

# ST. JOHN'S NEWSLETTER

## ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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**BUILT ON CHRIST OUR CORNERSTONE**

**Vol. 126, No. 11**  
**November 2023**

### *From Pastor: "The Nephilim Part II: Who Were They?"*

*The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of man and they bore children to them. These were the mighty men who were of old, the men of renown. (Genesis 6:4, ESV).*

The Nephilim are the subject of much speculation, but one interpretation is best described as fantastic: that they were the offspring of fallen angels and human women and so were some sort of demon/human hybrid and so were very powerful, "the mighty men who were of old, the men of renown." This perspective is then viewed as supported by the Septuagint<sup>1</sup> since it translated Nephilim as "giants," which then seems to be corroborated by Greek mythology which claims that there was a race of mighty giants at one time on the earth.<sup>2</sup> And again, this idea of "giants" would appear to be substantiated by the report of the spies who had scouted out Canaan who claimed to have seen the Nephilim in the land and spoke of their large stature.

*"The land, through which we have gone to spy it out, is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people that we saw in it are of great height. And there we saw the Nephilim (the sons of Anak, who come from the Nephilim), and we seemed to ourselves like grasshoppers, and so we seemed to them." (Numbers 13:32-33, ESV)*

All this seems to make a case for the Nephilim being some sort of partly supernatural being. Yet, when considered closely, one sees that such an interpretation is impossible. First of all, please recall the several theological points I made in last month's article which prove that there *cannot be* children of fallen angels and humans. Second, consider that the idea of "giants" comes from a *translation*, with the exact meaning of the Hebrew word *Nephilim* remaining a bit uncertain (more below).

Third, the report of the spies is already coming from rebellion against God's will. They were purposely trying to turn the people against entering the land, thus exaggeration, if not outright lying, are not rather likely. After all, consider that there is *no mention of these Nephilim when the Israelites actually enter the land under Joshua!* Did they all die in those forty years or move away during them? I believe you get my point. Besides, the Flood destroyed all people (as well as land animals and birds) who were not brought onto the ark almost a thousand years earlier. Consequently, the Nephilim, whoever they were, were destroyed and so could not have been in Canaan when the spies were there.

So we can say with certainty that the Nephilim were *not* some sort of hybrid children conceived by sexual unions between demons and humans. But who *were* they? The word *Nephilim* is a noun that derives from the verbal root which means "to fall, to fall upon." As already stated, this does not mean that they "have fallen" from

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<sup>1</sup> The Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures. The translation of the Pentateuch (the first five books, Genesis-Deuteronomy, written by Moses) was completed circa 250 BC in Alexandria, Egypt during the reign of Ptolemy II Philadelphus.

<sup>2</sup> It should go without question that using Greek mythology as an interpretive tool in our understanding of the Biblical text is very poor hermeneutics; and its usage as support of an interpretation, while not absolutely wrong as ancient myths do at times contain a kernel of truth within them, still remains a weak source on its own.

heaven, but instead that they are those who “fall upon” others, that is, attack violently. Truly the world had become terrible.

*The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually...Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight, and the earth was filled with violence. And God saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth. (Genesis 6:5, 11-12, ESV)*

One need not be semi-supernatural to use their intelligence and strength for violence and domination. Luther translated Nephilim as “tyrants” and is spot-on. As believing men grew ever more worldly, they cared less and less about finding godly women to have children with, simply acting upon their lust after physical beauty. And so as the number of believers kept decreasing, so also the open wickedness of sinners increased. And in such a topsy-turvy corrupt world, these self-centered, vile and violent men, children of sinful marriages and lust, were seen as “the mighty men, the men of renown” as they hurt and oppressed others instead of as the villains they truly were. (One cannot help but think of how many people have a fascination with the Mafia, outlaws of the old west, and other evil men who should be despised, not admired.)

Friends in Christ, some people have turned this portion of Genesis into a science fiction/fantasy story. First, it is incorrect. But second, such an interpretation leads people away from the fact that today's world is increasingly becoming like that before the Flood. Holy marriage is despised, lust is not controlled, open wickedness grows worldwide, and those who do such are more and more viewed as heroes, at least to an ever increasing number of people. As one commentator rightly, though sadly, put it, “The world certainly did not in those days, even as it does not now, esteem godly men highly. Only the wicked were renowned or had a name.”<sup>3</sup>

Fellow Christians, the account of the Nephilim is true history, but like all of Scripture it is more. It is also a warning that history will repeat itself as the End approaches, which the Bible prophesies and experience continues to bear out, hence wars and rumors of wars, increasing violence and wickedness, and the general, overall fact of love growing cold amongst mankind.

