

ST. JOHN'S NEWSLETTER

ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Hearing/Handicapped Assistance Available



BUILT ON CHRIST OUR CORNERSTONE

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From the Pastor -

“Conversion Part 3: God’s Working through the Law in Conversion”

Last month we saw that conversion (true inner spiritual change) is a work that is accomplished in us by God; we are passive recipients. But a logical question then is, “How does God work conversion?” Is it done directly on our souls without any means, the Holy Spirit just sort of “zapping” us at some particular time determined by God? Or does God have certain means (instruments, tools) that He uses to do His work upon us?

To begin, let’s consider this question closely so that we do not get off to a misguided start. The question is not, “*Could* God work our conversion directly without any means?” No doubt, if He had decided to do such, He could. But again, that is *not* the question. It is instead, “*Has* God decided to do His work of conversion with or without means?” In other words, this is not a question about God’s power, but a question of His will; *how* did God, according to His divine wisdom, determine to work our conversion?

With this in mind, let us quickly remember that conversion is turning from sin and unbelief to faith in Christ as Savior.¹ But just like someone needs to know they need a doctor before they see one, one needs to know that they need a savior before they will believe in Jesus as their personal Savior. And God shows us this need *through the means of His Law*.

Of course, deep down, people do know that their relationship with God is not right, or at least as good as it should be, and that they are accountable to “God.” Yet even this is due to God’s Law, for the moral law is written on the hearts of all people even as their God-given conscience is there to either approve or disprove of how they follow that law (Romans 2:14-15). However, while this is of value in keeping externals in order for the sake of society (and we thank God for that!), it utterly fails to do what is necessary *in spiritual matters*. This is for a few reasons.

First, the knowledge of God’s law in a person’s soul has been “blurred” by sin. While certain outward behavior might be recognized as wrong, wicked thoughts and feelings are just considered “normal and natural.”² In fact, the law is so blurred, our natural knowledge of God so weak, that we don’t even know who the true God is by nature. (This is why I put “God” in quotes in the previous paragraph.) *This makes the conscience a fallible guide*, not because of the conscience itself, but because of the incomplete and, at times, faulty knowledge it goes by.

Second, people can actively suppress their conscience. Repeated willful sinning will do such, searing the person’s conscience (1 Timothy 4:2). Just as dead flesh does not feel pain, people hardened by repeated sinning do not feel the prick of their conscience anymore. If you tell it to be quiet enough, it will no longer bother you. (This is a warning for us believers as well!)

¹ A true conversion will also certainly bring forth the fruits of faith. However, the fruits of faith are not to be confused with faith itself. They are certainly connected, but yet are distinct. Faith leads to fruits, but it is not the fruit anymore than the tree is the fruit hanging on its own branches.

² Consider how St. Paul declared he only knew coveting (an internal sin) was a sin *because the Law told him it was* (Romans 7:7).

Third, because of our sinful nature, not only do we not know God or His will clearly, we even suppress and pervert that which we do know (Romans 1:18ff.). We worship the creature instead of the Creator, whether an idol outside of us or the idol of “self.” We *choose* to do even that which we know is wrong, that is against God’s very design in nature (e.g. homosexuality), and then even have the audacity to call it good. Worst of all, again by suppressing the truth and our conscience, we can even come to believe our own lies about what is good.

Because of these reasons, a person may recognize they have some short-comings, weaknesses, even faults, but they are not ready to see themselves as needing a savior from them. A counselor, a therapist, a coach, even an accountability partner, sure maybe those; but not a *savior*. Consequently, something more is needed.

And so, like a diagnosis from the doctor shows us our illness, God uses the Law to show us our (eternally terminal) spiritual illness of sin. Not just sins, but *sin*; that we are corrupt to our core. Like faith and its fruits are distinct yet connected, the one bringing forth the other, so also sin and sins are connected, sin (original corruption) brings forth sins, whether open wickedness or hypocritical, pseudo-holiness (think Pharisees). So the Law of God shows us that we have not met His standard of absolute perfection, not even in our externals, and certainly not in our internals which He equally judges.³

This is the work of the Holy Spirit through His Law. It is His convicting the world (sinners) of sin (we have it) of righteousness (we need it) and judgment (it awaits us) (John 16:8). When the Law has done its work, we no longer want a counselor, a therapist, a coach, or an accountability partner. No, we want a Physician who can heal us of our disease; one who can save us from our sins and their consequences of divine condemnation and wrath in time and eternity!

This work of the Holy Spirit through the Law is called *contrition*. It is the crushing of our heart in recognition that we are lost and condemned sinners, fully deserving God’s just judgment against us. This leads to the fear of God, sorrow over sin, and a complete despairing of one’s own works, righteousness, and any form of “self-help.” It is the godly grief that produces true repentance and so leads to salvation (2 Corinthians 7:10). Contrition is a necessity if a person is to be converted. In fact, it is a necessary work *to keep a person converted*, lest they come to think that they have overcome sin and have outgrown Jesus as their Savior (thereby demoting Him to counselor, therapist, coach, or accountability partner!). However, as critical as this work of the Law is, it is not *yet* conversion, but a *preparation for* conversion. The actual tool God uses for conversion will be our topic next month.

