

St. John's Messenger

OURISHING
SERVING
FAITH

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Office Hours

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday
8:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

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Little Fig Tree

**I'm a little fig tree
Tall and lean
Long are my branches
Leaves of green**

I stand alone, a single young tree and all I see are rows and rows of vines all around me, as far as I can see. I'm not really sure why I'm different than them, but I do know that I am. I don't look like them. I'm tall and spindly, they are long and twisty. I don't have fruit like them, and even my leaves are different. And the owner who comes around frequently doesn't treat me like them. I know I am different, but I still want to be useful, to do something meaningful, something other than just standing here all day. I always thought trees like me were planted somewhere very different than here. Somewhere with warm sunny days, sheltered from the high winds and storms, and near a wall or building that would keep me warm on the cool nights. But here I am standing alone in the middle of the vineyard, trying my best to grow strong, so that I can produce those sweet figs that my ancestors did.

**I'm a little fig tree
Craving the light
Hungry are my roots
And thirsty through the night.**

The winter has been dark and dreary, little sunlight to be had. It's been extremely hard to grow without sunlight these past months. And even though the season's turning the nights

are still so cold. Without the sunlight I do not have energy to grow. I cannot extend my roots deep into the soil to find the nutrients that I so hunger for. The soil here is so sandy and full of rocks, it's hard to find water and my thirst grows each day.

**I'm a little fig tree
All alone
Keeping to myself
So others do not groan.**

My roots can only go down, for if I reach too far to the sides, the roots of the vines tell me to get back into my own space, telling me that I do not belong here. The same happens with my branches, I cannot grow out, only up, because they yell, "move over and get back in your own space, you're taking up my sunlight. You don't belong over here."

The vineyard workers spend the hot days in the sunshine picking the grapes, pruning the vines, and tending the roots. None of them take notice of me. Yes, they lean against my trunk when they are tired. They tear off my branches when they need my leaves to fan them in the heat. But no one notices the wilt around the edges of my leaves from lack of water or the brittleness of my bark from lack of nutrients. They don't offer me any tenderness, care, or encouragement. They just take what they need from me and move on without even really seeing me.

When the owner visits, he smiles at the vines, gently inspects what they have produced, and praises them for the glorious fruit. At the end of the rows, he comes to me, shaking his head, a frown on his face. I have no fruit to offer for am only 3 and life has been hard to find all I need. Still his expectations are that I should bear fruit. No kind words for me, no encouragement either. This is not the first time I have disappointed him. But this time, the fear sets in as I hear him exclaim, "cut it down" while pointing at me.

**I'm a little fig tree
Trying my best
Who can help me
Get out of this mess?**

The gardener steps forward, gently lays his hand on my bark, begging the owner to give me a chance. He's offering to care for me, to get me more nourishment and the things that I need. Hope wells within me. Someone cares. Someone has finally noticed how hard it is for me to grow here. Now I have a friend, a protector, an advocate. I will do my best to receive what he offers, use it to grow stronger so I can produce the fruit the master is waiting for. I can do this; I just need a little help!

**I'm a little fig tree
Loved by God
I have an advocate
Hopeful that I can beat these odds.**

As requested by several of you, a reprint of my sermon from the Third Sunday in Lent, March 23, 2025, based on the Gospel of Luke the 13th chapter, verses 1-9. This reflection reminds us to be kind, embrace diversity, and to advocate for those who cannot advocate for themselves.

May the Risen Christ continue to show up in your lives, surprising you, and transforming you to live out this new life we've been granted through the life, death, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Blessings,

Pastor Karla



Notes From the Director of Music

This Is the Feast": A Celebration of Praise in Lutheran Worship

Dear St. John's Church Family

As we gather in worship beginning on Easter Sunday one of the most uplifting moments is when we sing "This Is the Feast." This hymn of praise serves as a joyous proclamation of our faith, inviting us to celebrate God's grace and the blessings of the Eucharist. In our current Evangelical Lutheran Worship (ELW) hymnal, we are blessed to have ten different musical settings of this beloved song, four of which we are particularly familiar with in our congregation.

