

ST. PETER COMMUNICATOR

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June 2025

From the desk of Pastor Peterson.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ. I hope that this newsletter finds you well. That you had a blessed Memorial Day as we remember those men and women who paid the final sacrifice for our freedom that we enjoy today.

This article will continue to focus on Luther's Small Catechism. Martin Luther took it upon himself to solve the problem of regular household Christians not being able to truly understand the key points of Christianity. He wanted to create a simple and understandable book for the regular person to grow their knowledge in their Christian faith. It was made to help shape every Christian's life and develop their faith. Many Pastors in the early 1500s did not have the knowledge that the Small Catechism contains, which Luther saw as a problem because then many people could not hear these important aspects. He said, "Yet all the people are supposed to be Christians, have been baptized, and receive the Holy Sacrament even though they do not know the Lord's Prayer." Martin Luther intended this book to simplify the values of Christianity for all.

Luther valued instruction in faith because it was his desire that all people know what they believe, why they believe, and to defend their belief. Luther was passionate about the basics of Christianity and believed that it was to be taught in the home. The father, as head of the family, was to lead his family in daily study and devotion. Studies have shown that if the father does not set a good example in his faith, the family will suffer. So, I would encourage all you dads to lead your families in daily bible study and in studying the Small Catechism. Imagine the difference that would make in your families, and church attendance.

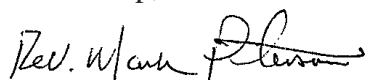
A good place to start is Christian Questions with Their Answers. This is normally used by people who wish to take the Sacrament of Holy Communion. This section is also an excellent introduction to the Christian Faith that we all cherish. It takes 20 minutes a day to review these, and to study them with family. In addition, in the Introduction and Explanation in the Small Catechism, there is a section that is very important and that is the Introduction itself. This goes into a deeper but profound explanation of our Christian Faith. I would encourage each of you to study and use these as a supplement to your daily scriptural devotions as well. If you would like to order a **Small Catechism with Explanation**, please contact me or you can order one through Concordia Publishing House, www.cph.org.

Once you get through the Christian Questions and the Introduction, the Small Catechism goes deeper into the 10 Commandments, The Apostle's Creed, The Lord's Prayer, The Sacraments of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion, Confession, Daily Prayers and The Table of Duties. When a family studies God's Word, engages in daily devotions, and study the Small Catechism, you are setting a firm foundation for yourselves and for your children. This also helps me because we can do into deeper issues that children face in their lives.

As far as confirmation classes go, the elders and I have had numerous discussions as to how to proceed. We all agreed that with the onslaught of all kinds of different beliefs that are overwhelming our kids in school, that a proper foundation is needed to help our kids in their faith walk. We are going to have a policy of 3 years of instruction. This will be effective starting with this year's class that has already had a year of instruction and will have 2 more years to go. I ask for your help with your children in this matter so they will have a good foundation to start with. If you have a child that will be starting 6th grade, I will ask that you contact me so we can get started with their education.

May God richly bless you this summer and as you continue with your education and your children.

In His Grip,



Pastor Mark Peterson



LUTHERAN WOMEN IN MISSION

Gifts From the Heart for A Place of Refuge:

Thanks to all of our St. Peter members for the many items for the babies and moms at A Place of Refuge in Milwaukee. In addition to the items brought in to our ingathering bin, this year we also had a \$250 Thrivent card courtesy of Cherlyn Schmitting. Thanks, Cherlyn! As a result, we were able to purchase some large containers of dishwasher soap, laundry soap, and dish detergent as well as cases of diapers and baby wipes. We also bought two baby monitors and a few of the other items on the want list from Refuge House. When we delivered our load of goodies, we learned that one of the moms had just delivered twins, and another mom also just had her baby. As a result, they were thrilled to see the abundance of newborn diapers! They were also very pleased with all the newborn clothing items that we brought. It's always such a good feeling to be able to deliver these gifts for moms and their children when we know the need is so great. Thanks again to all of you.

Summer Plans:

As we have announced, we will not be holding our summer meetings this year. However, the good news is that the Bible studies for this summer are in your summer Quarterlies, and so we will each be able to do our monthly Bible studies at home at a time that works for each of us. So whether you prefer to do your personal Bible study in the morning in your pajamas with your cup of coffee or at night with your feet up, once each month you will be able to do the study from LWML. In fact, you might even prefer to spread it over two or three days. Your choice! The thing we will

miss is Pastor's leadership as well as our group discussions. Those will resume in Fall.

