

On Eagle's Wings



St. John's Monthly Newsletter – Jul/Aug 2025

Pastor's Paragraphs

Are you fundamentally good or fundamentally bad? I've asked this before but it bears repeating. Lutherans have long used the phrase, "Simul justus et peccator." Or in English, "simultaneously saint and sinner." It is the idea that we have both good motives in us and bad. By bad I do not necessarily mean evil and destructive. Of course it includes that, but it also means any tendency to ultimately trust anything other than God. That is where it gets subtle and things go wrong.

For the last several decades our society has been believing that people are fundamentally good. It seems to be assumed that if people are given enough education, and if they feel that they are safe, that they can be counted on to have values that are wholesome and good. We are taught to find the good in others. Even in the original Star Wars movies Luke Skywalker senses good in Darth Vader and counts on it to win out in the end. It all seems innocent enough on the surface. It can make people feel good about themselves. It can make for a good plot in a movie. But it leads to all sorts of problems.

Remember, sinfulness is not necessarily what we would call evil and bad. Sinfulness is any tendency to ultimately trust anything other than God. If we are fundamentally good, and if we think we can enhance and protect that goodness by our own efforts, then we are ultimately trusting in our own goodness. Therefore we are not trusting in God.

I've done plenty of funerals for people who were abusive. Sometimes the abuse was kept secret. But even close family and friends who knew about the abuse would say things like, "He could be rough, but he had a good heart. I'm sure he's in heaven." I'm not in a position to say who gets into heaven and who does not. But I do know our society's belief that there is goodness in people that can be counted on to get them into heaven is entirely wrong. That is God's work. And all of it depends entirely on God's grace. Ultimately we all have a powerful sinful side that wants to trust in ourselves rather than God.

If instead of our society's ideas that people are basically good, let's reverse it and go with the idea that we are inescapably sinful. Many people don't like this approach because it can lead to depression and despair. And, I will acknowledge this approach has been used to

excuse abuse and destruction. It is not perfect. But ironically it is the approach that can lead to authentic goodness.

If you think you are basically good then you are more inclined to justify yourself. You are likely to think that God thinks just like you. You are likely to become certain of many beliefs because they feel good and right to you. Humility quickly takes a back seat in the lives of those who think they are basically good. It is the root reason for the decline of churches. Why go to church if you can trust that all the goodness you need to go to heaven resides within you?

Those who recognize they are inescapably sinful are much more likely to have authentic humility. They know they can be wrong. They know they make mistakes. They know that their knowledge is incomplete and that their motives might be mixed. They are willing to listen and learn. They are willing to live sacrificial lives because they do *not* believe that, based on their inherent goodness, they deserve everything they have and more. They go to church because they know that they need God completely.

I think our society is addicted to the idea that we are basically good. Our Christian faith, however, tells us otherwise. By acknowledging that we have a tendency to not fully trust God we recognize the strength of God's grace. Everything else comes into line from there. True goodness for the whole world begins to emerge.

Blessings,
Pastor Jon



Family Promise Bed Race 2025

Last year we were the fastest team overall in Family Promise's annual bed race! We're hoping to enter our bed again this year. We need racers though. The race is again at the county fairgrounds on Tuesday of fair week (July 22). If you're able to be on the team (any age) please talk to Pastor Jon. Also, come to the fair to cheer on the racers and make donations to Family Promise.

July Worship Assistants

	July 6	July 13	July 20	July 27
Greeters & Ushers	Tom and Carol Urbanic	Bruce & Connie Stevenson	Mary and Greg Zuege	John and Linda Thomson
Acolyte	Elijah Young	Thomas Bullwinkled	Alyssa Young	Charlotte Stroup
Altar Care (10:30)			Linda Flood	
Communion Assistants			Emma Deibler	
Counters				
Coffee Hour				

August Worship Assistants

	August 3	August 10	August 17	August 24	August 31
Greeters & Ushers	Linn Griffio and Morgan Sackett	Helen Crown	Linda Flood	Phyllis Henderson	Janice Lockwood
Acolyte	Elijah Young	Thomas Bullwinkle	Alyssa Young	Charlotte Stroup	Elijah Young
Altar Care (10:30)	Linda Thompson		Linda Thompson		
Communion Assistants	Sally Mansfield		Gary Boisseau		
Counters					
Coffee Hour					



Upcoming Bible Readings from Luke for Worship

In July and August our gospel readings are coming from Luke 11-14. This is a series of teaching and events from the time Jesus was traveling to Jerusalem. The tension in the stories rises higher and higher the closer he gets.

- 7/6 Luke 11:14-36
- 7/13 Luke 11:37-54
- 7/20 Luke 12:1-21
- 7/27 Luke 12:22-34
- 8/3 Luke 12:35-59
- 8/10 Luke 13:1-9
- 8/17 Luke 13:10-35
- 8/24 Luke 14:1-24
- 8/31 Luke 14:25-35



Worship In- person and Zoom

10:30 is in-person

worship in the sanctuary and also by Zoom. The Zoom link for 10:30 is emailed weekly. If you cannot connect to the 10:30 service with a computer you can still hear and participate in the service with any phone.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85898911838?pwd=Ho0hGtKqSJAnRpugabpkQTuY73SbyK.1>

Meeting ID: 858 9891 1838

Passcode: 020293

By phone:

1 929 436 2866 US (New York)



Community Outreach

Maggie's Kids Summer Camp

Our day with them is Monday, July 14th from nine to about 12:30. Thank you to everyone who has donated money to help with food and supplies. Your generosity is appreciated! If you are available to help with breakfast or lunch that day please let Burdie Gillern know. Thanks so much for your support of this project.

