



# The Informer

May 2025

St. John's Lutheran Church

Volume 66 Issue 9

## From Pastor's Pen:



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See The Informer  
IN COLOR  
On Our Website

*"As for you, continue in what you have learned and firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it, and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus."  
2 Timothy 3:14-15*

Dear friends in Christ,

This month we will again celebrate the Church's high feast of "Mother's Day" [just kidding]. Yet even though it is just another commercialized secular observance it is good, right and salutary that we use it as an opportunity to remember, and give thanks for, God's gift of mothers.

President George Washington said, "The greatest teacher I ever had was my mother." This is an observation with which most of us would probably agree. Mothers play such a vital role in shaping our character and faith. Not only do they impact their children but they also impact their grandchildren because of the wisdom and truths that they pass on.

The apostle Paul wrote to young Pastor Timothy about the impact his mother and grandmother had on his life, saying, *"I am reminded of your sincere faith; a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well."* (2 Timothy 1:5)

This demonstrates to us just how important the women who are the heart and soul of our homes and families are for us in faith formation and our life in Christ. For Timothy, it started with his grandmother, Lois, went to his mother, Eunice, and next to him. And who knows how many lives were impacted by the faith those women passed onto him and the way they made him acquainted with the sacred scriptures.

If you're a mom, maybe you sometimes feel overwhelmed. Perhaps you wonder if you are doing, or have done, your job well. Especially when your children do not seem to share your faith and values, you may wonder if you have failed. I encourage you to remember, however, that your children are always a work in progress. Just keep praying for them and never give up, in the way because the impact you have on them is greater than you may realize.

Consider St. Monica whose life had been made difficult by her husband's debauchery. Sadly, her son, Augustine, followed in his father's footsteps. He was an unbelieving academic who was well known for his loose and wasteful living. Legend has it that Monica wept over her son every night. After many years of prayer for Augustine, the influence of his pious mother's teaching and example, won him over. He was brought to faith and became the Bishop of Hippo, and a prolific confessor of our Christian faith. In his Confessions Augustine wrote extensively of his mother's pious and prayerful life that she had dedicated to the reformation of her son. I encourage all mothers to remember, and be encouraged by, the wisdom of Proverbs 22:6: *"Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it."* You, dear mothers, rejoice and give thanks for this most noble and important vocation that the Lord has entrusted to you.

All children, I call upon you to remember the blessings that your mother has brought into your life. Through painful childbirth, sleepless nights, and many shed tears she has sacrificed so many things in her life for you. If your mother is a Christian, she has likely dedicated herself to raising you up in the reverence and admonition of the Lord, so that the faith that dwells in her might dwell in you also.

Take time, not only on the second Sunday of May, but always, to show your appreciation for mom. Let her know that you love and honor her as a precious gift from God. And give thanks to the Lord who has provided this special woman to care for you.

In Christ's love,

*Pastor Umbarger*

## Deaconess' Desk

Happy Easter! Christ is Risen!

When thinking about Lutheran hymnody, our minds often jump directly to Martin Luther himself and with good reason. Luther was not only a remarkable theologian, he was a gifted hymn writer and we have many of his hymns passed on to us in our hymnals. There is however, another prolific Lutheran hymnist who I would like to focus on this month.

Paul Gerhardt, born in Saxony, Germany, in 1607 was no stranger to conflict and holding to confessional steadfastness through trial and danger. He was familiar with political turmoil within the church and state from the time he was young as his mother's father, Pastor Kaspar Starke, had held fast to the Book of Concord in the face of political pressures from territorial rulers, ultimately leading to the banishment of his family from house and home.

Gerhardt began his schooling in Saxony and by 1627, he had graduated from the Royal Academy at Grimma. He would continue his studies at the University of Wittenberg where he would be mentored by professors who held fast to the Lutheran Confessions and helped him refine his education in literature, theology, poetry, and hymnody.