A Historical Perspective

The roots of "This Is the Feast" can be traced back to the ancient liturgical tradition of the Church. It is derived from the "Sanctus," which is Latin for "Holy." This hymn has been a part of Christian worship for centuries, originally used to express the congregation's joy in the presence of God during the Eucharistic celebration. The song reflects the biblical themes of thanksgiving and praise, reminding us of the heavenly banquet prepared for all believers.

"This Is the Feast" was first introduced into Lutheran worship in the 1978 Lutheran Book of Worship (LBW) and has since become a staple in our liturgy. Its melodic and rhythmic structure invites participation, making it a beloved choice for congregational singing. The hymn embodies the spirit of celebration, aligning with the biblical call to rejoice in the presence of the Lord.

Biblical References

The themes of "This Is the Feast" are deeply rooted in Scripture. The song draws inspiration from several key biblical passages, including:

1. ****Revelation 5:12-13**:** In this passage, the heavenly hosts sing praises to the Lamb, declaring, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!" This aligns with the song's focus on honoring Christ's sacrifice.
2. ****Isaiah 25:6**:** This verse speaks of the great feast that God will prepare for all peoples, highlighting the joy and abundance of His grace: "On this mountain the Lord Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine—the best of meats and the finest of wines." This imagery is echoed in our worship as we come together to celebrate the Eucharist.
3. ****Luke 14:15**:** Jesus speaks of the great banquet, inviting all to join in the feast of God's kingdom. This invitation reflects the all-encompassing nature of God's grace, which we celebrate when we sing "This Is the Feast."

In our worship, we are particularly familiar with four of the ten settings of "This Is the Feast" found in the ELW hymnal. Each setting brings its unique musical expression, allowing us to experience the hymn in different contexts:

1. Setting One - A lively and joyous arrangement that captures the celebratory essence of the feast.
2. Setting Two - A more meditative setting that invites reflection and contemplation on the significance of Christ's sacrifice.
3. Setting Three - A contemporary arrangement that incorporates modern musical elements, appealing to a diverse congregation.
4. Setting Four - A traditional setting that honors the historical roots of this hymn, creating a sense of continuity with our faith ancestors.

As we continue to gather in worship, let us embrace "This Is the Feast" as a powerful expression of our faith. Each time we sing this hymn, we participate in a long-standing tradition of praise, celebrating the goodness of God and the gift of His Son. May our voices unite in joyful song, proclaiming the glory of the Lord and the grace that binds us together as His people.

In Christ's Abundance,

William Jacavage (Bill)

Director of Music

Saint John's Evangelical Lutheran Church

CONGRATULATIONS HIGH SCHOOL, COLLEGE AND HIGHER EDUCATION GRADUATES!!

Now is a time for you to celebrate ...
the accomplishment of a dream you have
worked so hard to realize. You have shown
so many people how special you are.



Now is the time to begin to pursue the next path,
to reach out for the next star, and to achieve the
things that are so important to you.

Always keep your dreams alive.
And keep them coming true.

-Author Unknown

BIBLE QUIZ

According to one account of Jesus' ascension, commonly called the Great Commission, he told the disciples to do several things. Which of the following was not part of Jesus' instructions?

- A. Make disciples
- B. Perform miracles
- C. Teach
- D. Baptize

Answer: B (See Matthew 28:19-20.)

HAPPY
Father's
DAY

*To all Fathers, Grandfathers,
Uncles, Brothers, and all
nurturing men.*

Mark Your Calendars - All Ladies of the Church !!

All ladies are invited to join
WELCA for their summer picnic
on **Monday, June 23rd**
at 6:00 p.m. at the Shikellamy



Picnic

Marina (near the point). Join us for a time of fellowship and meal. Please bring a dish to share, BBQ and paper products will be provided. Please rsvp to Brenda Herbert, 570-743-7678 or the church office, in order to prepare enough bbq.

Have a new idea, project, or program you'd like to see – bring along your suggestions. Hope to see you there!



The Garden Crew is looking for helpers. If you would be interested in helping keep our gardens looking beautiful, please contact Mary Siemsen, 570-898-4058. Any amount of time you can volunteer would be greatly appreciated.



Thank You

Worship & Music would like to thank Trudy Baker for refurbishing our seasonal wreaths. Your time and talent is appreciated in updating our outdoor and indoor décor.

