



The Informer

August 2022

St. John's Lutheran Church

Volume 65 Issue 9



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From Pastor's Pen:

"Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy." Psalm 126:5

My beloved in Christ,

As the spiritual father of so many who have fallen away, I write this letter especially for those who weep over their children and grandchildren. I cannot number the times in which parents have teared up while sharing with me their grief over the spiritual condition of their children. They did their best to train up their child in the way he should go, only to be crushed when he grew old and departed from it. (Cf. Prov. 22:6)

This month we commemorate one such parent, St. Monica. This tiny, dark-skinned African woman was married off at a young age to a pagan named Patricius who made life very difficult for her. Through it all Monica held to her faith in Christ and lived a life of devotion and dedication to her family. Her witness, life and tearful prayers were instrumental in leading her husband to convert to the Christian faith.

Sadly, the many years of growing up under pagan influence had led her children to reject that faith. The most challenging of all her children was Augustine. His way of life completely clashed with her Christian beliefs and values, so much so that for a time he was not even allowed in the family home. Needless to say, she did not put up with his ungodly ways. In the midst of it all, however, she never stopped praying for her wayward son. Like so many parents she wept and prayed for her adult child, that he would turn from his sinful ways and find true direction for his life in Jesus. When she shared this with her pastor he told her, "It is not possible that a son of so many tears should be lost."

Monica followed Augustine to Italy where he became a famous teacher and orator. As his housekeeper she painfully witnessed his arrogant attacks against her faith, his debauchery and the endless line of women he bedded. Through it all she shared her faith with him and in prayer sowed her tears upon the mercy seat of God. Finally, God's Word accomplished its good purpose. Augustine's life was turned around, and he was baptized at Milan in 387 AD. Monica's son became one of the greatest fathers of the early church, and one who has touched countless millions of lives with the gospel of forgiveness through Christ. Her prayers being answered and her mission complete, Monica departed to be with her Lord that same year. Truly, she had sown in tears and reaped in songs of joy.

I encourage all of you who are struggling with your own children who seem to have lost their direction to keep praying for them. I urge you, whose children may arrogantly attack your faith and live in ways that completely clash with your beliefs, to continue to stand firm and make your strong confession. I invite you to sow your tears at the mercy seat of God in the hope that you may yet reap with songs of joy. With the persistence, the faith, and the love of Monica make it your mission in life to share God's Word which is powerful and affective to work repentance and restore faith. I leave you with the words of St. Monica's pastor to her: "It is not possible that a [child] of so many tears should be lost."

Peace in Christ,

Pastor Umberger

See The Informer
IN COLOR
On Our Website

Vicar's View

Eyes-Wide-Open, All-In Faith

And a scribe came up and said to him, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go." 20 And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." 21 Another of the disciples said to him, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." 22 And Jesus said to him, "Follow me, and leave the dead to bury their own dead." (Matt. 8:19-22)

As I begin this year with you, I have my mind on some of the big picture questions: how should we Christians think and live out our faith in this confusing, pluralistic, often wicked, but always interesting world in which we find ourselves? I believe a good start to answering that question is an attitude of "eyes-wide-open, all-in faith." There are two different aspects of this attitude, and Jesus addresses both aspects in this passage.

First, we need to approach our faith with "eyes wide open." The first person who talks to Jesus is an example of someone who is all-in on following Jesus, but doesn't have his eyes open to what he's getting himself into. Jesus points this out by more or less telling him, "You know that I'm homeless, right, and you will be too if you want to follow me?" This man hasn't fully considered the challenges and the consequences of following Jesus. I think that is partly why some people in our day become disillusioned with Christianity, "deconstruct" their faith, and walk away from the church. They may be fully committed to the idea of Christianity, but they have their heads buried in the sand. They live in a Christian echo chamber where their eyes are closed to the challenges, criticisms, and scandals that the church faces. Their concept of Christianity may be centered around a political agenda, the social community of their church, family tradition, or something else besides the resurrection of Jesus Christ. And when they inevitably face challenges from people who don't think like they do or start to question whatever they built their faith on, it all crumbles.

