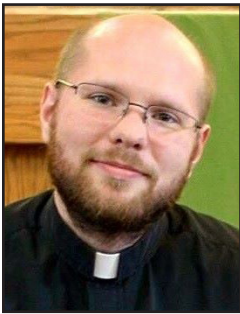


# THE MESSENGER

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH, STERLING, IL  
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## PASTOR'S POINTS

### Getting uncomfortable with Jesus



*“Do you think that I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division!” (Luke 12:51, NRSV)*

I think it is more than fair to say we all live in some kind of comfort zone. Few intentionally seek out discomfort in their lives, and who would blame a person for wanting some sense of continuity and security in their lives? It's practically hardwired into every person to seek out those places and circumstances that will ensure one's own survival and prosperity.

More often than not when presented with a familiar and unfamiliar option, the more familiar will be chosen with little hesitation. This is not a new phenomenon—generations of persons from time immemorial have and continue to follow this very predictable pattern. Yet every so often, something happens that upsets this seemingly natural flow and leaves people wondering what might truly be possible if a different course of action is taken.

These highly intentional disruptions are not without consequences. To go against the established norm or cultural expectations comes at great risk and personal cost.

Early into the ministry of Jesus, many followers fell back upon stereotypes and assumptions about what the Messiah would be and do. When Jesus didn't nicely fit into that predefined box, things started to get messy, and Jesus rather flippantly names that what is happening and what will end up being is not the status quo or any type of easily recognizable expectation.

“Do you think that I have come to bring peace...” Jesus says to his followers. Who, after all, doesn't want peace? Peace is comforting; it makes one feel safe and secure. Yet the “peace” so many in Jesus' time knew of, the “peace” the Roman occupation dealt in, was peace by sword. “Peace” that was taken by way of oppression and violence. It was a “peace” that was indeed no peace at all.

For nearly 300 years the early Jesus followers intentionally bucked the trends of the PAX ROMANA that kept the multitude complicit and submissive to the desires of the

Roman Empire.

Then came the reign of Constantine and an offer to which even the most ardent Jesus follower fell victim. Constantine offered the Jesus movement a dangerous mingling of political might and the allure of the free practice of their faith.

It all seemed simple enough, if Christianity could be used to achieve the will of the Empire then both could have what they desire. Constantine could unfurl crossed banners that read “In Hoc Signo Vinces” (“In this sign thou shalt conquer”) and the Jesus follower would no longer be the subject of Roman oppression. The peace of Christ it seems would take a back seat to the PAX ROMANA.

Jesus knew when he spoke to the disciples so long ago that there was great mortal risk involved in truly being people of the Lord's peace, a peace that truly surpasses understanding. Jesus even ended up being executed for being unwavering in this commitment to the peace of the Lord.

In the garden on the night Jesus was betrayed, he told his own disciple to put away his sword. Jesus heals one

*Continued on pg. 3*

## JULY 2023

Branches News Briefs.....	2	Birthdays & Anniversaries.....	4	Parish Register.....	6
CommUNITY VBS.....	2	Council Highlights.....	5	July Calendar & Events.....	7
Nurse Notes.....	3	About St. John's.....	6	July Special Offerings.....	Back

# Youth & Family Ministries news

## CHILDREN'S NOISY OFFERING

In the month of July, our noisy offering will be donated to Blue Feather Alliance. Blue Feather Alliance is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization working exclusively on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota. Over the years we have completed many projects primarily in the community of Manderson, South Dakota. Manderson is located on the reservation in Oglala Lakota County, one the poorest counties in the country. Our mission is to honor and serve the people of South Dakota's Pine Ridge Reservation by collecting and distributing food, clothing, and other life necessities.

## 2024 ELCA YOUTH GATHERING

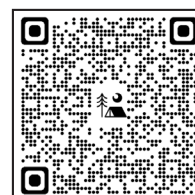
It's not too early to be thinking about the 2024 Gathering. July 16-20, 2024 is the ELCA Youth Gathering and Young Adult Gathering in New Orleans. Registration dates and cost can be found under Youth & Family News on our website. Please note that hotel, meal and travel costs are not included in the registration fee. The Gathering Planning Team encourages congregations to budget \$50-60 per person, per day for meals and \$175 /night + tax for a room. Typically, three individuals are assigned to a room. As with previous Youth Gatherings, St. John's will be helping cover some of the costs for youth who would like to attend. If you are a youth who would like to attend or a parent/guardian of a youth that would like to help chaperone, please let Pastor Jacob know.



