

Blessing (p. 267)

Hymn to Depart: 761 Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me

Silent Prayer

ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH-LCMS

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HEARING ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE

Rev. Timothy Nerud

Pastor

309-949-2516 (Office)
309-949-2517 (Home)
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+In God's Grace—In God's Service+

Elder: Carl Freeman
Videographer: Joel Werling
Ushers: Kaleb Rahn
Organist: John Neumann

Today's Readings: Old Testament Reading: Ezekiel 17:22-24
Second Reading: 2 Corinthians 5:1-10
Holy Gospel: Mark 4:26-34

WE PRAY: Holy Spirit, whose call included us in the holy faith, and whose enlightenment through the Gospel holds us in it, keep us from falling and failing in the testing time in which we must live by faith until we come home at last; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who with You and the Father are one God with dominion over us forever. Amen.

WELCOME TO ALL!

We are anxious to share with you the Christ-centered ministry at St. John's. Our Liturgy follows closely the pattern of Word and Lord's Supper handed down from the ancient Church. It is our hope that you will make the Church's life of prayer your own. If you have difficulty following our order of service, please ask someone sitting near you for assistance. We pray that you will receive rich spiritual blessings from your presence here. May the peace and power of our risen Christ be yours always.

IF YOU DESIRE a visit or call from Pastor Nerud, please contact the church office (309-949-2516).

OFFICE HOURS

Terri's hours (Monday—Friday) 8 am—12 pm
Pastor's hours (Monday, Pastor's day off) 9 am—12 pm
(Tuesday) 9 am—12 pm
(Thursday) 9 am—12 pm & 1 pm—4 pm
(Wednesday & Friday) please call ahead.

LIVE STREAMED SERVICES are available on St. John's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/St.Johns.Geneseo/> and posted on Monday on the church website: www.stjohnsgeneseo.org found under the 'Sermon' tab.

ATTENDANCE LAST SUNDAY

Sunday school—12 Adult Bible Class—11 Worship—50

OFFERING

Offering last week \$2,908.49
Weekly Budget needed \$3,967.56

THIS WEEK AT ST. JOHN'S

Today 8:45 am SS/Adult w/Youth Bible Study
10:00 am Divine Worship
Thursday 1:30 pm Adult Bible Class
Next Sunday 8:45 am SS/Adult w/Youth Bible Study
10:00 am Divine Worship/Communion
1—4:00 pm Open House for Sarah Nerud
5:45 pm Vacation Bible School

One thing I ask of the LORD, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and seek him in his temple. Psalm 27:4

MARK 4:34 – “He did not speak to them without a parable, but privately to his own disciples he explained everything.” How blessed we are to be His disciples! The Lord has indeed explained everything to us. He has told us all things plainly. Why then are we ever so foolish as to disobey His clear Word? Our fight against sin in the power of the Holy Spirit is truly a struggle. Therefore, let us receive the Lord's help in His Word and Sacraments, and let us fight the good fight of faith and grow up into His image.

PLEASE CHECK the attendance sheet for you and your family members, marking each one attending the worship service. Thank you for your help.

ALTAR FLOWERS have been given to the praise and glory of our Heavenly Father in celebration of the wedding anniversary of Dave and Dee Schmedt. May they continue to serve the Lord together for many years to come.

Council minutes are available on the counter by the mailboxes.

VBS will begin next Sunday—Thursday at 5:45 pm. Sign up to help. Bring your children or grandchildren, friends and neighbors. this ministry.

PRAYER MINISTRY

Remember God's work in the Dominican Republic as you pray:

MISSION—*Pray that God would supply faithful and capable men and women to serve as missionaries, both in Latin America and around the world.*

ST. JOHN'S—Mr. Jared Wright—We offer before You our common request for the well-being of Your church throughout the world that it may be so guided and governed by Your good Spirit that all who profess themselves Christians may be led into the way of truth and hold the faith in unity of spirit in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life. Specifically, we pray for Jared, Harry, and Jack and ask your blessing on them.

