

*June 2024  
Newsletter*

# GOOD NEWS



**Saint John Lutheran Church  
Hattiesburg, Mississippi**



I was listening to the radio the other day in the car and a song came on by Sia. I think it's called "Unstoppable." There is a lyric in the song that goes, "I put my armor on, I will show you how strong I am." Other artists have picked up on this motif. David Guetta has a song called "Titanium" featuring Sia. I find it to be interesting that this seems to be a thematic element in this pop culture and songs. And I think it reflects our cultural idea of what armor is and does for a person. I say this because long gone are the days of knights in their iron and steel plates. Sure there are Renaissance fairs, museums, things of that nature and of course the works of fairy tales and fantasies like Dungeons and Dragons and other such entertainment.

But it pushes this notion that the armor makes you stronger. I guess in the sense that armor absorbs damage you can stay in the fight longer. Maybe that is a type of strength. I think it is more a sense of I have this protection now I can be more bold and face something that if I had any sense I would run from. And it has me thinking about the book of Ephesians, particularly Ephesians 6:11 and following. It starts off: "Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities against cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places." We learn from this that St Paul is telling the Ephesians they are in a battle, not the kind where men's strength is pitted against each other, but the kind that says I have authority to tell you how to think and what is true. The kind that influence the whole world, that keeps the darkness going. And this battle rages all the way to heavenly places.

Jesus fights for your hearts and minds from the throne room of God. Back in the book of Daniel Chapter 10, you will see a vision he has and it is of a heavenly being in the likeness of man. And he tells Daniel he was detained by the prince of the kingdom of Persia until Michael came and helped him. He also tells Daniel that only Michael helps him contend against the other princes of the nations around Daniel. The next fight in the future was going to be the prince of Greece.

When saint Paul and the other missionaries enter into the area of Ephesus, it is a Greek colony. It has Greek religion and philosophies that are quite unchristian. Also, there is a temple to Artemis. And they bring the gospel into a place that has no concept of Jesus. And war of the spiritual kind ensues ideologies and values lock horns. Christian virtues and values are not the same as Greek virtues and values. And we see from an earthly perspective the spiritual war that Daniel is told about. Paul is fully engaged in this spiritual war and his place in it. The same as Daniel was. The same as the Ephesians are. The same as we are. Just because we don't pay attention or know it is happening doesn't mean it isn't happening and doesn't mean we don't have roles and duties in it.

And because of his knowledge of this he wants to equip the Ephesians. And all those who by extension read his letter. In his instruction Paul outlines the armor of God modeled off the Roman kit. Something books like *Pilgrims Progress* picks up on and sends Christian out on a Journey. Here is the misunderstanding that happens when you read things like *Pilgrims Progress* or listen to songs like "Unstoppable." There is an assumption you're in the fight alone. Paul is writing to the church at Ephesus. Romans didn't fight alone unless something went really bad. They each carried their shields in formation supporting and protecting each other. The entire church is to put on its armor and stand together. Yes, it's singular in the sense that each wears the armor but it doesn't function correctly unless the entire unit is in formation.

We are in this spiritual war together. And just like physical battlefields the enemy always looks to exploit weakness and gaps. Like Daniel and Paul take up the world, take up prayer and your spiritual armor to support your brothers and sisters that are hard pressed. And if you are hard pressed, we are with you.

Blessings and peace,  
*Pastor Chet*



The BOD met on May 15, 2024. The financial report reflected that our receipts are up from this time last year, however we had more expenses than receipts. We remain in good shape financially and are always cognizant of fluctuations in giving throughout the year. Summer is here, which is traditionally a challenge in our giving with summer travels and family activities. Please prayerfully consider our needs during the summer months.

BOD business:

- Discussions on church maintenance.
- VBS is scheduled for June 4-6, 2024, and Closing VBS service on the 9th. VBS will begin at 5:30 with dinner. Everyone is invited to attend this multigenerational event.
- The church picnic is scheduled for June 23rd at Lake Serene Clubhouse.
- Campus ministry will start-up in the Fall.
- Oktoberfest is underway and our next Committee meeting will be on June 2<sup>nd</sup> after church.

Chris Keiper will be relinquishing her duties as the church administrative assistant at the end of May. We want to welcome Beth Scherbarth as our new administrative assistant. She has prior experience as a church secretary and has a passion for ministry. Chris and Beth are currently working together to ensure a seamless 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, May 5, 2024, totaled \$74.15. Thank you for your prayers and support of the Mission Grants selected in convention by the Gulf States District and National LWML. There will be no LWML Business meeting in June.

