

The Messenger

July 2026 Edition



A Monthly Newsletter from St. John Lutheran Church and School

Inside this Issue...

Devotional Corner	page 2
Today's Christian Parenting	page 3,4,7
Events	page 5
News Highlights	page 6
Contact Information	page 7



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

Devotional Corner



Devotion Corner: A Gift to Enjoy

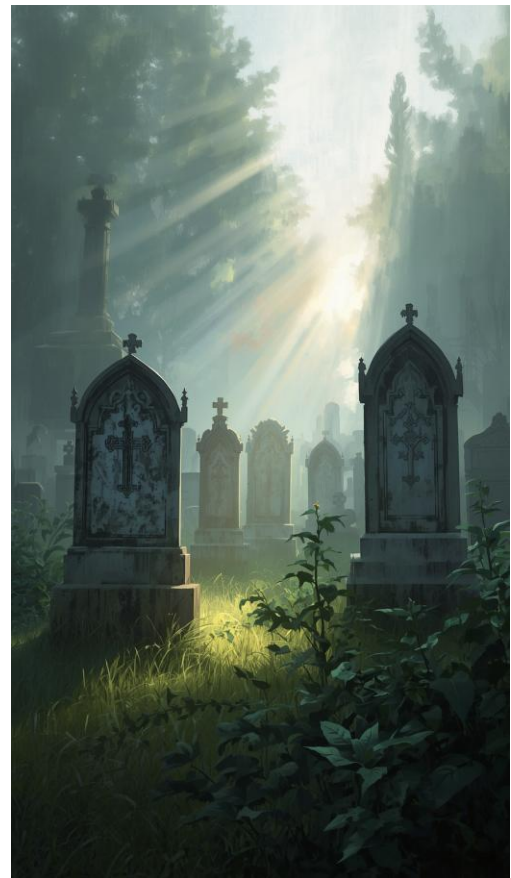
*The wages of sin is death, but
the gift of God is eternal life
in Christ Jesus our Lord.*
Romans 6:23

My first paycheck. \$100! A ONE with two zeroes behind it! It didn't matter that I spent a week pulling weeds with thistles in a 45-acre field. It didn't matter that I sweltered under a hot July sun. It didn't matter that I earned minimum wage. It had my name on it. I earned it.

There is another paycheck that I'm not so excited about. It comes in the form of guilt pricking my conscience far deeper than a thistle could ever penetrate my skin. Sometimes I see it when my temper flares hotter than the summer sun. I feel it when I know I should be more considerate, more caring, more loving toward others around me. So I work harder to do what's right and try harder to do better than before, but still, it never seems to be enough. And it isn't enough, because the Bible tells me the wages of my sin is death—and it's your paycheck, too.

But, thank the Lord, the Bible also tells us that God is not going to give us what we have earned with our sins. Instead, he gives us something we have not earned—eternal life. It's a gift that has been bought and paid for by the blood of Jesus and earned by his death on the cross.

That takes all the pressure off, doesn't it? Instead of the failures of our past, we can look to Jesus' perfect life of love. Instead of the pressures of tomorrow, we can look to the promise of eternal life that is already won for us by Jesus' dying and rising from the dead. As a result, life is not a burden, but a gift to enjoy always.



Worship With Us Sundays at 9:00 am

Christian Parenting Today

Christian Parenting Today: From Helicopter Parent to Lighthouse Parent

Excerpts from a Focus on the Family Article by Tim Elmore

In recent years I've read reports about community Easter egg hunts getting canceled. Why? Aggressive parents were jumping onto the field to help their kids retrieve Easter eggs, despite being told by event organizers that the hunts were only for children. In their desire to ensure that their own children received plenty of eggs, they took whatever measures were necessary, creating a situation where some kids were pushed aside and didn't get eggs.

In another story, a mother of a set of twins heard that a bee had stung a neighbor. Word got out that it was a nasty sting, so this mom decided it was too dangerous to allow her twins to play outside. She kept them inside. All summer. Again, a well-intentioned choice.

New generation of parents: Over the last few decades, I've watched parents give a new report card to themselves: If we're going to be good parents, we have to act like the proverbial helicopter.

In the name of our children's safety and self-esteem, we've hovered over them, desiring to prevent any negative experience that might damage their esteem or hinder their safety. Now that my own kids are grown adults, I can see how, at times, my wife and I did a better job protecting our kids from the world than preparing them to live in it. After all, these are our children, we reason with faulty logic, instead of learning to trust God for our children's growth so they, too, may one day learn to lean on Him.

