

ST. JOHN'S NEWSLETTER



BUILT ON CHRIST OUR CORNERSTONE

ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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GROWING IN CHRIST'S FAMILY -In God's Grace - In God's Service

"Christian Witnessing Part III: The Basics"

This month we are continuing our basic overview of Christian witnessing. In the first article, we noted the reality and necessity of *every* Christian being called to witness to others about Christ Jesus and His salvation since without faith in Him no one will be saved. We also noted the reality that not everyone will respond positively to our witness (something we have likely experienced already). In the second article, we were reminded that to faithfully witness of Christ to others, we must come to worship ourselves, for Christ is present for us there, *serving us* through Word and Sacrament, nurturing and encouraging our faith, which includes empowering us "to live bold and courageous lives of Christian witness before a non-believing world."¹

Unfortunately, that "non-believing world" is the problem. Most of us could handle witnessing *if it was nothing more than* faithfully participating in the worship service. But that conversation with the family member, co-worker, or next-door neighbor, *that's totally different*. "What do I say?" "What if I don't know the answer?" "What if I say something wrong?" Questions like these plague sincere Christians, causing us to be hesitant, even silent (which often then leads to guilt afterwards).

Please permit me to address this from some personal experience. When I attended the required training in order to become a non-commissioned officer in the army, one of the basic principles that we were taught was that "the worst decision is *no* decision." The point was simple, while what you do may not be *the best* possible decision, the worst thing you can do is *to do nothing at all*. This can be carried over to witnessing. While it might be true that you do not know exactly what to say in every circumstance (who does?), that you might not know all the answers (again, who does?), and even that, in hindsight, you wish you would have said something else (who doesn't?), saying *nothing* at all would still likely be worse. Why? Because an imperfect witness *is still a witness*, which is better than failing to witness at all.²

However, with that understood more must still be said. Going back to my army experience, the whole point of the training was so that we would not merely make any old decision, but make the right one, so we received instruction. In a similar vein, we should not be content to give a poor witness *just because it is better than none*. On the contrary, we do desire to learn more so that we are better prepared to deal with what we face as we live as Christian witnesses. And for that, then, instruction is needed, instruction in the teaching of Scriptures so that we would know Christian doctrine and be able to apply it.

Now it should be obvious that the more we know the better. Thus we see another benefit in regular church and Bible study attendance, increasing our knowledge of God's Word, which includes the benefit of having a seminary trained pastor there to teach it. (Truly, I cannot emphasize the importance of Bible study enough, as that context allows topics to be approached in depth and includes Q&A.) Yet, the Bible is a big book, and its texts are not organized under specific topics or headings. Therefore, a summary manual would be rather helpful, wouldn't it? Not to replace the Bible (God

¹ Sean Parker, quoted in *Gathered Guests: A Guide to Worship in the Lutheran Church 2nd Ed.*, Timothy Maschke, CPH, 2009, p. 35.

² This is not to deny that an important part of witnessing is listening to others. That will be touched upon in a later article. Nor does this deny that some "witnessing" hurts more than silence, such as when a "Christian" says "God hates fags!" or such other hateful nonsense. But if one knows **the basics**, one will not say such say such misguided and damaging things as part of witnessing (for they will know that such is wrong!).

forbid!), but to help us learn the basics, retain them, and be a solid foundation on which more in depth study can build. And by God's grace we have such a manual, though in reality two, the Small and Large Catechisms of Dr. Martin Luther.

How is that? Is it that we just rattle off Luther's meanings in the Small Catechism to a person and call that witnessing? Well, there might actually be a time you do something like that! After all, those meanings were written so that *children* could learn the basics. As such, they are both simple and straightforward, which is what's needed for "front-line" witnessing. More likely, however, one won't just recite them (much like how we don't just recite Bible passages and call it witnessing). Quite often you will use your own words, but since you know the catechism's teachings (the meanings) your words can and will faithfully, accurately explain or apply the appropriate teachings to the person's question or situation.³

Therefore, dust off your catechism (if it needs it) and make reading it a part of your devotional life (if it isn't already). In addition, read the Large Catechism, which is still simple and straightforward, but also gives more depth in both explanation and application.⁴ Such catechism study, as it is teaching the basics of the Bible, will increase your knowledge and so will strengthen your own faith as well as better prepare you to be a knowledgeable Christian witness.

Your fellow witness in Christ,
Pastor Nerud

Next month, we will look closer at the basics taught in the catechisms, beginning with the Ten Commandments.

