



St. John's
Lutheran Church
& School

April 2021 Eagle Newsletter



Mark 16:6 ESV

"Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him."

Why I Don't Do Congregational Surveys

In my first congregation, we considered the question of how many services to offer and when to offer them. I learned a lot from that experience. One of the lessons I learned was the ineffectiveness of a congregational survey. The elders of that congregation decided to survey the members to see what their preferred worship time was. It was a disaster. Not only was there no consensus, but the very act of surveying gave people the impression that their preference was what was best for the congregation. Many of them became unwilling to even consider other possibilities. So I resolved never to survey a congregation again.

So when the question of service times was put to me at St. John's by several informal discussions with members, by a formal request from the Board of Trustees, and by my own observations over the first several months of my tenure at St. John's, I decided to do something different. In 2019 I put four questions to the Board of Elders in our discussion concerning the St. John's worship service schedule. In January 2020, I asked for these questions to be put to the congregation for reflection and discussion in preparation for the next voters' meeting.

These questions are not meant to be easy. If they challenge you to broaden your horizons and think about church and ministry in new ways, then they have been successful. If they make you uncomfortable, they should. At the same time, I ask that you do not read anything into these questions. There is no hidden agenda. And there are undoubtedly other questions that would accomplish the same results, and perhaps more effectively.

The congregation is asked to consider the following:

- How would God, by the work of His Spirit, cause St. John's to grow using only one morning service?
- How would God, by the work of His Spirit, cause St. John's to grow using two morning services?
- Does God ever will a local congregation to reduce in size?
- Does God measure growth in ways other than numerical statistics?

Members can communicate their thoughts on these questions to the elders. Or, for confidentiality purposes, members can provide feedback to anyone in the congregation who can then direct the feedback to the elders.

In Christ,

Under the cross,
Pastor Ehrhard



*From the
Pastor's
Desk*

Ladies Book Club: In March, the Ladies Book Club read City of Scoundrels by Gary Krist. The well researched novel tells the story of twelve volatile days in 1919 in Chicago, when an aviation disaster, a race riot, a crippling transit strike and a child's murder brought Chicago to the brink of collapse, giving birth to a modern Chicago. It's been more than 100 years. Unfortunately, many things in Chicago have not changed.



In April we will be reading Lillian Boxfish Takes a Walk by Kathleen Rooney. This work of fiction has been described as a "delightful stroll with a colorful character". The book club has been meeting on the last Tuesday of the month at 7:30PM via Zoom. If you would like to join us, please contact Betty Carey.

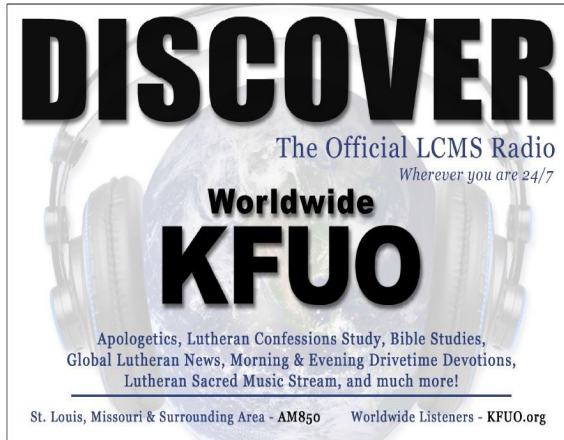
From the Principal: St. John's Lutheran School will be saying goodbye to two faculty members at the end of this school year. Mrs. Johnson has decided to retire at the end of the year. Ms. Wheeler has also decided to not return at the end of this school year. The Board of Christian Education and I are working to fill these positions.

In addition to the regular activities of the school, two very important meetings for the school will take place in April. Representatives from the Chicagoland Lutheran Educational Foundation will be meeting with me on April 14th to determine whether St. John's meets all the requirements to receive a Medallion Badge for Governance. On April 26th, a representative from the Illinois State Board of Education will be meeting with me to determine whether St. John's meets the requirements to remain a Fully Recognized Illinois Non-public School. Both of these meetings were postponed a year due to the COVID-19 epidemic.

Lastly, we have begun the reaccreditation process for National Lutheran Schools Accreditation. This is a year long process that requires St. John's to achieve or exceed seven Accreditation Standards. St. John's is already scheduled for the Validation Team Visit which will take place in March of 2022.

Principal Green

Help Needed: St. John's Lutheran Church will hold its elections in May for the next two-year term. We need help in every area, President, Treasurer, Trustees, Elders, Board of Christian Education, and Board of Youth. Please contact neubauer.adam@gmail.com if you can serve.



Lutheran Radio Station Worldwide KFUO

Find and Listen at kfuo.org and follow us at Facebook.com/KFUOradio.

Issues, Etc.—Weekdays @ 3PM CST or ON DEMAND via Website! Christ-centered, Cross-focused talk radio.

