

The image is a conceptual illustration. At the base, an open Bible is shown, its pages filled with text. From the center of the Bible, a thick, gnarled tree trunk grows upwards. The trunk is shaped like a large wooden cross. The top of the cross is covered in lush green leaves and branches, which spread outwards. The background is a soft-focus blue and green, suggesting a natural setting. The overall theme is the connection between faith, scripture, and growth.

**October 2025
Newsletter**

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

Satan Forced To Surrender

God's Word from the Old Testament to New Testament holds the Devil in contempt. He always seems to hide behind things like a serpent in the garden, an idolatrous nation, a false prophet, or any form of uncleanness. Of course, Christ in the line of David came to fulfill the Gospel that God promised for humanity. The cowardice of Satan became known! God's Son as true man met the Devil head-on in the wilderness tempted forty days to prove His faithfulness. Christ's defeat of Satan by His death and resurrection is now an eternal shame. St. John declares beyond the present strife, "Then I saw another angel flying directly overhead, with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who dwell on earth, to every nation and tribe and language and people" (Revelation 14:6). The Reformation over five hundred years ago let this eternal gospel shine and we are in need of this faithfulness of God toward sinners from age to age.



As clear as Scripture are about the Devil, our culture has taken on an infatuation with the Devil. Have you noticed how truly evil characters like on Disney now have backstories to win-over the audience to their side? The evildoer turns out to be better than the good guy! Even an online streaming company like Netflix has a series running several years now entitled, "Lucifer." The story goes that Satan is bored with hell. He turns to the nightclub business only to team up with a homicide detective. The Reformation times were a response to Satan being used as a tool for driving fear into the cash flow of a twisted church hierarchy against Christ. Yet, today it seems entertainment for a secular world drives the show with Satan and people are receptive to the fear and darkness! This deliberate distorting of good and evil leaves a confused weariness over life. Solomon shares some wisdom, "He who justifies the wicked and he who condemns the righteous are both alike an abomination to the Lord" (Proverbs 17:15).

The goal of Satan comes summed up in two points. Strangely enough, they often work in tandem. One deals with distorting good and evil and leaves a person lost to sin and darkness. St. Paul depicts the illusion, "For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions..." (2 Timothy 4:3). The other goal of darkness is the outcome, which in many ways arises from the first point. It is a direct assault on life at the present or ultimately ending with eternal death. Jesus ties the Devil's deception to joy over death. We hear, "He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies" (John 8:44). Apart from the Word, we are helpless and sheep without a shepherd.

No wonder grace alone comes from the Gospel and that faith is in Christ alone who confronts the Devil for us. He does it by the Word and simple things like water, bread and wine. These gifts render the service of Christ who holds evil in contempt with the victory won out of His cross. Since the Word consistently condemns the Devil, so with Christ sinners find refuge in Him as promised by the Gospel. Where attraction to evil is a lie that turns to fear and shame, the Lord delivers His truthful word and forgiveness. To the murderous rage causing despair and doubt, the Savior comes to the brokenhearted. Satan prefers the toying around by Hollywood. If entertainment is iconic today, is it surprising that the Devil takes center stage? Let us gather to God's service for it is no spectacle only good news that hides nothing against our old evil foe.

A pastoral word from President Harrison



reporter.lcms.org/2025/a-pastoral-word-from-president-harrison

September 17, 2025

(LCMS/Erik M. Lunsford)

By Matthew C. Harrison

“For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.” (Mark 7:21–23)

“Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.” (1 John 3:15)

Charlie Kirk was a devout Christian, murdered for his conservative religious and political views by a young man who has fallen victim to the ideological demons of our time. It is becoming clear that the man who killed him had been radicalized by “anti-fascist” groupthink and rhetoric, which pervades university campuses, circles of political extremists, and especially the internet. Fellow high school students reportedly called the shooter “Reddit kid” after a particular platform known for extremism. Indeed, the man’s very bullets were inscribed, “Hey fascist! Catch!”

In the wake of Mr. Kirk’s unjust demise, extremists now revel in his murder, even creating media, T-shirts, etc., to celebrate the death. The depth of evil knows no bounds. As Luther wrote in the Smalcald Articles, the “hereditary sin [that resides in our hearts] is such a deep corruption of nature that no reason can understand it. Rather, it must be believed from the revelation of Scripture” (SA III I 3). I’m not such a fool as to think evil is the particular propensity of but one extreme of the ideological spectrum. “None is righteous, no, not one” (Rom. 3:10). “Whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God” (Rom. 3:19).

