ST. JOHN'S NEWSLETTER

ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

8948 North 1900 Avenue Geneseo, Illinois 61254-8941 309-949-2516 Church Office Rev. Timothy Nerud, Pastor pastor@stjohnsgeneseo.org churchoffice@stjohnsgeneseo.org Website: www.stjohnsgeneseo.org

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/St. Johns. Geneseo/

Hearing/Handicapped Assistance Available

Vol. 127, No. 1 January 2024



BUILT ON CHRIST OUR CORNERSTONE

"THINK ABOUT IT"

The season of Epiphany is upon us. Epiphany is a Greek word meaning "manifestation" and it is during this season that we especially highlight Christ's divine nature manifesting (showing itself) *through* His human nature. Perhaps what sums it up best is that great Epiphany hymn *Songs of Thankfulness and Praise* (LSB #394), which closes each stanza with those awesome words, "God in man-made manifest." Yet, do we find ourselves taking these words for granted?

It has become so easy to speak about Jesus and not think about what we're saying. "Jesus is true God in human flesh" and "That was a good game" sometimes come out of our mouths with about the same level of emotion. Maybe sometimes a game (or a concert, or a movie) brings out more emotion! Fellow believers, *this should not be*!

Take a moment to consider what the Incarnation means: the eternal, almighty Son of God through whom and for whom all of creation was made¹ came to earth as a true man. Being just like us (except without sin), He developed from a (miraculously) fertilized egg (virgin conception and birth) and went through all the stages of human development until finally, as a fully-grown man, He suffered and died on a cross. *Why* would God do such a thing? It certainly doesn't fit our image of what God should do, does it? But that's just further proof that what too often passes for "God" in our minds is our imagination, in fact, an *idol*. (This is why the Word alone must instruct us on the truths of God!)

How could God have shown His love in any greater way than by giving His only-begotten Son who not only came to earth, but actually became one of us in order to save us? How could God have shown His mercy in any greater way than by bearing our sins and taking our sentence of death and hell on Himself so that we, the lawless anarchists,² are set free for eternity in glory with Him? The answer is simple, *He couldn't have*! The incarnation of Christ to be our substitute under God's Law and wrath, to be our Savior from sin, death, the devil, and damnation, *is the surest and greatest proof of God's love and mercy for all people, including you and me*.

God manifesting Himself in Jesus for our salvation is the absolute most incredible thing ever. And it gets even better! For Jesus, the Godman, will return in the great glory that He once set aside to save us, and He will then bring to fulfillment His work of salvation when He takes us and all believers into the new heavens and earth.

¹ C.f. John 1:1-3; Hebrews 1:2; Colossians 1:16

² 1 John 3:4, "Sin is lawlessness."

So then, can we really think of "Jesus is true God in human flesh" as "Oh, hum"? Certainly not when we actually take the time to ponder it in repentant faith!

May you have a blessed Epiphany, for God has truly made Himself manifest in our Savior Jesus!

In His service, Pastor Nerud

APOLOGETICS: I am a rock, I am an island3

Not for the first time, and likely not the last, a new island has rapidly emerged from the sea. The most recent one appeared around 1,200 km (750 miles) south of Tokyo, Japan, between 21–30 October 2023.^a An active underwater volcano situated south of the Ogasawara Island, Iwo Jima, spewed out enough material to eventually breach the Pacific Ocean's surface and created a new landmass of approximately 100 m across (330 feet).

There are reports, such as in ScienceAlert, that give this event a spin to talk about long eons of time:

"Watching islands form from these eruptions ... gives incredible insight into how many such islands in the Pacific ... once formed, millions of years ago."

Of course, nobody witnessed anything supposedly appear millions of years ago, but in the very next two sentences the author writes about another island that formed in 2015, which was destroyed by a subsequent eruption in 2022. She continues, "Who knows how long the new one in Japan will last." This acknowledgement of uncertainty about future affairs contrasts with her assertiveness when it comes to past events. Interestingly, the observations made with this (ongoing) eruption—as well as past islands emerging—tie in very nicely with biblical geology of catastrophic processes during Noah's Flood.

