

THE COMPASS



Summer Barbeque Bible Study

By Peter Tomfohrde

Bible Class. If your home town church is anything like mine, you are probably thinking the same thing - I have to get up an hour early to sit around with a bunch of older adults and talk about the same old stuff I've been hearing since grade school. But what if there was an alternative? What if there was a way to study God's Word, have fun, meet and make new Christian friends, and not repeat Catechism school? Well there is - the True North midweek and Sunday morning Bible studies!

This summer, almost every Wednesday night, the Johnsons held a barbeque Bible study or BBS. A bunch of us from True North would show up, eat some delicious food prepared by Val, and then do a Bible study. And these aren't just any Bible studies. I can honestly say the material

we go over is so interesting and different from what I have been used to that I don't want to stop. Throw in some brilliant comments by PJ and an awesome group of fellow Christians and you have the perfect excuse to put off that homework for a couple of hours.

We studied apologetics during this summer's Bible studies. What does that even mean? Apologetics means to give an answer or to witness your faith. While this might sound hard and boring, it was quite easily the most fascinating bible study I have participated in.

[Continued on page 5](#)

WELS Worship Conference

By Joseph Jakubowski

This summer I was blessed with the opportunity to attend the tri-annual WELS Worship Conference, held at Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, MN. The conference lasted four days and three nights; about one thousand pastors, organists, instrumentalists, vocalists, and other laypeople attended. It was truly an outstanding experience, and one that I doubt I shall ever forget.

Each morning and evening a worship service was held, each with a different theme. I found the daily worship to be very enriching to my faith; it helped all the participants remember why we were there. The volume of

one thousand people belting out hymns was one of the most memorable experiences I have; it was great to be drowned out as we joined together in praising God. I enjoyed attending church twice a day to hear God's Word; I also enjoyed the opportunity to participate in communion two days in a row. The music was of the utmost quality as well, with literally hundreds of WELS musicians singing in choirs, playing in orchestras or brass choirs, playing handbells, or playing organ or piano.

[Continued on page 2](#)

OCTOBER 2008

- **Equipping the Saints:**
What do you and a pumpkin have in common? Page 2
- **Upcoming Events** Page 3
- **On Assignment: A Letter of Advice**
from Matt Otterstatter Page 3
- **A Letter to the Exiles**
by Hilarie Johnson Page 4
- **Standing in Awe: Science**
by Catie Michaelson Page 5
- **Devotional Message**
by Pastor Johnson Page 6

ISSUE 1, VOLUME 8



Equipping the Saints:

Conversations to share with unbelievers

Maybe you don't think you have a whole lot in common with a big orange vegetable. I can understand that—I'm not the biggest fan of pumpkins myself. But you have to admit they are unique. Every single one, whether big or small, has its own look and shape. But no matter how different pumpkins look from each other they all have the same gunk inside.

I think that's one way we are very much like pumpkins. You look around campus and you see incredible and wonderful diversity. Every single person on this campus is unique and every one of us has things about us that stand out. There are so many different gifts all around us. And yet for all of that, inside of us, we are very much alike. We all desire friendships and love. We have known many of the same sorrows of life and we all long for a better tomorrow. We also share one incredible negative—evil or sin. We see evidence of this whenever we feel bad over what we've done or failed to do. We feel it when we really look at who we are and we don't like what we find. We recognize it's there every time relationships with friends or family get strained, when fights break out, when harsh words are said. And if there really were mind readers who could read our every thought

What Do You And A Pumpkin Have In Common?

on a give day, our hearts would look very much like the inside of a pumpkin—a slimy mess!

Jesus saw us, not just the outside, but our heart and life. And he could have been disgusted and held us accountable for everything we have thought and felt and did. He would have been right to do that, but instead he decided to answer the evil of this world with his strength and love. He took that evil of our hearts and carried it on his shoulders—that was his strength. You see that strength at the cross where he took out sin, the evil of this world, and where he suffered the consequences of evil. He did that so we could be forgiven and stand before God with clean hearts that were washed clean by God himself. And he didn't stop there. He has come into our lives and filled us with his peace and joy. Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid." That peace is why we're eager to share His message.

...Continued from page 1

WELS Worship Conference

by Joseph Jakubowski

I attended several sessions, each with a different theme regarding worship. Welcoming Diversity was about learning to worship together as a congregation of people from different backgrounds, and how to reach out to people who may have a different taste in music and service than we do. The presenter stressed blended worship every week instead of trying to make separate services for different musical styles; blending together the styles makes sure everyone is included rather than making everyone divide into their own groups for a service. The presenter stressed that opposition to music is often one of merely personal preference. This session (and the whole conference) stressed the importance and usefulness of the liturgy: it clearly proclaims scriptural messages, it focuses on the Means of Grace rather than on our personal feelings, it reviews salvation and Christ's work weekly and yearly, and offers public confession and absolution. The second half of this session was about making appropriate choices and examining texts and messages when choosing songs. Too often, we make choices based only on our musical preferences. One should examine the lyrics and the message of the song before adding to worship to make sure that they align with the theme and with sound doctrine.