Thanks be to God that these terrible things *are also signs of our Lord's return* as King and Judge. On that Day, the modern Nephilim, along with all the ungodly, will be destroyed by fire as they once were by water, even as repentant believers will be rescued from the eternal destruction just as righteous Noah and his believing family were during the Flood. But as this is the Final Judgment, safety is not found in an earthly ark built of wood, but the ark of the Church. For there God's people are rescued through faith in Christ Jesus and kept in that faith by the continued hearing of the Word, receiving the Sacrament, and being firm in prayer and living a godly live in defiance of this world and the ways of unbelieving worldlings.

Yes, we may well suffer for our confession of Jesus, certainly many Christians have and still do. But Christ is risen, evil stands defeated, and it is only a short time until we live in the fullness of that victory in the world without end. And then finally the devil, the Nephilim (past and present), and all the ungodly and unbelievers will receive the full wages due their wickedness, being forever separated from us along with every evil of body and soul, even as we, God's saints, though oppressed by evil here, will be the ones renowned forever, for our names are known by God since we bear the name above all names, the name of Christ Jesus!

God give us His Holy Spirit that we would stand mighty, not in violence and sin, but in faith and godliness until then.

Yours in Christ,

*Pastor Nerud*

### **Apologetics: Is progressive ideology subverting biology? Evolutionists Jerry Coyne and Luana Maroja think so<sup>4</sup>**

Evolutionary biologists Jerry Coyne and Luana Maroja have written an article complaining about the growing impact that progressive ideology has on the science of biology, even suggesting that biology is being poisoned. They argue that biology as a science may become unrecognizable if this continues unchecked.<sup>a</sup>

Coyne is an atheist and fierce critic of biblical creation, whose writings undermine Christian faith and its role in the foundation of science.<sup>b</sup> But with Christianity effectively removed from science, we also see the loss of

<sup>3</sup> *Exposition of Genesis*; H. C. Leupold; Baker, 1942, p. 259.

<sup>4</sup> By Andrew Sibley. <https://creation.com/coyne-ideology-biology>

scientists' commitment to morality, values, and objective truth—so, the scientific process itself has been damaged. Scientific endeavor is now subject to alternative belief systems, including from people that seek to impose their political ideology upon it. This is to the detriment of good science and society as a whole.

*What do Coyne and Maroja say?*

In the article, Coyne and Maroja bemoan the new strictures on biological enquiry:

“Biology faces a grave threat from ‘progressive’ politics that are changing the way our work is done, delimiting areas of biology that are taboo and will not be funded by the government or published in scientific journals, stipulating what words biologists must avoid in their writing, and decreeing how biology is taught to students and communicated to other scientists and the public through the technical and popular press. We wrote this article not to argue that biology is dead, but to show how ideology is poisoning it.”<sup>a</sup>

They conclude their paper with a gloomy warning, but one in which biblical creationists may see a certain irony:

“Unless there is a change in the Zeitgeist [spirit of the times], and unless scientists finally find the courage to speak up against the toxic effects of ideology on their field, in a few decades science will be very different from what it is now. Indeed, it’s doubtful that we’d recognize it as science at all.”<sup>a</sup>

*A biblical creationist response*

Of course, as biblical creationists we too are concerned about the impact that progressive and godless ideology has upon the development of science. We have some sympathy with Coyne’s comments about the direction science is taking—for instance, where scientific conclusions are becoming subject to the dictates of influential voices, people with extreme left-wing ideology. Such ideologies sometimes even have a “form of godliness” to them (2 Tim. 3:5), because advocates seem to care for disadvantaged groups. However, this is applied without seeking Christian values of mercy, truth, repentance and reconciliation. Australian musician and writer Nick Cave commented that:

“Without mercy a society loses its soul, and devours itself. ... [it] grows inflexible, fearful, vindictive and humorless. As far as I can see, cancel culture is mercy’s antithesis. Political correctness has grown to become the unhappiest religion in the world. ... It has become quite literally, bad religion run amok.”<sup>c</sup>

But we are also concerned about the dominance of atheism in science. We are told by Coyne, and other leading humanists such as Richard Dawkins and Michael Ruse, that science must follow methodological naturalism. This is an approach that, in effect, removes God from His own creation. Instead, Coyne and Co. wish to reinforce philosophical naturalism as a godless self-supporting worldview. Both Coyne’s approach to science and that of the progressive ideologues are underpinned by atheism.

