

NEWS FROM ST. JOHN'S

MARCH 2025

FROM THE PASTOR

It isn't new for Elon Musk to be in the news, as he's been a well-known figure for many years and happens to be the wealthiest man alive. His name came up more in the time leading up to the November election. Following the results of that election, and after the inauguration of our nation's 47th President, he seems to be in the news every day. He showed up to a meeting in the Oval Office with his young son, and the images there reminded me of Pastor DeYoung with his son John—although I haven't yet seen John on Pastor DeYoung's shoulders during a service here!

Perhaps it was a surprise when a well-known name drew attention to the Lutheran faith earlier last month. Ready to move with a goal of bringing about significant federal spending cuts, Musk described a large number of payments, totaling a far larger number of dollars, as illegal. Retired General Michael Flynn wrote, "Now it's the 'Lutheran' faith (this use of 'religion' as a money laundering operation must end)," and identified Lutheran Family Services and its affiliated organizations as recipients of billions of American tax dollars.

That's quite a charge, and this is no light matter! Martin Luther, whose name we use as part of our theological identity, suffered many attacks for standing against the Pope and the false teachings of his day. His well-known response at the Diet of Worms (April 16-18, 1521), a meeting established for him to defend his positions or, hopefully for Pope Leo X, to recant them can be found here:

Unless I can be instructed and convinced with evidence from the Holy Scriptures or with open, clear, and distinct grounds and reasoning—and my conscience is captive to the Word of God—then I cannot and will not recant, because it is neither safe nor wise to act against conscience. Here I stand. I can do no other. God help me! Amen.

Our Synod President, Rev. Dr. Matthew Harrison, sent out a letter in response to the charges of Lutherans laundering money. Rather than an emotional or quick reaction, President Harrison took a couple of days before composing that letter. This is a good example for us all, especially when seeing something that we find to be troublesome or worthy of our complaint! Take a breath, take some time, and put the best construction on the words and actions of others! Harrison wrote:

The LCMS is a law-abiding and patriotic church body. We don't invite or support illegal immigration. We don't say much to or about the government. We don't have government contracts. Not one. We leave issues of government to our 1.8 million members and 5,700 active pastors, who act in the civil realm according to their Christian consciences as good citizens.

He went on to clearly state that the LCMS, beginning five years ago, offers no funding to Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services (LIRS), now known as Global Refuge. While he pointed to the many decades of good work done by LIRS while associated with the LCMS, he showed also that over the years its leadership and the actions taken by the organization led to an observable secularization—including the appointment of a Hindu to serve as its president and CEO. It was fitting for them to change their name, and to no longer use the word "Lutheran" in it! Though this sad decision for the LCMS to step away from this organization was necessary, with Luther's appeal to the Christian conscience that is shaped by God's Word alone in mind, it is one that was appropriate. This is the reality of living under the curse of sin, surrounded by the temptation for the Church to fit more in line with the world and its short-sighted brokenness.

It is important to note that while the LCMS is no longer affiliated with Global Refuge, it was a Recognized Service Organization (RSO) of the LCMS for many years. Not only this, but there are also a great number of RSOs that fall under the approval and supervision of the LCMS. Some of them, technically, are included in the charge of "Lutheran money laundering," though this is due to a long history of connections and overlaps with ELCA-tied organizations.

As I consider this accusation, and with some of my own experience with an RSO here in the Racine Circuit of the South Wisconsin District, I find that our best reaction is to look at this as an important warning and call to self-examination. This is nothing new for any of us! Each week as we approach the altar to receive Christ's body and blood, given and shed for us for the forgiveness of our sins, we are to follow St. Paul's call to examine ourselves (**I Corinthians 11:28**) and to confess our sins before the Lord.

If an LCMS RSO, or any church or school that holds an affiliation with the LCMS, is found to be guilty of breaking the law, I hope repentance takes place, as well as the meeting out and acceptance of any temporal or legal consequences follows.

