

The Epistle

MAY 2023

**St. John's Lutheran
Red Bud, Illinois**

**Church: 508 Bloom Street
618/282-2394**

**School: 808 South Main Street
618/282-3873**

618-282-4087 (fax)

office@stjohnsredbud.org

www.stjohnsredbud.org

Worship: Saturdays at 5 p.m.

Sundays at 8 and 10:30 a.m.

Christian Education Hour:

Sundays from 9:30-10:15 a.m.

We preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ, administer the sacraments and provide Christian education in service to all people.

Rev. Mark A. Nebel, Senior Pastor

Rev. Brian Nowak, Associate Pastor

Mrs. Lindsey Hudak, Director of Parish Music

Mr. Justin Palm, Principal

Mr. William Becker, Director of Christian Education

Mrs. Amanda Falkenhain, Daycare Director

From Lutheran Church Charities

"Are You Producing for God?"

(Jesus said) "You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last.

Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in My name." *John 15:16*

Ever wonder how some people are able to accomplish so much? What makes them so productive? Fast-forward to the end of your own life. What will it take for you to be able to say, 'I led a productive life. I accomplished what I set out to do'? What do you consider to be a productive life? More importantly, do you know God's definition of a productive life?

Let's consider what it means to be a fruitful Christian. The word 'fruit' occurs sixty-six times in the New Testament. Three different kinds of fruit are referred to: the kind we eat – figs and grapes; biological fruit – infants; and spiritual fruit – Christ-like character. The Bible defines this spiritual fruit as nine things: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (see *Galatians 5:22-23*). Now you know the kind of fruit that God wants produced in your life. That's how *He* defines a productive life.

Jesus said, *'This is to My Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be My disciples' (John 15:8)*. The proof that you are a disciple of Jesus is that you bear spiritual fruit. Perhaps you're a good 'fruit inspector' when it comes to examining the lives of others. But what kind of fruit is growing in your own life? Are you growing more carnal and fleshly or more Christ-like? To know how fruitful you are, examine what's *growing* in your life. If you like what you see, keep doing what you're doing. If you don't, get down on your knees and pray, 'Father, help me to bring forth fruit that glorifies You.'

Prayer: Dear heavenly Father, by Your Holy Spirit move me to bring forth the fruits of faith that glorify You and further Your will for my life in Jesus' precious Name. Amen.

Welcome to Our Family of Faith

April 16 Baptism of Grace Leigh Langrehr

April 22 Baptism of Hadalee Renee Crafton

Your Pastors' Ponderings

Thank you to all those who kindly and graciously remembered my birthday in April with your cards, gifts and well-wishes. I praise God for your goodness and support of our shared ministry together in Jesus' name!

The above devotion is based on words of Jesus recorded in the Gospel of John that are very key to a study we are doing in Sunday morning Adult Bible Class on "The Gospel of Eternal Election and Predestination."

There are two things that we learned in our first lesson on this topic. As we elect people to political office in order for them to serve the public, God elects us to be His people in order for us to do something for Him. He does not call us to saving faith in Jesus so that we just sit around in this life waiting for His angels to take us to heaven. We are to bear the fruits of Spirit-given faith for a godly influence on the world around us.

Secondly, God elects us to be part of a community. He does not call us to be hermits who keep to ourselves. Instead, God places us into a family of faith, a Christian congregation, to work with one another, empowered by the Holy Spirit through God's Word and Sacraments, to make our calling and election sure.

We will continue this study during the Sundays in May. Please join us in the Fellowship Hall on Sundays from 9:30 to 10:15 a.m. to learn more about this important teaching of our Christian faith.

Your servant in Christ, Pastor Mark Nebel

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Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,

HE HAS RISEN!!

HE HAS RISEN INDEED, ALLELUIA!!

I pray this letter finds everyone doing well, staying active, and healthy. I hope everyone had a joyous and happy Easter, an extra special Easter filled with peace. Peace in the ability to spend time with family and loved ones we may not have seen in a while. Peace in being able to take a little time to relax. Peace in being able to attend a Christian worship service. Peace in knowing that our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ conquered the grave for us who believe in Him as our Savior of all. Peace in knowing that the day is coming when Christ will return and we will live with him together in Paradise together ... forever.

