

The St. John's Messenger

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Is Anything Worse Than a Betrayer?

Yes, it is Lent, a time to look at the suffering and death of our Savior. So why not take some time to look at one of the main people involved – the one who betrayed our Savior, Judas Iscariot! You don't hear about many children being named Judas, do you? Just mentioning the name brings to mind one of the most despicable actions one person can carry out against another – betrayal.

It wasn't just anyone that Judas betrayed. No, Judas turned on someone who had been his close friend for three years, someone who had shown him nothing but kindness, someone who was willing to die for Judas. All it took for Judas to deliver his friend and Savior into the hands of his enemies was thirty pieces of silver. (Estimates regarding the value of this amount range from a few hundred dollars to \$15,000. Even at the high end it is still a small amount to take in exchange for the life of a friend!)

So despicable and so infamous is his deed that his action has become synonymous with all who are willing to give up the trust of others for things of lesser value. (The word traitor is derived from the Latin word "traditorem" which means "one who delivers" or "one who hands over".)

Yet, in Judas do you see one of the tragic figures of history? He was never able to enjoy the outcome of his action. In fact, he tried to undo what he had done and gave the money back. In the end he could do nothing to erase his action and, realizing how horrendous his deed was, he despaired and hung himself.

The truly tragic fact in all that happened to Judas is that he never realized that the death Jesus endured and the suffering he endured at the hand of God covered his sin. He never saw the resurrection. He never believed that what Jesus was doing was for him and so he did not receive the benefit of forgiveness.

But through faith, we do. We need that forgiveness, because every time we ignore what Jesus has to say about our lives, we betray him. Every time we fail to give a clear confession about Jesus as our Lord and Savior, we can be called a traitor – we give up our relationship with him in order to avoid discomfort among others! We are often much like Judas and so it is a comfort to know that Jesus paid for Judas' sins, because then we know our sins are also removed from God's sight. That is another focus in the season of Lent, to look at our own sins and failures, bring them to the cross of Christ, and know they are forgiven.

In the name of our Savior,

Pastor Draper

St. John's Mission statement:

*The continuing purpose of this congregation is to serve all people in God's world
with the gospel of Jesus Christ on the basis of the Holy Scriptures.*

Church Council Minutes March 14, 2011

Present: Steve Windschitl, Leo Derkowski, Jerry Dittbenner, Andy Lochner, Van Tallman, Barry Hillmann, Mike Crabtree and Pastor Draper.

Pastor Draper opened the meeting with devotion and a prayer.

Minutes

Andy Lochner/Van Tallman made a motion to approve the February 2011 minutes. Motion carried.

Pastor's Report

Attendance continues to improve.

Treasurer's Report

No report submitted.

President's Report

Steve Windschitl submitted written report:

- Stacy Shrum has been called as the Pre K-K teacher.
- The second long range planning meeting, focusing on the school, was held with good attendance and participation.
- The next planning meeting, on church attendance, is scheduled for March 27, 2011 at 7:00 PM.
- Lutheran Schools week culminated in a potluck and presentation by the students on Sunday, March 13.
- There will be benefit on April 3 for Aaron Dittbenner who lost most of his possessions in a fire.

Board of Elders

Leo Derkowski/Van Tallman made a motion to accept the membership through affirmation of faith of Mike and Jeannie Ream and their children, Erin and Ryan Hinrichs. Motion carried.

The Elders have begun preliminary work on salary budgets for next year.

Principal & Board of Education

Van Tallman/Barry Hillmann made a motion to offer grades K-8 for the next school year. Motion carried.

Pastor suggested that we consider adopting a new logo and mascot for the school.

The Board is looking into offering bus service from other towns such as Morgan and Springfield.

Andy Lochner/Barry Hillmann made a motion to move to a flat fee schedule for the next school year, eliminating the many small fees for various programs. The fee schedule is \$800 per year for the first student, \$700 per year for the second student in the same family, \$600 per year for the third student from the same family and \$500 per year for the fourth, fifth, sixth or more students from the same family. Motion carried.

Worship Committee

No report.

Maintenance Committee

Work continues on the fellowship area in preparation for the LWMS rally. The goal is to have all of the painting completed by the end of the day Saturday, March 19.

Three smoke/carbon monoxide detectors will be installed in the school.

Outreach

No report.

Stewardship

No report.

MVL/WELS

No report.

Endowment and Trust Fund Committee

Quarterly investment dividend checks will be issued soon.

Old Business

All Boards and Committees have their budget worksheets. The preliminary budget will be reviewed at the next council meeting.

New Business

Leo Derkowski/Jerry Dittbenner made a motion to authorize the formation of committee consisting of at least five members to perform a study to determine school facility needs and possible solutions. The committee will report periodically to the council. Motion carried.

