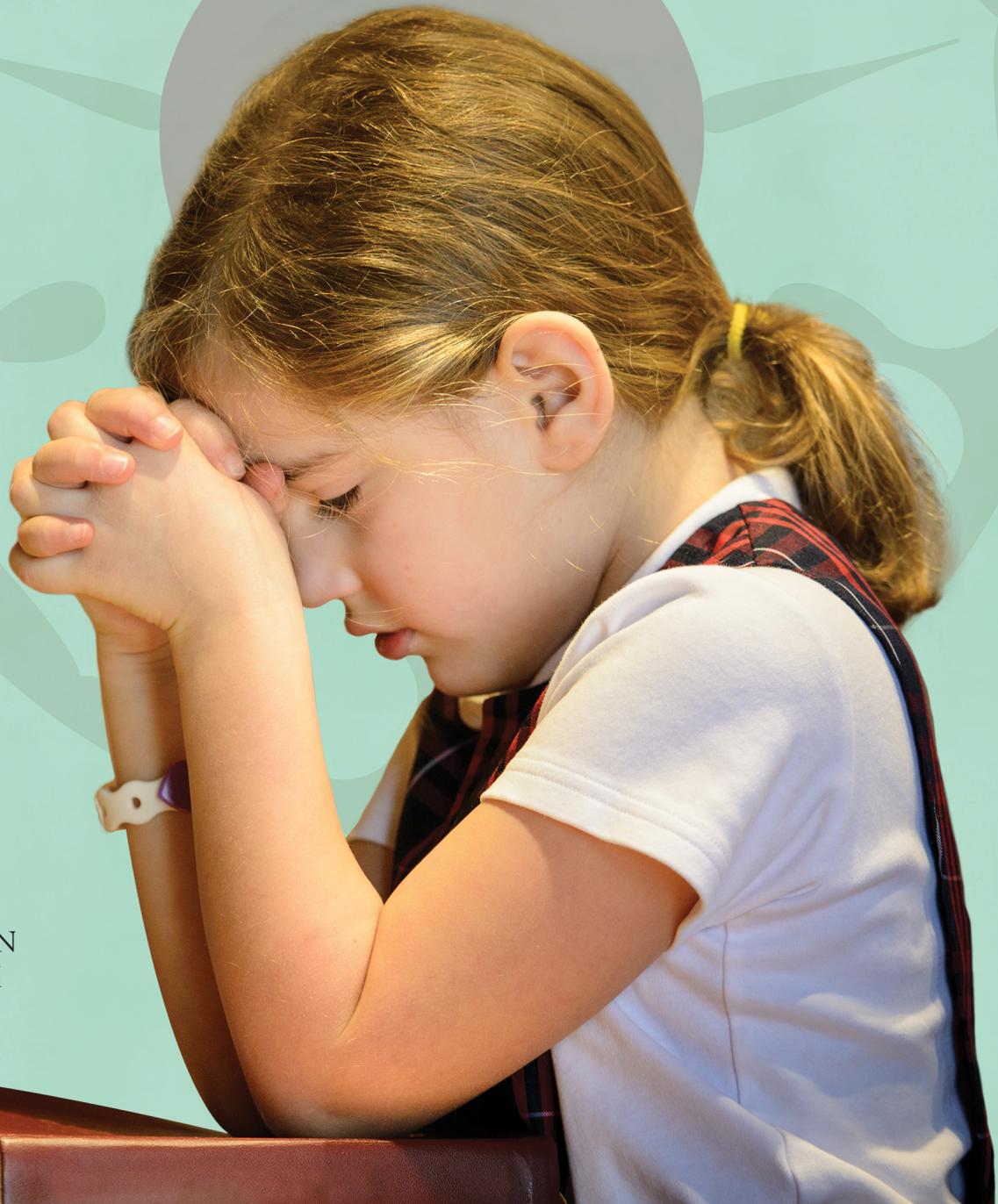


NATIONAL LUTHERAN SCHOOLS WEEK 2018

# IT'S STILL ALL ABOUT JESUS



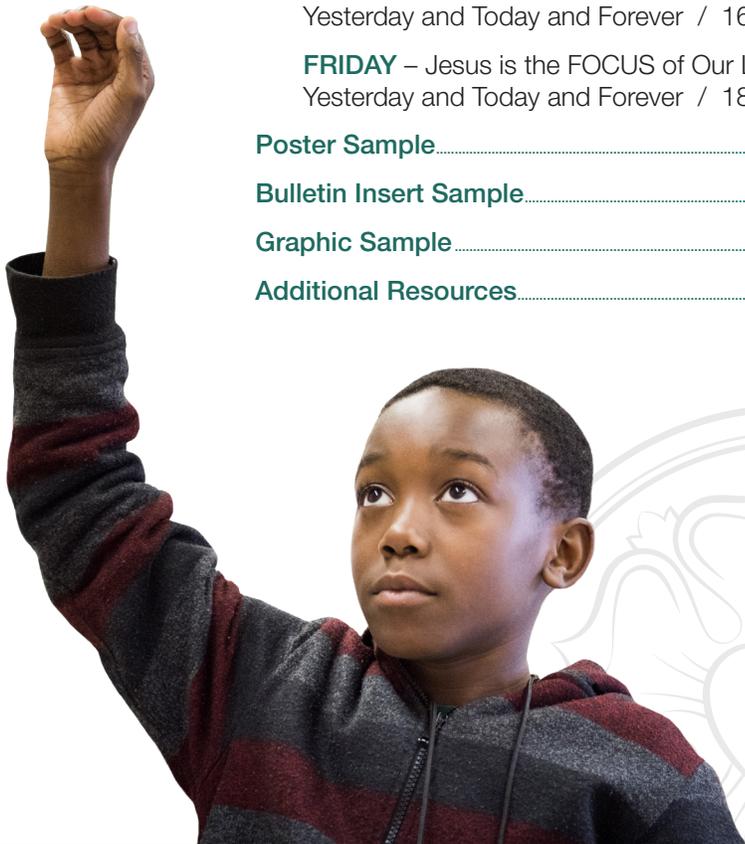
  
THE  
LUTHERAN  
CHURCH  
MISSOURI  
SYNOD

*"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever."*

HEB. 13:8 ESV

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## Welcome Letter

National Lutheran Schools Week affords us the opportunity to join with more than 2,000 schools in giving thanks and praise to the great God we serve. We are grateful for the challenge that we have been given to train and equip the children who attend our schools. During this annual event, congregations and schools are provided with an opportunity to rejoice together in the partnership that we have in sharing God's grace and mercy as we provide another year of spiritual training and educational preparation to the next generation of faithful Christian servants.

This year's theme, "It's *Still* All About Jesus," is based on Heb. 13:8: "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever." It provides a fitting purpose for our celebration. We worship the same Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, as our ancestors did when they came to America and founded the first Lutheran schools in Perry County, Mo., in 1847.

As we celebrate, it is important to review the context of the theme verse:

*Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith. **Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.** Do not be led away by diverse and strange teachings, for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, which have not benefited those devoted to them. (Heb. 13:7-9, emphasis added)*

Lutheran teachers are role models for their students. This is a great and awesome responsibility. Teachers stand in the same sinful condition as their students, in need of a Savior. Through their actions, teachers can demonstrate the joy of forgiveness, grace and mercy that is afforded to us by our Lord and Savior. Apart from parents, there is no more important role model for students than a joyful, faith-filled, forgiven Lutheran teacher.

We can all celebrate the fact that our schools will remain faithful to the teachings and confessions of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. We will not be led away by the diverse and strange teachings being imparted in our world today. Our God is faithful, and we will remain faithful to Him. We stand fast in the knowledge that our Lord and Savior is the same yesterday and today and forever. That's the reason for our celebration!

*Terry Schmidt*

DIRECTOR, LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY  
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod



# Presidential Proclamation

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## 2018 National Lutheran Schools Week

*Whereas*, God in His Word comforts us in the knowledge that His Son “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever” (HEB. 13:8); and

*Whereas*, That same Jesus Christ is at the heart and core of each Lutheran school’s mission and work, setting them apart from every other curriculum and model available in education; and

*Whereas*, Lutheran schools consistently produce articulate, thinking and speaking academics and theologians who are grounded in an understanding of and faith in the One who gives the gifts of math and science, language and history, sports and art; and

*Whereas*, Discovery and inquisitiveness, curiosity and revelation, high standards and academic excellence are a key mission priority for the Synod regarding Lutheran education, both as they pertain to Christ and to the world His Father created; and

