



The Messenger
St. John Lutheran Church

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PASTOR'S OFFICE HOURS

Monday and Thursday: 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Tuesday and Wednesday: 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

No appointment is necessary – just stop by! Please call the office and make an appointment if these times are not convenient (345-0120).

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

Monday through Thursday, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Dear members and friends of St. John,

The story is told of an Early Church bishop who bowed respectfully before Emperor Theodosius but refused to bow to his son, Arcadius — at which the emperor, of course, showed great displeasure. But the Christian leader replied, "O King, how much more will Jehovah [God] abhor those who reject His Son!"¹

That's the central question for people of all religions, isn't it? Will you recognize the only Son of God? From St. John chapter 5, we have Jesus saying: *"The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him. Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears My word and believes Him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life"*(vv. 22-24, ESV).

There seems to be great confusion about Jesus and the need to recognize Him as God's own Son. There are numerous church denominations that have publicly stated that Jews will also go to heaven because of their belief in the God of the Old Testament. There are TV evangelists that publicly solicit funds to send Jews back to their homeland, Israel – implying that Jews have an inherent right to heaven, through their heritage (and that Jesus will return to Mt Zion when Israel is reestablished in Jerusalem - a false teaching). What does the Bible teach us? St. John chapter 5 is crystal clear. These are the simple and unmistakable words of Christ. Without Christ, there is no God. To be without Christ is to be lost, and on a "spiritual pathway" in this short life that leads to eternal death in hell.

I know that this message is distasteful to many Americans. It's embarrassing to all who in their ritual or worship would prefer to delete the name of Christ and be content with more general names for the Creator of all things.

Our Savior Jesus is no mere prophet, no mere teacher, no mere human leader. He is "very God of very God." He is the almighty Son of the Most High. Listen to these words from Colossians chapter 1: *"He [Jesus] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities— all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross"*(vv. 15-20, ESV).

I realize that political correctness has entered Christendom and has made the preeminence of Christ a reprehensible notion. However, we must understand this to be Satan's work to destroy the knowledge of the Truth, found in Jesus Christ alone.

As St. Paul states in Colossians, *"For in Him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell..."* Jesus is fully and completely God. God was fully found in Him when Jesus hung on the cross, dying with the sins of all mankind.

We understand this truth by reading the next part of the text: *"...and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things...making peace by the blood of His cross"*(Col. 1:20, ESV). Jesus' death on the cross was an acceptable payment in the Father's eyes for the sins of the whole world. Jesus reconciles you and me to the Father, by shedding His blood on the cross. Our faith in Jesus, and Jesus alone, makes us right in God's eyes.

Finally, Jesus again reminds us of the truth, when He said, *"I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father, except through Me."*(John 14:6). Your friend or neighbor who

believes that there are other ways to get to heaven, needs to hear these words. Use this article, if necessary, to reach them today. Pray with them first, that they may receive the truth about God's only Son, to their eternal benefit. You may be the only person that ever confronts them with God's Truth.

Yes, the world finds the message of Jesus reprehensible. But we have the Truth, and we know the importance of sharing that truth with others who are lost. May God continue to use us for the good of His kingdom. Amen.

Pastor Travis

1. Hoyer, Theodore, et. al., *Meditations on the Gospels: According to His Word*, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c. 2009.

SOCIAL MINISTRIES

FOOD TRUCK – We are collecting donations of personal hygiene items and cleaning products to distribute at the Food Truck give-a-ways. Individuals in need cannot purchase items such as shampoo, soap, deodorant, toothpaste, or household cleaners with their Bridge cards even though they are needed.

We are working with a grant from Thrivent and our local Walmart for the food funding. A collection basket will be in the fellowship hall for donations. We very much appreciate the support we get from all of you! Very blessed to be a part of this church family! Questions can be made to Lisa or Bev.

Please save the date and come join us for a picnic on 9/9/18 at Irons Park after Sunday Service...please bring a dish to pass... meat will be provided...Thanks.

Social Ministries team is collecting garage sale donations for their garage sale until September 2nd ...please drop off at the Garage or in Sunday school class room- last room on the left...Garage sale is to be held on September 7, Friday 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., and on September 8, Saturday 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

PRAYER MINISTRIES

Prayer Warriors – Thank you to all of you who have stood in the gap praying for our students throughout the school year! We encourage you to remember your assigned students in prayer throughout the summer and new students will be assigned in September.

