

*May 2024  
Newsletter*

# GOOD NEWS



**Saint John Lutheran Church  
Hattiesburg, Mississippi**



# A NOTE FROM YOUR PASTOR

## CONTEXT MATTERS

Do you ever notice yourself hearing or reading something and being confused by it? I watch these little, short video snippets on my phone. They will say sensational things to get you to click or tap on them in order to get you in this doom scroll of views and advertising. And after watching, I am often left confused. The confusion comes because the context isn't clear. You can take a snippet or clip of an event or idea but really it doesn't give you full understanding, and that's without people editing for agendas and sensationalism. And speaking of that, we also have to be aware of bad actors as some would call them. They will try to manipulate your dopamine hit for their agenda and lead you into confusion.

This contextual confusion can be true of scripture as well. St. Paul tells the Ephesian Elders in Acts 20 that he shared the whole counsel of God with them. He didn't leave out anything so that they may watch over the flock of God and to guard against the people that will come into the church to devour and destroy and even among themselves will arise those who will twist the word of God.

We are exhorted to know the whole counsel of God, so we are able to see when things are out of context and being twisted. Sometimes we will see examples of where a word is used in book of the bible, and we assume it must be the same in another book. And this is not always the case. Baptism by definition means to immerse in water. Yet Jesus uses it to refer to being immersed in fire and suffering. He uses it to mean being immersed by the Holy Spirit. St. Paul was baptized in a house in Damascus with no tub or full immersion that we know of. Instead of taking these as the totality and applying the same meaning to the word in every instance the context of the passage around it matters, it will guide us on what is being spoken of.

For example, Jesus is tempted in the desert by Satan. He quotes scripture at Him taking the one-off bible memory verse technique. And Jesus fires right back because He understands the context of the scripture. Is there value in memory work? Certainly, but do not neglect the context in which the verse rests. Jesus shows us in that resistance to Satan that he understands the passage Satan is quoting but in the much larger context of scripture and faith. He knows that God would never tell you jump off a building to injure yourself.

Another confusing example is the word "body." We often find in scripture that church is called the body of Christ. And it is, however, when Christ is instituting His supper, He is not referring to the church or anyone of us. That had not been established. In the sacrament, He is referring to His own actual self. He gives himself for the forgiveness of sins; He gives His blood for the cost of our iniquities. The church as in His body on earth after His ascension does not give of themselves like Jesus does. The church is to do the labor of spreading the gospel and sharing the sacraments which He gave.

In another example, the church is also called the bride of Christ as in His wife, yet not in an earthly carnal way. But in the sense that He died for her, loves her, and puts her first. It takes no stretch to see how far off base a person can find themselves when they do not know the context. The context of these ideas and words matter. And to mix them is to get the word of God twisted.

Let us heed the warning of Paul in Acts and stick to the whole Counsel of God.

Blessings and peace,  
*Pastor Chet*



The BOD met on April 18, 2024. The financial report reflected that our receipts are up from this time last year, however we were below our budget requirement for the month. Year to date we remain ahead of last year. This is great news, and we thank God for all of our blessings. We remain in good shape financially and are always cognizant of giving fluctuations throughout the year. Summer is fast approaching, which is traditionally a challenge to our giving with summer travels and family activities.

BOD business:

- Discussion on updating the church By-Laws
- Discussions on church maintenance.
- The church picnic is scheduled for June 23rd at Lake Serene Clubhouse.

Chris Keiper will be relinquishing her duties as the church administrative assistant at the end of May. We thank her for her outstanding organizational skills that kept the church administrative functions operating through our vacancy and allowed for a smooth transition for Pastor Chet. She continues as a member of St John and will remain active in church activities. The Board wishes to thank her for all she has done and ask that members express their thanks to her on an individual basis.

In light of Chris' transition, we are announcing the administrative assistant position is open for anyone interested within the congregation and for referrals of other suitable candidates recommended by members. The deadline will be May 13, 2023, for applications. Interested persons may contact Chris in the office for a copy of the Job responsibilities and submit a resume to the church office. Please pray for a smooth transition.