The saying goes, "April showers bring May flowers." I think we can agree that we have had enough rain this April. We also experienced some beautiful weather. Let us pray that this saying proves true. Not just for all of the beautiful flowers. But let us pray that this proves true for all of this country's hard-working farmers and the crops that they plant. We pray that the Lord would bless them and the crops they plant. We pray that the Lord will show His abundance and glory in this year's crops. As He shows us His abundance in our lives, may we, in turn, show abundance back to Him in our first fruit offerings.

As the weather starts to change, my family and I are looking forward to making some beautiful improvements to the landscaping around the parsonage in Baldwin this year. Who knows, maybe we will even have time to watch a CUBS / CARDINALS game on the television together. GO CUBBIES!!

Hallelujah that the "Alleluia" has returned. I do not know about you, but I am certainly glad that they are back. I have missed them. Now, we enter into a joyous and glorious season of new life. A 50-day season of celebration where the Alleluias have returned to our worship services. A time of fresh life. Yes, the season is a 50-day celebration, yet on the 40th-day, we celebrate and observe Jesus' ascension into heaven. Do you notice a significance to the number 40 in the Bible?

I pray that this Easter Season is one of happiness and celebration as we celebrate the greatest gift of all. The gift that we have been given through the conquering of sin, death, and the devil of our Lord Jesus Christ. FOR US!!!!

God's blessings to you, Associate Pastor Brian Nowak

We Bid a Fond Farewell

April 3 Death of JoAnn Kunkel

April 3 Transfer of Sophie Richards to Trinity, Prairie

April 17 Death of Fern Schnepel

Midweek Bible Classes

Our midweek Bible classes are Wednesday Morning (9:30 a.m.) Women ("Be Still and Know"); Wednesday 7:30 p.m. (1st Chronicles) and Thursday 7:15 a.m. (Matthew). Men's Bible Breakfast will meet on the first and third Saturdays (6th and 20th) this month at 7 a.m. We are studying the Old Testament book of Proverbs, "God's Ancient Wisdom for Our Modern Living."

Open Houses in St. John's Fellowship Hall

On Saturday, May 20, 2-4 p.m. we will celebrate Carl and Flo Zschiegner's 65th wedding anniversary which they will observe on May 11. In lieu of gifts, please share a note of your fond memories with this couple.

On Sunday, May 21, the 80th birthday of Loren Harms will be celebrated from 2-4 p.m. with your presence being the only present requested.

Adult Instruction

Those who are interested in learning the doctrines of the Christian faith as taught in the Lutheran Church are welcome to contact Pastor Nebel to take part in an information class leading to the Rite of Confirmation and communicant membership at St. John's for those who so desire. This class will meet once a week for 12 weeks based on the schedule of class members.

Sunday School and Bible Classes

Our international mission project this year is Bible Books for Families in Ukraine through Lutheran Heritage Foundation. LHF has been translating and printing a variety of Bible storybooks and the Small Catechism for families in Ukraine. Only \$5 provides a Ukrainian family with a Bible storybook, Small Catechism, or other Bible resource in their language!

Martin Luther translated the Holy Bible into the German language for more people to read it. Now your \$5 helps LHF translate Luther's *Small Catechism* and Bible storybooks into the Ukrainian language for children and youth to read. Many Lutheran children have lost their belongings and are now refugees due to the war of this past year. There also are tens of thousands of unchurched refugee children who could receive these books.

To support this project, please include these people in your prayers. Place your financial gift in an envelope marked "Books for Ukraine" and put it into an offering plate at church or mail it to our office. Thank you!

Kindergarten Screening for 2023-24 school year will be on May 24-25. Please call our school office to schedule an appointment for your child on those dates. Thank you!



Sunday School students are pictured with their mission project to collect money to support Lutheran Heritage Foundation and Christian books for Ukrainian children.



Mrs. Nebel's 4th grade day school class dedicated their mission project in March to Bible Books for Families in Ukraine. Thank you for your support in raising \$1,173.72.

Music CDs Available

St. John's member Joan Voges offers music CDs from her Lilyfields Collection to us for a donation to our school's ministry. All of her Lilyfield CDs are available on the table in the Fellowship Hall for a \$10 donation to our school ministry.

