

*May 2023
Newsletter*

GOOD NEWS

Because Good Happens!

**Saint John Lutheran Church
Hattiesburg, Mississippi**





– **It Was a Beautiful Day!** –
In memory of Leonard Erich Hennings
by Gary Weier, written October 2002

*“Amen, Hallelujah!” “Praise our God all you his servants, you who fear him both small and great!
For our God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory.”* *Rev 19:4/7 NIV*

It was a beautiful day!

The warmth of the sun peered over the horizon as was usual so early in the day.
Only a few gray, heavy clouds threatened the break of day.
Yet the sun beams broke through the haze and gently lifted the dew from its grassy perch.

It was a beautiful day!

They kicked back the covers and stepped into what promised to be wonderful times together.
A coffee aroma and prayers soon filled their little home,
and toast popped up gleefully with jam spread on its face.

Yes, it was a beautiful day!

Their toil was cut out for them but then the reward -- the joy-filled presence of a dear friend.
Quickly they dressed and hurried on their way.

It was a beautiful day!

With the sun so warm and soothing they reached their first retreat.
Loving chatter of workers filled them with laughter and good cheer.
In such joyful mood, they set to a serious toil before their continued play.

It was then that his clear blue eyes began to gray as he slowly slumped where he sat.
She watched in her own confusion yet coming to his side.
Her gentle calling of his name soon turned into soft falling tears. **It was a beautiful day!**

Angry sirens screeched down the street to bear its precious cargo to a place of hopeful promise.
She watched as his eyes once more lit up with love, care and hope.
He said, “I’m ready to go home.”
She said, “I love you!” He unhesitantly returned her sacred vow. **It was a beautiful day!**

It was a beautiful day!

His heart began to race with a quivering uncontrolled while hers came to a sudden stop.
Pushed aside by merciful helpers, she watched as his eyes lost their warm and friendly sparkle.
He closed his eyes one last time. She only whispered a prayer of hope: “You’re in the Lord’s hands now.”

And then—after what seemed an eternity to her but only a moment for him --
His eyes opened one more time. **Yes, It was a beautiful day!**

The radiant Son shone brightly with a brightness only divinity could provide;
The warm rays of Godly love lifted his loving child from earth’s grassy knolls and took him home forever.
Suddenly his clear, blue eyes opened widely as he stared in wonder and awe,
He then bowed himself in reverence before the Lord of Love. **Oh, what a beautiful day!**



Board of Directors' Report
For April 2023

The BOD met on April 20, 2023. Our financial situation continues to be sound. However, we have seen a small downturn in giving compared to this time last year. The Board thanks everyone for your continued giving during this challenging time as we search for a new pastor.

The Call committee continues its search for a new Pastor. Please continue to pray for the Holy Spirit's guidance in our pastoral search.

We are receiving quotes for the remediation of the building to ensure good air quality throughout the church. We hope to have this done in the near future.

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. We hope and pray that the leadership team that planned and implemented the mission event last year, will continue to do so for this year's event. All of our proceeds go directly to our mission partners, which were again fully funded by St. John. Thank you again to all who made last year's Oktoberfest a tremendous success.

Please be on the lookout for details of our church picnic, scheduled for June. We will set the date soon.

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



MITES collected on Sunday, April 2, 2023, totaled \$52.50. The "What's Your 80?" Challenge to the congregation (collect 80 ten-dollar bills) was completed on April 2, 2023, with a grand total of \$1,070.00. Praise God!!! Thank you all for your continued prayers and support for the Mission Grants selected in convention by the Gulf States District and National

The 40th Biennial Convention will be held in Milwaukee, WI on June 22-25, 2023. Theme: "Celebrate the Lord of the Nations." Scripture verse: "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people whom he has chosen as his heritage! The Lord looks down from heaven; he sees all the children of man" (Psalm 33: 12-13).

Pray for all the Delegates, members, and friends attending the convention. What a blessing to be with Christians from all over our nation, sharing the Good News of Jesus through the "Mighty Mites" all over the world!