Pundits have crafted lists of Mr. Kirk’s statements, which allegedly justify his murder. But no speech of any human being justifies his or her murder. It’s also clear to me that very few who make such accusations listened to or watched his events across the country. While I do not endorse all Mr. Kirk’s religious or other comments he made in his debates, I do not believe he was a racist, and certainly no hater. Pull his videos up on YouTube and judge for yourself.

It is ever perilous for a church leader to speak publicly into highly contentious cultural and political issues. The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) does not politicize the Gospel, nor do we redefine the Gospel as the liberation of oppressed peoples. The Gospel is God’s saving act in Christ. Love for all is our sacred response. We

confess with the sacred Scriptures, “The blood of Jesus [the man] His [God’s] Son [God in the flesh] cleanses us from all sin” (1 John 1:7). Our sacred task is calling all to repentance and proclaiming the one eternal remedy for sin, the blessed life, death and resurrection of Jesus. As the church *per se* we are not finally about saving the state, engaging in political activity or even Christianizing the state. Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world” (John 18:36). Our Augsburg Confession states that the Lutheran church does not “mix church and state.” Nor do our Lutheran Confessions mandate one form of government or another. “Neither does the Gospel offer new laws about the public state” (Ap XVI 55). Our forefathers came to America seeking religious freedom from tyrannical states. We treasure a well-run and ordered state because the Gospel does not prosper where chaos reigns (Rom. 13).

At the same time, we recognize the deep Christian influence in the founding of the United States, particularly in the establishment of the reasonable and ethical authority of law, which is expressed in the Ten Commandments and sound reason. “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal” (*Declaration of Independence*). Here sound reason echoes the orders of creation and redemption. Indeed, every person is not only created in God’s image, but worth the very blood of Christ. “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16). We believe in healthy patriotism.

The LCMS also strongly encourages participation by its people in honorable civic affairs of all sorts, from law enforcement to the military, judiciary and all elected positions. This accords with the New Testament. Jesus never tells a soldier or an official to stop serving the state as though doing so were improper for a Christian (Luke 7:8). But He does insist they act justly in doing so (Luke 3:14). Our Augsburg Confession wholeheartedly commends service in the secular realm by Christians.

Our churches teach that lawful civil regulations are good works of God. They teach that it is right for Christians to hold political office, to serve as judges, to judge matters by imperial laws and other existing laws, to impose just punishments, to engage in just wars, to serve as soldiers, to make legal contracts, to hold property, to take oaths when required by the magistrates, for a man to marry a wife, or a woman to be given in marriage (AC XVI).

While the LCMS does not issue political directives nor insert itself in the vast majority of social and political issues of our day, we are compelled to call out evil because the Bible does so. The murder of a man for exercising his civil right to free speech is evil. Trans ideology — to which the murderer is connected — is an evil disordering of human existence, as are all matters that disorder fami-

lies and individuals. It leaves people hurt and suffering. It displaces God's design for the family with caricatures that cannot sustain society. Consider the many studies that have shown that the most progressive individuals are far less satisfied or happy in nearly all aspects of life. We are deeply concerned about and care for people who have succumbed to this disorder or are challenged by it. The church is for sinners all. We include ourselves in that number (Rom. 3:19). We do not hate. We love. We pray for the shooter's repentance and conversion to Christ, even while supporting the administration of justice by the state in accord with Romans 13:4: "[The governing authority] does not bear the sword in vain." Indeed, we pray that very justice — facing the death penalty — bring repentance and faith in Christ.

Marxism, which is pervasive on many university campuses, praises anarchy and violence because violence is the means to throw the status quo into chaos and overthrow allegedly repressive regimes. As an atheistic paradigm of human social existence, Marxism views all law and ethics as utilitarian, indeed merely a human construct — including sexual identity itself, which has always been (Rom. 1) and is again, with an intensity never seen before, the frontier of "freedom" from Divine design. Hermann Sasse, the friend of the LCMS and great Lutheran who lived through the Hitler years in Germany, was the first publicly to reject the Aryan Paragraph of the Nazi party platform. He blew the whistle on real fascism and racism, and suffered for it. His collaborator Dietrich Bonhoeffer died for it. Last week, before our very eyes, Sasse's comment on Marxism has again been proven true: "Marxist theory has been refuted with rivers of blood." For the radicalized Marxist, if the divine mandate not to murder interferes with "progress," so be it. If an outspoken conservative Christian has to die for progress, then so be it.

Well, Charlie Kirk was such a Christian. I am such a Christian. And I know thousands more.