Former St. John's member Bryan Perdue has made his latest CD of music, "Freely Given, Freely Received," available for us to purchase. The \$10 will be used for our congregation's Debt Reduction. They are on the table in the Fellowship Hall.

Cindy Steele Retirement Congratulations

On Sunday, May 7, St. John's will observe the upcoming retirement of our Pre-School teacher Cindy Steele after 30 years of teaching at St. John's. There will be an invitation-only dinner from noon to 1 p.m. in the school's old gym followed by an Open House with cake and cookies from 1-3 p.m. All school children are invited to sing at 1:15 p.m. A stained-glass window has been put up in the main lobby of the school in honor of her great service to St. John's.

GOD'S BLESSINGS TO YOU!

Special Events on Thursday, May 18

Thursday, May 18 is forty days after the resurrection of Jesus from the dead on Easter Sunday. We will hold a Holy Communion service at 8:30 a.m. in the church sanctuary. Instead of our planned evening Holy Communion service we will hold the graduation of our 27 8th graders that evening at 7 p.m. in our school's old gym.

From the Principal's Pen

Our school attended the Regional Office of Education Monroe/Randolph Co. Spelling Bee on April 20. The students who represented our school were Blaine Rohlfing, Ella Cowell and Karleigh Liefer. We congratulate Blaine for taking 3rd place at the 5th grade level and Karleigh for taking 3rd place at the 7th grade level. We thank those students and parents who took the time to participate in this academic event.

The 8th grade students, parents and guests travelled to Washington DC and other historic sites from April 14 - 21. The 8th grade students were privileged to see Wright Patterson Air Force Museum, Flight 93 Visitors Center, Gettysburg, sites in DC included getting back into The National Cathedral and Capitol buildings. We also were able to take a picture outside the south lawn of the White House. We visited The Museum of the Bible and all the memorials, National Archives, and Library of Congress. We did add the Louisville Slugger Museum as our last stop. Our trip was from April 14-21. We had 67 total people. The largest group ever to have been on the trip.

We thank our PTL for planning Teacher and Staff Appreciation the week of May 8-12. We are blessed to have such support from our school PTL and congregation.

The students are happy to be back to normal with having field trips. Grades four and five will attend Weather Bash at Busch Stadium on April 19, grades six and seven will go to the Fox Theater and Fitz's for lunch but are awaiting details from the Fox Theater, grades Kindergarten and one will visit the Zoo on May 11 and grades two and three will visit the Science Center on May 8. Eighth grade will also make a trip to the Seminary on May 15 and travel to Perry Co. Missouri, on May 16. As you can tell, we have some very busy weeks ahead.

Our students have had some warm and some cold days for track meets. However, the runners have been red hot when performing. They competed in the Okaw Valley Conference Meet on April 12 with the girls' team scoring 71 points and a 1st place finish and the boys scoring 124 points and nearly 50 point margin of victory. Looking back at conference records this is the first time both boys and girls have gotten 1st in the same year. The girls and

boys team also competed Red Bud Catholic Track Meet on April 22; the day after returning from the 8th grade trip. However, the boys were still able to earn 1st place scoring 137 points and the girls earned 3rd place by scoring 55 points. The season has been fun and we have had eight students qualify for Lutheran State on May 20 and 21st; we hope to represent the school well.

(below) Pictured back row: Max Voss, Lucas Summers, Easton Ruebusch, Ty Voss, Landon Ruebusch, Lucas McCarthy, Brayden Schlesinger, Barrett Wagner, Blayton Sutton, Connor Bumann, Ian Moll, Blaine Rohlfling, Colton Alber, Henry Sachtleben, and Jack Sachtleben Front Row: Elle Sutton, Amelia Cheek, Sophia Zieger, Jenna Whelan, Jozlynn Palm, Maya Macbeth, Julia Whelan, Mallory Arbeiter, Cailyn Wilson, and Emily Farmer Not Pictured Alan Wolter.



