

ST. JOHN'S NEWSLETTER

ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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BUILT ON CHRIST OUR CORNERSTONE

Vol. 127, No. 6
June 2024

From the Pastor

“A God for You!”

We like to keep things simple, don't we? No reason to make something confusing, is there? And no place is this truer than in our relationship with God, right? Well, then have I got a religion for you! I can sum it up in these five concise points, just to keep it simple.

1. A god exists who, in some manner, created and ordered the world and watches over human life on earth.
2. God wants people to be good, nice, and fair to each other.
3. The central goal of life is to be happy and to feel good about oneself.
4. God does not need to be particularly involved in one's life except when needed to resolve a problem.
5. Good people go to heaven when they die.

Isn't this slick! God's there. God wants you to be nice, but doesn't get overly specific about what “nice” is so you have your freedom to choose (so no doubt you're already doing a good job, right!). God wants you to be happy and have a high self-esteem. To help you with that, God won't bother you in your life with all sorts of rules, make you go to church, or burden you with other such nuisances. Yet, God is quite ready to be your Divine Butler and Cosmic Therapist: always on call (God answers “knee-mail,” right!), takes care of any problems that arise (an all-powerful handyman!), professionally helps you to feel better about yourself (affirms *your* choices and behaviors *without* judgment!), and does all this without becoming too personally involved in the process (lets you keep your space and freedom!). And after you're done being a happy and, no doubt, such a good person here on earth, well then God will just beam you right into heaven as well (no doubt an eternity of God continuing to tell you how wonderful you are!). Are you ready to sign up? (And then take off because there are no fellow congregational members to have to waste your valuable “you time” to care about!)

No doubt you detected *just a bit* of sarcasm so far. Sadly though, these points of belief were compiled from interviews with approximately 3,000 teenagers. This understanding of God was labeled, **Moralistic Therapeutic Deism** (MTD) by the researchers who conducted the interviews.¹ These same researchers said this MTD spirituality is rather catchy with teens who think God and religion should be like Burger King so they “can have it their way.” But is this thinking truly limited to the youth? Are adults immune to it?

Is it not true that we know people who claim to be Christians, who believe that there is a God, but they don't care too much about who He is, honestly believing, or at least acting as if “the Big Guy in the Sky” is equivalent to “the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit”? (Reflect: “You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.”²) Don't we know people who claim to be Christians

¹ *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers*, by Christian Smith and Melinda Lundquist Denton, Oxford University Press, 2005. While an older study, this idolatrous MTD spirituality is still present in general thought and, sadly, within Christian churches.

² Exodus 20:7, *English Standard Version* (ESV)

that firmly believe that God simply wants them to do their best in life, and if they perform basic earthly obligations like raise their family, work hard, pay their taxes, etc. that God is just gushing over their absolute wonderfulness? Never mind *that a complete unbeliever* is capable of such. (Reflect: “You shall be holy (i.e. *sinless*), for I the LORD your God am holy.”³)

Don’t we know people who live in a way that God clearly condemns; who not only continue to do so, but defend it, boldly claiming to still be Christians, convinced that God understands and supports them *because what they’re doing makes them happy* and, therefore, anyone who tells them otherwise is judgmental and unloving? (Reflect: “If you love me, *you will keep my commandments*.”⁴) Don’t we know people who claim to be Christians that seldom, if ever, enter His house, hear His Word, receive the Sacrament, support their fellow believers, etc., in other words, who have no time for Christ and His Church, wanting Him to keep His nose out of their lives, *but who then wonder why* God lets troubles enter their lives and *why* He doesn’t rescue them quicker? (Reflect: “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy”⁵ and “Do not be deceived: God is not mocked.”⁶)

Don’t we know people who claim to be Christians who honestly believe that most everyone, as long as they’re basically a “good” person, will go to heaven? (Reflect: “Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life. *No one comes to the Father except through me*.’”⁷) Don’t we know some people who even believe that those who continue in open sin, perhaps themselves, will still go to heaven. (Reflect: “Or do you not know *that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God*?”⁸) Yes, we know such people. Even more, we know that we ourselves are at least tempted to think such things.

