

# The Encourager

Spurring one another to love and good deeds

## What Are You Striving For?

by Pastor Caleb

When I was grade school, I can remember always striving to be older than I was. When I was in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, I wanted to be in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. When I was in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, I couldn't wait to be in 4<sup>th</sup> grade. When I was in Jr. High, I eagerly anticipating being in High School. When I was in High School, I looked forward to being in college. And so on and so forth. Always looking forward to the next step of life. Always looking to mature and progress in this journey we call "Life." Maybe you are like me, striving for the next step. It doesn't stop with high school and college, now in the professional world, we strive to make ourselves better—more educated, more polished, more refined.



In our faith journey too, we progress. We start as “Wonderers”—wondering if there is a God and what he is all about. We have questions about this thing called Faith. Then we become a “Basic believer”—knowing the basics of the Christian faith. Jesus loves me this I know for the Bible tells me so. We then mature into “Comfortable Christians”—where we have a more significant knowledge of and relationship with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We come to Church and soak it all in. Next we grow in our faith and strive to be a “Good and Faithful servant”—radiating God’s love in our actions, in our lives. Loving others is exciting and fulfilling to us. From there we mature into “Dedicated Disciples”—with our faith fully developed and our lives and resources fully committed to God, used to serve Him and give Him glory. Please be sure that this maturity of faith has nothing to do with your salvation, because you are saved by Jesus Christ by His grace through faith alone—no matter how developed that faith is. This maturity in the faith has everything to do with how we live out our faith here on earth. Jesus says, *if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you can move mountains* (cf. Matthew 17:20). In another section of scripture, he says that a small mustard seed is put in the ground and grows into a large tree so that the birds come and rest in its branches (cf. Mark 4:30-32). What does faith do? It grows!

A few months back, I took a survey of the congregation, and I asked two questions. The first was “On the last day, will you be saved?” and the responses were overwhelmingly “yes, without a doubt.” The

second question was “On the last day, do you want Jesus to say to you, ‘Well done Good and Faithful Servant?’” And 100% answered “Yes.”

As your pastor, it is my job to nurture and aide your maturity in your faith journey. At the most basic level, it is my desire that you are saved on the last day, when Jesus comes back. Praise God that the majority of you are confident in your salvation! However, as your pastor, I also desire to help equip you, working with the Holy Spirit, to increase your maturity and support you to grow as Good and Faithful Servants while you live out your faith here on earth.

Over the next few months, here at St. John’s, as a staff we will intentionally be providing various opportunities to help you foster your faith. Some of these steps will include taking notes in worship-- each person, coming up with an action plan of things that they can do each week to help them to grow in their faith. As we talk through our action plans with others, we will have built in accountability and give us a road map to nurture our faith in God. This will help put into practice the things that God is teaching us through his Word when we gather together for worship. Additionally, it will help open our eyes to the way God is working in our lives and in the lives of others around us. At St. John’s, as we strive to grow in our faith, my prayer is that you will be abundantly blessed by doing the Lord’s will and growing in the purpose he has for your life.

“Well Done Good and Faithful Servants!” Now that is something to strive for!!

## SCRIP

SCRIP is a gift card program that benefits our St. John’s Tuition Education Program. It is **incredibly EASY!** All you do is purchase gift cards at their face value, and those companies give back a portion of the sale to our Tuition Education Program.

Coffee on your way to work? How about Starbuck’s or Dunkin’ Donuts. Going out to lunch? We have Panera Bread, Olive Garden or Dairy Queen. Buying Clothes? How about a Kohl’s card or Dick’s Sporting Goods. Need to fill up on Gas? Need a birthday gift? The choices are endless.

And it doesn’t cost you a penny more than the actual gift card and it **GREATLY BENEFITS** our church.

Please stop by the SCRIP table after church to see what’s in stock. We have gas cards, groceries, restaurants, shopping and much, much more. Need it during the week; call the church office to see what’s in stock. If you want a specific company; we can get it for you. Ask for a list of companies that participate at the SCRIP table; HUNDREDS of companies are available!

This program has the potential of earning thousands of dollars for our church. Thank you for supporting Lutheran education.