Apologetics: Is Evolution 'Fake Science'?⁵

The organization BioLogos, which advocates that Christians accept secular evolutionary claims, recently published an online essay entitled "How to Spot Fake Science."^a The not-too-subtle implication of the article is that Christians skeptical of 'consensus science' claims are being duped by pseudoscience. Based on their published material, BioLogos clearly thinks that criticisms of evolutionary theory fall into this category. Ironically, however, a number of the stated characteristics of pseudoscience apply to evolutionary claims.

According to the article, one characteristic of pseudoscience is that "explanations are made up after the fact to fit whatever outcomes are observed."^a Closely related to this is the tendency to invoke "built-in explanations for the cases when the idea fails."^a Evolutionists do this all the time. This tendency to "explain away" contradictory data was illustrated by a recent article purporting to explain why crocodiles have remained the same for 200 million years.^{b,c} The very first sentence in the news article claims that "a 'stop-start' pattern of evolution, governed by environmental change, could explain why crocodiles have changed so little since the age of the dinosaurs."^b Of course, if evolution were true, one would expect creatures to not remain the same for hundreds of millions of years. Creationists would argue that crocodiles have not evolved simply because evolution isn't true. The fossils show abrupt appearance, stasis, and extinction—not evolution.^d

Another trait of pseudoscience is that "scientific-sounding terms or jargon are used in imprecise, incorrect, or undefined ways."^a Evolutionist invocations of 'natural selection' is a classic example of this. When one reads the evolutionist technical literature, it is very clear that evolutionists are 'fuzzy' regarding the precise meaning of this term, despite its centrality to evolutionary theory. Is natural selection real, or just a metaphor?^e Does it act on a population or on genes? ICR President Randy Guliuzza has repeatedly shown that evolutionists routinely use the phrase natural selection in contradictory ways, even within the same papers.^{f,g}

Creation author David Coppedge has rightly ridiculed evolutionary storytelling as the claim that "stuff happens." He observes that

. . . the Stuff Happens Law (natural selection) explains everything. It explains why evolution is fast sometimes, and slows to a halt at other times. It explains why animals get bigger sometimes, and smaller sometimes. There is no observation in biology that cannot be explained by the two words, "stuff happens."^h

But if evolution explains everything, does it really explain anything? One can always come up with an after-the-fact 'story' to explain observations that contradict evolution. But according to the BioLogos article, isn't that one of the characteristics of pseudoscience?

Another characteristic of pseudoscience is that "[i]deas from outside the realm of science are presented as scientifically established."^a Evolutionists do this with a vengeance, especially in the field of cosmology. Speculative ideas

³ This is just one example of why memorizing the Six Chief parts of the Small Catechism is not just "confirmation work," but is extremely beneficial for all Christians. Recognizing this importance, we have included regular catechism instruction in our worship services with our utilizing the Service of Prayer and Preaching.

⁴ You can get a copy of the Large Catechism (LC) in two ways. The first is purchasing the Book of Concord as the LC is included in it as it is an official confessional document of the Lutheran Church. You can also purchase a copy of just the LC. Both are available through Concordia Publishing House. If you have questions about what to order, or need help ordering, I would be glad to help you out.

⁵ By Jake Hebert, PH.D.; <https://www.icr.org/article/is-evolution-fake-science/>. Dr. Jake Hebert is Research Associate at the Institute for Creation Research and earned his Ph.D. in physics from the University of Texas at Dallas.

such as inflation theory are invoked to solve problems with Big Bang cosmology even when there is zero evidence for those ideas. Some evolutionists are willing to invoke other (unobservable) universes, in part because it's demanded by inflation theory,ⁱ and in part because they (mistakenly) think that it removes the need for a Creator.^j

The subject of origins is inherently religious or philosophical, and some evolutionist philosophers of science have acknowledged that evolution is a religion.^k Some supernatural ("beyond nature") cause must be invoked to explain our universe. Evolutionists claim otherwise, but their own theories compel them to invoke entities that are effectively supernatural, such as other universes. Because creationists candidly acknowledge that a supernatural Creator is required to explain our existence and unashamedly acknowledge that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Creator,^l creation critics are quick to label creation science as "pseudoscience." Yet these critics often overlook the fact that the charge of pseudoscience can just as easily, and with more far more justification, be applied to evolution.