The MTD God seems to be a perfect God, yet that is another of Satan’s lies. While many things could be said, I would like to focus on just one main point. This god cannot truly fix your greatest problem, *your sin*. This god does not love you enough to become one with you, to live and die for you in order to give you new life now and forever. The MTD god cannot do such, for truly the MTD god does not exist, but is an idol developed by our sinful minds. But the Holy Trinity is real, and He does love you so much that the Father sent His only Son to be born of the Virgin Mary to live, suffer, and die under the Law, earning for you forgiveness, new life, and eternal salvation, assured by His resurrection, and given to you by the Holy Spirit through the Word and Sacraments. Yes, this God “gets involved in your life,” doing so like any loving parent would do: warning you away from self-destruction, loving you enough to tell you when you’re wrong, loving you enough to do everything to save you, *which He did through His Son*.

Yes, I have a God for you, but it is not the god of Moralistic Therapeutic Deism, a “god” who is truly a mask for demons. No, I have the Holy Trinity, who comes to you in Word, Baptism, Absolution, and Communion, who comes not affirming your sins, but forgiving them, and giving you a new life of freedom from sin’s ruling power, a new life that will last forever in His eternal kingdom. Yes, He is a God for you, for me, for all people!

Peace and joy in Christ Jesus,
Pastor Nerud

Apologetics: Earth’s design for life A systems engineering masterpiece⁹

Systems engineering has been recognized for over 60 years as essential to the proper development of complex and complicated man-made systems. It has been applied to a wide range of technological projects involving design, development, construction and maintenance. Examples are automobiles, urban infrastructure, environmental controls, aircraft, spacecraft, software, hardware, and ships. Systems engineering is the discipline that integrates complicated systems, ensures operability, balance and integration, and defines systems success.

Systems engineers are often the technical leaders for vast and complex projects. They develop the concept, architecture, and intricate design of the system. They also evaluate and manage complexity and stability. Systems

³ Leviticus 19:2 (ESV).

⁴ John 14:15 (ESV *emphasis mine*).

⁵ Exodus 20:8 (ESV).

⁶ Galatians 6:7 (ESV). See also Isaiah 1:15.

⁷ John 14:6 (ESV *emphasis mine*).

⁸ 1 Corinthians 6:9 (ESV *emphasis mine*). See also v. 10 and Galatians 5:19-21.

⁹ By Dr Jonathan Corrado; <https://creation.com/earth-designed>

engineers determine how to assess whether a system is functioning as designed. They are also in control of the myriad of other facets of system creation.

Systems engineering concepts and practices are used in nearly all complex projects. The success of newly-launched systems can invariably be traced to innovative and effective systems engineering.

Our engineered system

One example of a complex system that clearly displays the hallmarks of skilled systems engineering is that of planet Earth and its external support systems (the sun, our galaxy, our moon, etc.). It is beautifully designed, optimally positioned within the solar system, and intricately balanced to enable and sustain life.

System Earth has all the tailor-made features researchers have determined are necessary for a planet to be capable of supporting living things. Scientists have long identified more than 250 optimized design requirements a planet must have for this. These include a robust and customized atmosphere, appropriate quantities of water in its various phased states (ice, liquid, and vapor), an ideal range of surface temperatures, and a period of rotation on its axis that is finely tuned.^a

The fact that System Earth has these (and more!) design elements essential for life suggests it is a systems engineering marvel, one that shows all the hallmarks of incredible intelligence. For instance, the range of color a star emits depends on its mass. In the case of our sun, this was carefully engineered to ensure the color of its light is in the right range. If it were shifted more toward the red or more toward the blue, the photosynthetic reaction, needed to allow plants to grow and produce food as well as lifegiving oxygen, would be less efficient.

Also, if the sun were more massive, the high-energy radiation would increase to overwhelm the defensive shield in place (Earth's magnetosphere^b). This would be directly harmful to life, and would in addition strip away our atmosphere.

