



**St. John's**  
Lutheran Church  
& School

March 2025 Eagle Newsletter



**LENT BEGINS**

**Luke 4:1-2 ESV**

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness <sup>2</sup>for forty days, being tempted by the devil.

## The Opening Versicles

O Lord, open my lips,

**and my mouth will declare Your praise.**

Make haste, O God, to deliver me;

**make haste to help me, O Lord.**

These versicles are the opening words of both Matins and Vespers. Morning Prayer uses just the first two lines and Evening Prayer and Compline begin with versicles suited for the evening time. The opening versicles for Matins and Vespers come from Psalm 51:15 and Psalm 70:1. The Daily Office is organized around the Psalms, so it makes sense to open with the Psalms.

Unlike the Divine Service in any of its settings, the Daily Office does not begin with the Trinitarian Invocation. This does not mean that it neglects to invoke the Trinity; the Gloria Patri follows these versicles a brief hymn of praise to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Daily Office flows from the Divine Service, and the Invocation on Sunday morning continues to echo throughout the week.

These versicles say something very profound about our prayers. If God does not open our lips, then our lips are incapable of declaring His praise. We may say or sing some nice things about God, but if the things we say or sing about God are not the things that God first says about Himself, we are likely to fall into a lie about God. What God says is most true and sure and when we begin with God's Word, we can be sure we speak something true and sure.

When Isaiah saw God in His throne room, he was concerned with his unclean lips. God cleansed his lips with a burning coal and opened them to speak the truth of His Word. Similarly, God opens our lips with the cleansing blood of Jesus, which He puts on our lips in the Holy Sacrament. And with His blood He puts His Word in our mouths for us to speak. Because of this cleansing, some people like to make the sign of the cross during the opening versicles: O Lord, open my + lips.

The second couplet from Psalm 70 also speaks to the work of God. There is no deliverance or help without God making haste. If He does not initiate the work, the work is in vain. As we say or sing these words, we are asking not only for present help in time of need, but also for eternal deliverance from sin, death, and everlasting condemnation. For this reason, some people like to make a larger sign of the cross during these versicles as a reminder of the baptismal deliverance that we have received and which will be complete in the resurrection: Make haste, + O God, to deliver me.

When we begin our prayers with God's Word we begin with what's most true and sure. God's Word opens our lips to speak truth about God, to speak truth to God, and to declare His praise, because He has made haste for our deliverance.

Next month: Psalmody

In Christ,  
under the cross,  
Pastor Ehrhard



*From the  
Pastor's  
Desk*

**Principal's Report:** As March begins, our school is overwhelmingly thankful for the warmer weather. This means that our students are able to consistently enjoy recess outdoors and get the fresh air and movement their bodies need. On Saturday, March 8<sup>th</sup> we will be hosting our Mardi Gras Gala at Ridgemoor Country Club. The funds raised from this event will go towards the renovation for a new playground. If you cannot attend our Gala, but are interested in the silent auction or are able to donate funds please visit: [www.gofundraise.link/themardigrasgala/auction](http://www.gofundraise.link/themardigrasgala/auction)

Another opportunity for fellowship this month is at our Food & Fellowship on Thursday, March 20<sup>th</sup> at the Portillo's in Hardwood Heights. Please be sure to mention St. John's when ordering your meal.

We will close out March with Spring Break the week of March 23<sup>rd</sup>. On March 31<sup>st</sup>, our students will have off, but our teachers will meet for some in house professional development as we plan and prepare for the last few months of the school year.

We are continually grateful for the prayers and support of our St. John's community!

Principal Runge

**St. John's School News:** It is exciting to see so many enrollments this time of year! We are currently at 116 students enrolled for the 2025-26 school year, and our goal is 180! Please continue to pray for the ministry of St. John's Lutheran School. We believe God will place the right families at our school, and we trust Him for that!

As we approach the spring season, we are excited to offer a variety of after-school activities and clubs. Our students will be able to participate in 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade basketball teams, cooking classes, and a math club, among other options. As we continue to promote St. John's, we want the community to recognize the many academic, extracurricular, and spiritual growth opportunities available to our students.

