

NEWS FROM ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN

APRIL 2026

FROM THE PASTOR

Christian Zionism: A Lutheran Perspective

One thing that is on everyone's mind right now is the ongoing war in the Middle East between the USA/Israel and Iran.

On the one hand, this kind of thing is nothing new—a tale as old as time, going back centuries.

On the other hand, this time might seem a bit different, in part because of the perceived religious implications of this war.

First, a disclaimer — I am not in a position to offer a political opinion on this war. I am a pastor, not a political commentator. Besides, they are a dime-a-dozen all over the news and the internet.

But what I do want to address is the topic of Christian Zionism, which has become a topic of more consideration over the past several weeks.

For the sake of brevity, I am putting this in the form of a Q&A:

What is “Christian Zionism”?

A religious belief popularizing the modern State of Israel (est. 1948) to be a fulfillment of God's prophecy given to Abraham that awaits its final fulfillment later.

Are Lutherans “Christian Zionists”?

No. Lutherans believe that Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of the Old Testament scriptures, including the prophecy given to Abraham. The existence of the political State of Israel is therefore theologically irrelevant.

Where did the idea of “Christian Zionism” come from?

It was popularized in the 1800s by John Nelson Darby, who denied Jesus to be the fulfillment of the Old Testament, that the Church does not replace Israel, and that the Jewish people must return to Israel before the end of the world can take place.

What is the Dome of the Rock?

The Dome of the Rock is part of the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem. To put it simply, it is contested land. It is the only location in which modern Jews can build their longed-for third

temple (Mount Moriah), and at the same time, the third most holy place in Islam, believed by them to be the location Mohammed was assumed into heaven.

Why is the Dome of the Rock significant?

For many modern religious Jews, it must be destroyed and the Muslim influence eradicated before they can begin construction of a third temple. Remember, the second temple was destroyed in 70 AD, as prophesied by Jesus himself in ([Luke 19:41–44](#)).

Christian Zionists believe the third temple must be constructed in order to usher in the Antichrist, who will bring about the end of the world.

What do Lutherans believe about the temple in Jerusalem?

That the Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed by God (by means of the Roman Emperor) in 70 AD after giving the Jewish people roughly one generation to convert after the resurrection and ascension of Jesus. Remember, the Old Testament system of sacrifices has been ended by the sacrifice once-for-all of Jesus on the Cross. Jesus is the new temple, just as we are the new Israel.

How should we view the modern State of Israel?

Like any other nation, as a political entity. You need not support or oppose it to be a confessing Christian.

For what should we pray?

That the Jewish people would repent and believe in Jesus as the promised Messiah and the one they rejected ([John 14:6](#); [Acts 2:14–41](#)).

That the Muslim people would repent and believe in Jesus as not only a prophet, but as the Christ, the Son of God ([Matthew 16:16](#)).

That the Lord would bring about peace in our land and across the world—and that he would come quickly to bring us, his promised people, into the eternal Jerusalem and the wedding feast which shall have no end.

ST. JOHN'S MEN'S SOFTBALL TEAM

St. John's Men's Softball team is looking for new players for the 2026 Season. We are looking for a few utility players to fill vacancies on the 2026 roster. We play on Monday nights at Cliffside Park against other churches in the Racine area. The season lasts from May through August with end of season playoffs for most teams. The only qualifications are to be male, 14 or older, attend or attended St. John's Church or School and enjoy playing softball. Roster deadline is April 15th. If interested, contact Carl Seils at 498-9357 (call or text)

FELLOWSHIP FRIDAY

Just a note that we will not have a Fellowship Friday get together in April due to Easter! We look forward to getting together again in May when Pastor DeYoung will be making his St. John's famous tacos!!

FEED MY STARVING CHILDREN TRIP

Please join the Stewardship Board on Saturday, April 25 for a spring service field trip to Feed My Starving Children, a Christian organization in Libertyville, Illinois that partners with volunteers to pack life-saving meals for children in need around the world.

