

The St. John's Messenger
St. John's Lutheran Church and School
(Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod)
(507) 794-6200 • Fax: (507) 794-6202

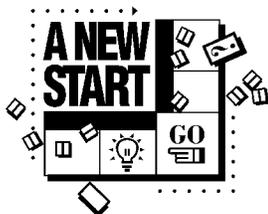
Rev. Chris Cordes, Pastor ~ Mr. Dan Rick, Principal
www.stjohnsse.com



Learn, Love, Live for Christ!

August 2015

Pastor's Page



It's On!

We're right in the start of it!
We're into the money months, where last month I gave all our members a three-month challenge to test God.

Normally we're taught to not test God, but there is a subject in which he does invite us to do so. And, no, of course he's not inviting a bad attitude. Just the opposite! He's made some promises, and, just like he did with Peter, he invites us to step out of our boats and see what it's like to stand on top of the water!

Would you be willing to commit to it for three months – July, August, and September? Of course, by the time you read this, we're heading into August. But if you didn't start at the beginning of July, it's okay to start now. Do it for August, September and October. Would you be willing to tell me if you are joining me in the challenge? I

don't need to know more details than that, just the joy of the partnership in taking God at his word, in a real and concrete way.

Here's the challenge: First, with whatever income comes in, willingly set aside a percentage for the Lord. There's no rule here. It's more of a challenge against yourself in which you're attacking personal reluctance and doubt.

Second, decide how much God would agree is generous, or what heads you in that direction. It's not about what you can afford (that would be backwards thinking). How much would I advise? If you will accept my challenge, set aside for the Lord 10% of whatever comes in. (You can divide it up for the various weeks of the month.) If you already give ten percent, my challenge is to increase your percentage by one percent. If you give 15% now, give 16% for these three months. Move 25% up to 26%, and so on.

Third, it's got to be given to him first. No leftovers for God, but

a generous amount put aside first off for his work. Yes, that means before you pay the bills. This means you will also be practicing the trust factor. But this is why the challenge is such an important one: God doesn't need the money, but you and I need to challenge ourselves to give willingly, first-fruits, generously and trustingly. And of course it's about thanksgiving! You're already right with God; you have his forgiveness and life. Now you're just trying to excel in the grace of giving.

This is the test of faith part. But I can tell you ahead of time: You cannot out-give God. And he will not – He cannot (It's impossible.) – let you down on his promise of Matthew 6:33. "Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things (you're tempted to worry about) will be given to you as well."

Do this without trying to fix the



budget or assume your contribution won't matter in the big scheme of things. It does and here's how: The matter of giving to God and running a church is all about the heart. It's not about what comes in versus what goes out. It only looks like that because all we see are the numbers, like those in the Stewardship table. Our God does not live by numbers. (Yes, we have bills, and yes, they have to be paid, so, yes, we each have a responsibility to support our church. But that's like a frame around the photo. The big picture is what kind of hearts are listening and acting

on the powerful promises of our faithful God. He can change the frame anytime.)

This challenge gives you the opportunity to step out of your boat – whether the first step or the third or fourth. Our church has been known to come through in a pinch. Or to give generously when a big opportunity presents itself. I'm observing, however, a place where we can grow even more, where we establish a culture at our church, a culture of regular giving throughout the year, a culture that expresses constant joy in our Lord's purposes and

eager participation in them, across all our membership. (If you know someone who didn't (get to) read this, take it to him/her and share it. We're all members of the body, right?)

God will make everything else work out just fine! Our highest priority in this matter is to improve the culture. This is his target from 2 Cor 8:7, to "excel in the grace of giving"!

With you in the thick of it,
Pastor Cordes.



What's Coming for Worship Themes?

On August 16, we begin a brand new series that will walk us right through the amazing book of Galatians! This is no small feat, and it is no unimportant study! The series is called “Grace on the Line” because it was! And it still is!

The series includes such titles as “An Intolerant Position,” “The Clash of Two Titans,” and “Changing Horses Mid-Stream”.