ST. JOHN'S FAMILY—O Lord, You are the great Physician of soul and body. We pray that You would show mercy to Your servants:

Drew Schillinger	Jim Rahn	Paula Chapa
Arlyn Helke	Lois Esterlein	Lynne Johnson
Derek Helke	Lillian Hock	Jim Dahl
Betty Firch	John Erdman	Carolyn Werner
Linda Aper	Marilyn Woods	Don Hock

Don Eggers (son of a friend of Marilyn Woods)

Mike Miller (friend of Bob & Sherry Wechsler)

Jodi Martins (daughter of Gary & Darla Johns)

Jon & Anita Clausing (missionaries in Kenya)

Marilyn Potts (wife of Cal Potts, former St John Laborer For Christ)

Pam Bennett (friend of Dan/Roselyn Maeltzer)

Karen Wright (wife of Pastor Gary Wright)

Virginia Miller (mother of Jamie Werling)

Kelly Wechsler (cousin of Bob Wechsler)

Jim Neumann (father-in-law of Brad Gehn's son)

Harley Hepner (cousin of Sarah Hock)

Delores Gonion (mother of Michele Barry)

Glenn McAdam (friend of Bob & Sherry Wechsler)

Lonnie Anderson (employee of Brad Gehn)

Laurie Sanford (sister of Jan Dahl)

Karrie Wiese (cousin of Pastor Nerud)

MILITARY—We pray for those serving in our military and their families:

Mandy & Richard Davila (daughter & son-in-law of Dale & Linda Aper)

Luke & Nicole Thompson (son & daughter-in-law of John & Kindra Thompson)

Ken Willeford (husband of Alicia Willeford)

Karl Flynn (son of Mr. & Mrs. Paul Flynn)

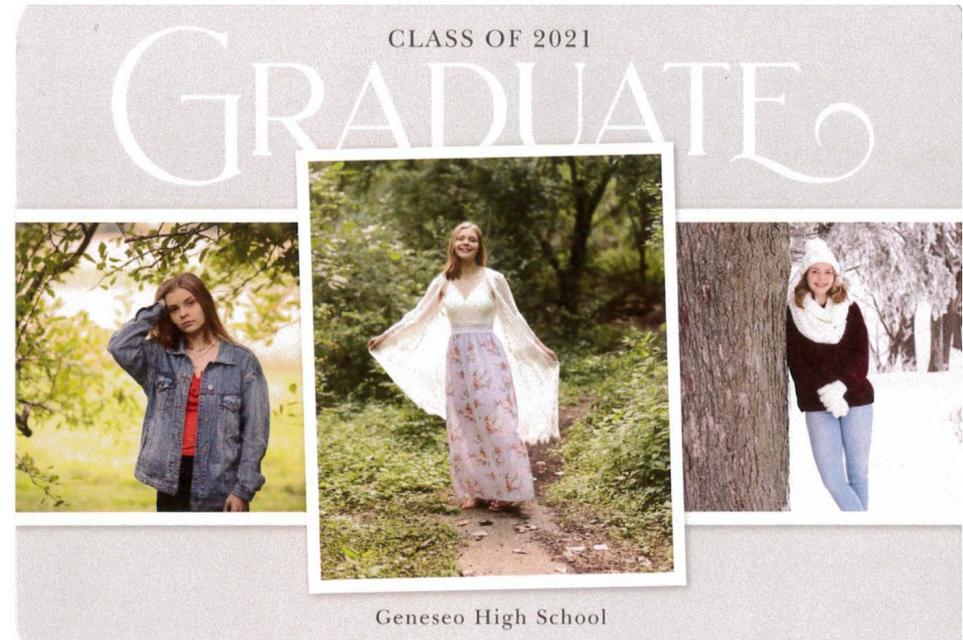
Zachary & Tiffany Gardner (nephew & wife of Bob & Lois Esterlein)

Casey Powers Jr. (step son of Lisa Powers)

Brittany Loenser (daughter of Gabe Loenser)

LUTHERANS FOR LIFE

“It's a terrible thing to see any life that is used and abused instead of being protected and cared for. The value of life should not be based on the benefits it can offer. So we pray to the Lord to move all people to value and appreciate all life as God's gift.” *Rev. Peter Sulzle, St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church, Redwood Falls, Minnesota – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • lutheransfor-life.org*



