

## Sacred, Holy Ground

*Then [God] said, "Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." He said further, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob."*  
—Exodus 3:5-6a

Spring arrived today! It's the first official day of Spring (March 20th) and it is a beautiful day!! The snow is melting, the sun is shining and it is a great day in Wiota! I even went for a short walk today and as I admired the beauty around me I wondered, "what is sacred?" Do we consider the land sacred? What about particular buildings or other objects?

The dictionary defines "sacred" as something devoted or dedicated to a deity (God) or for a religious purpose. Sacred places and objects are usually regarded with reverence.

So I wonder, is our church building, our place of worship, a sacred place? It's important to step back from time to time and really evaluate if what we say and believe is true is actually experienced in what we practice.

"Business" can easily creep into churches. I'm reminded of the gospel passage in which Jesus overturns the tables in the temple. We are careful to only have fundraisers that further the mission of Christ and our church, but it is a fine line and sometimes there are critical decisions that have to be made regarding what is allowed.

"Business" can also include those conversations we have with others members we're going to see. We might have the best of intentions when asking them to do something, but is this really why we gather? Sometimes presenting another member with a "to do list" or "something to think about" is a distraction from the primary reason they came—worship.

And what about our attitudes toward one another and how we treat each other? Hopefully our church is a place where all people feel welcome. Hopefully we are a church that puts an end to rumors, lies, gossip, "venting", and hateful speech. In Bible study yesterday, we read this passage from 1 Peter 3:8-11:

*Finally, all of you, have unity of spirit, sympathy, love for one another, a tender heart, and a humble mind. Do not repay evil for evil or abuse for abuse; but, on the contrary, repay with a blessing. It is for this that you were called—that you might inherit a blessing. For 'Those who desire life and desire to see good days, let them keep their tongues from evil and their lips from speaking deceit; let them turn away from evil and do good; let them seek peace and pursue it.*

Someone yesterday remarked, "if we did all these things, we'd be a saint." Exactly! That is why we gather together in this sacred, holy place: to worship God who loves and forgives us and who teaches us to treat each other in the same manner. May we say and do everything out of love and humility toward each other. As Christians, that is our calling. When we gather together in our house of worship, remember: the place on which we are standing is holy ground.

With every hope and prayer, I remain faithfully,  
Your brother in Christ,  
Pastor Luke

## Highlights from March Council Meeting

\*Two families have signed up for “simple giving” (automatic offering payments). This helps the congregation to pay its bills by spreading out and ensuring regular monthly giving from these members. Thanks to the two families who have signed up. Forms to register for Simply Giving are available in the church narthex.

\*Confirmation students are working with mentors during the Lenten Season. The mentor relationships are often a highlight for both the students and the mentors.

\*The church ski trip was a huge success. Both new and seasoned skiers thoroughly enjoyed the day on the slopes together.

\*The worship committee is busy planning Lent and Holy Week worship services.

\*Spring Cleanup is scheduled for April 12th. Please spend a few hours with us that day to help us beautify our properties.

### Palm Sunday Brunch!



Support the Wiota LYO and enjoy a delicious brunch too! Following worship on Palm Sunday, April 13th our youth are hosting a pancake brunch packed with lots of goodies! Be sure to bring friends and family and join us for this special occasion!

### Holy Week Worship

Palm Sunday, April 13th at 10:30am  
(followed by LYO brunch)

Maundy Thursday, April 17th at 7:30pm

Good Friday, April 18th at 7:30pm

Easter Vigil, April 19th at 7:30pm

Easter Sunday, April 20th at 7:00am (at East)

Easter Sunday, April 20th at 10:30am (at Wiota)



(Volunteers are needed for worship helpers at all of these special services! Consider being a part of this powerful experience!)

**In our prayers:** Karen Noble, Carol Broge, Shirley Johnson, Clare Pehl, Hazel Miller, and our homebound members.



**Also in our prayers:** Leona Reed, LuAnn Komprood, Dorothy Wicklund, Delbert Shager, Barb Dinges, Mark Reilly, David Gertsch, Jaden Goninen, Nick Saataff, Rudy Gebhardt, Jayne Kent, Judy Fernstaedt, Tom Garvey, and Martha Chandler.

