

St. John's Journal

Volume 50, Issue 1

LUTHERAN DISTINCTIVES

II. Lutherans carefully distinguish between God's messages of Law and Gospel. Part 1.

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Here is another important Biblical teaching that is distinctive of the Lutheran Church: a proper understanding of Law and Gospel. Martin Luther said:

“This difference between the Law and the Gospel is the height of knowledge in Christendom. Every... Christian should know and be able to state this difference. If this is lacking, one cannot tell a Christian from a heathen or a Jew; of such supreme importance is this differentiation.”

Luther expressed this so strongly because he understood from the Scriptures that a confusion of Law and Gospel will invariably lead a person either to trust in his own goodness for salvation, or to despair of salvation. Obviously we want to avoid both these deadly errors! We will have more to say about this in a later article. For now we will review the basic content of God's Law and Gospel.

By *Law*, we mean the message of God that commands what we should and should not do, condemns sin, and declares punishment for it. The Ten Commandments are a clear and concise expression of God's Law. Jesus also summarized the Law very nicely when He was asked which is the greatest commandment in the law. He replied, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” *Matthew 22:37*
-39

By *Gospel*, we mean God's message of salvation in Jesus Christ. This is the good news that not only informs us about, but also delivers to us, the blessings of what God has done and is doing to save us in Jesus Christ. Here are some good examples of the way God speaks of the Gospel. “In Him you also, who have heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and have believed in Him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit.” *Ephesians 1:13* “For I am

not ashamed of the gospel; it is the power of God for salvation for everyone who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.” *Romans 1:16*

God expects His people, and His ministers in particular, to distinguish Law and Gospel properly. Paul wrote to Timothy: “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.” *2 Timothy 2:15* The right handling of God's word certainly involves keeping His two main messages straight!

This is why our Lutheran Confessions say: “We believe, teach, and confess that the distinction between Law and Gospel is an especially glorious light that is to be maintained with great diligence in the church so that, according to St. Paul's admonition, the Word of God may be divided rightly.” *Formula of Concord, Epitome V:2* (For further reading in the Book of Concord see the entire article V. You might also read the Apology of the Augsburg Confession IV:5.)

We thank God for these two important messages, by which we know God's loving will for our lives, our sin, and our need for the Savior, and by which we know and trust that Jesus Christ is our Savior. May He give us discerning hearts and minds, not only to distinguish Law and Gospel rightly, but to believe all God tells us therein.

- Pastor Bishop



Christian Education
Sunday School

Perfect Attendance

November 2023

Third/Fifth Grades

Aiden Harms

**JANUARY
BIRTHDAYS**



Jan 01

Darian Becker

Jan 02

Mary Beck
Hunter Hall
Chelsea Hamlet

Jan 05

Nicole Hurst
Tiffany Matthews

Jan 06

Erica DeBoer

Jan 08

Brianna Nash

Jan 09

Sarah Adkins
Shantel Becker
Brianna Morrison

Jan 10

Sharon Becker
Nicole Kelley

Jan 11

Noah Dingerson
Carol Long
Donovan Warning
Danielle Watson

Jan 12

Mike Nauth

Jan 13

J. Terry Adkins
Megan Gaitros
Danny Segó

Jan 14

Tammy Gottman
Brock Norman
Erin Wilson

Jan 16

Hayden Jackson
Shannon Higdon

Jan 17

Ruth Hillman
Aminta Liescheidt

Jan 18

Megan Walsh

Jan 19

Jaylah Dalton
Jesse Garmon
Michele Spelbring

Jan 20

Janet Lawson
Nathaniel Nelson

Jan 21

Sara Nafziger

Jan 22

Rhonda Bowman

Jan 23

Deanna Oltman
Michael Sheckler

Jan 25

Donald Houge
Melanie Tiona
Ryan Widby

Jan 26

Jaxon Allen
Samantha Segó
Terry Swearingen

Jan 27

Pastor Glenn Niemann

Jan 28

Daryl Dagit
Lincoln Ferguson
Kathryn Ford
Jeffery Gottman
Dane Hoover

Jan 29

Jacob Kelley

Jan 30

Wade Peacock

**JANUARY
ANNIVERSARIES**

Jan 03

Michael & Leah Sipka

Jan 15

Donald & Mae Houge

Jan 27

James & Nona Buster



PARISH NOTES



Church Attendance

Nov 2023— **556—13** services
 Nov 2022— **606—14** services
 Nov 2021— **617—13** services

