



ST JOHN AMELITH PARISH NEWS

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

July 2024

From The Pastor

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"For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another." Galatians 5:13-15 (ESV)

Americans celebrate freedom in different ways throughout the year. July for us comes with fireworks, parades, and all kinds of red, white, and blue décor. Celebrating should also make us ask, "What is the point of freedom?" In our nation, it allows for an array of opinions, provides diversity to our culture, and establishes a certain kind of peace. Freedom brings opportunities, but opportunities in themselves are not always good. Plenty of dangers press against our society and its use of freedom. The Lutheran Center for Religious Freedom writes, "But, today, secularism, wealth, and technology especially cause us to overestimate our ability to do what's right, while underestimating the damage our propensity to evil brings in society too. Sadly, unmoored from any moral restraint today, some of the most horrific damage done in society is ironically done when people think that they are passionately doing the "right thing." To overestimate man is pride and this demands underestimating or even denying the bonds of our sinful flesh.



Of course, St. Paul prayed for all people including the rulers of nations, but the Galatian churches had a greater promise. He said, "For you were called to freedom, brothers." That call was apart from the peace navigated or offered by men, but what God graciously gave by the Gospel of forgiveness won by Christ's death and resurrection. It is a freedom of rescue from captivity to sin, judgment held by death and even salvation from the Devil. Like worldly freedom, abuse of the Gospel can give wrong opportunities to serve the flesh. Specifically, this freedom misjudges love needed among the baptized or church that without reconciliation only ends in being "consumed by one another." We already know how this biting arose between the disciples before Jesus. As they overestimated their supposed love, He did not underestimate their sinful flesh. His Word called them back to be free by repentant faith in Him. His love would bind itself to the cross for all as God's great service in our flesh.

As an election year challenges how we will be as a people with freedom in this nation. How much more for the Church, since the Gospel is freedom that the world cannot give only Jesus to save sinners. Over the past months, heartache and distress has come with news of restructuring for Concordia University, Ann Arbor. Likewise, changes concerning our St. John school has felt biting that is no service of love to one another. While our love fails and falters, freedom is in Christ. No other prospects of love will last outside of His cross. There is no greater love, no better service, and no other freedom than God consuming our opportunities for the flesh by His sacrifice. What is freedom, but Christ forgiveness for you! What is freedom, but Christ's love for a new kind of service! What is freedom, but to live through the cross as our witness before the world! This freedom by God's Word and Sacrament is the service of Christ to us all. From His service we extend a freedom of love shaped by Christ into our roles and relationship in the church, family, and even society.

Blessings in Christ Jesus,

Pastor

<https://www.lcrlfreedom.org/blog/word-from-the-center-friday-june-21-2024>

CONGREGATION NEWS!

Donations - Congregation members have been generous this past month. Funds have been low from previous months, so it is still a struggle from day to day keeping payroll and bills paid. Jim Meddaugh has been working hard to make sure that extra deposits are made to help cover payroll this past week. We will probably need to be borrowing from our Church Extension Fund account. Please keep our financial issues in your thoughts and prayers.

The BOTTLE/CAN Drive to help offset costs for the school will continue through the summer. 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.

Flower Committee - Plants and flowers as well as weeds are growing so nice in the flower beds. Planting, watering, weeding and trimming bushes are needed all summer and fall. If you are able to help keep everything looking nice, please contact Debbie Fisher 989-397-5304.

St John Financial Status June, 2024

General Fund Giving for Month

Home Envelopes & Loose	\$26,251.00
Tuition	1,200.00
Misc/Other	50.00
Total	\$27,501.00

Designated Gifts Giving for Month

Mission	\$970.00
Misc & Other	\$3,087.91
Total	\$4,057.91

General Fund Expenses for Month \$49,319.94

Year-to-Date General Fund Summary

YTD Actual Giving	\$238,023.54
YTD Actual Expenses	\$332,298.71
TDT Actual (Shortfall)/Surplus	(\$94,275.17)

YTD Budgeted Income	\$308,570.50
YTD Budgeted Expenses	\$290,852.14


End of Month Bank Acct Balance \$24,323.46

Debt

Internal Borrowing Balance	\$88,402.43
External Borrowing Balance	\$85,000.00
Total	\$173,402.43

Current Total Debt (\$149,078.97)

Financial Status is updated monthly for month prior



July Office Hours

Tuesday	9am-3pm
Wednesday	9am-3pm
Friday	9am-3pm

These are the hours that Molly will be in the office working and there to help you. Pastor Jerry and Jonathan (the new principal) will have varied hours until school begins. Office hours will change in the month of August.



