

ST. JOHN'S NEWSLETTER



BUILT ON CHRIST OUR CORNERSTONE

ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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

“Merry Epiphany!”

“Merry Christmas” has come and gone once again. Various stores are having sales, dropping prices extra low to try and get rid of “last year’s” holiday items (I should probably take a look...). The T.V. specials are over, the trees are being taken down, and the decorations are being put back into boxes. Honestly, a bit of the “post-Christmas blues” may even be affecting us. So here’s a little joy during this time of potential emotional letdown: “Merry Epiphany!”

Now that isn’t something you hear every day is it? In fact, you probably don’t hear it at all. Yet Epiphany, which is January 6th, and its season,¹ is really a rather joyous time for the Christian (it also helps separate the Christian from the rest of the unbelieving “happy holidays” crowd!).

On Epiphany, we commemorate, *and celebrate*, the visitation of the Gentile Wise Men to the child Jesus.² This visit is truly something for us to celebrate, because it is the beginning of the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies that foretold the Messiah did not come for only national Israel (by blood), but actually for the new Israel, Jews and Gentiles alike, the Christian Church (by faith in Christ).

The whole season of Epiphany (Greek for *manifestation*) is a time of tremendous joy for the Christian. It is through this liturgical season that the Church highlights the truth that underneath the humility of a baby born in a stable, and a man who appeared to be no different than the rest of humanity,³ is in fact and truth *the full divinity of the eternal, only-begotten Son of God*, the Second Person of the most blessed and holy Trinity. This truth is especially revealed through His miracles and culminates in His Transfiguration when He lets His divine nature shine through His human nature before Peter, James and John, a hint of what all the world will see when He returns again in glory.

There really is nothing that could bring more joy than this truth: True God becoming true man, so that sinful mankind can be restored to God, a restoration that will last for all eternity for those who trust in the crucified and risen Jesus alone for their salvation. *This* is the saving truth revealed in Scripture, which the Church faithfully proclaims year after year until Christ returns with all His angels to take the believers into the new heavens and earth. *This* is the saving truth that makes our lives “merry”, even when current events around the world, and right in our own houses, may be anything but joyful. Why? Because we know that our salvation has been won by our Lord and Savior Jesus, Son of Mary and Son of God.

Once again, *Merry Epiphany* to all of you!

Pastor Nerud

¹ The date of Easter determines how many weeks are in the Epiphany season, which can be as many as nine Sundays, with the last Sunday of Epiphany, the Sunday before Ash Wednesday, celebrated as Transfiguration Sunday.

² Yes, it’s true. Our beautiful nativity sets are technically incorrect as they have the wise men visiting the infant Jesus in the stable. See Matthew 2:11.

³ Compare Luke 4:22, “Isn’t this Joseph’s son?”

A Look at the Lutheran Confessions

Last month we saw the truth about ourselves, that we are sinners separated from our Creator. Now we confess what God has done about that situation, first by confessing the person of Jesus Christ (who He is, His two natures) and His saving work.

*Augsburg Confession Article III: The Son of God*⁴

Our churches teach that the Word, that is, the Son of God [John 1:14], assumed the human nature in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary. So there are two natures—the divine and the human—inseparably joined in one person. There is one Christ, true God and true man, who was born of the Virgin Mary, truly suffered, was crucified, died, and was buried. He did this to reconcile the Father to us and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for all actual sins of mankind [John 1:29].⁵

He also descended into hell, and truly rose again on the third day. Afterward, He ascended into heaven to sit at the right hand of the Father. There He forever reigns and has dominion over all creatures. He sanctifies those who believe in Him, by sending the Holy Spirit into their hearts to rule, comfort, and make them alive. He defends them against the devil and the power of sin.

The same Christ will openly come again to judge the living and the dead, and so forth, according to the Apostles' Creed.

Apologetics: Tyrannosaur 'walking with sharks'?⁶

How Hell Creek supports the Bible.

Fossils recently discovered in Hell Creek rock formation (Montana, USA) testify to the recent Flood of Noah, which would have buried many land and sea creatures together. This is the same formation in which soft tissue and intact protein was found in a *T. rex* fossil, flying in the face of belief in millions of years and evolution.^a

A paper published in the *Journal of Palaeontology*^b describes the discovery of the teeth of various small marine sharks in close association with the most complete and likely the largest *Tyrannosaurus rex* specimen yet unearthed. This is the famous "Sue", aka skeleton FMNH PF 2081, named after discoverer Sue Hendrickson.

