blessed with faithful pastors and teachers who rejoice in their calling to serve in a Lutheran school ministry. Lutheran schools are blessed with supporting congregations that sacrifice time and treasure to serve their children through a Lutheran school. Lutheran schools could not operate without volunteers, who serve daily and richly. The “Sent to Serve” National Lutheran Schools Week resource celebrates many whom God has sent to serve in the Lutheran school setting.

Lutheran schools are sent to serve congregations, families, communities and the world. This “Sent to Serve” resource recognizes various service opportunities and provides suggestions for local school leaders, children and families to serve others as Jesus’ servants in that place. The “7 Practices of Healthy Youth Ministry” resource says, “Giving youth opportunities to serve and lead takes time and effort. Parents and other supportive adults should work together to identify how God has uniquely gifted each teen” (Page 28). The same observations could be made about each child in a Lutheran school. God has also gifted them to serve. We all are “Sent to Serve.”

God’s blessings on your celebrating and serving during National Lutheran Schools Week!





HYMN: "We Have Been Sent to Serve"

TEXT BY JEFFREY E. BURKART

2021 National Lutheran Schools Week theme: "Sent to Serve" based on Matthew 20:28

"Even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (ESV).

We have been sent to serve *Matt. 20:28*

By Christ, our Servant King,
Who gave His life that we might live;
New life to others bring.

Our Lord and Master's grace
Impels each faithful one
To hold the lost in His embrace; *Luke 19:10*
Each daughter, ev'ry son!

No longer slaves to sin *Rom. 6:3-7; 22*

We serve in lowliness.
Through Word and water we begin
A life of holiness.
May we, through servanthood,
Proclaim Lord Jesus' love,
So all might know that God is good, *1 Chron. 16:34; Ps. 23:6; Ps. 34:8*
And trust the LORD above. *Jer. 17:7-8; Prov. 3:5-6*

To those who are ignored,
Who live with troubled hearts, *John 14:1-3*

May we, as servants of the LORD,
Tend them till fear departs. *John 21:15-17*
May they, by grace, be blest
Through faith in Jesus Christ,
Who gave His life so all would rest *Matt. 11:28*
In His great sacrifice.

Our ransom has been paid *Matt. 20:28; 1 Tim. 2:3-6*

For Christ, who conquered death,
Rose from the grave, came to our aid,
With His life-saving breath.
He reigns as LORD of all;
He shall return again. *Acts 1:1-10*
Until His coming, heed His call
That all might heaven gain.

△ To God the Father sing *Ps. 45:17*

A high doxology;
Unto Christ Jesus ever bring *Rev. 5:13*
A hymn sung glor'ously!
Then to the Spirit raise
Psalms of unending joy,
As we, with willing spirit, praise *Ps. 51:12*
Our LORD and God on high! *John 20:28*

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Tune: DIADEMATA ("Crown Him with Many Crowns," LSB 525). Music: Public domain. S M D (66 86 66 86)



Sunday OR Celebration Service

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 20:20–28

TEXT: “Even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Matt. 20:28).

SONGS: LSB 842, “Son of God, Eternal Savior”; LSB 848, “Lord, Whose Love through Humble Service”; LSB 643, “Sent Forth by God’s Blessing”

MESSAGE: “Don’t You Get It?”

The elementary classroom teacher gives a thorough explanation of the significance and location of the subject and verb in the sentence. Immediately after the explanation, a student gives a blank look to the teacher. “Don’t you get it?” The same scenario happens in the middle school or high school math class as students struggle with algebraic equations. “Don’t you get it?”

The question also comes up in the home when the clearly defined family rules or expectations have again been violated. “Don’t you get it?” In addition, the question has been asked personally and painfully when a heartache or struggle is not understood by a spouse, friend or fellow parishioner. “Don’t you get it?”

The question could well summarize the response that Jesus might have had at the interaction with His disciples and the mother of the sons of Zebedee in our Gospel lesson. Jesus has repeatedly taught His disciples about His mission. Matthew’s Gospel notes three specific conversations. Following the “who do people say that the Son of Man is?” question (Matt. 16:13) and Peter’s confession, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (v. 16), we are told, “From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things ... and be killed, and on the third day be raised” (v. 21). Shortly after Jesus’ Transfiguration (Matt. 17), Jesus again shares a similar message (vv. 22–23).

In the days before the Palm Sunday entry into Jerusalem, Jesus continues to teach His disciples. Jesus is very clear as to why they will be journeying to Jerusalem: “And the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to death” (Matt. 20:18). Jesus continues with details about the emotional and physical agony of His journey.

