

The Messenger

October 2025 Edition



A Monthly Newsletter from St. John Lutheran Church and School

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ST. JOHN

LUTHERAN CHURCH & SCHOOL

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

Devotional Corner



Devotion Corner: How can I be happy when people attack me for doing the right thing?

“Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness.” Matthew 5:10

Parents who won't let their teenage daughter go to R-rated movies might not win a “Favorite Parent” contest with their daughter's classmates because they seem too restrictive. They are only trying to look out for the welfare of their daughter.

A factory employee working at a fast pace may get a talking to by others on the job. He might hear, “Stop working so hard. You're making the rest of us look bad.” He's only trying to be a faithful worker and do his best.

A freshman in high school has spent hours studying for the science test. Some of his classmates know that he'll do well on the test, so they ask him to let them copy his answers. He tells them “No.” Those same classmates begin to make life miserable for him. He was only trying to be honest and not help others cheat.

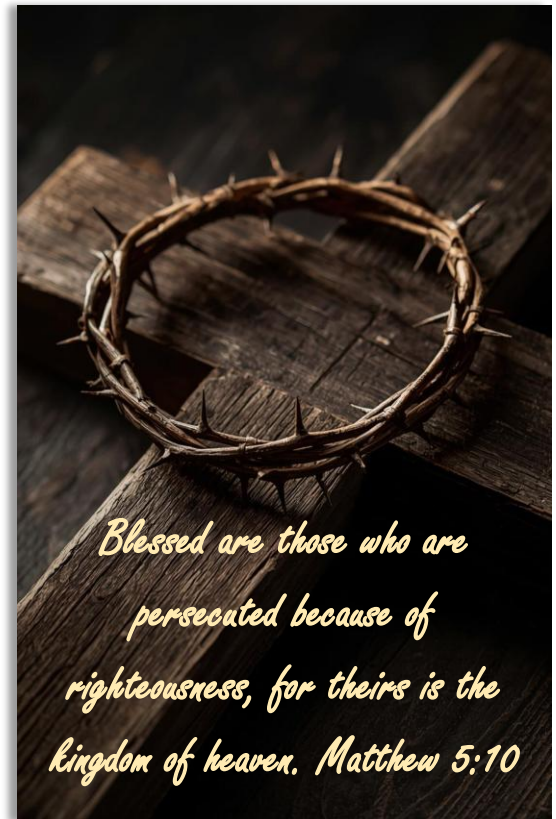
Can any of these people be happy that they did the right thing? Is there any happiness in being looked at differently or having a reputation ruined? Wouldn't it be better to do things that won't cause conflict?

It may surprise you, but Jesus says that people can have joy in their hearts for doing the right thing. “Blessed (happy) are those who are persecuted because of righteousness (doing the right thing), for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

Jesus knew that it isn't always easy to do the right thing. But with these words Jesus is talking to people who know him. They know who he is. They know he is God who came as the Savior to forgive their failures and guarantee a place in heaven for them.

People who know and trust in Jesus want to do the right thing. They want to be parents who look out for their child's well-being. They want to use their talents and abilities as best they can. They want to live honestly. They do this even if they are attacked for doing the right thing. In the way they live, they want to thank Jesus because he's promised them the gift of heaven.

Be happy knowing that there is someplace better waiting for you. It's a place where there is no backbiting or peer pressure. It's the place called heaven. Jesus promised it.



Worship With Us Sundays at 9:00 am

Christian Parenting Today

Christian Parenting Today: What is Bullying? How can parents help children who are struggling with relationships with their peers?

Excerpts from a Forward in Christ article by Sarah Reik and Rachel Blum

As the school year begins, I often get requests to speak to students and parents about bullying. There are many aspects to explore on this topic, but here are two of the questions I always attempt to answer:

What is bullying? According to expert Dan Olweus, bullying happens “when a person is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions by one or more others, and has difficulty defending himself or herself.” We are all capable of being unkind or careless at times, but bullying involves an imbalance of power, and it is usually intentional and persistent. It’s a group of children that finds a way to exclude one specific child most days at recess. It’s the strong boy that physically intimidates a smaller boy any time they are in the bathroom together. It’s the popular girl who regularly posts embarrassing pictures on social media of the girl with no friends.