Did you know St. John's is hosting a Gala on March 8<sup>th</sup>? A group of faithful parents have formed a fundraising committee to help get St. John's new playground funded. All proceeds from the Gala will benefit our playground project. We would love it if you could join us! If you would like to purchase tickets or if you are unable to attend the Gala but would like to support our playground project, you can go to our Gala Fundraiser page:

[www.gofundraise.link/themardigrasgala](http://www.gofundraise.link/themardigrasgala)

You can also stop by or call the school office if you have any questions.

On Sunday, April 13<sup>th</sup>, the St. John's students will sing during the 9AM worship service. Following the service, we will have an Easter Egg Hunt! We hope to see you there as we come together to worship and enjoy fellowship!

In Christ,

Jenna Scifo - Admissions & Marketing Coordinator

**Ladies Book Club:** In March the Ladies Book Club will be reading The Fixers by E.J. Fleming. The Ladies Book Club continues to meet via ZOOM on the last Tuesday of the month at 7:30PM. If you would like to join us please contact Betty Carey.



## St. John's Lutheran Church Celebrates 150 years by Remembering the Past (Part Two):

*You might remember Henry Friedrich from the days he ushered at our German worship services. Henry, a lifelong member of St. John's, was called home by our Lord on July 5, 2014. Part One of his early life, born in 1918, was printed in February's 2025 issue of the EAGLE. Henry related to me his life's history which was originally published in a 2009 EAGLE, to let us know...how it was back then.*

Henry's early education was right here at St. John's Lutheran School. Pastor Luecke came to visit his parents; Mother recovering from a ruptured appendix and his Father from a fall off a ladder. Pastor noticed how Henry was "bossing" his two older sisters and suggested that Henry, age five, needed to be in school. Since St. John's did not have kindergarten, Henry entered First Grade midterm.

First, Second, and Third Grades, at that time, were in the basement of the 1876 wood church. When promotion time came, his teacher Miss Hammond promoted all the first graders but Henry! As the class went through a doorway to second grade, his classmates kept beckoning him to come with them. "I guess," Henry said, "I had to stay in First Grade because I was young and had not put in a full year."

The desks were for two people and were not bolted to the floor. Church functions would be held in the under-croft (basement) of the church and desks had to be moved around. There was also a large platform in the second and third grade area which was used as a stage for plays, music events, and other productions.

One school day when he was six, he vividly remembered needing to get to the outhouse in a real hurry. So he ran around the church to the outhouse behind the church. Two big boys, and he still remembered their names, were riding their bikes to home for lunch and purposefully rode right into Henry, knocked him down, and kept going. "I was scared and hurt. Fortunately, two older boys heard me crying and calling for help. They picked me up and took me to the doctor's office which was on the second floor of the Milwaukee and Montrose building. They broke my leg!" There was no medical insurance in those days and his parents did not have the money to have his leg properly set. Consequently, the doctor put on a cardboard-like cast and sent him home. The boys who knocked him down denied it to both their parents and the police and never helped with medical expenses. It took some time before his parent accumulated enough money to have his leg properly set and cast.

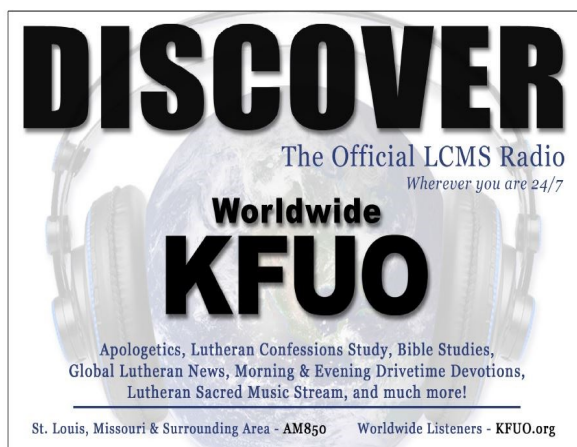
Here are a few other memories he related. One day there was a tremendous storm with lots of thunder and lightning. "We were sitting in our church basement classroom when there was a tremendous crash that was not thunder! It turned out that lightning had hit the wooden church's bell tower causing the bell to come crashing down. That's the same bell we ring every Sunday." We went every Wednesday to prayer meetings with our parents because they had no money for babysitters. All our classes were taught in German. When in Fourth Grade, students were moved into the big 1915 brick building (since demolished and replaced by the Blanke Center) that stood behind the church on the back playground. Pastor Luecke confirmed Henry in 1932, at a service that was spoken in both German and English. St. John's members were starting to realize the need to have English spoken in their worship services as well as in the school.

