

THE ST. JOHN NEWS

September 2023

The Christian's Perspective: The Temporal in Light of the Eternal

How busy are you? Most people feel that they are always busy. When you stop to think of all that is available to do today with regard to free time and non-essential activities, we can certainly keep ourselves very busy. You have probably heard people today say that their generation is busier than previous generations and they long for the simple life of yesteryear. Even those in retirement are amused at how busy they are now and wonder how they ever got non-career work done before they retired. "I'm busier now than when I was working!"

Taking kids to school, going to work, getting to the gym, taking kids to sports practices, getting meals, cleaning the house, doing yard work, laundry, fixing things around the house, attending school functions, attending work functions. The list goes on and on. With all that is going on in our lives, is it any wonder that we cannot fit God more into it? How does one fit in an hour of worship on a valuable Sunday morning? How can you stick around or come earlier for Bible class or Sunday school for an additional hour? Take time each day to pray, read a devotional, or read a chapter or two of the Bible? It all seems too much and it is usually our religious practices that suffer most. Martin Luther is quoted as saying, "I have so much to do that I better spend two hours in prayer today."

It is easy to find that hard to believe of Luther because we operate from the position of trying to fit God into our busy lives and schedules. Each part of our lives takes up a different part of our day, and we view God as another part of our lives. Naturally, we are working from the position of ourselves as the most important person, as though we matter most. The world revolves around us. After all, that is our sinful perspective, how we see everything, through our own eyes. It is easy to see just how quickly our time with God gets put on the back burner while everything else comes before.

What God reveals to us through his Holy Word is a very different perspective. God reminds us that he is the creator of all things. "In him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28). This is God's world; we simply live in it. This is all his story; we play a very minor role in it. St. Paul writes in Colossians 1 about the preeminence of Christ: "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and *for him*. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together."

The Almighty God created Adam and Eve in perfection. God provided for all of their needs. We do not know exactly what their lives would have looked like if they had never fallen into sin. But, we can be sure that it would not look like the lives we know today. Free from sin and selfishness, God would have remained perfectly elevated in their lives. Speaking his Word and singing his praises would have been commonplace for Adam and Eve and all their children. There would have been no opposition to God and love for him would have permeated all things. To not speak of God, to not meditate on his greatness and love, that would be the oddity, the abnormal.

Sadly, that is not the case for us Christians today. Our sinful nature, the devil, and the world have shaped our perspective to view things of God as strange and irregular. It is common in this world of sin to feel out-of-place reading the Bible, praying to the Lord Jesus, and enjoying fellowship with brothers and sisters in Christ. Yet, this is what our lives in Christ are meant to be and what they will look like for all of eternity in the new heavens and the new earth. "One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in his temple" (Psalm 27:4).

It should not be strange to read the Bible and know its stories better than anything else, yet more and more of our youth hardly know any Bible passages at all. It has troubled pastors for decades how little their students know about the Bible. The fix for this begins in the home. Bible reading should be regular, like eating and sleeping. It should be a major part of who we are, as though we cannot live without it. Luther said of prayer, "To be a Christian without prayer is no more possible than to be alive without breathing." The same can be said for reading and studying the Scriptures, the Word of God. This should not be mandated or required, but it should be the perspective of the Christian. Gathering together on Sundays should be the highlight of the week for all of God's people, not a burden or an obligation. This weekly gathering is a foretaste of the perfect fellowship still to come. Not to mention that it is where we meet with our Lord in a way unlike any other, as he comes to us in his Word and Sacraments.

The devil is “the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience” (Ephesians 2:2). He is prowling around like a roaring lion (1 Peter 5:8). The devil, the world, and our sinful nature seem to have it made, ruling over all. Yet, the Gospel still intervenes and saves sinners, pulling sinners from the grasp of the devil. God’s grace is still present in the darkness. Christ is ruling even now through the Means of Grace, which cannot be snuffed out.

Yes, terrible things continue to happen. Tragedies take lives. Evil corrupts adult and child alike. But, all of this happens within the greater circle of Christ’s salvation. That is, it is already defeated and dealt with by Christ, him crucified and resurrected. None of what we suffer and endure will transcend into the new heavens and the new earth. That perfect life we will enjoy without end. We will move farther and farther away from this blip of life in this sinful world, enjoying forever the creation as God intended it to be, as the Lord Jesus has redeemed it to be.

To best enjoy this life and this world now, the Christian simply need to practice what he and she will enjoy for all eternity. Hearing God’s Word. Being surrounded by his grace and favor. Be at peace and harmony with brothers and sisters in Christ. Pray. Sing. Worship. These are God’s wonderful gifts to you, gifts to open up and enjoy even now, pointing you more and more to the life and world to come, Jesus’ wondrous kingdom.

