December 2026

St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church

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 12

Weekly Schedule:

- Service 9:00 am
- Adult Bible Study/ Sunday School 10:15am
- Confirmation Sundays noon –1:30pm
- Monday Night Bible Study 6pm
- Wednesday Coffee Time 8:30am
- Wednesday Scripture Study 9 am
- Youth Group Wednesday 5:30pm

Special Activities:

- LWML December 3 @ 11 am
- Elders December 3 @ 6pm

From the Desk of Rev. Samuel Beltz

A Non-Biblical Considerations Guided By Biblically Influenced Reason

1. Usually, we do not hesitate to tell our babies, "I love you." We do not hesitate to hug them, play with them, rock them, hush them when they cry, feed them, change them, etc. We do these things as signs and tokens to them, despite their inability to "understand" "know" or "confess" their faith and trust in what we are doing to/for them as their parents. On top of these activities toward our children, we work and labor to provide all the things to support their bodies and lives (often superabundantly) Nonetheless, we do these things as good parents without consideration of our children's ability to comprehend what they are receiving. Baptism is God's good gift to his children despite their inability to understand what they are receiving.
2. We call Baptism a Good Gift of Grace and Favor from God, and rightly so. The interesting thing is that, again, as human parents we do not hesitate to shower our children with good gifts of grace and favor. Even prior to their birth we are actively working to make nursery rooms comfortable and well furnished. We buy clothing and toys all in anticipation of the child and desiring to communicate to the child, and others, that we are overjoyed at that child's presence in our lives.
    a. To offer a crass human analogy, Baptism to some degree is as if a family friend showed up to your home after you wife has announced she was pregnant. He comes with two suitcases loaded with cash. He says, "I would like to give your child this gift and promise him that there is more to come." Do the parents reject the gift because their child is completely unable to comprehend the gift, its generosity, immensity, and scope? Do the parents reject the gift and say, "Can you come back when our child is able to understand what is happening?" Or, do the parents say, "Yes! Wow! Thanks! We will make sure to take care of this until such a time that our child grows up and can manage this gift himself. We will make sure he grows up understanding and believing how generous, graceful, immense and loving this gift was when you gave it and how it still impacts his daily life now and into the future." Obviously, in most cases the Parents of the unborn child will act as stewards. Speaking on behalf of their child and receiving the gift in his name as his caretakers. They will probably make sure the child remembers the gift, remembers the giver, is in regular contact with the giver and offers thanks on a regular basis. When the time comes the child will make regular use of the gift.

We have worked our way through the biblical foundations and commands concerning baptism. Baptism is a work of God. It is commanded by God as a ceremonial and divine entrance for Christians into the salvific work of the Reign of God made concrete in Jesus Christ full of the Holy Spirit. We have established that Baptism must be applied in the Name of the Triune God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). We have established that it is good and right for Baptism to be applied to infants and babies. At this point we turn our attention to another question that has been asked in the North American context. The question concerning the number of baptisms that a person might have applied to them.

The Biblical and Historic Reasoning and Practice for "One Baptism for the Remission of Sins."

Continued on pg 3

December Duties:

Elder
Sean Strothman

Altar Guild
Betty McWilliams
Myrna Antony

Acolyte
12/6 Jack Rice
12/13 Beckett Vanderwilt
12/20 Evan Anderson
12/27 Lincoln Duffy

Greeter
Judy Webb

Hospitality
12/6 O'Lears
12/13 Becca Duffy & C
Cassie Beltz
12/20 Christmas Reception
12/27 Brooklyn Vanderwilt
Evie McKain

Ushers
12/6 Curt Jager & Gabe Hoy
12/13 Tony Karavitis &
Alan Pickett
12/20 Lawrence Smith &
Malachi Schauer
12/27 Mike Forschler &
Marty George

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 meet on December 3 @ 11am. We will have an Ornament exchange and Business Meeting and election of President/ Treasurer. Hostesses is everyone as we will do Potluck. Devotion will be "Send Out Your Light" by Marjorie Roach

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

Bulletin announcements due by end of the day on Wednesday of each week.

Newsletter items due by the 20th of each month.

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Easter Carr	**12-06**
Mathew Bowie	**12-11**
David Fenton	**12-11**
Mike Forschler	**12-15**
Hannah King	**12-15**
Monica Pickett	**12-23**
Bailey Brown	**12-26**
Regina Hoy	**12-26**
Carla Malloy	**12-26**

DECEMBER ANNIVERSARY

Mike & Lisa Forschler
12-18-2021
Austin and Hannah King
12-20-2014

Prayer Requests for Advent

As we enter the Advent season, we will be updating our prayer list. If you have names you would like to remain on the list, or if there are others who should be added, please contact the church office.

