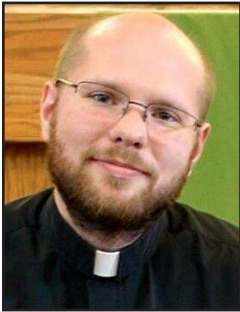


THE MESSENGER

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

Uniting in spirit



As we enter May, I'm reminded that in the year 325 it was the month of May that served as the starting point for the

first Ecumenical Council also known as the First Council of Nicaea from which the Nicene Creed was produced.

Not only is this event highly significant for Christianity, but it was also a massively significant moment in ancient history as it served as a global gathering (at least for those who lived in and around the Mediterranean Basin and large portions of Europe). This first truly ecumenical meeting of religious leaders was not just large in terms of the territories that participated, it was also large in the length of the gathering (from May through August) and the vast array of topics undertook for discussion. Can you

imagine what it would be like if our synod or churchwide assemblies lasted over three months?

While the distances traveled, length of the gathering, and depth of topics discussed can feel overwhelming, much of what ended up being determined at the Council of Nicaea we take for granted. Things like how to determine the date of Easter, who the persons of the Trinity are, and even questions surrounding the divinity of Christ.

It is out of these months of questions, prayer, and walking together that the catholicity (the universality) of the church came to be. In the generations since, there have been other Ecumenical Councils and interdenominational gatherings and dialogues that have taken place—some that inspire hope and others that are derided for appearing to be public displays of predetermined decisions or opportunities for one-upmanship between various denominations.

Often it can feel as though faith groups are more interested in pursuing opportunities for schism rather than embracing a spirit led desire to hold with love and intention the whole and diverse body of Christ that is the Church in this world.

For me, looking back on the First Council of Nicaea is not so much about romanticizing its impetus and work. Rather it is about recognizing the potential for what the Church on Earth can be in all its breadth, depth, and beautiful diversity. It's a hoping and longing for faithful to be united in spirit over uniformity in practice.

Perhaps our prayer for this time can best be said in the words of a hymn by Marty Haugen, "Come, O God, and take us, move and shake us, come now, and make us anew, that we might live justly like you." Amen.

Rev. Jacob M. Lawler

MAY 2024

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Youth & Family Ministries news

CONFIRMATION CLASS

A reminder that there is Confirmation Class on May 5 at Immanuel. Students please be sure to remember to bring your Bible and Small Catechism to class. If you have misplaced either, please let Pastor Jacob know so arrangements can be made for class.

CONFIRMATION SUNDAY-JUNE 2ND

Confirmation Students and families, be sure to mark your calendars for June 2. As we get closer to June, reminders will be sent out about preparing student's faith statements and selecting their Confirmation Verse (favorite Bible verse), as well as when to pick up a confirmation gown, and information on making a confirmation stole.

THANK YOU!

Big thank you to all who have helped provide meals for the joint confirmation classes at St. John's during this school year, and thank you to all who participated and helped with this year's Palm Sunday breakfast!



MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

June 23-25 is CommUNITY VBS and June 30 is the CommUNITY VBS Worship Service at Grandon Civic Center.

MAY NOISY OFFERINGS

For May, the noisy offerings are going to Let's Feed Our Children. Summer is a critical time for children's health and well-being. During the school year, many children receive free and reduced-price meals at school and most of those children also make use of the Buddy Bags Program. However, when school is out, these kids no longer have access to those meals and their families' budgets are often stretched to the breaking point. This program provides free meals to all children, helping kids who rely on school meals during the school year continue to receive healthy food during the summer without the need to register. Everyone is welcome, always.

SUNDAY SCHOOL SCHEDULE

- May 5: Lesson 13-The Sower & Sunday School Party
- May 12: Mother's Day Craft/Last Day of Sunday School



St. John's will be participating in the Sterling and Rock Falls Community Garage Sales on May 18th from 9:30 am-3:00 pm. Please bring any donations to the church between April 19th and May 10th. There will be a collection area set up in the Luther Chapel. All monies raised will help support youth events like the Quake and National Youth Gathering.

