

SAGACITY

NEWSLETTER OF S.A.G.E.S.

SAINTS ALIVE, GROWING, EVER SERVING



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Downloadable information about S.A.G.E.S. and the GATHERING is available at www.mnsdistrict.org under "Get Involved" tab, S.A.G.E.S.

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SAGACITY, n. [OF, fro, Latin *sapiens*, fr, *sapere* to be wise]

Quality of being sagacious; keenness of discernment or judgment.

SAGE, n. [OF, fr. *sage*, fr. L *sapers* to be wise]

A profoundly wise man; a person of high repute for wisdom; often someone who is venerated for the store of wisdom that has been accumulated during a long life.

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Joy is not just a word to use, but rather it is an attitude to share and celebrate because it is a gift from the Lord Himself! Check these suggestions out as we go forth in joy:

1. Take a ride through the scriptures and read, shout, or whisper "hooray" at all the times the Lord is proclaiming to us that we really do have Joy to share in our ministries.
2. Be intentional about putting young people and older people, including ourselves, in "ministry range" of each other. We miss so much of the joy when we do not use the gifts of having older people share their stories and experiences with younger people. As a friend once shared, "Every time an older person dies, another library burns to the ground."
3. Watch for ways that people "suck the joy" out of our ministry. Do not ignore these situations but do not dwell on them either. I asked a number of church workers to tell me what brought both joys and sorrows to them, and most of them referred to those few negative voices around them that disable and deplete their energies. We cannot control how other people act, but we can work at exercising self-control in terms of how we respond.
4. Help to encourage people of all ages to "celebrate God's gift of aging". Joy is not being shared when the generations continue to have negative perceptions of people younger and older than themselves. Use positive examples of both the young and the old. If we want to make fun of an age group, my rule is simply, "Only make fun of the age group that you are a member of yourself!" So I can be joyful and laugh at myself when I state that the first word my grandkids heard from me was, "Huh?"
5. Remember the Japanese saying which is on the entrance to the Hospice Center in Wheat Ridge, Colorado, which states, "The rising sun is no less beautiful than the setting sun!" Joy in Ministry is all about celebrating God's gift of aging, and we can be certain that the one thing we all are doing together each day is growing older, in the Lord! And by the way, the Lord must really like older people, because He sure is making more of us!"

Let us continue to travel together as Joyful Lutherans, along with the rest of the Joyful bands of believers! Continue to sing and shout together, "Joyful, Joyful, we adore thee". Continue to "Lighten up", laugh at ourselves, and help others do the same. We are called to be "joy-fillers". A "joy-filler" helps people to be "joy-filled"! If you have joy in your heart, why not tell your face about it? And by the way, Joy is contagious – let's all pray for an epidemic!

Dr. Rich Bimler

It is with great joy to announce that Rev. Dean Nadasdy will be the featured presenter at the SAGES GATHERING, May 6/7, 2024.

PSALM 23 - BIBLE STUDY

Insights from the book *A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23*
by Phillip Keller

OPENING THOUGHTS:

