



**St. John's Lutheran Church**  
**June, 2019**  
*Fortress*

## **Dandelions**

"Then [Jesus] opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, "This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." (Luke 24:45-47)

Judah and Joel (my 3rd grader going into 4th grade and my Kindergartner going into 1st grade) have a chance to earn some money this spring and summer. They get a bounty when they hunt the wild taraxacum, better known as the "lion's tooth," or dandelion. I've offered them one penny per dandelion that they pick from our yard and bring to me. But the catch is, it doesn't count if the dandelion is white. They have to bring it to me when it's yellow before it can seed. I've tried to stay on top of mowing the lawn short to keep the weed from spreading. I've paid out almost \$10 so far to my boys who bring me the yellow heads in neat little rows easy to count by the hundreds! But the dandelions in my yard seem to keep multiplying faster than I can get rid of them.

I like lilies. I think they're beautiful with their tall, elegant stems all covered with green leaves and their long white petals accented by the bright yellow splash in the center. And I love how they look in the chancel as we celebrate our Savior's resurrection (even if they do cause Pastor Bovee to go into sneezing fits mid sermon)! :) But, in spite of how much I love lilies, I've always thought that the dandelion would make for a better Easter flower. Let me explain.

For starters, the dandelion seems to be unstoppable. No matter how many seasons homeowners have tried to eradicate the species from their yard, they always seem to keep coming back. You just can't stop them!

Isn't that a fitting picture of Easter? For centuries -- millennia even! -- unbelievers, refusing to examine the evidence, or struggling desperately to find ways to explain it away, have tried to deny the physical, bodily resurrection of Jesus from the dead. But for all their efforts, for all their rhetoric, for all of their ranting and raving, they've been unable to offer any better explanation for the evidence that we have than that Jesus rose from the dead. Like the dandelion, the truth of the resurrection just can't be stopped! Try as some may, it will go on and on and never be suppressed. And what great news that it for us! It means that the message of Easter -- that in spite of our selfishness, in spite of our attempts to suppress the truth when the truth made things difficult for our sinful natures, in spite of many and varied sins... Easter still triumphs! Our Savior still lives! Our sin is still forgiven! We still have heaven, no matter what the skeptic or the unbeliever might claim! Rejoice in this truth, dear friends: Jesus lives! And so you are forgiven! And you will live with him in heaven one day soon!

But I think the dandelion would make a good symbol of Easter for another reason too: as the dandelions so easily spread, so too, the message of Easter spreads like wildfire!

Even if I could get all of the dandelions out of my yard, I'd still have another problem: My neighbor has a few of the pesky weed in his yard. That means that the seeds will inevitably spread back into mine. And from my yard they will blow into my neighbor's yard on the other side. Not only can the seeds not be stopped, they also can't be contained!

In that first century already the good news of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection couldn't be stopped in spite of the best efforts of those who wanted to stamp out this "Jesus" sect. But nor could it be contained! The good news went out to the ends of the earth! Beginning at Jerusalem, it quickly spread to all of Judea, Samaria, Turkey, and Greece, to Rome and to the ends of the Roman Empire! Starting with Pentecost, the seeds spread from one place to the next, always taking root, and creating more seeds wherever it took root.

And the message still spreads like a weed that cannot be contained today! It's gone to the ends of the earth: to China and Vietnam, to Mexico and Africa, to Alaska and to New Ulm! And we can continue to be a part of its spread as we share the message of God's love and grace through our Risen Savior, right in our back yards!

So as you're chatting with your neighbors about those pesky dandelions, don't forget to take the conversation to the next level: Invite them to check out our Soccer Camp (June 24th through 27th) or to join us for worship in the park (June 29th at 6:30pm at German Park). Let them know about our Vacation Bible School (July 23rd through 25th) or about our fellowship event at the Sleepy Eye Water Park (July 26th). Or simply invite them to come worship with us any weekend! Let them hear of the hope that we have: that Christ suffered and died for our sins, that he rose again to assure us of the forgiveness that he won, that we will live with him forever in heaven!

God bless your summer! And God bless your witness as you help spread the message like a dandelion seed!

In our Risen Redeemer,  
Pastor Rob Guenther

## **Staff Minister**

The study of God's Word continues on Sunday morning at 10:45 am. The first subject is the book of Hebrews.

June 24 to June 27 St. John's in connection with St. Paul's will host a Soccer Camp. Check the bulletin for further information.

“But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood.” (Ro 3:21-25a).

