



THE STORY

AUGUST 2023

St. John Lutheran Church

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Once upon a time, there was a beautiful garden. The master gardener had carefully laid out every detail of the garden, interspersing different types of flowers and colors to create a magnificent, year-round display of breathtaking wonder that testified to his wisdom and care. The garden had roses and lilies and baby's breath and daisies and so much more—too many flowers to name. And the gardener took care of each plant perfectly.

Now, the plants didn't always like being taken care of. They didn't like when the gardener pruned them. It hurt! They didn't understand that they needed pruned in order to grow bigger and stronger.

...every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. John 15:2 (ESV)

Petal was one flower in this garden—a rose to be exact. She'd grown strong and sturdy under the gardener's wise care. She was planted where she had to endure the heat of the sunlight all day. Unbeknownst to her, that's what made her grow so strong and bear such sweet flowers.

But one day, Petal noticed another flower that grew in the shade. Why do I have to endure all this heat while that flower doesn't? she wondered. Petal didn't understand that different flowers need different amounts of sunlight to grow, but the gardener knew all that. Rather than trusting him, though, Petal managed to pull up her roots and move herself to a different part of the garden where she could hide in the shade too. Ah, this is nice! she thought. Yet soon she began wilting, and her leaves turned yellow. She wasn't designed for the shade. The gardener lovingly picked her up and put her back in a sunny spot.

"Ah, my dear Petal," he said as he moved her. "I need you to bloom where I put you. Won't you trust me? I know just the pruning and conditions each of my plants need."

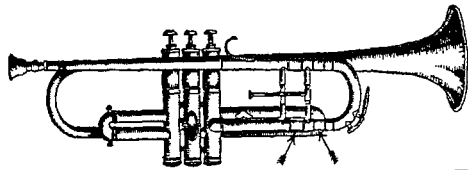
Jesus said to him, *"If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow me!"* John 21:22

Another time Petal noticed a small lily growing near her. Such beautiful flowers that lily has, she thought to herself. I wish my petals looked more like hers. And she doesn't have any thorns...and she's so dainty! I'm not dainty at all. Petal began trying to shrink her large branches to be more like the lily's and started opening up her flowers earlier, hoping they'd look more like a lily's.

Petal didn't realize that her attempts to look more like a lily meant she was no longer filling the role in the garden she'd been planted to fill. The gardener had placed her in the garden to grow tall and strong and form an elegant backdrop for the smaller plants, but instead she was cowering and shedding her beautiful petals early.

Faithfulness ..continued





HEAR YE HEAR YE

***Please have all items in the office for the September newsletter by August 21th. PLEASE and Thank you!**

If you receive "to go boxes" from Maggie J's , Panda Express or other restaurants, Please wash and bring to church. We are wanting to eliminate all styrofoam being used in the church.

Attention All Sunday School kids!

On August 10th, the Adult Choir will be singing for "Songs on the Lawn" in Heritage Park , Please text Judy if you are able to come (507-399-3383) We would love to see everyone there! We would like you there at 5:30.

**St. John Quilters will receive the Service to Mankind Award on August 20th from 2-4pm at Heritage Park. All are welcome to attend.
Congratulations on this wonderful honor.**

Two Big Things Happening in September

We want you!!!! In September we will be having pictures taken for a new directory, We would like as many people as possible to participate. The last directory had a poor showing of the members here at St. John.

The dates will be September 21 and 22 from 2-8:30 pm and September 23 from 10am—4 pm.
Please keep these dates in mind.

WE HOLD IN PRAYER: Ashlyn Bennett, Larry Albrecht, Ron Swift , Dick & Ann Kuball, Michelle Birr Straumann, Ladonna Barr, Judy Pollei, Gloria Schuett, Eloise Ward and Bea Kunz

HOMEBOUND MEMBERS: David Treanor, Cheryl Bergemann, Betty Borsoski, Arlene Tolzman, Betty Aschlager, Orville Halverson and Audrey Annis

Prayer

Mighty Spirit of God, stir us to be a bold and faithful witness to Jesus Christ.
Amen.

At the beginning of each day, offer a prayer to be open to God's Spirit.

O God, you are the source of life and the ground of our being. By the power of your Spirit bring healing to this wounded world, and raise us to the new life of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen

August Liturgist

Mike & Annette Ward

Church Council Members

August

Royce Woitas

Aaron Annis

September

Gary Denn

Cathy Pluym

PASTOR'S PAGE

Dear Friends at St. John-

Have you ever wondered... why don't sparrows fall off their perches when they fall asleep?

