

Joint Epistles

St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church
330 East Vallette Street
P. O. Box 127
Oxford, WI 53952-0127
608-586-5877



Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church
W5940 Chestnut Street
P. O. Box 628
Packwaukee, WI 53953-0628
608-589-5138

The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod

Pastor Larry Sheppard. . Home Phone: 608-586-6415/Cell Phone: 608-450-0317

Email: pastorshepp@gmail.com

Dual Parish Website: www.stjohn-trinity-lcms-marquette-co-wi.360unite.com

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The Shepherd's Corner, August 2025... "Fanned Into Flame"

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, according to the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus, to Timothy, my dear son: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. I thank God, whom I serve, as my forefathers did, with a clear conscience, as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers. Recalling your tears, I long to see you, so that I may be filled with joy. I have been reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also. For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.
(2 Timothy 1:1-7)



Dear Friends in Christ,

Those of us who've tended woodstoves or campfires over the years know that "it only takes a spark to get a fire going." (It may also take a bit of huffing and puffing, or even a good dose of lighter fluid to help things along!)

St. Paul writes to his young protégé Timothy, in the passage above, about the spark of faith that was started in him when he was young. That spark of faith began with mom, grandma, and people who loved him putting the good news about Jesus in his tender young ears, and by bringing him to the "gift of God" in the blessed water of Baptism. The spark of faith was begun in Timothy, and that same spark is in all of us who have faith. That is a good and beautiful and holy thing, and a gift all of us should be forever grateful for.

But should we be content with the original spark - with a little, glowing ember of faith? St. Paul laid his hands on young Timothy and urged him to reach for more. Timothy, it seems, was timid about his gifts and shy about using them. "Now fan into flame the gift of God," Paul told him.

How does that work? How can you and I do it? How can we "fan into flame" the gift of faith God has given us? Should we be content with small things or lesser things, or should we also be asking God for the "power, love, and self-discipline" that will enable us to do great things for Him? This will take more than a little effort on our part; it will take bit of spiritual "huffing and puffing" as we seek the will of God, a little "Holy Spirit lighter fluid" to stoke the fire under us. Fanning the gift of God into a flame will require that "day and night prayer" St. Paul talks about, and seeking God's will in His Word. (That's why we've been doing our "Bible reading challenges," and why I've been asking all of you to come to Bible studies). Being "on fire for Jesus," and spreading the Good News about Jesus in the world around us, is what God is looking for, and has always been looking for, from His Church and from His people.

Fire, as we all know, can be destructive. But we're not talking about an out-of-control forest fire here, or a house fire, or a fire that does harm. We're talking about a blessed bonfire, the kind of fire that warms and comforts and welcomes people - the fire of the love of God.

I've been waiting (not always patiently!) and praying that our Lord will light a holy fire in our churches, and that we'll light a candle together in this place that everyone around us will see and feel. Please pray, with all your heart, that the spark in us all will be fanned into a flame.

Serving Jesus, Together with You, Pastor Sheppard

OUR WORSHIP in August 2025

Sunday, August 3, 2025, Eighth Sunday after Pentecost "Hearts and Minds On Things Above"

Psalm 100; Ecclesiastes 1:2, 12-14, 2:18-26; Colossians 3:1-11; Luke 12:13-21

What is your heart set upon this day? St. Paul urges us in Colossians to "set our minds on things above, and not on earthly things." But we live in a world full of "rich fools," whose hearts are intent on building bigger barns and filling them with more and more things - not thinking of the day when each of us will have to stand naked before God. May we have the wisdom to set our hearts on Christ and live our lives for Him.

Sunday, August 10, 2025, Ninth Sunday after Pentecost "What Faith Can Do"

Psalm 33:12-22; Genesis 15:1-6; Hebrews 11:1-16; Luke 12:22-34

When someone says, "Have a little faith" or "Keep the faith," the question we have to ask is, "Faith in what? Faith in whom?" People can put their "faith" in all kinds of different things - but faith and trust in our Lord Jesus Christ is the only faith that will do us any good. Faith - if it's truly faith in the life and work and Person of Jesus Christ - is that kind of mountain-moving faith that touches hearts and lives, and can change even the most impossible of situations. Join as we see what faith in Christ can do.

