



St John's
Lutheran Church
& School

February 2021 Eagle Newsletter



Ephesians 2:8-9 ESV

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

From the Pastor

First Communion Prior to Confirmation

When the Agenda to the *Lutheran Service Book* was released in 2007, it included a rite of "First Communion Prior to Confirmation." Its inclusion arose from a more in-depth study of the practice of confirmation in the Lutheran Church. One of the most complete studies of confirmation is Arthur Repp's *Confirmation in the Lutheran Church*. The big takeaway from Repp's study is that there has never been a consistent practice of confirmation in the Christian Church and that the Lutheran Church has featured six different types of confirmation. Here's a summary (if you're interested in further information, I will provide additional notes):

- Confirmation history in the Christian Church
 - Early Church: immediately followed baptism as a symbolic "strengthening" of the newly baptized with the promise of the Holy Spirit; mostly adult converts
 - Medieval Church: confirmation separated from baptism; performed by the bishop; became its own "sacrament;" promised new grace on top of baptism
 - Post-Reformation: Catholic church solidified confirmation as sacrament; Protestant churches turned it into a course in doctrine and a passage to adulthood
- Six types in the Lutheran Church
 - Catechetical; Hierarchical; Sacramental; Traditional; Pietistic; Rationalistic
 - Elements of all six present in contemporary practice of confirmation
 - Hierarchical type is dominant today: confirmation as commitment to the church and gateway to Communion
 - Lutheran Reformation held to catechetical type: catechesis as preparation for the Lord's Supper; not tied to any age, children were brought when they were ready

The rite of First Communion Prior to Confirmation is a way to recapture the Reformation understanding of confirmation. It is designed for children to begin to learn the catechism and to participate in the Sacrament of the Altar. Rather than tying the Lord's Supper to a given age or grade level, this practice ties the reception of the Sacrament to that which makes a person truly worthy and well prepared: *Faith in these words, "Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins" (Small Catechism).*

I plan to offer First Communion Prior to Confirmation this Spring for children of our congregation. While there is no age requirement, traditionally children in the Lutheran Church have been at least seven years old before starting catechetical instruction (F. Bente, *Historical Introduction to the Book of Concord*). I will offer First Communion Prior to Confirmation on Pentecost, May 23.

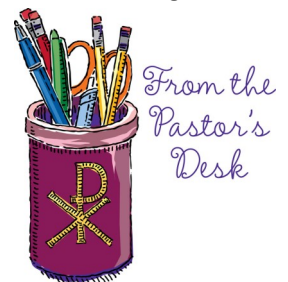
Parents who wish their children to receive First Communion Prior to Confirmation will arrange to meet with me prior to March 28 (Palm Sunday) to discuss preparation for this rite. Children and their parents will also attend catechetical sessions on the following Sundays: April 18 & 25, May 2, 9, & 16. Children will also know by heart the Ten Commandments, Apostles' Creed, and the Lord's Prayer, as well as the words instituting Baptism and the Sacrament of the Altar.

Catechism will conclude with examination and absolution (Augsburg Confession, Article XXV). Children whom I consider to be unprepared at the conclusion of this course of catechism will be required to wait and continue their catechetical training in the future.

Please call the church office or email me at pastor@stjohnschicago.org for more information.

In Christ,
under the cross,

Pastor Ehrhard



Ladies Book Club: For the month of February, the Ladies Book Club will be reading The Splendid and the Vile by Erik Larson. Using public records and diaries, this book examines Winston Churchill's life during his first year as prime minister when Hitler was leading a blitzkrieg against the United Kingdom. The Ladies Book Club meets via Zoom on the last Tuesday of the month at 7:30PM. If you would like to be included please contact Betty Carey.



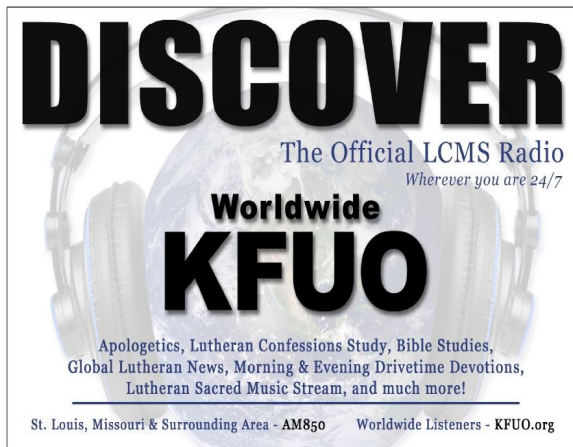
From the Principal: As I write this article, St. John's is at the beginning of Lutheran Schools Week. The theme for the week is, "Sent to Serve!" This theme is based on Matthew 20:28: "*The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and give His life as a ransom for many.*" St. John's students will put this theme into practice with daily service projects. In addition to the service projects are special dress up days, whole school devotions, and culminating with VIP Day and closing chapel. As we continue to observe the COVID-19 health and safety protocols, many of these large group activities were conducted virtually.

