

Sermon Followed By Service

February 27, 2022 - A Heritage and Heart Sunday

Luke 9:28-36

Note: In the following sermon, you will see foreshadowing of the following **bolded** themes in our coming sermon series.

Where do you see the following **bolded** themes:

3/6 - What's at Stake? God's Great Connector and

Defender

3/13 - Connection Breakers - Watch Out and Avoid

3/20 - Cost of Connection - Expect Opposition

3/27 - Make Every Effort to Keep the Unity of Peace

4/3 - Keep Grace at the Center

Remote control. Don't you love it? If you don't like what's on, turn the channel. If you don't like what you're hearing, press mute. If you want to see if you like another channel better, just click, click, click. Do you ever want to do that to God? Click, click, click. Do you ever want to do that to your church? Click, click, click.

We clicked, here at St. John. Go back in time to the early 1960s. Times were a-changing. And our older sister was changing. She didn't like what Our Father [Bible] was saying (Dad was too strict), so Big Sister figured it wasn't really Our Father saying those things. Big Sister started saying that the Bible was just some old guys putting words into Our Father's mouth. That made it easier for Big Sis. She didn't have to listen to things in here [Bible] she didn't want to hear; she didn't have to say things other people didn't want to hear. As a church, she could preach and teach what she wanted; she could preach and teach what other people wanted to hear. That made it easy to get

along, go along, grow. Getting along, going along, growing - being the big sister, being the star on the Lutheran stage - that was more important for Big Sis than holding to the Bible as Truth.

For years, we tried telling our older sister. Sometimes it seemed: “Maybe there’s hope, maybe she’s listening.” But for the most part, she wasn’t listening. More and more, she wasn’t listening. So in 1961, we broke away from our older sister - “You’re not listening to Our Father; you’re disrespecting him; you’re leading your family away from Our Father, against Our Father; and we can’t just sit back and pretend it’s ok. We can’t just sit back and pretend that what you’re preaching and teaching is ok. We have to stand up for Our Father; we have to stand for the Truth. Even if it means losing our friendship; even if it means no more Big Sister to help us - we have to stand with our Lord.” So in 1961, little sister Wisconsin stood up to big sister Missouri and said: “No more pretending. With what you’re saying about God and his Word [Bible], we’re not family anymore.”

Somehow, I don’t know how or who - somehow here at St. John we heard how Big Sister MO was going along to get along - and it sounded good. It sounded more loving, more fun, more American. Big MO’s going along to get along sounded better out there in the world; Big MO’s going along to get along was sounding better in here. And Big MO didn’t just sound better, Big MO looked bigger and better. I don’t know about back then, but today we have about 20 congregations where they have about 200 congregations. Being part of big MO would be easier, more convenient, more comfortable, more fun - a big step up. And so St. John stepped out from Wisconsin and stepped in with Missouri.

Did everyone here know what they were stepping into? I doubt it. For many of us, Big MO wasn't just our sister church; she was our Mother Church, our first church. Many, if not most of us, had family and friends in Big MO. Many, if not most of us, knew Big MO from a time and a place she stood true to God's Word.

But it didn't take long for us to find out what we had stepped into. Going along to get along meant going along with people who were a whole lot more mouthy against God than Big Sister was. Going along to get along meant going where we - by God's grace - weren't ready to go. Going along to get along meant going against God in ways that we - by God's grace - weren't willing to go.

So we stepped back. We didn't jump back all at once. We didn't just change the channel. We had people to love and Truth to speak. First, we tried speaking up and speaking out for the Truth - "If we care about what God says, we can't just go along to get along." Then we raised the stakes; instead of sending our offerings to ministries wishy-washy on God's Truth or even against God's Truth, willing to go along to get along, we sent our offerings to ministries standing up for the Bible as God's Truth. Then, finally, in 1971, we realized that speaking up and speaking out wasn't doing any good. Big MO - going along to get along - was going along further and further away from what God said. So we stood up to Big MO, broke away, and started our own church body. A nation-wide church body started here at St. John, nation-wide from Florida to California - 7 churches from Florida to California. There were a thousand more churches and pastors who had claimed to be for God's Word as Truth, who had claimed to be against going along to get along, but for the most part they ended up just going along to get along. Why? Going along to get along is easier than

standing up for the Truth. With that, the writing was on the wall. In 1978, we rejoined the Wisconsin Synod.

