



Letter from a Seminarian

Postmarked March 24, 2021

Nick Wagenknecht is our Adopt-a-Student funding recipient for 2019-2021

To the members of Saint John Lutheran Church,

God's peace to you from a rainy St. Louis! It is that time of the year again where the plants are making their appearances on campus and I cannot help but smile when I see the green stems breaking through the fertile black dirt. It serves as a reminder of home and I think about my grandmother's garden and the crops in the field when the Lord does his work and lets them grow to a perfect height! And of course, like I said, it is raining with the temperatures in the high 50's to low 60's every day for the last two weeks, the rain comes almost every other day. The nice weather shows when many people are coming out of their houses for walks with their families and their dogs.



This semester is going by very fast! It feels like yesterday that we came back from Christmas break, but now we are heading into Reading Week. I will be doing some traveling for the break! I will go over to Indiana to see Hannah for a couple of days in Minnesota, to spend time with family and friends. This will be a nice break from the busy work that we have had put on us this semester. I am currently taking Pastoral Counseling; Reformation of Luther; Preaching and Reading the Word; and Church and World. My favorite class right now is probably Pastoral Counseling. This course has allowed me to grow in active listening as well as being able to lead a couple through some couples counseling. This course has also instructed us on writing Wedding and Funeral sermons. These will be quite helpful for me in my "sooner than I thought" pastoral ministry. I am also serving as the Vice President of the Student Association this year. This has been a fun experience for me to interact with the members of the board and be able to help the student body in any way we can.

Call Day is coming up pretty darn quick! Hannah and I have had a couple meetings with Dr. Nielsen to talk about the different options of churches that I could serve at this next year. There are a couple in Indiana that will be good options for me, and I am really looking forward to serving my Lord more in the parish over the next year[for vicarage/internship]. This is a really exciting time for Hannah as well because this day will tell us where we will be living for our first year of marriage.

Hannah is doing wonderful! She is enjoying her classes this semester even though it is the busiest semester of her life! I went and surprised her this last weekend which she said was the second-best surprise I have given her. After popping the questions of course! She has been quite busy planning the wedding and traveling all over the country for bridal showers! She was in Wisconsin earlier this month for her sides bridal shower and will be traveling to Minnesota in early May for my sides.

It has been quite a whirlwind trying to plan the wedding with the lingering thought that because of Covid, we would have to change our plans. We have been very fortunate that the restrictions have been getting lighter and lighter as the days go by. We have had to move our venue a couple of times, but we are still going to be getting married on May 29th with many of our family and friends in attendance. We are going to try and live stream the wedding in some way. I will talk more about that in my next letter to you if you would like to watch. You can continue to follow our website at theknot.com/nickandhannahwagenknecht.

I write to you again to say Thank You! Your support has meant so much to me and Hannah! We were talking the other day and we both agreed that we would have no idea the extreme amount of stress that we would have if I would have had to worry about paying for seminary tuition. It is because of churches like you that allow us seminarians, and their wives, to enjoy the seminary experience without stressing on the debt that could go with it. So once again, thank you! I pray for y'all every day and am thankful for all that you have done for us! Blessings to you as we go through this season of Lent and a blessed Easter to you all!

God's Richest Blessings,
Nick Wagenknecht and Hannah



*"Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another,"
Proverbs 27:17*

From the Chair – Walking Wet in The Spirit

Many years ago, a good Lutheran pastor shared some wisdom with me that still stands up in these troubled times. He asked me to think about the concrete or “cool deck” that surrounds an in-ground swimming pool. Imagine also that nobody has walked on the deck, and the sun is out. What you see when you or someone else gets out of the pool is footprints from the water left on the bottom of your feet. Soon the sun will dry up the footprints, but for a brief time, your footprints will show. That is “walking wet in the spirit.”



This is within all of us regardless of our ability to swim, or just get wet. Left brain dominant folks need to be instructed to turn away from overthinking this or they will by nature do it when they seek to come into the Lord’s presence. Sometimes more right brain dominant folks after hearing from God will add to that word with left brain thinking and will believe they are still in right brain and still hearing from God. All of us, regardless of brain domination must learn to distinguish what is from the Spirit (flow) and what is from their own minds.