Thank You

The first Sunday of each month communion is celebrated with a loaf of bread and wine. Worship and Music would like to thank Mary Siemsen for sponsoring these items each month.

THANK YOU

Kate's Kupboard would like to thank the Bill and Ann Roll Charitable Foundation for their recent donation of \$975.00. This Foundation has been a faithful supporter of Kate's Kupboard for several years. We are truly grateful for their continued support.

Thank You

I would like to thank the Social Ministry Committee for the hand-held prayer quilt and Worship & Music Committee for the Easter worship bags. Your thoughtfulness was greatly appreciated.

Mike & Bernadette Payne

Thank You

A big thank you to the S. Luther Savidge Charitable Foundation for their recent donation of \$5,000.00 to Kate's Kupboard. This donation is greatly appreciated and will be used to help us restock our shelves following a very busy April Kate's Kupboard.



PRAYERS:

Robert T. Snyder Jr.;
Dana Jaegers;
Karen Treacher;
Ann Thieman;

Michele Wheeland; Bob Stuck; Kathryn Lebo;
Bob Herbert; Nathan Ferster; John Oliver; Terry
Walker; Marvin Gaugler; Louise and Paul
Hilkert; Dixie Wagner

HOMEBOUND Jason Gulden; Helen Snyder;
Doug Manning; June Diehl; Mary Rogers; Mike
Payne; Nevin Brungard; Elaine Kohl; Dolly
Naginey; Nancy Hendricks; William Wagner;
Phyllis Gordon; Betty Yerg; Jane Ressler; David
Bartholomew; Marti Row

NEWS FROM KATE'S KUPBOARD

Kate's Kupboard was open on **April 19, 2025**.

We helped **616** people by distributing **196** household/personal care bags, **190** produce boxes, **196** packs of meat and **236** food boxes. We helped **103** babies and provided adult care products to **30** people.

The total cost was **\$6,771.46**

Thank you to **ALL** the volunteers who helped with this Kate's Kupboard in any way.

Between our March and April Kate's Kupboard we helped **1** family (**3 people**). This family included a baby and a person in need of adult care products. We also gave them **1** food box, **3** bags of groceries and **1** household bag. We help people through NEIGHBORLYPA.com.



Summer Concert

Join us on Monday, June 16 at 7:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall for an evening of entertaining music presented by the Sunbury City Band. Kick off your summer with some great music and fellowship.

Worship Supply Sponsorship Available

The following items are available for sponsorship for Sunday services. If you would like to sponsor any of the items below or check on future dates, please contact the church office. Please note that as on May 1st, the cost of altar flowers has risen to \$45 due to rising costs of our florist.

June 1 - Flowers, bulletins, candles	August 3 – Flowers
June 8 – Bulletins, candles	August 10 – Flowers
June 15 – Bulletins, candles	August 17 – Bulletins, candles
June 22 – Flowers, bulletins, candles	August 24 – Flowers, bulletins, candles
June 29 – Bulletins, candles	August 31 – Flowers, bulletins, candles
July 6 – Bulletins, candles	September 14 – Bulletins
July 13 – Flowers, bulletins	September 21 – Flowers, bulletins, candles
July 20 – Flowers	September 28 – Flowers, bulletins, candles
July 27 – Flowers, bulletins	

Prices:

Altar Flowers - \$45
Bulletins - \$15
Candles - \$8

Geranium Order Form

Pentecost will be celebrated on Sunday June 8th . Geraniums may be ordered by completing this order form. The form along with payment may be placed in the offering plate (in an envelope marked **Geraniums**), dropped off at the church office, or mailed to the church.

**All Geraniums Cost \$ 4.25 Each
For a 4 1/2 Inch Pot – Color: Pinto Red**

Last Date to order is May 25th

Please indicate: Yes, I will pick up my flowers Please plant in the church gardens

Qty Ordered @ \$ 4.25 = Total

Amt. Paid check # Cash

Given By:

In Memory of:

In Honor of:

To the Glory of God:

Mark Your Calendars for Vacation Bible School

Join us on
Sunday, July 20-Thursday, July 24
5:30-7:30 p.m.

Watch for more information in future
issues of the newsletter.