SAVE THE DATE
VALLEY LUTHERAN HIGH SCHOOL'S
25th ANNIVERSARY
GOLF
Outing
APPLE MOUNTAIN GOLF COURSE
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2024

MORE INFORMATION AND REGISTRATION DETAILS ARE AVAILABLE AT
WWW.VLHS.COM/GOLF

St. John Amelith

Fun for the whole family!

German food will be available for purchase!

Watch for special menu coming soon!



September 14, 2024

Thanks be to God for he is good!

St. John Amelith Church and School
1664 Amelith Rd
Bay City, MI

We are honored to present
Frankentrost Band 12pm-2pm
and

Floyd Grocholski's Family
Tradition from 3pm-7pm

Cornhole tournament
starting at noon
\$20 per person with
drawing for teams

Bounce house and
game area

Many of us remember Emma (Ledford) Jensen, who was a music director here at St John for a short time before moving with her husband to Germany. If you would like to contact them, their address is:

Pastor Nathaniel and Emma Jensen
Danzigerstrasse 7
66849 Landstuhl
Germany



Cardinal Comfort Signup Form

In the wake of recent events, most (if not all) of current Concordia University Ann Arbor Cardinals have faced fear, sadness, anger, and anxiety about the future. Cardinal Comfort, a new program, is looking for volunteer Champions to pray for and encourage current Cardinal students, faculty, and staff for the 2024/25 school year. Champions will be assigned a Cardinal to pray for daily, send an encouraging letter or card at least monthly, and send a care package at least once per semester.

If you are interested in offering prayer and hope by becoming a Cardinal Comfort Champion, please sign up by contacting Wendy Jacobs via email at wendyLKJ@jmkusch.com.

On behalf of everyone at Lutherans For Life, we would like to say thank you for your support of our mission to equip Lutherans and their neighbors to be Gospel-motivated voices For Life. Your generous first-time donation is a beacon of hope and a testament to the compassionate spirit that defines our Lutherans For Life community. With your assistance, we are able to continue our vital work of educating others about God's precious gift of LIFE.

Once again, thank you for your support. It is heartwarming to have St. John Amelith Lutheran School standing with us in our journey to protect and support the unborn and all God's people at various life stages.

In Faith and Fellowship, David Probst



**LUTHERANS
FOR LIFE**

We continue the series of articles about every Sunday communion for our newsletter. There are plenty of things that we need daily if not weekly in life. David celebrates this care of our Good Shepherd feeding him in Psalm 23 declaring, “You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies...” (vs. 5). Truly the table of our Lord is today His true body and blood to eat and drink for us men and our salvation. Our Lutheran Fathers made every Sunday communion part of their defense at the time of the Reformation. They confessed, “At the outset we must again make the preliminary statement that we do not abolish the Mass (Lord’s Supper), but religiously maintain and defend it. For among us masses are celebrated every Lord’s Day and on the other festivals, in which the Sacrament is offered to those who wish to use it, after they have been examined and absolved. (Augsburg Confession, Apology, Article XXIV).

God’s peace be with you in Christ Jesus,

Pastor

Jesus’ Medicine December 21, 2020



The Third Article in a series about weekly communion

3. In love ... encourage your neighbor to “take the medicine Jesus gives”!

It is not fanatical for pastors and members to desire the weekly opportunity to commune. They long for the recovery of Jesus’ gracious gift that, for centuries, went hand in hand with the sermon. In the Reformation, Luther zealously worked to recover this practice while removing abuses in the Roman Catholic Mass. His most profound change was insisting someone must be present to receive the Sacrament. He stopped unscriptural private masses said by solitary priests for the dead, for special needs and for payment.

Luther knew the Sacrament to be Christ’s doing and not ours. As he ended unscriptural masses, he was equally concerned that Jesus’ gift be provided in weekly worship when desired. He instructed pastors to provide weekly service with Holy Communion for those who desired to receive Jesus’ forgiving gift, even if there was only one member. That others attending the service may not have desired to commune did not prevent Jesus from serving those who did.