For edification in this Gospel-centered perspective, meditate on passages such as:

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

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have a good understanding.
Psalm 111:10

The fear of the LORD leads to life, and whoever has it rests satisfied; he will not be visited by harm.
Proverbs 19:23

“Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” And [Jesus] said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.” Matthew 22:35–40

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Philippians 4:8

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. Hebrews 12:1–2

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Matthew 6:19–22

And [Christ] is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.
Colossians 1:18–20

You are the dearly loved and baptized people of God, a chosen race, a royal priesthood (1 Peter 2:9), and your eternal future is secure in the hands of Jesus. God grant you the joy and peace that comes from this sacred truth of his.

In Christ’s service,
Pastor Caithamer

New Member Class – Sunday, September 10th will see the beginning of our next New Member Class. This class is intended for those who would like to know more about Lutheranism and are interested in becoming members of St. John. All of our current members are invited and encouraged to attend this class as a refresher course in the Lutheran faith. It also is a blessing to new members to get to meet and know current members. We will meet in the fellowship hall each Sunday at 1pm. Please email Pastor Caithamer with any questions and to let him know if you would like to attend.



September Music Notes



Greetings as we move into September and the resumption of our adult choirs, in addition to all the other special activities that resume here at St. John.

Rehearsals for our Alleluia Ringers (Handbells) will commence Wednesday, September 13 at 6:00 in the church balcony. Handbells ring generally once a month. There is always room for another ringer, and we will make you feel most welcome.

Our singing choirs (Mixed and Men) will be gathering jointly on Thursdays at 6:00 beginning on September 14. Our singing choirs help to lead worship on a regular basis.

Instrumentalists of all ages and levels of experience are always welcome in the balcony to play along on hymns, and perhaps play a Prelude or Offertory. We have lots of music for individual instruments, and Keith is also happy to arrange something. You can also play a hymn- either as a solo or to help in leading the congregation.

We have recently put together a library of music for Woodwind Quartet – generally flute, oboe, bassoon, clarinet and horn. Please be in touch if you would like to be a part of this and we will arrange rehearsals to suit your schedule.

Likewise, we love to include brass players (in any quantity!) on Sundays. We have music for all levels of proficiency for 1 Trumpet, 2 Trumpets, 1 Trombone, Brass Quartet and Brass Quintet just waiting to be used.

Please contact Keith with any questions and to offer your talents.

Soli Deo Gloria,
Keith

Let Us Pray

For Peace and Comfort: The family of Louise Crawford at her death

For Healing and Recovery: Kaylianna -great granddaughter of Bob & Joan, Lila , Leslie Miller-daughter of Joyce Conley, Rev. Doug Evenson, Lydia, Robin, Greg -brother of Joyce, David -grandfather of Sara and Ryan, 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: Susan, Rod, Dan, Nancy , Barb, Luke, Earl, Linda, Joan, Jeanette, Nancy

For our Military: Nick, 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



LIFELIGHT is back! Join us for Worship, a 9-week Bible study of how and why we worship the way we do, and (in the words of a former St. John member who took this class) "what a treasure we have in our Divine Service." You can join us Wednesday evenings at 5:45 or Thursday mornings at 9:30. Classes start September 13th & 14th. To sign up, look for our table in the overflow or contact Matt K, Donna E or Bill G.

September E.A.T. Night - Portillo's, Sept. 11, 5-8p - Portillo's is giving back 20% of our purchases, so we have a great chance to raise some money for the school, enjoy delicious food, and enjoy wonderful fellowship with our brothers and sisters in Christ! Please bring along a Portillo's flyer and show it when you order. Flyers are available on the narthex table and the school website. This fundraiser only applies to dine-in, carry out, or drive thru purchases. It does not include gift card purchases. If you use the drive thru, please show the flyer at the first window after ordering. Thank you for your continued support of these events!

LWML is again collecting school supplies for the Orphan Grain Train. Needed items are: crayons, new pens and pencils, loose leaf paper and notebooks, spiral notebooks, glue sticks, construction paper, 12 inch rulers, scissors, washable markers, and new coloring books. All supplies are given individually. Please place your items in the box located in the coat room by Sunday, October 8, 2023. For further information, please contact Donna E or Jean. Many thanks for your help in supporting kids around the world with LWML!



Vendor Applications are now available! You can find them on the school website, in the school office or on the narthex table. You can also receive an application via email. Contact the school office with any questions.

