



ST JOHN AMELITH PARISH NEWS

May 2024

From The Pastor

Former professor Rev. Harold Senkbeil and founder of Doxology -The Lutheran Center For Spiritual Care and Council writes, *“By our Lord’s own mandate, he has so arranged it in his church that we grow, are fed, nourished, guarded, and protected not out of the weakness and ineptitude of our ministers but rather by the tools Christ has entrusted into their hands. The gospel and the sacraments are not static entities—mere object lessons by which we advertise and promote the kingdom of God. Rather, the gospel and the sacraments throb with vitality. They are filled to the brim with the energy and life of God’s own Spirit.”* (The Cure of Souls, p.30).

Sin, death, and the devil do not to give relief even during the summer months. There are good questions to consider, “When can a person call upon their pastor? How has the servant of Christ been a part of my life? Why is pastoral care an extension of God’s Divine Service from Sunday? The answer comes, “You are the precious sheep of Christ and He cares for you!”

Here is a list of a few things I as pastor can extend in Christ’s Name and for your benefit.

- You are ill, in the hospital, or had surgery
- Have a new baby, stillbirth, or miscarriage
- Need for baptism of child or adult
- Communion at home for physically distressed
- Personal or family strife
- Breakdown of marriage or facing divorce
- Comfort of Private Confession/Absolution
- Bereavement over loss of loved one
- Are leaving for college or military service
- To be included in the pastor’s daily prayers
- Healing and spiritual care with abuse or violence
- Coping with changes before life such as retirement
- Go over funeral preparations and the church service
- Blessing of a home as gift of security to the family
- Guidance for private and family devotional life
- Support with ethical matters on infertility, end of life, vocation, etc....
- Demonic affliction, dealing with persecution, or facing addictions
- Need help from losing job or other unfortunate circumstance to bear



Pastors are servants of the spirit-filled Word, not simply a service offered by a church. St. Paul declares, “This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.” (1 Corinthians 4:1-2). Pastors are not C.E.O’s, but caretakers of sheep. Jesus told Peter - after His resurrection, “Feed my lambs” (John 21:15). Again St. Paul says, “Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood” (Acts 20:28).

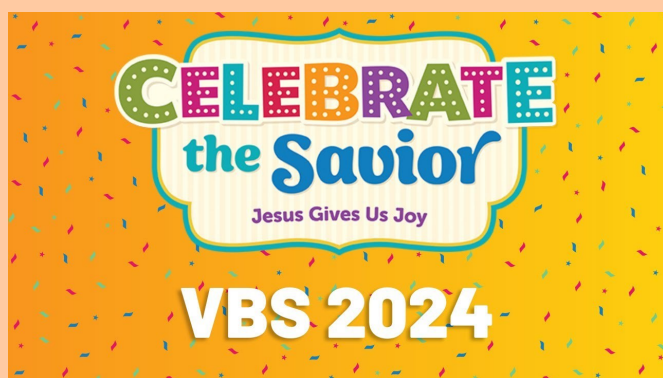
In service to the Lord and His flock,

Pastor

SCHOOL ENROLLMENT at St. John Amelith for the 2024-2025 school year has begun. School resumes August 20, 2024. Please call the school office @ 989-686-0176 to enroll. Spread the word to friends and family with children who may be interested!

A BUDDY PROGRAM has been initiated to help children at our school. A generous donor can help a child with their tuition. The expectation is to co-sponsor with a family, not to pay the entire tuition. If interested, please reach out to Jill (989-714-3811) to get started!

A BOTTLE/CAN Drive to help offset costs for the school has begun. There are two barrels outside the school entrance for you to place your bottles/cans in. If you'd prefer to have someone pick them up from your home, please contact Jill @ 989-714-3811.