In his book *Faith vs Fact: Why science and religion are incompatible* Coyne claims that science and faith cannot coexist, and that there is no evidence for the biblical claims for miracles and the supernatural. Like his fellow atheists, Coyne insists that science must exclude God as an explanation for the beauty and incredible complexity we see in the world—and yet he is far more willing to make extraordinary claims for the power of evolution to form and shape the world.<sup>b</sup>

We would point out that the determination of secular humanists, like Coyne, to remove Christian faith from science has itself helped to undermine the scientific process. Coyne rejects Christian morality (see: Darwinism fosters moral decline), claiming that belief in evolution undermines traditional ethical boundaries. He writes that the evolutionary narrative “contravenes many common religious beliefs ... dealing with morality, meaning, and human significance.”<sup>d</sup> But with that argument, he is unwittingly undermining the commitment to truth itself as a value to be prized, both in the scientific enterprise, and in society more generally.

Only biblical Christianity logically provides an objective foundation for truth and morality, because we hold that human beings are created in the image of a loving heavenly Father, and from that proceeds divine grace, and our legal system of rights and duties. Without that basis, atheists must found their beliefs upon subjective criteria, ones that arise in human minds alone. Such people disagree about what those truths and values are, so atheistic humanism leads to a multiplication of beliefs, whether secular beliefs and values, or even pagan beliefs. G.K. Chesterton wrote insightfully, in the *Oracle of the Dog*, that loss of faith in God leads to a multitude of beliefs; or to use the well-known paraphrase, “When people stop believing in God, they don’t believe in nothing, but in anything.” Chesterton’s actual words were as follows:

“It’s the first effect of not believing in God that you lose your common sense, and can’t see things as they are. Anything that anybody talks about, and says there’s a good deal in it, extends itself indefinitely like a vista in a nightmare. ... and all because you are frightened of four words: ‘He was made Man.’”<sup>e</sup>

Coyne and other atheistic scientists have actually helped to create this “vista in a nightmare” by actively undermining the foundations of Christian faith. While understandably frustrated about the subversion of biological science by progressive ideology, they are in effect reaping what they have sown.

While Coyne claims that science can be done without religious beliefs, he ignores evidence that it was biblical Christianity that led to the scientific enterprise in the first place. In the early modern period, it was those committed to reading the Bible literally that gave rise to science, as Australian historian Peter Harrison has shown. From the back cover of his book *The Bible, Protestantism, and the Rise of Natural Science* we read:

“Peter Harrison examines the role played by the Bible in the emergence of natural science. He shows how both the contents of the Bible, and more particularly the way it was interpreted, had a profound influence on conceptions of nature from the third century to the seventeenth. The rise of modern science is linked to the Protestant approach to texts, an approach which spelt an end to the symbolic world of the Middle Ages and established the conditions for the scientific investigation and technological exploitation of nature.”<sup>f</sup>

### Summary

While biologists Coyne and Maroja may complain about the growing influence that progressive ideology has upon science, their own atheistic commitments have opened the door to the rise of such beliefs. This is because they undermine the commitment to objective truth and values that arises from Christianity. It was Christianity that allowed science to begin in the first place, then to flourish.

### References and notes

- a. Coyne J.A., Maroja, L.S., The Ideological Subversion of Biology, *Skeptical Inquirer* **47**(4), July/August 2023.
- b. For example: Coyne, J.A., *Faith vs Fact: Why science and religion are incompatible*, Viking Press, New York, 2015. And see review by Woodmorappe, J., Atheist fantasies vs facts, *Journal of Creation* **30**(2):40–45, 2016.
- c. Cave, N., Why cancel culture destroys the creative soul, *The Spectator*, 31 December 2020; [spectator.co.uk](http://spectator.co.uk)
- d. Coyne, J., Why you don’t really have free will, *USA Today*, p. 3, 1 March 2012. Return to text.
- e. Chesterton, G.K., *The Incredulity of Father Brown: the Oracle of the Dog*, Cassell and Co., London, p. 96, 1926.
- f. Harrison, P., *The Bible, Protestantism, and the Rise of Natural Science*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998.