References

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- b. University of Bristol. Why crocodiles have changed so little since the age of the dinosaurs. *ScienceDaily*. Posted January 7, 2021 at sciencedaily.com, accessed January 11, 2021.
- c. Stockdale, M. T. and M. J. Benton. 2021. Environmental drivers of body size evolution in crocodile-line archosaurs. *Communications Biology* 4 (1).
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- e. Guliuzza, R. J. 2018. Evolutionists Sense Life's Design and Deify Nature. *Creation Science Update*. Posted October 11, 2018 on ICR.org, accessed January 11, 2018.
- f. Guliuzza, R.J. 2011. Darwin's Sacred Imposter: Recognizing Missed Warning Signs. *Acts & Facts* 40 (5): 12-15.
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- i. Hebert, J. 2012. Why Is Modern Cosmology So Weird? *Acts & Facts* 41 (8): 11-13.
- j. Hebert, J. 2013. Hiding from God in the Multiverse. *Acts & Facts* 42 (6): 9.
- k. Morris, J. D. 2008. The Contrasting Religions of Creation and Evolution. *Acts & Facts* 37 (11): 13.
- l. Colossians 1:16.

A Look at the Lutheran Confessions

Last month (Article V) we confessed how the Holy Spirit gives and sustains our faith in Christ through the means of grace.⁶ Word and Sacraments (Baptism and the Lord's Supper). We also condemned the teaching that the Holy Spirit comes in any other way. In Article VI we confess how that saving faith in Christ is a living and active thing in us, bringing forth a new life of good works.⁷ Yet we equally confess that such works, though necessary, do not merit (earn) salvation in any way. While this gives us no excuse for laziness in our new life, it does remain our greatest comfort. For how could we ever be sure that we had "done enough" otherwise!

Augsburg Confession Article VI: New Obedience⁸

Our churches teach that this faith⁹ is bound to bring forth good fruit [Galatians 5:22-23]. It is necessary to do good works commanded by God [Ephesians 2:10], because of God's will.¹⁰ We should not rely on those works to merit justification before God. The forgiveness of sins and justification is received through faith. The voice of Christ testifies, "So you also, when you have done all that you were commanded, say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done

⁶ The means of grace are the Gospel Word and the Sacraments (Baptism and the Lord's Supper). They are the means/tools/instruments that the Holy Spirit uses to bring us God's grace in Christ.

⁷ Some during the Reformation slandered Lutheran teaching by claiming that we failed to teach the necessity of a new life in Christ, that is, a life of good works. This is still occasionally heard against Lutheranism today because of our strong Biblical emphasis on God's grace and salvation through faith in Christ alone and not by our works. But it is equally true that Lutherans have never seen a holy life as optional! However, we rightly understand that the power to live such a life *is a gift from God as well*, given through the means of grace to one who is *already a believer*.

⁸ *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions, 2nd Edition*; Paul McCain, Ed. CPH, 2006.

⁹ I.e. justifying faith in Christ created by the Holy Spirit through His means of grace.

¹⁰ A *Christian* desires to live according to his or her heavenly Father's will. Willfully living contrary to our Father's will (the Law) shows a lack of fear and love for Him and thus a lack of faith (or, best case, an extremely sick and dying one).

what was our duty” (Luke 17:10). The Fathers¹¹ teach the same thing. Ambrose says, “It is ordained of God that he who believes in Christ is saved, freely receiving forgiveness of sins, without works, through faith alone.”¹²

HOLY WEEK/EASTER SUNDAY

Maundy Thursday service will be April 1st beginning at 7 pm. Holy Communion and the stripping of the Altar will also be part of this service. The Good Friday service will begin at 7 pm on April 2.

We will be celebrating the resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus, on Sunday, April 4. Worship with Holy Communion will begin at 7:00 am.

From the Elders: The Elders have been made aware of some concerns of those in the congregation with serious health issues and would like to make the following announcement concerning Easter Sunday service on April 4. We ask that all in attendance please have a mask or face covering on at all times. Those who are not able to wear a mask or face covering for health reasons are asked to sit with their families or to social distance. There will be singing of hymns and some liturgy during the service. The distribution of Communion will not be separated from the rest of the service, unlike services since last July. Overflow seating will be available in the fellowship hall. Thank you for your consideration of these matters. God’s Blessings, Aaron Raschke, Mike Dahl, & Carl Freeman

NOTE: In light of the strong feelings about the need and wearing of masks, the Stewardship Board has reconsidered the health safety of hosting the Easter Breakfast and decided to cancel this event. However, we will still have a basket out for any contributions the congregation would like to make for Cristo Rey. All Lenten supper and Easter Breakfast donations are designated for them.