2025	ACTUAL	BUDGET
April Income:	\$ 23,222.82	\$23,759.76
Year to Date Income:	\$ 83,000.60	\$87,589.04
April Expenses:	\$ 22,623.09	\$ 23,843.57
Year to Date Expenses:	\$ 90,368.02	\$ 91,955.03
Income Less Expense – April	\$ 599.73	
Year to Date	-\$ 4,365.99	

Memorial Day Prayer

Heavenly Father, we thank You for the Gift of Your love poured out for us in the selfless sacrifice of Your Son, Jesus Christ. Greater love has no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. As we remember this day those who have made the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom, we think of how they have followed in the footsteps of Your Son. We thank You for those men and women who have laid down their lives in loving, selfless, sacrifice for us, for our nation, for our freedom, for our families, and for our children. They are an image, a reflection, and an extension of Your love, grace, mercy, and compassion for all people.

Help us to honor their sacrifice by cherishing the freedoms they died to preserve. Help all citizens of this great nation to sacrifice themselves in humble service to their neighbors, recognizing that all we have comes from Your gracious hand, and that we are but stewards and managers of Your boundless providence.

Grant our nation humble and faithful leaders who bear the sword You give them for the good of those under their charge and make this nation, under God, a beacon light of charity, mercy, hope, and peace for the world, that those dwelling in the darkness of sin and death may know true Peace in the Light of Your love, mercy, and forgiveness.

Hold our service men and women in Your strong arms. Cover them with your sheltering grace and presence as they stand in the gap for our protection. We also remember the families of our troops and ask for Your unique blessings to fill their homes, and Your peace, provision and strength to fill their lives. May the members of our armed forces be filled with courage to face each day, and may they trust in the Lord's mighty power to accomplish each task. Let our military brothers and sisters feel our love and support.

May the Peace of God that passes all understanding, that peace which the world can neither give nor take away, abide with us to bless us, this day, and even forever more.

In the Name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

By Father Jon M. Ellingworth

Your Gifts At Work

St. John's members have always been generous in helping those in need. Each month there is a World Hunger envelope (yellow envelope), along with monthly Pink envelope designation and special collections. The following is a breakdown of the ELCA's 2024 World Hunger and Disaster Response.

Lutheran Disaster Response 2024 Financial Highlights

REVENUE	\$ 17,494,828
By source	
58%	Individuals and others \$10,210,967
35%	Synods & Congregations \$ 6,232,369
6%	Bequests, trusts & Miscellaneous \$ 980,752
1%	Endowments and other ELCA held funds
By designation	
57%	General undesignated support \$9,895,587
43%	Specific designated support \$ 7,599,241
EXPENDITURES	\$ 119,095,324
By type	
58%	International \$ 11,157,125
36%	United States \$ 6,850,110
6%	Fundraising and administration \$ 1,088, 089
By fund	
57%	Specific designated support \$10,921,894
43%	General undesignated support \$ 8,173,430

