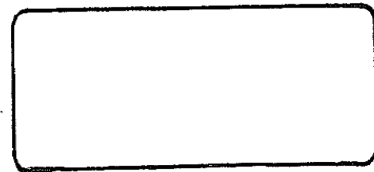




Gods Work. Our Hands.

Evangelical Lutheran Church of America

Presorted Standard
Non-Profit
Mapleton, MN. 56065
Permit No. 3



Bits and Pieces: In other words things to remember ;)

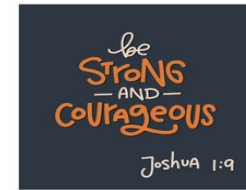
All are invited to join for a Farwell Gathering for Pastor Steve and Judy following the service on August 31st.

National Night out:

Mapleton Police Department is excited to announce the 1st Annual Nation Night Out Event.

Thursday August 14th 5:30 to 7:30pm at Heritage Park in Mapleton

Please join in the event!!



THE STORY

August 2025 St. John Lutheran Church

PO Box432 104 Central Avenue North Mapleton, MN 56065

Phone: 507-524-3615 * Email: stjohnslutheran.mapletonmn@gmail.com * Facebook: St. John's Lutheran Church, ELCA

Summer's End

Every season ends and for some, that's great news and for others it's sad.

Life's made up of seasons. According to Ecclesiastes 3, there is a time for everything under heaven.

The secret is to embrace each season. Regardless of whether it's a favorite or least favorite, give each season the attention it deserves.

Often we can't wait for a season to end, like wishing for the kids to grow up. But I can tell you I wish I could have them small again so I can spend more quality time with them.

Wishing our lives away is sad. Every season is an opportunity to learn, grow, and apply the principles we find in God's word. If you are going through a tough season, it might be a season where you may have to pray more often and draw closer to God.

If you are going through a great season, it is time to be thankful and grateful and offer praises to God.

But no matter what circumstance you are in, Jesus is Lord and God's Word can help you through it.

We need to be like the three Hebrew children in Daniel 3. They were in the fire, but when they came out; they didn't even smell like smoke. They were in the fire, but the fire never got into them.

Stay close to God and keep your commitment to His Word strong by feeding your faith. This is the only way you will rise above any season that you find yourself in.

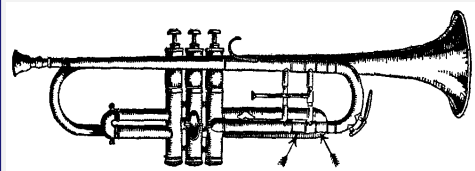
In His presence is the fullness of Joy. In His presence is the peace and answers you need. Each season, you can gain wisdom about life and about yourself. This vital information will help you in the future season of your life.

Let everything be a learning opportunity. Ask yourself, "What can I learn from this? How can I avoid this in the future?"

Sometimes the only way we learn things is by experience. So learn the lesson quickly and move on.

Lets pray that the season you are in right now is enlightening you and showing you how much God loves you.

Cast all your cares onto Him and let Him lead you through this season. Don't camp there and cry whoa is me! No, go through it with God's help and come out more than a conquer!



HEAR YE HEAR YE

***Please have all items in the office for the September newsletter by August 19. PLEASE and Thank you!**

A new calendar for 2025 is posted on the bulletin board in the hallway of the Education Lobby. This calendar is for the purpose of those who would like to reserve a space for some event. (These would need to be approved by the church council.) Other regular meetings will also be posted.

For more information, please see Anna in the church office.

All are invited to join for a Farwell Gathering for Pastor Steve and Judy following the service on August 31st.

Thank you to Kathy Ek for her special talents, one of which is decorating our church bulletin boards. They are so so special!!

National Night out:

Mapleton Police Department is excited to announce the 1st Annual Nation Night Out Event.

