



Monthly Newsletter

ANCHORED IN CHRIST
through every season

CELEBRATING 100 YEARS TOGETHER

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ORIGINAL SIN: THE TRUTH THAT MAKES US GENTLE

Lent places us firmly in the season of repentance. As the Church prepares to walk with Christ toward the cross, we are given the gift of honest self-examination. One of the most necessary—and most humbling—truths we are called to confess is the doctrine of Original Sin.

The Augsburg Confession, Article II, states it plainly:

“Since the fall of Adam all men begotten in the natural way are born with sin, that is, without the fear of God, without trust in God, and with concupiscence; and that this disease, or vice of origin, is truly sin, even now condemning and bringing eternal death upon those not born again through Baptism and the Holy Ghost.”

This is not an abstract theological idea or a pessimistic view of humanity. It is a clear-eyed confession of reality. Original Sin means that sin is not merely something we do—it is something we are by nature. Scripture teaches the same truth: “I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me” (Psalm 51:5), and again, “None is righteous, no, not one” (Romans 3:10).

Original Sin means we are born lacking what humanity was created to have: fear, love, and trust in God (Genesis 1:26–27; Ecclesiastes 7:29). Instead, our hearts are turned inward (Romans 8:7). Our desires are disordered, which the Confession names concupiscence—the sinful inclination that remains even when outward actions appear good (James 1:14–15).

This truth humbles us because it strips away every illusion of self-sufficiency. We are not born spiritually neutral. We are not naturally inclined toward God. We are not capable of fixing ourselves through effort, reason, or sincerity. Sin is deeper than bad habits or poor choices; it is, as the Confession says, a disease of our nature.

That is why the Augsburg Confession is equally firm in rejecting Pelagian thinking:

“They condemn the Pelagians and others who deny that original depravity is sin, and who argue that man can be justified before God by his own strength and reason.”

Scripture likewise rejects this idea: “By works of the law no human being will be justified in His sight” (Romans 3:20), and “It depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy” (Romans 9:16). Any teaching that places confidence in human ability ultimately obscures the glory of Christ, who alone saves sinners completely and freely (Ephesians 2:8–9).

Original Sin leaves us with nothing to offer God except our need.

And that is precisely where grace begins.

The Confession points us immediately to God’s remedy: new birth through Baptism and the Holy Spirit. Jesus Himself declares, “Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God” (John 3:5). Baptism is not a symbolic gesture toward God; it is God’s gracious action toward us—washing away sin (Acts 22:16), granting new life (Titus 3:5), and uniting us to Christ’s death and resurrection (Romans 6:3–4).

This confession of Original Sin does not only shape our theology; it shapes our life together.

When we truly understand our own condition, it becomes harder to be harsh with others. We are slower to assume bad motives. We are less shocked by human weakness—both our own and that of our neighbors. We are less quick to take offense when things do not go our way, whether in daily life or in the life of the Church.

“All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). That shared condition fosters humility. It teaches patience. It guards us from pride. It reminds us that the Church is not a gathering of the morally successful, but a fellowship of forgiven sinners living by mercy alone.

Original Sin teaches us that everyone we encounter is broken in the same way we are. That does not excuse sin (Romans 6:1–2), but it does temper our response. It replaces sharp judgment with gentleness, and self-righteousness with compassion (Colossians 3:12–13).

In the end, this doctrine does not lower our view of Christ—it raises it. Only a Savior who is truly God could rescue people who are truly lost (Matthew 1:21). Only grace that is entirely undeserved could save sinners who have nothing to bring.

Original Sin humbles us. Grace lifts us up. And together, they teach us how to live—before God and with one another.

Pastor Ben Hollingsead

Citation:
Augsburg Confession, Article II, Of Original Sin, Book of Concord (1580).

SINNED AGAINST

Midweek Lenten Services
5PM Supper | 6PM Worship

ASH WEDNESDAY : FEB 18

Sinned Against by THOUGHTS Sinned Against by WORDS Sinned Against by DEEDS Sinned Against by LEFT UNDONE Sinned Against by FAILING TO DO

FEB 25 MAR 4 MAR 11 MAR 18 MAR 25

HOLY WEEK

HE IS RISEN!

We invite you to
ST. JOHN'S
LUTHERAN CHURCH LCMS

MAUNDY THURSDAY Thursday, April 2 at 6:00PM

GOOD FRIDAY Friday, April 3 at 1:00PM

TENEBRAE Friday, April 3 at 7:30PM

EASTER SUNDAY Sunday, April 5 at 7:00AM & 9:00AM

As we approach Holy Week, we are excited to share that our Sunday School children will be singing with the adult choir on Palm Sunday. This has become a sweet tradition of young voices being mentored by adults, and it is always a heartwarming experience for our entire church family.

