

A conceptual image featuring a tree whose trunk is shaped like a Christian cross. The tree's roots are spread out across the pages of an open Bible, which is visible at the bottom of the frame. The foliage of the tree is green and leafy, extending upwards against a soft, out-of-focus background of green and blue light. The overall composition suggests a connection between nature, faith, and the Word of God.

February 2025
Newsletter

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

St. John Amelith Lutheran Church and School
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Pastor Jerry Gauthier

From The Pastor's Desk

“For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body— Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.”

1 Corinthians 12:12-13 (ESV)

During the season of Epiphany, our Epistle reading has followed the letter of 1 Corinthians. While the Church by its own right is a miracle, those early Christians struggled with what that meant before their lives. Some lingered at the fringes, others worshiped their own glories, and still others neglected the fellowship all together. Many people still struggle with the place of church in their life with how we might fit into it. Sadly, some have left from abuse or lack of love and others returned to the false comforts of the world. The cultural downslide with emptiness over God (secularism) and assault against Christian churches (progressive agendas) has not helped. Repentance is always healthy for the church, since the Gospel is to receive Christ as Savior and Lord. You can pretend there are no heartaches, play it safe at a distance, or become dead to it all. Yet, a better light shines in the darkness. St. Paul said, “For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body...and all were made to drink of one Spirit.”


This “one Spirit” has nothing to do with idealizing church as in the good old days. It definitely is not a spirit found in trying to make church an interest group or club. Privatized religion has also turned community upside to make me the center of my spirituality so no need for church! The “one Spirit” is what the water of baptism delivered and this held the one Word who is Christ for you, for any, and for His Church. The Epiphany season always ends with everything fixed on Jesus transfigured before Peter, James, and John on a mountain. What the Father says of the Son is similar to His baptism. Except, these additional words stand out, “Listen to him!”

Listening is love. God's speaks in love. What Adam lost over fear with God has met fulfillment for us to listen to Jesus. The struggles over church are far more than a social science project or business venture. As the body of Christ, listening to Him is the center of attention for His baptized. Forgiveness, life, and salvation the Father lifts up ultimately in the death and resurrection of His Son. The answer of church pulls all together to hear Christ's love before our lives. This bond of listening to Christ (Word) binds the Church to Him and to one another (Sacrament). Where there is love to receive from Christ, the body of Christ circulates with love to all its members. The mission of St. John reflects this communal life for us to be rooted in God's Word, growing in Christ's love, branching out to serve, and bearing fruits of faithfulness.

We love because He first loves us,

Pastor Jerry Gauthier





Dear Cardinal Families,

It is hard to believe we are now in the month of February. Where has the time gone? It seems like January came and left for vacation already. This past month we started something new in the mornings with the students during our gatherings and that is a morning devotion. We are going through Levi Lusko and Tama Fortner's Roar like a Lion: 90 Devotions to a Courageous Faith. One of the devotions this last month titled "Just Passing Through" had myself in thought about our school in the first half of the school year.

The devotion is based on John 14:2 "In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you?" It is all about how our time here on Earth is temporary but even deeper in this devotion was a paragraph on how any problem small or mountainous is temporary but we can get through it knowing God has something in place for you.

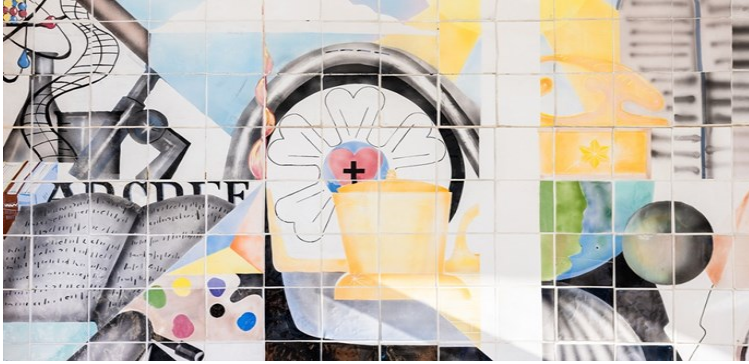
In January we were able to celebrate National Lutheran Schools Week. Our students, faculty and staff were able to enjoy time as combined classrooms working together and doing different activities. We were even able to attend two events with other Lutheran Schools in the Bay City – Saginaw region. One of them was the AriSon concert at Valley Lutheran. The other was going to Zion Lutheran Bay City and participated in a science assembly through Dynamic Assemblies.