BIBLE STUDY OPPORTUNITIES

All high school age and adults are invited to participate in any or all Bible studies offered at St. John’s. We are thankful we can gather together around God’s Word. You are welcome to attend anytime.



- Sunday morning Adult Bible class – 8:45am in the Fellowship Hall. Topic of study is the book of Ecclesiastes.
- Men’s Bible Study – 7 pm the first Thursday of each month. Topic of study is, “The Genesis Academy”.
- Adult Bible study – 1:30 pm the third Thursday of each month. Topic of study is, “The Genesis Academy”.



- Please call the office or Pastor if you desire private communion during this time.
- Please call the office when someone is ill, hospitalized, or homebound.
- Please use the email addresses below.

Terri Hock – churchoffice@stjohnsgeneseo.org

Website address – www.stjohnsgeneseo.org

Facebook pages: <https://www.facebook.com/St.Johns.Geneseo/> (church page)

All Sunday services are ‘Live’ streamed at 10am on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/St.Johns.Geneseo/>) These streamed services are posted to our church website (churchoffice@stjohnsgeneseo.org) the following day.

ALTAR FLOWERS

Celebrate a special occasion with flowers for our Sunday worship services. Sign the flower chart, which is on the bulletin board next to the rest rooms. Put \$20 in a yellow envelope (found by the chart). Fill in the date you want to provide flowers along with the occasion/memory and place envelope in the offering plate. The rest is done for you.



MEMBERSHIP UPDATES

Erin Erickson – 2575 Chesterfield Dr., Bettendorf, IA 52722-6232



LUTHERAN WITNESS SUBSCRIPTION

If you would like a subscription to Lutheran Witness, please email Paula Chapa: chapa1962@gmail.com or call the church office, no later than April 30th. There is no cost to you as a member of St. John’s.

¹¹ Theologians and pastors from the early church.

¹² For the sake of historical accuracy, the scholarly consensus today is that this quote was not from Ambrose, but from a late fourth century commentary on Paul’s epistles from the same time period. Ultimately it does not matter, since the quote still indicates that early Christians understood and taught that we are saved by faith alone without works.

THANK YOU!

I am thankful Mom was part of a strong God-fearing church. She loved St. John's her entire life. Thank you for helping in her journey to the Promised Land. God bless you all.

Tom Daniels & family

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

4 Mary Jo Gehn
8 Brian Magerkurth
9 Brad Gehn
13 Jennifer
Magerkurth
13 Thad Curry
15 Olivia Loenser



20 Sabrina Smith
21 Trevor Eastburn
21 Margo Schillinger
22 Jamie Eastburn
22 Rylie Hallendorff
23 Marcia Helke
23 Christian Loenser

23 Linda White
24 Brenda Hallendorff
30 Gannon Marckese
30 Theresa Mosher
30 Sarah Nerud

APRIL ANNIVERSARIES

5 Ken/Lisa Allison (1986) - 35 yrs
8 Carl/Heidi Freeman (2006) - 15 yrs
8 Marty/Coni Himmelman (1995) - 26 yrs
14 Randy/Karen Rasmussen (2009) - 12 yrs
18 Don/Sarah Hock (1998) - 23 yrs



21 Jerry/Peggy Hickenbottom (1990) - 31 yrs
26 Thomas/Emily Marckese (2008) - 13 yrs
27 Gary/Kathy Post (1968) - 53 yrs
30 Jason/Cassie Dahl (2011) - 10 yrs

APRIL BAPTISM BIRTHDAYS

1 Carolyn Werner
5 Beverly Peterson
8 Luke Davila
10 Roselyn Maeltzer
10 Paul Mosher
11 Lois Esterlein
12 Joseph Schillinger
13 Dan Maeltzer



13 Karen Rasmussen
14 Justine Mitchell
14 Marilyn Woods
15 Kathy Remick
15 Mike Kolb
19 Logan Raschke
22 Derek Helke
24 Caleb Nash

27 Gayla Kroll
27 Avery Magerkurth
28 Jaimie Jorgensen
29 Andrew Hock
29 Brian Magerkurth
30 Mary Jo Gehn



Our Father in heaven sent His Son, Jesus, to be our Savior. His atoning sacrifice is the first fruits of all the dead, a pleasing aroma to His Father, so that His perfect life and death count for all who believe in Him. He claimed us as His own children in Holy Baptism. He sustains and strengthens our faith with His Holy Word and His Body and Blood.

