

THE ST. JOHN NEWS

May 2023

Preparing for Death in the Light of the Resurrection

Bucket lists have become rather popular in recent generations. The idea of a list of things to do before you die usually stems from the emotion of regret. Before a person dies, they believe there are things that they really should do before the end comes for them. See the Grand Canyon. Go skydiving. Make peace with a loved one or friend. Such a feeling of regret only exists in the moments before death, if a person has that knowledge that they are about to die. Once death comes, especially for the Christian, such regrets cease. You can be assured that you will not carry any regrets with you into the new heavens and the new earth! Christ himself said from the throne in heaven in Revelation 21:4, "He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."

On top of all of that, the Lord Jesus does not want his people to worry about how much time they have in this life. "Do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?...And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?" Christ's purpose behind these words is twofold. First, he does not want his people to be anxious about this life because the most important thing to seek is Christ's kingdom, which he freely gives to you. "But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you" (Matthew 6:33). And second, Christ wants you to be focused on what he has given you to do: fulfill your vocations as his dear people.

As Christians, we have a usual way of thinking that this life will continue on for us unless either we die or the Lord Jesus comes again first. While clear passages are not easily found with how to directly prepare for death, the Lord Jesus does clearly teach how to be ready for his return. Because both will bring this life to an end as we know it, preparation for Jesus' return will serve us well in preparation for our death, both of which could occur at any moment.

Our Lord Jesus taught much about his second coming in the days leading up to his crucifixion. Matthew 24 and 25 are considered Jesus' eschatological (study of the last things) discourse. In Matthew 24:42, for example, Jesus tells his disciples, "Stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming...Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect." The same is true for our deaths, so we need to be ready. But how?

In Matthew 25, Jesus gave his disciples the Parable of the Ten Virgins. Ten virgins were awaiting the arrival of the bridegroom for the great wedding feast. It was evening and they needed to keep their oil lamps burning. Five were wise and brought extra oil, while five were foolish and brought only the oil in the lamps. In other words, five were ready and five were not. The foolish virgins were not permitted to enter the marriage feast, but the wise ones were. The marriage feast is a picture of eternal life and salvation. The Scriptures plainly teach that only faith in Jesus Christ gives eternal life and salvation. Unbelief leads to death and destruction. Therefore, to be ready for Christ's return is to have faith. To be unready is to be in unbelief.

To be ready for Christ's return or our deaths, whichever may come first, you and I only need to have faith. Faith is the gift of God given to us through the Word of Christ. That faith rightly receives the grace of God given in Word and Sacraments, the Means of Grace. Faith in Christ is thus strengthened through these means. Being baptized, hearing the Gospel by coming to church where you receive Christ's body and blood in his supper, this is what makes you ready for Christ's return or your death.

To think of such things should not be morbid or depressing, but rather assuring and comforting. Christ our Lord makes you ready for his great coming and your death, no matter which comes first. As the baptized of Christ, you are truly ready for anything, and that is an amazing blessing.

In order to make life easier on loved ones at the time of their death, many people will make funeral and burial arrangements ahead of time. This is good and proper planning that should not be undervalued. One such way to prepare for your Christian funeral is to think about which Bible readings you may like to have read at the service. They could be passages that are meaningful to you, or that you think would be most helpful for your loved ones as they grieve. You can also select ahead of time hymns to be sung at the service, again as ones that were helpful for you or will be for your loved ones.

Like with weddings at the church, funerals at church are public services of the congregation. What happens in the Christian funeral will rightly reflect the identity of the congregation. Hymns that are chosen should be found in our *Lutheran Service Book* for ease of singing and printing. Non-religious music can be reserved for a time at the committal and/or at the luncheon. Because the funeral is a public service of the congregation, eulogies are not included in the service, but may be spoken at the visitation prior, or the committal or luncheon after.

In order to aid in preparation for funeral planning, you can find a funeral information form on the table in the narthex of the church. On the back side of that form is a list of commonly used and suggested Bible readings and hymns for funerals. If you have any questions about any of these things, please feel free to contact me at revcaithamer@gmail.com or my cell phone, 217-649-8017.