Back to School:

Just as a heads up, we will be having our gathering of school supplies during August for our Hilbert students. Start watching for school sales and our bulletin board lists sometime during July.

THE LUTHERAN WITNESS

Letter From the President



Very God of Very God: The Nicene Creed's Faithful Testimony

By Matthew C. Harrison

We live in strange times of exploding scientific knowledge and deep ignorance of the Bible and Christianity. Our young people are taught the Bible is myth. They are told that the books included in it were selected for political and prejudicial reasons, while the "gospels" excluded from the canon of Scripture (the "Gospel of Thomas," for example) were rejected for their broader, more open views of women, sexuality and so on. In reality, these other "gospels" are filled with obviously spurious material. The historical existence of over 60 persons in the Old and New Testaments has been verified by extrabiblical sources, whether archaeology (seals, inscriptions, pottery, ancient paintings) or extrabiblical writings. The Bible is not myth. Nor is it the result of bigots hijacking the faith — and neither are the Apostles' or Nicene Creeds. This is important to know as we celebrate the 1,700th anniversary of the Council

of Nicaea and the Nicene Creed (A.D. 325), though its third article was largely added at a council in Constantinople (A.D. 381).

You know the Creed well. Thank God, we use it every time we celebrate the Sacrament! We confess of the Christ that He is “God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, ... of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made.” This confession was written in direct opposition to a fourth-century Christian named Arius. He was probably from Libya. He stirred up the church in Alexandria, especially St. Athanasius, by asserting that “there was a time when the Son of God was not.” That meant that the Son of God was created by the Father, and if this were so, Jesus could not be true God. But in fact, Jesus claimed to be God: “I and the Father are one” (John 10:30). “Before Abraham was, I am” (John 8:58). The Gospels call Him God: “In the beginning was the Word [i.e., the Son of God], and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1). Jesus does divine things: “Who can forgive sins but God alone?” (Luke 5:21).

Further, the earliest confession of the church is “Jesus is Lord” (1 Cor. 12:3; Rom. 10:9). Paul follows this confession in Romans 10 by quoting Joel 2: “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved” (Rom. 10:13). The prophet Joel says in Hebrew, “Whoever calls on the name of YAHWEH will be saved”! Jesus IS Yahweh.

Out of the 300 or so bishops at Nicaea, only a couple rejected the council’s decision. Emperor Constantine had called them together, to be sure, and argued personally for the divinity of Christ and the use of the word *homoousios* (“of the same substance” with God the Father). But this was clearly the teaching of the apostolic church and the post-apostolic church (Polycarp, ordained by John the Apostle; Ignatius of Antioch, connected to John; and others). The apostolic connection was important. The apostolic Scriptures were the real ones. Living second-century pastors and martyrs who knew the apostles had given testimony to what the apostles taught and to which writings were apostolic. The fathers at Nicaea knew all of this.

They had read the writings of the apostles. They had read the writings of the great second-century stalwarts like Irenaeus (c. A.D. 130–202), who had seen and heard Polycarp, who had been a disciple of St. John.

The point is, the creedal statements about Christ in our Nicene Creed express the clear truth about Jesus. He is God in the flesh. Man is God. God is man. Said Luther: If Jesus were only a man, then we are in great trouble. For then His sacrifice would not be sufficient to pay for our sins. But because He is divine and human, His sacrifice on the cross paid for the sins of the world.

For years, the church tried to figure out how to best express the truth of Christ’s divinity over against Arius, using biblical terms. But no matter how it was formulated, Arius and his supporters always twisted things. The word *homoousios* was finally chosen to express the truth. “One substance with the Father.” But the Arians even twisted that and winked at each other during the proceedings, deceptively confessing one thing but twisting it to mean something else.

Our great *Book of Concord*, in the Formula of Concord, Article VIII on the Person of Christ, solemnly rejects all the ancient heresies about Christ: “We reject and condemn as contrary to God’s Word and our simple (pure) Christian faith all the following erroneous articles, if they are taught ... [that] Christ is not true, natural, and eternal God, as Arius held (blasphemed).”

