



The Informer

June 2026

St. John's Lutheran Church

Volume 68 Issue 9



HAPPY FATHER'S DAY

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From Pastor's Pen:

The Exception Clause

I first met Jesus' "exception clause" in the early 80's, while a student at Concordia Theological Seminary in Ft. Wayne, IN. Matthew records His use of it twice, during the Sermon on the Mount (5:32) and as part of a response (19:9) to the question put forth by some Pharisees, "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?" Both times Jesus says that divorce is not allowed "except for..."

Except for what? I thought it an important question, so important that I wrote my Masters' Thesis on just that; The Exception Clause. I read a lot and thought a lot in the process of producing seventy-something pages in 1985, and as is often the case, I have continued to study that same subject. I'm probably the most knowledgeable person on The Exception Clause you'll ever meet!

The Greek word is "πορνεία," and English and American versions translate it into words like "unfaithful, unchastity, fornication, " and mostly "sexual immorality," which is probably the best. Jesus says that He forbids divorce "except for πορνεία," which means anything other than a one man - one woman relationship, in which case there sort of has to be a divorce, as a matter of course.

If a woman is married to a pedophile, she can't stay married to him, especially if she has children. If the husband wants to bring other women into the his marriage, you have to divorce him. If two men are "married" to each other, or two women are "married" to each other, the biblical thing to do is to get a divorce. If you are married to a homosexual, then divorce may be the only option.

And animals. If you are married to - oh, you were not aware that people are getting "married" to animals? Do a search on "marry pet." Why would you do that? Because they want to be married, but not to a human. It's the same reason why people would rather have pets than children. Animals never become teenagers, they never tell you they hate you, and they always come when called.

See The Informer
IN COLOR
On Our Website

From a July 31, 2019 article in The Guardian,, an English woman named Elizabeth Hoad “married” her dog, Logan, a Golden Retriever because “after four failed engagements, 220 dates and a range of unsatisfactory experiences in the search for love – men concealing wives, men her age pursuing younger women – she had given up on the male of her species.” The dog was much less trouble.

The dog has been “a constant” in her life, and she says “He’s saved me and I’ve saved him. I was broken before I got him.” A New York woman says of her husband the poodle cross, “He’s always there for me. He listens, and he loves me no matter what. What more could a woman want?” A man? Could you want a good man and raise a family together? But I do hear what you’re saying.

I think it’s harder than it ever has been for our young women to find a “good man” and for our young men to find a “good women,” but it can be done. The first thing is; don’t settle. Don’t marry somebody just to be married. The second thing is – hard to believe we will be married for 48 years in August. The second thing is neither one of us believe in divorce. Except for πορνεία.

In Christian Service,

Pastor Anderson

S.A.L.T (Secretaries and Administrators in Lutheran Fellowship)

The Rock Island Circuit has 12 churches, 10 of which have secretaries/administrators. The secretaries have begun a new partnership in our Circuit ministry: one that supports each other in their positions by sharing ideas, problem solving together, and praying for one another. They are also working together to provide opportunities for our Circuit churches to connect through fellowship, service events, and worship. Watch your bulletin and newsletters for upcoming events and a special fundraiser that everyone can enjoy in 2027, all...year...long!

Introducing...

ATTENTION MEN Join us for Men’s “Brats, Bible, & Beverages” on Sunday June 28th at 5:00 PM at the church. Brats, hot dogs, and buns will be supplied. Also, unsweetened iced tea and water will be provided. We ask you bring something to share such as condiments, chips, casseroles, desserts and your own beverage if you desire something other than tea or water. Please sign up no later than June 21st so we know how much food to purchase. This will be a great opportunity for fellowship with our congregational men and possibly other men from local congregations. Contact Rod Hopkins, 920-217-1484, for questions.