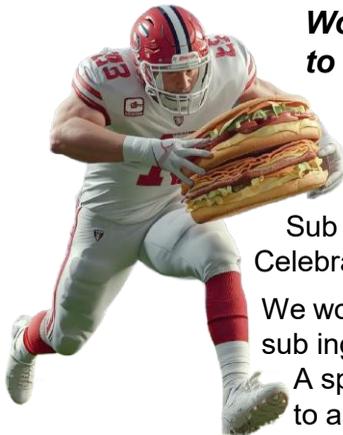
We are currently looking for volunteers to host our Easter Breakfast. At this time, our regular groups are not able to, though we do have a couple of volunteers willing to serve a fellowship time between services if need be. If you are interested in helping in any way on Easter morning please contact Debbie Schultz. We appreciate your help in making this a meaningful time of celebration and fellowship for all!



Celebrating 100 years together

UPCOMING EVENTS

Wow! Way to come together and support February events to celebrate 100 years together as a congregation!



NO ONE WENT HUNGRY

Thank you to everyone who came out to support the Super Bowl Sub & Snack Sale in February to help raise funds for the Centennial Celebration in September.

We would especially like to thank the generous members who donated sub ingredients and took the time to prepare delicious snacks for the sale.

A special thank you also goes to our sandwich artists who arrived early to assemble the subs and set up for fellowship.

Together, we are stronger and able to achieve more. **We were blessed to raise just under \$1200 towards the Centennial Celebration.** We are truly grateful for your continued support.



YOU ANSWERED THE CALL

Thank you to everyone who took the time to share your favorite recipes for the upcoming St. John's Centennial Recipe Book! **Together, we collected over 250 wonderful recipes**, including a few favorites from even Pastor Carnicom, who was especially excited to hear about this when visiting in January. It's been a joy to see such a delicious variety of dishes shared by our church family. Who knows maybe we'll have to host a potluck featuring

some of these favorites one day! We look forward to getting the books printed and into your hands this summer. The cost will be \$20 per book, and all proceeds will go toward supporting our Centennial Celebration. Thank you again for being part of this special project!



COMING SOON

The Centennial Committee is designing a special invite that members can send to family members or friends that have members in the past to join in the celebration. Watch for more details soon on how to be a part of that.



CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION: SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13

Don't forget to mark your calendars. Watch for more details...



ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

YOUTH NEWS



BEAUTIFUL DAY FOR SLEDDING & POTLUCK LUNCH

Kids (and a few adventurous adults) had an absolute blast at our Annual Sledding & Potluck Party. With about two inches of fresh snow covering the ground, the hill was in perfect condition for an afternoon packed with excitement and laughter. Sleds were flying, smiles were wide, and the sound of cheering could be heard all around as everyone took their turn racing down the hill.

Before hitting the hill, we gathered to enjoy a delicious potluck meal filled with warm dishes and sweet treats. It was a wonderful time of fellowship sharing food, stories, and plenty of laughs.

A heartfelt thank you to our wonderful hosts, Bruce and Debbie, for graciously opening their home and making this special day possible.



FAMILY DAY AT AITKIN LANES

We're looking forward to a fun-filled day of bowling with our church family on Sunday, March 1! It's always a joy to spend time together, and this will be a great opportunity to relax, laugh, and make lasting memories.

We hope you were able to sign up ahead of time and are planning to join us. It's sure to be a fantastic day of fellowship and friendly competition. We can't wait to see everyone there!

IMPORTANT DATES



Mar 01: Bowling at Aitkin Lanes

Mar 29: Palm Sunday – Kids sing with Choir

TBD: Meal Packing



Tony Flerlage
ACT Leader

Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but be an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity. 1 Timothy 4:12

St. John ACT has kept a good pace the last month, not too overwhelmed and not bored.

We have been studying the life of Joseph in Genesis. What a fine example of a person to live life for God's purpose.

We completed the fundraiser for Brainerd Jaycees at their ice fishing tournament. We had five adults and seven youth brave the cold for the day and assist by checking the buckets of the participants.

ACT has a February fundraiser with Rosallini's. Teens sell vouchers for pizza and get proceeds for each pizza sold. The cost of the voucher is less than their menu listed price. We're blessed to have Rosallini's support our church.

We hosted a Superbowl Party at the church for ACT families. We ate snacks, played games, and enjoyed the football on TV.

Like Joseph, let us be an example of faithful followers of God. Lord, help us to do your will. Please bless St. John Church and our youth.

