



# St. John's Newsletter

May 2020



## God's Grace Is Sufficient

**“And he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, because my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will be glad to boast all the more in my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may shelter me. That is why I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties, for the sake of Christ. For whenever I am weak, then am I strong.” 2 Corinthians 12:9-10**

How would you complete this sentence? “I know that God loves me because he \_\_\_\_\_.” All too often we would fill in that sentence with something to the effect that “I know that God loves me because he has kept me safe or blessed me with some wonderful earthly blessing.” While that might sound true: What do we say when things aren't going so wonderfully? All too often we look at the list of troubles in our lives and say to ourselves, “If God really loved me, he'd take these away!” But is that a fair and accurate conclusion? If that thinking is true, what can we conclude about God when our hours just got cut at work because of the Coronavirus and all this Coronavirus has left us mentally and emotionally frazzled? My guess is it is all too easy to think that if God really loved us, why would he let this happen to us?

Paul's words from 2 Corinthians 12 tell us quite a bit about how to look at God and the troubles in our lives. Paul had a huge problem. He called it a “thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan.” This was not a small problem. Paul pleaded with God three times to take away his “thorn in the flesh.” What did God do?

God didn't take away the “thorn in his flesh.” Does this mean that God didn't love Paul? No! Listen to what God had Paul write for us about troubles and weaknesses? **“My grace is sufficient for you, because my power is made perfect in weakness.”** God used his grace and his strength to help Paul deal with his “thorn in the flesh.” In other words, Paul was stronger during his weakness, because he put his full trust in God. Instead of removing his problem, God strengthened Paul. That is why he could write, **“Therefore I will be glad to boast all the more in my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may shelter me.”**

In fact Paul took it further as he writes, **“That is why I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties, for the sake of Christ. For whenever I am weak, then am I strong.”** Did you catch that? He said I **“delight in weakness.”** This didn't mean that Paul ran out of his way to find troubles, but he knew when he was in troubles and hardships, God was still in control and was his strength and hope.

The same is true for us. God loves us – even during this pandemic. How do we know? Look at the manger where his Son humbly laid. The Father's love is so strong that he sent his Son for us. Look at the cross. Jesus loved us with such love that he died in our place for all the foolish, sinful things we've thought and done. Look at Jesus' empty tomb. God declared us not guilty by the power of Jesus' resurrection.

Whenever we wonder, “If God really loves us” be assured that he does. In eternity, he planned for our eternity. In his grace and wisdom, the Father gave his Son and his Son gave his life for us. God's grace powerfully forgives our sins and gives us an eternal home in heaven with no troubles. God's grace makes us strong in the face of whatever troubles this sinful world has to offer. It is true what Paul writes about our outlook on troubles: **“My grace is sufficient for you, because my power is made perfect in weakness.”**

*Pastor Mark Gartner*

Pastor Gartner

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**BAPTISMS** Sierra Jo Holtz, daughter of Kyle and Abbey (Schultz) Holtz born March 23, 2020 will be baptized May 3, 2020 at St. John.

Mackenzie Lee Holtz, daughter of Steven and Kaci (Moeller) Holtz born April 17, 2020 will be baptized in May at St. John.

In baptism the Holy Spirit works faith in Jesus Christ. Through faith in Jesus Christ, Sierra and Mackenzie receive the forgiveness of sins, life and salvation. ***“Be baptized and wash away your sins.”*** Acts 22:16

**BIBLE CLASSES:** Pastor Frey is meeting by video on Monday nights at 6:30 to study the books of Nehemiah and Esther. If you are interesting in joining this Bible study, please email Pastor Frey at: [pastor.frey@stjohn-appleton.org](mailto:pastor.frey@stjohn-appleton.org) He also records this class and is sending it out to those who are interested in this format.

Pastor Gartner has started again on Thursday at 6:30pm his study on “The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel.” This is in a video format like Pastor Frey’s class. If you are interesting in joining this Bible study, please email Pastor Gartner at: [pastor.gartner@stjohn-appleton.org](mailto:pastor.gartner@stjohn-appleton.org) He will also record this class and will send it out to those who are interested in this format.

**QUARTERLY VOTERS MEETING:** Our regularly scheduled Voters meeting for April 28 has been postponed indefinitely. Hopefully we’ll be able to meet together in June for worship and other things like our voters’ meeting!

**CONFIRMATION:** Similar to our Voters’ meeting the examination of our confirmands (scheduled for April 26) and their confirmation (May 3) has been indefinitely postponed. We plan to have our examination/confirmation whenever we are able to join together.

**THE ANNUAL LWMS CONVENTION:** LWMS has decided to not hold an in-person convention this year; instead everything will be streamed on-line. Look for more information next month. However, elections need to be made on a congregational and circuit level. If you are involved with LWMS, Kathy Schabo will be contacting you. If you are interested at all in this, please contact her at 920-427-2768 or [kathyschabo@gmail.com](mailto:kathyschabo@gmail.com). Try to do this by May 17<sup>th</sup>.

**WORSHIP SERVICES:** By now most of you have been able to find our worship services online, but we will include the notes below for those who might still need some assistance.