We are called as Christians by our Lord to “...let [our] light shine before others, so that they may see [our] good works and give glory to [our] who is in heaven” (Matthew 5:16). This is a wonderful call to living out our faith, and a rewarding one at that! When we give a bad witness to our faith, it is the world around us that we hurt. When we claim to be Christian or Lutheran, we tarnish the faith and our confession of it as we do not visibly put into practice what we say we believe as the most important part of who we are! Over the last few years, there has been the observation of what is called “mission drift” within organizations and educational institutions of the LCMS. This is applied to Lutherans who call themselves Lutherans but do not stand firmly on what it means to be Lutheran! I pray that the Lord will continue to keep St. John’s grounded in that which Luther cited with his life on the line: The eternal, inerrant, Word of God! It can be confusing and frustrating when those who claim the Lutheran confession as their own—be they individuals, organizations, or educational institutions—go on to water it down or diminish what we believe.

For now, there are perhaps some people you know who associate Lutherans with money laundering. I encourage you to take this with patience, to point out to the LCMS being separate from the ELCA and from LIRS/Global Refuge, and to wait and see how any of this plays out—if even at all. The news cycle moves quickly, and doesn’t often go back to clarify these important theological distinctions. We can go forward with certainty that the Lord remains in control of His Church, and that the LCMS is included in this promise as long as she remains faithful to His Word and what we confess our faith as formed by it!

If you would like to see President Harrison’s full letter, or if you have questions about this development, please be sure to reach out to Pastor DeYoung or me!

In Christ,
Pastor Gilbert

OFFICIAL ACTS

Baptism:
Elijah Joel Hlavacek 2-16-2025

Funeral:
David Krause 2-27-2025

LENTEN DINNERS 2025

Date	Group Serving	Menu	Group Singing
3/5/25	Board of Elders	Mostaccioli	Senior/ Handbell Choir
3/12/25	---	Soup Supper	Oboe/Piano
3/19/25	Senior/ Handbell Choir	Sloppy Joe’s	Piano Solo
3/26/25	-	Soup Supper	Cherub Choir
4/2/25	Board of Trustees	Pulled Pork Sandwiches	Flute/Organ
4/9/25	-	Soup Supper	Children’s Choir/Chime Choir

SOUP SUPPERS

Again this year on the weeks where no group is hosting a Lenten meal, we will be having “Soup Suppers.” ***This Lenten tradition is common in many Lutheran parishes and is a simple meal of soup and crackers/bread.*** Kimberly will have a sign-up online to bring a soup (you may also call the church office). ***This meal will be self-serve; disposable bowls, plates, cups, utensils, and decaf coffee will be provided. There is no group assigned to clean up anything that isn’t disposable. We ask that you take the vessel in which you brought your soup when you leave, along with whatever contents remain.*** Feel free to bring your own beverages if you want to drink something other than water or coffee. If you have any questions, please contact Kimberly Chapman in the church office. The links for the three soup suppers are listed below if you would like to sign up to bring a soup.

Wednesday, March 12

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/9040B4ACA62EA3FB6-55085389-lenten#/>

Wednesday, March 26

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/9040B4ACA62EA3FB6-55085513-lenten#/>

Wednesday, April 9

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/9040B4ACA62EA3FB6-55085500-lenten#/>

"BIBLE AND BREW" MEN'S STUDY

Our February Bible and Brew Men's Study will take place on Wednesday, March 26 at 8:30pm. This month's study will be held at Pastor Gilbert's house, 501 Augusta Street.

FELLOWSHIP FRIDAY

We will not have Fellowship Friday events in March and April! Please join us at one of the Lenten dinners or Soup Suppers on Wednesdays during Lent.

FEED MY STARVING CHILDREN TRIP

Please join the Stewardship Board on Saturday, April 12th, for a spring field trip to Feed My Starving Children, a Christian organization in Libertyville, Illinois that utilizes volunteers to pack meals for children in need around the world.

Our group travelled to Feed My Starving Children twice in 2024. If you attended both times, individually you packed almost 1,200 meals!!!

Last September, our group was part of packing 122 boxes of food, which will feed 193 children for an entire year. That is 70,272 meals...and we are hoping to see those numbers grow this spring!!

