

*July 2023
Newsletter*

GOOD NEWS

Because Good Happens!

**Saint John Lutheran Church
Hattiesburg, Mississippi**





The BOD met on June 22, 2023. Our financial situation continues to be sound. The Board thanks everyone for your continued giving during this challenging time as we search for a new pastor.

The Call committee has extended a call to Pastor Chet Scherbarth. The congregation had the opportunity to meet him, his wife Beth, and their nine-year-old son, Paul. Please continue to pray for the Holy Spirit's guidance as he considers the call to St. John.

We have completed the remediation of the building and our air quality tests showed a marked improvement. Please see the article in this issue describing the successful remediation.

We are considering a fundraiser to pay down the mortgage even faster. If you would like to volunteer for such an effort, please see a Board member.

Work on Oktoberfest 2023 has begun. We encourage everyone who wants to support this Mission project to join us as we start our planning. Our leadership team that planned and implemented the mission event last year, will continue to do so for this year's event. We thank them for their continued service. All of our proceeds go directly to our mission partners, which were again fully funded by St. John.

Please be on the lookout for details of our church picnic, scheduled for July 9th at Lake Serene clubhouse.

Ongoing Board issues include:

- Re-establish ushers, readers, and greeters. Christopher Longman and Nancy Kaul will coordinate and develop a plan of action.
- The minutes of the Board meetings are posted on the bulletin board located in the narthex.

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.

In his service and yours,

The Board



LWML MITES collected on Sunday, June 4, 2023, totaled \$88.06. Praise God! Thank you for your continued prayers and support of the Mission Grants selected in convention by the Gulf States District and National LWML.

Summer has arrived! In past years prior to Covid 19, the LWML members would take a break from regular activities to enjoy times with family, travel, visiting friends, etc. Even though there are no planned activities, members continue to "serve the Lord" at Saint John Lutheran and our community at every opportunity by supporting the Board of Directors in search for a new Pastor, Planning for Oktoberfest in the Fall; and sharing the "Love of Jesus" wherever He leads us.

By the time you read this article, the 40th Biennial LWML National Convention in Milwaukee, WI, celebrating eighty years of sharing the Gospel through the Mission Grants will be concluded. I'm sure though, all in attendance will return home to share the JOY of receiving God's Word and Sacrament with thousands of Christians from our nation. We are looking forward to the Magnolia Zone Fall Rally on October 28, 2023, to hear all the highlights from Hanna Dunlap, Zone President, and Julie Radavich from our church. The Theme: "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people who he has chosen as his heritage!" (Psalm 33: 12-13)

Recently, I came across an article written in July 2022, *Good News* by Dennis Smith under the title "Come Holy Spirit." This Article was based on the Greek word "Kairos" and its meaning is found in Luke 12:54-55 and Mark 1:15. Translated, it means "the opportune moment." It is a call for us to act now, a time when conditions are right for the accomplishment of a crucial action. These words from both Scriptures tell us God is at hand in every moment, every "Kairos", and He instructs us to ask ourselves two powerful questions: What is God saying? and, How can I respond? We should always live our days looking for those moments in our daily walks with Christ. Everything we do is marked by the steady march of time. Seconds to minutes to hours to days to months to years. The problem for all of us is that the clock crawls toward the next tick. Let's ask ourselves the following two questions: Where did all the years go? and, Did I miss out on my chance to make a difference? What wonderful words from beloved Dennis! Let's always strive for those "Kairos" moments by sharing them at every opportunity. "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand, repent and believe in the Gospel."

Coming on July 9, 2023, after the worship service from 12:00 - 4:00 p.m. . . . The Church picnic will be held at Lake Serene Clubhouse. The Theme: Happy Birthday to All!!! There will be grilled hamburgers and hotdogs for all. Bring sides and desserts. The LWML will provide the drinks. Mark your calendar now. Watch the Bulletin for more details.