Sunday School Attendance Year-to-Date

Nov 2023: **1,494**
 Nov 2022: **1,412**
 Nov 2021: **1,364**

Communion Assistance

Jan 07
 8:00 Tom Ivey
 10:30 Ross Gould

Jan 21
 8:00 Randy Couch
 10:30 Jon Bolt

2024 OFFERING ENVELOPES are in the gym for those who have not picked theirs up yet. If you see a member of your family or a friend who has not picked up their envelopes, it would be appreciated if you would take theirs and deliver them for us.

Thank you for your help.

SHUT-INS for the MONTH:
 Even though some of our members cannot attend church, we want to keep them in our thoughts and prayers and let them know they are not forgotten. Please send a card or pay a visit to these shut-ins this month.

Acolytes

Jan 14 8:00 Elizabeth Sayles
Jan 21 10:30 Elizabeth Sayles
Feb 4 8:00 Elizabeth Sayles

January Ushers

8:00

James Lonergan Scott Stalter
 Merle Wiseman

10:30

Brian Ford Nate Ford
 Trent Hoover Brian Umbach

Videographer

Zane Dobbelaire

Worship Chairman

Brian Fuelberth

GREETERS: It is always nice to have someone greet us as we come into church. So we have put up sign-up sheets for the last week of October, November and December on the bulletin board in the Narthex. Please consider being a greeter.

Shut-ins for January are: Loretta Newman, Sunset Rehab & Health Care, 129 S. 1st Ave., Canton 61520; Hazel Nichols, 1106 S. 8th, Pekin; Sharon Parry, 1721 Valle Vista, Pekin and Sheryl Riley, UAW Apartments, #1212, 444 S. Parkway Dr., Pekin.

Thank you from your St. John's Ladies Guild

**TREASURER'S REPORT
 NOVEMBER, 2023**

	<u>November</u>	<u>Y-T-D</u>
<u>INCOME</u>	25,973.00	321,153.37
<u>EXPENSES</u>	29,809.07	345,210.44
<u>INCOME—</u>	- 3,836.07	- 24,057.07
<u>EXPENSE</u>		
<u>General Fund Accounts</u>		
General Fund		(4,026.31)
General Fund Total		(4,026.31)
<u>Educational Fund Accounts</u>		
Educ. Grant Fund Checking	2,948.56	
Ed Grant CD LCMS 6/24	51,928.87	
Ed Grant CD LCMS 6/24	51,900.80	
Ed Grant Fund #2 Vanguard	62,864.70	
Educational Fund Total		169,642.93
<u>East Bluff Property</u>		
East Bluff Property Vanguard	38,270.30	
East Bluff CD LCMS 6/24	53,808.61	
East Bluff CD LCMS 6/24	53,837.70	
Cat Stock at FMV	92,516.72	
		238,433.33
<u>Memorial</u>		
Memorial Fund Checking	29,200.12	
Memorial Vanguard	94,094.90	
Memorial Fund Total		123,295.02
Building Fund Checking	25,360.17	
Sunday School Fund Checking	12,815.45	
TOTAL ASSETS		<u>573,573.21</u>
Checking Acct Balance	74,350.61	
		74,350.61
<u>LIABILITIES</u>		
Payroll Liabilities	2,665.04	
Misc. LCMS Orgs Fund	10.00	
Total Liabilities		2,675.04
<u>Fund Balance</u>		
Net Income (Loss)		(9,797.09)
Capital Accounts	580,695.26	
Total Fund Balance		570,898.17
TOTAL LIABILITIES & FUND BALANCE		<u>573,573.21</u>

HI-LITES OF ST. JOHN'S VOTERS ASSEMBLY December 11, 2023

Mike Nauth called the meeting to order. A quorum was present. Pastor Bishop opened with devotions.

The November Parish Report was reviewed. A motion was made by Randy Couch, seconded by Julie Wagner, to approve the November Parish Report. Motion carried.

