

Correspondence sent electronically to more than 100 Wisconsin school districts
December 22, 2024

Board President Joan Ensign
Waunakee Community School District
905 Bethel Circle
Waunakee, WI 53597
jensign@waunakee.k12.wi.us

Dear Board President Ensign,

Thank you for your dedicated service to the families of your Wisconsin school district. A 2024 nationwide scientific poll of 1,000 registered voters conducted by RMG Research found more than three-quarters of Americans believe public school students need moral and character education. Additionally, more than half of Americans believe the Bible should be used for that moral and character education. (1) **As lead clergy from one hundred-sixteen (116) congregations across Ohio, we are asking that your school district consider utilizing a released time religious program called LifeWise Academy.**

Released time religious instruction is a concept outlined by the 1952 U.S. Supreme Court decision *Zorach v. Clauson*. This landmark decision determined this practice was constitutional and therefore legal in all fifty states. Under released time, students can be released from public school during the school day to attend religious classes, provided the program is off school property, privately-funded and parent-permitted.

The same year lead clergymen from 150 congregations declared 2019 as "The Year of the Bible," (2) the Ohio-based LifeWise Academy launched its two initial Ohio school district pilots. Today, LifeWise Academy enrolls nearly 50,000 students from almost 600 public schools across more than 29 states. (3) LifeWise has a strong presence in Ohio with 337 schools presently enrolled.

According to a third-party independent study by Thomas P. Miller & Associates, when LifeWise is implemented in schools struggling with post-COVID attendance, even though LifeWise students are removed from school for a short period of time for Bible education, there turns out to be a net increase in class time. In addition, there is a marked improvement in student behavior with In and out-of-school suspensions going down. (4)

We believe this innovative Bible education program offered to public schools is having a profound impact on the lives of students. If you want school attendance to go up and suspensions to go down, we encourage your district to partner with parents to register with LifeWise Academy at no cost to your district. If over three-quarters of professional educators believe both students and schools benefit from LifeWise Academy, (5) we believe when your district registers with this program, you will feel the same.

Sincerely,

Lead Clergy from one hundred-sixteen (116) Ohio congregations from the 14 counties of: Richland (76), Crawford (8), Ashland (6), Knox (5), Wayne (5), Morrow (3), Stark (3), Trumbull (3), Huron (2), Licking (1), Lorain (1), Lucas (1), Preble (1), & Sandusky (1)

Pastor John Temple, Loudonville Trinity Church
Dr. Jeff Mills, Mifflin Little Flock Fellowship
Pastor Dave Rentzel, Shelby Life Church
Pastor Steve Kistler, Bellville New Life COC

Pastor Chad Berry, Lexington New Liberty
Dr. Ricky Branham, Willard Ripley Chapel
Pastor Ken Ginter Jr., Ontario Abundant Life
Pastor Mark Dettmer, Pleasant Grove Church

