



## March 21, 2024 - "The DW Digest" Newsletter

### Why are you crying?

Picture the scene: a woman stands over a grave, weeping. A man approaches her and asks, "Why are you crying?" Do you think that man's question is cruel because she's obviously dealing with the loss of a loved one? Or do you perceive the stranger is trying to be helpful, giving the woman an outlet to talk through her grief? Actually, the intent of the man's question was to help her see that there was no reason to be sad. Her dear friend had kept his promise. He was alive.

If you haven't figured it out yet, the scene I asked you to imagine was Mary Magdalene crying at Jesus' tomb because his body was missing. We read in John 20:14-17:

*<sup>14</sup> At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus. <sup>15</sup> "Woman," he said, "why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?" Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him." <sup>16</sup> Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means Teacher). <sup>17</sup> Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet returned to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"*

Yes, there was no reason for Mary to cry. Jesus rose from the dead just like he said he would. All sin was paid for in full. Death was defeated. God was reconciled with humanity.

But Jesus told Mary not to hold on to him yet. He needed to return to his Father so he could rule at his side for the benefit of his people. Yes, Mary would have to let go of Jesus, but she could rest assured that her goodbye wouldn't be permanent. She would see Jesus again and be with him forever when He returned.

Like Mary, we are filled with tears when a loved one dies. But Jesus offers us a most comforting hope regarding those who die in the LORD: our loved ones are not dead but asleep. Their souls live on with God in heaven while their bodies rest in the grave – all because Jesus did what he said he would do! He paid for the world's sins on His cross so that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have everlasting life. Our salvation is as sure as Christ's resurrection.

Not only that, but Jesus gives us this promise: “Because I live, you also will live.” (John 14:19). In other words, Jesus will raise believers from the grave on the last day, as St. Paul promises in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18:

*<sup>13</sup> Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. <sup>14</sup> We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him.*

*<sup>15</sup> According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. <sup>16</sup> For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.*

*<sup>17</sup> After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. <sup>18</sup>*

*Therefore encourage each other with these words.*

“Why are you crying?” There are a multitude of reasons to be sad at the passing of a Christian relative or friend, but we should never be without hope. We will see them again on the Last Day – alive and glorified! Christ's resurrection guarantees it!

### **Voters' Meeting on Sunday, March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

Our next quarterly voter's meeting is scheduled for after next Sunday's worship/fellowship (at about noon). Physical attendance is highly encouraged. Please let me (pastor) know before the meeting if you need to attend via Google Meet so I can set it up (which I will do only if requested.)

### **Holy Week Schedule at Divine Word**

#### ***March 24***

10:30 AM - Palm Sunday Service

#### ***March 28***

7:00 PM - Maundy Thursday Service with Holy Communion

#### ***March 29***

10:30 AM – Good Friday Service (no Communion)

#### ***March 31***

8:00 AM – Easter Sunrise Service with Holy Communion

9:00 AM – Easter Breakfast

10:30 AM – Easter Late Service (no Communion)

### **Easter Schedule at Our Shepherd in Poltimore**

#### ***March 31***

3:00 PM – Easter Service with Holy Communion

### **Sunday Bible Classes**

We finished our study looking at God's gracious acts in the lives of Elijah and Elisha. We are now studying the Gospel of John, and it's never too late to join.

## **In-person Worship Attendance**

*December* – An average of 39 for worship and 30 for communion

*January* - An average of 40 for worship and 37 for communion

*February* – An average of 44 for Sunday worship and 39 for communion

An average of 18 for Midweek Worship

## **Friday Fellowship**

After a little break for Lent, we plan to restart our Friday Fellowship in April. Therefore, we cordially invite you to join us for supper and Bible Study on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Fridays of the month at Divine Word at 6 p.m. We are studying various statements Jesus made during his ministry and their meaning for us. For example, why did he compare himself to the temple? What did he mean when he said you can't sew new cloth on an old garment, etc.

## **Long Range Planning Seminar**

Circuit Pastor Caleb Schultz will hold a joint Long Range Planning Seminar with Abiding Word and Divine Word on Saturday, May 4. He hopes to provide more information after Easter. Please stay tuned to the after-service announcements and keep the date free if you are interested in attending.

## **WELS International Youth Rally**

The 2024 WELS International Youth Rally is planned for June 25-28 at Colorado State University, Fort Collins, Colorado. Youths from Divine Word are planning to attend this Rally and are asking for your help to offset the Rally's registration and transportation costs. They are hoping to set up various fundraisers between now and the rally. Their first fundraiser will be at the Easter breakfast.

## **Daily Prayers**

I continue sending out daily devotions, links to other devotional sites (included in Monday's messages), Bible classes, Communion registration reminders, and announcements.

If you or someone you know is not receiving the daily prayers and would like them, please let me know their email address, and I will add them to our email list.

*Note:* Please let me know before unsubscribing if you do not wish to receive the Daily Prayer via email. The 'Unsubscribe' feature at the bottom of the daily email would remove your name from all congregational emails, including urgent ones.

## **Evangelism Notes**

*By: Jordan Alves*

The Lenten Study Challenge is entering its final week. The next Evangelism meeting will be on April 14 to discuss our plans for the summer.