- Why is Psalm 23 one of the more well-known selections in the Bible?
 - What is it about the psalm that makes it so well-loved by so many people?
- v.1. **The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want;**
- a. Why don't we always acknowledge the Lordship of our Good Shepherd?
 - b. Under God's care, we are well-fed, safe, and flourishing. Does it mean we will never "want?"
- v. 2. **He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters.**
- a. Sheep are restless and cannot thrive unless they "lie down in green pastures" and find "still waters." Only the shepherd knew how to provide this. See Philippians 4:11-13. How did St. Paul find rest?
- v. 3. **He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake.**
- a. When a sheep was cast down, lying on its back, it could not get up without the shepherd "restoring" it (getting it back on its feet). Psalm 42:11 gives us a great insight into these words. What does God do to "restore" us when we are cast down?
 - b. Sheep are creatures of habit and often follow the same path resulting in ruts, eventually making a wasteland due to overgrazing. What are some of the ruts (habits) of our life that lead to wastelands.?
- v. 4. **Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me. Your rod and Your staff they comfort me.**
- a. The shepherd often led sheep UP a mountain to higher ground. But every hill has its valleys. It is called the "valley of death" for so many reasons: the dangers of predators, sudden floods, and dangerous cliffs on the way up. They need the shepherd's leadership. He knows the way. He has walked it many times.
 - b. Notice: Walk THROUGH the valley, not die in it! How is this true for Christians?
 - c. We fear no evil, because we are never without the Savior. What did Jesus promise His disciples before He ascended to heaven? See Matthew 28:20.
 - d. The shepherd used the rod and staff for defense (rod/club) and rescue (staff). How does the Word of God provide this for us? (Think of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness.)
- v. 5. **You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil my cup overflows.**
- a. The word table is actually "mesa", a highland plateau where good pasture could be found. But the shepherd had to "prepare"

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it by going ahead of the sheep to remove “enemies” of the sheep. How is this an image of what Christ did for us at Calvary?

- b. For sheep, flies or insects were so distracting that sheep would stop eating and drinking. The only antidote was an olive oil, linseed oil, and sulphur medicine rubbed (anointed) on their heads. When we are “bugged” by large and small annoyances of life, we can be in danger, also. How might annoyances be dangerous to our life of faith? What is the “oil” that God provides for anointing us?
 - c. In the ancient world, if a host welcomed you to his house and kept your glass full (of wine), it meant you were welcome to stay. How do we know that this is what God wants for us? See John 10:10.
- v. 6. **Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.**
- a. Goodness and mercy are like God’s two sheepdogs that pursue the flock to guard it. “SURELY” this will happen. Why do we need to hear this assurance every day?
 - b. Max Lucado, a Christian author, comments on these words: “God never said that the journey would be easy; but he did say that the arrival would be worthwhile. He’s the Father of forward motion. Trust Him. He will get you home. And the trials of this trip will be lost in the joys of the feast.”

FOR REFLECTION:

- If there is one thought from this psalm that stands above all the rest for you personally, what is it?
- Sheep and shepherds were a common sight 2,600 years ago. It related to everyday life. We are not a culture of sheep and shepherds, so how can this psalm be applied in today’s culture?

Rev. Francis Lieb
Blue Springs, Missouri
(With permission)

UNDER OBSERVATION

Entry one: A great part of summer depends on how June begins and eureka! It has begun warm and sunny.



Entry two: My life has returned to revolving around the dentist. Only this time new front teeth are a refreshing change to the usual grind and anguish. My smile now includes a full set of teeth to surprise and astonish any soul who comes into my vicinity.

Entry three: The summer season began mid-June with an ice cream social with large portions, big choices, and cheerful folk. We seem to be recovering from the COVID “hide and avoid” attitude that was encouraged. We’ve learned to live differently--good or bad remains to be seen.

Entry four: Oh, yes, it is summer, my goodness, yes. The bird bath is standing room only. It takes an hour for all the water to be splashed away – and loud chirping till I fill it again. It became so crowded that the sparrows settled for dirt baths in the loose

garden soil. – with a whole lot of wiggling going on.

Entry five: Just sitting the living room when there was loud tapping on the window and the roof. Through that north window I saw a wall of ice balls coming at the house steadily as loud as a truck coming through. The storm lasted about 20 minutes and was gone. The ground was covered with hail stones, just like a white snowstorm, 18 inches deep by the back door and remained till next morning. All the window screens were shredded on the north side but bless steel siding!