# Vacation Bible School

Host: Zion and St. John's Lutheran Churches

Location: St. John's Lutheran Church

When: June 1st through June 5th 8:30am - 11:30am

Discover His Plan! Discover His purpose! In Camp Discovery VBS, your children learn that Jesus works in and through us. They will look into the Bible, God's Holy Word, and explore five "tree"mendous Bible accounts where God works in His people to save them and through His people to serve. Jesus saves, gives us faith, courage and wisdom to serve Him and share His good news with our neighbors. God does have a plan and a purpose for each of His beloved children.

Please register NOW for Camp Discovery Vacation Bible School. We are glad to have your children participate in this fun, week-long adventure. Our VBS program is open to children (potty trained) ages 3 years old to those entering the 6th grade.

As part of Camp Discovery VBS, we share God's blessings with others through a mission project. This year we are asking for non-perishable donations for the Marengo Food Pantry. To make this even more fun, the classes will be competing with each other throughout the week. All students will receive a prize for each donation they bring each day. The class that brings in the most items will receive a special prize at Friday's closing program.

Registration Fee is \$20.00 per child. There is no charge for children of volunteers. To help keep the cost low for everyone, donations are happily accepted. A list of needed supplies and snacks will be posted in the Church Narthex. T-shirts and CD's are available for purchase.

Your children will want to tell you about their travels as they walk upon the mountain, so please make plans to come the closing program on Friday, June 5th at 11:00am.

## Church History: Vacation Bible School

In the first part of June many children will be joining us for Vacation Bible School. In the display case I will be featuring pictures and artifacts of past Vacation Bible Schools. The first VBS was held in 1947 and continues to this day.

Check out the Display Racks for the most recent picture of our new Confirmands. You will find this picture in the rack closest to the Sanctuary door.

**A MOMENT IN HISTORY:** Pastor Otto Doederlein was the first Pastor of our church. He served from 1887 to 1891. In that time he married Pauline Lange from St. Louis. Her father started Concordia Publishing House.

# Planned Giving

*By Annette Hammortree, Chair of the St. Johns Lutheran Church Endowment committee*

Our goal, as a board, is to help grow the Endowment created by Henry Boi. Since the Endowment has been established it has distributed \$91,089.89 back to the church. These distributions have been able to support numerous projects such as Tuition Assistance, Little Blessings, WalCamp and Lutheran charities. The endowment will grow over time, and checks will be larger, from 2 sources: growth of our investment portfolio and new contributions or gifts from **you**, the congregation. There are a number of ways for individuals to **give**. We will be offering some different strategies of giving in future newsletters.

## One Solution: Charitable Bequests

A charitable bequest is one you make to your favorite charities upon your death. This is sometimes known as “planned giving.” The bequest can be made through your Last Will and Testament or Revocable Living Trust. You may bequest cash, investment accounts, real property or tangible personal property, such as valuable artwork, through your will or trust. You may also make charitable bequests of assets that do not pass through your will or trust. These would include assets having a beneficiary designation, such as your life insurance, IRAs, 401(k) plan or annuities. The important thing to remember is that, regardless of the type of asset you decide to give to charity, a charitable bequest ensures you never have to give up control and ownership over the property during your lifetime.

Unlike lifetime charitable gifts, where you lose complete control and access over the property once given to charity, charitable bequests offer much more flexibility. You may revoke or modify the bequest at any time prior to your death. If the bequest is made through your will or revocable living trust, these documents may be amended to reflect your changed goals and intentions. Beneficiary designations may also be easily changed by completing the appropriate beneficiary designation change forms of the financial institution.

