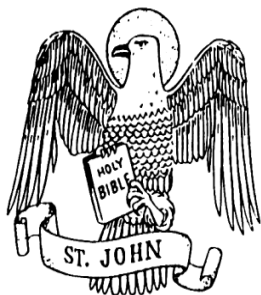


St. John's Lutheran Church  
200 North Hickory  
Toluca, IL 61369

Address Correction Requested



**Risen for times like these!**

**ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH**

Worship: 9:00 AM

Sunday School: 10:15 AM

Coffee Hour: 10:15 AM

Interim Pastor Mauricio Vieira

Office Phone: 815-452-2266

Pastor's office hours: Tu -Th, 8:00AM-5PM (generally)

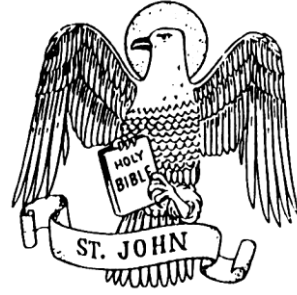
E-mail: [pastor@stjohnstoluca.org](mailto:pastor@stjohnstoluca.org)

Facebook: stjohnstoluca

Website: [www.stjohnstoluca.org](http://www.stjohnstoluca.org)

# THE EAGLE CRIER

Newsletter  
St. John's Lutheran Church  
February, 2022



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## Word for Thought

By Pastor Mauricio Vieira

### Risen for Times Like These

“For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For God’s foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God’s weakness is stronger than human strength.”

*1 Corinthians 1:21–25 NRSV*

“Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say there is no resurrection of the dead? If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins.”

*1 Corinthians 15:12, 17 NRSV*

I know. It is not even Lent yet. However, Easter has been in my thoughts a lot as we move the communion of sinners made saints into the [hopefully] post-pandemic world.

It has been argued that every Sunday should be Easter for the Christian believer. I completely agree. We should all celebrate, daily, the faith that we receive as a gift and allow us to confess that Jesus was raised from the dead for the forgiveness of our sins. The reason to celebrate is simple. His unselfish act on the cross has the power to transform all who believe into saints. God showed us how much God was willing to do for us by staying at the cross and taking all our evil, all our violence, all our rage. When Jesus rose from the tomb, God proved to us that all such evil has no power at all. It does not win. God’s sacrificial love does.

It is easy to overlook the power of Jesus’ resurrection for us in times of abundance, health, and general peace; or when we live in the center, away from the struggling margins of the world. All is good with us, right? We even have enough - resources, energy, security - to mind those who don’t. Therefore, it is also easy to dismiss when we hear of God’s unconventional wisdom. What are you saying, Pastor? Strength is strength; foolishness is foolishness!

The past two years have thrown us a curveball. God must be very angry with us! Deep and threatening clouds were cast upon the wicked and the righteous, saints and sinners alike. Disease, death, violence, conflicts in the streets, natural disasters, rumors of wars, why is this? Pointless, faith alone is not getting us anywhere! Well, can we pay a little more attention to the power of Jesus’ death and resurrection now?

Has God put all the past recent events together on purpose? I have none of God's wisdom, but I refuse to think so. I also refuse to get myself into the rabbit hole of who is ultimately responsible for the evils of this world. All I know is that all of us, siblings in Christ, were called in baptism to resist the evil forces who want to defeat us and to separate us from God (Evangelical Lutheran Worship, ELW, pg. 229). I also know that God, in all God's unconventional wisdom, through dying to live again, gave us a powerful template to do just that.

See, conventional wisdom tells us that we must have done something wrong for God to have abandoned us. Or that God is cleaning the threshing floor! Some will point fingers or say, I told you so! Some will dismiss faith altogether. I dare to see it differently. Our Lord Jesus was crucified and raised so we can overcome times like these. When we proclaim Christ crucified with words and actions, we do not proclaim hopelessness but assurance of the dawn of life anew. When we proclaim the risen Christ with words and actions, we do not proclaim complacency but courage to live again. If anything, I think the troubles of the recent past allow us to rise up, full of hope and confidence in God's wisdom. It is not weakness if the trust in God's promises remains. It is not foolishness if we rise up together, on the other side of grief and resentment, as a community still alive for Christ. That is an Easter to celebrate!