Kids maturing: When our kids were toddlers, they often needed our constant watchful eye. However, we need to shift roles to adjust to our kids' maturity level. We must move from being a helicopter parent — hovering, guarding, keeping a tight hold, manipulating and controlling — to being a lighthouse parent.

A lighthouse stays in one location, and it's a beacon that has ongoing communication with passing ships. A lighthouse reveals its location; it warns mariners of danger and provides wise guidance — but it won't chase down the ships. How does the analogy apply to parenting? Here are the differences in a nutshell:

Helicopter parents hover and control, follow kids around, tell them how to behave, and impose rules and regulations. **Lighthouse parents** check in and communicate, won't chase kids down to enforce rules, let them know where they stand, and offer wisdom (light) and guidance.



Our children won't mature in a healthy way if they aren't allowed to navigate scary situations and challenging experiences. Kids need to take calculated risks to mature. Unfortunately, American parents often view struggle as a negative thing. We've created a world of convenience, filled with smartphones, microwaves and the Internet. The message is that struggles and discomfort are to be avoided.

What we fail to see is that when we remove struggles from our children's lives, we begin to render them helpless. They lose the opportunity to develop resilience, creativity and problem-solving skills — important strengths they'll need later on.

Scripture reminds us to count it joy when we fall into trials, for this kind of testing produces endurance. We're then encouraged to allow endurance to have its full effect (James 1:2-4). When we continually step in to control our kids' levels of risk, they don't learn how to be in control or under control. All they learn is how to be controlled or how to seek help every step of the way.

So let's take a quick look at what the shift from helicopter to lighthouse might look like:

Scenario [1]: Zoe, a second-grader, forgets to take her backpack to school.

Helicopter parent: Calls the school, informing them that Zoe didn't remember her backpack. Then the parent drives it to the school so Zoe doesn't get in trouble.

Article continues on page 4

Helicopter vs Lighthouse Parenting

Continued from page 3

Lighthouse parent: Waits for the phone call about the backpack. Then talks it over with an educator to see if Zoe may learn a greater lesson by not having it for a day. This requires long-term thinking, knowing that a little pain now will help Zoe's memory in the future.

Scenario [2]: Ben has been invited to a sleepover at his good friend's house. He's 9, but has been too scared to spend the night till now.

Helicopter parent: "I'm not so sure this is a good idea. You know you get scared at these things. I think we better say no, sweetheart." Ben learns to avoid his fears.

Lighthouse parent: "Do you think you're ready? I'd love to see you try, Ben. Let's plan for you to go. We know Michael's mom will be glad to help you, and if you need to, you can call me at 9:00 to talk over how you're doing."

Essentially, when we remove all risks from our kids' lives, we may do more long-term harm than the risk itself.



Helicopter parenting: a Biblical example: In case this shift from helicopter parent to lighthouse parent feels overwhelming, it is helpful to know that, according to Dr. Kelly Cagle, helicopter parents have existed since the book of Exodus.

Most of us know these things about Moses. His mom put him in a basket and floated it down the river. He was found by Pharaoh's daughter and was well taken care of by his mom who got hired by the servant.

He also thought he wasn't good enough to talk to Pharaoh, but God made him capable by pairing him up with his brother, Aaron, and he led the Israelites to freedom.

And, Moses was a helicopter leader. After Pharaoh let God's people go from slavery, the long journey began for Moses. The Israelites brought every single issue to him. They complained because they had no food... no water... everyone was going to die... all the animals were going to die... they constantly questioned why

God would free them from Pharaoh's power if they were just to die in the desert anyway (Exodus 17:3).

When people brought their requests to Moses, he always went to God for answers. God, in His infinite love and wisdom, would instruct Moses on what to do or say to the people each time.

Jethro's perspective: Jethro was Moses' father-in-law and was not in the desert during the Israelites' journey. He didn't see their daily needs and wasn't a part of the

various miracles God had been performing. In Exodus 18, Jethro went to visit Moses. Others had shared with him about everything Moses had been doing for the people, but for the first time, he actually saw it all for himself.

Exodus 18:4 says, "when Moses' father-in-law saw all that Moses was doing for the people, he asked, "What are you really accomplishing here? Why are you trying to do all this alone while everyone stands around you from morning till evening?" Jethro quickly recognized Moses was doing a lot for the Israelites.

"Moses replied, "Because the people come to me to get a ruling from God. When a dispute arises, they come to me, and I am the one who settles the case between the quarreling parties. I inform the people of God's decrees and give them his instructions," Exodus 18:15-16.