Why? Going along to get along might be easier, more convenient, more comfortable, more fun - but it just doesn't fit with what God says. And what does God the Father say? You heard him in our lesson today. From the cloud, the Father boomed: **“This is my Son whom I have chosen; listen to him.”** **“Listen to Jesus.”**

Peter needed to hear that. Just a week earlier, Peter tried scolding Jesus; Peter tried muting Jesus and changing his channel. Why? Jesus was saying things Peter didn't want to hear. Jesus has a way of doing that, doesn't he? “Deny yourself. Love and forgive your enemies. Put God and his kingdom first.” I could go on. Jesus has a way of saying things that just don't fit our normal way of thinking. So it can be tempting to want to turn him off, mute him, change the channel, and to listen to somebody who tells us what we want to hear. And when people around us don't like what Jesus says, it can be so easy to just go along to get along. It can be so easy to turn off and turn from the Truth of Jesus for something easier, more comfortable, more convenient, more “fun.”

What if Jesus would have listened to Peter and gone for the easier, the more comfortable and convenient? If we were to take away the cross of Jesus, what would we have left? Guilt and judgment. Guilt for trying to mute God; guilt for trying to click God off when he says things we don't want to hear. Guilt for being wishy-washy on God's Truth and going along to get along. Guilt for keeping quiet instead of loving God's Word enough to stand up and speak up for God's Truth. Guilt for keeping quiet instead of loving God's people enough to warn them of the Devil's lies. If Jesus would have taken the

easy way out, comfortable and convenient, what would we be left with? Guilt and judgment, judgment where there is no love, no comfort, no convenience, no fun, just the judgment of God in hell.

But Jesus didn't listen to Peter; he didn't choose easy, comfortable, and convenient over Truth and Love. Jesus went to the cross - with your guilt and mine. And there he satisfied God's judgment. Now, with Jesus, we don't have to stand before God in judgment; we get to stand before God in Truth - the truth of Jesus. We get to hear Jesus' invitation: "Come to me." We get to hear Jesus' promise: "Your sins are forgiven." We get to hear Jesus' future: eternal life. That's right, Jesus' future for those who listen and believe is eternal life in heaven.

And today? Today, Jesus calls us. He doesn't call us to go along to get along. He doesn't call us to take the easy way out. He doesn't call us to choose the comfortable and convenient. Today, Jesus calls us to his Truth. To rest in his Truth - forgiven full and free. To rest in his Truth - safe with him for time and eternity. To rest in his Truth, but not just to rest and sit back, but to stand up for his Truth, to speak up for his Truth. To gather and be part of a church that stands up and speaks up for the Truth, even if, even when, it might cost comfort or convenience. Why? Not because it's "our way or the highway," but because it's His way to heaven. Amen.

St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church

A Family Connecting in Christ



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WELCOME TO ST. JOHN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

Masked

With the renewed mask mandate across Illinois, we now offer masked worship - Saturdays at 5 and Sundays at 9. If you have questions, please ask!

To Our Guests

- We pray that you receive a warm welcome and are blessed by the message of God's Word in our lessons and hymns. If you have questions, please ask!
- Our service is designed to focus us on Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. The Holy Spirit does that by exposing our need for Christ and by showing us the wonders of God's grace in Christ – forgiveness and peace, help, and hope for life in this world, and life forever with God in heaven.
- Please join us after Sunday service for fellowship and Family Bible Hour.

Our Communion Practice

We practice close communion, the Biblical and ancient practice of the church. We invite our congregation members and visitors from sister WELS or ELS congregations to join us, but ask Christians from other denominations to kindly respect our practice. Further explanation is in the pew racks or from our pastor.

We Care about Your Children

We love to have children with us in worship.

- Children's worship bulletins and "church bags" (with paper, colors, and Bible story books) are available in the Narthex Gathering Area.
- If your children are crying loudly, our nursery, Gathering Area (back of church), and downstairs Fellowship Hall are audio-equipped for you and your young children. When your children are ready, come back so we can worship together.

We Care about Your Special Needs

- **Large Print** Service Folders are available from an usher.
- **Hearing Assistance** for those with hearing aids is provided through our Hearing Loop or personal hearing devices available at the "sound table."
- A **wheelchair lift** is available for your assistance; please ask an usher.



Our Facilities

Restrooms are in our Fellowship Hall, downstairs and to the right of the kitchen.

Our Ministry

St. John offers an excellent preschool-8th grade school program. We are members of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) - www.wels.net.

THE SERVICE

IN OUR WORLD TODAY...

IN OUR WORSHIP TODAY...

