

West Nidaros Milestone Ministry

Milestone Ministry is not a program – it is a way of life!

West Nidaros Lutheran Church provides opportunities to celebrate important events in the lives of our children, youth, and adults and helps parents fulfill their Baptismal promises even as we, the church, fulfill our promises. These events are used as teaching moments for parents and children alike and are a time to connect families with each other and with the church.

NEWBORNS

“She conceived and bore a child” (Genesis 21:2).

The Newborn Milestone is a quilt made by the Caring Friends group of West Nidaros received when newborns are acknowledged during worship on Christmas Eve.

BAPTISM

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19).

The Baptism Milestone is a Baptismal Chest received on the day of Baptism. The baptismal candidate or the parents of small children who will be baptized meet a few weeks beforehand with the pastor to talk about the meaning of baptism, and parents are introduced to the Four Keys to nurturing faith at home. Splash packets are sent to the parents each month through the age of 36 months.

ANNIVERSARY OF BAPTISM

“This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:17).

The Anniversary of Baptism Milestone is a special service at 10:30 am worship on the Sunday after Epiphany (Jan. 6) followed by a Baptismal Birthday Party where we celebrate the anniversary of the year’s baptisms as a community on Baptism of Our Lord Sunday.

0 to 3 YEAR-OLDS

“You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart” (Jeremiah 29:13).

The 0 to 3 Year Olds Milestone is a special time for infants and toddlers to begin to experience God’s love for them through their parents and fun activities at church. This age group and parents meet the first Sunday of each month (October – May) during the Sunday school hours. This is also a great opportunity for parents to connect with other parents and share their parenting journey together.

3 YEAR-OLDS – First Step

“Never stop praying” (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

The 3 Year Old Milestone is a Prayer Pillow received at 10:30 am worship on Rally Sunday, the Sunday after Labor Day in September, and the day parents register children ages 3 and up for Sunday School

On the Saturday before they enter Sunday School, 3 year-olds and their parents are treated to a special event, welcoming them to Sunday School. Together they learn about promises in the bible, promises at their baptism, and what it means to pray. Oh, and they have a yummy snack too!

PRESCHOOL – The Next Step

“My child, do not forget my teaching” (Proverbs 3:1).

The Next Step milestone is received at 10:30 am worship on the third Sunday of October. Preschoolers and parents will learn together how to do family devotions at home using the Faith 5 and Four Keys.

KINDERGARTEN – Prayer

“Lord, teach us to pray” (Luke 11:1).

The Prayer Milestone involves memorizing and leading The Lord’s Prayer at 10:30 am worship on the first Sunday of March.

1st GRADE – The Apostles’ Creed

“God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us” (Romans 5:5).

The Apostles’ Creed Milestone involves memorizing and leading The Apostles’ Creed at 10:30 am worship on the first Sunday of February.

2nd GRADE – The Ten Commandments

“I am the Lord your God” (Exodus 20:2)

The Ten Commandments Milestone involves memorizing and reciting the Ten Commandments at 10:30 am worship on the second Sunday of January.

3rd GRADE – The Bible

“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path” (Psalm 119:105).

The Bible Milestone is a 3rd Grade Bible received at the 10:30 am worship on the third or fourth Sunday of September.

At baptism, parents promise to place in their child’s hands the Holy Scriptures. A one-session event for students and their parents is held during Sunday school on the same Sunday the students receive their Bibles to help parents fulfill their promise, and to bring families together around God’s Word.

4th GRADE – First Communion

“This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me” (Luke 22:19).

The First Communion Milestone is a special time for 4th Graders and their parents that culminates on Maundy Thursday worship (the Thursday before Easter Sunday) when students receive their first communion.

At West Nidaros, children prepare to take communion when their parents feel they are ready, but each year we invite and encourage 4th graders to attend First Communion preparation. During Sunday School on Palm Sunday students attend a training session that includes painting their very own chalice for use at their First Communion. Students and their parents also experience a traditional Jewish Sedar Meal on Maundy Thursday before their First Communion service.

5th GRADE – Acolyting

“I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life” (John 8:12).

The Acolyte Milestone is received at the 10:30 am worship service on the last Sunday of April.

When children at West Nidaros end 4th grade and enter 5th grade, they learn about and become acolytes. The expectation is that they will acolyte on their given Sunday service when scheduled. A training session will take place during Sunday School on the same Sunday they receive the Acolyte milestone.

7th GRADE – Entering Confirmation

“Teach them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:20).

The Entering Confirmation Milestone is received during worship on the Sunday before Confirmation Camp.

In 7th grade our youth begin a two-year confirmation program where they study Luther’s Small Catechism in large and small group settings. They will also have servant events and game nights, and they will visit Horse Creek on the Rosebud Reservation.

Students attend confirmation camp in the summer before their 7th grade year.

8th GRADE – Blessing of the Car Keys

“Be mature and complete” (James 1:4).

The Blessing of the Car Keys milestone is received during worship on the first Sunday of June.

Even if a youth has not yet received their driver’s license, they have reached a milestone in their life in which they are considered old enough to be responsible for driving a vehicle and old enough to take further responsibilities in their lives.

9th GRADE – Confirmation

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths” (Proverbs 3:5-6).

The Confirmation Milestone is received at 10:30 am worship on Reformation Sunday (the fourth Sunday of October).

Affirmation of Faith

After attending two years of Confirmation classes in 7th and 8th grades, and after completing small assignments during September and October of their 9th grade year, youth complete a major milestone by affirming their faith on Reformation Sunday (the last Sunday of October).

HIGH SCHOOL

“Teach them to obey everything that I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:20).

Maturing in Faith

High school years are growth years. They give a person time to develop and mature mentally, emotionally, physically, and spiritually. At West Nidaros we journey with our high school students as they grow into young adults. High school students attend Sunday school and Wednesday evening youth group. West Nidaros high school students participate in one youth trip each year – the ELCA National Youth Gathering, a mission trip, and a fun-time fellowship trip (these events rotate on a three-year cycle). Slowly they take on greater responsibility in the life of the church.

GRADUATION

“Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18).

The Graduation Milestone is a beautiful hand-crafted quilt presented to all high school (and college?) graduates by the women of West Nidaros Lutheran Church at the 10:30 am worship service on the 1st Sunday of May.

MARRIAGE

“They are no longer two, but one flesh” (Matthew 19:6).

Two to six months prior to the wedding the couple meets with the pastor for marriage counseling and setting up the wedding service.

Wedding coordinators are Pam Petersen and Lavonne Burns. The bride gets a copy of the Marriage Guidelines.

Anniversary

“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you” (John 15:12).

Each anniversary is its own milestone. We learn to love one another because God first loved us.

FUNERALS

“I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die” (John 11:24-26).

Receive spiritual counseling and “Journeying through Grief” booklets at 3 weeks, 3 months, 6 months, and 11 months after death.

NEW MEMBERS

“For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body... and we were all made to drink of one Spirit” (1 Corinthians 12:12-13).

There are two new member classes, one in the fall and one in the spring, led by the pastor and the Membership Committee. The Membership Committee serves a light supper with the class. The people that want to officially join are asked to fill out a membership information form. New members are usually received on the appointed New Member Sunday, although there are exceptions