In Christ our dear Lord to Whom we have been graciously converted,

Pastor Nenud

APOLOGETICS: Darwin’s Arch collapses ... and joins a growing collection⁴



Oliver Petschner © 123rf.com

³ This is what we call the Second use or purpose of the Law. It functions as a *mirror* to show us our sins and sinful condition.

⁴ By Jonathan O’Brien. <https://creation.com/darwins-arch>

The famous Darwin's Arch, a geological feature off the coast of the Galápagos Islands, has collapsed into the Pacific Ocean.^a The central bridge section succumbed to erosion in May 2021 and fell into the sea. It left only the two vertical rock pillars either side that supported it still standing. The arch (pictured here before the collapse) was a major tourist attraction.

Long age 'icons'

The arch and nearby island are named after Charles Darwin, who studied finches on the Galápagos. He is of course most famous for his 1859 book promoting evolution, *On the Origin of Species*. This undermined and eroded faith in the Bible throughout the western world.

The structure is composed of natural rock and was a popular diving site due to the submerged rock platform **underneath** providing a natural haven for sea creatures. Fortunately, no one was harmed in the recent collapse. Darwin's Arch joins a growing number of natural structures that have collapsed. In Australia, no less than three popular tourist attractions did so along a 16 km (10 mile) stretch of coastline—within less than 20 years. In 1990 the London Bridge arch, then in 2005 one of the Twelve Apostles limestone stacks, and in 2009 the Island Archway in Loch Ard Gorge—all collapsed from ongoing erosion.^b In Malta, the Azure Window arch, another major tourist drawcard, collapsed in 2017. This undermines the dogma that these structures have been around for millions of years and would likely be around for many more.

True age of formations

In other words, the observable rapid rate of weathering and erosion in Darwin's Arch and these other examples demonstrates that natural rock formations are not millions of years old but are much younger. This fits well with the biblical teaching that the world is only around 6,000 years old.

It's said that the surviving columns of Darwin's Arch are to be renamed 'The Pillars of Evolution'. If so, the situation is not without a certain irony—given that the remains of the rickety-looking edifice are crumbling away, literally before people's eyes. So much for the prevailing secularist assumption of an unassailable solidity and permanence.

References and notes

- a. Galapagos Islands: Erosion fells Darwin's Arch, [bbc.com](https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-57181818), 18 May 2021; Galapagos Islands' famous Darwin's Arch collapses due to erosion, [news.com.au](https://www.news.com.au/science/galapagos-islands-darwin-arch-collapse/news-story), 19 May 2021.
- b. Catchpoole, D., [A dangerous view](#), *Creation* 37(2):12–15, 2015.

A LOOK at the LUTHERAN CONFESSIONS

Last month, we began Article XXIV, The Mass. In it we rightly confessed that we uphold the Mass, that is, the service of Word and Sacrament, including many of the ceremonies in order to educate people in basic Christian truths,⁵ and that only those who are instructed and absolved of their sins receive the Sacrament. This month we continue the article on the Mass, rejecting using God's gift of the Sacrament to make money. Augsburg Confession Article XXIV: The Mass, 10–20⁶

It is clear that for a long time the most public and serious complaint among all good people is that the Mass has been made base and profane by using it to gain filthy wealth [1 Timothy 3:3].⁷ Everyone knows how great this abuse is in all the churches. They know what sort of men say Masses for a fee or an income, and how many celebrate these Masses contrary to canon law. Paul severely threatens those who use the Eucharist in an unworthy manner, "Whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord (1 Corinthians 11:27).⁸ Therefore, when our priests were warned about this sin, private Masses were discontinued among us, since hardly any private Masses were celebrated except for the sake of filthy gain.

The bishops were not ignorant of these abuses. If they had corrected them in time, there would now be less discord. But until now they have been responsible for many corruptions seeping into the Church. Now, when it

⁵ We see this in the Divine Services found in our hymnal.

⁶ From *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions*, Paul McCain, Ed. CPH, 2006. Due to the length of this Article, it is being broken into smaller sections.

⁷ Refers to having people pay a priest to say Masses outside of the normal worship setting, being connected to special vows or to help someone believed to be in purgatory. Clearly this goes against the Lord's institution of His Sacrament, which was to be celebrated freely amongst His people that they could receive the forgiveness of sins that He won for them.

⁸ Thus "unworthy manner" certainly includes, *but also means more than* just not believing in the Real Presence of Jesus' body and blood in the Sacrament (that His body and blood are received by the mouth by all who commune, whether worthy or unworthy, believer or unbeliever).

is too late, they begin to complain about the Church's troubles. This disturbance has been caused simply by those abuses that were so open that they could no longer be tolerated. There have been great disagreements about the Mass, that is, the Sacrament. Perhaps the world is being punished for profaning the Mass for such a long time and for tolerating this in the churches for so many centuries by the very men who were both able and duty-bound to correct this situation. It is written in the Ten Commandments, "The LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain" (Exodus 20:7). But since the world began, nothing that God ever ordained seems to have been abused for filthy wealth as the Mass.