God wants us to live out of our hearts rather than our heads. The words “heart” and “spirit” show up 1300 times while “mind” and “think” less than 200 times. Sensing God’s movement in our hearts can be called illumination, revelation, perception, discernment, word of wisdom, word of knowledge, or prophecy.

You may say, “This is harder than I thought.” A couple of aids may be useful. We must focus intently. Lifestyle changes are the result of focus and practice. One who looks intently and puts it into effect, will be blessed. (James 1:25) It is one thing to define an experience, and another thing to walk in it. To “walk wet in the spirit” you must focus on it and intentionally practice it for a while until it becomes a natural, instinctive part of your life. You will also need coaching regardless of your spiritual maturity. Have you ever stopped to think that the best folks in any sport, still have a coach that probably is not as accomplished as they are? That’s humbling and helpful!

“Unless one is born of ...the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”

(John 3:5)

“If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the spirit.”

(Galatians 5:25).

Walk Wet!

Dennis Smith

History of Mother's Day

Celebrations of mothers and motherhood can be traced back to the ancient Greeks and Romans, who held festivals in honor of the mother goddesses Rhea and Cybele, but the clearest modern precedent for Mother's Day is the early Christian festival known as "Mothering Sunday." Once a major tradition in the United Kingdom and parts of Europe, this celebration fell on the fourth Sunday in Lent and was originally seen as a time when the faithful would return to their "mother church"—the main church in the vicinity of their home—for a special service.



Over time the Mothering Sunday tradition shifted into a more secular holiday, and children would present their mothers with flowers and other tokens of appreciation. This custom eventually faded in popularity before merging with the American Mother's Day in the 1930s and 1940s. The official Mother's Day holiday arose in the 1900s as a result of the efforts of Anna Jarvis, daughter of Ann Reeves Jarvis. Following her mother's 1905 death, Anna Jarvis conceived of Mother's Day as a way of honoring the sacrifices mothers made for their children.

After gaining financial backing from a Philadelphia department store owner named John Wanamaker, in May 1908 she organized the first official Mother's Day celebration at a Methodist church in Grafton, West Virginia. That same day also saw thousands of people attend a Mother's Day event at one of Wanamaker's retail stores in Philadelphia. Following the success of her first Mother's Day, Jarvis—who remained unmarried and childless her whole life—resolved to see her holiday added to the national calendar. Arguing that American holidays were biased toward male achievements, she started a massive letter writing campaign to newspapers and prominent politicians urging the adoption of a special day honoring motherhood.

By 1912 many states, towns and churches had adopted Mother's Day as an annual holiday, and Jarvis had established the Mother's Day International Association to help promote her cause. Her persistence paid off in 1914 when President Woodrow Wilson signed a measure officially establishing the second Sunday in May as Mother's Day. Anna Jarvis had originally conceived of Mother's Day as a day of personal celebration between mothers and families. Her version of the day involved wearing a white carnation as a badge and visiting one's mother or attending church services. But once Mother's Day became a national holiday, it was not long before florists, card companies and other merchants capitalized on its popularity.

Mother's Day Around the World

While versions of Mother's Day are celebrated worldwide, traditions vary depending on the country. In Thailand, for example, Mother's Day is always celebrated in August on the birthday of the current queen, Sirikit.

Another alternate observance of Mother's Day can be found in Ethiopia, where families gather each fall to sing songs and eat a large feast as part of Antrosht, a multi-day celebration honoring motherhood.

In the United States, Mother's Day continues to be celebrated by presenting mothers and other women with gifts and flowers, and it has become one of the biggest holidays for consumer spending. Families also celebrate by giving mothers a day off from activities like cooking or other household chores.

At times, Mother's Day has also been a date for launching political or feminist causes. In 1968 Coretta Scott King, wife of Martin Luther King Jr., used Mother's Day to host a march in support of underprivileged women and children. In the 1970s women's groups also used the holiday as a time to highlight the need for equal rights and access to childcare.