What can parents do to help? We can take a few important steps as parents to arm our children against the negative effects of bullying.

We can give them truthful and persistent messages about who they are. 1 John 3:1 says, “See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!” When our children hear consistently from an early age that they are loved and valued by God and by us, they are more likely to recognize bullying messages from others as lies.

We can teach assertiveness and conflict resolution skills. A boy in my daughter’s preschool class would get jealous if she didn’t want to play with him. One time when she wanted to sit with the girls in her class, he told her he wouldn’t be her friend if she did. She said, “That’s too bad because I like being your friend. But I’m still going to go and sit with the girls.” If she had allowed his words to affect her, he would have likely tried that tactic again. By answering kindly but firmly, she created a boundary and paved the way for a different dynamic.



If children regularly hear unkind words, disrespectful language, or aggressive tones from us, they will come to believe that it is normal for others to talk to them that way. They may even become bullies themselves, because they see bullying behaviors “work” at home. Instead, we can talk together about how God wants us to treat each other, set clear standards of behavior, and model respectful communication and empathy.

We can build relationships with the parents and teachers in our children’s lives so that communication is more effective if bullying becomes an issue. One time I met a mother for coffee who believed my son was bullying hers. Because we already knew and respected each other, we were able to work together to understand each other’s perspective and develop strategies to deal with any inappropriate behaviors.

Finally, in some situations, we may need to take more direct steps to help our children. This may include creating positive opportunities for connection with new peer groups, taking them out of a specific class or school, or even logging and reporting certain behaviors to authorities.

Bullying is a difficult reality at times, but as parents we can play a powerful role in preventing and addressing it. Through love, structure, and involvement, we can guide our children to recognize their worth in Christ, treat others with respect, and stand up to bullying behaviors with truth and confidence. “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good” (Romans 12:21).

-Sarah Reik

*Article continues on page 7 with advice
from Rachel Blum*

Upcoming Events

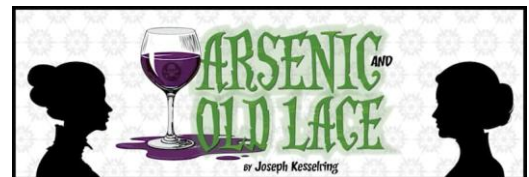


Trunk or Treat- Saturday, October 25th

Get your cars decked out and your candy stocked- it's time for our annual Trunk or Treat! Join us on Saturday, October 25th from 1:00-3:00 pm for this great community event. We are hoping to once again host dozens of vehicles and hundreds of trick-or-treaters in costume. Mr. Ben will once again be there to offer tractor rides around the campus. If you plan to bring your vehicle and hand out candy, please register at signupgenius.com/go/10C0B44A5A72AA2FDC16-59118540-trunk so that we have a general idea of how many spaces to set aside. We will start arranging vehicles in the lot at 12:30. If you are bringing the family to trick-or-treat, there is no need to register; just come at 1:00 and join in the fun!

Wrightstown's Fall Fest- Saturday, October 4th

Wrightstown will be holding its annual Fall Fest this Saturday, October 4th. Activities will feature a color blaze run, a vendor market with kid's activities, a car show, and live music. Come visit the River District, and be sure to stop in the parking lot of The Hair Canvas to visit St. John's booth, where you can find PTO volunteers serving pulled pork sandwiches, hotdogs, chips, and cookies! We will be under the St. John canopy from 10:00 am- 3:00 pm.



FVL Fall Play: Arsenic and Old Lace, Showing October 24-26

FVL's fall play will be "Arsenic and Old Lace", a dark comedy that features the only thing deadlier than poison: family. Tickets are \$7 a piece and may be purchased online or at the door. Three showings are available: 6:30 pm on Friday, October 24th; 6:30 pm on Saturday, October 25th, and 2:00 pm on Sunday, October 26th.

Mark Your Calendars!