As the baptized of Christ, we look at death and the return of Christ as the great hymn *God's Own Child, I Gladly Say It* says:

4. Death, you cannot end my gladness: I am baptized into Christ!
When I die, I leave all sadness To inherit paradise!
Though I lie in dust and ashes Faith's assurance brightly flashes:
Baptism has the strength divine To make life immortal mine.
5. There is nothing worth comparing To this life-long comfort sure!
Open-eyed my grave is staring: Even there I'll sleep secure.
Though my flesh awaits its raising, Still my soul continues praising:
I am baptized into Christ; I'm a child of paradise!

Because Jesus Christ has triumphed over death, we shall too! Death has lost its sting and its victory (1 Corinthians 15:57)!
Whether it be death or the Last Day, it is covered and secure in the grace of Christ!
All glory to our risen head, the firstfruits of those who are raised from the dead, Christ Jesus our Lord!

Pastor Caithamer

Let Us Pray

For Peace and Comfort: Linda and family at the death of husband John, Kurt & Satomi and family at the death of Kurt's father Harold, the family of Glenda Trimpe at her death

For Strength, Hope and Peace: Earl

For Healing and Recovery: Randy, Lydia, John, Joyce Susan, Robin, Greg-brother of Joyce, David-grandfather of Sara and Ryan, Bentley -great grandson of Bob & Joan, Herb, Karla, Charlene, Brian, Teresa -godchild of Bob & Joan, Barbara -family friend of Bob & Joan, John, Hendricks-grandson of Dan & Joanie, Maria, Merv, Rebecca -daughter of Marvin & Esther,

Roy - father of Anne, Todd -grandson of Harold, Brett -cousin of the Kindts'

For Successful Treatments: Dan, Nancy, Barb, Luke, Earl, Linda, Joan, Jeanette Nancy

For our Military: Nick, Andy, Brandon, Zachary, David

For our Missionaries: Pastor Randrianasolo Dembiniana Havanjanakary and the Madagascar Lutheran Seminary, Pastor Magnus Bengston and Lielsalaca Lutheran Church in Latvia, Pastor Obot Ite and the Lutheran Mission in Kingston, Jamaica



Vacation Bible School—God's Living Water (JUNE 19-23, 2023)

1 Timothy 1:14 says, "The grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus." This is the starting place for 'God's Living Water: Covered in Jesus' Grace'. Each of the lessons focuses on biblical accounts that emphasize the Living Water, Jesus Christ. Kids will learn about Jesus using all their senses at different sites. These sites provide yummy snacks, energetic games, inquisitive science experiments, clever crafts, and theatric Bible stories. All work together to speak the truth of overflowing grace. Registration is now open for students aged 3 years old (and potty trained) through completed 5th grade. Register at <https://vbsmate.com/events/stjohnhcampaign/27336>. Any questions, please email vbs@stjohns.com.



Volunteers Make Our VBS a Success! Youth (completed 6th grade-12th grade) and adult volunteers are needed. If you can help full or part time, we have many ways to be involved to suit your schedule needs or interests. A sign-up sheet is posted by the Fellowship Hall. Email vbs@stjohns.com if you have any questions. Also, if you are not able to volunteer in person while VBS is going on, but would still like to help, keep on the lookout for ways you can donate items or supplies that we may need. We will be having a VBS planning meeting on May 13 at 9:00am in the Fellowship Hall. We will be finalizing plans and seeing what still needs to be ordered. If you have any questions or need more information, please contact Sara

Evangelism Workshop Opportunity:

The CID Office will present The Beyond the Classroom introduction module in five regions within the district. St. John is one of the host sites. The presentation is from 10am-2pm on Saturday, May 6th. These presentations are an introduction to the program that will encourage congregations or associations with schools to reach out to the unchurched dechurched families in their school communities. If you would like to attend or have questions, please contact Faith

Ladies Luncheon on Wednesday, May 10th at 12:00. Please join us for food and fellowship. Please bring a dish to share if you are able. There is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board by the church office to help us prepare. Thank you and we hope to see you there.

Summer Sunday School begins June 4th. We want to give our teachers a break for the summer. There will be a sign up sheet on the bulletin board by the church office if you would like to volunteer for one or more Sundays. The material will be provided. If you have any questions, please contact Cindy

Thank You to Dan W for facilitating the installation of our new coffee machine. We are thankful for your efforts in this project.



