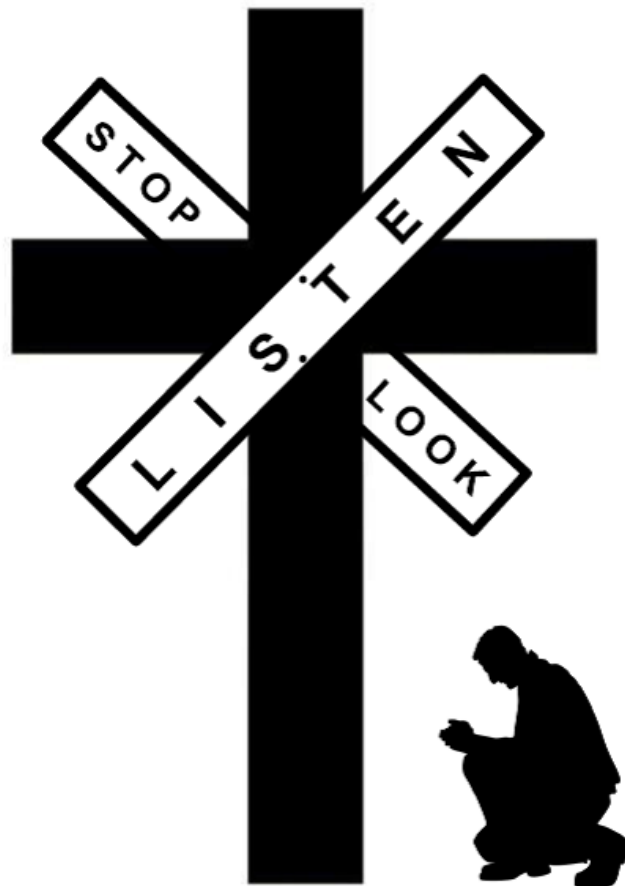


St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church

A Family Connecting in Christ



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Principal Jon Woldt
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WELCOME TO ST. JOHN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

At this time our services are for people wearing masks and social distancing!

Please know that even as we experience this awkwardness, your Good Shepherd holds you close to his heart and goes with you to share his love!

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.

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.

- 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.

October 4, 2020

DIVINE SERVICE II

This month in worship ... Stop! Look! Listen! It's Time for a Check-Up!

IN OUR WORLD TODAY ... with all that's going on, it's easy to feel tired, stressed, anxious, guilty and beaten down.

IN OUR WORSHIP TODAY ... we hear our good doctor's prescription: "Sit Back, Rest, and Relax with me."

OPENING HYMN

"Children of the Heavenly Father"

Hymn 449

Children of the heav'nly Father
Safely in His bosom gather;
Nestling bird nor star in Heaven
Such a refuge ne'er was given.

God, His own doth tend and nourish;
In His holy courts they flourish.
From all evil things He spares them;
In His mighty arms He bears them.

Neither life nor death shall ever
From the Lord, his children sever;
Unto them his grace he showeth,
And their sorrows all he knoweth.

Though he giveth or he taketh,
God his children ne'er forsaketh;
His the loving purpose solely
To preserve them, pure and holy.

INVOCATION

M: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

CONFESSION

M: Dear friends, let us approach God with a true heart and confess our sins, asking him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to forgive us.

C: **Lord of life, I confess that I am by nature dead in sin.**
For faithless worrying and selfish pride,
For sins of habit and sins of choice,
For the evil I have done and the good I have failed to do,
I deserve to be cast away from your presence forever.
O Lord, I am sorry for my sins. Forgive me, for Jesus' sake.

ABSOLUTION

M: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again. In his great mercy, God made us alive in Christ even when we were dead in our sins. Hear the word of Christ through his called servant:

I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

LORD, HAVE MERCY †

Kyrie

M: In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

For the well-being of all people everywhere, that they may receive from you all they need to sustain body and life, hear our prayer, O Lord.

C: **Lord, have mercy.**

M: For the spread of your life-giving gospel throughout the world, that all who are lost in sin may be brought to faith in you, hear our prayer, O Christ.

