

Why do you
seek the
living
among the
dead?

He is risen!
Alleluia!

May 2020



Connecting People in the Heart of Jesus

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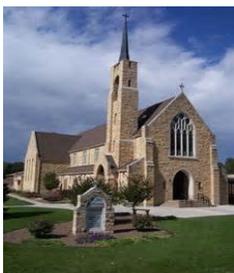
Service times:

Traditional Worship:
Saturday 6:00pm -
Sunday 8:00 am

Contemporary Worship:
Sunday 10:30 am

Staff:

Senior Pastor : Rev. B.J. Fouts
Music Director:
Steven Whitney
Business Manager:
Judy Warneke
Secretary: Diane Stoural



Fasting from the Feast

Brothers and sisters in Christ,

In this month's newsletter you will find articles and a Bible Study focusing on the Lord's Supper. As we endure the social and physical distancing and gathering restrictions, some are questioning practices of the Lord's Supper, especially upon viewing what is practiced in different churches who are practicing their own version of communion.

We should partake of the Lord's Supper every Lord's Day. Right? This is what we have been taught. "Do this as often as you..." yes? What a beautiful conundrum! We hunger and thirst for Christ's body and blood; we yearn to receive these precious gifts frequently, but now we are not. How is it, we fought so hard to have communion every week, and now it looks like we are not fighting very hard to continue to creatively receive communion every week? What is different?

Our rich theology regarding Christ's body and blood and the Sacrament of the Altar is beautifully simple and beautifully complex. In our confirmation class, where communion is first taught, at its most basic level, we express the understanding of Christ's real presence and worthy reception. The truth is, Biblical doctrine regarding the Lord's Supper is much broader than we could cover in a month or even a year of confirmation classes; furthermore, our broken nature, desiring to disguise peace by avoiding conflict leads us to shy away from the truth that God has placed more restrictions on eating and drinking at His table than our church or our government ever could.

This newsletter will not be able to collect the entirety of the teachings of the Scriptures regarding this Sacrament; however, this does not mean that we can declare important teachings as trivial.

The Scriptures teach us that the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper has both a vertical and a horizontal aspect. In the vertical aspect, the individual Christian and his/her faith and participation in the Lord's Supper is the focus. Christ gives his body and blood for the individual's forgiveness. The Holy Spirit gives the gift of faith which allows the individual to receive these gifts. Holy Communion also clearly includes a horizontal aspect, that is the aspect of fellowship which is evident in the Scriptures teaching about the proclamation of Christ through our participation in Christ's body and blood. (See Walther's devotion reprinted in this newsletter)

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Vertically, the power of the Sacrament is in Christ's words. When Christ declares that the bread and wine are His body and blood, the power of His creative Word makes what he says happen. Whenever Christ's words of institution are present, the Sacramental presence of Christ is powerfully present. With this presence comes the truth that the holiness of Christ's body and blood can only be safely received by faith, whereas for those who eat and drink without faith (which leads to repentance, and recognition of Christ's presence and institution of communion as well as the union in communion) this powerful gift can be dreadfully dangerous. Having been made stewards of the mysteries of God, we take great care in where, when and how we use these gifts.

Horizontally, participation in communion becomes an expression of confessional unity. We partake of the one bread because we are one body. But, what if, we are not one body? This condition leads to much of the inspired, inerrant, infallible writing of 1 Corinthians. While, it is Christ's body and blood, it is not Holy communion at the Lord's Table when we eat and drink according to our own re-institution of the sacrament separated from the worship of Christ.

The Scriptures have always taught, and the historic Church has always understood, until the last century or two that the responsible use of the Sacrament includes refraining from communion under certain circumstances. Some of these may include when there is an unrepentant sin or unreconciled discord in the life of the Christian; or when the Christian does not believe the Words of Jesus and the real presence of Christ is in the Lord's Supper; or when the Christian is unable to examine his/her own life and faith; and finally, when the Christian cannot publicly confess the faith confessed at the altar where communion is being served.

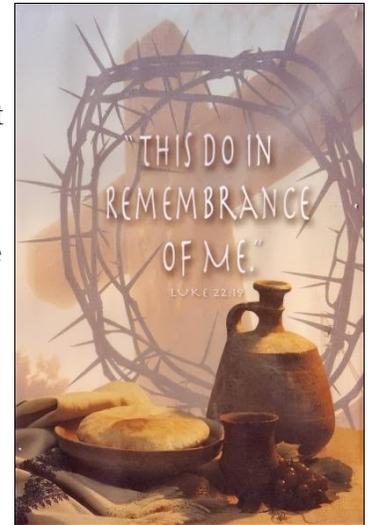
In the practical application of our theology, we as Lutheran-Christians recognize that there are ordinary and extra-ordinary times. Ordinarily baptism is performed by the pastor in the public worship of the congregation where the baptized plans to grow and learn. In extra-ordinary times, any Christian can baptize with water in any place. In ordinary times we seek to receive Christ's body and blood as often as possible, every week, or more. We seek to receive Christ's body and blood, extraordinary gifts in ordinary ways. There is not a Scriptural or Confessional example of an extraordinary manner to receive communion when the ordinary is not possible. Why does this distinction exist?

Mark 16:16 says, "Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved." As significant as the Eucharist is, there is not an equivalent Scriptural proclamation. Christ's body and blood give the complete forgiveness of sins, just as it is received through Baptism, Holy Absolution, or any time the Gospel is proclaimed. We hunger for the body and blood of Jesus because of the intimate gift of forgiveness we receive any other way, but feel no other way. Ultimately, the reason to take communion becomes, "I want it," instead of, "I need it." In ordinary times, following the restrictions/limitations our Lord sets, we partake of communion as often as possible. In extra-ordinary time, we fast (see the Cwirla article included in this newsletter.)

