

The Messenger

May 2024 Edition

A Monthly Newsletter from St. John Ministries

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

Short Stories that Speak Volumes for Our Lives

Devotional Corner: Build on Solid Rock

Jesus said, "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who build his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock."

Matthew 7: 24, 25

If you had to evacuate your home because of rising water following severe storms, imagine how difficult it would be to return and assess the damage: muddy floors, moldy walls, and worldly possessions headed for a dumpster. It would be emotionally devastating to observe the physical destruction that the waters caused.

Jesus told a story about building on a location to avoid destruction. He compared a wise builder and a foolish one. The foolish builder built his house on a nice sandy stretch by the water. It was a beautiful place to live until the storm hit. There was no defense against the rising waters—a complete loss (maybe even a loss of life!). In contrast, there was a wise builder. He built his house in the hills; he spent the extra time and money to firmly position it on solid rock. It was worth it. The building remained high above the floodwaters and stood strong against the wind.

Jesus' short story speaks volumes for our lives. He wants us to think carefully about the foundation on which we build our lives. It needs to be strong when

life's storms strike. When the company is downsized, we want the strength to keep a positive outlook. When conflict loosens family ties, we want tight knots to hold it together. When we've really messed up, the guilt must not sweep us away. When bad news comes, there needs to be rock-like endurance to get us through.

There's much advice today about successfully building our lives: build up a network of reliable family and friends, develop more of a positive attitude, get different forms of insurance for rainy days, and pursue proven avenues of achievement. But in the end, they're all "sand foundations." The storms that overwhelm human hearts and hopes are far too violent. We need something stronger to build on.

Jesus tells us to build our lives and futures on the solid rock of his word. It takes some time and effort to build that way, but Jesus says it's worth it. Hearing of his sacrifice on the cross brings us the lasting peace that we're forgiven. Hearing that Jesus rose and ascended to rule over all things gives us firm hope in the midst of life's uncertainties.

Don't build your life on shifting sand. Build on solid rock. That's Jesus. His teachings give you the strongest foundation for life. Confidently build your life on him. We'd be glad to help you do exactly that!

In Christ's Service & Yours!
Pastor Mike Gehl



Worship With Us!

Service Sundays at 9:00 am

Bible Class Sundays at 10:15 am

Christian Parenting Today



Christian Parenting Today: Helping Our Kids Grow and Keep a Positive Mindset

Excerpts of a *Focus on the Family* article by Jay Stocker
<https://www.focusonthefamily.com/parenting/helping-our-kids-grow-and-keep-a-positive-mindset/>

Today's kids face new challenges and ask questions our kids didn't have to two decades ago. But God has provided every answer and truth to help them have a positive mindset and turn adversity into an adventure.

Twenty years ago, my children were young. But it feels like yesterday they were hitting major milestones and asking a million questions. All their milestones, questions, challenges, achievements, and fears feel near and relevant to who they are today — and to who I am. I can still feel the acute pains of sharing in their hurts and disappointments. I can sense the familiar helplessness that parents feel when helping their kids grapple with stress or anxiety.

Looking back affords me a more complete perspective than I had when my kids were little. I can see the well-worn paths of where my children's thoughts took them. I can also observe intentional reroutes where my wife and I stepped in to lend guidance. Of course, we knew we couldn't overhaul their thoughts or tell them what to think — kids generally don't take well to that.

But what we did know was this: when directing their thoughts to God's promises and truth, they would discover He is enough for every question, concern, and fear. More powerful than society's shallow "You can do it" catchphrases, God's promises pave the way for a positive mindset founded in timeless truth.

Creating a Pathway to Peace

Perhaps now, more than ever, kids are susceptible to anxiety. Along with the age-old worries around school,

friends, relationships, and family life, our society has in recent years introduced new stressors. The increase of technology and peer pressure, uncertainties about the future, and the instability of the world around us build a serious case against our children's peace. And yet, there is more opportunity than ever for us to point our children to Christ.

My wife and I knew we had to be the ones to forge these principles in their minds. Like a small animal trail, their path would become broader and easier to locate the more we led our children down it. Like every parent, we made plenty of mistakes along the way. Yet my wife and I found if we always returned to God's truth, we were going in the right direction. God works with our small, faithful steps.

Break Away from Mainstream Thought Patterns

Meditating on God's Word day and night rewires our brains and redirects our spirits — much like a waterway system. There are several rivers near our home in Colorado. Most of the water's current follows the same course and at the same pace. Single droplets tumble over boulders and navigate rapids in the same methods and to the same end. Some, however, make their break for a tributary creek bed or riverway. They cut away from the main waterway and find a quieter, less-traveled, more peaceful avenue. This is what happens as we equip our children to step away from society's mainstream thoughts and develop a positive mindset built on Biblical truth.

When sin entered the human heart, we grew more familiar with our weaknesses. Fear was given an open door to our hearts. To pull our attention away from anxious and deceptive thoughts, we can train our minds to dwell on all that is noble, pure, lovely, and true. This is what God's Word means when it instructs us to renew our minds in Romans 12:2.

