

The Messenger

January 2023 Edition



A Monthly Newsletter from St. John Lutheran Church and School

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Gather. Grow. Go. To the Glory of God.



Thank God that the answer is a resounding “YES.” In Psalm 107:9, God tells us that:

*He satisfies the thirsty
and fills the hungry with good things.*

Devotional Corner

I'm not satisfied with the way things are going in my life. Can God help me be more fulfilled?

About this time of the year, millions of people make New Year's resolutions. We make them because there's some area of our lives that we'd like to change. We want to stop doing something (overeating, smoking, drinking) and start doing something else (being a better parent, doing a better job at work, living a healthier lifestyle). Can we find satisfaction in keeping our resolutions? Maybe, at least, we can for a while.

Usually, most people end up breaking their resolutions. Then what kind of emotions set in? Frustration: “Oh, I can't believe it is January 5th, and I am already back to my same old unhealthy diet.” Despair: “I am never going to be able to stop doing that (whatever that may be).” Failure: “Why even try? There's no way I will ever be able to do it. I'm a loser.”

There's another problem that causes us to feel a lack of satisfaction and fulfillment in our lives. We can't control things. The storm hits and causes damage to the roof—expensive damage. The interest rates go up and cause that loan to be a little more stressful to pay off. The boss decides that he's going to give the other person the promotion even though you worked harder and did better work. Do we wonder if we can ever find true and lasting satisfaction in this kind of world?

Here's the catch, but it's a good one. The “good things” God gives us aren't the good things we normally are looking for. Certainly, God can give us a good job, the willpower to keep our resolutions, and the good fortune not to have unforeseen accidents come into our lives. However, those things are minor compared to the real “food” that God gives us. God truly satisfies us and gives us fulfillment in life when he shows us, in his Word, that we have a Savior in Jesus.

No job, no relationship, no possession, or no person can give us the satisfaction and fulfillment God offers us in Jesus. In Jesus, we're assured of the forgiveness of our sins. In Jesus, we know that God is our loving Father. In Jesus, we're confident that we'll be in heaven one day because of what he's done for us.

Jesus lived and died for you. He's opened heaven to you. Believe in him and find the peace and fulfillment he wants you to have in this life and in the one to come.

In Christ's Service and Yours!
Pastor Mike Gehl



Worship With Us!

Sundays at 7:45 or 10:15 am

Thursdays at 6:30 pm

1537 Day St. Greenleaf

Sunday School and Bible Classes Sundays at 9:00 am



Today’s Christian Parenting: How can we teach kids to be good friends? Excerpts from a Forward in Christ article

This might sound odd, but I’m usually more concerned about how my kids are doing interpersonally in school than how they are doing academically. Don’t get me wrong. I’m all for reading, writing, and arithmetic, but I think that so much growth in how we navigate relationships takes place in school. These are character-building lessons. Read on to see what pointers two veteran teachers have for us.

— Nicole Balza

“You have a friend in me.” “I’ll be there for you.” “Friends forever.” “Besties.” These quotes about friendship are familiar to many. They quickly make a connection in our brains to a story, people, characters, maybe even a memory. Most adults could quickly rattle off a list of things that define friendship for them. We know what it takes to be a good friend, and we also know that, like every relationship, maintaining those friendships takes effort. Good friends learn from each other, help each other, share, complement each other, and the list goes on.

So how do we help young children learn to be good friends? As with many concepts and skills, teaching friendship is not a one-and-done lesson. It is ongoing. It is an integral part of a young child’s social-emotional development, and it continues to grow and develop as our children do.

My kindergarten students practice these skills frequently in the classroom. We talk about what good friends do. We model and role-play social situations. We discuss what our friends do that make us feel happy and what we can do to make others feel good. This is all part of a bigger process in which we work to cultivate empathy, compassion, and kindness in our children.

When I ask my students to share what they can do to be a good friend, they will often respond with answers like “I can help,” “Check on others if they are hurt,” or “Say kind words.” These ongoing conversations are a key part in teaching our children about friendship.

Of course, as sinners we can never get it right all the time, but as the guardians of Christ’s little lambs, we can keep the conversations going. We can have the discussions, we can read the books, and we can model the love we have in Christ to those around us. In these conversations it’s valuable to help our children understand that it’s so much more than being a friend to those we know, care about, and spend time with. It’s about showing kindness, love, and compassion to all, the way Jesus did. It is because of his immense sacrificial love for us that we are even capable of loving others.