Rather than risking the dangers of an extra-ordinary use of the Lord's Supper, which can injure, we choose, for a time a part, to refrain from receiving the gift this way, and focus our reception at the gifts present in Baptismal Water, Words of Absolution, and the Proclamation of the Gospel.

We long to commune together, meaning we long to gather as the body of Christ to partake of the body of the Christ. Our rich heritage and teaching lead us to this desire. This same desire easily leads us to either unintentionally forget or willfully ignore that rich heritage and teaching. I encourage you to avoid this temptation; to avoid the virtual communions of some other church's worship presentations; to avoid seeking extraordinary means for receiving the Lord's Supper; and instead turn the question of lament to God, "How long, O, Lord" shall this fast continue? How long, O Lord, must we endure this temporal and temporary separation from Your gifts? May God use for good, what would otherwise have been harmful.

Sanctified to Serve,
Rev. B.J. Fouts



Eucharistic Fasting

(Note from Pastor Fouts: this theological article, reprinted with permission, may help provide some insights into the communion conversations and discussions among us during this time. Please take the time to read the article. While, I may not have said these things in the same way, there is no disagreement with the theological opinions presented here.)

© Rev. William M. Cwirla, April 16, 2020

The Covid-19 pandemic has created something of a crisis of communion in the Church. The Orthodox churches have largely suspended communion where they cannot gather. So also have the Roman churches. For non-sacramental protestants, this is not as much of a problem because music, preaching, and Bible study can be live-streamed or recorded. But for the sacramental churches, quarantine at home measures pose a serious challenge to theology and practice. Many Lutheran churches have resorted to a variety of extraordinary measures, attempting to comply with local health directives and sanitary practices while offering the Sacrament to the faithful. These measures include serial small group communions, private communions, drive-in communions, and in a few cases, virtual communions over the internet.

Once it became apparent that we could no longer safely or legally gather as a congregation, I chose to suspend the Sacrament altogether in our congregation and declared a "Eucharistic fast" until such time as we could again have the Sacrament as a gathered congregation. This also included our shut-ins who commune as an extension of the gathered congregation. We are receiving this as the loving discipline of our God for our repentance and faith. This was neither an easy decision to make nor was it made without considerable theological reflection and prayer.

This Eucharistic fast is not a voluntary one, such as the practice of some to "give up" something such as coffee or chocolate for Lent. This is more in the way of Orthodox Christians, who view fasting not as a sacrifice but as a discipline. In this case, the Lord Himself laid this fast on us, as He is disciplining His people even as His wrath is poured out upon the world. He has made it impossible for us to offer and receive the Sacrament in the ordinary manner as a simple bread and cup in the gathered community. God has spoken through His left-hand minister of the sword (Romans 13); we would do well to heed Him. Shelter in your homes until His wrath passes over (Isaiah 26:20). Christians have no special immunity to viruses or special exemptions from the laws of the land. This is not a "we ought to obey God rather than man" moment.

While the idea of going without the Sacrament may seem unthinkable to Lutherans accustomed to frequent, if not weekly participation in the Sacrament, it is not foreign to the Reformation. In 1522, Luther advised just such a fast for those who were troubled in conscience by the radical reforms of Andreas Karlstadt. "You are not lost if you do without the Sacrament," Luther said. "Train yourselves without this Sacrament in God's Word, in faith, and in love" (StL ed 20:210,734, quoted in Pieper, 392). In 1523, advising the Senate in Prague, Luther wrote, "...the Eucharist is not so necessary that salvation depends on it. The gospel and baptism are sufficient, since faith alone justifies and love alone lives rightly" (LW 40:9)

At the heart of this pastoral counsel is Luther's unwavering reliance on the Word of Christ alone. It is the Word of Christ that makes Baptism and the Supper sacraments. In the words of Luther in the Smalcald Articles, our churches confess the richness of the Gospel: "...God is surpassingly rich in his grace: First, through the spoken word, by which the forgiveness of sin (the peculiar function of the Gospel) is preached to the whole world; second, through Baptism; third, through the holy Sacrament of the Altar; fourth, through the power of the keys; and finally, through the mutual conversation and consolation of the brethren. Matt. 18:20, "Where two or three are gathered," etc." (SA IV, Tappert, 310) To be forgiven in many ways is so much better than just one way.

Faith alone in the Word of Christ alone is necessary for salvation. This is the hallmark of the Lutheran Reformation which was able to navigate through turbulent times of plague and persecution, when pastors were lacking in certain areas or when churches had to ordain pastors for themselves. Christ's church, as a priesthood of believers, is never without His Word. This same reliance on the Word guided the Saxon forebears of the Missouri Synod through their own troubled beginning in America.

Lutheran dogmatists have always distinguished between "ordinary" and "absolute" necessity. Only the Word of Christ and faith in Christ is absolutely necessary. Francis Pieper, the leading dogmatist of the LCMS in the early 20th century, reflects this perspective in his *Christian Dogmatics*.

Still, there is no absolute necessity of the Lord's Supper, because the remission of sins is not divided among the various means of grace, but each one of them offers the full remission of sins provided by Christ's satisfactio vicaria and works, or strengthens faith. All means of grace have the same purpose and the same effect. Hence he who believes the preached or written Word of the Gospel is, through his faith in the Word, in possession of the full remission of sins and salvation, though circumstances keep him from using the Lord's Supper.