Tying all this together is that we are all part of something greater. As time passes through our Lutheran Schools are working together and St. John's is a large part of that network. I saw a comment on our Facebook page from one of our members that stated "We are Cardinal Strong in the Love of Jesus!" Let's take this forward through this New Year and be Cardinal Strong together.

*Sincerely,
Jonathan P. Korpi
Principal*

Commissioned colloquy manual gets major update

January 17, 2025



A mural at the entrance to Word of Life Lutheran School in St. Louis features Luther's seal. (LCMS/ Erik M. Lunsford)

An updated policy manual for commissioned minister colloquy in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) is now available. The LCMS Colloquy Committee for Commissioned Ministry (CCCM), which is responsible for directing the Synod's activity in this area (Bylaw 3.10.3.2), undertook a thorough review of commissioned colloquy policies and procedures in the previous triennium, involving many stakeholders throughout the process. The results of that review and update are contained in the new policy manual.

A commissioned minister is a rostered member of the Synod who serves in a non-ordained position (e.g., teachers, directors of Christian education, directors of parish music, deaconesses and others). Individuals who did not graduate from a course of study leading to commissioned status in the Synod may apply for colloquy in order to ensure that they have the theological training, understanding of the Synod, and professional and spiritual attributes necessary for Synod membership. More information about commissioned minister colloquy is available at lcms.org/colloquy-commissioned.

Some of the most significant updates in the manual include:

- Clarification of the role of the Concordia University System (CUS) institutions in relation to the Concordia University Education Network (CUEnet). CUEnet, a cooperative effort of the CUS, provides an online platform by which the CUS schools may provide theological training for commissioned ministers who did not get their degree at a CUS institution.
- Making the Synod's website the front door for those seeking information about and pursuing collo-

quy.

- Offering a single, standardized colloquy application that is used by all applicants in all categories, that is submitted at the beginning of the process (by the end of the first course) and that requires district endorsement as part of the application.
- Providing a checklist for the applicant so he or she fully understands the process and what is required.
- Discontinuing the requirement that a teacher who wishes to colloquize must have a state teaching license.

Other notable changes and clarifications relate to candidate eligibility, including:

- The candidate must have been a member of an LCMS congregation for one year prior to starting coursework.
- The candidate must have been a member of an LCMS congregation for two years at the time of his or her colloquy examination.
- While a state teaching license is not required, the candidate must have a bachelor's degree.

In addition to changes to the process for colloquy applicants, there will also be some procedural changes for LCMS districts. Most notably, districts will now receive the entire application and supporting documentation for a candidate at the same time as it receives the District Endorsement Form.

The Rev. Dr. Paul Philp, executive director of CUEnet, noted that the CUS recently adopted new standards for commissioned worker programs. Both CUEnet and the CCCM will be reviewing these standards as the CCCM develops its own standards for colloquy in keeping with Bylaw 3.10.3.2 (b).

Set Apart to Serve (SAS), the Synod's initiative to create a culture of church work recruitment, has a strong stake in supporting professionals who are interested in colloquizing to become a commissioned minister in the LCMS.

The Rev. Dr. James A. Baneck, executive director of *SAS* and the LCMS Office of Pastoral Education, said, "Together with LCMS Colloquy, *SAS* will develop messaging, strategies and resources to encourage candidates to become rostered church workers and to facilitate conversations about the value of colloquy. To that end, *SAS* is committed to building awareness of the benefits of becoming a commissioned church worker; providing tools, resources and opportunities to help these adults pursue colloquy;