### Sunday School Schedule

April 6th: Lazarus (John 11:1-45)

April 13th: Palm Sunday—Movie

Saturday, April 19th—No Sunday School; Easter Weekend

April 27th: Doubting Thomas (John 20:19-31)

May 4th: The Road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35)

May 11th: Mother’s Day (last day of Sunday School); Breakfast with family and sing in church.



Greetings from your council,

On Saturday morning, March 8<sup>th</sup>, the council had the pleasure of meeting with Bishop Mary Froiland. The meeting was called to discuss Wiota's noncompliance with the ELCA constitution and the course of reprimand that needed to be taken. The meeting ended up being much more than an issuing of punishment and I would like to take some time to explain in depth Wiota's relationship with our Synod.

Bishop Froiland began our conversation by acknowledging Wiota Lutheran Church as a wanted and necessary part of our South-Central Synod of Wisconsin. She is proud of our commitment both to the synod and to ourselves as we work through dealing with the issue at hand. She is supportive and respectful of the continued pastoral care that Pastor Luke continues to give our congregation. She believes the relationship between Wiota Lutheran Church and the ELCA must continue forward while working together toward resolution.

Part of working through our disagreement means following the regulations laid out for our congregation in the synod constitution. The punishment for our noncompliance can range from a letter of Censure and Admonition to removal from the ELCA. In this case, Bishop Froiland has decided that the punishment for this breach be a letter of censure and admonition. To be perfectly clear, the letter on the following page is our formal reprimand. Wiota Lutheran Church is not being removed from the ELCA. We are expected to move forward with our mission as a congregation while working together with the synod and Bishop Froiland as we continue to make decisions regarding our pastoral care.

We believe this meeting has provided a healing balm between our congregation and our synod. We as your council continue to strengthen our congregation's relationship with the synod. We ask that you continue to pray for our congregation, our lay leaders, and Pastor Luke as we trust the Lord's guidance and move forward.

Your Brothers and Sisters in Christ,  
Wiota Lutheran Church Council

### **Set a Goal to Tithe**

*"Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in my house, and thus put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts; see if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you an overflowing blessing."*  
—Malachi 3:10

With the current economic times it seems inconceivable to most of us to tithe (pay 10% of our income) to our church. There are some who follow this principle and we thank them. However, for many of us there are so many things to pay that seem to be more important – mortgage/rent, car payments, credit cards, cell phone bills... the list goes on.

If we look at the role of our church during our lifetimes, is it really less important? Our church welcomes, guides and comforts us when we are baptized, attend Sunday school, are confirmed, get married, grieve the loss of loved ones and when we ourselves face death. Is it therefore any less important than the other financial obligations we face throughout our lives?

Tithing seems unattainable, yet I believe each of us can set a goal to tithe for one month. By giving 10% of our paychecks to our church for one month, it is possible for all of us to follow the teachings of Jesus and tithe. Try it for one month and see how it feels.

Connie Redden, Treasurer

# April Birthdays



## February Treasurer's Report

- 1 Lisa Blumenthal
- 2 Troy Nethery
- 3 Becca Johnson
- 3 Nicole Schneider
- 5 Scarlett Therese Ames
- 6 C. "Brody" Nyffenegger
- 6 Diana Shager
- 7 Karen Noble
- 7 Karen Hauser
- 8 David Jorgenson
- 8 Mrs. Marie (Willie) Mason
- 8 Steven Norland
- 8 Kurtis Paulson
- 9 Eldon Johnson
- 11 Matt Jenson
- 11 Janelle Johnson
- 12 Bowen Wilson
- 12 Lukas Hendrickson
- 12 Doral Olsen
- 12 Alex Olson
- 15 Derek Larson
- 17 Nita Gilbertson
- 17 Dean Jorgenson
- 17 Jean Shager
- 20 Jeff Krebs
- 20 Arnold Lancaster
- 22 Don Shager
- 23 Chandler Johnson
- 24 Mabel Brenum
- 27 Wyatt Peterson
- 30 Troy Berget