May Music Notes



Schedule for May

Sunday	May 7	Easter 5	Men's Choir 10:45
Sunday	May 14	Easter 6 Confirmation	Alleluia Ringers & Brass
Thursday	May 19	Ascension	7:15 service
Sunday	May 21	Easter 7	
Sunday	May 28	Pentecost	Brass & Choirs
Sunday	June 4	Trinity	Alleluia Ringers

In our Lectionary we commemorate many people who have been important in the life of the church. Recently we observed the commemoration day of Johann Walter, often referred to as the first Kantor of the Lutheran church. Walter, in 1526, assumed the position of cantor at the Municipal Latin School in Torgau—a school attended at that time by more than 170 boys. . . . He also assumed the job as director of the *Stadtkantorei*, a group of the citizens of Torgau—musical amateurs—who met together to sing and study music under Walter's direction. This example of a voluntary choral organization interested in maintaining a high level of music in the church was soon followed elsewhere.

It is difficult to overestimate the importance of the school and the *Schulkantorei* in the development of music during the Reformation period. They helped cultivate an interest in music throughout the community and inspired congregations to more active participation in the service. School choirs were often the focal point of many communities, and the townspeople took pride in them.

Walter, like many musicians of his day, was not only a composer but a poet as well. In 1538, while at Torgau, he published a rhymed homage to music, *In Praise of the Noble Art of Music*, a didactic poem of 324 lines, in which he developed an entire theology of music, following the ideas of Luther's scattered remarks on the subject.

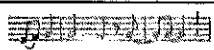
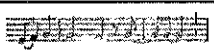
Luther himself provided a rhymed introduction to this poem entitled "A Preface for All Good Hymnals". Luther put his preface on the lips of *Frau Musica* (Lady Music) and had her extol her own gifts. Luther's introduction, together with Walter's more elaborately conceived poem, provide remarkable insights into the early Reformation's view of music.



That such unmerited free grace (Which God from love for all our race
Had promised in His Word) might be kept fresh in human memory
And move the heart to high delight in praising God both day and night—

This is the weightiest reason why God music did at once supply.
Then too, since sin acquired at birth would bring to Adam's seed on earth
Much woe and—earth itself now spoiled—small joy in all for which they toiled,
As antidote against that blight, to keep man's life from wilting quite,
And also to rejoice the heart, God soon supplied sweet music's art.

Soli Deo Gloria,
Keith

Thank You to all who supported the April E.A.T. Night at Culver's. It was a great turn out and fun was had by all. St. John earned \$500 from the sales of our families. From August 2022-April 2023, over \$4,200 was raised from these nights of food and fellowship! This money will be used by PTF for teacher and classroom needs. E.A.T. Nights will return in August. Have a great summer!

 **SPRING CONCERT** 
Tuesday, May 9th, 6:30 pm
Performances by St. John students are included
Invite your family and friends to come and hear how musically talented our St. John students are!


CLASS OF 2023


Congratulations
St. John 8th Grade Class of 2023
Graduation Ceremony
Friday, May 26, 2022, 6:30pm
St. John Lutheran Church
Reception following the ceremony in the Fellowship Hall

Bike Day Parking Lot Access
On Wednesday, May 25, our 2nd-3rd grade students will enjoy a Bike Day at school. To allow a safe place to ride, the entrances from Mattis Ave. and Round Barn Rd. will be closed from 9:30-3:00. The entrance from John St. will remain open, as well as the parking lot in front of the church and school. Thank you for your cooperation.

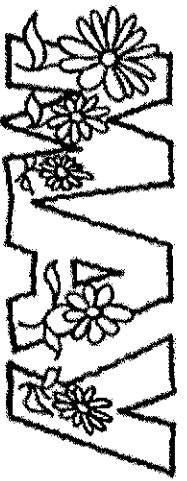


Our Little Lamb Preschool students will be having a promotion ceremony on Thursday, May 25 at 6:30 in the sanctuary. Families are welcome to come celebrate our preschoolers who will be moving on to kindergarten and to PS4 class next school year! There will be a reception immediately following the ceremony.



Torch Passing Ceremony
Our Kindergarten/1st Grade Torch Passing Ceremony will take place on Tuesday, May 23 at 6:30pm in the sanctuary. This is a special time when our first grade students pass the "torch" of leadership to the current kindergarten class. We invite everyone to attend this special school ceremony!





