Newsletter



Things Happening at Amelith

Nov 2nd - No School (office closed)

Nov 2nd - Quilting 9:30am

Nov 3rd - No School (office closed)

Nov 4th - Chapel w/ Veteran's Breakfast 8:05am

Nov 5th - United Financial Branch 8:00am

Nov 8th - Youth Meeting 6:00pm

Nov 9th - Buffalo Wild Wings Fundraiser (all day)

Nov 10th - Butter Braid Fundraiser Ends

Nov 10th - Council Meeting 6:00pm

Nov 15th - Youth Meeting 6:00pm

Nov 16th - Quilting 9:30am

Nov 17th - Bookmobile 10:30am

Nov 17th - Elder Meeting 6:00pm

Nov 19th - United Financial Branch 8:00am

Nov 22nd - Voter's Meeting 11:00am

Nov 24th - Podcast & a Pint 6:30pm

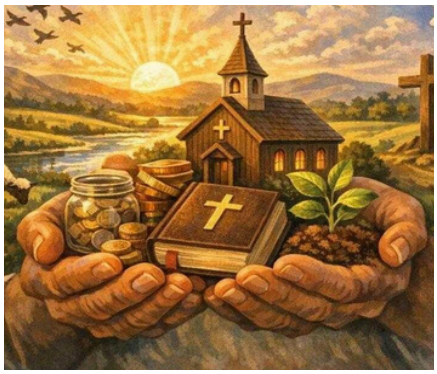
Nov 25th - Thanksgiving Dinner 5:00pm

Nov 26th - Divine Service (Thanksgiving) 9:30am

Nov 30th - Board of Ed Meeting 5:30pm

From The Pastor

"And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." Colossians 3:17



When St. Paul concludes his description of putting on the new self in Christ. His "whatever" does not mean that our words and actions are unimportant or that we can simply do as we please. Rather, as the baptized, we consider everything in the name of Lord Jesus. This is why we pray to our Father, "Hallowed be Thy name." What does this mean? "God's name is kept holy when the Word of God is taught in its truth and purity, and we, as the children of God, also lead holy lives according to it." Jesus has made us holy through His sacrifice (Hebrews 12:24) and His resurrection delivers that promise by baptism (1 Peter 3:21). It is "whatever" to sin, death, and the Devil with new life God has created and kept for us in His Son.

With forgiveness freely given and reconciliation with God accomplished. Faith receives it all from the Lord Jesus. This is why St. Paul says, "Whatever you do, in word and deed" is now with love for God and others. The Lutherans Confession explains, "Good Works are to be done because of God's command and for the exercise of faith—confessing the faith and giving thanks… Through these works Christ celebrates His victory over the devil, just as the distribution of alms by the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 16:1) was a holy work, a sacrifice and battle of Christ against the devil... To demean such works (the confession of doctrine, sufferings, works of love, suppression of the flesh) would be to demean the outward rule of Christ's kingdom among people." 1

Since God's grace is new every morning, it is not surprising our daily life and vocations receive the greatest attention of love. This applies especially entering November in two distinct ways. At the beginning of the month, we exercise not merely the right to vote, but give respect to the 4th commandment. Mid-term elections bring with it politicking that comes with plenty of hype. Yet, let us never forget that for the government to function well, we should vote. This is especially difficult today and maybe it feels better to keep quiet, but just remember. "As Christians, we engage in politics precisely because we value other things much more, including God, the church, our family, friends, neighborhood, and the common good." 2

Second, later in November, is the annual stewardship pledge. This consideration is about proportional giving to the Lord from our families. The government takes by way of taxes, but the church in America, and unlike Europe, relies on offerings given freely. Freely does not mean again, "whatever" but to consider Scripture. This good work is an exercise of faith and in ways is greater than voting. Elections come and go, but offering is giving back to God a portion of what He already has given us. While St. John is debt-free, gratitude to God remains through Jesus Christ. Our service to the Gospel is giving faithfully not for a feeling of forgiveness but to honor Christ's ministry among us and what we as a church are able to do in love for others.