Pastor Mark Wireman, Shiloh Pentecostal COG
 Pastor Les Vnasdale, Cornerstone Grace Brethren
 Elder Moe Hill, Grace Evangelical Free Church
 Pastor Robert O'Brian, Apostolic Faith Assembly
 Pastors Joe & Amanda Nichols, ARC Empowerment
 Rabbi William Hallbrook, Ontario Sar Shalom Ctr.
 Pastor Brandon Johnson, Mansfield Foursquare
 Pastor Jeremy Huff, Mansfield Church of Jesus Christ
 Pastor Jake Keister, Mansfield Church of GOD
 Bishop J.C. Church, Victory in Truth Ministries
 Pastor John Bouquet, Savannah Bethel Chapel
 Pastor Diego Sandino Ontario First Wesleyan
 Pastor David Mahon, Galion Apostolic Assembly
 Pastor Gary Click, Fremont Temple Baptist
 Pastor Justin Lawhorn, Church of GOD Prophecy
 Pastor Paul Lintern, Oakland Lutheran Church
 Pastor Duane Hennen, Restoration Bible Church
 Pastor Brian Phillips, New Beginnings Freewill Baptist
 Pastor Clyde Kerby, Hope & Healing Ministries
 Pastor Steve Burkhalter, Ontario Potter's House
 Pastor Rich Hurles, Plymouth LifePoint Community
 Pastor Matt Merendino, Clear Fork Alliance
 Pastor Paul Lintern, Southside Christian Church
 Pastor Rob Ratcliff, North Woodbury Freewill Baptist
 Pastor Joe Smith, Ontario Westside Baptist
 Pastor Faron Cole, Eastern Rd. Church of GOD
 Pastor James Marshall, Ganges Community Church
 Pastor Bruce Philippi, Journey Life Center
 Pastor Dan Rebon, Father's Heart Healing Ctr.
 Pastor John Campos, Bowman St., Church of GOD
 Pastor Patrick Bailey, North Bend Church
 Pastor Randy Raynes Mansfield Fellowship Baptist
 Pastor Joe Curry, Taylortown Community Church
 Pastor James Hill, Mansfield Paradise Church
 Deacon Ken McGregor, Diamond Hills Baptist
 Pastor Clarence Sanderfer, New Life Baptist
 Pastor Nickolas Kelly, North Liberty Church
 Pastor Dan Zediker, Mansfield Mission Point
 Pastor Dan Barker, Cortland Trinity Baptist
 Reverend El Akuchie, Godsfield House of Prayer
 Pastor Ferlie Yates, Hanna Church of GOD
 Pastor David Howell, Powerhouse Worship Center
 Pastor David Bates, Galion Unity Freewill
 Pastor Glen Mowry, Faith Mission International
 Bishop Greg Griffith, Willard Church of GOD
 Pastor Aaron Boggs, Fredericktown Freewill Baptist
 Pastor Aaron Rose, Madison Fusion Church
 Pastor Russell Stanford, All Believers inChrist Church
 Pastor Ben Gregg, Plymouth Church of GOD
 Bishop Sylvester Ginn, Ontario Hesus Agape Church
 Pastor Cory Schnuerer, North Woodbury Alliance
 Pastor Jason Price, Mansfield Victory Baptist
 Pastor Dallas Waggle, Lucas Foursquare
 Pastor Troy Wooten, Christian Life Church
 Pastor Russ Smith, Wesley Evangelical Church
 Pastor Kevin Evans, Ganges Liberty Lifesong
 Pastor LaMont Lindsey, Book of Life Church
 Pastor Steve Baldridge, Rome Community
 Pastor Denny Nezrick, Lexington Presbyterian
 Pastor Jack Williams, Walker Lake Baptist
 Pastor George Lewis, Shelby Temple of GOD
 Pastor Dink Porter, Church of Open Bible
 Pastor David Koehler, Loudonville Baptist
 Pastor Hank Webb, Belmont 96 Church
 Pastor Lucian Baker, Christ the King Church
 Pastor Eric Steward, Mount Zion Lutheran
 Pastor Troy Thompson, Church on North Coast
 Rabbi Bob Bauer, Crestline Beit El Elyon
 Pastor Art Kennard, Maranatha Christian Ctr.
 Pastor Walter Moss, Canton Foursquare
 Pastor Mark Meyer, Lexington GracePoint
 Pastor Matt Potosky, Albion Brethren Church
 Pastor Jerry O'Brien, Orville Faith Harvest
 Pastor Hank Webb, Belmont Community
 Pastor Joe Silvestri, Wooster Bible Church
 Pastor Eric Byrom, Mansfield Grace Fellowship
 Pastor William Cole, Recovery Church
 Pastors Les & Grace Farley, Irresistible Church
 Pastor Robert Caw, Newark ChurchTriumphant
 Pastor Dave Guild, Wooster Foursquare
 Pastor Bill Fox, Faith Community Church
 Pastor Matt Pond, Hillstone Freewill Baptist
 Pastor Rick Lewis, Shelby Connect Church
 Pastor Joe Maggelet, Ashland Fellowship
 Pastor Robert Bird, Vermillion Baptist
 Pastor Patrick Bailey Danville North Bend
 Rabbi Michael Oyler, Star in the East
 Pastor David Holbrook, Warren Revival Ctr.
 Pastor Dana Gammill, Cathedral of Life
 Pastor Mike Wilson, Lincoln Heights Baptist
 Elder Heath Mullins, Mansfield Calvary Chapel
 Pastor Jeremy Rands, Monclova Baptist
 Pastor Clint Zeigler, Sovereign Christ Church
 Pastor Floyd Allen, Philippian Church
 Pastor Nate Gailey, Hilltop Community Church
 Pastor Ron Puff, Pleasant Valley Baptist
 Pastor Louis Blevins, Latter Rain COGIC
 Pastor Robert Kurtz, Mansfield Temple Baptist
 Pastor Ed Colegrove, Edison EnterpriseBaptist
 Pastor Steve Brennemen, Awakening Christian
 Pastor Matt Smith, Love Action Church
 Pastor Andrew Stensaas, First Baptist Church
 Pastor Chris Spencer, People's Baptist Church
 Pastor Matt O'Harra, Calvary Community

Elder Link Briggs, Mt. Hermon Missionary Baptist Pastor Bobby Edwards, Jesus is Alive Holiness
Elder Henry Bradley, New Community Temple COGIC Pastor Jamie Terry, Providence Church

References:

- (1) "LifeWise Academy CEO Joel Penton responds to NBC in new video: "Here's what they did not tell you," March 26, 2024, <https://lifewise.org/blog/lifewise-academy-ceo-joel-penton-responds-to-nbc-in-new-video-heres-what-they-didnt-tell-you/>
- (2) "150 Clergy declare 2019 as "Year of the Bible" in North Central Ohio (VIDEO)," January 16, 2019, <https://frontlinesohio.com/index.php/2019/01/16/150-clergy-declare-2019-as-year-of-the-bible/>
- (3) "LifeWise Academy Plans to Serve Over 50,000 Students Across 29 States in Upcoming School Year," August 28, 2024, <https://lifewise.org/blog/lifewise-academy-plans-to-serve-over-50000-students-across-29-states-in-upcoming-school-year/>
- (4) "LifeWise Academy Outcomes Report," October 23, 2023 <https://lifewise.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/LifeWise-Outcomes-Report-2023-2.pdf>
- (5) "In a 2023 survey of 495 public educators, 76% agreed that their schools and students benefit from LifeWise," <https://lifewise.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/LifeWise-2023-Educator-and-Parent-Survey-Results.pdf>