Last September, our group packed 80 boxes of food, providing enough meals to feed 127 children for an entire year—that's 46,080 meals! This spring, we're hoping to build on that incredible impact and pack even more.

Our packing session will take place from 2:00–3:45pm. We will meet at the Highway 20 Park and Ride at 12:45pm and caravan together to Libertyville.

This is a meaningful and hands-on opportunity to give back, and we hope you and your family will consider joining us. *Please note: for safety reasons, Feed My Starving Children requires all participants to be at least 5 years old.* Please sign up at <http://www.fmsc.org/join-group?joincode=8762ZB>

CRADLE ROLL PLAYDATE

Stay tuned for upcoming Cradle Roll playdates this month!

LWML ZONE SPRING RALLY

Join the LWML Zone 21, Saturday, April 25 at Good Shepherd Lutheran, 1936 Emery, East Troy for Mission Work helping in the Kingdom of God!

- 9:00 - *Registration & Fellowship followed by Bible study & Learning about Forged by Fire Ministries* - <https://www.weservehope.org/>
- Join in making Crosses for Benny
- special favors for the upcoming
- LWML-SWD Convention in June

Help support Forged by Fire Ministries with your Gifts from the Heart: AMAZON gift cards or go to

<https://www.weservehope.org/resources>

- select the rapid response list
 - select the AMAZON link to have items sent directly to the ministry
-

ALTAR GUILD MEETING

The St. John's Altar Guild will meet on Monday, April 27 at 5:30pm in Fellowship Hall. Dinner will be served. ***This meeting is for all current and new members. If you are interested in learning more about the Altar Guild, you are also invited to attend.*** If you have any questions, please contact Kimberly in the church office at chapman@stjohnsracine.org; (262) 637-7011.

"BIBLE AND BREW" MEN'S STUDY

Our April Bible and Brew Men's Study will take place on Wednesday, April 29 at 8:30pm. This month's study will be held at Pastor Gilbert's house, 501 Augusta.

NEW LEAVES ON THE TREE

Take a look at the new leaves that have been added to our St. John's family leaf tree outside the pastors' offices.

Connie Bernhardt – Baptized – September 16, 1945

In Loving Memory of Patricia Bertermann
P & K Glassen – Ephesians 2:8-9 – United together – 4/20/2018

SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER NEEDED

We are still looking for someone willing to teach our 6-8th grade Sunday School or someone who would be willing to trade off teaching every other week. The material used for the class can be provided by St. John's through Concordia Publishing House. If you'd like to learn more about it, please contact the church office or one of the pastors.

USHERS NEEDED

The Board of Elders is in need of individuals interested in ushering during worship services. Thank you for your prayerful consideration in helping out as an usher. If you would be interested in ushering, contact an elder or Kimberly in the church office; chapman@stjohnsracine.org; (262) 637-7011.

SERMONS ON YOUTUBE

We are now streaming live content through YouTube. The easiest way to watch the sermons live is to subscribe to the channel and turn the notifications on. Our channel can be found by searching "St. John's Lutheran Church and School Racine, WI." Every time a live video is being broadcast, you will get an update and will be able to watch it. The sermons are also archived on the channel, but are now accessible through the tab that says "Live" rather than the "Videos" tab.

CALLING ALL MEN OF ST. JOHN'S

Join Pastor DeYoung and hundreds of men across our Synod in the Memento 70 challenge. This is a call to bodily and spiritual discipline, devotion in the Word of God, and brotherly encouragement. You can find out more about Memento by visiting their website [memento70.com] or by scanning the QR code attached to the church emails, and on flyers posted in the narthex.

TACKLING TOUGH TOPICS

We have an online educational opportunity for you! It is called "Tackling Tough Topics" and will be focused primarily on addressing issues related to the Christian morality, parenting, and marriage from a scriptural perspective. You can find my new page on Substack and on YouTube by searching "Tackling Tough Topics" and following the link or scanning the QR code found on the attached flyer. (A flyer can also be picked up at the back of the sanctuary.) I encourage anyone who is interested to subscribe. If you have any suggestions on topics that you would like to be tackled, please reach out to Pastor DeYoung. This is different way to address relevant topics that I pray will be a blessing to St. John's and the wider church.