## A LOOK at the LUTHERAN CONFESSIONS

*Last month, we continued reading Article XXVI, The Distinction of Meats and confessed that traditions can cause despair when they are wrongly taught as necessary to earn God’s grace, and when they take the focus off of Christ’s and His Word. This month we confess the Biblical truths that prove that observing human traditions within the Church do not merit anything from God.*

*Augsburg Confession Article XXVI: The Distinction of Meats, 21-29<sup>5</sup>*

So our churches have taught that we cannot merit grace or be justified<sup>6</sup> by observing human traditions. We must not think that such observances are necessary acts of worship. Here we add testimonies of Scripture. Christ defends the Apostles who had not observed the usual tradition (Matthew 15:3). This had to do with a matter that was not unlawful, but rather, neither commanded or forbidden.<sup>7</sup> It was similar to the purifications of the Law. He said in Matthew 15:9, “In vain do they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.” Therefore, He does not require a useless human service. Shortly after, He adds, “It is not what goes into a mouth that defiles

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<sup>5</sup> From *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions*, Paul McCain, Ed. CPH, 2006. Due to the length of this Article, it is being broken into smaller sections.

<sup>6</sup> That is, declared righteous by God.

<sup>7</sup> Such is an *adiaphora*, something that is neither commanded nor forbidden by God in His Word.

a person, but what comes out of the mouth; this defiles a person” (Matthew 15:11). So also Paul, in Romans 14:17, “The kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit,” and in Colossians 2:16, “Let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to...a Sabbath.”<sup>8</sup> And again, “If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations—‘Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch’” [Colossians 2:20-21]. Peter says, “Why are you putting God to the test by placing a yoke on the neck of the disciples that neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? But we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will” (Acts 15:10-11). Here Peter forbids burdening consciences with many rites, either from Moses or others. In 1 Timothy 4:1-3 Paul calls the prohibition of meats a teaching of demons. It is contrary to the Gospel to institute or do such works thinking that we merit grace through them, or as though Christianity could not exist without such service of God.



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### SPECIAL WORSHIP SERVICE

We invite you to join together on Wednesday, November 22 at 7 pm to praise and thank God for His gracious gifts and mercy. Our thanksgiving offering this year has been designated for Dollar for Missions.

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### THANKSGIVING BASKETS

We will be handing out food baskets just before Thanksgiving. Do you know a person or family that could use help? Please submit their name and contact information to Terri Hock or Linda Aper by October 31. We are asking the congregation to bring pantry items for the baskets (ex: cereal, Kleenex, toilet paper, paper towels, soups, crackers, cookies, fruit juice, pasta, spaghetti sauce, canned fruits/vegetables, peanut butter, snack items, canned meats, etc. Place them in the box in front of the Office no later than November 19<sup>th</sup>. A Thrivent Action Plan has been obtained to purchase fresh grocery items.



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### GROWING IN THE WORD OF GOD

- Sunday morning Adult Bible class – 8:45am in the Fellowship Hall. The current study is the book of Nehemiah.
- Men’s Bible Study –6:30 pm the first Thursday of each month. The current study is ‘Lost Books?’ Don’t miss this opportunity to grow in God’s word as well as build and strengthen relationships with other men at St. John’s.



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### ALTAR FLOWERS



Celebrate a special occasion with flowers given for a Sunday worship service. Sign the flower chart, found on the bulletin board next to the rest rooms. **NOTE: Cost for 2 arrangements is \$30.** Put money in a yellow envelope (found by the chart). Fill in the date for the flowers along with occasion/memory and place envelope in the offering plate. Flowers will be ordered by the office and picked up for you.



Please call the office or Pastor when someone is ill, hospitalized, or homebound or you desire private communion.

- Please use this email to contact the office: [churchoffice@stjohnsgeneseo.org](mailto:churchoffice@stjohnsgeneseo.org)
- Website address – [www.stjohnsgeneseo.org](http://www.stjohnsgeneseo.org)
- Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/St.Johns.Geneseo/>
- All Sunday services are ‘Live’ streamed at 10am and posted to our church website

the following day.

- **All newsletter articles need to be into the office no later than the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month.**
- **Bulletin announcements must be to Terri by Wednesday morning each week.**

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<sup>8</sup> Here God clearly reveals that the Old Testament Sabbath Day, the seventh day (Saturday), is no longer binding upon Christians. We observe the Third Commandment by joyfully gathering to hear, learn, believe and live according to God’s Word, for in the Word we receive Christ who is the rest of our souls (*Sabbath* is Hebrew for “rest”).