And we don’t “wink” when we make this confession our own every Sunday in the Divine Service. We do so in the sight of God Almighty, knowing that this is the faith we shall one day confess before the judgment seat of Christ.

“The blood [human nature!] of Jesus God’s Son [God in the flesh!] cleanses us from all sin” (1 John 1:7). And that’s no myth or political machination. It’s the Gospel itself.

—Pastor Matthew C. Harrison



Part 4: Adulting in the Digital World

This is the fourth installment in a six-part series, “Reclaiming Humanity in the Digital Age.”

By Joshua Pauling

[Part 1](#) of this series established why it’s time to take action regarding the ubiquitous role of digital devices in our lives, [Part 2](#) explored some core principles for parenting, and [Part 3](#) offered some ways to counteract the unique challenges faced by those coming of age in the digital world.

Now, Part 4 focuses on why this is not just a “kids these days” problem. The challenges cross generational lines. Adults too have been reshaped by digital technology in unhealthy ways. But adults are uniquely positioned to model what constitutes a humane and flourishing life. They also can play a vital role in setting norms, providing guidance and establishing boundaries as leaders, employers, employees and more.

Adults, Too

Today, there is widespread concern about what screens do to the developing brains of children and adolescents. But adults are not immune to the pull of the screen and its detrimental effects. Surveys show that, on average, adults spend 4–6 hours a day on their smartphone and check their phone around 200 times per day. That means adults are spending roughly 75 full days a year — two and a half months! — on their smartphones. And even the self-reported impacts of this are sobering. Almost half of Americans admit to having a problem with digital addiction

and over half of Americans want to cut down on phone usage in order to improve their mental health, increase their attention span, get better sleep, or improve their physical health.[\[1\]](#) Clearly, all this device usage is affecting our brains *and* our bodies.

Add to these sobering statistics two more realities: 1) Many professions in the modern global economy require near constant engagement with an internet connected screen; and 2) Lines between work and the rest of life are easily blurred because so much of our work can be done from a smartphone and from home. Given these two facts of life, it is no surprise that before we even realize it, the internet-connected device swallows up everything else.

We adults may have more executive function and impulse control than children and adolescents, but devices and apps are often designed to hack our attention and our dopamine response. This means it’s very possible to revert back to an infantile condition where we have little impulse control or ability to mute background stimuli. As our brains become hijacked by constant distraction and driven to a frenetic pace, we start to resemble the child who doesn’t know what to attend to.

This erosion of attention leads to everything from overstimulation to lack of impulse control to the colonization of our focus by commercial interests. It can also lead to profound loneliness, as we become unable to enjoy the meeting of minds that comes from joint attention sharing. The more we give in to distraction and chaotic alerting, the more our executive functions atrophy. Neurologically, we become like babies whose orienting networks are not yet under control of the executive functions, lost in a sea of chaotic alerting.[\[2\]](#)

Return to Our Divine Design

This series seeks to anchor our response to digital technology in God’s design for us as embodied beings with body and soul, and with inherent creaturely limits (Gen. 1–2). With this foundation in mind, consider the following three suggestions:

1. Protect your attention and focus.

The triune God designed us to be in one place at one time, with senses that can attend to what is in our immediate surroundings. The online world clashes with this design: online, it seems that we can be in multiple places at once, doing multiple things at once, all disassociated from our bodies and the place and people right around us. Multitasking becomes the norm in the digital world. But studies show that multitasking is really a myth.[\[3\]](#) You actually get worse at multitasking the more you do it, because it trains you to seek distraction and decreases your attention span.

To protect your attention and focus, you might consider turning your phone or computer back into a one-use tool: Use it to do one thing at a time. When you need to do email on your computer, only do email. When you need to use Microsoft Word, only use Microsoft Word and close all the other windows and tabs. Consider taking social media off your phone, so you don't mindlessly use it (and if you really need social media, access it on your computer at designated times). And so on. When you are done with each task, be done with it until the next period of time set aside for that activity. As Cal Newport has argued, these types of practices can greatly increase productivity and our ability to accomplish meaningful, deep work.[\[4\]](#)

To foster deeper attention and focus, the philosopher of technology Albert Borgmann highlights the importance of focal practices. A focal practice is something that requires joint concentration of the mind and body. Playing a musical instrument is a focal practice, as are many traditional hand crafts, skills and trades that require precise bodily movements and mental focus. Reading books, exercising, gardening, preparing a meal and eating together, and all sorts of other activities can be focal practices. The key is to engage with the world and with each other in ways that develop a skill and require our full attention in real time and space with real things and real people.[\[5\]](#)

2. Establish clear digital boundaries.

The Holy Trinity also designed us with limits. Even before the fall, human bodies had inherent limitations as creatures of God. They also had external limitations — they were not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2:17).

