



St. John's Lutheran Church
New Ulm, MN
June, 2023 *Fortress*

God Doesn't Take Vacations... (But He'll Go with You on Yours!)

Vacation time is a blessing. Time away from work, time with the family, time to refresh and recharge are all blessings. Even Jesus took time away. (***"Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed."*** Luke 5:16) But don't let your vacation from work and home be a vacation from God.

For the times we pack our clothes, our fishing rods, and our sunscreen, but leave behind our devotion books, our Bibles, and our God... We deserve to have him leave us behind. For forgetting about God, we deserve to have him forget about us... for eternity.

But you know that that's not what he does. He doesn't leave us behind or forget about us... ever. God doesn't take vacations from giving his grace. (***"Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning."*** Lamentations 3:22-23) He doesn't ever rest from watching over you and protecting you. (***"God has said, 'Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.'"*** Hebrews 13:5) No matter where you go this summer, God will go with you. (***"Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."*** Joshua 1:9) So don't take a vacation from him!

While you rest and travel and play this summer, be sure to stay connected to God's grace through his means of grace. Here are a few suggestions as to how you can do just that this summer...

- Come to worship here at St. John's whenever you are in town.
- Worship at the closest WELS/ELS church to where you're vacationing. Meet new friends! (Search for the nearest WELS/ELS church here: <https://yearbook.wels.net/unitsearch>.)
- Read or listen to sermons online or sign up to receive them via email. (Watch us on YouTube here: <https://www.youtube.com/@st.johnslutheranchurchav88>. Email the office to get your email address added to the list: office@stjohnsnewulm.com.)
- Read or listen to other devotional material online. Check out WELS devotions at (<https://wels.net/serving-you/devotions/>) for some suggested resources.
- Take your copy of Meditations and your Bible along! Read a page each day.
- Buy a good book from Northwestern Publishing House (www.NPH.net) and read it.

- Check out a book from our church library and read it.
- Buy an audio Bible on CD (cf. www.ChristianBook.com) and listen while you drive! (Watch where you're driving while you listen to where you're going!) :)
- Download a free Bible app to read or listen to the Bible (You can get through the whole New Testament in 28 minutes a day in just 40 days!) (Check out "[YouVersion](#)" or "[Bible.is.](#)")

And then, as you're reminded of God's grace to you, here are some ways that you can respond in thanks...

- Take the opportunity to have a heart to heart talk with God in prayer undistracted by the busyness of work or pressing urgent matters of home or school.
- Forward an emailed sermon or devotion to friends. Let them know you're praying for them.
- Make it a goal to share your faith with someone you meet on your vacation.
- Mail your regular offerings of thanks to church (at **627 S. Washington St., New Ulm, MN 56073**) when you can't be here in person. (Or use your bank's online "Bill Pay" service to have them send your regular offering and save yourself the cost of an envelope and a stamp.)

Remember, God doesn't take a vacation from pouring out his rich grace on you. Don't take a vacation from him. Stay connected to the Word. Respond in thanks. And may God richly bless your summer! May God grant you safe travels as he goes with you and watches over you this summer and always! (*"The Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore"* Psalm 121:8)

In Him,

Pastor Rob Guenther

June Sermon Texts

June 4	2 Corinthians 13:11-14	Grace, Love, and Fellowship - The Three-fold Blessing of the Triune God
June 11	Ephesians 5:8-14	Leave Your Light On!
June 18	Matthew 9:35-10:8	Work in Jesus' Fields
June 25	Romans 10:5-17	Faith Comes Through Hearing the Message

Bible Classes meet in the Church Basement
The class can also be found online at bit.ly/SJBibleClass

Sundays at 11 am	Pastoral Epistles	Pastor Jeff Bovee
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Council Digest

The St. John's Church Council met on May 16. The council hosted the members of the St. Paul's Church Council for a joint council meeting, held semi-annually between the two congregations. The historical purposes of these meetings include mutual communication, encouragement, and cooperation. Pastor Bovee of St. John's led the opening devotion. Attendees heard reports from Pastor Nate Scharf of St. Paul's and Pastor Rob Guenther of St. John's. A summary of topics addressed follows:

A major topic discussed was the two congregations' partnership in St. Paul's Lutheran School (SPLS). The two councils have had a small group of representatives meeting regularly to discuss issues and forge an equitable agreement between the two congregations. Progress has been steady with the creation of an annual total cost of education report. Timeline and details are scheduled to be worked on over the coming months.