Praying for you... Have you received a postcard in the mail recently that said, "The Congregation has prayed for you"? As part of the ongoing prayer ministry here at St. John, we pray for the spiritual, emotional, and physical wellbeing of our members. We also lift up the ministries and outreach of this congregation on a daily basis. If you are interested in praying for these concerns, August Prayer Sheets are available in the Narthex on the cart next to the Portals of Prayer.

LADIES AID

BIBLE AND DEVOTIONAL COLLECTION – 18 boxes of Bibles, hymnals and devotional materials were delivered to the new branch of Orphan Grain Train in Sebewaing, Michigan on Friday, July 20th. Our load of goods was the first donation to the new branch of OGT.

FAMILY FARE "Direct Your Dollars" - As of June 19th we have collected 31,609 dollars in receipts. Remember, you must use your "Yes Rewards" card or give them your phone number for the purchase to count as a "Direct Your Dollars" receipt. We have had some receipts recently that didn't count due to not using the "Yes Rewards" card!

MEETING – Don't forget we have changed our meeting day to the 2nd Tuesday of the month instead of Thursday. The August meeting will be held on Tuesday, August 14th. It will begin with a potluck lunch @ 11:30 A.M. which will be held at the home of Mary Lowery. Call Mary if you need directions.

School Kits – The ladies have sewn and completed 50 backpacks which will be filled with school supplies and donated to Orphan Grain Train and the local schools. Each backpack must be filled with the following items:

- 2-3 Spiral Notebooks
- 2 or more pencils
- 2 or more pens
- Pkg. of construction paper
- Crayons
- Ruler (must have centimeters or both inches and cm.)
- Glue sticks
- Blunt scissors
- Washable markers

We would appreciate any donations of these school supplies to assist in making these school kits and to help our local school children. Extra copies of the above list are available on the table by the church entrance.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Your Word is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path.
Psalm 119:105

Let His Word light your way!

**Check out the opportunities below
and come join us we dig into God's Word!**

Sunday Mornings

8:30 a.m. - A Longer Look at the Lessons – Prepare for worship by taking a closer look at the Bible readings for that Sunday's service.

Monday Mornings

10:00 a.m. - We are taking an in-depth look at **1 Samuel**. We will see our Lord's continuing, faithful care for His people, despite their

weaknesses and unfaithfulness. Our Lord hears their prayers and calls them to repentance again and again. Ultimately uniting them as a nation under His servant, King David, and ultimately pointing them and us to Jesus our Savior and King.

Tuesday Evenings

7:00 p.m. - Women's Bible Study at Jane Tennant's home. *They are still on summer break, and will resume meeting in September.*

7:00 p.m. - Men's Bible Study on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday. *They, also are on summer break, and will resume meeting in September.*

Wednesday Mornings

9:00 a.m. – Men's Breakfast and Devotional - 3rd Wednesday at the church.

Take time to refresh and recharge in God's Word throughout the summer months.
The benefits are eternal!

Sunday School Happenings

**For Thine is the kingdom
and the power and the glory forever and ever.
Amen.**

Sound familiar? It's the conclusion of the Lord's Prayer. Right? But, you knew that! And, as summer is coming to an end, so is our in depth look at the Lord's Prayer. We will finish up our Sunday School lessons this month with the Conclusion and Amen of the Lord's Prayer. So what does this mean? "This means that I should be certain that these petitions are pleasing to our Father in heaven, and are heard by Him; for He Himself has commanded us to pray in this way and has promised to hear us. Amen, amen means 'yes, yes, it shall be so.'" With the Amen, the emphasis is placed on the certainty of God hearing our prayers and answering them. God alone is the King who has all good gifts in His control. He alone has the power to grant our petitions. And, He has all glory and is worthy of our praise...

*Salvation and glory and power belong to our God.
Revelation 19:1*



It was a wet week at Splash Canyon VBS where we learned that...

"God keeps His promises on life's wild ride!"

- 1), On Sunday, from Exodus 2:1-10, we learned that
"God is with us! Yes He is!"
- 2), On Monday, from 1 John 2:25, we learned that
"God gives us life! Yes, He does!"
- 3), On Tuesday, from 2 Kings 5:1-14, we learned that
"God is faithful! Yes He is!"
- 4), On Wednesday, from Acts 27:13-44, we learned that
"God gives us hope! Yes, He does!"

