



The Messenger

April 2024 Edition

A Monthly Newsletter from St. John Lutheran Church and School

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



Devotional Corner: Canceled Debts

Jesus said, "Two men owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he canceled the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?"
Luke 7:41,42

One day Jesus was invited to dinner at the home of a religious leader named Simon. He was a member of the group called the Pharisees that believed their good works made them worthy before God; they didn't believe that they needed to be saved from their sins. There was an unexpected guest at the gathering—a sinful woman, a prostitute. She had come to honor Jesus by pouring expensive perfume and even her own tears on his feet. Simon was upset that Jesus was welcoming the praise of this sinful woman. He thought that if Jesus really knew who she was, he wouldn't even let her touch him. The truth is Jesus knew that she had lived a sinful life. He also knew that her joyful tears were born of his forgiving love for her.

So Jesus told a story to teach Simon and us a lesson about forgiveness. There were two men who were in debt. One of them owed a moneylender about three years' worth of wages. The other owed the same moneylender about 50 days of wages. Neither was able to repay, so the moneylender graciously canceled both debts. Jesus posed a question: "Now which one of

them will love him more?" Simon answered correctly that the one who had the larger debt canceled would have loved the moneylender more.

Jesus' short story speaks volumes for our lives. We all have a huge debt that we can't pay. We can't make up for all the sinful things we do, not by doing more good things or by doing less bad things. We can't cancel the debt of sin by anything we think, do, or say.

But God saw our desperate need and loves us so much that he canceled our debt of sin. He did that by having his Son, Jesus, pay it completely for everyone. The price he paid was his death. As the sinless Son of God, he was able to take all of our sins on himself and suffer their punishment for us. By his death, he canceled the debt of our sin. Three days after he died, he rose from the dead to prove that his sacrifice counted for all of us.

It's springtime, and Christians are celebrating the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. What a great time of the year to be reminded that Jesus has canceled our debt of sin and given us new life with him!

In Christ's Service & Yours!
Pastor Mike Gehl



Worship With Us!

Sundays at 8:00 and 10:30am

Thursdays at 6:30 pm

Bible Classes and Sunday School- Sundays at 9:15 am

Christian Parenting Today



Christian Parenting Today: How to Stop Your Child's Angry Cycle

Excerpt of a *Focus on the Family* article by Tricia Goyer
See the full article at: <https://www.focusonthefamily.com/parenting/how-to-stop-your-childs-angry-cycle/>

Helping your children deal with their anger can seem impossible when emotions run high. But you can train your kids to recognize triggers and replace them with truths that will help them get out of their angry cycle.

The flash of anger in my tween daughter's eyes surprised me. We'd been camping, and Maddie's 6-year-old sister, Aly, had just burned her finger on hot ash. As I treated the wound, Maddie strode up. "I hurt myself, too," she said, with attitude. "Last night when we were making S'mores."

"Hold on," I said. As Aly screamed beside me, I tried not to show my frustration. "I need to help your sister first." This was the first I'd heard of Maddie's burn.

Maddie's anger flared. "You always help her first! You don't care for me at all!" She rushed back to our cabin as I finished bandaging Aly's hand.

I walked back to the cabin, dreading the confrontation ahead. I could see how the next few minutes would play out: pleas and demands from me, mounting anger and accusations from her. There had to be a better way to manage these cycles of anger. It was making all of us weary, especially Maddie.

The Angry Cycle: Once a child is angry, it's easy for him to stay in a cycle of thoughts, emotions and physical responses that feed his rage. Here's what the angry cycle looks like:

An event creates pain or distress that sets off the child's anger. This event can be something another person says or does, or an unmet expectation.

The pain triggers thoughts or memories that focus the child's angry response on another person. For example, he may think you don't understand his life or that you care more about a sibling.

These "trigger thoughts" lead to a negative emotional response. Your child feels frustrated, rejected, fearful or enraged.

These emotions cause a physical response, such as a flushed face, tense jaw, pounding heart and clenched fists. As anger takes control, a child finds it difficult to think rationally.

Finally, a behavioral response occurs. The trigger thoughts, emotions and physical reaction evoke a fight, flight or freeze response.

Stopping the Angry Cycle: We often try to lecture our children or teach them a lesson in the midst of their angry cycle — right when they cannot think rationally. Our best efforts at correction will likely not get through when our child is in this highly emotional state; harsh discipline often make things worse.

This is true of kids of all ages: An emotional, angry teen can't be any more rational than an emotional, angry toddler. When one of my children is angry, I know I have to first stop the angry cycle before anything else can happen. I use some of these phrases instead of escalating the interaction:

"I am sorry that happened to you. I'll be here to talk about it when you're ready."