Law and Gospel—Weekdays @ 9:30AM CST or ON DEMAND via Website! This is a program that uses the theological distinctions between Law and Gospel not only to apply the Bible but also to understand our relationship to the holy Trinity, our gracious salvation because of Jesus Christ and how to interpret reality the way God thinks.

Faith'n'Family—Weekdays @ 10AM CST or ON DEMAND via Website!

Faith'n'Family is a program that lets family's keep their Lutheran faith first as we praise God for the gift He has given us in our children, parents, grandparents, and even the in-laws! Every day, Faith'n'Family will have an expert on the show to discuss life issues such as money management, dealing with divorce, adoption, how to raise children to lead a God-centered life in a very non-Christian world, and more. And the best part of all, you can be part of the show by calling in with your questions and comments for our expert! While Faith 'N Family at KFUO is well aware of the fast-paced world of today, we want to keep the focus of raising our family and yours on what's really important—making Christ known for generations to come!

Cross Defense—Mondays @ 2pm CST or ON DEMAND via Website!

When a skeptic questions us about our faith, or when we ourselves have questions about what we believe, how do we answer them? Learn how to address modern-day issues and tough arguments levied against faith, *and* how to engage these conversations with intelligence and grace. Join us and discover how to share your faith clearly and lovingly.

Free to be Faithful — 3rd Wednesday of the Month @ 2:30PM CST or ON DEMAND via Website!

Free to be Faithful is very specific in addressing public policy matters that impact our LCMS community. It is often topical and linked to contemporary issues, such as political elections or the March for Life. the analytical program regularly has experts and observers interpreting the issues at hand and suggesting courses of action. Listen to high-caliber guests discussing in-depth knowledge of issues with host Kip Allen.





APRIL

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH—MISSOURI SYNOD

Pray For Us Calendar

TEACHING THE FAITH — APRIL 1-15

This month, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod celebrates the many ways that God's children are instructed, encouraged and strengthened in the faith. By teaching the faith, we nurture the faithful and reach the lost.

Remember how God works to strengthen the faith of His people as you pray:

1. with thanksgiving for the gift of faith received at Baptism. Ask the Lord to continue to strengthen that faith — and the budding faith of our children — until we depart this life and are united with the Lord.

2. with thanksgiving to God for the gift of His holy and inspired Word, the Sacred Scriptures; and for the Book of Concord and the many teaching aids that help us understand that Word aright and rejoice in its consolation.

3. for Christian families, that the Lord would provide the assistance and tools necessary to overcome every challenge — big or small — that might drive them apart.

4. for strong Christian marriages, that husbands and wives would cling to each other in the Lord, despite life's challenges, and raise their children to walk in the way of the Lord.

5. for Christian parents, that they would make teaching the faith to their children a priority. Pray that they set aside time to worship together, talk about faith issues, study the Bible and have family devotions.

6. that family members would treat each other with kindness and patience, so that each member might be built up in the family of God.

7. for our children and young people, who face daily assaults on their Christian beliefs, that God would strengthen and encourage them to stand firm while sharing the Gospel.

8. for our churches, that they would provide useful education and programs to help equip people at every stage of life — teens, husbands and wives, parents, caretakers of aging parents and more.

9. that God would continue to provide faithful church workers to serve as role models and teach people about their identity as a baptized child of God.

10. that church members would eagerly volunteer their time and talents to support the congregation's educational programs, such as vacation Bible school, Sunday school and groups for young families.

11. that LCMS members would eagerly participate in Bible studies, small-group discussions and private study.

12. with thanksgiving for faithful parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, teachers and other role models who help to "train up a child in the way he should go" (Prov. 22:6).

13. for the Concordia University System and the Synod's two seminaries, that the Lord would bless their work in training new generations of workers to serve the Church.

14. for the Synod's directors of Family Life Ministry, that God would bless their efforts to support healthy relationships in the families of our congregations.

15. that we might have hearts that are willing and eager to serve the Lord in every way.

PHOTO: LCMS COMMUNICATIONS/ERIK M. LUNSFORD

APRIL Pray For Us Calendar

MINISTRY TO THE ARMED FORCES — APRIL 16-30

Since the Civil War, LCMS pastors have served as military chaplains. Today, the Synod's Ministry to the Armed Forces (MAF) supports active duty, reserves, National Guard and Civil Air Patrol chaplains. MAF recruits, interviews and endorses all military chaplains and supports them throughout their careers. MAF also provides a network of care for our nation's military members, families and veterans through Operation Barnabas.

Remember God's work through LCMS Ministry to the Armed Forces (MAF) as you pray:

16. that God would bless and guide the work of the MAF director and assistant director.

17. for the President of the United States. Ask God to guide our commander in chief to lead with wisdom for the protection of the innocent against evil.

18. for LCMS military chaplains serving on active duty for the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines and Coast Guard.

19. for our LCMS Reserve and National Guard chaplains, especially those who have been mobilized stateside or overseas and taken from their parishes to extended active duty assignments, for those deployed, their families and their home parishes.