MAY BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

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

1

- Arthur & Dorothy Frey
- Dana Goff
- Richard & Christine Rucker

2

- Jonathan Byar

3

- Evan & Mindy Karrow

5

- Landon Murphy

6

- Leroy & Joyce Baer

7

- Alivia Heald
- Orrie & Sonya Peterson
- Kevin Schmitt

9

- Teresa Lauritzen
- Curtis Peterson
- Ashley Schmitt

10

- Brynlee Wolfe

11

- Iris Allen
- Dan Eads
- Sharon Zinanni*

12

- Betty Mapson*

13

- Kiersten Bontz
- Paige Bontz
- Olivia Bergeson
- Lisa Hartz
- Braden Karrow
- Jessica White

16

- Christoffer Breed
- Craig Wolber

18

- Steve Grevengoed
- Kimberly Heald

19

- Thomas Sheldon

20

- Charlene O'Connell
- Joshua Olson

21

- John & Elizabeth Hubbard
- Caitlyn Johnson
- Paul Wolfe

22

- Tom Leesman

23

- Becky Blevins
- Amy Dorathy
- Adrian Kibodeaux
- Michael Schmidt

25

- Marissa Razo
- Jarrett Vilmont

26

- Lauren Tupper

27

- Dan & Cynthia Bragg
- Linda Guerrero

28

- Boris Starkovs

29

- Richard Clark Jr.
- Trevor Goodwin
- Eugene LeFevre
- Michelle Shipma

30

- Katherine Allen
- Edward Loos*
- Pat Megli*
- Kevin & Jamie Schmitt
- Rick & Sandra Westbo*

31

- Michael & Rhonda Miller
- Caitlyn Pink
- Allison Stewart
- Heather Wolf



May Special Offerings

The special offerings for May have been designated by the Congregation Council to be donated to ELCA Disaster Response. Lutheran Disaster Response shares God's hope, healing and renewal with people whose lives have been disrupted in the United States and around the world. This organization collaborates with other disaster response organizations and religious entities. This enables the greatest stewardship of resources and maximum impact of response. They continue to be a welcome partner because they respect the perspectives and strengths of other

organizations. When the dust settles and the headlines change, they stay to provide ongoing assistance to those in need.

Lutheran Disaster Response strives to help the church continue to be church in the midst of disaster — following Christ's call to share hope and healing with our neighbor in need. Please consider a generous donation to the Special Offerings during the month of May. There are many areas of our nation and the world who are experiencing events that are supported by the ELCA Lutheran Disaster Response initiative.

COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

PASTOR'S REPORT

- Positive feedback was received regarding this year's mid-week Lent and Holy Week services. Many thanks to those who helped plan and assist in various ways.
- Planning continues for VBS 2024. The event will return to a multi-day format, team leaders are established, registration forms are being updated and meal assignments have been made. The next meeting is 5/6.
- Pastor has been signing off on community service hours for youth participating in the SVCC Impact Program as well as community service hours to meet requirements for various student honors programs, clubs, groups, and the occasional court-ordered community service hours.

FINANCE REPORT

- The Finance Committee unanimously approved the March financials as presented.
- It was noted that postage expenses were higher in March and may be tied to the increase in the bulk mailing rate effective in April.
- Dawn Zeigler requested funds to repair the handbells and chimes at an estimated cost of \$5,000. A motion carried to withdraw the funds from the Music Fund held with the ELCA.
- The budget process will begin next month.
- A question was asked concerning the placement of the \$5,000 for organ repair in the Christian Education account at the ELCA, as opposed to placement in the Music account, also held with the ELCA.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

PERSONNEL:

- The committee will meet with Kyle Morgan, Andrew Stutzke, and

Dawn Zeigler Sunday 4/28 following worship to finalize our process for satisfying the Illinois State law that became effective 1/1/24 regarding paid leave for all employees. The Holiday, Bereavement, Sick, and Vacation Leave Policy will be updated accordingly. It is hoped that this can be completed by the May council meeting.

SOCIAL MINISTRY:

- The committee met 4/13. They hosted the Lenten Soup and Sandwich Supper 3/13. The proceeds from the free will offering were donated to the First United Methodist Breakfast program. The collection of personal care kits began 4/7 and will continue through May. They will be donated to the Fish Food Pantry. A Birthday Buddy Celebration is scheduled for 5/7 for Michael at the LSSI Group Home. Plans are in the works for supporting the Community Garage Sale, school kit collections, Hot Dog Days, and concessions at the concerts held at the Grandon Civic Center.

PROPERTY:

- The committee met 3/23. A list of repairs and maintenance items were discussed. The list included concern regarding the outside structural wall near the elevator. Dave Geil will contact Willett Hofmann & Associates to check the structure and formulate a plan for a repair. A clean-up day was set for 4/13 at 9:00 am. Mont Cessna will obtain supplies for maintaining the outside lighting and will contact the committee to set a date for the work.