Musicians Jennifer Orth, Daniel Balm, Josh Semrow, & author Joseph Jakubowski practice before Worship. Joseph Jakubowski is a sophomore from Star of Bethlehem in New Berlin, WI.

Another interesting session was Worship and Outreach, presented by Pastor Donn Dobberstein. One of the ideas this presenter had was to print out the liturgy and hymns in the service bulletin to make it easier to follow for visitors. He also suggested going to church the next week and pretending to know nothing about the way the service works. This puts you in the position of the visitor and can help you see challenges you would have missed. Pastor Dobbenstein also suggested that churches not try to tailor the music to attract visitors. Instead, a church should be consistent so that the visitors see what the church is really like and will not be surprised when everything is back to normal the next week.

I am very grateful to True North for helping to fund my trip to the Worship Conference this year. I know that what I learned there has already helped my perspective as a member of this year's worship committee. I plan to use what I have learned to serve God in that regard here at True North throughout my remaining years here and at future congregations.

UPCOMING EVENTS

OCTOBER

- 2nd - College Cooking 5-7 pm
We'll learn, cook, eat, and enjoy!
- 14th - Tasty Topic Tuesday 7-9pm
For the ladies! The Beautiful Bloom-a study with food and flowers.
- 24th&25th - Overnight at the Johnsons' starting at 8pm... Students are welcome for games, movies, food, and Saturday morning brunch
- 30th - Dollar Dinner 5:30-7pm
A student is cooking up a delicious meal in the True North kitchen

NOVEMBER

- 1st - U of M Homecoming
Choices will be in the parade.
- 11th - Tasty Topic Tuesday 7-9pm
For the Ladies! Pastor Johnson shares "What Guys are Really Thinking."
- 17th - Dollar Dinner 5:30-7pm

DECEMBER

- 3rd, 10th, & 17th - Soup Supper 5:45pm
Advent Devotion 6:30pm
- 13th - Christmas on Broadway at St John in Mpls... True North students are helping out with this one day VBS.
- 21ST - Sunday Worship 11am
Then Winter Break 'til January.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

- Sundays -- 9:45am Bible Study
The Gospel of Isaiah
- Sundays -- 11:00am Worship Services
- Wednesdays -- 7:00pm Bible Study
Exodus; We're not like that!
- Fridays -- 1:00pm Women's Café Study
Cappuccino With Colossians at Bordertown Coffee

For More Events and updates
www.truenorthwels.org/Twincities



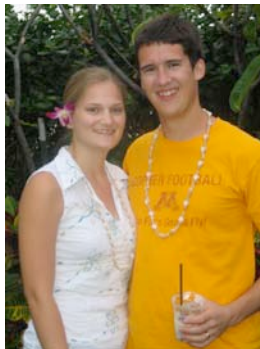
On Assignment: A Letter of Advice

from alumnus Matt Otterstatter

Greetings, fellow Gophers,

I am with you at heart, even though I write from my desk in California. I want to share with you what my time at the University of Minnesota and True North has meant to me. In short, it was the opportunity of a lifetime, and I wish to impress upon you the importance of making the most of your opportunities there, as well. I'm not talking about the lifelong friends you will meet, the courses that will shape the way you think as an adult, or the parties and sporting events that fill your collegiate days with excitement. Everybody tells you about those things. I'm talking about an even bigger opportunity, that few people ever advise you of before entering college.

College is probably the most formative period in your life. You go in as a lump of clay, but you leave with a deep set of impressions, beliefs, and habits that will stick with you forever. This includes the type of Christian you will become, and it is deeply affected by how well you stay rooted in God's Word and whether you take the opportunities to grow as a Christian. Will you become a casual Christian, going to church on the obligatory Christmas and Easter services, or will you learn to truly live your faith? Will you keep quiet when people trash your beliefs, or do you stand up for the Truth? Do you take an opportunity to talk with others about Christ's love, or do you just live and let live? Do you live in fear of those people who challenge your beliefs, or do you heed the comforting and empowering words of Isaiah 41?



Matt Otterstatter is a systems engineer in Sacramento, California.

There are certainly plenty of opportunities around campus to witness your faith in those direct and confrontational ways, but you also must be aware of the opportunity to witness indirectly, by living out your faith and serving as the light of the world. The devil will try to snuff out that light, tempting you in ways you didn't even know possible. This too is an opportunity to overcome and build character, and you can only succeed by relying on Christ.