Lawn Mowing Volunteers

We are looking for people to help mow the church lawn. There is a commercial mower that is easy to use, a zero turn mower, and a small lawn tractor. It usually takes a couple hours for a team of two. Training is available. Talk to Tom Urbanic if you're willing to help.



Garden Project 2025

The garden is a mix of success and failure. The potatoes are doing well. The sweet corn emerged very poorly. Some of it was replanted and that also emerged poorly. The pumpkins seem to be doing okay. As you'd expect, the weeds are flourishing! The garden has been cultivated once. More cultivating is needed. If you're able to help with driving the tractor, running a rototiller, or doing hand weeding please let Pastor Jon know.



-Thank you to Jim Spawton and Gary Boisseau for helping to lead worship when Pastor Jon has been away.
-Thank you to Julie Stuart and Mary Zuege for creating a special coffee hour for Father's Day.
-Thank you to everyone who mowed the church lawn in June.



- David Storch as he lives in a memory care facility.
- Alex Clark, friend of the Shulers. He is a 38 year old father who was recently diagnosed with stomach and intestinal cancer.
- Marilyn Bair who is currently home and is improving slightly in health.
- Paul Huber as he is home and recovering.

June Council Highlights

Church council did not have an official meeting in June. A vote was held by email to approve using money from the Memorial Fund to replace the large wooden cross in the outdoor chapel.



June Bible Trivia Questions

1. What do James and John offer to do to the Samaritan village that didn't welcome them? Answer: Command fire from heaven to consume them. (Luke 11:52)
2. In the parable of the Good Samaritan where was the man who was attacked heading? Answer: Jericho (Luke 10:29)
3. What does Martha, who was busy with housework, ask Jesus to tell her sister Mary? Answer: Help her. (Luke 10:40)
4. Where does the Good Samaritan take the injured man, to what sort of place? Answer: An inn (Luke 10:34)

July/August Bible Trivia Questions

All the answers can be found in the Bible readings appointed for worship in July and August.

1. Jesus says not to fear those who can kill the body but those who can do what?
2. In the parable of the rich fool, what does he plan to do to store all his crops?
3. How many were killed with the Tower of Siloam fell?
4. In the parable of the unproductive fig tree what does the gardener suggest/offer to do to get the tree to produce?

July 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2 7:00 Alcoholics Anonymous	3 <u>Thomas, Apostle</u>	4 <u>Independence Day</u>	5
6 <u>4th Sunday After Pentecost</u> 8:30 Outdoor Service of the Word 10:30 Service of the Word	7	8	9 7:00 Alcoholics Anonymous	10	11	12
13 <u>5th Sunday After Pentecost</u> 8:30 Outdoor Holy Communion 10:30 Service of the Word	14 Maggie's Kids Day at church	15 11:00-7:30 Red Cross Blood Drive	16 7:00 Alcoholics Anonymous	17	18	19
20 <u>6th Sunday After Pentecost</u> 8:30 Outdoor Service of the Word 10:30 Service of the Word	21	22 6:30 Family Promise Bed Race (County Fairgrounds) 7pm Property Committee	23 7:00 Alcoholics Anonymous	24	25 <u>James, Apostle</u>	26
27 <u>7th Sunday After Pentecost</u> 8:30 Outdoor Holy Communion 10:30 Service of the Word	28 <u>J.S. Bach, Musician</u>	29	30 7:00 Alcoholics Anonymous	31		

August 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
3 <u>8th Sunday After Pentecost</u> 8:30 Outdoor Service of the Word 10:30 Holy Communion	4	5	6 7:00 Alcoholics Anonymous	7	8	9
10 <u>9th Sunday After Pentecost</u> 8:30 Outdoor Holy Communion 10:30 Service of the Word	11 6:00 Church Council	12	13 7:00 Alcoholics Anonymous	14	15 <u>Mary, Mother of Our Lord</u>	16
17 <u>10th Sunday After Pentecost</u> 8:30 Outdoor Service of the Word 10:30 Holy Communion	18	19	20 7:00 Alcoholics Anonymous	21	22	23
24 <u>11th Sunday After Pentecost</u> <u>Bartholomew, Apostle</u> 8:30 Outdoor Holy Communion 10:30 Service of the Word	25	26 7:00 Property Committee	27 7:00 Alcoholics Anonymous	28	29	30
31 <u>12th Sunday After Pentecost</u> 8:30 Outdoor Service of the Word 10:30 Service of the Word						



St. John's Lutheran Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

*We are a community of faith
committed to living and sharing the love of God.*

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July August Newsletter