

St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church



Pastor Kevin Raddatz
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.

- Children's worship bulletins and "church bags" (with paper, colors, and Bible story books) are available from an usher.
- 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

- **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.

Confirmation Sunday

May 9, 2021

IN OUR WORSHIP TODAY ... we join our Confirmand in learning God's promise, confessing our faith, and asking God to keep us with him for time and eternity.

OPENING HYMN

"With the Lord Begin Your Task"
Hymn 478

With the Lord begin your task; Jesus will direct it.
For his aid and counsel ask; Jesus will perfect it.
Ev'ry morn with Jesus rise, And, when day is ended,
In his name then close your eyes; Be to him commended.

Let each day begin with prayer, Praise and adoration.
On the Lord cast ev'ry care; He is your salvation.
Morning, evening, and at night Jesus will be near you,
Save you from the tempter's might, With his presence cheer you.

With your Savior at your side Foes need not alarm you;
In his promises confide And no ill can harm you.
All your trust and hope repose In the mighty master,
Who in wisdom truly knows How to stem disaster.

If your task is thus begun With the Savior's blessing
Safely then your course will run, Naught your soul distressing.
Good will follow ev'rywhere While you here must wander;
You at last the joy will share In the mansions yonder.

CONFESSION OF SINS

M: We have come into the presence of God, who created us to love and serve him as his dear children. But we have disobeyed him and deserve only his wrath and punishment. Therefore, let us confess our sins to him and plead for his mercy.

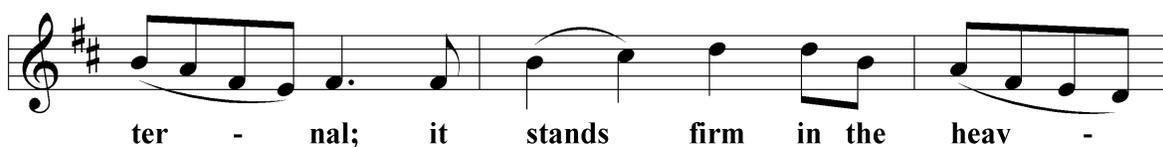
C: **Merciful Father in heaven, I am altogether sinful from birth. In countless ways I have sinned against you and do not deserve to be called your child. But trusting in Jesus my Savior, I pray: Have mercy on me according to your unfailing love. Cleanse me from my sin, and take away my guilt.**

M: God, our heavenly Father, has forgiven all your sins, by the perfect life and innocent death of our Lord Jesus Christ, he has removed your guilt forever. You are his own dear child. May God give you strength to live according to his will.

C: **Amen.**

M: In the peace of forgiveness, let us praise the Lord.

OH, TASTE AND SEE



ens. Your faith - ful - ness con - tin - ues for -
 ev - er. Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good.
 Bless - ed are they who take ref - uge in him.

PRAYER OF THE DAY (*Spoken together*)

Gracious Father, keep your family, the Church, always faithful to you, that we may lean on the hope of your promises and be strong in the power of your love; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

FIRST LESSON

Colossians 3:12-17

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

GOSPEL LESSON

John 15:1-8

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.”

“I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.”



HYMN OF THE DAY

“A Mighty Fortress Is Our God”

Hymn 200

A mighty fortress is our God, A trusty shield and weapon;
He helps us free from ev’ry need That has us now o’ertaken.
The old evil foe Now means deadly woe;
Deep guile and great might Are his dread arms in fight;
On earth is not his equal.

With might of ours can naught be done; Soon were our loss effected.
But for us fights the valiant one Whom God himself elected.
You ask, “Who is this?” Jesus Christ it is,
The almighty Lord. And there’s no other God;
He holds the field forever.

Though devils all the world should fill, All eager to devour us,
We tremble not, we fear no ill; They shall not overpow'r us.
This world's prince may still Scowl fierce as he will,
He can harm us none. He's judged; the deed is done!
One little word can fell him.