**Come "Celebrate the Savior"
at Vacation Bible School.**

When: June 17 - June 21

Time: 9 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

Where: St John Amelith Lutheran School

**There will be a potluck Lunch on Friday
after the closing chapel.**

- Children from Preschool - 6th Grade are invited to join us for VBS to hear about Jesus' love for us. Registration forms can be found in the church narthex or school office.



- High school and 7th and 8th grade students are invited to participate as helpers.
- Adult Volunteers are needed as well.
- If you are willing to help or volunteer in any way, please reach out to Deb Hutter at (989) 316-8322.

MOVIE NIGHT
BROUGHT TO YOU BY
St. John's Youth Group

NOW SHOWING

MOANA

WHEN: FRIDAY, MAY 17TH

TIME: 6:00 Seating
6:30 Movie Starts

WHERE: St John Amelith Gym

Bring a camp chair or a blanket to sit on.
Concessions will be available to purchase.



Children must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

Please RSVP by phone or text to
Deb Hutter at 989-316-8322 by May 10th.



Octoberfest Kickoff Meeting

On May 20th at 5:30 PM in the church all members of the Church and School are invited to attend an Octoberfest Kickoff Meeting. We will be looking to form a committee to handle the details of the event scheduled for September 14th. Please come with an open mind and ideas of how we can celebrate Gods blessings He has shown this congregation. Please reach out to Vinny Revord 989-385-8352 with any questions.

VLHS *Ministry Update*

VALLEY LUTHERAN HIGH SCHOOL
**Commencement
Service**

WE CELEBRATE THE
Class of 2024

SUNDAY, JUNE 9
2:00 PM
DOORS OPEN 1:00

The VLHS Music Department
presents their



Spring Concert

DATE | **TIME**
May 21, 2024 | 6:00 pm

VENUE
St. Lorenz Worship &
Event Center (WEC)



**VLHS
SUMMER
CAMPS**

**Coming
in June**

For students in Grades 5 - 9



View the full schedule
and sign-up at
www.vlhs.com/camps

May is National Mental Health Awareness Month

As much as we see many problems and dangers at the present. It would be good for us to never forget the silent suffering that can happen behind the scenes with the mind. 1 out of 5 people face some form of mental health condition. If Jesus calls only sinners, should this be any less of a fact in the church, maybe more? A sinful world has many kinds of distress that weighs heavy upon the lives of people. Beyond resources and people to help, the prophet Isaiah turns us in the right direction saying, "You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you" (26:3). Let us not be ashamed in promoting mental health awareness, since God is our refuge and strength! His way of love among us as the body of Christ at St. John is by His Word and Sacraments. He is rich in forgiveness and salvation and this even grants us the honor to rich out to those with mental illness. Below are Scripture text by the Lutheran Foundation to help us personally and those that might need God's Word to set their mind upon Him and His peace.

Blessings to you,

Pastor

Scripture For Encouragement and Support

The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace. (Numbers 6:24-27)

The LORD himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. (Deuteronomy 31:8)

But you are a shield around me, O Lord; you bestow glory on me and lift up my head. To the Lord I cry aloud, and He answers me from his holy hill. (Psalm 3:3-4)

I love you, O LORD, my strength. The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge. He is my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. (Psalm 18:1-2)

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. (Psalm 23:4)

God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. (Psalm 46:1)

Find rest, O my soul, in God alone, my hope comes from him. He alone is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will not be shaken. My salvation and my honor depend on God; he is my mighty rock, my refuge. Trust in him at all times, O people, pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge. (Psalm 62:5-8)

Because you are my help, I sing in the shadow of your wings. My soul clings to you; your right hand upholds me. (Psalm 63:7-8)

So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. (Isaiah 41:10)

Rescue me from the mire, do not let me sink; deliver me from all who hate me, from the deep waters. Do not let the floodwaters engulf me or the pit enclose its mouth over me. Answer me, O LORD, out of the goodness of your love; in your great mercy turn to me. Do not hide your face from your servant; answer me quickly for I am in trouble. (Psalm 69:14-17)