Limits are not bad. In fact, they enable us to flourish in accord with our design. We should keep this in mind when it comes to digital boundaries. Adults need boundaries around devices too, because willpower is a limited resource and we are fighting against companies that are racing to the bottom of our brain stems. We can't resist the addictive aspects of our devices by willpower alone.

Two of the most basic ways to institute healthy boundaries is to compartmentalize time and compartmentalize space. Set time frames around when you can be online or engage in other screen-based activities to ensure there is also time for richer activities that recalibrate us around our divine design. The same holds true for space. Designate certain places where digital devices are off-limits.

Anna Lembke, author of *Dopamine Nation*, explains why we need such boundaries. "One of the biggest risk factors for getting addicted to any drug," writes the Stanford psychiatrist, "is easy access to that drug. When it's easier to get a drug, we're more likely to try it. In trying it, we're more likely to get addicted to it." The same is true with digital drugs. Even small barriers to access can be all that's needed to end bad habits and develop new ones.

We need barriers and boundaries to help us "press the pause button between desire and action," as Lembke puts it, until new habits are formed. We need nooks and crannies for contemplation that birth new insight. We need sanctified times and spaces for silence that bring forth peace. We need alcoves for awkward boredom that blossom into creativity.

3. Serve someone.

God designed us for relationship with Him and with others (Gen. 2:18, Matt. 11:28–29, 1 John 1:1–4). The perfect love and relationship between the persons of the Holy Trinity overflows in creation and redemption as we are brought into the divine life through the work of Christ that is made ours through Word and Sacrament. The creative love and radical hospitality of the Trinity then pours forth through us as well, as we love and serve one another.

Inviting others to share a meal together, to cross the threshold of our homes, to labor together in joint projects, to share in one another's sufferings — all of these actions bring us outside ourselves into a deeper experience of love and purpose. And all of it is patterned after our King and Master, Jesus Christ, who came not to be served, but to serve, who invited the sick and outcasts to His table, who entered into our suffering in His own person, and still extends the invitation to His banquet today (Matt. 9:10, Luke 5:29, Rev. 19:6–9).

In Part 5, we will pick up on this note: how Christ and His church are a refuge in the digital age. The church has the ultimate answers to what it means to be human in Christ, the One who was fully and truly human and who brings us with Him into resurrection life, by grace, through faith, on account of His perfect life, death and resurrection.

[1] Trevor Wheelwright, “Cell Phone Usage Stats 2025: Americans Check Their Phone 205 Times a Day,” *Reviews.org*, Jan 1, 2025, reviews.org/mobile/cell-phone-addiction; Alexis Bazen, “Cell Phone Statistics 2025,” *Consumer Affairs*, Mar 20, 2025, consumeraffairs.com/cell_phones/cell-phone-statistics.html; “Are You Addicted to Your Phone? American Phone Usage and Screen Time Statistics,” *Harmony Healthcare*, Jan 8, 2025, harmonyhit.com/phone-screen-time-statistics; “Mobile Fact Sheet,” *Pew Research Center*, Nov 13, 2024, pewresearch.org/internet/fact-sheet/mobile.