The long answer is: the secret lies in their built-in security system. They have specialized tendons, located in front of the knee joint and behind the ankle joint. When a bird sits on a perch, its weight stretches those tendons so that their toes flex, move forward, and lock around the perch.

The short answer is: God designed them so they wouldn't fall off.

For me, that brings even more significance to what Jesus said: *Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them.*

Are you not of more value than they? (Matthew 6: 26)

Have you ever wondered... how many stars are there in the universe?

The long answer is: using the milky way as our model, we can multiply the number of stars in a typical galaxy (100 billion) by the number of galaxies in the universe (2 trillion), yielding approximately 200 sextillion stars.

The short answer is... more than I can imagine.

And so I can relate even better to the words of the Psalmist: *When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established; what are humans that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them? Yet you have made them a little lower than God.* (Psalm 8:3-5)

Have you ever wondered... Why would God love me, knowing who I really am, and how much does God love me?

The long answer is... read the whole Bible to find out why and how.

The short answer is: Because God designed you for love, and loves you more than you can imagine.

So along with the Psalmist, let us declare: *O LORD, you have searched me and known me. You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from far away. You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. Even before a word is on my tongue, O LORD, you know it completely. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works!* (Psalms 139:1-4,14)

Thanks be to God!

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.

Disciples to Apostles

Disciple: a committed follower or student of a teacher (or teachings)

After Jesus was baptized, he spent approximately three years teaching, preaching and healing. People gathered to hear this man who taught with authority, unlike any others. Jesus invited people to follow him and apply his teachings. Jesus said, "Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your soul." (Matthew.11:28)

Jesus taught his followers to keep their priorities straight and to be obedient to God. He kept his teachings simple so each disciple could remember them. Jesus taught, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself." (Matthew 22: 37-40) It sounds simple, but it is challenging to live the commandments in daily life.

Jesus did more than speak words. He lived his teachings and embodied love. He continues to invite people to follow him, to become his students and to invest time to learn to apply his teachings.

What does it mean for you to follow Jesus?

How much time do you invest each week to learn and apply the teachings of Jesus?

Apostle: one who is sent on a mission; commissioned

Jesus began with listeners, those intrigued, inspired and convicted by his teachings. Then, Jesus invited them to follow him, learning more each day. This was part of a greater plan to send his followers on a mission.

The mission began with the twelve disciples. They were sent in teams of two to heal and to preach about the reign of God. After the death and resurrection of Jesus, these twelve were commissioned for a greater mission: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." That commission extends to disciples of Christ in every time and place.

Jesus teaches us to be disciples and then sends us to teach others. We are given the privilege to teach others about the love of God made known through Jesus Christ. We bear witness to the Good News of Christ, encouraging others to follow Jesus.

Where and to whom is God sending you?

August

2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Join us for Coffee Hour following Worship The Stories are amazing!!!		1	2	3 10:30am Community Home Worship 5:30 Worship Committee 6:30pm church council	4	5
6 8:30 Worship Choir practice 9:30am Worship / communion	7	8	9	10 Worship choir sings at Songs on the Lawn at Heritage Park 6:00pm	11	12
13 8:30 Worship Choir practice 9:30am Worship	14	15	16	17	18	19
20 8:30 Worship Choir practice 9:30am Worship / communion Bible School from 5-7pm Here at the church. Quilters honored for Service to Mankind award 2-4pm at Heritage Park	21 News Letter deadline	22	23	24	25	26
27 8:30 Worship Choir practice 9:30am Worship	28	29	30	31		
Stay tuned for information about Sunday School and Confirmation Class						

ST JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH—Council Minutes

No council meeting was held in July

Piano available for the taking. This piano is a Wurlitzer and is free to anyone who would like to give it a home. If you would like to give a donation, that would be appreciated.



WELCA NEWS

New coffee servers are now here, also a new roaster. We are looking at other improvements to be done in the kitchen and will keep you posted as those come around. Keep in mind our special event that will be held in September.

-Rita

Old-Fashioned Scalloped Corn

Ingredients:

Ingredient Checklist

- 3 tablespoons butter or margarine
- ¾ cup coarsely crushed saltine crackers (about 10 crackers)
- 1 large onion, finely chopped (1 cup)
- 2 cups fresh corn kernels or one 10-ounce package frozen whole kernel corn, thawed
- 1 14.75 ounce can cream-style corn
- 1 cup coarsely crushed saltine crackers (about 14 to 15 crackers)
- 1 cup milk, half-and-half, or light cream
- 3 eggs, lightly beaten
- 1 4 ounce jar diced pimiento, drained
- ½ teaspoon ground black pepper or 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- ¼ teaspoon paprika (optional)
- ½ cup shredded Swiss, Gruyère, cheddar or provolone cheese (2 ounces) (optional)

Directions

Instructions Checklist

Step 1 Grease a 2-quart oval baking dish, 2-quart round casserole dish or 8x8x2-inch square baking dish (2-quart); set aside.