Sometimes we need to take a step back and make sure our eyes are open, that we've considered what we believe and why. We need Jesus to remind us, "You know that Christianity means believing that a homeless rabbi is the God and ruler of the universe, right?" If our eyes are open, it isn't too hard to see why many people today aren't ready to accept that. Never fear, we have good reason to believe what we do: God raised Jesus from the dead, showing that he truly is the ruler of all things. But we also don't need to be afraid to listen patiently and carefully to the many people around us who don't believe what we do yet, or to open our eyes to their concerns. The Christian faith will stand up to any challenge because we can trust the words of the man God raised from the dead.

When we've considered the costs and challenges involved in following Jesus, he also expects us to be "all-in." That's the second man's problem in the passage: he's already "a disciple," so he may have an idea of what he's getting into, but he isn't fully committed. When it comes to following Jesus, you can't hedge your bets or serve two masters. Jesus is offering the most important thing in the universe: eternal life in union with God, and we should treat it as such. I hinted before that the Christian faith can seem quirky and weird and old-fashioned. Rather than try to downplay those aspects, embrace them. We should resist the urge to say, "I'm a Christian, but not like *those* Christians, the hyper-religious ones." We should absolutely take our faith seriously, but never take ourselves too seriously. Don't be afraid to make a habit of asking people if you can pray for them, or perhaps of saying things like "Lord have mercy," or "thanks be to God" in your everyday conversation. People might think you're "hyper-religious," but if you also have a humble, "eyes-wide-open" attitude, then you won't be a hypocrite. That's the attitude I want to live with in this world, to say to Jesus, "I've considered it, I know what I'm signing up for, and I'm all-in."

Vicar Moellenhoff

Ushers

Sat, Aug 6: Chuck Brokaw, Todd Miller, Rick Newlon, & Larry Ripka
Sun, Aug 7:
Sat, Aug 13: Chuck Brokaw, Todd Miller, Rick Newlon, & Larry Ripka
Sun, Aug 14:
Sat, Aug 20: Chuck Brokaw, Todd Miller, Rick Newlon, & Larry Ripka
Sun, Aug 21:
Sat, Aug 27: Chuck Brokaw, Todd Miller, Rick Newlon, & Larry Ripka
Sun, Aug 28:

Greeters

Sat, Aug 6: Gail Massey & Joann Sager
Sun, Aug 7: Lee Copeland & Margie Schaefer
Sat, Aug 13: Lou Ann DeRammelaere & Ruby Pancrazio
Sun, Aug 14: Glen & Lori McMillin
Sat, Aug 20: Gail Massey & Joann Sager
Sun, Aug 21: Nancy Cartwright & Sandy Young
Sat, Aug 27: Lou Ann DeRammelaere & Ruby Pancrazio
Sun, Aug 28: Susan Bowman & Nancy Davis

Acolytes

Sun, Aug 7: Aubree Medinger
Sun, Aug 14: Payton Braddy
Sun, Aug 21: Easton Antolik
Sun, Aug 28: Lydia Merritt



Altar Guild

Kathy Herron
 &
 Gail Massey



Eternal Candle

Aug 7: Evan & Dawn Antolik, in honor of Allison's birthday
Aug 14: Rod & Noreen Hopkins, in honor of their 35th Anniversary
Aug 21: Gail Massey
Aug 28: Larry & Sharon Ripka, in memory of parents and Jeffie



Flowers

Aug 7: Rhea Oakes, in honor of Harper's birthday
Aug 14: Rhea Oakes, in honor of Judy Jenning's birthday
Aug 21: John & Ruby Pancrazio, in memory of James
Aug 28: Larry & Sharon Ripka, in memory of parents and Jeffie

Church News

Birthdays

August 1 - Jessica Kruger & Susan Parvin

August 2 - Brett Brashears & Rebekah Weber

August 4 - Sandy Dosch & Ron Heitzman

August 5 - Allison Antolik & Linda Sharp

August 6 - Betty Bell, Marlene Fellows, Debbie Girard, Paul Sellers & Vernon Sletten