It is important that you do so for your own sake, but also for the health of the Christian Church. You are all future leaders of that Church, by the sheer fact that you are receiving a college education from a world-class university. It is evidence of the talent that God has given you, and He expects you to use it (Matthew 25). The first step to developing those talents and growing as a Christian is to take advantage of every opportunity that God puts before you.

Without a doubt, my time at True North and the U of M has provided more opportunities than I could even handle to witness my faith and grow as a Christian. I pray, you take these opportunities, as well.

Matt Otterstatter
UMN Class of 2006

A Letter to the Exiles

By Hilarie Johnson

The state of our world, society, and our country seem anything but optimistic. Animosity and immorality are all around us. We are reminded in Luke 21:9 "When you hear of wars and revolutions, do not be frightened. These things must happen first but the end will not come right away." Soon Judgment Day will be upon us, and we will enjoy an eternity with the Triune God. But what is the Christian, constantly confronted with sin, to do in the meantime?

Jeremiah 29 provides us with a letter of direction to God's people exiled in Babylon. We, too, are God's people scattered amidst an unbelieving world awaiting the Lord's return to restore us to our promised land, heaven. "4This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says to all those I carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon. 5'Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. 6'Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease.'" Rather than isolate ourselves from unbelievers, Jeremiah's letter encourages us to live *in* society where we have an opportunity to share Christ's love and produce visible fruits of faith.

Jeremiah goes on to say, "7Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city which I have carried you into exile." Rather than simply integrating into the world, Jeremiah encourages us to better our society by actively participating in it. We can volunteer to keep our communities clean or to help others in need. As Christians, we should serve as God-fearing role-models for others and can hold authoritative positions within our communities. In addition, we should use our Christian values as a guide for choosing wise and moral leaders for our cities and country. With the presidential election in

full swing, our God-given right to vote and the discernment we learn through His Word can be dually enacted to vote for a president who is both descent and sensible. Volunteering and voting are just two ways our faith can be put into action within society to improve the earthly institutions God has established.

Additionally, Jeremiah reminds us to pray for our country, communities, and the leaders that we elect. "7Pray to the Lord for [the city], because if it prospers, you too will prosper." Just as God instituted government, He has made us earthly citizens of His establishment. As the end creeps closer, prosperity is often replaced with poverty, division, and inequality. These quarrelsome sentiments often dishearten Christians exiled in an unbelieving world from being good stewards of the abilities, opportunities and rights He has entrusted us with. But we are encouraged and comforted by verse 11. "For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.'"

From God's letter to His people exiled in Babylon, we can take away tools for living in today's sinful world. Though we know the condition of the earth is destined to deteriorate, we are encouraged to live as God-fearing lights within a dimly light, spreading Christ's loving sacrifice to our neighbors. Jeremiah also points out that, though we are citizens of a higher kingdom, we should work towards peace and prosperity as productive earthly citizens. We are reminded to pray for the society instituted by our heavenly Father for our good. Lastly, regardless of the national or global circumstances plaguing our sinful world, we can take heart in God's perfect control over the world we are temporary citizens of.

Hilarie Johnson is a senior majoring in Biology, Society, and the Environment pursuing a career in pharmacy.

TRUE NORTH STAFF	THE COMPASS	<p><u>For a WELS Campus Ministry near you:</u></p> <p>Contact Karen Marshall at 414-256-3279 or e-mail her at Karen.Marshall@sab.wels.net</p> <p>Or Access the church locator at WWW.WELS.NET</p>
<p>PASTOR: Joe Johnson <i>pastor@truenorthwels.org</i> Office & Pastor's cell#: 612-378-1346</p> <p>MINISTRY COORDINATOR: Valerie Johnson <i>coordinator@truenorthwels.org</i></p> <p>www.truenorthwels.org/Twincities 1501 University Ave. SE Suite 308 Minneapolis, MN 55414</p>	<p>EDITOR: Hilarie Johnson <i>joh02179@umn.edu</i></p> <p>WRITERS: Peter Tomfohrde <i>tomfo004@umn.edu</i> Joe Jakubowski <i>jak0037@umn.edu</i> Catie Michaelson <i>hill0663@umn.edu</i> Matt Otterstatter <i>otte0093@umn.edu</i></p>	



Standing In Awe: *The Only Christian On Campus?*

Marveling at the Wonders of God's Creation

by Catie Michaelson

Six years ago I came to the U of MN. As a 19 year old girl from Wausau, Wisconsin I had no idea what I was in for heading to the University, a campus who has a population larger than my entire hometown. The first thing I quickly learn as a student is that you can find just about everything on campus...every major, every culture, every religion, every belief and of course every opinion. The second thing I realized is that with such high numbers of students, the population of Christians on campus can quickly appear quite diluted. As a microbiology undergraduate there were times when I was confident that I was a population of one in many of my classes. The microbiology professor that I did research with throughout my

