



The St John Lutheran Newsletter is a monthly publication of St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church, a congregation of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

Volume 4 Issue 5

Weekly Schedule:

- Service 9:00 am
- Adult Bible Study/
Sunday School
10:15am
- Confirmation 12:00pm
- Monday Night Bible
Study 6:00pm
- Wednesday Coffee
Time 8:30am
- Wednesday Scripture
Study 9 am
- Wednesday Night
Senior High Youth
Group 5:30pm

Special Activities:

- LWM May 7@ 11am
- Elders May 7@ 6pm
- Cody Mock
Presentation with
Potluck May 10
following service
- Confirmation Sunday
May 24
- May 31 Potluck
Brunch following
Church service

From the Desk of Rev. Samuel Beltz

From the Pastor's Heart: The Good Shepherd

This past Sunday John chapter 10, Jesus' powerful promises concerning the Good Shepherd, occupied our attention. Jesus knows His sheep by name, He leads them, He protects them, and ultimately, He lays down His life for them. It's a passage that echoes the ancient promises captured by St. David in Psalm 23. That, despite the gloomy nature of the horizon; death, hell, destruction and confusion—God is with us. In Jesus those promises become so very concrete.

As I preached I got emotional. Really emotional. Tears came, my voice broke, and I found myself rather unprepared. In the moment, I didn't explain some of my words as clearly as I wish I had. I want to give you more clarity — not as an excuse, but as an illuminator from a my pastoral heart, who loves you and loves this Calling.

The tears weren't primarily about my own immediate circumstances. Even though at this point I can readily admit the lines of distinction are blurred. Things in my personal life right now are not falling apart. I am not dead inside or broken as a matter of itself. The deep reason those emotions surfaced so strongly has to do with the cumulative weight I carry from walking with people through death, chaos, broken marriages, addiction, grief, and all the ways this fallen world doesn't make things right or offer us good.

For years I've sat with you in hospitals, stood at gravesides, become a participator of pain and problems without easy fixes. In short, I carry Crosses with you and try to constantly proclaim the Gospel and give Jesus' concrete promises while we tarry on. Over time, that load builds up. Fixes do not come. Nothing seems to change. I start to feel powerless and ineffective because I cannot change the circumstances for the people I love and care for. I pray, I counsel, I point to the Shepherd — but I am not God, I am not a Messiah, and I can't fix. And over the last few weeks that feeling of powerlessness, impotence, and lack has hit me hard. My way has felt lonely, I have felt crushed, I have wrestled with guilt and shame—as if I am failing.

That's what I meant when I said I felt dead inside and broken. Not that my faith is gone or that my life is in crisis, but that the constant exposure to suffering, pain, chaos, unanswered prayers, and the shadow of death has left me drained, feeling helpless, crushed, weak, and tattered. I cannot make things right for the sheep I care about.

Only God. Only Jesus.

I am nothing, in the end. While I KNOW this reality, what took place on Sunday was the sudden and unregulated EXPERIENCE of that reality. I am just a sinner and all I possess is death, and dust, and ash—apart from God's gracious activities in Jesus Christ.

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May Duties:

Elder

Sean Strothman

Altar Guild

Karen Westercamp
Judith Webb

Acolyte

Beckett Vanderwilt

Processional Cross

5/24 Lincoln Duffy

Greeter

Karen Westercamp

Hospitality

5/3 Mitey Muffin Sunday
5/10 Potluck
5/17 Brooklyn Vanderwilt &
Evie McKain
5/24 Confirmation Reception
5/31 Pickett'/Potluck Brunch

Ushers

5/3 Curt Jager & Gabe Hoy
5/10 Mike Forschler &
Toni Karavitis
5/17 Lawrence Smith &
Alan Pickett
5/24 Adam McKain &
Nolan McKain
5/31 Malachi Schauer &
Jacob Anderson

A big THANK YOU to all members who served as organists, Hospitality servers, Ushers, Elders and Altar Guild last month. This is just another part of STEWARDSHIP in action at St. John.

LWML NEWS

LWML will have a Business meeting on May 7 @ 11am
With Devotions on Lord, if You Will.
Bible Study with Pastor

Hostesses will be Judith Webb & Carol Fynaardt

We will also have a May basket exchange.

All Women are welcome to join us.

Mite box Sunday is the first Sunday of the Month. Please remember to bring your mites and put in the LWML box.



MAY BIRTHDAYS



Fran Katko	5-03
James Horn	5-04
Jack Rice	5-05
Jim Poore	5-07
Linda Sarver	5-08
Sue Pitts	5-12
Adam McKain	5-16
Judith Webb	5-18
Claire Beltz	5-24
Marjorie Roach	5-28
Cole Brendlinger	5-30



May ANNIVERSARY



Keith & Betty McWilliams	5-09-70
Fred & Donna Reineke	5-11-1974
Brad & Jami Sickels	5-11-19
Samuel & Cassie Beltz	5-24-08
Levi & Patricia Vander Molen	5-27-2023
Malachi & Hannah Schauer	5-29-2022







Please include in your prayers daily



 Sean Strothman, Luke Letzring, Rod Hacker, Karen Westercamp, Tamra Van Haaften and Ann Ohms. 



 **Prayers for the Mocks for: strengthening of relationships** at our local church with both existing and newcomers, **wise technology decisions** the improve effectiveness of both Luther Academy and the Eurasia Region, **language learning, activities and friendships** for Eva and Moriah 

 For those in Isreal, Ukraine, Russia, Uvalde and other places suffering from acts of senseless violence; 

 For those serving in our Armed Forces and for our Police Officers and Fire Fighters; may they remain safe in their service; 

 For the many that continue to struggle with isolation and loneliness; For those directly and in directly affected by the conflict in Ukraine; For the many who continue to struggle with natural disasters and bad storms; 

 For our Church, that God would continue to grant us new members and make us a good gift to each other and our community; 

 For us as a congregation to faithfully receive God's good gifts this day. 