August 7 - Debbie VanRycke

August 8 - Reed Thurman

August 9 - Lori McMillin

August 10 - Mary McGee, Jill Schofield & Jonathan Weakley

August 11 - Duane Gosa & Jennifer Schmidt

August 12 - Judy Jennings & Terry Tipsworth

August 13 - Samantha Fetterer, Todd Miller & Jacob Pena

August 14 - Scott Kelly

August 15 - Sarah Schofield

August 16 - Kathy Verstrate

August 18 - Karen Hatfield & Mildred VanRycke

August 19 - Jill Cruse & Gavin Johnson

August 21 - Kinzlee Antolik, Dylan Descamps, Jordan Johanson, Evan Kahle & Ryan Sanders

August 22 - David Rogers

August 23 - Ken Cobb, Brian Engebrecht, Laura Frankowski, Carrie Johnson, Debbie Richard & Jacob Rossmiller

August 27 - Michael Brashears, Joyce Hoffman, Lydia Merritt, Easton Nitz & Theresa Roberson

August 28 - Bill Girard, Norman Kahle, Robert Lilly, Bill Park, Paula Pratt & Margie Schaefer

August 29 - Don Hakeman, Gail Massey & Michele Rogers

August 30 - Norma Johnson, Kelly Sanders & Anne Williams



Weekly Attendance

<u>DATE</u>	<u>THIS YEAR</u>	<u>LAST YEAR</u>
6/26	138	139
7/3	110	141
7/10	144	133
7/17	151	131
7/24	129	145

Simply Giving June 2022: Average monthly attendance of St. John's membership: 22%

Membership Report

Deaths:
Gloria Burke (6/24/22)
Sharon Kays (07/07/22)

Baptized:
Lilith Hinman (7/10/22)

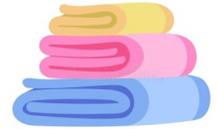
Church News

LWML

Our next meeting will be Thursday, August 25th at 6:30pm. Our program will be 'Getting to Know Vicar Moellenhoff.' Please join us!

LWML Donations - Bath Towels and Wash Cloths

A big **THANK YOU** to all who have donated items to prepare personal hygiene kits for the shelters this fall. August's collection will be bath towels and washcloths. New or gently used please.



Hometown Hero

Congratulations to Greg Burke for winning a KWQC Hometown Hero Award! Greg was chosen for all of the time and work he puts into coordinating our Food Pantry. Thank you Greg for all that you do!

St. John's Spotlight

We hope you have been enjoying looking at the pictures displayed on the Spotlight bulletin board in the concourse over the past few months. There are a few new members on it right now so go and learn about them before the next display goes up – our new Vicar! After that is up for a couple of weeks we need some new ideas. Do you have any questions we can answer about the congregation or the church building (how many vicars have we had, or give us some information on the paintings in the sanctuary, etc). What would you like to know more about? There are forms in the concourse to write your suggestions and place in the box.

Care Ministry Team

The Board of Human Care is looking for volunteers that we can call on to help if another member needs assistance. Some examples of services we would like to provide are:

- Rides to and from church, medical appointments, grocery stores, etc.
- Friendly visits to check in, chat with, maybe play a card game or board game
- Inside light cleaning duties such as dusting and vacuuming
- Yard Care

There is a form on the Information table if you think you would be interested.

See Carrie with questions



WE ARE HIRING!

St. John's is looking to hire a Director of Youth and Family. This is a salaried position with an average of 16 hours per week. A detailed job description can be found in the St. John's office. Applicants will need to fill out an application and supply a resume with 3 letters of recommendation. Call Cris Braddy at 309-235-7984 if you have any questions.



Church News

Confirmation Instruction

Its hard to believe summer is coming to an end, but its that time again. There will be a pre-confirmation information meeting on **Wednesday, August 17th at 6:30pm** to discuss the curriculum, expectations, the schedule, and supplies needed. Please plan to attend this meeting. Confirmation Instruction will begin on **Wednesday, August 24th at 6:30pm**.