Hopefully, the disciples would begin to understand the purpose and gravity of Jesus’ mission. However, rather than asking additional questions or offering support, the disciples are immediately distracted by an interaction with the mother of the sons of Zebedee. She asks, “Say that these two sons of mine are to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom” (v. 21). We are blessed with the broader perspective of Jesus’ mission and the events that were to follow. We might respond, “Don’t you get it, mother?”

The disciples get caught up in the conversation, “and when the ten heard it, they were indignant at the two brothers.” In their jealousy, they wanted similar positions in Jesus’ kingdom. They were more concerned about themselves than their Lord and Master.

Before we become too judgmental of the mother and disciples, we must reflect and confess that often we, too, don’t get it.

We don’t get the reality of our sin. We identify with the disciples as we seek our own prideful places in the kingdom. Surely, we are more worthy of recognition than

others. Certainly, our service in church, school, home and other contexts deserves some reward. Prior to this text, Jesus told of the laborers in the vineyard (**Matt. 20:1-16**) who felt they deserved greater reward because of their longer and more faithful service in the kingdom. Rather than celebrating Jesus' grace, we seek our own glory. God's Law would have us "get" that we are sinful in thought, word and deed, and deserve no place in His kingdom.

The Good News is that "the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (v. 28). The Son of Man was willing to leave the right hand of His Father's kingdom to take on human flesh as the babe in Bethlehem. Jesus journeys to the cross, fulfilling every detail of God's plan of salvation. He was willing to be delivered over to the chief priests and scribes, and to be condemned to death and delivered to be mocked, flogged and crucified (vv. 18-19). Jesus served as the sacrifice for the sins of the world. So that His service might be the sufficient and final payment received by all who believe, He was raised on the third day (v. 19).

The message of Christ's death and resurrection is the message that Lutheran schools have shared with children and families for generations. Like the disciples, we get distracted from Jesus' message individually and collectively. Lutheran schools seek to offer an excellent education, a safe and thriving environment, a variety of activities, and other aspects of education in today's complex and demanding world. However, Lutheran schools are unique and critical because of the message that Jesus came "to give his life as a ransom for many." That's the message that Lutheran school students are baptized into. That's the message taught and lived every day in the classroom. The world may not "get" our message, but our mission is to share the work of our servant Savior. Lutheran school students will not "get" every language arts, mathematics or science lesson taught. They may not even get every explanation in Luther's Small Catechism. However, we pray that through the Spirit's work and blessing, they believe Jesus served them through His suffering, death and resurrection

Having heard of Jesus' saving service, the disciples are "Sent to Serve." "It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant" (v. 26). Jesus demonstrated greatness by associating with little children, healing lepers, responding to the pleas of fathers and mothers for their sick and dying children, sitting in the living rooms of thieving tax collectors and other

sinners, and washing feet. The King of kings came to serve all the way to the cross.

We, who have received the bounty of God's love through the Means of Grace, are sent to serve. The message of our sinful nature, the temptation of Satan and the encouragement of the world is "serve me." Again, we identify with Jesus' disciples and say, "Put me next to You on Your throne." Parents desire, "Serve my child first." Everyone seems to suggest, "What about my rights?" Certainly fairness and justness are godly and necessary. However, many of our requests tend to be self-serving.

Jesus teaches, "It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant."

We praise God for the many servants who are part of our Lutheran school ministry. We are blessed with great teachers, great staff, great volunteers and the great support of many. The greatness is not measured in academic degrees, hours of service, dollars donated or other typical standards. The greatness is measured in a faithful response to God's grace and a generous response to His blessings.

We are sent to serve children and families. (The worship leader may want to share information now on children and families served: number from the congregation, number from the community, Baptisms and other celebrations, etc. Personal "stories" are always helpful.)

We are sent to serve our community in Jesus' name. (The worship leader may want to share how the local community is blessed through the school ministry: nonmember children and families served, acts of service to the community, etc. Again, "stories" are helpful.)

We are sent to serve the world. (The worship leader may want to share how the school children and staff are in mission beyond the immediate community: perhaps chapel offerings are supporting a missionary or mission field, children pray for missionary families, etc.)

We confess that we don't always "get it." We miss the point of Jesus' message and mission. We still seek our own interests. Through the message of God's Word in our worship and in the classrooms of our Lutheran school, we continue to "get" the Good News of God's grace and we "get" that we are sent to serve in Jesus' name. Amen.



