

# *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](http://www.stjohnsse.com)



**JULY 2014**

### **God is Our Refuge**

Have you stopped to think about it?

One of the easiest things to do is not read God's Word. One of the next easiest things is to read it too fast. Our eyes blur over words and we catch some of the meaning, but that's more like walking down the aisle in a grocery store!

Slow down just a minute and think what it means "God is our refuge." There's the word "God," and we can dwell a moment on the fact that we're thinking about the one true God, whose names have become precious to us. Jehovah, for example, the "I AM," eternal, absolutely independent, faithful in everything he says and does. That's just one name! "God" means "mighty one". Oh, then that stirs up thoughts about how strong he is, like all-mighty, the most powerful one, the maker of the entire universe.

Now let that reflection slide you into the word "is". Just a simple little word, but what it does not mean helps forge an image in the little passage. It does not say "God used to be..." or "God sometimes is," or "could be". (You can think up other possibilities.) But "is" means those other meanings don't fit. It helps us see him as perfectly stable, solid, constant. This word "is" stands forever with its meaning of "right now". He will never change from this "is"! This is a permanent reality!

What is? That the great Almighty, "God,"

is

our "refuge".

Refuge. You know what it signifies. Not too fast now! Think on it a moment more. That's a place where someone can go and hide, find shelter from the elements, from danger, from enemies. Danger either doesn't see you there, or, if it does, it cannot reach you. And notice he doesn't limit the kind of refuge he's talking about. Whether you need safety from physical dangers, or the emotional kind, or the spiritual enemies and influences, it's all the same to our Almighty. Nothing can reach behind his protection; we find refuge in the shadow of his wings (Ps 36:7).

And we did miss a word, didn't we? (Did you read too fast to notice?) "Our" This is as precious as any of the other words. God is not saying he is the refuge for someone else, excluding you. Because of his love, the love that put skin and bones and redemption on his Son, God wanted to make sure we know we are welcome near him; we can own him as ours and be comfortable close to him. "Our refuge" is a thought we will be making songs about in heaven's realms!

What a tremendous gift he speaks into our souls! And what a pleasure to take the time to ponder it!

## Coming Events

We've got a boatload of great things coming to our church life! Here's a peek at the next couple months:

- **June 29 is our church picnic.** We gather at the Allison Park side of Lake Sleepy Eye for worship at 10 am (note the time!). There will be games and competitions, a festive atmosphere, great fellowship. It will be a potluck affair, so watch for information on what to bring so we have something besides 400 carrot cakes to eat. (Carrot cake is wonderful, of course, but 400?....) By the way, these informal, unusual events are great opportunities to bring friends. It's not as "threatening" as entering a church building, and there are a lot more chances for friendly conversations.
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- **July 4th weekend:** *A Spectacular Kind of Freedom*
  - **July 13 begins my first sermon series with you.** We're going to dig into the Lord's Prayer, each week exploring a section of it for what Jesus meant and how we can pray it more thoughtfully (and with greater blessings!) A couple sample titles: "You Call Him WHAT?!" "What if God Never Said 'No'?"
  - **July 26:** Our new school playground will be installed!
  - **August 4-8:** Vacation Bible Camp! Our team is lining up a grand event of excellent life-teaching, craft building and fun playing for kids. It will be a morning event this year. Children from all over the area will be invited. Pray that lots of unchurched children come! And volunteers are needed to make it a grand success for the Lord! Talk with Judy Maasz (507-794-4464) about what you might be needed for!
  - **September 7 is Hog Roast Sunday.** But, no, I won't be preaching about pork. Count on a useful message from the Lord's good Word and a great dinner afterwards. It's also the kickoff for a new season of Sunday School. We're thinking up something special as part of the day's events.
  - **September 14 is our organ dedication.** At last! (Thanks, by the way, for waiting until my family and I could join you for this event!) Your new Worship Team is planning a special, spectacular program for the day. We'll have a long set of pre-service music, with a wide variety of organists and special pieces played before worship begins. The service itself will involve lots of grand music and spiritual insights in and surrounding the gift of music. We'll have an organ demonstration right after the service, with a professional explaining how the instrument works, challenges to playing organ, and ways to maximize its awesome potential. We hope to have this visible to all via live video projection. (Not very many can squeeze up next to the organ and watch the organist play!)  
After this we'll have a special dinner and fellowship, including a short, fun program. Speaking of that program, your Worship Team would like your memories. We're gathering memories people have about organs in church or otherwise, a favorite song you heard on an organ, some memory you associate with hearing organ music, etc. Send in a brief story (short paragraph). Several entries will be read at the dinner!

### 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.*

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

June 17, 2014

June brings us (to what I see in the outdoors) as the greenest time of the year. Spring's new life is growing into maturity, and things here in Minnesota are very much alive. Our congregation is much like that. We are growing and maturing in our faith and sharing with each other that faith which keeps us alive. Working together, using the gifts we are given, allows our congregation to grow and be complete.