**July 16 from 2-4 pm at  
St. Paul Lutheran Church**  
**Registration opens at 1:30 pm**  
**Closing celebration and dinner at 4 pm**

**CommUNITY VBS Worship will be  
held July 23 at 9 am at  
Grandon Civic Center**

**COMMUNITY**  
VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL



Scan the  
code to  
register  
now!

Continued from pg. 1

who was injured by his own disciple. He even refuses to defend himself against the attacks and abuse of his captives before being hung upon the cross.

The peace of the Lord turned humanity's lust for violence against God and neighbor into the power of the resurrection where humanity's ability to wield the power of death became useless. The very promise of resurrection is so powerful that any earthly might fails in comparison.

Yet the temptation of earthly rule, power, or might continues to blind humanity to all that God has done,

will do, and actively is doing. All of the trappings and temptations of this present-day world we live in are so much greater than any that have come before; however, they are and have always been easy to recognize if we give pause. For indeed the things that draw us furthest from God are the very things that draw us away from our neighbor. Greed, envy, spite, fear, hate... they are the roots of all that makes it so easy to ignore the image of God in one another.

The peace of the Lord conversely is all that draws people into relationships with one another.

Compassion, understanding, readiness to provide aid... such things point toward the Lord having come near.

The love of God is revealed in the fragility of Christ, and in the vulnerability of Jesus we have an example of the Lord's peace. A peace that changes the world not with violence or oppression but with gentleness and God's own eternal love.

May the peace of the Lord fill your hearts and this world,

*Rev. Jacob M. Gaudin*

**SOCIAL MINISTRY** is accepting School Kits Supply donations thru September for Lutheran World Relief. **SUPPLIES ONLY.** Setting an ambitious goal of 150 complete School Kits! Your enthusiastic support is greatly appreciated. To meet this goal we need: 600 Notebooks; 750 Pens & Pencils; 150 Crayon box, Pencil Sharpeners, Rulers, Scissors, and Erasers. Book Bags will be purchased in bulk. Thank you in advance!

*-Paul Wolfe on behalf of St. John's Social Ministry.*



## NURSE NOTES

# Plan for a power outage

Are you prepared to get through a day or two with no electricity without risking your health or safety? Plan ahead with these steps:

- *Stock the basics* — Keep a cushion of nonperishable food in your pantry that doesn't require cooking. Options include canned goods, nuts, peanut butter and dried fruit. Keep a few gallon jugs of water in storage. Have battery-powered LED flashlights available with fresh batteries on hand.
- *Keep the fridge closed* — Left shut, it will keep cool for about four hours without power. A full freezer will maintain its temperature for around 48 hours (24 hours if half-full) if the door remains closed. If you have temperature sensitive medications, note the total power outage time and if the medication has previously been used or unopened. Then contact your pharmacist to determine if the drug needs to be replaced.
- *Guard against carbon monoxide* — Never heat your home with your oven or run a generator, grill or other outdoor device inside your home. Have at least one working carbon monoxide detector, and test batteries twice a year.
- *Have a plan for electricity-dependent medical devices* — The Food and Drug Administration has a booklet designed for people to record relevant information about their devices, so they're prepared in case of a power outage. Print the booklet at [www.fda.gov/media/80782/download](http://www.fda.gov/media/80782/download).
- *Know your community* — Stay aware of community safe spots to go to for heat, air-conditioning, food and lodging. Keep a paper contact list of people and places you can turn to for help; having your contacts on your phone will only help you as long as your phone stays charged.

