

November 2, 2021

## **Making a sad day a day of joyful celebration**

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**D**ivine Peace Lutheran Church in Milwaukee, Wis., was started as a mission of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod in 1957. The neighborhood on S. 76th Street was a new and growing community on the southwest outskirts of Milwaukee, an area at the time filled not with blocks of homes but with undeveloped fields and few streets.

After almost 65 years of bringing the gospel of Jesus Christ to its neighborhood, Divine Peace will hold its final worship service on Sunday, Nov. 7.


It's always a sad day when circumstances force a congregation to close its doors for the last time. But even at a time of sadness and loss, the members of Divine Peace have found a way to celebrate and to express their joy and thanks to a gracious God.

The congregation has decided that the proceeds from the sale of its building, along with its other assets, will be used to carry out gospel ministry even after Divine Peace has closed. It has designated that 80 percent of the congregation's assets will be given to the synod to support the planting of new home missions and that 20 percent of the assets will be given to Wisconsin Lutheran High School in Milwaukee to support the Christian education of young people. In doing so, the congregation is making a beautiful statement that even though Divine Peace will no longer exist, its ministry will continue through these gifts that will be used to proclaim the gospel through new congregations and through the Christian education of future generations.

The members of Divine Peace are bringing this gift to the synod both out of desire to further mission work in new locations but also out of thanks and appreciation for the synod that established Divine Peace as a home mission in 1957.

Because of its location in Milwaukee, the members of Divine Peace will have many different opportunities to find a new WELS church home in the area. Divine Peace is providing its members with assistance in finding and joining a congregation nearby.

Our prayers are with the members of Divine Peace. And we join in thanking them for this forward-looking gift of faith that will continue to support gospel ministry for generations to come.

Serving with you in Christ,  
WELS President Mark Schroeder 

## Five home mission congregations are enjoying new or renovated worship spaces

**B**eautiful Savior, Fayetteville, N.C.: On Aug. 29, Beautiful Savior dedicated its new worship space, which was built with the help of Builders For Christ. This congregation serves a large military population.

- **Illumine, Rock Hills, S.C.:** On Oct. 3, members of Illumine began worshiping in their “old” worship space and then caravanned to their new building to finish a special “Moving Day Worship Service.”
- **Risen Savior, Mansfield, Ohio:** After 15 months of renovation work, Risen Savior dedicated its new space on Oct. 10. In June, the congregation hosted a Praise and Proclaim outreach seminar, which led to 15 people knocking on 300 doors and making more than 50 gospel presentations. Since then, Risen Savior’s members have continued to reach out to their neighbors by canvassing local neighbors one Saturday each month.
- **Amazing Grace, South Beloit, Ill.:** Amazing Grace held a dedication service for its new building on Oct. 31. This congregation has a pumpkin patch on its church property and each year it offers community members the opportunity to pick a free pumpkin in exchange for donations for a local food pantry.
- **Shepherd of the Lakes, Linden, Mich.:** On Oct. 31, Shepherd of the Lakes dedicated its new church. Members began worshiping in the

new space in December 2020 but held off on a dedication service due to the pandemic and a pastoral vacancy. New seminary graduate Caleb Schaeve was assigned to serve Shepherd of the Lakes in May and was installed there in July.

“For those involved in building a church, a church dedication marks the end of a long process,” says Keith Free, administrator of WELS Home Missions. “And yet, it really is just another beginning for the mission church to continue its efforts to share the gospel of Jesus Christ. From its inception the members of the mission strive to be gospel proclaimers with a temporary worship location as their base. Now, blessed with a permanent facility, the people of God renew their efforts to go with the gospel into their community.”

WELS Church Extension Fund, Inc., helped these congregations along the way by providing financing through loans and grants for their ministry facilities. In fiscal year 2020–21, WELS Church Extension Fund approved \$15.4 million in new loans and \$1.98 million in new grants to congregations. In addition, it provided grants of \$1.06 million and \$.6 million to the Board for Home Missions. Visit [wels.net/cef](http://wels.net/cef) to learn more about WELS Church Extension Fund. ☪

## OWLS convention focuses on telling the next generation

**A**fter not being able to meet in person last year due to COVID-19 restrictions, the Organization of WELS Lutheran Seniors (OWLS) was thrilled to gather at Martin Luther College

(MLC) and the Best Western Hotel and Conference Center in New Ulm, Minn., on Oct. 19–22 for its annual convention.

The convention revolved around the theme “We will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord,” with particular emphasis on the 25th anniversary of the formation of Martin Luther College (1995–2020).

Early arrivals to the convention could choose between two informative tours. The first tour featured highlights of the MLC campus, including the Early Childhood Learning Center and the Chapel of the Christ. Participants could also view the construction progress of MLC’s new athletic facility, the Betty Kohn Fieldhouse. The second tour option highlighted historic places in New Ulm.

Daily worship, workshops, and the three keynote presentations at the convention focused on the convention theme of telling the next generation. Prof. Paul Koelpin presented lessons from the German Lutheran immigrant generation; Dr. Keith Wessel spoke about treasures old and new, featuring the new *Christian Worship* hymnal and accompanying resources; and Professor Em. James Pope led an informative session on how to utilize the Q&A section of [wels.net](http://wels.net).

The OWLS again used its offerings to support the WELS European Civilian chaplaincy, which serves military personnel and WELS civilians in Europe. This year, the OWLS presented Military Services with a check for \$53,300 for

work in Europe. Convention offerings and proceeds from the silent auction were directed for next year’s gift to the work of the chaplain in Europe as well.

One of the goals of the OWLS is to increase awareness of its ministry within local congregations and throughout WELS. Special Ministries Director Rev. Jim Behringer commented, “It was such a joy to be together with OWLS members in person again! The convention had a feeling of contentment and friendliness that probably was increased by having to postpone last year’s gathering. I encourage any congregation with a seniors group to investigate the OWLS program of senior ministry because it offers meaningful ways for seniors to serve and to gather.”

Long-time OWLS members welcomed a number of first-time attendees to the convention this year, people like Linda Klein from David’s Star, Jackson, Wis. She reflects: “My first convention was a wonderful experience—seeing old friends and making new ones, attending interesting workshops, and visiting MLC. I especially appreciated learning more about OWLS and its ministry. I’m really looking forward to next year’s convention.”

The 2022 OWLS convention for seniors will be held Oct. 11–13 at the Stoney Creek Hotel and Convention Center in Onalaska, Wis. The convention is open to all seniors in WELS and the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, regardless of OWLS membership.

Learn more about the OWLS at [wels.net/owls](http://wels.net/owls). ☪



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