We encourage you to review the Board minutes on the bulletin board in the narthex and if you have any questions, please feel free to ask. Also, please share any concerns you may have with members of the Board. We are at your service.

In his service and yours,

*The Board*



LWML MITES collected on Sunday, April 7, 2024 was \$126.21. Thank you for supporting the Mission Grants selected in the Convention of the Gulf States District and National LWML. There will be no Business meeting in May.

The Magnolia Zone LWML Spring "JOY SHOP" was held at Christ Lutheran Church in Pascagoula, with twenty-five members present - seven from Saint John Ladies Guild. The Zone members voted to help defray travel expenses with a gift of \$200.00 for the Delegates. Julie Radavich will be voting as the Alternate Delegate for Saint John Lutheran in place of me, and I will be the Delegate for Sandy Ziegenhagen, Zone President, as she is unable to attend the Convention. I will have all the news to share regarding the 2026 Gulf States District Convention to be held on the Gulf Coast, and our Zone will be hosting the convention with the help of the Azalea Zone in Alabama. Julie and I are both looking forward to joining hundreds of Sisters in Christ praying, singing, and serving the Lord together. What a JOY!!

On Pentecost Sunday, May 19, the LWML will host a Congregation Potluck in the Fellowship Hall immediately following the worship service. It will be an opportunity to celebrate this special time with members and guests. What to bring? Bring your favorite main dish, salad, or dessert to share. Drinks will be provided by the LWML. If you would like to help in any way or have questions, please contact me or any LWML member.

LWML MITES will be collected on Sunday, May 5, 2024. If you are unable to attend worship, you may make your check out to Saint John Lutheran LWML and mail it directly to Christina Noffke at 108 Ramblewood Drive, Hattiesburg, MS 39402.

### LWML MISSION STATEMENT

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

Until Next Time . . . . Serve the Lord with Gladness!!!  
Shirley Thone  
President LWML



## *From the Altar Guild*

May is filled with both religious and secular days of observation. Some will get more attention than others. For instance, The Ascension of Our Lord is May 9th, and Mother's Day is May 12th. While there certainly is no competition involved, Mother's Day will probably be more recognized than that of our Lord's Ascension.

The Ascension of Our Lord, which occurred 40 days after Jesus rose from the dead on Easter, is the final act of our redemption that Christ began on Good Friday. On this day, the risen Christ, in the sight of His apostles, ascended bodily into Heaven (Luke 24:51; Mark 16:19; Acts 1:9-11).

The reality of Christ's Ascension is so important that the creeds (the basic statements of belief) of Christianity all affirm, in the words of the Apostles' Creed, that "He ascended into heaven, sits at the right hand of God the Father almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead." Doesn't that create a magnificent image in your mind, one definitely worthy of reflection! The denial of the Ascension is as grave a departure from Christian teaching as is denial of Christ's Resurrection.

Christ's bodily Ascension foreshadows our own entrance into Heaven, not simply as souls after our death, but as glorified bodies after the resurrection of the dead at the Final Judgment. Christ came to redeem mankind, to offer salvation to our souls, and to restore the material world to the glory that God intended.

Other days in May that will be observed are Pentecost (19th), the Holy Trinity (26th), and The Visitation (31st).

Holy Trinity Sunday, is celebrated a week after Pentecost Sunday in honor of the most fundamental of Christian beliefs—belief in the Holy Trinity. We can never fully understand the mystery of the Trinity, but we can sum it up in the following formula: God is three Persons in one Nature. The three Persons of God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—are all equally God, and They cannot be divided. This is more upon which to spend time reflecting.

Veni Sancte Spiritus ~ Come Holy Spirit,

Christina Keiper  
Altar Guild Chair



*"Later that night, the boat was in the middle of the lake, and he was alone on land." Mark 6:47 (NIV)*

When life gets messy, it can feel like our Messiah has gone missing.

That's exactly the kind of situation we find Jesus' disciples in as we read Mark 6. Right after Jesus miraculously fed 5,000 people, the 12 disciples got in a boat to travel to their next city. But strong winds caused the water to get very rough. The disciples were *"straining at the oars"* as the realities of life beat against them (Mark 6:48, NIV).