MEET OUR CONFIRMANDS

Trevor James Eastburn is the second son of Alan and Jamie Eastburn. Trevor was born at Genesis East, Davenport IA on April 21, 2009, just turning 14 yrs. old (Happy Birthday). He became a child of God through the waters of Baptism on July 26, 2009 at St. John's.

Trevor attends Geneseo Middle School as an 8th grader. His favorite school subject is sports. He isn't sure what he would like to do after school but he has plenty of time to figure that out.

Trevor like to eat ribs. In his spare-time he works in the yard. He has a German Shepard named Zeus.

His favorite Bible verse is Deuteronomy 31:6, *Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the LORD your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you.*

Trevor would love to visit Hawaii.



Gannon John Marckese is the oldest son of Thomas and Emily Marckese. He was born at Unity Point, Moline IL on April 30, 2009, another turning 14 yrs. old (Happy Birthday). He became a child of God through the waters of Baptism on June 14, 2009 at St. John's.

Gannon attends Geneseo Middle School as an 8th grader. His favorite subject is History. After graduating high school he desires to attend college in the field of Computer Science/IT.

Gannon like to eat Cheeseburgers. In his spare-time he plays video games and rides his bike with his brother, Griffin.

His favorite Bible verse is Genesis 1:1, *In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.*

Gannon would also like to travel to Hawaii.

Robert Charles Wolfe is the oldest son of Tim and Kristy Wolfe. Bobby was born July 15, 2009 in Geneseo IL (your birthday is just around the corner, early Happy Birthday). He became a child of God through the waters of Baptism on October 11, 2009 at St. John's.

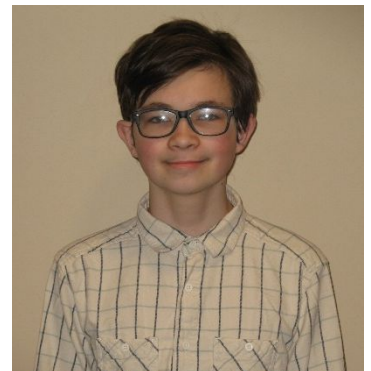
Bobby attends Geneseo Middle school as an 8th grader. His favorite subject is Math. After high school graduation Bobby plans on attending college.

Bobby like to eat meatloaf. In his spare-time he plays with his friends or reads.

Bobby too would like to visit Hawaii. (Maybe you all can go together)

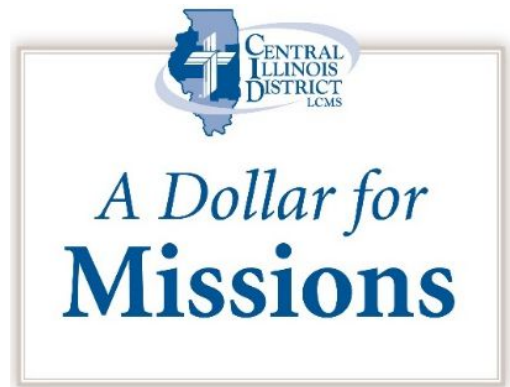
Just a note of interest. All three boys were baptized at Beautiful Savior church during our time there after the fire, before our new building was constructed.

We pray for these three young men that they continue to desire learning of their Lord, that they walk each day with Lord and that their lives will reflect whose they belong to giving God all glory and praise.



“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich” (2 Corinthians 8:9). ‘A Dollar for Missions’ is a project hosted by Evangelism/Stewardship Bds. One EXTRA dollar given by EACH member of the churches of the Central IL District Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, will enable tremendous Mission work to be accomplished.

At the time of this printing, the current ‘Dollar for Missions’ project has not been completed. Here is a reminder of the project: These first dollars will be used to provide the first half-years’ worth of support for a Vicar to serve Immanuel Lutheran Church, Springfield, devoting most of his time to continuing development of this congregation’s new church start in northwest Springfield, Immanuel Lutheran Chapel. CID’s first \$30,000 of DFM funds will be applied to this endeavor. For more information, see <http://www.cidlcms.org/ministry-dfm-current-project.html>



CHRISTIAN LIVING

(A message from Stewardship & Evangelism)

Follow Him in Generosity

Our Savior calls us to follow Him in generosity. “For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you” (John 13:15). We cannot give our lives for the salvation of the world, of course. Praise God, that job’s already done! But with hearts full of thanksgiving for what Jesus has given us, we can follow His example of generous giving. And Jesus’ generosity is not merely an example. Our Lord also commands us to act according to our gifts: “The one who contributes, [let him give] in generosity” (Rom. 12:8).