**Thursday August 14th 5:30 to 6:30pm at Heritage Park in Mapleton
Please join in the event!!**

WE HOLD IN PRAYER: Ashlyn Bennett, Ron Swift, Larry Albrecht, Marvel Peterson, Kirsten Becker, and Sybil Solting

HOMEBOUND MEMBERS: David Treanor, Audrey Annis, Earlynn Simonson, Cheryl Bergemann and Bonnie Schultz

PRAYER:

O God, you shepherd your people, faithfully feeding and protecting us. Heal each of us, and make us a whole people, that we may embody the justice and peace of your son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen

Liturgist

Church Council

August

Jen & Matt Marzen

September

Brent Fischer

Josh Isebrand

YOUR SLIP IS SHOWING

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

And no one is unfamiliar with bitterness. No one. And I hate to tell you this – No, seriously, I hate to tell you this... but if you belong to the human race, you're prone to unforgiveness, and you're wired for bitterness. It's just one more yucky thing that exists in all of us as a result of the fall. Darn it, Eve!

It's easy to recognize bitterness in someone else, isn't it? The person who can't seem to speak nicely to you, the relative who can hardly control their disgust when you show up in the room, the people who do everything they can to make absolutely sure you're not only excluded, but that you KNOW and FEEL that you're excluded... That comes from someplace. It comes from a root of bitterness they've not only allowed to grow, but they've nurtured and watered and pruned, allowed to grow deep – real deep. And we all know what roots can do. They can break a foundation, wreck your plumbing, and cost you a fortune to fix.

Like I said – it's easy peezy to recognize the bitterness in others. But what about the bitterness in us? Yeah, that takes a face plant, a truly repentant heart, and a willingness to be honest with God and allow Him to reveal it. And heal it.

Because after all, trying to get rid of that bitterness all by yourself, is like using Round-Up. Remember that stuff? It's not on the shelf any longer, and there are a lot of people going through cancer treatment as a result of using that poison, filing law suits even – and our self-centered attempts at curing our bitterness without the Lord are exactly like using that cancer-causing product. Simply put – it doesn't work. There's only one thing that works. Remember the face plant? Yep. That.

Ephesians 4:31-32 says to let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with malice, and to be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

Can you even imagine how life-changing (and eternity-changing) it could be if your family members and friends saw a heart change in you that resulted in forgiving the person you're carrying resentment, unforgiveness, and bitterness toward? (Can you imagine the burden it would lift in YOUR heart?)

Can I actually say, "I have let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, slander, and malice be put away from MY lips? Have I been kind to ___(person I need to forgive)___, tenderhearted, forgiving, as CHRIST HAS FORGIVEN ME?

Can you? Can you say this?

Here's the thing. Bitterness shows. You can't hide it. You just can't. And for those of us old enough to remember wearing slips under our dresses, it's like that one slip that's always way too long and just keeps showing, and random people keep on walking up to you and whispering in your ear, "Honey – your slip is showing."

Well, if you're letting your unforgiveness and bitterness grow deep roots in your heart – trust me, you can't hide it. Everyone sees it in you, and this is an offense to God. It's sin! So don't wait. Consider this the whisper in your ear that your slip is showing – and so is your bitterness.

"Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, 1 bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive."
Colossians 3:12-13

TIME FOR EVERY SEASON

To build and maintain faith through challenging seasons, one must actively choose to trust God, even when feeling doubt or uncertainty, and seek support from others. This involves persevering through difficult times, practicing spiritual disciplines like prayer and scripture reading even when they feel dry, and recognizing that spiritual growth isn't always marked by dramatic breakthroughs, but often by steadfastness. Ultimately, faith is strengthened by relying on God as a lifeline rather than viewing prayer as a transactional exchange for desired outcomes.

Here's a more detailed look at how to build and maintain faith through difficult seasons:

1. Embrace Doubt as Part of the Process:
2. Don't run from doubt, but bring it into the light and seek help processing it with trusted individuals.
3. Remember that faith is not about blind certainty, but about choosing to trust even when facing uncertainty.
 4. Cultivate Spiritual Practices:
 5. Engage in prayer, even when you don't feel like it.
 6. Read scripture, even when it feels dry.
 7. Attend religious services, even when your bed feels more appealing.
 8. Understand Growth in Seasons of Difficulty:
9. Recognize that spiritual growth doesn't always look like outward breakthroughs, but can be seen in perseverance and endurance.
 10. Know that even a shaky faith can be a strong faith.
 11. View Prayer as a Lifeline, Not a Transaction:
 12. Prayer is a way to stay connected to God, not a way to get what you want.
13. God's plans are for your good, even when you don't see them according to Church.
 14. Remember You Are Only Passing Through:
 15. Difficult seasons are temporary, even if they feel like they will last forever.
 16. God is with you and will help you through the challenges.
 17. You will come out stronger and more refined.
 18. Remember God's Faithfulness:
 19. God is faithful even in seasons of lack and hardship.
 20. Lean into God's Love and Grace:
 21. God's love is a constant source of strength and hope.
 22. His grace is sufficient to see you through any difficulty.