Inconvenient truth

This new find highlights the increasing lengths evolutionists resort to, so they can explain away their data. In this case, the problem is that marine shark teeth are mixed up with a land-based *T. rex* skeleton. The teeth, including those of a 'new' species of small shark, *Galagadon nordquistae*,^c were discovered in close association with the *T. rex* skeleton—actually in the surrounding soil matrix encasing the bones. Furthermore, these teeth are similar to those of modern marine sharks—which is a problem given that Sue was believed to live in a fresh-water environment containing crocodiles, turtles, amphibians, fish, and plants.^b The authors admit that recovery of "carcharhinid" (migratory shark) teeth from the Sue locality is "surprising given the [supposed] freshwater environment from which the fossils derive."^b

The paper does not discuss how Sue could have been so well preserved (90% complete) in an environment they assume was teeming with crocodiles and fish (because fossils of those are buried there). In their scenario, these would have been all too ready to dispose of any *T. rex* carcass that happened to come their way! Of course, the added complication now is how to explain marine fossils alongside those of freshwater and land creatures—all jumbled together.

A flood, or the Flood?

The obvious answer is to invoke a flood of course! The authors theorize: "Throughout the latter half of the Cretaceous an intercontinental seaway flooded part of the North American continent, providing ideal conditions for the invasion of freshwater ecosystems by sharks and rays as well as the subsequent preservation of those ecosystems in the fossil record."^b Problem solved? Far from it! The flood scenario envisioned would have lasted around 40 million years, as an imperceptibly gradual single event. The authors believe sediments containing shark teeth were deposited when the supposed "intercontinental seaway" retreated from North America, due to an episode of mountain-building ('Laramide orogeny').

The global Flood of Noah (Genesis 6–8) provides a far superior explanation for the co-existence of marine, freshwater and land animal fossils. The entire globe was in effect covered by the ocean, with powerful currents eroding and depositing sediment and burying countless creatures—from both land and sea.

⁴ *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions, 2nd Edition*; Paul McCain, Ed. CPH, 2006.

⁵ This speaks against an erring view increasingly expressed in the Medieval Church that Christ's Passion only covered original sin, and so He gave the sacrifice of the Mass to cover the actual sins we still commit. This nonbiblical view takes away glory from Christ's suffering, denies His once for all sacrifice, and switches it to the work of the priest. It makes the precious Sacrament of the Altar, a pure gift whereby God's forgiveness is given to us, into a work done by the priest to appease God, i.e. to *earn* forgiveness.

⁶ By Gavin Cox; <https://creation.com/hell-creek-formation>. Underlined texts are hyperlinks in the online article.

This also explains why there is excellent preservation and little scavenging of the Sue skeleton—it was buried beneath tons of sediment before it had a chance to be dismembered. And in any case, the fossils of creatures found with Sue do not so much indicate that they all *lived* together, as long-agers presume, but were *buried* together. Since sharks' teeth continually fall out and are replaced, these were likely in the sediment of the pre-Flood seafloor, picked up by the raging Flood currents and redeposited on land.

The fact that *T. rex* soft tissue has been discovered in the same formation is testament to the recent deposition of the sediments, rather than the supposed 67.5 MY age for the Hell Creek formation.

More questions are raised in the paper by the authors' belief that the Sue site was "likely" a "meandering river channel." However, they admit that "no geologic evidence exists of a channel", rather, the local geology consists of "alternating layers of mud-rich sediment containing leaf fossils and sandy siltstone."^b The 'layer-cake' nature of the local geology, combined with the chaotic nature of the fossil assemblage—including Sue—is not evidence of an "abundant aquatic community" as the authors theorize. Rather, the evidence is consistent with this fossil graveyard having been formed within the global Flood of Noah's day.

Evidence consistent with the Bible

- 1) While trying to demonstrate shark evolution from these teeth, the researchers' findings are fully consistent with biblical creation—sharks reproducing sharks (see "[Sharks and evolutionary assumptions](#)").
- 2) The association of marine sharks, fresh-water animals and plants and *T. rex*, all mixed together in one location, is strong evidence consistent with Noah's Flood.
- 3) The good preservation of the *T. rex* skeleton is consistent with it having been rapidly covered by sediment before it could be scavenged. This would require a truly catastrophic flood given its size.
- 4) The fact that another *T. rex* from the same Hell Creek formation contains soft tissue and intact biomolecules is 'smoking-gun' evidence that the entire formation is young and resulted from the Flood of Noah, around 4,500 years ago according to the true history of the Bible.