FRANCIS PIEPER, CHRISTIAN DOGMATICS (CPH, 1953) 3:392

We already know this. Most of us grew up in Lutheran churches that offered the Sacrament no more than once or twice a month, some even less frequently. We withhold the Sacrament from our baptized children until such time as they are able to understand and confess properly. We withhold the Sacrament from our guests and catechumens until they are properly instructed in the faith. We do not say that they are without Christ or forgiveness. I have blessed many non-communing catechumens and guests at the altar with the Word of Christ while they fast from the Supper.

This Gospel-centric approach to the sacraments gives us clarity in extraordinary times. No water? No Baptism. The Word is sufficient. No bread? No Eucharist. Scripture seems to make allowances for the absence of the Cup, however. "Do this as often as (i.e., whenever) you drink it..." (Cor. 11:25). One may reasonably envision a Eucharist without the Cup, not only for the laity as in Rome, but for the whole congregation including the pastor. The Bread and Cup belong to the whole congregation not to the clergy. This might be helpful to us in our post-quarantine period where we will be able to meet, but must maintain a safe distance and sanitary practices. Without the gathered congregation, however, there is no Body of Christ to receive the Body of Christ. Under ordinary circumstances, it is sinful to absent oneself from the gathered congregation to hear the Word and receive the Sacrament when one is able and these are offered. But in extraordinary circumstances, it is no sin when one cannot receive and the church cannot offer. Augustine said, *Contemptus sacramenti damnat, non privatio*. Contempt of the Sacrament condemns, not privation.

There is no such thing as an emergency Lord's Supper, just as there is no such thing as an emergency Thanksgiving dinner. Israel in Babylonian exile went for seventy years without a Passover meal. The Lord's Supper is a feast of victory not an act of despair, panic, and emergency. If it doesn't look, sound, and feel like the Lord's Supper we know, perhaps it would be best to forego it for a while until we are able to receive it in the ordinary way once again. Our Lord knows our need, and He knows best how to fill it. He is rich in His Word.

I fear the extraordinary measures to have the Sacrament at all costs and by any means will do us more harm than good in the long run. Many bad ideas and practices have entered the church through emergency situations and extraordinary measures. The extraordinary tends to become the ordinary. Grape juice and individual cups entered the Lord's Supper during the time of Prohibition.

I do not presume to speak for the whole church. I am nothing more than a parish pastor to a small congregation of saints. But these times and circumstances compel me to provide a public rationale for my decisions. The Holy Spirit always works out in the open, never in secret. I am ever open to the mutual admonition and correction of my brothers and sisters in the Lord on the basis of Holy Scripture, our common Confession, and sound reason. These matters are far too urgent to wait and sort things out later. I am convinced that the path of Eucharistic fasting is good, right, and salutary at this time. In my judgment, it is far better than attempting to have an ordinary means of grace in an extraordinary way.

Should the Lord tarry in His coming, we will hopefully soon be able to gather again in our congregations and receive the Sacrament according to our Lord's mandate and institution. But until then, it is no sin not to gather or receive the Sacrament when times and circumstances do not permit it. God knows this and has richly provided for us with His Word and the gift of prayer.

My brothers and sisters in Christ, beloved children of God, do not let this light and momentary affliction drive you to despair. The Lord is with us. Let the solitude we are now experiencing kindle a greater love for our gathering, so that we never again take a divine service for granted, whether on Sunday or a festival day. Let the hunger we now feel kindle a deeper hunger and thirst for the Sacrament when it is offered. You never know when it will be your last. And let this time of sheltering at home be a season rich in the Word of God, in the liturgy of the hours, in deeply contemplative prayer, so that when we rise from our domestic tombs, we emerge enlivened in faith toward God and fervent love toward one another.

Confession in Communion

Devotional Message: by Rev. C.F.W. Walther

(A note from Pastor Fouts: C.F.W. Walther, the first President of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, and the theologian who lead the confessional Lutherans of North American into both independence and confessional fidelity, write in this devotional message about the participation of the communicant in the act of taking communion.)

“For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.”
– 1 Corinthians 11:26(ESV)

The apostle Paul demands that all communicants “proclaim” the Lord’s death at their use of the Supper. Although they celebrate it, above all, for their own sake, they also celebrate it for the sake of their neighbor and the world, thereby preaching and extolling to them all the atoning death of the Lord. The altar on which the holy Supper is celebrated should also be the pulpit of the laity where they, as true spiritual priests, proclaim the virtues of Him who called them from the darkness into His wonderful light. The preacher proclaims the crucified Christ in his sermon from the pulpit, and when that sermon has ended, the believing congregation gathers at the altar to proclaim Him as well. By this, they demonstrate that they are part of the Church of Christ. If Christ had instituted only the office of preaching and not the holy Sacraments as well, no one would know where the Church or the congregation of believers is to be found. Many who do not want to be Christians, to whom the crucified Christ is foolishness, also hear the sermon. By their celebration of the Supper, those who have come to faith in Christ and have been baptized appear at the altar of the Lord to testify that they are still mindful of their covenant and that they remain His faithful disciples.



But our text also makes another demand. Saint Paul declares that our use of the holy Supper is a common confession of faith. Therefore, we should celebrate only with those who confess the same faith with us. If the Supper had been instituted for the sole purpose of eating the true body of Christ and drinking His true blood, we could then celebrate it wherever it is rightly carried out according to Christ’s command. But Paul says that, by this act, we “proclaim the Lord’s death,” that is, we confess the faith. Thus it would be against Christ’s will for us to celebrate the Supper where our confession of faith is contradicted.