A Note Especially for Young Christian Men

"I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one" (1 John 2:14). The rise of radical ideologies has affected you deeply. Whether your ethnicity or your sex, or perhaps your perceived social status, much of your identity has been the very bullseye of radicalism's attacks. God-given and pleasing masculinity and strength, which demonstrates itself most beautifully and profoundly in self-sacrifice (Rom. 5:7), is ceaselessly vilified. The world has been fixated on everybody else's perceived injustices but yours. You and your culture — indeed, all Western culture — are the source of all evil, they say. Young women have disproportionately rejected traditional values, particularly with respect to the family and children. DEI has cost you academic advancement and employment. The leftist attack experienced in most universities has ridiculed your biblical faith and the very values you learned from your fathers and mothers, grandparents and your Confirmation pastor — values that taught you Christ, forgiveness, love, service and vocation.

The answer is not in opposite extremes. You are called by

Christ to bear up in faith at this time. You were baptized for this moment. Do not give way to racial theories that contradict basic biblical truths of human dignity and Christ's and the church's love for all peoples. Peter preached, "Truly I understand that God shows no partiality." Literally, he said, "God does not receive faces," that is, God does not judge you on how you look, on your culture or on your skin color (Acts 10:34; see also Matt. 27:32, Acts 2:10, Acts 11:20, Acts 13:1). Our ethnic genetics are all First Article gifts. The Bible calls upon men to "honor" and love their wives "as Christ loved the church" (Eph. 5:25). Relationships with women are not about power. They are about responsibility that sacrifices self for another. Go to church. Excel in your vocations. Run for office. The biblical and Lutheran Doctrine of the Two Kingdoms does not mean you do not participate in the civil and political realm. Quite the opposite. We've never needed Christians more in our civic life. Volunteer at church. Talk to your pastor. Become the man God wills you to be so that, whether or not God gives you a bride, you can be a spiritual leader in your family, church and beyond. Avoid bad places on the web. Turn off the video games and engage in physical activity. Avoid isolation. Confess the truth of Christ. Seek healthy relationships with young women who share your values on children and family. Wait on the Lord. He loves you. Think about becoming a pastor. Visit the seminary. Read through the Scriptures. Or listen to the audio. Four chapters a day, and you'll finish in a year! And devour the *Book of Concord*. The paperback pocketbook version from Concordia Publishing House is cheap. Revel in the Christian family and friends God *has* given you.

Young women: Find the young Christian man who will use his office as husband to point and lead you to Jesus, love you, rejoice in your gifts and strengths, and treat you as the precious gift of God you are (Prov. 31). Help him become the strong man of character and faith he's meant to be in Christ. Be open to the blessing of children. If our Lord does not call you to marriage and motherhood, trust in His plans for you — "plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope" (Jer. 29:11).

Perhaps as important as anything, love those who hate you.

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven." (Matt. 5:43–45)

Charlie's debate videos are a marvelous example of this. If you are experiencing confusing thoughts about sexuality, talk to your LCMS pastor. He loves you. Read the LCMS document on gender dysphoria: *Gender Identity Disorder or Gender Dysphoria in Christian Perspective*. Check out the Sixth Commandment treatment in your catechism.

"Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for He who is in you is greater than He who is in the world" (1 John 4:4).

Our consolation is that Charlie rests in the arms of Jesus. He confessed Ephesians 2:8–9: “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. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”

As important as it is for Christians to participate in our national life near this 250th anniversary of our founding, it is more important that we know Jesus our Savior, and that others know Him too.

We weep for Charlie’s suffering and grieving wife, children and family, and we pray Christ and His blessed resurrection be their consolation. We weep for the devastated family of the accused, who helped bring him to justice. We weep for the accused himself, another soul lost to the lies of the evil one. We pray for repentance and faith in Christ. Come Lord Jesus quickly.

And finally, a word from St. Paul to a young man named Timothy, which speaks to all of us now:

“First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time. For this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.” (1 Tim. 2:1–7)

Statement From District President Davis regarding events in Grand Blanc Sept 29, 2025

Together we grieve the events in one of our Michigan communities. We are saddened by the tragedy that took place at a congregation of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints in Grand Blanc on Sunday, and we pray for healing and peace in the community.

Later that day, I was in touch with both of the pastors at Faith Lutheran, Grand Blanc, as well as with our District Parish Nurse, who is a member there. The shooting and fire took place about one mile from Faith. The congregation had emergency procedures in place and immediately went into a preplanned lockdown until an all-clear was given by local authorities. The congregation is now working on ways to bring blessings to the community in the face of the tragedy.

For more information about their support of the

Grand Blanc community, contact churchoffice@faithgb.org.