Principal Markgraf reported on staffing and enrollment numbers for next year. We are thankful to Jesus for a full faculty for next year. Enrollment numbers are increasing. It is important to enroll early to ensure seats are available.

In addition to the partnership we share in the operation of St. Paul's Lutheran School, the two congregations cooperate in a variety of activities. Those activities are organized under the name John and Paul Ministries (see website for updates www.johnsandpaulministries.com.) The group's goal is to host a variety of events with a primary focus on outreach. The next event is July 5-8 - Soccer Camp

The next joint meeting will be hosted by St. Paul's and was tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, November 21, 2023.

After the St. Paul's council was dismissed for the evening, the St. John's council continued with its regular meeting. A summary of reports and actions not reported elsewhere in the Fortress follows:

Membership changes approved

- Transfer Out: Joel and Kati Koelpin to Peace Lutheran, Trinity, FL
- Transfer In: Jeremy Blackwell from Peace Lutheran, N. Mankato, MN
- Release: Krista Brown

Board of Youth and Education chairman, Jon Hermanson, reported on plans for the 2023-2024 Tuition Off-set for St. John's students attending SPLS. A tuition off-set letter will be sent to St. John's families in the near future with further details and deadlines.

Jason Mohror, reporting for the Elders, noted that the board worked on organizing their work for ease of encouragement and attention to the spiritual needs of members. They also initially discussed a staffing question. They also finalized actions for adjusting teacher Balza's insurance to VEBA plan 2, which aligns with St. John's policies starting June 1, 2023.

Evangelism Board chair Jesse Zahrt noted they are currently in the final stages of updates to our church's website and will go live at the end of May. Evangelism events include:

- June 11: Church picnic at Hermann Heights Park, running from 5-8(ish)pm.
- June 17: Joint service at German Park at 6:30 pm.

The Board of Evangelism is the parent board for the Fellowship Committee. They currently have 2 roles they are looking for volunteers, a Social Media Manager and a Fellowship Coordinator. If you are interested or know someone with gifts for either, please contact Chairman Jesse Zahrt.

The Stewardship Board and Chairman Dan Borgwardt are working to coordinate a few different priorities that are informed by the worship calendar. The worship calendar helps to set the timeline for several of these priorities, including ordering giving envelopes. This coordination also includes working with other committees and asking members about aspects of their giving to Jesus through St. John's.

Scott Deters, Trustee's Chairman, brought the recommendation to the council to change their name to the Board of Properties. This recommendation is due to the legal realities that the "trustees" of an organization are the member with control or powers of administration with a legal obligation to administer it solely for the purposes specified. For St. John's, these responsibilities are granted in the constitution to the executives of the council. To ensure St. John's is aligned, the council approved this recommendation and will bring it to the next voter's meeting.

Next council meeting - Tuesday, June 20, 2023, at 7 pm

Next voters' meeting - Tuesday, July 25, 2023, at 7 pm

Submitted by Jon Schaefer,
Congregational President

Church Library

Summer is here! For a minute earlier we were wondering whether it would ever come. But the Lord promised that seedtime and harvest would never cease. Now we can watch our flowers and vegetables and lawns grow.

This month we have two small books to help us through trauma , and two fiction books.

The first small book is Purposeful Grieving by Stacy E. Hoehl. The author experienced her own grief and can explain how to "embrace God's plan in the midst of loss." She uses Psalm 13 as her base. She treats King David's loss, Naomi's losses, and how to experience turbulence. And God's love is still there and in heaven.

The second small book is deep as the sea by Timothy Bourman, who is a pastor in New York . He writes 12 letters to survivors of trauma, such as military combat, abuse, or devastating losses. PTSD affects all of them. It can be a serious spiritual loss also. The author suffered trauma and talked to others. It should be a great help to survivors.

The two fiction books are written by Lauraine Snelling. Wake the Dawn takes place in northern Minnesota in a rural hospital. When they experience hurricane force winds that cause outages and injuries, the hero and heroine have to work 48 hours to help many until help can reach them. The heroine has PTSD and the hero recognizes it, and helps her get help. They also have proof that the community needs a bigger and better hospital. They even find and save a three -week -old baby.