OPENING HYMN

"Thy Strong Word"

Hymn 630

vs. 1-3, & 5

Thy strong word did cleave the darkness; at thy speaking it was done.
For created light we thank thee while thine ordered seasons run.
Alleluia, alleluia! Praise to thee who light dost send!
Alleluia, alleluia! Alleluia without end!

Lo, on those who dwelt in darkness, dark as night and deep as death,
broke the light of thy salvation, breathed thine own life-giving breath.
Alleluia, alleluia! Praise to thee who light dost send!
Alleluia, alleluia! Alleluia without end!

Thy strong Word bespeaks us righteous; bright with thine own holiness,
glorious now, we press toward glory, and our lives our hopes confess.
Alleluia, alleluia! Praise to thee who light dost send!
Alleluia, alleluia! Alleluia without end!

Give us lips to sing thy glory, tongues thy mercy to proclaim,
throats to shout the hope that fills us, mouths to speak thy holy name.
Alleluia, alleluia! May the light which thou dost send
fill our songs with alleluias, alleluias without end!

INVOCATION

In the name of the Father and of the T Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

**If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just
and will forgive us our sins
and purify us from all unrighteousness.**

Let us confess our sins to the Lord.

Holy God, gracious Father,

I am sinful by nature

and have sinned against you in my thoughts, words, and actions.

I have not loved you with my whole heart;

I have not loved others as I should.

I deserve your punishment both now and forever.

But Jesus, my Savior, paid for my sins

with his innocent suffering and death.

Trusting in him, I pray: God, have mercy on me, a sinner.

Silence for meditation and reflection

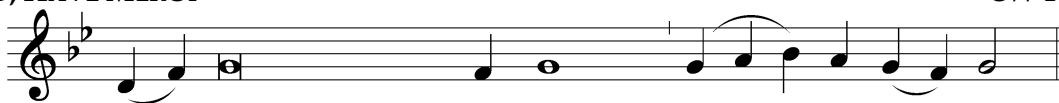
Our gracious Father in heaven has been merciful to us. He sent his only Son, Jesus Christ, who gave his life as the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the whole world.

Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the T Son and of the Holy Spirit.

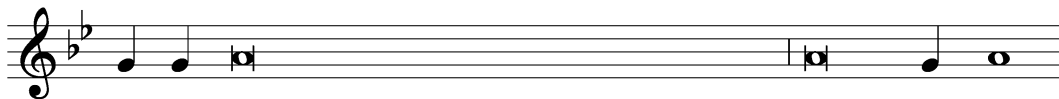
Amen.

LORD, HAVE MERCY

CW 174



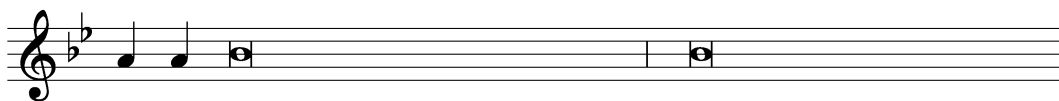
In peace let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mer - cy.**



For the peace from above and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



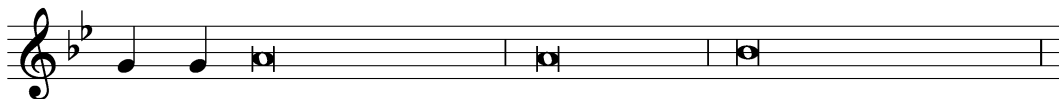
For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of



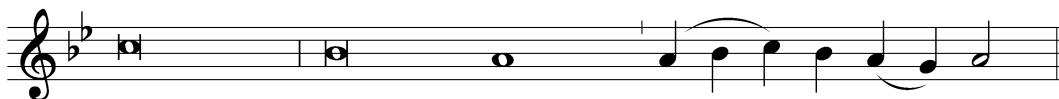
God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and



praise, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mer - cy.**



Help, save, com - fort, and de - fend us, gra - cious Lord.



A - men.

GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST

CW p.176



Glo - ry to God in the high - est, and peace to his



peo - ple on earth. Lord God,



heav - en - ly King, al - might - y God and Fa - ther, we



wor - ship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your



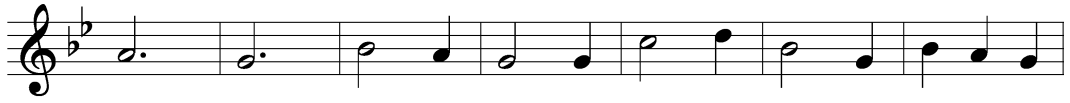
glo - ry. Glo - ry to God in the high - est, and



peace to his peo - ple on earth.



