



Newsletter

ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH
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Article for March Newsletter
Saint John Lutheran, AuGres, Michigan

“Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. (John 1:29)”.

Dear brothers and sisters in our Lord Jesus. “In like a lamb, out like a lion.” You may have heard this phrase as a weather forecast for the month of March. If the weather is pleasant as the month begins, the end of March will bring a storm. If stormy, the opposite will be true.

I would like to use this phrase to describe our spiritual journey for the next several weeks. During this month we are in the season of Lent. Our thoughts focus on Jesus, the Lamb of God. And well they should! In love for us, Jesus was willing to go to the cross, where He took the punishment for our sins that we deserved. Isaiah says, “Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, the punishment that brought us peace was laid upon Him, and with His wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray, and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all (Isaiah 53:4-6)”.

What does this mean? A Lenten Hymn by Paul Gerhardt puts it beautifully:

“Your cords of love, my Savior, bind me to You forever;
I am no longer mine. To you I gladly tender
All that my life can render, and all I have to you resign.
(LSB 453, vs. 4).

Since the heart and center of our faith is the Cross of Christ, it is good that we spend time thankfully remembering that, had the Lamb of God not gone to the Cross for us, we would be eternally lost. The love, forgiveness, and peace that flows from His Cross are what move us to take up our cross and follow Him. Truly, March is all about the Lamb.

But then comes the Lion! On Sunday, March 31, we will celebrate that “the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered (Revelation 5:5)” The Lamb of God, who died for our sins, conquered death and roared forth with a victory cry from the tomb. On Easter Sunday, we will sing:

“This is the feast of victory for our God! Worthy is Christ, the Lamb, who was slain, whose blood set us free to be people of God!” (LSB p. 171)

Because Jesus conquered death, He has given us a share of His eternal victory. He says, “Because I live, you shall live also.” (John 14:19) Jesus is stronger than any sickness, suffering, or sorrow. His empty tomb proves that “the Lion of Judah has conquered.”

“Lo, Judah’s Lion wins the strife, And reigns o’er death to give us life! Hallelujah! Oh let us sing His praises!” (TLH 211)

I have no idea what the weather will be like this month, but I do know this: the Lamb of God, the Lion of Judah, will keep His promise to be with us and bless us with His love and forgiveness.

That’s something to remember and celebrate, whatever the weather!

Sincerely, in Jesus,

Theodore Voll, Vacancy Pastor



Quilting will take place on Thursday, March 14, 10am-3pm. NO experience is necessary. If you wish, you may take quilt squares home and assemble them into tops at your convenience. You may bring a sack lunch if you wish. We need all the help we can get in this worthwhile endeavor. The need is GREAT!



Please join our church family & visitors alike after worship on Sundays for coffee hour, fellowship and snacks. If you wish to donate/help serve for the month of March, please sign up in the fellowship hall or contact our March hostess, Pat Metzger 989-867-4734.

Operation Hope & Care

Hope & Care Tote

A little bag makes a big difference!

February 14th - March 29th Help provide Hope and Care to the homeless

Fill a Hope & Care Tote with the following items:

- Shampoo
- Body Wash & Cleansing Pouch
- Lotion
- Hair Brushes
- Chap Stick
- Women's Shaving Gel
- Tissues
- Men's Deodorant



Please place your donations in the box in the fellowship hall. We also accept monetary donations and will shop for you. Thank You!



+ Christian Symbols +

Shamrock

St. Patrick used the shamrock to teach people about the Godhead. Holding up a shamrock, he challenged them, "Is this one leaf, or three?" Inevitably, people replied that it was both, prompting St. Patrick to draw the analogy that so, too, is God: one God in three Persons — the Holy Trinity.



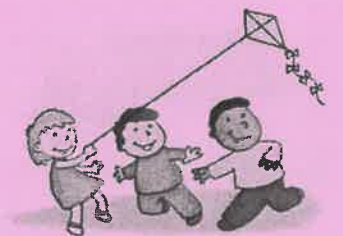
Please join us for these upcoming dates:

March 28, Maundy Thursday, Worship/HC 6:30pm


March 29, Good Friday, 6:30pm

March 31, Easter Worship/HC, 9:00am

Easter breakfast served by the men of St. John after worship until 11:00am



An Irish blessing

May you have
walls to keep out the wind,
a roof to keep out the rain,
warm drinks by the fire,
laughter to cheer you,
those you love near you, 
and all that your heart may desire,
including the love of God within.