"Return to your Rest" (Psalm 116:7) was the theme for the 40th Biennial Convention, Gulf States District held in Prattville, AL on April 26-27, 2024. What a wonderful weekend of sharing the JOY OF JESUS with our "sisters and brothers" in Christ! The 41st Biennial Convention will be held somewhere between the Alabama and Mississippi Gulf Coast (to be determined later). The Azlea Zone and Magnolia Zone will share hosting the convention with an increased Mission Grant Goal of \$75,000. Praise God!!!

#### BUSINESS ITEMS:

- 1) MITES and other income received: \$66,677.98 (205.16%)  
Saint John Lutheran Church, Hattiesburg, MS - \$3,373.98 (February 1, 2022 - January 31, 2024)
- 2) ELEVEN MISSION GRANTS selected for 2024-2026 Biennium including Gulf States Scholarship Program (increased to \$5,000).

The convention Bible Study Leader, Michelle Diercks, author of *Promised Rest: Finding Peace in God's Presence*, and Host of "Peace in His Presence Podcast," Michelle specializes in helping women find peace through the uncertainties of life. Michelle has taught God's Word through volunteer and Christian Education Training for more than thirty years. She and her husband, Joel, live on a farm in Eastern Iowa raising their two sons, who are now studying to become pastors. Michelle was an inspiration to all as she shared her life experiences and trust in God's Promises in His Word!

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*

### **Be Still...**

“We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them,” asserted Albert Einstein. In fact, we often “over think” things in our effort to find a solution that may even perpetuate the problem! And so we pray. We give it (our problem) to God, and then we take it back. Again, we give it to God, and take it back yet once more. Too often, this becomes a cycle providing no peace and no solution. The Psalmist writes, “Be still and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10). These words encourage us to reflect on what God can do in the face of what we are unable to do. But let us not neglect Verse 1 of Psalm 46: “God is our refuge and strength, **a very present help** in trouble.” I invite you to focus on the words, “a very present help,” in that verse. That is assurance you are not alone. It is often when we are confounded with problems, illness, heartache, or any myriad of woes, that we are apt to feel most alone. Trust. We are not alone. God says so!

Come to the Altar. Be still. Receive God’s assurance.

### **The Nativity of John the Baptist ~ Observed annually on June 24th**

Jesus called John the greatest of all those who had preceded him: “I tell you, among those born of women, no one is greater than John...” But John would have agreed completely with what Jesus added: “[Y]et the least in the kingdom of God is greater than he” (Luke 7:28).

John spent his time in the desert, an ascetic. He began to announce the coming of the Kingdom, and to call everyone to a fundamental reformation of life. His purpose was to prepare the way for Jesus. His baptism, he said, was for repentance. But one would come who would baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire. John was not worthy even to untie his sandals. His attitude toward Jesus was: “He must increase; I must decrease” (John 3:30).

John was humbled to find among the crowd of sinners who came to be baptized the one whom he already knew to be the Messiah. “I need to be baptized by you” (Matthew 3:14b). But Jesus insisted, “Allow it now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness” (Matthew 3:15b). Jesus, true and humble human as well as eternal God, was eager to do what was required of any good Jew. Jesus thus publicly entered the community of those awaiting the Messiah. But making himself part of that community, he made it truly messianic.

John challenges us Christians to the fundamental attitude of Christianity—total dependence on the Father, in Christ. Except for the Mother of God, no one had a higher function in the unfolding of salvation. Yet the least in the kingdom, Jesus said, is greater than he, for the pure gift that the Father gives. The attractiveness as well as the austerity of John, his fierce courage in denouncing evil—all stem from his fundamental and total placing of his life within the will of God.



Christina Keiper  
Altar Guild Chair





## THE BEST IS YET TO COME

***"I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." John 10:10b (ESV)***

Sometimes on the road of life, we come across unexpected bumps that derail our plans, or as is supposed to happen, life simply changes. Yet any type of change can be unsettling.

I have found myself staring at a new season of life more than once, filled with anxiety about all the unknowns ahead of me in uncharted territory. Maybe you can relate. You're tired of transitions and would rather things stay the way they are. But sometimes we have no control over change, and we certainly can't keep time from marching forward.

We find ourselves thinking, *Where am I supposed to go from here? How do I embrace this phase of life and move forward? How can I face a season of unknowns courageously without letting fear or sadness cripple me?*

It's when we have these thoughts that we need to cling to Jesus' words in today's key Bible verse: *"I came that they may have life and have it abundantly"* (John 10:10b).

In the first part of this verse, Jesus explains there is a thief who *"comes only to steal and kill and destroy"* (John 10:10a, ESV). Not just physically but also mentally, emotionally, and spiritually, Satan wants to rob us.