Wherever it is celebrated, the holy Supper is the congregation’s banner of faith. Just as a person enlists on the side of the army whose flag he supports, so also each Christian places himself on the side of the congregation in whose midst he eats the Supper. If that congregation confesses the true faith, the communicant, by his appearance at the altar, confesses the same faith with it. But if the congregation confesses a false faith, the communicant, by his participation in its celebration of the Lord’s Supper, also confesses the false faith and thus denies the true faith. Therefore, whenever we approach the altar, let us appear before the world as confessors of the crucified Christ and as true spiritual priests of Him who called us from darkness to His wonderful light. Let us not gather around this banner of faith in the false church, but rather assemble where the true Christ and His whole, pure, and genuine Gospel is confessed and preached.

*O Jesus, blessed Lord, to Thee
My heartfelt thanks forever be,
Who has so lovingly bestowed
On me Thy body and Thy blood.*

*Break forth, my soul, for joy and say:
What wealth is come to me this day!
My Savior dwells within my heart:
How blest am I! How good Thou art! Amen.
(TLH 309)*

Admission to the Lord's Supper: Basics of Biblical and Confessional Teaching – A Report of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod – (November 1999)



(A Note from Pastor Fouts: The CTCR is tasked with addressing theological questions posed from around the Synod and consists of pastors and laity who engage with the foundations of Biblical truths, the principles of the Lutheran Confessions (drawn from the Scriptures), and the historical applications of these Biblical truths and Confessional principles. I encourage you to read the summary and the Q & A printed here, but the full document is also available at: <http://www.lcms.org/Document.fdoc?src=lcm&id=411>)

Concluding Summary:

The Lord's Supper offers the two-fold gift of forgiveness and peace with God on the one hand, and unity and oneness among those who commune together on the other hand (Matt. 26:28; 1 Cor. 10:16–17). Those who receive the body and the blood of the Lord do so, therefore, in terms of their relationship with God as well as with their fellow-communicants.

The most important distinction among those who commune is the difference between communing “worthily/in a worthy manner” and receiving the Eucharist “unworthily/in an unworthy manner.” All those who repent of their sins, trust in Christ, believe in the real presence of Christ's body and blood and seek to be one with those with whom they commune are prepared to commune “in a worthy manner.” The positive purpose of this distinction is that those who come might receive the Eucharist as Christ intends it to be received, for the forgiveness of sins and the continued unity of the body of Christ. The negative purpose of this distinction is to prevent some from receiving the Sacrament to their own spiritual harm. To be sure, Christians themselves ought to seek to discern when they should or should not come to the Lord's Supper. Those living an unrepentantly immoral life may realize that receiving the Lord's Supper could harm them. Christians who reject the doctrine of the real presence may also understand that they should not come to an altar where faith in the real presence is proclaimed and required. But along with individual Christians, pastors also have received responsibility to instruct, exhort, and include or exclude some from the Lord's Supper. The very existence of the letter of 1 Corinthians itself gives evidence of Paul exercising his responsibility as a steward of the divine mysteries (1 Cor. 4:1). The Lutheran Confessions also assume and describe this pastoral responsibility. When our pastors ask some to refrain from communing because they may do so “in an unworthy manner,” it will be done out of love and concern for the spiritual well-being of those persons.

Moreover, the second distinction among communicants also flows out of concern for their well-being, for heterodox teaching is a danger to one's life in Christ. This second distinction views individual Christians as persons who represent the confession or doctrine of the church body to which they have promised their loyalty. The LCMS, therefore, also teaches in accordance with the Scriptures, the Confessions, and the historic tradition of the church when it asks that fellow-Christians who are confessors of a different doctrine not participate in the Lord's Supper at our altars. The Lutheran Confessions are especially clear that those who adhere to the Augsburg Confession should not practice altar fellowship with those who hold to unscriptural confessions, and so the LCMS has preserved this historic practice. We do this not with any thought of superiority or with any gladness, but in deep sorrow and prayer to the Lord of the Church that he would remove the divisions that separate His children from one another in their visible expressions of fellowship. Even as we view Christians of other confessions in this way, however, we must at all times acknowledge the possibility, even necessity, of situations of crisis or personal spiritual need in which these fellow Christians as individual believers in need of the Sacrament's comfort and strength might receive such also from our pastors and at our altars.

A final note. If we are right about the seriousness of the divisions that separate the visible churches from one another, we are not permitted by Christ or His Gospel to hold back and wait for those whom we believe to be in error to come to us. We must go to them, committed to genuine, respectful participation in substantial theological dialogue, urgently praying to the Lord of the Church “that the time of complete unity among all who believe in him may return.”

Continued

Common Questions About Admission to the Lord's Supper:

1. **Question:** How can we possibly say that all those Christians from other church bodies are unworthy to receive the Lord's Supper? Isn't that what we are saying?

Answer: Absolutely not! There are two reasons why people can be refused admission to the Lord's Supper. The first has to do with faith and discerning the body. Those who do not have such faith and discernment would commune in an unworthy manner and thereby receive God's judgment. But the second reason has to do with the need for a fitting confessional unity among those who commune together. Roman Catholic Christians, for example, may be perfectly prepared to receive the Lord's Supper in their own churches in a worthy manner and so to their own great blessing. But it would be unfitting for them, as confessors of their church body's error, to receive the Sacrament in our churches.

2. **Question:** Why are we so unfriendly? When we tell some Christians that they can't commune with us, it seems so unfriendly!