We welcome our newest member to St. John
by rite of Holy Baptism.

Greta Dolores Bender-Kalil

Daughter of Derek Bender & Raquel Kalil

and granddaughter of

Ken & Karen Bender

was baptized on February 11, 2024

By Rev. Ted Voll.

Welcome Greta!

Follow Jesus ... Through Scripture

To get a better feel for the events that transpired during Holy Week, here is a Bible reading schedule for you to follow:

Palm Sunday	Matthew 21:1-11
Monday of Holy Week	Matthew 21:12-17
Tuesday of Holy Week	Luke 22:39-54
Wednesday of Holy Week	Luke 22:66—23:25
Maundy Thursday	Matthew 26:17-30
Good Friday	Luke 23:26-49
Holy Saturday	Matthew 27:57-61
Easter Sunday	Matthew 28:1-9

Follow Jesus ... Through Prayer

Jesus said, "Not my will, but yours be done." —Luke 22:42

As Christ reveals to us, we must always bow to the will of God in our prayers, even if his will is in conflict with our own.

Jesus said, "Father, forgive them." —Luke 23:34

This prayer makes us realize that asking forgiveness for our sins and asking for help to forgive others should be first and foremost in our prayers.

Jesus said, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" —Mark 15:34

Jesus shows us in this prayer that we do not need to shy away from expressing our deepest difficulties and frustrations with God in prayer.

Follow Jesus ... Through Service To Others

"He touched the man's ear and healed him." —Luke 22:51

We are called to do what we can to bring healing to others through such simple things as a kind word, a hospital visit, or a phone call.

"Woman, behold your son." "Behold your mother." —John 19:26, 27

Now is a perfect time for us to encourage people in their relationships and work to strengthen the bonds we share with family and friends.

"He began to wash his disciples' feet." —John 13:5

Our task is to serve in love and humility and to consider the needs of others first when deciding how to schedule our days.

by CHRISTOPHER SEIFFERLEIN



Where does the phrase "He is risen. He is risen, indeed. Alleluia!" come from?

The angels proclaimed the Easter greeting to the women who arrived at Jesus' tomb (Matt. 28:6). The women were sent by the angels to speak the words to the disciples (Luke 24:9). The disciples also began to speak these words to one another (Luke 24:34). The followers of Jesus continue to this day to speak the Easter greeting, which is more than a report. It's a proclamation of the Gospel. It proclaims the forgiveness of sins, life and salvation to all who are condemned by sin and death. In this way, we participate in that first announcement of Easter. We proclaim one to another that death has been swallowed up by the death of Jesus, and we shall live forever because Jesus is risen.

CHRIST 4 KIDS 2024

ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH
Saturday, March 9, 1-3pm

Theme: Saint Patrick

- We will begin our event by serving a light lunch
- Listen to a Biblical Kids Message
- View a "Douglas Talks" video based on scripture
- Crafts
- Play a variety of games (Ping pong, Musical Chairs, Wii, Twister, Basketball, Bag toss, Board games)
- Fellowship



This event is open to all children ages 4yrs. and up. Older kids are encouraged to attend and lend a helping hand to the little ones. Come and join us for a FUN afternoon and bring your friends. Please text Sheri 248-953-0034, or call our office 876-8910 to sign up, this will help us plan for food and supplies!



Children's Church: Lessons continue each Sunday with 2 classes held following the children's message in the worship service. There will be no Children's Church on Easter Sunday.

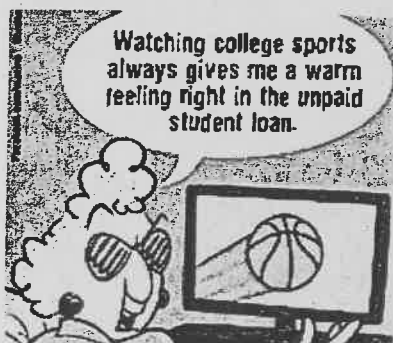
Quotes

"[Jesus] will care for you until you stand before His throne. Trust Him. Seek Him. Serve Him. Love Him. He's your King. He suffered and died for you. He rose for you. He only has words of love and promise to speak to you. So, when all is equal for you on your deathbed, you can rejoice and say, 'Come quickly, my King,' because He has given you the promise, 'You will be with me in paradise.'" *Rev. Peter Sulzle, St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church, Redwood Falls, Minnesota – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • lutheransforlife.org*

"You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit' (John 15:16). Those words are meant for every one of us. We should never cease to be amazed at God's gifts and timing to bear the fruit of God's love." *Lynette Auch, former President of Lutherans For Life – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • lutheransforlife.org*

+CHRISTIAN SYMBOLS: COINS+

The Bible often uses coins to symbolize human greed. During Holy Week, 30 silver coins — usually shown with a bag or purse — represent Jesus' betrayal by his disciple Judas (Matthew 26:14-16). Many of Jesus' teachings are about money, including the parable of the lost coin. Coins also symbolize giving as an act of worship, just as the widow offered her last "mite" (Mark 12:41-44).