A deeper study of the Greek word *basanizo* (pronounced *bas-an-id-zo*) that is translated as *"straining"* in Mark 6:48 reveals just how distressing their circumstances were. *Basanizo* can also mean "to torment." It's a word we see used in the context of the torment caused by disease in Matthew 8:6 and demon possession in Mark 5:7. Mark clearly wanted to emphasize the serious turmoil and struggle these men were facing.

This storm was terrifying for them. The waves weren't just cresting and crashing like you've probably seen if you've ever been in rough waters. These waves were exploding all around them in unpredictable ways. They couldn't brace themselves or their boat. They were completely helpless and swallowed up by fear. I certainly can't blame them for being afraid at that moment. Sometimes it's hard not to be completely consumed by fear.

How thankful I am that even when our storms cause us to lose sight of hope, Jesus never loses sight of us!

While the disciples were in the boat straining, Jesus was on the mountainside praying. From where He was, Jesus saw the disciples in the middle of the lake. *"Later that night, the boat was in the middle of the lake, and he was alone on land. He saw the disciples straining at the oars, because the wind was against them"* (Mark 6:47-48a, NIV).

Take note of Jesus' response to the disciples, who cried out in fear, not faith, when He walked toward them on the water. The Scripture says *"immediately"* He spoke to them and said, *"Don't be afraid"* (Mark 6:50, NIV). He didn't criticize them for being afraid. He climbed into the boat with them.

He's saying the same thing to you and me. He's not running from us in our fears. He's climbing in to be right there with us. With His presence comes peace. The same God who willingly revealed Himself to people in the Bible wants to reveal the fullness of His peace and the power of His presence to us as well.

In the midst of whatever hurts and heartbreaks you're facing today, I pray you will see Him. Friends, the Lord is near. We are safe. We are loved. We are seen.

*Lord, instead of being so terrified in the midst of what we don't understand, help us keep this picture of You watching us and always being with us. May we find courage in the assurance that You will come to us with Your miraculous presence. In Jesus' Name, Amen.*

*Lisa Case*



Yes, it's that time of year already! The Oktoberfest Committee met on Sunday, May 21, to begin preparations for St. John's 2024 Oktoberfest event. Lots of ideas were shared. If you have never been a part of Oktoberfest planning, now is a great time to get involved. There are jobs for all talents available. Our next meeting will be on June 2, 2024, immediately following church. We look forward to seeing you there!

At our first meeting, we asked for volunteers to supervise different areas, like tent set up or cooking duties. To that end, we are currently looking for someone (or someoneS) who are willing to act as kitchen/cooking supervisors. This job entails overseeing all of the cooking done at the church, including making of the strudels, potato salad, and sauerkraut. Recipes and cooking instructions will be provided. The jobs could be split between people- for instance, one person oversees strudel making while someone else makes sure the sauerkraut is done. Don't worry; there will be lots of helping hands.

If you are interested in this, or have questions about what is involved, please contact Jennifer Blair at 601-520-7392.

Until next time, Ein Prosit!

*Jennifer Blair*

**44th Annual**  
**St. John**  
**Oktoberfest**



## What is Oktoberfest?

Oktoberfest is the world's largest folk festival held yearly in Munich, Germany. It began in 1810 when Bavaria's Crown Prince Ludwig married Theresa of Saxony. The townsfolk held a party in a large field outside the city to celebrate, and it was so popular they held it again a year later. The same field has hosted the festival ever since and came to be named "Theresienwiese" or "Theresa's Meadow" in English. The rest, as they say, is history. It is, without a doubt, the largest festival in the world. It regularly draws over six million people through its sixteen-day run.

Although called Oktoberfest and originally beginning on October 12<sup>th</sup>, the festival date was changed to September in 1872 to take advantage of better weather. To determine when the festival begins in any year find the first Sunday in October and count back fifteen days to the starting Saturday.