There will be no LWML business meeting in July. MITES will be collected on Sunday, July 2, 2023, following the worship service. 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





A Grand Experiment

Exodus 19:3-8 - The LORD called to [Moses] out of the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the people of Israel: 'You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself. Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, you shall be My treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is Mine; and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel." So Moses came and called the elders of the people and set before them all these words that the LORD had commanded him. All the people answered together and said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do." And Moses reported the words of the people to the LORD.

"All that the Lord has spoken we will do." When I read these words, I think of an experiment I used to do with my all-grades Sunday school class.

Once every couple of years or so, we'd learn about the Ten Commandments, and we'd discuss what they meant in light of Matthew 5-7. So, not just "Don't murder," but all that goes with it—no harming people, no hating your brother in your heart. Not just "Don't commit adultery," but avoid the thoughts and words that lead to sexual sin as well. The whole tangled mess of sin, words and deeds and thoughts, all twisted and hurtful together.

And then I made my students a deal. If one of them—just one!—was able to live for 24 hours perfectly, during the next week, I'd throw the whole class a pizza party. They were overjoyed. It would be easy, right? They ran out of the class, happy and excited.

And the next week, they came slinking back in the door, heads down. I didn't have to ask to know what the result was. Nobody had avoided sin, not even for 24 hours. They had lost.

This is rather like what Israel went through, isn't it? "All that the Lord has spoken, we will do," they said. And the rest of the Old Testament tells us exactly what happened to that promise. Idolatry, greed and oppression, disobedience and disaster, shame and sin. The people of Israel stand for us, all of humanity—they tried, but they couldn't do it. And neither can we.

But there's good news for them and for us as well. God has always known we couldn't do it—the experiment, if we can call it that, was for our sakes, so that we would realize and believe that, too. Now we know that we need help. We need a Savior—and we have one, in Jesus Christ.

He is God Himself, become a human being—the only truly good and perfect human being ever to walk the earth. He came out of love for us. And through His own freely chosen death and resurrection, Jesus has traded places with us—taken our sin and given us His goodness, taken our death and given us everlasting life. And His Holy Spirit remakes our hearts in His image.

Oh, and my students? They got their pizza party. I brought out the boxes and smiled at their surprised and happy faces. "Now let's talk about grace," I said, as they ate. And we talked about Jesus.

WE PRAY: Dear Lord, thank You for the joy and forgiveness You bring us freely. Amen.

This Daily Devotion was written by Dr. Kari Vo; shared by Thomas Hesselgrave

Reflection Questions:

1. When you think of sin, do you usually think of individual actions or of something else?
2. If you said "something else," what is it?
3. Tell about a time when someone showed you undeserved grace in your life.



***"Then he said to her, 'Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace.'
Luke 8:48 (NIV)***

I was bullied growing up.

From the first day at a new school until the day I left, my anatomy and overbite made me the brunt of classroom jokes. For a burgeoning, insecure preteen, this laid the foundation for the perfect storm of self-doubt in my adolescence. My parents did the best they could to encourage me, but the lies of my classmates were louder than their voices. I had no idea those negative words would stay with me well into adulthood.

Depending on what is said, who says it and when they say it, we can find ourselves believing a lie about who we are for a lifetime. One account in Scripture speaks of a woman who others labeled and defined by her condition: She was known as the woman with an issue of blood.

Her medical state became her identity. No longer was she seen as a human being with thoughts, emotions, and a need to be loved. This woman would have been ostracized and possibly judged and criticized. I imagine town gossips may have talked about her behind her back. She was isolated from others because hemorrhaging women — and anyone or anything they touched — were considered unclean. She likely experienced loneliness, fear, and shame.

This woman endured her condition for 12 years. Mark 5:26 says she *"suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse"* (NIV). But in spite of her condition, she had enough faith to believe that if she could touch the hem of Jesus' garment, she could be made well.

This woman had resilient hope, and it paid off. Immediately after she touched Jesus' cloak, her bleeding stopped, and she was freed from her suffering. I'm struck by Jesus' response at that moment. In Luke 8:45a, He asked, *"Who touched me?"* (NIV).