Both the beginning and end of the month are full opportunities for good works! Many people vote, give, and serve their communities. Yet, for us as Christians everything in word and deed is by faith "in the name of Jesus." His holiness covers us, and the peace we have with God is not the result of anything we have accomplished. It is a pure gift given to sinners through Christ. Our works are imperfect, but God graciously uses them to serve our neighbors and bear witness to His goodness. Instead of our success, the blessing to boast over is how God has used us and whatever we claim finally belongs to His glory.

Let us give thanks in the name of the Lord!

Pastor Gauthier

1 Concordia The Lutheran Confessions Apology, Article V p. 110, 112.

2 https://www.lcrlfreedom.org/blog/word-from-the-center-friday-october-23-2026

Faith. Life. Conversation.

with Pastor Gauthier

Join us for another gathering to enjoy good food, good conversation, and good discussion about relationships in all walks of life.



Each month we'll choose three podcasts from **Issues, Etc.** (Find them online at Issuesetc.org.) We will talk around topics that connects Christian faith with everyday life—things like marriage and dating, work and vocation, technology, family, relationships, and living as a Christian in today's culture.

Listen to at least to the first one listed and others if you have time before we meet. Our discussion will change topics each meeting so come when you can but be ready to talk!

Next gathering: Tuesday, November 24th • 6:30 p.m.

Pierce Road Bar & Grill

November: Marriage, Dating & Being Single

1. *Young Men and Marriage* — Tim Goeglein
2. *Marriage, Family, Career and Young Women* — Suzanne Venker
3. *The Vocation of Being Single* — Peter Bender

Click the links to directly bring you to each podcast,
OR scan the QR code with your phone's camera!

Who is it for?

Singles, married couples, parents, newer members, longtime members, and friends.

This isn't another meeting. It's an opportunity to get to know others, ask honest questions, and think together about following Christ in everyday life.

Faith Codes for Military Personnel Raise Concerns Over the Establishment Clause



LCMS COMMUNICATIONS/ ERIK M. LUNSFORD

Rev. Gregory N. Todd, D.Min., D.D., Rear Admiral, Chaplain Corps, U.S. Navy (ret)

In May 2026, Secretary Hegseth directed the Department of War to reduce significantly its officially recognized religious faith codes for military personnel from 211 to 30 or 31 categories. The objective is to curb an excessive system that acknowledged numerous specific faiths and to streamline resources and funding for chaplains and commanders in providing religious programs.

The faith codes are assigned when Army and Air Force personnel join the military and are rarely updated. Consequently, it is not uncommon for an 18-year-old newly enlisted soldier with no religious background simply to identify themselves with the first faith that comes to mind, such as "my grandmother was Catholic, so I must be Catholic." And this designation — whether accurate or not — follows him for his entire career.

In practice, if, after reviewing the faith codes of all service members assigned to a base, the base chaplain determines that there is a significant contingent of Jewish personnel on the base and there is no Jewish chaplain assigned in the vicinity, the chaplain would then utilize religious program funds to contract a Jewish rabbi to lead the Jewish program.

The issue lies in its oversimplification. Synods as disparate as the LCMS, ELCA, WELS and ELS are now identified simply as Lutheran. Consequently, the commander with 500 Lutherans on base could contract the local ELCA pastor and fully satisfy the bureaucracy while denying Confessional Lutherans adequate service. This same challenge is mirrored across the faith codes.

The situation raises a deeper Constitutional concern: Can the federal government make a judgment, even a small one, about the faith of the service member?

The problem was highlighted when the original list identified the Church of Latter-Day Saints as non-Christian. Senator Mike Lee from Utah immediately objected that the LDS faithful were Christian. Given Senator Lee's position and influence, the list was changed. But how many new recruits are either as self-assured or powerful as Senator Lee?

By eliminating an LCMS faith code and conflating all Lutherans under one code, the U.S. government is making a value judgment that all Lutherans are the same, not recognizing distinction. The First Amendment begins: "*Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion.*" It exists to keep the government supportive but agnostic about faith.

> Can the Federal government make a judgment, even a small one, about the faith of the service member?

We thank God that in the U.S., He has provided our military members with chaplains. Through this specialized ministry, God provides Word and Sacrament to men and women serving around the globe. Without it, volunteers would be forced to choose between service to country and access to the church's Sacraments — or perhaps face death without the guidance and comfort ordained ministers provide.