CHAPEL TALK: A Great Lutheran School

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 20:20–28

TEXT: “It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant” (Matt. 20:26).

SONGS: LSB 801, “How Great Thou Art”; AGPS 117, “He’s Got the Whole World in His Hands”

INTRODUCTION

Display the motto “Great Faces, Great Places.” The state of South Dakota publicizes one of its most famous landmarks, Mount Rushmore, with this motto. The state invites tourists to visit to see the great faces of the presidents as well as the great faces of the people that greet visitors. Great places in the state not only include Mount Rushmore but also other historic, recreational and entertaining places.

MESSAGE

Our Lutheran school obviously has great faces: its students and staff. It also is a great place to worship, learn, play, participate and serve. (The leader may want to invite the assembly to share answers to the question, “What makes our school great?”)

In today’s Scripture reading, the mother of disciples James and John thinks that her sons are great (doesn’t every parent). She asks Jesus to place her sons at the right and left sides of His heavenly throne. The other disciples are immediately jealous. Obviously, they thought they were just as great.

Sometimes people show that they think they are great: the athlete who shares that he’s No. 1, or the actors or musicians who surrounds themselves with great things and people. Sometimes we even like to think of ourselves as being great. We may brag about our abilities or accomplishments.

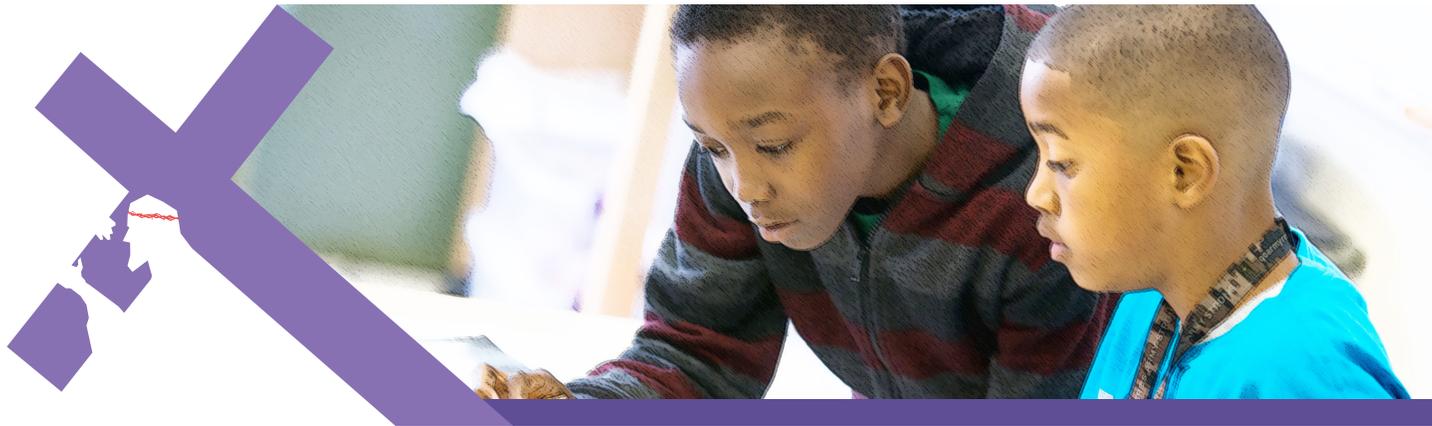
God’s Law reminds us that we are sinful people. The only great thing about us is that we have a great list of sins, and that’s not so great. Our text (Matt. 20:26) tells us that God doesn’t measure greatness by what we can do or who we are. Our nature is sinful, and our actions are self-serving and condemning.

The text tells us that greatness is shown in serving. Jesus, the great creator, great miracle worker and great teacher, came to serve. Jesus served all sinners when He came “to give his life as a ransom for many.” Jesus served each of us by dying for our sins. Jesus brings His victory over sin, death and the grave by serving us in the waters of our Baptism and in His Word. We have a great Lutheran school because we have the message of a serving Savior.

We don’t have to travel to another state to see great faces in a great place. They are right here in our Lutheran school. We show and share the greatness of Jesus by serving in His name. We look forward to a great National Lutheran Schools Week.

PRAYER

Jesus, Your greatness was shown in Your serving us and all creation with Your great sacrifice on the cross. Thank You for the great grace that we share in our classrooms, in our school worship together and in our congregation. Bless us as we seek to be great serving in Your holy name. Amen.