On the other hand, stars of very low mass are very unstable, and often emit flares that would strip the atmosphere of any planet close enough to be habitable. For a star of its particular size, the sun is actually exceptionally stable.^c

For any star like our sun, there is only a limited range of distances from it within which an orbiting planet could potentially be habitable. If the sun were significantly less massive, that range would become too narrow. Also, any planet within the closeness required would suffer 'tidal locking' (from the force of gravity between it and the sun), meaning that one side of it would be 'locked' into continually facing the sun. This would mean boiling temperatures on one side of the planet, and freezing temperatures on the other.

The earth's distance from the sun also appears precisely measured for a stable water cycle. If the earth were too far away, most water would freeze. If the earth were too close, most water would boil. Furthermore, the earth's rotation period, axial tilt, magnetic field, crust thickness, and the amounts and proportions of atmospheric oxygen, nitrogen, and carbon dioxide all show signs of conforming to the appropriate specifications, set in advance. So too does the system that ensures that, high in the atmosphere, the balance between ozone's formation and its destruction ends up with the amount needed to protect life on the surface from destructive ultraviolet rays.^d

Surpassing capabilities

According to industry, the qualities of a good (human) systems engineer include patience and perseverance, an analytical intellect, strong organizational skills, being detail-oriented, having the ability to see the big picture, being knowledgeable over many disciplines, having excellent communication capacity, and the ability to lead. So it's no surprise that our divine Systems Engineer, who reveals Himself as all-knowing and all-powerful, clearly surpasses all these human capabilities.

System Earth, despite groaning under the effects of the Fall ([Genesis 3](#)) was obviously created perfect for its purpose. It was made to be a home for humanity, along with our biological 'support system', the plants and animals. A perfect Earth reflects a perfect Creator, Jesus Christ, God the Son, the second Person of the Godhead. He designed and maintains Earth specifically for life, in order for His purposes to be fulfilled:

"All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made." ([John 1:3](#)).

Conclusion

With God in the design seat, as Earth's composition reflects, we have nothing to fear if our faith is in Him. If we are in Christ, we possess hope. We can be assured that our existence is not some cosmic coincidence; it was purposed and planned by our divine Creator.

References and notes

- a. Barrow, J. and Tipler, F., *The Anthropic Cosmological Principle*, Oxford University Press, 1988.
- b. Corrado, J., The magnetosphere: An invisible shield that makes life on Earth possible, *Creation* 44(2):46–48, 2022; creation.com/magnetosphere.
- c. Sarfati, J., [The sun, our special star](#), *Creation* 22(1):27–31, 1999; creation.com/sun.
- d. For a detailed outline, see Gonzalez, G. and Richards, J., *The Privileged Planet*, Regency Publishing, 2004.

A Look at the Lutheran Confessions

Last month, we continued our reading Article XXVII, Monastic Vows, declaring that any form of service, including vows, which are done to earn God’s grace are wicked as they rob Christ of His glory, and therefore are void as wickedness can never please God. This month we conclude the article by confessing the Scriptural truth that Christian perfection is found through faith in Christ and then living according to God’s commandments in whatever calling He has placed us, not by taking special vows that God has not commanded.

*Augsburg Confession Article XXVII: Monastic Vows, 44-62*¹⁰

It cannot be denied that the monks have taught that they were justified and merited forgiveness of sins by means of their own vows and observances. Indeed, they even invented greater absurdities, saying that they could give others a share in their works.¹¹ If anyone wanted to make more of this point, to make our opponents look even worse, even more things could be mentioned, things that even the monks are ashamed of now. And on top of all this, the monks persuaded people that the services that they invented were a state of Christian perfection. What else is this other than assigning our justification to our works? It is no light offense in the Church to set before the people a service invented by people, without God’s commandment, and then to teach them that such service justifies. For the righteousness of faith, which ought to be the highest teaching in the Church, is hidden when these “wonderful” and “angelic” forms of worship, with their show of poverty, humility, and celibacy,¹² are put in front of people.