CELEBRATE

the Savior

Jesus Gives Us Joy

mark
your
calendar

ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH
206 North Court St., Au Gres, Michigan

Invites children ages 4 thru teens to
Celebrate the Savior
Vacation Bible School
July 8th – 12th, 2024
Evenings - 6 to 8pm

Lots of Fun Activities

Music & Singing / Bible Lessons / Outdoor Games
Craft Projects / Snacks / Mission Project
Family Night & Picnic

For questions or to pre-register call 989-876-8910
or e-mail office@stjohnaugres.com

Imagine going in ...

When terrorists attacked the Westgate Mall in Nairobi, Kenya, last September, a former British Royal Marine guided many people to safety. His identity was concealed for security purposes, but *The Daily Mail* later quoted a bystander: "What he did was so heroic. He was having coffee with friends when it happened. He went back in 12 times and saved 100 people. Imagine going back in when you knew what was going on inside."

Imagine going into any place of danger or violence, knowing what's happening — or what could happen: firefighters rushing into a burning house, a classmate stepping into a tense situation to end bullying, an adult boldly reporting suspected child abuse to authorities.

And God ... taking on flesh and entering our world as Jesus, fully knowing "what was going on inside" and the violence to which he'd be exposed. Yet he went ahead and did this, all to rescue people — us! — from certain death.



Join us as we gather with Pastor & Linda Cordts and the residents for

Hymn Sing-along

with Bible Lesson & Prayer

at Eden Fields Assisted Living in Standish

(front lobby - sitting area)

Sunday, March 17, 2024 at 1:00pm.

They love music so come and sing unto our Lord with them.

All are invited to share the love of Christ with the residents.



Camp Lu Lay Lea Registration is now OPEN!

Camp Lu Lay Lea is a Christian Summer Camp for youth ages 8-14. Camp Lu Lay Lea is located on Henderson Lake near West Branch, Michigan. We are offering 5 one-week sessions (Sunday-Saturday) this summer. Youth campers have the ability to participate in daily Chapel, boating/canoeing, campfires, arts and crafts, gaga ball, devotions, three different games a day, skits, singing, swimming, making new friends and so MUCH MORE! To learn more about our camp and schedule, go to www.camplulaylea.org.

**“So give back to Caesar what is Caesar’s, and to God what is God’s.”
(Matthew 22:21)**

One of the teachings of Martin Luther is called “The Two Kingdoms”. It’s not the same thing as “separation of Church and State.” Jesus is teaching us in this Bible passage that both the Church and the Government are gifts from God, to be used the way that He intends them. Luther says, “For this reason God has ordained two governments: the spiritual, by which the Holy Spirit produces Christians and righteous people under Christ; and the temporal, which restrains the un-Christian and wicked so that – no thanks to them—they are obliged to keep still and maintain an outward peace” (Luther’s Works, p.91).

The Church (what Luther called the “kingdom of the right”) uses the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, to do its work. It does not use coercion or compulsion, but the love and mercy proclaimed in the Gospel to bring the Kingdom of God to people’s hearts through faith in our Lord Jesus.

The State (what Luther called the “kingdom of the left”) is also a gift from God. Jesus paid his taxes (See Matthew 17:24-27). The Apostle Paul encourages us to submit to the governing authorities (Romans 13:1-5). The way God shows His love in this kingdom is through justice. God gives authority to earthly leaders to use “the sword” (rule of law) to protect people from evildoers and to maintain order. Good government maintains peace so that the Gospel can be preached without being hindered.

One way to think of this is picture the two kingdoms as two sides of a coin. They are different, but both are gifts from God. The whole coin is a gift from Him!

One way that I remember this Biblical teaching is through the Christian and United States flags. The Christian flag teaches about the Kingdom of the Right. Our faith in the Triune God is pictured in the red cross (Jesus, who died for us); the sky-blue background of the cross represents God the Father, and the white color points to the Holy Spirit, who brings us to faith and keeps us in it, washing away our sins and making us holy. In a way, it’s a picture of the Apostle’s Creed.