By this time, the Thirty Years' War (1618-48) was raging in Germany and Gerhardt's hometown was not spared. His family home, church, and community were destroyed in the war, prompting Gerhardt to remain in Wittenberg until 1642 when he left for Berlin. In Berlin, he made his living as a tutor and began to make a reputation for himself as a skilled poet and hymn writer. During this time, he befriended Johann Crüger, cantor of St. Nikolai Church, who embraced Gerhardt's poetry and set the texts to music. In 1647, Crüger issued these hymns in a volume titled *Praxis Pietatis Melica* ("Musical Practice of Piety"). This was the beginning of a great legacy for both Gerhardt and Crüger.

After the Thirty Years' War, Gerhardt was called to a parish south of Berlin. Here he married Anna Maria Barthold and served as provost and superintendent of surrounding parishes. He continued to write hymns and poems, many of which were written during times of great tragedy, confessional crisis, and personal loss. He returned to Berlin in 1657 only to be faced with an imperial decree to disavow his Lutheran confessional heritage. When he refused, he was dismissed from his parish in 1666. He took his last call to a parish in Lübben following the deaths of his wife and four of his five children. Here he remained a faithful pastor until his death on May 27, 1676. Upon his death, a portrait of him was hung in his parish church with the words, "Paul Gerhardt, a theologian sifted in Satan's sieve, and afterward found faithful".

The *Lutheran Service Book* contains 17 of Gerhardt's 134 hymns:

**334** O Lord, How Shall I Meet You  
**360** All My Heart Again Rejoices  
**372** O Jesus Christ, Thy Manger Is  
**375** Come, Your Hearts and Voices Raising  
**438** A Lamb Goes Uncomplaining Forth  
**453** Upon the Cross Extended  
**467** Awake, My Heart, With Gladness  
**596** All Christians Who Have Been Baptized

**683** Jesus, Thy Boundless Love to Me  
**724** If God Himself Be For Me  
**726** Evening and Morning  
**737** Rejoice, My Heart, Be Glad and Sing  
**754** Entrust Your Days and Burdens  
**756** Why Should Cross and Trial Grieve Me  
**880** Now Rest Beneath Night's Shadow  
**977** I Will Sing my Maker's Praises

Translation: **449-50** O Sacred Head, Now Wounded

## Serving the Lord This Month:

### Ushers

**Sat, May 3:** Greg Burke, Todd Miller,  
Rick Newlon, & Larry Ripka  
**Sun, May 4:** Jeff Belan  
**Sat, May 10:** Greg Burke, Todd Miller,  
Rick Newlon, & Larry Ripka  
**Sun, May 11:** Jeff Belan  
**Sat, May 17:** Greg Burke, Todd Miller,  
Rick Newlon, & Larry Ripka  
**Sun, May 18:** Jeff Belan  
**Sat, May 24:** Greg Burke, Todd Miller,  
Rick Newlon, & Larry Ripka  
**Sun, May 25- Ascension:** Jeff Belan

### Greeters

**Sat, May 3:** Chuck Brokaw  
**Sun, May 4:** Bill & Donna Green  
**Sat, May 10:** Chuck Brokaw  
**Sun, May 11:** Brent Antolik & family  
**Sat, May 17:** Chuck Brokaw  
**Sun, May 18:**  
**Sat, May 24:** Chuck Brokaw  
**Sun, May 25:**



### Acolytes

**May 4:** Briella Churchill  
**May 11:** Joel Duffy  
**May 18:** Johnny Kjera  
**May 25:** Nathan Duffy



### Communion Assistants

**May 4:** Brian & Jonathan  
**May 18:** Glen & Kevin  
**May 25-Ascension:** Ralph & Jim

### Altar Guild

Kathy Ahrens & Rebecca Hinman

### Eternal Candle

**May 4:** Bill and Donna Green, in honor of their anniversary  
**May 11:** Evan & Dawn Antolik, in celebration of Allison's graduation  
**May 18:** OPEN  
**May 25:** in honor of Tanner McNally's baptismal birthday