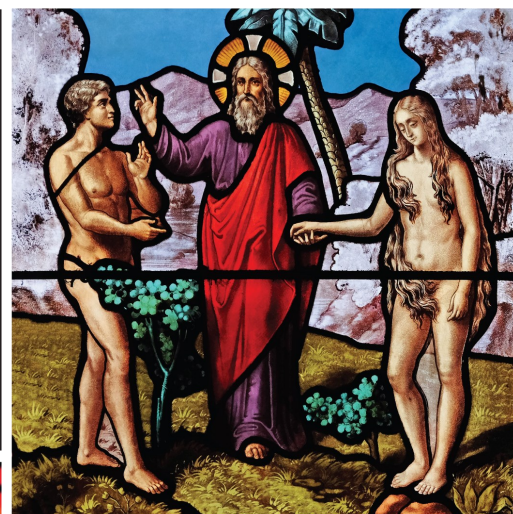
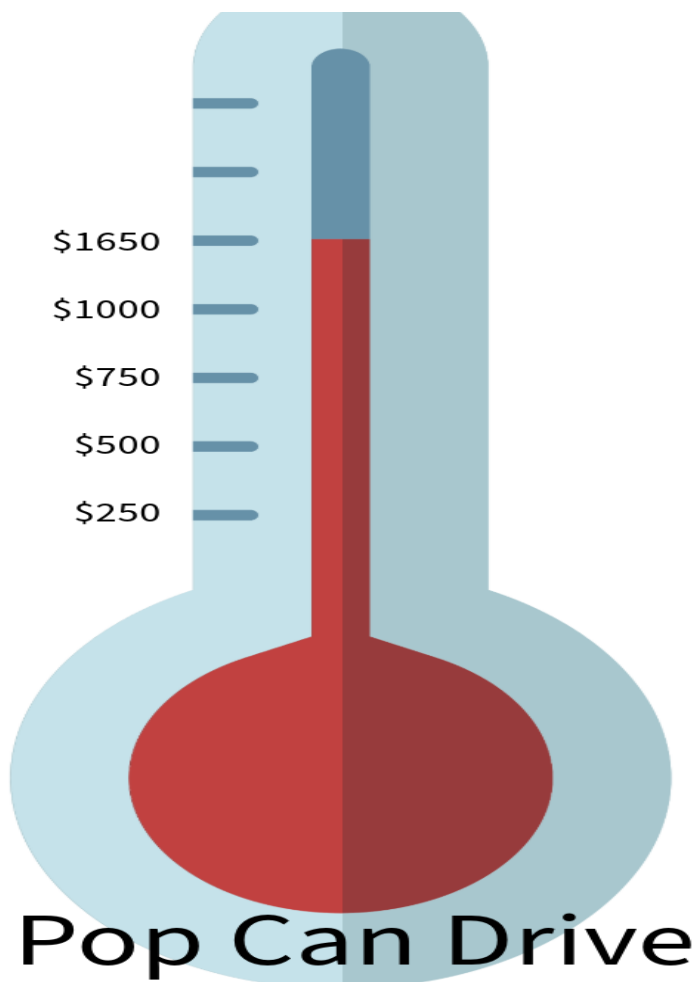
and engaging with and educating those who can influence those considering church work through colloquy.”

The Rev. Peter Lange, LCMS first vice-president, said, “The CCCM is thrilled and thankful to have achieved this milestone with the help and encouragement of a great number of colloquy stakeholders. We look forward now, in partnership with others, to building on this work as we turn our attention to colloquy standards, evaluation and publicity.”

Posted Jan. 17, 2025 Cheryl Magness is managing editor of the print and online versions of Reporter, the official newspaper of the LCMS. She has written for a variety of publications, including The Federalist, Touchstone and The Lutheran Witness, and is a contributor to the book He Restores My Soul from Emmanuel Press. She has degrees in English and music and enjoys playing piano and spending time with her family.

<https://reporter.lcms.org/2025/commissioned-colloquy-manual-gets-major-update>

The pop can drive has raised \$1645 to date, Thanks you!



March 22, 2025 We are hosting a seminar with Doxology presenting "Navigating Christian Sexuality in a Post-Christian Culture. With the legal redefinition of marriage, the confusion regarding gender, and rapidly changing sexual mores in society, biblical educators, pastors, singles, couples, and parents are looking for guidance in articulating and promoting a positive view of the Christian vision for marriage and sexuality. Please visit our website to register and save your seat. The conference will be featuring speakers Rev. David Fleming and Dr. Beverly Yahnke from Doxology. To register scan the QR code, go to www.amelith.org, see the event on Facebook or see Deb Hutter.



Confirmation Meeting

February 23, 2025
6:30pm



Editor's note: Monthly articles from LCMS Stewardship Ministry are hosted here on *The Lutheran Witness* site. Visit the "Ministry Features" page each month for additional stewardship content.

What is the difference between an athlete and a champion? What is the distinction between one who competes in business or academics and the one who achieves at the highest levels?

Certainly, no athlete becomes a champion or the greatest of all time without talent. No student or business leader achieves their loftiest goals without opportunity. There is a line of demarcation between the elite and those who compete. It is discipline.

It is discipline that leads the champion golfer to pound thousands of range balls a month. It is discipline that led the hall of fame hitters to take swing after swing in the batting cage. It is discipline that leads the virtuoso to practice their instrument hours on end. Discipline is the necessary effort that makes excellence possible.

But discipline is not any fun. It is tedious. It is boring. It requires a repeated effort, which is the cause of sweat, aches and sometimes even tears. Discipline is not pleasant. But it is necessary to move beyond average into the territory of extraordinary.