## June Sermon Texts

June 2	John 17:20-26	Jesus the High Priest prays for Christian Unity
June 9	Genesis 11:1-9	Should I Stay or Should I Go?
June 16	1 John 5:4-12	Jesus Gives Us the Victory
June 23	Luke 7:1-10	What an Amazing Faith!
June 30	1 Kings 17-24	Leave Your Life in the Hands of the Living God

## Church Picnic

Everyone is invited to a St. John's church picnic on Sunday, June 23, at Hermann Heights Park. It will go from 4 - 8 pm (food served until 6:30 pm), so you can come and go when it works for you!

We have both pavilions rented for us to use. Drinks, meat, and paper products will be provided. The families from A - L are encouraged to bring a side dish, and families from M - Z are encouraged to bring a dessert.

Registration is NOT required, but it would help for planning purposes. You can either sign up by June 16th on the sheets in the narthex or at the following link: [bit.ly/StJohnsPicnic](http://bit.ly/StJohnsPicnic).

Feel free to bring any lawn or card games along to play. We hope to see many of you there!

## Council Digest

The St. John's Church Council met on May 20. The council hosted the members of the St. Paul's Church Council for a joint council meeting, held annually between the two congregations. The historic purposes of these meetings include mutual communication, encouragement, and cooperation. Pastor Jeffrey Bovee of St. John's led the opening and closing devotions. Attendees heard reports from Pastor Nathan Scharf of St. Paul's, Pastor Rob Guenther of St. John's, and Principal Peter Markgraf of St. Paul's School. A summary of topics addressed follows:

- In addition to the partnership we share in the operation of St. Paul's Lutheran school, the two congregations cooperate in a variety of activities. They include the annual German Park worship service, to be held this year on Saturday, June 29, at 6:30 p.m. A recent canvassing effort involved members of St. John's, St. Paul's, and MLC students placing door hangers throughout parts of New Ulm to invite the members of the community to attend this service in the park.

- Other examples of joint efforts include the Good Friday Tre Ore service; youth and family programs; Vacation Bible School; Easter for Kids; Bible studies; worship services conducted at Oak Hills and other assisted living facilities in the community; and local groups like OWLS, Kingdom Workers, LWMS, and the MLC Auxiliary.
- An investigation of a shared pulpit rotation for midweek Lenten services received consideration.
- A new name has been officially designated and a website formed for joint ministry ventures between the two sister congregations. These joint activities are referred to as “John and Paul Ministries.” The website has been created to help with advertisement and registration for these joint outreach events. A youth soccer camp during the week of June 24-27 is currently featured on the site at [www.JohnandPaulMinistries.com](http://www.JohnandPaulMinistries.com)
- Considerable time was devoted to discussion of the school support formula used to determine St. John’s share of operational costs at St. Paul’s School. Related discussions included the St. John’s tuition offset used to assist families with school expenses, ongoing operational costs for the school, and opportunities to support the current school building project. St. John’s is being encouraged as a congregation to consider making regular contributions in support of this project.
- A plan to increase the frequency of these joint meetings to twice a year was considered. St. Paul’s will host the second meeting for 2019 later in the year on a date to be determined.

After the St. Paul’s council was dismissed for the evening, the St. John’s council continued with an abbreviated regular meeting. A summary of reports and action not reported elsewhere in the *Fortress* follows:

#### Membership changes

Adult Confirmation

20 May Kim Schmidt

Youth Confirmation

Hans Boeder      Michael Kiecker

Drew Domeier    Joseph Kowalke

Austin Enter      Rebecca Kuck

Elijah EnterKaydence Smith

Wesley Grob      Estrella Strackbein

Dorothea Grubbs Amber Toltzman

Natalie Hennig    Nathan Wels

Landon Karstens

Releases

Samantha Hegg    Ayden Meyer

Ciarra Fruehwirth Brandon Savoy

LeRoy Knoll      Courtney Steinhauser

#### Pastoral acts

Baptism

19 May Jason Ezra Schwartz

- A previous motion from the Elders to increase the church secretary’s hours by 10 hours per week during the school year remained tabled. A decision whether to replace Staff Minister Kelly Emde when he retires at the end of the calendar year is also pending. The council has decided that a ministry and staffing analysis should be conducted before taking action on these matters and discussed whether to hire a consulting team from the WELS Commission on Congregational Counseling or conduct the study internally. The Elders were assigned responsibility for bringing a recommendation on the preferred option at the June council meeting.

