

The St. John's Messenger

St. John's Lutheran Church and School

(Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod)

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www.stjohnsse.com



AUGUST 2014

I gotta thank Minnesota for a bit of understanding. Just living here has made me wiser.

It was the third of ten. The first was a bloody mess. The second was a hopping, leaping tangle of croaking stink and slime.

And then came the third.

God had Aaron do it: “Stretch out your staff and strike the dust of the ground, and throughout the land of Egypt the dust will become gnats.” (Exodus 8:16)

I've always wondered why this was considered a bad enough thing that God would count it among the 10 signs of his power against Egypt and her deities. I've often wondered... until now.

At the time I'm writing this, these little gnats are awful. They sense your warm body at great distances (given their size), and – bzzt! — they're on you! Sneaky things too. It's like they know where you're eyes can see them, so they stay beyond your peripheral view. Unless they are dive-bombing your eyes. Then they seem to take a zooming start and just run, full-tilt into your face.

Sometimes these living, zipping pebbles aim for the dark openings on your face. I was shooting some hoops with my son. At one point, just starting to arch up for a shot, he stopped mid jump, and bent over, hacking. A gnat had made a dash for his open mouth and nailed the back end of his tongue.

Often enough you don't know when they land, since they also do Black Ops Stealth Mode. After the unfelt landing, they insert something into your skin and start siphoning. What they want with your blood, I don't know. Then they leave behind that present, the little welt that gets to itching after a while, and stays that way for more than a week.

And they don't fly solo. It would be bad enough to have just one pesky gnat, dodging swats, persisting to find an opening. But they come in mini clouds. At least today's nuisances do.

Just imagine what that plague in Egypt was like! “All the dust throughout Egypt became gnats.” Can you measure dust? The Almighty turned all the dust in an instant, everywhere for thousands of square miles, into flying, swarming, probably biting gnats.

I thank Minnesota for helping me understand the gravity of that plague! God was surely trying to get their attention! When the gnat epidemic broke out, the Egyptian sorcerers tried to duplicate the plague like they had with the frogs and blood. (Interestingly, the best they had been able to do with their “secret arts” was to make the first plagues worse.) But this time, they couldn't make the gnat plague be any worse than what God had already done. They had to admit, “This is the finger of God.”

Now, despite my whining, I can't call the current gnatty scene a plague. It's nothing like what God was doing in Egypt. But if it makes us think about Egypt and God, and especially our own relationship with him, it can even be a good thing. God hoped the Egyptians would repent and turn to him. Some of them did: Some Egyptians actually left Egypt with the Jews in the Exodus!

God hopes the same for people today. He uses everyday troubles that “plague” us, to get us looking up for solutions and help from him. And he promises that everyone who seeks his help and blessing will find it. This is especially clear whenever someone repents of sins and seeks his forgiveness! “The eyes of the Lord are on those who fear him, on those whose hope is in his unfailing love!” (Ps 33:18)

And after you are a follower of Christ, when troubles come, he still stands ready to help whenever we ask. “Those who look to you are radiant; their faces are never covered with shame.” (Ps 34:5)

It's from this humble standpoint of looking up that we get to see more than the finger of God. We get to see him “bare his arm” in the form of a little baby born into the world at Bethlehem, whose arms eventually were stretched out on a cross in the ultimate expression of power, the power to love us to himself. “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest!”

President's Report to St. John's Church Council & Congregation

Our budget and electoral meeting was held June 30th. The voters' assembly approved the 2014-2015 budget. The budget needs are about the same as last year, including past and current special projects. The individual categories did fluctuate in several areas but overall it is a very workable budget. We were able to pull together and cover our expenses well the past few years. With prayer and God's guidance we will again do our best to take care of what has been entrusted to us. We can be very thankful for the blessings of a wonderful called worker staff, a great church facility, an awesome school and wonderful congregation!