Yet in the second part of John 10:10, Jesus declares exactly the opposite to be true of Himself. He came so we could have life, and He empowers us to choose to live abundantly despite the thief's intentions. One Bible translation says, *"I have come in order that you might have life—life in all its fullness"* (John 10:10b, GNT). Here we see the stark contrast between the destroyer of peace and the Giver of joy.

Life will always change, but God's promise of abundant life never will.

What does that really mean? How do we have abundant life in the midst of turmoil and change? A life full of peace, fulfillment, patience, kindness, compassion, and confidence is possible through a relationship with Jesus. He offers eternal life in heaven and abundant spiritual blessings on earth, despite our circumstances.

Perhaps you've lost hope that enjoying your new season of life is possible. If so, today is a great day to choose to start living abundantly. No matter what the future holds, God's desire is for us to embrace each new beginning He puts in front of us.

Life changes: God stays the same. It's up to us to trust Him and step into what's new, fully believing the best is yet to come.

*Dear Jesus, this season of change is hard. The present and future seem unfamiliar, and we don't know how to begin again. Please fill us with peace, joy, and a refreshed perspective. In Jesus' Name, Amen.*

Lisa Case



**OKTOBERFEST Is for Everyone**  
**44th Annual Oktoberfest**  
**Saturday, October 5th, 11am to 4pm**

Oktoberfest at Saint John Hattiesburg brings together some of the most important values of the congregation. It's **inclusive** of the whole congregation; we believe everyone can enjoy the camaraderie of shared preparation tasks, working shoulder to shoulder on Oktoberfest day, and including newcomers to the congregation and friends in the community.

Oktoberfest is **hospitality** toward the community; we believe that the best celebrations are those that heartily welcome friends and strangers. We want to throw open the Biergarten gates and sit a spell with good food and brew, to catch up on where the time has gone, and to tell a few tall tales. Laughter shared is friendship doubled!

Oktoberfest is **mission**; we believe that we're on this earth and a part of this neighborhood, this community, and this city for greater purposes than the mere enjoyment of life. We give back by pouring into the lives of others around us, by extending God's blessing to those in need, by sharing tasks and making room for new people, by providing financially for worthy efforts in our region and around the world.

At Saint John Hattiesburg, **Oktoberfest is for everyone!** Let's come together, find a place to help, and raise a toast to friends old and new!



**Church Office Hours:** 8:00am – 12:00pm, Tuesday - Friday

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

**2nd – Oktoberfest Meeting** – immediately following the worship service.

**2nd - 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.

**4th, 5th, 6th, 9th – Vacation Bible School**

**5th - Kaffee Klatsch** - meets at 1:30pm.

**12th - Avenues Study Group** - meets in the Fellowship Hall at 10:00am.

**16th – Elders Meeting** - after worship service

**19th - Kaffee Klatsch** - meets at 1:30pm.

**23rd – Church Picnic** – 12-4, Lake Serene Clubhouse

**26th - Avenues Study Group** - meets in the Fellowship Hall at 10:00am.

**30th- Retirement Reception** - for Chris Keiper immediately following the service.



## **Serving in June**

### **Pastor**

Chet Scherbarth

### **Organist**

Yinghan Zhang

### **Altar Care Team**

Sheila Curry and Cindy Landry

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

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

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

**July Newsletter Deadline** — Monday, June 17th.

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



## ***June Celebrations!***



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| Maresa McKinley  | 6/1  | Chuck Westfall    | 6/19 |
| Christina Noffke | 6/7  | Corbin Blair      | 6/20 |
| Aubrey Canfield  | 6/8  | Christina Jimenez | 6/21 |
| Rita Wilson      | 6/8  | Elaine Kersh      | 6/21 |
| Dewey Case       | 6/13 | Sheila Curry      | 6/23 |
| Bjorn Wastvedt   | 6/14 | Catherine Lee     | 6/25 |
| Chloe Scherbarth | 6/17 | Phillip Space     | 6/26 |



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| Bill Coll       | 6/1  |
| Bridgette Lee   | 6/11 |
| Alex O'Connor   | 6/11 |
| Maresa McKinley | 6/12 |
| W.F. Perkins    | 6/12 |
| Rita Wilson     | 6/20 |



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| David & Nancy Grunig (57)     | 6/3  |
| Ted & Maresa McKinley (23)    | 6/12 |
| Bjorn & Judy Wastvedt (54)    | 6/12 |
| Jerry & Debbie Frederick (55) | 6/13 |
| Jane & Shawn O'Connor (15)    | 6/27 |



### **Saint John Lutheran Church**

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

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

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