



May 26, 2022

# Staying in Touch May 26, 2022

## Normalize the Unexpected

Synod Assembly 2022 was the first in-person Assembly we have had since 2019. That's a long time not seeing friends and colleagues. Most striking was just how many new faces there were at the gathering. It was great to be with our wider church family throughout the Rocky Mountain Synod. The theme was *"Rhythm of the Saints"*. Our first session was a powerful reminder of how the Classic (or traditional) Church has remained faithful during these difficult times, but also the Church Becoming has so many new faces, expressions, ministries and opportunities.

One of the realities we come face to face with at a larger gathering of the church is how diverse and different we are as Lutheran Christians. I know we appear a homogenous church, and yes we are, but hang out with us for a while and you realize just how multifaceted we are becoming.

One of the ways that we express our diversity is our efforts to make normal ministries and people with whom we do not expect to engage. For example, in our Classic Church (1960's and 70's) we did valuable ministry with American Indian people. It was great ministry by all accounts. In the 80's and 90's that ministry began to fall apart for a variety of reasons. Now there is a resurgence and a great work being done with our native neighbors.

In 2016 our ELCA Churchwide Assembly repudiated the Doctrine of Discovery. In the last year we have established a task force to carry out

*"It is time we stepped into the world of making the unexpected more normal in our lives."*

some specific programs and plans for remediation. The Director of the office, Vance Blackfox, gave powerful and

inspirational testimony to the work being done. He has put together a library of resources to help pastors and congregations. This has been a ministry close to my heart for a few years now.

I want St. John's to embrace this ministry in a new way. First, we can get educated about the Native American tribes where we live now and where they have lived forever. There are ministries that we can support, speakers we can bring in and work we can do. Church Council began a discussion this month on Land Acknowledgment and how we might



Would you like to be part of a

### Study Group

on

Land Acknowledgement of Native American Lands?

Contact Pastor Wes for dates and times.

### Philippians 4:4 (AMP)

*"Rejoice in the Lord always [delight, take pleasure in Him]; again I will say, rejoice!"*

### What's Inside?

Normalize the Unexpected ...Page 1-2

Budget Report ...Page 2

Share the Joy Bingo Report

...Page 2-3

Easter Breakfast ...Page 4-5

Graduations ...Page 6

Article: "Our Moloch" ...Page 7-8

Birthdays/Anniversaries ... Page 8

...continued on page 2

...continued from page 1

integrate that into the life of our ministry, worship, and work.

I am looking for those people who are interested in learning more and leading St. John's into this ministry. This has not been a normal part of our life together. In fact, it might feel like it is unexpected or coming out of left field. We need to begin to normalize the unexpected. The unexpected isn't bad, it is just a bit different or strange. It is time we stepped into the world of making the unexpected more normal in our lives. Let's start with learning, studying, talking, and listening. If you want to be a part of this new learning, contact me and we will set up a time to gather.

Peace,  
Pastor Wes

## SHARE THE JOY!



### StJ Bingo!

So much has happened since St. John's started sponsoring bingo on October 8, 2021! We want to give you an update.

#### Volunteers!

What a delightful group of volunteers have come together, generous with their time and energy, and with great attitudes and work ethic. They've truly melded into a team that makes St. John's bingo one of the favorite groups of many bingo players at Bingo Oasis in Northglenn. Our volunteers include: Tom Berry, Laura Jones, Jeff Korsen, Suzanne Ryan, Tim & Char Stanford, Rosemary Stover, and Marty & Roberta Thorpe. Occasional helpers include Joyce Dunbar, Vickie Engele, Darcy Wendland, and soon—Bethany Wendland. Additionally, our church office is now closed on Fridays

...continued on page 3



Weekly bingo team, missing Char Stanford and Jeff Korsen

### April Budget Information

April 30, 2022 Budget Information		April, 2022 Account Balances	
YTD Income	\$142,075	Checking	\$6,856****
YTD Expenses	\$136,290	Savings	\$2019
Thrivent Mortgage Principal Owed	\$119,665	Scrip Checking	\$534
**includes cell tower sale ***used to cover two operating accts while moving to new bank. To be repaid semi-annually per Council. ****includes monies to repay Bldg Fund		Scrip Savings	\$315
		Building Fund	\$78,615**
		Note: to be repaid to Bldg Fund***	\$37,256***

### Do You Know a Place to Rent?

We've received a couple calls at the church office; for a room to rent and another for a home to rent. If you know of any, please contact the church office asap.

...continued from page 2

for Pastor Wes to be on the team and Nina to serve as the primary Games Manager for our team.

Over the 31 sessions we have hosted at Bingo Oasis our volunteers have logged in 1,220 hours of volunteer time. Toss in the time Nina and Pastor Wes commit to this ministry and the total hours dedicated has been 1,572. Our StJ volunteers and Genesis Gathering bingo volunteers have helped each other's team on many occasions. This has been another wonderful joint effort on the part of St. John's and Genesis Gathering.