At the voters meeting the voters approved to have any deficit from what is actually given to our MVL & Synod commitment to be paid at the end of this upcoming fiscal year. If we need to cover a difference it will come out of our general budget in July 2015. An update to our commitment will be reported at each voters meeting throughout the year so we know how well we are fulfilling our commitment to them. It is important to fulfill our commitment. MVL and Synod count on what we tell them we are going to give them and they set their budget accordingly. Please prayerfully consider your commitment to Synod and MVL and mark your envelopes so we know your intentions.

I am very grateful to those who volunteered to take positions on our boards and committees. A big “thank you” goes to Dave Silfies, our stewardship chair, for recruiting and encouraging these men to accept the various duties. Thank you so much to the following who were elected: Don Gohlke, for coming on the council as our financial secretary; Glen Kotten as council member and recording secretary; Gary Kuelbs as council member and maintenance chairman; and Dave Piotter, Shane Hinderman and Barry Hillmann as maintenance committee members. Thank you to Dave Jensen and Ralph Grundmeyer for taking a second term on the Endowment & Trust committee. Installation for these board members will be in the worship service on July 13th. Keep them in your prayers as they carry out God's work at St. John's.

Our annual voter's meeting will be held the evening of July 20th at 7 pm. Boards and committees will be sharing reports on the previous year's activities. It was an active one! We will assess our strengths and weaknesses and discuss our future direction. All voters, spouses and teens are welcome. Please come! We want your thoughts and ideas. There may even be a cool treat to enjoy!

Enjoy your summer! Come to Bible Study!

In Christ,
Steve Windschitl
President, St John's Congregation

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
July 10, 2014

Present: Jerry Dittbenner, Don Guhlke, Shorty Haus, Glen Kotten, Gary Kuelbs, Andy Lochner, Jim Mielke, Dave Silfies, Steve Windschitl and Pastor Cordes.

Pastor Cordes opened the meeting with devotion and a prayer.

Minutes

Shorty Haus/Jim Mielke made a motion to approve the May 2014 minutes. Motion carried.

Pastor's Report

Pastor presented a yearly report with recent updates.

Treasurer's Report

Dave Silfies/Gary Kuelbs made a motion to accept the treasurer's report.

President's Report

Written report was presented.

Board of Elders

Elder's are working hard to increase church attendance.

Elder's are looking to add one additional member to help with the growing responsibilities of the congregation. Please contact Steve Windschitl or Jerry Dittbenner if interested.

Principal & Board of Education

Playground installation is July 26th. Ten volunteers have signed up, more are welcome!

Shorty Haus/Andy Lochner made a motion to accept the Proposed Budget for Positions;
\$5,400 – Part-time teacher/Janet Crabtree
\$10.25 per hour – Pre-K Assistant Position
\$10.75 per hour – Hot Lunch Server

Worship Committee

Continue to meet monthly, looking for a chair person to head the Worship Committee.

Hiring a professional to access the audio and

other technology in the church.

Dave Silfies/Jerry Dittbenner made a motion to accept the resignation of head organist, Colleen Haag. Motion carried.

Maintenance Committee

Shorty Haus/Andy Lochner made a motion to have the floor in the church basement repaired. Motion carried.

Outreach

Meeting Sunday after Bible class.

The church picnic was amazing!

Stewardship

No report.

MVL/WELS

No report.

Endowment and Trust Fund Committee

No report.

Old Business

Looking to fill the position of janitor services for church up to 25 hours a month with a rate of \$9.50 per hours.

New Business

Annual voter's meeting will be held Sunday, July 20th at 7pm. Voters, spouses, teenagers are encouraged to come!

The next Church Council meeting will be held Wednesday, August 13th at 7:30 p.m.

Shorty Haus/Dave Silfies made a motion to adjourn. Motion carried.

The meeting closed with The Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Glen Kotten
Secretary

Ladies Aid

The Ladies Aid does not meet in the month of July.

Come join us at our next meeting, Wednesday, August 6th at 2:00 p.m.