Tell your friends, invite them to this life-changing series, because grace is rarely understood properly and always on the verge of a massive cover-up!

Care for a Cool Story on Tithing?

First, find out what the poverty level was in the mid-60's.

Then ask me what my parents made each month in those years.

Then do the math of 10% of that, plus 10% of the "fair rental value" they had to declare as if income and pay taxes on.

Then ask how many children were in the household in those days.

Get this information and watch a modern-day miracle unfold before your eyes!



Thank You!



Have you seen the new banner with our Mission Statement: "Learn, Love, Live for Christ"? Many thanks to the crew that helped with design concepts, planning, sketching, pattern making, materials purchasing, cutting, sewing, ironing and construction! Special thanks to Jesse Cordes for the design sketch and pattern construction, Rachel Cordes for sewing, Connie Trebesch and Paula Windschitl for materials, and the following for construction: Mickey Meyer, Amber Sommerfeld, Ruby Guhlke, Connie Trebesch, Paula Windschitl. We also wish to thank Rich Trebesch for making a new metal rod for hanging the banner. The crew was very excited to see it completed and we pray it serves as a useful tool in our worship services, reminding us of our purpose here at St. John's.

Thank You!

A special thank you goes to Gary & Marilyn Vait (M & G Rug Cleaning) for donating the vacuuming and cleaning our school carpets!



Altar Flowers

Thank you for altar flowers to the following: Delbert and Eunice Sandhoefner for the two bouquets given by their family in honor of their wedding anniversary; Hazel Maasz family in honor of her birthday, and Mary Bartz for garden flowers. Your generous gift of these flowers remind us of the glory of God's creation as he blesses our lives with this beauty.



Befriend A Mission

We have two events in August to celebrate and remember for our missionary families! If you wish to send cards, their addresses are as follows:

Luke & Jennifer Wolfgramm Gorkovo St. 14 Apt. 57 633010 Berdsk, Russia	(Please remember to check for additional postage for this mailing) (Do not use the title of Pastor, Reverend or Missionary) Wedding anniversary August 17th
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Grant Panitzke 812 Crest Forest Rd. Knoxville, TN 37923	Turning 7 years old on August 30th
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Veterans!



We want to put an accurate and complete listing of our church's veterans in the bulletin in early November. We started gathering details last year, but our list is incomplete. Please share information on yourself and/or a family member of our church: Name, final rank, where served, years of service. If you did not share each of these details last year, please call/write to the church office: 794-6200 or office@stjohnsse.com.

Clean-Up Day

The church and school clean up day will be Saturday, **August 8th**. from 8am to Noon. Breakfast snacks provided. Join the team and support your church and school!



Volunteers for After-School-Care Program

After-School-Care Program (ASC) is looking for volunteer help from 2:50-4:00pm, or 2:50-close on varying week days. Contact Janet Crabtree at 507-351-4276 or the school office at 507-794-6200 for further information.



There is nothing, *nothing* that can kill an organization faster than poor leadership. Similarly there is nothing more important to the health and growth of an organization and its mission than good leadership.

Leaders imagine a different future, and they live in that new mental space. They articulate a vision of something bigger and better. Leaders lead. They go first. They do not stand in the back and wait for others to sacrifice and take risks. This is equally true of Christian congregations as it is of community service nonprofits. In a capital campaign, for instance, good leaders will not only work to craft a great plan; they will step up and make their own financial commitment first.

King David's pre-construction planning and organization for the building of the first temple in Jerusalem was a great success. You know why? He went first, with lavish contributions of his personal wealth. And: **"Then the leaders of the families, the officers of the tribes of Israel, the commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds, and the officials in charge of the kings work gave willingly. The people rejoiced at the willing response of their leaders, for they had given freely and wholeheartedly to the Lord"** (1 Chronicles 29:6, 9).

Good leaders release energy for service among those who follow. Good leaders release generosity in those who follow by their own personal commitments. First.