20. for Operation Barnabas, which is designed to meet the needs of congregations in the event their pastor/chaplain is mobilized. Operation Barnabas also seeks to assist veterans and military families during and after deployment.

21. for all congregations that reach out to members of our military through Operation Barnabas, that they would uphold them in prayer as they help to meet their physical, psychological and spiritual needs through the training they have received and the Lord's provision.

22. for increasing opportunities for LCMS chaplains to spread Christ's message of salvation, hope and restoration to those they serve.

23. for all chaplains returning home, that they would receive a hero's welcome for their

sacrifice to this country so that in freedom we can continue to openly worship the one true God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

24. for those who suffer from battle stress and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. Pray that God would bring healing and renewal to those who have served or who are currently serving.

25. for all chaplains who are sick or have sick family members, that the Father of all mercies and the God of all comfort would look with favor upon them, and as it pleases Him, restore them to health or give them the grace to accept this tribulation with courage and hope.

26. for all chaplains in harm's way, that God would not let their hearts despair nor their faith fail them, but sustain, guide and comfort them.

27. for all members of the military who were disabled during their duty, that our heavenly Father would mercifully guide, aid and strengthen all

those with physical disabilities, enabling them to find fulfillment in their lives and encouragement for all their endeavors.

28. with thanksgiving to God for providing LCMS chaplains to serve members of the armed forces. Please pray that military chaplains would have every opportunity to share the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ with members of the military and anyone with whom they work and live.

29. for all military chaplains upon their return, that they would be reunited with their families, find gainful employment and receive all the care they need to heal their minds, bodies and souls. Grant that they would always look to Christ as their rock and their redeemer.

30. for those who minister to the armed forces, that by God's gracious working, they may honor Christ and advance the good of those committed to their care, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Congregations and individuals are invited to copy these pages for newsletters or other distribution. Download at lcms.org/prayforus or call 888-843-5267 to request a copy.

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH
MISSOURI SYNOD



HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU!

April 1st-- Sharon Ortega, Grace Wenzel

April 2nd-- Robert Clark, Grace Moore, Alyssa Randel, Jarvis Smallfield

April 8th-- Mia Glass

April 12th-- Patti Wolke

April 15th-- Erin Lackage, Jayme Wier

April 16th-- Laura Duenner, Jennifer Weith

April 17th-- Brigit Stacey, Joanna Stramel

April 20th-- Julie Gall

April 21st-- Dan Friend, Pearl Osmon

April 22nd-- Christopher Hudie

April 23rd-- Julie Smallfield

April 24th-- Melissa Kehr

April 25th-- Kimberly Scott

April 26th-- Linda Galek

April 27th-- Krystina Davis, Mark Eggert

April 29th-- Lenore Bowman



April 2021 Stewardship Newsletter from the LCMS

Our Father in heaven sent His Son, Jesus, to be our Savior. His atoning sacrifice is the first fruits of all the dead, a pleasing aroma to His Father, so that His perfect life and death count for all who believe in Him. He claimed us as His own children in Holy Baptism. He sustains and strengthens our faith with His Holy Word and His Body and Blood.

As new creatures, who have put on Christ, we bear good fruit. We do the good works prepared for us, which He makes known to us in His Word. By faith then, trusting in the Word of God, we do what he says because He does not lie and always keeps His promises. For “without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him” (Heb. 11:6).

And so the Lord promises: “Honor the Lord with your wealth and with the first fruits of all your produce; then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine” (Prov. 3:9-10). How do we honor the Lord with the wealth that God has given us in His generosity? By giving generously to those whom the Lord has called us to love and support your family, your society, and your church. And His promise is that, in so doing, you will never lack.

A common counterpoint is: “But that’s from the Old Testament!” Our Lord Jesus Himself gives us similar promises in the New Testament. He says, at the conclusion of the parable of the talents: “For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance” (Matt. 25:29).

And then at the end of the parable of the dishonest manager, he says: “One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much. If then you have not been faithful in the unrighteous wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? And if you have not been faithful in that which is another’s, who will give you that which is your own? No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money” (Luke 16:10–13).

And in His sermon on the mount, he says: “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matt. 6:19–21).

We have become conditioned against these promises because of their misuse by the peddlers of the prosperity gospel – the guys on TV who say you get rich by putting God in your debt. And thus, we miss out on the fact that God does reward temporal faithfulness in temporal matters with temporal blessings. It’s no quid pro quo. It’s all from God’s grace and His fatherly divine goodness and mercy. But those Bible passages do in fact say what they say! It’s not the Old Testament’s problem. It’s ours. It is almost as if we have become so jaded against this that we think it a virtue to be stingy with our offerings.

But our Father in heaven still loves to bless those who bless others. He loves to give to those who give freely and generously. In fact, he challenges us to challenge Him: “Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need” (Mal. 3:10).

And so, while we don’t give so that we would get, we do receive from the Lord in order to give, and He will bless your giving with more receiving. As St. Paul wrote in Rom. 8:32: “He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?”