MONDAY: Jesus — Sent to Serve

SCRIPTURE: John 13:1–17

TEXT: “If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you” (John 13:14–15).

OBJECTS: basin large enough to wash students’ feet, towel

STUDENT DEVOTION

When have you washed your feet? Perhaps you were at the beach and washed the sand off your feet before you went indoors. Perhaps you were playing outdoors and washed the dirt and grass from your feet because you wanted to slip your socks and shoes on again. Perhaps you had a cut or infection on your foot, and you had to wash it to avoid infection.

Jesus and His disciples washed their feet often. They wore sandals and walked on dusty pathways. Usually it was the job of the household servants to wash the feet of the guests. In our Bible reading, it’s not the servants or the disciples who wash feet. It’s Jesus! The Lord of all creation, the Son of God, the worker of miracles, the promised Messiah, is washing feet.

Jesus washes the disciples’ feet only hours before He leaves the Upper Room to be arrested, condemned under Pontius Pilate, and finally crucified and buried. By His suffering and death, Jesus does more than wash feet. With the blood that He shed on the cross, Jesus washes us from all of our sins. Jesus’ washing away of our sins is brought to us in the washing of our Baptism. In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, our heart, head, hands, feet and every other part of us has been washed clean.

Jesus has a lesson for the disciples and us: “I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you.”

We may not be washing the feet of our classmates or schoolmates this week. Your teacher may not be washing your feet this week. But when we serve each other in school, in our family, in our neighborhood or beyond in Jesus’ name, we are following Jesus’ example.

TALK ABOUT

- What would it have been like to have your feet washed by Jesus?
- Who are some of the people whose feet you may not wash, but for whom you can show special love and kindness?
- In Jesus’ day, guests were welcomed with foot washing. How do we kindly and respectfully welcome guests to our home, classroom and school today?

PRAYER

Jesus, thank You for washing me of my sins in my Baptism. Because You served me, help me to see others that I might serve in Your name. Amen.

STAFF DEVOTION

Welcome to foot-washing school.

This is a place where Lutheran school administrators, teachers and staff learn how to wash feet, and then routinely wash feet.

Foot-washing lessons always begin in the name and example of Jesus. One of the first events of the Passion account is Jesus' interaction with the disciples in the Upper Room. Jesus greets them by washing their feet. The Master washes the feet of His disciples. This action was not fitting to the culture of the time.

Peter responds to Jesus' action first with hesitance but then with the request, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head" (John 13:9). Peter's request is perhaps prophetic in that Jesus would wash all of Peter. As He journeyed to the cross and shed His blood, Jesus washed Peter and the world of sin. We are washed in the blood of the Lamb. As we are washed in the waters of Baptism, we are washed of our sins. We are washed so that in Jesus' name we can be foot washers.

While foot-washing lessons always begin in the name and example of Jesus, we reflect on those persons and events that are part of Jesus' instruction team. Some of us have learned foot washing from parents and family members who were always serving; some of us learned from our own teachers who served so humbly; some of us learned from students whose "feet" were especially dirty or perhaps deformed, but we were asked and instructed to "wash" them anyway. In reality, they washed us.

Foot washing is never a natural instinct. Our selfish and sinful human nature would rather have our own feet washed. We'd rather not look at or attend to the feet of others that are "too dirty." Often, it's hard to get down on our hands and knees in service.

God's Word instructs us, and God's Spirit directs us to be blessed by washing feet in a Lutheran school.

TALK ABOUT

- Who washes your feet?
- Who (teachers, parents, others) gave you foot-washing lessons?
- What situations have challenged you as a foot washer?
- How has God blessed your foot washing?



"SENT TO SERVE" as Jesus' Servants ACTIVITIES

- Set up a foot-washing station in the classroom or school hallway.
- List events in Jesus' ministry where we saw Him serving: feeding the 4,000 and 5,000, blessing little children, healing lepers and the lame, washing feet in the Upper Room, dying on the cross. Have classrooms display one of Jesus' acts of service, and invite serving "tours" through the school building.
- Have children enact the foot-washing scene of the Upper Room.
- Discuss: What prejudices or experiences prevent us from humbly and effectively serving certain individuals or groups? How do we confess and overcome those barriers?
- Review and celebrate the washing of Holy Baptism. Focus on "The Sacrament of Holy Baptism" in Luther's Small Catechism.
- Who are some of the servant foot washers in your church and school? Consider "foot washer" designation and recognition.
- Scripture notes several "My Servant, _____" titles. Who served as Old Testament prophets and resurrection proclaimers? Identify staff and students as "Jesus' Servant, _____."