**Results!**

We went into this bingo ministry with two missions in mind: help financially support the ministry and mission of St. John's and also to be a living witness of God's joy and love to the people we meet at bingo. Wow! Both are yielding great results!

**The people:** We're learning names, getting to know people, and we also show our care and concern and pray for people. Every week we put forth kindness and joy to share the love of Jesus in everyday life.

**The finances:** Wow! So far Bingo has raised between \$12-13,000 for the work of St. John's! We hope to continue that income on a quarterly basis, although things depend on attendance and other factors.

**Did you hear about Rocky Mountain Synod's grant??**

Rocky Mountain Synod recently offered a grant of \$1500 to any church engaged in innovative ministry, and St. John's was awarded the grant for our bingo ministry! This helped us to pay our bingo start-up expenses.

**The future...**

Bingo is part of our church mission outreach for the foreseeable future. If you want to join the fun and "Share the Joy" with us, contact Nina in the church office so we can put you on the schedule—even if only occasionally. We'll train you! And/or come play bingo to see firsthand and be a support to our team. Regular session games start at Noon on Fridays at Bingo Oa-

...continued from previous column

sis, 10657 Melody Dr., Northglenn. If you have any questions, give Nina a call or talk to one of our volunteers.



Bingo Oasis, 10657 Melody Dr., Northglenn

**Do You Shop at King Soopers and/or Amazon.com?**

Do you shop at King Soopers and/or online at Amazon? Both of these companies have a generous plan to donate money to your favorite charity. **When you choose to support St. John's, a percentage of your shopping will come to St. John's without spending an extra penny! No fees.**

**King Soopers Community Rewards:**

go to this website and follow the directions to register your loyalty card for your donations to St. John's.

<https://www.kingsoopers.com/i/community/community-rewards>



**Smile.Amazon.com:** to choose St. John's as your charitable organization, go to:

[www.smile.amazon.com](http://www.smile.amazon.com)

## Easter at St. John's

St. John's Church Council and all of us send out a big *thank you* to all the volunteers who set-up, provided food, and cleaned up for Easter Breakfast!! It was a great time together!



## More Easter at St. John's



# Congratulations Grads!

Class of 2022



St. John's Lutheran Church joins the families of these graduates to celebrate their accomplishment and pray for God's blessing on their future!

## College Graduates



**Deidre Flanagan**, daughter of Kim Flanagan, graduate of University of Northern Colorado with a Bachelors in Music Education.



**Tyler G. Gohl**, grandson of Jane Stallworth, graduate of University of Colorado Boulder, Leeds School of Business.



**Jill Ann Meier** graduate of Metro State University with a BS in Nursing.



**Dr. Josh Padilla**, son of Lisa and Phil Padilla, graduate of LSU, PhD Soil Science. Geaux Tigers!.

**Kyle McCabe**, son of Greta Brandstetter, graduate of Pepperdine University in California with a Journalism major. *(no photo available)*

## High School Graduates



**Jack Micheal Haggard**, grandson of Ron & Vickie Engele, graduate of Golden High School. He begins Electrical and Computer Engineering studies at University of Colorado Boulder in the fall.



**Jacob Larson**, son of John and Sam Larson, graduate of Mountain Range High School.



**Taylor Olson**, granddaughter of Janet & Randy Olson, graduate with honors from Prairie View High School.

*This article by Garry Willis was published in the New York Review December 15, 2012, but it could have been written yesterday.*

## Our Moloch

Few crimes are more harshly forbidden in the Old Testament than sacrifice to the god Moloch (for which see Leviticus 18.21, 20.1-5). The sacrifice referred to was of living children consumed in the fires of offering to Moloch. Ever since then, worship of Moloch has been the sign of a deeply degraded culture. Ancient Romans justified the destruction of Carthage by noting that children were sacrificed to Moloch there. Milton represented Moloch as the first pagan god who joined Satan's war on humankind:

First *Moloch*, horrid king, besmear'd with blood  
Of human sacrifice, and parents' tears,  
Though for the noise of Drums and Timbrels loud  
Their children's cries unheard,  
that pass'd through fire  
To his grim idol. (*Paradise Lost* 1.392-96)

Read again those lines, with recent images seared into our brains—"besmeared with blood" and "parents' tears." They give the real meaning of what happened at Sandy Hook Elementary School Friday morning. That horror cannot be blamed just on one unhinged person. It was the sacrifice we as a culture made, and continually make, to our demonic god. We guarantee that crazed man after crazed man will have a flood of killing power readily supplied him. We have to make that offering, out of devotion to our Moloch, our god. The gun is our Moloch. We sacrifice children to him daily—sometimes, as at Sandy Hook, by directly throwing them into the fire-hose of bullets from our protected private killing machines, sometimes by blighting our children's lives by the death of a parent, a schoolmate, a teacher, a protector. Sometimes this is done by mass killings (eight this year), sometimes by private offerings to the god (thousands this year).