God’s precepts, and God’s true service, are hidden when people hear that only monks are in a state of perfection. True Christian perfection is to fear God from the heart, to have great faith, and to trust that for Christ’s sake we have a God who has been reconciled [2 Corinthians 5:18-19]. It means to ask for and expect from God His help in all things with confident assurance that we are to live according to our calling in life, being diligent in outward good works, serving in our calling. This is where true perfection and true service of God is to be found. It does not consist in celibacy or in begging or in degrading clothes. The people come up with all sorts of harmful opinions based on the false praise of monastic life. They hear celibacy praised without measure and feel guilty about living in marriage.¹³ They hear that only beggars are perfect, and so they keep their possessions and do business with guilty consciences.¹⁴ They hear that it is an even higher work, a Gospel-counsel, not to seek revenge. So some in private life are not afraid to take revenge, for they hear that it is but a counsel and not a commandment.¹⁵ Others come to the conclusion that a Christian cannot rightly hold a civil office or be a ruler.

There are on record examples of men who hid themselves in monasteries because they wanted to forsake marriage and participation in society.¹⁶ They called this fleeing from the world, and said they were seeking a kind of life that would be more pleasing to God. They did not realize that God ought to be served according to the

¹⁰ From *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions*, Paul McCain, Ed. CPH, 2006. Due to the length of this Article, it is being broken into smaller sections.

¹¹ This is called *supererogation*. It is the teaching that the saints have “surplus works” which they can give to others. Those who have taken monastic vows were viewed as being so holy that they had extra works to give to others as well.

¹² These are threefold vows taken to enter a monastic community.

¹³ Note here how people felt guilty when living within God’s ordinance of marriage. This is not to be confused with people fornicating or living together without marriage as those should bring forth guilt, repentance and confession.

¹⁴ Again, this is speaking about simply *owning* possessions in the first place and doing *honest* business.

¹⁵ This is the “flip-side” of the above. While those human traditions brought guilt into the hearts of honest Christians by their false praises of the monastic life, here they made God’s command to not take revenge a “higher counsel” that “ordinary Christians” did not need to keep, but only the monks. Thus they lead many Christians into sin, putting them God’s judgment as well as themselves. See Deuteronomy 32:35; Romans 12:19-21; cf. Luke 17:1-2.

¹⁶ Note how they are fleeing from a life of love towards others, the very fulfillment of the Second Table of the Law (Commandments 4-10)!

commandments that He Himself has given, not in commandments made up by people. Only a life that has God's commandment is good and perfect. It is necessary to teach the people about these things.

Before our times, Gerson rebukes the monks' error about perfection.¹⁷ He testifies that in his day it was a new saying that the monastic life is a state of perfection. So many wicked opinions are inherent in monastic vows—that they justify, that they cause Christian perfection, that they make it possible to keep the counsels and commandments, that they are works over and above God's commandments. All these things are false and empty. They make monastic vows null and void.

CHURCH WORK DAY

Mark your calendar and lend a hand on Saturday, June 1 beginning @ 8:00 AM to no later than noon. Pizza will be provided if we are still there at noon. ***Rain date Saturday June 8.***

Here are some of the tasks that are planned. Wash some windows (inside and outside), Mulch, Minor cleanup for the outdoor worship area, Trim plants and bushes around the church building, Maintain weeds on the West side of the parking lot, Paint downspouts and gutters (touch up hail damage), Level a few headstones in the cemetery.

OUTDOOR WORSHIP SERVICE SCHEDULE

The Elders are planning for outdoor worship services on the second "Sunday of June (9), August (11), and September (8) and the fourth Sunday in July (28). If there is inclement weather on those second Sundays of the month we will try to move to the fourth Sunday.

OFFICE INFORMATIONS



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
 - Website address – 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 15th of each month.**
 - **Bulletin announcements must be to Terri by Wednesday morning each week.**
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MEET OUR CONFIRMANDS



Katrina Grace Nerud is the youngest daughter of Pastor Tim and Heidi Nerud. Katrina was born in St. Cloud MN on June 8, 2011 and welcomed by her two older sisters, Sarah and Nicole. Katrina became God's daughter through the waters of Holy Baptism on July 3, 2011 at Concordia Lutheran Church in Fairhaven MN.