So, when we bring offerings to the Lord, we should strive to heed His command and follow the pattern He has established for us. Jesus did not give us leftovers. He gave His best. We should not give leftovers, either, but the first and best of what He has given us. Jesus did not give as an afterthought — He gave according to the plan of salvation God established from the foundation of the world. So, when it comes to our own offerings, we should make a thoughtful plan to give generously, in proportion to the way He has blessed us. Like the Macedonian Christians, who gave according to their ability, and even beyond their ability (2 Cor. 8:3), we should honor the Lord by giving a generous portion of the income that God provides us.

We should also give freely, just as Jesus gave freely for us. There is no compulsion involved in our works of love and our offerings to the Lord. We do not give grudgingly, but willingly and cheerfully, each “as he has decided in his heart,” as the Lord says (2 Cor. 9:7). There is no New Testament ceremonial law involved here. Rather, we are free to give as generously as our Savior has given for us!

In the same way, our Lord teaches us to give generously out of our love for Him and for our neighbor. Jesus shows us that genuine love is always love “in deed” (1 John 3:18). It is love that sees our neighbor in need and gives generously to help him. It is love that hears the Word of the Lord and does what it says. If we truly love, we give generously. If we give without love, our giving is not truly following Jesus.

Finally, we follow Jesus in generosity when we support His Gospel ministry and other works of mercy. The people of Israel gave generously to construct and support the operation of the tabernacle, for that was the place where the Lord received the Old Testament sacrifices, through which He bestowed the forgiveness of sins on His people. So, they gave abundantly, so abundantly they had to be told to stop giving! (Ex. 36:5–6). In the same way, we should bring generous offerings to support the Lord’s work. We support our congregations in the preaching of His Word, Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, which bestow His gifts of forgiveness, life and salvation, and we take care of those who are poor and needy.

Our Savior calls us to follow His example in generous giving. Let us then, with thankful hearts, rededicate ourselves to following Him in generosity. – LCMS Stewardship Ministry



If anyone thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more... Yet with all he had, St. Paul knew he had placed his confidence in the wrong place. Many still don't know this about themselves. Your confidence is in Christ, and in this confidence make known to others the confidence they can have in Him who gives life and salvation.

BLANKETS FOR PHIL'S FRIENDS

We could use some help. We are making 8 blankets which will be included in comfort boxes for cancer patients. The fabric is all cut to size and ready for tying the two layers together. Please contact Terri Hock if you are willing to help tie one or several blankets together. This is a mission project from the Evangelism/Stewardship Bds.

BABY BOTTLE BOOMERANG

St. John's will participate in filling Baby bottles for Pregnancy Resources. This project will begin Mothers' Day and run through Fathers' Day. Simply pick up a bottle, place your gift in the bottle and return it to the church office at your earliest convenience. These monetary gifts help to save the lives of babies.

MAY Birthdays

1 Matthew Gehn
3 Ben Schillinger
3 Kyle Wickwire
4 Joshua Hock
6 Steven Magerkurth
8 Charles Johnson
9 Jacob Miller
9 Alexander Wolfe
11 Daniel Werner
12 Broc Krantz



12 Julie Lage
13 Craig Mosher
14 Karen Rasmussen
16 Blake Hallendorff
16 Ryan Hallendorff
17 Gracelyn Kulpa
19 Linda Aper
20 Kyle Miller
21 Claire Yerkey
25 Heidi Freeman

25 Brittany Loenser
27 Lindsey Gustafson
27 Randy Rasmussen
28 Gage Gehn
28 Nick Miller
30 Mike Dahl
30 Emma Yerkey
31 Gabe Loenser

MAY Anniversaries

4 Ron/Brenda Hallendorff (1996) - 27 yrs
16 Alan/Jamie Eastburn (2001) - 22 yrs
21 Adam/Samantha Hock (2016) - 7 yr



23 Gabe/Shandel Loenser (2012) - 11 yrs
23 John/Nancy Wickwire (1981) - 42 yrs

MAY Baptisms

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



**Lutheran
Women
in Mission**

President Marilyn Woods opened the meeting in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Members present were; Liz Neumann, Marilyn Woods, Carolyn Werner, Linda Aper and Bev Peterson.

Marilyn quoted one of her favorite Bible promises. Psalm 91:1-2.

Bev read a devotion about wearing the cross. She led the Bible study, God's Chosen People. All recited the LWML Pledge together.

The minutes from the March meeting were approved as read. A change in wording was suggested in regard to the district convention.

Treasurer's report: Bank balance as of Mar. 31 is \$434.60 which includes \$262.84 for missions, \$171.76 for operating. Receipts for March were; Mites \$143.14, Missions \$60, and Operating \$20. Disbursements: Mites \$143.14 to CID-LWML.

We received a 'thank you' from Pastor Nerud for the Christmas gift.

NEW BUSINESS:

June 13 we will be hosting the zone meeting with Missionary Clausung. Marilyn will contact Mary Donegan and Pastor Nerud about arrangements and invitations to the other church in the zone. When we hosted this gathering in the past. Our LWML provided a variety of desserts and drinks.