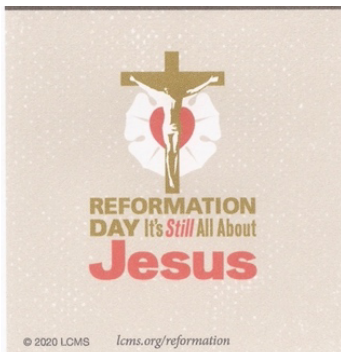
Entry six: The county fair came and went as usual but 3 days working in 90++ weather was just a bit much for me. Didn’t seem to faze anyone else so the fair as an institution survived and flourished.

Entry seven: We had a remarkable collection again for the Orphan Grain Train. From bedding on up we gathered enough for 46 boxes of materials that could still serve a good purpose. The real pleasure of the process was two young boys who came with their grandmother to help and ended up becoming the packing managers. What a joy!

Entry eight: Showing people around our Fire Hall remade into a historical museum can be a lot of fun. And now people coming to trace family stories using our information and the expertise of our self-made historians. It's a good scene.

Entry nine: I was quite mistaken back on Entry One as to the length and depth of the heat that came this summer. Forgive me. It was hot.

Entry ten: Good to have fall activities start. Across the street from a parochial school is a great vantage point for keeping alert and being entertained. There's the school bus parade twice a day, recess sounds of glee, games to watch and end of classes family reunions with mostly cheerful parents.



Sola Scriptura.

Sola Gratia.

Sola Fide.

Solus Christus.

Ironic, isn't it? A movement that resulted in the liturgy and the Bible in our language (not Latin) is remembered by

Latin phrases. By Scripture alone, by grace alone, by faith alone. Through Christ alone. Alone. Without your help. Without human tradition. Without anyone's assistance. God acts alone through Jesus. Scripture. Given by God. Through which we receive Christ. Grace. Given by God. Through which we receive Christ. Faith. Given by God. Through which we receive Christ. Through Christ alone. God gives us all these gifts because of Jesus' death and resurrection. All good gifts come from God and benefit all those who believe. Through Christ alone.

(The above adapted from LCMS Website at resources.LCMS.org)

Prayer also from LCMS website: For growth and joy in life Heavenly Father, of Your goodness You created us and sent Your Son that we may again have life and have it abundantly. Through Christ's cross and by virtue of His resurrection, our lives do not rush inevitably into death, but we pass from death to life. Mindful of this joyful path that lies before us into eternal life, lead us to delight in Your creation and in every wholesome enrichment for bodily life free from fear of what tomorrow may bring. Grant that we daily grow, learn and enjoy the

creation You have made and redeemed, which soon You will restore when Christ comes in His glory; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

What do you see? Take a look at this line of type:

GODISNOWHERE

Did you read it as "God is nowhere"? Or are you an optimist who read it as "God is now here"

BON VERBIAGE/John Addington

As a modern Minnesotan who likes to keep words in the right order, I am increasingly annoyed that our pioneer geographers strewed words over the map in such a disorderly manner.

I mean, doesn't it seem logical that they should have put Becker in Becker County and Clearwater in Clearwater County? Well, think again. Clearwater is in Wright County, half a state away, from Clearwater County, and Becker is half a state away from Becker County, in Sherburne County.

But is Sherburn in Sherburne County? Certainly not, Sherburn is far away in Martin County. Sherburn, however, is near Blue Earth, which is not in Blue Earth County but in Faribault County.

Ah, yes, Faribault County, you say. Home of the city of Faribault, famous for peonies, blankets and Episcopalian schools. Sorry, wrong again, Faribault is in Rice County. And don't interrupt me to tell about your visit to Rice. That's in Benton County.

You'd think that somebody would have had the kindness to put something Brown in Brown County, but instead they put Browns Valley in Traverse County, Brownton in McLeod County and Brownsdale in Mower County. Whoever named Cook came close. They put it in St. Louis County, which isn't too far from Cook County. Cotton isn't far from Cook, but it's plenty far from Cottonwood County. Cottonwood isn't even very close to Cottonwood County. And St. Louis Park is 150 miles from St. Louis County, and Marshall is a long way from Marshall County, and Pine Island is a fur piece from Pine County, and . . .