An omniscient Savior asked a question of finite people. It wasn't because He was unsure whose hands grasped the edge of His outer garment. He knows everything. Jesus

knew the exact moment the woman's fingers touched His tunic and caused power to leave His body. I believe Jesus asked the question for the benefit of the labeled woman. He knew she had spent more than a decade in the shadows of society. He knew she was weighed down by her condition. He knew she needed to be publicly redefined. And so He persisted: *"Someone touched me; I know that power has gone out from me"* (Luke 8:46, NIV).

Jesus left the unnamed woman no choice — she had to make her presence known. She fell at the feet of Jesus in the presence of the crowd. Jesus could have chastised her for touching Him. He could have publicly condemned her actions, but instead, He patiently listened to her. Then He said, *"Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace"* (Luke 8:48).

Jesus not only declared her healed; He called her *"daughter."* He didn't say "unnamed woman" or "woman with an issue of blood"...He selected an intimate and tender term. For 12 years this unnamed woman was an outcast in society. No one would have wanted to be near her, yet Jesus publicly acknowledged that she touched Him; then He applauded her faith and called her *"daughter."* With that single act, He said, "You are not alone. You are not isolated. You are not a label. You are a daughter of God."

When we place our faith in Jesus, we, too, become children of God. It doesn't matter if we were previously considered outcasts or lived underneath a label placed on us by humanity. Embracing our identity as children of God far outweighs any identity that has been or will ever be placed on us. In Him, we are fully loved and redefined. He is our heavenly Father; what He says about us matters most.

Dear God, thank You for redefining us as Your precious children. Help us choose to live based on who You say we are. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Lisa Case





 **DATE: Sunday, July 9th after our Worship Service**

 **WHERE: Lake Serene Clubhouse**

 **TIME: 12:00 – 4:00**

 **THEME: Happy Birthday to All!**

 **WHAT CAN YOU BRING?**

- Picnic Sides Chips Desserts Other Yummies

 **WHAT IS PROVIDED?**

- Cupcakes Grilled Hamburgers & Hotdogs Buns
Drinks





In Jesus' time, it was common practice to bury one's valuables in the ground for safe keeping. Today, we have the security of safes, safety deposit boxes, security cameras, burglar bars, and alarm systems-be they of the electronic or the canine variety.

Even with all this security, so many times in our lives we continue to bury the greatest treasure of all: our connection with our Lord. I don't feel that we ever break that connection, but we certainly do bury it at times.

Jesus came to proclaim the Good News. What was this Good News he was trying to get across to people? That the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. What does "at hand" mean? For me, it means within, at hand-we can touch it-it is attainable-we can allow ourselves to be touched by the Kingdom of God. God is in us-in His Holy dwelling place. What a treasure! Wow! So, why would we bury this? We are all on spiritual journeys. At times, we are cultivating our spirituality. But we also spend time in our lives doing a fair amount of excavating.

So, whether we are cultivating or excavating, we are invited to total dedication in following Jesus. We sell all that we have to buy that field or the fine pearl.

Selling everything is not a literal suggestion, though some religious orders do just that. It is a total surrendering to our Holy God within us-relinquishing ourselves to Him-our Treasure and accepting His love.

We teach ourselves the most unnatural habit of not communicating with our Creator. It's that burying thing again. In everything be led by Him. God is in His Holy dwelling place.

Reflection:

To what extent do we need to re-discover the treasures in the Bible and the treasure that is Jesus, the Christ?



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 12th, 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 7th.

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 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!

The History of Our OKTOBERFEST



Our Saint John Oktoberfest began as a congregational potluck 43 years ago. Friends were invited, and after a couple of years it was opened to the public. We now serve nearly 1400 plates of German potato salad, sauerkraut, and brats or wieners. Homemade German and traditional mustard, breads, and desserts will be sold in our Delicatessen. The proceeds from this event are used to fulfill our mission goal as a congregation. We support many local and some overseas organizations. Mark the week of September 24th on your calendar as there are preparation activities every day! Please get involved and find out what great friends you have here at Saint John.










It's time to order Brats!