May 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 10am AA
2 10:30am Worship LWML MITES Breadbasket	3 12pm AA	4 12pm AA	5 12pm AA	6 12pm AA	7 12pm AA	8 10am AA
9 10:30am Worship Mother's Day	10 12pm AA	11 12pm AA	12 10am Avenues Bible Study 12pm AA	13 The Ascension of Our Lord 12pm AA	14 12pm AA	15 10am AA
16 10:30am Worship	17 12pm AA	18 12pm AA	19 12pm AA	20 12pm AA	21 12pm AA	22 10am AA
23 Pentecost 10:30am Worship	24 12pm AA	25 12pm AA	26 10am Avenues Bible Study 12pm AA	27 12pm AA	28 12pm AA	29 10am AA
30 Holy Trinity 10:30am Worship	31 Memorial Day 12pm AA					

Church Picnic 2021? -- We're considering two dates for a church picnic this year, Sunday, June 6th or Sunday, June 13th. Either one would be following the worship service. We'd like to hear from you to learn if you're ready to participate in a church picnic, and which date is preferable. Please call or text Dennis Smith (601.329.6806) or Mark Key1 (601.466.0200) by Sunday evening May 9th.

Pastoral Transition Information

(Revised: January 8, 2021)

Points of Contact for Saint John Hattiesburg during the Pastoral Transition:

Dennis Smith 601.329.6806	General administration of the congregation. Oversight of property, programs, maintenance, supervision of paid and volunteer staff not otherwise delegated.
Mark Keyl 601.466.0200	Oversight of the call process and chair of the Pastoral Call Committee. Point of contact with Interim Pastor Gary Weier.
Nancy Kaul 601.307.5127	Coordination of worship schedules and services. Point of contact for members in need of spiritual care, delegating to other elders and spiritual care-givers.
Rev. Gary Weier	Interim Pastor serving onsite two or three Sundays per month. Other worship services will be conducted by lay members of our fellowship or other pastors as coordinated by Nancy Kaul under Pastor Weier's supervision. Pastor Weier will provide home and hospital visitation as time allows in addition to other elders and members.
Church Office	The necessary functions of the church office will be coordinated for the next several weeks by John Karle and Dennis Smith. Several individuals will be helping locally and remotely so that the core activities of the congregation continue as best possible. Email and phones will be monitored on a daily basis. There are no set onsite hours for office staff.
Continuing Business	Pastor Karle plans to make monthly visits for the next three months to advance landscaping, building repair, and administrative projects already underway and provide operational support as needed. The visits will be in the middle of selected weeks. He will provide background support for bulletin preparation on an as needed basis. Most of the basic preparation work for the next three months has already been completed and is in place.
All Other Roles	All other roles – such as Altar Guild, The Avenues Bible Study, LWML – will continue in an orderly way as they have been. Other programs will be resumed post-Covid.

Serving in May

Interim Pastor

Gary Weier

Music Director

Jason Sims

Altar Care Team

Thomas and Brenda Hesselgrave

Live Streaming of Worship Services — www.saintjohnhattiesburg.com.

Portals of Prayer for April-May-June are available at the lobby mailboxes.

June Newsletter Deadline — Monday, May 24th at 10am.

Kaffee Klatsch — No meeting in May.

About Tithes and Offerings — As followers of Jesus, we are convinced that the continuation of Christ's work — both in this place and to the ends of the earth — depends on each of our generosity of our life's passions, priorities, and provisions. As partners in Jesus' Gospel mission, we thankfully dedicate a part of our income to the Church's larger work. Financial tithes and offerings may be given Sunday mornings during worship in the offering plate, via the regular mail, or online at the congregation's website by clicking on the 'Give' button. Thanks!

Weekday Growth Group for Adults

The Avenues Study Group — (Even Week Wednesdays) Meets the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month at 10am at Saint John. They are studying Hope When Your Heart Breaks: Navigating Grief and Loss, a book of Hope when your heart breaks. The next meeting will be May 12th.

Pastoral Call Process

Progress Report — The Call Committee has completed the first big step of the process in conducting a survey of the congregation, gathering names of suggested pastoral candidates, and collecting congregational data. This has been compiled and submitted to the Southern District office. The next step is for their review of congregational information and gathering of information on available pastoral candidates, which will then be sent to our Call Committee for evaluation and review, likely in May. The Call Committee will then conduct initial interviews, discuss, and determine second interviews, potential site visits, and recommendations to the congregation.