The next voters meeting is on April 17, 2011.

The next scheduled council meeting: 7:30 Thursday April 7, 2011.

Leo Derkowski/Barry Hillmann made a motion to adjourn. Motion carried.

The meeting closed with The Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Leo Derkowski, Secretary

Preschool and Kindergarten News Miss Zastrow

April is here! For awhile there, we didn't think it would ever feel like Spring outside! We are enjoying our time at school, with no fear of more snow days in sight. This month the Preschool and Kindergarten students are looking forward to a field trip to Martin Luther College to see their Children's Theater performance of "Mr. Toad's Mad Adventures." Every year the MLC Children's Theater puts on good show for us, and we are as eager as ever to hear all about Mr. Toad and his adventures, this year!

In school, we will be learning all about insects! There are a few little girls in our classroom who LOVE teeny tiny bugs (and a few boys too, I'm sure) and are truly looking forward to learning more and more about them! We will also be learning about our country and some of the special things we experience because we live in the United States of America.

The Kindergarten students have now learned all of their letters and have been moving on to more challenging concepts like digraphs, blends, and combinations of letters. Their reading skills are gaining momentum faster than ever! First grade – here we come! Many of the Preschool students are now experts at everything that is "preschool" and are anticipating the end of the summer when they get to enter school again as a big Kindergartener!

Among others, one of our Bible stories this month is about Jesus' ascension into heaven. Our memory treasure that goes along with it (though Jesus actually said these words prior to His ascension) is from Matthew 28:20 - "Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." These words are a good reminder to everyone, especially in this classroom, that even though we may leave for a summer, and some may be leaving for even longer, God is always with us, everywhere, at every time. May God be with you, and richly bless you, this month!



Grades 1-5 News Mrs. Halvorson

April brings the hope of Spring and the joy of the Resurrection!

We have entered the last quarter of our school year. The time has flown by with new skills learned and busy days full of learning.

We have followed Jesus to the cross with our mid-week Lenten services, Bible stories, and special Resurrection Egg devotions. We will learn about Jesus' days on earth after his Resurrection and also the early Christian church yet this spring.



We are excited at the challenge to *Read Pastor to the Roof!* Many hours of reading are being logged to see if we can get Pastor to spend the night on the school roof by late May. Stay tuned for the results of the children's efforts!

In Science Grades 1-2 will learn about the human body. We will study the different systems of our body and marvel at how we are "wonderfully and fearfully made" by our God.

In Reading class Grade 2 will be doing an author study on children's author Vera B. Williams this month. First grade will enjoy digging into humorous chapter books such as Mouse Soup and Mouse Tales by Arnold Lobel. Grade 3 is enjoying a humorous book called The Lemonade Trick while grade 5 is deep into historical fiction with their novel The Sign Of The Beaver.

Later in April we will see the play at MLC in New Ulm. The Children's Theater will present "Mr. Toad's Mad Adventure". We are looking forward to this outing!

God Bless your Spring!



Grades 3-5 News from Mrs. Brown's crew...

Routine? What's that? We are so glad to have some routine back in our classroom following the awesome celebration of Lutheran schools that we had mid-March for Lutheran Schools Week. We hope you had the opportunity to enjoy our play, "How to Be a Pirate in 7 Easy Songs". Preparing and presenting the play was a great experience for the students, but it is nice to have that accomplished.

Christ Light (Grades 4-5) Our Christ Light lessons have followed the church calendar very closely this past month with Palm Sunday and Holy Week being our topics recently. The students have appreciated reading and discussing the lessons and then hearing it again 1-2 weeks later in church.

Minnesota History (Grade 5) We studied the effects that World War II and the Cold War had on Minnesotans and their companies, and vice versa. Spam and Betty Crocker had an interesting and important role during this time period.

Science (Grades 4-5) All living things are divided into 5 kingdoms (animals, plants, fungi, protists, bacteria). We then took a closer look at the animal and plant kingdoms, focusing on how scientists classify the members by their characteristics.

Science (Grade 3) We've shifted our studies quite a distance this past month from outer space to the human body. We knew the solar system was huge and there was much we did not know, but it is amazing that our own bodies have so much that we don't know about yet, and we live with it every day! The students just finished presenting about an organ of their choice and now we will look at each system of the body separately.

Social Studies (Grade 4-5) Aloha! Hawaii and the other 10 western states have been our focus this past month. The variety of these states makes this a very fun unit. We travel from tropical Hawaii, to the wilderness of Alaska, to California's Central Valley, and the Rocky Mountains. What an awesome and diverse country God has blessed us with! Soon we will be panning for gold, not quite like the 49's, since we'll be doing our out of a kiddie pool filled with water, sand, and gold flakes, but I think it will still cause some cases of Gold Fever.