C: **Christ, have mercy.**

† Kyrie is the Greek word for Lord. The expression "Lord, have mercy" is one of the oldest worship responses in the Christian church.

M: For patience and perseverance in this life, that we may not lose the hope of heaven as we await your return, hear our prayer, O Lord.

C: **Lord, have mercy.**

M: Lord of life, live in us that we may live for you.

C: **Amen.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

O God, the strength of all who trust in you, mercifully hear our prayers. Be gracious to us in our weakness and give us strength to walk with you in all we say and do; through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

FIRST LESSON

2 Corinthians 12:7-10

To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

SECOND LESSON

Romans 7:15-25; 8:1

I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.

So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! ... there is now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus.

HOLY GOSPEL

Matthew 5:28-30

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

NICENE CREED

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one being with the Father.**

Through him all things were made.

**For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary,
and became fully human.**

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate.

He suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures.

He ascended into heaven

and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

**He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who in unity with the Father and the Son is worshiped and
glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen**

HYMN OF THE DAY

"Day by Day"
Hymn 765

Day by day, your mercies, Lord, attend me,
Bringing comfort to my anxious soul.
Day by day, the blessings, Lord, you send me
Draw me nearer to my heav'nly goal.
Love divine, beyond all mortal measure,
Brings to naught the burdens of my quest;
Savior, lead me to the home I treasure,
Where, at last, I'll find eternal rest.

Day by day, I know you will provide me
Strength to serve and wisdom to obey;
I will seek your loving will to guide me
O'er the paths I struggle day by day.
I will fear no evil of the morrow;
I will trust in your enduring grace.
Savior, help me bear life's pain and sorrow;
Till in glory I behold your face.

Oh, what joy to know that you are near me
When my burdens grow too great to bear;
Oh, what joy to know that you will hear me
When I come, O Lord, to you in prayer.
Day by day, no matter what betide me,
You will hold me ever in your hand.
Savior, with your presence here to guide me,
I will reach at last the promised land.

Text: Carolina Sandell Berg, 1832–1903; tr. Robert Leaf, b. 1936 © 1992 Augsburg Fortress.
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SERMON

2 Corinthians 12:7-12

How are you doing? Some days, I'm tired. How about you? Not just sleepy tired, bags under my eyes tired, didn't get enough sleep tired. And not just tired of wearing a mask, or tired of allergies, or tired of sneezing my allergies into my mask. Sure, some days I'm that kind of tired. But some days I'm tired with a more tiring tired. Tired of not being good enough, smart enough, strong enough; tired of not knowing the right thing, saying the right thing, doing the right thing; tired of not getting done what needs to get done. How did Paul put it? Tired of being a wretch in a body of death. That kind of tired.

Do you ever get that kind of tired? Do you know anyone else who gets that kind of tired? I wonder if Asaph felt that way in Psalm 73 - "I'm pounding my head against the wall, LORD, trying to do the right thing, LORD, but it doesn't seem to be doing any good, LORD." I wonder if David felt that way in Psalm 18 - "**Cords of death entangled me; torrents of destruction overwhelmed me.**" I know Elijah felt tired that way. Jeremiah felt tired that way. The Apostle Paul felt tired that way: "**What a wretch I am - who will rescue me from this body of death?!**" Do you ever get tired that way? This COVID-time - cooped up, stressed out, on the edge - doesn't make it any easier, does it?

I think it's supposed to be that way - exhausting, tiring. Why? To break us. To break our pride. To break our self-reliance. To break our brittle. Not to make us brittle, but to break our brittle. To break us where we need to be broken so that we can come through stronger. That's what exercise does, isn't it? When we exercise we tear our muscles, and then when we feed them right, we heal them and make them stronger. And that's exactly what we get to see God doing. I know that sometimes it feels like he's just breaking us and tossing us. I know it felt that way to Asaph, to David, Elijah, Jeremiah, and oh, do you remember Naomi, Ruth's Naomi? - **"The LORD's hand has gone out against me."** At times, they were all tired, all thinking they were alone and on their own without God. But God wasn't breaking them, tiring them, exhausting them, to toss them. No, God was breaking them, tiring them, exhausting them to make them strong. Sometimes driving them but always inviting them to their knees - "Lord, have mercy." And he does the same thing for us, sometimes driving us, but always inviting us to our knees: "Lord, have mercy."