Our packing time is from **2:00 pm - 3:45 pm**. We plan to meet at the Park and Ride on Highway 20 and leave at 12:45 pm to caravan down to Libertyville.

This is a wonderful opportunity to give back - we hope that you and your family will be able to join us. *Please Note: For safety reasons, Feed My Starving Children does require that anyone participating is at least 5 years old.*

Please sign up at <http://www.fmsc.org/join-group?joincode=N8NXGG>

EASTER FLOWERS

Flowers to decorate the church for Easter are available by signing the sheet posted in the narthex or by calling or emailing the church office. (chapman@stjohnsracine.org, (262) 637-7011) Flowers available this year are hyacinths, daffodils, tulips, and Easter lilies at \$14.00 each. Checks should be made payable to "St. John's Altar Guild." Sunday, March 23 is the last day to sign up for Easter flowers. You may take your flowers home after the 10:15 a.m. Easter service.

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 or have questions, please contact Kimberly in the church office at chapman@stjohnsracine.org; (262) 637-7011.

FROM YOUR DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

Alleluia Farewell

Ash Wednesday, March 5th, our Senior Choir will present *Farewell to Alleluia/Alleluia, Song of Sweetness* written by Donald Busarow. Donald Busarow dedicated this SATB Choir, Organ, Oboe (with optional congregation) to Barry Bobb, a published composer of choral and organ music.

The choral piece is a very solemn plaintive choral setting of the traditional "Alleluia, Song of Sweetness", using the familiar tune, *Picardy*. It is a custom that a 'farewell to Alleluia' symbolizes our voluntary restraint of praise during Lent. On his original score, Busarow titled this anthem, *Alleluia Farewell*, but was retitled, *Farewell to Alleluia/Alleluia, Song of Sweetness* and published by Concordia Publishing House.

Listen to the words! The first two stanzas express the eternal joy of singing Alleluia. Stanza three expresses the solemn time during Lent and that we no longer will sing our joyful Alleluia. Stanza four, reassures us that because of what Jesus did for us on the cross, we look forward to eternal life and joyful singing of Alleluia - forever!

Join me on Sunday, June 8, 2025, for a Student Piano Recital beginning at 1:00 p.m in the Sanctuary.

Blessings to you all throughout this Lenten season. Sharon Adel

'Yet even now,' declares the Lord, "return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; . . . Return to the Lord Your God . . . (Joel 2:12-13)

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

1-Mar	Julia Kellner	17-Mar	Stephanie Peterson
1-Mar	Sutton Schaefer	17-Mar	Robert Pirk
2-Mar	Lisa Hlavacek	18-Mar	Terrel Tigges
3-Mar	Scott Schweitzer	18-Mar	Jan Vuvunas
4-Mar	Scott Albright	19-Mar	Janice Albright
5-Mar	McKenna Bowe	19-Mar	Christopher Nelson
5-Mar	Amanda Knoell	20-Mar	Michael Bennett
5-Mar	Nathan Knoell	20-Mar	Karalynn Franke
6-Mar	Jean Adel	20-Mar	Daniel Palenik
6-Mar	Evan Kotowski	20-Mar	Penny Paulson
6-Mar	Erhard Reimann	21-Mar	Caleb Jozwiak
7-Mar	Timothy Boeselager	21-Mar	Gary Miller
7-Mar	Rodney Darge	22-Mar	Ethan Schaefer
7-Mar	Lisa Eickhorst	23-Mar	Annistyn Anzalone
8-Mar	Marianne Gilbert	23-Mar	Richard Pierce-Ruhland
8-Mar	Theodore Patzke	23-Mar	Kristen Polack
9-Mar	Kathleen Gunderson	24-Mar	Tim Beier
10-Mar	Lydia Balke	24-Mar	Liliana Kading
10-Mar	Emily Grant	24-Mar	Adam Schneider
11-Mar	Amber Davis	25-Mar	Tim Busarow
13-Mar	Olivia Terselic	25-Mar	John Krenzke
14-Mar	Grace Block	25-Mar	Scott Miller
14-Mar	Patricia Cole	26-Mar	Matthew Nelson
14-Mar	Owen Kotowski	27-Mar	Brooklynn Christensen
15-Mar	Mara Douglas	27-Mar	Gavin Moser
15-Mar	Vanessa Luther	27-Mar	Whitney Riegelman
15-Mar	Dennis Polak	29-Mar	Madison Kuske
15-Mar	Nancy Rooney	29-Mar	Jessica Schuler
15-Mar	Mark Schaefer	30-Mar	Timothy Beuschel
17-Mar	Nancy Blaesing	30-Mar	Cherie Mayrand