But this blessing also lives at the intersection of church and state. The very categorization of faiths into Christian and non-Christian is a doctrinal judgement that belongs to the church alone. It is neither in the purview nor the competency of the left-hand kingdom.

Nevertheless, for any state to provide for Christian ministry in the military, officers of the state must act as Christians and, conversely, ministers of the church must be willing to serve as officers of the state.

You can pray for both.

Pray that our LCMS chaplains give wise and faithful counsel to government decision-makers, while also praying that our government ministers are pious, faithful and humble enough to receive it.

Rev. Dr. Gregory Todd recently retired as the 28th Chief of Chaplains of the United States Navy — the highest rank that a chaplain can attain. His career as a pastor and chaplain of the LCMS spans four decades and includes numerous accolades. At the most recent convention of the LCMS in Phoenix, he was honored with the St. Martin of Tours Medal.

Let us pray for those who minister in the armed forces.

O Lord, almighty God, as You have always granted singular gifts of the Holy Spirit to Your church on earth, grant Your special blessing, we pray, to all who minister in Your name in the armed forces, that by Your gracious working they may honor Christ and advance the good of those committed to their care; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Contacting the President and other elected officials:

usa.gov/elected-officials
senate.gov/senators/contact/
house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH MISSOURI SYNOD

Free to be Faithful **Update** | *lcms.org/socialissues/freetobefaithful*

Free to be Faithful is an LCMS newsletter published by The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
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Q&A with Lutheran Jazz Singer Erin Bode

This summer, Bode released a new album, *Sounds of Mercy,* created in partnership with the LCMS.

Story by Stacey Eising | Photography by Erik M. Lunsford | Fall 2026



Erin Bode's career as a professional jazz singer has taken her many places over the decades. In 2006, at the request of the Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison (then director of LCMS World Relief and Human Care), it took her all the way to South Africa, where she recorded music with boys' and girls' choirs at a Christian boarding school. *The Themba Girls with the Erin Bode Group* album was released in 2007 to raise scholarship funds for the school. This past summer, Bode, a lifelong Lutheran, collaborated with the LCMS again on *Sounds of Mercy,* a new album of previously unreleased Themba Choirs recordings with commentary on mercy by Harrison. In July, she sang some of these songs at a special evening performance during the LCMS convention.

How did you first get involved with this project back in 2006?
A: I was sitting in our music room in our house in St. Louis, and I got a phone call from Pastor Matt Harrison. … He had just recently been on a trip to South Africa and had met with the Themba School [and] was just absolutely blown away by their music. … He told me that it struck him that if people could hear their music, they would want to help support these students, most of whom needed scholarships to attend the school. So, he thought, how can I get this music to a wider group of people who might be interested in helping? I was very fortunate that he thought of me.

What was it like recording with the students in South Africa?
A: The school is in a very rural area of South Africa, outside a very tiny village. They have a camp there with some houses. And there's the student housing area and a chapel, and some buildings for classes and things [where we would] set up to record.

We spent two weeks at the Themba School. We brought a few songs to record with them, and we collected many of theirs that they had prepared to share with us. It was just a magical experience.

What impact did this have on you?
A: It completely changed the way that I think about music — how music is such a powerful way to share your faith and to really help people, because it connects people so strongly. And that connection can really build a common faith. It can build hope and encouragement between people.

What did you learn during your time in South Africa?
A: Music is such a huge part of their culture. … We would record with them for eight hours a day. And when we would take a break for lunch, they would sing. It was just constant music. It reprioritized what music meant to me: It should be that widespread over our life. They were constantly praising God [with their music], and it was just such a wonderful example. … It helped me to reprioritize what music means to me within my professional capacity. Music isn't meant to serve the self as much as maybe we're encouraged for it to.

Tell me about this new album.
A: The album contains eight songs that were chosen from the collection that we got in South Africa. And these eight pieces have been combined with seven sound bites from an *Issues, Etc.* podcast that Pastor Harrison did. And they tie together the music and this wonderful subject of mercy work.

What do you hope listeners will take away from the album?
A: I hope that they will be able to take away a little bit of what it was like to be there in South Africa. They'll get a little taste of the beauty of the faith that we share in common with these kids and the people in South Africa. And I hope they'll come away with … the hope and joy and comfort that we have in these songs.