Moses had a valid point: the people needed him. The people trusted the solution he provided every time because it came directly from God. However, Moses believed the people wouldn't be able to solve anything without his help, advice, and problem-solving ability.

If we analyze many parentings styles, we would find there are some parents who resemble Moses' helicopter leadership approach. Parents intervene when siblings are fighting. Parents pick up the phone the second a child comes home with a complaint about a teacher. Child not getting enough playing time on the team? Time for the parent to have a talk with the coach. Drama with a friend? Oh, of course the parent is getting involved.

Some parents suffocate their children, others lack in training them to face adversities in the process of wanting to protect them.

Jethro's advice: After Moses answered the question about why he was trying to do everything for the Israelites, Jethro responded, "What you are doing is not good. You and the people with you will certainly wear yourselves out, for the thing is too heavy for you. You are not able to do it alone," Exodus 18:17-18.

Article finishes on page 7

Upcoming Events



Vacation Bible School- July 6th-10th

Join us for a Tropical Trek where we will learn how Jesus came to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10)! As we traverse fun and exciting places, like a dormant volcano and island caves, we'll discover how God finds us and helps us in every challenge we face. Students can join our VBS on July 6th-10th, from 9:00 to 11:45 am. Our time will feature games, snacks, crafts, and Bible stories in the Tropical Trek theme.

Registration is required so that we know how many students to prepare crafts and snacks for. Families with children ages 3-11 (all children must be potty trained) can sign up to participate by following the link at stjohnwrightstown.com/events. Please note that there is no Cardinal Quests summer care program during this week.



Park Play Dates Continue

School families, stay in touch with each other throughout the summer as we hold park play dates every Wednesday from 9:00-11:00 am! For July, the park playdates will be: July 1st at Quarry Park in DePere, July 8th at Appleton's Memorial Park, July 15th at St. John's own playground, July 22nd at Lungaard Park in Appleton, and July 29th at Sherwood Park and Splashpad, with a change in time to 10:00am -12:00 noon.



Faith and Freedom Worship Night- July 8th

St. John is excited to host its first ever worship night! We have a nationally known Christian recording group coming to our campus for a concert and worship event. Local artist Jedidiah Tuyls will open things up. This is a free event, but tickets are required to help us track numbers and prepare for the crowd. We will open at 5:00 pm, with the band starting at 6:00 pm. There will be Terra Verde coffee, Scoops ice cream truck, and classic grill-out food and drinks available for purchase. Donations to support the event will be accepted. For more information, contact Kari Bern. Scan the QR code to register for a ticket.



Mark Your Calendars!

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| July 1 | Park Playdate at Quarry Park, DePere |
| July 6-10 | No Summer Session
Vacation Bible School (VBS) |
| July 7 | Martha's Circle |
| July 8 | Park Playdate at Appleton Memorial Park
Faith and Freedom Worship Night |
| July 13 | Blood Drive
Elder's Meeting
Church Council Meeting |
| July 14 | Fellowship Meal |
| July 15 | Park Playdate at St. John Playground |
| July 21 | Outreach Team Meeting |
| July 22 | Park Playdate at Lungaard Park Appleton |
| July 29 | Park Playdate at Sherwood Park Splashpad |
| August 7 | Last Day of Summer Care |

News Highlights

Pastoral Call News

During our June 28th voter's meeting, St. John elected to call Pastor Tim Wagner to come and take over pastoral duties for our church. Pastor Wagner is currently serving at Riverview Lutheran Church in Appleton while his wife, Elisabeth, is the FVL Schools Band director. Please keep them and their 5 children in your prayers as they deliberate Pastor Wagner taking the call to Wrightstown. If you wish to reach out, Pastor Wagner can be reached at twagner@riverviewlutheran.org



Early Childhood Teacher Sought

St. John is currently searching for a full-time early childhood teacher in the EC1 (4K) classroom for the 2026-2027 school year. A qualified candidate must have a Bachelor of Science in Education Degree, Associate Degree in Education, Early Childhood Development certificate, or equivalent; be a member of a WELS congregation, have an ability to work proficiently in a diverse, multi-cultural setting; exhibit effective oral communication and interpersonal skills; and show a desire to actively support the ministerial objectives of St. John Lutheran Church and School. An ideal candidate will also have a passion for working with children, be tactful and courteous, be a team player, be punctual, professional, patient, be an exemplary Christian role model for pupils and parents, and have a neat, presentable appearance.

The starting salary for this position is \$51,000 with additional pay for years of experience and additional educational credentials. Health insurance is also available and provided by the employer. If responding, please submit your resume or equivalent documents to school administrator Tim Raddatz via the following email address: tim.raddatz@stjohnwrightstown.com.