undergraduate career asked me numerous times how I could be so smart in science yet at the same time stupid enough to believe in a Creator instead of the big bang. While this wasn't always easy, it certainly did challenge me to constantly be prepared to give an answer for the faith that I have. As I have transitioned into my graduate nursing program, little has changed. Several of my classmates have shadowed a nurse practitioner who performs abortions in Minneapolis, a career choice that they are considering. It is not always easy to be the one with the opposing viewpoint, but it's also a constant reminder of the work that God has placed all Christian students there to do. If you aren't there in that classroom there might only be one viewpoint heard. As Christians at the U, we have the amazing opportunity of coming in contact with hundreds even thousands of unbelievers everyday. How many people have that same opportunity? It is important that we are here, as

representatives of Christ, in every class that we attend whether it be economics, biology, psychology, English literature, or underwater basket weaving. We are recipients of the amazing gift of salvation and the peace that accompanies it. In light of that gift, what a blessing to be the only Christian in a classroom!

As a six year veteran of the University and everything that it has to offer, I pray that as Christians on campus we can continue to grow in the faith and love of Christ and that we can support and encourage each other through friendships and fellowship. Most importantly I pray that we have the strength and excitement to be the Christian in the classroom, dorm room, cafeteria, or study hall so that in all those places, where we exist, Christ exists.

Catie Michaelson is a nursing student and the Coordinator for Choices, True North's Pregnancy Counseling and Resource Center.

Emilie Sieker and other students worked at MN Harvest Sept. 6. Their earnings went to the WELS India Mission.



...Continued from page 1

Summer Barbeque Bible

By Peter Tomfohrde.

The study involved watching video presentations by several smart cookies who quashed the idea that apologetics can only be done by pastors and missionaries. Basically, you can just have a pleasant conversation with someone while telling them about your faith and why it is important. In the process we learn a lot about our own faith and what it means to us.

And now the interesting part. I know that taking a few hours from one's Wednesday night and/or Sunday morning seems like asking a lot. We are all very busy people with loads of homework and other obligations. How can we squeeze time from all of those things to go to a Bible study when we can just go to church? Think of it

this way - our relationship with God is undeniably the most important thing we have on this earth. Everything else will fade away but His love and mercy endures forever. He provides for our physical and spiritual needs and sent His son to save us from our sins. When we put Him as priority number one, everything else fades into the background. Granted, if you study the Bible 24/7 your homework won't get done, but I have found time and again that when I put God first, everything else just happens to fall into place naturally.

Find out for yourself how great Bible studies are. Join us at True North Wednesday nights at 7:00 PM and Sunday mornings at 9:45 AM at the Dinky Dome or experience Bible study at your own church. Even if you can't make one or the other every week, just try one. You will be glad you did.

Peter Tomfohrde is a senior mechanical engineering student. His home church is St. John's in Lake City, Minnesota.

Watch Your Step!

By Pastor Joe Johnson

“It’s a dangerous business, Frodo, going out your door. You step into the Road, and if you don’t keep your feet, there is no knowing where you might be swept off to. Do you realize that this is the very path that goes through Mirkwood, and that if you let it, it might take you to the Lonely Mountain or even further and to worse places?” [1] --Bilbo Baggins of the Shire

Did you know that the brick path out my back door leads to the strip club and to church? A journey to the mountains of the west coast, the pyramids of Egypt or to the University of Minnesota begins right there on that same path. It’s a scary thought isn’t it! So it is with life. If you’re not careful, if you don’t watch your steps and make the right turns – you could end up anywhere!

Lot was a good man. He simply didn’t watch his steps. He starts by “pitching his tents near Sodom.” First he was simply near a group of people whose whole worldview was opposed to God. But it didn’t stop there. Soon you find Lot living and walking in Sodom. Finally he ends up fleeing Sodom with his wife dead and his family in shambles. It all happened because Lot wasn’t on guard and he allowed

himself to be swept away.

Where are you headed? Are you taking some steps in your life that don’t seem all that important but will eventually lead you into trouble or far worse – away from God? Is it taking a job that means you will have no time for church? Is it giving into and living with a sin that really is “no big deal”? Or can you already look back and see that you didn’t intend to be where you’re standing? Well, it’s not too late.

You’re still on this journey of life as God’s child and that means you can walk with Jesus instead of away from him. So look at all those “little” decisions and steps in your life and give them to the One whose steps led him to the cross so the end of your journey would find the crown.

“Dear friends, since you already know this, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.

2 Peter 3:17-18

True North gives permission to re-use our articles in additional church publications.

E-mail Valerie Johnson at coordinator@truenorthwels.org if you would like the electronic version of these articles.

TRUE NORTH WELS CM

1501 University Ave. SE Suite 308
Minneapolis, MN 55414

*Partially funded by
Lutheran Institutional Ministry Association*

NONPROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
MINNEAPOLIS, MN
PERMIT # 1606