Tony Flerlage



LUTHERAN
**ISLAND
CAMP**

CAMPERSHIPS AVAILABLE

St. John's is providing \$100.00 or one half of the cost of camp (whichever is greater) for any of our children that would like to attend a summer program at Lutheran Island Camp. You can go online to the camp website (www.islandcamp.org) to check on the summer camp possibilities. If you have any questions, you can call Debbie Schultz, 218-839-4322.

If you would like to donate toward this, please place your gift in an envelope marked: "LIC Camperships" and place the envelope in the offering plate.

SUMMER IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER!

What's Up at St. John's Church?



SPECIAL DELIVERY

Thank you to our wonderful St. John's Circle for continuing their cherished tradition of remembering our college students and those serving in the military. This year, they lovingly prepared and sent care packages to eight special recipients, each box filled with treats and a thoughtful message from the St. John's congregation of encouragement. This meaningful tradition is a beautiful reminder that no matter how far from home they may be, they remain in our prayers and in our hearts.

Connor Rose, a recipient over the last four years while attending college, wrote in his recent thank you, "I want to tell you how thankful I am receiving one every year for all the years of being at college. It gave me something to look forward to and helped me get through the hard days." These packages are truly appreciated and bring great joy to those who receive them.



A Note from the

Deacons
Leading through Serving

MEETING OF THE MINDS 30 YEARS IN THE MAKING

Three of our St. John's Deacons, Scott Bartz, Dan Borseth, and Jim Schendel, recently attended a Deacons' Conference in Brainerd. It had been 30 years since such a gathering last took place, making this event especially meaningful.

They joined approximately 150 other area Deacons and Pastors for a day of learning, discussion, and fellowship. Topics included a look at the Biblical foundations of what an Elder/Deacon is and what they are not, along with guidance in caring for the spiritual well-being of the congregation and supporting the Pastor and his family.

It was a valuable experience, providing opportunities to share ideas and learn how other churches approach various situations and challenges. We extend our sincere thanks to Scott, Dan, and Jim for taking the time to attend and for bringing their insights back to St. John's to help strengthen our church family spiritually.



Membership News

We are excited to share the news of a baptism!

On Sunday, February 15, 2026

Eloise Ann Hollingsead

was baptized in the name of
the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit

Daughter of Pastor Ben & Amber Hollingsead

Sponsors are Rick & Amy Kalkbrenner and Alex Kalkbrenner

Born January 16, 2026



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Blessings on your special day!

Hunter Westerlund	02	Kaleb Bauer	15	Eric Wold	24
Monica Lovsness	03	Jessica Schultz-Perlberg	17	Noah Christian Carlson	25
Sally Fenner	04	Isabelle Harmon	18	Marissa Sterling	25
Eric O'Neil	04	Kevin Rom	18	Gina Wold	25
Lyle Spicer	05	Bruce Sanvig	18	Jeanie Christian	26
Ted Hasskamp	08	Travis Torgerson	18	Dennis Ruschmeier	26
Theresa Bartel	09	Terry Urban	18	Levi Flerlage	27
James Bartel	09	Kathy Hanlon	19	Paige Harmon	28
Daniel Witt	09	Cynthia Priem	21	Katelyn Sarlette	28
Lydia Kleinhans	10	Nathan Rom	21	Maggie Borseth	29
Jason Torgerson	10	Jennifer Monse	22	Kyle Priem	29
Stacey Borman	12	Emily Davis	23	Gabriel Carlstrom	29
Beckett Pearson	12	Lori Kaiser	23	Bryan Haugly	31
Christine Miller	13	Roger Renstrom	23	Huck Novotny	31
Charles Wikelius	13				

**The birthdays listed are from our church records. Any mistakes are unintentional. Please notify the office of any mistakes, deletions, or if you do not want your birthday listed.*

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR FELLOWSHIP

We are looking for volunteers to provide refreshments during fellowship time following worship. If you are able to help, please sign up on the sheet posted in the fellowship hall by the kitchen. Feel free to team up with others. Thank you for your willingness to serve.



Mark Your Calendar



All are invited to the
ST. JOHN'S

Spring Luncheon

Meatballs, Breadsticks,
Salads & Desserts

THURSDAY
APRIL 16TH

11AM - 1PM

\$12 per person

We invite everyone, including our community, to a St. John's Spring Luncheon.

Watch for a sign-up in the Narthex for bringing salads and bars. Money raised will go to the getting more silverware for meals and towards the new furnace/AC unit at the parsonage. Thank you in advance for your support of this effort.

BEING A HERO DOESN'T HAVE TO BE HARD...

You can save up to 3 lives by donating blood!

Red Cross is coming to St. John's

APRIL 20 & 21 12 PM - 6 PM

Register at www.redcrossblood.org
Walk-ins may be available

GIVE BLOOD

You can make a difference.



**American
Red Cross**