Duty Roster — Those serving on the Call Committee are: Mark Keyl (chair), Christina Jimenez, Wayland Johnson, Nancy Kaul, Jane Kersh, Steve Lawrence, Christopher Longman, Shawn O'Connor, Ethan Potesta, Pat Potesta, and Dennis Smith.

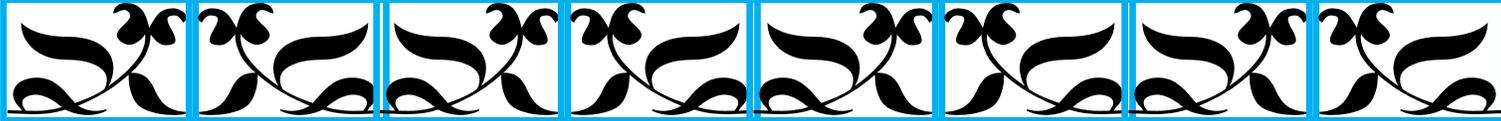
OKTOBERFEST 2021

It's time to start planning for Oktoberfest in 2021! I have heard from some in the congregation about Oktoberfest for this year. Most have indicated that we need to do something to carry on the tradition, or perhaps lose it forever. There have been suggestions on how we can have an abbreviated Oktoberfest that is safe and keeps the tradition going. Ideas have ranged from setting up our Fellowship Hall as a large Deli selling frozen brats, mustard in jars, pre-packaged potato salad and sauerkraut and whatever baked goods can be brought as in past years. The hours could be shortened and we could invite the USM brass band to lend some atmosphere! It has also been suggested that in addition to the Deli, we could serve take-out orders, as has been done in the past.



Our challenge is, the congregational commitment to provide sufficient persons to prepare the food in advance and on Oktoberfest Day. The Oktoberfest Committee will be discussing a plan and we encourage everyone's thoughts on continuing this tradition at Saint John. Please communicate your ideas to any committee member or myself. We are anxious to hear from you! Let's work together to keep this great tradition going!

Mark Keyl



From the Altar Guild

May 13: The Ascension of Our Lord or Feast of the Ascension (Altar colors will be white)

For 40 days after his resurrection on Easter Sunday, the Bible records that Jesus travelled and preached with his apostles, preparing them for his departure from Earth. Jesus led his disciples to the Mount of Olives. Here He blessed them and asked them to wait for the fulfillment of the promise of the Holy Spirit. Ascension Day marks the moment Jesus literally ascended into heaven as witnessed by his disciples, at the village of Bethany, near Jerusalem.

Pentecost (Altar colors will be Red)

On May 23rd, we will celebrate Pentecost. Originally, Pentecost, a Jewish holiday, was held 50 days after Passover or *Sukkot*, the Feast of Booths. This is a week-long celebration representing the importance in Jewish life of giving thanks for the bounty of the earth.

For Christians, Pentecost means something far different. This feast celebrates the coming of the Holy Spirit 40 days after Easter. Before Jesus was crucified, he told his disciples that the Holy Spirit would come after him:

“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever — the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you” (John 14:16–18).

And 50 days after Jesus was resurrected (10 days after he ascended into heaven), that promise was fulfilled when Peter and the early Church were in Jerusalem for Pentecost:

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them (Acts 2:1–4).

May 30: The Holy Trinity (Altar colors will be white)

The Feast of the Holy Trinity is the Christian feast honoring the Trinity--Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Our Western liturgical churches celebrate this Feast on the Sunday following Pentecost (the 50th day after Easter). It is known that the feast was celebrated on this day from as early as the 10th century!

Christina Keiper

Altar Guild Chair
601-550-1050

ckeiper511@gmail.com



Lutheran Women's Missionary League

LWML MITES collected on Sunday, April 4, 2021, totaled \$105.46. Thank you again for your prayers and support for the Mission Grants selected in Convention by the Gulf States District and National LWML. MITES will be collected on Sunday, May 2, 2021.

Mary Abbe Brutkiewicz, Gulf States District Treasurer, reported the next three Grants will be complete for the Biennium by the end of February as follows: 1) \$5,000 for the early childhood safety improvements at Redeemer Lutheran School in Pensacola, Florida. 2) \$3,000 for the "God's Little Ones" program to be used to build women's living quarters for the poorest of poor in Madagascar. 3) \$5,000 for the Center for Refugee Orphans and Jacmel Lutheran House in Haiti. Our former Pastor, Rudy Schaser and his wife, Dorothy, shared their mission trips in the last two grants with our congregation many times. What a blessing these MITES bring to share the Love of Jesus!!!

