

St. John's Newsletter – Summer 2011

From His Word ...



Bright red cherries covered the tree in front of the parsonage. Not many are left after the birds and squirrels have had their fill. But it reminded me of the words from Psalm 1: "... a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season" (Psalm 1:3 NIV1984).

How important water was in the arid climate of the Middle East! Streams of water nourished the tree even in the dry season, when the wadis in Israel became parched ground. Picture how the open prairie has no trees except along the river banks.

Who is like such a tree? Whoever delights in God's Word and meditates on it day and night (Psalm 1:2). Like many passages in Scripture, this Psalm refers to all of God's Word as "the law." The Hebrew word for law (*torah*) has the idea of "teaching." All of God's Word reveals his teachings, both his saving teachings (his Good News of full forgiveness in Jesus) and his moral teachings (his commands of what to do and not to do.) Both bring delight to the Christian heart.

During the hot days of summer keep your faith well-watered. Without the weekly routine of school and with vacations and weekend get-a-ways changing our schedules, God's Word can fall by the wayside. Faith slowly withers without us realizing it. How vital the living water of God's Word is for you and me!

Let God's Word soak down to the roots of your soul. Contemplate what you read in the Bible. Chew on what you hear preached each week. Reflect on the words of the hymns as the melodies echo in your head. As God's Word soaks into your heart and mind, what delight, joy, and gladness it brings your soul! You're like a tree planted by streams of living water. Meditate on Psalm 1.



Vacation Bible School

The theme this year is "*One-of-a-Kind Zoo*." The background of each day takes place at different exhibits: Tropical Rain Forest, Farm Habitat, Grassland Safari, Living Seas, and the Rest Area.



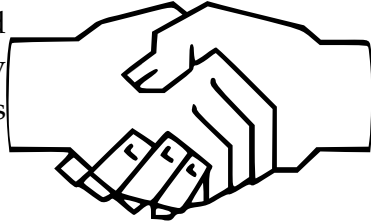
But more importantly, we learn about our one-of-a-kind Savior. In the Garden of Eden he made a one-of-a-kind promise. He brings a one-of-a-kind blessing as he made clear to Balaam through his donkey. He carries out a one-of-a-kind rescue as he did for Daniel in the lions' den. He teaches us and Jonah a one-of-a-kind lesson. And finally he brings us true rest because Jesus is both the one-of-a-kind Sheep and the one-of-a-kind Shepherd.

Please note: VBS is in the morning this year, from **10:00 a.m. to noon** on Monday, July 11 to Friday July 15.

VBS – Part 2

As our one-of-a-kind Shepherd, Jesus served us by giving his life for his sheep. He laid down his life for us and took it up again. He didn't come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for all. So also as his followers, we serve one another.

We want to impress on the children in VBS that as Christians we serve, helping others as the Lord enables us. How can you help us teach this?



Invitations

Do you know any families with children in the area who might want to come? Just let us know their name and address, and we'll be sure they get an invitation. Or if you want to deliver an invitation personally, they are available in the narthex at church.

Luminarias

As the Good Samaritan helped his neighbor in need, so also we want to encourage the children to show Christian compassion to people who suffer, such as those with cancer. The American Cancer Society has its Rely for Life on July 15, the same week as VBS. We thought that decorating luminarias for the Rely for Life would help the children think with compassion.

So if you are planning to purchase a luminaria or have already done so, could the VBS children decorate it for you? For more information or to make arrangements, please contact Bridget Joos 392-7426 by July 11.

Visits

For the closing activity for VBS this year, the children will be delivering care packages to retired or home-bound people in our com-

munity. They may also sing some of the VBS songs they learn (like Christmas caroling in July). We plan to do this Friday, July 15, from 11:00 a.m. to noon. If you live in Hancock and would like us to stop by or if you know someone in the community that would appreciate our visit, please let Pastor Bitter know. Sometimes the best way to teach service is to let others serve you.