Katrina is attending Geneseo Middle School and will be an 8th grader in the 2024/2025 school year. Her favorite subject is math. After high school she has thoughts of possibly learning and becoming a Marine Biologist.

In her spare time, she reads, goes for walks/runs, plays the piano and sings.

Her favorite Bible verse is John 3:16 (her confirmation verse) and Matthew 7:7.

Katrina likes sushi and mac n' cheese. She has two pet guinea pigs and two cats. If Katrina could travel anywhere in the world, she would like to visit Hawaii or Australia.

¹⁷ John Gerson (c. 1363-1429). A scholar, educator, theologian, and poet. Worked to correct some of the obvious abuses in the Church of his day and to have all people lead truly pious lives. Thought of by some as a pre-reformer, and in some of the external aspects he was, but his understanding of grace and, therefore, salvation, was in error.

Nicole Elizabeth Werling is the daughter of Joel and Jaime Werling. Nikki was born in Moline IL on July 26, 2010. She became a child of God through the waters of Holy Baptism on October 31, 2010 here at St. John's.

Nikki attends Geneseo Middle school. Her favorite subjects are science and history. After graduating from high school, Nikki would like to study forensics and/or religion.

Nikki's spare time activities include; drawing, reading and talking with friends. Her favorite Bible verse is Psalm 118:8.

Nikki loves to eat pasta salad. Her family has 3 dogs, 3 cats, chickens, sheep and horses. If Nikki could travel anywhere in the world she would like to visit France.

We are blessed to have both these young ladies as communicant members. May they daily walk with Jesus and grow in the faith that God has begun in them.



SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

The June – August Devotional books will be given out to the students during Sunday school.

There are several concerns having VBS at St. John's. First concern is we only 2-4 possible students who may/may not attend. The second conflict is the only available time for holding VBS is the last week of July. After discussion, a suggestion was made that our students attend Concordia's VBS. Carolyn Werner will Concordia and also talk with St. John's parents. Concordia's VBS is June 24-28, 9 am – 11 am.



PREGNANCY RESOURCES BABY BOTTLE DRIVE

The Pregnancy Resources Baby Bottle Drive is underway. Don't miss this opportunity to make a difference in the life of a child. Grab a bottle, fill with cash or a check (payable to Pregnancy Resources), and return the bottle to church sometime by June 16. Easy Peasy!



A DOLLAR FOR MISSIONS

DFM is funding new prison ministries in central Illinois. If a congregation lends its pastor to prison ministry one day a week, Central Illinois District is in a position to thank that church with \$5,000 per year. In 2023 it received DFM funds for starts of new ministries in as many as four prisons or county jails. Now in 2024 the project is to gather sufficient money to continue such new work into 2025. The current target is \$10,000. See the video at: <https://youtu.be/BcyFWxA-ww>



CPR CLASS

There will be a CPR class, through the American Heart Association, held at St. Johns on Saturday June 22nd at 1:00 pm. The class will be taught by Wanda Sierens-Lucas and staff from Hammond Henry Hospital. The cost is free unless you would like or need to have a CPR card (card cost is \$20.00). There is no age requirement or limit as long as the person is able to understand the steps and physically do chest compressions on the manikins provided. Length of the class is dependent on the number of people attending (allow maximum 3-4 hours. There will be a sign-up sheet available or you can call Terri in the church office. Direct additional questions to Kathy Curry (309-337-8148) or Marilyn Woods (309-944-7569). Refreshments will be provided.



JUNE ANNIVERSARIES

7 Gary/Darla Johns (1964) - 60 yrs
14 David/Denise Schmedt (2015) - 9 yrs
15 Evan/Kate Rocheford (2019) – 5 yrs
18 Arlyn/Marcia Helke (1967) - 57 yrs
20 Justin/Justine Mitchell (2009) - 15 yrs

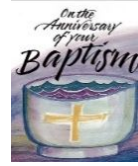


22 Jay/Janelle Gibson (2014) - 10 yr
24 Fred/Sheila Magerkurth (1962) - 62 yrs
25 Bill/Julie Lage (1999) - 25 yrs
27 Mike/Francie Kolb (1970) - 54 yrs