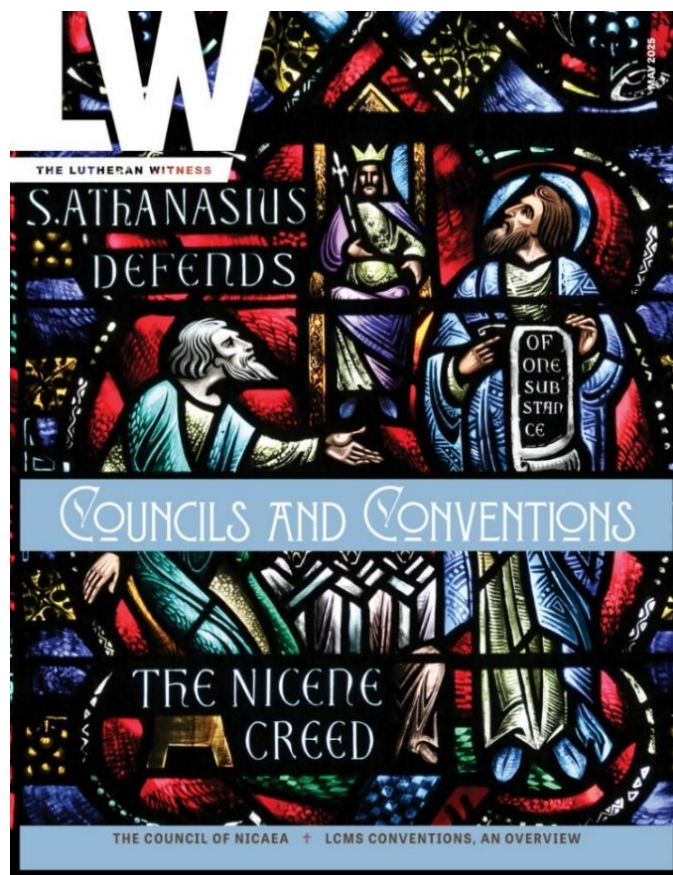
[2] For more on the importance of attention and the dangers posed by digital distractions, see Chapter 30 of Robin Phillips and Joshua Pauling, *Are We All Cyborgs Now? Reclaiming Our Humanity from the Machine* (Emmaus, PA: Basilian Media and Publishing, 2024).

[3] Robin Phillips and I document the research around the ineffectiveness of multitasking in our book [*Are We All Cyborgs Now?*](#) (Basilian Media, 2024).

[4] Newport develops these arguments in three books, *A World Without Email*, *Deep Work* and *Digital Minimalism*. As an example, he argues that many times email actually slows work down, because what once used to be a two-minute conversation in the office or on the phone, now is extended over multiple emails that span a longer period of time and eat up more attentional resources from the people involved because it does not occur all at once.

[5] For more on Albert Borgmann's ideas, see Chapter 17, *Are We All Cyborgs Now?*.

Article from May 2025 Issue of The Lutheran Witness



Rooted in Christ, Growing in Stewardship

The heartland is now awash in various hues of green. The doldrums of winter give way to the colors of spring. Now, the promise of spring gives way to the growth of summer. Fields are planted and sprouted. Gardens are planted. Flowers adorn the beds of neighborhood homes and roadside ditches. Green is the shade of life!

Green growth is also the hue of the faithful steward. The seed of faith planted in human hearts in the waters of Holy Baptism grows as it is nurtured in the Word proclaimed and ingested in the Holy Supper. This faith does indeed save. But our stewardship of the Gospel is also designed to bear fruit for God's glory and the benefit of our neighbor.

To consider this, let us look at the hymn, "Fruitful Trees, the Spirits Sowing" (*LSB* 691). It is very much a stewardship hymn!

Fruitful trees, the Spirit's sowing, May we ripen and increase, Fruit to life eternal growing, rich in love and joy and peace.

- The tree of faith is not planted in us by us. It is the Spirit's work! We do not claim the title "steward." Rather, we are created for it (Gen. 1:26–28).
- He is the One who makes it grow in us. The fruits of the Spirit are borne out because we, by grace through faith, are connected to the vine that is Jesus (John 15).

Laden branches freely bearing Gifts the Giver loves to bless; Here is fruit that grows by sharing, Patience, kindness, gentleness.

- Our stewardship is NOT about what we do. It is about what the Holy Spirit does in and through us. That is the fruit that we bear. His fruit for His purposes.
- But that fruit is lived out through us. The world sees the fruit of our stewardship of

the Gospel in lives lived connected to Word and Sacrament.

Rooted deep in Christ our Master, Christ our pattern and our goal, Teach us, as the years fly faster, Goodness, faith, and self-control.

- Stewards have been created and redeemed to reflect the image of Jesus in the world. He is the pattern. We reflect to others around us the Light of the Gospel He has shone on us.
- This reflection comes when Christ's goodness flows from us to others.

Fruitful trees, the Spirit's tending, May we grow till harvests cease; Till we taste, in life unending, Heaven's love and joy and peace.