As new creatures, who have put on Christ, we bear good fruit. We do the good works prepared for us, which He makes known to us in His Word. By faith then, trusting in the Word of God, we do what he says because He does not lie and always keeps His promises. For "without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him" (Heb. 11:6).

And so the Lord promises: "Honor the Lord with your wealth and with the first fruits of all your produce; then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine" (Prov. 3:9-10). How do we honor the Lord with the wealth that God has given us in His generosity? By giving generously to those whom the Lord has called us to love and support your family, your society, and your church. And His promise is that, in so doing, you will never lack.

A common counterpoint is: "But that's from the Old Testament!" Our Lord Jesus Himself gives us similar promises in the New Testament. He says, at the conclusion of the parable of the talents: "For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance" (Matt. 25:29).

And then at the end of the parable of the dishonest manager, he says: "One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much. If then you have not been faithful in the unrighteous wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? And if you have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own? No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money" (Luke 16:10-13).

And in His sermon on the mount, he says: "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matt. 6:19-21).

We have become conditioned against these promises because of their misuse by the peddlers of the prosperity gospel – the guys on TV who say you get rich by putting God in your debt. And thus, we miss out on the fact that God does reward temporal faithfulness in temporal matters with temporal blessings. It's no quid pro quo. It's all from God's grace and His fatherly divine goodness and mercy. But those Bible passages do in fact say what they say! It's not the Old Testament's problem. It's ours. It is almost as if we have become so jaded against this that we think it a virtue to be stingy with our offerings.

But our Father in heaven still loves to bless those who bless others. He loves to give to those who give freely and generously. In fact, he challenges us to challenge Him: "Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need" (Mal. 3:10).

And so, while we don't give so that we would get, we do receive from the Lord in order to give, and He will bless your giving with more receiving. As St. Paul wrote in Rom. 8:32: "He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?"



Jesus is the faithful witness. He came from heaven to bear witness. His witness is the truth that brings life to the world. His ultimate witness of God's love, mercy, and grace is in His Cross and Resurrection.

Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, and from Jesus

Christ the faithful witness, the first born of the dead and the ruler of on earth. Rev 1:4-5

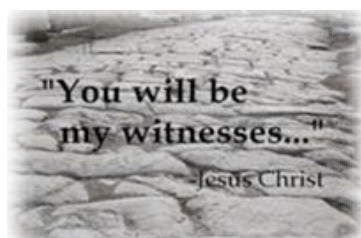
PROJECT CONNECT MINISTRY

The Evangelism Committee would like to invite you to check out the Project Connect Ministry pamphlets. These expertly written, topical booklets have assisted people on subjects ranging from marriage, stress, money management, cancer, PTSD, addictions, parenting, romance, dying and forgiveness. We have something new to offer, "A Simple Explanation Series". A series of brief booklets packed with powerful explanations. How does Baptism work? What are the differences between Christian denominations? How does Christ offer us everlasting life? A Simple Explanation pamphlet provides solid, scriptural guidance on various Christian topics whether they are for you, a loved one or friend, these booklets may be a way to help during a difficult time. Both booklets and pamphlets are available next to the mailboxes in the fellowship hall.



PRAYING FOR EACH OTHER

Luther says that praying is the greatest power of the church. Many of you have indicated that you would like to continue with this mission. If you would like a person/family to pray for throughout the year, please email Paula Chapa at: chapa1962@gmail.com or call the church office.



Jesus is the faithful witness. He came from heaven to bear witness. His witness is the truth that brings life to the world. His ultimate witness of God's love, mercy, and grace is in His Cross and Resurrection.

Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the first born of the dead and the ruler of on earth. Rev 1:4-5



SUMMER CAMP

Please call the church office if you have a child or grandchild that is interested in going to Camp CILCA this year. We do have full scholarships available, and the church pays half for any of our youth to go.

PRAYING FOR OUR CHURCH COUNCIL/VOLUNTEERS

During the month of April, we are encouraged to pray for those who are on the Finance Board, Jan Dahl and Jim Stonehouse. Keeping the financial workings and information of this church is a big job. They do their job willingly. We thank them for their work.

WHO'S WHO in THE PEW NEXT to YOU?

It is the Mark & Rebecca Ague Family!