*Whereas*, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is celebrating the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in which knowledge and understanding of Jesus and His gifts was offered freely and plainly to all, just as it remains today in Lutheran schools; and

*Whereas*, Students and parents, principals and teachers, coaches and donors all have opportunity to bear witness to Christ by reminding those on the field and in the classroom that “It’s *Still* All About Jesus;” therefore be it

*Resolved*, That January 21–27, 2018 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 School Ministry – Only and Always About Jesus

National Lutheran Schools Week (NLSW) is a significant event in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and in specific church and school settings. The specifics of the observance vary with the local history and setting. For some, it is an opportunity to promote the Lutheran school in the community and provide an invitation to others to experience the blessings of a Lutheran school. For others, NLSW provides celebration and fellowship opportunities among students and families. Some schools use NLSW as a way to strengthen the ministry partnership between church and school, and in some cases between the Lutheran schools serving a geographic area.

Whatever the NLSW expression or experience, “It’s *Still* all about Jesus.” While everything in Lutheran schools is always about Jesus, this theme clarifies for students, parents, staff, supporters and everyone connected with the school that Jesus is taught, worshipped and lived in the Lutheran school.

The “yesterday and today and forever” phrase of Hebrews 13:8 encourages a historical reflection not only of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, but also a celebration of the “yesterday” of the school. “Today” celebrates God’s purposes and promises in the present. The devotions and worship suggestions of this resource bring Jesus into the context of today. The word “forever” not only celebrates the eternal perspective of the message of the Lutheran school, but encourages planning for the future of sharing Jesus in the specific context of the Lutheran school ministry.

While a theme is suggested for each day, the themes can certainly be adjusted to fit the local setting. Each school is encouraged to explore the themes of Message, Truth, Mission, Heart and Focus in ways applicable to the size and setting of the school.

National Lutheran Schools Week will be successful in your setting and among the schools of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod if every individual connected with a Lutheran school responds to the question, “What was National Lutheran Schools Week about this year?” with the answer “It was all about Jesus!”



## Theme Hymn

### “Yesterday, Today, Forever”

BY DR. JEFFREY E. BURKART

Based on Heb. 13:8 “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.”

1. Yesterday, today, forever,  
Our Lord Jesus is the same.  
He, the Alpha and Omega,  
Christ, the Lamb of God, His name;  
Who was there in the beginning  
And will be there at the end,  
The Almighty One, our friend,  
There, with all the saints and angels,  
We shall stand before His throne  
Where unending joy is known.

*Heb. 3:8; Rev. 22:13; John 1:29; Rev. 7:9-17*

2. Yesterday in Beth’em’s manger  
Jesus made His earthly bed;  
Giving up His heav’nly mansion  
To become our Living Bread.  
With His blood He paid our ransom;  
Died and rose that we might be  
Freed from Satan’s tyranny  
To inherit life eternal;  
Thus, our praises we employ,  
Bathed in endless grace and joy.