October 1- Breakfast and Bible Study
Board of Education Meeting
FVL Homecoming Frolic
October 3- Kindergarten Field Trip to Apple Orchard
October 4- Wrightstown Fall Fest (PTO Food Booth)
October 6- Cross Country at New London
October 7- Martha's Circle
October 8- 1st and 2nd Grade Field Trip to FVL/Plamann
October 11- LWMS Rally
FVL Daddy/Daughter Dance
October 12- PTO Packers Ticket Scanning Event
FVL Choirs and Band Fall Sacred Concert
October 13- Church Council Meeting
October 14- Fellowship Luncheon
October 15- Breakfast and Bible Study

October 15- No Public School Confirmation Class
October 19- Quarterly Church Voter's Meeting
October 20- 8th Grade Welcome Night at FVL
October 21- Outreach Committee Meeting
October 22- EC Field Trip to Polly's Pumpkin Patch
October 23- EC Pastor Parent Play Date
October 24- End of 1st Quarter of School
October 24-26- FVL presents: Arsenic and Old Lace
October 25- Trunk or Treat
October 26- Kindergarten Sings at Worship
October 28- PTO Meeting
October 29- Classroom Halloween Celebrations
Picture Retake Day
October 30-31- No School (State Teacher's Conference)
November 5-6- Parent/Teacher Conferences

Church Highlights



JAM Volunteers Needed

Our newest ministry, JAM (Jesus and Me), is off to a great start! Children have been enjoying the crafts, songs, Bible lessons, and more that are presented at their level during church. Leaders have likewise been enjoying their time with the children, but more helpers are being sought so that adults may take turns between serving in JAM and attending regular worship services themselves. If you are middle school age or older and interested in helping us out, please speak with Kari Bern, Heather Guggenbuehl, or Ben Evenson to get started.

Adult Bible Class and Sunday School

Our ministries don't end as soon as worship is over! If you are interested in joining adults in learning more, or if your children want to continue the fun from JAM, join us for Adult Bible Class and Sunday School following services every Sunday. Both ministries begin at 10:15. Bible class runs for about 30-45 minutes, where we are currently studying the book of Judges. Sunday School goes for an hour and features a Bible Study and project each week.

FVL Fall Choirs and Band Sacred Concert- October 12th

Join us for an afternoon of sacred music as FVL's bands and choirs present their annual fall concert. This special event celebrates God's gift of music through inspiring performances from our student musicians. Admission is free and open to the public. All are welcome! We look forward to welcoming you, your family, and friends for this uplifting afternoon of music and praise in the FVL auditorium. The concert begins at 1:00 pm on Sunday, October 12th.



8th Grade Welcome Night at FVL

If you are considering sending your 8th grader to FVL next year, you are strongly encouraged to attend the 8th Grade Welcome Night on Monday, October 20th as a family. There will be informational sessions for parents and plenty of fun activities for students to interact with future classmates with pizza, lemonade, inflatables, multi-player video game challenges, a DJ and dancing, giant Jenga, dodgeball, and more. Doors open at 5:00 pm and the event lasts until 7:45.

October Church Birthdays

Happy birthday to our church members celebrating in October!

Oct 1 Bryce Herlache
Oct 2 Lisa Pohlman
Oct 4 Austin Lazor
Oct 4 Dominic Myers
Oct 5 Dale Abrahamson
Oct 6 Bernice Klister
Oct 6 Jason Uitenbroek
Oct 8 Porter Micke
Oct 8 David Rosenbaum
Oct 10 Gavin Hein
Oct 10 Carl Uitenbroek

Oct 13 Jacob Bruecker
Oct 13 Collyns Nielson
Oct 14 Owen Ratkowski
Oct 14 Arlen Wicks



Oct 15 Cecelia Raddatz
Oct 18 Eric Olp
Oct 19 Kevin Vande Hey
Oct 22 Robert Maass
Oct 23 Michael Pennerberg
Oct 23 Lynn Ratkowski
Oct 24 Caleb Ritter
Oct 26 Shelly Meulemans
Oct 28 Hannah Kraus
Oct 29 Leah Cisler
Oct 31 Amy Leonhard

School Highlights



2025-26 Student Council Announced

Students in grades 1-8 recently voted for this school year's student council positions. The elections resulted in the following roles:

President: Ximena Mata-Perez

Vice President: Tia Nelson

Secretary: Savannah Summers

Treasurer: Braxton Evenson

At Large Representatives: Hadley Schisel,
Dawson Mollen, and Lilith Splan

The student council is tasked with holding fundraisers, bringing suggestions from the student body to the attention of the school board, organizing spirit days, and more. Miss Crowley will be their advisor as they take on their new roles. Students may contact any of the student council representatives if they have ideas on how to improve life at St. John. Congratulations, students!