Mark was born in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. He is a truck driver/supervisor, and he loves to be outdoors. He learned to drive in a Toyota Tundra with his dad. He also learned to drive on a 1955 Allis Chalmers tractor. His favorite Potluck dish is meatballs and broccoli rice casserole. St. John's is dear to him because it is where he and Becky were married and where his children were baptized and confirmed. He said that Becky was instrumental in getting them all back to church regularly and because of that, he knows what a church family is. His favorite Bible verse is: *Lamentations 3:32. "Though he brings grief, he will show compassion, so great is his unfailing love."*



Rebecca was born in Davenport, Iowa. She is a lab tech/teacher. She also enjoys being outside and swimming. Becky finds St. John's relaxing as she has gone here all her life. Her favorite memories of St. John's are Easter's with Grandma Neumann (some of us remember her as "Buddy"), their wedding, VBS and her favorite potluck dish also is broccoli rice. She knows her faith is strong because of her Grandma Neumann and her Mother, Michelle. She loves the bible verse *John 3:16 - "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."*

Jessie attends United Township High School, and his teacher is Ms. Greer. He enjoys outdoor activities like dodge ball and basketball. He has Heidi Nerud as his Sunday School Teacher and his favorite Bible Story is Noah's Ark. He loves St. John's and remembers his baptism and the day he was confirmed, and no one can make BBQ little smokies like St. John's.

Memphis goes to Washington Middle School and has Mr. Smulback for a teacher. He enjoys hiking and camping. He remembers his first confirmation lesson. It was not as hard as he thought it would be. Joel Werling is his Sunday School teacher, and his favorite Bible Story is Noah and the Ark. Who can go wrong with scalloped corn for a favorite potluck dish!

Kelsey attends Long Fellow School and Mrs. Benson is her teacher. She likes to play basketball, soccer and she likes to hike. She loves her memories of singing with her Bible School teachers. She also loves the Bible story of Noah's Ark. Just like her brother, she loves St. John's scalloped corn. She has Sandy Rahn as her Sunday School teacher.

Buddy Neumann would be happy knowing her family is still sitting in St. John's pews.

So, who sits in the pew next to you? Check out June's Newsletter to see!

SUNDAY SCHOOL



There will not be Sunday school Easter Sunday. We pray all will worship together as family and rejoice in the resurrection of our Savior, Jesus.

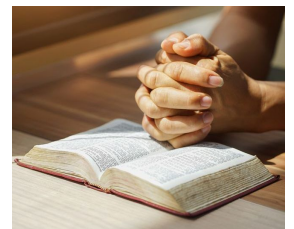
VBS materials are in hand and being looked at. More information will be coming as to how VBS will be approached this year. Your prayers and help are very much appreciated as we begin our planning.

HOW CAN WE PRAY FOR YOU?

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:6-7

We have a 'Prayer Chain'. All prayer requests can be made to the office and a special prayer will be sent to the prayer warriors.

'What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer'!



Pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. James 5:16b
Our Infrequent Attendees—pray the Holy Spirit bring them to the understanding of their need to be in regular worship in church on Sunday and that we as their brothers and sisters in Christ would reach out to them.
Our LWML Chapter—that God would continue to bless their work.

Sunday school – pray the Holy Spirit would direct and guide the students to a better understanding of God’s love and mercy in Jesus Christ and that all parents would be diligent in bringing their children each Sunday.

Women's Ministry - we pray that a ministry would begin which would speak to the needs of all women.

Youth – pray the Holy Spirit would provide the means to work with our youth to keep them faithful to their confirmation promises. Bless and increase their numbers.

Elderly/Homebound - pray that this congregation would continually remember our Elderly and Shut-ins and minister to their special needs.

Stephen/Care Ministry – pray that God would guide us to the needs of others and supply willing people who will reach out to help provide for those needs.

Confirmation Students – pray that they will be eager to study, learn and grow in the teachings of the Lutheran church and their faith. May they see this is the beginning of a life lived for Jesus.

REMEMBERING THOSE IN NEED!

