

# ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH

June 2026 Newsletter

## A Letter from the Pastor

### On Receiving the Lord's Supper Frequently

One of the most beautiful, yet often neglected parts of Luther's Small Catechism is "Christian Questions and Their Answers." Toward the end of this section, the communicant is asked:

"What should admonish and encourage a Christian to receive the Sacrament frequently?"

The answer: "First, both the command and promise of Christ the Lord. Second, his own pressing need, because of which the command, encouragement, and promise are given."

This simple question exposes a common temptation among Christians. Too often, churches treat the Lord's Supper as something occasional, reserved for especially holy moments or rare Sundays. Yet our Lord did not institute His Supper as a spiritual occasion, but as medicine for sinners, strength for the weak, forgiveness for the guilty, and comfort for the fearful.

Jesus says plainly: "Take, eat... Drink of it, all of you." He does not merely allow us to have the Sacrament; He gives it, commands it, and attaches His promise to it. "Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins." As Luther teaches, "wherever there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation."

Luther's catechism goes further. Another question asks:

"But what should you do if you are not aware of this need and have no hunger and thirst for the Sacrament?"

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IN HONOR OF FATHER'S  
DAY

The honest answer follows:

“To such a person, no better advice can be given than this: first, he should touch his body to see if he still has flesh and blood. Then he should believe what the Scriptures say of it in Galatians 5 and Romans 7.”

In other words, if you still struggle against sin, temptation, impatience, lust, pride, anger, anxiety, fear, or doubt, then you still need the Sacrament. Christians never outgrow their need for Christ’s gifts. We do not come to the altar because we have become worthy. We come because Christ is merciful.

The Fathers of the church proclaim this truth clearly. St. Ignatius of Antioch, writing in the early second century, called the Eucharist “the medicine of immortality.” The Sacrament was not viewed as an occasional symbol, but as Christ’s gift of sustenance to His Church.

Likewise, St. Ambrose wrote:

“Because I always sin, I should always have a remedy.”

What honesty! Christians do not avoid the Lord’s Supper because they are sinners. Rather, sinners flee to the Lord’s Supper because Christ meets them there with forgiveness.

This understanding also shapes the reverence with which the Church should handle the Sacrament. In our congregation’s liturgy, I elevate both the consecrated bread and the chalice during the Words of Institution and genuflect during the consecration. These actions are not empty ceremonies or attempts at theatrical display. They are acts of reverence and teaching.

The elevation visibly confesses what Christ Himself says: “This is My Body... This is My Blood.” The pastor lifts up the elements so that the congregation may behold the Lord’s gifts and remember His promise. The genuflection likewise confesses that Christ is truly present according to His Word. Such gestures preach without words. They teach children. They instruct visitors. They remind distracted sinners that something holy is taking place among us. You are also free to bow during the elevation and cross yourself. Incorporate your body in the worship of our Lord.

In an age that often treats everything casually, reverence teaches. Our bodily actions confess what we believe. Just as kneeling for prayer teaches humility, so reverence at the altar teaches awe before the mystery of Christ’s presence.

On the other side of the coin, reverence must never cause us to become distant. Sometimes Christians wrongly assume that because the Sacrament is holy, they should stay away until they feel spiritually strong enough. But the opposite is true. The Lord’s Supper is precisely for those who know they are weak.

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Again, the catechism asks: "What is the Sacrament of the Altar?"

And the answer: "It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ under the bread and wine, instituted by Christ Himself for us Christians to eat and to drink."

Notice those beautiful words: "for us Christians." The Sacrament is Christ's gift for His people. It's not a reward for the perfect. It's nourishment for the baptized.

Frequent reception of the Lord's Supper then shapes the Christian life. It anchors us in forgiveness rather than in our feelings. It strengthens us against temptation. It comforts troubled consciences. It unites the congregation around the same altar and the same Christ. It continually places before our eyes the death and resurrection of Jesus for sinners.

The Church has always gathered around Word and Sacrament because Christians need both perpetually. We do not say, "I heard the Gospel once years ago; that is enough." Neither should we say, "I received the Sacrament once in a while; that is enough." Christ continues to serve His Church with His gifts because He knows our continual need.