Serving the Lord This Month:

Ushers

Sat, June 6: Greg Burke, Todd Miller, Rick Newlon, & Larry Ripka
Sun, June 7 : Glen McMillin
Sat, June 13: Greg Burke, Todd Miller, Rick Newlon, & Larry Ripka
Sun, June 14: Glen McMillin
Sat, June 20: Greg Burke, Todd Miller, Rick Newlon, & Larry Ripka
Sun, June 21: Glen McMillin
Sat, June 27: Greg Burke, Todd Miller, Rick Newlon, & Larry Ripka
Sun, June 28: Glen McMillin

Greeters

Sat, June 6: Chuck Brokaw
Sun, June 7:
Sat, June 13: Chuck Brokaw
Sun, June 14:
Sat, June 20: Chuck Brokaw
Sun, June 21:
Sat, June 27: Chuck Brokaw
Sun, June 28:

Acolytes

Summer acolytes will be on a volunteer basis.



Altar Guild

Christine Engebrecht, Carole Krouth, and Margie Schaefer

Communion Assistants

June 7: Jonathan Schmidt & Kevin McAnally
June 21: Jim Homann & Glen McMillin

Flowers

June 7: Rod & Noreen, with thanks for God's blessings
June 14: OPEN
June 21: Kevin & Kris McAnally, in honor of their anniversary
June 28: OPEN

Eternal Candle

June 7: Gail Massey
June 14: Dawn & Evan Antolik, in honor of Kristen's and Easton's birthdays
June 21: In honor of Ethan Sountris' graduation
June 28: Ralph & Norma Grotelueschen's 61st anniversary



Church News

Birthdays this Month:

June 1 - Judy Murphy

June 2 - Orene Antolik

June 4 - Howard Williams

June 5 - Rod Hopkins

June 7 - Chris Brand, Alice
Gingry, Valerie McDonald &
Penelope Parker

June 8 - Rhea Oakes

June 9 - Bali Guerrero, Jim
Homann, & Jennifer Palar

June 11 - Joel Duffy & Owen
Mattly

June 13 - Evelyn Weakley &
Nicole Wilson

June 14 - Kristen Antolik

June 16 - Rachel Kjera &
Adam McMillin

June 18 - Easton Antolik,
Monica Scheer & Lora
Vallee

June 19 - Samuel Bowman,
Sylvia Fauser & Samuel
Nelson

June 20 - Hailey Ekin

June 21 - Carrie Homann &
Jonathan Schmidt

June 23 - Tony Frankowski &
Kevin Verschoore

June 24 - Ron Wilson

June 25 - Matt Hawkins, Peg
Heitzman



June 27 - Derek Duffy

June 28 - Tim Chellew &
Melinda Loete

June 29 - Grant Belzer, Chuck
Brokaw, & Gunter
Terronez

Weekly Attendance & Offerings

<u>DATE</u>	<u>THIS YEAR</u>	<u>LAST YEAR</u>
4/26/26	96	115
5/03/26	119	163
5/10/26	145	161
5/17/26	128	141
5/24/26	119	127
Average monthly attendance of St. John's membership 2025: 29 %		
2026: 26%		

Membership Report

Deaths:

Kathy Herron (05/09/26)

James Vrban (05/16/26)

Nancy Smart (05/19/26)

New Members:

Thomas, Lindsey, Alexander and Jack Chapman
transferred from Concordia Geneseo (05/20/26)

Infant Baptism:

Beau Beale (05/10/26)

Church News

LWML

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

The next **LWML** will be meeting **Thursday June 18th at 1:00 pm**
Watch the Bulletins for more info

LWML Central Illinois District

2026–2028 Mission Grants & Convention Highlights
April 24-25 | Decatur, Illinois



Delegates gathered in Christian fellowship, worship, and prayerful consideration as important decisions were made to guide the work of the LWML Central Illinois District in the coming years.

Delegates approved a change to the CID LWML convention schedule:

- LWML CID will now hold conventions every **two years (biennium)**
 - Conventions will occur in the **opposite years of the National LWML Convention**
- This adjustment allows for better alignment and planning with national LWML activities.

