

*November 2023
Newsletter*



Because Good Happens!

**Saint John Lutheran Church
Hattiesburg, Mississippi**



A NOTE FROM YOUR PASTOR

The other day I came across an article about bitcoin. And beings I do not completely understand how bitcoin works. I thought I would read it. Now the article didn't address how bitcoin works but gave the story of a man who had 7000 bitcoins locked in special USB thumb drive. The encryption is so tight on this thing that after ten attempts to unlock it, all the data is erased. He lost the piece of paper that had the password on it. And had tried 8 times to unlock it. Each bitcoin in today's market is worth like 34,000 dollars. This guy literally has millions of dollars locked into this device by today's standard. And as I think about bitcoin and the lack of tangibility of it, I think to myself where does the value come from?

People, it comes from people deciding that bitcoin has value. This same thing is true of gold, silver, and all the precious gems we think of traditionally as treasure. Somebody somewhere saw the value in those things and as a result now we consider those worthy of being hoarded. This leads me to ask how often do we value things that have no value? Value seems to be so subjective. I have heard it said many times stuff is only worth what someone will pay for it. And I think about the stuff I value- the bits of plastic and paint that are tucked away in boxes with their foam trays. And it's not the plastic that is valuable but the experience and the interaction that comes with it. It can also be found in the challenge of trying to figure out strategies to be victorious.

Yet I know if the house is on fire, I don't go back in for these things. If it really gets down to life or death, there is very little value in anything we have collected. I think about the beforementioned bitcoin. What happens if we were in a situation like the war in Ukraine where your infrastructure is destroyed daily. It will take years for bitcoin to be of value. Heat, food, and light are of so much more value. I think about the ever-popular post-apocalyptic stories and TV shows. The power goes out and the world descends into chaos. What value would bitcoin have in a world without power or computers to access it?

It would be apparent to us that food would become the primary currency followed by all the other things needed to sustain life and comfort. And this would vary a little from person-to-person region to region. But how quickly it would all change? Then I have to ask the question what has value? Well, our lives for one might be a good answer to the lives of friends, families, and our pets. And as I think about that I know that our lives reach a conclusion at some point or another what then has value? Is it the hoard we pass to the next generation? No, we know that value is fickle. Life has value. How do we hang on to this thing of value?

We go to the source, to God and the life we have in Christ Jesus. We go to the Author and perfecter of our faith. In Luke 17:33, we have "Whoever seeks to preserve his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will keep it." Seems to be counter intuitive to our way of thinking. I want to preserve my life, the thing with the most value I have. Yet Jesus tells me to keep it I have to lose it. What does he mean by that? It means that I lose it to him or another way to say this is I find my life in Christ Jesus. And it's eternal life. For something of such great value there is no payment that I can make, yet Christ made the payment of eternal life with his own. What is the value of the Son of God's life? It has the value to cover the cost of my sin and all the sin in the world. It has the value to give me that which I cannot guard for myself. What a valuable thing it is to be a child of Christ covered by his blood. And It remains if the password is lost or the power goes out. Amen

Blessings and peace,
Pastor Chet



October 2023 Meeting

The BOD met on October 26, 2023. The primary business discussed was planning our budget for 2024. Now that we are supporting a full time Pastor, our budget projections will increase from our previous couple of years. We plan on adopting a recommended budget at the November 16th Board meeting and will have it available for congregational review before our Annual Congregational meeting on December 3, 2023. We encourage input as we perform this important task.

Octoberfest was a huge success as we grossed over \$34,000.00. Thank you to the entire congregation for supporting this fundraiser for missions. We thank the Octoberfest Committee for all of their hard work in organizing the event and a special thanks to the cooks who prepared the food. We received numerous compliments this year from regular attendees indicating that the food was the best ever. Our hard work and effort to celebrate our Lutheran heritage will pay dividends as we support our mission work in His name. AMEN!!

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, October 1, 2023, totaled \$191.77. Praise God!!! Thank you to all for your prayers and support of the Mission Grants selected in Convention by the Gulf States District and National LWML.

On Saturday, October 28, 2023, the Magnolia Zone LWML Fall Rally was held here at Saint John Lutheran Church for the first time since Spring of 2016. The Theme for the Rally was "JOY!" "Then he said to them, "Go your way. Eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions to anyone who has nothing ready, for this day is holy to our Lord. And do not be grieved, for the Joy of the Lord is your Strength" (Nehemiah 8-10). The Bible Study entitled "Why the Joy of the Lord is your Strength" was led by Pat Davenport with Sheila Curry assisting. As Christians, our times of Joy come when our Heavenly Father claims us as His own in our Baptism. Our Joy is found in Jesus Christ who sacrificed His own blood on the cross to save us from our sins, and the Holy Spirit lives in us each day guiding and directing us to all our hopes of our eternal home in heaven. Thank you, Jesus, for true JOY! Help us to share this Joy using the gifts of love with those who haven't heard the Good News of the Gospel.