References and notes

- a. Catchpoole, D., [Double-decade dinosaur disquiet](#), *Creation* **36**(1):12–14, creation.com/dino-disquiet.
- b. Gates, T.A., Gorscak, E., and Makovicky, P.J., New sharks and other chondrichthyans from the latest Maastrichtian (Late Cretaceous) of North America, *J. Paleontology*, pp. 1–19, 21 Jan 2019.
- c. Named after a spacecraft in the computer game *Galaga*, which supposedly resembles the teeth of the shark.

SEVERAL REMINDERS

St. John's members are invited to worship with members of Concordia, Geneseo at 6 pm New Year's Eve at Concordia Lutheran Church.

Also, a reminder that Pastor Nerud and his family will be out of town December 27 – January 3. If you are in need of Pastoral Care, please contact Rev. Mueller at 989-928-6603.

JANUARY DATES TO REMEMBER

Please check out the list below and mark your calendars.

- **Saturday, January 9th at 9:30 am** – Please come help take down the Christmas decorations and put them away. Many hands make light work.
- **Sunday, January 10th** – Installation of 2021 church officers during the worship service, Pledge Sunday, and Town Hall meeting with the new 2021 church Council after the worship service (lunch is provided by Gary's Deli. Sign up for the lunch is necessary)
- **Sunday, January 31st** - Quarterly Voters' Assembly will be immediately after the worship service.

JANUARY TOWN HALL MEETING FOR CONGREGATION

Sunday, January 10th will be the second Town Hall meeting for our congregation. You the members have the opportunity to bring your thoughts, concerns, and suggestions to each church board. We will meet immediately after the worship service. Box lunches will be provided from Gary's Deli. Lunch forms must be filled out by January 4th. Forms will be available on the table at the front entrance or from Terri Hock.

If you are concerned about personally attending the meeting, there are 'Concern/Suggestion' forms also available on the front table (look for the gold colored sheets) and at the end of this letter. You may write your thoughts on these forms and turn them into the church office by the morning of January 13th. You can also email or send this form to the church office. Be sure to put your name on the form as they will be given to the appropriate Board members who will consider them and return their written plans or thoughts back to you.

Town Hall Meeting





PLEDGE SUNDAY

We will dedicate our gifts and selves to the service of God for 2021 during the worship service January 10th. Pledge forms are available on the table next to the front entrance or at the back of this newsletter. Place you pledge in the ‘Pledge Box’ found next to the offering plates. All we are and have comes from God. We cannot out give Him and we can trust Him to provide for all our daily needs. Consider how you can serve here at St. John’s with your time, talents, and treasures. God give generously to each of us. *What will your response be to Him?*

HOUSEKEEPING ITEMS

The 2021 contribution envelopes are out. Please pick yours up when at church. If you were not assigned envelopes and desire them for your weekly contributions, please let Terri Hock know. She will get a box to you.

The 2021 ‘Membership Directory’ is being updated for printing in early January. Please contact Terri Hock if you have changes or additions to your information or other family members. It would be appreciated to contact Terri ASAP.

BIBLE STUDY OPPERTUNITIES

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

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



All questions can be directed to the church office.

JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES

- 5 Drew/Cathy Schillinger (2003) - 18 yrs
- 14 Richard/Mandolyn Davila (2006) - 15 yrs
- 20 Bob/Lois Esterlein (1961) - 60 yrs



- 25 Alan/Christy Magerkurth (2003) - 18 yrs
- 27 Thad/Kathy Curry (1990) – 31 yrs

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

- 3 Alicia Willeford
- 4 Addison Jorgensen
- 4 Avery Magerkurth
- 4 Bridgette Smith
- 5 Tricia Anderson
- 5 Emily Marckese
- 6 Larry Hock
- 6 Madeline Mosher



- 7 Makeena Wickwire
- 8 Jackson Bellmyer
- 11 Kelly Helge
- 11 Kyra Nash
- 12 Mary Jayne Nash
- 17 Patricia Johnson
- 18 Teresa Hock
- 20 Paul Mosher

