

Sermon followed by Service

May 21, 2023

Numbers 6:22

Today is Graduation Day and I have good news for our graduates; I have good news for all of you. “Life is going to get easier!” The time is coming when we will see cancer cured and Alzheimers undone. We’ll pass all our tests; better, we won’t have any more tests. Homework, if we have any homework, will have us singing with joy. Whatever we try, we’ll get it right. Sickness will be wiped out. Death will be done. No more fear; no more worries; no more pain. Yes, life is going to get easier! As you graduate, you get to look forward to life made right! But first, we have life in this world.

That’s probably not what you wanted to hear. In this world, we still have pain and sickness. In this world, our work doesn’t always have us singing for joy. In this world, we still have tests, hard tests, and some of those tests we fail miserably. But I do have good news for you. As you graduate - into a new grade, a new school, a new job, a new day in your life - as you graduate, you get to step out of this church and into that world with a special power, a special power from God.

In our lesson today, God’s people were about to graduate from God’s school at Mt. Sinai. They were on the way to the Promised Land, but first they were about to step out into the Sinai wilderness. Life was going to get easier, but first - the wilderness. As they stepped out into the wilderness, God’s people didn’t know what to expect. What was out there? Who

was out there? What were they supposed to do? Where were they supposed to go? What's next? How would they make it? For all those questions, for their time in the wilderness, God gave his people something special to hold on to.

As you step up and out into the wilderness of this world, we have the same questions, don't we? What's next? What are we supposed to do? How are we going to make it? And now there's another question - where are we supposed to find the answers? The world today can seem like the old, wild west before the law rode into town - no right or wrong, anything goes. Satan seems to be getting his way, having his say - even in God's church. People who out and out reject God and people who claim to love God are saying the same thing: "It doesn't matter what god you follow; it doesn't matter whose bible you follow. It's time to re-write God's word; it's time to re-shape God to fit the way we think; it's time for God to say what we want him to say."

Friends, as you graduate, as you step up and out into the world, you don't have to face the world without answers for your questions. You don't have to face the world wondering: "Is there any purpose to this? Is there anybody in charge? How am I supposed to know?" When Moses was about to graduate from God's wilderness school, God appeared to Moses. To get Moses ready for stepping up and stepping out, God wanted Moses to know who he is. And God wants you to know who he is. God is LORD, LORD with the four capital letters, Jehovah, Yahweh. At the burning bush, when Moses wanted to know who God is, God called himself: "I am who I am." God calls himself: "I am." We

answer back: “He is.” The LORD is, whether people believe him or not. The LORD is, whether people follow him or not. The LORD is. Satan’s lies don’t change him. The world’s rejection of his word doesn’t change him. The LORD is. No matter what the world says about God, he is.

The LORD is and he will not tolerate people thinking they can change who he is and change what he says. If we go along with the world and think we can re-shape God into a puppet who hops around doing what we want, or a ventriloquist’s dummy who says what we want, then we will find ourselves on the outs with God, without God and damned. The LORD is God; we’re not. The LORD is God and he will have his way.

The LORD will have his way. It’s hard to see that out there. The best way to see God having his way is to look at the Son of God, Jesus. In Jesus, you get to see God hold you close to his heart. In Jesus, you get to see God reach out to the lonely and unloved. In Jesus, you get to see God love even the unlovable. In Jesus, you get to see God’s smile. But what about those times we’ve stepped up and stepped out and stepped away from God? Jesus isn’t smiling because he somehow sees our sin as cute and fun; he doesn’t. And he doesn’t see our stepping up and stepping out to do our own thing as independent maturity. No, Jesus sees sin, your sin, my sin, the sin of the world as a rejection of who he is and what he has for us. So why do we get to see Jesus smile? Because Jesus stepped up to take your sin and mine. At the cross he paid the price for the times we have stepped away and turned away from God. At the cross he took the punishment we had

coming and he satisfied God's justice. With Jesus, God doesn't see you as guilty; he sees you with a smile, right with Jesus.

Looking out there in the world, we might not see God's smile. Looking in here [our hearts], we might not feel God's smile. That's why God, God the Father and God the Son together, send you their Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit works through God's Word, through Baptism, through the Lord's Supper, to show you God's smile. With Jesus, you are forgiven! With Jesus, you have God's face beaming on you as the children he loves. With Jesus, you have God looking out for you to bless you and keep you safe with him.