Come out for the 2nd Annual St. John Car Show! Bring your car and enjoy a wonderful fall day with other car enthusiasts! There is no registration fee, we only ask that you contact the school office if you plan on attending so we can reserve a spot for you! (Drop-ins are welcome.) Contact Kim at kscheidt—at—stjohns.com or call the school (217) 359-1714



Young Adults Group will be meeting on Saturday, September 16th at 2:00pm. We will be at Meadowbrook Park in Urbana to play Ultimate Frisbee, as well as enjoy fellowship and a devotion. Then, we will head to Casa Del Mar for dinner together. Anyone between the ages of 18-35 are welcome to attend. Questions, contact Sara.

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| 1 Hannah, Chris, Danielle, Terry, Melissa | 24 Preston , Sara, Keith |
| 2 Jean, Dean, Vicki, Jaime, Judy | 25 Theresa, Alice, David |
| 3 Rachael, Carol | 26 Alex, Blake, Cindy, Lilyana |
| 5 Susan | 27 David, Kevin |
| 7 Ray | 28 Jessica, Jeremy |
| 8 Stephanie | 29 John, Ron |
| 9 Rebekah, John, Haston, Craig, Terry, Leona | 30 Nadia, Maiben, Haleigh |
| 10 Esther, LuAnn, Norm, Stuart, Alexander | |
| 11 Delaney | |
| 12 Christina, Marissa, Joanie | |
| 13 Jaylyn, Rachel, Dan, Donna | |
| 14 Everett, Rochelle, Karen, Stephen | |
| 15 Barbara, Benjamin, Julianna, Zakary | |
| 16 Mimi, Sarah, Christina | |
| 17 Terry, Tim, Damyam, Doug | |
| 18 Fischer | |
| 19 Peggy | |
| 20 Jack, Brooklyn, Beth, Nick | |
| 21 Amanda, Annette, Olivia, Jordan, Lyle | |
| 22 Kyleigh | |
| 23 Elmer, Todd, Jim, Jack | |

SEPTEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 Brandon & Jennifer (16) | 18 Rick & Rita (41); Steve & Susie (53) |
| 2 Kevin & Cissy (44) | 19 Bob & Joan (69); Stephen & Donna(31); Kyle & Andrea (8) |
| 3 Mike & Karen (23) | 20 Kyle & Edna Marcellus (|
| 4 Keith & Judith (47) | 21 Chris & Linda (38) |
| 5 Jeremy & Lana (14) | 24 Mark & Diane (29) |
| 6 Dean & Karla (37) | 25 Mark & Letha (42) |
| 8 Bryce & Chelsea (5) | 29 Tryston & Stephanie (11) |
| 11 Terry & Robin (41) | |
| 14 Jim & Stephanie (21); Walter & Anita (55) | |
| 15 Steve & Jan (21) | |

Open Positions in Our School

Our school does continue to have some open positions to be filled, including Art Teacher, After School Care Teacher, and Athletic Director. If you know someone interested in an open position, please have them contact Mrs. Black, at cblack—at—stjohns.com.

Athletic Director Position – We are looking for an individual interested in serving as a director of our athletics. We offer Cross Country, Volleyball, Girls and Boys Basketball and Track and Field. We have coaches in place and schedules already started. This is a great way to learn more about our other Lutheran schools and see how Christ works through our student athletes.

Art Teacher for St. John Lutheran School – St. John Lutheran School is seeking an inspiring K-8 Art Teacher for the 2023-2024 school year. This teacher is responsible for teaching art education and developing in each student an interest in and the ability for creative expression in visual terms, using skills and techniques of artistic expression; to develop aesthetic understandings and appreciations; to discover and develop talents of students in the field of art.

After School Care Teacher Needed – St. John Lutheran School is seeking an After School Care Teacher for the 2023-2024 school year. This teacher is responsible for the engagement and care of children in our After School Care program, Monday - Friday, 3:00 - 5:30 PM. The teacher will provide high standards of care and play opportunities for children, preschool-first grade, in a safe, Christian environment.

SEPTEMBER

But according to his promise we are waiting
for new heavens and a new earth in which
righteousness dwells.

2 Peter 3:13

2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat																																																																																																		
<p>Church Office 359-1123</p> <p>School Office 359-1714</p>	<p>Pastor Caithamer's day off: Fridays</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="7">August 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>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td> </tr> <tr> <td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td> </tr> <tr> <td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td> </tr> <tr> <td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td><td>31</td><td></td><td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	August 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	31			<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="7">October 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>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td> </tr> <tr> <td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td> </tr> <tr> <td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td> </tr> <tr> <td>29</td><td>30</td><td>31</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	October 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	31						1	2
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