JUNE BAPTISMS

2 Rylie Hallendorff
3 Jennifer Magerkurth
4 Dan Werner
6 Ben Schillinger
8 Matthew Gehn
8 Linda White
10 Kyle Wickwire
12 Addison Jorgensen

14 Gannon Marckese
15 Linda Aper
16 Charles Johnson
17 Randall Rasmussen
18 Martin Himmelman
18 Janice Neeld
22 Mike Dahl
22 Lindsey Gustafson



24 Payten Helg
26 Richard Anderson
26 Craig Mosher
27 Gabe Loenser
28 Kyle Miller
29 Claire Yerkey
30 Marcia Helke
30 Jacob Miller

JUNE BIRTHDAYS

1 Jessica Johnson
1 Jerry Hickenbottom
4 Aidan Copejans
6 Mike Kolb
7 Darla Johns
7 John Neumann
7 Kem Schillinger
8 Coni Himmelman



8 Katrina Nerud
9 Richard Anderson
12 Paula Chapa
12 Emerson Mitchell
12 Seth Winchell
13 Mandolyn Davila
16 Denise Winchell
18 Sharilly Iliff

18 Sandra Rahn
19 Nicole Nerud
24 Haillie Miller
24 Rodney Miller
25 Rosalie Jorgensen
27 Kyle Rahn
28 Liz Neumann

CHRISTIAN LIVING

The Gift of Contentment

As children grow up, they often feel cramped by their parents' restrictions. Dad says to be home by 11. But why can't I say out 'til midnight? Mom says to clean your room on Saturday morning. But I want to sleep in late, then roll out of bed, hop in the car and go to my friend's house without delay. I want to do what I decide is best.

The older we get, and especially when we have kids of our own, we begin to see the truth. Mom and Dad were not cramping our style or trying to crush our personal freedom — they were looking out for us, providing for us and teaching us a better way of life.

If that's how it is with fallible human parents, how much more so with our Heavenly Father! We sinners often feel cramped by the Law of God. Our sinful flesh wants to go its own way, do its own thing and be in charge. But in our heart of hearts, we know how foolish this is. We know that God loves us, and therefore all of His commands are for our benefit. Each one of His commandments is meant to bless us. Consider the last two commandments:

You shall not covet your neighbor's house.

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not scheme to get our neighbor's inheritance or house, or get it in a way which only appears right, but help and be of service to him in keeping it. (SC II)

You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not entice or force away our neighbor's wife, workers, or animals, or turn them against him, but urge them to stay and do their duty. (SC II)

The commandments against coveting are warning us against losing one of the greatest gifts we can possess: contentment. Being content and thankful with what God has provided for us is a necessary building block of living a happy life. Unthankful coveting of what we have not been given will only make us miserable, so God warns us against it.

God has proven His love for us in sending His only begotten Son to shed His blood for us, cleanse us of our sins and brings us back into His family. If He loves us this much, then when percentage of His commandments do you think are meant to harm us? Probably no more than one or two percent, right? Of course that's absurd. God means to bless us with everything He says to us. The Law of God simply describes what a truly happy life, lived in thankfulness to Christ, looks like: It's a generous, merciful, contented life that uses all of the resources God has given us for His purposes.





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.

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

Betty Firch

Jessica Johnson

Linda Lundquist

Paula Chapa

Arlyn Helke

Aaron Raschke

Marilyn Woods

Joyce DeFauw

Lynne Johnson

Drew Schillinger

Carolyn Wildermuth

Mandy Davila

Don Eggers (son of friend of Marilyn Woods)

Jon/Anita Clausing (missionaries in Kenya)

Jodie Martin (daughter of Gary/Darla Johns)

Ron Powell (friend of Brad Gehn)

Shandel Loenser

Ellen Bauer (grandmother of Joel Werling)

Paul Werner (brother of Dan Werner)

Todd Erbst (former member of St. John’s)

Justin Rittenhouse (grandson of John/Nancy Wickwire)

Ron Powell (friend of Brad Gehn)

Don Lutz (husband of an LWML friend of Liz Neumann)

Gary Kilstom (friend of Brad Gehn)

Marty Cavato (cousin of Mary Jo Gehn)

Carol Eggers (friend of Marilyn Woods)

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)

Casey Powers Jr. (step son of Lisa Powers)

Luke/Nicole Thompson (son/daughter-in-law of John/Kindra Thompson)

Brittany Loenser (daughter of Gabe Loenser)

Karl Flynn (son of Mr/Mrs Paul Flynn)

Rylie Hallendorff (grand-daughter of Carolyn & Dan Werner)



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

NEWS YOU CAN USE!