Alleluia! He Has Risen Indeed! Alleluia! What a wonderful Resurrection service on Easter morning! It was so good to hear the choir and people singing and waving the Alleluias in Joy! I especially want to thank all who made the "Coffee Fellowship" a success by baking the "goodies," setting up, decorating, and making the special treat bags for the children. There were thirty extra "To Go" boxes filled with baked items for members to deliver to neighbors, friends, and anyone unable to attend worship services.

MITES will be collected next on Sunday, May 7, 2023. Saint John Lutheran Ladies Guild has been collecting "Mites by Mail" for those unable to attend worship services for the past three years. We collect MITES on the first Sunday of every month. If you are unable to attend worship service, you may make your check out to our Society Treasurer, Christina Noffke, and mail it directly to her at 108 Ramblewood Drive, Hattiesburg, MS 39402.

The LWML will hold a business meeting immediately following the worship service in the Community Room on May 7, 2023. We will be making plans for the next few months. Also, we hope to take a current picture of members to send along with our "What's Your 80?" check to the Gulf States District. Please make plans to attend. You are needed!

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

Altar or Alter? What is happening here?

Simply put, Altar is a noun. It is merely a table or stand. But it is a table or stand used for sacred purposes, such as the one in St. John's sanctuary. Alter is a verb meaning to change, to modify, to become different.

On the Altar, the bread and wine are altered into the Body and Blood of Jesus: that is, the Body and Blood of Christ are truly present "in, with, and under" the elements of bread and wine.

This is such a glorious and holy moment, that I feel everyone should be on their knees. Our minds can barely conceive what is happening; our language can barely express this altering.

We bring our fears, our guilt, and our misperceptions to the altar as it is the Altar of Truth. We take in the Body and Blood of Christ. We put on Christ and thus are altered.

One of Jesus' tasks was to alter man's thinking and his actions toward himself, God, and others. Though with all the changes He set forth—these alterings—Christ remains changeless. In His changelessness is our release—our salvation.

We are led to our internal Altar—a very holy place. Here we can forgive and forget untruths. We can know the Truth of our Divineness. We can know the words of Jesus, "The kingdom of God is at hand" (Mark 1:15). God is with us.

Through our altering, the greatest thing we can do is to see the divinity in every face, in every form. Our greatest privilege is to see Christ in every face, and that leads to the unlimited power to know God within. Our one goal is God.

His request: "Be still and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10).

The Altar Guild



STRENGTH IN STILLNESS

"The LORD will fight for you; you need only to be still." [Exodus 14:14](#) (NIV)

The afternoon sun streaks through my window, and I settle into my spot on the bed, finding just the right place for the light to hit my body. On my nightstand, devotion books bend into one another, and one of my daily Bible verses shows an image of majestic mountain peaks and a scriptural assurance of faith I cannot see.

The call to faith in the unseen resonates SO much deeper than I wish it did.

I've spent the past ten years fighting for my physical and mental health. I'm still wrestling with multiple chronic illnesses, comparing my state of existence to where I was before I got sick. When I see my life as it was and I see the setbacks I'm battling, I can't help but be tempted to spiral down the "why me?" rabbit hole. The daily battles leave me worn and wondering just how this will play out. My camp is close to crumbling, and I need reinforcements. If I have the Lord of heaven's armies with me, what is His tactic? What is His next move?

Is it to strengthen me supernaturally so I can take ground where I have loosened my hold?

Is it to storm my enemies and knock them down in one motion?

Is it to wait for me to say the right prayer or scripture and believe *just* a bit more for my faith to come to life and be "useful" in my healing?

Or is it possible God is calling me to something radically different? What if God's will looks something like this: *"The LORD will fight for you; you need only to be still."* ([Exodus 14:14](#))?

The more I meditate on this verse, the more I realize I've been carrying much more stress than I need to. I've hoisted the weight of my health on my shoulders, striving to learn answers, comparing what was to what is now, and holding heavy, unrealistic expectations in my heart and mind.

Maybe you are, too. Maybe we've all been holding on to our own designs of how life should be and having trouble wrapping our minds around reality.

What do we do with the vise grip we've put ourselves in?

