

# St. John's Newsletter – Summer 2012

Phone: 320-392-5572 – Email: hancocklutheran@gmail.com – Website: HancockLutheran.org

## From His Word ...

“Our Father who art in heaven.” How astounding are those first two words Jesus used in the model prayer he taught us! As dear children going to their dear father we approach the holy, almighty God, who reigns over all from heaven above. We bring our prayers to him with the same expectation and confidence of a child asking his or her own father.

We see this in David as he prays: “In the morning, O LORD, you hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before you and wait in expectation” (Psalm 5:3 NIV84).

Who is this God whom we call Father? David describes him, “You are not a God who takes pleasure in evil ... you hate all who do wrong” (Psalm 5:4, 5 NIV84).

Have you ever done wrong? I have. David did. In fact, I still do wrong. I still sin, even though I don't want to. Does God hate me? He hates all who do wrong. Doesn't that include me? How could we ever approach such a holy God, much less call him Father?

David writes, “But I, by your great mercy, will come into your house.” (Psalm 5:7 NIV84). Can you wrap your mind around that contrast? The same God who hates sinners has mercy on sinners. How amazing his mercy is!

If we try to explain away his hatred of all who do wrong, we rob his mercy of its greatness.

Some try to say that God only hates the really bad sinners like child-molesters and mass murderers. But God's law, which condemns murderers and molesters, also condemns every desire in our hearts that fails

to be content and instead covets what God hasn't given us. Each sinful desire we have groups everyone of us with all who do wrong.

Others try to explain the contrast between God's hatred and mercy by saying that God hates the sin but loves the sinner. But God's law condemns the sinner, not just the sin. Psalm 5 says God not only hates the wrong but also the person who does it.

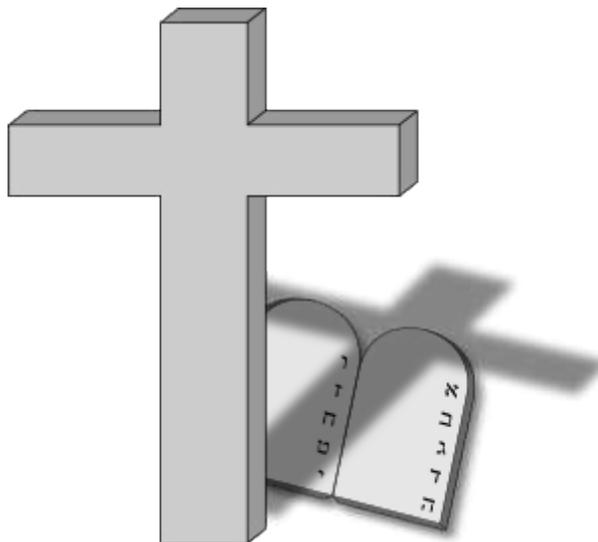
So how can God hate the sinner and also love the same sinner? Look at Christ's cross. See Jesus, the Son of God, who became one of us. Although he had no sin of his own, he became our sin. He took the place of each and every person who has done wrong. When

Jesus hung on the cross, God saw him as you, me, and everyone else who has done wrong. And he unleashed against his own Son the just hatred we have rightly earned.

What love and mercy that punished his Son instead of us! What grace that freely credits Jesus' holy, righteous record to sinners! Through faith in Jesus you are forgiven.

Faith clothes us with Jesus' righteousness. Although we are still sinners, God does not count you or me among those who do wrong but calls us righteous, as long as our faith trusts that Jesus has fully paid for all the wrong we've done. Because of Jesus we gladly approach the holy God as our dear Father. For just as Jesus took our place on the cross, so also when we come to the Father in prayer, God sees his Son.

So dear Christian, pray like David with that child-like expectation. Through faith in Jesus you are righteous in God's sight. Count on his blessing. “For surely, O LORD, you bless the righteous; you surround them with your favor as with a shield” (Psalm 5:12 NIV84). Read Psalm 5.



# Vacation Bible School

This summer the Olympics are coming not only to London but also to St. John's. The Vacation Bible School theme is *Team Jesus*. We'll host the games Monday, July 23, to Friday, July 27, from 10:00 a.m. to noon. Children ages three to those entering sixth grade are invited to attend. All families and members are invited to the closing ceremonies starting at 11:30 a.m. on Friday, July 27. Come hear the children share in word and song what they have learned.

Jesus has won the crown of eternal life for us. He gives us his victory. Let's run the race as we follow him so that we don't lose the prize he's earned for us. Think of the strenuous training an athlete goes through for a chance to gain an earthly prize that won't last. How much more so don't we control our body and train our soul for the eternal prize that Jesus has guaranteed to all who continue in the faith. (1 Corinthians 9:24-27; 1 Corinthians 15:57, 58).

