

The Messenger

November 2024 Edition



A Monthly Newsletter from St. John Lutheran Church and School

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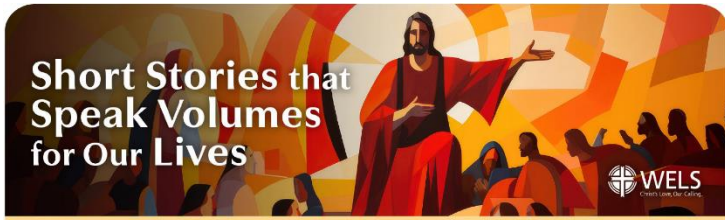


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Gather. Grow. Go. To the Glory of God!



Devotional Corner: Real Wealth

Jesus told this parable: "The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop... he said, ... 'I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I'll say to myself, "You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry."'" But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?' This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God."
Luke 12:16-21

"I need money!"

"How much money do you need?"

"Lots! Start with one and keep adding zeros till I say, 'Stop.'"

Did you ever have a conversation like this? At times we dream about being very wealthy. What would we do? Quit our jobs? Buy a new car? Travel? While it is fun to dream, the reality is that we are richer than most people in the world. Yet we may not feel rich, even though we have almost everything for maintaining a fairly comfortable lifestyle.

So why don't we feel rich? The main reason is because there's something wrong with all of us. We have a sinful nature. It likes to twist things around in our minds, so we constantly want more. And when we get more, our sinful nature still isn't satisfied.

Jesus illustrates this in a story about a farmer who had a bumper crop one year. Instead of giving away the surplus to feed the hungry or to proclaim how generous God had been with him, he thought only of himself. He planned to build bigger barns and take life easy. But soon, he died. All his accumulated wealth went to someone else, and he had to face God.

Acquiring a lot of wealth in this world is finally worthless without Jesus. He is our real wealth. The Bible says,

Though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.
2 Corinthians 8:9

Jesus, the eternal Son of God, left heaven and humbled himself to become a man. He bore the punishment of our sin, including the greed that lurks within our sinful nature. The result of his poverty is that we are freely given the riches of forgiveness and life with God.

When we think about our lives, we have so much to thank God for. Though we may not have all the worldly riches of our dreams, we have real wealth in Jesus!



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 (Mom Edition)

Exerts from a Forward in Christ article by Megan Redfield, Brenda Wagenknecht, and Megan Neisius

One of my children feels things deeply, making it challenging for him to regulate his emotions. This can lead to loud, physical meltdowns.

When this happens in public, I sometimes fail to parent with compassion and calm, worrying instead about what others think. I might snap or (I cringe just thinking about it) point out how many people are watching in an effort to make him stop, projecting my shame onto him and only making things worse.

It's easy after those moments to fall into my own shame spiral. After my son and I both calm down, I have to work hard not to beat myself up for the choices I made in the moment. I sometimes also have to resist the temptation simply to move on and act like nothing happened, which could give my son the mistaken impression that his mom is incapable of making mistakes or that he's responsible for my complicated feelings.

And so begins the repair work. It might be tempting to say, "If you hadn't screamed, this wouldn't have happened," like Adam when he shifted blame, saying, "The woman whom you gave to be with me" (Genesis 3:12 ESV). Instead, I've learned to name what happened, take accountability, and lead with compassion for how unsafe and scared he must have felt when I responded in anger and embarrassment instead of being a safe person.

I hope that through this repair I'm able to teach my son that I'm a sinner in need of forgiveness, just as he is. I also hope to open up a conversation and teach him new skills—perhaps even alternative ways to handle his big feelings. Repairing relationships is more complicated than fixing a flat tire or a broken toy, but it's also as simple as this: "Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness" (Lamentations 3:22,23).
-Carly Seifert

For over 15 years on Facebook, I've shared my parenting lowlights that demonstrate why I have never received the coveted Mother of the Year tiara and sash. Like the time I asked my sick child to wrap Christmas presents. Or that time I helped on math—and the answer was marked wrong. Admittedly, those are just funny foibles, but what about the fails?

There were times I handed out consequences but didn't discuss repentance and grace. Or sometimes I didn't deal with sinfulness because I was tired and didn't want to bother. Then there were times my heart, words, and actions were sinful, not resembling any fruit of the Spirit. This list leaves me feeling guilty.