As you step up and step out from here, life might not get easier, at least not in this world. But you get to step up and step out with a power and promise that sets you up with everything you need to face this world. You have the promise of God:

“The LORD bless you and keep you.
The LORD make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The LORD look on you with favor and give you peace.” Amen.

May 20 & 21, 2023

NEW MORNING PRAISE

IN OUR WORLD TODAY ... “Congratulations, Graduates” is echoing throughout our communities. Sadly, how many of those graduates know the answers to the most basic and most important questions: “Who am I? Why am I here? What hope, what promise do I have? And who says?”

IN OUR WORSHIP TODAY ... we and our graduates hear the answers for those most important questions in life.

OPENING HYMN

“Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty”

Hymn 483

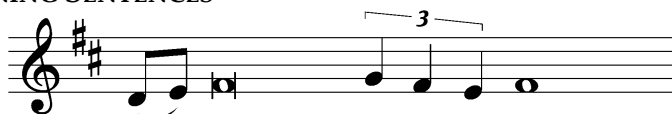
Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
Early in the morning our song shall rise to thee.
Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty!
God in three persons, blessed Trinity!

Holy, holy, holy! All the saints adore thee,
casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;
cherubim and seraphim falling down before thee,
which wert and art and evermore shalt be.

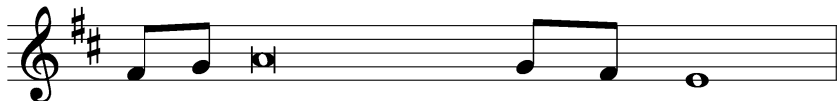
Holy, holy, holy! Though the darkness hide thee,
though the eye of sinful man thy glory may not see,
only thou art holy; there is none beside thee,
perfect in pow’r, in love, and purity.

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
All thy works shall praise thy name in earth and sky and sea.
Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty!
God in three persons, blessed Trinity!

OPENING SENTENCES



O Lord, o-pen my lips.



And my mouth shall de - clare your praise.



Hasten to save me, O God.



O Lord, come quickly to help me.



Give glory to God, our light and our life.



Come, O come, let us wor - ship.

COME, O COME, LET US SING TO THE LORD



Come, O come, let us sing to the Lord,



let us shout with joy to our sav - ing Rock;



come, en - ter in with our songs of praise,



come, en - ter in with thanks - giv - ing.



1 You are a great and a won - drous God,
2 Come, let us wor - ship and, bow - ing low,



cup - ping in your hands all the depths of earth.
kneel be - fore the One who has made us all.



You made the hills and the moun - tains high,
You are the God whom we call our own,



Refrain

you made the seas and the dry land.
we are the flock that you shep - herd.

HOLY BAPTISM (SUNDAY)

CW p. 151

+ Brooke Benz +

Daughter of Tim and Brett Benz

In the name of the Father and of the T Son and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

CONFESSION

Our Savior Jesus Christ commanded Baptism when he said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

All of us are born into this world with a deep need for Baptism. From our parents we inherit a sinful nature; we are without true fear of God and true faith in God and are condemned to eternal death. But while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. He took away our sin by giving his life on the cross. In Baptism, he clothes us with the robe of his righteousness and gives us a new life. We recall what Baptism means for our daily lives:

**Baptism means that the sinful nature in us
should be drowned by daily sorrow and repentance,
and that all its evil deeds and desires be put to death.
It also means that a new person should daily arise
to live before God in righteousness and purity forever.**

As baptized children of God, we confess our sins:

Holy God, gracious Father,

I am sinful by nature

and have sinned against you in my thoughts, words, and actions.

I have not loved you with my whole heart;

I have not loved others as I should.

I deserve your punishment both now and forever.

But Jesus, my Savior, paid for my sins

with his innocent suffering and death.

Trusting in him, I pray: God, have mercy on me, a sinner.

Silence for meditation and reflection

God saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit and united us to the death and resurrection of Jesus. Every day God forgives your sins, removes your guilt, and strengthens you to defeat Satan's power.

His promise is for you and your children, and he will never forsake you. Your sins are forgiven. You are clothed with Christ. You are at peace with God now and forever.