Sunday, August 17, 2025, Tenth Sunday after Pentecost "Eyes Upon Jesus"

(Guest preacher Rev. Robert Busse)

Psalm 119:81-88; Jeremiah 23:16-29; Hebrews 11:17-40, 12:1-3; Luke 12:49-56

Today in our Scriptures, we're reminded that whatever happens and whatever life does, we simply must keep our eyes upon Jesus. In our Gospel reading in Luke, Jesus describes a world that's gone to pieces, a world full of trouble and divisions, a world where the devil delights in causing turmoil. Jesus alone knows the way through and the path to heaven - so what can we do but trust and follow Him?

Sunday, August 24, 2025, Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost "How Jesus Opens Doors"

Psalm 50:1-15; Isaiah 66:18-23; Hebrews 12:4-29; Luke 13:22-30

God's perfect heaven, according to Scripture, has bars and gates of pearl and walls. The Holy City we'd all like to live in one day is locked down tight to all sin and sinners and imperfections. If we had no way to open those "mighty gates," we'd be left on the outside, in a place of terrible darkness. Thanks be to God, our Lord Jesus holds the blessed Key! Today we're reminded that Jesus has opened the door to heaven for us. Thanks be to God!

Sunday, August 31, 2025, Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost "A Wedding Invitation"

Psalm 131; Proverbs 25:2-10; Hebrews 13:1-17; Luke 14:1-14

"Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb," the book of Revelation says. We all love weddings and wedding banquets - so how much greater is that wedding feast in heaven going to be? Today in a service of hymns and praise, we're once again blessed with "a foretaste of the feast to come."

AUGUST BIBLE READING CHALLENGE: The Book of Proverbs

I hope everyone has been enjoying our Bible Reading Challenges, and hopefully getting into the Bible reading habit.

Our next challenge for the month of August is to read the Book of Proverbs. May our Lord fill us with praise as we read the words and wisdom of good King Solomon, and learn to apply his wisdom to our lives. There will again be an "I did it!" sheet in the back of the church that you can sign once you're finished. God bless you as you read His Word!

YOUTH CONFIRMATION

Pastor Sheppard will begin teaching Youth Confirmation classes in late September. This 2-year class is open to all young people entering 7th or 8th grade in the coming school year.

Help us prepare your children for life in a difficult world, by drawing them closer to Christ and the life of His Church.

Please call or email Pastor if you have questions about Youth Confirmation or enrolling your child: pastorshepp@gmail.com 608-450-0317.

ADOPT- A- CHAP



While Chaplain Rockrohr doesn't have much to report other than ongoing high numbers of counselling and students, there has been a whirlwind of people at the Rockrohr household.

Chaplain Rockrohr's brother returned from Australia with his wife and new baby which prompted a family reunion. The children love their new cousin and nicknamed him "cousin." They got to play with Chaplain's sister's six kids which is always entertaining! Thankfully we were able to spend the day at church which gave us more room and a bigger kitchen.

A week later Stacy's parents came to build a fort in the backyard. Andrew, Philip and Elizabeth all got to help. There is still more work to do, but the kids can play inside and start painting the outside.

John turned one right before everyone came and he has been busy keeping up with the kids and throwing balls. He also loves to unload the dishwasher with Mom, throw laundry all over and play with the recycling. The older kids have been great playing with him outside when Mom needs to get work done.



PASTOR ON VACATION

Pastor and Kim will take a long-awaited vacation from Saturday, August 16 to Saturday, August 23rd.

Pastor Robert Busse will be preaching for us on Sunday, August 17.

There will be no morning Bible studies on the 17th, and no office hours or Thursday Bible study during the week.

MEN'S LUNCH & BIBLE STUDY

All men and boys of our Dual Parish, as well as their friends and neighbors, are invited to our next quarterly

Men's Lunch & Bible Study, to be held at Trinity, Packwaukee on Saturday, August 2, beginning at 12:00 noon. Pastor will provide brats and all the fixings for this event, as well as bringing the Bible study.

If anyone would like to help out with putting the lunch together, please let me know.

FINANCIAL UPDATES

St. John, Oxford

June 2025

General Fund Offerings: \$4,057.00

Expenses: \$4,281.82

Shortfall for June 2025: -\$244.82

Year-to-Date Shortfall: -\$977.09

To meet our 2025 Budget, General Fund Offerings of \$1,095/weekly are needed.

Trinity, Packwaukee

June 2025

Income (In The Plate): \$4,284.50

Expenses: \$3,740.16

Recap from Semi-Annual Meeting...

Fundraisers \$3,362.46

Thrivent Choice \$561.00

Year-to-Date/Shortfall: -\$132.26

To meet our 2025 Budget, General Fund Offerings of \$982.00/weekly are needed.