Our Sports Awards night will be May 17 in the old gym. The last day of school for the 2022-2023 school year will be May 22. Graduation will take place on May 18 at 7 p.m. in the old gym. The faculty will make plans for the upcoming year on May 24-26. Registration/Book Night will take place on Wednesday, July 12, from 4-7 p.m.

The first year is coming quickly to a close and I can not believe how fast it has gone. The business of the school year really makes time fly and I look forward to summer and a time of preparation and planning for the 2023-2024 school year. We will welcome three new teachers; Kristen Sachtleben as our part-time junior high math teacher, Heather Nowak as our preschool teacher, and Kristy Young as our Resource Teacher who will also help as a reading specialist. We hope to make some exciting changes to help educate every child at the highest level and will start the year off with a big event; hosting the Day of Spiritual Renewal for the S. Illinois District.

May the Lord bless and strengthen you, Mr. Justin Palm

Attention Coffee Drinkers

We are part of Community Coffee's program, "Cash for Schools." Clipping the proof of purchase off packages of ground coffee and/or K cups earns our school rewards. You can drop off proof of purchases at the school office. Thank you for using this program to benefit our school.



Former principal Deitt Schneider and DCE Bill Becker stand with our 8th grade students next to the statue of Martin Luther outside the chapel of the Lutheran seminary in Gettysburg (not an LCMS school).

May Servers

Flowers: Vernitta Wolter and Pam Stellhorn
 Paraments: Ella Hemmer Cloths: Lynn Langrehr



Nashville-based Lutheran Christian singer Jennie Williamson performed in concert for excited St. John's school students on the afternoon of March 31. That evening she provided a concert for over 100 adults and children in the new gym. She is relocating her ministry to Perry County, Missouri.

Thank You!

"Thank you for participating in the Baby Bottle Project. Forty-three of 50 St. John's bottles have been returned with \$1138.19. We appreciate every dollar you donated. It all makes a difference in our clients' lives."

The Board of Directors and staff of Life Network

High School Bible Class- Mr. Becker's Classroom

Sundays from 9:30 to 10:15 a.m.

From Your Director of Christian Education

He is risen! He is risen indeed alleluia! The month of May is upon us! As I reflect on the inaugural eighth grade trip as tour director, I am thankful for the 26 students, 41 guests, and families that were blessed with many wonderful experiences the week of April 14-21. We will have a picture in the North County News soon with all of the guests and our Representative Mike Bost. Instead of the article that students usually write I am compiling the class work that the students have been working on in a new form using a QR code and link to see all of the stops we made in a Google Presentation. I want to thank Deitt Schneider for coming along as this was the largest group that has gone on the trip. We had two buses! Deitt's knowledge especially in D.C. has assured me that with more experience "everything will be just fine!"

St. John's is losing another faithful and dedicated teacher as Cindy Steele has decided to retire after 30 years. I praise God for the many years we have spent together in His ministry here serving the children and families of St. John's Lutheran.

We will have a large group Sunday school class Memorial Day weekend on May 28 at school. We will meet in the school cafeteria on this day. I would like to thank the faithful group of teachers, helpers, and school board members that serve our students in this wonderful ministry. Summer Sunday school will be held in the main lobby of the school beginning June 4 at 9:30 a.m.

We will host Vacation Bible School on June 12-16 from 9-11 a.m. at the Fellowship Hall and church. Lots of helpers, volunteers, and teachers will be needed! Watch for on-line registration soon. The WE DO LEGO Stem Camp will be July 10-14 in the school's science room.

Serving our risen Lord, DCE Bill Becker

Junior Youth

Our May event is a trip to SkyZone in Fairview Heights on Saturday, May 13. **Drivers/Chaperones Are Needed!** We will meet at 9 a.m. in our school parking lot. Our Jump Time is from 10-11:30 a.m. *TIME SUBJECT TO CHANGE* A 90-minute jump is \$22.99 per jumper plus the cost of the jump socks @ \$3.99 per pair. We will pay for our jump as we arrive. Online waivers must be signed by parents for students to attend. There is also a small arcade and concession stand for drinks and snacks.

Stephanie Valleroy

Senior Youth

Thank you to everyone who came to enjoy our Easter Breakfast! Our May meeting will be moved up a week to May 7th since the following week is Mother's Day.