Mite Goal for 2026–2028

\$220,000 Biennium Goal

As part of this new biennium, delegates approved an updated mite goal of **\$220,000.**

- **75%** of mites will remain in the Central Illinois District to fund district mission grants
- **25%** will be contributed toward national LWML mission grants

APPROVED MISSION GRANTS

Sharing Christ's Love Through Your Mite Offerings

The following mission grants were approved for the 2026–2028 biennium:

- **Student Church Workers** – \$60,000
- **Christ-Centered Crisis Support - LFS** – \$25,000
- **Sharing Our Savior, 1 Meal at a Time** – \$7,500
- **Hands that Serve, Hearts that See - Braille** – \$12,000
- **Care Packages - Phil's Friends** – \$5,000
- **Children's Books - LHM State Fair** – \$10,000
- **Lutheran Books for Children - World** – \$5,000
- **Set Apart to Serve** – \$10,000
- **Gospel Access for Aging Adults - CID** – \$13,000
- **Deaconess Kim Bueltmann in Germany** – \$10,000
- **Family 4 Life in CID** – \$7,500

Newly Elected Leadership of the Executive Committee

- **Rev. Steven Sommerer Jr.** – Counselor
- **Sara Wendling** – Treasurer
- **Pat Heinecke** – Recording Secretary
- **Brenda Hendricks** – Corresponding Secretary
- **Laura Strattman** – Vice President of Mission Grants

Church News

- ALL BOARDS MEET ON THURSDAY, JUNE 4TH AT 6:30PM
- PARISH PLANNING WILL BE AT THE SAME MEETING.
- THE NEXT VOTER'S MEETING IS SUNDAY, JUNE 7TH AT 1:00PM, WITH A SPECIAL PASTORAL CALL VOTE AT 2:00PM



Baccalaureate Service

On Sunday, May 31st, we will recognize our baccalaureates during our worship service.

Congratulations to our class of 2026!!!

Lauren Belzer

Carlee Budney

Megan Hess

Gavin Johnson

Dawsyn McDonald

Jaydin Medina

Brooke Medinger

Jonathan Weakley

Demetrius Williams



Tyler Belan– Illinois State University

Payton Mattly– Augustana College

Ethan Sountris– Bradley University

Fellowship Dinner

The game night planned for June 12th has been changed to reschedule the Fellowship Dinner at the Riverside Asian Kitchen in LeClaire at 6:00pm. This dinner event was originally planned for April but was canceled due to severe weather that night. Please sign up by June 7th so we can make reservations!

Ladies Luncheon

All the lovely ladies of St. John's are welcome to meet at Deerfield Restaurant in Silvis on Thursday, June 18th at 11:30am for lunch and laughs. The more the merrier!

Notes from the Balcony

June greetings,

Last month, the terms *Matins and Vespers* were the subjects of investigation. This month, let's think about why we might call five of the service settings in our hymnal *Divine services*. You probably have noticed that these services include Holy Communion. In the red and blue hymnals of my childhood, this service was called "The Order of Holy Communion," or more commonly, "Page 15." "Page 5" was the service of non-communion Sundays. What is it about the word "Divine" that made our synod's musical church leaders change this service's title to "Divine Service" from a perfectly good name like "Page 15"?

What do you think of when you hear the word divine? I usually think of it as a word associated with God. But food can taste divine, or you can have a divine time. Have you ever had the candy called Divinity? Fond potluck memories of this confection, composed of whipped egg whites, sugar, and corn syrup, reawaken in my mind a white cloud-like candy rendered even more divine by the addition of walnuts. My mom remembers her grandma making this heavenly candy. And how about a divining rod? Have you seen one in use? Since there is no good subterranean map of our subdivision, when it came time to dig a hole in our front yard, a man with a bent stick walked across our lawn, and when the stick bent down, the pipe was found. When I asked the Bible Gateway site to search for the word divine in the ESV Bible, most of the occurrences referred to diviners who were fortune-tellers or known to communicate with the spirit world.