Lord Je - sus Christ, on - ly Son of the Fa - ther,



Lord God, Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the



world; have mer - cy on us. You are seat - ed at the



right hand of the Fa - ther; re - ceive our prayer.



Glo - ry to God in the high - est, and peace to his



peo - ple on earth. For you a -



lone are the Ho - ly One, you a - lone are the Lord,



you a - lone are the Most High, Je - sus Christ,



with the Ho - ly Spir - it in the glo - ry of

God the Fa - ther. A - men. A - men.

Glo - ry to God in the high - est, and peace to his

peo - ple on earth.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

O God, in the glorious transfiguration of your only-begotten Son, you confirmed the mysteries of the faith by the testimony of Moses and Elijah, and in the voice that came from the bright cloud, you foreshadowed our adoption as your sons. In your mercy, make us co-heirs of glory with Jesus our King, and bring us at last to heaven; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

FIRST READING

2 Peter 1:16–21

For we did not follow cleverly devised stories when we told you about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in power, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. He received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.” We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain.

We also have the prophetic message as something completely reliable, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.

Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things. For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM OF THE DAY

Psalm 19B

Refrain



Lord, you have the words of ev - er - last - ing life.

Tone



The heavens declare the glo- / ry of God;
the skies proclaim the work / of his hands.
Day after day they / pour forth speech;
night after night they reveal / knowledge.

The law of the LORD is perfect, refresh- / ing the soul.
The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the / simple.
The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy / to the heart.
The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light / to the eyes. *Refrain*

They are more precious than gold, than much / pure gold;
they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the / honeycomb.
By them your servant / is warned;
in keeping them there is / great reward.

Keep your servant also from / willful sins;
may they not rule / over me.

May these words of my mouth and this meditation / of my heart
be pleasing in your sight, LORD, my rock and my Re- / deemer.

**Glory be to the Father and / to the Son
and to the Holy / Spirit,
as it was in the be- / ginning,
is now, and will be forever. / Amen. Refrain**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



Refrain



Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

Rejoice in the Lord
For his love and faithfulness.

Refrain

GOSPEL

Luke 9:28-36

About eight days after Jesus said this, he took Peter, John and James with him and went up onto a mountain to pray. As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning. Two men, Moses and Elijah, appeared in glorious splendor, talking with Jesus. They spoke about his departure, which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem. Peter and his companions were very sleepy, but when they became fully awake, they saw his glory and the two men standing with him. As the men were leaving Jesus, Peter said to him, “Master, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.” (He did not know what he was saying.)

While he was speaking, a cloud appeared and covered them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. A voice came from the cloud, saying, “This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him.”

When the voice had spoken, they found that Jesus was alone. The disciples kept this to themselves and did not tell anyone at that time what they had seen.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise be to you, O Christ!

HYMN OF THE DAY

“Jesus, Take Us to the Mountain”

Hymn 390

Choir sings v. 1-3

Congregation sings v. 4-5

*Jesus, take us to the mountain where, with Peter, James, and John,
we are dazzled by your glory, light as blinding as the sun.
There prepare us for the night by the vision of that sight.*

*What do you want us to see there that your close companions saw?
Your divinity revealed there fills us with the selfsame awe.
Clothed in flesh like ours you go, matched to meet our deadliest foe.*

*What do you want us to hear there that your dear disciples heard?
Once again the voice from heaven says of the incarnate Word:
“Listen, listen, ev’ryone; this is my beloved Son!”*

Take us to that other mountain where we see you glorified,
where you shouted, “It is finished!” where for all the world you died.
Hear the stunned centurion: “Truly this was God’s own Son!”

We who have beheld your glory, risen and ascended Lord,
cannot help but tell the story, all that we have seen and heard,
say with Peter, James, and John: “You are God’s beloved Son!”

SERMON

APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

M: May this be a time, O Lord, for confession and repentance. Forgive us for the apathy that harms our faith and hinders our works. Forgive us for boasting of our past achievements and for blaming others for our present problems. Rid us of indifference to public worship and Bible study. Destroy the distrust that plagues us, and shatter every thought and word that harms the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace.

C: **Create in us pure hearts, O God, and renew steadfast spirits within us.**

M: Let this be a time, O Lord, when you renew us again by Word and sacrament, when you reform our hearts and minds, and when you restore to us the joy of fellowship and service. Grant to us in this age and in this place the courage, steadfastness, and dedication of those who have gone before us.