*Luke 2:1-20; Phil. 2:1-8; John 6:22-51; Gal. 3:15*

3. Here on earth today we wander  
Knowing not what may betide.  
Even so our Savior’s near us,  
Never changing, by our side.  
Though our pilgrim path’s uncertain,  
We remain in His embrace  
As we run this earthly race.  
Therefore, trust in Jesus solely,  
In His grace now rest secure  
Joyful in God’s promise sure.

*1 Peter 2:25; Heb. 12:1-3*

4. Christ will stay with us forever;  
With Him we shall e’er remain.  
When our time on earth is over  
He will call us by our name;  
For our Savior will remember  
How in Him we were baptized.  
He will say to us, “Arise!  
Come, partake of God’s own promise  
That was made so long ago,  
And My joy forever know.”

*John 10:3; Rom. 6:1-10; Luke 7:11-17;  
Luke 8:41-42, 49-56; John 11:17-44*

△ *All stand in honor of the Trinity.*

5. Glory be to God the Father,  
Author of all life and light;  
Honor bring to Christ the Savior  
Who has set all things aright.  
Praise sing to the Holy Spirit  
For the gift of faithfulness.  
To the Three in One address  
All our thanks and adoration  
Till that joyous day when we  
Dwell in God’s infinity.

*Genesis 1; Isaiah 61; Rom. 15:13; Ps. 23:6*

“Yesterday, Today, Forever”

Text: Copyright © 2017 by Jeffrey E. Burkart. All rights reserved.

Tune: Georg G. Boltze, 18th century.

LASSET UNS MIT JESU ZIEHEN

Music: Public domain

Meter: 87 87 877 877

“Yesterday, Today, Forever” is sung to the tune of “Let Us Ever Walk with Jesus,” which can be found in the following hymnals:  
*Lutheran Service Book (LSB)* 685, *Lutheran Worship (LW)* 381  
and *The Lutheran Hymnal (TLH)* 409



# *It's Still All About Jesus: Yesterday and Today and Forever*

## Sunday or Celebration Service

### TEXTS

OLD TESTAMENT / Ps. 90:1–14

EPISTLE / Heb. 13:8–15

GOSPEL / Matt. 16:13–19

### HYMNS

LSB 536 / “One Thing’s Needful”

LSB 537 / “Beautiful Savior”

LSB 900 / “Jesus! Name of Wondrous Love”

*The hymns can be used within one of the Lutheran Service Book liturgies or other liturgies familiar to the congregation.*



### MESSAGE:

## “It’s All About the Same Jesus”

### MESSAGE TEXT:

#### Heb. 13:8

Virginia, a “grandmother” figure for many children in the neighborhood, died unexpectedly. Saddened by the death of this special friend from her childhood, the teenager observed, “I wish things could stay the same as when I was little.” Don’t we all wish that things could stay the same as when we were little, when we were first married, when we were in high school, when we graduated from college, when our spouse was alive or when ... ? Don’t we sometimes wish things could stay the same in our school, church, neighborhood, family or job? Obviously, many things don’t stay the same. Today we find life stability and eternal security in the proclamation, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever” (HEB. 13:8).

While all of Scripture directs us to Jesus, the book of Hebrews does so most clearly and emphatically. Hebrews includes over 20 different titles and descriptions of Jesus. (The school chapel series of this school year has directed our students to the assortment of biblical titles for Jesus.) The epistle begins, “Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by His Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created

the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God” (HEB. 1:1–3). Chapter two refers to Jesus as “for a little while ... made lower than the angels ... crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death” (HEB. 2:9). In chapter 9 (v. 15) Jesus is called the “mediator of a new covenant,” and Heb. 12:2 invites us to see Jesus as “the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross.”

In the first 12 chapters of Hebrews, we see all sorts of signs that say “Jesus.” Then, in chapter 13, it is as if we have finally reached our destination, as God’s inspired author summarizes, “Jesus is the same yesterday and today and forever.” What did the original readers and hearers understand with those words? What do we hear today in our own settings and circumstances?

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday. The book of Hebrews takes us to the yesterday of the Old Testament. It emphasizes that the covenant was fulfilled in Jesus. The role of the Old Testament high priest is perfected in Jesus, the holy High Priest. The faith of Abel, Enoch, Abraham, Moses and many other heroes noted in chapter 11 was a faith in Jesus, the

Messiah. The Jesus of yesterday is the fulfillment of all that God promised.

Yesterday to the Hebrew readers also included the accounts of the miracles of Jesus that they were still hearing about — the teachings still fresh in the decades after Jesus' life on earth. This is the Jesus that perhaps some of them had even seen whipped, scorned, crucified, dead and buried. This was the Jesus witnesses had affirmed was alive again.

This is the Jesus of our yesterday. This is the Jesus who in our yesterday called us in the waters of Baptism. This is the Jesus who came to us in His Word in our Christian home and Christian classrooms and nourished us in the faith. This is the Jesus who is the foundation of our church and school.

*(Some significant yesterdays of the church and school ministry might be included).*

This is the Jesus who came to us in the many and varied yesterdays of our disobedience, wanderings and unfaithful response to His love, only to forgive us for all our yesterdays and take us to today.

Jesus Christ is the same today. The today of the Hebrew readers included a time of temptation to return to the tradition and legalism of Judaism. It included an apathy toward the truths of the Christian faith and the life of a Christian. In response to those inclinations, there is the encouragement not to give up worshipping together and to keep on living in love. There is the encouragement to “run with endurance the race that is set before us” (HEB. 12:1). Anticipating a time of persecution and hardship, the readers are encouraged to anticipate God's discipline and to endure hardship. Into this today came a Jesus who was Lord of all and Savior for all. Into the Hebrew readers' todays came a resurrected Lord who had conquered sin, death and the devil, and who would forever be victorious. Every day Jesus was there to say, “Today I am with you.”