Sometimes it takes swimming upriver against the current of society's thought trends. It can require all our energy to break away from well-worn patterns of thought. But once we do, new habits begin to develop. As 2 Corinthians 10:5 encourages, we can "take every thought captive..." Our kids can discover the freedom that comes when we take hold of our thoughts and help show our kids where they can and cannot lead.

Article continues on page 7

Upcoming Events



Brat Fry- Saturday, May 18th

St. John will have an opportunity to run the brat fry at Dick's Family Foods during Wrightstown's rummage sale weekend! Please contact Courtney Schisel (920-707-0039) or Karen Geiger (920-360-8442) if you can help out, and be sure to stop by for a great lunch between 10:00 and 2:30 on Saturday, May 18th!



Spring Performance Night- Friday, May 3rd

Our school will be holding its annual Spring Performance Night this Friday! Join us in the Wrightstown High School auditorium by 6:00 pm for a variety of acts from all of our classes. Our early childhood students will go first, then we will work our way up the grade levels. There will be a brief intermission and a few refreshments before the upper grades put on the long- anticipated play "Something's Rotten in the State of Denmark".



Family Night at the T-Rats- Friday, May 17th

Our school students have wrapped up the annual Fang's Reading Club program and several students have earned a free ticket, a hot dog and soda voucher, and even a mini-bat for their efforts! St. John will be gathering to celebrate at the Timber Rattler's Stadium on Friday, May 17th. Look for ticket ordering information to be available very soon. New to the school program this year, 20% of all ticket purchases made through our school will be given back to us as a fundraiser. Make plans to join us for the game against the Beloit Sky Carp beginning at 6:40. Kids run the bases after the game!

Clays for Cardinals- Saturday, May 18th

St. John PTO is excited to announce the 2nd annual Clay's for Cardinals fundraiser! This event was a ton of fun and very successful last year! This year we are raising funds to get the volleyball equipment installed in the gym, mats for some of the metal poles in the gym, side hoops, and various gym and playground equipment.

It would be astounding if everyone could get involved in some way! You can do this several ways: Sign-up for the Clay Shoot, donate a silent auction basket, attend and bid on the silent auction baskets, or come for dinner and fellowship. Of course, free-will donations are also gladly accepted. Contact Dierdra Stary for a sign-up link or Courtney Schisel or Janet Coenen for more info.

Anyone is welcome to attend this event, so invite your friends and family! The shoot will begin at 2:30 and the dinner at 5:30. The silent auction will close at 6:30.



Mark Your Calendars!

- May 3- School Spring Performance Night at WHS
- May 5- Confirmation Sunday
- May 7- Pastor Play Day
- May 8- FVL Middle Schools Track Meet
- May 9- Ascension Worship
- May 12- Mother's Day
- May 12- Pastor Gehl's Last Service
- May 12- Final Sunday School of the Year
- May 14- Monthly Fellowship Luncheon
- May 17- Family Night at the Timber Rattlers
- May 18- Brat Fry at Dick's Family Foods
- May 18- Clays for Cardinals Fundraiser
- May 19- Service Schedule Change
- May 24- Last Day of School
- June 10- First Day of Summer Care

Church Highlights



Pastoral Transition Coming

Pastor Gehl will only be holding services for two more Sundays and one more Thursday evening: Confirmation Sunday on May 5th, Ascension Service on May 9th, and Mother's Day worship on May 12th. We wish him well as he moves his ministry to Kingman, Arizona.

In a meeting a few Sundays ago, the voters of St. John unanimously extended a divine call to Rev. Steven Hillmer, currently serving at St. Matthew, Oconomowoc, WI, to serve as the next pastor here at St. John. Please keep Pastor Hillmer and his family in your prayers as he considers where he can best serve with his gifts and abilities. Any member is welcome to reach out to Pastor Hillmer to share their thoughts and/or words of encouragement: shillmer76@smls.org or 775.229.3194.

Pastor John Raasch (rhymes with cash), who serves full-time at Bethel Lutheran Church in Menasha, will serve as our vacancy pastor until the next full-time pastor arrives. He is ready, willing, and able to provide any pastoral care for church members and school families, as needed. He can be reached at 414.721.6013 or pastorraasch@bethelmenasha.org.

Schedule Updates

With Pastor Raasch serving as a vacancy pastor for the near future, we are moving our service and Bible study times to our summer hours a couple of weeks early. Beginning on May 19th, we will hold only a single service at 9:00 am. Bible study will follow the service at 10:15. Thursday night services are also now stopped until we have a full-time pastor again, with the exception of the joint Ascension Service on Thursday, May 9th at 6:30 here at St. John. Our hope for the single service is multifold: to have less pressure for Pastor Raasch as he fills our vacancy, to unite together as one congregation rather than worship in smaller groups, and to allow for more live music during the services.

Logo Choices

Over the past couple of years, we have been making an effort to better combine the ministries of St. John Wrightstown. So far that includes steps like a combined budget, newsletter, website, Facebook and Instagram pages, and of course our combined campus! Our previous church logos are out of date as they show either the Turner Street church building, a 150-year celebration theme, or our building project logo. We are now looking for a logo that better serves our combined ministries. There are some examples available on the table in the hallway where we enter the worship space. We are asking all members to vote by placing a tally mark next to their favorite logo.