Yet I am poor and needy; come quickly to me, O God. You are my help and my deliverer; O LORD, do not delay. (Psalm 70:5)

I lift my eyes unto the hills—where does my help come from? My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth. He will not let your foot slip—he who watches over you will not slumber; Indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. The LORD watches over you—the LORD is your shade at your right hand; the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night. The LORD will keep you from all harm—he will watch over your life; the LORD will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore. (Psalm 121)

He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. (Isaiah 40:20)

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. (Jeremiah 29:11)

For nothing is impossible with God. (Luke 1:37)

My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. I and the Father are one. (John 10:27-30)

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your heart be troubled and do not be afraid. (John 14:27)

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us for the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:38-39)

For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. (Romans 15:4)

May the God of all hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13)

But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. (2 Corinthians 12:9)

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6-7)

May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it. (1 Thessalonians 5:23-24)

May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word. (2 Thessalonians 2:16-17)

Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. (1 Peter 5:7)

Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. (Hebrews 10:23)



Some Practical Ways to Implement These Scripture Verses

- Include one of the verses in a "thinking-of-you" card or "We've missed seeing you" card
- and send it to someone you know who could benefit from some encouragement.
- Text a verse to someone you know who needs to be remembered and uplifted to let them know you are thinking about them and care about them.
- Meditate on one verse as a basis for your daily devotion.
- Put one verse per week/month on your church's/school's website homepage or
- Facebook page.
- Select a few verses and use them for discussion in one of your Bible study groups.
- Use some of the shorter verses as memory verses for Sunday School kids.
- Use them on handmade bookmarks or other artwork that can be given to your shut-ins or those in the hospital.
- Print out some of the verses and attach them to the bags/boxes of food you distribute through your food pantry.
- Print out some of the verses and attach them to the quilts, baby blankets, other knit items or handicrafts that your LWML/women's group creates for distribution.
- Print out some of the verses and affix them to the coffee cups used in your church's coffee fellowship/ministry.
- Use them on your church sign.

The possibilities for sharing these Bible verses are only as limited as your imagination!



What to do when 'STANDING TO'

Here you are, alert in your designated fighting position, fully up-armed, standing in a hole next to your battle buddy. The smell of fresh earth permeates your nostrils. Your mission is to stand alert in the darkness before dawn.

So, what should you do as you stand ready? For starters, be confident in your equipment — the full armor of God (Ephesians 6). Trust your leadership. Our Lord and Savior Jesus is on your side (Psalm 42:2).

Be a warrior:



Of prayer
(2 Chron. 6:40)



Who is gentle (Gal. 6:1)



Who attends worship
(Heb. 10:25)



Prepared for battle (Ps. 144:1)



Prepared to defend the faith (1 Peter 3:15)



Who knows the enemy
(Eph. 6:12)



With a mind focused on Jesus (Phil. 2:5)



Confident in the Lord Almighty
(Ps. 91:1-2)

Stand firm with your eternal hope in Christ!

Every Sunday communion can get many reactions and raise questions. I pray the articles in our newsletter the next couple of months would help answer question and inspire us to what the early church saw to be a great good. “And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers” (Acts 2:42) Again, “On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul talked with them...” (Acts 20:7) Our Lord promises, “Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me” (Luke 11:25). And finally as the pastor says to the church in the liturgy, “For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.”

God's peace be with you in Christ Jesus,

Pastor

Are You Fanatical about the Lord's Supper?

By Kenneth Wieting

Weekly communion was not widely practiced for a significant part of the twentieth century in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS). In recent decades, however, scores of LCMS congregations have restored weekly communion. Such practices may appear fanatical. Some may pridefully say, “Look how often we do it,” while for others, objections may quickly surface: “Why should we have to do it every week?”