**NOTE:** The rest of Henry's life story is in the EAGLE's archive. April's EAGLE will feature life-long member Edna Coca - her church and school experiences at St. John's.

# Pictures from the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Hymn Festival







## Lutheran Radio Station Worldwide KFUO

Find and Listen at [kfuo.org](http://kfuo.org) and follow us at [Facebook.com/KFUOradio](https://www.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!

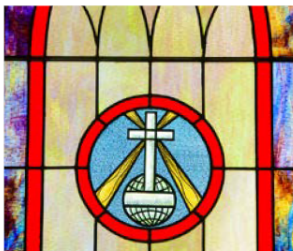
**Cross Defense**—Mondays @ 2pm CST or ON DEMAND via Website!

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** — 3<sup>rd</sup> 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.





MARCH

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH—MISSOURI SYNOD

# Pray For Us Calendar

## WORLDWIDE THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION — MARCH 1-31

The LCMS provides theological education throughout the world by means of seminaries and missionaries. Scholars and leaders from foreign church bodies also come to the LCMS seminaries for advanced degrees, learning sound doctrine from the Scriptures and Lutheran Confessions.

*Remember the centrality of God's Word as you pray:*

1. for Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, that all there might grow in the Word and prepare for the proper proclamation of the Word and administration of the Sacraments.
2. for Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind., that the faculty might teach the Word in its truth and purity; and the students learn God's Word in preparation for ministry.
3. for Christ's work throughout the world, that the Gospel might be proclaimed to all people and the forgiveness of sins delivered through the Means of Grace.
4. for Concordia Seminary, Hong Kong, that people and

pastors might be trained there to proclaim the Gospel.

5. for Martin Luther Seminary in Lae, Papua New Guinea, that God would strengthen and preserve the seminary to prepare the pastors of the Gutnius Lutheran Church to convict people with God's law and heal them with the word of Absolution.
6. for Japan Lutheran Seminary in Tokyo, Japan, that our Lord, Jesus Christ, would make the seminary a place where the Word of God is taught in its truth and purity.
7. for Concordia Theological Seminary in Nagercoil, India, that the Lord would preserve the seminary from all evil and lead it to become a bastion of the

Gospel against the attacks of the wicked foe.

8. for Timothy Lutheran Seminary in Birip, Papua New Guinea, that the Lord would use the instructors to shine His Word upon the path of students preparing to serve His Church.
9. for students and professors of Lutheran Theological Seminary in Baguio City, Philippines, that they might serve the Lutheran Church in the Philippines faithfully.
10. for Luther Seminary in Seoul, South Korea, that the Lord would preserve those who teach and those who learn to hold fast to His Word in all circumstances.
11. for the ministry carried out through the Westfield House of Theological Studies in Cambridge, England, as this ministry trains church leaders for England and many other church bodies around the world.

12. for the Lutheran Center for Theological Studies (CLET) in Togo, that theological training for men from French-speaking countries in West Africa might continue.

13. for Concordia Reformer Seminary, Dominican Republic, that the students there might share the Gospel throughout Latin and South America.

14. for the Synod's Global Seminary Initiative (GSI), which helps to fill the need for trained church leaders who are native to the region and cultures in which they serve, that God would guide this program to strengthen the formation of pastors and deaconesses around the world.

15. for LCMS professors and pastors who travel overseas to teach seminars and intensive courses for our current and emerging church partners, that God would grant them safe travel and fruitful labors.

