



The Messenger

December 2024 Edition

A Monthly Newsletter from St. John Lutheran Church and School

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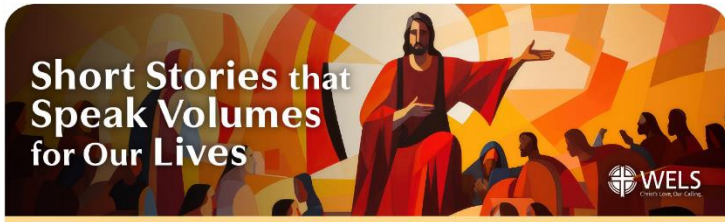


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Gather. Grow. Go. To the Glory of God!



Devotional Corner: The Perfect Pearl

*Jesus said, "The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it."
Matthew 13:45,46*

Have you found the perfect Christmas gift for that special someone yet? If so, what makes it perfect? Is it perfect because it's unique, like handcrafted pottery? Is it perfect because it fits the personality of the individual for who you bought it, like a plaid shirt for the lumberjack in your family?

What if you find the perfect gift only to discover that it's beyond your budget? Would you sell your car, your house, everything you own to obtain THE perfect gift?

Jesus once told a parable about a pearl-dealer whose goal was to find the perfect pearl. When he found it, he sold all that he owned so he could buy his treasured find. The perfect pearl represents the message of salvation found in the Bible. This message is perfect because it tells us everything we need to know for this life and the next.

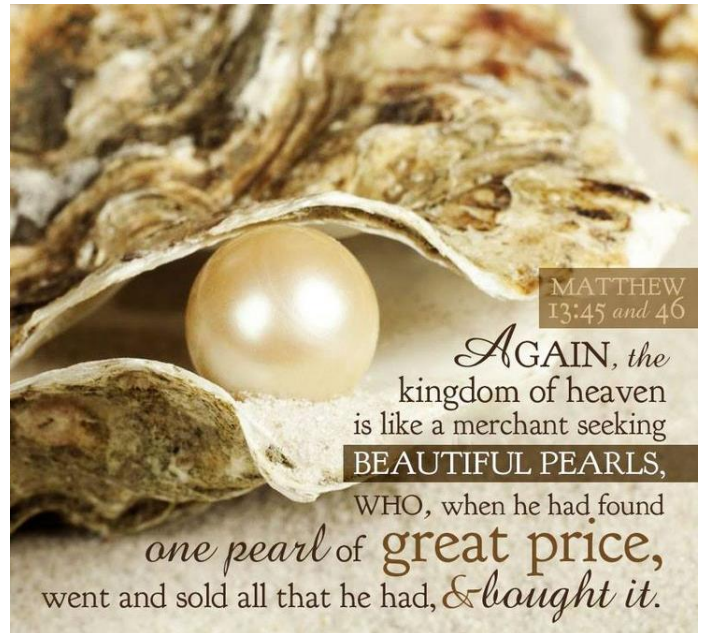
The Bible tells us that all have sinned and deserve God's eternal punishment in hell. But the Bible also says that Jesus came to take that punishment—like your next-door neighbor paying for the fire damage that your hastily strung Christmas lights did to her

house. Because of Jesus, our sins are paid for and forgiven!

This message is not only perfect; it's one of a kind. There are plenty of places you can look for the answers to life's questions, but the only place you'll find the perfect pearl is in the Bible. We would be glad to share with you the treasure that God has for us in his Word. The Bible appears to be like any other book, but within there is a precious message that exceeds everything we've known.

It's like the person who pries open a dull clamshell and finds a glowing pearl nestled within that's worth more than any other. A pearl in a clamshell! That's often how God works. He comes to us in unlikely places to give us his love.

Could that be illustrated any more beautifully than it is at Christmas? At Christmas, the Son of God, our Savior, was born in a barn! And then this Jesus willingly gave up his life on the cross to pay for our sins and win us a place in heaven. This message is God's priceless, perfect gift for us.



Worship With Us!

Worship Services: Sundays at 9:00 am

Bible Class and Sundry School: Sundays at 10:15 am

Christian Parenting Today

Christian Parenting Today: Parenting Failures (Dad Edition)

A Forward in Christ article by Andrew Schroer,
Rob Guenther, Clark Schultz

Every night when my children were young, we would pray together before they went to sleep. Among other things, we prayed:

Now I lay me down to sleep.
I pray the Lord my soul to keep.
If I should die before I wake,
I pray the Lord my soul to take. Amen.