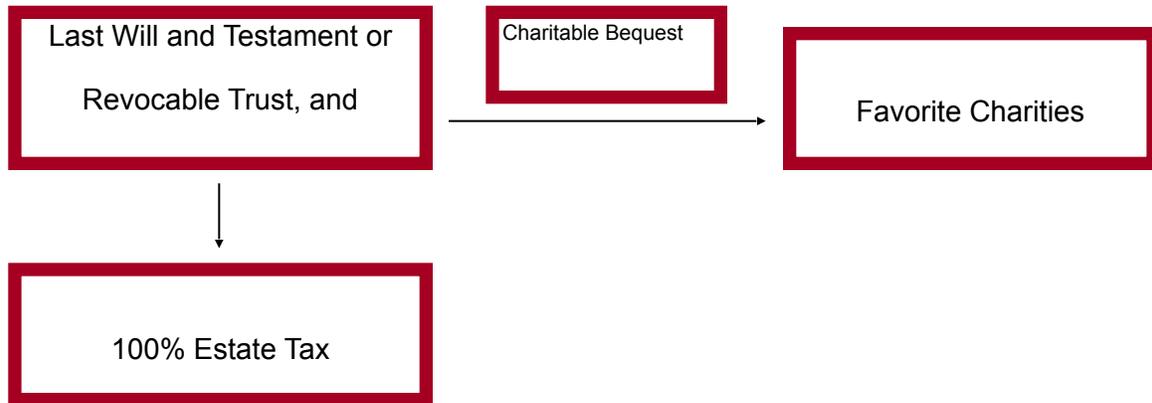
Charitable bequests are also well suited if you have estate tax concerns. Although assets bequeathed to charity are fully included in your gross estate, the estate is entitled to a full estate tax charitable deduction. The charitable estate tax deduction is generally equal to the fair market value of the property. If your estate consists largely of retirement plans, IRAs, annuities, stock options or even deferred compensation, charitable bequests can help you from an income tax perspective, too. Normally, the beneficiary receiving the asset is responsible for paying the income taxes. Qualified charities, however, are not subject to income taxes since they are tax exempt organizations.

## Benefits:

- You can make a significant charitable impact on your community without sacrificing your goal of controlling and using your assets during your lifetime.
- You may make a specific bequest of cash or other assets. You may even bequeath a certain percentage of your estate to charity.

- No estate taxes will be due on the bequest since your estate will receive a 100% estate tax charitable deduction for the amount left to charity.
- Income taxes on certain assets can be eliminated by leaving them to charity.

**How does it work:**



For any questions or more information you can call Annette at 815-788-7420 or ask your estate planning attorney. More strategies to follow in future newsletter!

**Men’s Breakfast**

You are cordially invited to the Men’s Breakfast on **Saturday May 30th from 7:30am - 8:30am.**

We plan to have an overview of the Word and how GOD calls for men to lead their communities, families and church in faith and worship.

This will be the last Men’s Breakfast before our summer break. We will have a great breakfast meal, and share fellowship and worship with other men.

Please join us and invite others.

**John 15:5**

I am the Vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

## Faith and Family Day

On Saturday, July 25th the Marengo/Union Clergy Alliance will be holding the 2nd Annual Faith and Family Day in Marengo, IL.

All families are invited to enjoy a day of music, games, and entertainment which includes Arts and Crafts Fair, Corn Boil, Root Beer Float Garden and good food.

Live entertainment will begin at 11:00am with bands and vocal groups such as The Orchard Band, Grateful Praise, Crystal Lake Community Band, Voices in Harmony, Marengo 1st Assembly of God Band and headlining on the main stage will be christian music artist and former American IDOL contestant DANNY GOKEY.

Please plan to spend the day with us. Visit [www.faithandfamilyday.com](http://www.faithandfamilyday.com) or on Facebook for more details and updates!

## Upward Soccer:

It is amazing that we have 99 young people playing soccer this season! We are delighted that your families are participating and it is our prayer that this is a positive experience for children, parents, coaches, volunteers and spectators.

One of the reasons we love Upward Soccer here at St. John's is that we get the opportunity to share God's love in mid-practice huddles. This season the focus is on various virtues and devotions; scripture learning will focus on one virtue for several weeks.

Practices are split between Monday and Tuesday evenings at 6pm and Games are on Thursday evenings at 6:30pm. Please come enjoy the games and support our youth.

Check out the snacks being offered in the Pavillion by Faith Lutheran High School. Proceeds are to fund a special Mission trip.

Essential Characteristics of a Winning Spectator: Cheer for both teams and provide an environment of encouragement to every child.

## Walcamp Outdoor Ministries

Please check out our local Lutheran Camp website for details on events and opportunities happening over the summer. Visit [www.walcamp.com](http://www.walcamp.com)

## JOY Group: Millenium Carillon

JOY stands for Jesus' Older Youth, for those 50 and better for fellowship and service activities.

This year Millennium Carillon in Naperville is featuring carillonneurs from the Netherlands, France, Germany, Denmark, Russia, Australia, Canada and the United States. On Tuesday June 23rd we will have the opportunity to listen to Malgosia Fiebig, City Carillonneur from Utrecht, Netherlands.

We will leave St. John's at 4:30pm and dine at Texas Roadhouse in Naperville. After dinner we will travel on to Naperville Riverwalk to find the perfect spot to listen to the recital. Please bring a chair or blanket for lawn seating. Cost is what you choose to spend for dinner and share of gas costs. Please sign-up in the lobby.