Our Senior Youth is selling greeting cards (all occasions) for \$1. Cards are on display in the Fellowship Hall. We are using an honor system for payment. A money box is next to the card display. We also have full boxes of greeting cards for sale. They cost \$30 for 30 cards and a lovely storage box. *Stephanie & Kirk Liefer*

Evening Guild News

Desserts: St. John's is hosting the Southern Illinois District Pastors' Conference on Tuesday, May 2. Our Evening Guild will serve desserts and needs donations. Please bring them to the church kitchen that day by 11 a.m.

Dutch Treat Night will be Tuesday, May 16, 6 p.m. at Lisa's Market Street Grille in Prairie du Rocher. Lisa is preparing a roast pork buffet dinner with drinks for \$16. Devotions will be by Brenda Gilpatrick followed by a business meeting. Join us for an evening of fellowship.

Quilting for May is Tuesdays from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and Wednesdays from 9 a.m. to noon in the quilting room.

Baldwin Sight Center: Volunteer your time to help make large print books at the Baldwin Center on the 2nd & 4th Thursdays of May (11th and 25th). Call Mary Ann Wegener (618-282-2839) or come to the church parking lot at 1 p.m.

Men's Club

The Mens Club will meet on Thursday, May 11 @ 6:30 in the storage building behind church. The evening will begin with a fish-fry.

Risen Christ Hymn Festival

One of the hallmarks of Lutheranism has been dedicated congregational singing. The Lutheran Church has been known as the "Singing Church!" Celebrate that powerful heritage! On Sunday, May 7, at 3 p.m., Zion Lutheran in Mascoutah will host a "Risen Christ Hymn Festival." This hymn festival is the book-end to the "Christ Triumphant Hymn Festival" held at Zion Lutheran in Belleville last November. We will sing many of the great hymns of the Easter season. Between the hymns, we will hear commentaries from Dr. Jon Vieker, the Dean of the Chapel at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, who previously was an assistant to LCMS President Matthew Harrison and a leader of the LCMS Commission on Worship. Come sing our joy found in Christ's resurrection! Zion is at 101 S. Railway St. in Mascoutah.

Church Professional Careers

Concordia Seminary in St. Louis is offering *Vocatio* on its campus from June 24 to July 1. Do you know someone entering 9th-12th grades who is interested in a church professional career? This is an opportunity to spend time experiencing seminary life, learning from professors and engaging in thoughtful conversation about faith, vocation and God's calling to ministry. The deadline to register is May 27. For more information, email admit@csf.edu or call 1-800-822-9545.

Camp Trinity in New Haven, Missouri offers an Academy from July 16-21 for boys going into 8th grade through those just graduated from high school who are interested in attending seminary or just want to learn more theology. Campers will be introduced to theological study in the morning, including library time, with afternoon activities that include the pool, hiking, fishing, campfires and softball. The cost is \$135 per camper and adult chaperone. For more information visit camptrinity.org or email Pastor Andrew Preus at ajpreus@gmail.com with the subject line "Camp Trinity Academy."

Financial Need For Medical Treatment

St. John's member and Red Bud High School senior Ashlynn Crafton is battling leukemia. We can provide some financial assistance for her treatments at her GoFundMe account <https://gofund.me/3579ba87> or at an account set up with Buena Vista National Bank Account #272745. Thanks for helping her during this trying time.

Acolyte Schedule

Sat. May 6	5 p.m. Olivia Valleroy
Sun. May 7	8 a.m. Eve Schwartzkopf 10:30 a.m. Maya Macbeth
Sat. May 13	5 p.m. Addie Rahn
Sun. May 14	8 a.m. Brody Stellhorn 10:30 a.m. Olivia Candler
Thu. May 18	8:30 a.m. Landon Kilpatrick
Sat. May 20	5 p.m. Kendall Crafton
Sun. May 21	8 a.m. Charlie Muench 10:30 a.m. Sage Pensoneau
Sat. May 27	5 p.m. Hollis Wolfmeier
Sun. May 28	8 a.m. Claire Carnahan 10:30 a.m. Macie Brown

If you are not able to serve when scheduled, please switch with another acolyte and contact our office with the change. Thanks!