The meeting closed with Mite Box prayer #3.

Respectfully submitted, Beverly Peterson



The Youth meet regularly each month on the third Sunday after worship. Summer activities are being planned. Follow are the circuit events coming up.

1. We are planning to go to Starved Rock on June 25 for the afternoon. Details are coming soon.
2. In August Taylor Ridge will host cook-out/outdoor games. Don't worry the games will be easy and fun for all.

St. Matthews will host something in May, but we do not have further details. Please share this with your children and get them excited to join the area teens and show them they are not alone in their worship of the true Triune God.

If you have any questions please contact me by email or call/text me at 309-716-8621.

An email has been sent to the parents of students requesting to let Barb Miller know who is interested in attending VBS and what dates your child won't be able to attend. PLEASE let Barb know ASAP if you have not already done so.

On Palm Sunday, the students in a group with teachers processed to the front of the sanctuary laying their palms on the steps of the communion railing.



GROWING IN THE WORD OF GOD

- Sunday morning Adult Bible class – 8:45am in the Fellowship Hall. The study of the book of Colossians continues.
- Men's Bible Study – 7 pm the first Thursday of each month. The study topic is; ***How We Got the Bible***. 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.
- Adult Instruction classes meet each Tuesday evening @ 7 pm



- 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 blurs must be to Terri by Wednesday morning each week.



She looks well to the ways of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness. Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her: Psalm 31:27-28

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 and occasion/memory and place envelope in the offering plate. Flowers will be ordered by the office and picked up for you.



Thank you to all the volunteers who helped with the Easter Breakfast. We appreciate the donations of food, help setting up, clean, serving and all the kitchen workers who made food and served. Also, thank you to Paula Chapa, Kindra Thompson, Barb Miller, Janelle Gibson, Carolyn Werner and Marilyn Woods for chairing this event. We added to the gifts for Cristo Rey in the amount of \$439. Blessings to all.

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

Lois Esterlein

Lynne Johnson

Wanda Rahn

Paula Chapa

Betty Firch

Jessica Johnson

Marilyn Woods

Jim Dahl

Arlyn Helke

Drew Schillinger

Mary Jayne Nash

Anthony/Sami Sedotto (Seminararian)

Andrew/Sarah Hill & family (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)

Rev. Justin Kane (son of Sandra Kane)

Laurie Sanford (sister of Jan Dahl)

Susan Mayden (sister of Michele Barry)

Mike Erdman (nephew of Bob Erdman)

Kim Riedy (cousin of Mary Jo Gehn)

Shandel Loenser (wife of Gabe Loenser)

(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/husband of Linda Aper)

Luke/Nicole Thompson (son/wife of John/Kindra Thompson)
Karl Flynn (son of Mr/Mrs Paul Flynn)

Casey Powers Jr. (step son of Lisa Powers)
Zachary/Tiffany Gardner (nephew/wife of Lois Esterlein)
Brittany Loenser (daughter of Gabe Loenser)

MEMBERSHIP

New information: Mary Jayne Nash – 309-714-8826



NEWS YOU CAN USE

April 2023

The Easter acclamation **“Christ is risen! He is risen, indeed! Alleluia!”** are welcome words of joy and comfort in concert with Jesus’ promise, **“Because I live, you also will live.”** (Jn. 14:19)

St. Paul reminds us that we have been united with Christ’s death and resurrection through our baptism, which is the very power of God doing something mysteriously wonderful to us. United with Christ’s death means that our old sinful self was crucified. (Cf. Rom. 6:2,6) United with His resurrection means that we have been given new lives in the Spirit to live for Him who died and rose again for us. It also means that we will not die, but on the last day be raised from our own tombs to live with our Lord in eternity. (Cf. Rom. 6:8; Jn. 11:25-26) Through baptism, we have been made heirs with Christ to share in His sufferings, here and now, and to share in His glory, then and forevermore.

Let us rejoice in the certain promise of our Lord who says to us, *“Because I live, you also will live,”* and proclaim: Christ is risen! He is risen, indeed! Alleluia! Alleluia! Amen.

Pastor Kent A. Umbarger

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 in your prayers the outreach of Christ Lutheran Church for the Deaf and Pastor Tom Phillips. Pastor Phillips is our CID missionary to the deaf. He serves in Jacksonville but also spans the District to bring the Good News about Jesus to the hearing-impaired.

Items of Interest to Share

CID-Board of Directors Meeting Summary March 28, 2023

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. Minutes from the Jan 24, 2024 meeting were approved.^{2nd} Vice President Pastor Michael Burdick and Secretary Pastor Kent Umbarger excused all others present. Pastor Bruce Scarbeary served as assistant secretary.

The meeting Devotion leader was Pastor Mark Eddy. Text 1 Pet 4:1-11

Pastor Rodney Blomquist addressed the Board concerning CID Prison Ministry.