The gun is not a mere tool, a bit of technology, a political issue, a point of debate. It is an object of rev-

*...continued from previous column*

erence. Devotion to it precludes interruption with the sacrifices it entails. Like most gods, it does what it will and cannot be questioned. Its acolytes think it is capable only of good things. It guarantees life and safety and freedom. It even guarantees law. Law grows from

*"Even the Supreme Court has been cowed, reversing its own long history of recognizing that the Second Amendment applied to militias."*

it. Then how can law question it? Its power to do good is matched by its incapacity to do anything wrong. It cannot kill. Thwarting the god is what kills. If it seems to kill, that is only because the god's bottomless appetite for death has not been adequately fed. The answer to problems caused by guns is more guns, millions of guns, guns everywhere, carried openly, carried secretly, in bars, in churches, in offices, in government buildings. Only the lack of guns can be a curse, not their beneficent omnipresence.

Adoration of Moloch permeates the country, imposing a hushed silence as he works his will. One cannot question his rites, even as the blood is gushing through the idol's teeth. The White House spokesman invokes the silence of traditional in religious ceremony. "It is not the time" to question Moloch. No time is right for showing disrespect for Moloch.

The fact that the gun is a revered god can be seen in its manifold and apparently resistless powers. How do we worship it? Let us count the ways:

1. It has the power to destroy the reasoning process. It forbids making logical connections. We are required to deny that there is any connection between the fact that we have the greatest number of guns in private hands and the greatest number of deaths from them. Denial on this scale always comes from or is protected by religious fundamentalism. Thus do we deny global warming, or evolution, or biblical errancy. Reason is helpless before such abject faith.

2. It has the power to turn all our politicians as a class into invertebrate and mute attendants at the

*...continued on next column*

*...continued on page 8*

...continued from page 7

shrine. None dare suggest that Moloch can in any way be reined in without being denounced by the pope of this religion, National Rifle Association CEO Wayne LaPierre, as trying to destroy Moloch, to take away all guns. They whimper and say they never entertained such heresy. Many flourish their guns while campaigning, or boast that they have themselves hunted “varmints.” Better that the children die or their lives be blasted than that a politician should risk an election against the dread sentence of NRA excommunication.

3. It has the power to distort our constitutional thinking. It says that the right to “bear arms,” a military term, gives anyone, anywhere in our country, the power to mow down civilians with military weapons. Even the Supreme Court has been cowed, reversing its own long history of recognizing that the Second Amendment applied to militias. Now the court feels bound to guarantee that any every madman can indulge his “religion” of slaughter. Moloch brooks no dissent, even from the highest court in the land.

Though LaPierre is the pope of this religion, its most successful Peter the Hermit, preaching the crusade for Moloch, was Charlton Heston, a symbol of the Americanism of loving guns. I have often thought that we should raise a statue of Heston at each of the many sites of multiple murders around our land. We would soon have armies of statues, whole droves of Heston acolytes standing sentry at the shrines of Moloch dotting the landscape. Molochism is the one religion that can never be separated from the state. The state itself bows down to Moloch, and protects the sacrifices made to him. So let us celebrate the falling bodies and rising statues as a demonstration of our fealty, our bondage, to the great god Gun.

*Garry Wills, a journalist and historian, is the author of numerous books, including Nixon Agonistes (1970), Inventing America (1978), Explaining America: The Federalist (1981), and Lincoln at Gettysburg (1993), which won a Pulitzer Prize that year. His most recent book is What the Qur’an Meant: And Why It Matters (2017). (November 2019)*



*Happy May Birthday to these St. John’s Family Members!*

- |                   |                     |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| 3 Robin Holcomb   | 21 Tyler Columbia   |
| 8 Nick Columbia   | 22 Tyson Voyek      |
| 8 Carey Wilkening | 24 Tom Berry        |
| 9 Kathy Robertson | 25 Jane Hoagland    |
| 11 Trevin Blay    | 25 Bethany Wendland |
| 13 Lee Beckler    | 18 Jacob Padilla    |
| 13 Julian Rogers  | 28 Alan Lentfer     |
| 19 Lisa Wilkening | 29 George Pech      |
|                   | 29 Lilly Hull       |

### May Anniversaries



- 3 John & Sam Larson
- 14 Irene Randall
- 29 Bob & June Bernatchez
- 30 Shawn & Grace Helgeson
- 31 Randy & Janet Olson



### St. John’s Lutheran Church

11040 Colorado Blvd. Thornton, CO 80233  
 303.457.2476  
[www.stjohnsthornton.org](http://www.stjohnsthornton.org)

### Sunday Worship - 9:00 a.m.

Livestream at  
[www.stjohnsthornton.org](http://www.stjohnsthornton.org)