C: **May the Lord our God be with us as he was with our fathers; may he never leave us nor forsake us.**

M: Let this be a time, O Lord, when we recommit and reconsecrate ourselves to the ministry of the gospel. Let us find joy in our unity, zeal for our work, and success in our labor.

C: **May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face shine on us, that his ways may be known on earth, his salvation among all nations. Amen.**

HYMN

“Speak, O Lord”

Hymn 633

Speak, O Lord, as we come to you To receive the food of your Holy Word;
Take your truth, plant it deep in us; Shape and fashion us in your likeness
That the light of Christ might be seen today
In our acts of love and our deeds of faith.
Speak, O Lord, and fulfill in us All your purposes for your glory.

Teach us, Lord, full obedience, Holy reverence, true humility;
Test our thoughts and our attitudes In the radiance of your purity.
Cause our faith to rise, cause our eyes to see Your majestic love and authority.
Words of pow’r that can never fail, Let their truth prevail over unbelief.

Speak, O Lord, and renew our minds,
Help us grasp the heights of your plans for us,
Truths unchanged from the dawn of time, That will echo down through eternity.
And by grace we’ll stand on your promises,
And by faith we’ll walk as you walk with us.
Speak, O Lord, till your Church is built, And the earth is filled with your glory.

PRAYER

Blessed Lord, you have given us your Holy Scriptures for our learning. May we so hear them, read, learn, and take them to heart that, being strengthened and comforted by your holy Word, we may cling to the blessed hope of everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

LORD’S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

BLESSING

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and T give you peace.

Amen.

FAREWELL TO ALLELUIA

Brothers and sisters in Christ, when we next gather for worship, it will be Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent. On that day we will begin our solemn journey to the Savior's cross. While the joy of faith remains undiminished throughout the year, our rejoicing during Lent is muted and quiet. For centuries, therefore, Christian churches have omitted their most jubilant songs during this season, including the word *alleluia*, which means, "praise the Lord."

Now for a time we say farewell to *alleluia*. We do this to prepare ourselves for the quieter days of Lent. The *alleluias* will return on Easter dawn as we gather to shout our praise to the risen Lord.

CLOSING HYMN

"Alleluia, Song of Triumph"

Hymn 977



1 Al - le - lu - ia, song of tri - umph, sound of joy that
2 Al - le - lu - ia we are sing - ing, voic - ing hymns in
3 Al - le - lu - ia can - not al - ways be our song while
4 May our hymns be filled with long - ing— hear us, Ho - ly



can - not die; al - le - lu - ia is the an - them
pure ac - cord, with Christ's ho - ly Church u - nit - ed,
here be - low; al - le - lu - ia our trans - gres - sions
Trin - i - ty— as we look to your blest East - er,



ev - er dear to choirs on high; saints a - dorned in
jus - ti - fied, re - deemed, re - stored, and with all his
make us for a while for - go. For the sol - emn
here, and then e - ter - nal - ly, when we shall once



robes of glo - ry join the great an - gel - ic cry.
faith - ful peo - ple raise our songs to praise the Lord.
time is com - ing when our tears for sin must flow.
more be sing - ing al - le - lu - ia joy - ful - ly!

OFFERING

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History of FAL (Federation for Authentic Lutheranism)

Pastor Voss

In the late 1960's it became increasingly apparent that the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod (which St. John's joined in 1963) in many quarters was abandoning its former position in doctrine and practice as confessed in the former Synodical Conference. Consequently, the LC-MS declared itself in fellowship with the American Lutheran church in 1977 without establishing doctrinal agreement. Becoming more vocal also were clergy within the LC-MS who questioned and denied that the entire Bible is divinely inspired and inerrant Word of God. St. John's along with numerous other LC-MS congregations protested and withheld contributions to the LC-MS. When it became obvious that the LC-MS would tolerate such false teachers in its midst without disciplining them, St. John's joined with other dissenting LC-MS congregations from the Federation for Authentic Lutheranism. The Constituting Convention of the FAL was held at St. John's, Libertyville, on November 1, 1971, and a new confessional Lutheran church body was born.

The FAL was very active in founding and supporting home mission congregations as well as overseas churches. One of these was St. John's parish on the island of Antigua in the West Indies. After four years of existence, it became apparent that the FAL would not become viable because of distances between her churches and insufficient numbers to support a seminary and publishing house. The FAL disbanded in 1975. Its congregations joined either the Wisconsin Synod (WELS) or the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (E.L.S.). Some remained in fellowship with these synods but chose to remain synodically independent. St. John's rejoined the Wisconsin Synod in 1978.

The "FAL years" were an exciting period in St. John's history!