The CID-CEF currently carries a total of \$19.3 million in loans. It was also reported that their 18-month CD would remain at 3 percent interest.

Various efforts continue between the CID Gift Planer and individual congregation and congregation members.

Mr. Lewis Rodgers will serve as the point person for the MinistrySafe program. Various CID congregations are either starting or looking into starting schools.

Dr. Schurb raised the prospect of moving to modified service roughly beginning Sept 1, 2024. Finance & Management will review Dr. Schurb’s request and bring more information to the May BOD meeting.

Plans were approved for the University Lutheran Church (Champaign) to partner with Living Alternatives Crisis Pregnancy Resource Center.

A discussion was held concerning Cristo Rey’s request for financial assistance to resurface their parking lot. CID seeks more information before the May meeting before deciding on their request.

The District Salary Guidelines lines for 2024 were discussed and approved. They will be posted to the District Web page and submitted to the congregations.

Prayer Cards entitled “A Prayer for Wednesday’s Child” concerning the Life of children in the womb are available upon request from Dr. Schurb.

It was noted that the District is currently running behind projected income.

Treasurer Oschwald noted that the District Convention expenses for the 2024 Synod Convention are due soon. Finance and Management noted that District manuals for Personnel, Business, and CID staff need to be updated. BOD accepted the constitution of Trinity-Arenzville, Christ-Peoria, and Zion-Lincoln.

A motion to clarify the Synod concerning Dr. Schurb’s service as both CID’s-BOD and Staff advisory representative to the Synod Convention passed.

President Mohr noted that Redeemer-Peru, IL would be dissolving. A resolution was passed granting Redeemer permission to divest their property at their discretion.

The meeting closed with Prayer and adjourned at 12:50 p.m.

Next BOD meeting is May 23, 2024, at 9 a.m.

Lutheran Heritage Foundation

FREE RESOURCES: Do you know someone who doesn’t speak English as a first language, and you want to introduce them to the Savior? Check out the Lutheran Heritage Foundation’s database of free Lutheran books, translated into more than 140 languages worldwide! Resources include children’s Bible storybooks (often also suitable for adults with lower literacy levels), Luther’s *Small Catechism*, and devotion booklets in languages like Spanish, Chinese, Hindi, and Swahili – all available at no cost to the ministries, short-term mission teams, and individuals who need them. Search the LHF Publication List at www.LHFmissions.org/Publications.

Prison Ministry Materials: Consider donating printed Gospel-centered materials to a nearby state or federal prison or county jail. Thanks to Central Illinois LWML, you or your CID congregation can make such a donation and receive up to \$400 reimbursement from the District. (This reimbursement amount has been *raised* from \$200.) See the voucher, guidelines, and list of approved materials at <http://www.cidlcms.org/resources/outreach/Vouchers%20and%20Guidelines.pdf>

Keeping Christ on Campus: Lutheran Legacy Foundation of Paris, Illinois, has announced that it will make additional financial gifts to match YOUR monetary contributions to endowments funds that support CID’s four established campus ministries: at U. of I., ISU, EIU, and WIU. Lutheran Legacy is now providing a 20% match. If you contribute five dollars to one of these endowment funds, your gift will amount to six dollars! For additional information, see <http://www.cidlcms.org/outreach-missions-campus.html>

Central Illinois District Scholarship Sunday- May 7, 2023

Fifteen students (10 seminarians, one deaconess, and four undergraduate students) were given grants by our CID Scholarship Committee this year. Thanks to substantial gifts given by the Seider Scholarship Endowment, the CID LWML, and our CID Scholarship Endowment Fund, as well as many generous gifts given by faithful Lutherans like you, \$105,500 was awarded to help offset \$327,347 worth of unmet financial needs. Unmet needs are the student's responsibility after scholarships, grants, parental assistance, expected congregational gifts, and the like are subtracted from the total cost of education.

You can help ease their burden with your gift to the Central Illinois District Scholarship Sunday appeal. By indicating on your, “Will They Always Be There?” envelope or on your check, you can direct all or part of your gift to go toward helping our 2023-2024 students by designating “CID Scholarship Fund,” or you may choose to make a gift to the “CID Scholarship Endowment Fund.” The income from the CID Endowment Fund will be used to make need-based grants to our students for years to come.

The special “Will They Always Be There?” envelopes are available at your church, or you may send your gift directly to the Central Illinois District Scholarship Fund, 1850 N. Grand Avenue West, Springfield, IL 62702-1626.

Once again, I want to stress the importance of providing these need-based grants to our CID students attending our seminaries and Concordia Universities as they prepare for careers in full-time church work. The ever-increasing cost of education is creating enormous education debt for many of these servants of God. Together, our generosity may be the difference that allows some of them to continue their studies and helps relieve the burden of their educational debt.

If you are considering a major gift, a gift of appreciated assets, or a gift through your estate, you may contact CID Planned Gift Counselor. Rev. Charles Olander, at (217) 416-8842 or by email at c-olander@msn.com for assistance. Thank you.