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The beautiful thing that came out of Sunday was that, despite the rather confused emotional bookends of the sermon, many of you were still able to glean a very clear and concrete Gospel promise: the only hope I have, we have, is Jesus Christ and despite our confusion, our sin, our death, our emotionally mercurial moments, Jesus is OUR Good Shepherd. The promise isn't that we will have it together. The promise is that he will be with us, you and I.

A second beautiful aspect that has arisen from last Sunday is the proclamation of the Gospel from all of you to me. I forget that I need to hear the Gospel. It is a central aspect of my own personal care. I spend so much time teaching, caring, and feeding others I rarely have the discipline and opportunity to receive the Good Gifts I need. You have helped me with that this week. You have proclaimed to be the beautiful simple promise, "Jesus loves you too, Pastor." As I am writing this, I am still tearfully joyful at this message and gift. I need the friendliness of the Gospel.

I do owe you an apology for letting those emotions spill into the pulpit the way they did. Part of my responsibility is to manage my own heart, body, and spirit so I can serve you well. The truth is, being a pastor is hard work by design. Jesus said this to St. Paul, "I will show him how much he will suffer for my name..." Caring for sheep isn't always beautiful. It takes a toll. My job is to keep showing up, keep pointing you to the Good Shepherd even when I feel the weight of the work. That doesn't mean I'm above needing help — it means I need to steward my own life better so I can keep doing this for the long haul.

Here's what I don't want to happen, though, and this is really important: Please don't handle me like a fragile object. Don't stop bringing me your needs. Don't decide I must be too fragile or too busy to talk to or that the load is too heavy. The very best thing for me is to keep doing the work God called me to. Lifting heavy, working, praying with you, serving you — that's life-giving, even when it's heavy.

What I do need from you is clear and concrete: your prayers, your kindness, your friendship, your willingness to keep using me as your pastor, and to proclaim the Gospel to me. Pray that God would strengthen me physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Pray that the Good Shepherd would refresh His undershepherd here at St. John.

John 10 reminds us that Jesus is the Good Shepherd who never gets tired, never burns out, never feels powerless, and when he is killed, rises again. He knows every sheep by name, including the ones who feel lost or weary. When we experience the weight of this broken world, we experience that there is no hope apart from Jesus, we look to Him — the One who laid down His life for the sheep and took it up again.

Thank you for being gentle with me, caring, and friendly. Sunday was a display of my own weakness and need for the Gospel. Let's keep walking together into the Word of the One who calls us by name and leads us into death, but out again into life eternal.

Pastor Beltz



NURSERY VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

As our church family grows, we're looking for new ways to support parents and care for our youngest members. Therefore, we are looking for volunteers to serve in the church nursery during Bible study hour. Our goal is to have one adult and one older youth scheduled each week. This allows one volunteer to step out to bring children to their parents when needed, while the other stays with the remaining children.

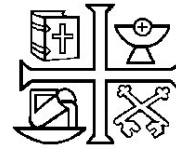
The more volunteers we have, the less often each person will need to serve — meaning everyone can still regularly attend Bible study.

This can also be a sweet opportunity for a you and your youth to serve together! If you're willing to help, please sign up on the nursery door or email the church office.



Congratulations to our Confirmands

*Evan Anderson
Abram Beltz
Bristol Duffy
Lincoln Duffy
Jack Rice
Keagen Strothman
Beckett Vanderwilt*



The church is happy to have you continue to grow in your faith. There will be a reception following service on May 24 to honor the confirmands



LET'S GIVE THE

Mocks a Warm Welcome!



Mock's Returning to the US! ❤️



They will be giving a talk on their work in Latvia.



POTLUCK!

Please bring a dish to share. Let's share a meal and encourage the Mocks together!



MAY 10

Following
CHURCH SERVICE

Let's surround the Mocks with love and encouragement! ❤️



Congratulations to our Graduates

*Caitlyn Crile
Daughter of
Jason & Jara*

*Julia Shmales
Daughter of
John & May*



Camp Scholarships

There is scholarship money available for those needing money to help cover the cost of camp. Please fill out a camp scholarship form from the office and return it by May 31



May 2026

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 641-673-6546
 office@stjohnosky.org

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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
3 9am Divine Service with Communion 10:15am Mitey Muffin Sunday	4 6:00pm Monday Night Bible Study	5	6 8:30am Coffee Hour 9:00am Scripture Study 5:30pm Youth Group Bulletin Items Due	7 LWML 11am Elders 6pm	1 8	2 9
10 9am Divine Service with Communion 10:15am Potluck with Mock's	11 6:00pm Monday Night Bible Study	12	13 8:30am Coffee Hour 9:00am Scripture Study 5:30pm Youth Group Bulletin items due	14	15	16
17 9am Catechetical Review 10:15am Bible Study/ Sunday School	18 6:00pm Monday Night Bible Study	19	20 8:30am Coffee Hour 9:00am Scripture Study 5:30pm Youth Group Bulletin items due	21	22	23
24 9am Divine Service with Communion 10:15am Bible Study/ Sunday School	25	26	27 Bulletin items due	28	29	30
31 9:00am Matins 10:15am Potluck brunch	1	2	3 8:30am Coffee Hour 9:00am Scripture Study 5:30pm Youth Group Bulletin items due	4 LWML Work Day 9:30am-Noon		