### Flowers

**May 4:** Janet Wachs, in memory of Ed  
**May 11:** in memory of Chuck and Robyn Hanna  
**May 18:** Susan Bowman and Nancy Davis  
**May 25:** Larry & Sharon Ripka



## Church News

### Birthdays

**May 1** – Jameson Nitz, Sharron Ripka & Owen Weakley, Jr  
**May 2** – Hans VanRycke  
**May 4** – Nancy Bonow  
**May 6** – Alex Verschoore  
**May 7** – John Davis  
**May 8** – Nico Stone  
**May 11** – Nicholas Kjera  
**May 12** – Pastor Umbarger  
**May 13** – Palmer Beale & Rachel Duffy  
**May 14** – Mark Grotelueschen  
**May 16** – Bob Scheer  
**May 18** – Katherine Kirby & Kristian Umbarger  
**May 19** – Hailee Fischer, Kathy Herron & Barbara Honert  
**May 21** – Lindsey Rowe  
**May 23** – Grant McManus  
**May 25** – Kris McAnally & Patsy Mills  
**May 26** – Brandon Descamps  
**May 28** – Steven Bailey, David Busch, Keith Foehrkolb, & Kimberly Medina  
**May 30** – Bill Johnson Jr.  
**May 31** – Adam Hess



### Weekly Attendance & Offerings

DATE	THIS YEAR	LAST YEAR
3/30/25	131	229-Easter
4/06/25	150	126
4/13/25	168	146
4/20/25	214-Easter	157

Average monthly attendance of St. John's membership: 34%

### Membership Report

#### Address Updates:

Mary Ann Eckert is now in room 108

Kathy McDowell  
 1700 Hospital Rd #124  
 Silvis, IL 61282

Carole Hodshire  
 Silvis Center  
 1455 Hospital Rd #137  
 Silvis, IL 61282

Judith Murphy  
 190 Beacon Harbor Circle  
 East Moline, IL 61244

### Special Voters Meeting

Please join us on Sunday, May 4th after service for a special meeting to discuss bids on having some work done on the parking lot. We will meet approximately 10:15am in the Janssen rooms (with coffee and donuts) to hear from the Board of Trustees about the work that needs done and the proposed costs.

## Church News

### Mother Daughter Facials

Join Jill Schofield and her daughters for a FREE Mary Kay mother daughter facial on Sunday, May 4th at 2pm at church.

Please RSVP to Jill at 309-721-1646.

(\*Must not already have a Mary Kay consultant)

### Thank you to everyone that purchased an Easter Lily!

Nancy Davis	In memory of Marilyn & Sam Kupresin	1
Susan Bowman & Nancy Davis	In Memory of Don Davis & family	1
Carol Krouth		1
Christina Sinrer	In Memory of Norman Sihrar & Christa Sihrer	4
Janet Wachs	In Memory of Ed Wachs	1
Carole Vrbanc	In Memory of Jane Hill & Jerry Hill	1
Norm & Orene Antolik	In Memory of Loved Ones	1
Margie Schaefer		1
Nancy Williams		1
Chuck & Bev Brokaw	In Memory of Michael & our sisters	1
Jonathan Schmidt		3
Belan Family	In Memory of Ed Belan	1
Kathy Herron	In Memory of Loved Ones	1
Lynne Suess	In Memory of Roy Suess & Chase Weeks	1
Flo Moore	In Memory of Loved Ones	1
Ron & Peg Heitzman	In Memory of Loving Parents	1
Troy & Val McDonald	In Memory of Loved Ones	1
Dennis & Lois Kelly		1
Lucille Perley	Hallelujah	2
Judy Dugan	In Memory of Loved Ones	1
Brian & Christine Engebrecht	In Memory of our Dads	2
Peggy Murphy	In memory of Tammy Root	1
Kevin & Kris McNally		1
Sharon DeWulf	In Memory of my Mother Betty & husband Dick	1
Joyce Hoffman	In Memory of beloved family	1
Dennis & Marsha Boarts	In Memory of Jim & Fern Hanna	1
	Frank & Martha Boarts	2
Kent Umbarger	In Memory of Judi Umbarger	1
Todd & Jeri Miller	In Memory of Doris Byles	1
	Ann & George Miller	2





## Church News

### Calling all graduates!



If your child is graduating from high school or college this spring, please let the office know so we can recognize them! We need names, pictures, school graduating from, and the date of the ceremony. Feel free to include additional information such as: the college your grad plans to attend in the fall, majors/ minors, sports played, awards/ honors, etc.!