LERT Chainsaw Training Event

To be held at: St. Peter's Lutheran Church

200 Cole Street

East Peoria, Illinois 61611

Saturday, May 20, 2023. 9:00 am to 5:00 pm

The registration fee (\$35.00) will include breakfast and lunch.

You must be a certified LERT member to attend this class.

If you are already LERT chainsaw certified, the event is considered continuing education (no charge).

Chainsaw Training Registration Online Link:

Please click on the link below or copy and paste and complete the entire registration form. https://www.lcms-lert.org/need/detail/?need_id=785803

Small Church Summit - June 3, 2023 from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

On Saturday, June 3, Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church in Farmersville (at I-55 exit 72) will host the third Small Church Summit. You can attend for free.

The featured presenter will be Pastor Todd Kollbaum, Director of LCMS Rural and Small Town Mission. He will talk about *resources* and *cooperation*:

- Helps for small churches
- Ways for various congregations to work together

Rev. Kollbaum himself is currently serving as a rural pastor, at Trinity Lutheran Church in Madison, Nebraska. You will find him to be quite an encourager in the Lord with a wealth of experience and a lot of information to share.

Also on June 3, Trip Rodgers of CID staff will speak briefly concerning the Synod's national contract with Ministry Safe, a firm that provides churches with background checks and other tools to see especially to the safety of children. Your congregation can get involved with Ministry Safe this year at no cost! Trip will tell you more.

Toward the end of the proceedings, a discussion will be held about the future of the Small Church Summit. We are in the process of outgrowing the small church where we started! Come and be part of this future planning.

If you have a long drive to Farmersville, consider traveling as far as Springfield on the previous afternoon or evening. Contact Ken Schurb of CID staff by May 8, and he will try to set up a billet for you with a host family in Springfield on the evening of Friday, June 2. E-mail kschurb@cidlcms.org

If you regard your church as small, YOU are invited to the Small Church Summit! It will work best if you bring one or two others with you. Please register by May 26 at <https://forms.gle/PPzJpC72NJhCZqME8>

In addition, Pastor Todd Kollbaum, Director of LCMS Rural/Small Town Mission and featured presenter at the next Small Church Summit, will also speak at Concordia Lutheran Church in Springfield on Sunday morning, June 4. At 9:00 he will conduct an Open Forum with the Bible class. Come with your questions about rural/small town ministry! He will also preach at the 10:00 church service.

Congregation presidents or representatives from various committees in rural or small town churches fairly close to Springfield have an opportunity here to meet Pastor Kollbaum, ask him your questions, and become better acquainted with the Synod's efforts to help with rural/small town ministry. Concordia Lutheran Church is located at 2300 E. Wilshire Rd., Springfield, IL 62703.

LETTER FROM SEMINARIAN ANTHONY SEDOTTO

Dear Saints John Lutheran Church,

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ! He is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia! I pray that this Lenten season is proving to be a time of deep devotion in the Lord as we ponder the great

weight of Christ's sacrifice on the cross, as well as celebrate in the assurance of the resurrecting power of our Lord and Savior!

During this Lenten season, our congregation has been diving deep into the Forgiving Challenge by Zach Zehnder, turning it into a 40-day challenge that began on Fat Tuesday and ends on Palm Sunday. It is a walkthrough of the acronym, S.C.A.R.S., which stands for Sanctification, Confession, Absolution, Restoration, and Sanctification. As we have been walking through this, our sermons and midweek homilies are in alignment with the devotional acronym topic. Because of this cohesion between the devotional and the messages, the members at St. Paul seem to be really getting a lot out of this Lenten walk, and we have heard great testimonies about their faith growth. We've been especially emphasizing the grace and forgiveness of Christ, the truthful proclamation that for those who are in Christ, there is NO condemnation. Jesus paid it all, he has removed our guilt, and we are righteous and redeemed.

Speaking for myself, this Lenten season has been a fantastic time of growth because I have had an increase in my workload due to the demands of the Lenten season. I am preaching twice a week, every other week, which has definitely been an increase. However, because of this, and because of the grace of God, I have noticed that my stress and anxiety over preaching, especially preaching without notes, has greatly diminished. Instead of the stress that would weigh heavy before a sermon, I am now starting to feel something quite the opposite: joy.