The November meeting minutes were reviewed. A motion was made by Diane Gould, seconded by Bob Oliverius, to approve the November meeting minutes. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report – Daryl Dagit presented the November Treasurer's Report. The report shows a year-to-date shortage of around \$24,000.00. Daryl thanked Rod Bollinger for stepping in on the Finance Committee this year and agreeing to be Treasurer next year.

A motion was made by Dave Drockelman, seconded by Ross Gould, to accept the November Treasurer's Report. Motion carried.

Daryl had presented the budget for 2024 at the November meeting. The only change was to the dollar amount for the cleaning budget. Overall, the budget is at about 2% over this year's budget. Daryl indicated that there is no way to budget income but he did put together a graph going back to 2004 that shows what income has been over the years. A motion was made by Nancy Drockelman, seconded by Randy Couch, to accept the budget for 2024. Motion carried.

Board of Trustees – Dave Kesselmayr reported that we had to have some repairs done to the pipe organ. There are still some additional repairs that need to be done. The Trustees are still working on updating lighting, painting, and cleaning in some areas of the church. The Trustees received proof of insurance and some good references from the company that we were considering hiring to do the cleaning of the church. The company has started cleaning the church. The Trustees are wanting to replace the tables and chairs in the gym. They have looked at prices and discussed possible fund-raising ideas. They will have costs by next month. It was pointed out that there is quite a bit of money in the Memorial Fund and it was asked if money could be taken from there to purchase these items. Dave indicated that maybe they could find ways to raise money for the purchase and any remainder needed could be taken from the Memorial Fund. Dan Watson has volunteered to join the Trustees in 2024.

Board of Elders – Randy Couch reported that the Elders are serving the Advent dinner on Wednesday, December 13th.

Board of Finance – No report.

Board of Christian Education – Leslie Hauk reported on November 19th the youth group helped clean up a couple of member's yards. The Sunday School Christmas program is on Sunday, December 17th at the 10:30 service. The youth group will also be caroling at 2:30 on Sunday the 17th. The Good Shepherd Christmas program is this Thursday.

Mike Nauth reported that he received an email from Joel Kilgus indicating that Good Shepherd is looking into starting another Capital Campaign. The previous campaign has ended. The school and school board will be conducting a study to see if a new campaign is feasible. If you get a survey from the school, please fill out and return the survey. Mike also indicated the parent of a student that is attending Good Shepherd lost their job and has fallen behind in paying tuition. A little over \$1000 is due. The mother has gotten a new job but has not started yet. It is felt remaining at Good Shepherd is in the best interest of the child. Ross Gould asked if there was any money left in the scholarship fund at Good Shepherd. There is not. Mike indicated that what was in the fund was used at the beginning of the school year. Discussion took place. It was indicated that this is exactly the type of situation that could be addressed if the guidelines for use of the Education Fund were updated. After some discussion, Bob Oliverius motioned, seconded by Ross Gould that \$1,000.00 be taken from the Education Fund to help the student. Motion carried. If anyone wants to donate to the Scholarship Fund at Good Shepherd, they can send the donation to the school and indicate that it is to be specifically used for the fund.

Board of Worship – Diane Gould reported that on Saturday, December 2nd, the committee, along with some additional volunteers, decorated the church. Diane thanked everyone that helped with the decorating. Also, the committee is still in need of 2 additional members.

Board of Evangelism – Tracy Glass thanked Ron Reising for serving on the committee. Tracy also thanked those individuals who have signed up to be greeters at the services. Tracy noted that the committee will be meeting tomorrow.

Board of Stewardship – No report.

Long Range Planning Committee – No report.

Educational Grant Fund Committee – No report.

East Bluff Property Committee – No report.

Constitution By-laws Committee – No report.

Unfinished business – Nominations for the boards and committees for 2024 were reviewed. Additions were made to the Trustees and Elders.

Nominees for 2024 are as follows:

President	Mike Nauth
Vice President	Ross Gould
Secretary	Linda Wagner
Treasurer	Rod Bollinger
Financial Secretaries	Barb Theleritis/Janet Lawson Julie & Linda Wagner Sandy & Valerie Ferguson Dave & Nancy Drockelman
Trustees	Dan Watson Dave Kesselmayr
Finance Committee	Daryl Dagit
Board of Elders	Brian Ford
Brd of Christian Ed	Michelle Stalter Laura Dobbelaire
TSLA Board	Dave Drockelman

A motion was made by Dave Drockelman, seconded by Bob Oliverius, to accept the amended ballot as presented. Motion carried.