Please include in your prayers daily

Letzring Family, Tamra Van Haaften, Majorie Roach 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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Biblical Passages that give us ground for One Baptism

1. Ephesians 4.1-6
    a. In this passage St. Paul is encouraging the Ephesians Christians toward holy and righteous conduct in their daily lives.
        i. Apparently, the Ephesian Christians struggled to maintain the unity of the body of Christ in some way. To emphasize the singular nature of the body, St. Paul pushes the multiple aspects of the single reality.
            1. One Body, One Spirit, One Hope,
                a. One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism/Birth,
                i. One God and Father of All.
    b. It is important to notice that the intention of St. Paul is not to comment on Baptism as much as it is to encourage the Ephesians to maintain the unity of the Body of Christ and cherish the many gifts that are present among the many members of that body.
        i. Nevertheless, his statement, "One Baptism" is meant to reinforce the idea that Christians share in a singular event together. One Baptism here stands as a clear referent to the one Sacramental event that was individually applied yet unites each Christian into a singular reality. One Faith. Under One God and Father. Into One Hope. A part of ONE Body.
2. Romans 6.1-10
        a. In this passage St. Paul is commenting on the power and benefit of Baptism for the Christian. In particular, St. Paul is asserting that Baptism works death and life. Death in Christ and Life in Christ. For the sake of time we will only focus on the first few verses.
            i. "What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life." Romans 6.1-4
            ii. How many times did Jesus die? How many times did Jesus rise from the dead?
                1. Again, the point of this passage isn't to assert the single moment of Baptism in the life of the Christian, it nevertheless appears to assert that, just as Christ has died once and been raised once, the work and practice of Baptism precipitates from Jesus' person, work and example in his own death and Resurrection.

Exclusions to or Reinforcements of the "rule" for One Baptism.

1. The first matter at hand is the matter of Christian conscience. In all the readings given above, God makes it clear through Jesus and the Apostles that he wants us Christian people to view baptism with the confidence and assurance:
    a. That God has Worked for them
    b. That Sin is defeated.
    c. That Death is overcome by Life
    d. That I am a member of Christ's Body the Church (transferred from the domain of darkness into his marvelous light).

2. What happens, though, if the Christian heart, soul and conscience are not confident and sure and certain about our baptism, place before God, or salvation?
        i. For Example, earlier in my career I had an older gentleman that simply couldn't clearly remember if he had been baptized. His parents were dead. His older sister believed that he had been baptized. The congregation of the Church had closed down and there were no accessible records to confirm or deny his baptism.
            1. This lack of certainty made this man nervous. His desire was to have the certainty of baptism. So, I baptized him.

3. What happens if we think we are too sinful and that baptism needs to be reapplied, over and over again?
    a. I was approached by a young woman who had gone through a Christian conversion. She had lived a rough life full of sin in her younger years. She becomes pregnant and had a significant change of life and faith. She starts going to church. She, in her words, "gives her life to Jesus." But, she struggles with memories of her sinful life and falling back into sinful ways. So, she keeps wanting to be baptized to take care of these repeated and ongoing sins. She wants to be baptized so often, in fact, that her pastor tells her, "we cant do this every Sunday." This makes her made and she approaches me to ask if I would be willing to baptize her each week to "take care of the sins."
        i. I approached this situation differently. This lady needed the confidence of Romans 6. That God had taken action in Baptism to usher her into a new life and that now, there were other means by which she could hear God grant her forgiveness—namely Confession and Absolution or the Lord's Supper. This is what I directed her toward, not more and more baptism.

Pastor Samuel Beltz

Friends of Marty
December 4
6:00pm

All men are welcome to come

Children's Christmas program
December 20th @ 9am



Mock Care Package

As a church we like to support the Mock's with a Christmas Care Package each year! This year it would be special to have members of St John write notes and cards to the family! The church also has designated monetary support to help send the package overseas as well as buy a few "American" treats and treasures that are hard to find in The Czech. If you would like to include your own gifts please check with Hannah King first as there is limited space and content precautions for packages sent overseas.

Please have items and notes/cards to Hannah/St John by December 6!

Thank you for your support and love to the Mock family!



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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2 8:30am Coffee Hour 9:00am Scripture Study **Advent Service 6pm** **Advent Meal 6:30pm** LWML Potato Bar	**3** LWML 11am Elder 6pm	**4** Friends of Marty 6pm	5
6 9am Divine Service with Communion 10:15am Adult Bible Study/Sunday School Confirmation 12:00-1:30pm	7 Monday Night Bible Study 6pm	8	9 8:30am Coffee Hour 9:00am Scripture Study **Advent Service 6pm** **Advent Meal 6:30pm** Youth	10	11	12
13 9am Divine Service with Communion 10:15am Adult Bible Study/Sunday School Confirmation 12:00-	14 Monday Night Bible Study 6pm	15	16 8:30am Coffee Hour 9:00am Scripture Study **Advent Service 6pm** **Advent Meal 6:30pm**	17	18	19
20 9am Matins/ Christmas Program 10:15am Reception	21 Monday Night Bible Study 6pm	22	23	24 6:00pm Lessons & Carols 11pm Candlelight Service	25 10am Christmas Divine Service	26
27 9:00am Matins 10:15amn Bible School/ Sunday School	28	29	30	31	1	2