Calling All Graduates! Please contact our church office with the names of St. John's members who are graduating this year from any level of education.

Worship Greeters

Sat. April 29	5 p.m. Stanley and Lynn Langrehr
Sun. April 30	8 a.m. Kalin and Kathy Liefer 10:30 a.m. Jim and Judy Guebert
Sat. May 6	5 p.m. Ron and Diane Kunkelmann
Sun. May 7	8 a.m. Cindy Steele and Olivia Schmitz 10:30 a.m. Gerald and Jill Hanebutt
Sat. May 13	5 p.m. Virginia and Mark Moeller
Sun. May 14	6:30 a.m. Clyde and Kathy Rowold 10:30 a.m. Ken and Karen Wetzel
Sat. May 20	5 p.m. Ron and Diane Kunkelmann
Sun. May 21	8 a.m. Loren Harms and Lisa Quinn 10:30 a.m. Ron and Donna Burgdorf
Sat. May 27	5 p.m. Virginia and Mark Moeller
Sun. May 28	8 a.m. Roger and Peggy Hanebutt 10:30 a.m. Jim and Judy Guebert

We need two people or one couple to serve as greeters for the Sunday late service!

Musical Opportunities

Calling all students, youth, and adults who sing/play an instrument! I am looking for anyone who is interested in using your gifts of music to enhance our weekend worship services by providing pre-service music before the worship services begin. I welcome everyone, from beginner to advanced! If you would like to play/sing in a different part of the service, that can be arranged also. Let me know if you are interested! *Mrs. Lindsey Hudak*

Website Bible Studies

Bible studies topics under the Media tab of our website www.stjohnsredbud.org are Amen, Angels, Antichrist, Apostles, Apostolic Preaching of the Resurrection, The Resurrection in Revelation, Baptism Q & A, Church & Homosexuality, Communications Skills, Cremation, Christian Citizenship, Discussing Homosexuality, End of the World, Eternal Election and Predestination, Fear or Faith? Terror or Trust? Worldly Worry or Christian Living, God's Will in the Lives of His People, Haggai, Having the Right Attitude, Heaven, The Justice of God, Justification and Sanctification, Islam, Live By the Spirit, Malachi, Meditation, Philemon, Purses, Was Jesus a Vegetarian?, and Word Dwellers.

Student Aid Endowment Fund Golf Scramble

Our Southern Illinois Student Aid Endowment Fund Golf Scramble will be held on Saturday, June 10 at Roland Barkau Golf Course in Okawville. This raises money to provide tuition assistance for members of our SID congregations who are studying for church professional careers.

You can participate by being a golfer on this date. Please see Pastor for more information on that. You also could be a sponsor for this event. Forms for that are on the bulletin board by the ramp door at church. Thank you!

LCMS Foundation

Twenty-three years ago, Frieda and Herman put their estate plan together with their attorney, right when Herman retired. Last month, the Lord called Herman home and now Frieda has an appointment next month to go to the attorney to have her will re-drafted. The thought of taking Herman's name out of her will pains her. Yet, she is confident that he lives on in Jesus. She is working through that change.

The second thing she is pondering is that in her last will, it referenced all three of their children. Frederick died as a hero in Afghanistan fifteen years ago. As with Herman, Frieda clings to the resurrection hope in Jesus about Frederick as well.

In recent days, she has been considering that in the past, their estate was to be equally divided in three parts to their three children. Frederick passed without a wife or children. Frieda has a desire to make his share become a personal endowment to offer support to her congregation to assist those going through grief, all to make sure people can find their comfort in Jesus, just as she has. Her congregation is talking about a new Stephens ministry program, part of which will be directly focused on grief care. She wonders if her endowment could pay for her congregation enrolling in that program.

She scheduled an appointment with her LCMS Foundation Gift Planning Counselor for tomorrow to discuss this. For the first time in weeks, she is feeling great energy and joy about her life, working toward this goal. Your LCMS Foundation Gift Planning Counselor can help you too. Contact Scott Radden by calling his cell phone at 618-977-4049 or email scott.radden@lfnd.org.