I receive devotions called "Grace Moments" from Time of Grace in my inbox daily and I would like to share a portion of one I got a week ago:

*"Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms" (1 Peter 4:10). Let no Christian ever say, "I've got nothing." St. Peter states that all believers have gifts, gifts intended by God to be shared. Romans chapter 12 gives some examples to get you thinking.*

*Not sure what yours are? Do two things: ask a friend what he or she thinks you're good at, and then have a conference with yourself and determine what you're really passionate about that could help somebody else. That passion may be the Spirit's clue."*

We all have gifts that are useful, but we may not always see what they are. Asking a friend to help you determine what your gifts are may be very helpful. Members in your congregation often times are able to see what your gifts are - - and they are useful gifts indeed! Opportunities abound for members to lend help and support to other members in times of need. There are always upcoming events that require eager, willing people to see that they happen. Our property can use attention in various forms. There are boards and committees that offer opportunities for using your gifts to the best of your ability, which serve to help keep our church body functioning in a God-pleasing manner. If you are asked to help out please contemplate that request prayerfully and with due consideration. It may just be that we are seeing your gifts!

Our budget and electoral meeting will be held June 30th after the 7 pm service. We will fill our boards and committee positions, and also set our budget and goals for the upcoming year. Please join us! Your input is valuable.

The new playground project is moving along and it's about ready to be built. The build date has been set for July 26th. Everyone with gifts in construction is especially asked to be there! Many thanks to Mr. Rick and the St John's School Board Members for putting in extra effort to see this project to completion. Thanks to all who have donated to this project. I know the kids are going to love it!

Join us for Bible study after services. Attendance has been growing and the discussion is great! Vacation Bible School is coming the first week of August, too. There are so many opportunities to grow and learn more about God's word!

Our annual voter's meeting will be held Sunday July 20 at 7 pm; all members are invited to come.

Have an enjoyable summer, but please don't forget to come to church at St. John's and worship -- or worship in a nearby WELS or ELS church if you're on vacation -- and give thanks for our many blessings!

In Christ,

Steve Windschitl  
President, St John's Congregation



**Church Council Minutes**  
**June 17, 2014**

Present: Jerry Dittbenner, Shorty Haus, Andy Lochner, Jim Mielke, Steve Windschitl, Kevin Leopold and Jon Meyer.

President Steve Windschitl had a devotion followed by prayer.

**Minutes**

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

**Pastor's Report**

Pastor absent, no report.

**Treasurer's Report**

Andy Lochner/Jerry Dittbenner made a motion to accept the treasurer's report. Shorty Haus presented a written revenue report.

**President's Report**

Written report was presented. President Steve Windschitl is encouraging all members of the congregation to serve with their time and talents.

**Board of Elders**

No membership changes this month. The elders reported on usual activities for the month.

**Principal & Board of Education**

Dan Rick was absent. No report.

Jon Meyer presented a report with updated information on the new playground installation.

**Worship Committee**

No report.

**Maintenance Committee**

Kevin Leopold was present to report on various repair projects on the church and parsonage.

**Outreach**

Jim Mielke reported on activities including the upcoming picnic.

**Stewardship**

Dan Silfies was absent. No report.

**MVL/WELS**

The quarterly MVL delegate meeting is scheduled for June 23rd at 7:00 p.m.

**Endowment and Trust Fund Committee**

Andy Lochner gave a verbal report on the current activities of the Endowment and Trust Committee.

**Old Business**

The council reviewed the preliminary budget for 2014/2015 making some minor adjustments.

Shorty Haus/Andy Lochner made a motion to present the adjusted budget recommendation to the congregation at the annual voter's meeting in July. Motion carried.

**New Business**

Shorty Haus presented a verbal report on his attendance at the Mn District Convention at MLC. Shorty was very much impressed with the proceedings and that he had learned a great deal.

The Annual Voter's Meeting was set for Sunday, July 20th at 7:00 p.m.

The next Church Council meeting will be held Thursday, July 10th at 7:30 p.m.

Andy Lochner/Shorty Haus made a motion to adjourn. Motion carried.

The meeting closed with The Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Jerry Dittbenner  
Acting Secretary

## Ladies Aid

The Ladies Aid met on Wednesday, June 4th at 2:00 p. m. for their regular scheduled meeting. Pastor Cordes led devotion from the book of Romans 8:18. Our present sufferings are not worthy, compared to the hope we have in heaven.



A bill of \$40.00 was presented for the cake reception on Baccalaureate Sunday, May 18th. The Ladies Aid also paid \$24.50 for new place mats to be used for church events.

The Ladies Aid received a thank you for our recent donation of \$50.00 to the Lutheran Home, Malawi Disability Ministry.

Block 3 is up to serve.

The Ladies Aid do not meet in the month of July. Our next meeting will be on Wednesday, August 6th at p. m. Come join us!