The United States flag reminds us to thank God for the gift of good government. St. Paul said “I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people— 2 for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. 3 This is good, and pleases God our Savior, 4 who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.” 1 Timothy 2:1-4. While our citizenship is in heaven (Philippians 3:20), we also live in a country where we have a responsibility to be active in our community and to vote for leaders who represent our Christian values and will preserve and protect our Christian liberty. We should not for a moment think that Christians are only in the United States. Jesus said, “My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations (Mark 11:17)”. Nor should we think that the U.S. flag represents one political party or another. Given the hateful and vitriolic rhetoric that dominates political discourse these days on every hand, I personally think it’s best to avoid engaging in ungodly gossip or placing our trust in any earthly leader. One last thought, the United States flag reminds me to be thankful for those who served our country and community (soldiers, police officers, fire-fighters) to preserve our Christian liberty (freedom to do what we ought) and to keep us safe. Thank God for them!

In Jesus,

Pastor Ted Voll



St. John Lutheran Church | 2024

Call Committee Update:

A congregational Call Meeting was held on Sunday, February 25, led by Rev. Winter as our substitute Circuit Visitor. Following review of all candidates, and the Call committee review process, a vote was held and a candidate selected for a call. The Pastor Elect has been notified and Call documents have been sent to him and the District office. A visit to Au Gres is being organized for the Pastor Elect while the Call is considered by him.

The Vacancy pastors are doing a great job of supporting us during this period. Please keep the pastors and the Call Committee in your prayers as we seek the Holy Spirits guidance.

St. Michael's Lutheran Church of Richville presents their

23rd Annual Living Passion Drama



You are invited to St. Michael's Church to learn about Christ's last hours on earth. You'll "watch the path of Jesus Christ" and see and hear live action scenes of what our Lord endured before He gave His life for us on the cross. Because of His sacrifice, we have the promise of eternal life with Him in heaven.

3455 S. Van Buren Road,
near the intersection of
M-46 and M-15

For more information
call 989-868-4791
or visit our website at
stmichaelsrichville.com

March 22 & 23, 2024

Friday, March 22, 6:00 & 7:30 PM

Saturday, March 23, 4:30, 6:00 & 7:30 PM

Quite a story

During Sunday dinner, a mother asked her son what he'd learned in Sunday school that day.

"Well," he said, "our teacher told us how God sent Moses behind enemy lines on a rescue mission to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. When he got to the Red Sea he had his engineers build a pontoon bridge and all the people walked across safely. Then he used his walkie-talkie to radio headquarters for reinforcements. They sent bombers to blow up the bridge, and all the Israelites were saved."

"Now, is that *really* what your teacher said?" the boy's mother asked.

"Well, no," he admitted. "But if I told it the way the teacher did, you'd never believe it!"

Grace is a gift

When we work an eight-hour day and receive eight hour's pay for our efforts, that is a WAGE.

When we compete with an opponent and receive a trophy for our superior performance, that is a PRIZE.

When we receive something in recognition for our service or achievement, that is an AWARD.

But when we can earn no wage, can win no prize and deserve no award — yet we receive such a gift — that is unmerited favor. That is undeserved kindness. That is GRACE.

Harbor Lights Pregnancy & Information Center



Birth of a Family

Pregnant? Need Help?

All services are provided free of charge to residents of Iosco and surrounding Counties.

Services Provided

Free Self-Administered Pregnancy Test.

Medical Referrals

Community Resource Referrals

Emotional Support - Spiritual Support

Parenting Education & Support

Fatherhood Program

Life Skills Education & Support

Adoption Information

Earn While You Learn Program & Boutique

Sexual Integrity Information

Healing from Sexual Abuse Program

Empty Arms Grief Counseling

Family Court Reunification

We care and we can Help!

Please call to schedule your appointment.

Office: 1-989-305-6308

Emergencies: 1-800-712-help

Office Hours are: Wednesday 10:30am – 4:00pm

Thursday 10:30am – 7:00pm

The mission of Harbor Lights Pregnancy & Information Center is to provide valid pregnancy and parental choices. In addition, we provide educational and spiritual support for the development of healthier children, families, and communities.

Children's Church: Lessons continue each Sunday with 2 classes held following the children's message in the worship service. There will be no Children's Church on Easter Sunday.