- 21 Aaron Raschke
- 23 Justine Mitchell
- 25 Sara Yerkey
- 27 Marta Haughton
- 28 Laura Anderson
- 28 Rylan Mitchell
- 29 Logan Raschke

JANUARAY BAPTISM BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Nathaniel Helg
- 3 Kenneth Allison
- 6 Kate Rocheford
- 9 Alan Magerkurth
- 11 Laney Esterlein
- 13 Alicia Willeford
- 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
- 31 Suzanne Blank
- 00 Robert Esterlein

OFFICE

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

Terri Hock – churchoffice@stjohnsgeneseo.org

Website address – www.stjohnsgeneseo.org

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

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

TOPIC at UPCOMING CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

A proposal to push the synodical convention from 2022 to 2023 will be coming before the voters at our quarterly meeting on January 31. The idea is that this would allow for the various districts to have their conventions extend into 2022 as necessary due to the COVID restrictions and closures in the hospitality industry, etc. At least 25% of the synod's member congregations must vote, with results then determined by simple majority. Larry Kane, our lay delegate, will give a short presentation of this issue at the meeting. If you desire to look into this deeper, there is a letter from our synod's president as well as from the Chairman of the LCMS Board of Directors available in the church office, along with an FAQ on the topic and the minutes from a meeting with the synods' Commission on Constitution Matters where this topic was discussed.

THANK YOU

To my St. John's family: Thank you for my birthday card (in November), the Thanksgiving card, AND for the tote bag FULL of reading material, other useful items, and delicious 'goodies'. You are so kind and thoughtful. May God be with and Bless each of you this Christmas season and throughout the New Year.

Love through Christ our Savior, Joyce DeFauw

To those who continue to pray for Lilly and Barrett and help out financially, we are truly grateful. This year continues to throw punches at us as a family, but we are not alone. We have a God who is right there with us and a Christian family that encourages and supports us in countless ways. Thank you so very much. God's blessings to all. The Hock & Gunnison family

ALTAR FLOWERS

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



LWML NEWS

St. John's LWML met Tuesday December 8, 2020 at 1:00 pm. There were 5 members present and 1 guest. Terri Hock opened our time together in the name of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Today is our annual Christmas celebration.

Terri began the afternoon with several initial notes of interest. First, we had a brief discussion where to send our Christmas sock money. **A motion was made by Sherry Wechsler to send these gifts to Pregnancy Resources, Bev Peterson seconded the motion. Motion carries.** Second item of business was discussion about the January meeting. With the Covid situation and cold weather contributing to a low meeting attendance, it was decided that **we would not meet in January** but look forward to our February meeting. The third item was an update on the two Thrivent Action plans voted on in November. Liz has purchased needed items for Christian Care. They will be delivered later this week. Terri was able to purchase items for Phil's Friends from Amazon. These items will be shipped directly to Phil's Friends. Liz requested a box from Phil's Friends be sent to Norma Daniels. New program booklets were handed out for 2021.



The afternoon activities began with a devotion given by Terri Hock. This devotion was called, "The Candles tell the Story". Seven special candles represented Bethlehem, the angels, the shepherds, the star, Joseph, Mary, and Baby Jesus. After each reading and scripture verse, a Christmas carol was sung by the group.

The first game was the '12 Days of Christmas'. Bev Peterson was our winner. The second game was 'Carol Riddler'. Our winner for that game was Joan Stonehouse. The last game was 'Jesus is the Reason for the Season'. The winner here was Sherry Wechsler.

Bev Peterson shared some trivia about Christmas. Turkey is a traditional meat served. They were called, Indian Peacocks. The first Nativity was displayed in a Roman church. Soon after other churches began using this display. St. Francis of Assis has been given the most acknowledgement for this special Christmas decoration. Bev then shared some of her favorite memory and Christmas decorations. Others shared some of their memories as well.

Lunch was served in a Christmas bag. This included a Christmas cake, ice cream, nuts with cranberry mix, and several chocolates. Each bag also had a small cross ornament. The afternoon was closed with a prayer for Advent.

Financial Report: Nov. receipts: Mites \$423.44, Missions \$85, Operating \$35, Memorial Mite \$10. Balances as of November 8: Mites \$1,267.03, Missions \$289.84, Operating \$104.57, Memorial Mites \$10.

Respectfully submitted by, Terri Hock, Secretary

STEWARDSHIP

It's a new year. It's a time when we take stock of the year past in order to improve the year to come. It's a time when we sit down to plan and implement what we want to accomplish and even change. Part of that is planning our stewardship for the coming year.