That same Jesus comes to us today. Today and every day we wake up as sinners. Today we are unsure. Today we face temptation. Today we may face ridicule and persecution for our witness. Today we have our family concerns and church and school frustrations. But today Jesus comes to us again in the assurance of

our Baptism, in His Word of forgiveness, and at His table, where He gives His Body and Blood.

Today Jesus Christ is the same at our Lutheran church and school.

*(Share how the Gospel is being proclaimed in the present of the church and school.)*

Jesus Christ is the same forever. Forever is tomorrow and the next day and the next day. Forever is reached one day at a time. Forever is having Jesus go with us through all the changes of the future. As I shared in the opening illustration, we often wish that things could stay the same. Things change.

*(Note some of the changes that have taken place in the church and school ministry in recent years.)*

Whether the changes are the result of detailed planning or adjustments to unforeseen circumstances, Jesus is always part of the conversation and change.

*(Note some of the visions for the future of the school ministry.)*

Forever certainly has eternal implications. “But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus” (HEB. 12:22-24).

We are thankful for all those who gathered in our school in the name of Jesus in the yesterday of our school history. We rejoice in every child and family that learns of Jesus in our school today. We are blessed that through God's grace in Jesus we will be with Him forever.

“Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen” (HEB. 13:20-21).

# *It's Still All About Jesus: Yesterday and Today and Forever*

## **Jesus Never Changes – Chapel Talk**

### **TEXT**

Heb. 13:8

### **SONG**

LSB 900 / “Jesus! Name of Wondrous Love”

AGPS 143 / “Jesus in the Morning”

### **VISUAL**

*Examples of things that change – clock, calendar, small child/older child, etc. (A listing of things that change: seasons, butterflies, pictures of various ages and life stages, etc.)*



### **INTRODUCTION:**

Invite children to name some things that change.

### **MESSAGE:**

We celebrate many changes. We like the beauty and change of activities of the seasons. It's exciting to see a caterpillar change into a butterfly. There are always new experiences when we change grade levels, classrooms or teachers, or get new technology in our school. Some other changes aren't as exciting. Sometimes things in our family change, as when a family member gets ill, parents get divorced or older siblings move on to college or jobs.

Adam and Eve were blessed in the Garden of Eden, where everything was perfect and happy. Then the fall into sin changed everything: their relationship with God, with each other and with God's creation. Adam and Eve changed locations from the perfect Garden to a world and work outside. As a result, things have been forever changed for all of us. The greatest change was from life to death. Because of the fall into sin, everything would die.

God promised Adam and Eve a Savior, and God shared that promise with His family. Jesus was the change of the yesterday of the Old Testament. Everyone who believed in Jesus would be saved from

the consequences of sin. Jesus would bring new life and change the world forever. When Jesus came, He did more than change water into wine, a few loaves of bread into a meal for thousands, weakened limbs into strong bodies, and the dead to life again. By His death and resurrection, Jesus changed our relationship with our Heavenly Father. Jesus changed our death into new life. Jesus brings change to us today and forever.

Many things have changed and will change in our school. There will be new students and teachers, new learning materials and new experiences. One thing will never change: Jesus is the Savior of all, and Jesus is the message of our school yesterday, today and forever.

### **PRAYER:**

Jesus, by the power of Your creating Word, You changed darkness into light; by the power of Your redeeming acts You changed death into life; by the power of Your Spirit You changed us from being forever lost to being children of God. Continue to bring the changes needed in our individual lives and in our church and school so that Your glory is revealed and Your kingdom grows, in Your name alone we pray. Amen.

## Jesus is the MESSAGE of Scripture Yesterday and Today and Forever

**TEXT:** MATT. 16:16–19

**STUDENT DEVOTION:**

Receiving messages is part of the routine of the school day. Teachers get messages from the principal. The school secretary may bring in a message for a student from a parent. At the end of the school day, there may be messages shared about after-school or next-day activities.

There's another message that's part of every school day. It is a message delivered to us from God's Word. God's Word tells us that Jesus is God's message to the world. The message was delivered to the world in a baby born in Bethlehem. Jesus shared God's message with His disciples. The apostle Peter saw and heard the message as he listened to Jesus teach. He saw Jesus' miracles. Seeing and believing in Jesus, Peter shared the message that Jesus was "the Christ, the Son of the living God."

The message that Jesus is the Savior and that He died for all our sins and rose again is shared every day in our Lutheran school. As God shares His Word through your pastor and teachers, and as God's Word is heard

in our study of the Bible, in chapel worship and in classroom devotions, He delivers His message to us.

We may not get a message from the school office or our parents every day. We do, however, get a message from God every day. We are blessed each day by the Good News message that we are children of God in our Baptism. We are blessed by the message that our sins are forgiven. We are blessed with the message that we will be with Jesus forever when He comes again.

We have a great message to share with our friends and family. We share that message with people in our community and around the world with our chapel offerings.

**Reflections:** Through whom and to whom did God deliver messages that the Savior was coming? Can you think of someone to whom you might deliver the message of God's love?

**Prayer:** Thank You, Jesus, for sharing the message of Your love with us in our school. Help us to joyfully hear, live and share Your message every day. In Your name we pray. Amen.



### STAFF DEVOTION:

The pastor's children's message included a riddle: "What has a bushy tail, eats nuts and climbs trees?" The children reflected momentarily and one of them responded, "It sounds like a squirrel, but it must be Jesus."

Sometimes little children seem to be programmed to reply to every religious and devotional question with "Jesus." Obviously, it's not that simple. However, the message that we share with children and that we are blessed to celebrate in our own lives is always "Jesus."

