

The Communion of Saints

Every time we as believers confess our faith in the words of the Apostles' Creed, we declare that we believe in the "Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, and the communion of saints, etc." This declaration gives public voice to our shared belief that the Holy Spirit has placed us together in His one body, the Church. Martin Luther's explanation to the Third Article states:

"I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith. In the same way, He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith."

The aspect of the Holy Spirit's work here that particularly strikes me is how He keeps me in the one true faith and how this divine activity of "keeping" relates to His work of gathering all Christians into His Church. It is, in fact, through the work of the Church that the Holy Spirit accomplishes His task of keeping us in the faith. More specifically, it is in the Church through the Word and Sacraments that He does this.

A recent visit to share God's Word and Sacrament with our St. John's shut-in members, prompted me to consider, more fully, how the Holy Spirit keeps us united in His grace as the "communion of saints." Gathered throughout time and history, the church of Christ is present and active wherever His Word and Sacraments are proclaimed.

As we transition from April to May, this is all the more striking as young new communicant members of St. John's will join the ranks of history by "confirming" the faith the Holy Spirit gifted to them. On the weekend of April 27th our confirmands will have already read their "faith statements" by the time you receive this newsletter. However, do be sure to join us Sunday, May 4th, as we celebrate our expanding growth of the "communion of saints." Our confirmands are:

- **Samuel William Cobine**: *"Cast your cares on the Lord and He will sustain you; He will never let the righteous be shaken" (Psalm 55:22).*
- **Brody John Jacobs**: *"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile" (Romans 1:16).*

- **Kinsley Sky Jones:** *“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future” (Jeremiah 29:11).*
- **Lyla Isabella Lobdell:** *“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go” (Joshua 1:9).*
- **Kaylin Kimbly Wade:** *“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand” (John 10:27-28).*
- **Korbin Scott Winter:** *“God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble” (Psalm 46:1).*

How remarkable it is that our members gathered at the Liberty Village, Lena Living Center, Pleasant View Nursing Home, Allure, Pearl Pavillion, Winn Prairie, Lena Retreat, individual residence, etc. and churches and communities all across the globe can share as “one body in Christ” by the working of the Holy Spirit.

We also lift up and pray for our high school graduates:

- **Katie Cobine:** River Ridge High School, Hanover, IL
- **Sylvia Schnoor:** Pearl City High School, Pearl City, IL

Young and old, together, we celebrate with our new confirmands and many graduates who continue the legacy of the communion of saints, into which all believers are gathered, and serve as a channel through which the Holy Spirit accomplishes His work.

Won’t you please join with me in celebrating God’s good activity as, together, we live out our calling as the “holy Christian Church and the communion of saints.”

In Christ’s Service,



Pastor Shaw

LENTEN & EASTER THANK YOU!

We are deeply grateful and thankful for the people who helped to make our Lenten and Easter worship opportunities meaningful experiences. So many people and families made an impact in helping to make our worship experience very special. Thank you for stepping up and touching us with the heart of Jesus.



CONFIRMATION

Six of our young people will renew their Baptismal vow through the rite of confirmation on Sunday, May 4, in the 10:30 am worship. These young people will also receive their first communion that day.

Those confirmed are: Sam Cobine, Brody Jacobs, Kinsley Jones, Lyla Lobdell, Kaylin Wade, and Korbin Winter.

If these young people are to remain faithful in Worship, Bible Study, and Youth Ministry—they need the support and encouragement of their parents, extended family, church staff, and congregation. Pray for these young people daily that they might remain faithful and continue growing in the faith.



BLESSING OF OUR HIGH SCHOOL ON MAY 18th!

During our Weekend Services we will be celebrating with our Seniors, their accomplishments, and a milestone in their lives. We will also have the opportunity to share in a service of blessing. Our graduating seniors this year are: **Katie Cobine & Sylvia Schnoor**

CRADLE ROLL NOTES

Callahan Schubert 5-21-24 is the only member celebrating a birthday this month. We wish Callahan all God's richest blessings!



OUR SYMPATHY

FAMILY OF BRUCE JOGERST, who passed away April 20, 2025 with Christian service held here at St. John's on April 25th. Our heartfelt sympathies to the Jogerst family.