The Spirit of the Lord is upon us, believe the Good News!

Pastor Mauricio

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St. John's is a member of the Central-Southern Illinois Synod (CSIS). To learn more about our synod and its various ministries go to [csis-elca.org](http://csis-elca.org) You can subscribe to the monthly Central/Southern Illinois Synod newsletter by going to this website.

### We Pray For...

Gladys Haig, Edna Meinhold,  
Snyder Village Assisted Living:  
1115 Harbers Lane, Metamora,  
IL 61548;

Eva Stutzman, Aperion Care,  
101 E. Via Ghiglieri, Toluca, IL  
61369

Helen Young: St. Joseph's  
Nursing Home: 401 Ninth St.,  
Lacon, IL 61540.

Prayers Appreciated: Kathy  
Bade, Bob Baldwin, Molly  
Brashers (Cheyanne Sunken's  
friend), Erin Breyne, Jack &  
Norma Calbert, Ruth Ann  
Clanin, Deb (Nenne) Clanin,  
Heidi Cook, Bev DeRubeis,  
Marcia Folkert (friend of  
Pastor's), Bella Fortner, Melody  
Geyer (friend of Susan Petri),  
Garris Graham (friend of  
Pastor's), Robert Hall, Gary

Haszler, Sandi Houtz (Ruth-Ann  
Clanin's sister-in-law), Dolores  
& Wayne Imm, Linda & Tom  
Kratochvil, Nancy Lohr (Tim  
O'Connor's cousin), Aaron  
Luning, Sharon MacDonald  
(Bev DeRubeis sister), Emma  
Myers, Chris Renken, Charlie  
Robinson, Gladys Schmillen,  
Holly Schumacher (Heidi  
Cook's niece), Willard Smith,  
Dorothy & Tori Sunken, and  
Tessa Sutton (friend of Marilyn  
Juers).

### Currently Serving Our Country:

Frank and Frederick Hall,  
Jeremy Merdian, Sean  
O'Connor and Nicholas Swartz.

### Liturgical Calendar

**Year C** focuses on the Gospel  
of Luke. The semi-continuous  
Old Testament readings are of  
prophetic proclamation chosen  
in chronological order and  
highlighting Jeremiah. The  
second, New Testament,  
readings are chosen mainly  
from Galatians, Colossians, 1  
and 2 Timothy and 2  
Thessalonians.

**Time after Epiphany**  
January 7 – March 1

**Lent**  
March 2 – April 13

**Each Wednesday:**  
5PM Text study of Gospel and  
readings for the following  
Sunday. All are welcome.  
6PM Meal  
7PM Worship

## Lenten Meal

As noted above, we will be having a small meal at 6PM prior to each Lenten service. Pam Hahn has kindly offered to coordinate this. There will be a sign-up sheet in the Narthex for each of the seven Wednesdays that will have two slots for each night. The two people who sign up can decide what they want to serve. We only have an hour to do this from start to finish, so a small, simple meal will be perfect. If more than two people want to pick a Wednesday, that is fine. It will be good to have some fellowship before the service. Your help is appreciated.

## Taco Tuesday

Pastor Mauricio invites anyone, from graduating high schoolers to 30-ish to gather at Suds for Tacos on Tuesday, March 15 to shoot the breeze, get to know each other and testify to the taco making abilities of Carolyn Smith!

## Dates to Remember

Ash Wednesday,

### **The Three Days**

April 14 – April 16

Apr. 14, 7PM

Apr. 15, 7PM Maundy Thursday

Apr. 16, 7PM Good Friday

### **Easter**

April 17 – June 8

Apr. 17 – 9AM Easter Worship

May 22 –Blessing of Graduates

Beginning May 29 – September 25, we will have services in the Pavilion, the last Sunday of

each month, weather permitting!