Notes from the Balcony

Back to school. How do those three words make you feel? Anxious? Sad? Excited? As a student, back to school meant a loss of the freedom summer months granted, but once back in school, I enjoyed my time with classmates and learning. As a teacher, back to school meant a clean, newly decorated classroom and looking forward to seeing students again. As a homeschool mom, back to school meant a return to some order in daily activities and new learning experiences to look forward to. Lately, back to school means the house gets emptier one by one. This year the youngest will also be gone. But back to school will also mean the restart of church music groups and childcare for refugee English classes, both something to look forward to.

Even if August doesn't mean for you the return to tasks set aside for the summer, we should remember and pray for students and teachers coming back to classes. We recall how Jesus took children in His arms and blessed them (Mark 10:16). One such prayer could be found in our hymnal, LSB 866, *Lord Jesus Christ, the Children's Friend*. It was written in 1980 by Dr. Henry Letterman, who was a son of a Lutheran school teacher, became a Lutheran school teacher and eventually was a professor at Concordia University in Chicago. Stanza 1, in particular, serves as a good prayer for students:

*Lord Jesus Christ, the children's friend,
To each of them Your presence send;
Call them by name and keep them true
In loving faith, dear Lord, to You.*

His child,
Christine Engebrecht

***Cherub chimers will be starting up in a couple of weeks. Please see Christine if your child would like to be part of this fun group!

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
9am - Worship w/Communion 10:15am - Bible Study / Sunday	7am - EMPD Training 9am - Morning Prayer @ 1pm - Staff Mtg. 6:30pm - Men's Reunion	7am - EMPD Training 10am - Food Pantry 6:30pm - Guitar Jam	7am - EMPD Training 9am - TOPS	7am - EMPD Training 6:30pm - Board Meetings	7am - EMPD Training	5pm - Worship w/ Communion
9am - Worship w/ Communion 10:15am - Bible Study / Sunday	9am - Morning Prayer @ 1pm - Staff Mtg. 6:30pm - Men's Reunion	10am - Food Pantry 6:30pm - Guitar Jam	9am - TOPS	11:30am - Ladies Luncheon @	5pm - Worship	5pm - Worship/ Communion
9am - Worship 10:15am - Bible Study / Sunday	9am - Morning Prayer @ 1pm - Staff Mtg. 6:30pm - Men's Reunion	10am - Food Pantry 6:30pm - Guitar Jam	9am - TOPS 6:30pm - Confirmation Instruction	6:30pm - LWML	5pm - Worship	5pm - Worship
9am - Worship 10:15am - Bible Study / Sunday	9am - Morning Prayer @ 1pm - Staff Mtg. 6:30pm - Men's Reunion	10am - Food Pantry 6:30pm - Guitar Jam	9am - TOPS 6:30pm - Confirmation Instruction	All Boards Meet in Prep for Parish 6:30pm - Board Meetings	5pm - Worship w/ Communion	5pm - Worship w/ Communion

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

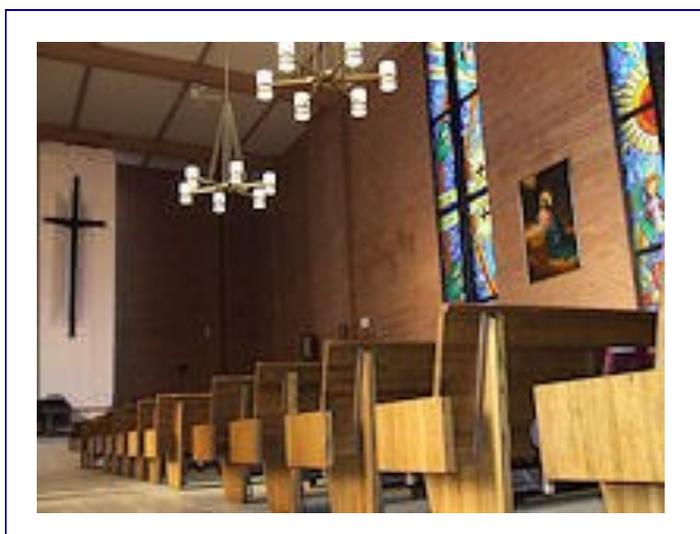
Sunday School

& Bible Study-10:15am

Office Hours:

Monday – Thursday 8:30am– 2:00pm

Closed for lunch from 12-1pm



Inside our Sanctuary.