Marilyn Deibele  
Secretary

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## Altar Care

Here at our church, we don't have a formal Altar Guild, but we do have individuals who perform the duties necessary to keep the worship items current and in proper order. Marcia Derkowski monitors the Church calendar and places the appropriately colored altar, pulpit and lectern cloths according to the season. Banners, flowers and communion napkins are overseen by Paula Windschitl, with help from volunteers. Elders (and sometimes their wives) set up and take down communion items. Seasonal displays (the cross at Easter with lily garland, Thanksgiving/harvest display, etc.) are erected by various volunteers, with special direction from Lynn Hacker, Jan Dittbenner and others. Christmas decorations are put up and taken down by a rotating list of church groups. Many times, our church elders pitch in and help with any of these things as needed. Would you be interested in helping out sometimes? This is a good opportunity for teens - or anyone really - to become more aware of

how the church operates behind the scenes! If you can help out on occasion, or have questions or comments about this part of service preparation, please contact Pastor, Marcia, Paula or some of the elders. We'd love to share in the joy of this special service.



The worship committee recently met and we would love to acquire some additional banners and perhaps begin to "retire" some of the older, unused or tattered ones as we become able to replace them. Do you have an artistic knack for creating a banner? Or, would you find it rewarding to help purchase a new banner? If so, please contact Paula Windschitl. Thank you!

Other areas of opportunity to help with altar duties: The woodwork on the altar, pulpit, lectern, pews, and window sills should be washed with Murphy's Oil Soap annually. How about picking one of those areas? Or, how about gathering some friends to get a little cleaning party together in order to take a bigger bite out of the project? With the organ dedication coming up in September, it would be great to have a sparkling church for "company" when they arrive. Thanks to all the members who so diligently and sometimes silently perform duties like this!

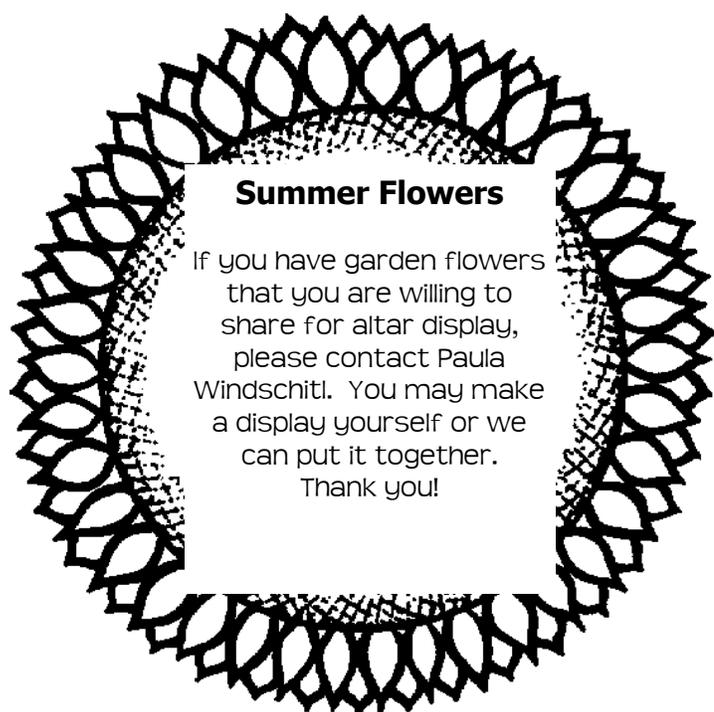
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## LWMS Summer News

The National Convention will be history by the time you read this. It was held June 26-29 in Dallas, Texas. Thank you for casting your ballot in the month of May for officers as well as Home and World Mission projects. It's not too early to start considering a trip to next year's convention to be held in Rapid City, SD. The mission stories, devotional studies and Christian women's fellowship is an experience that should be enjoyed!

We have no birthdays or anniversaries to commemorate in July for our Befriend a Mission Assignments in St. Lucia and Arizona, but please remember all missions and especially World missionary families in your prayers. The summer months are often their times of furlough, where

they get to enjoy a trip back to the US to visit extended families, take care of medical needs, purchase items they don't have access to, and enjoy fellowship with their American Christian friends. International travel can be difficult, especially for families with children. Pray for their safety and refreshment at this time so they may be able to return to their field to continue their work of sharing the saving Word of God.



## 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.



*Always give  
yourselves fully  
to the work of  
the Lord...*

*1 Corinthians 15:58*

## Thank You

Thank you for all the wonderful cards of support from our church family when my dad (Herb Vogt) went to his eternal home.

Jan & Jerry Dittbenner

*Thank You!*

## Playground Volunteers Needed

Playground installation will take place on Saturday, **July 26th**. We are looking for 10 volunteers to work with tools and haul heavy equipment.

Contact Dan Rick to volunteer.

Thank you!