LWML will hold a Business meeting in the Community Room immediately following the worship service on Sunday, November 5, 2023. Agenda Items: Holiday Plans; Election of Officers 2024; LWML District Travel & Quarterly Orders. All women are welcome. Please make plans to come and share your ideas. You are needed!

LWML MITES will be collected on Sunday, November 5, 2023. If you are unable to attend worship service, 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





On Luke 12:49-51

Jesus' proclamation of the Kingdom is a refining and purifying fire. His message which is met with either acceptance or rejection, is a source of conflict and dissension. These conflicts have been consistent throughout history – between churches, among friends, within families, and even within us at times as we meet the challenges sometimes presented as we grow in our relationship with our Holy Creator.

Just what are these teachings of Christ? Did he come to bring peace or more war? It is like asking, "Do stairs go up, or do they go down?" To these two questions it is easy to answer – both. Jesus' teachings bring peace and conflict: First, stairs go up and second, then they go down. Peace comes to those who seek truth, and fire comes to those who seek something else. When there is conflict, our hopeful goal is to build unity.

A personal thought to leave with you: what might you do when someone you love rejects Jesus' teaching because he or she is closed to the Truth? How do we build unity?

Prayers:

Lord may your fire bring light where there is darkness and warmth where there is coldness. May it purify us, and not destroy us.

Lord, our God, Father of all, our source of power and inspiration, strengthen our faith, hope, and love. May we do with loving hearts what you ask of us. Go before us in our pilgrimage of life, anticipate our needs and prevent our falling. Give us strength and joy in serving you as followers of Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Christina Keiper
Altar Guild



"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:6-7 (NIV)

There's something I've learned about myself: Sometimes what's really overwhelming me isn't that I have too much to do or too much to process. It's that I've allowed too much fear into the mix of it all.

Fear of the unknown.

Fear of what crazy thing is going to hit me next.

Fear of not being able to know when or if "normal" will ever return.

Can you relate? Sometimes what is really causing me to be afraid isn't what's actually in front of me — it's me projecting fearful possibilities onto what I'm facing today. I have a habit of mentally running into the future, painting pictures of all the worst-case scenarios, and then running back to today and pinning those pictures all over the walls in my mind. But as God is my witness, no worst-case-scenario thinking has ever protected me. It's only projected the possible pain of tomorrow onto today and fed more fear.

Today, I'm asking God to help me know the difference between wise discernment and fear. And there is a BIG difference: One prompts me to remember God. The other prompts me to panic. And we can't live in panic and peace at the same time.

Instead of trying to figure out the future and panicking because of worst-case scenarios, I can intentionally look back at all the places in my life where I can clearly see that God had a good plan — He provided for me, He came through for me, and He helped me through whatever I faced. Taking the time to trace God's hand of faithfulness from the past is so much more calming than trying to predict the future.

And when I lay down my worst-case scenarios, I also pray differently, as our key verse for today instructs us to do:

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:6-7).

These verses show me that I’m just one prayer away from experiencing the peace of God — and so are you. Even when we’re crippled with fear and don’t understand what’s in front of us, we can whisper a simple prayer: *God, please help me. Be with me. Lead me. Hold me. Show me the next step.* Often, our next step isn’t walking forward; it’s remembering who God is. God is loving. God is kind. God is patient. God is just. God is all-capable and all-knowing. God is forgiving. God is generous. God is good. Praying these truths about who God is will comfort us in our panic.

Then after we pray, we can take a moment and glance outside. Look at the sky. Acknowledge that it’s not falling. We don’t have to live in fear. We don’t have to worry about what’s ahead. The same God who keeps all the galaxies in place will be right there to greet us and lead us into the days to come. This truth is the safest place for us to land.

Father God, when we’re tempted to let worst-case scenarios write and rewrite the truth we believe, remind us You are in control. Remind us You can be trusted with it all. Remind us we don’t have to run ahead and be prepared for it all because You hold it all together. Infuse our hearts with hope as we cling to You. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.