## First Communion Classes

First Communion Classes will be held on Sundays March 13, 27 and April 10 from 10:30-11:30. There will be a sign-up sheet in the Narthex for any family with children ages 11 or older that is interested in having them take First Communion.

First Communion will take place during the Maundy Thursday service, April 15.

## Confirmation Classes

During Lent, Confirmation Classes on March 20th and April 3<sup>rd</sup> will be held from 10:30-12:00.

## Acolyte Schedule

Feb. 20 – Kaden Mooberry

Feb. 27 – Madison Gardner

Mar. 2 (Ash Wednesday)–

Drew Overocker

Mar. 6 – Ethan Gardner

Mar. 13 – Braden Hahn

Mar. 20 – Macy Gochanour

Mar. 27 – Drew Overocker

Apr. 3 – Kaden Mooberry

Apr. 10 – Madison Gardner

Apr. 14 (Maundy Thursday)–

Drew Overocker

Apr. 17 – Ethan Gardner

Apr. 24 – Braden Hahn

May 1 – Macy Gochanour

May 8 – Kaden Mooberry

May 15 – Madison Gardner

May 22 – Ethan Gardner

May 29 – Braden Hahn

## Greeters Schedule

Mar. 20 – Pam and Dick Hahn

Mar. 27 – Carol Hurlbut & Ruth

Ann Clanin

Apr. 3 – D. Dahlbach & Paula

Nenne

Apr. 10 – Sharon & Gene Nenne

Apr. 17 – Carla & Tim O'Connor

Apr. 24 – David & Larry Gerjets

May 1 – Gail & Bruce Clodfelter

May 8 – Margaret Ann & Don

Stutzman

May 15 – Pam & Dick Hahn

May 22 – Carol Hurlbut & Ruth

Ann Clanin

May 29 – Carol Miller & Paula

Nenne

## Lectors

Feb. 20 – Rhonda Sunken

Feb. 27 – David Gerjets

Mar. 6 – Tim O'Connor

Mar. 13 – Carla O'Connor

Mar. 20 – Dick Hahn

Mar. 27 – Bruce Clodfelter

Apr. 3 – Paula Nenne

Apr. 10 – Ruth Ann Clanin

Apr. 17 – Rhonda Sunken

Apr. 24 – David Gerjets

May 1 – David Gerjets

May 8 – Tim O'Connor

May 15 – Carla O'Connor

May 22 – Dick Hahn

May 29 – Bruce Clodfelter

## Main Usher Schedule 2022

1<sup>st</sup> Sun. Ron Thies & Al Toepper

2<sup>nd</sup> Sun. Jeff Gochanour & David  
Hall

3<sup>rd</sup> Sun. Carol Imm & Paula Nenne

4<sup>th</sup> Sun. Larry Gerjets & Chuck  
Holz

## Thank You!

A big thank you to Chuck, Bruce and Don for their continued efforts in plowing the parking lot and the parsonage driveway and shoveling where needed. It is greatly appreciated by all.

Thank you to Nancy Breyne for her tireless willingness to prepare and play the organ each Sunday. Music does so much in creating the mood for the service. Were very grateful.

Thank you to everyone who just goes ahead unseen and does things for the betterment of the church, grounds and the congregation. You're amazing!

## Little Red Schoolhouse Hospitality Table

Beginning Wednesday, February 23, a hospitality table will be set up in the narthex to welcome children and parents coming to the Little Red Schoolhouse pre-school. Coffee and prepackaged treats will be available to begin with. The Little Red Schoolhouse students arrive at 8:30am and 12:30pm, Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Pastor Mauricio will be at the table on Wednesdays and Fridays. If you would like to participate in this ministry and volunteer on Mondays, especially, or any other time of the week, please let Pastor know. If you would like to donate pre-packaged treats, as well, it would be greatly appreciated.