ST. JOHN’S FAMILY—O Lord, You are the great Physician of soul and body. We pray that You would show mercy these members of St. John’s:

Drew Schillinger
Arlyn Helke
Derek Helke
Betty Firch

Jim Dahl
Jim Rahn
Lois Esterlein
Paula Chapa

Lynne Johnson
Lillian Hock
Carolyn Werner
Linda Aper

Carolyn Wildermuth
John Erdman
Seth Winchell

OUR EXTENDED FAMILY/FRIENDS:

Andrew, Sarah, John, Daniel Hill (seminary student)
Don Eggers (son of a friend of Marilyn Woods)
Mike Miller (friend of Bob & Sherry Wechsler)
Jodi Martins (daughter of Gary & Darla Johns)
John & Anita Causling (missionaries in Kenya)
Marilyn Potts (wife of Cal, former LFC)
Pam Bennett (friend of Dan/Roselyn Maeltzer)
Karen Wright (wife of Pastor Gary Wright)
Virginia Miller (mother of Jamie Werling)
Casey Powers (husband of Lisa (Bear) Powers)
Kelly Wechsler (cousin of Bob Wechsler)

Kathleen VanDe Rostyne (friend of Bob/Sherry Wechsler)
Joseph Baamonde (friend of Paula Mooney)
Clinton Kane Family (son of Sandy Kane)
Jim Neumann (father-in-law of Brad Gehn’s son)
Harley Hepner (cousin of Sarah Hock)
Delores Gonion (mother of Michele Barry)
Glen McAdam (friend of Bob/Sherry Wechsler)
Justine Fowler (son of Kathy/Kurt Gehn)
Lonnie Anderson (employee of Brad Gehn)
Laurie Sanford (sister of Jan Dahl)

MILITARY, THOSE SERVING & THEIR FAMILIES:

Mandy/Richard Davila (daughter/son-in-law of Linda Aper)
Luke/Nicole Thompson (son/daughter-in-law of John/Kindra Thompson)
Ken Willeford (husband of Alicia Willeford)

TylerHynes (nephew of Mark Ague)
Karl Flynn (son of Mr. & Mrs. Paul Flynn)
Zachary & Tiffany Gardner (nephew/wife of Lois Esterlein)
Casey Powers Jr (step-son of Lisa Power)



CENTRAL ILLINOIS
DISTRICT
of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

NEWS YOU CAN USE!

Mid-March 2021

Why Not Me?

“Here I am dying of cancer while wicked people are living healthy and happy lives!” Joan exclaimed in frustration. Many godly people who suffer pain, loss, or misfortune ask, “Why doesn’t God help me the same way as he helps

others?”

Job struggled with this question. Elijah prayed in exasperation, “I have been very jealous for the Lord, the God of hosts...and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away.” 2 Kings 19:10. There are no easy answers to the question.

Luther gives us good advice: “If you cannot understand how...then grant the Holy Spirit the honor of being more learned than you are.” (What Luther Says Vol.1 p.93)

How terrible it would be if God knew only what we know! His promises would be contingent on an unknown future. He could not have devised and implemented the wondrous plan of salvation accomplished through a virgin birth and Christ’s resurrection.

God has not promised that we will live 100 years, or have great wealth and possessions. He has promised us greater things than these: to be with us always; to guide and comfort us; to provide for our needs; to forgive us; to give us

eternal life. Of these promises we can be certain. St. Paul says in 2 Cor.1:20: For no matter how many promises God has made, they are “Yes” in Christ. And so, through him the “Amen” is spoken by us to the glory of God.

Life can be painful and unfair, and the wicked prosper. But God brings justice into an unjust world. We have the joy and hope that Isaiah proclaimed to a lost and hurting people: **“Be strong, do not fear; your God will come, he will come with vengeance; with divine retribution he will come to save you.”** Is.35:4

Rev. Jeff Harter

ITEMS OF INTEREST TO SHARE

Central Illinois District Youth Bible Bowl (April 18th @ 2:00pm)

CID's Youth Bible Bowl: *The Exodus*. Exodus (chapters 1-20, 24, 32-34, & 40). This year we are having an “online” Bible Bowl. No team is too small to participate in the Online Bible Bowl. Contact Pastor Mark Eddy at zionlcms@juno.com if your congregation's youth might participate in this year's Bible Bowl.