One great error of the Roman Catholic Church perverts the Sacrament into something done by man, an un-bloody re-sacrifice by the priest. One great error of Protestants distorts the Sacrament into something done by man, a symbolical act of remembrance and obedience. Lutherans do not commit the errors of Rome or the rationalizing of the Protestants. But questions that take the Sacrament as something we do unwittingly and harmfully distort the action and direction of this holy gift.



The living Christ, here and now, in the flesh, does this. It is His doing, not ours.

The Lutheran Confessions identify the nature of both the Roman Catholic and Protestant errors as fanatical because they speak of the Lord's Supper as something that we do. Dr. Luther narrows in on this in the Large Catechism: “Nearly all the fanatical spirits ... regard the Sacraments, aside from the Word of God, as something that we do” (LC V 7). “Aside from the Word of God” means “apart from.” Luther was combatting Zwingli and other Protestants who treated the Sacrament as our human act and denied the gracious promises God connects to it. Luther's reasoning here is closely related to Article V of the Augsburg Confession, which confesses that God is not known apart from His Word.

Our sinful default setting focuses first on our own actions; this pertains also to the Lord's Supper. Keeping this in mind, Lutherans do not disconnect Holy Communion from Christ's Holy Word. They do not follow Zwingli's error of denying the forgiveness of sins and the other blessings Christ gives in this Sacrament. Even so, we are constantly tempted to take over the verbs of Scripture and treat God's gifts as our work. We rebels long to be in control. When we view the Sacrament as our doing, we are being fanatical.

Christ-centered questions

The Scriptures confess that the Sacrament is what Christ does for us. Questions about the Sacrament, therefore, are rightly expressed with Him as the subject — the “doer” — of the verbs, not us:

- Why should the living Christ visit sinners like us in such a personal (“for you”) and marvelous way? Why should the living Christ have opportunity to do this for His gathered guests each Lord's Day? This perspective profoundly differs from “our doing” the Sacrament. This perspective is foundational for the recovery of weekly Communion.

Answers to questions about our actions turn us in on ourselves, our habits, our felt needs of the moment. When I was confirmed in the 1960s, my home congregation served the Sacrament four times a year. With that foundation, the faulty question “Why should we do it each month?” could have replaced the faulty question “Why should we do it each week?”

Our Lutheran Confessions’ warning against treating the Lord’s Supper as something we do is a loving warning. Answers to Christ-centered questions explode with beauty and blessing beyond all earthly limits. Scriptural answers show the beating heart of the Divine Service and are full of “life and salvation.” In the Lord’s Supper “we speak of the presence of the living Christ, for we know that ‘death no longer has dominion over Him’ [Rom. 6:9]” (Ap X 57). Thus, what Lutherans confess from Scripture concerning Holy Communion might be summarized this way: The living Christ, here and now, in the flesh, does this. It is His doing, not ours.

Jesus’ great gift

Of all the beautiful acts Jesus did, this is the ultimate gift He gave His church before stepping out into the night on Maundy Thursday. He taught them much in the preceding three years. He did many miracles and signs of feeding, healing and rescue in their presence. Then He set His face toward Jerusalem.

His incarnation, His holy birth, His submission to His parents, His Baptism in the Jordan, His years of visible earthly ministry, all led to the upper room. There at Passover, He prayed high and priestly prayers. He humbly washed dirty feet. Then, He gave His gifts. As He moved steadily to the cross, He bequeathed to His Bride the means by which she would receive forgiveness, His soon-to-be-sacrificed body and blood.

This was His great gift to His gathered disciples and, by extension, to His church before His walk to Gethsemane. Then came the center of human history, the greatest gift of all, His once-for-all sacrifice for the sin of the world. His sacrifice was followed by His open, empty tomb and bodily resurrection to new life for us. Alleluia! Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia! Now, He intercedes for us as both God and man and continues His ministry to us as both God and man, with all authority in heaven and on earth — that is, at God’s right hand.

