



The Parish Twine

August, 2025

- ❖ St. John's Lutheran Church, St. Donatus, IA
- ❖ St. Paul's Lutheran Church, La Motte, IA



From the Pastor's Desk:

Dear Friends in Christ,

Next month will mark a full year of this "Heartsongs" newsletter series. I could probably continue it indefinitely without running out of good hymns, but it seems like it makes sense to shift gears after next month. If I haven't gotten to your favorite hymn by then, please let me know so that I can keep it in mind if I come back to this series in the future. Keep in mind that in this series I'm trying to focus on songs that are not only favorites, but which lend themselves well to learning "by heart." One of the best in that regard, which I know is a favorite of many folks, is "Leaning on the Everlasting Arms," also known by its first line, "What a Fellowship, What a Joy Divine."

If you want to start memorizing a hymn but don't feel like you're very good at memorization, this song's for you! More than half of the lines in the song are literally the words "Leaning, leaning," and "Leaning on the everlasting arms." Add the line "Safe and secure from all alarms," and you've got the entire refrain! For the verses, again half of the lines are "Leaning on the everlasting arms." After that, all you need to memorize are three pairs of rhyming lines:

1. What a fellowship, what a joy divine, (leaning on the everlasting arms);
what a blessedness, what a peace is mine, (leaning on the everlasting arms.)
2. Oh, how sweet to walk in this pilgrim way, (leaning on the everlasting arms);
oh, how bright the path grows from day to day, (leaning on the everlasting arms.)
3. What have I to dread, what have I to fear, (leaning on the everlasting arms?);
I have blessed peace with my Lord so near, (leaning on the everlasting arms.)

All that repetition doesn't mean it's boring, though! This can be one of the most fun hymns to sing in the entire hymnal, as long as you sing it with a little pep. It gets even more fun if you add the bass line under the refrain: "Leaning on Jesus! Leaning on Jesus!" Whichever part you sing, sing it out loud and clear!

I've come to realize over the past few years that the biggest part of being able to sing is believing you can do it. I know that we each have physical differences that might impact the ways we can sing, but I suspect that for the majority of folks the biggest limit to singing is in our minds. I never used to think I was a very good singer, and as long as I believed that, it was true. I'm still no Bing Crosby or George Strait, but the more I've learned to just enjoy singing in church and go ahead and do it, the more comfortable I've become with singing.

A familiar, joyful hymn like "What a Fellowship" is the perfect opportunity to use the wonderful, unique voice God gave you and sing it out from the bottom of your belly. No wonder, considering that one of its authors taught singing!

This hymn was actually written by two people in 1887. Anthony Johnson Showalter was a singing teacher, music publisher, and an active member of First Presbyterian Church in Dalton, Georgia. He is said to have been inspired to write the refrain based on Deuteronomy 33:27, "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms" (KJV) after hearing the news that the wives of two of his former students had recently died—according to some accounts, being buried on the same day. The refrain was part of his note of sympathy to these students, and he asked his

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Holy Communion:

1st, 3rd, & 5th Sundays
of each month
plus major festivals

Sunday Worship

St. John's—8:30 a.m.
St. Paul's—10:00 a.m.

Council Meetings

St. John's, Aug. 4—6:30
St. Paul's, Aug. 5—7:00

Women of ELCA Bible Study

August 7—1:00 p.m.

Pastor on Vacation

August 29–September 1

Sewing Day

August 20—10:00 a.m.

Joint Worship

La Motte Town Park
August 24, 10:30 a.m.

Council Notes

Worship Attendance:

		<u>St. John's</u>	<u>St. Paul's</u>
July	6	25	15
July	13	no service	13
July	20	28	18
July	27	25	14

St. John's Council—July 7:

Meeting called to order by Richard Busch.

Members present: Pastor Will, Richard Busch, Mark Hueneker, Linda Hueneker, Peggy Post, Tom Decker, Deb Decker, John Busch, Julie Busch, Rev Laurie, Judy Hueneker-Kremer

Devotions: Provided by Pastor

Pastor Report: Pastor Will provided

VBS

Wedding 6/14/25 – groom and best man were childhood friends of Pastor.

Pastor to be late to Tractor Pull due to College Orchestra Reunion.

Pastor filled in at Stonehill service.

Rev. Laurie – provided a written report.

Secretary Report: Judy H-K. provided a written report.

Treasurer Report: Julie B. provided a written report.

Motion carried to accept reports.

Old Business:

Tractor Pull:

Set up will be Friday night at 6:00

David Bies donated tractor from last year back and weights were added to the tractor

Random raffle items have been donated

Insurance:

Mark H, is currently reviewing

Building and Maintenance:

Joseph to look at 2 back doors in church basement and soffit on house

Office Printer:

Continuing work in progress

God's Helping Hands:

To be discussed at Women's meeting

Service in the Park:

Pastor and TPJC to coordinate

New Business:

Lamotte Telephone to provide internet and Wi-Fi at no cost

Next meeting: August 4, 2025 at 6:30.