Jesus is God's only answer to our sinful conditions and situations. When the questions are raised — "Where is forgiveness?" "Where is there eternal hope?" "Where is there a presence and power for every situation?" — the only answer is "Jesus."

There are some aspects of our lives that pertain to our teaching and school service, but have little relevance for our family life or other personal contexts. Jesus is more than a school subject shared professionally or academically. Jesus is our personal Savior. Jesus is brought into our family, our social settings and every context of our lives. Jesus blesses every day in every context.

Jesus is the answer for the children in our school every day. During the day, we give many answers to children's questions. To questions of doubts, hurts, sadness and disappointments, we have the privilege of sharing the answer, "Jesus."

**Reflections:** Who has shared the message of Christ's love with you? What does God's message to you mean for your daily life? What does it mean to be God's messenger in this ministry setting?

**Prayer:** Jesus, You are the message and the messenger. Help me to hear and receive Your message in my own life and ministry. Send Your Spirit so that I might share Your message truthfully, faithfully and joyfully, in Jesus' name. Amen.

## SAME MESSAGE/ NEW EXPLORATIONS:

- › Have students and staff share and post their favorite passage ("message") from God's Word.
- › Share a "message of the day" on school bulletin boards, web sites, newsletters, etc.
- › Identify God's messengers in the school and church and thank them.
- › How is God's message translated into other languages and for other cultures (Lutheran Bible Translators, etc.)?
- › Does every school family have God's message in their home? (Distribute Children's Bibles and other editions for children and families.)
- › Develop a Good News message for children to share with families or other children in their neighborhood.
- › Send a message to someone who is hospitalized, in a nursing home, or homebound (ask the pastor for a list of these members or other friends of the church/school).
- › Interview older members, grandparents, etc., and ask, "How has God's message been a blessing to you in difficult or special times?"
- › Explore how the message is shared with the deaf, blind or mentally challenged.

## Jesus is the TRUTH of the Reformation Yesterday and Today and Forever

**TEXT:** JOHN 8:31–32

**STUDENT DEVOTION:**

“Now tell the truth!” Have you ever heard that statement from a parent or teacher? We have all had those occasions when we have avoided or hidden the truth with our lies or with our silence.

When we tell the truth, we often feel much better. Our conscience is clear and we can begin to live freely again.

The devil is called the “father of lies.” The devil would encourage us to lie about our sins. The greatest lie of the devil is that God doesn’t love us or that our sins are so bad that God would never forgive us.

The truth is that Jesus is the Savior of the world. Jesus died for all our sins. Jesus brings us His forgiveness in our Baptism. Jesus forgives our sins of lying and every other sin we commit.

Martin Luther had been told many lies by the Church of his day. There was the lie that his sins were too great to receive God’s forgiveness. There was the lie that one could buy or earn forgiveness of sins.

God showed Martin Luther the truth of Jesus. The truth was that Jesus had died for the sins of Martin Luther and everyone else. The truth is that God’s forgiveness is ours by faith in Jesus. God used Luther to share that truth with the people of his day as Luther translated the Bible into German and as Luther wrote the Small Catechism to help people learn the truth in a simple way.

We are blessed to learn about the truth of Jesus every day in our school. We hear about the truth of Jesus every week in worship. God now uses us to share this truth with others.

**Reflections:** What are some of the lies that Satan tries to have us believe? Can you think of someone with whom you can share the truth of God’s Word?

**Prayer:** Jesus, You are the Truth! Forgive me for the lies that have come from my lips. Forgive me for the times when I haven’t believed or shared the truth of Your Word. Thank You for the truth tellers of the Reformation. Thank You for the truth tellers in our church and school, in Jesus’ name. Amen.



### STAFF DEVOTION:

Have you ever been hurt by lies or gossip? Many of us have heard unkind remarks behind our back, read cutting comments on social media sites or received untruths through the gossip network. These types of lies can be painful.

Lies about the source and hope of salvation can be eternally painful. The hierarchy of the Church of Luther's time had perpetrated the lie that the forgiveness of sins could be bought in the form of an indulgence. It was also suggested that souls could be rescued from purgatory with a donation to the Church. Obviously, those lies bound the consciences of individuals.

Martin Luther was chosen by God to again reveal the truth of Holy Scripture. Scripture reveals the truth of Jesus. Jesus came to proclaim the truth and then to complete the truth of God's promises so that we might truly be saved. The truth is that only the sacrifice of Jesus has paid for the sins of all. The blessings of His sacrifice are ours by grace through faith. The truth of Jesus assures us of our salvation.

The truth of Jesus frees us to be witnesses of the truth. There was only one Martin Luther and only one historic Reformation. However, Satan still sows lies that bind consciences and steal salvation. We are blessed in this time and this place to share the truth that frees.

**Reflections:** What examples have you seen or experienced where lies caused pain? Why is it important that the truth of Jesus and His Word be shared in our church and school?

**Prayer:** Jesus, You are the Truth! May Your truth condemn and drive away the lies which Satan would have us believe. Guide me into Your Word so that in all my teaching and living my students, family and everyone with whom I associate may hear and see Your truth, from me and in me, in Jesus' name. Amen.

## SAME TRUTH/ NEW EXPLORATIONS:

- > Explore the life and work of Martin Luther.
- > Explore the history of the Reformation.
- > Have a Reformation "fair" showcasing some of the people and places of the Reformation.
- > Learn about Germany in the time of the Reformation and Germany today.
- > Collect \$500 for a mission designation.
- > Collect 500 objects — one for each year since the Reformation.
- > Display "truth" facts about the church and school: enrollment, history teachers, etc.
- > Complete an "It's true!" bulletin board to display Gospel declarations: "God loves me!" "I'm forgiven!"
- > Older students might compare the truth of Christianity with the lies of other religions.