May, 2024

Upon this, your confession...

In Luther’s Small Catechism we are often asked, “What does this mean?” We might ask this question regarding the words above. The pastor speak these words after we have prayed the confession in the Divine Service.

It is easy for us to say the confession by rote, with little thought. If we find ourselves doing this, we should check ourselves and prayerfully consider these words. David wrote by the Holy Spirit in Psalm 32:5, "I said I will confess my transgressions to the Lord, and you forgave the iniquity of my sin." He also wrote in Psalm 51:17, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise." These words imply that we prayerfully consider the words we are speaking as well as the gravity of sin and its consequences. St. Paul reminds us in Romans 6:23, "The wages of sin is death." When we consider how death touches each of us, we have reason to say, "I, a poor, miserable sinner."

When we honestly and sincerely confess our sins and trust that God graciously forgives us through our Savior Jesus, then we hear and receive the absolution. "Upon this, your confession..." basically means, "Having truly confessed your sins, the words that follow are for you!" The opposite is also true. "If you have not truly confessed your sins, the words that follow are not for you!"

If we feel we have not truly confessed our sins, we can take heart! We can confess our sins many times during the worship service: The Lord's Prayer, during the sermon, in the Offertory, as we receive Holy Communion, and other times. God hears and accepts our confession at any time, even when we are not in church. The absolution is a blessed pronouncement of God's grace. And to that we say with confidence: "AMEN" this is most certainly true!

Rev Jeff Harter

Stay Connected with Your District

Looking for additional information, visit <https://linktr.ee/cidlcms> or connect with the following items:

- † CID's GatePost (newsletter) Subscribe to the E-GatePost/*News You Can Use*. Stay connected with us on Facebook and Instagram --**Central Illinois District-LCMS**

Items of Interest to Share

Apply for Dollar for Mission funds in 2025: All CID congregations are invited to submit proposals for projects to be funded with 2025 Dollar for Mission funds. Well-conceived projects will be considered in the following order of priority: first, brand-new church plants; second, mission-focused augmentations to existing ministries (e.g., adding a new ethnic ministry to a present congregation); third, established CID missions (e.g., Ministry in Spanish, Campus Ministry, Deaf Ministry, Prison Ministry). Application deadline is Sept. 1, 2024. For more information, see <https://www.cidlcms.org/ministry-dfm-apply.html>

Small Church Summit - Saturday June 8th, 2024 - Zion Lutheran Church 501 S. Broad Street- Carlinville, IL

This year's summit will start earlier; opening is scheduled to start at **9:30 a.m. and finish at 2:30 p.m.** An ice cream social will follow. The special guest presenter will be Rev. Dan Galchutt, Executive Director of the Synod's Office of National Mission. A former parish pastor and Mission and Stewardship in the Kansas District, Rev. Galchutt has been in his current position for about a year. Rev. Galchutt's topic for the SCS is "Engaging Your Community . . . with Jesus." He will give answers to two questions that emerged last time SCS met: a.) How can a small congregation engage its community so as to "make a dent"? and b.) How to make sure we are not simply providing refreshments, fun, or food, but are also pointing people to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ?

In the afternoon, participants can choose two of the following three breakout sessions: 1. Continuing discussion with Rev. Galchutt

2. Walking Through Your Community's Demographics with Mr. Trip Rodgers of CID staff

3. Front Line Reflections on Forming a dual parish from a pastor who has just been through this process, Rev. Matthew Berndt of St. Paul and Trinity Lutheran Churches, Manito, Illinois

To make sure demographic studies will be at hand for the congregations of all participants, the registration deadline is a little earlier this time: Monday, May 27 (Memorial Day).