*From the Mayo Clinic Health Letter. Submitted by Nancy Rasmussen, Parish Nurse.*

**VITALITY SURVEY COMING SOON! LOOK FOR IT!**

## JULY BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

*\*Indicates 80-plus-year birthdays and 50-plus-year anniversaries.*

1

- Ann Baither\*
- Johnathon Imel

4

- Nicole Dettman
- Cole Heald
- Lois LeFevre\*
- Randy & Teresa Stewart

6

- Mark Sciacero
- Carman Thorp\*
- Sophia Torres

7

- Teri Holldorf

8

- Adan Ramirez

9

- Kandra Cook

10

- Elsie Iben\*
- Shauna Kramer

11

- Robert & Patricia Henson\*
- Brian & Jill Lehman
- Devin O'Connell
- Douglas Schmitt

14

- Kay Iben

15

- Kaylen Blumhoff
- Michael Clark
- Eric Douglas
- Jerry McCormick
- Brittany Schmitt
- Hunter Wolfe

16

- Brandon Johnson

18

- Marcie Davis
- Randy & Julie Johnson
- Charles Lehman
- Nathan Stahr

19

- Sarah LeFevre

20

- Brad Barron

21

- David & Lori Gonzales
- Debbie Kibodeaux
- Dina Razo

22

- Gary Cassens

23

- Molly Benson
- Kayla Schmitt

24

- Kevin Amesquita
- Wayne Schmitt\*
- Mark Sisson
- Tim Smith

25

- Chad & Kerensa Pink
- Erika Smith

27

- Anna Breneman
- Bradley Lauts
- Mark Oelrichs
- Parker Rogers
- Christine Rucker

28

- Tom & Sharon Leesman
- Matt Murphy

29

- Madeline LeFevre
- Sandra Westbo

31

- Teresa Stewart



### 2023 SYNOD ASSEMBLY ACTIONS TAKEN

- Passed the 2024 Northern Illinois Synod Budget
- Passed the 2023 Rostered Minister Compensation Guidelines
- Passed both resolutions brought to the assembly
- Elected several members to serve on Synod Council and committees
- Heard from Bishop Fidlar on new initiatives including a partnership with Southeastern Iowa Synod

## COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

### PASTOR'S REPORT

- Alice Diehl died May 17, 2023 - Service held Saturday, May 27, 2023.
- Brenda Sisson died May 26, 2023 - Service held at McDonald Funeral Home- Rock Falls Thursday, June 1, 2023.
- On June 4th Kiersten Bontz, Sarah Doughtry and Jocelyn Pink were confirmed.
- Christian Ed. & Youth Ministry
  - Sunday School teachers and helpers had end of year meeting on 5/21.
  - Plans for the upcoming school year are underway
  - Ongoing conversations with Immanuel and St. Paul about possible collaborations around the Youth Gathering in 2024 as well as some other youth events this summer and into the upcoming school year.
- Tri-Church Worship Service & Fellowship Event on 6/11
  - The day's weather necessitated the change in gathering location to Immanuel
  - Approx. 91 attendees for worship and the potluck following service; about 32 were members of or otherwise affiliated with St. John's
  - Overall a very good collaboration and wonderful opportunity to present the new Mission and Vision Statements for Tri-Church
- The Finance committee has begun working on a budget for 2024
  - Pledge letters have been mailed to congregation members for this years campaign
  - Budget planning sheets are being revised for committees and groups of the congregation
  - The first of a series of one-to-one conversation videos on the stewardship of relationship was

shown during service on June 18 and these videos will continue to be part of Sunday Worship through the service on July 2nd collection Pledge Cards

- The Synod Assembly was held at Augustana College on 6/16 & 6/17 and the new Synod Staff was installed
  - Denise Norman and Larry Kradle joined Pastor at the Assembly as voting members from St. John's
- Looking Ahead:
  - Pastor will be vacationing 7/3-7/9; Pastor Leo is handling emergency coverage and leading worship
- 7/16 is CommUnity VBS
  - Yard banners have been placed and addtl publicity is in the works
  - This year St. Paul is the host
  - 7/23 is the CommUnity VBS Worship Service at Grandon Civic Center
- On 8/13 St. John's will be hosting a visit from LSSI
  - The visit will include a temple talk, a sermon by Pastor Kelly the Manager of Church & Community Engagement, and a fellowship hour forum following the service
- 8/27 is Rally Day; theme is luau
- 10/15 is the budget hearing
- 10/29 is the annual meeting
- 10/31 is Trunk-or-Treat in the St. John's parking lot

### COMMITTEE REPORTS

#### TREASURER:

- Question about why Larry Wick's memorial was not placed under memorials. The memorial is new money.

#### MINISTRY TEAMS:

- Note that Dawn is going to be gone quite a bit this summer for

vacation, a wedding, etc. She has everything lined up for music while she is gone.