Amen.

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

The Gospel according to St. Mark:

People were bringing little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them.

Brooke, I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Receive the sign of the cross on the head and heart T to mark you as one redeemed by Christ the crucified.

The almighty God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has given you the new birth of water and the Spirit and has forgiven all your sins. May he strengthen you with his grace all the days of your life. Peace be with you.

Let us pray.

We give thanks, most merciful Father, that you have received **Brooke** as your own *child* and made *her* a member of Christ's body, the church. Now, we pray, grant to *her* and to all your church on earth that, being dead to sin, we may live to righteousness and, being buried with Christ into his death, we may also share in his resurrection, so that, with all your saints, we may inherit eternal life; through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

HYMN

"See This Wonder in the Making"

Hymn 646

See this wonder in the making: God himself this child is taking
as a lamb safe in his keeping, his to be, awake or sleeping.

Miracle each time it happens as the door of heaven opens
and the Father beams, "Belovèd, heir of gifts a king would covet!"

Far more tender than a mother, far more caring than a father,
God, into your arms we place him/her/them,
with your love and peace embrace him/her/them.

Here we bring a child of nature; home we take a newborn creature,
now God's precious son or daughter, born again by Word and water.

FIRST READING

Genesis 1:1—2:3

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth
was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and
the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.

God saw that the light was good,

and he separated the light from the darkness. God called the light "day,"
and the darkness he called "night."

And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day.

And God said, "Let there be a vault between the waters to separate water
from water." So God made the vault and separated the water under the
vault from the water above it.

And it was so.

God called the vault "sky."

And there was evening, and there was morning—the second day.

And God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and
let dry ground appear."

And it was so.

God called the dry ground “land,” and the gathered waters he called “seas.” **And God saw that it was good.**

Then God said, “Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds.” **And it was so.**

The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds.

And God saw that it was good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the third day.

And God said, “Let there be lights in the vault of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark sacred times, and days and years, and let them be lights in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth.” **And it was so.**

God made two great lights—the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. God set them in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth, to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness.

And God saw that it was good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the fourth day.

And God said, “Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the vault of the sky.”

So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living thing with which the water teems and that moves about in it, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind.

And God saw that it was good.

God blessed them and said, “Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth.”

And there was evening, and there was morning—the fifth day.

And God said, “Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: the livestock, the creatures that move along the ground, and the wild animals, each according to its kind.”

And it was so.

God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds.

And God saw that it was good.

Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food."

And it was so.

God saw all that he had made,

and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.

Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array.

By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

A MEDLEY OF SCHOOL THEME VERSES

M: Be kind and compassionate to one another,

C: **forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.**

(Ephesians 4:32 ~ 2015-2016)

M: Do not be anxious about anything,
C: **but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving,
present your requests to God.** (Philippians 4:6 ~ 2016-2017)

M: I have told you these things,
C: **so that in me you may have peace.**
M: In this world you will have trouble.
C: **But take heart! I have overcome the world.** (John 16:33 ~ 2017-2018)

M: So do not fear, for I am with you;
C: **do not be dismayed, for I am your God.**
M: I will strengthen you and help you;
C: **I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.** (Isaiah 41:10 ~ 2018-2019)

SCHOOL CHILDREN SING

“The First Song of Isaiah”

Refrain

*Surely, it is God who saves me; I will trust in him and not be afraid.
For the Lord is my stronghold and my sure defense, and he will be my Savior.*

*Therefore you shall draw water with rejoicing from the springs of salvation.
And on that day you shall say “Give thanks to the Lord!” and call upon his name.*

Refrain

*Make his deeds known among the peoples;
see that they remember that his name is exalted.
Sing the praises of the Lord, for he has done great things,
And this is known in all the world.*

Refrain

*Cry aloud, inhabitants of Zion, ring out your joy,
for the great one in the midst of you is the Holy One of Israel.*

Refrain

M: “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened,
C: **and I will give you rest.”** (Matthew 11:28 ~ 2019-2020)

M: "I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord,
C: **"plans to prosper you and not to harm you,
plans to give you hope and a future."** (Jeremiah 29:11~ 2020-2021)