The District encourages our congregations to have emergency procedures in place for all types of emergencies: weather, health, and intruder. We should be prepared to protect the people under our care. Check out this District [resource](#) or contact the District Office if your congregation needs help in developing procedures. At the same time, we anticipate our congregations will also be eager to serve their communities in the face of tragic circumstances.

Together we serve the Gospel of Jesus, bringing hope into difficult situations, in a world that continues to see “Cain killing Abel.”

10 Ways Portals of Prayer Helps You Share God’s Word

CPH - September 12, 2025

It’s always a blessing to have extra copies of *Portals of Prayer* on hand. Check out these ideas for how you can put extra copies of *Portals of Prayer* to good use in your community!

1. Church Library - Does your church have a library full of Christian books and resources available for checkout? If so, consider offering your spare copies of *Portals of Prayer* for people to keep alongside whatever materials they might be borrowing. Perhaps someone visiting your church library is new to Christianity and wants to learn more; a free issue of *Portals of Prayer* could help them learn more about what Jesus has done for them.

2. Homeless Outreach - Care for people experiencing homelessness in your community by assembling care kits to give to them (or to nearby shelters). For example, your church can pack zip-lock bags with supplies like hand warmers, granola bars, hygiene items, and warm socks—and add a copy of *Portals of Prayer* to each bag! This way, you are helping people in concrete ways that they desperately need, and also offering an opportunity for them to hear the hope of the Gospel.

3. Homebound Care - Being hospitalized, in a care facility, or homebound for other reasons can be isolating. Even if your church distributes *Portals of Prayer* issues as they are released to homebound members, think about giving them a spare copy too. Even if the dates are past, extra

devotions can fill with hope and encouragement the heart and time of the person who is home-bound.

4. New Member Gifts - Sometimes churches give new members gifts or goodie bags upon joining. If you wish to begin, continue, or add to this tradition, make sure extra *Portals of Prayer* issues are included in the gift! After spending some time in *Portals*, these new members will want to grab the next issue from your narthex as soon as it's available.

5. College Student Gifts - Whether you're thinking of college students who are displaced from your community or you have a local college that brings new worshipers into your midst, you can care for them with extra copies of *Portals of Prayer*. Send a simple care package or mailer for students who are away from home or hand out copies at church events catered to college ages. Mid-terms, homesickness, dating, and finances can all be stressful in this stage of life, so help out your college students with *Portals*.

6. Community Outreach via Members - There are plenty of ways in which your church (or someone on behalf of your church) can share extra copies of *Portals of Prayer*—but what about challenging your members to do the sharing? If you have 50 extra copies, for example, challenge ten people to each pass out five copies of *Portals of Prayer* to friends, family, and community members who would benefit from these uplifting daily devotions.

7. Support Groups - What kind of support groups exist in your community—AA, cancer support groups, or others? Maybe some are even hosted at your church. Think about sharing extra copies with these groups. It's excellent that people lean on each other in various times of need, and even more excellent if they know they can lean on Jesus too. Drop off spare copies and see how the Holy Spirit works through them.

8. Community Events - Does your church ever have a booth at a community fair or farmer's market? Try offering free copies of *Portals of Prayer* at your booth alongside any other pamphlets, stress balls, bookmarks, or other freebies you typically see at events like these. People tend to mosey through booths, choosing when and where they stop for more information—so this type of event won't make visitors feel cornered if they're

not interested in grabbing a copy.

9. Seasonal Events - Within the same vein of community events, think about any seasonal events your church participates in or hosts. Trunk or treats? Fall festivals? Parades? Christmas caroling? Any of these seasonal events would be great opportunities to hand out spare copies of *Portals*. Keep in mind that people who attend a seasonal parade might not be seeking a religious conversion or to be “preached at,” but devotions like *Portals of Prayer* can open the door for further prayer, reading, and consideration without a lot of pressure.

10. In-Kind Donations - Finally, consider any in-kind donations your church collects, such as tangible food, clothing, school supplies, or hygiene items for local or global organizations. If and when you distribute items to people or organizations in need, consider supplementing donations with your extra copies of *Portals of Prayer*. For instance, if you are collecting coats for people in need in the winter, slip a copy of *Portals* in each coat pocket to further bless recipients.

If you have some extra copies of *Portals* on hand, we pray that these ideas help you put them to good use in your community. Thank you for shining the light of Jesus! (<https://blog.cph.org/serve/10-ways-that-portals-of-prayer-can-help-you-share-gods-word>)

Directory App If you would like to add or update a picture for your family in the directory app email it to the office office@amelith.org or bring in a picture and we can update the app for you.