So how did we end up with "Divine Service" as the title of our communion services? I believe it has to do with Merriam-Webster's first definition of divine: "of, relating to, or proceeding directly from God." We LCMS Lutherans believe that the Divine Service is primarily a time set aside when God comes to serve us in Word and Sacrament. We then respond, in our human-limited fashion, with praise and thanksgiving. This give and take, occurring throughout the service, including at the time of the sacrament, leads to the realization that the former title, "The Order of Holy Communion," is a bit narrow in scope. The title, "Divine Service," also helps us keep the focus in the correct direction, which is on God and what He does for us, rather than on ourselves and our goals.

In closing, stanza one of the hymn, "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling", LSB 700, captures several ideas that the Divine Service encompasses. It was written by Charles Wesley (1707-1788), an English Anglican priest and prolific hymn writer of more than 6000 hymns. Notice the direction of blessings in this stanza, from heaven to earth.

"Love divine, all loves excelling,
 Joy of Heav'n to Earth come down,
 Fix in us thy humble dwelling,
 All thy faithful mercies crown;
 Jesus, thou art all compassion,
 Pure, unbounded love thou art;
 Visit us with thy salvation,
 Enter ev'ry trembling heart."

A fellow recipient of many Divine blessings,
 Christine Engebrecht



Church News

Trusting and Faith in the Call

Hallelujah! The Lord is here at St. John's. Blessed are those who are anxious in the call of a pastor. That wasn't one of the beatitudes that Jesus preached at the Sermon on the Mount but maybe it should have been.

As we approach the one-year mark of the retirement of our beloved shepherd of 30 years, I know that fear, anxiety, and worry about the future of our church is on the rise. Yet, the Lord is here at St. John's. He is here in the Word that is preached. He is here in the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Our Lord continues to nourish us through weekly worship, Bible studies and the serving of our neighbor.

For many in the congregation, this is your first time going through the call process. There is FEAR! Some people have stopped coming. Some are asking, What is wrong with our congregation because the men we have called haven't accepted? Are we offering too little in pay? Will the members just give up and move to a new church? What can WE do to get a pastor? How can WE entice the man we call to accept?" But here is the thing, WE aren't in charge; God is! That is such a simple statement, that we all know is true. Unfortunately, we sometimes hold onto our anxiety instead of casting our fears on Him. "I have chosen you and not cast you off; fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand." (Isaiah 41:9b-10)

Why is the wait so long? 1) Currently within the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS) 1 in 5 (20%) congregations are in a pastoral vacancy. That means there are approximately 1,000 congregations that are vacant. 2) "Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore, pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers to his harvest.'" (Matthew 9:37) The highest number of seminarians graduating from our two seminaries was in the 60s and 70s, with the peak being around 1000. Pastor Umbarger's graduating year was 180. This year's graduates totaled 71. This simply adds to the fact that it is not uncommon for congregations to make multiple calls before one is accepted. In an article in the February 2026 issue of the *Lutheran Witness Magazine*, Rev. Dr. Michael Von Behren, president of the LCMS Northwest District states; "There can be an expectancy when a congregation first goes into the vacancy that they will ... have a pastor within about six months. And the reality is, a fast call process would be a year to 18 months."

For a pastor, a call is more than a job offer. The deliberation is more than looking at the location of the call and salary being offered. Several factors can go into why a pastor may or may not accept a call beyond the compensation package and the community. While seeking the Holy Spirit's guidance through prayer and scripture, there are questions he should prayerfully consider.

- Am I still needed at my current call?
- Is there an opportunity for growth, outreach, and long-term impact?
- How would this call impact; the personal well-being of my family, my personal health, and my spouse's ability to find employment?
- How long was the previous pastor at the congregation?
- Ultimately, based upon the previous questions, "does it seem most beneficial in my service to the Lord for me to stay at my present congregation, or would it be better to accept this new call?"

Our Synod has created the Call process with several important steps that involve many people -----, all of whom need to trust the process. When a pastor receives a call, he has an obligation to inform his congregation, the Circuit Visitor, and the District President of that fact and not keep it to himself. He also has an obligation to acknowledge receipt of the call to the calling congregation. His congregation should be a part of the decision process and should be encouraged to pray for the pastor. The calling congregation should also pray for the pastor and his congregation. Christian congregations are a union of the body of Christ and therefore, are mutually responsible and accountable to one another.