PHOTO: LCMS COMMUNICATIONS/ERIK M. LINSFORD

## MARCH Pray For Us Calendar

16. for the international students who come to the Synod's seminaries, that God would grant safe travels and comfort while away from family and friends.
17. for Lutheran pastors worldwide, that they would have access to the necessary books and resources to teach Law and Gospel.
18. for the health and safety of LCMS missionaries who provide theological education, thanks that they have heeded the call to serve Christ in this way.
19. for Lutheran church workers in Europe, that their work is fruitful.
20. for the seminaries of LCMS partner churches around the world, that they would faithfully educate future leaders for their churches.
21. for the Gospel multiplication as pastors are equipped to teach their flocks and train new leaders for the church, thank God for the growth of His Kingdom.
22. for the continued growth of Christ's Church on earth, that the Lord would continue to raise up missionaries according to His good and gracious will.

23. for Lutherans throughout the world, that they rejoice in God's gifts of His Word and Sacraments.

24. for the Synod's generous donors, thanks for those who make it possible for LCMS theological education around the world.

25. The Annunciation of our Lord, thank God for sending His Son into our flesh.

26. for our partner churches, that God would raise up pastors and servants to serve His people.

27. for sound doctrine throughout the world, that God would preserve the truth of His Word against false teachings.

28. for those on vicarage from our partner seminaries, that God would bless their time in the field as part of their education.

29. for seminarians' wives, that they would be prepared to support their husband's call into ministry.

30. for seminarians' children, that they rejoice in the Gospel and in their father's calling.

31. for all who listen to those who receive theological education, that the Gospel might take root and produce fruit.



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

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH  
MISSOURI SYNOD

PHOTO: LCMS COMMUNICATIONS/ERIK M. LINSFORD



# March

## BIRTHDAYS

### March 1st

John Straszynski

### March 3rd

Lillian Adamczyk

### March 6th

Caitlyn Chavez

### March 9th

Elijah McArthur

### March 10th

Tammy Straszynski

### March 11th

Terrence Dunn

### March 12th

Joey Barzano & Lawrence Pankonin

### March 13th

Midge Klein

### March 18th

Isaiah Rayo

### March 20th

Bernard Giesse

### March 22nd

Ruth Lyons

### March 28th

Rachel Benedict

### March 29th

Michelle Runge

### March 30th

Hayley Friend

### March 31st

Marlene Dunn & Eric Hernandez



## March 2025 Stewardship Newsletter from the LCMS

*For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. (Eph. 2:10)*

Some pastors refer to these words as “the most forgotten words in the Scriptures.” They are forgotten because they follow the familiar and critical words before it. The preceding two verses that overshadow Ephesians 2:10 are words of justification: “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast” (Eph. 2:8–9). These are words preached regularly. They are assigned as confirmation verses. They carry with them the very heart of what it means to be a redeemed child of God!

Precisely because the previous verses are so central to salvation, they often overpower our practice of stewardship! We have been saved by grace. This is certain and sure because of Jesus. Works play no role in our salvation. No credit taking for us! Grace is freely given. Faith is miraculously created by the Spirit and joyously received. This truth is so wonderful and so encompassing that we often miss out on WHY we are redeemed.

The grace of God revealed in Jesus calls us to faith. But St. Paul doesn't stop with grace and faith. He continues to the logical conclusion. Just like the creation declares the handiwork of God, the redemption of sinners like you and me declares His greatest handiwork! Redeemed stewards are created to reflect the grace and mercy God showers on us to others.

As Lutherans, we understand that good works flow from faith in Jesus Christ. They are the fruit of the tree of salvation into which we have been grafted by grace. Sanctification and stewardship are both on-going and active confessions of what the Lord has done in us. These works are not always spectacular. Many times, they are simply parents showing Jesus to their children. They are compassionate actions that live out the truth of the Gospel to co-workers and even complete strangers. While they can be grand endeavors, more likely they are simple, beautiful works which highlight what Jesus has done in us.

These works aren't random either. They have been planned by God. God planned to use you as a faithful steward as you walk the road that leads you through your daily life. There are no chance encounters or coincidences. They have been planned by the Lord of the universe for the benefit of His creation. Good works are what point to God's greatest work: Jesus!

He calls you and me to walk in this faith, which flows from this grace, which has been poured out on us in Jesus. But even this is not to our credit. We are simply called to be faithful stewards of God's grace so that we may share it with those who need it as much as we do. God's Spirit carries us along in this. We are just the steward — the instrument in His hand to accomplish His plan and glorify Him!