New business –

A motion was made by Bob Oliverius, seconded by Jennifer Kesselmayer, to close the meeting. Motion carried.

The meeting closed with the Lord’s Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Wagner
Secretary

JANUARY LIBRARY CORNER
By Eileen Tiona



*“A Star will come out of Jacob, a
Scepter will rise out of Israel.”
Numbers 24:17*

I haven’t any new books to report on this month, but you are welcome to come into the Library and check out all the wonderful books that are available for your enjoyment.

Hope you all had a Blessed Christmas and wishing you all a Happy New Year.

The Flower Chart for 2024 is posted in the Narthex. Please sign-up for the Sunday(s) that you would like to provide flowers for the altar and **call the church office, 347-2136**, and let us know what you want in the bulletin.

If you would like a special arrangement for your date, please call Greenhouse Florist at 347-5921. There could be an additional cost. The cost for 2 vases is \$40 for 2 vases of flowers and \$10 for delivery, unless you order something special. Then we will let you know the cost.

Remember you can pick up your flowers after the 10:30 service (please leave the green liners) or Mon. to Fri. from 8:00 a.m. to 12 Noon.



A SINCERE THANK YOU to everyone for all the prayers, cards, notes, gifts, and words of appreciation this Advent and Christmas. We deeply appreciate your Christian love and kindness. *Pastor Bishop and Deanna*

THANK YOU; We would like to thank the St John’s congregation for its gracious and unwavering support during our most difficult and heartbreaking moments over this past year.

We want it to be known that intentions and love sent to us by the church gave us hope and kept us grounded in our faith.

We hope everyone feels as blessed as we do this holiday season (and everyday in between)! Love, Heath and Karson Norman



A BIG THANK YOU TO THE WORSHIP COMMITTEE, TRUSTEES AND ALL OTHERS WHO HELPED WITH DECORATING THE INSIDE AND OUTSIDE OF OUR CHURCH FOR THE CHRISTMAS SEASON.

We received a letter from Lutheran Heritage Foundation: Rev. Bishop and People of St. John, Your special mission gift is gratefully received. Thank you Rev. R. Rahn, Founder

Lutherans for Life sent a letter thanking us for our donation to them.

Received a thank for our donation to the Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, MO.

GSLS is looking for volunteers to help supervise all recess. 11:40-1:05.

Also in need of piano players for our Wednesday Chapel services. If you can play the piano or you know of someone who can, please let Mr. Kilgus know.

The Legend of the Pine Tree

When the Holy family was pursued by Herod’s soldiers, many plants offered them shelter. One such plant was the Pine Tree. When Mar was too weary to travel longer the family stopped at the edge of a forest to rest. A gnarled old pine which had grown hollow with its’ years invited them to rest within its trunk—then it closed its branches down and lept them safe until the soldiers had passed. Upon leaving, the Christ Child blessed the pine and the imprint of his little hand was left forever in the tree’s fruit — the pine cone. If a cone is cut lengthwise the hand may still be seen.



Thank You

to all who gave a poinsettia
in memory of loved ones
or to beautify the sanctuary
during the Christmas services:



Ray & Joyce Barnes
Don & Valerie Dobbelaire
Dave & Nancy Drockelman
Michelle & Zach Ferguson
Sandy Ferguson
Valerie Ferguson
Jake Gould
Ross & Diane Gould
Penny & Dane Hoover
Trent Hoover
Bob & Donna Hurst
Tom & Cheryl Ivey
Steve & Faye Kesselmayr
Jimmy & Joyce Lonergan
Carol Long

Jerry, Paul, Heath & Karsen Norman *for all the St. Jude children*
Pat Proehl
Ruthanne Scott
Barb Theleritis
Julie Wagner *in memory of loved ones*
Linda Wagner *in memory of loved ones*
Curt & Pam Woolsey

In Our Prayers

*If you know of anyone who needs to be added,
please let the church office know.*