For many people, the only reason for the festival is beer, but drinking is not the only thing to do at Oktoberfest. The Oktoberfest grounds are over 100 acres and host a dazzling array of "bier" tents, food stands, carnival rides, games and more. Many families enjoy taking the children to Oktoberfest and, in fact, Tuesdays at the festival are family days with reduced food, beer and ride prices.

That is the background for the festival we at Saint John celebrate. However, our emphasis is not on beer but rather on mission work and spreading the love of Jesus throughout Hattiesburg and the world beyond. Our festival is held on the first Saturday in October which this year is October 5th. It is a lot of work and requires all hands-on deck. If you have not been contacted about working for Oktoberfest, please speak to Jennifer Blair, Mark Keyl, call the church office, or sign up on the lists when they appear. We always need help preparing and serving the food, baking for the delicatessen, and setting up and cleaning up. There is a spot for your talent!





**Church Office Hours:** 8:00am – 12:00pm, Monday – Thursday

**Pastor's Hours:** Tue-Thu: 9:00am – 1:00pm; Fri – Sun: by appt; Mon: off

**Phone:** 601.583.4898

**Email:** [stjohnlutheranchurch@gmail.com](mailto:stjohnlutheranchurch@gmail.com)

**1st - Kaffee Klatsch** - meets at 1:30pm.

**4th – Men's Breakfast** - meets at Chesterfield's Restaurant at 9:00am.

**5th - MITES** - The LWML will be collecting MITES. If you cannot give in person, please mail your mites to Christina Noffke at 108 Ramblewood Drive, Hattiesburg, MS 39402. Make your check payable to Saint John Lutheran LWML.

**5th – Vacation Bible School Planning** meets after the worship service.

**8th - Avenues Study Group** - meets in the Fellowship Hall at 10:00am.

**15th - Kaffee Klatsch** - meets at 1:30pm.

**16th - BOD** - meets at 6:30pm.

**19th – Potluck Dinner**, sponsored by the LWML following the worship service

**5/19 – 6/3** – Vacation Bible School preparations underway!

**22nd - Avenues Study Group** - meets in the Fellowship Hall at 10:00am.

## **Serving in May**

**Pastor**

Chet Scherbarth

**Pianist**

Lewei He

**Altar Care Team**

Thomas and Brenda Hesselgrave

**Live Streaming of Worship Services** — [www.saintjohnhattiesburg.com](http://www.saintjohnhattiesburg.com).

**Bell Choir** – The Bell Choir rehearsals: May 5th and May 12th at 5:00pm

**Portals of Prayer for April - June** are available in the Narthex.

**May Newsletter** — available via the church website and printed copies are near the foyer mailboxes. Thanks to all those who contributed!

**June Newsletter Deadline** — Monday, May 20th.

**The Spirit that is St. John:**



## ***May Celebrations!***



### **B I R T H D A Y S**

Ellen Heck	5/4
Mary Cubley	5/9
Wally Pye	5/12
Wayland Johnson	5/13
Karl Jahnke	5/20
Irvin Curry	5/21
Bill Coll	5/26



### **B A P T I S M S**

Van Lowry	5/5
Nancy Grunig	5/10
Susan Perkins	5/11
Terry Lovdahl	5/13
Brandon Lee	5/20
Sandy Barnett	5/26



### **A N N I V E R S A R I E S** **W E D D I N G**

Wally & Lynn Pye	5/8
Brian & Diahn Lee	5/14
Tommy Breland & Jane Kersh	5/24



### **Saint John Lutheran Church**

2001 Hardy Street

Hattiesburg MS 39401

Telephone: 601.583.4898

Website: [www.saintjohnhattiesburg.com](http://www.saintjohnhattiesburg.com)

Email: [stjohnlutheranchurch@gmail.com](mailto:stjohnlutheranchurch@gmail.com)

Like Us on Facebook: Oktoberfest Hattiesburg

Like Us on Facebook: Saint John Church Hattiesburg



**Church Office Hours:** 8:00am – 12:00pm, Monday – Thursday

**Pastor's Hours:** Tue-Thu: 9:00am – 1:00pm; Fri – Sun: by appt; Mon: off