BE STILL. Stop the swirling thoughts and expectations of where you *should be* and rest in where you *are*. Here is now, and God is present here. The gift of His grace overpowers any shame, guilt, and disappointment we may feel about ourselves. And His grace extends to His command for us to release the effort and allow Him to do His deep, restorative healing in our hearts as He fights for us. In stillness lies our strength.

Take the burden off your shoulders and relax into the Lord. He is the One who will fight your battles. Our God has our best in mind, for our good and His glory. His love is making a way in our lives because the battle belongs to the Lord.

Sometimes, the best thing we can do is be still with this truth and believe. We can turn over our trust to His capable ways, lift off what weighs us down and let Him do the heavy lifting.

Father, we have been holding on to so much. We cannot carry the weight of this worry any longer. We've been flailing and trying to fight this battle by using our own strength. Will You take the weight off our hearts, minds, and bodies? Will You fight for us as we sit still and fall into Your arms? You are our salvation, and You offer us deep, abiding rest. Thank You for the grace You give; we trust You to guide and grow us. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Lisa Case

**The Lord will fight for you;
you need only to be still.**

Exodus 14:14



A Year of Feasts and Festivals

May 7: Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther is honored.

C.F.W. Walther was the first President of the Missouri Synod: 1847–1850 & 1864–1878.



Born: 25 October 1811, Langenchursdorf, Saxony, Germany

Died: 7 May 1887, Saint Louis, Missouri

Walther was educated at the University of Leipzig, after which he tutored for the Loeber family in Cahla from 1833 to 1837. He was ordained on 15 January 1837 and briefly accepted a parish in Bräunsdorf, before sailing to America in November 1838 with the Saxon Immigration. In 1878 he received an honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity from Capital University in Columbus, Ohio.

For forty-six years Walther was the pastor at Trinity Lutheran Church in Saint Louis. He also taught at and was president of Concordia Seminary, Saint Louis, from 1850 until his death. He served as the president of the Synod from its founding in 1847 to 1850. In 1864 he was again elected president and served until 1878.

May 18: The Ascension of Our Lord

Ascension Day occurs 40 days after Easter. The Ascension of Jesus is our belief, reflected in the Creeds and confessional statements, that Jesus ascended to Heaven after his resurrection, where he was exalted as Lord and Christ, sitting at the right hand of God.

May 28: The Day of Pentecost

Pentecost is a holy day taking place on the 50th day after Easter Sunday. It commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles and other followers of Jesus Christ while they were in Jerusalem celebrating the Feast of Weeks, as described in the Acts of the Apostles.

May 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 12pm AA	3 12pm AA	3 12pm AA 1:30pm Kaffee Klatsch	4 12pm AA	5 12pm AA	6 9am Men's Breakfast 10am AA
7 10:30am Worship MITES Collected LWML Mtg BreadBasket	8 12pm AA	9 12pm AA	10 10am Avenues Bible Study 12pm AA	11 12pm AA	12 12pm AA Fellowship Hall in Use	14 10am AA
14 10:30am Worship Mother's Day	15 12pm AA	16 12pm AA	17 12pm AA 1:30pm Kaffee Klatsch	18 12pm AA 6:30pm BOD	19 12pm AA	20 10am AA
21 10:30am Worship	22 12pm AA	23 12pm AA	24 10am Avenues Bible Study 12pm AA	25 12pm AA	26 12pm AA	27 10am AA
28 10:30am Worship	29 12pm AA	30 12pm AA	31 12pm AA			

Serving in May

Interim Pastor
Rev. Gary Weier

Music Director
Jason Sims

Altar Care Team

Thomas & Brenda Hesselgrave

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

Portals of Prayer for April - June are available on the table across from the sacristy.

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

June Newsletter Deadline — Monday, June 19th

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
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
Brooklyn Noffke	5/16
Lynne Longman	5/16
Brandon Lee	5/20
Christopher Longman	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, 58 yrs	5/8
Brian & Diahn Lee, 5 yrs	5/14
Tommy Breland & Jane Kersh, 19 yrs	5/24



Saint John Lutheran Church

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