M: Those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength.
C: **They will soar on wings like eagles;**
M: they will run and not grow weary,
C: **they will walk and not be faint.** (Isaiah 40:31~ 2021-2022)

M: Therefore go and gather disciples from all nations
C: **by baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son
and of the Holy Spirit.** (Matthew 28:19 ~ 2022-2023)

SCHOOL CHILDREN SING

"Go Into the World"

*Go ye, go ye into the world And make disciples of all nations.
Go ye, go ye into the world, And I will be with you there! Repeat*

*I am the vine; you are the branches, ever the fruit to bear.
I am the light, you, the reflection ev'rywhere.*

*Go ye, go ye into the world And make disciples of all nations.
Go ye, go ye into the world, And I will be with you there! Repeat*

GOSPEL

Matthew 28:16–20

Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise be to you, O Christ!**

APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty. From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

HYMN

"Speak O Lord"

Hymn 633

Speak, O Lord, as we come to you to receive the food of your holy Word;
take your truth, plant it deep in us, shape and fashion us in your likeness,
that the light of Christ might be seen today
in our acts of love and our deeds of faith.

Speak, O Lord, and fulfill in us all your purposes for your glory.

Teach us, Lord, full obedience, holy reverence, true humility;
test our thoughts and our attitudes in the radiance of your purity.

Cause our faith to rise, cause our eyes to see
your majestic love and authority.

Words of pow'r that can never fail, let their truth prevail over unbelief.

Speak, O Lord, and renew our minds,
help us grasp the heights of your plans for us,
truths unchanged from the dawn of time,
that will echo down through eternity.

And by grace we'll stand on your promises,
and by faith we'll walk as you walk with us.

Speak, O Lord, till your Church is built,
and the earth is filled with your glory.

SERMON**2 Corinthians 13:11–14**

Finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice! Strive for full restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you.

Greet one another with a holy kiss. All God's people here send their greetings.

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

HYMN***"In Christ Alone"*****Hymn 510**

In Christ alone my hope is found; he is my light, my strength, my song;
this cornerstone, this solid ground,
firm through the fiercest drought and storm.
What heights of love, what depths of peace,
when fears are stilled, when strivings cease!
My comforter, my all in all; here in the love of Christ I stand.

In Christ alone, who took on flesh, fullness of God in helpless babe;
this gift of love and righteousness, scorned by the ones he came to save.
Till on that cross as Jesus died, the wrath of God was satisfied;
for ev'ry sin on him was laid; here in the death of Christ I live.

There in the ground his body lay, light of the world by darkness slain;
then bursting forth in glorious day, up from the grave he rose again!
And as he stands in victory, sin's curse has lost its grip on me;
for I am his and he is mine, bought with the precious blood of Christ.

No guilt in life, no fear in death, this is the pow'r of Christ in me;
from life's first cry to final breath, Jesus commands my destiny.
No pow'r of hell, no scheme of man can ever pluck me from his hand;
till he returns or calls me home, here in the pow'r of Christ I'll stand.

GRADUATION

Teacher – Mr. Justin Wintrone

Aiden Mark Brown
Brenna Leigh Freeberg
Addison Azalea Lofsness
Tea James Tisch

FACULTY GRADUATION

Mr. Keith Kopczynski

PRAYER AND LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

M: O Lord, our heavenly Father, almighty and everlasting God, you have brought us safely to this new day. Defend us with your mighty power, and grant that this day we neither fall into sin nor run into any kind of danger; and in all we do, direct us to what is right in your sight, through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord. Amen.

BLESSING



The Lord bless and keep you.



A - men.



The Lord's face ev - er shine up - on you.



A - men.



The Lord grant you peace for all your days.



A - men.

CLOSING HYMN

"Go, My Children, with My Blessing"

Hymn 930

Go, my children, with my blessing, never alone.
Waking, sleeping, I am with you; you are my own.
In my love's baptismal river I have made you mine forever.
Go, my children, with my blessing, you are my own.

Go, my children, sins forgiven, at peace and pure.
Here you learned how much I love you, what I can cure.
Here you heard my dear Son's story; here you touched him, saw his glory.
Go, my children, sins forgiven, at peace and pure.

Go, my children, fed and nourished, closer to me;
grow in love and love by serving, joyful and free.
Here my Spirit's power filled you; here his tender comfort stilled you.
Go, my children, fed and nourished, joyful and free.