Answer: It is probably inevitable that, when we ask people—including some fellow Christians—not to commune at our altars, some may conclude that we are "unfriendly." This is why it is so important that we explain ourselves and our teaching to others who, quite frankly, may not understand it at all. But when we explain, with genuine interest and friendliness, our doctrine that the Lord's Supper is both a gift and a sign of unity, others will come to see that we do what we do not because we are unfriendly but because of what we firmly believe.

3. **Question:** What about our mobile society? "Snowbirds" spend months away from their home congregations, and many people travel overseas and around the country. Doesn't that change the way we should think about admission to the Lord's Supper?

Answer: Vacations and brief periods of travel ordinarily do not create any particular situation of intense spiritual need or crisis. When visitors from other church bodies come to our churches or when our own members attend worship out of town at other churches, there is normally no pressing reason to override their identity as "confessors" of a certain doctrine. The case of "snowbirds" or others who are away from their home congregations for long periods of time raises a more difficult question. It would be a difficult situation indeed for a Christian to be bereft of the Lord's Supper for many months or even years. If in such a situation a pastor's discretion led him to admit members from other churches to the Lord's Supper at an LCMS congregation, it would have to be done after much discussion and discernment, and with the understanding that the "long-term visitor" was in agreement with our doctrine and had placed himself under the pastoral care of our pastor. Moreover, the future confession of the "long-term visitor" should be an item of discussion.

4. **Question:** What about relatives who are very close to us but who are members of other church bodies? On special occasions such as baptisms, confirmations, or weddings, can't they be admitted to the Lord's Supper if they have genuine faith and repentance?

Answer: This question is often a very difficult and sensitive one on an emotional level, because we feel united with those whom we love—and all the more when they are fellow Christians! As powerful as those feelings can be, however, they must not override the spiritual realities involved. The situation can be eased if we can talk with our friends and relatives openly and lovingly about the differences that divide orthodox Lutheran churches from heterodox Christian churches. Many Christians may not even be aware of the differences, and such discussions would be of benefit to all.

5. **Question:** Well, when Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper, He communed Judas, didn't He? How can we dare exclude anyone, if the Lord gave His Supper even to the man who betrayed Him?

Answer: We cannot determine with certainty on the basis of the Gospel accounts whether or not Judas was present at the institution of the Lord's Supper. But even if he were present, we cannot take all the historical details of the institution of the Eucharist as patterns that we must follow today. If we did so, we might have to conclude that only a certain inner circle of Christians should receive the Lord's Supper, for only the Twelve were present that night. Or, on the assumption that Judas was not repentant (since Satan had already entered into him, Luke 22:3), we could conclude that unrepentant persons should be welcomed to the Eucharist. One can see the specific errors that are created when we try to make the historically unique aspects of the institution of the Lord's Supper into patterns or policies.

On the positive side, however, the historical example of Judas could well reinforce the sound pastoral principle that pastors are not expected or required (or even able) to judge the hearts of communicants. Judas was a hypocrite, one who presented himself as a believer on the outside but was an unbeliever in his heart (cf. FC SD VII, ; Tappert, 580).

6. Question: I understand and support our teaching on admission to the Lord’s Supper, but it bothers me that no one else has the same perspective. Why are we so different?

Answer: As a matter of fact, our teaching stands in line with the history of the Christian church and with the majority of Christendom to this day. Both the Roman Catholic church and the Orthodox churches teach something very similar to what our Synod does regarding admission to the Lord’s Supper. In North America, however, the Protestant churches that do not accept the truth that all who eat and drink the

Plan for Return to Worship

Though the date is not known for certain: we hope for May 9 & 10, we anticipate some later weekend in May, but ultimately do not know, restrictions on group gatherings will be relaxed. What we expect is that the recommended gathering size will increase to 50. When this is the case, we will return to public worship in our sanctuary. This is the plan for worship at that time. With a maximum group size of 50, we will temporarily add a 4th worship service time and slightly alter our schedule. Traditional services will be offered Saturday at 6:00pm, and Sunday at 8:00am. Contemporary services will be offered on Sunday at 9:30am and 11:00am. The first 50 people to arrive will be seated in the Sanctuary and the next 50 to arrive will be seated in the parish hall to worship through the closed-circuit connection to the Sanctuary. Unfortunately, after 100 people arrive, we will have to ask any additional guests to either come back at a later service or participate on line. We will post a recording of the Saturday night service on line Sunday morning for those who are unable to attend, under quarantine or seeking to remain at home for their own health and safety. We will be waiting for new guidelines regarding distribution of Holy Communion, health/symptom screenings, and many other questions leading into our return to worship. Throughout this time of public health emergency, we are striving to be responsible citizens in our community. Please stay tuned to announcements and updates through our digital platforms or call the church office with questions.



Join us on Sunday morning at 8:00 am for worship at St. John Church with Pastor Fouts on our Facebook page or on our YouTube:
St John Lutheran Church
Battle Creek

Where is the Church Calendar?

In effort to avoid confusion we have decided not to print a church calendar or servant schedule for the month of May. When we return to worship we will be contacting those serving with a schedule. Thank you!

May 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

Church Office will be closed Monday, May 25th in observance of Memorial Day.



St. John Prayer Partners Ministry

If you feel a need for extra prayer for yourself or someone else, whatever the need, St. John Ministry Prayer Partners are here for you. All prayer requests are confidential, you can give as much information as you feel comfortable with, the Lord knows the need. Ask for prayer by calling or emailing anyone at the church office, we will then relay your message via email or phone to our Prayer Partners, who will help lift up your needs to the Lord. Everyone connected to this group takes your request seriously, and we count it a privilege to partner with you in prayer.