The Word they still shall let remain, Nor any thanks have for it;
He's by our side upon the plain With his good gifts and Spirit.
And do what they will -- Hate, steal, hurt, or kill --
Though all may be gone, Our victory is won;
The kingdom's ours forever!

SERMON

Matthew 7:7

“Ask and it will be given to you;
seek and you will find;
knock and the door will be opened to you.”

Today, Confirmation Day, is a big promise day. Today you promise to live your whole life according to the Word of God, even if it costs you your life. A big, huge promise. But more important than what you promise God today, is what you ask of God the rest of your days. And with your asking, God gives you a big promise. Listen to Jesus: **“Ask and it will be given you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened unto you.”**

Think of the promises that God has given you. What are your favorites?

Why might I say that what we ask of God the rest of our days is more important than what we promise on our Confirmation Day?

Imagine your dad at work - a thousand things to do; customers,

clients, co-workers all trying to talk to him; the competition raising a ruckus; all at the same time. And you have something to ask him. With all that's going on, what do you expect him to say? "Don't bother me now; can't you see I'm busy; wait your turn"? No, not your Father in heaven; he wants you to ask!

Your Father isn't half-hearted about wanting you to ask – "ask if you want" He so much wants you to ask that he commands you to ask and not just ask, but he commands you to seek, and not just seek, but he commands you to knock. And not just once – he commands: "ask and keep on asking; seek and keep on seeking; knock and keep on knocking." Your Father wants you to ask!

What is your favorite prayer invitation, command, or promise?

What lesson on prayer from Bible History is especially meaningful to you?

Do you do that? Do you ask like your Father wants you to ask? I think if God only gave me what I asked and asked and asked for, what I sought and sought and sought for, what I knocked and knocked and knocked for – I'd be dead, hell-fire dead. If God only gave me what I asked and asked and asked for, not only would my belly be empty, my heart would be even emptier.

For example, how many times have I thought about my confirmation promises and asked God to help me keep my promises? When we were confirmed we promised we would rather suffer anything, even death, rather than fall away from the church. We promised we would be diligent in the use of the Means of Grace; we would work hard, work faithfully to make sure we got to church. To keep those promises we asked God to help us. Do we still ask and ask and ask God to help us want to get to church? Do we still seek and seek and seek God's help to keep us faithful? Do we still knock and knock and knock for God's Word?

If not, why not? Do we think we have things under control? Are we content to be a bit soft, a bit wishy-washy in our life with God? Is walking with God, walking God's walk, just not important enough to pray and pray and pray for?

Compare and contrast your goal for your life with God and God's goal for your life with him. In what ways are our goals for our walk with God better for us than God's goals? Why is God's goal so "extreme"?

Think about it - if we're not walking and talking with God - asking, seeking, knocking - we're walking and talking without God. Talking without God - that talk can and will be used against you. Walking without God - that walk leads to hell, and your Father has no good gifts for you there.

That's not what God wants for you. He wants heaven for you! So God sent Jesus. Jesus asked and he sought and he knocked; as the perfect child he satisfied our Father's expectations, for us! At the same time, Jesus took our sin - whether it be our not asking, or our impatience and dissatisfaction with God's answering Jesus took it all to the cross. There Jesus faced God's anger over our sin, and there Jesus satisfied God's judgment on sin. How do we know? God raised Jesus back to life with him. What does that mean for us? With Jesus, you are forgiven, forgiven to walk and talk with God; forgiven so we can dare to ask and seek and knock.

*Do you have something in your history that keeps you from asking?
What does Jesus say about that something?*

Yes, your Father really does want you to ask. That's why he commands. He knows we can be shy; we might feel too unworthy, too guilty to ask; we might think he's too busy for us. He knows we might ask once and then feel too shy, too unimportant, too little to keep on asking. So

your Father makes it clear – “ask and keep on asking, seek and keep on seeking, knock and keep on knocking” – your Father wants you to ask.

And listen to his promise! **“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.”** Your Father didn’t say, “Ask and we’ll see if we can’t work something out.” He doesn’t say, “Seek and we’ll see if we can’t find something for you.” No, your Father promises to answer you.