From Grace Moments,

Leader gives first, by Pastor Mark Jeske

I am proud to say we have those leaders in our congregation today. At our voters meeting on June 22 we had enough men commit to the positions available on our boards and committees to see that we now have a full church council of 11 members along with Pastor and Mr. Rick. Would you thank these men for committing their time and resources to furthering God's work at St. John's? I am excited to have this much leadership in action!

I attended the Lutheran Women's Missionary Society convention with Paula in Rapid City at the end of June. It was my first, and yes, it is done by women for women - but men are getting involved and are helping out. The theme for it was *Lift High the Cross in the Hills*. It was a great experience to hear about how our missionaries work around the world and in our country. It is truly greater what they do for the Lord in the way of spreading God's word so that others may also know of Jesus and the way to heaven. Some missionaries and their families go to great lengths and even risk all they have at times to assure that others know of Jesus and the salvation he has to offer. We have it very comfortable here in the way we can worship and not worry about government intervention and jail for worshipping.

The convention had an opening service, general ses-

sions and breakouts with many great talks by missionaries and their wives along with pastors that are working with LWMS. Several choirs sang during the 4 day convention. There were displays from the missionaries work areas around the world along with displays on many of the services the WELS offers families and individuals for help with daily living. There was time for fun as attendees enjoyed two skits: first, the hosting circuit presented a humorous play about the next convention in Chicago, then the National Board provided great humor in their skit about the LWMS. The Hill City Singers followed with musical entertainment and a comedy act. Sunday offered a closing service, then everyone departed for home. I would encourage ladies to attend and even guys. There are men that are learning and growing from this experience too! The next one will be in St. Charles IL, June 23-26, 2016.

In Christ,

Steve Windschitl, President
St John's Congregation

Learn, Love, Live for Christ



Some information about the National Convention was already shared through the President's letter in this newsletter, so I won't reiterate that. I would like to share a few more facts about the recently held convention in Rapid City.

Opening service attendance was 1,214. Number of registered attendees was 1,074. 55 of 60 circuits were represented, with 199 voting delegates. There were 223 First Time Attendees, and 21 S.O.S. (Send One Sister) attendees. Worship service offerings were contributed as follows: \$23,429.13 to Home Mission project "First Public Service Assistance", and also \$23,429.13 to World Mission project "International Missionary Wives Conference". Mission Projects selected by ballot were: Home Mission "Tools for Outreach" and World Mission "Asia Lutheran Seminary" each received \$38,349.19. The K.I.D.S. Care Project of "Children's Ministry Assistance" received \$39,762.96.

There is complete information about details of the convention on the www.lwms.org web site. (Click on Convention – Quick Facts – 2015 Convention.) In item of interest to us would be that the election of officers included our Pastor Cordes' sister, Ruth Schmitzer, being elected as Spiritual Growth-Mission Awareness Coordinator. The worship leaders, bible study and workshop leaders were invigorating and insightful. Time spent with other fellow mission-minded sisters and brothers in the faith led to many old and new acquaintances enjoying time together at, before, or after the convention.

The next convention will be June 25-28, 2016 in St. Charles, Illinois. The following year, June 2017, it will be held in Orlando, FL, hosted by the northern Florida circuits.

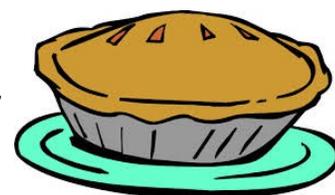
I can't even explain how uplifting it is to attend these conventions. There is so much to be learned about our Synod, our mission both as a group and as individuals, and support and care for our missionaries and their families. Please prayerfully consider attending a convention in the future. If you have further questions about the LWMS, I will be happy to chat with you or help you find the information you are looking for. Please remember to pray for missions, missionaries and their families. Your words of encouragement mean a lot to them also.