Each person attending should register. Start by clicking <https://forms.gle/pEuFuENrygSBDtWG6> There is no cost to attend SCS. **Remember, if you think your church is small, YOU are invited**

LCMS Center for Religious Liberty

Join Dr. Greg Seltz Director of LCMS Center for Religious Liberty

Saturday, June 1, 2024 from 6 - 8 pm at Immanuel Lutheran Church (203 E. Division St, Altamont, IL 62411)

The center provides input, education, advice, advocacy, and resources in the areas of life, marriage and religious liberty and seeks to engage in discussions in Washington D.C. to establish partnerships and resources in our national capital for the sake of our churches, schools, universities and seminaries. For more information go to lclrfreedom.org.

Dear Saint John Lutheran Church,

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ! FINALLY Call Day came and went, and now the end is in sight for what has been a long and arduous journey. Our Call process was a bit hectic because we were thrown a curveball at the last minute, but our director of placement, Dr. Nielsen, was able to work his magic, and we wound up getting a call to a church that looks like it is going to be a fantastic fit: Grace Lutheran Church and School in Menomonee Falls, WI. I will be serving as an associate pastor in the South Wisconsin District, and the senior pastor I will be working with is Rev. Joel Howard.

One of the things that I am most excited about when thinking of serving at Grace is the emphasis that they place on building up resilient Christians. I appreciate the view that they take on how we are to help form disciples in this time of cultural upheaval, particularly by emphasizing the need to engage with culture in a Christian way, rather than avoiding it or building alternatives to it. In a sense, they feel like it is critical that we equip Christians with the tools to properly engage with secular culture without getting sucked into the mindset of the world that surrounds us – a ministry approach that I fully agree with!

Finding out that we were going to Wisconsin, my wife and I were a little bit concerned about the fact that we are not from the Midwest, and we have not really had the opportunity to explore much of the state of Wisconsin. However, we had the pleasure of visiting the town over the weekend after Call Day, and it looks like we are going to love the area! It reminds us of our hometown where we both grew up, over in upstate NY, and we are excited that there are tons of lakes and beautiful nature spots to visit. Moreover, the people are exceptionally friendly, and we have been greatly enjoying getting to know the senior pastor more. Whatever trepidations we may have had in the beginning have definitely faded away already.

Lastly, I want to sincerely thank you for your support. The fact that I did not have to pay for this wonderful seminary education is a complete blessing that I could not be more grateful for. It is through your help and support that this was possible, and we want to thank you from the bottom of our hearts. It is my prayer that God would bless you and keep you, that His peace would be upon you, and that He would preserve you in the one true faith until life everlasting.

Peace,



Anthony Sedotto

acsedotto@gmail.com

(518) 944-3494





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

June 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		<i>Elder Mike Dahl</i>				<i>1 Work Day @ church 8am—12 pm</i>
2SS/Adult/Youth Bible Study 8:45am Worship/Comm 10 am Elders' 11:30 am	<i>3 Pastor's Day Off</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6 Men's Bible Study 6:30 pm</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>9</i> SS/Adult/Youth Bible Study 8:45am Worship 10 am Outdoor Worship	<i>10 Pastor's Day Off</i>	<i>11 Council 6 pm</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>16</i> SS/Adult/Youth Bible Study 8:45am Worship/Comm 10 am Youth 11:30 am	<i>17 Pastor's Day Off</i>	<i>18 LWML 1:00 pm</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>23</i> SS/Adult/Youth Bible Study 8:45am Worship 10 am	<i>24 Pastor's Day Off</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>26</i>	<i>27 SS Teachers 6:30 pm</i>	<i>28</i>	<i>29</i>
<i>30</i> SS/Adult/Youth Bible Study 8:45am Worship/Comm 10 am				<i>For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. Mark 10:45</i>		



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 1st, 3rd, 5th Sundays)

Live Streaming each week on Facebook

Outdoor Worship – June 9th