NORTHERN ILLINOIS FOOD BANK TRUCK will be at Orangeville Boco Station parking lot May 13th from 3-4:30.



ST. JOHN'S ON THE MOVE

Worship Folders have been received from---

Brenda Offermann—St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Decatur, IL

Mary Anne Keith—Salem United Church of Christ, Lena, IL

FLOWER CHART 2025:

The 2025 Flower Chart is posted in the Narthex. When you visit the church, please take a minute to sign your name on a weekend of your choice to provide altar flowers for the worship services. We sincerely appreciate your help in adding the beauty of altar flowers to our worship services. Thank you.



BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENT!

Congratulations to the Mau family as Zach & Hailey Mau are parents to Emmy Lee Mau born April 15th. Grandparents are Mark & Anita Mau, Great-Grandparents are Tom & Carol Mau and Carole Fernsteadt



MAKE-A-SMILE CARDS FOR LENA LIVING CENTER. We are hoping to have May Cards, using an **FLOWERS & MOTHER'S DAY** theme, donated

next. If you are creative and are a card maker, please be a part of this wonderful venture and **please include a sentiment inside the card.** A basket will be placed on the table, outside the office, for your beautiful creations

and we will get the cards to Good Shepherd Church who in turn will get them to the Activity Director at the Living Center **around the 10th of each month.** Thank you in advance for your willingness in being part of this venture. For questions, please contact the church office.

SHUT-INS: We visit with our shut ins both in their home or in local facilities. Would you please pray about becoming a part of this ministry? We rotate and each volunteer's turn comes up about once every other month. Please contact the church office if you have any questions. If you have a heart for our shut-ins and would like to get to know them a little better and brighten their day with a visit, please consider joining our team.



FROM THE BOARD OF STEWARDSHIP

THE *Lord* IS
MORE CONCERNED WITH OUR
availability
THAN OUR
capability
BECAUSE HE KNOWS OUR
possibilities

SIMPLY GIVING - Simply Giving is a great way to give your regular offerings to St. John's. Your regular offering can be electronically transferred eliminating the need for you to write checks and you'll never forget your offering. It is safe and protects you. The Board of Finance will record your offerings for your IRS records the same as they do now. To join those at St. John's who are already a part of the Simply Giving family, give Michelle a call and she will get you set up. It's a great way to "bring the best of the first fruits...to the house of the Lord your God." Exodus 23:19.



THE FRIENDSHIP CENTER

Our Adult Day Care is a special ministry to people who are either handicapped or need assistance on a daily basis to either give a Caregiver a needed rest, allow them to run errands, work, etc. We provide social opportunities, nutrition, field trips, in a safe home-like environment.

Recently, Provena, the adult day-care in Freeport closed and we are seeing an increase in our clientele at the Friendship Center. We are very happy to have more clients, and they soon feel like family. This also creates a need for more staff. We need another nurse and CNA at the very least. Please, if you've ever thought about joining this ministry, even for one day a week, that would help immensely. Or maybe you could fill in as a sub on occasion? We'd love to have you.

We are blessed with a great staff, tremendous volunteers, and the resources to be of assistance. If you know of someone who needs the services of The Friendship Center, someone who would like to volunteer, provide entertainment, share a pet—would you please call Denise or Jenny at 815.369.2690, or Michelle at 815-369-4035 or 815-275-0397.

Also, we have a monthly Caregivers Support Group that meets at church led by one of our Friendship Center staff. If you would be interested in finding out more about the Group, please call the same number as above. Our next meeting is Tuesday, May 13th at 1:00 p.m.

The following is a list of current needs at the Veteran's Footlocker:

Paper Towels

Kleenex

Cans of fruit

Cans of vegetables

Cans of Soup

Dish Soap

Jello & Pudding

Cans of Tuna/Chicken

Hamburger Helper

Crackers

Laundry Soap

Donations can be brought to the Lena American Legion Home on Saturdays from 10:00 to 11:00 at 316 W. Main St., Lena. Donations are greatly appreciated. This list is immediate needs; however other items will always be accepted.