Often, we find this difficult and daunting and even joyless, but it doesn't have to be. In fact, it is really quite simple and full of joy. So, here are some tips to make that planning less stressful. You begin by answering these three questions:

- *Who are you? *To whom do I give? *And how much?

So, who are you? The Table of Duties in the *Luther's Small Catechism* informs us. Are you a hearer of God's Word? Are you a citizen of society? Are you a member of a family? Stewardship covers these three estates: church, society, and family. We don't particularly struggle to give to society or family. Our struggles, our difficulties, and our questions arise in giving to the Church.

So, what is our duty as members of the Church with regard to giving? Again, the Table of Duties, gives us a guide. If you are a hearer – a member of the Church who receives instruction – St. Paul taught: "Let the one who is taught the word share all good things with the one who teaches" (Gal. 6:6). This means the local congregation is primary.

Your pastor is the one called to preach the Gospel to you and administer the Lord's blessed sacraments to you. Your congregation is the place where those things happen. Thus, when God calls us to give to the Church, He has the local congregation in mind. For "the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel" (1 Cor. 9:14).

How much do we give to the local congregation? Our only instructions are to give:

- Regularly (1 Cor. 6:1–2);
- Proportionally (1 Cor. 16:1–2; 2 Cor. 8:12);
- Generously (2 Cor. 8:20); Of our first fruits (Gen. 4:4; Prov. 3:9; Lev. 27:30); and
- With a spirit of eagerness (2 Cor. 9:2), earnestness (2 Cor. 8:7), cheerfulness (2 Cor. 9:7), and love (2 Cor. 8:23).

In other words, giving to the Church is not to be an afterthought, given after everything else is spent. In this way, it is deliberate. We give regularly – weekly, biweekly, monthly, quarterly, or yearly – keeping in mind our own strengths, weaknesses, and limitations. We set it aside beforehand – before anything else is spent.

From those first fruits, we set aside a proportionate and generous amount. Ten percent was the standard for the Israelites. This was a command for the ancient Israelites. We can give as much as we want, but ask yourself: Do we really want to be less generous than was commanded of the Israelites? Is the job of the New Testament Church bigger or smaller than the job given to Israel?

And how are we to give it? We give it with eagerness and earnestness. We give it cheerfully and with love, not out of compulsion. For through the preaching of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments, God has made us His children, forgiven us all our sins, given us grace upon grace, promised us life everlasting with Him in His kingdom, and filled us with His own Spirit, the Holy Spirit. This makes giving a joy, as Jesus said, "it is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).

It's that easy. And it is joyful. For in stewardship, our gracious and giving Lord invites us to take part in the work that He accomplishes here on earth, providing for the ongoing preaching of the Gospel as well as those who are in need. Taking part in that makes all our work holy – work that is done in service to the Lord as priestly members of His kingdom.

EVANGELISM

Matthew 2:13-23: After the visit of the wise men from the east to find and worship the newborn King of the Jews, Herod in a rage tried to kill the Child. God used faithful Joseph to take the Child and Mary to Egypt to flee from the wrath of Herod. May God also use us as faithful followers of Jesus by worshiping Him with our whole heart and sharing Him with those whose lives we touch. Source: LCMS.ORG

SUNDAY SCHOOL

We wish to thank the students, teachers and parents who helped in the Christmas program for 2020. Even though it was much different from previous years, the message of our Savior's birth was still front and center. No matter what our situation, God does not change and the gift of His Son is the most important gift of all. May the coming of Jesus our Savior and redeemer fill you with much joy and hope even in the difficult times.

We are in need of SS teachers and sub teachers. Please, please pray where you might be called to help. Contact Sandy Rahn for further information.

HOW CAN WE PRAY FOR YOU?

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

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



will be sent to those prayer warriors.

‘What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer!’

- Pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. James 5:16b**
- Our Infrequent Attendees** –pray the Holy Spirit bring them to the understanding of their need to be in regular worship in church on Sunday and that we as their brothers and sisters in Christ would reach out to them.
- Our LWML Chapter**– that God would continue to bless their work.
- Sunday school** – pray the Holy Spirit would direct and guide the students to a better understanding of God’s love and mercy in Jesus Christ and that all parents would be diligent in bringing their children each Sunday.
- Women's Ministry** - we pray that a ministry would begin which would speak to the needs of all women.
- Youth** – pray the Holy Spirit would provide the means to work with our youth to keep them faithful to their confirmation promises. Bless and increase their numbers.
- Elderly/Homebound** - pray that this congregation would continually remember our Elderly and Shut-ins and minister to their special needs.
- Stephen/Care Ministry** – pray that God would guide us to the needs of others and supply willing people who will reach out to help provide for those needs.
- Confirmation Students** – pray that they will be eager to study, learn and grow in the teachings of the Lutheran church and their faith. May they see this is the beginning of a life lived for Jesus.

PRAYING FOR OUR CHURCH COUNCIL/VOLUNTEERS

During the month of January, we are encouraged to pray for those who having been voted as our 2021 Church Council. May they be guided by our Heavenly Father to serve this congregation with love, patience and willing hearts. We thank and praise God for those that have completed their terms. We were blessed with their service and hope they too received blessings untold.

REMEMBERING THOSE IN NEED!

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

Drew Schillinger	Jim Rahn	Lillian Hock	Linda Aper
Arlyn Helke	Bob/Lois Esterlein	Carolyn Werner	Betty Firch
Derek Helke	Lynne Johnson	Norma Daniels	Paula Chapa
Jim Dahl	John Erdman	Fred Magerkurth	John Neumann
Carolyn Wildermuth			

OUR EXTENDED FAMILY/FRIENDS:

Andrew, Sarah, John, Daniel Hill (seminary student)	Kathleen VanDe Rostyne (friend of Bob/Sherry Wechsler)
Don Eggers (son of a friend of Marilyn Woods)	Joseph Baamonde (friend of Paula Mooney)
Mike Miller (friend of Bob & Sherry Wechsler)	Clinton Kane Family (son of Sandy Kane)
Jodi Martins (daughter of Gary & Darla Johns)	Jim Neumann (father-in-law of Brad Gehn’s son)
John & Anita Causling (missionaries in Kenya)	Harley Hepner (cousin of Sarah Hock)
Marilyn Potts (wife of Cal, former LFC)	Delores Gonion (mother of Michele Barry)
Pam Bennett (friend of Dan/Roselyn Maeltzer)	Glen McAdam (friend of Bob/Sherry Wechsler)
Karen Wright (wife of Pastor Gary Wright)	Donald Gilbert (uncle of Pastor Nerud)
Virginia Miller (mother of Jamie Werling)	Justine Fowler (son of Kathy/Kurt Gehn)
Casey Powers (husband of Lisa (Bear) Powers)	
Kelly Wechsler (cousin of Bob Wechsler)	

MILITARY, THOSE SERVING & THEIR FAMILIES:

Mandy & Richard Davila (daughter & son-in-law of Dale & Linda Aper)	Tyler Hynes (nephew of Mark Ague)
Luke & Nicole Thompson (son & daughter-in-law of John & Kindra Thompson)	Karl Flynn (son of Mr. & Mrs. Paul Flynn)
Ken Willeford (husband of Alicia Willeford)	Zachary & Tiffany Gardner (nephew/wife of Bob & Lois Esterlein)

NEWS YOU CAN USE

December 2020

Have you heard the saying, “All politics is local”? Well, all *Gospel* is universal. The Christmas angel said, “I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:10-11). Not just for *some* people, but for *all!* Good News of

God’s grace for all in the Christ Who came for all!



Yet this Gospel is *located*. For “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us” in the Person of Jesus, “full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). Jesus is the Gospel in Person, and in action. For “Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him” (Hebrews 9:28).

Meanwhile, where do we have access to the universal yet located Gospel? The angel told the shepherds, “you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger” (Luke 2:12). Today Christ comes to us sinners in His grace through His Word and Sacraments. Around these He gathers His church. “Therefore,” Luther’s *Large Catechism* says, “everything in the Christian church is so ordered that we may daily obtain full forgiveness of sins through the Word and through signs appointed to comfort and revive our consciences as long as we live,” that is, the sacraments.

A blessed Christmas to you and yours! Celebrate the Christ Who came for all, and do so in church.

Rev. Dr. Ken Schurb- Central Illinois District Office

December 2020, part 2

We may have been hoping that the COVID-19 pandemic would be over by now. But many of us are still experiencing its affects. Even if we aren’t sick, we may be feeling COVID FATIGUE, which may include weariness, loneliness, frustration, fear, anger, and grief.