### OLD BUSINESS

- Motion made to abandon the congregational office of the treasurer, delegating its responsibilities, and checks and balances to the finance committee of the congregation and the financial secretary of the congregation. Applicable procedural language and the language of the constitution will be updated as required, with the approval of the Synod and congregational council. Motion carried.
- The surveys were returned to Larry. He tallied them up to review. Larry would like to send the survey to the congregation. Will look at putting the survey online and an announcement in the bulletin to make the congregation aware. Will go out and will have 4 weeks to fill out and return.

### NEW BUSINESS

- Approval of \$10,000.00 transfer.
- Discussion on what holidays should be included for staff. Discussion will continue next month.
- Special Offering: July- Sauk Valley food bank, August- Buddy Bags (Sterling), September- Broadway Methodist Church
- Motion approved to continue Natural Gas contract with Santanna for 24 months at .4818.
- The sanctuary air conditioner is currently 40 years old. Start thinking about replacing it. The cost (ballpark figure) would be about \$ 35,000.00.
- Discussion on what to do with the Thrivent dollars. Motion approved to donate on a monthly basis \$75.00 to World Hunger and \$75.00 to Special Offerings.

## PURPOSE STATEMENT

St. John's is a Lutheran family striving to build relationships that will serve our community and God's World

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. Jesus is our Lord and Savior.
2. We make prayer, Bible study and dialog the center of our decision making.
3. We are willing to change as we discover God's mission for us.
4. We invite everyone. Jesus said, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations." ~ Matthew 28: 19a
5. We recognize and give thanks for our blessings.
6. We act for the discovery and fulfillment of God's mission.

## COUNCIL AFFIRMATION STATEMENT

The Council affirms that ministry is a core tenant of our Mission and that established ministries will continue and the opportunity for expanding into additional ministries will be evaluated when presented. The Council fully understands the complex nature of ministry, but as long as God's people are willing to engage in good works, we will do everything in our power to support those ministries.

## PARISH REGISTER

### DEATHS

- Alice Diehl, 5/17
- Brenda Sisson, 5/26

### WEDDINGS

- None

### BAPTISMS

- None

### MEMBERS RECEIVED

- None

### MEMBERS REMOVED/TRANSFERRED

- None

### CHANGE OF ADDRESS

- None

### STAFF BIRTHDAYS

- None

## WHO'S WHO AT ST. JOHN'S

### PERSONNEL

Rev. Jacob Gawlik, Senior Pastor  
 Rev. Leo Patterson, On Call/Visitation Pastor  
 Daudi & Kellen Msseemmaa, Missionaries to East Africa  
 Dawn Zeigler, Minister of Music & Bell Choir Director  
 Nina Peters, Office Manager  
 Andrew Stutzke, Systems Administrator  
 Kyle Morgan, Technical Director  
 Mont Cessna, Facility Maintenance  
 Stahr Media, Newsletter & Website  
 Nancy Rasmussen, Parish Nurse  
 Jan Klocke, council rep to Tri-Church

### CONG. COUNCIL

- Dave Geil, president\*
- Denise Norman, vice president\*
- Kandra Cook, secretary\*
- John Lichner
- Chrissy Murphy
- Lois Anderson-Rowzee
- Paul Wolfe
- Shawn Wolfe
- Larry Kradle

*\*Exec Committee member*

### CHRISTIAN ED

- Michelle Gawlik
- Chrissy Murphy
- Jan Klocke
- Denise Carl
- Mont Cessna

### STEWARDSHIP

Vacant

### PERSONNEL

- Denise Norman, chair
- Lois Anderson-Rowzee
- Rev. Jacob Gawlik
- Dave Geil

### FINANCE

- Nancy Breed
- Druann Bushman
- Mike Doughty
- John Lichner

### FUNERAL

- Dave Geil, chair
- Linda Geil, chair
- Druann Bushman, chair

### MEMORIAL

- Dave Geil, chair
- Rev. Jacob Gawlik
- Brian Luebke
- Nancy Rasmussen
- Jannet Taylor