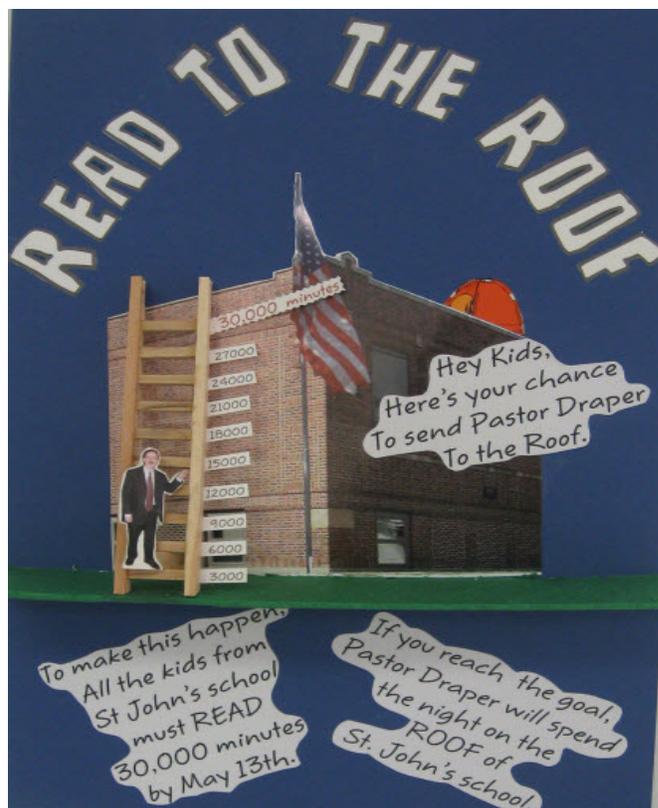


Use Scrip for Gas and Support St. John's

As gas prices continue to have a larger impact on our wallets, using Scrip gift cards for gas purchases can increase your support of St. John's. Available gas gift cards and the percent that is returned to St. John's are

- Casey's - \$25 & \$50 - 3%
- Freedom - \$25 - 5%
- Little Dukes (Cash Wise) - \$25, \$50 & \$100 - 2%
- Kwik Trip - \$25 - 9%

Contact Sallie Draper (507-794-4500 or sallie.draper@stjohnsse.com) to purchase Scrip anytime!



St. John's students have taken up the challenge to read Pastor Draper to the roof of St. John's School! If the students read a combined 30,000 minutes by May 13th, Pastor Draper will spend the night on the the roof of the school. Follow their progress on the special "Read to the Roof" charts in school and the church basement.

Ladies Aid

The Ladies Aid met on Wednesday, March 2nd at 2 p.m. For their regular scheduled meeting. Our devotion was lead by Pastor Draper from the Book of Genesis 28:10-28. Jacob had a dream in which the LORD spoke to him. The LORD promises to speak to us through the words of the Scripture.

We received a thank you from the Pal Program for our recent donation of \$100.00.

The LWMS collection taken on February 27th after services amounted to \$204.00. Thank you to all who supported this mission. The theme of the LWMS Spring Rally to be held



here at St. John's is "A Gospel Oasis South of the Border." Everyone is invited to the rally to be held on Saturday, April 9th. Registration will be from 9-10 a.m.

The MLC Auxiliary Spring Meeting will be held on Monday, April 18th at St. John's, Fairfax.

The Treasure Haus net income for 2010 was \$74,525.00. MVL received 75% or \$55,809.00. St. John's work day at the Treasure Haus is the first Friday of each month. Volunteers are invited and appreciated.

A report on Central African Medical Mission (CAMM) was given. There is a list of items they could use.

Block 3 is up to serve.

Our next meeting will be Wednesday, April 6th at 2:00 p.m. Come join us!

Marilyn Deibele
Secretary

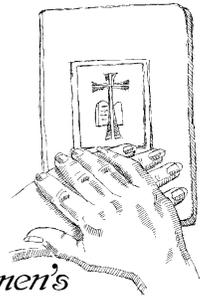


Memorials

In Memory of Arnold Guhlke
Wayne & DeAnn Gustafson - \$25.00

Hosanna Circle

Hosanna Circle met at the church on March 3rd at 6:00 p.m. Pastor shared God's word with us and we find more and more the unending love and compassion he has for us. We can all rest in the grace he gives us even though we don't deserve it. When we continue to hear his word, it builds us up and renews our strength to go forth and share his good news. Thank you, Pastor.