I the Lord will bless and keep you and give you peace;
I the Lord will smile upon you and give you peace;
I the Lord will be your Father, Savior, Comforter, and Brother.
Go, my children; I will keep you and give you peace.

OFFERING

If you prefer online giving, you may scan this code with your mobile device.



(You heard our school children sing today. Tuition Grant Fund envelopes are available in the pew rack to support affordable tuition for our school.)

Thank you to our school children for beautifying our Sunday Worship, and thank you to Jenna Wietbrock for playing pre and post service organ music.

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Summer Project List

Please feel free to recruit some help and take on a project - on your schedule or on ours!
If you have questions, we have some contact names below, or ask Pastor.

Outside Yard Projects (In order of priority.) - Contact Jim Safran and Todd Haefke

- Rake and dispose of leaves. That includes the flower beds.
- Police the southside easement.
- Rake up gravel that has been pushed back from plowing
(both the eastside parking lot and at the clinic).
- Please bring leaf rakes and heavy-duty steel tine rakes.

Painting

- Heating/Cooling unit conduits - paint wall color.
Paint some supplies are on the stage.
- Classroom Wall Repairs - walls should be ready later in June
- Grout Lines - school restrooms

Inside Cleaning - Contact _____

- Goo Gone Patrol - hunt down and wipe out gooey tape residue
- Cubbies / Lockers
- Church/School Entry - church wall "sill"
- Fellowship Hall Restroom Floors (grout cleaning and sealing)
- Fellowship Hall Microwaves

Ladder Work - Contact Pastor

- Gutter (far-east) over lift sidewalk leaks onto sidewalk
- Church/School Entry lights (scaffolding needed)
- Light bulbs

Destruction - Contact Pastor

- Rip Out water-damaged wall in lift shaft

Repairs - Contact Pastor

- Office folding machine
- Office Window Blind cords

Muscle Moving

- Old carpet runner (north landing outside) to garbage
- Laptop charger cabinet (ESS Storage Room) to Kindergarten-Room
- Classroom dividers (3) (outside of Fellowship Hall) to Grade 5-6 Room
- Classroom Move (before and after floor cleaning)

Technology (It's not all techy.)

- Assist Justin with Tech Set-Up

Summer 2023 Event

ARBOR DAY - JUNE 10, 9 A.M. - NOON

LIBERTYVILLE DAYS - JUNE 16-18

- Friday – Sunday – St. John Booth, Contact Nic Holter to sign up for a shift
- Friday – St. John Family Sing – meet at 12, sing at 12:15 p.m., Monica Wintrone
- Saturday – Parade, meet at Metra Station by 9:45 a.m.

VBS: STELLAR - SHINE JESUS' LIGHT

If you are interested in attending or volunteering, please reach out to Ms. Brooke Behl at brooke.behl@stjohnslib.com.

Where: St. John Lutheran School

When: Monday, June 19 – Thursday, June 22, 9-11 a.m.



FELLOWSHIP OUTING TO KINGFISH GAME! - JUNE 23, 6:35 P.M.

Join us for a night of fellowship and fun at the Kenosha Kingfish baseball game. RSVP by June 9, and contact Paul Massey for more information

- Tickets are \$16 per person, which includes your ticket, hot dog, chips, soda, and baseball hat
- Feel free to invite and bring along friends to the game

WELS NIGHT AT THE BREWERS - FRIDAY, JULY 7

Join the WELS family for an evening at the ballpark to watch the Brewers take on the Reds.

Group tickets can be purchased by contacting Jason Fry, Jason.Fry@brewers.com.

Individual tickets can be purchased at BREWERS.COM/WELS.

ARBOR DAY - JULY 15, 9 A.M. - NOON

WELS NIGHT AT GUARANTEED RATE FIELD - FRIDAY, AUGUST 11

Join your Chicagoland WELS family on Friday, August 11, for a night of fun, fellowship, and baseball. The Chicago White Sox take on the Milwaukee Brewers starting at 7:10 p.m. More info to come.

ARBOR DAY - AUGUST 12, 9 A.M. - NOON

2023-2024 SCHOOL OPENING SERVICE - AUGUST 20