St. John's will begin enrolling students for the 2021-2022 school year beginning this month. An Open House is scheduled for February 18th from 5:30PM to 7:30PM. Potential families have to reserve a time via Sign-Up Genius. The link is located on the school website. Please recommend new families to St. John's.

As part of my commitment to fiscal responsibility, St. John's Lutheran School will discontinue all discounts with the exception of the multi-child discount. The challenge now is how to fund the multi-child discount. This can be done by revising how financial aid is applied. The ultimate goal is to be able to charge and receive the cost per pupil thus alleviating the stress on the congregational budget.

St. John's Lutheran School continues because of the support of the church, CLEF, the HK Fund, and community partners and donors. I thank you for your continued support.

Principal Green



Lutheran Radio Station Worldwide KFUEO

Find and Listen at kfueo.org and follow us at Facebook.com/KFUEOradio.

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 KFUEO 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.





FEBRUARY

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH—MISSOURI SYNOD

Pray For Us Calendar

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES — FEBRUARY 1-29

"Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God," Jesus says in Luke 18:16. God wants all His children to have faith in Him, yet sin and brokenness permeate the lives of His people. Children are orphaned, and families are ripped apart. Over the years, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) has reached out to care for God's precious children through the mercy ministries of congregations, missionaries and Recognized Service Organizations (RSOs).

Remember God's love and will for children and families as you pray:

1. *for all Christians*, that they would help and defend the orphan and widow, the poor and lonely, the helpless and oppressed.

2. The purification of Mary and the Presentation of Our Lord: *for mothers*, that they might rejoice in their vocation and raise their children in the Lord.

3. *for adoption and foster-care agency workers*, that they would make good and right decisions concerning what is best for all involved — enabling them to find proper families and resources to

meet the needs of the children they serve.

4. *for all children*, that they might be brought to the waters of Baptism and taught God's Word.

5. Jacob (Israel), Patriarch, thank God for Jacob, through whom came the promise of the Messiah and the 12 tribes of Israel: *for fathers*, that they might raise their children in the Word.

6. *for men as they grow up*, that they may be godly in their youth and their adult years.

7. *for orphanages around the world*, that they might receive

proper funding, food, resources and godly caregivers so that they can provide the best care possible to the children entrusted to them.

8. *for orphanage workers*, that they might be refreshed by Your Word and be good role models and teachers as they provide loving care to those in their charge.

9. *for all orphans*, that they might find Christian families who will nurture them with the love and knowledge of Christ.

10. Silas, Fellow Worker of St. Peter and St. Paul, thank God for Silas, lesser known, but essential to the work of the Kingdom: *for all church workers*, that all might work as God calls them to serve Him.

11. *for all foster children*, that they might find peace among the chaos as they wait for a proper family to be established.

12. *for all who suffer from domestic violence*, that the Lord would deliver them from danger and comfort them with His peace and forgiveness.

13. Aquila, Priscilla, Apollos, thank God for these examples of earnest learning and meditation in the Word of God.

14. Valentine, Martyr, pray that the love of Christ might be the love celebrated above all loves.

15. Philemon and Onesimus: *for all Christian workers and those in authority*, that all might serve God in their vocations.

16. Philipp Melanchthon (birth), Confessor: thank God for the Augsburg Confession and the other writings of Melanchthon that proclaim the truth of the Gospel.

17. *for all caregivers*, that they might raise children in the truth faith.

PHOTO: LCMS COMMUNICATIONS/ERIK M. LINSFORD

FEBRUARY Pray For Us Calendar

18. Martin Luther, Doctor and Confessor: thank God for Luther's proclamation of salvation by grace through faith for Christ's sake.

19. *for children and parents who are deaf*, that they might know Jesus's voice and be filled with His peace.

20. *for widows*, that they might know Christ as their faithful bridegroom who will supply for their needs as they live their lives in prayer and purity.

21. *for the homeless*, that they might find a warm and safe place to lay their head, food for their bellies, hope for the future and rest in the love of Christ.

22. *for the unemployed*, that they might find suitable and fulfilling employment, fair wages and encouraging support.

23. Polycarp of Smyrna, Pastor and Martyr: thank God for those who continued the teachings of Jesus and gave their lives for the Gospel.

24. St. Matthias, Apostle: thank God for his quiet witness and those who gave their lives for the Gospel without any recognition.

25. *for the poor*, that they might find true riches in the Word of God and be blessed by the generosity of others.