Parent-Teacher Conferences

Upcoming Parent-Teacher Conferences- November 5th and 6th

The end of the first quarter will be October 24th, and as we wrap up this portion of the school year, we look to hold Parent-Teacher Conferences for the whole school. Report cards for grades K-8 will come out on October 29th, with time to review them before conferences on Wednesday, November 5th and Thursday, November 6th. Conferences will be held from 3:00 until 6:00 pm each day. By mid-October, keep your eyes out for an e-mail containing a link to a Sign Up Genius page that will allow you to register for a conference with each of your children's teachers. Time slots will be 15 minutes each. If you are unable to make it on those days, or wish to meet for a longer time with teachers, please communicate with them directly to arrange an alternate date. The conferences are considered required and have a large impact on your child's education, so please make every effort to attend.

Halloween/Harvest Celebrations

With the state teacher's conference falling on October 30th and 31st this year, our classroom Halloween or Harvest celebrations will fall on Wednesday, October 29th. Children are welcome to dress up in costumes and make-up for the day, though we ask that parents ensure that the costumes allow children to use the bathroom independently and that any fake weapons that go with the costume be left at home. Masks may need to be removed during class times as well. Families may generally bring in a snack to share as well and teachers often have special activities planned for the day. If choosing to bring in a snack, please note that more and more families are choosing to have dye-free foods for their children. While this is not a requirement at SJLS, avoiding dyes may help all children enjoy treats equally. Check the weekly news or speak with your children's teachers directly for individual classroom information.

Please note that the 29th is also the day for picture retakes! Students who need pictures retaken or who were not able to attend the original picture day are encouraged to start the day in their picture clothes and bring their costume to change into after. Pictures will be taken early in the day.

October School Birthdays

Amara B.- October 5th
Natalie K.- October 8th
Porter M.- October 8th
Mila G.- October 9th
Gavin H.- October 10th
Shaliah V.- October 10th
Brock G.- October 11th
Luella S.- October 14th
Cecelia R.- October 15th
Audrey T.- October 15th
Raelynn W.- October 20th
Emory G.- October 22nd
Marcella R.- October 25th
Braxton E.- October 30th



Dealing with Bullying

(Christian parenting article Continues from page 3)

As both a teacher and a mom, I hear about friendship struggles daily. Often, kids simply need an adult to listen with empathy so they can process the situation and begin solving the problem themselves. After listening, I gently remind them that all people—including their friends—are sinners and we all need forgiveness every day.

I then ask whether they'd like help communicating with their friend or if they already have a plan. Some kids know exactly what to do next, while others prefer that an adult guide them through the conversation. Still others feel the issue was a one-time mistake, and they choose to forgive and move on. If your child would like adult help in resolving the issue, the best person to ask is usually the leader directly involved—someone who knows both children and can support them in working through it. Parents can help by having a brief conversation with that adult to ensure everyone is on the same page.

By working together—parents, teachers, coaches, and leaders—we create environments where children are guided in truth and love. This highlights the importance of parents continually listening to and talking with their children. Christian kids will make unkind or harmful choices at times because they are sinners too. That's why adult presence matters: to teach, intervene, address sinful behavior, and help them repair broken relationships.

Because parents aren't always present during activities or school, communication with teachers and coaches is key. When all adults involved work together, children can be supported in solving problems quickly. Bullying can take root when adults overlook children's struggles and allow intentional, harmful behavior to persist.

Caring parents can also take the initiative by asking school or team leaders how they handle friendship struggles and conflict so that those efforts can be reinforced at home. When there's a clear plan—supported by active supervision and consistent teaching on how children should treat others—the chances of bullying are greatly reduced. God reminds us in Proverbs 22:6, "Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it" (ESV). If no plan exists, it's appropriate to encourage leaders to create one so that children are taught to grow in positive, respectful relationships—not left to navigate social challenges on their own.

By working together—parents, teachers, coaches, and leaders—we create environments where children are guided in truth and love. Teaching them to build healthy relationships and respond to conflict with grace not only prevents bullying but also shapes godly character for life.

-Rachel Blum

*To view the complete article, visit
forwardinchrist.net/bullying/*

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