## Jesus is the **MISSION** of the School and Church Yesterday and Today and Forever

**TEXT:** JOHN 20:30–31

**STUDENT DEVOTION:**

History reveals a number of important missions: Columbus' mission to discover America; Lewis and Clark's mission to explore the Louisiana Purchase. (Have students think of other missions.) While all those missions are interesting and important, the most significant mission in the history of the world was that of God sending His only Son on the mission to save the world.

Jesus always knew what His mission was. However, the mission was formally announced by John the Baptist, who saw Jesus and described Him as “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.” Jesus accepted His mission at His Baptism. During His earthly ministry, Jesus took care of every detail of God's plan perfectly. Jesus died on the cross, saying, “It is finished.” His mission was accomplished.

We are blessed not only to know about Jesus' mission, but to receive the blessings of all that He accomplished. Jesus died for our sins. Believing

in all that Jesus has done, we know that we are God's children now, and that we will be with Him forever when He comes again.

During our lives, we may be part of some spectacular missions. It will be exciting to see how God uses each of you. Whatever our roles or jobs, Jesus gave us the mission to share His mission. We have the privilege of telling others what Jesus has done for us and of sharing God's gifts.

**Reflections:** What's your favorite historical mission? What was Jesus' mission? What is our mission?

**Prayer:** Jesus, thank You for completing the greatest mission ever, the salvation of the world! Thank You for missionaries who go to all people in all parts of the world to share Your mission. Help me to share Your mission with others, in Jesus' name. Amen.



### STAFF DEVOTION:

A few decades ago the television drama “Mission Impossible” began each episode describing the secret mission: “Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is ... .” As the drama unfolded, the often complicated and dangerous mission was successfully completed by the secret agents.

Jesus chose to accept His mission from His Father. With His mission successfully completed and our salvation secured, we are blessed to be agents in His service. Our mission is not a secret. We are to make all that Jesus has done known to the world.

Every day the life of a Lutheran school teacher is a participation in the drama that might be entitled “Mission Possible.” Because of God’s grace in Christ Jesus, we are participants in sharing the Good News of Jesus with children and families. There may be challenges and frustrations, but the results of the mission are always certain. God has called us to be His, and we are blessed to share His message. The Spirit will bless our witness.

**Reflections:** Have there been times when teaching and serving in a Lutheran school seemed like a “mission impossible”? When have you seen God’s blessing on the mission on which He has sent or is sending you?

**Prayer:** Jesus, forgive me for the times when I might have doubted Your mission or doubted my participation in that mission. Thank You for choosing me to be part of the mission team of this church and school. Bless us as we share and live Your mission, in Jesus’ name. Amen.

## SAME MISSION/ NEW EXPLORATIONS:

- › Share the church/school mission statement (or update it if it is not relevant).
- › List past and present mission projects of the church and school (missionaries, district, the Synod, etc.).
- › Visit a local mission outreach center (food pantry, homeless shelter).
- › Invite a missionary for a school/classroom presentation (in person or via the internet).
- › Celebrate those individuals, places and organizations that have a mission heart for those with special needs.
- › Find out about the mission fields and missionaries serving through The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.
- › Contact your LCMS district for mission starts or stations in your district.
- › Host a mission fair describing mission fields in countries around the world.

## Jesus is the HEART of the Home Yesterday and Today and Forever

**TEXT:** PS. 51:9-12

**STUDENT DEVOTION:**

A little girl was scheduled for major heart surgery. The family gathered for a conversation with the heart surgeon, who explained the surgical procedure to the little girl and her family. The doctor asked if there were any questions. The little girl asked, “Will you find Jesus?” The puzzled doctor asked the girl what she meant by her question. She explained, “My teacher says that Jesus is in my heart. Will you find Jesus in my heart?”

The little girl had an amazing faith. When we are baptized, Jesus does enter our heart. He doesn’t just enter the beating heart in the middle of our chest, He enters our entire being. He enters our soul — the part of us that believes in Jesus.

It doesn’t take heart surgery to look for Jesus. The presence of Jesus in our heart is seen outwardly in the words we use and the deeds we do in Jesus’ name. When children in our Lutheran schools gather for classroom devotions or worship in the church,

we see Jesus in their hearts. When children treat one another with kindness, or welcome the new student, we see Jesus in their hearts. When children live in the love of Jesus in their families and share the love of Jesus with their friends, we see Jesus in their hearts.

Jesus is the heart of our school, and He is in the hearts of all His children.

**Reflections:** What does it mean to have Jesus “in your heart”? When have you seen Jesus in the heart of someone else?

**Prayer:** Jesus, thank You for entering my heart in my Baptism. As You keep me faithful to Your Word, I know that You will never leave my heart. Keep my heart pure. Through the Holy Spirit, enter the hearts of others who may not know of Your love for them. Thank You for being the heart of our church and school, in Jesus’ name. Amen.



### STAFF DEVOTION:

How's your heart? Have you had your heart checked recently? Anyone who has ever experienced a heart attack or other heart issue knows the significance of those questions. Medical issues involving the heart are taken seriously.

God's Law provides our spiritual check-up. How's your heart? How's your heart in relationship to God and to others? Jesus warned that "out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander" (MATT. 15:19). Our hearts are diseased by sin. King David confessed that his sinful heart had led him to lust, commit adultery, murder and lie.

God in Christ has provided the cure for sinful hearts. The heart of God is revealed on the cross of Calvary. The blood of Jesus cleanses and cures hearts. In our Baptism God has provided a heart transplant. God's promise through Ezekiel (36:26) of a "new heart" is God's reality for us.

No matter the condition of our physical heart, God gives us new, healthy hearts every time we are forgiven. Healthy hearts love God and love others. Healthy hearts reach out to others. Celebrate the healthy hearts on your school ministry team.