While vacancies pose real challenges, there are things we can do to help us weather the challenges. Here are a few.

- **Be flexible.** Things are naturally different than when we had a permanent pastor.
- **Get Involved.** Ask how you can help to serve the congregation and keep things going.
- **Carry on as a Congregation.** Remain in the Word, in worship, in Bible Study. Participate in the work of the church, just like you did before.
- **Love One Another.** Have grace for one another and show support for one another. Pray fervently for one another, for the next pastor, the vacancy pastor, the District President, and the Circuit Visitor.
- **Gives Thanks.** This is not your church, it's Christ's. Christ builds His church, and He knows the needs of St John's more than we do. God has blessed St. John's with...
- Circuit pastors who are serving us so that we can continue our Saturday services
- Faithful pastors who administer the Word, Sacraments and the forgiveness of sins.

We are in good hands. Not in the hands of our vacancy pastor. Not in the hands of our circuit visitor. Not the hands of the District President, but in God's hands. Hallelujah! The Lord is here at St. John's.

Read more in the article *Weathering Vacancies Well from the February 2026 issue of the Lutheran Witness*. <https://witness.lcms.org/2026/weathering-vacancies-well/>

Call Committee Update

After much prayerful deliberation, Pastor Peter Deberny has declined our call. The call committee had a meeting and decided that the 4 remaining names our call list are strong candidates and we will proceed with another vote. Voting members of the congregation are invited to a special Pastoral Call Vote on Sunday, June 7th at 2:00pm. This will follow the regular voter's meeting at 1:00pm in the Janssen rooms.



Rock Island Circuit Night at the Ball Park

Saturday, July 11

5:30pm Game Time
Doors open at Noon



● **RSVP** to your Home Congregation
by **Sunday, June 14th**

● **\$\$** Give your Cash or Checks
(written to your home congregation) by **June 14th.**

Tickets You can pick up your tickets at the
Will Call Window under our church name.

The park is wheelchair/
walker accessible.

If the game is rained out your
ticket is good for any other
home game that you want to
use it at. No money will be
refunded.



**Rock Island
Circuit
Summer
VBS
Guide**

Are your children, grandchildren, or young neighbors and friends looking for a fun, faith-filled experience this summer? We have several incredible Vacation Bible School (VBS) options available throughout the area!

Reserve your child's spot by calling the number listed for your chosen program. Walk-ins are always welcome.

Please note: Not all programs run 5 days, check the dates carefully.

Find the week that works best for you!

June 1-5

CONCORDIA LUTHERAN CHURCH

316 South Oakwood Avenue, Geneseo
9:00 AM – 11:30 AM
Rainforest Falls by Concordia Supply
PK – 8th Grade
309-944-3993

June 29 – July 3 (light meal served)

IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH

3300 24th Street, Rock Island
Light meal 5 PM, VBS 5:30 PM – 7:35 PM
Teach Us to Pray by Higher Things
309-786-3391

June 15-19

ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH – TAYLOR RIDGE

18121 134th Avenue West, Taylor Ridge
8:30 AM – 11:30 AM
Tropical Trek by CPH
309-795-1063

July 13-16 (4-Day Program)

MOUNT CALVARY LUTHERAN CHURCH

1372 West Fremont St, Galesburg
6:00 PM – 7:30 PM
Tropical Trek by CPH
309-342-7083

June 17-19 (3-Day Program)

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

109 South Elm Street, Kewanee
9:00 AM – Noon
309-852-2461

August 2 – August 6 (Includes Adult VBS!)

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

8948 N 1900th Avenue, Geneseo
Light meal 5:30 PM, VBS until 7:45 PM
Emerald Adventure: An Irish Adventure through Psalm 23
An Adult VBS will be held at the same time!
815-989-2025

June 22-26

ST. MATTHEW LUTHERAN CHURCH

115 12th Avenue West, Milan
9:00 AM – Noon (with a Th evening program)
Tropical Trek by CPH
309-787-4295

We can't wait to see you!

Bring a friend, all are welcome!