Each Lord’s Day

“Why should the living Christ give this gift for His gathered guests each Lord’s Day?” To unite bodily with His Bride with all the authority in heaven and earth. The living Christ, here and now, in the flesh, does this. He continues the teaching and doing that He did in His earthly ministry (Luke 24:50–53; Acts 1:1–11). He does not teach and act today in some spiritualized, “wispy” manner. Rather, “Jesus Christ has come in the flesh” (1 John 4:2), and continues to teach and act in physical, “fleshy” ways. How wondrous! Jesus, the God-man, still ministers in the flesh for us.

The third stanza of Luther’s Commandment hymn reinforces this truth about Sabbath Day worship. Concerning the day of rest, he writes, “and put aside the work you do, So that God may work in you” (*LSB* 581:4). Luther’s words apply to the preaching Christ does for His gathered church (Rom. 10:17; Luke 10:16). Surely, they also apply to Christ serving His church His holy food. The question “Why should the living Christ come to serve us this wondrous and forgiving gift?” is answered by Luther’s Sabbath Day hymn, “so that God may work in you.”

“In My remembrance”

What about Jesus’ words (Luke 22:19–20) and those of St. Paul (1 Cor. 11:24–25): “Do this in remembrance of me”? This could be translated, “You all keep on doing this in my remembrance.” The context of the Last Supper and of God’s revelation to St. Paul is important. Those in the upper room were apostles (“sent ones”), as was St. Paul. Jesus sent them to be stewards or house managers of the mysteries of God (1 Cor. 4:1–2), and they were to continue setting forth this gift of Christ’s ongoing ministry to His people. Luther similarly taught pastors who were hesitant in celebrating Holy Communion. He made clear that the Lord’s Supper should be celebrated once or twice on Sundays and during the week, if desired. If pastors had reservations or felt unworthy of this, Luther wrote, “I would tell them that no one compels them except God himself through his call. For since they have the office, they are already obliged and compelled to administer the sacrament when it is requested of them; thus, their excuses are void” (LW 49:207).

When Jesus said “keep on doing this in my remembrance,” He wasn’t speaking primarily about recalling past history. Rather, He spoke of active remembrance, of receiving in faith the benefits He serves us (AC XXIV 30–32). This is not a conscious activity, a mere mental capacity. Rather, it is recognizing and receiving in faith what Jesus does in His forgiving, life-giving capacity. God is remembering His promise in Christ as Christ serves us. Our remembering is receiving in faith what He is present to give us now from His saving work on Calvary.

God is remembering His promise in Christ as Christ serves us.

The Holy Spirit declared Jesus' ongoing sacramental doing on Pentecost. He led the infant church in devotion to the apostles' teaching and to the Lord's Supper (Acts 2:42). The word translated "devoted to" reveals that the laity were obstinate and immovable in their reception of both Word and Sacrament. They kept on receiving what Jesus came among them to do. The prayers — the ordered worship — and the fellowship of the post-Pentecost church were formed by the ongoing ministry of the risen Christ. He continued to speak His Word and serve His Sacrament to them through His sent ones. The living Christ, there and then, in the flesh, was doing that.

The Lord of the Sabbath (Matt. 12:8) remains among us as One who serves at His Table (Luke 22:27; see also Matt. 18:20; 20:28). It is not fanatical to desire His loving and wondrous gift each Lord's Day. "Why should He visit sinners like us in such a personal ('for you') and marvelous way?" Because He loves to give life and light, healing and strength, forgiveness and rest, unity and faith, hope and love, and peace that passes all understanding. Indeed, the holy mystery of His body to eat and His blood to drink passes all understanding. The magnificent truth foundational to this holy mystery is this: The living Christ, here and now, in the flesh, does this.

<https://witness.lcms.org/2020/are-you-fanatical-about-the-lords-supper/>

Rooted in God's Word, Growing in Christ's Love, Branching Out to Serve, Bearing Fruits of Faith

Contact Us

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