The 39th Biennial National LWML Convention will be held in Lexington, Kentucky, June 24-27, 2021. THEME: Running the Race...Looking to Jesus (Hebrews 12:1-2). Brenda Hesselgrave, Elaine Kersh, and I will be attending the National Convention. If you would like to participate in the Gifts from the Heart collections brought to every convention by members for local charities, we will be collecting Gift Cards in the amount of \$10.00, \$15.00, or \$20.00 from Wal-Mart and Target. We will be collecting these gifts until Sunday, June 13, 2021.

LWML MISSION STATEMENT

As Lutheran Women in Mission, we joyfully proclaim Christ, support missions, and equip women to honor God by serving others.

CORE VALUES

- Christian women - We live as redeemed children of the Triune God
- In God's Word - We live in joyful response to the Holy Scriptures
- Mission Focused - We answer God's call to share His Gospel at home and abroad.
- Embrace Diversity - We are sisters in Christ who value and benefit from each other.
- Servant Leaders - We are called and equipped by God to serve others.

I am so thankful for all the women in our congregation who continue to share the Gospel by using their God-given gifts in serving others and following this Mission Statement and Core Values. MITES will be collected next Sunday, May 2, 2021. If you are unable to attend worship, you may make your checks out to Saint John Lutheran LWML and mail them directly to Christina Noffke at 108 Ramblewood Drive, Hattiesburg, MS 39401.

UNTIL NEXT TIME. . . . "Serve the Lord with Gladness!!!"

-Shirley Thone

President LWML

FOOD FOR THOUGHT ABOUT THOUGHTS AS FOOD

We know the old phrase, “You are what you eat.” Is that true? Maybe, but only to a point. Here is some different food to chew on and digest, food for thought. We know that if you want to get a fairly accurate picture of your priorities, you can keep track of and examine where your money goes, how you spend your time, how you use your talents, where you go, with whom you spend the most time, and so on.

Now, what do you think about this idea? You are what you think about the most. Aren’t we largely the sum of our voluntary thoughts? It’s easy to do a little self-check. Towards what do your inner heart and your thoughts turn when they are free to turn wherever they will? What we think about when we are free to think about whatever we will is what we are or will soon become.

Try this: Keep track of your thoughts. Sometimes when you find yourself coming back from being lost in thought, pause and think about what you were just thinking about. Then ask yourself if those thoughts were pleasing to God. Anyone who wants to check on their spiritual condition can do so by noting what their voluntary thoughts have been over the last hours or days.

The best way to handle our thoughts is to offer our mind to God in complete surrender. The Holy Spirit will accept it and take control of it. It will then be relatively easy to think on spiritual things, especially if we train our thoughts through intentional and sometimes long periods of daily prayer. In addition, spending time in God’s Word will help us direct our thoughts to His will for us. Practicing the art of silent prayer, inwardly talking to God as we go about our day, helps us form the habit of holy thought so we can Love. Like. Jesus.

Cast down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. 2 Corinthians 10:5

Nancy Kaul
Board of Elders

Birthdays in May

Ellen Heck	May 4	Mary Cubley	May 9	Walley Pye	May 12
Wayland Johnson	May 13	Karl Jahnke	May 20	Bill Coll	May 26
Joel Bentley	May 27			Dorothy Longworth	May 27

Anniversaries in May



Walley & Lynn Pye 56yrs May 8
Ted & Annette Meyer 31yrs May 18



Baptisms in May

Nancy Grunig	May 10	Susan Perkins	May 11	Terry Lovdahl	May 13
Brooklyn Noffke	May 16	Brandon Lee	May 20	Sandy Barnett	May 26

Surprise the World!
Love. Like. Jesus. + Hope for the City.



Saint John Lutheran Church

2001 Hardy Street
Hattiesburg MS 39401

Telephone: 601.583.4898

Website: www.saintjohnhattiesburg.com

Email: stjohnlutheranchurch@gmail.com

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