## A DOLLAR FOR MISSIONS UPDATE

It is with exceedingly great joy that Central Illinois District President Rev. Michael Mohr announces that not only has our current *Dollars for Missions* Project (the purchase of a 15-passenger van for University Lutheran Church in Champaign) been fully funded, but July contributions towards *Dollars for Missions* have been robust enough to fully fund the next project on the list – Augment pay for Prison Ministry at Lincoln and Logan Correctional Centers. Therefore, our current *Dollars for Missions* Project is to raise \$20k for stipends to pastors to begin visiting four new prisons or jails in 2024.

Additional information regarding the Dollars for Missions Projects can be found on the district website at: <https://www.cidlcms.org/ministry-a-dollar-missions.html>.



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## CHRISTIAN LIVING

Give Thanks with a Grateful Heart!

Our Father in heaven has claimed us as His own. By the shedding of His Son's blood, by His death for our sins and His resurrection for our justification, God the Father has received us back into His family. By water combined with His Word, promise and name, the Holy Spirit has taken up residence in us. We belong to Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He is in us, and we are in Him. And being in Him, all things are ours. In Him, we are richly and abundantly blessed.



Our true treasure and wealth is that we belong to the most holy Trinity and everything that is His belongs also to us: righteousness, peace, eternal life. Even our temporal treasures are gifts from His fatherly, divine goodness and mercy.

We receive our treasures from Him, and thus, as good stewards of His varied grace, we manage them in such a way that they may be returned to Him. We bring them to Him, hallowed through prayers of thanksgiving and God's Holy Word, as a sacrifice. Thus all our possessions, as gifts from God, are also sacrifices to Him, from which we eat to nourish our bodies and share with our family, neighbors and fellow Christians, with the poor and even our enemies, as holy things given by our holy God. His temporal gifts are blessings to and for us, and bring blessing upon us even as they are pressed into His service for His kingdom and the souls that receive them.

Thus we place all that we have into God's hands. He never fails to remember us and pours out the fullness of His promises upon us. We give thanks for all that He has done, is doing and will continue to do. We give thanks by not taking for ourselves, but giving to all even as our heavenly Father has given to us.

As we prepare for Thanksgiving celebrations, may we all give thanks continually for all that we are and all that we have because of God's providential care. And may we be all the more diligent in bringing everything that we have received from God to Him, so that He may bless it and employ it for the good of all — even for us. For to the one who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance.

– LCMS Stewardship Ministry: [lcms.org/stewardship](https://lcms.org/stewardship)

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## SPANISH BIBLES FOR EAST MOLINE CORRECTIONAL CENTER



Thirty Spanish Bibles were given to Chaplain Paul Weber at the East Moline (Illinois) Correctional Center where Rev. Pablo Dominguez, pastor at Christ the King (Cristo Rey) Lutheran Church in East Moline, conducts weekly Spanish Bible studies.

Presenting one of the Bibles to Pastor Dominguez is Marilyn Woods, President of the LWML at St. John's Lutheran Church, Geneseo, IL.

St. John's: LWML: purchased the Bibles using money from a Central Illinois District grant which reimburses individuals or groups for pre-approved materials given to county, state or federal jails.



## PRAYER GROUP (CHAIN)

All are invited to participate either by becoming an email prayer warrior or asking for prayers. Prayer warriors receive requested prayers from the Pastor via email which then can be used as they pray throughout the day. Those desiring prayers can make a request to the Pastor.

This is a blessing to those requesting prayers and those praying for our brothers/sisters in need of prayers.

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### NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

5 Erin Erickson  
5 Heidi Nerud  
5 Tim Wolfe  
7 Joyce DeFauw  
10 Jessi Ague



11 Wayne Winchell  
12 Teresa Firsch  
15 Larry Kane  
16 Drew Schillinger  
18 Laney Esterlein

20 Kenneth Cullison  
21 Vivian Smith  
26 Janice Neeld  
27 Betty Firsch

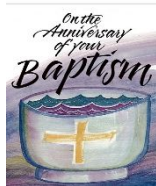
### NOVEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

11 Kurt/Kathy Gehn (2011) - 12 yrs  
18 Dan/Roselyn Maeltzer (1978) - 45 yrs  
24 Charles/April Johnson (2008) - 15 yrs



### NOVEMBER BAPTISMS

1 Lisa Peterson  
7 Timothy Nerud  
8 Janelle Gibson  
10 Jill Wickwire  
12 Kurt Gehn  
13 James Dahl



13 Emerson Mitchell  
14 John Erdman  
19 Kristen Wolfe  
20 Erin Erickson  
24 Russell Blank Jr  
24 Fred Magerkurth

26 Alan Eastburn  
28 Katherine Wolfe  
29 Nancy Wickwire

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### PRAYER REQUESTS

**Our Infrequent Attendees** –pray the Holy Spirit bring them to understand their need to be in regular worship in church and we as 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.