***Then You will call,
and the Lord will
answer; you will cry
for help, and he will
say: Here am I.***

Isaiah 58:9

We welcome all members to join in the shared privilege of holding up our brothers & sisters in Christ in this prayer ministry.



If you would like to join us in Prayer Partners Ministry, please send your request via email or call the church office at stjohnbattlecreek@gmail.com or 402-675-3155.

NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER Thursday May 7th.

The National Day of Prayer is observed annually on the first Thursday in May. This day of observance, designated by the United States Congress, asks people “to turn to God in prayer and meditation.” The modern law formalizing the annual National Day of Prayer observance was enacted in 1952 and each year since, the President of the United States has signed a proclamation, encouraging all Americans to pray on this day.



Best wishes on your

JOURNEY
OF
Faith

Congratulations to our 2020 Graduating Seniors!

Vaugh Finkral

Kolby Heller

Bailey Hurlburt

Alison Korth

Slate Kraft

Kylee McLean

Tria McLean

KoDee Mullner

Alyssa Nelson

Lydia Roskeland

Luke Stueve

Gavin Tegeler

Lawrence Walz IV

Zachary Zohner



Mark your calendars for Confirmation 2020.

With the uncertainty about our return to large group gatherings, the elders have set the new date for 2020 confirmation on Sunday, October 25 @ 9:30am Reformation Sunday - Many Lutheran have moved to celebrating Confirmation on Reformation Day. It is fitting to connect with this day. We are hearing that group gathering size restrictions will be incrementally lapsed from 10 to 50 to 100. Our celebration of confirmation will be much larger, and so perhaps 6 months gets us to that day. It also puts us past any summer plans and the beginning of the next school year.





WINGS—Women In Gods Service

WINGS Women’s Ministry at St. John is part of the Nebraska North District of LWML. All women of St. John are members of WINGS Ministry. Meetings are held the last Thursday of the month, all women are invited to attend.

OUR MISSION

The mission of the Lutheran Women’s Missionary League is to assist each woman of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in affirming her relationship with the Triune God so that she is enabled to use her gifts in ministry to the people of the world.

Nebraska North District LWML 2018-2020 Biennium Mission Grants are now fully funded:

- Scholarships - \$30,000
- Mission Central Missionary Support - \$10,000
- Jesus Our Savior Preschool Tuition Assistance - \$10,000
- Financial Assistance for Food and Clothing Co-op at Fort Wayne Seminary - \$10,000
- Chaplain Scholarship for Medical Mission Trips 0 \$6,000
- Young Women's Representatives – UNO On-Campus Outreach Events - \$2,018
- Youth in Mission – His Kids Camp Scholarship to Camp Luther - \$218
- Seminary Education for New Pastors in South Sudan - \$7,500
- Post-Seminary Applied Learning and Support (PALS) Curriculum Resources - \$3,000



The Nebraska North District LWML Convention has been moved to September 25-26. Location remains the same: Ramada Inn in Columbus. – Keynote Speaker – Deb Burma~ Proclaimer – Rev. Richard Snow
Convention theme is “Let us fix our eyes on Jesus.” Hebrews 12: 2

Celebration of Life May Birthdays

1 Joe Jessen	9 Silas Whitney	18 Justin Eckert	25 Dennis Hofmann
1 Roberta Trudeau	10 Brian Nelson	18 Cassie Lahm	26 Jason Lyon
2 Troy Austin	10 Cody Roewert	19 Terrie Dahlberg	26 Adam Wysocki
2 Kyley Lingenfelter	10 Kathy Schick	19 Wyatt Holecek	26 Titus Tillman
2 Jon Schnebel	10 Riley Prauner	19 Donna Ziehmer	26 Mandy Humphrey
3 Dave Praeuner	11 Randy Halpin	20 Kyle Hamilton	27 Ginger Huttman
3 Linda Seiler	11 Elijah Santos	20 LaRhea Voelker	27 Dick Seelmeyer
3 Garnet Volquardsen	11 Layla Santos	20 Taylor Wennekamp	28 Hannah Goodwater
5 Jerry Lulow	12 Taylynn Aldag	20 LaVern Werner	28 Grayson Ehrisman
6 Sophie Humphrey	12 Daniel French	21 Crystal Schurman	28 Jim Henrickson
6 Travis Humphrey	12 Deb Westerman	21 Karley Lingenfelter	28 Holly Smith
6 Tucker Kirby	13 Zach Painter	22 Sierra Anderson	29 Timothy Johns
6 Rich Lauritsen	13 Peyton Aldag	23 Ali Long	29 Harper Harbottle
6 Cody Young	14 Lexi Stueve	23 Brittney Forsell	29 Larry Werner
7 Tammy Bierman	14 Ralph Glandt	23 Doug Praeuner	29 Emily Wedekind
7 Kara Christensen	14 Pat Hintz	23 Jim Wennekamp	29 Mona Henery
7 Crystal Hintz	14 Courtney Klug	24 Anthony Bowder	30 Ashley Meyer
7 Brian Wysocki	14 Deb Martin	24 Paige Kossman	30 Susan Bierman
8 Kolby Heller	15 Aceley Krueger	24 Julie Smith	30 Theo Uecker
8 Tami Otjen	15 Chris Prauner	24 Richard Brauer	31 Kay Ponton
8 Leon Volker	15 Jane Beltz	24 Matthias Spulak	31 Ben Bierman
8 Peggy Smith	15 Russ Hamer	25 Preston Buckendahl	
	18 Justin Schnoor		



April 20, 2020 Council Meeting Minutes

In attendance via Zoom Meeting were: Randy Sunderman, Ryan Heller, Wendell Lewis, Judy Warneke, Arvid Warneke, Christy Schmidt, Kelsey Schnoor, Nick Onnen, Steven Whitney, Brian Wysocki, Jeff Borchers, Paul Sandall, and Pastor B.J. Fouts

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Randy Sunderman at 8:00 P.M. Randy gave an opening devotion and prayer.