One night when my daughter was five, she started crying after that prayer.

“Isabel, what’s wrong?” I asked.

“Daddy, I don’t want to die,” she sobbed.

I was caught off guard. I wanted to talk about how great heaven was, but, for some reason, the first words to come out of my mouth were, “Oh, Isabel, we’re all going to die.”

Before I could continue, the floodgates were opened. “I don’t want you to die!” she wailed as she threw her arms around me.

My heart broke. I tried to fix it. I talked about Jesus and the heaven we would enjoy together, but it was too late. She couldn’t hear me. Fear and anxiety had taken hold. To this day, my 20-year-old daughter still struggles to sleep at night. Anxiety is still a daily burden she bears. I know that our conversation 15 years ago was not the only contributing factor to her insomnia or anxiety, but it certainly didn’t help. Ever since that night, I have prayed that God give me wisdom when talking to my kids. He often does. Sometimes, however, the words still don’t come out right.

My comfort is knowing that God’s power is best demonstrated in our weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9). Though painful, my daughter’s struggles are part of his plan of love for her good. God promises to work all things—including our mistakes as parents—for our children’s good (Romans 8:28).

I know that God loves my daughter more than I do. When I fail to be the dad I should be, he forgives me

because of Jesus. I trust he will continue to help my daughter to grow and mature through (and sometimes despite) me.

That is my hope and confidence as a father, even when the words don’t come out right. *-Andrew Schroer*

I once tried to impress my boys with a flip on the trampoline. I did a face-plant instead. “That was an epic fail!” my boys laughed. *Really? Epic?* I thought. *Poems will be written? Songs will be sung telling the tale of Dad’s epic fail?*

I asked my boys what they thought my real “dad fails” were. Without hesitation, they responded:

- I don’t listen well.
- I slip into “lecture mode.”
- I lose my cool.
- I think I know it all and want to make sure they know I do.

Ouch. Humbling.

But worse than those fails are the times I’ve failed God. I promise I’ll do better. I promise I’ll be more patient with my boys. I promise I’ll be less selfish. But before long, I fail God again.

We’ve all failed God. And they’re epic fails. Literally. In the Bible, poems have been written and songs have been sung telling the tale of our most epic fail. And this is no face-plant on a trampoline. This epic fail has eternal consequences. We all deserve to spend an eternity in hell apart from God.

So how do we recover from our epic fails? Confess. I apologized to my boys: “I’m sorry that I’m not a very good dad at times.”

And my boys tell me more often than I’d like to admit and maybe less often than I need to hear: “I forgive you, Dad. And so does Jesus.”

My boys become my confessors. Along with my associate at church and my wife, they often assure me that I am forgiven. And I am grateful for it. I need to hear often “I forgive you. So does Jesus.”

I know I’m not a perfect dad. I’m far from it. But I also know that I’m forgiven for my failures—by God and my boys.

Article continues on page 8

Upcoming Events



Wrightstown Christmas Parade- Saturday, December 7th

St. John will be participating in Wrightstown's Christmas Parade once again. We have chosen to do a live nativity. We are currently looking for kids and adults to sign up to walk with the float. Please sign up online at <https://forms.gle/42EVWRcWYCMsVy7w9>. If you have questions about the float, please e-mail Kari Bern at kariynn.bern@gmail.com. We are also accepting candy donations in the reception area to hand out at the parade.



Holiday Vendor and Craft Fair- Sunday, December 8th

Join us on Sunday, December 8th, from 12:00 to 5:00 pm in the St. John gym for our first-ever vendor and craft fair! We already have several great vendors signed up and are accepting more through our Google form at <https://forms.gle/xYRevusiVf3HG3aA8>. Sellers can come with their homemade, new, or resale items. Be sure to invite your family and friends to come and get their Christmas shopping done! Contact Tim Raddatz with any questions.

Christmas Break Family Get-Together- Tuesday, December 31st

Families are invited to gather for a casual get-together at Altitude trampoline park on Tuesday, December 31st, beginning at 10:00 am. This will be held during Altitude's normal business hours rather than a closed-off event. Junior Jumpers passes will allow ages 6 and under unlimited access to trampolines and attractions for 3 hours at \$10.99. Parent passes are available to join them for \$5.00. Jump passes for those 7 and older begin at \$23.00 for 90 minutes. It is highly recommended to buy your passes online at altitudetrampolinepark.com early before the day's passes are sold out due to the busyness of Christmas break.