5), And, on Thursday, from Matthew 3:13-17, we were reminded that...

"Jesus is our Savior! Yes, He is!"

A very special thank you to...

- Everyone that contributed food, finances, and prayer support to make this week possible. *Children and staff both were blessed by your loving support!*
- And, for all those that lovingly shared their time, talents, and *energy* with the children that came, pointing them to Jesus' love and His victory over sin, death, and the devil.

**We pray that the Lord would bless, sprout, and grow
the seeds that were sown this week!
To God be the glory! Amen.**

EVANGELISM / OUTREACH

During our **Free Food Give-a-ways** we have an **evangelism table** where New Testaments, tracts, and information on St. John are handed out free to all who are interested. These resources have been very well received by the community! Please pray that the Christian resource materials and Bibles will be effective in reaching the lost and hurting. We will be receiving a Thrivent Grant to be used for Lent Devotions for our Sunday School children and also for the day cares in the community. Thank you.

Prayer cards are being sent out and Facebook has been updated with pictures from Bible school. Patty Rohman is sending cards to our visitors to let them know we were glad they chose to worship with us and inviting them back. Hope everyone will remember to pray for the people in Texas during the hurricane and flooding they are going through.

We still have lots of car decals if you want one just ask Patty or John or check with Dennis in the office. Don't be bashful to ask. They make great conversation starters to invite someone to visit us on Saturday night or Sunday morning services. Do you know anyone that could use a prayer or a word of encouragement, let me know so I can send them a card. Carolyn Smith

The Gift of Prayer by John Kleinig

Some years ago, I was teaching a class that was unusually ready to challenge what I taught. In the previous session on the creed, I had stressed that our salvation was given to us as a free gift that we did nothing to earn. I had barely begun a lesson on the Lord's Prayer before one of the stirrers asked, "Please, sir, do we have to pray?" My answer surprised him and the rest of the class. "No," I said, "you don't have to pray." Then, after pausing for effect, I added, "But you would be stupid if you didn't!"

I went on to challenge the class with a hypothetical scenario. What if I handed out a super-voucher to each confirmand? What if that voucher had a list of 1,000 items? And what if, on presentation at the local shopping center, that person could receive any of the listed items free, either for himself or his friends, not just once but whenever he wished? And what if I agreed to pay for all of them? "What," I concluded, "would you think of anyone who asked whether he had to use that voucher?"

That exchange opened up a discussion on prayer as a gift rather than an obligation, prayer as something that Jesus has given to us for our benefit to receive God's gifts. We pray in order to receive the gifts that God has for us and others. And best of all, prayer itself is a gift!

No need to pray?

More than anything else, the devil tries to stop us praying, for as soon as we pray, his work is undone. So he does everything he can to prevent that from happening. He commonly misuses God's Word in two ways. On the one hand, he argues that since prayer is not a means of grace and our works contribute nothing to our salvation, we have no need to pray. On the other hand, since we seem to fail more often in prayer than in anything else that we do, no matter how hard we try, we should give up and leave it to the experts in faith. He tries to deprive us of the good things that God wants us to receive from Him.

Since prayer comes so hard to us, God has taken great pains to help us to pray. He sent His Son to live a human life in which He accomplished for us what we could not accomplish by ourselves. In the three years from His Baptism to His death, Jesus did not just preach God's Word to His disciples but also prayed for them. All that He said and did was undergirded by regular prayer. He had no need to do that for Himself; He did it for others, bringing them and their needs to the Father. Yet, His work of prayer did not end with His life on earth. In fact, His death laid the foundation for His ongoing prayer for us and all people. The author of Hebrews claims that this is what He is now doing for us: "Consequently, He is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:25).

Jesus teaches us more about that in Luke 11:1-13. Luke begins the story by noting that Jesus had been praying. When He had finished, one of His disciples, speaking for the others and us, too, who would like to be better at prayer, said: "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples." That disciple wanted Jesus to give them some tips on prayer. But Jesus does not do that. He answers the request in four surprising ways.