How can I know that promise is for you? Jesus says, **“For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.”** “Everyone.” Pinch yourself. No, not the person sitting next to you. Pinch yourself; do you feel it? Then you must be one of those everyone. Do you believe in the Triune God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit? Do you believe that Jesus died to take your sin away? Do you believe that because of Jesus you are right to walk and talk with God? Do you want to walk and talk God’s way? Then you are praying to the right God with the right heart and your Father promises – **“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.”**

Every year I am asked in Confirmation Class, what if Jew, Muslim ... sincerely prays to their god, will God answer?

But if God promises to answer, then why don’t I get what I’m asking for? Why do we have to ask and ask and ask, and seek and seek and seek, and knock and knock and knock?

Sometimes God holds off on answering our first prayers to set us up for a better answer. If we have to ask and ask and ask and seek and seek and seek we might realize we could be praying for something better. And when we get on board with God, he gives us that something better.

Or God might hold off on answering our first prayers to exercise us

and make us stronger. You've seen this, haven't you? A dad with his little one-year-old. The little one has a big smile and starts walking toward dad. But what does dad do? He steps back and steps back again. Why? Not to be mean, but to help his little one walk strong. Sometimes our Father in heaven works that same way. He holds out his promise, but then he holds off on answering us, not to cheat us out of an answer, but to get us to walk strong, talk strong, pray strong - asking, seeking, knocking. And when God "finally" answers we find that we are far closer to him than if he had made things easy.

Do you have any examples (that you would like to share) of how God's timing in answer prayer was better for you than the timing you had in mind?

When your Father seems to be holding back, remember - he's already given you his Son; he's not going to get cheap and hold back on you now. He's already given you his Holy Spirit as a down-payment and guarantee of heaven; he's not going to go back on his promise. Your Father will have a good answer for you.

Listen to Jesus - **"Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? [nobody, right?] If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!"**

What's your idea of a good gift from God? If you could have whatever you wanted, what would you ask for?

Have you ever seen the little child open his birthday gift - you know, that \$50 gift you were so happy to find - and then he plays and plays with the wrapping paper and the box, as happy as can be, while that \$50 toy gathers dust? Have you ever cooked up the big meal that takes hours of cooking, with the fancy plates and the good silverware, and then you hear, "Let's just have pizza and watch TV"? So often that's what we do with

God's good gifts. Our hearts and souls are starving and we ask God for cotton-candy.

God does give us some very nice wrapping paper to play with; he does give us some very sweet cotton-candy to eat. But your Father has even better gifts for you. What does your family need? Ask, and your Father will give you - forgiveness for the times you hurt your family. Seek, and your Father will give you - an understanding and forgiving heart. Knock and knock and knock some more, and your Father will give you - patience for your impatient heart. What do you need? Ask, and your Father will walk and talk with you. Seek, and your Father will give you a love for his word. Knock, and your Father will give you the strength to be faithful and true. Those are just some of the good gifts that your Father has for you. And then there is heaven.

Today is Confirmation Sunday. Today we say to our congregation - "I want to ask and seek and knock with you; I want to ask, and seek, and knock for you; and I want you to ask, and seek, and knock for me." Today, on Confirmation Day we stand before our God and we ask, we seek, we knock on the heart of our God - "Keep me safe, keep me faithful for heaven." And, yes, on Confirmation Day we promise, "Yes, with the help of God ... yes, by the grace of God." And as we make our promises, we have his promise - **"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened."** Amen.

What do you pray for your congregation?

What (or how) do you pray for your St. John family members?

What (or how) do you pray for your worldwide WELS family and ministry?

What do you want your St. John family to pray for you?

RITE OF CONFIRMATION

Confirmand

Amelia Olive Haak

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.

M: Gracious Father, you have adopted our sister in Baptism and anointed her with your Holy Spirit. Renew and strengthen her by that same Spirit so that she may continue to grow in faith and boldly confess you before others. Lord, in your mercy:

C: Hear our prayer.