- Listen to the *Sounds of Mercy* album https://resources.lcms.org/erin-bode/?

Source: engage.lcms.org/q-a-erin-bode-fall-2026/

Debt Free: A Great Achievement to Celebrate

Faithful Today, Ready for Tomorrow



St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church of Amelith

3 Year Debt History:

- Future Ministry Team and Fund Development in December of 2023 made a goal to eliminate Internal and External Debt within 3 years and a long-term goal to stay out of debt once the initial goal was reached.
- Our peak debt was reached in October 2024 hitting $192,500.
- Since 2023, we have reduced total annual budget by over $129,000.
- As of the October 2026 Voters' Meeting, we are debt free! The goal was achieved over the last 3 years by Fundraising, Generous Matching Gift Challenges & Oktoberfest.

Celebrating all Internal and External debt
has been paid as of Oct 2026 Voters Mtg!

Despite now being debt free the fact is that we continue to face major struggles to pay the routine bills of this congregation. Regular offering plate and envelope contributions are what pays ongoing bills and avoids future borrowing.

Help Amelith achieve the long-term goal to stay Debt Free by your personal Stewardship to Amelith.

Please consider your Stewardship opportunitiesas a member of St John to maintain debt free status. Regular Offering plate giving is neededtopay bills and stay debt free. Electronic Giving is an excellent option to participate in for delivering your stewardship commitment.

CELEBRATE THE ACHIEVEMENT
SUSTAIN THE PROGRESS

"*For I know the plans I have for you" declares the LORD, "plans to give you hope and a future.*"
Jeremiah 29:11

St. John Amelith NEWS
November 2026

Hello form Mrs. Molly!

Gobble, gobble 🙂 Hoping this month brings lots of blessings and wonderful family time! We have many things happening in November please check out our online calendar. Everyone is welcome! Please reach out to me with any questions or concerns, my door is always open!



United Financial Days are November 5 & 19

Bookmobile November17

We are almost halfway to our mission goal of sending 80 books to Malaysia! Thank you for teaching your kids the importance of giving.



Thank you for being supportive of the changes to the lunch program! I am so happy that the kids are willing to try the items and when they find they like them it makes my momma heart very happy. Please remember to fill out the online form so we can make a plan for grocery shopping. You can easily change your selection or make a suggestion for the next month with a quick message to Andrea or myself in Jupiter Ed.

Important Dates:

Office Closed
November 4 - Veteran's Chapel and Breakfast
November 9 - Buffalo Wild Wing Fundraiser
November 25 Community Thanksgiving Dinner
November 25-27 No School Thanksgiving Dinner

Study Opportunities for adults
Wednesdays @
9am Women's Bible Study
6pm Bible Study with Pastor

November 24 @ 6:30pm
Podcast & a Pint with Pastor
Listen to the pre-selected podcasts, come and discuss with Pastor and others.

Reach out if you would like more information!

BUTTER BRAID
PASTRY FUNDRAISER

Going on now through Nov. 10th!

Orderthrough theoffice, anystudent,or on the form in the back of the church



All Braids Only $17!

Proceeds benefit St. John Amelith School

Order online, too!

Scan the QR Code

https://store.myfundraisingplace.com/products/602ec973-45d7-4f02-91ce-d3d37e124e74/5111966/

St. John Amelith Church

ANCHORED IN CHRIST THROUGH THE YEARS
1852 – 2027

175TH ANNIVERSARY

JUNE 25-27TH, 2027



June 27, 2027 • 9:30 AM
✝ Divine Service ✝

FRIDAY

3:00 PM Welcome Campers
6:00 PM Hot Dog Roast
8:00 PM Campfire Fellowship

SATURDAY

9:00 AM Pancakes & Prayer Service
4:00 PM Hymn Festival
6:00 PM Pot Luck
8:00 PM Campfire Sing Along

SUNDAY

9:30 AM Divine Service Rec. Gathering
11:30 AM Drive pickup on Pine Church Steps
12:00 PM Catered Meal
1:00 PM Fellowship / Music
3:00 PM Closing Blessing

Faith ~ Family ~ Fellowship

St. John Amelith

Join our Special Christmas Eve Choir!



All voices welcome!

No experience necessary!