Sometimes that can be a hard thing to accept, that God could be working to break us, tire us, exhaust us. We'd rather think of Jesus holding us, helping us, healing us; and that this COVID-time is something that God is fighting along with us. I get it. I'd rather think the same thing, too. But it's good for me to remember - this COVID-time isn't something outside of God's control. Our tiredness, our weakness, our failures aren't something outside of God's control. God uses them all to exercise us, to work our faith, to tear us down, build us up, to make us strong with him.

One more thing on that. If you're frustrated, angry, or sore at God for exercising you, think about this. It really doesn't take much effort on God's part to tire us, to exhaust us, does it? We seem to do a pretty good job of that ourselves. If it's not the world out there making us tired, running us ragged, wearing us down, we are all old masters at tiring ourselves, running ourselves ragged, wearing ourselves down. Instead of getting sore at God, blaming God for our tiredness, it's best just to take God at his invitation: "Lord, have mercy."

And what does our God do? In Psalm 18, he comes down from heaven like a fire-breathing dragon; he reaches down and pulls us up, picks us up, sets us free, and filling us with his energy and power, he makes us strong for anything - **"I am strong for all things through him who gives me strength."** Oh, those are

great days, aren't they? Maybe, perhaps on our tired days, he's getting ready to do just that. But let's not wait. Jesus has something even better for us. I call it better because God calls it better. We have, you have, Jesus inviting you: **"Come to me all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."** Jesus isn't promising rest with the snap of a finger. He invites: **"Take my yoke upon you and learn from me for I am gentle and humble in heart. And you will find rest for your souls."** Jesus has something better for us than a fire-breathing dragon and rest at the snap of a finger. He has God's answer, he is God's answer for the worst of what tires us. Do you remember what Paul said: **"Oh, what a wretch I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?"** How did Paul answer his own crying question? **"Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! There is now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus!"**

Think about what that means! The voices out there, the voices in here that echo around - "you're not good enough, you're not good enough," the sin that proves those voices right, the guilt that eats us up and beats us down ... with all that, Jesus invites you close - **"Come to me ..."** He promises: "Your sin and guilt are covered over, paid for by my blood, forgiven and gone." And what about those judging voices? They're answered, covered over by the voice of Jesus: **"Father, forgive them,"** covered over by the voice of your Father: **"You are my son, my daughter whom I love; with you I am well pleased."**

How pleased? So pleased he calls you his! So pleased he makes his home in you to live his life through you. So pleased he has a home for you in heaven, with him forever! We don't have to go through life aimlessly; we don't have to go through life hopelessly. We don't have to go through life wearing ourselves out, trying to earn approval, trying to find some point and purpose to this all. No, living the Jesus-life, living the life God gives you in baptism, your life already has purpose and point. With Jesus in your baptism, you already stand approved, approved by God. Let me echo what your Father says to you: **"You are my son, my daughter whom I love; with you I am well pleased."** That's just a taste of the rest that Jesus has for you.

But we don't always feel it, do we? Sometimes we wish God would do the fire-breathing dragon thing, that he would reach down and snatch us out of our troubles. Sometimes we wish God would do the finger snapping thing and make life easy. Instead, sometimes God does what he did for Paul and he lets us struggle and hurt and flounder about. And when we pray and pray and pray, instead of snapping his finger he says: **"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."** I don't always like that answer, but I'm learning Paul's answer: **"Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, for when I am weak, then I am strong."** The less we rely on ourselves - our strength, our smarts - and the more we rely on him - his strength, his smarts - the smarter and stronger we will be. What does that mean for this COVID-time? Perhaps even COVID-time is a blessing.