PASTOR'S PAGE

Dear Friends at St. John-

One of the favorite TV shows for children over the years has been Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood. The last episode of the show was aired 24 years ago, but it has lived on in reruns and in memories. During its 31 year run, every kid wanted to be Mister Rogers' neighbor. It was a gentle, thoughtful children's show, as Fred Rogers treated kids with kindness and respect. Every show started as he changed into his cardigan and sneakers and sang, "It's a beautiful day in this neighborhood. It's a beautiful day for a neighbor. Would you be mine? Could you be mine? Won't you be my neighbor?"

One of the best-known parables that Jesus told was also about being a neighbor, but this story is about hate and greed, violence and indifference, prejudice and pain. The Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) describes a man being beaten and robbed, then avoided and ignored by two people who could have (and should have) been helpful, until finally tended to and cared for by a most unlikely traveler. The story ends with Jesus asking, "Who was the neighbor to this man in need?"

As children of God, we are **called** to be neighbors to the wonderful (like Mr. Rogers) and the undesirable (messy and needy). As children of God, we were **created** to be neighborly to all (the word literally means 'the one nearby'). As children of God, we are **empowered** to be good neighbors – we can love others because the Lord has loved us first.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind: and your neighbor as yourself. Luke 10:27

As Jesus said to the one he was teaching... Go and do likewise.

Peace be with you (and your neighbors)!
Pastor Steve



St. John Information

CONTACT/CONNECT

Email: stjohnslutheran.mapletonmn@gmail.com
Berkeland.stjohnslutheran@gmail.com

Website: www.stjohnlutheranelca.com

Streaming: Go to www.youtube.com (type in St. John's Mapleton in the search box). From there you will find all the services.

Items for the newsletter can be emailed to:
thestory.stjohnlutheran@gmail.com

Spiritually Speaking

Please check out our congregation's Facebook page and "like" us. Check us out every few days and "like" some of the inspirational and encouraging pictures and share announcements about events with your friends.



This is one easy way to share information about our church and God's Word with others.

YOUR SLIP IS SHOWING

Scrambled eggs & bacon with some wheat toast – that's what I had for breakfast Friday morning on the 4th of July when I met my friend I hadn't seen in – well, way too long. Two hours later, we gave the waitress a tip that amounted to what she'd likely have made in tips, had we not sat in her booth for as long as we did.

Sometimes though, you just gotta sit with a friend for a long, long time, and soak in all of the good stuff there is to share about the current joys in life, the hurts, and struggles, and yeah... struggles.

Did I mention the struggles?

God speaks in so many ways, but for me – and probably for you, too – He often speaks through the wisest, godliest people in our lives. So we sit for two hours and leave \$20 tips. Trust me, it's worth it. It's always, always worth it.

Oh, I'm so grateful for my friend. We share a similar struggle, but from two completely different... not really perspectives, but... experiences. Yes, experiences – I think that's the best way to put it.

Mine has, I'll admit, caused me at times to become bitter, angry even. You see, things haven't come to the conclusion that I wholeheartedly believe they ought to, but God has definitely provided me with plenty of times when He has helped change my "tude," if you will. He is constantly reminding me that He will bring all things to His good conclusion in His good time (not mine).

But on Saturday He providentially brought my friend and I together over some scrambled eggs & bacon to help us both be sure not to allow any bitterness to take root. Andddd, perhaps to do something about the roots that are always there, ready and willing to creep in, grow deep, and stick around.

God has an awful lot to say about bitterness, and it's not good.

Continued on page 11

Forty-two (42).

That's how many days are left of summer, and if you're from Michigan, or probably anywhere in the Midwest, the thought of how fast time flies comes to mind quickly. We plant flowers and head to the Great Lakes as quickly and as often as we can, because the warm sunny months don't last very long before that white stuff starts falling from the sky. I can't say the word because I'm not ready for it yet.