For the neighbor
Luther’s heart for those in need of Christ’s promised forgiveness and love in the Sacrament mirrors the concern for others in Scripture. St. Paul writes, “In

humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others” (Phil. 2:3–4; see also Phil. 2:1–2). In seeking the good of one’s neighbor (1 Cor. 10:24), we seek their advantage that they may be saved (1 Cor. 10:33). “Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up” (Rom. 15:2).

Christians pray daily for God’s kingdom to come for their neighbor’s welfare, for their protection against temptation and for their deliverance from evil. These petitions voice the Christian concern for their neighbor’s welfare. In looking out for the interests of others, we seek for our neighbor to be built up in the faith, comforted by the Gospel.

‘In this together’

In looking out for others in the recent pandemic, a valid concern was to minimize personal contact for the most vulnerable, the aged and the ill. Businesses sometimes shamelessly pandered the phrase “we’re all in this together” in their advertisements. In the Christian church, there is nothing artificial about the phrase “we’re all in this together.” Over and over again Scripture encourages concern for “one another.” Our greatest concern for one another as Christians, however, is not avoiding personal contact with the neediest, vulnerable or weak. Rather, we do all we can to bring the personal contact of Jesus to them.

As Christians love their neighbors, they often help a sick or hurting fellow member receive the treatment and medicine their earthly physician prescribes. They will inconvenience themselves to provide transportation for an appointment or pick up a prescription. They may pack a walker or wheelchair and use precious time to sit patiently in a waiting room. They desire to love their neighbor by giving them every opportunity to receive the healing medicine they need.

The Great Physician's medicine

This same caring attitude should also exist for those who desire the medicine that the Great Physician administers among His gathered people. Some members may not feel the same weakness or need for this gift as a fellow member. However, in bearing with one another with compassionate hearts (Col. 3:12–13), surely the compassion Jesus pours out at His Table bears consideration. As we seek to help others bear their burdens (Gal. 6:2), surely it is kind and caring to help others receive this burden-lifting gift from Jesus. In seeking to love our neighbor as ourselves, the healing consolation Jesus bestows in this gift should not be overlooked or downplayed. As we sing,
Firmly hold with faith unshaken
That this food is to be taken
By the sick who are distressed,
By hearts that long for peace and rest.
(LSB 627:5)

Why should the Great Physician have opportunity to bring His healing medicine to His church in weekly worship? Because among His gathered guests there are always those who are sick with the effects of sin. Those near us may be pressured by stress, aching from loneliness, struggling with doubt, grieving a family member fallen from the faith, wearied by unrelenting physical pain, verbally or emotionally or physically abused, accused by vocational failures or facing terminal illness. Christians could multiply this short list from their own daily struggles. Seeking to measure our need for God's gifts of grace with our feelings is perilous work. It is especially perilous when our preferences limit the opportunity to commune for our brothers and sisters in the pews. This is more than a simple matter of personal preference about what we do. Holy Communion is not something we do. It is what the living Christ, here and now, in the flesh, does for us and also for those who gather with us.

This gift is the Lord's healing medicine. With it, He intimately unites with those grieving, crippled with fear, rebuffed in their efforts to reconcile or tempted to despair. As we sing, "With Thee, Lord, I am now united; I live in Thee and Thou in me" (LSB 619:2). The Lord says to those dealing with all manner of hurt and suffering: "Given for you." "Shed for you." It is His personal prescription for those facing a wide range of threatening and draining needs. The Great Physician offers medicine in this gift that surpasses any prescription offered by any earthly doctor or health advisor. As we sing, "Jesus comes today with healing, Knocking at my door, appealing, Off'ring pardon, grace, and peace" (LSB 620:1).

Through the roof

Consider the faithful friends who helped the paralytic receive healing in the presence of Jesus (Mark 2:1–12). They carried him to the house where Jesus was. When they could not get near Jesus, they opened the roof and let down the bed on which the paralytic lay. This man's greatest need for healing was immediately addressed by the Lord, "Son, your sins are forgiven" (Mark 2:5). Amid questioning about His authority to forgive, Jesus gave more healing, "Rise, take up your bed and walk" (Mark 2:9).