Mark Your Calendars!

- December 3- Board of Ed Meeting
- December 6- Christmas Tree Decorating
Otto/Gamboa Christmas Service
- December 7- Christmas Parade
- December 8- Holiday Vendor and Craft Fair
- December 9- Church Council Meeting
- December 10- Fellowship Meal
- December 13- Hot Lunch
Buss/Crowley Christmas Service
- December 15- 2nd-8th Grade Christmas Service
Bake Sale
- December 16- Red and Green Dress Up Day
- December 17- Christmas Movie Character Day
Early Childhood Play Day
- December 18- Ugly Christmas Sweater Day
- December 19- Deck the Halls Day (any Christmas wear) with Hot Cocoa Bar
- December 20- Christmas Pajama Day/ Classroom Christmas Parties Day
- December 23-January 1- Christmas Break
- December 24- Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship
- December 25- Christmas Day Worship
- January 2- Classes Resume

Church Highlights



Vacancy Pastor Change

Pastor Raasch has ended his time as vacancy pastor for St. John. Pastor Robert Wilke, who had previously served as a part-time pastor for St. John during Pastor Gehl's tenure here, has now taken over as the vacancy minister. Join us in welcoming his return! If you need to reach him for any reason, Pastor Wilke's e-mail is revrwilke@gmail.com and his cell phone is 920-915-4870. He will normally be in the office on Tuesdays and Thursdays in the morning and on Wednesdays for chapel and breakfast Bible study.

Pastoral Call to Rev. Jeffrey J. Schmidt

Our congregation has placed another call for a new full-time pastor, as Pastor Krause returned our call and will remain serving at FVL. On Sunday, December 1st, voters elected to call Reverend Jeffrey J. Schmidt. Pastor Schmidt currently serves at Emanuel Lutheran Church in Flint, MI. You may reach out to him at 810-931-6794 or jjschmidt@msn.com to discuss the call and his potential service here at St. John. Please keep him and his family in your prayers as he deliberates where he may best serve the Lord.



Children's Christmas Services

Although the beautiful weather we were blessed with in October may make it seem like winter events are a long way away, now is the time to begin marking your calendar for our special children's Christmas services. Our classes will be split into three groups to prevent overcrowding our worship space. EC 1 and EC 2 (Mrs. Otto and Mrs. Gamboa's classes) will have their service on Friday, December 6th at 6:00 pm. EC3 and K/1 (Miss Buss and Miss Crowley's classes) will present their Christmas program the next week on Friday, December 13th, also at 6:00 pm. Finally, 2nd-8th grades (Mrs. Wicks, Mr. Raddatz, and Mr. Solomon's classes) will take over the regular worship time on Sunday, December 15th, at 9:00 am. Each service will have a casual cookie social following the program.



Additional Christmas Worship Opportunities

We will be holding a Christmas Eve Candlelight Service at 5:30 on December 24th, as well as a Christmas Day Service at 9:00 am. Please join us as we celebrate the birth of our Savior!

Church Birthdays

Happy birthday to our church members celebrating in December!

Dec 4 Lincoln Cisler
Dec 5 Danielle Bruecker
Dec 6 Mason Kussow
Dec 7 Diane Bowers
Dec 7 Carol Just
Dec 7 Eric Kraus
Dec 7 Adelaide Vande Hey
Dec 10 Ellery Olp
Dec 11 Lynn Zirbel



Dec 13 Joshua Vickman
Dec 15 Brian Gardner
Dec 18 Paige Schisel
Dec 25 Jules Cappelle
Dec 25 Holly Schmidt
Dec 27 Leah Uitenbroek
Dec 28 Janet Wierschke
Dec 30 Jonathan Van Schyndel
Dec 30 Judith Wicker

School Highlights

Christmas Spirit Week

During the last week of school before Christmas break, we will be having a celebration full of dress up days and Christmas spirit. Students in all classes are invited to participate in the dress-up days. Our celebrations are planned as follows:



Monday- Red and Green Day

Wear your most fun red and green clothes.



Tuesday-



Christmas Movie Character Day

Dress up as your favorite character from a Christmas movie.

EC Play Day

Early childhood classes will join together for a Christmas-themed morning of fun.