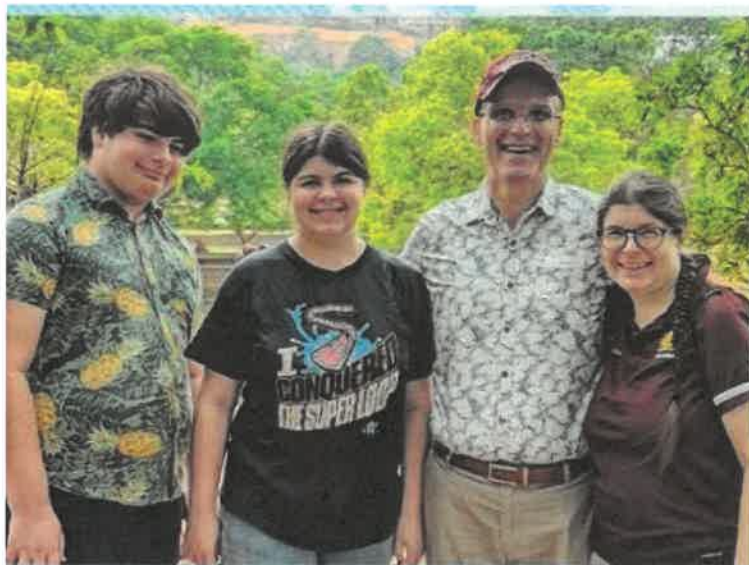
So let us not neglect what Christ so freely gives. Let us come often, repentant yet confident, hungry and trusting His promise. Let us receive with reverence, joy, and faith the Body and Blood of Christ given and shed for us.

For where Christ gives forgiveness, there He also gives life and salvation.

*Pastor McNeil*

## *Dad Jokes*

- Did I ever tell you about the time I went mushroom foraging? It's story with a morel at the end.
- I had a quiet game of tennis today. There was no racket.
- What's a shark's favorite saying? "Man overboard!"
- What did one slice of bread say to the other before the race? You're toast!
- What did the bison say to his son when he left the ranch? Bi-son.
- Watch what you say around the egg whites. They can't take a yolk.
- I gave my handyman a to-do list, but he only did jobs 1, 3, and 5. Turns out he only does odd jobs.
- Who won the neck decorating contest? It was a tie.



## Mission of the Month

### *LCMS International - Pastor Steven Mahlburg*

Rev. Steven and Martha Mahlburg serve the Lord through The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) as missionaries in Sri Lanka. Steven partners with the Ceylon Evangelical Lutheran Church (CELC) in Sri Lanka to share the hope we have in Jesus Christ. He provides administrative support, Christian education and mentoring for the pastors, evangelists and laypeople of the CELC. He travels to the CELC congregations around Sri Lanka to encourage a bold witness to Jesus Christ. Steven also assists Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Colombo by conducting the English service, teaching Sunday School and providing English-language pastoral care. In addition, Steven supports the regional director as a manager for other missionaries in the Asia region.

## Serving people right on our doorstep

### **Au Gres Christian Charities**

As you are purchasing your own groceries, consider adding an extra item or two and then donating it to our local food pantry. Items such as cereal, peanut butter, boxed meals, pantry staples, and hygiene items are always needed. Place your donations in the shopping cart in the fellowship hall.

### **Closet Exchange**

The Closet Exchange was established to provide clothing, shoes, etc with the goal to provide basic needs for all children. Their operating hours are Friday and Saturday from 9am - 1pm. Check out their Facebook page for current size of clothing needed.  
<https://www.facebook.com/TheClosetExchangeArenac/>

### **Operation Christmas Child**

Donations may be placed in the marked tote in the fellowship hall. An itemized list of preferred items to be purchased is located on the bulletin board in the MPR. Any questions you have can be directed to Laura Daly.