Ipad Schedule for October/November

Oct 19 - Tony Johnson

Nov 9 - Tyler Rau

Nov 27 - Jim Meddaugh

Nov 30 - Blake Henry

If for some reason you are not able to run the Ipad on the date above please try to switch or let Molly know and we can work something out. We are also still taking more volunteers! December is going to be a busy month for the Ipad and we can use your help. Email the office and we will partner you with someone to get you comfortable doing it.



St. John Amelith presents
"Navigating Christian Sexuality
in a Post-Christian Culture"

November 1, 2025

8am - 4pm

Featuring: Rev. David Fleming &
Dr. Beverly Yahnke

Discussing:

- Christian Worldview and Sexuality
- Caring for the Child who Identifies as Transgender
- GPS Essentials for Traveling through Difficult Conversations
- Light in the Darkness: Christian Responses to Conflict in a Sexually Toxic Culture

St. John Amelith Lutheran Church and School
1664 Amelith Rd.
Bay City, MI 48706
989-686-0176

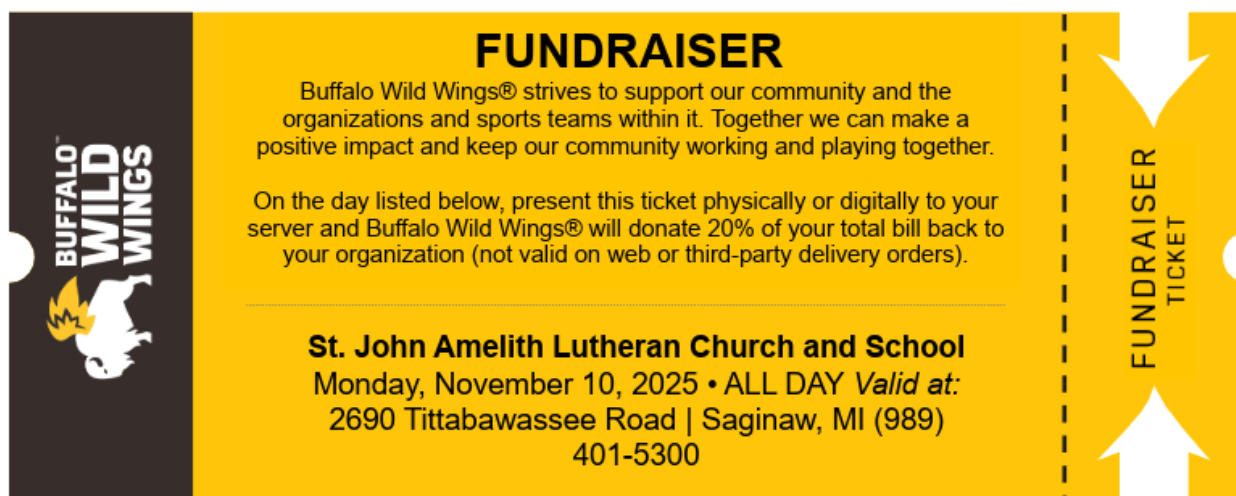
To register scan the QR code,
go to www.amelith.org, see
the event on Facebook or
call Deb Hutter 989-316-8322



Buffalo Wild Wings Fundraiser

Fund Development and Cardinal Strong (Church/School) are coming together to collaborate in fund raising efforts. You can go anytime on November 10th at Buffalo Wild Wings in Saginaw. Just bring the coupon below and present it to the restaurant on November 10th and we will earn 20% of all sales. We will have extra tickets available in the church and office. Share with as many people as we can!

You can even take it one step further in your fundraising and purchase a gift card through Raiseright! You can purchase gift cards online/digital or through Jackie. If you would like to learn how to work the Raiseright app stop and see Molly in the office.



October Prayer Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 October Anniversaries	2 Fund Development	3 Preschool Aides	4 October Birthdays
5 Youth Group	6 Quilters	7 Council Members	8 October Altar Guild Servers	9 SJA Teachers	10 Preschool Director	11 SJA Students
12 Board of Ed	13 Cemetery Committee	14 Bookmobile	15 Women's Bible Study Group	16 Office Volunteers	17 SJA Parents	18 Confirmation
19 Coffee Hour Volunteers	20 Pastor	21 Lunch Lady	22 Cardinal Strong Volunteers	23 SJA Taskforces	24 Finance Team	25 Trunk or Treat
26 LWML	27 Elders	28 Sunday School Teachers	29 Treasurer	30 Stewardship	31 Principal	

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.