For topping:

Step 1 In a 12-inch skillet, melt 2 tablespoons of the butter over medium heat. Add the ¾ cup crushed crackers. Cook and stir until crackers are light brown; remove from skillet and set aside.

Step 2 In the same skillet, melt the remaining 1 tablespoon butter over medium heat. Add onion. Cook onion until tender, stirring occasionally. Stir in corn, cream-style corn, the 1 cup crushed crackers, milk, drained pimiento, eggs, black pepper and, if you like, paprika.

Step 3 Transfer corn mixture to the prepared baking dish. Sprinkle on topping.

Step 4 Bake, uncovered, in a 325 degree F oven for 35 to 40 minutes or until center is set and a knife inserted near center comes out clean. Remove from oven. If you like, sprinkle with cheese. Let stand for 10 minutes before serving. Makes 8 servings.

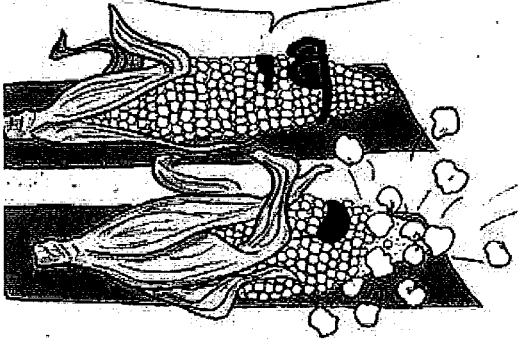
If desired you may add:

Prepare as directed above. Cut 6 ounces cooked boneless ham into bite-size cubes. Stir into corn mixture in skillet.

Just a Little Humor

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

I TOLD you to wear sunscreen.



modest-jokes.blogspot.com

I'm returning your nose dear! I found it in my business



**Two Signs...
Same Message!**

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"I don't bring my work phone on vacation.
If it's an emergency, call my shell."

Daily Discipleship

Continued from front page

"Ah, my dear Petal," the gardener said as he straightened back up her branches. "Each flower is different and special for a reason. Won't you trust me?"

For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. 6 Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; 7 if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness. Romans 12:4-8 (ESV)

I'm a sinner saved by grace through Jesus Christ. I'm also a writer—I've been writing ever since I could hold a pen. I... Meet Katherine [Loop]

Hospitality Matters

"...extend hospitality to strangers." Romans 12:13b

Carmela noticed the lapel button on the Parking Lot Greeter; it read: "Ask Me" but since this was her first time to visit the church, she was too shy to ask what it meant.

As she entered the front door of the church, the greeter at the entrance also had the same button on her blouse: "Ask Me" but once again, because there were other people entering the church at the same time, Carmela was reluctant to ask what it meant.

By the entrance to the sanctuary, Carmela noticed that one of the ushers was also wearing the same button: "Ask Me."

Finally, her curiosity got the better of her, so she asked, "What does your button mean?" The usher grinned and replied, "We have many people who come into our building for the first time and this is one way to designate specific people to whom they can ask for information. How may I help you?"

Carmela breathed a sigh of relief and said, "I'm glad to know if I have any questions that there are so many people to whom I can turn and ask."

After taking a seat in the sanctuary, Carmela gave thanks to God for directing her to a congregation that showed such concern for first-time visitors.

Questions to Ponder

If visitors come to your church, to whom would they turn if they have question

What system does your congregation use to intentionally designate specific people to meet and greet visitors?

How might your congregation "extend hospitality to strangers"?

Writer: Robert Dealey ELCA

FAITHFULNESS

DAILY DISCIPLESHIP -

The church calendar year that we are now in is the “Time After Pentecost”; the longest season of the Lutheran church calendar year.

Pentecost – Acts 2:1-21 Focus: Turning the World Upside Down

Word of Life “In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.” (Acts 2:17 NRSV)

Read Acts 2:1-21

God speaks the word and creation comes to be. That power-filled and transformative word of God continues in the Old Testament through the voice of prophets, such as Joel and is repeated by Peter in his first sermon after the resurrection of Jesus.

In Acts 2, Peter’s audience wrongly thinks the disciples of Jesus are drunk at nine o’clock in the morning. It appears to some of the Jews who had gathered in Jerusalem for the Festival of Pentecost that the disciples are babbling nonsense, until they hear words in their own language. How could this motley group of disciples have the ability to speak clearly in the native languages of the diverse population? Their words are beyond human comprehension, but at the same time understandable.