Lisa Case



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

Phone: 601.583.4898

Email: stjohnlutheranchurch@gmail.com

Nov 1: 1:30 Kaffee Klatsch

Nov 4: 9:00 Men's Breakfast at Chesterfields Restaurant
(Set Clocks BACK before retiring for the evening)

Nov 5: Daylight Saving Time Ends

Nov 5: MITES Collected

Nov 5: Breadbasket Collection

Nov 8: 10:00 Avenues Bible Study Group

Nov 15: 10:30 Stinnett's Visit

Nov 16: 6:30 BOD Meeting at church

Nov 23: Thanksgiving – Church Closed

November 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	12pm AA		1 12pm AA 1:30 Kaffee Klatch	2 12pm AA	3 12pm AA	4 10am AA 9:00am Men's Breakfast
5 10:30am Worship MITES Collected Breadbasket	6 12pm AA	7 12pm AA	8 10am Avenues Bible Study 12pm AA	9 12pm AA	10 12pm AA	11 10am AA
12 10:30am Worship	13 12pm AA	14 12pm AA	15 10:30am Stinnett's Visit 12pm AA	16 12pm AA 6:30pm BOD 6pm FH in Use	17 12pm AA	18 10am AA
19 10:30am Worship Elder Mtg	20 12pm AA	21 12pm AA	22 10am Avenues Bible Study 12pm AA	23 12pm AA Thanksgiving Church Closed	24 12pm AA	25 10am AA
26 10:30am Worship	27 12pm AA	28 12pm AA	29 12pm AA	30 12pm AA		

Serving in October

Pastor

Chet Scherbarth

Pianist

Lewei He

Altar Care Team

Sheila Curry

Christina Keiper

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

***Portals of Prayer* for October-December** are still available in the Narthex.

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

December Newsletter Deadline — Monday, November 20th.

The Spirit that is St. John:



November Celebrations!



B I R T H D A Y S

Dawn Wright	11/2
Jerry Herrington	11/9
Ethan Potesta	11/12
Macy Reid	11/12
Jane Johnson	11/17
Darlene Boortz	11/18
Shawn O'Connor	11/18
Braxton Lee	11/20
Haley Trahan	11/20
Sonja Chaney	11/23
Jane Kersh	11/23
Lee McMichael	11/26
W.F. Perkins	11/26



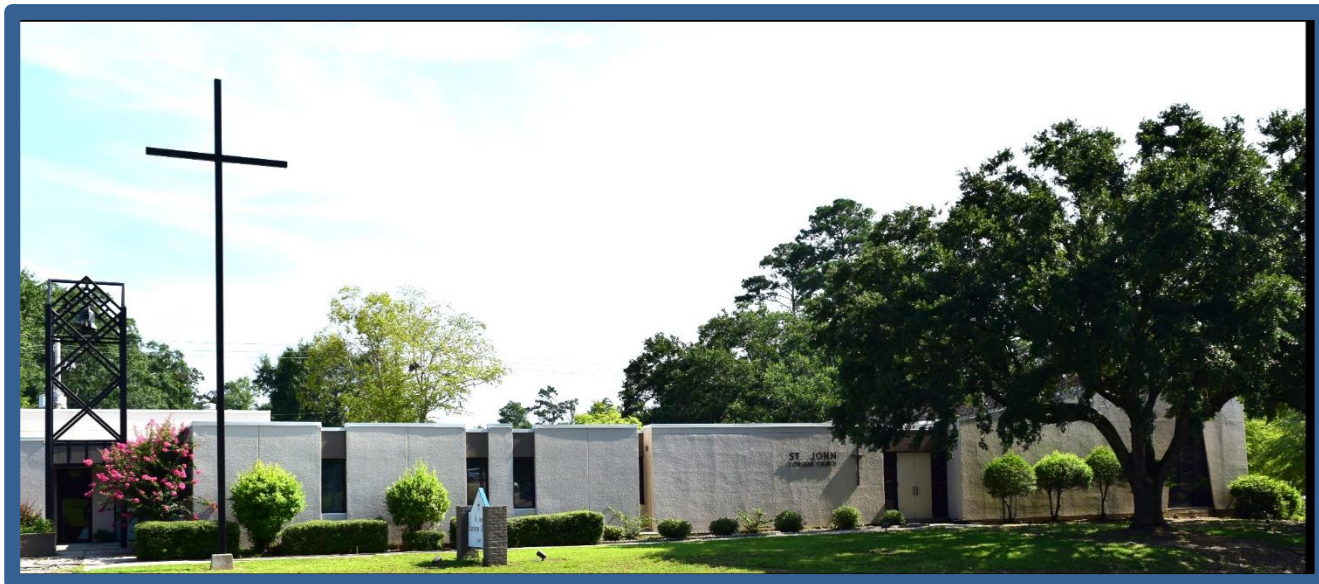
B A P T I S M S

Doris Schneider	11/1
Jennifer Blair	11/7
Christina Keiper	11/13
Ethan Potesta	11/16
Bonnie Hauser	11/20
Julie Radavich	11/22
Logan Lovdahl	11/23



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

John & Donna Blair, 54 yrs.	11/8
Willy & Christina Noffke, 53 yrs.	11/10
Wayland & Jane Johnson, 15 yrs.	11/22



Saint John Lutheran Church

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