<b>Balance 1/31/2013</b>			\$ 189.48
<b>Income:</b>			
02/02/2014	Sunday	Weekly Offerings	2,744.50
02/02/2014	Coffee Hour	Donations	2.00
02/02/2014		Craft for a Cause	570.00
02/09/2014	Sunday	Weekly Offerings	1,759.00
02/07/2014	Thrivent	Thrivent	127.00
02/16/2014	Sunday	Weekly Offerings	472.00
02/18/2014	Furnace	Transfer from Memorial Fund	3,116.41
02/18/2014	Furnace	Transfer from Wiota R&M	3,116.41
02/21/2014	Loan	Transfer from Memorial Fund	500.00
02/23/2014	Sunday	Weekly Offerings	1,487.00
02/23/2014	Coffee Hour	Donations	21.00
02/23/2014	Sunday	Donations	18.75
02/23/2014	Loan	Transfer from Memorial Fund	2,000.00
<b>Total Income</b>			\$ 15,934.07
<b>Expenses:</b>			
02/09/2014	Luke Smetters	Pastor Base Salary	1,582.67
02/09/2014	Luke Smetters	Pastor's FICA-Church Share	156.46
02/15/2014	Connie Bocklund	Custodian	308.22
02/15/2014	Brooke Ames	Office Secretary	323.22
02/15/2014	Church Mutual	Insurance - Umbrella	350.00
02/15/2014	Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative	Electricity East	22.00
02/15/2014	Regez Supply Co.	Cleaning Supplies	20.47
02/15/2014	Regez Supply Co.	Worship/Church Supplies	123.29
02/15/2014	Portico	Pastor's Pension & Insurance	2,128.68
02/18/2014	US Postal Service	Postage/Copier/Office Supplies	200.00
02/18/2014	Green County Child Advocacy	Craft for a Cause	1,000.00
02/18/2014	US Postal Service	Postage/Copier/Office Supplies	20.00
02/21/2014	Fritz's Burner Service, Inc.	Capital Improvements Wiota	6,232.82
02/23/2014	Connie Bocklund - Expenses	Cleaning Supplies	18.75
02/23/2014	Luke Smetters	Pastor Base Salary	1,582.67
02/23/2014	Luke Smetters	Pastor's FICA-Church Share	156.46
02/28/2014	Alliant Energy	Electricity Wiota	246.24
02/28/2014	Alliant Energy	Fuel Wiota	372.13
02/28/2014	Alliant Energy	Electricity Parsonage	113.31
02/28/2014	Alliant Energy	Fuel Parsonage	250.61
02/28/2014	CenturyLink	Telephone Wiota	40.83
02/28/2014	CenturyLink	Telephone & Internet Parsonage	109.58
02/28/2014	Church Mutual	Insurance - Com'l Ppty	545.30
02/28/2014	Augsburg Fortress	Worship/Church Supplies	68.40
02/28/2014	US Postal Service	Postage/Copier/Office Supplies	49.00
<b>Total Expenses</b>			\$ 16,021.11
<b>Balance 2/28/2014</b>			\$ (87.04)
<b>Bills unpaid at month end:</b>			
	South Central Synod of WI	Benevolence - October thru Febru	2,500.00
	Memorial Fund	Borrowed from Memorial Fund	9,500.00
			<u>\$ 12,000.00</u>
<b>Account Balances:</b>			
	Church Usage	Regular Savings	\$ 650.50
	East Repair & Maintenance	Regular Savings	\$ 6,510.34
	Memorial	Regular Savings	\$ 2,381.37
	Music & Education	Regular Savings	\$ 102.22
	Parsonage	Regular Savings	\$ 1,155.35
	Wiota Repair & Maintenance	Regular Savings	\$ 3,012.07



## News from the Bold Café Gals

### Vendors Wanted:

If you, or someone you know has a side business, their own crafts that they sell or even wants to have a garage sale without the fuss of planning, this is the event for you!

What: Wiota Lutheran Church Flea Market/Garage Sale

Where: Church parking lot (6682 Hwy 78 N. in Wiota)

When: Saturday, May 10, 7am-4pm

Parking stalls (approx. 9 ft. x 12 ft.) will be \$5 each for the day



For more information or to reserve your space, contact Sue Buetzer at 608-966-3362.

Donations welcome!

If you're doing some spring cleaning and have items you would like to donate, feel free to drop them off after Easter at the church (in the Sunday School room next the library). The Café Gals will be having a booth to sell any donated items they receive.

A concession stand will also be available throughout the day!

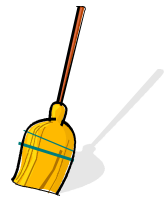
**The next Bold Café Gals meeting is Thursday, April 10th at 6:30pm.**

### Memorials and Donations:

- A donation of \$70 to the Wiota LYO.
- A donation of \$20 for receiving the newsletter.