FROM YOUR DIRECTOR OR MUSIC – APRIL 2026 NEWSLETTER

The most basic Christian teaching is: "God is love." You can find this message anywhere you look in Scripture, and we probably know where many of these verses are, here is one beautiful passage to meditate on:

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us. 1 John 4:7-12

The fullness of God's love is what we have to proclaim. Let us all be living proof of God's love in an ever-changing world.

*Love's redeeming work is done, Alleluia!
Fought the fight, the battle won, Alleluia!
Death in vain forbids him rise, Alleluia!
Christ has opened paradise, Alleluia!
Lives again our glorious King, Alleluia!
Where, O death, is now thy sting? Alleluia!
Once he died our souls to save, Alleluia!
Where's thy victory, boasting grave? Alleluia!*

Save the Date: On Tuesday, May 26, 2026, our Choral End of Season gathering will be held at Reefpoint Brew House, 6:00 p.m.

Save the Date: On Sunday, June 7, 2026, I will hold a Student Piano Recital beginning at 1:00 p.m.

*We sing Hallelujah, the Lamb of God has
overcome!*

SCHOOL NEWS CORNER

FROM THE PRINCIPAL

They say that April showers bring May flowers- well, I'm not sure what late March blasts of snow are supposed to bring, but we are excited to be heading toward warmer weather and sunnier recesses here at St. John's Lutheran School! Our March was full of Kids' Heart Challenge activities, Dad-Daughter Dances, and Social Studies Fair fun. A big thank you to Naomi Holthaus and all of the NWTa members who gave our students an amazing experience as they learned about weaving, lacemaking, Revolutionary War tactics and more at our recent Social Studies fair!

We will start April off with a celebration of Easter and a nice break, but we will be springing into action once we are back in session. The school will have its accreditation visit on April 19-21- we ask for your prayers that it goes well and the visiting team sees all of the amazing things happening at our school! We also invite you to join us for the 7th and 8th grade Dinner Theater on Saturday, April 25th, as our students present "The Thirty-Three Little Pigs"- tickets will go on sale soon, so watch your email for the flyer. May this Eastertide bring you great joy, and thank you for your continued support of our school!

DINING OUT NIGHT

Join us on Tuesday, April 14 at Chick-fil-A from 4-8pm for our next Dining Out Night. See the flyer attached to this newsletter or pick up a copy in the back of the sanctuary.

BOX TOPS FOR EDUCATION

We have an account with Box Tops for Education. If you would like to help raise funds for our school, please follow the steps below.

- Download the Box Tops for Education app on your phone and create an account.
- You scan your store receipt from the app and submit it. You can also upload a digital receipt. The program will automatically find products that are Box Top eligible.
- You can also link your Walmart account to the Box Tops for Education app, and it will automatically redeem Box Tops points when you shop at Walmart.
- There is a list of eligible products on the app.

Miss Pesch has put an envelope/box by her classroom for store receipts if you are unable to scan your receipts. She'd be happy to scan them for you. If you have any other questions, please let Miss Pesch know.

STEWARDSHIP CORNER – APRIL 2026

April 5 – Easter

Mark 16:6 – “And he said to them, ‘Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here.’” The Good News is not just that Jesus is risen, but that He is risen to bless us — there is no need to be alarmed. He still calls us His friends and brothers and means to bring us through death to resurrection as well. The Lord is risen, He is risen indeed!

April 12 – Second Sunday of Easter (Quasimodogeniti)

John 20:19 – “On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, ‘Peace be with you.’” Jesus spent a lot of His time telling the disciples to not be afraid. Our fears constantly hem us in and prevent us from following the Lord's will. But there is no need to fear. Jesus has conquered. No fear can keep us locked up. We have been set free by Jesus to live lives that declare His marvelous deeds.