Yet, in Christ we can still have hope, joy, and peace. Martha Washington was quoted as saying, “The greater part of our happiness or misery depends on our disposition and not on our circumstances.” We do not always have the power to change our circumstances. But we do have the power to change our attitude or outlook. We can adjust our disposition by doing the following:

Remember that just as God has gotten us through difficulties in the past, He can do so again. He has provided and will continue to provide the resources and support we need.

Believe that eventually, according to his timing, God will change our circumstances. We are told that a number of COVID vaccines will soon be available. We can trust that eventually this pandemic will end.

Think positive. Norman Vincent Peale wrote “Change your thoughts and you change your world.” St. Paul wrote in Philippians 4:8 “*Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable - if anything is excellent or praiseworthy - think about these things.*”

Trust that God works through all situations for the good of those who love him and are called according to his purposes (Romans 8:28). He gives us peace that passes understanding, hope that doesn’t fail us, and strength in Christ. God may be working through our difficulties to help us grow, to rearrange our priorities, or to fashion us for better things.

Trust that God is with us always. David said to his son Solomon in 1 Chronicles 28:20, “*Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed, for the Lord God, even my God, is with you. He will not leave you or forsake you.*”

Jesus said in John 10:10, “*I have come that they may have life and have it to the full.*” He gives us a full life of hope, joy, peace, strength, and contentment even when the world seems to be trying to take these blessings away. Jesus assures us in John 16:33, “*In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.*”

Rev. Jeffrey Harter

ITEMS OF INTEREST TO SHARE

Central Illinois District Youth Bible Bowl (April 2021)

Introducing the 2021 Central Illinois District Youth Bible Bowl: The Exodus. As, God willing, we have our own exodus from home confinement to meeting together as God’s church in our various congregations, we seek God’s guidance for our exodus by studying the historical portions of the biblical book of Exodus (chapters 1-20, 24, 32-34, & 40). Whether or not we can have an in-person District Bible Bowl. (or via Zoom?), we can study God’s word in our homes and/or churches in the Christian hope of God’s freeing us from the shackles of this world into His promised paradise through Jesus Christ. Contact Pastor Mark Eddy at zionlcms@juno.com if you would like more information about how your congregation’s youth might participate in this year’s Bible Bowl.

Stewardship Speakers: Invite President Mark Miller or Stewardship Executive Ken Schurb to your church to preach and teach on Stewardship some Sunday in 2021. They are both making themselves available as much as possible for this, as part of the CID “Bring Giving Home” initiative.

ACROSS OUR DISTRICT

“Through the Old Testament in a Church Year”- audio resource by Issues, etc. with Ken Schurb

You can find resources that survey the Old Testament in a year. Here, however, is one that does so in a *church year*. This audio resource will consist of a series of *Issues, etc.* interviews with CID staff member Ken Schurb during the 2020-2021 church year. The typical interview will run about 25 minutes, closer to 20 minutes if listeners fast-forward through various announcements. The interview recordings will be available on-demand at <https://issuesetc.org/archive>

The series commenced on Thanksgiving Day, November 26, 2020, with an hour-long premiere that will highlight the biblical teachings of Creation (appropriate for Thanksgiving) and of the Fall and the first prophecy of the coming Deliverer (for the First Sunday in Advent

Responding to Idols- Book Discussion (Zoom format)

Starting on Thursday, January 14, at 3:00 pm

The book *The Unholy Trinity: Martin Luther against the Idol of Me, Myself, and I* by Michael Lockwood (CPH, 2016) lays out Luther’s multi-faceted case against idolatry and for the one saving God. This book applies the reformer’s biblical insights to our times today.

CID Evangelism Executive Ken Schurb will conduct one-hour Zoom discussions of this book every other week, with a break in February.

These conversations are open to all members of CID churches. Pastors and other rostered church workers are especially encouraged to participate. Send an e-mail (kschurb@cidlems.org.) expressing interest. We will take that as your registration and reply with the appropriate Zoom link. The sessions will be recorded. If you cannot participate live, you can view the session later.

There is no cost for the sessions. In fact, CID will provide the first 25 registrants for these sessions a *gratis* copy of the book *The Unholy Trinity*. (Please reimburse the District \$3.00 for shipping costs.) If you register by January 3, 2021, we can mail a copy of the book. Be sure to include both your e-mail address and your postal address in your e-mail message to kschurb@cidlems.org.