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE:

- An Easter card and potted plant were delivered to each of our twenty-three shut-in members and friends. One delivery was not made due to inaccurate address information. Members are encouraged to update this information in the church office.

OLD BUSINESS

- Pastor Ebener will meet with the current council members and those who completed their terms in 2023 at 6:30 pm on 4/25 for the purpose of visioning and goal setting. He will also meet with the congregation following worship 5/5.
- Responses from each of the council members relating to the "Letter of Endorsement from Ministry Site" that is needed for Pastor Jacob's application are due to Denise Norman by the 5/21 Council meeting. Denise will collate the comments into one statement. To date, no responses have been received.

NEW BUSINESS

- Transfers totaling \$10,600.00 were made in March; the monies were moved from the Undesignated Account (#8005) to the SVB checking account. A motion was carried to approve the transfers.
- A member of the congregation notified the church office that a Thrivent distribution in the amount of \$1,220.15 would arrive. The member indicated that the Congregation Council should decide where the monies could be most appropriately used. A motion was carried to designate the money to the tiered savings account (#7064) held with the Sauk Valley Bank for the purpose of building repair.
- The Finance Committee recommended a withdrawal of \$5000 from the Music Fund that is held with the ELCA to cover the cost of bell tuning. A motion to make the withdrawal was carried with the understanding that any unused portion will be returned to the fund.



God's Work Our Hands Workday

Tri Church will be participating in a workday at LOMC (Lutheran Outdoor Ministry Center) near Oregon, IL on Saturday, May 11. Work will begin at 9:00 am and conclude at 4:00 pm—any help you can give that day will be appreciated! Lunch will be provided at noon (freewill donation).

The project list includes mulch spreading and garden bed work, tree trimming, deck board replacement and staining, trail maintenance, window washing and spring cleaning, small carpentry repairs and toilet repairs. Rob Foelski, LOMC Property Manager, will be present to provide instruction and guidance. It is recommended that participants bring work gloves, a water bottle, hat, sunscreen, and insect repellent. Optional items include tools for landscaping and basic repairs.

There is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin table for those able to help; include if you plan to attend lunch. Please sign-up no later than Sunday, May 5th. In addition, LOMC is a volunteer partner with Sauk Valley Community College's Impact Program.

SAYING THANKS

To Friends of Fish at St. John's Lutheran Church,

Thank you very much for your support of the Fish Food Pantry. Donated groceries add variety to our shelves. We have been very busy and they disappear quickly.

Thank you again,
Beth Mathew

St. John's Lutheran Church,

Thank you for donating to LOMC's ministry of helping guests of all ages connect with God and each other. Your gift makes all the difference in helping LOMC thrive.

Lutheran Outdoor Ministries Center

NURSE NOTES

Lyme disease warning signs

Deer tick bites can transmit bacteria that cause Lyme disease. Here are signs to watch for:

- *Black-legged-ticks* — Ticks with black legs spread the bacteria. Remove ticks quickly to reduce your chance of illness. Use tweezers to grab the tick's body close to your skin. Pull it straight out without twisting. Note the tick's appearance or take a picture. Then dispose carefully.
- *A bump or bite mark* — Ticks often bite the back, groin, armpit or lower leg. A bite might look like a mosquito bite and feel irritated. However, a tick bite alone doesn't indicate Lyme disease.
- *A bull's eye rash* — A rash starting at the bite usually appears in 7 to 14 days. The rash look like a bull's-eye with rings. On white skin, a pale center might be surrounded with pink rings. On brown or black skin, a brown center might be surrounded with rings of darker brown or purple. Not everyone with Lyme disease gets the rash.
- *Other early signs* — You might experience fever, headache, joint pain, muscle aches or pain, and swollen lymph nodes. If you experience symptoms, seek medical care. Early on, Lyme disease is treatable with an antibiotic.

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



MOVING BEYOND THE PAGE

Join us for faith, fellowship, and book study on May 9 & 23 at 6:30 pm in the church library.

We'll be discussing *Short Stories by Jesus*.

Copies will be available upon request. Please speak with Pastor Jacob.