Open House

Sunday June 20, 2021

1:00-4:00 pm

St. John's Lutheran Church Fellowship Hall

(All are invited to the celebration of Sarah's High School Graduation)



Third Sunday after Pentecost

June 13, 2021

Sermon Text: 2 Corinthians 5:1-10 (Epistle)

Other Texts: Ezekiel 17:22-24 (Old Testament); Mark 4:26-34 (Gospel)

“Walking to Our Eternal House in the Heavens”

Grace, mercy, and peace, be yours from God our Father through faith in Jesus the ascended Lord.

In today’s epistle, the Apostle Paul likens our earthly existence to that of a tent, which he then contrasts with a building made from God, our home in the heavens. This is similar to the Epistle to the Hebrews where it is written concerning Abraham, “By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents...For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God.”¹ This thought is also reflected in the Israelite’s Festival of Booths, when they lived in tents during the festival in commemoration of their time of wilderness wandering after leaving Egypt and before entering Canaan.

Thus St. Paul’s illustration is vivid as well as rather straight forward. This earthly life is *not* our true home. Like a tent it is temporary, impermanent. Like a tent that has its stakes pulled up so it can be moved from one place to another, so also this life is but a journey, each day like a pulling up of stakes, each night a setting up the tent again, only to repeat the process the next day once more. Like a tent in a storm, which offers little shelter, so are we in this life exposed to the harsh, threatening elements of living on a sin-cursed earth in this sin-weakened, mortal body.

Hence why St. Paul says that in *this* tent we groan, being burdened. For we endure the afflictions which are a normal part of this earthly existence: weaknesses, pains, illnesses of our bodies and minds, sorrows over the suffering of our loved ones and just our fellow man, dangers of existence in a world that is under God’s curse upon sin, the rulership of which has been usurped from mankind by Satan through his temptation.

And so we groan all the more as Christians, enduring Satan’s temptations and spiritual assaults, the wickedness of the world, our own sinful nature twisting us into a mere caricature of what we were created to be. Our consciences are burdened by sin and guilt even as our new life in Christ always falls short, even our best of works. More frustrating, the works we do seldom seem to accomplish that for which we hoped, as those to whom we witness of Christ so often seem uninterested, those whom we invite back to church so often decline, those whom we warn against sin so often ignore us, get angered at us.

Now none of what I’m saying is denying either God’s blessings in this life or His protecting us from various sufferings during it. Truly, if we did not have these from our Father in heaven this life of ours would be a veritable hell on earth. But there are limits to these in *this* life, as we know from experience, all those things we were just considering. And finally, this life’s impermanence is fully revealed, when the earthly tent is destroyed in death.

Yet none of this brings the Christian down. Why? Because, along with Paul, and through his inspired writing, we know that there is something after this tent’s destruction, not made with

human hands, that is, enduring, permanent, for it is a building from God, eternal in the heavens. There the groaning will end, the burdens will cease, every tear will be wiped away from our eyes replaced by endless peace and joy and marvels beyond compare as our bodies are raised in immortality and power and then God increasingly unfolds the glories of the new heavens and the new earth unto us, the dwelling place of the righteous, basking in His visible presence.

This is why Paul speaks of not desiring to be unclothed, but that we would be *further* clothed. That is, we do not simply seek to escape the groaning and burdens of this life. We do not simply “want to die,” that is, be unclothed. Why? Because death, of itself, is not the answer. After all, death is the last great enemy, and hell is eternal death, the never-ending state of groaning and burdens, but far more horrific and, truly, unbearable, for there is no relief. Ever. No, as Christians we know that only *life* can overcome suffering and death. So we want to share fully in our Lord’s victory, having what is mortal swallowed up by life, finally receiving the fullness of life in the Holy Spirit by being raised from the dead in imitation of the risen Christ.