PRAYER

Jesus, thank You for washing my feet. Thank You for those who by their example have washed my feet in Your name. Bless my foot washing. Amen.



TUESDAY: Pastors and Teachers — Sent to Serve

SCRIPTURE: Ephesians 4:11–16

TEXT: “He gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ” (Eph. 4:11–12).

OBJECT: a wrapped gift

STUDENT DEVOTION

Who likes to receive gifts? We all do! Today I have a gift for each of you. See if you can guess what the gift is. The gift is right in this room. The gift is not wrapped. The gift is in this room every day. The gift is a person. The gift teaches this class. The gift is YOUR TEACHER.

Obviously, the greatest gift of all is Jesus. The Good News is that “God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son” (John 3:16). God gave a gift to the whole world. In today’s Scripture reading, the apostle Paul shares that God has given gifts to His church. God wants us to continue to learn about and live the Good News of the gift of Jesus. God wants others to receive the gift of salvation. Through His church, God “[equips] the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.” God’s gifts to accomplish this work are “the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers.”

Moses, Isaiah and the Old Testament prophets were God’s gifts to His people. Paul, Peter, John and the other apostles were God’s gift to the Early Church. The passage describes pastors and teachers as God’s gifts to His church today. Your teachers and pastors are God’s gifts to you through whom He shares the Good News of His forgiveness and the life eternal He has planned for you.

What do you do with a special gift? You thank God for him/her. You treasure him/her. Treasure and respect the gifts that God has given to your church and school.

TALK ABOUT

- How are your pastors a special gift to you and your school?
- How are your teachers a special gift to you and your school?
- Without buying a gift, how can you show your pastors and teachers that you appreciate them as God’s gifts?

PRAYER

Dear Jesus, You are the greatest gift of all. Thank You for the gift of forgiveness of sins, life and salvation. Help us to treasure our pastors and teachers as Your gifts to us. Amen.

STAFF DEVOTION

I have a compliment for you: “You are a gift!”

Most likely, you seldom receive that compliment. Occasionally your spouse, children or others might share “You are a gift” at Christmas, Valentine’s Day, an anniversary or another special occasion. We confess that we seldom recognize or affirm the people “gifts” in our lives.

Others may not note or appreciate your “gift” status, but God does. The God who gave His only begotten Son also gave “the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.” The God who gave the messengers of His grace throughout the Old Testament and throughout the Early Church still gives.

We are blessed to receive a ministry calling through His church. The Holy Spirit gifts us to be His gifts in a variety of ministry contexts: gifts who preach and teach His Word, gifts who administer the Sacraments, gifts to share His absolution, gifts to teach His children, gifts to minister to the sick and dying. Others are gifted to share God’s Word through teaching, music, administration and other ways.

You are a gift to share the greatest gift of all. You share with children, families and many others that God’s gift of salvation is for them.

Due to our sinful human nature, the temptations of the devil or the distractions of the world, we feel like anything but a gift. We see our ministry as a burden; we feel our efforts are inadequate, our ministry is less important than someone else’s, and our influence is limited. In those times, hear God’s affirmation, “You are His gift. God has gifted you to be His gift in this time and place, in Jesus’ name.”

TALK ABOUT

- What distracts you from your “gift” status?
- What individuals have been or are God’s gifts in your life?
- What gifts has God given you for ministry in your setting?
- How are the words “You are a gift!” affirming to you?

PRAYER

Jesus, thank You for the gift of Your forgiveness. Thank You for the gifts You have given me to be a gift of service to others. Amen.

“SENT TO SERVE” as God’s Gifts ACTIVITIES



- Learn about some of the pastors and teachers who have faithfully served in your church and school.
- Learn about those sent to serve in the history of the Reformation. How did Martin Luther serve the church? What were his gifts?
- Learn about those sent to serve in the history of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Who was C.F.W. Walther? Who were some of the other early church leaders? Who are our present-day church leaders?
- Who were among those sent to serve in a challenging era in the black history of our country and church? How are these brothers and sisters in Christ served today? How are other cultures or groups being served? How can we be God’s servants to them?
- How does our church prepare future servants for the church? Learn about our Concordia universities and seminaries. Perhaps consider a visit or invite a representative to the church and school.
- Encourage students to consider full-time service in the church. How has God gitted you to be a gift to His church?
- Pastoral ministry servants are often liturgically “wrapped” for service. Invite the pastor to share the significance of the robe and stole, as well as the worship and altar coverings.
- Interview pastors and teachers. Who influenced them to become professional church workers? What joys do they experience in their ministry?