Learning to pray

First, He does not tell us how to pray but gives us His own prayer, the Lord's Prayer, the prayer that He prays for us and the whole world. With this, He gives us His own unique relationship as Son with God the Father and lets us stand in His shoes, joining with Him in His praying. In this prayer, we identify ourselves with Jesus as we pray together with Him for the hallowing of the Father's name and the coming of the Father's kingdom. In this prayer, Jesus also identifies Himself with us and our need for food, forgiveness and protection from temptation. In this prayer, we pray together with Jesus who prays for us and the whole world.

Second, He teaches us to pray with the parable of the unexpected visitor. Here Jesus gets us to imagine that we have an unannounced visit at midnight from our best friend. He has come a long way and has had nothing to eat. Worst of all, there is not a scrap of food in the house. Yet, even though we have nothing to set before our visitor, we have a friend next door. So we borrow from him for our guest.

How does this parable answer the request for Jesus to teach us to pray? God gives us unexpected "visitors," people who cross our paths and make impossible demands that we can't fulfill. We would like to help them out but have nothing for them. But we do have a friend next door. Unlike the neighbor in the parable, Jesus is eager to provide what is needed. So Jesus teaches us to pray by giving us unexpected visitors, people who need our prayers and help from God through us.

Third, Jesus teaches us to pray by giving us God's Word with its commands and promises. He authorizes us to pray by saying "ask" and "seek" and "knock." To each of these commands He adds a promise. If we ask, God will give us His promised gifts. If we seek help and guidance, we will find what is needed from God. Best of all, if we knock at the door of the Father's house, He will open the door for us and invite us in. We won't just get what we ask for; we will enjoy His warm hospitality.

Jesus helps us to pray by giving us God's words. His words are aids to prayer. The Bible is our prayer book, for as we listen to what God says, we receive help and guidance in praying according to His will. That's why Luther explains in the Small Catechism that we can be sure that God the Father is pleased with our prayers because "He Himself has commanded us to pray and has promised to hear us."

Fourth, Jesus helps us to pray by the promise of the Holy Spirit. He challenges us with two questions. Even the worst father would not give his son a snake if he asked for a fish or a scorpion if he asked for an egg. Then comes an unexpected conclusion: God the Father does not just give good things on request to His children, but He also gives the Holy Spirit. That's the best of gifts!

A spirit of prayer

But how does Jesus teach us to pray by giving us the promise of the Holy Spirit? The answer is simple. We are all dunces at prayer, people who find it hard to pray. So God provides us with His Holy Spirit, not just once but again and again, whenever we pray. The Spirit is the Spirit of prayer, for He is not just received by faith in prayer, but also prompts us when we pray. Since we do not know how to pray or what to pray for, the Spirit, says Paul in Rom. 8:26-27, intercedes for us and in us before God. We pray to God the Father together with Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit. Indeed, we have received the gift of prayer from God to receive gifts from God in prayer.

The Rev. Dr. John Kleinig, former lecturer at Australian Lutheran College, is currently writing a commentary on Hebrews. Reprinted from *The Lutheran Witness*, May 2012, St. Louis: LCMS, c. 2012.

“I WILL GIVE YOU THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN” Matthew 16:19

Jesus' teaching of His keys can never be understood by the world. Even for Christians, Jesus' keys are not fully grasped. To give followers of Jesus *a faint* idea of Jesus' teaching on His **keys**, Rev. Dr. C. F. W. Walther, a great Lutheran Bible scholar, offered an analogy.

Walther writes that, from ancient times, the transfer of **keys** has always signified transferred authority:

“... **for whoever has the keys has access to all things**. If, for example, a man delivers to his wife the **keys**, he attests that by this fact he acknowledges her as his mate and that he entrusts to her the care of the home.”

“Similarly the **keys** are delivered to stewards and managers by their masters, and by this act there is delivered to them authority over the rooms, cellars, and chests, and whatever is preserved in them.”

“In the same way, whenever princes are admitted into a city, they are given the **keys** by the citizens, which indicates that these subject themselves to their dominion and acknowledge that they have the power to admit anyone to the city or to exclude him from it.”