Of course, we’re not there yet. It is, as Paul says, quite true that we live by faith and not by sight while in our earthly tent. And while walking by faith is not as good as sight, as Paul himself makes quite clear, living by faith does not make it any less *certain*. For faith is trusting in God’s promises and, remember this dear Christians, His promises cannot fail. As it is written, “God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind.”ⁱⁱ And no wonder, as Paul wrote just a few chapters earlier in this letter, “For all the promises of God find their Yes in [Christ Jesus],”ⁱⁱⁱ for they have been sealed by His blood which was shed to redeem us from sin, death, and the devil that we might be His own, restored to the heavenly Father as His children. So as we heard in the Old Testament and Gospel readings the promise that God Himself builds His Church through His Word, so He promises that He will bring His Church into glory, working through that same effective Word.

Yet while we would be satisfied with His promise, that being all the assurance we need, our loving Father and gracious Savior still give us more, the Holy Spirit Himself, given to you in Holy Baptism.^{iv} Truly, His presence is God’s guarantee to us, that is, His pledge and down-payment by which He makes us all the more certain that He fully intends to bring us into the eternal building in the heavens that our dear Savior has prepared for us. And what an assurance His presence is!

For while His presence is invisible, He most definitely gives the evidence of His indwelling residence. First and most obvious is the faith by which you are walking this life as a Christian, which is your trust in Christ Jesus, crucified and risen, as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, and so as *your* Savior. It is by His presence that you, along with St. Thomas, cry out to Jesus, “My Lord and my God!” and, confessing that faith, are blessed for believing *without yet seeing*.^v

So also the Spirit’s presence is noted within you by the fruits of faith, one of the most obvious being that you too are “always of good courage.” Being such no matter what the situation is in this tent-life, no matter what difficulty or hurt we are being challenged with. Therefore, we do not need to fear death nor anything that happens to the body. Not because we do not care about our body and life, nor because we foolishly take risks and put the Lord to the test, but because

we have the rock solid promise of the Rock of Ages Himself that He will bring us into the fullness of life where we will be fully with the Lord, sturdy faith being replaced by glorious sight.

Again, the Holy Spirit's presence is recognized by our making it our aim to please the Lord. Such is not living in bitterness, sorrow, or spite while on our earthly journey, and certainly it is not giving up! It is living as a Christian soldier. It is facing the challenges, carrying the burdens, yes, it is groaning, but it is not being overwhelmed by such, for the grace of God and the power of the indwelling Spirit will see us through until the morning of eternity dawns.

And recognizing that every day brings us one day closer to that glorious morning, realizing that we will be in the nearer presence of our Lord Himself, how the indwelling Spirit makes us ever more ashamed of doing that which displeases Christ, whose judgment seat we must appear before. How does continuing in sin connect with confidence in heaven? Truly it does not, for the only thing that can cause us to lose our heavenly home is our own willful turning away from Jesus and righteousness unto sin, which has behind it the devil.

But aiming to please the Lord means more than just turning from sin. It means doing that which actually pleases Him. For despite what some claim, far from the hope of heaven making us useless here on earth, it is actually the opposite. The more we recognize our future glory, truly believe in it, hope for it, the more we will be willing to sacrifice earthly joys and comforts for the sake of Christ's kingdom and serving others in love. After all, we have all eternity in the majesties of the new creation, so what then is this temporary suffering now. Truly, it pales in comparison to the glories that will be revealed to us. So being of good courage in Christ and His salvation, we aim to please the Lord in service, even in suffering if necessary, for it shall soon pass, as night passes to day!

Friends in Christ, truly nothing matters more than the Lord's attitude towards us, whether He is pleased with us or not. Who amongst us does not want to hear from our Savior, "Well done, good and faithful servant"?^{vi} Surely we all do!

So God grant His Holy Spirit to work mightily within us, that we might truly please the Judge, Christ Jesus, who is also our gracious Savior and the very reason that we have the sure hope of being fully clothed in resurrected glory in our lasting heavenly home. Amen!

ⁱ Hebrews 11:9, 10. All quotes are from *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (ESV) unless otherwise noted.

ⁱⁱ Numbers 23:19.

ⁱⁱⁱ 2 Corinthians 1:20.

^{iv} Acts 2:38.

^v John 20:28, 29.

^{vi} Matthew 25:23.