



# ***The Messenger***

*July 2024 Edition*

***A Monthly Newsletter from St. John Ministries***

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## **St. John Lutheran Church and School**

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

## Short Stories that Speak Volumes for Our Lives

### Devotional Corner: Lessons from a Fig Tree

*Jesus told them this parable: "Look at the fig tree and all the trees. When they sprout leaves, you can see for yourselves and know that summer is near. Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that the kingdom of God is near." Luke 21:29-31*



The newspapers report a lot of bad news: war, robbery, murder, corruption, domestic abuse, even the abandoning of little babies. Life just seems to be one bad thing after another. Will there ever be an end to all this?

"Yes," Jesus says. In a short story that speaks volumes about life, Jesus teaches us about his coming on the Last Day. Our loving God has put a schedule in place for this earth. Only God knows exactly when these things will take place. In his divine wisdom, though, God sometimes lets us know when things are about to

change. Jesus said when trees sprout leaves, you know that summer is near. In the same way, Jesus tells us when we see things such as wars, talks about wars, and earthquakes, we know his kingdom is near.

We can't just ignore the bad news, and we shouldn't. God doesn't want us to be afraid of these sad events. Rather, he wants us to look past them and see that they are signs that tell us Jesus is coming again. Just as the trees welcome the summer months so believers will welcome their time with Jesus in heaven.

The second coming of Jesus will bring an end to all that is wrong with the world. It will be a day of final judgment. For those who reject Jesus, there will not be another chance to believe. There will be no escape. Christ is coming back once more and that will be the Last Day.

Those who trust in Jesus don't fear that day. Believers know that Jesus has forgiven them and promised them eternal life. They simply wait for him to come and take them to the paradise he has promised. They wait patiently and put up with the world's troubles, knowing that Jesus will change things forever someday.

The lessons from a fig tree tell us that Jesus is coming again, and that life will be far better. Come and learn about all the wonderful things waiting for those who believe in Jesus.



## Worship With Us!

**Service: Sundays at 9:00 am**

**Bible Class: Sundays at 10:15 am**

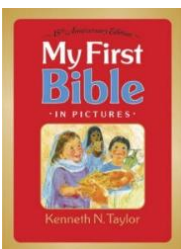
# Christian Parenting Today

## Christian Parenting Today: The Best Bible Storybooks for Family Devotions

Excerpts of a *Forward in Christ* article by Anna Geiger  
[forwardinchrist.net/best-bible-story-books/](http://forwardinchrist.net/best-bible-story-books/)

*Editor's note: I stumbled across this article while searching for this month's parenting page. I was glad to find it and use it this month because A) I have been asked on multiple occasions about good choices for family devotions and/or Bibles for early readers and B) summer is a great time to start up a family devotion time, because you can fit it in with your schedule no matter how busy or bored you are. Bring a devotion book camping, keep one in the car to have one parent read as the other drives home from sporting events, or break it out at meal times! Try out these suggestions from Anna Geiger, or ask a Pastor or Lutheran teacher for other family devotional books. -Rebecca Wicks*

When our children were young, my husband and I sifted through dozens of Bible story books to find the best Bible story books to read aloud. As we chose books to read to our kids, we kept several things in mind. First, we made sure that the books added little detail to the original Bible account. When our children were young, we chose only books with engaging text and pictures. As our family grew, we tried to find books that appealed to different age levels. Most important, we chose books that did not contradict biblical doctrine.

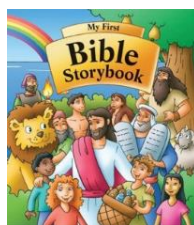
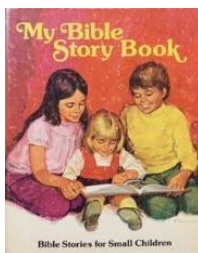


### My First Bible

My First Bible by Kenneth Taylor is the first Bible story book we used with our kids. The stories are very short and written with toddlers in mind. It's best for kids ages 0 to 2.

### My Bible Story Book

My Bible Story Book by Sarah Fletcher is a favorite from my childhood and is the perfect next step from Taylor's book. This is one of those books that adds a few things to the stories—but not too much (usually). I love how the author keeps Jesus as the center of the book, even with Old Testament stories. It's perfect for three- to five-year-olds.

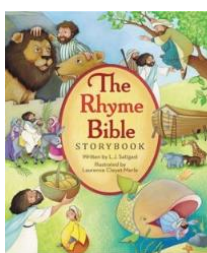
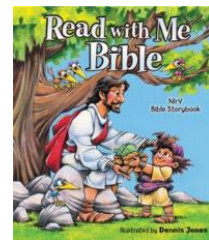


### My First Bible Storybook

My First Bible Storybook published by Concordia is another excellent choice. The stories are accurate, engaging summaries of the Bible text. It's great for ages 3 to 6.