Questions call 815-369-4684 or 815-233-5284; vetsvan@stephensoncountyil.gov

AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY MEMORIAL DAY BREAKFAST

A breakfast is being held on Memorial Day, Monday, May 26, 2025 at the Lena American Legion Home, 316 W. Main St., Lena, sponsored by the American Legion Auxiliary.

It is being served from 7:00 am to 9:30 am—come eat breakfast and then attend the memorial service.

Serving:

Scrambled Eggs, French Toast, Biscuits and gravy, sausage, ham, coffee cake, fresh fruit, juice, milk and coffee

\$5.00 under 10 and \$10.00 over 10

Carryouts available

SATURDAY, MAY 3RD, IS THE ANNUAL WALK FOR LIFE, Join other pro-life people in your community at 10 AM on Saturday, May 3rd, as we Walk for Life and raise funds for the ministry of Lifeline Coalition!



Save The Date!! August 4-8th VBS

We can **BEAR**ly believe it!

It's about to get **WILD** at St Johns!



THANK YOU FOR BEING THERE!

It's awesome to see the congregation going about the Lord's work and doing ministry and mission together. Our reports showed a congregation busy doing ministry and mission in our Lord's name. We've done a lot, but as always, we've got a lot of work to do as our missions continue.

Monday night, April 28, the Voter's elected a Vice-Chairman to serve on each Board—

Vice-Chairman of the Congregation: Kory Gerbick

Vice Chairman of the Board of Elders: Dave Thompson

Vice-Chairman of the Board of Education: Lauren Dick

Vice-Chairman of the Board of Evangelism: Lisa Park

Vice-Chairman of the Board of Stewardship: Marquita Bannon

Vice-Chairman of the Board of Trustees: Brandon Falk

Vice-Chairman of the Board of Youth Ministry: Lindsay Bader

Vice-Chairman of the Board of Finance: Deb Turnmeyer

Board of My Friend's Closet: Pat Fuchs and Ellen Conway

These folks will serve as Vice-Chairman for one year and then become Chairman. They are eligible for two terms as such, after which they must take a one-year break from any office. Those serving on the My Friend's Closet Board serve a three-year term.

Thank you to all who serve our church family and our Lord Jesus Christ by giving of their time and talents.

Thank you for being willing to serve. These people and the many others who serve on our Boards are carrying out our responsibilities as a congregation to serve our Lord and build His Kingdom. They need our support, our participation, and willingness to serve when called upon to pitch in. It begins with our active participation in worship and our ongoing financial support that allows follow through on our mission and ministry. Special thanks go out to all the people who give of their time, talent, and treasures to make our ministries happen. It's great to serve with you!

Currently, we have 3 members of our Friendship Center Committee that will step down soon. These 3 people have been so faithful and have served on the committee since before covid. To serve on the Friendship Center Committee, a person can be a member of St. John's or from the Lena community and have a heart for our clients who need our care. If you would like to join this very rewarding ministry or know of someone who would be a great asset, please call the church office and talk to Michelle.



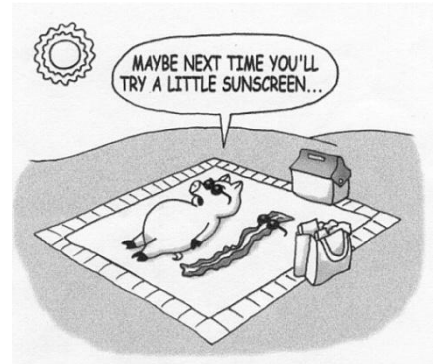
PARISH HEALTH NOTES

PLAY IT SAFE IN THE SUN – May is Skin Cancer Awareness Month

Outdoor fun does wonders for the body and soul, but we must remember that our skin needs extra protection from the sun. Of course, we all know that the sun can cause a painful sunburn. Sun damage also causes premature skin aging, including wrinkles, spots, and dry, leathery skin texture. It can also lead to skin cancer.

Did you know you can get sunburned even on a cloudy day? Up to 80% of the sun's rays can penetrate light clouds, mist and fog! Snow reflects the sun like a mirror. Fresh snow reflects nearly 90% of the sun's rays. Dry surfaces even reflect some of the sun's rays – concrete reflects up to 85% of those rays.