**Reflections:** How is your heart? (Share any physical or spiritual heart issues that may have been part of your life.) How's the heart of your church and school? How could our ministry heart be healthier?

**Prayer:** Jesus, we rejoice in Your Word which shares Your heart for the world. Thank You for entering our hearts and continuing to strengthen our ministry hearts through your Word and Sacraments. May our students and others see Your heart in ours, in Jesus' name. Amen.

## SAME HEART/ NEW EXPLORATIONS:

- › Put hearts around the church/school setting: "Jesus is the heart of \_\_\_\_\_ Lutheran School."
- › Share the "heart" of the school with the elderly, homebound, nursing home residents, etc.
- › Choose or share "Hearts for Jesus" mission projects.
- › Invite a health professional to talk about the human heart and to share healthy heart actions.
- › Have the school host a CPR training for teachers, parents and the community.
- › Recognize school/church volunteers: "Thanks for sharing your heart with us."
- › Develop a health or science unit on "The Human Heart."

## Jesus is the FOCUS of Our Life Yesterday and Today and Forever

**TEXT:** 1 COR. 2:2 (JESUS WAS PAUL'S FOCUS)

**STUDENT DEVOTION:**

**Object:** Microscope, binoculars or other focus instruments

Some instruments help us focus. A microscope helps us focus on the specific parts of a cell or some other objects that are magnified. We may take binoculars along to the game or to a scenic sight to more clearly see something in the distance.

God's Word helps us get in focus. God's Word takes us to a specific area of our life and helps us see the details more clearly. Unfortunately, what we see is not something of beauty, but we see the details of our sin. God's Word helps us look out into the world, and we more clearly see all the places of hurt and helplessness caused by sin.

God's Word also helps us focus on Jesus as the Savior of the world. We see more clearly the love of God. We see the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. We see

Jesus coming out of the tomb as the victor over sin and death.

During this 2018 National Lutheran Schools Week we have focused on Jesus. However, Jesus is more than our focus for a special week. Jesus is the focus of our church and school every day and every year. Jesus is also the focus of our home and family. We focus on Jesus in everything we do.

**Reflections:** What's it like when the microscope, binoculars, etc. are out of focus? What's it like when Jesus is out of focus?

**Prayer:** Jesus, we give thanks that Your focus was always on us. Thank You for Your Word, which keeps the focus on You alone. Thank You for being the focus of our school, especially this National Lutheran Schools Week. Help us focus on You in everything we do, in Jesus' name. Amen.



### STAFF DEVOTION:

“Let’s focus!” Ever shared that directive in the classroom? Distractions inside or outside the classroom divert the children’s attention, and the classroom teacher pulls that attention back with the words “Let’s focus!” That same command may be heard at the athletic contest, music concert or other setting.

This command also comes to us as Christians and servants in school ministry: “Let’s focus on God’s Word.” We often get distracted by all the activities in our personal or professional lives. Our worship, devotional or prayer life may not get the attention it deserves. We need the Spirit to interrupt our lives and get our attention.

Let’s focus on our need for a Savior. It is very easy to focus on conditions outside ourselves or to focus on the weaknesses of others. God’s Law directs the focus on ourselves and indicates that we are sinful human beings. With the focus on ourselves, we see our many failures, and we are left helpless and hopeless.

Let’s focus on God’s response to our need for His grace. God’s Word takes our focus to the cross and empty tomb where the focus is on God’s action for us in Christ.

The “It’s *Still* All About Jesus” theme invites us to focus on Jesus in all stages of our life, in all seasons of the school year, in all sessions in the classroom and in all ministry contexts.

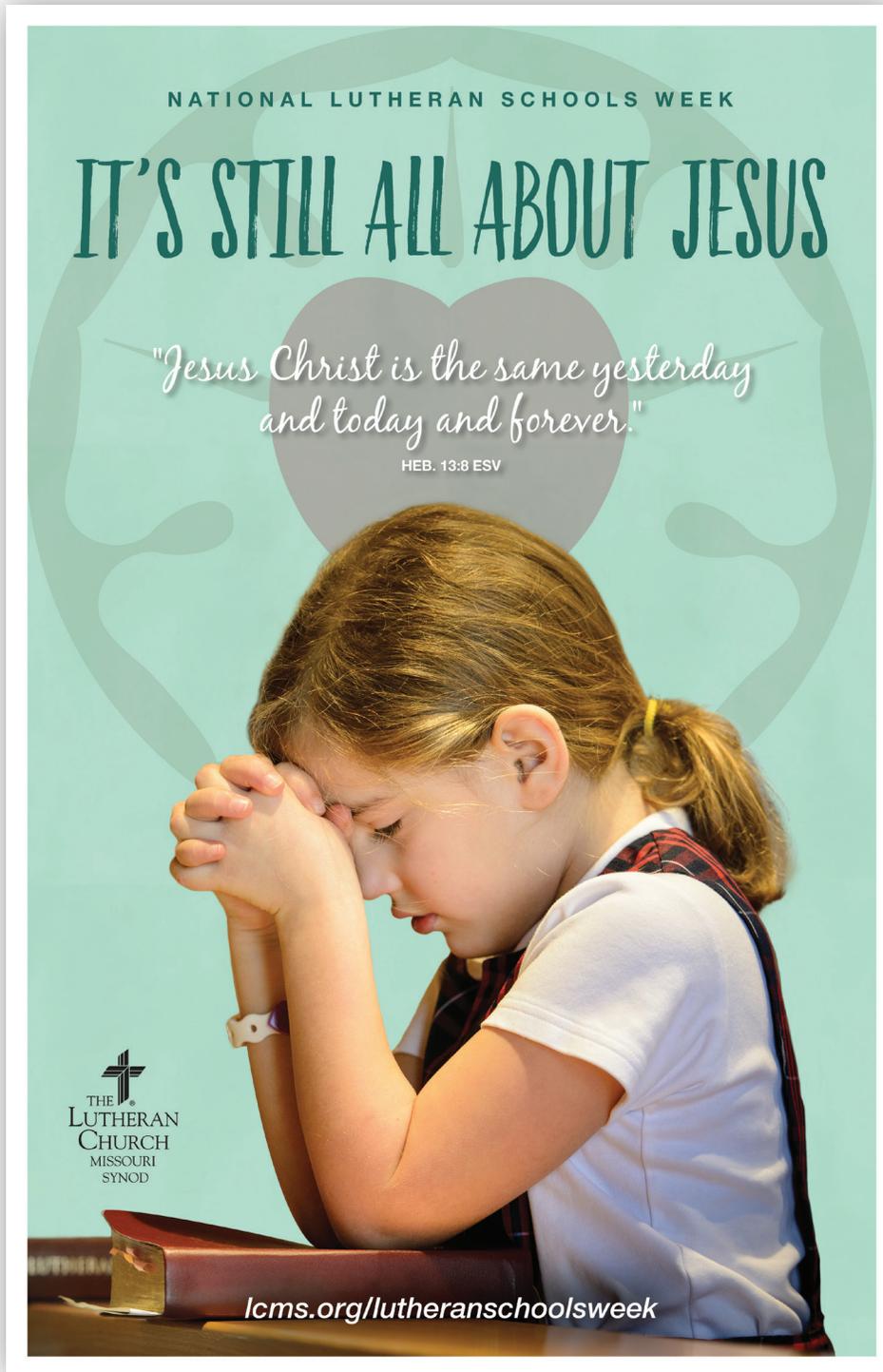
**Reflections:** When have you asked students (or others) to focus? What helps your focus on God’s Word? How can we help each other and our students to focus on God’s Word more intently and intentionally?