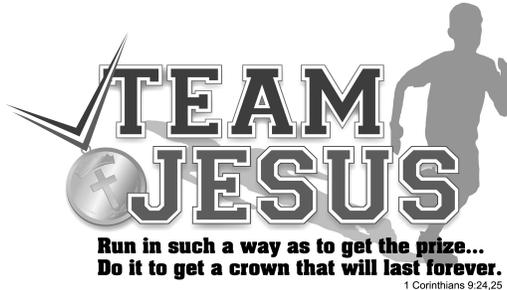
## Generations

The VBS staff invites the older generation in our congregation to share some time with the children. You are invited not only to the closing service at 11:30 a.m. on Friday, July 27, but also to come early that day to spend some time doing a craft, helping with a lesson, or sharing your experience with the children. More details will come, but think about keeping that Friday morning open.

## VBS Help

We're looking for volunteers to work with the children at VBS helping them to learn their

lessons, to do their activities, and to do their crafts. You don't need experience and anyone too old for VBS (those going into 7th grade and up) are not too young to be a helper. Even if you can only help part of the time, your help is appreciated. Let Pastor Bitter or Bridget Joos know when you are available.



## Parade Float

Bridget Joos volunteered to coordinate the float again this year. But she needs volunteers to ride/walk with the float. If you're able to do so, give Bridget a call (320-392-7426) by Wednesday, July 4. That's when we'll decide whether the float is workable this year or not. The parade theme is "Remembering Past, Present and Future Owls." Thanks for considering helping out.

## National Service

For our regular Sunday service at 9:00 a.m. on July 8, we will give thanks to God for our nation and the freedoms he has blessed us with. We'll follow a special order of service.

## Outdoor Service

We're planning a joint outdoor service with St. Paul's of Morris at Pomme de Terre Park on Sunday, July 29, at 10:30 a.m. Bring some lawn chairs or sit at a picnic table. After the service we'll have a potluck picnic, so bring a dish to pass.

## Fair Booth

For communities like ours, a fair booth let's people know that we are still here as a congregation, ready to serve and reaching out to those who still need to hear about Jesus.

So again this year, we plan to share a fair booth with St. Paul's at the Stevens County Fair Wednesday, August 8, to Sunday, August 12. Between St. Paul's and us, we are to be at the booth for 32 hours. Many of you are very busy during fair time, but even if you can reserve just an hour or two to help out at your church's booth, that adds up quickly.

## Youth Room

Bridget Joos has been working on plans for the youth group room and would like your help and feedback in making it all come together before VBS on July 23. Check out the display board in the narthex to see the layout and the accessories that are planned. Take a peak downstairs to see the work in progress. Let Bridget know what you think or if you have suggestions. How could you help out? Here are some ideas:

- Donations of furnishings: chairs or storage cabinet (Contact Bridget for more information on what they're looking for.)
- Volunteer to help build the benches. (Contact Bridget for more details.)
- Donations of money toward supplies and furnishings.

If you have any questions, please talk with Bridget (320) 392-7426.

## District Convention

On June 12-14 Duane Hausmann and Pastor Bitter attended the Minnesota District Convention in New Ulm. During a convention there's worship, discussion, resolutions, Bible study, devotions, fellowship, reports, and elections. Duane has made some of the information on choosing a Bible translation available in the narthex. Short reports about the convention will be included in the bulletins in the weeks ahead.

## Marriage Amendment

The District Convention also discussed the proposed marriage amendment to the Minnesota state constitution that will be on the November ballot. The WELS refrains from speaking to or intruding on political matters when clear scriptural principles are not at



stake. But the issue of what constitutes a marriage is not only a political/social issue but also a moral/religious issue.

So the convention recognized that the thrust of the 2012 proposed Marriage Amendment (which says: "Shall the Minnesota Constitution be amended to provide that only a union of one man and one woman shall be valid or recognized as a marriage in Minnesota?") is in harmony with clear Scripture, especially as it points to marriage as consisting of "one man and one woman." The complete resolution that the convention adopted will be included in the bulletin on Sunday.

So this November please keep in mind that a **YES** vote means marriage will continue to be defined as a union between one man and one woman. A **NO** vote (or leaving it blank which counts the same as a no vote) leaves the definition of marriage open for the courts to interpret.

## WELS Press Release

MILWAUKEE—June 22, 2012—Rev. Mark G. Schroeder, president of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS), signed an open letter from religious leaders in the United States to all Americans protesting the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' requirement that all health care plans cover contraceptives, as well as abortive drugs and medical procedures.

"While the signers of this letter represent many differing religious beliefs, we do have one thing in common: the recognition that the freedom to practice our religion is one of the most precious blessings enjoyed by all Americans. Those whose ancestors came to this country seeking religious freedom can't remain silent when that freedom is threatened," Schroeder says.

The letter entitled "Free Exercise of Religion: Putting Beliefs into Practice" was written by The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod and approved by the office of the

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. The letter states: "As religious leaders from a variety of perspectives and communities, we are compelled to make known our protest against the incursion of the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) into the realm of religious liberty."