**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.

**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:

Elizabeth Bjork

Arlyn Helke

Aaron Raschke

Carolyn Werner

Paula Chapa

Lynne Johnson

Wanda Rahn

Jim Dahl

Jessica Johnson

Marilyn Woods

Betty Firsch

Drew Schillinger

Carolyn Wildermuth

Anthony/Sami Sedotto (Seminararian)

Don Eggers (son of friend of Marilyn Woods)

Jodie Martin (daughter of Gary/Darla Johns)

Jon/Anita Clausing (missionaries in Kenya)

Marilyn Potts (wife of Cal Potts, former LFC)

Mike Erdman (nephew of Bob Erdman)

Bruce & Debbie Bley (sister/brother-in-law of Cathy Schillinger)

Shandel Loenser (wife of Gabe Loenser)

**Laurie Sanford** (sister of Jan Dahl)  
**Kim Riedy** (cousin of Mary Jo Gehn)  
**Nancy Rice** (Aunt of Kindra Thompson)

**Paul Werner** (brother of Dan Werner)  
**Jim DeFauw** (son of Joyce DeFauw)

*(Please remember to call the church office if you are needing prayer. Also let us know when we can remove your name because your health has improved and you are living a regular life. We love to give thanks to God for His healing just as we send Him our requests.)*

**MILITARY** – We pray for those serving in our military and their families:

**Mandy/Richard Davila** (daughter/son-in-law of Linda Aper)  
**Luke/Nicole Thompson** (son/daughter-in-law of John/Kindra Thompson)  
**Karl Flynn** (son of Mr/Mrs Paul Flynn)

**Casey Powers Jr.** (step son of Lisa Powers)  
**Brittany Loenser** (daughter of Gabe Loenser)  
**Rylie Hallendorff** (grand-daughter of Carolyn & Dan Werner)



**CENTRAL ILLINOIS  
DISTRICT**  
*of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod*

## **NEWS YOU CAN USE November 2023**

After crossing the Jordan River into the Promised Land, twelve stones were taken from the river and placed as a memorial to the children of Israel (Joshua 4:7). This memorial was set up as a teaching tool for their children. So, when their children would ask about the stones, they could tell them how God cut off the Jordan River so they could cross on dry ground.

What are your teaching tools to teach about God's blessings in your life? One way to be prepared to talk about your "memorial stones" is to thank God for His involvement in your life. Think about the blessings you have received even during the difficult times in your life. Remember all of the blessings, both great and small. As you pray to God, keep your eyes open to see the blessings that surround you. Think about how God has placed special individuals in your life.

Just as God instructed Joshua to set up the twelve stones, ask God to help you set up your "memorial stones" so that others can ask you about your Hope. "But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give **the reason for the hope** that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect," (1Peter 3:15)

Trip Rodgers – Central Illinois District Office

**Pray For Our Central Illinois District Missions supported by your church's Mission Dollars to the District. "Finally, brothers, pray for us, that the Word of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored. Please remember to thank God for outreach with the Gospel in Spanish at St. John's Lutheran Church, Beardstown. Pray for community liaison Maria Guijosa.**

### ***Items of Interest to Share***

**Announcing 2024 Central Illinois District Youth Bible Bowl:** "The Gospel according to St. John." In the best way you know how, study the Gospel according to St. John with your young people, so they get to know better the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom He sent to win eternal life for all believers. The CID Bible Bowl is being planned for a Sunday afternoon in April, at Camp CILCA. Circuit Bible Bowls may be held in March. More information will be forthcoming. The CID Youth Bible Bowl is an opportunity for young people in Senior and Junior High School (grades 6-12) to study a portion of God's word each year, and meet with other young people of their circuit and the District. If you would like more information you may contact Pastor Mark Eddy at Zion Lutheran Church, Taylor Ridge, Illinois ([zionlcms@juno.com](mailto:zionlcms@juno.com)) or 309-795-1063.