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

- None

WEDDINGS

- None

BAPTISMS

- None

MEMBERS RECEIVED

- None

MEMBERS REMOVED/TRANSFERRED

- None

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

- None

STAFF BIRTHDAYS

- Dawn Zeigler, 5/15

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
- Council Rep for Tri-Church, Vacant

CONG. COUNCIL

- Paul Wolfe, president*
 - Dave Geil, vice president*
 - Denise Norman, secretary*
 - Larry Kradle
 - Marci Fisher
 - Rhonda Stutzke
 - Karen Wolfe
 - Chrissy Murphy
 - Lois Rowzee
- *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
- Dave Geil

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

WORSHIP ARTS

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

SOCIAL MINISTRY

- Paul Wolfe
- Shari Baker
- Marsha Keime
- Larry Kradle
- Denise Norman
- Lois Rowzee
- Amy Smith
- Gary Smith
- Sharon Zinanni

WORSHIP TECH

- Anita Carl
- Dan Eads
- Charlene O'Connell

CONG. LIFE

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

SJLC Activities ~ May '24

May Open/Close:
Karen Wolfe

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
*HC=Holy Communion			1 6:00-Worship	2 7:00-Al-Anon	3	4
5 <i>FISH collection</i> 9:30-Worship <i>Acolyte: Caylee W.</i> <i>Asst.: Denise Norman</i> Pastor Josh Ebener Congregational Mtg. after worship	6 6:00-Men's Group	7	8 6:00-Worship	9 6:30-Moving Beyond the Page 7:00-Al-Anon	10	11 9:00-God's Work Our Hands @ LOMC 10:00-Social Ministry meeting
12 9:30-Worship <i>Acolyte: Kiersten B.</i> <i>Asst.: Denise Carl</i>	13 6:00-Finance Committee mtg	14	15 1:30-Parkway HC 2:30-Heritage Woods HC 3:30-Morningside HC 6:00-Worship	16 2:30-Allure of Sterling HC 3:30-Citadel HC 5:00-Exec mtg 7:00-Al-Anon	17	18 9:30-Garage Sale @ St. John's
19 Pentecost Sunday (wear red) 9:30-Worship <i>Acolyte: Josie P.</i> <i>Asst.: Chris Rucker</i>	20	21 <i>Nwsltr. items due</i> 6:00-Council mtg	22 6:00-Worship	23 6:30-Moving Beyond the Page 7:00-Al-Anon	24	25
26 9:30-Worship <i>Acolyte: Noah R.</i> <i>Asst.: Jeff Fischer</i>	27 Church Office Closed	28 6:30-NAMI group	29 9:00-Newsletter Assembly 6:00-Worship	30 7:00-Al-Anon	31	

RED GERANIUMS WANTED! St. John's Lutheran Church has a loving tradition of adorning our altar area with geraniums for Pentecost, which this year is May 19th. You are invited to participate in this ministry to beautify our Sanctuary and our Church Grounds! Plants will be planted outside after Pentecost. The cost is \$7 each. Geraniums can be ordered in honor of or in memory of a loved one or a special event. Plants will be coming from Selmi's in Rock Falls. Orders must be received by Sunday, May 12th.



ORDER INFORMATION

_____ (#) Geraniums at \$7 per plant _____ Will purchase own and bring to church on Friday, May 17th.

All geraniums should be red. Please return this slip to the church office whether you plan to purchase with the group or on your own.

BULLETIN INFORMATION

From _____

In memory of (deceased person(s)) _____

In honor of (living person(s) or special occasion) _____

As a gift: _____

Personal Care Kits!

The Social Ministry Committee will once again collect personal care kits beginning April 7th. Last year we collected kits as prescribed by Lutheran World Relief and donated them at the Synod Assembly in June. This year we are making a couple of minor changes to the items included in the kits and they will be donated to the First United Methodist Church for distribution at their Food Bank and in conjunction with their Free Breakfast Program. The folks at First Methodist were very excited by our offer of these items! Please include these items in each of the kits. If you would prefer that the committee shop and assemble on your behalf, donations for this purpose are absolutely welcome!

- One light-weight bath-size towel (we recommend a dark color)
- One wash cloth (again, we recommend a dark color)
- Two bath-size bars of soap in the original wrapping
- One adult size toothbrush in its original packaging*
- One sturdy comb (remove packaging)
- One metal nail clipper (remove packaging)
- One full-size tube of toothpaste

**Toothbrush multi-packs may be used by sealing individual toothbrush in a business-size envelope.*

Fold the towel in half. Place the rest of the items in the towel, fold and roll so nothing falls out and secure with yarn, ribbon, string or rubber bands.



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.

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