The second fiction book is Heaven Sent Rain. The heroine finds a boy and his dog alone and helps them. She receives custody for the boy when the mother dies. But she knows nothing about being a parent. Her famous company has problems. Her help comes from a veterinarian who helped the dog. He is a believer and helps the boy understand death and heaven.

Enjoy reading this summer.
LeiLani Rahn, church librarian

St. John's congregation will observe its 75th Anniversary in 2023

The planning committee has chosen Sunday, August 6 as the special day of celebration.



Two services with communion will be held at 8 and 10 am. We will not have a Saturday evening service that weekend.

Former St. John's pastor David Kolander will be the guest preacher.

The 75th Anniversary meal will be held at 12 pm in the MLC gymnasium. There will be a picnic type of meal with salads and desserts followed by a brief program.

Registration and payment for the meal will be held each Saturday and Sunday in June before and after services in the new narthex. The deadline for registration is June 25th. The cost of the meal is \$12.50 per person including children. We will accept cash or check payments. Exact change is appreciated.

Please contact Denise Karstens if you have any questions at 507-766-5899.

Summer Devotions in the Park

The Friday morning women's Bible study group invites all parents and their children to join them during the summer months for Christian fellowship in the park. We meet at 9 am at the listed park for free play and a picnic lunch (optional). Feel free to bring a friend! If you have any questions, please contact Erika Grundmeier at (989) 529-8729.

June

- 2 - Lincoln Park: 718 S. State St
- 9- Riverside Park: 101 S. Front St.
- 16- Washington Park: 715 N. State St.
- 23- Harman Park: 101 N Garden St.
- 30- North Market Park: 1414 N. German St.

July

- 7- Nehl's Park: 1100 Summit Ave.
- 14- South Park: 1800 S. State St.
- 21- German Park: 200 N. German St.
- 28- Hermann Heights Park: 14 Monument St.

August

- 4- North Park: 1801 N State St. (Splash Pad available starting later in morning)
- 11- Harman Park: 101 N. Garden St.
- 18- Highland Park: 1627 5th North St.
- 25- TBD

Lutheran Women's Missionary Society (LWMS)

Greetings Mission minded friends!

A few things to note about LWMS in the month of June...

1. Our congregation has been asked to remember our BAM congregations specifically in the month of June. You can help support that effort by praying for those congregations as well as sending them cards and gifts. These are the BAM congregations we have been assigned:

- Asia One Team: Mark Zondag (878 217th Street, Osceola, WI 54020)
- Amazing Grace, Dickinson, ND: Rev. Joel Prange (130 7th Ave. W, Dickinson, ND 58601)
- Good News, Mt. Horeb, WI: Rev. Jon Bauer (208 Valley View Rd, Mt. Horeb, WI 53572)

If you would like more information about these home/world mission congregations, please email Carrie Schaefer for those details. Carriehieb@yahoo.com

2. Did you know that parts of the annual convention are FREE? The opening and closing services are open for all to attend regardless of being registered for the convention! If you want a taste of Heaven, these are definitely services you want to join us for. The opening service will begin on Thursday, June 22 at 7:00 pm, the closing service will be on Sunday, June 25 at 8:30 am. Both services will be held in La Crosse, WI at the La Crosse Center (300 Harborview Plaza)

More details about the annual convention can be found online at LWMS.org.

Carrie Schaefer
LWMS Reporter

Our Synod at Work

WELS 2023 Annual Report: Called to Serve

This month we would review some of the highlights in the 2023 WELS Annual Report to Members that is entitled “Called to Serve.” The report states that “WELS Congregational Services exists to serve congregations and schools and their leaders by providing resources, training, and personal assistance so that they may carry out gospel ministry in the most faithful way on the local level.” We will take a look at some of the activities that fit into the area of Congregational Services

The **Women’s Ministry Conference** was held on July 12-23, 2022, at Luther Preparatory School in Watertown, Wisconsin. More than 330 women attended the conference, which had the theme of *Won to be One*.” It looked at the book of Ephesians and God’s grace that gives believers their identity in Christ.