So how are you doing? Some days, I'm tired, but by God's grace he's making me smarter and stronger. I pray that's true for you too. Amen.

A MEDLEY OF SCHOOL THEME VERSES

- M: "I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord,
C: **"plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."** (Jeremiah 29:11~ 2011-2012)
- M: Those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength.
C: **They will soar on wings like eagles;**
M: they will run and not grow weary,
C: **they will walk and not be faint.** (Isaiah 40:31~ 2012-2013)
- M: I am strong for all things
C: **through Christ who strengthens me.** (Philippians 4:13 ~ 2014-2015)
- M: Be kind and compassionate to one another,
C: **forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.** (Ephesians 4:32 ~ 2015-2016)

M: Do not be anxious about anything,
C: **but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving,
present your requests to God.** (Philippians 4:6 ~ 2016-2017)

M: I have told you these things,
C: **so that in me you may have peace.**
M: In this world you will have trouble.
C: **But take heart! I have overcome the world.** (John 16:33 ~ 2017-2018)

M: So do not fear, for I am with you;
C: **do not be dismayed, for I am your God.**
M: I will strengthen you and help you;
C: **I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.**
(Isaiah 41:10 ~ 2018-2019)

HYMN

"All Depends on Our Possessing"
Hymn 421

All depends on our possessing
God's abundant grace and blessing,
Though all earthly wealth depart.
They who trust with faith unshaken
In their God are not forsaken
And e'er keep a dauntless heart.

He who to this day has fed me
And to many joys has led me
Is and ever shall be mine.
He who ever gently schools me,
He who daily guides and rules me,
Will remain my help divine.

Many spend their lives in fretting
Over trifles and in getting
Things that have no solid ground.
I shall strive to win a treasure
That will bring me lasting pleasure
And that now is seldom found.

Well he knows what best to grant me;
All the longing hopes that haunt me,
Joy and sorrow, have their day.
I shall doubt his wisdom never--
As God wills, so be it ever --
I to him commit my way.

If on earth my days he lengthen,
He my weary soul will strengthen;
All my trust in him I place.
Earthly wealth is not abiding,
Like a stream away is gliding;
Safe I anchor in his grace.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Lord God, Lord of nations, you have made us citizens both of your kingdom of grace and of the earthly nation in which we live. You have placed us under a government that gives us the privilege of choosing the leaders who govern us. As another election approaches, help us appreciate and use this privilege. Bless our nation through the election of honest and responsible officials, and watch over us each day with your almighty protection and your unfailing love. 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.

THE SACRAMENT

(Guests, please see our communion practice on page 2.)

M: The Lord be with you.

C: **(Spoken) And also with you.**

M: Lift up your hearts.

C: **We lift them up unto the Lord.**

M: Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.

C: **It is good and right so to do.**

M: It is truly good and right that we should at all times and in all places give you thanks, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who rose from the dead in glorious triumph to bring forgiveness to the world and everlasting life to all who believe.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

M: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my † body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; this is my † blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

M: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: **Amen.**

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M: We give you thanks, O Lord, for the foretaste of the heavenly banquet that you have given us to eat and to drink in this sacrament. Through this gift you have fed our faith, nourished our hope, and strengthened our love. By your Spirit help us to live as your holy people until that day when you will receive us as your guests at the wedding supper of the Lamb, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
Amen.

BLESSING

M: 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 give you peace. Amen.

CLOSING HYMN

“Be Thou My Vision”

Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;
Naught be all else to me, save that thou art.
Thou my best thought in day and the night;
Waking and sleeping, thy presence my light.

Be thou my breastplate, my sword for the fight;
Thou my whole armor and thou my true might;
Thou my soul's shelter and thou my strong tower.
Raise thou me heav'nward, great Pow'r of my pow'r.

Riches I need not, nor man's empty praise;
Thou mine inheritance, now and always;
Thou and thou only the first in my heart;
High King of heaven, my treasure thou art.

High King of heaven, my victory won,
May I reach heaven's joys, O bright heav'n's Sun.
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
Still be my vision, O Ruler of all.

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