Four men brought this person into the presence of Jesus to receive His healing. Their love for their friend is unsurpassed in manner and magnitude. They did not question Jesus' doings as the scribes did. They trusted Christ's full authority to forgive and heal. They loved their friend, and they had faith in Jesus to help him. Christians today reflect that faith and love when they assist their brothers and sisters in receiving Christ's healing gifts.

The medicine offered by Jesus in Holy Communion is incomparable. Because the divine and human nature are united with each other in Him, Christ Jesus can say, "Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them" (Matt. 18:20). He comes not as an apparition or virtually. He comes in the flesh to serve us. Because of this personal union of the divine and human nature, our Confessions say, "His flesh is a truly life-giving food and His blood a truly life-giving drink" (SD VIII 76). Because of the personal union, Luther held that Christ's blood was God's blood and that one drop was enough to save the world.[1] We are not wrong to sing, "Oh, wondrous food of blessing, Oh, cup that heals our woes" (LSB 642:1).

The Great Physician offers medicine at His Table that heals more than we can ever see and feel. "Firmly hold with faith unshaken That this food is to be taken By the sick who are distressed, By hearts that long for peace and rest" (LSB 627:5). The healing He offers to us and to our brothers and sisters in Christ reaches beyond every earthly struggle and illness: "Our hungry mouths from Him receive The bread of immortality" (LSB 624:5).

Weekly medicine

"Why should the Great Physician have opportunity to bring His healing medicine to His church in weekly worship?" Because among His gathered guests each week stand the sick and suffering, those seeking His healing. Should we not lovingly aid our neighbor in receiving the healing medicine the Lord administers? "The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit" (Psalm 34:18). In His Supper, He comes to place His holy body and His holy blood into their mouths. So we sing, "All human thought must falter — Our God stoops low to heal, Now present on the altar, For us both host and meal" (LSB 639:2).

The stanzas of another hymn beautifully confess the wholeness needed by all the hurting faithful: It is wholeness only Jesus gives.

O gracious Lord, I firmly am believing
Your boundless love will bless each faithful soul,
As from this altar we are here receiving
Your body and Your blood to make us whole,
Your body and Your blood to make us whole.
Heavenly Bread, my life and benediction,
This cup You give can take away each ill.
Come and relieve my soul from all affliction;
Calm ev'ry sigh until my heart is still,
Calm ev'ry sigh until my heart is still.
(LSB 635:1, 5)

[1] Martin Luther, *What Luther Says: An Anthology* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1972), #567, #568. The Rev. Dr. Kenneth W. Wieting is a retired pastor and author of *The Blessings of Weekly Communion and Lutheranism 101 - The Lord's Supper*, both available from Concordia Publishing House.

LWML is collecting school supplies for Orphan Grain Train which are sent to places where even the few required school supplies may be more than a family can afford. The list of supplies are on the poster board in the gathering area. Get what you can find on sale - you don't need to furnish a complete kit. LWML is supplying all of the cinch up backpack bags. There will be a container for these items under the hangers in the gathering area until our meeting to assemble the school bags on September 17th. Thank you for your help. You are blessing many children in need.

The St. John Amelith Lutheran Church and School Parent-Teacher League is conducting a bottle and can drive to help offset costs for the school. There are two barrels outside the school entrance to deposit cans. If you'd prefer to have someone pick them up from your home, please contact the school office.



Contact us!

1664 Amelith Rd

Bay City, MI 48706

989-686-0176

office@amelith.org

www.amelith.org

LCMS July Stewardship Newsletter Article

The Rewards of Godliness

It's no secret that you can't bribe your way into heaven. No amount of good works will impress God enough to open heaven's door for their sake. "For the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23) and the person who "keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it" (James 2:10). Rather, salvation is "the free gift of God ... in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 6:23).

So, your good works won't earn you the reward of heaven. But does that mean that there are no rewards at all? Consider what the Small Catechism says in the "Close of the Commandments":

What does God say about all these commandments?

He says, "I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate Me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love Me and keep My commandments." (Ex. 20:5-6)

What does this mean?