Telling the Next Generation deals with WELS schools. Enrollment in WELS schools was up 9.8 percent during the 2021-22 school year. There were 26,586 students in 282 Lutheran elementary schools and 11,672 students in 363 early childhood ministries. This is the highest ever recorded enrollment for WELS early childhood ministries and highest number for Lutheran elementary schools since the 2004-05 school year. More and more students attending WELS schools are mission prospects, with nearly 33 percent of families in early childhood ministries and 16 percent in Lutheran elementary schools identifying either as non-Christian or no church home.

Devotions prepared by WELS Congregational Services follow the theme that is set for each week’s worship in the Foundation’s resources. The three devotions offering this connection are: (1) daily devotions; (2) family devotions; and (3) teen devotions.

In the fall of 2022 almost 30 congregations hosted WELS **Youth Nights**, which offered area-congregation teens and youth leaders the opportunities to grow in God’s Word and build relationships with each other. WELS Youth Night is a series of three youth-focused events to bring teens and youth leaders together in between large rallies.

WELS Commission on Evangelism designed the **Everyone Outreach Program** to help congregations build a culture of outreach among their members. In August 2021, the commission trained 21 pastors to facilitate these workshops. In January of 2022, 20 more were trained. More than 2,400 WELS members are participated in workshops as of December of 2022.

WELS Christian Aid and Relief offer **Community Care and Compassion Grants** to congregations that want to reach out in their communities through compassion ministry grants up to \$2,500. Daniel Sims, director of WELS Christian Aid and Relief stated that he “encourages congregations to find people who hurting in your community, formulate a plan to help them, and get in touch us.”

WELS **Ministry of Christian Giving** partnered with Martin Luther College to present the “Equipping Christian Witnesses” campaign, which received \$9.6 million to fund tuition assistance and build the Betty Kohn Fieldhouse. The Ministry of Christian Giving also encourages congregations and individuals to offer gifts of thanks. WELS has had two years of record-breaking Congregation Mission Offerings in 2020 and 2021.

Our review of the WELS Annual Report to Members will conclude next month with a summary of the “Called to Support” section.

Gerald Woodley

Staff Minister

Kitchen Project Volunteers – During May, the Kitchen Project focused on cabinets and the completion of the electrical and plumbing needs. It has really started to take shape and was actually able to be used in a limited way on Ascension. The only thing that has not been finalized is the installation of the trim. The trim includes baseboard, some ceiling trim, and the replacing of the door trim that had been removed for painting. If you are able to help with these things, email me at ***sm.dretske@stjohnsnewulm.com*** I will send you a link for an online signup sheet and instructions on how to use it.

There are still some kitchen costs that have not been covered if you still want to contribute directly to this project, otherwise funding was approved to come out of the building fund. If more than enough comes in, extras will be added to the building fund.

Member Care – There are some ***Member Care*** cards on the table in the Narthex by the windows. If there are members who are unable to complete various tasks in or around their homes themselves, they can fill out these cards and place them into my church mailbox. I will notify other members who have indicated that they would be willing to help others in the congregation to see if they can help you with your project. Sometimes it can be as simple as replacing a lightbulb that is too high to reach, or maybe replacing batteries in smoke or carbon monoxide detectors. If you are willing and able to help others, either contact me, or fill out the Time & Talent Survey (either the paper form found in the narthex, or online <https://bit.ly/TaTSurvey> and show your interest in ***Member Care***.

Online Church Directory – Members can update their own family pictures as well as new addresses or phone numbers using the neat Online App. Just go to the Apple Store (Apple) or Google Play (Android) and download the app for Instant Church Directory. Follow the instructions for signing in using your email that you have given St. John's. If you have a new address or any other new family information, please send to the church office at office@stjohnsnewulm.com

If you accidentally grab a pew directory when you leave church and find it when you get home, please bring it back and give to one of the ushers. They will find the right spot for it. Thanks!

Visiting the Homebound - I again have the privilege of joining the pastors in visits to members who are homebound—sharing the Gospel in Word and Sacrament. If you are not on our list to be visited but would like to be included, please call me at **507-217-7604** to get on the list.

Streamed/Recorded Services – Some of our members have been making use of the St. John's Church App. This app was part of a subscription our Evangelism Committee had with an Online Streaming/Gifting company known as ***Subsplash***. It became too expensive for the few members using it, so the Evangelism Board has requested cancellation. I have been working on that cancellation process. After June 1, 2023, our church services will no longer stream to the Church App. It also means that any who were making use of the Gifting part of the app will no longer be able to submit contributions to St. John's using the app. Those that have been using this "Gifting" method will be contacted. We have found that many members have just used their own bank's ***"Bill Pay"*** option to set up regular offerings to St. John's. Call your bank if you have questions about making contributions in this way.