Higher Things “Forgiven” 2021 Conferences

- † North Dakota State University Fargo, ND June 29-July 2, 2021
- † Colorado State University Fort Collins, CO July 6-9, 2021
- † Concordia University Texas Austin, TX July 27-30, 2021
- † Calvin University Grand Rapids, MI July 20-23,

Higher Things® offers an incredible, multi-day experience to registrants who attend one of the many events each summer. These conferences are held on college or university campuses around the country, giving registrants a taste and feel for what going off to school will be like. We've been at it since 2000. Higher Things has hosted between one and five Lutheran youth conferences each summer! Conferences in any given summer are planned around the same basic structure, but each has its own distinctive “personality” and dynamics, making each a singular, unique experience. For more information visit: (www.higherthings.org)

Here I Stand Sunday

April 18th

More information will be released from the Synodical Office in the future. As a reminder in its 2019 convention, the Synod adopted the following resolution:

4-09, To Declare April 18, 2021, as “Here I Stand” Sunday and to Encourage Multi-Congregation Celebrations

- † “Resolved, That April 18, 2021 be declared “Here I Stand” Sunday throughout The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, its districts, circuits, and congregations; and be it further
- † “Resolved, That these entities be encouraged to gather for worship celebrations to commemorate this event; and be it further
- † “Resolved, That a synod wide thank offering be coordinated and collected for this day, to be used toward the continued proclamation of the Gospel throughout the world . . .

BASIC LERT (Lutheran Emergency Responses Training) TRAINING will be conducted at St. John, 1450 30th Ave., East Moline, on Saturday, April 24, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Check-in will be at 8:30 a.m. Participants are asked to register online in advance and also pay a \$35 training fee which includes the cost of lunch. For registration, visit <https://form.jotform.com/81215292634959> use the training code:0082.

Recruiting Pastors and Other Church Workers

A convocation on church worker recruitment, particularly that of pastors, will be sponsored by the Shelbyville, Effingham, and Altamont Circuits at St. John Lutheran Church, Effingham on Pentecost, May 23, 3 to 6 p.m.

Dr. Dale Meyer, President Emeritus of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, will be the featured guest speaker. Representatives of the seminaries, Concordia-Chicago, and Concordia-Wisconsin will be there, also folks from LCMS Ministry to the Armed Forces and Camp CILCA.

You can register for this Circuit Convocation, starting April 1. Please register by May 7 at www.stjohnsLCMS.net

THE CAMP CILCA LOWDOWN

217-487-7497 / camp@cilca.org / 4124 Camp Cilca Rd, Cantrall, IL 62625

- **Spring Clean Up Day:** Saturday, March 27
 - 8:30-11:30, then lunch.
 - Lots of cleaning to be done.
 - A controlled burn on 7 acres will also be done.
 - Contact the camp office to let us know you are coming!



- **Women's Scrapbooking Retreat:** April 16-18 at the Christian Growth Center
 - \$80 covers your stay and 5 meals
 - Saturday evening worship service
 - Space is limited. Contact the camp office and reserve your spot today!
- **HELP NEEDED!** Camp CILCA is seeking to fill 2 positions year-round:
 - **Assistant Cook:** \$14/hr, part-time
 - **Maintenance:** \$12/hr, part-time
 - For more information contact the camp office today!




Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?"
John 11:25-26



A Joyous and Blessed Easter!



2021

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|---|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|--|-----|
| ELDER Aaron Raschke | | |  | 1 Elders 6 pm Worship 7 pm | 2 Worship 7 pm  | 3 |
|  4 Easter Sunday Worship/Comm 7am | 5 <i>Pastor's Day Off</i> | 6 | 7 Confirmation 5 pm | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 11 SS/Adult/Youth Bible Study 8:45am Worship 10 am | 12 <i>Pastor's Day Off</i> | 13 LWML 1 pm Council 6:30 pm | 14 Confirmation 5 pm | 15 Bible Study 1:30 pm | 16 | 17 |
| 18 SS/Adult/Youth Bible Study 8:45am Worship/Comm 10 am | 19 <i>Pastor's Day Off</i> | 20 | 21 Confirmation 5 pm | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| 25 SS/Adult/Youth Bible Study 8:45am Worship 10 am Voters' Assembly 11 am | 26 <i>Pastor's Day Off</i> | 27 SS Teachers' 6:30 pm | 28 Confirmation 5 pm | 29 | 30  | |



ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
8948 N 1900 AVE
GENESEO IL 61254-8941

Sunday school/Adult & Youth Bible Class - 8:45 am

WORSHIP SERVICES 10 am
(Communion -1st, 3rd, 5th Sundays of each month)

Live Streaming each week on Facebook

Holy Week

Maundy Thursday – April 1 – 7 pm
Holy Communion
Stripping of the Altar

Good Friday – April 2 – 7 pm

Easter, Divine Service/Holy Comm. – 7am