### February Birthdays

2 – Tara Greskoviak  
4 – Robert Farner  
5 – Al Toepper  
12 – Dawn Gray  
13 – Ken Spear  
20 – Kathy Baldwin, Wayne Imm Jacob Lindberg  
21 – Leah Guderjan  
22 – Heidi Cook

### March Birthdays

3 – Cara Keifner  
6 – Macy Gochanour  
9 – Juanita Robinson  
17 – Chris Gordon, Justin Hahn  
20 – Jackson Lindberg, Gene Nenne, Rhonda Sunken  
21 – Tina Smith  
26 – Karen Kinsey

28 – Kevin Cook, Jennifer Tooley  
31 – Bruce Clodfelter, Sydni Tooley

### April Birthdays

4 – Jodi Gochanour  
7 – Zachary McClanahan  
10 – Aaron Suffern  
11 – Emma McClanahan  
12 – Chuck Swartz  
13 – Gary Haszler  
14 – Marilyn Juers  
16 – Rachel Cook  
18 – Elliana Shide  
21 – Mila Breyne  
22 – Ellen Fluech  
23 – Susan Petri  
24 – Carol Hurlbut  
25 – Margaret Ann Stutzman  
26 – Edna Meinhold  
28 – Erin Breyne

### May Birthdays

1 – Gladys Haig  
2 – Cindy Edwards  
7 – Phyllis Leininger  
10 – Paula Nenne  
12 – Phil Cook  
13 – Rebecca Lindberg  
16 – Dorothy Farner, Carol Miller, Carter Myers  
17 – Nancy Breyne  
18 – Jean Toepper  
23 – Ryan Gerjets & Keagan Paulen  
28 – Mike Gray, Camille Greskoviak  
We wish everyone a blessed birthday! We are thinking of all of you.

### February Anniversaries

15 – Gail & Bruce Clodfelter  
29 – Linda & Tom Kratochvil

### March Anniversary

19 – Kara & Justin Shide

### April Anniversaries

2 – Treva & David Clodfelter  
6 – Dorothy & Robert Farner

23 – Carla & Tim O'Connor  
27 – Cindy & Scott Edwards

### May Anniversary

21 – Cindi & Gary Kroeschen

Happy Anniversary to all!

### **How to Receive St. John's text messages**

You can receive text messages regarding church scheduling changes, e.g. no outdoor service due to poor weather, or service cancellation during winter, or special church events by doing the following:

Go to St. John's website at [stjohnstoluca.org](http://stjohnstoluca.org). On the left side of the page a ways down, is an orange box that says "Mobile Text Alert Sign-up". Click on that box. Then click on 'follow the link' (even if you don't have Facebook) and it will take you to a sign-up page where you will need to put your name and phone number. You then click in the box further down by St. John's Lutheran Church. You will then automatically receive church messages when one is sent out. (this is also the same site to receive City of Toluca messages regarding garbage pick-up, events, etc. by clicking the box next to City of Toluca)



Please watch the bulletin for information on Bible Studies beginning again. We have received word that the Synod Board has voted to reschedule the Biennial Convention to September 9-10 of 2022 at Grace Lutheran Church, Springfield, in hopes that Covid will be more under control and

more attendees will be vaccinated. Keep checking your bulletins for updates.

### Quilters

Quilting is taking place every Tuesday beginning at 9AM and ending by 2PM. We take a coffee break and then have a pot-luck lunch as well.

We could really use additional help to make the quilts. You need to know **NOTHING** about quilting to help. It involves cutting the quilt blocks, ironing pieces that need it, helping tie the knots in the sewn tops, laying out the blocks. You also do not need to stay the entire time. Coming for even an hour or two can be very helpful in creating more beautiful quilts to be donated. We don't have many more weeks and quilting will be finished for this year. Please join us if you're able! Also, please check your closets for any old sheets of any size, flat or fitted. We use these as backing for the quilts and to make additional quilt blocks. Look at it as an opportunity to do a bit of spring cleaning! You can bring them to church and put them on the table in the hallway. Thank you for any that you find.