- **Important Note:** It has come to our attention that some people are having trouble with the sound or volume on their phones or tablets and even some laptops. It seems to happen more with older devices. Here are a couple of remedies that we have found to help. 1) Try listening with your headphones. 2) Try using a laptop or smart TV instead of a phone or tablet. 3) Go to our "Growing in God's Word" Tab on our Webpage and you will find "Sermons". Under this "Sermons " heading you will find an audio of the sermons for each week. This audio should work fine on all devices. We are now including an audio of the whole service found under "Sermons" which should work on all devices. We are working to correct this problem, but it will take some time.
- You can find our worship services at: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCCsQs-LDzIHE1NTjOaVaQ2A>.
- You can find a bulletin for each Worship Service so you can follow along here: [https://stjohncenter-my.sharepoint.com/:f/g/person/pastor\\_frey\\_stjohn-appleton.org/EqetvOMWflhLsfsLRcDkxSgBL2cnYkpIuk8Klh7d-r\\_XQg?e=07dSma](https://stjohncenter-my.sharepoint.com/:f/g/person/pastor_frey_stjohn-appleton.org/EqetvOMWflhLsfsLRcDkxSgBL2cnYkpIuk8Klh7d-r_XQg?e=07dSma).

Another easy way to access our worship services is to go to our homepage on our website: [www.stjohn-appleton.org](http://www.stjohn-appleton.org) There you can do one of several things to find our services:

1. Scroll down to find the youtube link labeled “Now Live Streaming” – this will take you directly to our youtube page where you can find and watch all our services.
2. On the top of our page under, “Grow in God’s Word” click on “Sermons” this will take you to a page that has the video for each service, an audio only version of the sermon, and a written version of the sermon.
3. Also, under “Grow in God’s Word” click on “Weekly Bulletin” and this will take you to a page where you can access and/or print a PDF copy of each bulletin. This link can also be found in the description under each of our videos on youtube.

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### SPIRITUAL RESOURCES FOR YOU TO USE

- Forward in Christ -- Free digital editions for April: <https://online.nph.net/fic-free-issue-form> There are many articles and Bible Studies to help us through these difficult times.

**WE ARE HERE TO HELP:** We want you to know that we are here to help you through any troubles you might be facing. Please do not be afraid to call any of the Pastors or the Church Office with any of your questions. We will do our best to be of assistance. We ask for your prayers and patience as we go through these uncertain times.

Please also keep an eye on each other. Stay in contact with those who are elderly or living by themselves or those who may be going through medical issues. If you happen to run into some financial hardships or know someone who may need some financial help, please don't hesitate to call one of the Pastors and we will seek to provide some sort of financial assistance.

**WELS APPLE VALLEY FOOD PANTRY:** The pantry is planning to have its May collection. Items needed include cereal, plain rice (1 lb. bags and Minute Rice), jam, canned fruit, tomato and chicken noodle soups, chunky soups, beef stews, canned pastas, body washes (adults), paper toweling, hamburger helper, canned tomato products, cake/brownie mixes, all side dishes (potato, rice and pasta) and canned meats (SPAM, chicken, tuna). Because the pantry is having a difficult time purchasing in bulk, every donation above is greatly appreciated. Please drop donations off at church by **Friday, May 1**. Thank you for supporting the food pantry.

**FVL NEWS:** HOST FAMILIES still needed for FVL's International Program next fall. Despite the current health concerns, FVL's International program continues to offer the opportunity to share the Gospel with students from around the world. Applications are being received, and we have a great need to find housing for at least six more male students. International Coordinator Monica Uhlenbrauck stays updated with all the latest travel and health advisories to keep both our host families and students safe. If you are interested in helping share the Gospel with international teens in this way, contact Monica at [muhnlenbrauck@fvlhs.org](mailto:muhnlenbrauck@fvlhs.org). A stipend of up to \$6500 is offered to host families to offset possible costs.

### GIFTS TO OUR LORD DURING MARCH

		Expenses
General Fund	\$35,520.00	\$27,078.00
General Fund YTD	\$107,451.00	\$104,566.00
Building Fund	\$960.00	
Land Development Fund	\$250.00	
Missions (WELS)	\$1,277.50	
Christian Family Solutions	\$370.00	
Institutional Ministry	\$300.00	
FVLHS Operational	\$280.00	
FVLHS Let the Children Come	\$465.00	

***"On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income."***  
**1 Corinthians 16:2**

### OUR ATTENDANCE IN OUR LORD'S HOUSE DURING MARCH

Average attendance: 301

8:00 am – 148 10:30 am – 108 Monday evening – 44

Midweek Lent 3 165

Midweek Lent 1-3 Average: 202 Early: 60 Late: 142

***I rejoiced with those who said to me, "Let us go into the house of the Lord."***

**NEW OPTION FOR GIVING YOUR OFFERING** VANCO, the company we use for online giving through our website, now offers an app that allows you to give directly to St. John through your smart phone, VANCO Give Plus. Simply download the app, login/create a username, and then find St. John. This app will allow you to give to whatever fund you so desire, as well as set a one-time offering, or a recurring offering with a specific frequency. For more information, contact Tim Springstroh or one of the pastors. Below are the links for the app.

Google Play:

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.vanco.gpm>



Apple App Store:

<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/give/id1120840616>