## ST JOHN'S MISSION STATEMENT

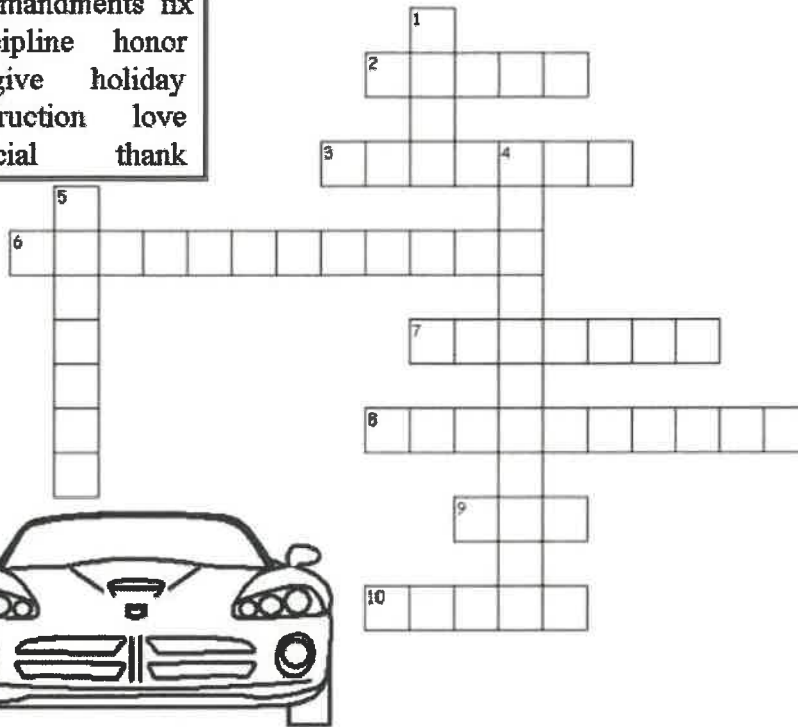
"The mission of St. John Lutheran Church is to make the love of Christ known within the church, the community and the world through preaching, teaching, reaching out to the community and spreading the Word of God to all people."

# Kids Corner-----

## Father's Day Crossword

**Word List:**

commandments fix  
discipline honor  
forgive holiday  
instruction love  
special thank

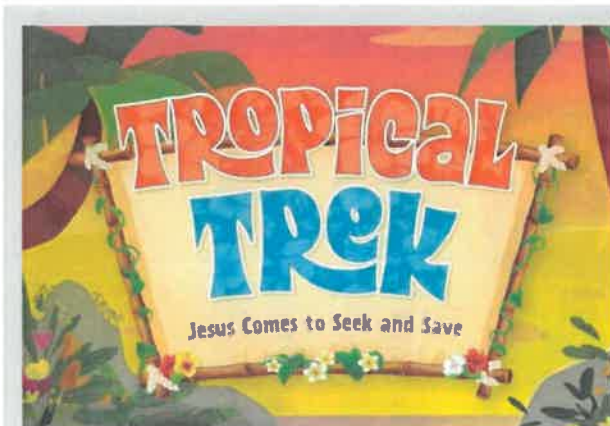


**Across**

2. We are doing this when we listen, obey, appreciate and forgive your dad.
3. God talks about our father in the Bible because he thinks they are this too.
6. Honor your father and mother is one of the ten \_\_\_\_\_.
7. Dad's make mistakes too so remember to \_\_\_\_\_ and forget their mistakes.
8. Dad's do this when we do something wrong so we learn from our mistakes.
9. When your dad can't \_\_\_\_\_ a problem remember you have a heavenly Father that wants to help.
10. Remember to \_\_\_\_\_ your dad for all he does for you and your family.

**Down**

1. Make sure to show your dad lots of this by hugging and telling him this.
4. Listen to your father's \_\_\_\_\_ and you will learn to have discipline and understanding.
5. Father's day is a special \_\_\_\_\_ to appreciate your dad.



**July 6th -10th: 6:00-8:00 pm**

**Tropical Trek**

“Jesus comes to Seek and Save”

There is still time to VOLUNTEER & come join the fun by LEARNING and SHARING JESUS' LOVE FOR US! It's not too late! It's going to be an exciting trek! Watch the bulletin for more information.

## Catechism Corner

This month, I commend to you Luther's Exhortation to the Lord's Supper. This would have been read aloud in the German Mass before the Words of institution every time the Sacrament was offered:

*"Dearest friends in Christ,*

*You know that our Lord Jesus Christ, out of unspeakable love, instituted at the last this, His Supper, as a memorial and proclamation of His death suffered for our sins. This memorial calls for steadfast faith, which will make every conscience and heart that wishes to use and partake of the Supper assured and certain that Christ suffered death for all his sins. But whoever doubts this and does not in some manner feel such faith in him, he should know that this Supper is of no benefit, but rather harmful to him, and should refrain from it. Since we do not see this faith, and it is known only to God, we will leave to the conscience of everyone who comes forward, and admit him at his request and petition. But those who still live in open sins, such as coveting, hatred, wrath, envy, usury, unchastity, and the like, and have no intention of renouncing them, are hereby refused, and admonished faithfully not to take judgment and harm upon their own soul, as St. Paul says. Yet if anyone has stumbled out of weakness, and proves by his deeds that he earnestly wishes to amend his ways, he shall not be refused this grace and Communion of Christ's body and blood. Let everyone be able and informed to act accordingly and proceed with caution. For our God is not mocked, nor will He have what is holy given to dogs, nor pearls cast before the swine. Amen."*

O Lord, we praise Thee,  
Bless Thee, and adore Thee,  
In thanksgiving bow before Thee.  
Thou with Thy body and Thy blood didst nourish  
Our weak souls that they may flourish:

O Lord, have mercy!