Fortunately, the Holy Spirit, who counsels me, would remind me that God, who wins Father of the Year every year, gives me grace for every mom foible and fail.

Grace means I don't have to beat myself up for my sins because Jesus was already punished for my true parenting fails. Because of Jesus' work, God sees me as a forgiven child of God who has been given the privilege of raising other forgiven children of God. This good news helps me relax and realize that even if I didn't teach my children everything, God abundantly gives them everything they need for life and godliness.

Grace reminds me that as my husband and I surround our children with a community of believers, they have a whole group of people who love them, pray for them, and tell them how much God loves them.

Grace helps me remember that because God is the giver of every good gift, my children are gifts to me and my husband—and we are gifts to them.

Grace also humbles me, reminding me that God gets credit for any parenting successes too.

Finally, grace means knowing that while I didn't get a tiara and sash here on earth, I have a Child of the Year white robe waiting for me in eternity.

P.S. When I told my kiddo I was writing about mom fails, she said, "Well, I could just let you read my journal"—and we laughed and laughed. But it was a reminder that as God gives us grace, our kids give us grace too. Thank you, Jesus!
-Linda Buxa

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Upcoming Events

Free Community Thanksgiving Meal- Saturday, November 16th

St. John is proud to once again hold a free Thanksgiving meal, open to everyone in the community. The meal will be held on Saturday, November 16th, from 12:00-2:00 pm. Join us for turkey and all the fixings! Most foods will be provided for through Thrivent Action Cards, though people are welcome to bring in desserts. Contact the office if you are interested in helping to make dessert, to serve the meal, or to deliver meals to shut ins. Also let us know if you are aware of anyone who might like to receive a meal but would be unable to make it to the meal that day.



Wrightstown Christmas Parade- Saturday, December 7th

St. John will be participating in Wrightstown's Christmas Parade once again. This year's parade will follow a 'Traditional Christmas' theme, so we have chosen to do a live nativity! We are currently looking for kids and adults to sign up to be part of the float. Children on the float will be dressed as angels, with costumes provided by the PTO. There will be a limited number of seats on the float, so please sign up online at <https://forms.gle/42EVWRcWYCMsVy7w9>. Anyone who wants to walk with us will be welcome. If you have questions about the float, please e-mail Kari Bern at karilynn.bern@gmail.com.



Community Blood Drive at St. John- Tuesday, November 19th

Come and give blood on Tuesday, November 19th, from 1:00 to 6:00 pm. Look for sign-up papers to come in the church hallway or contact the office to volunteer for set up, take down, registrations, or giving blood. Your donation could save a life!



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.

Mark Your Calendars!

- November 2- FVL Daddy/Daughter Dance
- November 3- Daylight Savings Time Ends
- November 4- Picture Retake Day
- November 4- Open Board of Education Meeting
- November 8- Hot Lunch
- November 10- 2nd and 3rd Grade, Choir, and Handbells Perform in Church
- November 10- Trout Sports Center Dedication at FVL
- November 11- Church Council Meeting
- November 12- Monthly Fellowship Meal
- November 13 & 14- Parent/Teacher Conferences/ No After School Program
- November 16- Community Thanksgiving Meal
- November 19- Blood Drive
- November 20- Breakfast and Bible Study
- November 22- After School Care
- November 24- Worship with Festival Praise Choir
- November 25- PTO Meeting
- November 28- Happy Thanksgiving!
- November 28 & 29- No School

Church Highlights



Pastoral Call to Rev. Brad Krause

As St. John continues its search for a full-time pastor, we extended a call to Pastor Brad Krause on October 15th. Pastor Krause is currently deliberating between our call and his current call as a religion teacher at Fox Valley Lutheran High School (FVL). Please keep both him and our congregation in your prayers during this time.

Thanksgiving Worship

Please note that our Thanksgiving worship time has changed this year. Our Thanksgiving service will be held on Thursday, November 28th, at 9:00 am. There will not be a pie social this year as we anticipate families being eager to celebrate the holiday together following the service.

Festival Praise Group Worship

On Sunday, November 24th, the Festival Praise Group will be coming to St. John to enhance our weekly service. The group is composed of vocalists and musicians from throughout the Fox Valley. Come ready to praise God through beautiful songs! A snack reception will follow worship.