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.”

† We give thanks for the gift of our Savior’s birth and pray for the adherents of various world religions who do not believe that in Jesus Christ the Word became flesh for the salvation of all people. We ask the Lord to shine His saving Gospel light through us to everyone!

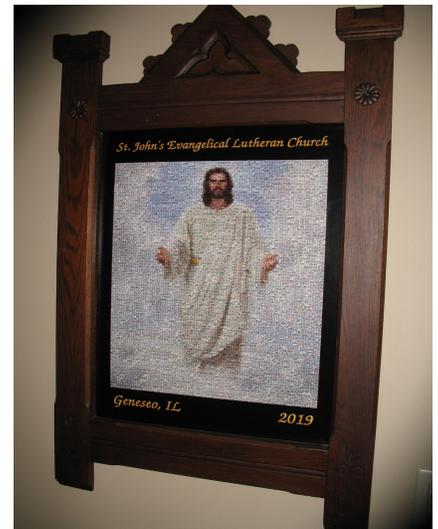
HAVE YOU NOTICED?

We have a new picture hanging in our building right next to the coat room. This special picture is to commemorate our 150th Anniversary.

This mosaic is made up of all the photos included in our 2019 Pictorial Directory. All God’s children are part of the body of Christ our Savior. This includes the members of St. John’s Lutheran Church. Though the pictures of the members are very small, the reality of being part of the body of Christ is so important for all of us to remember.

The frame has special meaning, as it was the hymn board from the original sanctuary of St. John’s Lutheran Church. It is mostly original with just two small pieces needing to be replaced and some general cleaning done. It is a wonderful piece of our history that we can now use and display in another way.

Thank you to Rosalie Jorgensen for selecting the picture format, Maple Grove Framing & Gallery for fitting and securing the picture to this frame, Bob Wechsler for hanging it, and Terri Hock for other details in having this beautiful piece.



MY PLEDGE TO GOD

Dearest God, You have given me everything that I have, my body and soul, my talents, money and possessions, provision and protection in this life and the hope of life eternal all for the sake of Your Son. In humble devotion and with heartfelt thanksgiving I dedicate myself to You, O Lord. Help me to live wisely and to Your glory, presenting my whole life as a living sacrifice, which is my spiritual worship (Romans 12:1). Therefore, being enlightened and empowered by Your Holy Spirit:

- I will take time to grow in faith, hope, and love by hearing the Word through regularly attending the worship services celebrated in Your house, attending group Bible studies, and personal Bible study and devotions.
- I will use my talents for the benefit of others to Your glory. Help me, Lord, to not to be afraid to do new things when asked but see such service as an opportunity to offer some of the praise due to You.
- I will give of the money that You have entrusted to me for the preaching of the Gospel of Christ in my congregation and beyond. I pledge _____% of all my income or \$_____.

O Lord, in recognition of all that You have done, continue to do, and will yet do for me, grant me Your grace to do as I have here promised. Amen!

Name _____ Date _____

JANUARY

2021

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 OFFICE CLOSED 	2
3 SS/Adult/Youth Bible Study 8:45am Worship/Comm 10 am	4 <i>Pastor's Day Off</i>	5	6 Confirmation 5 pm	7 Elders 6 pm Men's Bible Study 7 pm	8	9 <i>Take down Christmas decorations 9:30 am</i>
10 SS/Adult/Youth Bible Study 8:45am Worship 10 am Installation of Officers Pledge Sunday Town Hall Meeting	11 <i>Pastor's Day Off</i>	12	13 Confirmation 5 pm	14	15	16
17 SS/Adult/Youth Bible Study 8:45am Worship/Comm 10 am	18 OFFICE CLOSED <i>Pastor's Day Off</i>	19	20 Confirmation 5 pm	21 Bible Study 1:30 pm	22	23
24 SS/Adult/Youth Bible Study 8:45am Worship 10 am	25 <i>Pastor's Day Off</i>	26 SS Teachers' 6:30 pm	27 Confirmation 5 pm	28	29	30 
31 SS/Adult/Youth Bible Study 8:45am Worship/Comm 10 am <i>Voters' Assembly 11 am</i>		ELDER Aaron Raschke	USHERS Don Hock Andrew Hock Josh Hock			



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

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

Live Streaming each week on Facebook

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