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

SCHOOL NEWS CORNER

FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Even though February is the shortest month of the year, it is always an active one around St. John's. We kicked off the month with an exciting Cougar Classic basketball tournament, and then launched into our Kids Heart Challenge campaign, raising almost \$6,000 to help people affected by heart disease. Thank you to all who helped make those events successful! We have a blood drive coming up on February 27th, and then it's full steam ahead into the warmer months! After some chillier weather these past weeks and even a snow day, our students look forward to the promise of spring as we head into March. Thank you to all of our congregation members for their continued support of our school!

DINING OUT AT GEORGIE PORGIE'S

Join us for our next Dining Out Night at Georgie Porgies, 5502 Washington Avenue from 4-8pm on Tuesday, March 18. Show the flyer attached to the March newsletter or pick up a copy in the back of the sanctuary. Thanks for supporting this tasty fundraiser!

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

STEWARDSHIP CORNER - MARCH 2025

March 2 – Quinquagesima

Luke 18:35 – “As he drew near to Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging.” Who is not a beggar? All that we have is a gift of God. We are all beggars before Him. Knowing this can leave us with nothing but thankfulness in our hearts. And this thankful acknowledgment of all the Lord’s gifts is also what forms the basis of our own generous giving.

March 5 – Ash Wednesday

Matthew 6:19–21 – “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” What more is there to say about stewardship beyond this? These are the words of our Lord Jesus, and we would do well to heed them, for they flow from His heart of love.

March 9 – Lent 1

Matthew 4:7 – “Jesus said to him, ‘Again it is written ...’” Isn’t it interesting that Jesus does not defeat Satan with His power as God, but rather by His perfect obedience in His perfect humanity? Jesus defeats Satan not by miracles, but by quoting the Scriptures and living according to them. This should cause us great joy for two reasons. First, because we see Jesus win the victory for us. Second, because here Jesus shows us how to stand in that victory: on the Word of God alone. Let us build our lives on the sure rock of this Word!

March 16 – Lent 2

Matthew 15:27 – “Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table.” Faith receives what God gives, because faith knows that God only gives good things. Indeed, God has given us so much more than just the crumbs that fall from the table — He has given us life, salvation, body and soul, eyes and ears, possessions and income. That’s where our stewardship starts: with faith in the God who is the greatest Giver.

March 23 – Lent 3

Luke 11:21–22 – “When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are safe; but when one stronger than he attacks him and overcomes him, he takes away his armor in which he trusted and divides his spoil.” Jesus is stronger than Satan and He disarms him for us. But Jesus has disarmed Satan in a most unusual way: He has disarmed him by allowing Satan to cast all his weapons into Jesus. Satan has nothing left to attack us with — he spent it all on Jesus. And now Jesus is our Stronger Man. He guards and keeps us and ours, and we have none to fear.

March 30 – Lent 4

John 6:5 – “Jesus said to Philip, ‘Where are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?’” Why does Jesus ask Philip this question? Of course Jesus knows the answer already — He knows how He means to care for His people. The Lord provided, and He still provides. But we need to know this, and so Jesus gets Philip thinking about it. The knowledge that the Lord provides frees us for generosity without fear.

LIFE THOUGHTS FOR LUTHERANS – MARCH 2025

March 2 – Quinquagesima – The God of the Scriptures displays a decided preference for precisely the kind of lives our world despises. He devotes particular attention to infants and elderly persons (Psalm 146:9), with no thought for who might find them “unwanted” or “burdensome.” Can we invite one another and our neighbors to look beyond outward appearances (1 Samuel 16:7) and behold the blessings He has invested in every human life?