### Read with Me Bible

Read with Me Bible published by Zondervan was our first fat Bible story book. At first, we hesitated to use it because the pictures are cartoony and sometimes just plain silly. But the stories are well written, and the illustrations certainly kept our kids' attention! This book is ideal for ages 3 to 6.

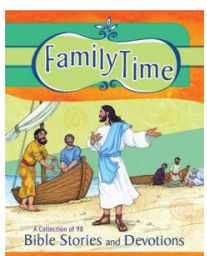
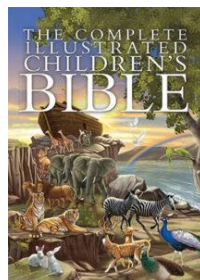


### The Rhyme Bible Storybook

My only complaint about The Rhyme Bible by L. J. Sattgast is that it's too short! All of us enjoyed the illustrations and the lovely rhyming stories. Our kids especially liked this one as three- and four-year-olds.

### The Complete Illustrated Children's Bible

One thing I love about The Complete Illustrated Children's Bible by Janice Emerson is that it has so many stories. It goes beyond familiar characters like Moses and Jonah to include many lesser-known Bible characters and stories. My criticisms are that the storytelling style can feel a little boring at times and the author fails to mention Christ in many opportune places. If you feel comfortable adding that in yourself, the book is a fine choice. I recommend it for ages 5 and up.



### Family Time

Family Time is another book we've read with our family. I love that the left side of each page is a Bible story and the right side is an application story. It's told in language that our children understood as preschoolers, but it was still engaging for our ten-year-old. The stories are Christ-centered and biblically solid. I highly recommend it for ages 5 and up. Younger children who are experienced Bible story listeners will also enjoy it.

*Article continues on page 6*

# Upcoming Events

## Annual Voters' Meeting- Sunday, July 21th

It is time for our annual meeting! Committee heads, please prepare your reports and get them in to Dierdra by July 16<sup>th</sup> at the latest so that she can assemble them. We will gather after church (around 10:15) to hear how things have been going throughout our congregation for the July 2023 through June 2024 fiscal year.



## Vacation Bible School Returns- Monday-Friday, July 8<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>

After a four-year absence (due to COVID followed by a lack of campus space), we are pleased to see the return of Vacation Bible School! Our theme this year will be "Rainforest Explorers". Children ages 3-11 can join us for crafts, games, songs, snacks, and more as Jesus leads the way through any terrain and all sorts of troubles. Our free VBS will run from 9:00 to 11:45 am each day of the week. Families who want to attend should register by July 5<sup>th</sup> at [stjohnwrightstown.com/events](http://stjohnwrightstown.com/events). All children must be fully potty trained. Anyone who is interested in helping out but has not yet signed up can speak with Rebecca Wicks.



## New Teacher Installation and Celebration- Sunday, July 28th

We are filling up the last of our new campus' classrooms! Miss Buss returns to early childhood to cover a new, 3<sup>rd</sup> EC room, while we welcome **Miss McKenzey L. Crowley** (pictured) to take over the kindergarten and first grade group. She comes to us having just graduated from Martin Luther College with a B.S. in Elementary Education and Secondary Physical Education with a coaching emphasis. Miss Crowley enjoys being outdoors whether it be hiking, camping, etc. She enjoys watching sports, reading, board games, and spending time with family, though she leaves her parents and brother back in her hometown of Rapid City, South Dakota.

Miss Crowley will be officially installed as our new teacher during the service on Sunday, July 28<sup>th</sup>. Help us to welcome her with a celebration and luncheon following the service. Sign up in the church hallway to join us for the meal and let us know what you might be bringing. Cards, gifts, and contributions to a welcoming gift may be placed in the marked box in the church hallway at any time. Keep Miss Crowley in your prayers as she embarks on her first full-time teaching adventure!

## Mark Your Calendars!

- July 3- Breakfast and Bible Study
- July 4-5- Summer Care Closed
- July 8-12- Vacation Bible School
- July 9- Fellowship Meal **\*Special Time: 12:30**
- July 15- Blood Drive
- July 15- Church Council **\*new date**
- July 17- Breakfast and Bible Study
- July 21- Annual Voters' Meeting
- July 28- New Teacher Installation and Celebration

# News Highlights



## Pastoral Call News

In June, St. John extended a second call in hopes of finding a full-time pastor. Please keep **Pastor Scott Wolfram** (pictured) in your prayers as he deliberates between his call to St. John and his service at Divine Word in Plover and The Word in Steven's Point. Feel free to reach out to him at [pastorwolfram@gmail.com](mailto:pastorwolfram@gmail.com).



## Fellowship Meal Time Change

With VBS being held in the same week as our Fellowship Meal takes place, we are bumping back the time of the Fellowship Meal by a half hour so that there is enough time to clean up from VBS activities before the meal takes over the kitchen. Please plan for the meal to start at 12:30 pm on July 9<sup>th</sup> rather than at the usual 12:00.