God threatens to punish all who break these commandments. Therefore, we should fear His wrath and not do anything against them. But He promises grace and every blessing to all who keep these commandments. Therefore, we should also love and trust in Him and gladly do what He commands. (SC II)

God promises to bless you in keeping His commandments. What might these blessings be? Well, consider what Paul says about keeping the Fourth Commandment: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 'Honor your father and mother' (this is the first commandment with a promise), 'that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land'" (Eph. 6:1-3).

And think about what your life would be like if you went around stealing (breaking the Seventh Commandment), telling lies about people (breaking the Eighth Commandment), and generally being cruel to those around you (breaking all the commandments!). That is obviously not a blessed way to live. In fact, you'd be miserable living that way.

And Jesus says more about what is in store for those who make sacrifices for His sake: "Jesus said to them, 'Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for My name's sake, will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life'" (Matt. 19:28-29).

So don't grow impatient in doing good. Follow the Lord who has freely given you everlasting life.

A quick look at August schedule

August 4 - Outdoor Service

August 11 - Welcoming of new members!

August 18 - Voter's Meeting

August 20 - 1st Day of School

Please join us in welcoming Jonathan and Catherine to SJA!

Thank you to the hiring committee for all of your hard work!



Jonathan Korpi,
Principal/Teacher

Jonathan was born and raised in Michigan's Upper Peninsula in the small mining town of Ishpeming. He earned a Bachelor of Science in history with a double minor in music and religious studies from Northern Michigan University. Jonathan then received his Master of Arts in history from Central Michigan University where his research interests included Christianity in the Middle Ages where he narrowed on the formation of the Benedictines, the Cistercian Reforms, and the preaching of the Second Crusade. During his undergraduate and parts of his graduate studies He focused on the historical development theology of mutual ministry in the Episcopal Diocese of Northern Michigan, and music history, primarily the music of the Reformation.

Jonathan has an extensive background in music, curriculum management and as an educator in both the public and private school systems. He was the middle school general education teacher for Bethlehem Lutheran Church and School LCMS in Saginaw, middle/high school ELA and History teacher at Huda Upper School in Farmington Hills, sixth-eighth grade social studies and music teacher for Mid-Michigan Leadership Academy in Lansing, a high school World and U.S. History teacher at J.W. Sexton High School in Lansing.

He is joining Amelith as principal and as homeroom teacher for 7th/8th grade.



Catherine Hutter
Preschool

Ms. Catherine Hutter comes to St. Johns with several years of teaching experiences in public schools. The last few years she has taught technology through Carrollton Public schools as a shared teacher at two parochial schools.

Catherine has a BAA in Early Childhood and a minor in Family Counseling from CMU. After a variety of different teaching & work experiences, Ms. Hutter attended SVSU(Saginaw Valley State University) to earn her BA in Elementary Education.

Ms. Hutter attended grade school at Zion Lutheran Bay City, and then went to Valley Lutheran, graduating in 1982. She was inspired by many teachers from Valley and prays that she can instill the same passion for learning and love of Christ.

In my free time, I enjoy singing in my Church choir, volunteering with the local theater groups, and helping SVSU STEM program. For the last 10 years, I have tutored students of all ages. I'm also a member of the ADK teacher sorority and appointed as the Chaplain of the group.

I thank the Lord each and every day for the foundation my parents gave me, and look forward to the following path God has planned for me.



OPEN ENROLLMENT!

2024-2025

St. John Amelith Lutheran Church and School is now enrolling students in grades Preschool-8th for the 24/25 school year. Join us!

Why St. John Amelith?

- Preschool full day
- Full day Kindergarten
- Before and after school program from 6:30am to 6pm
- Smaller class size to ensure more personalized attention for your child
- Sharing the love of Jesus Christ with children everyday
- National Assessment for monitoring student growth issues three times during the school year
- Newer expanded building facility in 2006
- Teachers are certified by the state of Michigan
- Departmentalized Education with teachers specializing in Math, PE, STEM, English, Science, Language Arts, Art, Music, and Social Studies
- Athletic Programs; basketball, volleyball, soccer, and track.
- Excellence in education since 1852
- We have many safeguards in place so that we can operate face-to-face and keep all of our students and staff as safe as possible. Feel free to ask for a copy of our plan and procedures or just call and schedule a visit to come and take a tour of our wonderful, blessed school!

Please check out our website for more information and to fill out an application.

St. John Amelith Church and School
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