*Women's
Bible Study*

The details for the Ash Wednesday meal was finalized and then we worked out some of the details for the April 9th LWMS Rally being hosted here at St John's. If you are interested in helping out with this event and have not signed up yet, please speak with Paula Windschitl. Thank you to all who helped with the painting and cleaning to beautify our church.

Connie Trebesch was kind enough to let us meet at her house and do some of the Ash Wednesday meal preparation so we had great fellowship and this time was enjoyed by all who attended. Thank you, Connie. Easter Lilies will again be available for purchase. Watch for details in the church bulletin.

Hosanna Circle will cover the cost for updating the Children's Church bags in the Narthax and we would like to thank both Laurie Halvorson for picking up the supplies and Connie Trebesch for donating the crayons.

The lap robes are done and Pastor will give them to the shut-ins. This project was enjoyed by both the children who finished tying them and Hosanna Circle for putting them together.

Our next Hosanna Circle meeting will be April 7th at 6:00 p.m. in the church basement. We welcome all who would like to come and we will take this opportunity to clean any areas in the church still needing some attention before the Rally on the 9th.

Your Sisters in Christ,
Pam Dittbenner and Connie Trebesch

Thanks!

Many thanks to everyone who was involved in the church painting project. The basement, east and west stairwells and narthex were all painted the week of March 13th by volunteers from our church family. We wish to thank all who:

- Assisted with repair and prep work
- Assisted with painting and cleanup
- Donated money for paint and supplies
- Donated treats for the workers
- Loaned equipment
- Donated items to update our facility



All praise and thanks to our Lord who gave us the resources, abilities and talents to share for this offering of gratefulness as we worked to maintain and beautify our house of worship.



Easter Lily Orders

A sign up sheet is in the back of church for those who wish to donate lilies or azaleas to beautify our sanctuary on Easter morning. Cost is \$9 per lily and \$14 per azalea. Checks should be made payable to Hosanna Circle. Deadline to order is Palm Sunday, April 17.



ELS Summer Honor Choir Camp

Bethany Lutheran College Campus

June 19th-23rd

Available to students
currently in grades 9th - 12th

Applications and requirements
are available in the church office

Deadline to register is May 13th



Chili & Silent Auction Fundraiser

For Aaron & Sara Dittbenner

April 3rd

12 pm - 2pm

St. John's Ev. Lutheran Church,
Sleepy Eye



An account has been set up for
Aaron & Sara Dittbenner @
Wanda State Bank – East Main
St. Wanda, MN 56294 “Benefit
for Garage Fire” #23386403.

“I’d go to Bible Study, but ...”

Last month I mentioned that we would cover some of the misconceptions or fears of bible study in another article, so today we will take a look at a few of them. Let’s start with a little exercise:

Say “**I’d go to bible study, but...**” out loud before each one of these phrases. Short nudges of encouragement (ten words or less!) follow each phrase.

...I don’t want to read out loud.

You don’t have to. You can pass; others do too.

...I don’t want to be called on for an answer, because I’d probably get it wrong.

Pastor looks for volunteers to answer. He won’t ask you.

...I can’t hear well.

New audio system!

...I’m too busy at this time in my life. Maybe I’ll do it when I am older.

Really? What if you die first?

...I already go to church, isn’t that enough?

Church is worship; bible study is learning.

...I can read the Bible at home. Why would it be any better in a group?

Evaluate: Are you your own best teacher?

...Quite honestly, I think a lot of the Bible is rather irrelevant in our day and age.

God’s word is for you; you live today. Relevancy confirmed!

...It’s too early / too late / the wrong day

Excuse or truth? Can you make it work?

Perhaps the biggest question for many may be:

...Why should I?

Okay, this one takes more than ten words of encouragement! Please refer to 2 Peter chapter 3, vs. 11-14. In this section of scripture, Peter is describing the end of the world as we know it. He assures us that even though it will be terrifying for unbelievers, it is something we as believers can look forward to. He then states, “So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, **make every effort** to be found spotless, blameless, and at peace with him.” And in verse 18 of the same chapter, he encourages us “**But grow in the grace and knowledge** of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

I highlighted some words above... “**make every effort**” and “**grow in the grace and knowledge** of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” These are action words! Even though salvation is a gift of God by his grace, we are not to sit on our hands and avoid growing in our relationship with him. Imagine *not* having a close relationship with someone who loves you dearly (a spouse, a child, a parent). That would be pretty lopsided, wouldn’t it? You really wouldn’t get the full benefit of the relationship.

In love, God offers you great abundance in your life. If he was willing to die for you, don’t you want to get to know him better? Take action! The day will come when you will meet him face to face. Our time on earth is our time of grace, our time to prepare to meet him. Don’t let it slip away.

Paula Windschitl, Bible class participant.