



I Believe = I Trust 100% That God Is With Me

“This is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you sent.” John 17:3 (EHV)

How certain are you that God will be with you this coming year? How certain are you that God's love will be with you this coming year? Let's change those phrases a little bit: How many of you “believe” that God will be with you this coming and year and how many of you “believe” that God's love will be with you this coming year? Did you catch the slight change in those phrases? Is there really a difference between the words “certain” and “believe”?

As Christians there really isn't any difference between believing and being certain. They both have the same meaning that we trust 100% that God is and will continue to be with us all the time, but because of sin, the word “believe” has lost some of its meaning. For instance, we might say, *I believe* that my meeting is on the 15th... but I'm *not sure*.” or “I'm *not sure*. . . *I believe* that cold weather is on its way.” Or “*I don't know for sure*. . . *I believe* Thanksgiving is at Grandma's house this year.” In these phrases the word “believe” isn't 100% sure. There is some doubt.

But when we as Christians talk about our faith, it's just the opposite. The words “I believe” = “I know for sure. I am confident. I know this to be 100% true.” And what do we know for sure and what are we confident of and know to be 100% true? Jesus tells us in our verse, **“This is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you sent.”**

Faith is about knowing what God has given us in his Word. **I believe = I know the facts** of who God is and what he has done for me. I believe and through this gift of faith, I know, I am confident, I am sure that God made me, forgave me, saved me and gave me the gift of eternal life in heaven through his Son. There is no doubt! I am certain – 100%!

Faith is also about knowing someone. It's a relationship. It is a confident trust. **I believe = I know and trust** this creating, saving, forgiving, life-giving God as my God because he sent Jesus Christ, his Son, for me and promises to be with me forever – until the end of time.

In our lives, so much can be uncertain: weather, politics, conflicts across the world, our health, our employment, but here's something you can be certain about. You can be certain that the true God is your God and that he sent Jesus Christ to die and rise again for you so that you can know that you have eternal life through him. You can say: I know this to be true. I am sure of it. I am confident of it – 100%. By God's grace and power alone, we can also say, I believe and trust that God was with me last year (and all the years before that) and I trust and believe and am sure 100% that he will be with me in 2020 (and forever). Have a blessed 2020 believing our great and glorious God will surely bless us!

Pastor Mark Gartner

January 2020

ALTAR GUILD

Nancy Bruhn	739-5852
Ginger Kobussen	739-7227
Lynn Ziegert	585-4434

GREETERS

8:00	Chris Ahrens & Lucas Hansen	1/5
10:30	Janice Bates & Sheryl Hill	
8:00	Jeff & Cheryl Bohl	1/12
10:30	Nancy Bruhn & Eileen Defferding	
8:00	Jon & Chris Coenen	1/19
10:30	Larry & Rosalie Greenley	
8:00	Mitch & Ginger Kobussen	1/26
10:30	Phyllis Gresens & Sheryll Techlin	

BAPTISM Rudy Carleton Sielaff, son of Stephen and Katie (Klug) Sielaff was baptized November 22, 2019 at ThedaCare Regional Medical Center-Appleton. ***“Be baptized and wash away your sins.”*** Acts 22:16

NEW YEAR’S EVE Come and worship with us on Tuesday, December 31 at 6:30 p.m. with the Lord’s Supper.

WOMEN OF FAITH BIBLE STUDY & LWMS All ladies of the congregation are welcome to come for Bible study, LWMS updates and fellowship on Tuesday, January 14 at **1:00 p.m.** in the lower level of church. Moms are welcome to bring their children.

MEN’S BIBLE STUDY All men of the congregation are invited and encouraged to attend a Bible study and fellowship on **Tuesday, January 21** at **9:00 am.**

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING The annual congregational meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 21 at 7:00 p.m. All men ages 18 and over are encouraged to attend.

USHERS AND GREETERS The 2020 usher schedule (January-June) and the greeters’ schedules are available on the counter in the entryway. Please take the schedule with your name highlighted.

FLOWER CHART A 2020 flower chart has been placed on the bulletin board. If you would like to bring flowers for a special occasion, please sign for that date.

GREETING CARDS Did you know there are individual greeting cards for purchase in the church narthex? They are being sold by our Women of Faith as a service to you.

The cards are self-serve on a spinner rack near the library and are only 50 cents per card. Check the rack often as cards are added for special holidays and occasions.

2020 ENVELOPES If you have not picked up your 2020 offering envelopes, please pick them up as soon as possible. An explanation of the offering envelopes is enclosed with this newsletter.

2019 Annual Contribution Statements The statements will be available in January. If you want your statement emailed to you, let us know; email **church.office@stjohn-appleton.org** by Dec. 31.

NEW MEMBER WELCOME On Sunday, January 19, we will welcome the new members that joined us since January 2019. A pot-luck dinner will be held at 11:40 a.m. Please make plans to come and welcome the following new members: Ann Bruneau and Cathy Seekins, Parker Nabbefeld, John and Sarah Onorato, and Chad and Danielle Presteen and their daughters Audrey and Brinley.

SISTERS IN CHRIST Join us for the 20th Pathways to Christ Retreat on March 13-15 at LaSure’s Hall in Oshkosh. The 2020 theme is “A Friend Loves At All Times”, Prov. 17:17a. Friday evening’s opening session will consist of a guided round-table discussion and Bible study on friendship followed by *Thirsty Soul* – Praise Band.

On Saturday our three speakers; Rachel Fritz, Linda Gumm and Jenni Schubring will focus on our friendship with Jesus, on journey of life and friendship and on our calling as Christ’s disciples. *His Witness* will then share their gift of music with us.

Sound intriguing? On Sunday Pastor Leon Ehlert will share with us a Bible Study and then lead us in worship. Additional information, along with registration forms, can be downloaded from our website: <http://pathwaystochrist.org>. If you don’t have internet access, the church office will be happy to provide you with a brochure.

January 2020

FROM THE APPLE VALLEY FOOD PANTRY Your generous donations in the form of non-perishable groceries and cash to the WELS Apple Valley Food Pantry is very much appreciated! We would like to share major accomplishments in 2019 with you:

- **We served 75 families every month**
- 2,100 bags of non-perishable groceries and 800 bags of sundry items distributed. **That is nearly 40,000 pounds or 20 tons!**
- **\$27,000 in scrip** provided to families to purchase fresh foods such as meat, dairy and produce

Our pantry hopes to continue its role in our mission of helping to supplement the grocery needs of our congregation members and neighbors. And the need continues. For the January 5th collection, the following items are needed: Dish and laundry soap,

canned fruit, all crackers, cookies, jam, rice, rice and pasta side dishes, boxed and canned potatoes, canned meats, beef stews and canned meals.

Also, if you wish to direct monetary donations to the pantry, please make checks payable to Apple Valley Food Pantry and place them in the offering plate. Please keep the food pantry in your prayers and thank you for your continued support.

ELECTRONIC GIVING Looking for an easy way to regularly contribute monetary gifts to St. John? If so, check out electronic giving. Go to www.stjohn-appleton.org and select *Giving* **ELECTRONIC GIVING**. Complete the Online Donation form and create your online profile. If you have questions, contact the church office at 920-733-1307.