### 2nd Friday Fellowship

Join us on Friday, May 9th for fun and games with your church friends! We meet in the activities room at 6:30pm.

### Activities Room

The craft activity for May is painting landscape brick owls. Join us on Monday, May 19th at 1:30pm. This will be a free activity, but we do ask that you sign up so we can make sure to have enough supplies.

### Ladies Luncheon

All ladies of St. John's are invited to lunch at the Deerfield Family restaurant on Thursday, May 15th. Please join us at 11:30am– the more the merrier!



### COME JOIN NORMA AND RALPH'S 60<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION



There will be a sandwich and cake reception in St. John's gym on **June 22<sup>nd</sup> 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.** in celebration of Norma and Ralph Grotelueschen's 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

If you wish to attend, please sign the sheet on the table in the concourse so we can have adequate food.

Your presence will be our gift.

## Church News



**LWML - Lutheran Women's Missionary League** is an auxiliary of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. All ladies are welcome!

**The next meeting will be Thursday, May 15 at 1:00 pm in the Janssen rooms.**  
We will be helping with preparations for VBS .

*This month we are spotlighting two of the organizations receiving national LWML grants.*

### **2023–2025 Mission Grant No. 13**

#### **WATER AND THE WORD**

**Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenya | \$80,000**

LWML Mission Grant #13, Water and the Word, for \$80,000, will assist the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenya to provide clean water and pastoral care to students in 12 rural elementary and middle schools. About 10,000 lives will be impacted by this grant. The grant will also help cover the travel expense for pastors to travel to the schools every three to four months to check on the water systems and provide pastoral care.

To learn more, visit [www.lwml.org/2023-2025-mission-grant-13](http://www.lwml.org/2023-2025-mission-grant-13).

### **2023–2025 Mission Grant No. 14**

#### **ENHANCEMENT OF DEAF MINISTRY AND OUTREACH**

**Ephphatha Lutheran Mission Society | \$47,000**

Ephphatha Lutheran Mission Society (ELMS) shares the Gospel with the deaf and hard of hearing. It is estimated that 95% of people using American Sign Language (ASL) are unchurched. LWML Mission Grant No. 14 supports the expansion of the Church Interpreter Training Academy that is administered by ELMS. They will increase the number of training sites with the goal of training 100 new interpreters. This grant also supports the ASL translation of three *LSB* Divine Services and Matins.

To learn more, visit [www.lwml.org/2023-2025-mission-grant-14](http://www.lwml.org/2023-2025-mission-grant-14).

## From the CID

LCMS Stewardship Ministry – [lcms.org/stewardship](https://lcms.org/stewardship)

Newsletter Article – April 2025

### **‘By the Mercies of God’**

*I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. (Rom. 12:1)*

These words from Romans 12:1–2 set stewardship in its rightful place. Here, St. Paul shows us stewardship in its proper relationship to the Lord, and what stewardship should look like in our faithful service to Him. These are good words for the faithful steward to consider on a regular basis.

Notice from whence comes the appeal! The mercies of God are the defining factor, shaping both the steward and all subsequent actions. It all begins with the mercies of God. This beginning is not some esoteric, philosophical consideration either. The mercies of God, poured out upon the faithful steward, find one anchor point in human history. The mercies of God are on full display at the cross.

On Calvary, our Lord Himself, bearing human vesture and carrying our sins and griefs, lowered His holy, crown-encircled brow. But Christ's death on the cross should not be taken as a sign of defeat. Rather, by the mercies of God, Christ's death grants fallen sinner/stewards like us new life! We trace this journey each year through the season of Lent and Easter. Amid the bloody sweat of Gethsemane, the injustice of the kangaroo court in Jerusalem, the ruthless and spineless acquiescence of Pilate, and the gore of Golgotha, we see exactly what the mercies of God look like.