Protect yourself during any outdoor activity with a sunscreen that has an SPF of at least 15. Sunscreen should be applied 15 to 30 minutes before going outdoors to allow the lotion to penetrate the skin. It should be reapplied after 2 hours. Protecting skin during the first 18 years of life can reduce the risk of some types of skin cancer by up to 78%.



"The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night." Psalm 121:6

****DO YOU READ THIS NEWSLETTER?****

Due to the ever-rising costs of mailing a paper newsletter, here at St. John's we will begin offering the option of receiving an electronic newsletter for those that prefer to get their news in that form and to cut down on unnecessary costs. We can email the newsletter to you in a mass email or it is always available on our Church web site at www.stjohnslena.org. We realize some people still want a **paper copy** and we **will certainly continue to mail a copy to those individuals**. We do not post the Birthday/Anniversary list on our website. But if you want to receive the newsletter by email, we can still include that page in the email.

We are asking you, the reader, to respond to THIS article that will be placed in the next (at least) 3 Newsletters by contacting Michelle or Chris at the church office. You can either email to office@stjohnslena.org, or call 815-369-4035, or text to 815-275-0397. State your name, and if you want your newsletter by snail mail or email. (Please make sure we have your preferred email in our files.) We will begin compiling those lists and make the changes as necessary. Also, if you would prefer, we can place a paper copy in your mailbox here in the narthex which could work well if you are in regular attendance.

Thanks for helping us out with this task by participating. 😊

REMEMBER OUR MISSIONARIES: (A card of encouragement is always welcomed)

****L.W.M.L./WOMEN'S SOCIETY TIM (Together In Mission)**

Danelle Putnam Schumann & husband Carlos Schumann, Apartada 1356, Santiago, Dominican Republic. Danelle.Putnam@lcms.org lcms.org/international lcms.org/putnam

L.W.M.L./WOMEN'S SOCIETY ADOPT A STUDENT:

Peter Ross Campus Post Office Box 801 Seminary Pl. St. Louis, MO 63105-3196

(rossp@csl.edu) During Vicarage: 3624 Rolling View Dr. White Bear Lake, MN 55110

****ST. JOHN'S TIM (Together in Mission):**

Rev. Carl & Chenhsi Hanson with Emma, Andrea, and Lydia serving in Seoul South Korea as Pastor at International Lutheran Church. 148 Hannam-daero, Yongsan-gu, Seoul, South Korea 04417

****ST. JOHN'S ADOPT-A-STUDENT:**

Mr. Blake Brockman (wife Hannah, son, Judah) 5 Founders Way, Unit D, St. Louis, MO 63105

Mr. Daniel Hampton (wife, Christie, son William, daughter Abigail) 328 Winter Lake Ct. Fenton, MO 63026

Mr. Tristan Jones (and wife Carolyn) 801 Seminary Pl. Clayton, MO 63105-3196, jonest@csl.edu. 7 Founders Way, Unit A, St. Louis MO 63105

****MY FRIEND'S CLOSET THRIFT STORE TIM (Together in Mission)**

Rev Jonah and Renee Domenichelli c/o The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, PO Box 66861, St. Louis, MO 63166-6861 memo line include: Domenichelli-Germany.

renee.domenichelli@lcmsintl.org

Deaconess Tirzah Kray, serving in Latin America & Caribbean, Tirzah.krey@lcms.org, facebook.com/groups/TirzahTales, c/o The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, P.O.Box 66861, St. Louis, MO 63166-6861

Rev Samual and Erica Bobby with Judah, August, Benjamin, Simon, and Pax c/o The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, PO Box 66861, St. Louis, MO 63166-6861

Serving in Riga, Latvia. Rev. S. Bobby, LTbekas iela3, Riga LV-1014, Latvija.

Zach & Christy Yoder serving in Nigeria with Wycliffe Bible translators. (more information to follow)

El Ayudante/Shick family, serving in Honduras, ryan@ae honduras.org Ryan, Angie, Abigail, Mandi, & Jacob

****THRIFT SHOP ADOPT-A-STUDENT:**

Mr. Alexander Allsing Campus Post Office Box 801 Seminary Pl. Clayton, MO 63105-3196, Allsinga@csl.edu

Rev.2/25