### PROPERTY

- Dave Geil, chair
- Art Frey
- Tom Leesman
- Ken Smith

### SOCIAL MINISTRY

- Paul Wolfe

### WORSHIP ARTS

- Dawn Zeigler, chair
- Denise Carl
- Karen Wolfe
- Shawn Wolfe

### WORSHIP TECH

- Anita Carl
- Dan Eads
- Charlene O'Connell

### CONG. LIFE

- Denise Norman, chair
- Lois Anderson-Rowzee
- Michelle Gawlik
- Nancy Rasmussen
- Pat Redfield

# SJLC Activities ~ July '23

July Open/Close:  
Dave Geil

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1
2 <i>FISH collection</i> 9:30-Worship <i>Acolyte: Martin F.</i> <i>Assistant: Shawn Wolfe</i>	3	4 Church Office closed	5 6:00-Worship	6 7:00-Al-Anon	7	8 Cook basement usage 10:00-Social Ministry meeting at St. John's Chapel
9 9:30-Worship <i>Acolyte: Alena T.</i> <i>Assistant: Mike Doughty</i>	10 6:00-Finance Committee mtg 6:00-Men's Group	11	12 6:00-Worship	13 4:15-Exec mtg 7:00-Al-Anon	14	15
16 9:30-Worship <i>Acolyte: Logan W.</i> <i>Assistant: Teri Holldorf</i> 1:30-VBS registration 2:00-VBS outside St. Paul's	17	18 6:00-Council mtg	19 1:30-Parkway communion 2:30-Heritage Woods communion 3:30-Morningside communion 6:00-Worship	20 <i>Newsletter items due</i> 2:30-Allure of Sterling communion 3:30-Citadel communion 7:00-Al-Anon	21	22 11:00-Luebke/Hay Wedding
23 9:00-VBS Outdoor Worship at Grandon Civic Center <i>Acolyte: Sarah D.</i> <i>Assistant: Shawn Wolfe</i>	24	25 6:30-NAMI group	26 6:00-Worship	27 7:00-Al-Anon	28 9:00-Newsletter assembly	29
30 9:30-Worship <i>Acolyte: James B.</i> <i>Assistant: Denise Norman</i>	31	 <b>MARK YOUR CALENDARS!</b> August 13: LSSI Sunday; August 27: Rally Day				

*St. John's will be collecting new children's tennis shoes and socks for Another Child Foundation during the month of July. There will be a bin next to the stairs outside of the sanctuary for donations. If there are any questions, please call Denise Carl at 815-535-0676. Thank you for your support of this opportunity to care for some of God's children.  
God bless, Denise Carl*



## Building Community...



## ... piece by piece

St. John's is participating in an opportunity for community building and fellowship! Stop by Monday through Friday during normal church office hours or on Sundays before or after worship and help complete the puzzle in the church library. When we work together, all the pieces come together.

# JULY SPECIAL OFFERINGS—SAUK VALLEY FOODBANK

The special offerings for the month of July have been designated by the Congregation Council to be donated to The Sauk Valley Foodbank. The Sauk Valley Foodbank was started in 2001 after the closure of Northwestern Steel and Wire Co.,



Lawrence Brothers, and National Manufacturing increased demands on local food pantries. The United Way of Sterling-Rock Falls formed a committee and approached the River Bend Foodbank in Davenport, Iowa to see whether the area needed a foodbank of its own. The Sauk Valley Foodbank started with a card table, a desk lamp, paper and pencil, and two pallets of food donated by the United Way of Sterling-Rock Falls. From those two pallets, the foodbank has gone on to handle more than 2.6 million pounds of food in the door and 2.5 million pounds of food out the door a year (2022). The Sauk Valley Foodbank does not provide food directly to individuals on a daily basis but to the local food pantries and other agencies. Any 501(c)3 non-profit that gives food away can buy

from the Sauk Valley Foodbank, which pays 7 cents per pound for the food and sells for 18 cents per pound. Please consider a generous donation in support of this ministry and the growing need of families in our community. At its June meeting, the Congregation Council voted to add an additional \$75 per month to the gifts of the congregation as a supplement to this donation. The additional funds will be given from the Thrivent Choice Dollars reserve.

The Messenger is a monthly publication of St. John's Lutheran Church, a church of the Northern Illinois Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Join us for worship at 9:30am Sundays and 6:00pm Wednesdays. If you would prefer to receive The Messenger via email, contact the church office at [office@stjohnsonthird.org](mailto:office@stjohnsonthird.org).

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