Everything Jesus endured should have been ours. When Jesus is forgiving and promising paradise even as He is being forsaken for us, we see true mercy! This mercy is what redefines who we are, a redefinition which happens when we are baptized. Once dead and deserving of condemnation, in Baptism we are given new life in Christ. This new life in Christ changes how we see ourselves. It also changes how we see the world.

By viewing ourselves and the world in this new way, we can start to live out St. Paul's oxymoronic call to be "living sacrifices." We know from the Old Testament that sacrifice means something dies. The bulls and goats, lambs and rams came at a high price. In the waters of Holy Baptism, something also dies — the old Adam. In our Baptism, we have already died and have been raised. This is how the mercy of God works on us. In the dying and rising, we can be a daily sacrifice that has been made holy and acceptable to God. This is not by our action, but by His!

Paul talks about this as our "spiritual worship." The Greek word here is *leitourgos*, which is where we get the word "liturgy." It is this view of the mercies of God that forms our daily stewardship, and our daily worship. The mercies of God define all you do in the course of a week as a steward of the Gospel worship. It is not limited to the Divine Service. In fact, the mercies you receive in the Divine Service are what you carry out to share with the world as your living sacrifice. After spending time with Jesus, you bear His image and His glow out into the world that is full of darkness and death. You have been made holy and acceptable to Him for the purpose of showing His mercy to others. This is what makes our "daily liturgy" so important. As we live and serve, and as we seek and share forgiveness and life with those around us, we are walking billboards of God's mercy in Christ.

This is what your stewardship puts on display. None of it is about you. It is about Jesus in and through you. You can't get to this by your own efforts. It is only about the mercies of God. These mercies are the treasure that you steward in your daily life of worship!



## From the CID

### The Camp CILCA Lowdown

May, 2025

217-487-7497 / [camp@cilca.org](mailto:camp@cilca.org)



### SAVE THE DATE:

- **Young Adult Night:** May 3 at 3pm

21 or older? Come join us for an afternoon/ evening of fellowship and pizza.

- **C.I.D. Campout:** May 23-26

Spend your Memorial Day Weekend at Camp CILCA. Bring a tent, camper, or RV. Swimming on Saturday and Sunday 1-4 p.m. No Hog Roast on Sunday.

**Camp CILCA exists to strengthen and foster faith in Jesus Christ and relationships with others in a unique outdoor setting.**

*2025 marks 75 years of outdoor ministry! To celebrate this blessed anniversary, Camp CILCA will be offering every week of camp to all campers for just \$75! Registration is open so sign up early to secure your spot.*



### CID CHURCH EXTENSION FUND

The Mission of the LCMS Central Illinois District Church Extension Fund (CID-CEF) is to aid The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS) congregations, schools, and agencies of the LCMS Central Illinois District (CID) in building and expanding their facilities and ministries for the growth of God's Kingdom.

### PRAYERS

**Pray For Our Central Illinois District Missions supported by your church's Mission Dollars to the District.**

**"Finally, brothers, pray for us, that the Word of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored."** Please remember in your prayers Immanuel Lutheran Chapel, a new church started by Immanuel Lutheran Church, Springfield. Pastor Adam Rouse serves both Immanuel Church on Springfield's northeast side and the chapel on the northwest side at the CID office.

## From the CID

### ITEMS OF INTEREST

#### Mission Education Toolkit - Part 2

With the District's next convention on the horizon, July 13-15, an opportunity lies at hand for members of CID congregations to become informed concerning the District's mission program now and into the future. For your help, "Mission Education Toolkit - Part 2" is now available on the CID website at <https://www.cidlcms.org/ministry-stewardship.html>. Find links there to the entire Mission Commission convention report, plus a couple of documents shared at recent Circuit events about prospects for mission work here in central Illinois.