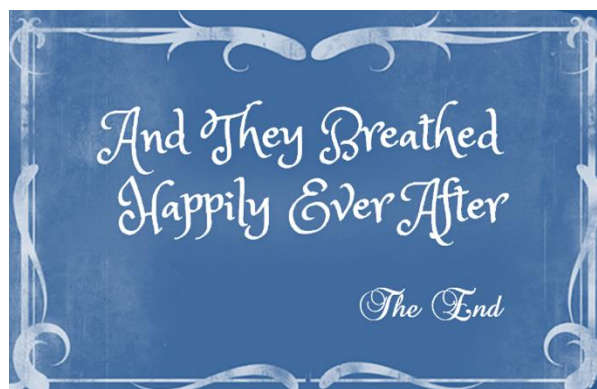


If you would like to order Bratwurst, the cost is \$50 for a box of 40 Brats (2 pkgs). Orders must be placed by Sunday, August 20th and will be delivered the first week in October. For more information and to order your Brats, please contact Eric Martin at 601-554-3340.



Once upon a time... in a church  not very far away, lived the Silent Foe. It cleverly found its way into the building through several facets, not to worship, but to wreak havoc on the innocent. This Foe was very sneaky and very dangerous indeed, finding it could do the most harm by disguising itself as warm or cool air, the very same air that comforted the church members 

Once discovered, the church leaders  worked feverishly to find the Hero  who could conquer the Silent Foe  and return the church environment to a healthy state for all who entered. After exhaustive discussions, research and seeking estimates, a plan was declared. And lo, the Hero,  Fairley's Heating & Air arrived bearing a secret weapon to slay the Silent Foe . Air quality was measured (oh, it was not good-a number of 40 revealed the Silent Foe's, thus far, successful rampant damage). Air ducts and vents were cleaned, and the special weapon-The Halo  - was employed and now lives in each air conditioning unit to render clean air to the people . Alas, they breathed deeply the clean air and cheered, for the Silent Foe  was slain! The Hero  humbly presented the number 2.5, which proclaimed clean air for all!



July 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 9am Men's Breakfast 10am AA
2 10:30am Worship MITES Collected BreadBasket	3 12pm AA	4 12pm AA	5 12pm AA 1:30pm Kaffee Klatsch	6 12pm AA	7 12pm AA	8 10am AA
9 10:30am Worship Church Picnic	10 12pm AA	11 12pm AA	12 10am Avenues Bible Study 12pm AA	13 12pm AA	14 12pm AA	15 10am AA
16 10:30am Worship Oktoberfest Meeting	17 12pm AA	18 12pm AA	19 12pm AA 1:30pm Kaffee Klatsch	20 12pm AA 6pm FH in Use 6:30pm BOD	21 12pm AA	22 10am AA
23 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 10:30am Worship	31					

Serving in July

Interim Pastor
Rev. Gary Weier

Pianist
Sandy Barnett

Altar Care Team
Lillian Smith & Jane Kersh

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

July Newsletter — available via the church website and printed copies are at the lobby mailboxes. Thanks to all those who contributed!

August Newsletter Deadline — Monday, July 24th

The Spirit that is St. John:



July Celebrations!



B I R T H D A Y S

Grey Jordan	7/1
Julia Hagen	7/2
Ethan Noffke	7/4
Nancy Kaul	7/6
Lillian Smith	7/7
Cindy Landry	7/8
Bridgette Lee	7/10
Cheyenne Thiel	7/16
Mary Lowry	7/18
Robert Meyer	7/21
Jesse Cubley	7/22
Patrice Lovdahl	7/22
Debbie Geroux	7/27
Lorhetta Lawrence	7/27
Colin Cubley	7/29
Joyce Coll	7/30



B A P T I S M S

Christina Noffke	7/2
Elaine Kersh	7/10
Patrice Lovdahl	7/20
Jesse Cubley	7/26
Cheyenne Thiel	7/27
Donna Blair	7/28



W E D D I N G

Brandon & Bridgett Lee, 17 yrs	7/10
James & Renee Elledge, 39 yrs	7/14
Steve & Lorhetta Lawrence, 21 yrs	7/21
Norbert & Trenia Thiel, 29 yrs	7/30

ANNIVERSARIES



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