Church Birthdays

Happy birthday to our church members celebrating in May!

May 2 Debra Gilson
May 2 Douglas Otten
May 2 Ethel Reschke
May 5 Clara Bohrtz
May 6 Clayton Herlache
May 7 Kenneth Gilson
May 8 Adeline Bohrtz
May 8 Tanya Parrish
May 9 William Coenen
May 9 Nichole Myers
May 10 Sue Rosenbaum



May 10 Ross Vande Hey
May 11 Allison Snyder
May 12 Amy Bowers
May 12 Hattie Juedes
May 12 MaKenna Leick
May 18 Brenda Van Schyndel
May 19 Matteah Gehl
May 19 Kenneth Wierschke
May 20 Loree Baumgartener
May 20 Lincoln Snyder
May 22 Ginny Uecker



May 23 Gregory Gutzman
May 23 Andrew Heimmermann
May 25 Emily Fehlauer
May 26 Lou Ann Gutzman
May 27 Gary Brandt
May 27 Andrea Kussow
May 28 Mary Fritsch
May 28 Luke Spatchek
May 29 Miranda Gehl
May 29 Holly Snyder
May 31 Terry Sieker

School Highlights



Summer Program Information

We are happy to announce that we are enrolling for our upcoming summer session. Our summer session will run from June 10th through August 9th, allowing two weeks after the school year ends and two weeks before the new school year starts that our building is closed for teacher training and development days, preparation for the summer session and new school year, and whole school cleaning. We will also be closed on Thursday and Friday, July 4th and 5th, to allow for celebrating Independence Day. Hours will run from 7:30 am until 4:30 pm.

Space is limited and filled on a first-come first-serve basis. Families are required to prepay a week at a time. We will always invoice for each upcoming week. Due to scheduled staff, families are required to pay for time scheduled even if your child isn't in attendance. Our enrollment is reserved for any child ages 3 (potty-trained) – 9. Special cases can be directed to the school administrator. All children should have a lunch and sunscreen (preferably spray on) each day they are in attendance. Younger students who are present in the afternoon should also have rest time equipment, such as a pillow and mat, sleeping bag, or blanket. The summer session is an activity-based program, with lots of outside time and group activities. Contact our office for a link to register and schedule attendance or visit stjohnwrightstown.com/summer-care.

Summer Care Employment Opportunities

Contact our office if you are interested in working as a lead or assistant teacher for the summer. We will have a couple of classrooms to staff. Lesson plans and materials will be available.



Last Day of School- May 24th

Our last day of school traditionally invites parents to a 9:00 closing worship service followed by awards, fun activities, and one last group hot lunch, with an early dismissal around 11:30 am. This year, we are asking family members to get in touch with us so that we have an idea of how many total people will be attending. This will allow us to plan enough seating and will help to determine if all attendees can fit in the worship area or if we will need to use the gym. It will also help us to determine how much food we will need on hand for lunch. Please help us prepare by RSVPing to Dierdra Stary at office@stjohnwrightstown.com.



School Birthdays

Happy birthday to our May celebrants!

- Aberdeen D.- May 4th
- Clara B.- May 5th
- Addie B.- May 8th
- Will C.- May 9th
- Luke S.- May 28th
- Nolan O.- May 30th



Helping Kids' Positive Mindsets

Christian parenting article continues from page 3

Our kids hear countless messages every single day. We cannot filter everything that enters their ears or occupies their minds. However, we can help our kids believe sound truth to recognize anything that does not align with God's best for them. They can learn to identify false messages from the media, peers, or their own minds and measure them against sound arguments from God's Word.

Positive Mindset: Anxiety

When our kids hear "You do you" but grow anxious and insecure because they don't actually know who they are yet, we can point them to their identity in Christ and remind them, "You be who God has made you to be." We can encourage them with Jeremiah 29:11, "'For I know the plans I have for you,' says the LORD. 'plans for welfare, and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.'"

Positive Mindset: Peer Pressure

When pressures from peers leave them fearing they're not enough, we can assure them we are more than enough in Christ. We can read Galatians 1:10, "For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ."

Positive Mindset: Fear

Suppose they're overwhelmed by frightening happenings in our world and feel a lack of control over their lives. In that case, we can point them to God's sovereignty in Psalm 91:1-2, "He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say to the Lord, 'My refuge and my fortress; my God, in whom I trust.'"

Positive Mindset: Future

As our kids grow older and become anxious about their futures, we can direct their thoughts to Matthew 6:25-26 and verse 34, "do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, as to what you will put on...Look at the birds of the air...your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they? ... Therefore do not anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself."

Creating a Positive Mindset

Today's kids face new challenges and ask questions my kids didn't have to two decades ago. The world has certainly changed, but our children's needs have not. We all need the indescribable peace of Christ — not only to calm our souls but to center our thoughts on God's limitless power and unfailing love. He has provided every answer and truth to help our kids have a positive mindset that cannot be shaken by this world.

Contact Us

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