- Just as the Spirit has created us for stewardship of the Gospel, so also does He cause our faithfulness! He calls, gathers, enlightens, sanctifies and KEEPS us in this faithful stewardship of the Gospel.
- The ultimate goal of our faithful stewardship is eternity. For us. For our neighbor. All worked out by the Spirit.

Green is the color of the world right now. It is also the color of our stewardship and it is growing in us as we are connected to the vine, Jesus! God grant our growth in Him!

LCMS Stewardship Ministry: lcms.org/stewardship



HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

June

- 11th** Dean & Jan Bergelin
- 16th** Charles & Jerilyn Fochs
- 20th** Dennis & Melissa DuPrey
- 23rd** Jerry & Nancy Propson
David & Lori Schwalenberg

Now Available in the Narthex



Spring 2025

During the past year, many people around the world have been rocked by disaster — flooding in North Carolina, typhoons in the Philippines, wildfires in California. Lutherans are not spared from the consequences of a fallen world. Yet, they are called “to be together around Word and Sacrament” even at a time like this, says the Rev. Christopher Schaar, pastor of Historic First Lutheran Church in Pasadena, Calif., which narrowly escaped the Eaton fire in early January.

In this issue of *Lutherans Engage the World*, you’ll find stories of the projects that are completed, the people that are cared for and the seeds that are planted when the church clings to Jesus Christ and His promises at all times, especially during a time like this.

Feature Stories

- **United in Word and Song**
Lutherans in Indonesia and the United States celebrate the creation of a new hymnal in the Indonesian language.

- **Holding Fast to the Promises of Jesus**
After devastating wildfires destroy thousands of homes, God’s people in Los Angeles County continue to gather around Word and Sacrament as LCMS Disaster Response helps them begin to recover and rebuild.
- **The One Body of Christ**
God has brought together the resources and support to help two new church plants take root in south Wisconsin.

Also in This Issue

- **Director’s Letter: Found and Restored in Jesus**
- **Q&A: With the Rev. Stephen Heimer**
- **Update: Rebuilding ‘Little by Little’**
- **Mercy Moment: Grant Assists Filipino Lutherans Impacted by Typhoons**
- **Witness Moment: Confessing That ‘Every Life Is Valuable’**



June

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| 1 | Pastor Krueger |
| 4 | Sandra Mirsberger |
| 6 | Laurie Ecker |
| 9 | Alec Schwalenberg |
| 12 | Delaina Mueller |
| | Louis Hernke |
| 14 | Barb Konen |
| 15 | David Behnke |
| 16 | DeAnn Eldred |
| | Madalyn DuPrey |
| | Jordan Kalies |
| 17 | Dolores Bornemann |
| | Marjy Jentsch |
| 19 | Paul Schwalenberg |
| 24 | Dave Franz |
| 25 | Bonnie Ott |
| 28 | Jan Bergelin |

June 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Seventh Sunday of Easter <i>White</i> 8:30 Divine Service	2	3	4	5	6 <i>10:00 Bible Study @ Terra Verde, Chilton</i>	7 <i>Wedding</i>
8 The Day of Pentecost <i>Red</i> 8:30 Divine Service (NC)	9	10	11	12 6:00p Elders Meeting	13 <i>10:00 Bible Study @ Terra Verde, Chilton</i>	14 Flag Day
15 The Holy Trinity <i>White</i> 8:30 Divine Service Father's Day	16	17	18	19 6:15p Council Meeting	20 <i>10:00 Bible Study @ Terra Verde, Chilton</i>	21 Summer Begins
22 Second Sunday after Pentecost <i>Green</i> 8:30 Divine Service (NC)	23 <i>VBS @ St. Luke 11:30-2:30</i> Newsletter Articles Due	24 <i>VBS @ St. Luke 11:30-2:30</i>	25 <i>VBS @ St. Luke 11:30-2:30</i>	26	27 <i>10:00 Bible Study @ Terra Verde, Chilton</i>	28
29 Third Sunday after Pentecost <i>Green</i> 8:30 Divine Service <div>←----- LWML Convention ----- </div>	30				Altar Guild: June 1 - Dan & Cindy Koffarnus June 8 - Bonnie Ott & Cheri Koffarnus June 15 - Donna Marose & DeAnn Eldred June 22 - Dean & Jan Bergelin June 29 - Dan & Cindy Koffarnus	

Divine Services marked (NC) will not have Holy Communion