- As previously reported, Bookkeeper Wendy Lambrecht has been experiencing ongoing health issues that prevent her from completing her responsibilities in a timely manner. This includes preparation of monthly financial statements and bill paying. Treasurer Paul Gunderson noted that there is little indication that the situation will change soon and that the audit team appointed to review congregational financial records for 2018 has been unable to function. As a result, the Elders were directed to proceed with the hiring of a part time, temporary assistant with a goal of getting the financial reports up to date.
- Trustees Chair Scott Deters provided a report on plans to rent our parsonage to the family of a man from Alaska who will attend MLC the next two years while he prepares for ministry. A rental rate has been set and a lease agreement is being drawn up in anticipation of the family's arrival in June.
- Deacon David Bellig has asked to be relieved of his responsibilities as soon as a replacement can be found. We thank Dave for his service to the congregation over the past two and a half years. If you are aware of someone who might be interested in filling out the remainder of this three-year term, please contact the undersigned.
- The congregation has a time-limited opportunity to purchase a used, refurbished two-octave set of handbells at a greatly reduced price. The Board of Stewardship recommended that a full set of handbells (including a third octave to complete the set) and accompanying tables, pads, stands, risers, mallets, etc. be added to the congregational wish list at an estimated total cost of \$13,000, contingent upon identification of adequate storage space and an enabling resolution from the Worship Committee to form a handbell choir. The Worship Committee, meeting a day later, provided the necessary resolution and supporting documentation for consideration by the council. The purchase would be made through internal borrowing with the idea that placement on the congregational wish list will provide members the opportunity to contribute toward the purchase and eventually repay the proposed internal loan. Because of the tight time frame, the council will react to the proposal from the Worship Committee via electronic ballot rather than wait until the June meeting and possibly lose out on the opportunity to start a handbell choir at a savings of about \$4,000. A follow-up report will be provided if and when the transaction is approved and completed.

Submitted by Steven Thiesfeldt,  
Congregational chairman

## St. Paul's Lutheran School

[splnewulm.org/school](http://splnewulm.org/school)

### **BoCD Work** (SP Board of Child Discipleship)

#### **Raise in Tuition and Fees**

The SP Council approved a \$50 increase in tuition for the 2019-20 school year bringing the SP tuition to \$1,175 for a member first child. There is a \$100 decrease in tuition for the 2<sup>nd</sup> child and another \$100 for the 3<sup>rd</sup> child in a family. In October, 2018, the St. John's Voters voted to raise the tuition off-set from \$550 to \$575 and included the amount with the budget. A letter was sent to all parents of grade school children in the congregation at the end of May to notify them of the off-set. The off-set was created to allow parents to continue to support all the ministries of St. John's through weekly offerings.

## **Building Project**

There has been a lot of work done already and it is exciting to see all the changes to the outside of the school. Although there were modifications necessary to the drop-off and pick-up routine as well as deliveries during the last month or two, everything seems to be running smoothly. Everything got cleaned out of classrooms and other rooms so that the refurbishing portion of the project can start on June 3<sup>rd</sup>. The office will move to St. Paul's Church over the summer. You can still reach the office calling the school number. Continue to keep this project in your prayers and if you are able, support the project with your gifts. St. Paul's does track the gifts from St. John's members and credits our congregation for amounts to go toward expenses in the project that are considered maintenance/replacement in nature. Consider writing "St. John's" in the memo of any checks sent to St. Paul's or placed in the St. John's offerings. Check the church's website for a Link to Construction Pictures – Awesome! Praise the Lord!

## **New Call Assignment**

Mrs. Holle Rodriguez was assigned on Call Day to teach 5-6 grade at St. Paul's School for a one-year assignment. Although in the essence of time, the BOCD made the arrangement for going to the Assignment Committee for a graduate, she will be considered a St. John's teacher. The position is being used to fill Mr. Dretske's classroom while he continues to heal. The prayer is that providing time for healing will allow Mr. Dretske to return to the classroom in Fall of 2020. Please keep Mrs. Rodriguez and her husband in your prayers. There will be a welcome for them, sometime in August. Mrs. Kate Carlovsky declined the one-year call to teach an afternoon section of PreK as she had done this past year. The BOCD will be working to place a call to fill this position for the coming school year. There will also be a position open for morning paraprofessional in the PreK. Mrs. Carlovsky currently filled both positions. We thank Mrs. Carlovsky for her faithful service and pray that these positions be filled quickly.

## **Registration Day**

Registration Day will take place on August 1st with two sessions. One will run from 10:00 -2:00 and the other from 4:00 until 7:00 pm. LifeTouch will take school ID pictures. A packet of information will arrive in early July with forms to fill out along with other information. If you are planning a vacation and will not be able to come on August 1<sup>st</sup>, please stop in the SP Church office before that day to register your child. The school year 2019-20 is planned to begin for grades 1-8 on Tuesday, September 3<sup>rd</sup> with an opening service at about 8:20. The start of the school year is dependent upon the progress of the building project, but so far they are on target to allow the September 3<sup>rd</sup> start. Watch the bulletin for updates.