April 19 – Third Sunday of Easter (Misericordia Domini)

John 10:16 – “And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice.” The sheep know the Shepherd's voice and delight to go where He leads. Of course, the world, the devil and our own sinful flesh want to pull us in another direction. But following the Shepherd means life, and following anyone else means death. So, no matter how difficult the path, let us follow Him!

April 26 – Fourth Sunday of Easter (Jubilate)

1 Peter 2:11 – “Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul.” Surely one of the “passions of the flesh” we all struggle with is greed. We constantly desire to have more things to bring us comfort and peace of mind. But that shows us the real problem with greed: it wages war against our soul. It urges us to place our trust in the things of this world and not in God. But St. Peter reminds us that in this world, we are sojourners and exiles — we really belong to the kingdom of God. We have been purchased by the blood of Christ and belong to Him.

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

1-Apr	Daniel Feldscher	17-Apr	Bill Badley
1-Apr	Thomas Jaeck	17-Apr	Jerry Konecny
1-Apr	Julie Schaefer	17-Apr	Isabella Petkus
2-Apr	Luke Pringle	18-Apr	Lauren Sollman
3-Apr	Grayson Witek	19-Apr	Evan Dondlinger
4-Apr	Sarah Rieckhoff	19-Apr	Lily Krewal
5-Apr	Herman Blaesing	19-Apr	Samuel Riegelman
5-Apr	Samuel DeYoung	20-Apr	Lori Jaeck
6-Apr	Josie van Sliedrecht	20-Apr	Jacquelyn Kellner
7-Apr	Paula Bruening	21-Apr	Samantha Nelson
7-Apr	Bonnie Liebenow	21-Apr	Shvaughn Paulick
7-Apr	David Monson	22-Apr	Benaiah Hasseldahl
7-Apr	Michael Schweitzer	22-Apr	Susan Kish
9-Apr	Marla Gorelik	24-Apr	Daniel Jaeck
9-Apr	Owen Jozwiak	24-Apr	Henry Miller
10-Apr	Jeff Nelson	25-Apr	Mike Moe
11-Apr	Trisha Balke	25-Apr	April Otto
12-Apr	David Milaeger	27-Apr	Dorothy Miller
13-Apr	Julie Stauffer	27-Apr	Declan Paulick
14-Apr	Mateo Bernal	30-Apr	Laine Beier
16-Apr	Bob Boehler	30-Apr	Mitzi Gamroth
16-Apr	Lisa Bowe	30-Apr	Brandon Kuske
16-Apr	Jenny Gilbert		



We apologize if we have forgotten anyone.
Please contact the church office at 637-7011 to correct.
Thank You!

VANCO MOBILE AND ONLINE GIVING

Giving is easier than ever through St. John's Vanco online or the Vanco Faith mobile app. You can access **Vanco online giving** by going to the St. John's Church and School website; stjohnsracine.org.

Under the church heading, click online giving. This page allows you to give to different church funds. You can choose a one-time contribution or set up recurring contributions through this site. Giving is also available through the **Vanco mobile app**. Vanco, our eGiving provider, has launched an updated mobile app called Vanco Mobile Faith. Downloading the new Vanco Mobile is easy! Head over to the App Store or Google Play to download Vanco Mobile for free.

To use Vanco Mobile, follow these easy steps:

1. Search for our church by entering St Johns Lutheran. Do not use any punctuation, and it is case sensitive
2. Create a new account or login
3. Select your gift amount, fund, and frequency
4. Enter your payment method and click submit to complete your donation.

Please contact Kimberly in the church office if you have any questions about or need assistance with the Vanco online or mobile app giving. chapman@stjohnsracine.org or (262) 637-7011

You can also scan the QR code below to set up electronic giving or make a one-time gift through our church/school website giving page.



ONLINE GIVING CARDS

Giving a tithe or offering online has been available here at St. John's for a number of years. If you participate in this and would like to place something in the offering as it is passed during the service, please pick up one of the laminated cards in the back as you walk in. This is a simple way of showing, especially to children who are watching and learning, the importance of giving to the work of the Lord here at St. John's.