What would it have been like to hear the disciples speaking so many languages on Pentecost?

What is your favorite part of the story told in Acts 2:1-21?

Peter begins to preach—the one who denied Jesus three times and abandoned him at the crucifixion now has the courage to publicly proclaim God’s actions done through Jesus Christ. On Pentecost the Holy Spirit empowers Peter and the other disciples to move beyond fear and personal concerns to become vibrant witnesses to God’s actions in Jesus.

How does Pentecost give Peter a second chance?

What does Peter do with this new opportunity to serve Christ?

The sermon of Peter begins with the words of the prophet Joel, but moves to describe the fulfillment of Joel’s vision. God’s Spirit is unleashed in the world. Both sons and daughters shall speak God’s word—a life-giving word which has the power to transform. Those filled with the Spirit cannot help but proclaim God’s word.

Pentecost is a reminder of God’s creative ways to turn the world upside down and bring newness to our world as “...your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.” (Acts 2:17 NRSV) The young are known for living today, dreaming of a future which may or may not be based in reality. Likewise, the old have had their opportunities to live out their dreams. Over time, dreams are often relinquished as people age and come to terms with reality.

What does it mean for young men to see visions?

What might it have meant for the emerging first-century church to have old men dream dreams?

FAITHFULNESS

DAILY DISCIPLESHIP — CONTINUED

With gusto, the Holy Spirit breathes new life. “Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy.” (Acts 2:18 NRSV) God is not to be limited nor bound. Instead, there is something new happening through Jesus Christ. The world is being turned upside down and being placed right side up—all by the grace of God.

What does Pentecost mean to you?

Word among us

A young woman pastor decided to join a local hiking group for a hike on her day off. The group gathered in a parking lot and began their morning hike through a hilly forested park. The hikers were a wonderful mixture of veterans and new hikers. Friendly conversation floated along the trail as hikers got acquainted.

Eventually, someone asked the pastor what she did for a living. She replied, “I am a pastor.” Silence fell on the trail. A few hikers stopped to glare at the pastor. A woman turned to her and asked, “The Bible is clear women should not preach. *Where in the Bible does it justify you to be a pastor?*”

The pastor sighed inwardly. Although she had hoped to have a relaxing day off, she offered this reply, “Consider what God did on Pentecost. Peter stood up and proclaimed the prophet Joel’s words... “and your daughters shall prophesy”. God needs and wants all of us—old and young, male and female—to preach and teach! There is too much to be done to leave it to the men.”

How would you have responded to the hiker’s question?

How do you justify youth being involved in worship and leadership of a church?

Do you believe God’s work in the world should be left to the clergy?

Pentecost reminds us of the ways God turns the world upside down. The Spirit of Pentecost stirs up new possibilities, encouraging the use of our gifts in ways we never envisioned. We might as well put our excuses aside, for the Holy Spirit is breathing new life.

If you listen carefully to the reading of Acts 2:1-21, you can hear more than “the rush of a violent wind” (Acts 2:2) and words spoken in diverse languages. You can hear walls and barriers being blown down by the Holy Spirit. For God will not be limited by human constraints.

What surprises you most about Acts 2:1-21?

Faith practice in daily life

Proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed

How did Peter find the courage to preach to that hostile crowd gathered in Jerusalem for Pentecost? By the grace of God! Peter had help when he preached that sermon. It is doubtful he had written down notes or a sermon before he opened his mouth. He might not have known he was going to have a chance to speak. But the Spirit filled him with both the courage and those words to speak.

When we visit the sick, console the grieving, listen to a friend, or counsel a family member, we may not know what to say. When we are at work, trying to put into practice our faith in daily life, we may not know how to respond. But the Holy Spirit can give us the wisdom and courage for the hour.

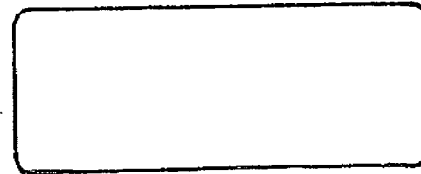
When and how this week will you be turning to the Holy Spirit for guidance? ELCA .org



Gods Work Our Hands.

Evangelical Lutheran Church of America

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

August 20th Bible School from 5-7 here at

St. John's. This week "Walk on Water"

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The last directory had a poor showing of the members here at St. John.

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10am—4 pm.**

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Compassion.. Commitment.. Community.. In Christ!