Wednesday-



Ugly Christmas Sweater Day

Who will have the most hideous holiday wear?



Thursday-



Deck the Halls Day

Decorate yourself in any Christmas garb you like!

Hot Cocoa Bar

Hot cocoa will be offered to everyone on campus.



Friday-



Christmas Pajama Day

It is time to snuggle up around the tree!

Classroom Christmas Parties

Check with your child's teacher or watch the weekly news for information about gift exchanges, treats, activities, and more.

Cookies and Volunteers Needed

Following each of the children's Christmas services, we will hold a small cookie celebration. We are asking each family with a child in the day's service to bring in at least a dozen cookies. We are also looking for additional volunteers to help set up, serve, and clean up after the cookie socials after each service. This is a great time to get volunteer hours in for those families with work hours that prevent helping during many other school activities. Please contact Courtney Schisel or the office to sign up to help.



Basketball Skills Camp Inquiry

Any family with students in grades K-8 who may be interested in a basketball camp should fill out an online google form. Please check the recent e-mail from PTO for a link to the form or contact our office to express your interest and let us know whether a weekday, such as Monday or Thursday, or a weekend session would work better for your family.

School Birthdays

Happy birthday to our December celebrants!

Aria R.- December 2nd
Lincoln C.- December 4th
Josie O.- December 6th
Madelyn R.- December 8th
Dayle S.- December 8th
Collins C.- December 9th
Ellery O.- December 10th
Finnegan A.- December 13th
Daxton S.- December 19th
Dawson M.- December 21st
Emmett B.- December 22nd



Parenting Failures

Article continues from page 3

Parents, we will fail, but Christ has redeemed us and promises to work through our failures. God's love for you will never fail: "Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet [God's] unfailing love for you will not be shaken" (Isaiah 54:10).

That's God's unfailing love for you. And it is epic! In the Bible, poems have been written and songs sung telling the tale of our Savior's epic, unfailing love for us!
-Rob Guenther

Our newborn woke us up in the middle of the night. I wanted to give Mommy a few more precious moments of sleep, so it was Super Dad to the rescue.

I raced into the bedroom and cradled the child in my arms with plans to soothe him to sleep. However, as I walked through the doorway in the darkness, I accidentally bonked his head on the frame of the door. Epic shrieks filled the halls of the Schultz home, waking Mommy up. Our son had a huge abrasion on his head. To make matters worse, we went to visit family friends the next day and introduced our firstborn to many with a huge mountain of a bruise on his head. Talk about a *Wizard of Oz* moment: "Pay no attention to the man behind the curtain or the huge lump on my child's head." #dadfail

Another time Mom was at a meeting 40 minutes away. We now had three children and had gone from man-to-man to zone coverage of the kids. While I was bathing the newborn after a colossal diaper overload, the five-year-old ran into a corner of a wall, cutting open his head and spewing blood everywhere. At the same time, the four-year-old was on the potty asking for assistance. Talk about the perfect storm. #dadfail

We can read all the books on how to parent, but they will never make us the perfect parents. Only Jesus and his blood cover a multitude of sins, including the times we fail as parents. Jesus alone makes us perfect.

An old deodorant commercial said, "Never let them see you sweat." I disagree. I say that it is okay for my children to see my faults—even for me to admit them, not hide them. While it is easy to become self-reflective as the bumps and storms of life happen, my prayer is to model for my children that these are the vital times to focus on our heavenly Father.

By grace, he alone carries us and forgives us every time we fail. Of all the lessons I could teach my children, God's love and forgiveness are and should always be at the top of the list, because with him we never fail!
-Clark Schultz

Visit forwardinchrist.net/parents/ for more great parenting articles.

Contact Us

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Dillon Solomon, dean of students and 6 th -8 th grade teacher	248-525-3700	dillon.solomon@stjohnwrightstown.com
Rebecca Wicks, 2 nd -3 rd grade teacher	920-809-8648	rebecca.wicks@stjohnwrightstown.com
McKenzezy Crowley, kindergarten and 1 st grade teacher	605-390-6827	mckenzezy.crowley@stjohnwrightstown.com
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Leah Gamboa, EC 2 teacher	920-309-5037	leah.gamboa@stjohnwrightstown.com
Madie Otto, EC 1 teacher	920-629-1220	madie.otto@stjohnwrightstown.com
Claudia Puente, student services coordinator	920-716-8523	claudia.puente@stjohnwrightstown.com

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