From the CID

Dear St. John's Lutheran Church,

¹ Blessed is everyone who fears the Lord,
who walks in his ways!
² You shall eat the fruit of the labor of your hands;
you shall be blessed, and it shall be well with you.
Ps. 128: 1-2

Time of Celebration

We are in a season of celebrations, gathering together to honor individuals at their confirmations and graduations at many levels. These milestones are a wonderful opportunity to reflect on the many blessings we have received.

Psalm 128 reminds us that these blessings are not based on luck, but flow from a personal relationship with God, who is intimately involved in our lives. God is faithful to His children, and in His time, He will provide the fruit of His blessings.

As we celebrate, let us not rush these moments – but pause, savor them, and receive them with a thankful heart.

Mr. Trip Rodgers – CID Office

Dollars for Missions

New Project: A new lighted, cast aluminum sign for Wittenberg Lutheran Center at Illinois State University

Amount to be Funded: \$7,000

The second 2026 project for Dollars for Mission is a new lighted sign for Wittenberg Lutheran Center. \$7,000 will be collected for the cost. The cast-aluminum sign will feature the Wittenberg logo and be placed on the building's steeple to proclaim the work of Christ and the Holy Spirit for all.

Reminder that online one-time and recurring donations can now be made at <https://www.aplos.com/aws/give/LCMSCentrallllinoisDistrict/D4M>

Pray For Our Central Illinois District Missions supported by your church's Mission Dollars to the District.

Please remember in your prayers all our CID campus ministries, especially Rev. Michael Schuermann and University Lutheran Church in Champaign, serving students, faculty, and staff of the University of Illinois and other institutions. And pray for the "Keeping Christ on Campus" campaign, building endowments to help CID support our campus ministries.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
9am - Worship 10:15am - Bible Study / 31	1:30pm - Activities Room 1	10am - Food Pantry 6:30pm - Guitar Jam 2	1:30pm - Activities Room 3	All Boards Meet in Prep 5:30pm - Float Cmte mtg 6:30pm - Board Meetings 4	Fairweather rehearsal 5	12pm - Blacksmithing 2pm - Fairweather 5pm - Worship w/ 6
9am - Worship w/ 10:15am - Bible Study / 1pm - Voters' Meeting 2pm - Pastoral Call Vote 7	1:30pm - Activities Room 8	10am - Food Pantry 6:30pm - Guitar Jam 9	1:30pm - Activities Room 3:30pm - Fellowship 10	6pm - Fellowship Dinner 11	11:30am - Dodge Reunion 12pm - Blacksmithing 5pm - Worship 12	11:30am - Dodge Reunion 12pm - Blacksmithing 5pm - Worship 13
9am - Worship 10:15am - Bible Study / 1pm - Demetrius' 14	Informer Deadline 1:30pm - Activities Room 15	10am - Food Pantry 6:30pm - Guitar Jam 16	1:30pm - Activities Room 17	11:30am - Ladies 1pm - LWML 18	12pm - Blacksmithing 12pm - Engebrecht 5pm - Worship w/ 19	12pm - Blacksmithing 12pm - Engebrecht 5pm - Worship w/ 20
9am - Worship w/ 10:15am - Bible Study / 21	1:30pm - Activities Room 22	10am - Food Pantry 6:30pm - Guitar Jam 23	1:30pm - Activities Room 24	25	12pm - Blacksmithing 5pm - Worship 26	12pm - Blacksmithing 5pm - Worship 27
9am - Worship 10:15am - Bible Study / 5pm - BB&B men's group 28	1:30pm - Activities Room 29	10am - Food Pantry 6:30pm - Guitar Jam 30	1:30pm - Activities Room 1	2	3	12pm - Blacksmithing 5pm - Worship w/ 4



St. John's
Lutheran
Church

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We're On the Web!!
www.stjohnsem.org

Walking in the Light of Christ!



Worship Schedule:

Saturday worship— 5:00pm

Sunday worship- 9:00am

10:15am— Sunday School
& Bible Study

Office Hours:

Monday –Thursday:

8:30am– noon



St. John's in the summer sun