Our recommendation concerning ***streaming*** is to watch our streamed services directly on our St. John's YouTube Channel: [***bit.ly/SJyoutube***](https://bit.ly/SJyoutube) Don't hesitate to hit **"Subscribe"**. There is no cost. It only means that you will get a notification when we add a new service to our channel.

We generally stream the 8:00 am Sunday services plus the first service time of any mid-week services. Although they are available for watching during the "streamed" time, the services become available to watch shortly after each service is over for people who like to watch at their convenience. Our online services have been increasing in viewers—many from outside the New Ulm area – Praise the Lord! It is a nice way to stay connected to Jesus when you physically can't get to church. Please fill out a **Quick Response Survey** online to let us know how we are doing and leave a comment. Go to: [***https://bit.ly/SJRecord-Stream***](https://bit.ly/SJRecord-Stream) We are always striving to improve our streaming services.

Respectfully submitted,
Jim Dretske

Archives

Bulletin Gleanings from St. John's Archives - 1966

Construction on the superstructure moved worship from the basement church to the college auditorium. Monthly meetings (and even an occasional wedding) was held in the new parsonage. The following snapshot, by means of bulletin announcements, may help to understand the time in which our Lord gave us our current church building.

May 1, 1966

JUBILATE - THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

NOTE: Due to the difficulty in maintaining regularly scheduled rehearsals and other problems connected with our move to temporary worship quarters (*DMLC*), St. John's choir will disband until September. Prof. Backer will be in charge again until next fall. At this time we wish to thank Miss Janet Griebing for directing this year.

BUILDING FOR HIS HABITATION

Building receipts now total: \$36,332... All stone, laminated rafters, roof decking, steel, etc. has been stockpiled around the church.... Again, due to the unsettled weather conditions, the contractor has not begun actual construction.... The pews and finish hardware have been ordered.... Chancel furnishings will soon be designed for us.

ATTENDANCE (*for April 24th*)

221 (8:30) and 384 (10 AM) Total 605

MISCELLANEOUS We are cordially invited to the following activities at D.M.L.C.: The Annual Science Fair will be held in there auditorium this afternoon at 1:00 The children's play: "Little Red Shoes" will be presented on Wednesday evening. Admission: Adults - 50c Children - 25c. On Friday, the renowned Dr. Ernest Schwiebert, now of the State University of Iowa, will lecture* on the topic: "The Reformation and Theological Education at Wittenberg." Dr. Schwiebert has made a thorough study of Wittenberg at Luther's time. We are sure you will hear something very well worth your while...Next Sunday, you will have the opportunity to hear the large group, all-girl chorus, the Aeolians, the all-male chorus, the Marluts and the band in their Spring Secular Concert... Our "Mission" offerings to date amount to \$2,520.

**this was a Lyceum Lecture*

Sunday, May 8, 1966

The Dr. Martin Luther High School Senior Class play: "A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court" will be presented next Saturday and Sunday at 8:00 p.m. in the auditorium. Student tickets are 50c; Adults \$1.00; Reserved Seats \$1.25.

Sunday, June 5, 1966

Most preliminary work on the church has now been finished. The contractor began laying new stone; the entryway stairway is ready to be poured; the roof trusses will be erected this coming week; footings and foundation for the north entryway steps and ramp have been completed.

Sunday, June 12, 1966



Erection of the arches (roof trusses) began on Thursday. You will now have an idea of how high the church will be.

Picture on left: Laminated beams prior to the June 19th Cornestone Laying.

After the service at the college next Sunday, the congregation will be directed to form a car caravan to the building site. Part of Washington Street will be blocked off for our use. The (*corner*)stone will be placed on the northwest corner of the church... All members are urged to attend the pot-luck picnic at the college grounds at noon. Bring your picnic lunch, including coffee, etc. and your own dishes. Soft drinks and ice cream will again be given to the grade school and pre-school children. Adults may also purchase these.

Respectfully Submitted,
Pastor W.A. Laitinen
St. John's Archivist