## Field Trip: Cubs vs Brewers

Hop on Board St. John's Coach to Milwaukee Brewers vs. Cubs

We will take in the last game of the regular season at the beautiful weather proof Miller Park on Sunday, October 4, game time is at 2:10pm. Cost for the trip is \$51 per person which includes game ticket and transportation.

Our seating will be in the Loge bleacher section, which is great home run territory! There are backs on the bleachers, just no arms between the seats.

Transportation will be provided by Rockford Motor Coach and will leave at 12 noon. There are 47 tickets available. Please sign up and pay in the lobby and make checks payable to St. John's.

## Jr. Drumline Summer Camp

A fun way to get your child starting to learn about music!

Who: Boys & Girls Entering 2nd-6th Grade

When: Every Tuesday from 12:30-1:30pm beginning June 9th

Where: 1st class only will meet outside at Marengo High School, door #17 with a performance by the MCHS drumline!

What to bring: \$5/per student/per session to pay the drum instructor, & a water bottle!

Drumsticks will be provided

Come check it out!

For more info contact:

Tamara Kowalski 568-4033

(additional class info will be provided that day)

## Music Lessons

Piano, Acoustic Guitar, Bass Guitar lessons are being offered by Daniel Shinaberger.

If interested, please contact him at (857) 919-0238

# ST. JOHN'S LITTLE BLESSINGS SUMMER CAMP

**2015 REGISTRATION IS HAPPENING NOW!**

Where: St. John's Little Blessings  
6821 Main St.  
Union, IL 60180

When: June 8 through August 14, 2015 9:00am to 4:00pm

Who: K-5th Grade

EACH WEEK WE WILL HAVE A NEW THEME AND FIELD TRIP!  
(Larger Field trips will have an added cost and separate permission slip)

Themes will include:  
BUG WALK!  
ALL ABOUT HAWAII!  
WILDWEST!  
PLANETS AND SPACE!  
LET'S GO TO THE MOVIES!  
NATURE- HIKING AND CAMPING!  
OCEAN'S & CREATURES!  
ANIMALS AND ZOOS!

## Registration and Fees:

- \* New students not currently enrolled in Little Blessings: \$10.00 registration fee
- \* Weekly Cost/per child \$175.00 (plus some field trip expenses, kept to minimum)
- \* Lunch and snack included
- \* Care is also available between the hours of 6:45am-9:00am and 4:00pm-6:00pm, for an additional \$12.00 per day/per child fee

\*If you have any questions, please call Little Blessings Office @ 815.923.2910 or email [@littleblessingslc.info@yahoo.com](mailto:littleblessingslc.info@yahoo.com)

### St. John's Governing Board 2015

Chairperson	Wayne D. Gehring	(815) 923-4366
Vice-Chair	Paul Hill	(815) 923-2705
Secretary	Nancy Modrich	(847) 659-1103
Board Member	Lori Borhart	(815) 568-5799
Board Member	Mark Manninen	(815) 923-7675
Board Member	Lanny Brasile	(815) 923-4165
Board Member	Beth Reineking	(815) 923-2725

#### Financial Advisory Council

- Beth Reineking
- Jenny Arevalo
- Pastor Schauer

#### Pastoral Oversight Committee

- Wayne Gehring
- Lanny Brasile
- Paul Hill

### Feeding of the Homeless

For the past few years, over 40 individuals from St. John's have participated in serving breakfast to between 40-60 homeless people that meet at the Vineyard Church in Elgin.

The third Wednesday of every month, a group of up to 6 people prepare and serve a breakfast. They meet at St. John's at 6am and return around 9am. The meals consist of hot foods like casseroles or soups; plus fruit, juice, milk, bread, cookies and cakes. Hot meals are served during the winter months and sandwiches are served during the summer.

Many people have donated food, time, money and prayers to this caring outreach program; including donations from Thrivent. If you are interested in helping by shopping, preparing food, baking, providing transportation, serving these meals or donating financially to this effort please contact Mitzie Gehring (815 923-4366) or Sue Ziller (815 923-2733)

### In Case We Missed You...

The Encourager will be published quarterly; our next issue will be in August. If you have an event or information happening in August, September or October please email me details at [paulhoban@sbcglobal.net](mailto:paulhoban@sbcglobal.net).