Rehearsals

Sunday, December 4th at 5:00 PM

Sunday, December 18th at 5:00 PM

Location: Church Sanctuary

A brief warm-up session will be held prior to the Christmas Eve Service.

ANYONE IS WELCOME TO PARTICIPATE!
AGES 12 AND OLDER WELCOME!

SIGN UP SHEET IN THE OFFICE — EMAIL office@stamelith.org, CALL 999-686-0176. OR STOP BY TO SIGN UP! SEE PASTOR FOR DETAILS.

Youth Group Events

PLEASE JOIN US FOR

Thanksgiving Dinner

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 25
5 PM – 7 PM
1664 AMELITH RD | BAY CITY

Turkey dinner:
mashed potatoes and gravy,
stuffing, veggie, roll, and pie.
No take outs will be available.

Tickets available until November 15th.
Deb Hutter (989-316-8322)
School Office (989-686-0176)
Following Church Service

Free will donation/offering to benefit St. John's youth group.



Sponsored by the Outreach and Youth Groups

St. John Amelith Youth Group

Christmas Cookie Walk

DECEMBER 6
Immediately following church service until noon

At the school

Pick up some Christmas treats and help support our youth group!



All cookies are good cookies!

St. John Amelith Youth Group

Christmas Caroling

DECEMBER 6 • 4–7 PM

Join us as we share Christmas cheer with our shut-ins and residents at local nursing homes.
Everyone is welcome!
Children must be accompanied by a parent.

Meet at the school. After caroling, return to the school gym for dinner and fellowship. Pizza, salad, drinks and paper products will be provided. Please bring a plate of Christmas cookies.

RSVP:
Sign up in the narthex or call/text Deb Hutter at 989-316-8322.

St. John Amelith's Youth Group is hosting a

Christmas Lock In

Sunday, December 13th
1–4 PM

For any child preschool through 4th grade
Preschoolers must be potty trained

Parents, drop your kiddos off for us to watch them while you go Christmas shopping, wrap gifts, and more!

Activities planned for all ages!

Snacks will be provided.
Families must RSVP
by calling Deb at 989-316-8322
or letting us know in the office
A free-will offering to the youth for helping with the kiddos would be appreciated!

ST. JOHN AMELITH LUTHERAN CHURCH

Advent & Christmas Worship



"Prepare the way of the Lord, make His paths straight."
— Matthew 3:3

THANKSGIVING DAY

9:30 AM | **Thanksgiving Day Divine Service**
A service of prayer, praise, and thanksgiving for Almighty God's blessings.

WEDNESDAY ADVENT GATHERINGS *December 2, 9 & 16*

5:00 PM | **Advent Supper**
Fellowship meal in the church basement before worship.

6:00 PM | **Evening Prayer Service**
Midweek Advent worship.

6:45 PM | **Bible Study**
Deepen your reflection on God's Word.

SPECIAL EVENT — DECEMBER 16: The **Children's Christmas Program** will be held at 6:00 PM as part of the midweek service.

CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR WORSHIP

CHRISTMAS EVE
6:00 PM
Candlelight Divine Service celebrating the Nativity of our Lord.

CHRISTMAS DAY
9:30 AM
Divine Service with Holy Communion celebrating the birth of Jesus.

NEW YEAR'S EVE
6:00 PM
Giving thanks for God's blessings and guidance.

"For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given..."

All are warmly invited to worship with our church family as we celebrate the coming of Christ.

November Prayer Calendar

Every day, let us include the person/position/event mentioned in our prayers. You can pray for them, the job they do, those who receive or in whatever way you are led.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 All the Saints	2 Anniversaries	3 Birthdays	4 Bible Study	5 Students	6 Budget Committee	7 Altar Guild Servers
8 Confirmation Class	9 Stewardship Committee	10 Council	11 Veterans	12 Endowment	13 Church Staff	14 Lawn Mowing
15 Youth Group	16 Quilting	17 Elders	18 Tech/IT Team	19 Treasurer	20 Cemetery	21 Fund Development
22 SJA Members	23 LWML	24 Podcast & a Pint	25 Outreach Committee	26 Thanksgiving	27 Pastor	28 Trustee Members
29 Sunday School Teachers	30 Board of Ed					