LIFE THOUGHTS FOR LUTHERANS

APRIL 2026

April 5 – The Resurrection of Our Lord – The babe once wrapped in swaddling cloths, the crucified Man wrapped in burial linens on Good Friday is now the Lord of Life risen from the dead! He has died for our sins (1 Corinthians 15:3) and He has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep (1 Corinthians 15:20). He has sanctified every stage of our life from conception to death, even promising resurrection to our mortal bodies (1 Corinthians 15:53). We are not to hasten death, but we also need not fear death because our Redeemer lives (Job 19:25), and in Him shall all be made alive (1 Corinthians 15:22)!

April 12 – Quasimodo Geniti (Easter II) – The disciples locked themselves in the upper room out of fear (John 20:19) ... fear of the unknown, of what might happen. Like the dry bones seen by Ezekiel, fear can leave even the boldest and strongest feeling dried up, crying out, “Our hope is lost” (Ezekiel 37:11). An unplanned pregnancy, a terminal illness, a sudden death—just to name a few—these can leave us feeling like all hope is lost. But the Lord did not leave the disciples in fear without peace, and neither will He leave you. “Peace be with you!” Christ is risen, and in Him is the peace that surpasses all understanding. “Do not disbelieve, but believe” (John 20:27). Jesus knows how to turn death into life and fear into gladness. He has the nail marks to prove it.

April 19 – Misericordias Domini (Easter III) – The lost, the straying, the injured and the weak (Ezekiel 34:16): these are loved by the Lord, and they should also be loved by each of us. The widow, the orphan, the unborn, the single parent, the dying: for these Christ the Good Shepherd lives, as surely as He does for all His sheep. And there are still other sheep to be brought into this fold (John 10:16).

With this in mind, we also seek the lost and work to bring back, bind up, and strengthen fellow lost and wandering sheep, as the Lord gives us opportunity, knowing that Christ has also died for them (1 Peter 2:25) and that His goodness and mercy are for all.

April 25 (St. Mark, Evangelist) – Today we honor “John” Mark (Acts 15:37), the Gospel-writer and missionary companion. He and Paul got off to a poor start. In fact, Mark deserted the team (Acts 13:13)! Yet despite this early failure, this same Mark later proved to be very useful to Paul (2 Timothy 4:11). One’s past, even one’s shameful sins against life like abortion or euthanasia, does not preclude one from service in God’s kingdom. After believing the Gospel of forgiveness and salvation for ourselves (Mark 16:16), we too can become effective evangelists according to our vocations.

April 26 – Jubilate (Easter IV) – The conception and birth of every baby should be cause for joy (John 16:21). Sadly, millions of babies every year are conceived but never born. Either by intentional abortions or unintended miscarriages, joy falls victim to sorrow. A life is lost, and even if the world does not know it, a mother does. In His mercy that never comes to an end (Lamentations 3:22), Christ has died for our sins. He forgives. He will have compassion according to the abundance of His steadfast love (Lamentations 3:32). Now you know sorrow but also know that when Christ appears, you shall be like Him, pure as He is pure (1 John 3:2-3). Then your heart will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you.

SHARING THE JOY OF EASTER

I'm sure we're all ready to say goodbye to March and greet April in anticipation of warmer temperatures, sunny skies, and the fragrance of spring flowers. The same feeling is true as we move from our Lenten reflections to the glorious resurrection of our Lord. The joyful celebration of Easter at St John's is unforgettable. The "Hallelujah Chorus" brings tingles to our spines and the congregational singing of "I know that my Redeemer lives" can reduce any of us to tears of joy.

At this time, there are members of our church family who can't be with us at our Easter services because of the infirmities of age and/or illness. They are now shut-ins. Please consider sharing the "Joy of Easter through our risen Lord" by sending an Easter card or calling them and keeping them in our prayers.

May God bless you!

Julie

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SHUT INS

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