Those with a history in team sports know that coaches need to set the culture of discipline. When the team is not coached in the disciplines of detail and effort, the team's performance will suffer. The blessings of talent may go a long way, but there will always come a point where discipline and lack of diligence will lead to errors, breakdowns and defeat.

But the coach can only do so much. In individual sports, the athlete must provide a drive for discipline. Teams can only rise as far as the culture of discipline that the players are willing to partici-

pate in. No amount of coaching can overcome a lack of discipline.

The discipline of stewardship

Faithful teaching and practice of stewardship within the local congregation also requires consistent discipline.

Congregations that wish to cultivate faithful stewardship need to commit to the regular discipline of teaching and preaching stewardship. This preaching and teaching of stewardship needs to be more than a three-week sermon series that is the forerunner of the first draft of the budget.

Stewardship discipline means that stewardship of all of life and life's resources is regularly taught when the lectionary calls for it. There needs to be regular, year-round opportunities for the individual stewards to be encouraged to put in the arduous work of serving, caring, studying and giving of themselves for the glory of God and for the benefit of their neighbor.

Stewardship discipline should include an annual, intentional commitment process. These commitments are faithfully made when properly framed. Commitments respond to the two main stewardship questions:

1. How has God blessed me? How is He calling me to respond?

This discipline of the individual for the sake of the whole is essential. Both individual and congregational stewardship is stewardship of the Gospel!

The fruits of discipline: repentance and faithfulness

Discipline is required because faithful stewardship goes against our sinful human nature. Human beings are not content to be managed by anyone, including God. We have the desire to own, possess and control.

But at its root, this is idolatry. Idolatry is a sin which challenges us all. We think that our money is ours. We think that our skills are ours. We

think that our time is ours. But none of that is true. It all belongs to the Lord.

The discipline of the Law calls us to repentance and leads us back to being stewards, rather than owners. While not pleasant, it is essential if we are to be the stewards that the Lord has created and redeemed us to be. The repetitive, consistent call to repentance and new life can be tedious and painful. But it is what makes us stewards! *LCMS Stewardship ministry features may be reprinted with acknowledgment given to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.*

<https://witness.lcms.org/2025/stewardship-essentials-discipline/>

Pavilion rentals for 2025 are as follows:

Jan 1 thru the 14th, St John committees.

Starting Jan 15th St John members,

Starting Feb 15th other community members and Churches. Please call Deb Hutter at 989-316-8322 for information or to reserve your date.

Room/apartment/house to rent needed.

Principal Jonathan Korpi is in need of a place to rent in town for just a couple days a week and an occasional weekend until the end of the school year. If you or if you know of someone who could help out please reach out to him at 517--243-7810 or jkorpi@amelith.org

Molly is on vacation February 9 - 15!

February 16 bulletin will be printed before I go on vacation so please have anything you would like in there sent to me by Thursday, February 6.

The office will be staffed with our awesome volunteers but hours may vary so call ahead so you don't make an extra trip.

The World Famous Amelith Valentine's Chicken BBQ will be held 2/16/2025 tickets are on sale now. \$15 for a 1/2 and \$10 for a 1/4 along with all the fixings and desserts. Meals will be available for dine in or take out. Tickets available after church in the back or in the school office. We need your help, a sign up sheet for volunteers will also be in the back of the church. The proceeds from the Bbq will go to support the debt elimination through Fund development our goal is \$40,000 this year. Thank you for your

February 16, 2025
Take-out begins at 10:30am
Dine-in begins at 11:00am

Amelith Chicken BBQ

**Quarter \$10.00
Half \$15.00**

Dinner includes: chicken, baked potato, corn, cole slaw and dessert

***Pre-sale tickets available
at the church/school office
and after church services.***

**St. John Amelith
1664 Amelith Rd
Bay City, MI
989-686-0176**

support. Vinny Revord



February 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 recieve or in whatever way you are led.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 February Birthdays
2 Music Director	3 February Altar Guild Servers	4 Council Members	5 Youth Group	6 February Anniversaries	7 Preschool Director	8 SJA Students
9 Board of Ed	10 Quilters	11 SJA Teachers	12 Women's Bible Study Group	13 Morning and After Care	14 SJA Parents	15 Chicken BBQ Volunteers
16 Chicken BBQ Event	17 Pastor	18 Funeral Luncheon Volunteers	19 Outreach	20 Trustees	21 Finance Team	22 Trustee Members
23 Church	24 Elders	25 Sunday School Teachers	26 Treasurer	27 Choir Members	28 Principal	