## **Dretske Update**

Mr. Dretske has an appointment with Dr. Abdel, a Mayo Clinic surgeon, on June 5<sup>th</sup> to determine the progress of healing in his pelvis through further x-rays. He will determine a plan for rehabilitation and the possibility to see another doctor in regard to the sciatic nerve. Please continue to keep Mr. Dretske in your prayers.

## **Calendar**

- Aug 1 Registration Day with Pictures
- Sep 3 First Day for Grades 1-8
- Sep 4 First Day for Kindergarten

Respectfully submitted, James L. Dretske, Administrative Teacher  
jdretske@splnewulm.org

## Noontime Organ Recitals

The Sioux Trails Chapter of the American Guild of Organists presents its annual Summer Noontime Organ Recitals at 12:10 pm on Tuesdays in Mankato. In June, the series will be at Christ the King Lutheran Church, 222 Pfau Street, Mankato. Performers include Austyn Menk (6/11), Chad Winterfeldt (6/18) and Garrett Steinberg (6/25). Each recital is free. Visit [www.agsiouxtrails.org](http://www.agsiouxtrails.org) for more information.

## Women's Summer Devotions in the Park

The Friday morning women's Bible study group invites all women and moms to join them during the summer months for devotions in the park. We meet at 10 am at the listed park and read a devotion followed by free play and a picnic lunch (optional). Feel free to bring a friend! If you have any questions please contact Sarah Strackbein at 612-361-0425.

- June 7**    **North Market Park:** 1414 N. German St.
- 14**       **Washington Park:** 715 N. State St.
- 21**       **North Park:** 1801 N. State St.
- 28**       **Nehl's Park:** 1100 Summit Ave.

## Women of St. John's

The Women of St. John's met on May 7, 2019. Staff Minister Kelly Emde led a devotion based on Acts 13 which told us about Paul's ministry after his conversion.

Our presenters were Werner and Judith Lemke. We were given a power point presentation of the culture of the Apache along with their personal memories. As we celebrated 125 years of grace in this mission field, we were shown the many churches, schools and nurseries that were established during this time. The missionaries suffered many hardships, but some went on to become multi-generational missionary families. The Lemkes also brought in examples of the Apache culture including a cradle board and a traditional dress.

A business meeting was called to order and the minutes were read. There was no treasurer's report.

LWMS       Ballots for the National Election were distributed. The Fall Rally will be on Sep. 21, 2019. Speakers will be Charlie and Beth Flunker.

Reflections    The event went well and was enjoyed by all attendees.

Our next meeting will be on Tuesday, June 4. Everyone is asked to bring their own beverage and a picnic meal will be provided.

# Archives

## Miscellany

Like previous months, some more items from service bulletins, newsletters, and council and congregational minutes from 60, 50, 25, 10, and 1 years ago. Hope you will find them interesting. Comments, questions, suggestions and even corrections are welcome [kruegerh@mlc-wels.edu](mailto:kruegerh@mlc-wels.edu).

**1959, Pastors: Rollin Reim, Frederick Nitz** (as of Nov). Members serving in the military were noted at various times during the year: Michael Voecks and Willard Koestler in the Navy, Thomas Junke injured overseas, and John Oldfield in the Army Security division.

**1969, Pastor was Frederick Nitz.** Vacation Bible School to be held for two weeks beginning July 21 and the New Ulm Conference Lutheran Bible Camp at Lake Shetek for two weeks in July and August—the first week for grades 4-6 and the second for grades 6-11. Cost: \$16.

**1994, Pastors: David Kolander, Jeffrey Bovee** (Associate as of June); **David Zabel was Director of Christian Education.** Concerns about seating and space and seating and rearrangement of the sanctuary were discussed in December with a study to follow. Added service in August helped.

**2009, Pastors were Jeffrey Bovee and Wayne Laitinen; Administrative Teacher was James Dretske.** A number of calls for a Principal at St. Pauls' School were issued and returned. Jeff Wiechman of MLC covered the Principal's administrative duties and Mrs. Carol Schoenherr the teaching duties.

**2018, Pastors: Jeffrey Bovee and Rob Guenther** (Associate as of July); **Administrative Teacher was James Dretske.** Celebration of "100 years of God's grace in the Minnesota District" with a special service with other Minnesota congregations.

Bob Krueger