## **Trustee Notes**

*By: Jeremy Doherty*

- We have approached Bayview Windows to set an install date for the last two sanctuary windows.
- We have received news from the Federal government (Employment and Social Development Canada) that we were approved for a 2022 grant to address accessibility on our property; the grant is \$7,684. We were initially told we were not selected because the selection committee had run out of funds for the grant. I was now informed that the Minister added additional money last year, allowing the committee to revisit the list of applicants. The proposal we submitted was to rebuild the walkway/ramp on the south side of the church. There is still some paperwork to file, but this process is underway; we will have two years to complete the work. This grant does not diminish the generous donation that Doulos Construction has committed, and it should allow us to do more. Once we confirm that the application is final and the money is received, we will discuss further with Doulos how best to handle this blessing.
- After a recent windstorm, a portion of the fence that separates us from the Starbucks drive-thru blew over (6 panels). After alerting the property management team next door, they repaired/replaced the fence posts.
- We have begun to assess critical infrastructure to map out potential life cycle requirements; this will continue throughout the year to plan out major projects in the future.
- A thank-you to our cleaning teams, Board members and the many other individuals who chip in around the church to maintain our building/property. Many of you step in to assist with items large and small, and it takes a team to ensure our property is beautiful and functional; it is greatly appreciated.

## **Youth Education Report**

*By: Paul Reepschlager*

- Our congregation continues to support a small but faithful group of 5 youth in our weekly Sunday School program. At Christmas, members of our Sunday school participated in our Divine Word float at the Barrhaven Christmas parade and assisted in our Christmas Eve Worship service.
- Coming up soon is the WELS International Youth Rally "From the Mountain Tops," to be held June 25-28 at Colorado State University, Fort Collins, Colorado. The registration cost will be \$430 USD + airfare. Registration is open until May 28th. We hope to have four youths attend this year. Please get in touch with Paul Reepschlager or Pastor Sullivan if you wish more information.
- As the youth need to raise funds to help them on their journey to Colorado, they will be conducting fundraisers over the upcoming months. Please help support them as you can at these events or through special donations to "Youth" in your offerings.

## **Elders' Notes**

*By: Jeremy Doherty*

- After a lengthy delay, we are ordering the new hymnals. We appreciate everyone's patience as we navigate this transition.
- We are organizing a long-range planning session led by Circuit Pastor Caleb Schultz between mid-April and mid-May. This session will be held as a joint exercise with Abiding Word. Originally introduced at WELS-Canada this past year, this session will assist congregations with actionable plans to strengthen their organizations over the next 3-5 years.

## **Updates from the Board of Stewardship and Treasurer.**

*By: Jim Neubauer*

### I. E-Transfer Process

We are continuing to use the e-transfer process in 2024. There are 16 members using it regularly. If you wish to contribute monthly versus weekly to minimize the number of transactions, that would be totally acceptable. Please don't hesitate to email me: [jim.neubauer@sympatico.ca](mailto:jim.neubauer@sympatico.ca) or call 613-258-6367 if you have questions. The e-transfer email is [divinewordtransfer@gmail.com](mailto:divinewordtransfer@gmail.com)

### II. Regular Offerings and Budgets

**Regular Offerings:** Please find below the financial summary as of March 10, 2024, of all regular offerings collected to date being applied toward our Current Church Operating budget requirement of \$134,630 for 2024, increased from \$131,250 for 2023.

**As of March 10, 2024**  
**Offerings Received - \$24,011**  
**Operating Budget - \$25,305**

After ten weeks, we are approximately \$1300 behind the budget projection. Now, given that this included the March 3rd and 10th offerings – which are traditionally higher with several members providing monthly offerings- the shortfall is likely understated. So likely, we are closer to about \$10,000 of a shortfall on an annual basis – which is what we had anticipated could be covered by interest from our investments.

So overall, it is an ok (pretty good) start to the year. Clearly, we know that during the middle part of the year (vacations), we are lower.

Please continue to provide your offerings – whether in person or via e-transfers- and let's see if we can be ahead of target by midyear.

As always, if you have any questions – don't hesitate to contact me.

## **Thank you**

I want to thank all the volunteers quietly working in the background at church by doing things like helping with the Social Media, setting up the Altar, watching over our finances and member offerings, keeping on top of administrative paperwork, teaching our children, providing dinners and snacks, making necessary facility repairs, taking care of the property, beautifying the sanctuary, helping me organize for services, watching over the finances, keeping the property in order, giving fellow members an encouraging note or call, and upholding DW's ministry in prayer. Know that your work is not in vain. I thank God for all of you and all that you do.

## **Are You Struggling?**

Are you or someone you know struggling spiritually? If so, do not hesitate to contact me (Pastor). *Our conversation will be kept confidential.*

## **Pastor Sullivan's Contact Information**

**Home address:** 81 Upminster Way, Ottawa, ON, K2J5G2

**Email:** [pastor@divinewordottawa.ca](mailto:pastor@divinewordottawa.ca)

**Primary (Mobile) Phone Number:** (613) 255-2317

**Home "Internet" Phone:** (512) 887-8982

***Feel free to use my mobile phone number as the primary way of contacting me.*** If you see "Texas Caller" or a number with a "512" area code on your Caller ID, it is probably me calling from my home Internet number. Do not be afraid to answer the phone.

May the LORD continue to bless you.

In Christian love,

Pastor Michael Sullivan