May Thy body, Lord, born of Mary,  
That our sins and sorrows did carry,  
And Thy blood for us plead  
In all trial, fear, and need:

O Lord, have mercy!

Thy holy body into death was given,  
Life to win for us in heaven.  
No greater love than this to Thee could bind us;  
May this feast thereof remind us!

O Lord, have mercy!

Lord, Thy kindness did so constrain Thee  
That Thy blood should bless and sustain me.

All our debt Thou hast paid;

Peace with God once more is made:

O Lord, have mercy.

May God bestow on us His grace and favor  
To please Him with our behavior  
And live as brethren here in love and union  
Nor repent this blest Communion!

O Lord, have mercy!

Let not Thy good Spirit forsake us;  
Grant that heavenly-minded He make us;

Give Thy Church, Lord, to see

Days of peace and unity:

O Lord, have mercy!

Author of stanza 1: unknown, c. 1400;

Author of stanzas 2 & 3: Martin Luther;

During the service of the sacrament, the hymn, "O Lord, We Praise Thee," was sung every week. This is still a beloved hymn in our Congregation, and will serve as our hymn of the month. You can find it in Lutheran Service Builder Hymn #617.



# ***The Wonder of God's Creation***

## **Helping Kids find God in the Wonder of Creation**

**“The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the works of his hands” Psalm 19:1**

**“What is the point of sunsets?” asked my daughter, basking in the pinky-orange glow one stunning evening. As our conversation continued, we agreed sunsets served only two purposes: to be enjoyed, and to point us to the incredible God who created them. Assuming sunsets were no accident, we decided maybe they were a gift from God to the human eye and soul. To my daughter, this fit her understanding of a good God and a remarkable Creator.**

**When we look at God's creation, it helps us understand who he is and what he is like. The fierceness of a storm reminds us of God's power, the perfect patterns on a tiny ladybug show us God is always in the details, and the vastness of the universe echoes God's timeless and constant presence.**

**In Romans 1:20 the apostle Paul said, “Ever since the world was created it has been possible to see the qualities of God that are not seen. I'm talking about his eternal power and about the fact that he is God. Those things can be seen in what he has made” (NIRV). God is introducing himself to us through what he has made! So creation can be a visible way of helping children get to know an invisible God.**

**But how do you move beyond just enjoying nature with your family and actually connect with nature's Creator? Here are three tips.**

- 1. Be intentional. Point to the Creator, don't just admire the creation.**
- 2. Promote wonder and prompt questions: A camping trip, a nature walk in the local park, and even your backyard can be great places to explore creation and start conversations.**
- 3. Encourage a response to what you've seen: Be awed. Be impressed by what God has made. Be curious. Be thankful. And share it with your children.**

**Next time you are amazed by the beauty of a sunset, the detailed skill in a woven bird's nest, or the changes in the seasons, remember it was God who did that. We can find out what he is like through what he has made.**

**excerpt from blogpost on May 19, 2023**

**By: Simona Piscioneri**



## Weekend Backpack Program

Another successful school year of the backpack food program at Au Gres Sims elementary school will be completed in May.

The program was able to support 24 young children for the school year. Thank you to all who volunteered and supported the program!

### Don't throw away those cancelled postage stamps! They can help fund worldwide missions

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Since 1971 the Alliance Stamp Ministry at Shell Point Retirement Community in Florida has collected used stamps and sold them to stamp distributors, who then resell them to collectors.

The funds raised from this project—a whopping \$1.2 million so far—help publish Spanish-language Sunday School curriculum and evangelical literature, and then distribute the materials throughout Latin America, Spain, and the US.

**You can be part of this special ministry—here's how:**

- US and all foreign cancelled postage stamps are needed, including collections and stamp albums.
- Do not soak stamps off the envelopes.

## Giving From the Heart

God came down from Heaven,  
When Mary gave Him birth;  
He was named Immanuel,  
God with us on earth.