THE BIBLE IN FIFTY WORDS



*God Creates * Adam Ate * Noah Floats * Abraham's Oath * Jacob Schemes * Joseph Dreams * Bush Lit * Sea Split * Law Spoken * Tablets Broken * Judges Appointed * Kings Anointed * God Forgotten * Rulers Rotten * Kingdom Broke * Prophets Hope * Mary Favored * Baby Savior * Crucified * Jesus Died * Third Morn * World Reborn * Spirit Glows * Love Grows * Earth Awaits * God Creates...

ORPHAN GRAIN TRAIN

Orphan Grain Train provides clothing, furniture, medical supplies, and household items to needy persons, both here in our country and around the world. Please bring your new or gently used clothing or other items to church, and Pastor will see that they are delivered. (There is a list of needed and acceptable items posted on the bulletin boards in the narthex of both our churches).

The Westfield, WI branch of Orphan Grain Train, located at 486 N. Main St. (next to the high school), is always in need of volunteers to help sort and pack. Volunteer hours are Tuesdays from 8:00 am to 1:00 pm. All are invited to come for a tour and see what it's all about.

"What you did for the least of these brothers of mine, you did for Me."

FALL BIBLE STUDY SCHEDULE

Pastor Sheppard is preparing a Fall Bible Study schedule, based on the results of the Bible Study surveys collected thus far. If you haven't filled out a survey yet, they are still available in the back of both our churches. The goal is to provide Bible study opportunities in our Dual Parish that everyone can participate in. Please fill out a survey to indicate what days and times will work for you and return it to Pastor as soon as possible. Our churches grow outwardly as our hearts grow inwardly. See you in Bible class!

OUTREACH & EVANGELISM

Pastor continues to look for those of you who are willing to help with the work of outreach and evangelism in our congregations. Our neighborhoods are "fields white for the harvest," as Jesus tells us - but brining that harvest in has to be done intentionally and purposefully and with some sort of plan. We need your ideas, your energy, and your beautiful hands and feet, to do the good work our Lord has given us to do. If the Lord is laying this on your heart, come talk to me. "The longest journey begins with a single step."

PRIVATE CONFESSION AVAILABLE

Pastor Sheppard is available for private confession for those who feel the need for it, during St. John's office hours on Wednesdays from 2:00 - 5:00 pm, and during Trinity office hours on Thursdays from 2:00 - 5:00 pm. You may also make an appointment with Pastor for another time that fits your schedule.

In answer to the question some have been asking, no, we aren't "turning Catholic." We don't have a confessional booth, and I won't assign you "penance" for your sins. This is simply an opportunity to talk with Pastor about things you may need to talk about, and to "lay your burdens down" and walk away free - as has been the practice in our Lutheran Church for hundreds of years.

Pastor is also sworn by ordination vows to never disclose to anyone what we talk about in private confession.

"If we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9)

St. JOHN, OXFORD 130th Anniversary

St. John's, Oxford will be 130 years old this year. We'd like to plan a special Sunday during the month of October to commemorate and celebrate this anniversary.

Perhaps a special service, a special guest, invitations to past members, inviting the community, a nice dinner? If you're interested in helping plan the celebration, there is a sign-up sheet in the back of the church. October is coming up fast, so we need to meet soon.

Please let Pastor know if you'd like to help.



TRINITY LWML LADIES AID

No August Meeting Scheduled

ST. JOHN LADIES AID

No August Meeting Scheduled

41st BIENNIAL LWML CONVENTION—Growing In God's Grace

Thursday Evening, the Opening of Convention, held the Celebration Service with Holy Communion for over 4,000 people. It is such an emotional time feeling the Holy Spirit with us in Praising, Word and Sacrament.

We were blessed with wonderful Bible Studies and speakers. Friday Evening Bible Studies were offered by Donna Snow and Pastor Cory & Deb Burma. Over 600 participated. Wake Up in the Word was attended by 806 attendees. Leaders included Chaplin Craig Muehler, Rev. John Hakmann, Rev. Robert Roegner, Sharla Fritz, Christa Petzoid and Deb Burma.

Our Convention Bible Study Leader was author Christina Hergenrader. She spoke of our ancestors, what they went through and how their faith carried them through their lives. What would they think of how things have turned out? We all have a part. There is a divine timeline, have patience. There is grace in waiting. God has a plan for it all and in the end it's not about us. It's about Jesus. Don't miss opportunities to share how God has been good to you!