LCMS Stewardship: "Follow Him in Generosity"

Our Savior calls us to follow Him in generosity. "For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you" (John 13:15). We cannot give our lives for the salvation of the world, of course. Praise God,

that job is already done! But with hearts full of thanksgiving for what Jesus has given us, we can follow His example of generous giving. And Jesus' generosity is not merely an example. Our Lord also commands us to act according to our gifts: "The one who contributes, [let him give] in generosity" (Romans 12:8).

So, when we bring offerings to the Lord, we should strive to heed His command and follow the pattern He has established for us. Jesus did not give us leftovers. He gave His best. We should not give leftovers, either, but the first and best of what He has given us. Jesus did not give as an afterthought — He gave according to the plan of salvation God established from the foundation of the world. So, when it comes to our own offerings, we should make a thoughtful plan to give generously, in proportion to the way He has blessed us. Like the Macedonian Christians, who gave according to their ability, and even beyond their ability (2nd Corinthians 8:3), we should honor the Lord by giving a generous portion of the income that God gives us.

We should also give freely, just as Jesus gave freely for us. There is no compulsion involved in our works of love and our offerings to the Lord. We do not give grudgingly, but willingly and cheerfully, each "as he has decided in his heart," as the Lord says (2nd Corinthians 9:7). There is no New Testament ceremonial law involved here. Rather, we are free to give as generously as our Savior has given for us!

In the same way, our Lord teaches us to give generously out of our love for Him and for our neighbor. Jesus shows us that genuine love is always love "in deed" (1st John 3:18). It is love that sees our neighbor in need and gives generously to help him. It is love that hears the Word of the Lord and does what it says. If we truly love, we give generously. If we give without love, our giving is not truly following Jesus.

Finally, we follow Jesus in generosity when we support His Gospel ministry and other works of mercy. The people of Israel gave generously to construct and support the operation of the tabernacle, for that was the place where the Lord received the Old Testament sacrifices, through which He bestowed the forgiveness of sins on His people. So, they gave abundantly, so abundantly they had to be told to stop giving! (Exodus 36:5-6). In the same way, we should bring generous offerings to support the Lord's work. We support our congregations in the preaching of His Word, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, which bestow His gifts of forgiveness, life and salvation, and we take care of those who are poor and needy.

Our Savior calls us to follow His example in generous giving. Let us then, with thankful hearts, rededicate ourselves to following Him in generosity.

May Church and School Calendar

Saturday, April 29-

5:00 p.m. Divine Service with Holy Communion

SUNDAY, April 30-

8:00 a.m. Divine Service with Holy Communion

9:30 a.m. Sunday School, Youth and Adult Bible Classes

10:30 a.m. Divine Service with Holy Communion

Monday, May 1-

7:00 p.m. Board of Elders meeting in the Fellowship Hall

7:00 p.m. Choir practice in the church balcony

Tuesday, May 2-

9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Quilting in the Fellowship Hall

9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. S. Illinois District Pastors' Conference in FH

Wednesday, May 3-

8:30 a.m. Grades 3-8 Chapel at church led by 5th grade

9 a.m. to Noon Quilting in the Fellowship Hall

9:30 a.m. Women's Bible Study in the Fellowship Hall

3:00 p.m. Office Staff meeting

3:30 p.m. Make-up class for 8th Grade Public School Conf.

7:30 p.m. Bible Class in the Fellowship Hall (1st Chronicles)

Thursday, May 4-

7-8:30 a.m. National Day of Prayer Breakfast at RB Hospital

Friday, May 5-

8:30 a.m. Early Childhood Chapel service at church

Saturday, May 6-

7:00 a.m. Men's Bible Breakfast in the Fellowship Hall

5:00 p.m. Divine Service with Holy Communion

SUNDAY, May 7-

8:00 a.m. Divine Service with Holy Communion

9:30 a.m. Sunday School, Youth and Adult Bible Classes

10:30 a.m. Divine Service

Noon Senior Youth gather in their church basement hangout

Noon Cindy Steele Retirement Dinner (by invitation)

1-3 p.m. Cindy Steele Retirement Open House (old gym)

Monday, May 8- Grades 2 & 3 field trip to Science Center

3:15 p.m. Faculty meeting in the school library

7:00 p.m. Choir practice in the school music room

Tuesday, May 9-

9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Quilting in the Fellowship Hall