Meeting adjourned and closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Trinity Parish Jackson County

Meeting Monday, August 11, 6:30 p.m.

St John's Lutheran

To plan for the August 24 Worship in the Park.

God's Work Our Hands Project

The project this year is "Undies Sunday," to collect and distribute items for Dubuque Rescue Mission, Opening Doors and Almost Home. The top items needed for many using these facilities are: socks, t-shirts and underwear.

During the month of August and up to September 7. we are asking our church members to bring new, unopened socks, t-shirts and underwear of all sizes. *A basket will be provided for donations.*

On September 7, which is the designated God's Work Our Hands Sunday for the ELCA, we will gather after the service to sort and divide the items for delivery to the above-mentioned locations.

Vacation Bible School at Salem

Undaunted by a rainy day, 45 children played, sang, and learned in many ways at Salem's VBS on July 30. To understand how to mend God's world, the kiddos learn songs and Bible stories to praise God. Our themes of Pray, Feed, and Rest saw children decorate towels as yoga prayer mats, deliver donated food items to the Little Free Pantry at Andrew School and create feeders for tiny hummingbirds, and help to prepare materials to construct beds for children who have none. (Our special thanks to Sleep in Heavenly Peace folks for leading this project.) We're grateful to the 30+ adult and youth volunteers, without whom this day couldn't have happened. Most especially we're grateful to the families and friends who entrusted their children to us for the day. The kids seemed to enjoy the day; truly the Spirit of God was swirling with joy throughout the church!

Our Sympathy

Our prayers are with the family of Olive "Buzz" Wolter (Tracey Hueneker's mother) who died on July 26 at Mill Valley.

Congratulations

Delta Grace was born to Curtis Bormann and Dakota Foldenauer on July 10. She will be baptized on August 10 at St. Paul's.

Come Worship in the Park!

We will have our annual joint worship/communion in La Motte Town Park on Sunday, August 24 at 10:30 a.m. with potluck lunch to follow. Worship will be in the pavilion. Attendees can bring their own lawn chairs. Beverages **will be provided. Bring your own table service.**

Remember the "Undies" offering!

Women of the ELCA

August Bible Study

Thursday, August 1, 1:00 p.m.

Devotions: Betty Schroeder; Bible Study: Pastor Will

The Bible study will be on Deborah in the book, "Women of the Bible." If you can come for sewing starting at 10:00 a.m., bring a sack lunch.

Quilts Donated in July

12 fleece blankets (made by VBS) were taken to MY G.E.A.R. in Clinton.

Quarterly Meeting, July 10

There were five members present.

Treasurer reported disbursements of \$956.07 and a current balance of \$2,434.35.

Council had asked women to choose a project for "God's Work, Our Hands" to be done September 7. Diane Strickler agreed to use the theme of "Undies Sunday" and collect listed items during August, suggesting that council serve coffee, juice and donuts.

Motion passed to give \$250 for Texas Flood Relief.

Intergenerational Sewing Day

We will have another one on Wednesday, August 20 and hope more will join in the fun!

Cluster Gathering

Our next Cluster 5 meeting is September 20 at St. Paul's Lutheran in Clinton. Registration, 8:30 a.m. with program starting at 9:00 a.m. More details to come.

Coming Up:

- ⇒ **Bakeless Bake Sale**—St. John's/St. Paul's Women of the ELCA annual fund-raiser in October & November.
- ⇒ **Thankoffering**—Let us remember to express our thanks for each day's blessings. Our ingathering will be during the worship service on November 9.

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Tabs & Stamps

We continue to collect can tabs for Ronald McDonald House. Please bring them to St. John's and put in the container in the entryway.

We also are still collecting stamps for Lutheran World Relief shipping.

Pastor's Vacation

Pastor Will plans to be on vacation August 29 to September 1. For emergencies during that time, contact Rev. Laurie.

Prayer Concerns

Avela Bahr, Carmen Blake, Billie Bohy, Norma Bormann, Marilyn Bradley, Richard Bradley, Carlton Busch, Kimberly Busch, Tricia Busch, Lowell Carlson, Ann Current, Janell Daugherty, Paul Dent, Max Elliott, Carl Ganzer, John Hinke, Gary Hughes, Sharon Konrardy, Joyce Laughlin, David Schroeder, Liam Schroeder, Diane Wallace, Duane Westphal, Rita Wiegert, Al Wolter.