Our Keynote Speaker was Rev. Kris Whitby who is currently the Assistant to the President of Mission & Ministry for the Northern Illinois District. He spoke of not treating people like a commodity. Build relationships, making friends and telling them of Jesus. Do not lose connections within your community, but learn what the needs are.

Mites in Action Speakers included: Dakota Boys & Girls Ranch, Light of Christ in Eastern Europe, Lutheran Braille Workers, Lutheran Deaf Outreach and Forged by Fire Services (sharing Jesus with free meals; feed+listen+pray with them. Providing devotions and Bibles)

Over 100 Exhibit Booths offered information on missions, education and resources to serve God.

Servant Events: Attendees accomplished the following activities:

- ♥ 81 units of blood were donated
- ♥ 48,605 Mercy Meals were packed for Orphan Grain and 56 quilts were tied for Orphan Grain Train;
- ♥ 339 onesies were decorated for Lutheran Family Services
- ♥ 2,544 witness bracelets were assembled for MOST Ministries
- ♥ 300 First Responder Tool kits were assembled for Nebraska First Responders
- ♥ 265 cards of hope were created for Phils' Friends and 256 military thank you cards were created and distributed to Offutt Air Force Base in Omaha
- ♥ 9,600 feminine products were sewn and provided to Messiah Lutheran Church Lincoln-Common Threads
- ♥ 106 braille books and calendars made for Lutheran Braille Workers

Convention Offerings and Gifts-From-the-Heart totals have not yet been finalized for Camp Linn Haven; Grace Point Institute for Relational Help; Lutheran Early Response Team; Camp Luther of Nebraska; Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska and University of Nebraska at Lincoln Campus Ministry.

A Mission Grant Goal for the 2025-2027 Biennium was set at \$2,622,270.00 Thirty-three grants were chosen and can be viewed at <https://www.lwml.org/mission-grants>.

Tee Up for Mites raised over \$10,000 with 80 golfers. The Mission Walk had 1697 walkers and raised \$75,000.

As the Convention closed, we were reminded in our Sending Service that Christ is with us. Over these last few days, we have renewed or made new friendships sharing many hugs and encouragement to go out into God's World. We were also excited to have 79 Young Women's Representatives attend the convention. This is our future!

Submitted by Melody Rodger

Weekly Sunday Worship

August 3; 10; 17; 24 & 31

Worship Times:

Trinity, Packwaukee 8:30 am

St. John, Oxford 10:30 am

Holy Communion:

Trinity, Packwaukee August 3 & 17

St. John, Oxford August 3 & 17

Weekly Sunday School

St. John, Oxford—See you in the Fall!

Trinity, Packwaukee—See you in the Fall!

Pastor's Day Off [Mondays]

August 4; 11; 18 & 25

Pastor 'In the Office' 2:00pm-5:00pm

St. John, Oxford: August 6; 13 & 27

Trinity, Packwaukee: August 7; 14 & 28

Weekly Bible Studies

Trinity, Packwaukee @ 7:30am

August 3; 10; 24 & 31

Trinity, Packwaukee @ Noon

August 7; 14; 21 & 28

Orphan Grain Train Volunteer Opportunities

August 5; 12; 19 & 26 from 8:00am—1:00pm

Week of August 1

8/2—Men's Lunch & Bible Study Trinity, Packwaukee @ Noon

Week of August 3Week of August 10

8/12—Elders Meeting St. John, Oxford @ 6:00pm

8/12—Council Meeting St. John, Oxford @ 6:30pm

8/15—James Golisch Memorial @ Union Grove Cemetery

August 16—August 23 Pastor & Kim on Vacation

Week of August 17Week of August 24

8/25—Circuit Visitors' Meeting at SWD District Office, Milwaukee

Week of August 31

8/31—Hymn Service w/Communion Trinity, Packwaukee & St. John, Oxford

PASTOR'S OFFICE HOURS*St. John, Oxford Office Hours: Wednesday from 2:00 pm—5:00 pm**Trinity, Packwaukee Office Hours: Thursday from 2:00 pm—5:00pm*

Please call first, as emergencies and schedule conflicts do happen on occasion. As always, Pastor is available by appointment any time if you would like to meet with me outside of scheduled office hours.

Dual Parish Office: 608-586-5877

Trinity Office: 608-589-5138

Pastor's Home: 608-586-6415

Pastor's Cell: 608-450-0317

Pastor's E-mail: pastorshepp@gmail.com**August 2025**

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