I was looking forward to so many things this summer – beginning with the trip I share with my two girlfriends each June. But, health issues...

I also had a trip planned to visit some friends about five hours away, but... had an accident, tore my rotator cuff, and spent the evening in the ER. Plans canceled.

It had been three years since I'd made it to the Lavender Festival, but... then I finally managed to get COVID, so now I'll just look forward to Lavender Festival 2026, maybe?

And there were several other events or plans I'd been looking forward to enjoying with my grandkids and with friends. But... I won't bore you with the drama. Canceled – all of them.

Even a quiet lunch I'd planned among friends I was anxious to catch up with, and one I was really looking forward to seeing that I hadn't seen since prior to the start of COVID – unnecessarily ruined abruptly and unexpectedly. Thankfully, we've made plans for a "re-do!"

Seriously. Not one thing I'd looked forward to this summer turned out the way I had planned. None of them. So when my friend said that there were 42 days left of summer, I thought of a few things. First of all – I thought that making any plans at this point would likely prove futile. Secondly, I'll never purchase another conference ticket a year in advance again!

And lastly, I thought of a patient I cared for a really, really long time ago, who re-phrased Proverbs 16:9 like this: "We make our plans, and God laughs."

Well, I don't think God necessarily laughed at any of my plans, because they were all good plans. But I do believe He certainly rearranged my entire summer, and as Proverbs 16:9 really does say, "We can make our plans, but the Lord determines our steps." Most of my steps He did more than determine – He stopped. I don't know why – but I definitely know He's in charge, and I'm not, because this summer He reminded me – and FREQUENTLY!

So... 42 days left, right? Lord willing, I'll be doing laundry this Friday. Those are the only plans I'm brave enough to make at this point. I've got a few good books I can shove in my purse and take with me wherever He orders my steps, too, because after all, wherever I step, my purse comes with me! I'm starting with a re-read of "Balcony People," which is a yearly must-read and definitely small enough to fit in my purse. And after that, re-reading "Aging With Grace," so I'm constantly reminded not to get "brutish" as I age!

And tonight, I have a fall-scented candle burning to remind me that there's only 42 days left of this season, and a new pair of sneakers whose steps I'm sure are already ordered. I have no idea where they'll take me, but I definitely give up making plans beyond the laundry..... I surrender!

"We can make our plans, but the Lord determines our steps." Proverbs 16:9

Rita Macdonald

Just a Little Humor

If you are not allowed to laugh in heaven, I don't want to go there. Martin Luther

Baggage

I was buying airplane tickets when my eight-year-old asked, “Can a baby be considered a carry-on?” Before I could respond, my husband mumbled, “Well, it can definitely be considered baggage.” —Bridget Slayden, Rogersville, Missouri

What’s your name?

After a long drive to Canada, border patrol agents asked my father the name of us five kids in the back. Dad was so tired that he drew a blank. The brief lapse resulted in Dad being hauled in for questioning. After convincing them that he hadn’t kidnapped us, he was released—15 hours later. Source: cafemom.com

Eyes on the road

Driving across California, we stopped at a red light in a beautiful old western town. As I admired the elegant storefronts and beautiful scenery, I didn’t notice that the light had turned green and back to red again. It was then that a police officer tapped on my window and said, “That’s all the colors we got here.” —Yefim Brodd, Tacoma, Washington

Loose pants

Before our trip to Las Vegas, my husband lost quite a few pounds. This came into play on the airplane. As he was grabbing our overhead luggage, his pants slipped down to his knees. A woman asked, “Can I help you?” “Yes,” he said. “I’ll grab the luggage; you pull up my pants.” —Jeanne Gemler, Erie, Pennsylvania.