The apostle John wrote, “We love because he first loved us” (1 John 4:19). This goes beyond Jesus being a good example. He is perfect love, and he demonstrated that perfect love, that perfect friendship, by his death on the cross. Through that redemption in Christ Jesus and in the waters of holy Baptism, we are made righteous. Righteous people do righteous things. We are loved, saved, and made new, and as new creations in Christ, we are called and fully equipped to love one another, to be a good friend.

This is the message to share with your little one: We are saved, loved, called, and equipped. In Christ, it’s just who we are. **-Amanda Berg**

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As children look forward to going back to school, they are often thinking about seeing friends again and how exciting it is to talk and play with kids their own age. However, as the year begins and parents ask their children about school and how it’s going, the problems that kids bring up are often related to friendships and conflict with their peers.

As a first-grade teacher, one of the things that I notice is how quickly students “quit” their friendships. One child says or does something that another doesn’t like or agree with and quickly a child declares, “I’m not your friend anymore.”

Knowing that our sinful nature often leads us to avoid or cause conflict and then walk away from people who upset us or make us uncomfortable, we must arm ourselves and our children with the sword of the Spirit,

Upcoming Events



FVL Musicfest- Sunday, February 5th

This annual celebration of student musical talent will feature performances by the FVL Symphonic Band, Jazz Ensemble, FVL Schools Cadet Band & Concert Winds (Middle School), A Cappella Choir, Men's & Women's Choir, Choraliers, individuals, and small groups. Along with entertainment, guests can enjoy fellowship and homemade desserts. Admission is free for all, though freewill donations will be accepted.

As a special feature for 2023, FVL is putting together an alumni band! Mr. Wendland and Mr. Neujahr will be conducting for the special performance. They are asking any interested band alumni to register online by January 10. Music will be mailed to those who are participating. One group rehearsal is planned for Saturday, February 4 from 3:00-4:30 PM. An opportunity to socialize is being planned for after the practice.



Blood Drive- Monday, January 9th

St. John Lutheran Church will be hosting a Red Cross blood drive at the American Legion at 924 Main St. Wrightstown. Volunteers are appreciated to help set up the equipment, run the drive, and take down equipment. Watch for sheets available in the back of church to sign up for a donation time or a volunteering spot, or call the church office to arrange to help.

School Choice Window Opens- Wednesday, February 1st

The annual window for School Choice enrollment will be open from February 1st until April 21st. Parents who wish to enroll their child at St. John Lutheran School can apply for their tuition to be covered through the Wisconsin Parental Choice Program (School Choice) for the upcoming school year.

Students entering preK, kindergarten, or first grade, (or entering ninth grade at FVL) as well as those coming from a public school or homeschooling, are eligible to enroll in the School Choice program. Families of students currently enrolled must also re-submit an application in order to continue their enrollment in the program.

More information, including income cut-offs and application instructions, can be found at www.stjohnwrightstown.com/school-choice or through the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction website at dpi.wi.gov. Parents wishing to enroll their student at St. John can also speak with Mr. Raddatz or Mrs. Stary with any questions or for help with the enrollment process.

Mark Your Calendars!

- January 3rd- Classes Resume
- January 8th- Kindergarten and First Grade Sing in Church
- January 9th- Blood Drive
- January 10th- Fellowship Luncheon
- January 12th- End of 2nd Quarter
- January 16th- Church Voters Meeting
- January 20th- Early Release
- February 1st- School Choice Window Opens
- February 5th- FVL Musicfest
- February 9th and 10th- No School

News Highlights

Apple Valley Food Pantry

The WELS Apple Valley Food Pantry is seeking the following items for January: all canned meats (tuna, chicken, etc.), canned fruit (mandarins, pears, fruit cocktail), boxed helper meals, dish soap, paper towels and facial tissues. Collected items can be dropped off at church. Thank you all for your unwavering support of the pantry! We have been blessed!