Notice that the imagined millions of years contribute nothing to the empirical science that she lauds, such as this "living experiment for geologists, volcanologists, biologists, and ecologists to study".²

Going by past experiences, these scientists will not have to wait very long, as described in our <u>Surtsey still</u> <u>surprises</u> article. Within several years of its formation (beginning in 1963) Surtsey displayed evidence of a mature island, showing it does not require millions, thousands, or even hundreds of years:

"The island has excited geographers, who marvel that canyons, gullies and other land features that typically take tens of thousands or millions of years to form were created in less than a decade."

If only people stopped being confused about the ages of the rock and instead believe the revelation of the Rock of ages.

References and notes

- a. Pare, S., Underwater volcanic eruption gives birth to new island in the Pacific, livescience.com, 8 Nov 2023.
- b. Cassella, C., New island emerges off Japan after powerful underwater volcano eruption, sciencealert.com, 9 Nov 2023.
- c. Pearce, F., The fire-eater's island, New Scientist 189(2536):48–49, 28 Jan 2006.

A LOOK at the LUTHERAN CONFESSIONS

Last month, we finished reading Article XXVI, The Distinction of Meats and confessed that we do teach Christians to control their passions through bodily discipline and work and to see earthly afflictions as God-given for our good. We also confessed that we uphold good traditions within the Church for the sake of good order, but not because it earns anything from God. Now in Article XXVII, Monastic Vows, we will consider the abuses of the monastic system and uphold true Christian piety.⁴

³ By Lucien Tuinstra; https://creation.com/volcano-becomes-island

⁴ This article has in view Martin Luther's experience in the monastery, as well as what other former monks had to say about life in the cloister.

Augsburg Confession Article XXVII: Monastic Vows, 1-125

It will be easier to understand what we teach about monastic vows by considering the state of the monasteries and how many things were done every day contrary to canon law. In Augustine's time they were free associations. Later, when discipline was corrupted, vows were added for the purpose of restoring discipline, as in a carefully planned prison.⁶ Gradually, many other regulations were added besides vows. These binding rules were laid upon many before the lawful age, contrary to canon law.⁷

Many entered monastic life through ignorance. They were not able to judge their own strength, though they were old enough. They were trapped and compelled to remain, even though some could have been freed by the kind provision of canon law. This was more the case in convents of women than of monks, although more consideration should have been shown the weaker sex [1 Peter 3:7]. This rigor displeased many good people before this time, who saw that young men and women were thrown into convents for a living. They saw what unfortunate results came of this procedure, how it created scandals, and what snares were cast upon consciences! They were sad that the authority of the canon law in so great a matter was utterly set aside and despised. In addition to all these evil things, a view of vows was added that displeased even the more considerate monks. They taught that monastic vows were equal to Baptism. They taught that a monastic life merited forgiveness of sins and justification before God. Yes, they even added that the monastic life not only merited righteousness before God, but even greater merit, since it was said that the monastic life not only kept God's basic law, but also the so-called "evangelical counsels."



YOUR HELP IS REQUESTED

We will be putting away the Christmas decoration on Saturday, January 6 beginning at 9 am. It usually doesn't take much more than an hour and a half if we have plenty of working hands. Any help would be greatly appreciated. Weather permitting, we need several men to take down the outside decorations and put the Christmas trees back into storage.

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 'The Lords Supper' as laid out in the Small Catechism. 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.

THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

A BIG thank you to everyone who helped decorate the church for the holiday season and then helped in putting everything away. Working together makes the task so much easier and it builds relationships. Your willingness to help is so greatly appreciated.

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

⁶ Withdrawal from monastic life was originally allowable, but this was lost in the Middle Ages (ca. 800's).

⁷ Parents dedicating their children to monastic life was common in the Middle Ages, but this later ruling was against earlier canon (church) law.

⁸ The incorrect idea that Jesus gave "tougher laws" for us to follow than the Ten Commandments. The Commandments are to be followed by all, but the so called "evangelical counsels" were considered a higher obedience earning more merit. Biblically, the counsels are nothing other than Jesus teaching the fullness of the one God-given Law to which all people are held accountable, in the face of those who tried to weaken the Law in order to make it "doable."