26. *for children who are missing*, that the Lord would keep them from danger, restore them to their families and give them His peace and protection.

27. *for peace among siblings*, that the Lord would help them love and support each other throughout their lives, instead of being divided by bickering and jealousy.

28. *for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities*, that they might be treated with respect and love as beloved children of God.

29. *for families*, that they might attend worship to hear the Word and receive the Sacraments.



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

PHOTOS: LCMS COMMUNICATIONS/ERIK M. LINSFORD



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

February 3rd - David Lyons
February 4th - Ingrid Solomon, Michael Thompson
February 5th - Cheryl Margentina
February 6th - James Zink
February 7th - Michael Glasscock
February 9th - Stefan Smallfield
February 10th - Walter Flechsig, Jack Kraak
February 15th - Judy Weimer
February 17th - Diane Jensen
February 18th - Melissa Brackett
February 21st - Patricia Jannusch, Dorothy Schneider
February 23rd - Kim Wilson
February 25th - Brian Bowman, Adam Neubauer, Kyle Walk-Faust
February 26th - Barbara Banks, Marie Salyers
February 28th - Sandra Anhalt, Michael Banko, Robert Kraak, Larry Pahlke

Stewardship Under the Cross, God's Word on How We Use His Gifts

by HR Curtis

Putting It All Together



Over the past several months we have set out as a congregation to learn what God's Word has to say about stewardship. One thing we learned is that faithful stewardship is a lifestyle. So here is a review of God's Word for you to study with the year ahead in mind. No matter where you are at in your stewardship – tithing, going beyond a tithe, or still considering the concept of tithing – let this study lead you to think about pray about stewardship based on the Word.

Your heart will always go where you put God's money. Jesus said that where your treasure is, there your heart will be also and as we sing each Sunday morning at the Offering: We give Thee but Thine own. God is the ultimate giver of our incomes: all these gifts come from Him. To acknowledge this gift and our dependence on the Lord, God calls us to give a portion of our income back to Him for the maintenance of His Church. Indeed, the Scriptures are very clear: God calls His people to give at least a tithe of their income (10% of whatever "comes in") back to Him at their place of worship.

This calls for faith. Do we trust God's Word? Do we trust that what He says is for our benefit, not our harm? **If you have never tithed before, it can be a scary proposition.** *Give 10% of my income away!? You've got to be kidding.* But God doesn't ever kid us in His Word. Instead, He tells us how to live holy and blessed lives full of peace and contentment. Consider these Scriptures:

Jesus said, "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also (Matthew 6:19-21).

"Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. But you ask, 'How do we rob you?' "In tithes and offerings. ⁹You are under a curse-- the whole nation of you-- because you are robbing me. ¹⁰Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the LORD Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it " (Malachi 3:8-10).

On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as each one of you may prosper (1 Corinthians 16:2).

But just as you excel in everything-- in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us --see that you also excel in this grace of giving. (2 Corinthians 8:7).

The point is this: he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must do as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that you may always have enough of everything and may provide in abundance for every good work (2 Cor. 9:6-8).

We do not make God poor when we fail to give money to Him properly, but we *do* make ourselves poor if we do not give according to the standards He sets for us in His Word, the Bible. God does not need our money, but we need to give the way the Bible tells us to in order to overcome the negative influence money and the things of this world can have on us.

God will never tell us to do something that will be to our harm – He loves us too much for that. Jesus gave His life on the cross for me. He loves me and knows what is best for me – so I can know that what He says about stewardship is meant for my benefit. He wants my heart to be with Him – and my heart will always follow where I put God's money. **Tithing is not easy: it is godly. It will change your life.** Stepping out in faith always does. You may have to change your lifestyle to accommodate following God's Word in this matter. But tithing will change your life in other ways too: it will give you a peace and contentment that can only come from actually putting yourself in the hands of the Lord.

So read through those Scriptures again. Pray through the following questions and step out in faith this year with giving that is in accord with God's Word. And just see if you are not blessed in it.

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The Lord loves me and gave Himself for me on the cross.

Y or N

All that I have comes from the Lord.

Y or N

The Lord blessed me to live in the richest land in the world.

Y or N

If I had to start living on 90% of my current income tomorrow, I or someone in my family would starve.

Y or N

I / We have been making first-fruit, regular, proportionate and generous (at least 10%, a tithe) money offerings to the Lord from the heart.

Y or N

If "Yes", the Lord gets all the glory for that.

Y or N

If "No", the Lord wants me to change the way I make money offerings to him.

Y or N

If the Lord wants me to change, I should change now, not later.

Y or N

It is the power of the Holy Spirit and the love of Jesus Christ that changes me for the better.

Y or N