August Birthdays

- Aug. 1 — Chad Walker
- Aug. 2 — Joan Schroeder
- Aug. 3 — Nancy Dodge
- Aug. 5 — Peyton Moeggenberg
- Aug. 8 — Isaac Current Giere
Jodi Pendarvis
- Aug. 9 — Logan Hueneker
Lynn Sanders
Conner Michels
- Aug. 11 — Nathan Busch
- Aug. 13 — Scott Schroeder
Chuck Soliday
- Aug. 14 — Michael Felderman
Kerensa Kettmann
Aleeyah Steines
- Aug. 15 — Wanda Bormann
- Aug. 16 — Eldon Busch
Deb Weis
- Aug. 17 — Phil Kasik
- Aug. 19 — Claire Steines
- Aug. 21 — Betty McPhail
Samantha Schumacher
- Aug. 23 — Leita Marks
- Aug. 24 — Amy Current
- Aug. 25 — Randy Schoop
- Aug. 28 — Isaac Shaw
- Aug. 30 — Allison Bormann
Rosie Jo Decker
Amanda Oberman

Anniversaries

- Aug. 1 — Troy & Kim Hingtgen
- Aug. 6 — Doug & Jackie Clark
- Aug. 9 — Bill & Sherry Giesemann
- Aug. 11 — Brent & Jessica Willimack
- Aug. 12 — Josh & Kristi Kettmann
- Aug. 21 — Jon & Joan Schroeder
- Aug. 28 — David & Nancy Dodge

Please let us know of any errors or omissions.

friend, Pastor Elisha Hoffman, a Presbyterian minister then serving in Ohio or Michigan, to write the verses. Rev. Hoffman was a prolific hymn writer—one of his other well-known hymns is “Are You Washed in the Blood of the Lamb.”

While the story of the lyrics is known well enough, the tune has a bit of a mystery to it. While the music is usually attributed to Mr. Showalter, as well, some accounts suggest that the tune was written by Showalter’s nephew, Sam Duncan, who was studying music with his uncle. Duncan may have been asked to write the tune as an assignment for Showalter’s class. We may never know the truth, but I’m grateful to whoever wrote it, and I look forward to singing it with all of you soon!

Sincerely in Christ,
Pastor Will Layton

Camp Firelight—St. John’s VBS

Camp Firelight was held on Friday, June 27, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. We hosted 32 kids, with many of them returning from previous years with some new families joining. We had four 4-year-olds and three groups of 9-10, kids age 5 to 12 that learned about the story of Ruth and of Jesus calming the sea. The camp call out was ‘Whenever I’m afraid, I put my trust in You’. The kids did crafts, science and recreation around those two Bible Stories.

A central part of our VBS, is a service project. This year the kids made nearly 70 care bags for residents at Mill Valley Care Center and Sunrise Villa. The care packages had several items such as personal care items, decor, puzzle books and a hand-made card from one of the kids. On the Saturday morning after VBS, 11 VBS kids and 9 adults delivered the care packages to Mill Valley and Sunrise. The kids were able to hand out each of the care bags, talk to the residents and bring lots of smiles to people’s faces.



As a second service project, the kids tied 10 blankets to be donated to My G.E.A.R., an organization in Clinton, Iowa that works with kids in foster care.

VBS is supported by many in our church—from those that donated items for the care packages, fleece for the tie blankets or fixings for s’mores, we appreciate the support. We had over 20 volunteers the day of VBS including 8 young people. Of the 8, 6 were former VBS kids! We had several sets of volunteers, parents and kids that spanned 3 generations, helping build a solid foundation for sharing the faith in our community.

Volunteers: Laurie Hueneke Martens, Pastor Will, Jeanette Fredrick, Alleyah Steines, Addie Cook, Joselyn Ries, Bea Hansen, Cathy Layton, Deb Decker, Deacon Laurie, Natalia and Adriana, Barb Hueneke, April Theisen, Linda Hueneke, Tracey Hueneke, Tom Decker, Addy Blitgen along with Katie Hueneke, Mckenna Martens, Jody Martens.

The majority of the cost for VBS was incurred last year as we utilize one set of curriculum, crafts, decor over 2 years. VBS is provided free of charge, with some families making a free will donation to help offset the costs.

Thank you for the support of everyone in the congregation. VBS is tentatively set for Friday, June 26, 2026!

Additional recommendations for programming: There are many ways our congregation including VBS, Sunday School or confirmation could further engage with and support Mill Valley and Sunrise Villa.

There is a real interest for VBS and other children-centered programming in our community and look forward to continuing to host VBS at St. John’s.

Sunday School

We anticipate Sunday School beginning soon at our churches. Please talk to Anita Heacock (563-773-2715 or Heacock@netins.net) at St. Paul’s or Laurie Hueneke Martens (lueneke@yahoo.com or 202-441-4452 at St. John’s for more information about Sunday School.

Confirmation Class

Parents or other family members of children who are going into 7th or 8th grade this year, please be sure to talk with Pastor Will about plans for confirmation classes. Confirmation class begins in September, with days and times to be determined based on students’ schedules.