Quarterly Voters' Assembly is Sunday, January 28th immediately after the worship service.

NEW YEAR INFORMATION

Contribution envelopes have been placed in the mailboxes of those using them last year. If you desire to have envelopes, please contact the church office and Terri will get them to you ASAP.

New Membership Directories have been printed and were available during the month of December. If you would like a copy or an additional copy, please give your request to Terri Hock. This too will be no problem to get for you.

Contribution statements will be printed and in your church mailbox sometime before January 14th. If you need your copy before that date just contact the church office.

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.

CHRISTIAN LIVING

The Chief Stewards of Humanity: Mom and Dad

St. Paul tells the Ephesians that the first commandment with a specific promise attached to it is, "Honor your father and mother so that it may go well with you, and you may live long in the land" (Eph. 6:2). This promise is one indication of the importance of this commandment. The other thing that highlights the special nature of this commandment is its placement within the Ten Commandments.

The Ten Commandments are clearly organized in two big categories. The first three commandments deal with our relationship with God. This category is called the First Table of the Law. The last seven commandments, the Second Table of the Law, tell us how we should relate to other people. These two tables correspond to what Jesus calls the two greatest commandments: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind," and "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Matt. 22:37–39).

The order of the Second Table of the Law is also important. Murder is a greater sin than adultery, which is a greater sin that stealing, or lying, or coveting. But why is the Fourth Commandment first in the Second Table, ahead of "you shall not murder"? Is disobeying your parents really worse than murder? Or maybe we should give up on thinking these commandments are ordered?

The overall effect of this order is to get us to see our parents as a connection point between our neighbors and our God. Throughout our upbringing our father and mother stand between us and God and deliver His gifts to us: God clothes us, feeds us, protects us and teaches His Word to us through our parents.

So, parents have a very high calling from God. They are called to be stewards of the greatest gift: the gift of life.

Parenting thus gives us a keen insight into all our stewardship. Parents know that they have been given a great treasure in their children, a treasure that does not belong to them, yet for which they feel a great deal of responsibility. Truth be told, every gift we have been given is like this, because everything we have — whether our own personal skills and powers or our wealth and time — is all from God. He entrusts it all to us so that we can use it all and take care of it all for His great purposes.



A DOLLAR FOR MISSIONS UPDATE

A Dollar for Missions gathers many small gifts – one dollar at a time! – to add up to a big impact for the spread of the saving Gospel of Christ. Our current project is to provide payments to churches for pastors visiting 4 new prisons or county jails in 2024. To watch a video about his next project, follow the link here: https://youtu.be/JcC9nwejYK8

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.

A MESSAGE FROM THE CLAUSINGS

A blessed Advent and merry Christmas to you from Moshi, Tanzania. Thanks for the birthday greetings for both Anita and Eric!

Final exams wrapped up last week, so this week I'm just catching up on a number of important things before the Christmas holiday.

In many ways Tanzanians celebrate Christmas similar to Americans. There aren't as many Christmas decorations, Christmas trees, and Christmas lights as in the states, but in the church, we still follow the same pattern of liturgical readings and Christmas hymns (though in Swahili, of course). The other big difference is that it's blazing hot here! Most people cook a special meal for Christmas day, usually pilau (a seasoned rice dish) or chips mayai (like an omelet with French fries in it). Chips mayai is my personal favorite.

We wish you all the best as we celebrate our Savior's birth.

Peace in Christ, Rev. Clausing & family

THANK YOU!

Thank you to everyone who has in the past months sent prayers, visited mom, or helped out in any way. Mom loved her church family very much and delighted in helping where ever there was a need. She especially loved to teach. She will be missed, but she is finally home where she is surrounded by nothing but love and joy. Please know that it was appreciated and we thank you for being part of our church family.

God's Blessings, The Rahns Scott & Laurie; Sandy; Kevin & Stacie and grandsons.

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.