Ice Cream Pails Wanted

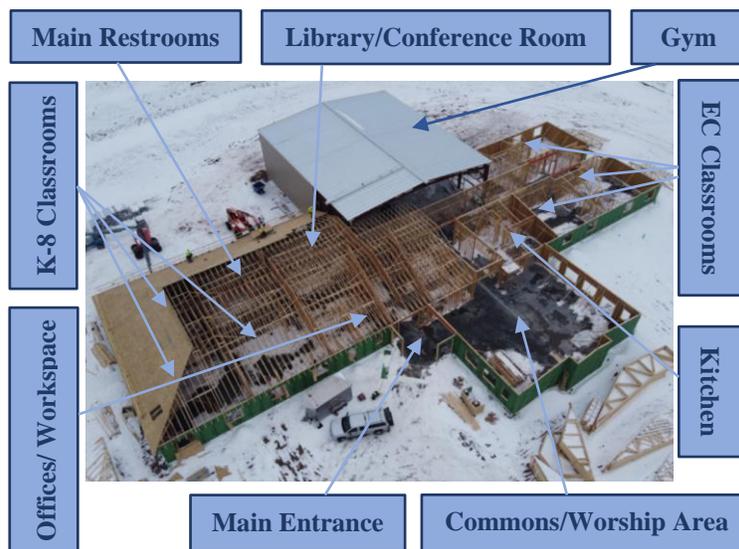
Please save your ice cream pails and covers, bringing them to school or church for a special project led by Karen Geiger and Amy VandeHey.



New Campus Updates

Progress Made on New Campus

Lots of progress has been made on the new campus! Walls are up, roofing is being installed, siding has been started, and Pastor Gehl has been sending up a drone to take pictures of the progress so that we can view everything happening. He has created a Google album that will be updated frequently. Visit stjohnwrightstown.com/bold-steps to reach a link for the album, which you can then join for easy access to the updates.



Church and School Birthdays

Happy birthday to those celebrating during the month of January!

Church Members

Jan 2 Ryan Theunis
Jan 3 Deborah Schaeuble
Jan 4 Ronald Zahn
Jan 4 Jack Zirbel
Jan 6 Kendra Pohlman
Jan 7 Weston Herlache
Jan 7 Faye Patoka
Jan 8 Aura Lee Gehl
Jan 8 Rose Heimmermann
Jan 8 Ronald Laabs
Jan 8 Lance Schroeder
Jan 9 Michaela Bowers
Jan 9 Sara Verheyen
Jan 11 Micah Foelske
Jan 11 Brett Toseland

Jan 12 James Calaway
Jan 12 Stephen Johnson
Jan 12 Amber Schroeder
Jan 12 Chad Schmidt
Jan 17 Henry Ollila
Jan 21 Zaine Gehl
Jan 21 Noah Pennenberg
Jan 22 Brent Ritter
Jan 24 Kristen Kraus
Jan 28 Rodney Kussow
Jan 28 Kane Schmidt
Jan 28 Levi Schmidt
Jan 29 Karen Geiger
Jan 29 Lawsen Leick
Jan 30 Daniel Schmidt
Jan 31 Owen Laabs

School Students

Jan 7- Trenton D.
Jan 14- Luke B.
Jan 16- Levi J.
Jan 29- Lawsen L.



God's Word. With the truth of God's Word and the Holy Spirit working in our hearts, we can love those we disagree with and lean into conflict, working through it.

But how do we begin talking to young children about building friendships? Relationships and conflict are hard for adults as well as children! It's important to begin with discussing the natural state we all share: We are all sinners in need of Jesus our Savior.

That truth means that we should expect conflict in our relationships because the people around us are sometimes going to make poor choices, just like we do. If we expect that everyone we interact with is going to need our forgiveness at times, it does not come as such a surprise when they do. Then we can lean into the conflict with love and forgiveness instead of running away. Colossians 3:13 says, "Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you." We also should be ready to say, "I'm sorry," when we need their forgiveness.

If we practice responding with love and forgiveness instead of meeting sin with sin, our relationships grow and improve. Practicing this with family members is an excellent way to set children up for success with their friends.

A good friend forgives, and a good friend also encourages. First Thessalonians 5:11 says, "Encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing." Teaching and showing our children how to look for ways to encourage those around them is a wonderful way to build the kingdom of God.

Our sinful nature wants us to compete with and compare ourselves with others, especially our peers, but God tells us to encourage and love one another. If our children learn to walk alongside one another with encouragement, forgiveness, and love, think of the beautiful friendships our children will have.

Growing friendships is not easy, but through them we gain the privilege of sharing Jesus and his grace. That is the most important blessing of friendship!

-Rachel Blum

To see the complete article, visit <https://forwardinchrist.net/good-friends/>



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