### **CID BOARD OF DIRECTORS REVIEW REPORT 09/26/23**

Rev. Mark Eddy called the meeting to order. Rev. Mike Burdick began a new series of devotions based on the Gospel of John, focusing on witness and outreach. Rev. Schurb gave the Mission Presentation explaining the resolutions concerning missions passed at this year's Synodical Convention, such as: congregational training for witness, planting churches, and missions to immigrants and various cultural groups.



President Mohr reported that CID has 32 vacancies and discussed the difficulties for our Illinois districts to call pastors from outside of the state. For example, the Synod congregational vacancy percentage is 9.7%, whereas CID congregational vacancy is near 20%. President Mohr gave a categorized list of Synod convention resolutions with brief descriptions. He pastorally advised the CID Board of Directors. He exhorted all of us to please pray for the leadership of Concordia Texas to fulfill their duty to walk together and reconcile with the LC-MS.

Mrs. Chris Andersen reported for CEF reviewing their loans and investments and reiterated CEF's mission first to serve the churches and schools of CID. She gave thanksgiving to God, announcing that Buckley Christ High School made the final payment on their mortgage in August. After their building closed last year, CEF continues to work with and support LuHigh. She noted 3 CEF grants for Summer Evangelism Interns 2024, Circuit Visitor Training, and an increase of funds for the CID Creation Science Series.

Rev. Chuck Olander reminded us of the many blessings to the district made through gift planning. He also announced his recent retirement from prison ministry after 41 years.

Mr. Trip Rodgers gave his reports on Congregational Life and Education. He reminds our district that the Ministry Safe resource is already paid for by the LC-MS and will soon be financed by CID. This is a no-cost resource for congregations that can protect you from predators and help provide congregational servants with background checks. He is working on future youth group training. He updated changes with our district-commissioned workers and the Invest in Kids Act, which provides scholarships for our CID schools and lowers their overall expenses.

Rev. Dr. Schurb announced his appointment to the LC-MS Commission on Handbook. Rev. Schurb has several recent resources on Evangelism: a series on Issues Etc, an upcoming sectional at CID pastors conference, and upcoming talks at Concordia Wisconsin and Ft. Wayne. It was approved to send a copy of the adopted CID budget every year to all district commission members and the human care committee.

The Board approved that the funds from the sale of Redeemer, Peru property go to the Endowment Fund to support church worker students.

Zion, Taylor Ridge; St. John, Quincy; St. John, Louisville; and Trinity, Casey, constitution changes were approved.

Rev. Wilfred Karsten was nominated for Ordained Minister for the Board for National Mission from the Central Region of the LC-MS.

The next CID Board of Directors meeting was set for November 28, 2023, at 9:00 a.m.

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### The Camp CILCA Lowdown



**October, 2023**

217-487-7497 / [camp@cilca.org](mailto:camp@cilca.org)

4124 Camp Cilca Rd.

Cantrall, IL 62625



#### **November 3-5: Women's SCRAPBOOK RETREAT**

- The cost is \$90 for your room and meals. (Private rooms are available upon request for \$120.)
- Each participant will be given a 6-foot table to use. 3 meals will be served on Saturday, as well as brunch on Sunday. Bedding and towels are also provided in the hotel-style rooms of the Christian Growth Center.

#### **November 4: Act Like Men WORKDAY**

- 8am-11:30am, lunch provided
- There is lots of hard work to be done preparing the camp for the winter season. **CAMP CILCA NEEDS YOUR HELP!** The Act Like Men Work Day is Saturday, November 4 from 8am-12pm. The campground needs to be readied for the winter and many hands are needed to get things wrapped up. Lunch will be provided for all volunteers. Contact the camp office at 217-487-7497 or [director@cilca.org](mailto:director@cilca.org) to let us know you are coming so we have enough lunch for everyone. See you there!

## December 8-9: Joyful Hearts Christmas

- Camp CILCA welcomes campers of all ages with developmental disabilities for a 24 hour CHRISTMAS PARTY! Campers are partnered up with a high school or college-age volunteer who will help them have a fun and safe time doing Christmas activities like baking, decorating, singing, and more!