Volunteers Needed for VBS!

VBS is back for the first full week of July! We are still seeking volunteers to help run the program. If you are available mornings, from 8:45 until 12:00 noon during the week of July 6th-10th, please consider helping to guide groups around or run an activity area such as snacks, games, or science experiments. Middle schoolers on up are welcome to volunteer. Please speak with Rebecca Wicks to sign up! Rebecca.wicks@stjohnwrightstown.com

July Birthdays

Happy birthday to our church members celebrating in July!

July 1 Josh Myers
July 2 Jody Bowers
July 3 Lou Ann Beard
July 5 Barry Laabs
July 7 Wayne Cisler
July 7 Dylan Myers
July 9 Anthony Cappelle
July 9 Ronald Van Schyndel
July 11 Emmie Gundrum
July 12 Kristy Asman
July 13 Jaime Bohrtz
July 13 Walker Chase
July 13 Edwin Maass
July 15 Aubree Barrett
July 16 Pastor Wilke
July 17 Idie Chavaarria
July 17 Adelaide Lemke
July 19 Cassandra Barrett



July 19 Tammy Olp
July 20 Everly Micke
July 20 Andrew Vickman
July 21 Blake Bauer
July 21 Wanda Ritter
July 22 Mercedes Kussow
July 24 Dean Buchholz
July 24 Althea Coenen
July 25 Joseph Kussow
July 26 Ximena Mata Perez
July 27 Tina DeMerritt
July 27 Troy Schisel
July 29 Ashton Demerath
July 29 Kyle Nelson
July 29 Heather Schisel
July 30 Josh Bohrtz
July 30 Lisa Vande Hey
July 31 Chloe Hein

Happy birthday to our students celebrating in July!

Jacob N.- July 4th
Theodore Q.- July 6th
Josephine A.- July 7th
Oden B.- July 9th
Emmalyn G.- July 11th
Jase S.- July 13th
Cliff P.- July 16th
Hank P.- July 16th
Adelaide L.- July 17th
Everett S.- July 18th
Everly M.- July 20th
Dean B.- July 24th
Althea C.- July 24th
Isaiah G.- July 25th
Ximena M.P.- July 26th
Chloe H.- July 31st



Helicopter vs. Lighthouse Parenting

Continued from page 3

Jethro knew that if Moses continued solving every little thing for the Israelites, he would hit burnout. He wouldn't be the leader God intended him to be. He also knew the job was too large for one person to do alone.

We know parenting is extremely rewarding. We can't deny that it's also quite exhausting. So, what can we learn from Jethro's leadership advice to Moses?

1. Teach. Children must be taught how to handle issues. They need to know how God wants them to be slow to anger, loving to their neighbor, forgiving to those who have hurt them. That includes an argument with a group member at school as well as their sibling.

Teach them scripture. God's decrees. Not the "because I said so's." Tell them why we turn the other cheek, choose kindness, and are merciful—because of Jesus' sacrifice for us. Next, teach them that we love—because God loved us first with the most perfect and selfless love known in the history of the world. Finally, teach them that He chose you to be their parents—because He knit them beautifully and perfectly in their mother's womb.

2. Find and train. Find other adults that are likeminded and can speak into your kids' lives. Train them by giving them permission to give advice and correct your children when necessary. Take advantage of partnerships with others you trust—you can't be everywhere your child is at all times.

Help your child realize who you've given permission to "parent" them. Guide your child to learn who their spiritual parents are, who their cool uncle is, and who has a super comfortable couch to talk about heartaches. It's likely that your children won't want to share certain things with you, even if you have the closest relationship! This is where those other leaders in their lives will be extra valuable.

3. Larger disputes. Jethro didn't tell Moses to give up control altogether. He knew that certain disputes would require Moses' expertise as well as closeness with the Lord.

Remain the primary decision maker in handling the larger disputes your children face. You're the main disciplinarian—ensure you remain that way.

Set the boundaries and stay consistent in how you handle the larger disputes. Define those disputes, know the standards you want your kids to abide by, and communicate with your kids often about various topics.

Avoid only having heart-to-heart conversations after they've messed up and need discipline. Have fun with them! Take them on dates! Make sure they feel your love during the good times as well as the tougher ones.

And take Jethro's advice: share the load. Don't be a helicopter parent hovering over your children's every single move. You'll run out of fuel.

To view the complete article, visit focusonthefamily.com/parenting/from-helicopter-parent-to-lighthouse-parent/

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