M: Move her to faithfully hear your holy Word and joyfully receive your sacrament that she may again and again be assured of your gracious love and forgiveness. Lord, in your mercy:

C: Hear our prayer.

M: Give her the sincere desire to die each day to sin and put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. Lord, in your mercy:

C: Hear our prayer.

M: Protect her from the powers of evil and give her the weapons to fight against the devil. Lord, in your mercy:

C: **Hear our prayer.**

M: Keep her faithful and holy, so that they may inherit eternal life; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: **Amen.**

HYMN

"May God the Father of Our Lord"

Hymn 597

May God the Father of our Lord,
Who called you by his holy Word,
Perfect, establish, settle you,
Keep you through faith forever true.

In Jesus Christ may you be blessed
And brought to his eternal rest.
The work he has in you begun,
He will perform till all is done.

The Holy Spirit give you pow'r,
The strength of prayer in every hour,
The wisdom, knowledge, fear of God,
That lifts above his chast'ning rod.

May God the Father, God the Son,
And God the Spirit, Three in One,
Preserve you blameless till in grace
You stand before his holy face.

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, you are the source of life, wisdom, and all good things. Look with favor on all mothers who have given life to their children and who nurture them with loving concern and faithful instruction. May their children honor them and call them blessed. When they become weary,

sustain them with physical and spiritual rest. Hear us for the sake of your Son, Jesus, who cared for his earthly mother and in whom you are well pleased. 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.

M: Almighty God, we thank you for teaching us the things you want us to believe and do. Help us by your Holy Spirit to keep your Word in pure hearts that we may be strengthened in faith, guided in holiness, and comforted in life and in death, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

THE BLESSING

M: Brothers and sisters, go in peace. Live in harmony with one another. Serve the Lord with gladness.

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

"In Christ Alone"

Hymn 752



1 In Christ a - lone my hope is found.
2 In Christ a - lone— who took on flesh,
3 There in the ground his bod - y lay,
4 No guilt in life, no fear in death,



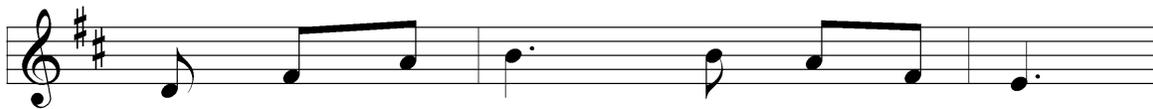
He is my light, my strength, my song;
Full - ness of God in help - less babe.
Light of the world by dark - ness slain;
This is the pow'r of Christ in me;



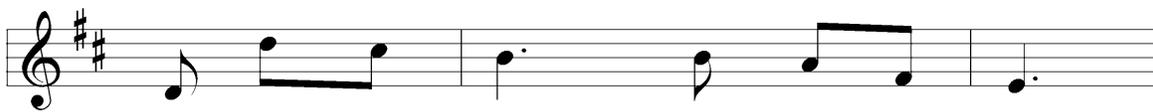
This cor - ner - stone, this sol - id ground,
This gift of love and right - eous - ness,
Then burst - ing forth in glo - rious day
From life's first cry to fi - nal breath,



Firm through the fierc - est drought and storm.
 Scorned by the ones he came to save.
 Up from the grave he rose a - gain!
 Je - sus com - mands my des - tin - y.



What heights of love, what depths of peace,
 Till on that cross, as Je - sus died,
 And as he stands in vic - tor - y,
 No pow'r of hell, no scheme of man



When fears are stilled, when striv - ings cease!
 The wrath of God was sat - is - fied;
 Sin's curse has lost its grip on me.
 Can ev - er pluck me from his hand;



My Com - for - ter, my all in all,
 For ev - 'ry sin on him was laid.
 For I am his and he is mine—
 Till he re - turns or calls me home,



Here in the love of Christ I stand.
 Here in the death of Christ I live.
 Bought with the pre - cious blood of Christ.
 Here in the pow'r of Christ I'll stand.



(Fine)

OFFERING

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