All our shut-ins

Pastor Niemann	Sandy Morgan
Flo McClure	Robert Rilea
Peggy Farlin	Jeff Ferree
Marlana Montgomery	Addie Burling
Julie Rilea	Eileen Tiona
Gabriella Kesselmayr	Lois Becker
Virginia Tackmann	Pat Proehl
Suzanne Reising	Kellen Norman
Joyce Barnes	Lee Morgan
Ray Garber	Roy Dagit
John Durdle	Susan Oliverius
Sara Morgan	Suzanne Reising
Stefanie Wilson	Scott Ruschmeyer

What did one wall say to the other wall?
I'll meet you at the corner!

Why is the moon always so hungry?
Because it's only full once a month.

GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN SCHOOL

- Jan. 8 No student attendance—Teachers Institute
- Jan. 9 Classes Resume—Full Day
- Jan 11 PTL meeting 6:00 p.m.
- Jan 12 PTL Meeting @ 6:00 p.m.
- Jan. 13 School Improvement Day (PS out at 12 p.m. & K to 8 out at 12:30 p.m.)
- Jan. 15 No School - Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- Jan. 17 Dining Out at La Gondola Pekin (4-7 pm) (Must use paper flyer or digital flyer, or mention GSLS)
- Jan 19 Spaghetti dinner & Talent Show
- Jan. 21 GSLS All school to sing at Trinity Pekin 10:45
- Jan. 21-27 National Lutheran School Week
- Jan. 26 School Improvement Day (PS out at 12 p.m. & K to 8 out at 12:30 p.m.)



HOSPITALIZATIONS AND HOME COMMUNION VISITS



If you or someone from your family is hospitalized or scheduled to go into the hospital, please contact the church office, so that Pastor Bishop knows about it and can visit you in the hospital. The hospitals do not contact us. Sandy calls the Peoria hospitals on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays to find out if there are any St. John's members there. If you tell them when you are admitted that you are a St. John's member, you will likely be on their list, and we can usually find out. So please help us stay informed so Pastor can serve you.

If you or someone else you know in the congregation has difficulty getting to church and needs to be on the Home Communion list, even if just for a while, please contact the church office, so that Pastor Bishop can visit you. This is an important part of his pastoral work, and he wants to do his best to serve everyone in need.

Thank you for your help with this.

(Address Service Requested)

Bible Wordsearch

The Fig Tree

Wordsearch 280

Matt.21:16-30

G	R	R	B	E	A	O	W	N	S	T	J	O	H	N
L	A	T	E	R	L	O	R	T	T	D	O	E	T	G
Y	M	E	T	Y	R	D	R	D	R	E	A	D	N	E
L	A	X	H	K	A	U	E	A	A	V	M	I	A	N
K	E	C	A	W	O	R	Y	R	E	I	Y	P	E	Y
C	V	E	N	C	I	E	P	N	S	A	N	V	L	F
I	E	P	Y	T	N	E	P	S	S	B	E	E	R	E
U	I	T	L	I	L	E	S	I	A	R	P	U	D	I
Q	L	H	V	E	Y	N	P	P	G	N	I	E	E	S
E	E	I	G	R	V	R	T	W	I	T	H	E	R	S
L	B	N	P	I	O	I	G	N	I	H	C	A	E	T
P	E	G	R	P	S	A	E	N	A	M	A	Z	E	D
O	E	S	H	M	I	N	D	C	U	H	T	U	R	T
E	R	E	F	A	T	H	E	R	E	H	T	I	A	F
P	T	H	I	N	K	I	T	M	O	R	N	I	N	G

FAITH
FRUIT
JOHN
LATER
MIND
NEVER
PEOPLE
PRAISE
ROAD
SAYING
SEEING
SPENT
TEMPLE
THINGS
THINK
TODAY
TREE
TRUTH
WORK

AMAZED
BAPTISM
BELIEVE
BETHANY
COURTS
ELDERS
EXCEPT
FATHER
HEAVEN
HUNGRY
MORNING
ORDAINED
PRAYER
PROPHET
QUICKLY
RECEIVE
TEACHING
VINEYARD
WITHER

After you find all the hidden words the left over letters spell out a
Bible verse reading from the top left to the bottom right