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

3 Alicia Hock

4 Addison Jorgensen

4 Avery Magerkurth

4 Bridgette Smith

5 Tricia Anderson

5 Emily Marckese

6 Larry Hock



6 Madeline Mosher 7 Makeena Wickwire 11 Kelly Helge 11 Kyra Nash

12 Mary Jayne Nash 18 Teresa Hock

20 Paul Mosher

21 Aaron Raschke

21 Kira Roberts 23 Justine Mitchell

25 Sara Yerkey

28 Laura Anderson

28 Rylan Mitchell

29 Logan Raschke

JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES

5 Drew/Cathy Schillinger (2003), 21 yrs 14 Richard/Mandolyn Davila (2006), 18 yrs



25 Alan/Christy Magerkurth (2003), 21 yrs 27 Thad/Kathy Curry (1990), 34 yrs

JANUARY BAPTISMS

1 Nathaniel Helg

3 Kenneth Allison

6 Kate Rocheford

9 Alan Magerkurth

11 Laney Esterlein

13 Alicia Hock



13 Wayne Winchell 14 Cole Freeman 14 Kayci Freeman 14 Larry Kane

16 Jack Magerkurth 18 Michele Barry

19 Heidi McKibbon 20 Carolyn Wildermuth

26 Alex Miller

26 Lucas Thompson

30 Haillie Miller

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:

Marilyn Woods

Elizabeth Bjork **Betty Firch Aaron Raschke** Carolyn Paula Chapa Arlyn Helke **Drew Schillinger** Wildermuth

Lynne Johnson Jim Dahl Jessica Johnson **Joyce DeFauw**

Anthony/Sami Sedotto (Seminarian) **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) Paul Werner (brother of Dan Werner) Jim DeFauw (son of Joyce DeFauw) Ron Powell (friend of Brad Gehn) **Scott Wilson** (great nephew of Darla Johns) **Russell Marshell** (friend of Brad Gehn)

(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)



We thank you Lord God for your unending love, care and provisions during this past year. We are assured by your promises that you will never leave us or forsake us. We go forward into the New Year trusting your promises and filled with an unending hope and peace that comes only from you. May your will be done in our lives and may we reflect whose we belong as your forgiven children. We pray all in the name of our risen Lord and Savior, Jesus. Amen.



May you heve a Blessed Christ mas cele brating God's love for usall a blesed New Year! He grant as all a blesed New Year! He grant as all a blesed New Year! He grant as all a blesed New Year! I have enjoyed watching the progression of your services on you be so that many could be on you were doing and Heis for what you are doing and Heis for what you are doing and Heis for what to be successfully at st John's work and worship at st John's work and worship at st John's hork and worship at st John's hor was hore professed for what he secures the secures the secures we ask to be successfully hor was hor wa

Dear Saint John Lutheran Church,

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ! I pray that you had a wonderful and gratitude-filled Thanksgiving with family and friends, and that you are in full holiday spirits as we celebrate the advent of our Lord, celebrating the reality that He has already come to redeem us, and also that He will just as surely come again to bring His mission to completion on the Last Day. Until that time, though, we wait in eager anticipation, living out His glory and proclaiming His joyful message of salvation to all who have ears to hear and eyes to see. And thank you for your work in doing this, through your own discipling and proclamation of God's Word in the midst of your communities, and also in your helping and supporting the seminary for the raising up of pastors to be faithful stewards of God's church until that Day.

As this semester is coming to an end, there are two pressing feelings that are upon me; first, I am greatly looking forward to the completion of schoolwork for a bit, as this semester has been rather difficult to keep up with the multitude of assignments and vocational duties that I have. However, with the grace of God, I have seen how much He has been forming me throughout this arduous semester, not only forming me in terms of the content that I have been learning, but also in my spiritual and personal growth. The second feeling that has been pressing on me is a growing sense of excitement (mixed with a tinge of anxiousness) at the impending call process and interviews that are becoming all too real! Soon enough this four-year process is coming to an end, and I cannot wait to finally know which church I will have the pleasure to serve.