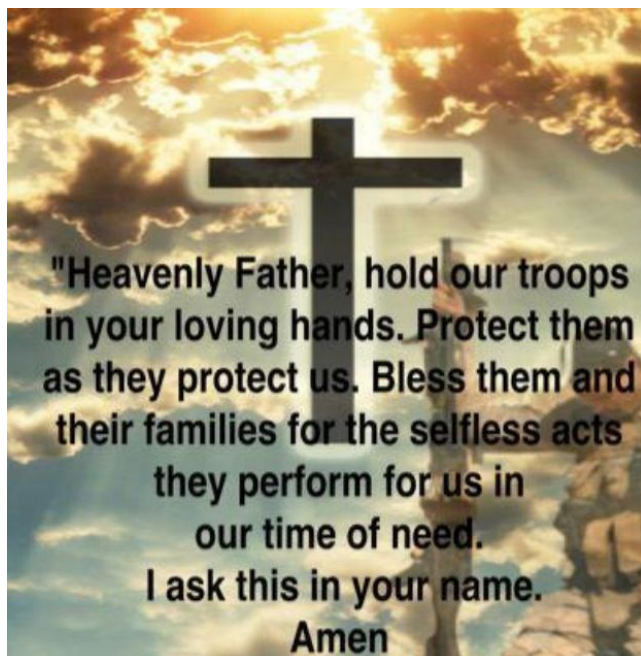
This has been a wonderful vicarage opportunity for me to grow in multiple areas, and it is sad to think that it will be over in a few months. But, until then, I will be glad to continue being with these wonderful people in this amazing ministry. And, more importantly, I want to thank you for your generous support to make this opportunity possible in the first place! Thank you! I pray that this letter finds you in good health and that things are going well for you.

God's peace and blessings, Anthony Sedotto

CALL DAY 2023

The Seminary recognizes and celebrates calls throughout the year, although the campus' primary Call Day celebration is typically held in April. On Call Day, concluding students receive their first calls to ministry and second-year students receive their assignments for vicarages and deaconess internships. All calls and assignments for service are to churches or ministries within The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS). Call Day this year was April 26, 2023. **Seminary student which we supported, Matthew Carlson received a call to, Our Savior Lutheran Church, Joliet IL as Pastor.**

The commencement ceremony will be May 19, 2023 for these two young pastors. Let us continue to keep both men and their families in our prayers as they begin serving God's people. May the Lord use both mightily in His church here on earth.



Happy Memorial Day!

Dear Friends and Supporters of St. John's~

Since August of last year, I have been serving as a Vicar at Messiah Lutheran Church in Danville, CA. Danville is in the East Bay Area by San Francisco and Oakland. I am the seventh Vicar they have had, but I am the first with the current pastor. (He arrived about a week before I did.) It has been a very good experience being here, and I have been learning a lot. It has been good getting into the routine of helping to lead worship every Sunday (I do the Kyrie, Old and New Testament Readings, and the Prayer of the Church). I have also enjoyed being able to preach a sermon about once a month. I have also learned a lot because seeing how different churches operate, I think, gives insight into ministry. Since no two churches are the same, I get to practice learning about a new church and community.

Danville and the San Ramon Valley has been a fun place to live. During vicarage, I am staying at one of the member's houses that has a "mother-in-law suite." This means I have a private bedroom, bathroom, living room, and kitchenette. It is nice that there is a lot to do in this area because everything I need is just a short drive away, but being as close to San Francisco, Oakland, and San Jose gives me even more to do. (Also, I'm about an hour and a half away from Napa, CA.) I have also found it interesting learning about some of the differences between this area to others I have lived. For example, it is extremely challenging to find a house for under one million dollars or how many houses you can pack into a small area.

While I did want to share an update, I also wanted to invite everyone to watch the Placement service on April 25 at 7:00 pm Eastern Time. This is when they will announce where I will go for my Call as an Ordained Minister. While I will not be done with vicarage until the end of July, this is still a very big moment, and I wanted to share it with everyone. For more information about the service, you can go to: <https://www.ctsfw.edu/ctsfw-events/event-candidate-call-service-2023/> While the official website is not up yet, this should give the information you need. Again I would like to thank all of you for all of the support you have given to me throughout my time at the Seminary.

God's Peace
Vicar Matt Carlson

I have included some pictures of the church on the next page.



The Sanctuary



Building From Parking Lot



Church Building From The Road



Parking Lot And Hill Behind Church



Fireside Room



View From Sacristy Window



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

MAY 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
ELDER Aaron Raschke	1 <i>Pastor's Day Off</i>	2	3 Confirmation 5 pm	4 Men's Bible Study 7 pm	5	6
7 SS/Adult/Youth Bible Study 8:45am Worship/Comm 10 am Elders 11:30 am	8 <i>Pastor's Day Off</i>	9 Council 6:00 pm	10 Confirmation 5 pm	11 SS Teachers 6:30 pm	12	13
14 SS/Adult/Youth Bible Study 8:45am Worship 10 am	15 <i>Pastor's Day Off</i>	16	17 Confirmation 5 pm	18	19	20
21 SS/Adult/Youth Bible Study 8:45am Worship/Comm 10 am Confirmation Sunday	22 <i>Pastor's Day Off</i>	23	24	25	26	27
28 SS/Adult/Youth Bible Study 8:45am Worship 10 am	29 OFFICE CLOSED  MEMORIAL DAY	30	31			

HAPPY
Mother's
DAY



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 Sundays)

Live Streaming each week on Facebook

But now thus says the LORD, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. Isaiah 43:1

