

The Messenger

August 2023 Edition



A Monthly Newsletter from St. John Lutheran Church and School

Inside this Issue...

Devotional Corner	page 2
Today's Christian Parenting	page 3, 7
Events	page 4
Church Highlights	page 5
School Highlights	page 5
Summer Session Fun	page 6
Contact Information	page 7

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



Devotional Corner: I want to have more happiness in my life. Can God help me find it?

We need to begin by asking, “What do we mean by happiness?” For a child, happiness might mean getting Christmas presents every morning and cake and ice cream for every meal. After a few days, though, it would stop being fun.

Many adults think that money will make them happy. But we have seen many rich people who are unhappy and even depressed.

Others might think that drugs and alcohol make them happy. But the “high” soon wears off. Finding happiness in the things and people of this world is an exercise in frustration.

The Bible uses the word “blessed” to describe happiness. The blessings of God give us true happiness. The most important of God’s blessings is Jesus, whom he sent into this world.

Jesus took the blame for everything we ever did wrong. That’s why he died on the cross—not because he did anything wrong, but because we did. Jesus has paid for our sins, and that means we are saved from God’s judgment of eternal death by believing in him. That makes us happy. Jesus blesses us with salvation.

No matter how long we live, we are all destined to die. But when Jesus rose from the dead on Easter morning,

he broke the hold of death. Even though we will one day die, by trusting in Jesus, we have the sure hope that we will also come back to life and live forever in heaven. That makes us happy. Jesus blesses us with eternal life.

God even uses the tough times in life for our good—to teach us more about his love and strengthen our trust in him. No matter how tough life is for us, no matter how much pain we endure, and no matter how poor we are, no one and nothing can take away what Jesus did for us.

Our sins are forgiven by God, and through faith in Jesus, eternal life in heaven is waiting for us. That makes us happy. Sometimes we smile through tears, but we can still smile.

Can God help us find happiness? He has already given it to us through Jesus!

In Christ’s Service and Yours,
Pastor Mike Gehl



Worship With Us!

Sundays at 8:00 and 10:30am

Thursdays at 6:30 pm

Bible Classes Sundays at 9:15 am

Christian Parenting Today



Today's Christian Parenting: Avoiding Law-Based Parenting A Forward in Christ article

One of the reasons that I appreciate this [monthly Forward in Christ] column is that it continually reminds me of the importance of balancing law and gospel as a Christian parent. I don't need much encouragement when it comes to laying down the law. Yet I continually search for ways to reflect God's grace in my parenting with the same skill. Our two [contributing writers] this month give solid recommendations on how to do just that.

-Nicole Balza

What purposes does the law serve? Luther's catechism says that the chief purpose of the law is to show our sin, exposing our need for Jesus. The law is a mirror. Because of the Holy Spirit, we can see our sin, turn away from it, and turn to Jesus.

I know that I am often tempted to use the law for much more than that. When I get emotional about something my children did or said that was wrong, I want to throw the law in their faces so they feel badly and stay in that place even after they have confessed and turned to Jesus for forgiveness.

I've learned that law produces guilt and guilt produces behavior modifications. I know my children well enough to push those guilt buttons, and they will immediately change their behavior. And while that looks great on the outside, it doesn't always get to the heart of the matter. And when we don't get to the heart of the matter, the behavior modifications are short-

lived. I become the face of the law. When I'm the face of the law, it works only when I am present.

So what options do we have as parents?

Use the law for its chief purpose—to show them their sin. Now that my children are older, I often don't have to show them their sin. They've already applied the law. They've already turned to Jesus. Instead of throwing it back in their faces, I get to step back and watch grace unfold.

Be the giver of grace. Whether or not I am the one to show the law, I want to shower my children with grace, to remind them that they are so dearly loved. One of my favorite reminders is that there is nothing you can do to make God love you more and there is nothing you can do to make God love you less. You are perfectly loved by God.

Model giving grace to ourselves. Don't live in guilt. Satan is known for using something from God and then twisting it. Satan takes guilt (which is supposed to turn us to our Savior in repentance) and chains us to it. Think about your frame of mind when you feel guilty. You are ineffective, exhausted, and not the person/parent God called you to be. When you feel guilty, use the law and ask yourself, "Am I sinning?" If the answer is yes, then turn away from that sin and turn to Jesus. But often you feel guilty for things that aren't wrong. You believe the lies Satan whispers in your ears and wallow in that guilt.

What does it look like for you to have grace-based parenting? Keep directing your children to follow Jesus—the one thing needed. He's the one who loves our children and us perfectly and unconditionally.

-Jenni Schubring

"How do we resist making our parenting law-based?" There are two ways of looking at the question.

Option 1- As a dad, I have a lot to feel guilty about. I snapped at my son, I reacted in anger at the disrespect,

Article continues on page 7

Upcoming Events

Open House at New Campus

While we have already had our dedication service and have begun using the new campus for many things, there has still been lots to do in the moving process. Progress continues at a great pace, and we would like to invite the public to an open campus on Sunday, August 13th, at 1:00 pm to view the whole building and all the progress that has been made! Invite your friends and family to explore the building, enjoy refreshments, and ask questions of our staff and congregation.



Summer Bash

We continue our summer fun, beginning with the annual Summer Bash (church and school picnic) on August 5th, from 11:00-2:00 at Greenleaf's Firemen Park. This year's event will feature a bounce house, small petting zoo, balloon twister, food, and an entertainer. Check your e-mails if you are interested in donating food items. Be sure to join us for all of the fun!