*Camp CILCA exists to strengthen and foster faith in Jesus Christ and relationships with others in a unique outdoor setting.*

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### FROM OUR SEMINARIAN, ANTHONY SEDOTTO

Dear Saint John Lutheran Church,

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ! I pray that this letter reaches you all in good health, and that you are enjoying this crisp fall season. As always, I want to say thank you so much for your generous support for my educational experience over these past months. It is deeply appreciated.

These past couple of months have been...interesting. In July, my wife and I were in a car accident that totaled our car, but God was with us, and no one was injured. This was shortly followed by our move from Florida to St. Louis, where we discovered that our storage unit had flooded over our year on vicarage, so we had to deal with that issue, as well as our apartment having water damage in it as we moved into our unit. Needless to say, it was a rough start to my senior year at the seminary. But, God is good, and all of these issues have (finally!) been resolved, as we refurnished our apartment, the apartment was fixed, and we were able to purchase a new car! And I bring these things up, not to look for sympathy, but to show how much of a difference you make; not having to pay for the Seminary education is a true blessing, and your help makes a real and substantial difference in the lives of Seminarians, and particularly my own. So, once again, thank you.

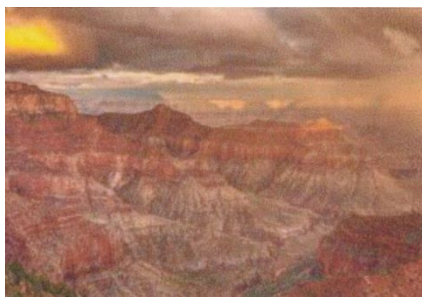
As for this senior year, the classes have been interesting, especially our class on Ethics. I think the most interesting part of that class is the heavy emphasis it places on the importance of reclaiming God's law as a good thing, not as a bad thing. After all, there is a reason that the psalmists delight and meditate on His law, as they know that His law is truly a delightful thing, as God Himself is good, and so is what He has established.

But, as interesting as school is, I can honestly say that I could use a break, which is why I am looking forward to our week off that starts tomorrow (10/13). In fact, my wife and I are going to Arizona to visit some friends who graduated two years ago, and also to go see the Grand Canyon and the Red Rocs of Sedona. I am very much excited to go, and also to get some much needed rest and relaxation. I pray that you also can have some rest and relaxation in this crazy world, especially before the start of the holiday season! God's blessings!

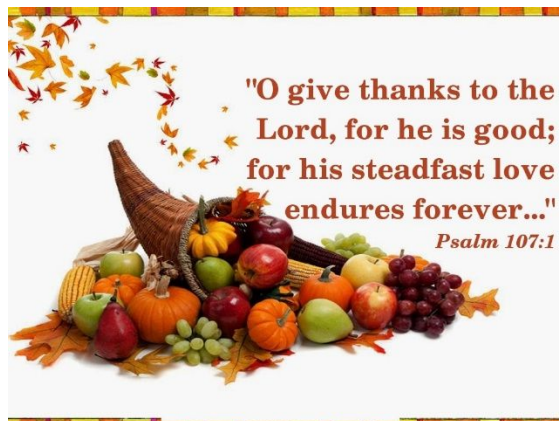
Peace,



Anthony Sedotto  
acsedotto@gmail.com



# A Blessed Thanksgiving!





ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH  
GENESEO IL  
309-949-2516



2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	<b><u>ELDER</u></b> <b>Aaron Raschke</b>		1 Confirmation 5 pm	2 Men's Bible Study 7 pm	3	4
5 SS/Adult/Youth Bible Study 8:45am Worship/Comm 10 am All Saints Day Elders 11:30 am	6 <i>Pastor's Day Off</i>	7	8 Confirmation 5 pm	9	10	11
12 SS/Adult/Youth Bible Study 8:45am Worship 10 am	13 <i>Pastor's Day Off</i>	14 Council 6:00 pm	15 Confirmation 5 pm	16	17	18
19 SS/Adult/Youth Bible Study 8:45am Worship/Comm 10 am Youth Group 11:30 am	20 <i>Pastor's Day Off</i>	21	22 Confirmation 5 pm Worship 7 pm	23 <b>OFFICE CLOSED</b>  Happy Thanksgiving!	24 <b>OFFICE CLOSED</b>	25
26 SS/Adult/Youth Bible Study 8:45am Worship 10 am	27 <i>Pastor's Day Off</i>	28	29 Confirmation 5 pm	30		



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

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

**WORSHIP SERVICES 10 am**  
**(Holy Communion 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays)**

**Live Streaming each week on Facebook**