### Altar Guild

First, a very big thank you to everyone who helped undecorate the church. It goes so much more quickly with many hands. Thank you again.

A new typed version of "Set-up for Communion" is on the counter in the Altar Guild Room and copies are up in the right-hand cupboard as well, if you'd like to take one with you. Some

changes have been made that everyone needs to be aware of.

This will become a busy time of year for Altar Guild. We will need to put the cross up sometime between February 27 and March 2, Ash Wednesday. Stay tuned for the time of that. We will then need as many members as possible to assist with stripping the altar on Maundy Thursday, April 14 at the end of the service. Paraments change a few times during this time of the church year as well.

There will be a brief Altar Guild meeting on Sunday, April 10<sup>th</sup> right after church. Please plan on attending if at all possible.

We will be purchasing lilies for the altar at Easter. Anyone who would like to contribute to their purchase, please give your money to our Treasurer Carla O'Connor or to Carol Miller.

As always, we are in need of additional Altar Guild members to lighten the schedule load for all. It doesn't take much time and is easy to learn. Please contact Carol Miller if you're interested.

Thank you to everyone.  
Carol Miller

### Cemetery Board

There will be a Cemetery Board meeting on Monday, April 4 at 7PM.

### **New and Gently Used LUGGAGECOLLECTION for children and youth in foster care and residential settings**

***Why? Because most  
Lutherans have extra  
baggage!***

ELCA congregations in the Northern Conference are collecting new and gently used luggage for children and youth entering and moving through foster care and residential systems for the Children's Home Association of Illinois and Lutheran Social Services. In the past, many children have come into care with all their belongings in large black garbage bags. As you can imagine, these transitions are difficult enough on kids without all their possessions being stored in a garbage bag! These local agencies have improved this process over the years through luggage donations but we've learned their inventory is low. And, that's how we can help!

Congregations are encouraged to start their own collection of new or gently used modern luggage to donate or pass this project along to individuals and families who may wish to participate. Carry-on through full size luggage is needed. Modern features such as wheels and handles are ideal. Please do not donate antique, damaged or out of date luggage from the back of your attic to this project. However, if you've upgraded your luggage in recent years or are planning to – why not pass on your extra baggage to this great cause!?!?

We will collect donations in a corner of the Parish Hall and then take them to the delivery site. We will need to have any donations by March 20<sup>th</sup>. Another opportunity to do some spring cleaning!

## **Sunday School**

.The Sunday School continues to grow slowly. We had 10 children participate in the Christmas program (masks and very little or no practice). We sincerely thank everyone who came that Sunday and supported them. It was good to have the program in these complicated times. The number of attendees continues to change but we carry on because the Bible says Matthew 18:20 "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. At times we join the Fellowship Hour and ask for their help. The children are amazed that they know the songs that we are teaching them. It's wonderful to see the spark in their eyes as they hear older people in the congregation singing the songs they're learning or interacting with them in some way. God is

good and is for everyone, young and old. He cares for us all. Thank you again for encouraging the children and making them feel important.

## **Directory Help Needed**

Have you dropped your home phone? Changed your address? Need mailings to go somewhere else during the winter? Have you moved?

If you've answered "yes" to any of these questions, please let Rhonda know so she can update the information and create a new directory. She has reached out to some, only to find that their land line has been dropped. Rhonda would like to create a new church directory with current phone, address and e-mail address information, including if the phone number is for the wife or the husband. If you have graduated from High School,

you will be given a separate entry. This hasn't been done for several years and would be helpful for all. Thank you.

## **Please Remember**

As we are beginning to have more meetings and activities at church, please remember to shut off all lights and lock all doors before leaving. We have gotten out of the habit of doing this. Thanks!

## **Newsletter Information**

We ask all ministries of St. John's to please contribute updates on events and/or accomplishments to The Eagle Crier. It is the newsletter of St. John Lutheran Church and its congregation. Contact Carla and Tim O'Connor at (815) 452-2529 or [toccmoc@att.net](mailto:toccmoc@att.net). Thank you