Vacancy Pastor Change

Pastor Raasch will be ending his time as vacancy pastor at St. John at the end of November. Please be sure to express your thanks for all his service to us at the beginning of our vacancy. Pastor Wilke, who had previously served as a part-time pastor for St. John during Pastor Gehl's tenure here, will be taking over as the vacancy minister beginning in December. Join us in welcoming his return!



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.

Church Birthdays

Happy birthday to our church members celebrating in November!

Nov 1 Sharon Demerath
Nov 1 Betty Schmidt
Nov 5 Monty Reynolds
Nov 5 Perry Schisel
Nov 5 Jeffery Sonnabend
Nov 5 Violet Sundin
Nov 5 Nicholas Van Schyndel
Nov 6 Robbie Pohlman
Nov 7 Melissa Vanderkelon
Nov 11 Brenda Kussow
Nov 12 Silvia Sieker
Nov 13 Peter Bowers

Nov 15 Aaron Wierschke
Nov 20 Tracy Golden
Nov 21 Alexis Luedtke



Nov 23 Martha Schmidt
Nov 23 Joan Zahn
Nov 25 Brad Hein
Nov 25 Danielle Vande Hey
Nov 26 Amy Vickman
Nov 27 Elliott Olp
Nov 27 Russell Otten
Nov 28 Alois (Lloyd) Patoka
Nov 28 Brenda Pohlman
Nov 28 Amelia Theunis
Nov 29 Michele Drootsan
Nov 29 Jayden Hein

School Highlights



Picture Retake Day

Anyone who missed picture day or needs a second try for a better smile should note that Monday, November 4th is our picture retake day. Parents, please be sure to communicate with your children's teachers if they need to do a retake.



Parent/Teacher Conferences

Fall parent/teacher conferences are quickly approaching! We ask that all families sign up for a conference with their children's teachers. The sign-up for time slots is active and now open to all families. Visit signupgenius.com/go/30E0C4DABAB23ABFF2-52779934-fall to register. Report cards for grades K-8 will come out on Friday, November 8th so that you can see grades and come to conferences prepared with any questions or concerns. Parents of students in grades 2-8 may also access their grades at any point through our Fast Direct system; contact Mrs. Stary to receive login information.



Parent/Teacher Organization Webpage

PTO now has its own webpage! You can access PTO information by heading to our main site, stjohnwrightstown.com, then clicking on the 'School' tab, then scrolling down to the picture link of PTO. You can also access the page directly at stjohnwrightstown.com/pto. You will find hot lunch menus, upcoming events, volunteer opportunities, classroom wish lists, and more all listed out or linked in. Be sure to check it out!



Board of Education Open Meeting

Every November and February, our Board of Ed holds an open meeting with time for parents to come in and discuss school concerns. Anyone with questions, concerns, or comments regarding St. John Lutheran School is invited to meet with the board on Monday, November 4th at 5:00.



Culver's Fundraiser Results

Our Culver's coupon fundraiser had amazing results, with \$3,280 in sales, of which \$2,460 is the estimated return to school (75%). Thank you to all who purchased coupons! They have been sent home with students and will be available at the reception desk for others.



Christmas Service Volunteers Wanted

Our PTO is asking for helpers for the Christmas services on December 6th, 13th, and 15th. Volunteers would be in charge of setting up extra seating, organizing cookie socials, and taking down seating. This is a great opportunity to knock out some volunteer hours for workers who can't help out during our school days. Please let Courtney Schisel know if you are able to help.

School Birthdays

Happy Birthday to our November celebrants!

Violet S.- November 5

Jude G.- November 6

Jaxton G.- November 13

Jayden H. – November 29

Owen V. – November 29



FVL Highlights



Daddy-Daughter Dance- Saturday, November 2nd

Girls ages 3-13 and their fathers are invited to enjoy an afternoon of dancing and other activities on Saturday, November 2, from 1:30-4:30 pm. The annual event is once again sponsored by FVL's Cheer and Stunt team. The cost is \$15 per person, with a maximum of \$50 per family. Register online or pay at the door.