## June Voters' Meeting News

In addition to the Pastoral Call meeting, we had our annual Ministry Financial Plan (MFP) and elections meeting last month. Our MFP shows the largest budget ever for our congregation due to our new campus' mortgage payments beginning, increased staffing, increased curricular needs, and more. We do anticipate increased income from tuition and school choice families due to our largest ever enrollment, but the congregation is asked to keep the mortgage in mind and consider what they can do to keep our ministries moving forward smoothly.

The annual elections bring six gentlemen into new positions in important congregational roles: Perry Schisel is our new church president, Wayne Cisler and Butch Van Schyndel join the elders, Brad Hein and Evan Bern join the Board of Education, and Ralph Bohrtz will serve on the Endowment Committee. Please keep these men in your prayers as they help to lead the congregation and school.



## Church Birthdays

### Happy birthday to our church members celebrating in June!

- |                           |                        |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Jul 1 Josh Myers          | Jul 20 Everly Micke    |
| Jul 2 Jody Bowers         | Jul 20 Andrew Vickman  |
| Jul 3 Lou Ann Beard       | Jul 21 Blake Bauer     |
| Jul 5 Barry Laabs         | Jul 21 Wanda Ritter    |
| Jul 7 Wayne Cisler        | Jul 22 Mercedes Kussow |
| Jul 7 Dylan Myers         | Jul 24 Althea Coenen   |
| Jul 9 Anthony Cappelle    | Jul 25 Joseph Kussow   |
| Jul 9 Ronald Van Schyndel | Jul 27 Tina DeMerritt  |
| Jul 12 Kristy Asman       | Jul 27 Troy Schisel    |
| Jul 13 Jaime Bohrtz       | Jul 29 Kyle Nielson    |
| Jul 13 Edwin Maass        | Jul 29 Heather Schisel |
| Jul 15 Aubree Barrett     | Jul 30 Joshua Bohrtz   |
| Jul 17 Idie Chavarria     | Jul 30 Lisa Vande Hey  |
| Jul 19 Cassandra Barrett  | Jul 31 Chloe Hein      |
| Jul 19 Tammy Olp          |                        |

## School Birthdays

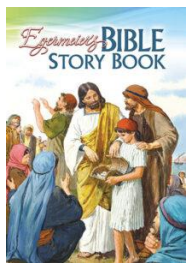
### Happy Birthday to our June student celebrants!

- July 9th- Oden B.
- July 16th- Vivian L.
- July 24<sup>th</sup>- Dean B.
- July 24<sup>th</sup>- Althea C.
- July 26<sup>th</sup>- Ximena M.P.



## Family Bible and Devotion Books

Christian parenting article continues from page 3

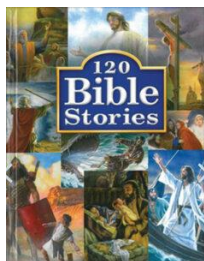


### Egermeier's Bible Story Book

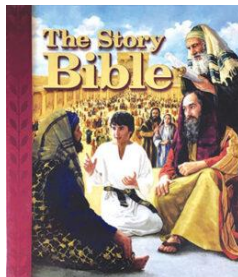
Egermeier's Bible Story Book is a republished classic. The 312(!) stories are beautifully told and doctrinally sound. The only challenge we had with this book is that the stories are often too long for our younger kids and there isn't a picture for every story. I recommend it for ages 6 and up. It really is a treasure!

### 120 Bible Stories

120 Bible Stories is a great choice for older listeners. There are fewer pictures, but they're extremely well done and full of interesting detail. I love how each devotion offers a short Bible passage to memorize. I also appreciate the questions at the end of each story. I recommend the stories for ages 6 and up.



*May God bless you as you share his Word with the next generation!*

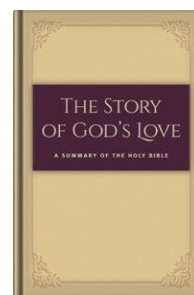


### The Story Bible

The Story Bible is a large Bible story book with stunning illustrations. I love that the stories come directly from the Bible, and I especially love the question, suggested activity, and prayer at the end of each story. However, I find it odd that the editors worked so hard to make the book one that kids could read themselves but included much of the stilted language of the English Standard Version translation of the Bible. Some of it was so awkward to read (and incomprehensible to our kids) that we had to revise the stories as we read aloud.

### The Story of God's Love

Finally, when our house became a mix of grade schoolers and teenagers, we started reading The Story of God's Love. This book is great for children who already know their basic Bible stories and have a longer listening span. It contains 250 readings of actual Bible text from all 66 books of the Bible. The kids enjoyed hearing lesser-known stories (like the story of Ehud and Eglon) that they had never heard in school or Sunday school.



## Contact Us

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