#### *CID Board of Directors Review Report - 3/18/25*

Rev. Mark Eddy called the meeting to order. Rev. Mike Burdick gave the opening devotion on Psalm 90, reminding us that the Lord is our dwelling place.

Pastor Adam Rouse led a mission Presentation regarding Immanuel Lutheran Chapel, Springfield. Pastor Rouse gave a history of Immanuel Lutheran Church and Chapel and the current work and teaching on evangelism and outreach studies. Pastor Rouse is hopeful and heartened about where Immanuel Lutheran Chapel is headed.

One-third of CID congregations have registered their delegates to the 2025 District Convention. Please check if your congregation has registered its delegates. Nominations for District President are due by May 18. Thanks to all who have filled out Witness Slips for HB 2827, "The Home-school Act." All LCMS Illinois District Presidents signed a letter explaining this bill's adverse effects on our LCMS Schools in Illinois. Because the State legislature has amended the bill, Witness Slips need to be filled out again. The Small Church Summit on June 7<sup>th</sup> is at Trinity, Taylorville. Every congregation should receive Witnessing Helps posters to aid in teaching Christian witnessing and practicing Christian witnessing.

CID BOD approved funding for CUEnet training for a student interested in future deaf ministry in CID. Trinity, Stewardson's revised constitution was approved. CID 2026 Compensation Guidelines were approved to include church worker sabbaticals. Sabbaticals are not merely to be "time off," but rather a period of reflection and renewal to encourage and motivate church workers in their vocation.

The next CID Board of Directors meeting is set for May 20, 2025, at 9:00am.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
27	28	29	30	1	2	3
				5:30pm - Call Committee Mtg 6:30pm - Board Meetings		8am - Men's Bible Study 9:30am - Choir Rehearsal 5pm - Worship w/ 6pm - Youth Lock-up
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
9am - Worship w/ 10:15am - Bible Study / 10:15am - Special Voter's 2pm - Mother Daughter	1pm - Staff Meeting 1:30pm - Activities Room 6:30pm - Heavenly Ringers	10am - Food Pantry 6:30pm - Guitar Jam	9am - TOPS 10am - Women's Bible Study 1:30pm - Activities Room		6:30pm - 2nd Friday	8am - Men's Bible Study 9:30am - Choir Rehearsal 11am - Homann Graduation 5pm - Worship
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
9am - Worship 10:15am - Bible Study /	1pm - Staff Meeting 1:30pm - Activities Room 6:30pm - Heavenly Ringers	10am - Food Pantry 6:30pm - Guitar Jam	9am - TOPS 10am - Women's Bible Study 1:30pm - Activities Room 3:30pm - Fellowship	11:30am - Ladies Luncheon 1pm - LWMIL		8am - Men's Bible Study 9:30am - Choir Rehearsal 11:30am - Home school 5pm - Worship
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
9am - Worship w/ 10:15am - Bible Study /	Informer Deadline 1pm - Staff Meeting 1:30pm - Activities Room and	10am - Food Pantry 6:30pm - Guitar Jam	9am - TOPS 10am - Women's Bible Study 1:30pm - Activities Room			8am - Men's Bible Study 9:30am - Choir Rehearsal 5pm - Worship
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
9am - Worship 10:15am - Bible Study /	1pm - Staff Meeting 1:30pm - Activities Room	10am - Food Pantry 6:30pm - Guitar Jam	9am - TOPS 10am - Women's Bible Study 1:30pm - Activities Room			8am - Men's Bible Study 9:30am - Choir Rehearsal 5pm - Worship



## St. John's Lutheran Church

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We're On the Web!!  
[www.stjohnsem.org](http://www.stjohnsem.org)

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*Walking in the Light of Christ!*



IN HONOR OF OUR HEROES

### Worship Schedule:

Saturday worship— 5:00pm

Sunday worship- 9:00am

10:15am— Sunday School  
& Bible Study

### Office Hours:

Monday – Wednesday 8:30am-2:00pm

Thursday 8:30 am– noon



*Inside our Sanctuary.*