January council meeting minutes were approved as printed without objection

Treasurer's Report by Judy Warneke: update on electronic giving, balance sheet, budget, receipts, and disbursements. Paul Sandall moved to approve the report. Second by Wendell Lewis. Motion carried.

Trustees' Report by Arvid Warneke: Handicap door is still planned to be finished. They want to add a drop box for donations on the west side of the church.

Elders' Report by Jeff Borchers: No transfers or releases. Discussions about plan for returning to church, possibly May 9th/10th.

Evangelism Report No report.

Parish Ed Report No report.

Parochial Ed Report by Brian Wysocki: Discussed budgets for upcoming school year. They have names submitted for nominations. Ground has been broken for the addition on the east side of the building. Two new teachers have been hired. Another teacher is highly probable. They are still in search of a preschool teacher.

Childcare Report by Christy Schmidt: Finalized their smart goals. Discussed the parent handbook. Parent-child enrollment forms.

Stewardship Report by Paul Sandall: High school/college scholarship winners are: Vaughn Finkral, Alyssa Nelson, and Zach Zohner. They have their nominations. Discussed the outcome of the wellness meeting. There will possibly be a celebration meal at the end of the COVID-19 lockdown.

New Business: Judy Warneke mentioned we need to get moving on bank funding for the new addition campaign. Seeking financing proposals through Lutheran Church Extension Fund or Elkhorn Valley Bank. Arvid Warneke moved to approve the search for funding. Second by Christy Schmidt. Motion carried.

Jeff Borchers moved to adjourn the meeting. Second by Wendell Lewis. Motion carried.

The meeting concluded with the Lord's prayer.

The next church council meeting will be on May 18th. Minutes by Ryan Heller.

Stewardship Update:

Thank you for supporting St John Ministries in these challenging COVID-19 times. Life is interesting for everyone. We ask you to prayerfully remember the church. Pray for God to guide us to function as well as possible in meeting your needs; and ask God to open up His bountiful blessings for you and for His Church.

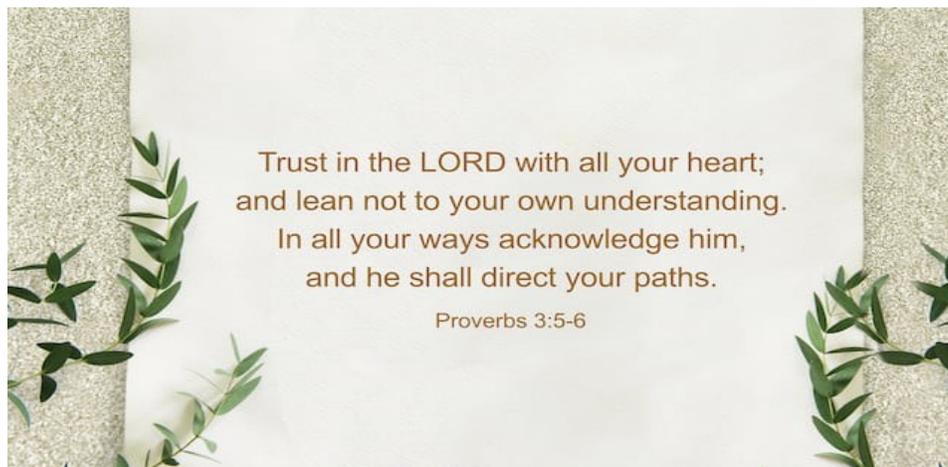
The staff at St. John have received numerous phone calls asking how congregation members may give their tithes and offerings, since they cannot give in the traditional worship setting. We are thankful people are asking the question. The reality has been that giving has been down approximately \$6,000 per week. Please consider the following options for giving:

- The church office is open from 8 am until noon, Monday through Friday with a wooden donation box just inside the parish hall entrance.
- For 24 hour convenience, a secure drop box is being installed (outside) close to the Church office entrance. The locked box will be opened from inside the office.
- Donations may be mailed to St. John Lutheran Church, PO Box 87, Battle Creek, NE 68715
- E-Giving options (We have 13 new E-givers in the past month) – Go to stjohnbc.net/church and click on “Give.” This will direct you to the secure on line donation platform.
- Use the GivePlus+ App available on Google Play or the App Store for Apple.
- Speak with your personal banker about setting up an electronic “bill” pay for sending your offering.

St. John Ministries has taken advantage of the provisions of the CARES act to assist in payroll expenses for our ministry staff. Thanks to this program and the ongoing contributions of our congregation, our financial situation is currently, precariously stable. The tithes and offerings of God’s people in joy-filled response to God’s precious gifts continue to be a much-needed blessing for the current and future ministry of St. John Lutheran Church, Battle Creek.

St John Stewardship Committee, Chair-Paul Sandall,

Bruce Grant, Curt Wragge, Kristy Lutt, Katie Schnitzler, Barb Preusker, Judy Warneke



FROM THE PRINCIPAL...