Schroeder says "The Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod holds to the biblical teaching that human life begins at conception and that the unborn are fully human beings, created by God. We are deeply distressed that the government of the United States would require the health care plans of our church-affiliated organizations to provide abortion-inducing drugs or other procedures that would end the life of an unborn child and would require coverage for any other medical treatment that violates our teachings and consciences."

*Note: The open letter has been distributed in your bulletin boxes or you can find online at: <http://www.wels.net/sites/wels/files/Open%20Letter-Religious%20Freedom-FINAL.pdf>*

## **St. John's Trivia Question**

Music is an important part of our congregational life and worship. When did St. John's get its first organ?

Last issue's question: When were the minutes for the annual voters' meeting first taken in English?

Answer: The annual meeting on January 7, 1929, had the minutes recorded in English by secretary H. A. Steinbring. At that meeting three men were accepted as voting members, elections were held, and a combined envelope system for the offering was adopted.

# Financial Deficit

As June comes to a close, the General Fund of the congregation is (-\$2520.81) in debt. From January through March the General Fund offering averaged \$6072 per month. From April through June the average fell to \$5180 per month. If we had received the same average for the last three months as for January through

March, there would be no deficit.

As the summer months continue, please do not forget the needs of your church. The same bills come in whether the church is full or nearly empty. Yet we know that our heavenly Father will take care of us. See how he even gave up his Son for us. What amazing grace and love!

## Ushers:

(List of duties are posted in the narthex. The captain is responsible to make sure that two members of his team will be present to usher.)

### July

Doug Nelson (capt.)  
John Jepma  
Dave Joos  
Seth Nelson  
Delroy Thielke

### August

Dick Lubenow (capt.)  
Jason Brown  
Barry Nelson  
Dennis Schroeder  
Cory Schroeder

### September

Duane Hausmann (capt.)  
Tom Mohr  
Harvey Flaten  
Scott Boettcher

## Church cleaning:

(List of duties are posted in the narthex.)

### July

Duane & Bonnie Hausmann  
Dennis & Karen Schroeder

### August

Dave & Phyllis Joos  
Gerald & Karen Hoffman

### September

John & Tawnia Jepma  
Jason & Amy Brown

## Greeters:

(Please be at church 15 minutes before service to hand out bulletins and greet. If you cannot make your Sunday, please exchange with someone.)

### July

8 -- Sam Roth  
15 -- Kerry & Mona Roth  
22 -- Dennis & Karen Shroeder  
29 -- Outdoor Service

### August

5 -- Dick & Polly Smith  
12 -- Don and Janet Spencer  
19 -- Delroy and Jane Thielke  
26 -- Scot Zeltwanger

### September

2 -- Kevin & Gloria Zeltwanger  
9 -- Allowese Becker  
16 -- Mary Bitter  
23 -- Scott & Shannon Boettcher  
30 -- Rachel Gray and Ryan Gray

**St. John's Ev. Lutheran Church -- Hancock, MN  
July 2012**

"I urge ... that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone – for kings and all those in authority" (1 Timothy 2:1 NIV).

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>1 Pentecost 5</b> (green) 9:00am Divine Service and the Lord's Supper	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> 7:00pm Divine Service and the Lord's Supper (same as Jul. 1)	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>8 Pentecost 6</b> (green) 9:00am Divine Service	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> 7:00pm Divine Service (same as Jul. 8)	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>15 Pentecost 7</b> (green) 9:00am Divine Service and the Lord's Supper <b>10:00am Quarterly Voters' Meeting</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b> 7:00pm Divine Service and the Lord's Supper (same as Jul. 16)	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>22 Pentecost 8</b> (green) 9:00am Divine Service	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	Church Cleaners: Duane & Bonnie Hausmann; Dennis & Karen Schroeder	
	<b>Vacation Bible School:</b> 10:00am to Noon, July 23-27 – "Team Jesus"			7:00pm Divine Service (same as Jul. 22)	Ushers: Doug Nelson (capt.), John Jepma, Dave Joos, Seth Nelson	
<b>29 Pentecost 9</b> (green) <b>10:30am Outdoor Service at Pomme de Terre Park</b>  No Wednesday night service on August 1	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>Pastor on Vacation August 1-5</b> <b>Wed., Aug. 1 – No service</b> <b>Sun., Aug. 5 – 10:30am Service</b>		Church Cleaners: Duane & Bonnie Hausmann; Dennis & Karen Schroeder	
			<b>Pastor on Vacation August 1-5</b> <b>Wed., Aug. 1 – No service</b> <b>Sun., Aug. 5 – 10:30am Service</b>		Ushers: Doug Nelson (capt.), John Jepma, Dave Joos, Seth Nelson, Delroy Thielke	
					Nelson, Delroy Thielke	