Timothy Trout Sports Center Dedication- Sunday, November 10th

The Trout Center is an incredible blessing made possible by a generous donor. While it is primarily a sports facility, it's designed to serve FVL students in more ways than just athletics. The space will also be used for school-wide events, special programs, and community activities, benefiting our entire student body. Join us for the Timothy Trout Sports Center Dedication and Open House on Sunday, November 10, from 1:30-2:30 PM. Weather permitting, the event will begin outside with a brief dedication, after which all are invited to walk through the new facility.



Retirement Planning Seminar- Tuesday, November 12th

Do you have questions about retirement? Not sure how to find the best plan for your needs? Whether retirement is less than 5 years or 25 years from today, you have this special opportunity to hear from experts and get questions answered. Join us at FVL to hear attorney Tori Kluess and financial advisor, David Wendland. The seminar will begin at 6:00 pm. To register or get more information, visit <https://www.fvlhs.org/support-fvl/events/seminars>.



8th Grade Scheduling Nights- November 4th and 14th

Families with eighth graders who are considering going to FVL next year are invited to register for a scheduling appointment on November 4th or 14th. They can meet with a faculty member who will help them arrange their child's classes for the next school year. Contact the FVL guidance councilors or fill out an enrollment form at fvlhs.org/admissions/enroll-now for more information.



Upcoming Band Concerts- November 11th and 14th

First, plan to attend the FVL Schools Band Concert on Monday, November 11, at 6:30 PM. Join us (or watch on youtube.com/@FVLFoxes/streams) to enjoy the performance of our grade 5-8 bands! All three FVL Schools bands will be performing: Cadet, Concert Winds, and Wind Ensemble.

Then, all are welcome to join us for our annual FVL High School Band Concert on Thursday, November 14, at 6:30 PM! Hear from our FVL Concert and Symphonic Bands. Enjoy the concert in person or stream online on the FVL YouTube channel listed above.



Veteran's Day Breakfast and Service- Monday, November 11th

FVL is pleased to once again host their annual Veteran's Day Breakfast and Service on Monday, November 11th. Veterans and their family members are welcome to attend. Breakfast will begin at 8:30 am followed by a special service in the auditorium at 9:25. Please RSVP at <https://fs30.formsite.com/FVLForms/Vet3333/index> by Sunday, November 3rd.

Parenting Failures

Article continues from page 3

My two kids are sometimes uncomfortably aware that I'm imperfect. From forgetting to teach them to tie their shoes to losing my temper over yet another popsicle stick left in the living room, I've had many opportunities to discuss forgiveness with and demonstrate apologies to my kids. When I asked them what they thought was my biggest "mom fail," they confidently proclaimed, "That night in Omaha!"

A couple years ago, the kids and I took a road trip from Wisconsin to Colorado. I promised that if we could make it to Omaha, Neb., before stopping for the night, I'd find the kids a hotel with a pool and get dinner from wherever they wanted. About an hour outside the city, the skies opened up and slowed our progress. The remaining hour of driving dragged on to two.

After I reassured the kids that they could swim no matter how late we arrived, we slowly crept into Omaha. I found a hotel that shared a parking lot with a Cracker Barrel and got us checked in with promises of food and pool time.

The kids got changed while I looked online to order food. I was perusing a menu as we walked down to the pool . . . that wasn't a pool. It was a construction site that would soon be a pool. The kids were understandably upset. I had promised pool time.

We were also all hungry, so I finished up the online order, only to be surprised by the message that the restaurant had closed while I was putting in my order. The kids became more upset.

Not to worry, I told them, I will brave the storm and call with dinner options. But this was a weeknight after 9 P.M. in Omaha. There was nothing open but a gas station. We ended up eating chips, salsa, and peanut butter M&M's.

Despite my inability to come through on my promises to my kids that night, they both best remember staying up until midnight, playing cards, and laughing together at what a rotten night it had been.

God loves us through all these things thanks to the sacrifice of his Son.

Our kids don't need perfect or flawless parents. They need to learn that we all make mistakes and have trouble sometimes. They need to hear what a sincere apology sounds like and see what attempts to change behavior look like. They need to be reminded that God loves us through all these things thanks to the sacrifice of his Son and that God forgives our shortcomings—even those of a mom who doesn't follow through on her promises.

-Kerry Ognenoff.

Contact Us

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