9:30 a.m. Holy Communion Service at Red Bud Care Center

5:00 p.m. Board of Parish Education meeting in school library

6:30 p.m. Worship Committee meets in the Fellowship Hall

Wednesday, May 10-

8:30 a.m. School Chapel service at church with Pastor Nowak

9 a.m. to Noon Quilting in the Fellowship Hall

9:30 a.m. Women's Bible Study in the Fellowship Hall

3:00 p.m. Office Staff meeting

7:30 p.m. Bible Class in the Fellowship Hall (1st Chronicles)

Thursday, May 11- Grades Kdg-1 field trip to St. Louis Zoo

7:15 a.m. Bible Class in the Fellowship Hall (Matthew)

1:00 p.m. Sight Ministries Center in Baldwin

6:30 p.m. Men's Club Gathering/Fish Fry in church garage

Friday, May 12-

8:30 a.m. Early Childhood Chapel service at church

Saturday, May 13- Southern Illinois District Track Meet

9 a.m. to noon(ish) Junior Youth to SkyZone in Fairview Hgts.

5:00 p.m. Divine Service

SUNDAY, May 14- Happy Mother's Day!

8:00 a.m. Divine Service

9:30 a.m. Adult and Youth Bible Classes and Sunday School

10:30 a.m. Divine Service w/ Holy Communion Grades 3-8 sing

Monday, May 15-

8:15 a.m. 8th Grade Confirmation Trip to Concordia Seminary

7:00 p.m. Church Council meeting in the school library

7:00 p.m. Choir practice in the school music room

Tuesday, May 16- 8th grade field trip to Perry County, MO

9 a.m. - 3 p.m. Quilting in the Fellowship Hall

6:00 p.m. Evening Guild Dutch Treat at Lisa's in Rocher

Wednesday, May 17-

9 a.m. to Noon Quilting in the Fellowship Hall

9:30 a.m. Women's Bible Study in the Fellowship Hall

3:00 p.m. Office Staff meeting

6:30 p.m. School Sports Awards Ceremony in the old gym

7:30 p.m. Bible Class in the Fellowship Hall (1st Chronicles)

Thursday, May 18-

8:30 a.m. Ascension Day Holy Communion service at church

7:00 p.m. 8th Grade Graduation Ceremony in the old gym

Friday, May 19-

8:30 a.m. Early Childhood Chapel service at church

Saturday, May 20- Lutheran State Track Meet

7:00 a.m. Men's Bible Breakfast in Fellowship Hall (Proverbs)

5:00 p.m. Divine Service with Holy Communion

SUNDAY, May 21-

8:00 a.m. Divine Service with Holy Communion

9:30 a.m. Adult/Youth Bible classes and Sunday School

10:30 a.m. Divine Service (Alternative)

Monday, May 22-

8:30 a.m. Close of School Year Chapel Service in new gym

Tuesday, May 23-

9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Quilting in the Fellowship Hall

1:30 p.m. Holy Communion Service at Garden Place

Wednesday, May 24-

9 a.m. to Noon Quilting in the Fellowship Hall

9:30 a.m. Women's Bible Study in the Fellowship Hall

3:00 p.m. Office Staff meeting

7:30 p.m. Bible Class in the Fellowship Hall (1st Chronicles)

Thursday, May 25-

7:15 a.m. Bible Class in the Fellowship Hall (Matthew)

1:00 p.m. Sight Ministries Center in Baldwin

Friday, May 26- Pastor Nebel on vacation thru June 1

Saturday, May 27-

5:00 p.m. Divine Service

SUNDAY, May 28-

8:00 a.m. Divine Service

9:30 a.m. Sunday School (school cafeteria); Adult Bible Class

10:30 a.m. Divine Service with Holy Communion

Monday, May 29- Memorial Day; Office Closed!

Tuesday, May 30-

9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Quilting in the Fellowship Hall

Wednesday, May 31-

9 a.m. to Noon Quilting in the Fellowship Hall

9:30 a.m. Women's Bible Study in the Fellowship Hall

3:00 p.m. Office Staff meeting

***May God Bless All our
Christian Mothers!***