TV shows to slot machines

As my husband and I were leaving a Las Vegas casino a few dollars lighter, I noticed the number of slot machines that were based on TV shows: Wheel of Fortune, Deal or No Deal, even Gilligan’s - Island. “I wonder what TV show they’ll base the next slot machine on,” I said. He responded, “The Biggest Loser.” —Debra Barrickman, Ashtabula, Ohio

August 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
38:30 Worship Choir practice 9:30am Worship / communion 10:30am coffee hour	4	5	6Parish Ed. Meeting 6:30pm	7Mapleton Community Home Service 10:30am	8	9
108:30 Worship Choir practice 9:30am Worship 10:30am coffee hour Worship Committee meeting 10:30am	11	12	13	14Church Council 6:30pm National Night Out 5:30-7:30 Heritage Park	15	16
178:30am Worship Choir practice 9:30am Worship / communion 10:30am coffee hour	18	19	20	21	22	23
248:30 Worship Choir practice 9:30am Worship 10:30am coffee hour	25	26	27	28	29	30
318:30 Worship Choir practice 9:30am Worship 10:30am Farwell gathering for Pastor Steve and Judy						

ST JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH—Council Minutes

St. John's Church Council did not meet July

What does the bible say about changing of the seasons

The Bible often speaks of the changing of the seasons, both literally and metaphorically, highlighting God's faithfulness and sovereignty over creation and the cycles of life.

Here's what the Bible says about the changing of the seasons:

God's faithfulness in creation: Genesis 8:22 states that as long as the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, will never cease. This verse emphasizes God's faithfulness in sustaining the natural order of the world. It shows that God has established a reliable system and will continue to uphold His creation.

A sign of God's sovereignty: The changing of the seasons serves as a sign of God's authority and control over the earth. Psalm 74:17 says, "You have fixed all the boundaries of the earth; you have made summer and winter". This indicates that God ordained the seasons and sets boundaries with these times, demonstrating His sovereignty over creation.

A metaphor for life's changes: The concept of seasons is often used metaphorically to represent different periods and transitions in life. Ecclesiastes 3:1 reminds us that there is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven, according to Christianity.com, including times of joy, sorrow, growth, and rest. These "seasons of life" are divinely appointed and serve a purpose in shaping individuals and communities.

The seasons point to God's beauty and purpose: The diversity and beauty of the seasons, from the blossoming of spring to the snowy landscapes of winter, are seen as reflecting God's creative power and intricate design. The seasons are a constant reminder of God's presence and His meticulous attention to detail in all aspects of creation.

A reminder of Jesus' return: The changing of the seasons can also be seen as a reminder that Christ will return, according to The Daily Grace Co.. Just as the seasons predictably cycle, believers can be confident that Jesus' promise to return is sure.

In essence, the Bible portrays the changing of the seasons as a testament to God's enduring faithfulness, sovereignty, and creative power, while also using them as a metaphor to encourage believers to trust in His plans through life's varying seasons.

"God's work. Our hands." Every day. **"GOD'S WORK. OUR HANDS.":** SHARING GOD'S GRACE AND LOVE As Lutherans, we know the difference that God's grace and love in Christ have made in our daily lives. Because of this, we work together to help others experience that same love and acceptance. We live out this vision through worship and service in our congregations and communities, through our individual vocations and through our collective work as church together. "God's work. Our hands." provides an opportunity to be church together and to share Jesus' love by inviting others to join in a day of service. This call for service unites all the ELCA expressions to focus on serving and accompanying our neighbors. There are many ways to serve in our cities and communities, so ELCA members and congregations should research opportunities that make sense for each congregation and its capacity. The idea is to deepen the members' experience and enable congregations to play a critical part in addressing community needs .



Editor Just Needed more fuller ;)

This story has some holes

On a tour of Switzerland, I found a small grocery store in Geneva. At the cheese counter, I asked if they had any Swiss cheese, which is my favorite. The gentleman, very kindly, replied, "Madam, they are all Swiss." —Betty Childress, Grand Rapids, Michigan

A top lass

Never say Brits aren't hospitable. While visiting England, my mother and I had been exploring the countryside when we spotted an inn and decided to stop in for a spot of tea. We walked in and sat down by a roaring fire, and a woman asked if she could help us. "We'd like some tea and maybe a couple of scones," I said. She returned with a lovely tea and scone service, which we thoroughly enjoyed. When I asked for the bill, the woman said there was no charge. "How can you run a lovely inn like this and not charge?" I asked. "An inn?" she responded. "This is my home." —Nairn' Gillet, Wickliffe, Ohio