Email

One way to get out updates and reminders in our modern age is through email. If you have an email address and don't mind sharing it with the church, we would appreciate it. The easiest way to get your email address to us is to send the church an email at hancocklutheran@gmail.com

You can also keep up by following the churches Twitter account @HancockLutheran or by going to www.hancocklutheran.org

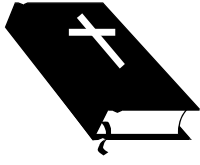
Youth Rally



Four of our teens will be traveling to the Means of Grace (M. O. G.) youth rally, sponsored by WELS churches at Kalihari, Wisconsin Dells, WI. Three large group speakers (a high school teacher, a seminary professor, and a pastor from a church aggressively reaching the lost) will give presentations feeding into small group discussions. Around that core will be fun at the water park and relationship building as teens and leaders meet new friends and old. The rally is July 21-23.

Please keep Evan Nelson, Lauren Nelson, Seth Nelson, Sam Roth, and Doug & Leah Nelson in your prayers as they travel and participate at the rally.

Wednesday Nights



If you miss Sunday morning, don't forget about Wednesday night. Most Wednesdays during the summer (except August 3) have the same service as the previous Sunday. Come worship your Lord.

Finances

How richly the Lord has blessed us! Just look at how full our homes are with stuff. We certainly have what we need and so much more.

As the summer months continue, please do not forget the needs of your church. The same bills come in whether the church is full or nearly empty. Yet we know that our heavenly Father will take care of us. See how he even gave up his Son for us. What amazing grace and love!

At the end of June, the General Fund balance was (-\$279.66) in the red. June offerings totaled \$5611.00 and expenses were \$6981.48, depleting the \$1000 cushion we had. The Congregational Mission Offering received \$435, bringing our total for the year to \$3875.75. Our annual commitment is \$8000.

Fair Booth

We want to see if we have enough volunteers for the fair booth this year. If you think you could help, please sign up on the sheet with a guess at the number of hours you could work. This is not a commitment to any specific day or time. We just want to see who's willing to help out. Between St. Paul's and us, we are to be at the booth for 32 hours. So far only five couples have signed up from St. John's. Sign up as soon as pos-

sible, so that we know that we will have enough help. If not, we may not have a booth this year. As the fair comes closer, we'll work out the specific times that fit your schedule.

Recipes

The Ladies Society is still looking for recipes for a cookbook. Please place them in the box in the narthex or email them to Gloria: kgzeltwanger@mchsi.com

Music



Phyllis Joos plans to attend the WELS National Conference on Worship, Music, and the Arts from July 19-22, at Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, MN. It's the largest worship conference of all North American Lutheran church bodies and is held every three years. The encouragement and ideas she receives there benefit us all as she uses her gifts to serve us and our Lord in worship.

Synod Convention

Please keep the delegates of the WELS in your prayers as they meet in Watertown, WI, for the 61st Biennial Convention, July 25-29. Some of the items to be discussed are the budget for the next two years, the NIV revisions, and long-range ministry plans.

Annual Cleaning

The Ladies Society is organizing summer cleaning for the month of August. If you cannot serve as a cleaner, have limitations, or would like to have a certain job, please speak with Gloria Zeltwanger (392-5985) as soon as possible.

Gregg Bitter
857 5th St
Hancock MN 56244

Upcoming Events

- **Sundays:** Divine Service 9:00 a.m.
Wednesdays: Divine Service 7:00 p.m. (same as previous Sunday)
1st and 3rd Sundays (and the following Wednesdays): Lord's Supper
- **July 10:** Quarterly Voters' Meeting, 10:00 a.m.
- **July 12:** Ladies' Society, 2:00 p.m.
- **July 11- 15:** Vacation Bible School, 10:00 a.m. to Noon
- **July 19-22:** WELS National Conference on Worship, Music, and the Arts in St. Peter, MN
- **July 21-23:** Youth Rally at Kalihari, Wisconsin Dells, WI
- **July 24-29:** WELS Convention in Watertown, WI
- **August:** Annual Cleaning
- **August 3:** No Wednesday evening service
- **August 11-14:** Fair booth at the Stevens County Fair
- **August 21:** Outdoor Service with St. Paul's at Pomme de Terre Park, 10:00 a.m., followed by a potluck picnic
- **September 11:** Return to Fall schedule
 - 9:15 a.m. Sunday School
 - 9:30 a.m. Youth Bible Class
 - 9:30 a.m. Adult Bible Class
 - 10:30 a.m. Divine Service

Keep up with the latest at St. John's at
www.hancocklutheran.org