“This figure [of handing over **keys**] Christ here applies to the church, whose **keys** He promises to Peter and his colleagues, teaching by this that He would make them His managers and stewards so that they might open to the worthy the treasures for their possession and use of the same and exclude from them the unworthy and sinful, shutting them out of the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 4:1). The expression ‘**keys** of the kingdom of heaven’ therefore embraces the administration, power, and authority by virtue of which all is done that is necessary for the kingdom of Christ or the management of the church” (*The Form of a Christian Congregation*, C. F. W. Walther. Concordia Publishing House, pp. 13-14).

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR CLARIFICATION

Q. Who decides whether a person enters the door of heaven?

A. Jesus decides. However, He has given this authority to church on earth. “The Office of the Keys is that special authority which Christ has given to His church on earth to forgive sins of repentant sinners, but to withhold forgiveness from the unrepentant as long as they do not repent” (*Luther's Small Catechism*). Jesus' church on earth has the power to forgive or retain sins, to lock and unlock the doors of heaven (Matthew 16:19; 18:18; John 20:23).

Q. Why does this teaching of Jesus sound so shocking today?

A. This teaching is shocking because most Protestant churches despise Jesus' **keys** by ignoring His teaching on the **keys**. Why do these Protestants ignore this important teaching? Because it does not fit into their preconceived idea of what Christ's church is. Protestants may attend a Lutheran church and hear the pastor say, “In the name and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you all your sins.” When they hear this, they react like the Pharisees did in Jesus' day and say: “How can you claim to forgive sins? Only God can forgive sins” (Mark 2:7). Even though

Jesus repeated this teaching on the **keys** three times in His gospels (Matthew 16:19; 18:18; John 20:23), most Protestant churches have simply ignored Jesus' words.

- Q. What does this teaching mean for Christians today who want to follow Christ and to be in heaven in Christ's presence?
- A. Jesus clearly states that He has established His church on earth (Matthew 16:18). If you want to be *assured* of entrance into heaven, you need to be part of a church that uses the **keys** of Christ. Never trust your eternal destiny to doctrines or teachings of men. Rather, let Jesus build the assurance of your total forgiveness and your eternal destiny on the living power of His **keys**, as these are announced to you by His representatives in His church (pastors).

*Dear Lord Jesus, thank You for not abandoning me. I praise Your holy name for establishing Your church and giving Your church the authority to announce Your forgiveness, especially to me. Lead all churches in the world to re-study and re-institute Your precious teachings on Your **keys**, for these open and close heaven. In Your powerful name, I pray. Amen.*

Reprinted from *Good News Magazine*, St. Louis: Concordia Mission Society, c. 2007.

CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

2018 FLOWER CHART — A new flower chart for 2018 is posted. There are many opportunities to sponsor flowers for the altar. Please take a few moments to sign up for a special date. Remember, flowers are \$15.00 and the Ladies Aid would like them paid for when you sign up.

DECALS — Been noticing St. John window decals in the cars in the parking lot or around town? Want one for your vehicle/vehicles? There is no charge . . . just ask Patty Rohman or stop by the church office to get one.

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT — St. John Lutheran has entered into an agreement with AuSable Valley Community Mental Health that allows them to use our facility for certain activities during the week. Part of this agreement is that our congregational members will keep confidential the names of people that are using our facility. Please observe this agreement by never mentioning the names of people that you may have seen. Also, remind others of this agreement if you hear of a visitor's name being mentioned. Thank you for your cooperation. Executive Council.

Reminder: There is a box in the Narthex for giving to the **Ogemaw County Clergy Association**. This money is collected hygiene items, for the purchase of food, personal home heating fuels, and funeral expenses for people in Ogemaw Country that are unable to afford these necessities. Make checks payable to Ogemaw County Clergy Assoc. Thank you!

EMERGENCY PRAYER REQUESTS — St. John has developed a system that allows us to rapidly contact all members when a life threatening situation develops, requiring immediate prayers. We are requesting cell phone numbers (for text messaging) or e-mail addresses for all members. For those who don't use e-mails or text messaging, phone calls will be made. Please request a salmon-colored form the office and return it when completed. Thank you.

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

8/02 – Lindy Hanft
8/02 – Jacqueline Johnson
8/11 – Linda Bertossi
8/14 – Benjamin Lowery
8/15 – Zachary Bertossi
8/18 – Amey Moeggenborg
8/30 – Betty Voss
8/31 – Burt Harms
8/31 – Kaitlin Randall



AUGUST ANNIVERSARIES

8/12 – Brian and Lesa Klein