To make a personal connection,  
He left Heaven for us;  
To bridge the gap between God and man,  
What a gift so precious!

What could I possibly give in return  
For His mercy, love, and grace?  
He sacrificed everything  
For the whole human race!

God gave each of us a gift,  
A talent to use for Him,  
To share Christ's love to others  
With a heart full of vim!

Jesus came to serve,  
And wants us to do the same;  
With our focus on serving others  
We give honor to His name.

So, serve others with love and joy,  
As together we take part  
In being God's hands and feet  
While giving from the heart.

By: Kate Luchtel

## Ladies Aid Meeting May 2026

Opening prayer by Pastor McNeil.

Devotion by Jane Bourdeau.

Seven ladies present.

Seven greeting cards sent.

Correspondence:

- Letter from Ann Hume concerning the orphans of Haiti.
- Thank you from our seminary student Ben.
- Asking for donations: Lutherans for Life.

Secretary's report read and approved. Treasurer's report: \$6,747.25 in checking.

LWML: Convention this year is in East Lansing, June 26-28. Mites collected by St. John for 2025 totaled \$669.42.

Old Business:

- Secret Sister Luncheon is June 16<sup>th</sup> in Tawas at Augies on the Bay, 1pm. Ladies will be leaving church at 12:30.

New Business:

- Pastor would like to place Lutheran literature in the Church display store. He would also like everyone to keep an eye out for another display case to place our church artifacts.

Sunday fellowship coordinators for June are Pat Metzger and Veronica Hiveley.

Card playing: June 19, 1-4. Quilting: June 25.

Motion to adjourn by Veronica, motion passed.

Meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted by, Vicki Huber

### ***Ladies Luncheon & Secret Sister Reveal***

**Who:** All ladies are invited

(whether you have a secret sister or not!)

**When:** Tuesday, June 16<sup>th</sup> at 1pm

**Where:** International Cafe in Prescott

We will carpool from church @ 12:26 pm.

Please sign up in the MPR by June 7th



# St. John Lutheran Server Schedule

## June 2026

	Service	SOS/Pianist	Elder	Greeter	Usher	Altar Care	Attendance
June 3 6:30pm	Midweek W/HC						
June 7 9 am	W/HC	Diana P	Bob B	Cheryl A	Duane P	Jane B	W - Bible St - WOW -
June 10 6:30pm	Midweek W/HC						
June 14 9 am	W/HC	Marion S	Eric S	Laura D	Charlie A	Lisa O	W - Bible St - WOW -
June 17 6:30pm	Midweek W/HC						
June 21 9 am	W/HC	Bob C	Denny K	Roxanne K	Duane P	Sharon V	W - Bible St - WOW -
June 24 6:30pm	Midweek W/HC						
June 28 9 am	W/HC	Marion S	Bob C	Paulette P	Charlie A	Cheryl A	W - Bible St - WOW -

W/HC = Worship/Holy Communion

If you cannot serve as scheduled, please find a replacement or trade with someone and let the church office know.


  
 Serving <sup>+</sup> <sup>+</sup>  
 from the  
 Heart



St. John Lutheran Church  
206 North Court St.  
P.O. Box 763  
Au Gres, MI 48703

### Letter From the Editor

My first “for sure” memory of my dad was the night my brother was born. My dad worked as a building contractor, and I am told that he began taking me on customer calls as soon as I could walk. I have many memories of going to work with him as I grew older. But my first memory has nothing to do with work. It is a picnic on my bed which my mother would have been horrified to witness. So many crumbs! My sister and I were a little lost without my mom. Daddy kept our normal nightly routine and put us to bed. I remember lying there wondering if Mommy was going to come home that night, when our door creaked open and Daddy appeared carrying crackers and Vienna Sausage. (Side note: in the future, this became the only reason I went deer hunting with my dad. He always took crackers and Vienna Sausages as his mid-morning snack in the deer stand, lol) He sat on the bed and talked to us while we ate. I have no memory of what he said, but I do remember that I felt comforted, safe, and secure.

As I have grown in my faith, I have learned that I can always turn to my Heavenly Father and will come away feeling comforted, safe, and secure. Some of you know that recently my father-in-law went to his heavenly home. Every day my dear mother-in-law exclaims to me of God’s faithfulness as he gives her peace and comfort each night. I am so thankful for the example of my dad and the witness of my mother-in-law. I can truly say, “God is good all the time and all the time God is good!”

*Sandra Jantzi*