"I get angry, too. How can I help?"

"It's OK to be angry, but think about how you act next. Make good choices."

When I acknowledge my children's anger, they see that I'm paying attention. And when I make myself available, my kids can turn to me for help. They do want to make good choices; they just need extra guidance, and they are often grateful for my offer to help instead of simply sending them to their rooms or giving them consequences.

Being available and attentive always works better than simply telling a child to calm down. And choosing the right words in the midst of your child's angry cycle can defuse the situation and lead to healthy resolution.

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Upcoming Events



Farewell to Gehl Family- Sunday, April 28th

We will be sending Pastor Gehl and his family off in traditional St. John style, with a community meal and gifts on Sunday, April 28th. The Events Committee will provide meat, beans, and potatoes. There is a sign-up sheet in the kitchen hallway for those who are interested in providing casseroles, salads, and desserts. We do ask families to sign up for attending the luncheon so that we have a rough idea of how many will be coming.

People wishing to give parting gifts can do so individually or drop off contributions for a group gift on Mrs. Stary's desk.

Students in grades 2-8 will be singing in the late service on the 28th. They should meet in the school library by 10:15 am.

Pastor Gehl's official final day preaching will be May 12th. He will stay past the farewell dinner to hold services at St. John for Confirmation Sunday May 5th, Ascension May 9th, and Mother's Day May 12th.



FVL Choirs Sacred Concert- Sunday, April 7th

Join us on Sunday, April 7, at 2 PM for a beautiful sacred concert at FVL! The FVL choirs will offer songs of praise to Jesus for defeating death and winning our salvation. Don't miss this opportunity to worship your promise-keeping Savior!

Clays for Cardinals- Saturday, May 18th

St. John PTO is excited to announce the 2nd annual Clays 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 some miscellaneous 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 information.

Anyone is welcome to attend this event, so invite your friends and family! Registration with payment and baskets are due by May 1st. The shoot will begin at 2:30 and the dinner at 5:30. The silent auction will close at 6:30.

Mark Your Calendars!

- April 1- No School- Easter Break
- April 2- Parent/Teacher Conferences
- April 5- Fox Fest Dinner and Auction
- April 6- FVL Kids Cheer Camp
- April 7- Pastoral Call Meeting
- April 7- FVL Choirs Sacred Concert
- April 9- Fellowship Luncheon
- April 10- Discover FVL for 7th Graders
- April 13-14- Handbell Festival
- April 18- Last Day for School Choice
- April 26- Hot Lunch
- April 28- 2nd-8th Grade Students Sing- Late Service
- April 28- Farewell Luncheon for Gehl Family
- April 29- PTO Meeting
- April 29- FVL Future Freshman Night
- May 3- School Spring Performance Night at WHS
- May 5- Confirmation Sunday

Church Highlights

CALL MEETING

Pastoral Call Meeting

With Pastor Gehl leaving for Arizona next month, we need to move forward on the search for a new pastor. On April 7th, we will have a call meeting between services to vote on who to call as a pastor for the long-term as well as vacancy pastor who can fill in between Pastor Gehl's departure and our new pastor's arrival. Church members are asked to mark their calendars to attend.



Apple Valley Food Pantry News

Please have all donations to our church by Sunday, April 7th. The following is a list of items currently in need of at the pantry: canned tomato products (diced, stewed, sauce), spaghetti noodles, egg noodles, misc. pasta noodles, pasta sauce, healthy adult cereals, boxed potato side dishes, canned mandarin oranges and fruit cocktail, canned chilis and stews, dish soap (20 oz or less), hand soap, and laundry soaps (50 loads or less). Thank you for your continuing support of the pantry!

Fundraising Efforts Ongoing

Though the work of building our new campus has been complete for several months now, the efforts to make the best use of the opportunities it provides are still ongoing. Some current opportunities include:

- **Debt Retirement.** The BOLD STEPS building project received financial support prior to the groundbreaking, but a substantial amount of borrowing was also needed. The Finance Committee is asking for support through a three-year financial commitment to help us retire the debt. We want to avoid paying for the mortgage through the general funds. Speak to Jean Brandt, Terry Sieker, or Ron Zahn about ways you can help or fill out the commitment paperwork, available either from the credenza in the church hallway or from the office secretary. Please pray about this, and respond in accord with God's blessings upon you and your household. Many thanks to those who have already submitted their giving plans.
- **Reception Area Furnishings.** We are seeking \$1000 in donations towards a reception area loveseat and chairs. As we furnish this area of the building, we will also look to post our mission statement on the wall so that it is the focus as we enter the building.
- **Gym/Playground/Sports Equipment.** Our PTO has set up our second annual Clays for Cardinals fundraiser! See the article on the events page for more information.