**Lutheran Disaster Response
36 States and Territories; 53 Countries**

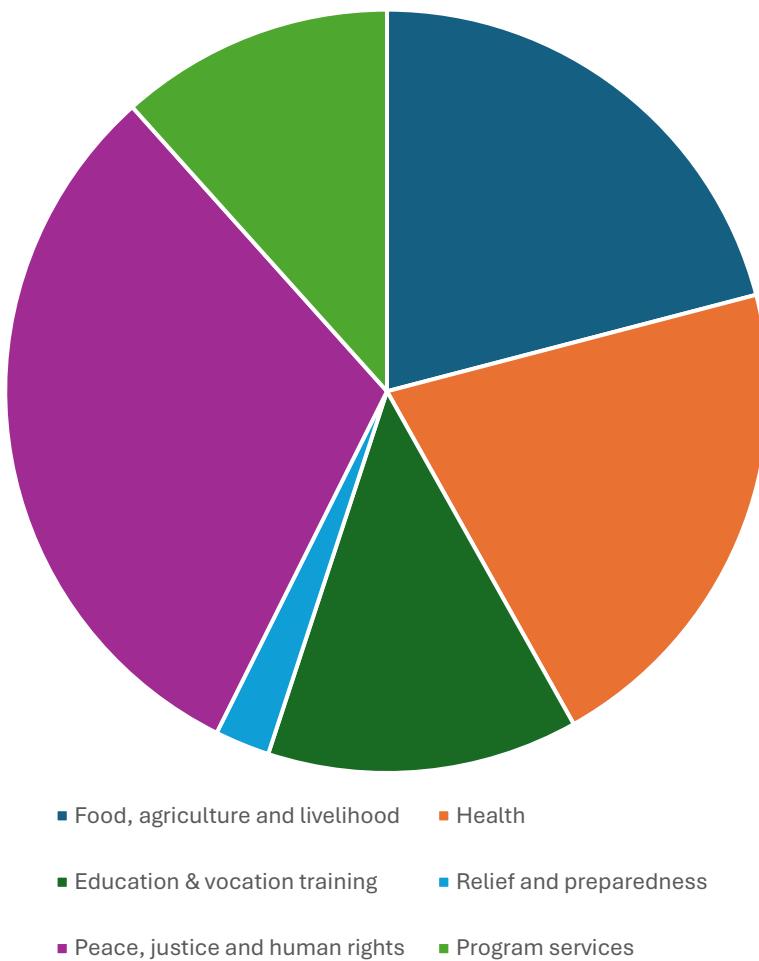
HIGHLIGHTED EXPENDITURES	
United States	
49%	Hurricanes
11%	Tornadoes
9%	Flooding
9%	Wildfires
7%	Clean water access, severe storms and other disasters
5%	Disaster preparedness and capacity building
3%	AMMPAARO, care for migrants
7%	Operations
International	
27%	Europe
25%	Africa
16%	Latin America & Caribbean
13%	Middle East & North Africa
9%	Asia
7%	Global grants
3%	Operations

World Hunger

REVENUE	\$ 20,630,172
52%	Individuals and other \$ 10,671,953
38%	Synods & Congregations
5%	Endowments and other ELCA held funds
5%	Bequests, trusts & miscellaneous

EXPENDITURES	\$ 24,463,492
64%	International Program \$ 15,776,571
27%	Domestic Program \$ 6,548,605 Educating & network \$ 513,695 Relief & development \$ 3,436,568 Advocacy \$ 2,598,342
9%	General administration & fundraising \$ 2,138,316

ELCA WORLD HUNGER
International projects by sector



ELCA WORLD HUNGER

Expenditures by region

Regional and global

Food, agriculture and livelihood
Education and vocational
training

Health

Peace, justice and human rights

Latin American & Caribbean

Peace, justice and human rights
Health
Education and vocational
training
Program services

Africa

Food, agriculture and livelihood
Education and vocational
training
Health
Peace, justice and human rights
Relief and preparedness

Europe & Middle East

Food, agriculture and livelihood
Peace, justice and human rights
Health
Education and vocational
training
Program services

Asia & Pacific

Food, agriculture and livelihood
Peace, justice and human rights
Health
Education and vocational
training
Program services



June 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Worship w/Comm. 9:00 a.m.	2 MomCo 6-8:00 p.m.	3 AA 7:00 p.m.	4	5 Al anon 7:00 p.m. Office Closed	6	7
8 Pentecost Worship w/Comm. 9:00 a.m.	9 MomCo Finance 6-8:00 p.m. 7:00 p.m.	10 AA 7:00 p.m.	11 Council Meeting 7:00 p.m.	12 Al anon 7:00 p.m. Scout Dis. Comm. 7:00 p.m. Office Closed	13	14 Synod Assembly
15 Father's Day Worship w/Comm. 9:00 a.m.	16 MomCo 6-8:00 p.m. Sunbury City Band Concert 7:00 p.m.	17 AA 7:00 p.m. 	18 Messenger Folding 9:00 a.m.	19 Al anon 7:00 p.m.	20	21 Kate's Kupboard 9-11:00 a.m.
22 Worship w/Comm. 9:00 a.m.	23 WELCA picnic 6:00 p.m. MomCo 6-8:00 p.m. 	24 AA 7:00 p.m.	25	26 Al anon 7:00 p.m. Scout Activities Comm 7:00 p.m.	27	28
29 Worship w/Comm. 9:00 a.m.	30 MomCo 6-8:00 p.m.	July 1 AA 7:00 p.m.	2	3 Al anon 7:00 p.m.	4 	5