It's been a year like no other. Never before have we held "online" school at St. John. Never before have teachers not physically seen students for the last 9 weeks. Never before have teachers taught remotely from home. It's been a year of "firsts."

You have likely had many "firsts" in the last several weeks. As so many details in life seem unfamiliar, rest assured that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. (Hebrews 13:8) It is for times like this that you are tethered to Christ. He is our ever-present help in a time of trouble. (Psalm 46:1) It's for times like this that St. John School exists to ensure our students and families have a foundation rooted in Christ. It's for times like this that we continue to invest in our ministry through building expansion and the "Building Foundations of Faith" capital campaign.

As we encounter challenges, we're reaffirmed in our purpose of spreading the Gospel message and assurance that there is hope beyond here and now. The one who has our future is also the one who knew of these struggles and Covid-19 before the world began. Though there is havoc in our world, He can and will use it for good. (Romans 8:28). "When a train goes through a tunnel and it gets dark, you don't throw away the ticket and jump off. You sit still and trust the engineer." (Corrie Ten Boom)

Growing Together in Christ,

Mr. Onnen



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ of St. John's Lutheran,

After prayerful thoughts and consideration, I have been moved by the Holy Spirit to accept the call to St. John's Battle Creek. I am extremely blessed to have the opportunity to serve back in my home church and school. I am very excited to join the staff as the 8th grade homeroom teacher along with the upper grade math and PE.

It will be a pleasure to be able to serve the St. John's community. I know that I will enjoy building relationships with the staff, students and families in Battle Creek.

Please keep my family in your prayers as we make the transition to teaching and living in Nebraska.

Go Hawks!

In Christ,

Jon Baumgartel



May 7th is the last day to buy a PTL plant card.

They make a great Mother's Day gift!

See the Childcare office or a St. John school student to purchase.



In His Arms Childcare

In His Arms Community Child Care Update

The Leadership of St. John Ministries made the decision on March 17 to close the entire campus, which included the child care. The President and Vice-President of the congregation, the Child Care Board Chairperson, Senior Pastor and Child Care Director have been continually reviewing the status of the COVID-19 outbreak in our area and assessing the status of re-opening the child care center. We do not yet have a specific date established for reopening, but eagerly await that opportunity. When we re-open we will have a limited capacity and additional restrictions, following the public health guidelines. During our closure In His Arms is posting a daily story time video on line and weekly sharing activities for our students and their families who are at home.

Kids in Divine Service:

Lutheran Church Missouri Synod

If all Jesus had to do was die, then why is Easter such a big deal?

Easter is a very important day. Easter is the day that we celebrate Jesus' resurrection from the dead.

After Jesus was crucified, His disciples were very sad. It seemed like their God and friend had been defeated and killed. They had forgotten that Jesus told them that He would rise from the dead.

They must have thought Mary Magdelene was crazy when she told them that Jesus had appeared to her at the tomb where He was buried. But her story was true! Jesus was alive! He had risen from the dead!

Later, Jesus appeared to His disciples many times to prove it. And that's just what He did, He proved it! By His resurrection, He proved to the world that He was victorious over death and paid for our sins completely. Now, the first words you hear in church on Easter Sunday are: "The Lord is risen. He is risen indeed! Alleluia!"



Parents: Help your children to recognize the different places in our worship service which speak of Jesus' resurrection (the Creed is a good example). Point out some of the symbols in the church that might aid in their understanding of the resurrection. Remind them that we join in His resurrection through our Baptism!

alleluia Christ is Risen!

May 2020

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
					1	2
					Read: Acts 1 Pray: All nations, their health, their faith, their well being	Read: Acts 2 Pray: The U.S. esp. the President and the economy
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Read: Acts 3 Pray: Nebraska esp. Gov. Ricketts	Read: Acts 4 Pray: Alabama & Alaska	Read: Acts 5 Pray: Arizona & Arkansas	Read: Acts 6 Pray: California & Colorado	Read: Acts 7 Pray: Connecticut & Delaware	Read: Acts 8 Pray: Florida & Georgia	Read: Acts 9 Pray: Hawaii & Idaho
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Read: Psalm 23 Pray: Illinois & Indiana	Read: Acts 10 Pray: Iowa & Kansas	Read: Acts 11 Pray: Kentucky & Louisiana	Read: Acts 12 Pray: Maine & Maryland	Read: Acts 13 Pray: Massachusetts & Michigan	Read: Acts 14 Pray: Minnesota & Mississippi	Read: Acts 15 Pray: Missouri & Montana
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
Read: Psalm 121 Pray: Nevada & New Hampshire	Read: Acts 16 Pray: New Jersey & New Mexico	Read: Acts 17 Pray: New York & North Carolina	Read: Acts 18 Pray: North Dakota & Ohio	Read: Acts 19 Pray: Oklahoma & Oregon	Read: Acts 20 Pray: Pennsylvania & Rhode Island	Read: Acts 21 Pray: South Carolina & South Dakota
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Read: Psalm 56 Pray: Tennessee & Texas	Read: Acts 22 Pray: Utah & Vermont	Read: Acts 23 Pray: Virginia & Washington	Read: Acts 24 Pray: West Virginia & Wisconsin	Read: Acts 25 Pray: Wyoming & All Territories	Read: Acts 26 Pray: All Military Men & Women & their families	Read: Acts 27 Pray: All Medical Professionals
31						
Read: Acts 28 Pray: The Church and all Christians						

Submitted by Jessica Fouts



St. John Lutheran Church
P.O. Box 87
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