Paula Windschitl
LWMS Reporter



Pie Making Volunteers

Pie making for Corn Days begins Thursday, August 20th starting at 8:00 am. Please watch the bulletins in August for more detail. We need pie makers, fresh fruit donations (rhubarb, peaches, strawberries, etc.) We will also need volunteers for Friday, the 21st.



Present: Jesse Cordes, Dennis Dittbenner, Jerry Dittbenner, Don Guhlke, Wes Helget, Gary Kuelbs, Paul Maasz, Dan Rick, Steve Windschitl, Dave Zimmerman and Pastor Cordes.

Pastor Cordes opened the meeting with devotion and prayer.

The following minutes are not yet approved.

Gary Kuelbs/Wes Helget made a motion to approve the June 2015 minutes. Motion carried.

Pastor's Report

Pastor Cordes shared a written report highlighting the first of a 3 month challenge to increase our offering to the Lord.

President's Report

Steve Windschitl presented a written report to the council.

Treasure's Report

President Steve Windschitl presented a written treasure's report in the absence of Jim Mielke. Paul Maasz/Dave Zimmerman made a motion to approve the Treasure's report. Motion carried.

Finance Committee Report

No new items to report.

Elder's Report

Dennis Dittbenner/Jerry Dittbenner made a motion to release Joni Deibele from membership at St. John's as per her request to the Elders. Motion carried.

Dennis Dittbenner/Don Guhlke made a motion to transfer out Chris Brown to St. Paul's Lutheran, New Ulm. Motion carried.

The Hog Roast date has been set for September 13th.

Mission Festival has been set for October 11th.

Principal/Board of Education

Principal Dan Rick gave a verbal report.

This month's activities include upgrading 2nd grade reading program, info on Title 1 program, renewed hot lunch contact in SE Public, Clean-up day has been set for August 8th for school and church.

Back-to-School night will be August 19th at 6pm. First day of school will be August 31st.

Worship Committee

A written report was presented.

Maintenance Committee

Gary Kuelbs gave a verbal report.

He reported on the repair to the fellowship hall floor, and the roof leak repairs that were completed.

Outreach Committee

Dave Zimmerman gave a verbal report that highlighted the WBS/ Soccer Camp which was successful.

Stewardship Committee

No report.

Pastor Cordes informed the Church Council of an upcoming Stewardship Workshop to be held at Zion, Winthrop on August 29th, from 9am to noon.

MVL/WELS

Jerry Dittbenner presented a verbal report on the major points given at the Annual Delegates Meeting.

Endowment & Trust

Gary Kuelbs informed the Church Council on the current activities of the Endowment & Trust Fund Committee.

Old Business

Discussion on Office/Secretary position—3 applicants have applied and will be interviewed. Elders are responsible for the interview process and recommendation to the Church Council.

New Business

There was a lengthy discussion on church finances and shortfall on the budget, and possible solutions were noted.

Discussed a proposal from Cheri Hammerschmidt and Head Start Program to host a Strong Start Program at St. Johns. Don Guhlke/Dennis Dittbenner moved to allow Cheri Hammerschmidt to proceed with and allowing the use of our fellowship hall for Strong Start Program. Motion passed.

The next meeting will be August 13th at 7:30pm.

Voter's Annual meeting will be held July 19th, 2015 at 6:30pm.

Dennis Dittbenner/Paul Maasz made a motion to adjourn. Motion carried.

Pastor closed with prayer.

Submitted by,
Jerry Dittbenner
Secretary



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Address Service Requested

**St. John's Lutheran
Church and School**



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**Non-Profit Organization
UNITED STATES POSTAGE
PAID
Permit No. 17
Sleepy Eye, MN 56085**

Regular Worship Schedule:
Sundays Worship—9am
Adult-Teen Bible Class/Sunday School—10:15am
Mondays Worship—7pm
Adult-Teen Bible Class—8pm
Thursdays Worship @ Sleepy Eye Care Center—4pm

Pastor—Chris Cordes
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Principal—Dan Rick
Phone—920-312-3829
Email—dan.rick@stjohnsse.com

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