WEDNESDAY: Serving Together on God's Team

SCRIPTURE: 1 Corinthians 12:12–27

TEXT: “Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it” (1 Cor. 12:27).

OBJECT: school or other team logo or uniform or other school team indicators

STUDENT DEVOTION

Have any of you ever been on a team? There are athletic teams, dance teams, robotics teams, debate teams and others. What teams do we have at our school? It's good to be on a team. We learn how to work together. We may make new friends. We may gain new skills. We can experience and accomplish things that we could not do alone.

In today's Bible lesson, the apostle Paul talks about a “team”: the church. Paul compares the church to a body. The body has many different parts — eyes, ears, arms, legs, brain, heart and many more. Paul explains that though there are many parts, there is only one body. It is the body of Christ. Jesus is the life of the body. The parts of the body are a “team” working together to help you live, move and serve.

We can also use the team illustration to think of the church. The members on a basketball team play different positions and have different skills, but they work together to get a victory for the school. The members of the math team may have different levels of ability and skills in different areas of math, but all together they are one team representing the school. As students in our school, we are all on the same team. More than representing our school, we represent Jesus.

In our Baptism, Jesus brings us together on the same team. While we have the same Lord and Savior who died

for us all, He gives us different skills and abilities to serve Him as members of His team.

While school teams work and play together for a victory, we work together on the team of the church because we already have a victory. Jesus' resurrection is His and our victory over sin, death and the devil. We thank God for our pastors, teachers, staff, volunteers and students who are part of God's team here. May we joyfully serve Him working and playing as His team.

TALK ABOUT

- What's your favorite team?
- What do you enjoy about our school teams?
- How is our church and school like a team?

PRAYER

Jesus, we don't deserve to be on the “team” of Your church. You have chosen us in our Baptism, and You keep us on Your team through Your Word. Bless us as we “play for” and serve You. Amen.

STAFF DEVOTION

Welcome, teammates. Lutheran churches and schools speak of “team ministry.” While it’s often part of the conversation and always a goal, effective team ministry is sometimes elusive. As team members, we often don’t play well together because we’d rather meet our own personal goals than the team’s goals. Rather than enjoying team ministry victories, we dwell on personal and ministry defeats.

Paul describes the church as a “body” in 1 Corinthians 12. Paul advises the church in Corinth, “You are the body of Christ and individually members of it” (v. 27). The passage might be paraphrased, “You are members of Christ’s team.” Modern-day professional team ownership is a complicated business. Team members must be highly skilled and deeply committed. Team members can be quickly released or traded.

Praise God we are not chosen to be on His team based on our skills. We have nothing to bring to our Owner. However, He purchased us for His team, paying with His own blood. He brings us to His team in our Baptism and promises that He will never release us from His commitment. Our response to our Owner is that of the First Article of the Apostles’ Creed, “For all this it is my duty to thank and praise, serve and obey Him.”

Our faithful service is our response. God calls us not only to the team of the church, but He calls us into specific ministry roles in the local church and school. God has chosen each of us to be part of His team in this time and place. Effective teams are joyful teams. May we have great joy as we live in His victory and share that victory with one another and the world.

TALK ABOUT

- What are the blessings of team ministry in your setting?
- What makes for an effective school ministry team?
- What gifts do you bring to the team?
- How could our work and play as a team be more effective and enjoyable?

“SENT TO SERVE” Team ACTIVITIES



- Celebrate a “school team” day with children and staff wearing school colors, uniforms, etc.
- Divide the student body into teams for a variety of fun and entertaining games.
- Display a “Those Who Serve Our Church and School” team bulletin board.
- Host a volunteer recognition event. Who are those who support the school “team”?
- Learn about those who serve in different areas of church and school ministry: school board members and other leadership groups, Altar Guild and other worship assistants. How are they part of the team, and why is their role important?
- Inform students about the administrative structure of the church and school. How does this team work together?
- Join other Lutheran schools in the area in team activities.
- Cheer on the school ministry! Visit congregation groups to share a school cheer or song.

PRAYER

Jesus, we are blessed through Your grace to be chosen to be on the “team” of Your church. We are then blessed to be part of the ministry team of this church and school. Bless our teamwork to Your honor and glory and the growth of Your kingdom. Amen.