**Prayer:** Jesus, You never lost Your focus on Your mission to save the world and to save me. Forgive me for the times I get distracted and focus more on myself than on You and your mission. When I am tempted to focus on the things of the world or on myself, direct my attention to Your Word and Your will, in Jesus’ name. Amen.

## SAME FOCUS/ NEW EXPLORATIONS:

- › Focus on the mission of the church and school: Is the mission statement clear and familiar to everyone?
- › Focus on the future of the church and school ministry: What will our ministry look like five years from now?
- › Focus on the children: How can we be more responsive to their individual needs?
- › Focus on families: How can we be more intentional in our partnerships with them and our ministry to them?
- › Focus on the congregation: How can the school ministry be more connected to the total ministry of the church?
- › Focus on the neighborhood: How are we reaching out to the community in which God has placed us?
- › Focus on the staff: Is the ministry of the staff celebrated? Is the staff growing in Christ and growing as servant leaders?
- › Focus on National Lutheran Schools Week: How has the observance of this week directed our focus on Jesus?

# POSTER SAMPLE



# BULLETIN INSERT SAMPLE

## LUTHERAN SCHOOLS

SHARING THE LIFE-CHANGING MESSAGE  
OF JESUS' LOVE WITH MORE THAN

**200,000**

STUDENTS, THEIR FAMILIES  
AND THE COMMUNITY



**1,150**

Early  
Childhood  
Centers



**793**

Elementary  
Schools



**86**

High  
Schools

### RAISING UP THE NEXT GENERATION OF FAITHFUL CHRISTIAN DISCIPLES

- Experiencing and celebrating God's lavish gifts of love, grace and mercy
- Sharing those gifts with others
- Being transformed by God's Word
- Clinging to the cross of Jesus

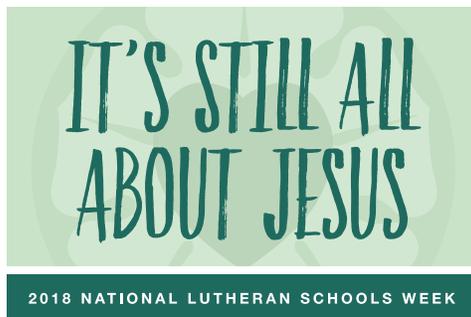
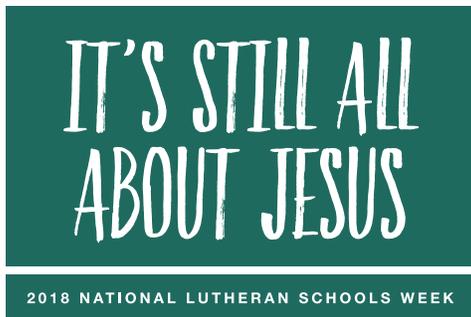
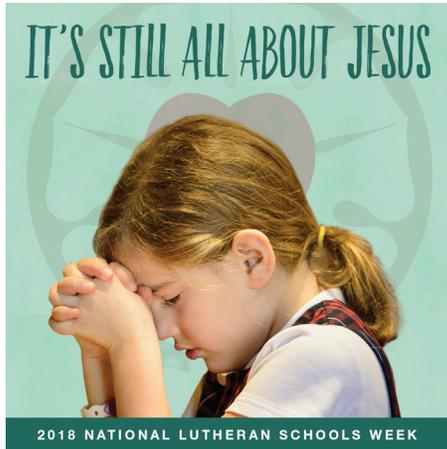
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- Creating a strong work ethic, critical thinking skills and the ability to relate well with others

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# GRAPHIC SAMPLES



› Download graphic images at [lcms.org/lutherschoolsweek](https://lcms.org/lutherschoolsweek).

## *Additional Resources*

Additional resources including images, daily posters, a worship PowerPoint presentation and more are found at [lcms.org/lutherschoolsweek](https://lcms.org/lutherschoolsweek).