### Wiota Spring Clean Up!

**April 12th, 2014 starting at 9:00am!**



### April Worship Assistants

**April 6th:** Greeters: The Ames Family; Ushers: Everett Thoreson & Alice Wang;  
Bread: Janeen Trame; Elements: Audrey Carpenter; Worship Asst.: Brooke Ames

**April 13th:** Greeters: Sandy Potter & Ramona Komprood; Ushers: J. Ruegsegger & S. Carrington;  
Elements: Mary Lou Hansen; Worship Asst: Sue Buetzer

**April 20th:** Worship helpers are needed for both Easter services.  
(Easter)

**April 27th:** Greeters: Ancil Norland & Don Seffrood; Ushers: Curt & Becky Wang;  
Elements: Marne Wilson; Worship Assistant: Sue Buetzer



# APRIL WELCA

April 2<sup>nd</sup> 9:00am Gather Bible Study  
10:15am Deborah circle serves  
10:30am WELCA business meeting

April 2<sup>nd</sup> Deborah Circle serves Lent refreshments

April 9<sup>th</sup> Abigail Circle serves Lent refreshments

April 15<sup>th</sup> 9:00am Quilting with potluck

April 26<sup>th</sup> Monroe Conference Spring Gathering at Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Brodhead.

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## March Minute Highlights

*Recorded by Marne Wilson*

We approved sending a quilt, six prayer shawls and \$100.00 for Katie’s Fund in addition to the already approved \$300.00 cash donation to Churchwide for the Triennial Gathering in July.

We were given an update on the Bakeless Bake Sale to support the Malaria Campaign. The money raised will be shared between New Guinea in honor of Nancy Anderson and Rodney Nordby and Africa.

We approved the purchase of three copies of Jim Carrey’s book Roland Rolls in honor of Rachel’s Day, a Churchwide supported event, to be given to each of the three Elementary Schools in our area.

Full minutes are posted on the bulletin board in the Fellowship Hall.

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The “LUAU” Salad Luncheon is coming soon



“My child, do not let these escape from your sight: keep sound wisdom and prudence.”

**Proverbs 3:21**

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## Mission: Stewardship

*Leona Meier and Mavis Shager*

WOW – THANK YOU for all the materials that have been donated to make quilts. This has been overwhelming!!!

We would like to see some new faces at our quilting days. Come and go as you need, but come and join the fellowship.

The ‘coupons for education’ box is in the Narthex, they are given to our area schools later in the year.

Ancil Norland will collect your cancelled postage stamps anytime. The Sons of Norway send them on to Norway.

Four more quilts will be given to Family Advocates this month.

Reminder to take along your LWR guide when you go ‘garage sale hunting’ this Spring. We need items for ‘Baby Care Kits’ 6-24 months.

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## UPCOMING MAY EVENTS

May 3<sup>rd</sup> ‘Luau’ Salad Luncheon starting at 10:30 a.m. ‘Enjoy the beauty of God’s world’. Cost \$7.00.

May 7<sup>th</sup> 9:00am Gather Bible Study  
10:00am Miriam Circle serves  
10:30am WELCA business meeting

May 20<sup>th</sup> 9:00am Quilting with potluck

May 21<sup>st</sup>/22<sup>nd</sup> Gather Bible Study training at Wartburg Seminary, Dubuque

**Easter Flower Order Forms—Orders are due April 6th!**

- 1.) Please indicate the number you would like of each plant.
- 2.) Circle if the plant is being given in either honor of (living) or in memory (deceased).
- 3.) List the name of the person/family member being honored/memorialized.
- 4.) Indicate who is donating (your name or your family's name)
- 5.) Total the cost and include a check with your order form.

\_\_\_ Easter Lily (\$17) in memory of/in honor of \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Tulip(s) (\$17) in memory of/in honor of \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Kalanchoe(s) (\$15) in memory of/in honor of \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Hyacinth(s) (\$15) in memory of /in honor of \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_

I have enclosed my check of \_\_\_\_\_ (total).

To My Church Family,

As many of you know, I'm fairly new to the church. I was at a point in my life where I felt lost and was seeking direction along with purpose. Dave Peterson, whom I considered a good friend, suggested I attend church; which is how I came to be a member of this WONDERFUL church. Part of my spiritual growth has been reading daily devotions from different pastors and authors. Recently, one made me think about Pastor Luke and our church. The daily devotional stated that:

- 1.) A pastor's vocation is a weighty one.
- 2.) The devil particularly preys on pastors.
- 3.) Pastors aren't perfect and will mess up which is why they need our prayers.
- 4.) A pastor is sure to disappoint us BUT the Lord has placed him/her in our lives for our benefit, our protection, and our good.