Marilyn Deibele
Secretary

Befriend a Mission

We see two wedding anniversaries on the calendar for our assigned mission sites for the month of August! A note of encouragement is always appreciated by these missionary families serving near and far. Even more than that, your prayers make a difference! Pray for their safety, health, well-being, and the advancement of the gospel under their watch. Here is where you can send them a greeting:

Tom & Jennifer Spiegelberg
Gablewoods Mall GM Box 858
Castries, St. Lucia, West Indies
Their anniversary is on August 13th.

Pastor & Mrs. Jeffrey Gunn
PO Box 13
Laveen, AZ 85339
Their anniversary is on August 10th.

Pie Baking

Pie baking for the Corn Days celebration will be Thursday, August 15th, starting at 8:00 am in the church basement. We are looking for donations of fresh fruit. Most baking supplies will be provided. There will be a sign up sheet in the narthex starting August 3rd for bakers and donated pies. Youth group and others, we need your help selling pies on Friday, August 15th.



Bake Sale

Organ Dedication to be held on September 14th!



Our renovated organ will be dedicated in a special worship service on September 14th. Several organists will bring special pre-service music. (Come early for this mini-concert of sacred music!) Our worship service will emphasize God's gift of music, and our special format will feature the music of the liturgy and the truths of God embedded in them. A professional will explain some of the interesting details of an organ, what makes it different from piano and other instruments, and then he will play a special piece that demonstrates the range of features. We'll serve a special luncheon, which will include historical facts about our organ, plus some games and other fun.

Be sure to mark the date on your calendar! And, please watch for more details and schedules to be forthcoming yet.

Church Woodwork Shines Again

"Thank you" to all who came out in force with buckets, elbow grease and a willing spirit on a warm and humid day - July 12th - to help clean the wood surfaces in our church! 16 volunteers showed up that day, and 2 others came earlier in the week. All the wooden surfaces were washed - including floors, pews, altar, pulpit, sills, baseboards, balcony, narthex furniture and stairwells. What a joy to see our house of worship to the Lord shining again! Lots of hands helped to make swift work of the project, as we finished in about 2.5 hours.



St. John's to be in the Corn Days Parade!

A float with singers will be representing St. John's in the Corn Days Parade this year on Saturday, August 16th. Rachel Cordes is leading the practice for two songs that the group of adults and children will be singing throughout the route. These songs are lively, fun, Christian toe-tappers that will make you want to sing along! By all means, you can still do that... practices are held on Wednesday evenings through August 13th. These songs need to be memorized, so a few practices should do it. They are very easy, singable tunes with simple lyrics. Other volunteers for the float are arranging for the vehicle, float unit with decoration, electrical sources and amps for the music, etc. We can always use another hand, so if you want to "get on board" we would love it! And, please cheer us on if you see us in the parade. (Clapping is definitely allowed!) Praising God is always something to cheer about!



St. John's Family Swim Night!

Come join us at the
Sleepy Eye Aquatic Center
from 8:00pm to 9:30pm.
on August 14th

- Admission is free and all school and church families are invited.
 - Special thanks to the PTO (Parent-Teacher Organization) for sponsoring this fun event.

Swim Party



You won't want to miss
the excitement!

Interactive Faith

In September 2014, Rev. Michael Quandt, pastor at Redemption, St. George, Utah, will teach a Bible study entitled: "God's grace to runaways—the book of Jonah." Please join us for a four-part study of Jonah and God's amazing grace. We will examine and confront the runaway heart that beats inside all of us. Most importantly, we will enjoy the awe and wonder of our God's tender care for us.

The one-hour studies are broadcast live via the Internet, both audio and video, with an interactive chat feature. The study is designed for segments of presentation by the instructor followed by time for individuals and congregations to interact and discuss.



Join us each Wednesday evening
6pm or 8pm CST in September.

For more information, visit www.wels.net/interactivefaith.

DIVE IN!

Find Treasure in God's Word
at Vacation Bible School!

Place: St. John's Church/School

Dates: August 4th – 8th

Time: 9am – 11:30am

- Let's dive into God's Word together!
- Registration forms can be found in back of church.

Thanks for the flowers!

Thank you to members
who contributed flowers
for our worship services in
July: Dave and Juanita
Piotter, Mary Bartz, and
Paula Windschitl.