*Spotlight ~ our
March
Mission of the
Month*

*CHILDREN'S
CHURCH*



Please join us for soup suppers at 5pm on March 6, 13, & 20. Lenten worship to follow at 6:30pm. Come and enjoy table fellowship and a delicious meal.

JUST WONDERING – 743

Just wondering about, “Please hold....”

We’ve all had it happen on a call to our doctor or some other service provider: “*Please hold, your call is VERY important to us. Someone will be with you shortly.*” The wait could be many minutes, but I usually hold rather than start over later.

This got me thinking about prayer. At first, I thought, “I sure am glad that God doesn’t put me on hold.” But is that true? Sure, God hears our call immediately even knowing what we want, but do we get an immediate answer? I don’t. Sometimes I must wait a bit—maybe even years? Read what the Psalmist says for example:

“I call upon you, for you will answer me, O God; incline your ear to me, hear my words.”

“Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord!”

“But it is for you, O Lord, that I wait; it is you, O Lord my God, who will answer.”

And from Isaiah speaking for God: “*Before they call, I will answer, while they are yet speaking, I will hear.*”

Jesus and the writers of the Epistles spoke of prayer often. And if you Google “What Martin Luther said about prayer” you will have hours of helpful reading.

So, we pray, and we hold. A saying goes, “sometimes God says yes, sometimes God says no, sometimes God says wait.” Overly simplistic but has a tinge of truth. Receiving a “yes” is easy. But a “no” is hard to understand and so we simply trust the wisdom of God and God’s timing. Remember, “*My ways are not your ways, and my thoughts are not your thoughts.*” Indeed, they are far apart. (Isaiah 55:8-9) Jesus reminds, “*God knows what we need even before we ask.*” But we ask anyway trusting the grace, love, and timing of God’s will. So, we call, and we hold because our prayer is indeed important to God.

Pastor Kirk Havel, Ret., February 25, 2024; havelkj@aol.com

Thanks to Rick & Jill Gehring for sharing the Just Wondering Word.

+St. John Lutheran AuGres+ Church Activites for March 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 *** ***	2 *** ***
3 Worship/HC 9am Confirmation/Bible Study 10:15am	4 WOW Women's Bible Study 10am	5 *** ***	6 Soup Supper 5pm Lent IV Worship 6:30pm	7 *** ***	8 *** ***	9 Christ for Kids 1-3pm Set Clocks Ahead 1 Hour
10 Worship 9am Blood Pressure Clinic 10:15am Confirmation/Bible Study 10:15am	11 WOW Women's Bible Study 10am	12 *** ***	13 Soup Supper 5pm Lent V Worship 6:30pm	14 Quilting 10am-3pm	15 *** ***	16 *** ***
17 Worship/HC 9am Confirmation/Bible Study 10:15am Eden Fields 1pm	18 WOW Women's Bible Study 10am	19 Ladies Aid Meeting 1pm	20 Soup Supper 5pm Lent VI Worship 6:30pm	21 Elder's Meeting 6pm Church Council 7pm	22 *** ***	23 *** ***
24/31 Palm Sunday Worship 9am Confirmation/Bible Study 10:15am Easter Worship/HC 9am Breakfast to follow	25 WOW Women's Bible Study 10am	26 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	27 *** ***	28 Maundy Thursday Worship/HC 6:30pm	29 Good Friday Worship 6:30pm	30 *** ***

Said three ways



In Scripture, the number three is thought to symbolize completeness — above all, in the Holy Trinity. Dating back centuries, Thursday, Friday and Saturday of Holy Week are, in some Christian practices, called *Triduum*, or The Three Days.

How appropriate, then, to allow three Christ-followers from different time periods to remind us of the wonder God enacted during those three days:

“God put the wrong on [Christ] who never did anything wrong, so we could be put right with God.”

—St. Paul, 2 Corinthians 5:21, The Message

“Through this blessed exchange, in which Christ changes places with us (something the heart can grasp only in faith), and through nothing else, are we freed from sin and death and given his righteousness and life as our own.”

—Martin Luther

“Nails didn’t hold God to a cross. Love did. The sinless one took on the face of a sinner so that we sinners could take on the face of a saint!”

—Max Lucado

Saturday Worship (Memorial Day – Labor Day)	4:00pm
Sunday Worship	9:00am
Sunday Bible Study	10:15am
Monday WOW (Women of the Word) Bible Study	10:00am

Loving Involved Growing Honoring Teaching

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.”



ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH
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