But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.
Matthew 6:33

2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat																																																																																																																
<p>Church Office 359-1123 School Office 359-1714</p>	<p>1 6:00 School Athletic Banquet</p>	<p>2 5:15 Fellowship Board 5:30 Evangelism, Trustees, School Board</p>	<p>3 8:10 Chapel 5:45 Midweek School 7:15 Holy Communion</p>	<p>4 7:00 Men's Prayer Breakfast @ Sammy's</p>	<p>5 5:45 Young Adults Group</p>	<p>6 10:00 CID Beyond the Classroom Presentation</p>																																																																																																																
<p>7 5th Sunday of Easter <i>New Member Sunday</i> 8:00 Holy Communion 9:30 Adult Bible Class, Sunday School 10:45 Holy Communion</p>	<p>8 5:30 Finance Board</p>	<p>9 6:00 Elders 6:30 School Spring Concert</p>	<p>10 8:10 Chapel 10:00 Adult Bible Class 12:00 Ladies Luncheon 5:45 Midweek School 7:15 Holy Communion</p>	<p>11 7:00 Men's Prayer Breakfast @ Sammy's</p>	<p>12</p>	<p>13 9:00 VBBS Planning Meeting</p>																																																																																																																
<p>14 6th Sunday of Easter 8:00 Holy Communion/Confirmation 9:30 Adult Bible Class, Sunday School 10:45 Holy Communion <i>Mother's Day</i></p>	<p>15 6:30 LWML</p>	<p>16 10:00 Adult Bible Class 6:00 Council</p>	<p>17 8:10 Chapel 5:45 Midweek School</p>	<p>18 Ascension 7:15 Holy Communion</p>	<p>19</p>	<p>20</p>																																																																																																																
<p>21 7th Sunday of Easter 8:00 Holy Communion 9:30 Adult Bible Class, Sunday School 10:45 Holy Communion, Parish Ed</p>	<p>22 <i>Newsletter Deadline</i></p>	<p>23 6:30 K/1 Torch Passing Ceremony</p>	<p>24 10:00 Adult Bible Class 7:15 Holy Communion</p>	<p>25 No School 6:30 Little Lamb Graduation</p>	<p>26 Last Day of School 8:10 Chapel 6:30 8th Grade Graduation</p>	<p>27</p>																																																																																																																
<p>28 Pentecost 8:00 Holy Communion 9:30 Adult Bible Class, Sunday School 10:45 Holy Communion</p>	<p>29 Memorial Day <i>Church & School Closed</i></p>	<p>30 10:00 Adult Bible Class</p>	<p>31 7:15 Holy Communion</p>	<p><i>Pastor Cathamer's day off: Fridays</i></p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="7">April 2023</th> </tr> <tr> <th>S</th> <th>M</th> <th>T</th> <th>W</th> <th>T</th> <th>F</th> <th>S</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> <td>5</td> <td>6</td> <td>7</td> <td>8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>9</td> <td>10</td> <td>11</td> <td>12</td> <td>13</td> <td>14</td> <td>15</td> </tr> <tr> <td>16</td> <td>17</td> <td>18</td> <td>19</td> <td>20</td> <td>21</td> <td>22</td> </tr> <tr> <td>23</td> <td>24</td> <td>25</td> <td>26</td> <td>27</td> <td>28</td> <td>29</td> </tr> <tr> <td>30</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	April 2023							S	M	T	W	T	F	S							1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30							<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="7">June 2023</th> </tr> <tr> <th>S</th> <th>M</th> <th>T</th> <th>W</th> <th>T</th> <th>F</th> <th>S</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> <td>5</td> <td>6</td> <td>7</td> <td>8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>9</td> <td>10</td> <td>11</td> <td>12</td> <td>13</td> <td>14</td> <td>15</td> </tr> <tr> <td>16</td> <td>17</td> <td>18</td> <td>19</td> <td>20</td> <td>21</td> <td>22</td> </tr> <tr> <td>23</td> <td>24</td> <td>25</td> <td>26</td> <td>27</td> <td>28</td> <td>29</td> </tr> <tr> <td>30</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	June 2023							S	M	T	W	T	F	S							1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30						
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