Sometimes I don't understand why things happen even though I know, "it's God's plan." I have learned since attending church that having faith means trusting God. My understanding of how Bishop Mary's letter is that Pastor Luke along with the church have been reprimanded and it is now time to move forward. I guess what I am trying to say is that even though the congregation didn't agree as a whole, we are still a church family. Let us continue to stay a strong church as we grow spiritually and hopefully membership wise.

Glad to be a Wiota Church member,  
Mia Holverson

**Upcoming Events:**

- May 3 Luau Luncheon (registration begins at 10:30am)
- May 4 LYO Potted Flower Sales
- May 10 Flea Market/Garage Sale in Church parking lot
- May 11 Mother's Day  
Last Day of Sunday School  
Senior Recognition Day  
LYO Potted Flower Sales
- May 17 Habitat for Humanity Run/Walk/Bike in New Glarus
- May 18 Syttende Mai service at East  
Wiota EMS Pancake Breakfast
- May 20 Women's Sewing Day



## **ELCA Stories of Faith in Action: Fighting hunger through music**

By Carrie Gubsch

Musician Jonathan Rundman is a child of the 1980s. “I was really inspired by my youth in the ’80s when I’d watch bands like U2, Peter Gabriel, John Mellencamp and Sting on MTV. Artists whom I really loved were dedicating their music to causes they believed in,” said Jonathan. “There was a movement going on where rock musicians were performing for Live Aid, Amnesty International and Farm Aid. They raised tons of awareness and tons of money for those causes. I thought that was so cool.”

So when Jonathan, an ELCA member, singer, song writer and musician based in the Twin Cities found out about a way he could marry his love of music with his passion for ELCA World Hunger, he jumped at the opportunity. “It’s easy to do if you’re a famous rock star because you have lots of people knocking on your door asking for help or asking for money, but I’m an independent artist and have been for 20 years. I’m not a celebrity!” Online technology is helping Jonathan is crowdfunding his next album, “Look Up,” through the website pledgemusic.com, which allows musicians to raise money to record albums and assign a portion of their profits to a charity of their choice.

“I thought this would be the perfect chance for me to support ELCA World Hunger and to give some online traffic and visibility to the ELCA and the ELCA World Hunger program,” said Jonathan. Once Jonathan reaches his funding goal, 10 percent of the proceeds from the album will go to ELCA World Hunger. Putting his music and his faith life together has been an important, but difficult, goal for Jonathan. “I’ve always struggled to find a way to integrate my vocation as a touring musician with a way to give back and to be a good steward of my income. I wanted to find a platform that was clear and public, yet also connected with my theological values,” said Jonathan. “Crowdfunding my new album via PledgeMusic is allowing this to happen for the first time in my career.” Album returns to rock Jonathan’s musical influences have moved him to write everything from liturgy and hymns to Nordic folk music that touches on his Finnish-American heritage. “Look Up” brings Jonathan back to the kind of music he started playing as a teen and young adult rock musician.

“I love playing liturgical music and folk music, but it’s been a lot of fun to return to rock and roll. I’m shifting gears and getting back to the music I played in my earliest days.” Even though “Look Up” is a rock album, Jonathan’s Lutheran roots and theology still show up in his lyrics. The song “Helicopters of Love” focuses on the Third Article of the Apostles’ Creed from Martin Luther’s Small Catechism. “[‘Helicopters of Love’] is sort of the quirky language I’m using for the need to be rescued and the need for grace,” explained Jonathan. A new way to reach people Ryan Cumming, program director for Hunger Education, said this is the first time a person has approached ELCA World Hunger with a project like this.

“It is always wonderful to hear about the passion that people have for tackling problems around the world.” Ryan said. “Clearly he is someone who is very committed to sharing his talent in the church and to using music to enliven and enrich his faith and the faith of those around him.” Beyond financial funding, the campaign gives the ELCA and ELCA World Hunger valuable exposure to a new group of people online who might not be aware of the work the church is doing. “The ELCA does amazing things related to hunger and poverty ministries,” Ryan said. “To be able to share that in new ways with new audiences is a gift.”