Summer Play Dates

We will conclude this summer's playdates with our annual summer bash (see above) and August's playdates, which will run as follows:

- Tuesday, August 8th at Tank Park and Splash Pad, Green Bay from 10:00-12:00
- Monday, August 14th at Morrissey Park, Chilton from 12:00-2:00
- Tuesday, August 2nd at Pierce Park, Appleton from 5:00-7:00



School Orientation/ 1st Day of School

To the relief of parents everywhere, it is almost time for students to head back to school! SJLS parents, please make plans to attend one of our two orientation days on August 16th and 17th. Both events will run from 5:00-7:00 pm. Come and meet with your child(ren)'s teacher(s), drop off school supplies, check on needed paperwork, get more information on the upcoming year. Be sure to connect with the teacher if you can't make it either day. Then we will see you for our first day of school on Monday, August 28th! Students should arrive each day by 8:00. Parents and community members are invited to join us for our opening day service at 8:30 pm.

Mark Your Calendars!

- August 5- Summer Bash at Greenleaf Fireman's Park
- August 8- Park Playdate at Tank Park
Monthly Fellowship Luncheon
- August 11- Last Day of Summer Care
Timber Rattlers Game
- August 13- Open House
- August 14- Park Playdate at Morrissey Park
- August 16- School Orientation
- August 17- School Orientation
- August 22- Park Playdate at Pierce Park
- August 28- First Day of School
- September 4- No School (Labor Day)

Church Highlights

Settling in to Our New Worship Space

It was wonderful to have a large group join us for our dedication service last month! We had over 200 people join us in praising God for all his goodness during our building project. If you have not done so yet, join us for regular worship during our new times—Sundays at 8:00 and 10:30 am and Thursdays at 6:30 pm.

Giving Thanks for Continued Help

The BOLD STEPS building project has seen many people giving of their time, talents, and treasures to help it succeed. We continue to push forward as we now turn our attention from the building itself to the rest of the property and the items needed indoors. We are incredibly grateful for all those who are helping to work on landscaping and playground equipment, moving items in from storage, assembling new furnishings, putting together the library, and much more! It has been amazing to see what large groups of people can get done in a short amount of time. Continue to watch your emails for more opportunities to contribute of your time and talents!

For those who would like to contribute from their treasures, you are still welcome to donate to the building project, general funds, or the updated wish list items. Check with the office to find out which items still need funding.

School Highlights

Gearing Up for the Start of School

Summer information has been sent out; parents should have received information regarding our calendar, school supplies, teacher homerooms, and more. Please contact the office or your child's teacher if you are missing any information or have questions before orientation. The new classrooms will be almost completely assembled before the open house on the 13th and the orientation nights, though some early childhood rooms may take longer as the old classrooms and some materials will be in use for summer care through August 11th. This will be a time of adjustments for teachers, new students, and old students alike as we settle in to the new facility and all the opportunities it presents. We are excited to take on all the changes and see everyone once again!



Church and School Birthdays

Happy birthday to our church members celebrating during August!

Aug 3 Dale Laabs	Aug 24 Kristin Pohlman
Aug 4 Rebekah Kraus	Aug 25 Diane Laabs
Aug 5 Owen Raddatz	Aug 26 Rozanne Bohrtz
Aug 6 Lyle Schmidt	Aug 27 Joshua Verbeten
Aug 9 Claire DeMerritt	Aug 31 Marna Johns
Aug 9 Amanda Wingo-Barrett	
Aug 12 Adam Kussow	
Aug 12 Charlene Lemke	
Aug 14 Matthew Van Schyndel	
Aug 16 Mitchell Herlache	
Aug 23 Charlotte Theunis	

Happy birthday to our school students celebrating during August!

Aug 1- Sebastian N.
Aug 1- Jovie S.
Aug 2- Ari V.
Aug 3- Ariana R.
Aug 4- Thea B.
Aug 5- Bekah K.
Aug 5- Owen R.
Aug 9- Claire D.
Aug 10- Ellie S.



Summer Session Fun

While church and school move into the new campus, summer session students have been enjoying the Clay Street school for the final season. Check out these pictures from safety week and other fun times from the last month!



Parenting with Law and Gospel - Article continues from page 3

and I ignored the boy who needed my attention. I'm far from a perfect parent. I know it. God knows it. So the law can sometimes drive me: Do better. Be better. Be more patient. Be more present. Be a better dad.

How do we parents resist being driven by the law? We find peace at the foot of the cross. We know we've messed up as parents. But we also know that we're forgiven by all that Jesus has done. He took away all sin, including our failures as parents. But there's another way of looking at the question.

Option 2- The law gets results. "Do what I say or else (lose your toy, your video games, your phone)" can get my kids to act. It gets results.

But does it really get the results that we want? Threats might get the chore or the homework done, but is that really all we're after? Our goal as parents isn't just controlled behavior but changed hearts and maturity of faith and life. The law can't do that.

I can force my kids into submission with threats of the law, but I would be raising kids who will behave only as long as the threat hangs over their heads. If they think I'm not looking or they can get away with it, they'll rebel.

By using the gospel, I can teach my kids to do the right thing out of love for their Savior. Then they will be subservient to him, eager to live for him in thanksgiving. So . . . how do we resist making our parenting law-based?

A rich devotional life answers both questions. We, and our kids, still need the law to show us where we fail, teach that rebellion against God is not okay, and drive us back to the cross. We, and our kids, always need the gospel to show us how Jesus was perfect in our place and makes us perfect in God's sight, which motivates and empowers us to live for God in thanks.

We find both law and gospel in the Word. So set aside time for personal devotions. Encourage your reading kids to do the same. Set aside time for family devotions. Feel the sting of the law. Then rejoice in the peace the gospel brings.

No parents give grace better than the ones who know that they desperately need it themselves and who know that they have it in Christ. The gospel, not the law, makes us joyful and patient parents and makes godly kids for this life and eternity!

-Rob Guenther

Visit forwardinchrist.net/parents/ for more articles on Christian parenting in today's world.

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