THURSDAY: Serving in Home and Community

SCRIPTURE: Luke 12:35–40

TEXT: “Stay dressed for action and keep your lamps burning ... Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes” (Luke 12:35, 37).

OBJECT: different kinds of clothes for different kinds of activities

STUDENT DEVOTION

Do you wear a uniform to school? Does your school have a “dress code” as to what types of clothing can and cannot be worn to school?

How we dress is important. We wear different clothes to the beach than to go hiking. We may wear different clothes to play with friends than we do when we go to church. What kind of clothing would you wear to a wedding?

Today’s Bible reading describes the importance of the right clothing. Jesus told several stories about having the right clothes for the wedding. Today’s story emphasizes having the right clothes to welcome the master as he came home for the wedding.

Jesus was teaching that the servants should be ready to welcome Jesus, the Master, when He comes again on the Last Day: “You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.” The Good News is that God has given us the clothing of faith so that we are ready when He comes again. In our Baptism, He has dressed us with the robe of His righteousness. He has covered our sinful nature with the forgiveness He has given us by His sacrifice on the cross. Jesus will welcome us to His banquet.

As we wait for Jesus’ return, we are to be “dressed for action.” Whether we are wearing clothes for school, church, play, the beach or any other activity, we are always ready to serve Jesus by serving others.

TALK ABOUT

- What’s your favorite item or type of clothing?
- When were you dressed in Christ’s righteousness? (What’s the date of your Baptism?)
- Where, how and when can you be in “action” serving others?

PRAYER

Dear Jesus, thank You for the “clothing” of my Baptism that covers my sinful nature. Remind me that the type of clothing that covers my body doesn’t need to be new or popular, but that whatever I’m wearing, I’m clothed to serve You. Amen.

STAFF DEVOTION

What do you wear in your various school roles? Perhaps your answer depends upon your teaching/serving task. If you are working with the early childhood classrooms, you may dress differently than the middle school teacher. The gym teacher may dress differently than the art teacher. The school cook will dress differently than the school custodian. Perhaps you dress differently on “casual Friday” than you do on “chapel day.” What we wear depends upon roles and circumstances.

Whatever our role in the Lutheran school, Jesus invites us to “stay dressed for action.” Lutheran schools certainly are “action” places. However, Jesus is not talking about a school or other activity. He is describing our dress as we wait for His return.

We celebrate that by faith we are dressed for Jesus’ return. We have been clothed in our Baptism with the robe of Christ’s righteousness. We are ready for the Bridegroom who comes to welcome His Bride, the church. The garments of Christ’s righteousness are His gift to us. The time and circumstances of Christ’s return need not frighten us for He comes to welcome us into His kingdom.

While we wait for Him, we continue to be in “action” for Him. Obviously, teaching is an active ministry. The action goes beyond the steps down the hallway or through the student activity area. The action goes beyond directing the choir or coaching the team. The actions are also those that encourage the fellow teacher who is struggling personally or professionally. The actions take frightened little children by the hand and lead them to a safe place in the classroom or on the playground. The actions are the caring conversations with a parent concerned about their child or about their marriage.

God has dressed you with His gifts and His Spirit so that you might be active in your witness for Him in the routines of your school ministry.

TALK ABOUT

- With what gifts has God “dressed” you to serve the children and your fellow staff members?
- What are your contexts of service beyond your classroom or other school role?
- How do we “dress” parents and guardians for their role in the homes of our students?

“SENT TO SERVE” in Home and Community ACTIVITIES



- Recognize those who are “dressed” for community service: policemen, firemen, nurses, etc.
- Invite those who serve in official community roles (mayor, council, etc.) to visit your school or send them a note of appreciation on behalf of the church and school.
- Have a school “dressed for service” day. Have students guess one another’s service role.
- Recognize parents and church members who are serving the local community.
- Celebrate the vocations of those who serve in the home: mothers, fathers, grandparents, foster parents, etc.
- Review the “Table of Duties” in Luther’s Small Catechism. How do the “duties” describe our dress as Christians?
- How is your Lutheran school serving the community? Is there a food bank, homeless shelter or other agency you could visit and support? What new ministry connections could you begin?
- Give a servant towel or cloth to every child and encourage them to use it at home, school or in the community.

PRAYER

Jesus, You came dressed in Your human nature to go the way of the cross. Continue to “dress” us with the gifts of the Spirit so that we might be ready to serve in Your name. Amen.