March 9 – Lent I (Invocabit) – God’s redemption of all humankind begins in the woman’s womb (Genesis 3:15). Jesus sanctifies every age and stage of our existence and development. He also sees and knows the hardships of life issues because He lives among us (Hebrews 4:15). And the victory Jesus gives over suggestions to attempt death as a solution (Matthew 4:6) free us to leave life-and-death decisions to our Heavenly Father.

March 16 – Lent II (Reminiscere) – What “rejoicing” (Romans 5:3) can we do when abuse, abandonment, and poverty complicate pregnancy? What “hope” (Romans 5:4) can we have when terminal illness takes a loved one’s faculties, functions, and future? Just this: God does not fail to bless in the wrestlings (Genesis 32:26-29), and the Lord Jesus who loves those labeled less-than-human (Matthew 15:26-28) will keep our life, whether coming or going, immediately and eternally.

March 23 – Lent III (Oculi) – The heart of Christianity is proclaiming Gospel promises courageously. Prophet Jeremiah (Jeremiah 26:8) follows the lead of Jesus Himself in speaking of God’s truth and Christ’s love even when unpopular. They believe their lives—and everyone else’s—belong in the Heavenly Father’s hands above all. Gospel-motivated voices For Life, take note: surely the Lord has sent you to speak it (Jeremiah 26:15), without accommodation or compromise!

March 30 – Lent IV (Laetere) – The earliest church found no delight in giving themselves over to radical autonomy. Instead they invested in fellowship and community that accompany each other rather than abandoning in time of need (Acts 2:44). What joy to recognize every human life as a heavenly gift (Isaiah 49:8)! Let us advocate for all those around us to receive this abundance (John 6:11-12) Incarnate God brings among us.

Thinking About Our Shut-ins:

LENTEN THOUGHTS and THOUGHTS OF OUR SHUT-INS

Lent is a time of reflection and repentance and shows us our separation from God. Our shut-ins, whether in the season of Lent, or any other season, often feel a separation from their church...from us! As we reflect on Christ's sacrifices during the Lenten season, please sacrifice a moment to pray for the shut-ins of our congregation. Consider the sacrifice of your time for them as well, with a visit, a phone call, a card and your continuing prayers. A suggestion, send them your favorite Lenten hymn. Let them know why it's so important to you, and then, let them know how important THEY ARE to you and all of us at St John's!

God bless your efforts!

God bless our shut-ins!

Julie Hagen (Cell phone 262-331-0052)

Julie_hagen@hotmail.com

SHUT INS

Name	Address	Phone Number
Ann Beckett	6603 Medley Drive, Racine, WI 53402	
Pat Cole	6551 Mariner Drive, Unit 6, Racine, WI 53406	
Sue Erickson	9311 Angelica Drive Sturtevant WI 53177	
Gary & Shirley Filicetti	4710 N Main St, Racine, WI 53402	
Janet Fisa	McMynn Tower 110 7th St, Racine, WI 53403 Room #904	
Marcella Geyer	3139 Conrad Drive, Racine, WI 53404	
Gail Gotch	1916 Wisconsin Avenue, Apt. 359, Racine, WI 53403	
Joanne Griffin	3920 N. Green Bay Road, Rm. 74, Racine, WI 53402	
Mimi Hynek	5321 Douglas Avenue, Apt. 1156A, Racine, WI 53402	
Susan Monson	418 Shoreland Drive, Racine, WI 53402	
Kathy Patzman	5404 Idlewood Drive, Racine, WI 53402	
Linda Puchter	8600 Corporate Drive, Rm. 18, Mt. Pleasant, WI 53406	
Joanne Ruble	1108 N. Sunnyslope #104, Racine, WI 53406	
Judy Schweitzer	5643 Erie Street, Room 247, Racine, WI 53402	
John Smith	1636 Raintree Lane, Racine, WI 53406	