Something else I am also excited about is the fact that my wife and I just adopted a puppy over the Thanksgiving break, a standard poodle named Chewie, and he is awesome! While we still have some training to do with him, he is exceptionally smart and well behaved (and not to mention adorable). He has definitely brought a little more work into the midst of an already busy semester's end, but the joy and comfort he brings is more than worth it!

Overall, I just want to say thank you again for all of your support throughout this year, and Sami and I truly appreciate it. We hope that this letter finds you in good health and spirits.

The Sedotto's wish you a joyful Advent season, a merry Christmas, and a happy New Year!

Peace,

Anthony Sedotto

acsedotto@gmail.com

(518) 944-3494

Lucille "Lucy" Radke, 85, of Mitchell, passed away peacefully at University Hospital in London on December 12, 2023. Lucy was the loving wife of Edward "Ted" Radke, celebrating 55 years of marriage this past August. Beloved mother of Lori Radke and cherished grandmother of Gracie Radke. Sister of Jean Henry, Jane Tofanelli, and Linda Gillet (Peter). Sister-in-law of Wilbur Floming, Julie Wiese, and Marilyn Taylor (Bruce). Also surviving are many cousins and nieces and nephews.

Lucy was predeceased by her parents Clarence and Helen Wiese, her stepmother Alice Wiese, brothers Richard Wiese and Mark Wiese, and sisters Lois Floming and Karen Adamson.

Lucy grew up in Geneseo, Illinois, and attended Valparaiso University in Indiana, obtaining a degree in religion with a minor in social work. Her first placements took her to a children's home and a parish in St. Catharines, Ontario, and she also served in a key role with the Lutheran Deaconess Association. During these years she would often travel to Lutheran youth events, where she first met Ted, who was studying at the University of Toronto.







Following Ted's internship in Chicago, they went on to marry in 1968, and spent their first year of marriage in St. Louis while Ted finished seminary. In 1969 they accepted a call to Humboldt/Bruno, Saskatchewan, Lucy played an active role in every parish Ted served, as they moved on to Portage La Prairie, Manitoba and Edmonton, Alberta, before arriving in Mitchell, Ontario in 1980. After several years in Mitchell, they hit the road again and moved to Pembroke and then to Samia, before settling back in Mitchell in 2010. Throughout this journey Lucy formed many life-long friendships. She loved visiting and had a knack for brightening people's days, at church and in the community. She was a positive force who used humour and laughter to connect with others. And she loved talking sports with anyone who could keep up. She was a big fan of baseball, football, and college basketball, and loved watching Gracie play softball



Friends will be received at the Lockhart Funeral Home, 109 Montreal Street, Mitchell on Sunday, December 17 from 1:00 p.m to 4 p.m. and on Monday, December 18 from 10:00 a.m. until 10:45 a.m. A celebration of Lucy's life will follow at 11 a.m. followed by a reception at the Lockhart Reception Centre. Donations in memory of Lucy may be made to Crohn's and Colitis Canada or to West Perth Village at LockhartFuneralHome.com





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

January 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Happy New Year!	OFFICE CLOSED Pastor on vacation—		3	4	5	6 Put away decorations 9:00 am
7 SS/Adult/Youth Bible Study 8:45am Worship/Comm 10 am	8 Pastor's Day Off	9 Council 6 pm	10 Confirmation 5 pm	Men's Bible Study 6:30 pm	12	13
14 SS/Adult/Youth Bible Study 8:45am Worship 10 am Installation of Council Elders' 11:30 am	15 OFFICE CLOSED	16	17 Confirmation 5 pm	18	19	20
21 SS/Adult/Youth Bible Study 8:45am Worship/Comm 10 am Youth 11:30 am	22 Pastor's Day Off	23	24 Confirmation 5 pm	25 SS Teachers 6:30 pm	26	27
28 SS/Adult/Youth Bible Study 8:45am Worship 10 am Voters' Assembly 11am	29 Pastor's Day Off	30	31 Confirmation 5 pm		nto the world as ves in me may 1 n 12:46	_



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

WORSHIP SERVICES 10 am (Holy Communion 1st, 3rd Sundays)

Live Streaming each week on Facebook

.... For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship Him.

Matthew 2:26