FRIDAY: Sent to Serve in the World

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 72:8–14, 18–19

TEXT: “May all kings fall down before him, all nations serve him!” (Ps. 72:11).

OBJECT: “Who serves who” list. Put these in order of most important: servant, prince, territory leader, king.

STUDENT DEVOTION

Who was at the top of your list? Who was at the bottom? Whether its kingdoms, schools or other entities, there is typically a ranking of who is seen as most or least important.

As people looked at our servant Jesus, the rankings seemed out of order. God’s inspired author of Psalm 72 is himself a king: King Solomon. The Bible tells us that Solomon was the richest and wisest king that ever ruled. King Solomon shares a prophecy of Jesus, “May all kings fall down before him.”

We remember that “kings” from the East came to Bethlehem to bow down before a baby, Jesus. Kings worshiped Him and brought Him gifts.

In the psalm, Solomon leads us in prayer that “all kings fall down before him.” Sadly many “kings” and common people in Jesus’ time refused to bow down to Jesus because they didn’t understand that the little baby of Bethlehem went to the cross to die for their sins. They didn’t believe that what many knew only as a common man, and some thought to be a criminal, was really the Savior from sin. They didn’t believe that the Jesus who served others was Himself the King of kings. Many rulers in today’s world still don’t bow down to Jesus, the Savior and King. We are blessed to hear about Jesus every day, blessed to know Him as our Savior, and blessed to worship Him.

We have been blessed to learn about and worship Jesus, our Servant King, this National Lutheran Schools Week. We continue to pray that every king, prince, subject, servant and student in every land will bow down before Him.

TALK ABOUT

- How and when do we worship King Jesus?
- How is Jesus the King of His creation? How do we take care of His Kingdom?
- Are most countries Christian countries who see Jesus as their King and Savior? How can we share the message of His kingdom?

PRAYER

Jesus, may we always honor and serve You as our King. Thank You for making us part of Your kingdom forever by being the King who came to die on the cross. Amen.

STAFF DEVOTION

Who do you serve and why? We have a variety of lines of accountability and a variety of reasons for our service. We serve to get a salary and have the benefits we need to support ourselves and our family. We serve to fulfill our calls or contracts to our church and school. We serve so that children will gain the skills they need for the next level of education and for life. We serve for the enjoyment or fulfillment of duties. All of those responses are real and significant.

Blessed to serve in the context of our Lutheran school and church ministry, we serve to “fall down before him (our King)” and to “serve Him.”

King Solomon’s prayer of Psalm 72 is certainly a prayer that all nations know and serve the King of kings who came from his father David’s kingly line. The King came as the humblest of servants. That King hung on the cross under the title “King of the Jews.” That King died so that all of His subjects would have a kingdom much greater than any earthly kingdom. That King reigns eternally from His heavenly throne and promises us a forever place in His kingdom.

Who do you serve? “My King.” Why do you serve Him? So that all the kings of the earth and all kids and families of the kingdom might serve Him now and eternally. Most likely, none of your students will ever be a king, president or other world leader. They may be leaders of a company or a supervisor of others. They may be an athletic team leader or a project leader. They may be a parent leading in the home. Whatever their context of service, they will be blessed to serve their King.

Suddenly and significantly, your role in a Lutheran school is not common or insignificant. You serve a King!

TALK ABOUT

- What are the joys of serving for the King in your place of ministry?
- Most of the world does not know or serve the King. What’s the school’s role in sharing His kingdom?

“SENT TO SERVE” in the World ACTIVITIES



- Review the Palm Sunday event where Jesus, the King, came into Jerusalem. Review the Passion and Easter stories, remembering the journey and the victory of the King.
- Have a school royal celebration. Welcome to God’s kingdom at our Lutheran school! This is where His subjects serve the King.
- How do we share the message of our Savior King with our partners in LCMS international mission? Who are our partner Lutheran churches in other countries?
- Learn more about the mission response of the Lutheran Women’s Missionary League.
- What resources does Lutheran Hour Ministries have to reach out to families and communities so that Jesus is King of every home?
- How can we be responsible stewards of the earthly “kingdom” in which we live? How can students respond to environmental initiatives?
- Invite artistic expressions of Rev. 19:16, “King of kings and Lord of lords.”
- Review the mission projects of the school. How do our chapel offerings share the message of Jesus and His kingdom?

PRAYER

King Jesus, how blessed we are to be in Your Kingdom. How privileged we are to serve our King. Give us joy in that service and help us to invite others to Your kingdom. Amen.

Poster Sample



Bulletin Insert Samples



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