Church Birthdays

Happy birthday to our church members celebrating in April!

Apr 1 Bea Ambrosius
Apr 2 Bryce Denor
Apr 2 Brooklyn Verheyen
Apr 3 Savannah Sommers
Apr 4 April Leick
Apr 9 Avery Asman
Apr 9 Hadley Schisel
Apr 11 Michelle Bruecker
Apr 11 Lincoln Wichman
April 12 Dillon Solomon
Apr 14 Roy Schisel



Apr 16 William Olp
Apr 19 Heather Bush
Apr 21 Isaiah Cyracus
Apr 21 Landen Cyracus
Apr 21 Jessica Laabs
Apr 21 Matthew Laabs
Apr 21 Ruth Zittlow
Apr 28 Brandon Beard
Apr 28 Amy Vande Hey
Apr 30 Judy Breister
Apr 30 Dianne Calaway 5

School Highlights

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Spring parent/teacher conferences will be held on Tuesday, April 2nd. Mrs. Otto and Mrs. Gamboa will be available from 12:00 to 7:00 pm to meet with early childhood students' parents. Miss Buss, Mrs. Wicks, Mr. Raddatz, and Mr. Solomon will be available to meet with elementary students' parents from 3:00 to 7:00 pm. Conferences will be held in fifteen-minute time slots. We ask that all families attend this session of conferences. If you would like more time to meet with your child's teacher or cannot make it in on April 2nd, please contact the teacher regarding an alternate time. Check for an online sign-up email that was sent out on March 18th.



Summer Registration Open

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.



Spring Performance Night

St. John Lutheran School will be holding its annual Spring Performance Night at Wrightstown High School on Friday, May 3rd. The 4th through 8th grade classes will be performing the play "Something's Rotten in the State of Denmark" under the direction of long-time thespian Dierdra Stary. The play is a comedic take on Shakespeare's Hamlet written by Joseph Wallace. Our preschool through 3rd grade classes will also showcase their talents through group songs and skits. The night will begin at 6:00 pm. Everyone is invited; be sure to arrive early for good seats!

School Birthdays

Happy birthday to our April celebrants!

Bryce D.- April 2
Savannah S.- April 3
Hadley S.- April 9
Arabella E.- April 12
Montzerrath A.A.- April 14
Barett L.- April 15
Nash B.- April 16
Alexis M.- April 19
Isaiah C.- April 21
Landen C.- April 21
Kennedy L.- April 23
Evelyn A.- April 29th



How to Stop the Angry Cycle

Christian parenting article continues from page 3

Training Kids to Recognize and Stop their Angry Cycles: When a child gets angry, multiple physical reactions are occurring inside her body. According to one public health organization, “The adrenal glands flood the body with stress hormones, such as adrenaline and cortisol. The brain shunts blood away from the gut and towards the muscles, in preparation for physical exertion. Heart rate, blood pressure and respiration increase.”

We can help our kids understand what’s happening inside their minds and bodies when negative thoughts are triggered so that they don’t get caught up in the angry cycle, which can become a habit. We can teach children to recognize and stop their own angry cycles using the three R’s.

Recognize: Identify the thought that came before the emotion. **Reflect:** Think about how accurate and useful the thought is. **Redirect:** Change the thought to a more accurate or helpful one.

1. Recognize How can a child begin to recognize trigger thoughts? Start writing a list of trigger thoughts on a piece of paper and review them regularly with your child. Some examples are: “She doesn’t care,” “This isn’t fair,” and “Nobody respects me.”

If your child is unable to identify his or her trigger thought, you can assist by saying something like, “I’ve

noticed that when you think I’m not listening to you, you get really angry with me.” Try to observe patterns that your child doesn’t yet recognize, and then help him.

2. Reflect Next, teach your child to check his thoughts. For example, when he is having an intense emotional response, encourage him to evaluate whether the thoughts in his mind are true. When a child learns to evaluate her thoughts in this way, she is better able to change them.

3. Redirect The next step is to replace the faulty thought with the truth. Philippians 4:8 says, “Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.”

Replacing negative thoughts with empowering thoughts does require some practice. Help your child focus on truth by listing counter statements to the triggers you’ve written down. For example, “I know Mom loves me,” “God is with me in unfair circumstances” and “I can set a good example for others.”

When our kids learn how to catch, check and change their trigger thoughts, they are better able to keep these negative thoughts from growing into bitter emotions and angry outbursts. As we help them redirect trigger thoughts to truthful thoughts, we equip them to stop the cycle of anger.

Contact Us

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