But repining at this late date is a waste of time. The damage was done because they let people draw maps before anyone had ridden over the ground to determine where the towns should be. I guess you could say they put the cartographer before the horse.





ADDRESS BOOK PRAYERS

By Bob Sitze (with permission)

I've always liked the idea of praying without ceasing. But this ideal can be different from the reality. Sometimes it can be difficult for me to maintain focus or direction. Thoughts don't always come easily. That's when I try to pray without getting stuck—to pray without seizing. An experience with one of my address books has helped me find a new way to explore this prayer practice.

Recently I was searching through my cellphone contacts list—a kind of address book—for information about a specific person. I realized that the list also included many of the people I've known over the years. Colleagues, relatives, neighbors, service providers, new friends. Dear ones with whom I haven't been in contact for years. As I scrolled through their names, memories of positive experiences called to mind the stories and cherished relationships that have shaped much of my life.

I found my thoughts about these people trending toward prayerful matters. Concerns for their well-being, curiosity about their lives and gratitude for these good folks. It occurred to me that these contacts could become a kind of prayer list. That this address book would invite the pleasant discipline of forming prayers of thanks for the people with whose lives I have been intertwined.

This practice is familiar to pastors and teachers. Some of them include in their prayer lives the deliberate task of praying for each member of their congregation or class over time. This ritual helps them hold members or students dear to their hearts.

This person-centered praying could be a good spiritual discipline for me, too. These people are reasons for gratitude! Perhaps I'll start now, with Thanksgiving Day as a reminder and motivation. And would this work for you? If so, our address book(s) will help us pray without ceasing....



LOST WORDS AND EXPRESSIONS

Heavens to Mergatroyd!

The other day a not so elderly (I say 75) lady said something to her son about driving a Jalopy; and he looked at her and said, "What the heck is a Jalopy?" He had never heard of the word jalopy! She knew she was old--but not that old.

Well, I hope you are Hunky Dory when you read this and chuckle.

About a month ago, I illuminated some old expressions that have become obsolete because of the inexorable march of technology.

These phrases included: Don't touch that dial; Carbon copy; You sound like a broken record; and Hung out to dry.

Back in the olden days we had a lot of moxie We'd put on our best bib and tucker, to straighten up and fly right.

Heavens to Betsy! Gee whillikers!
Jumping Jehoshaphat! Holy Moley!

We were in like Flynn and living the life of Riley; and even a regular guy couldn't accuse us of being a knucklehead, a nincompoop. or a pill. Not for all the tea in China!

Back in the olden days, life used to be swell. But when's the last time anything was swell? Swell has gone the way of beehives, pageboys, and the D.A.; of spats, knickers, fedoras, poodle skirts, saddle shoes and pedal pushers.

Oh, my aching back! Kiilroy was here, but he isn't anymore. We wake up from what surely has been just a short nap, and before we can say, "Well, I'll be a monkey's uncle!" or "This is a fine kettle of fish!"

We discover that the words we grew up with, the words that seemed omnipresent, as oxygen, have vanished with scarcely a notice from our tongues and our pens and our keyboards.

Poof, go the words of our youth. Where have all those great phrases gone? Long gone: Pshaw, The milkman did it. Hey! It's your nickel. Don't forget to pull the chain. Knee high to a grasshopper.

Well, Fiddlesticks! Going like sixty. I'll see you in the funny papers. Don't take any wooden nickels. Wake up and smell the roses. It turns out there are more of these lost words and expressions than Carter has liver pills. This can be disturbing stuff! (Carter's Little Liver Pills are gone too!)

Leaves us to wonder where Superman will find a phone booth.

See ya later, alligator! After a while crocodile. Oki-Doki, artichoke.

Join the Team—Still looking for circuit representative volunteers in circuits 23 and 24.

Also looking for anyone interested in helping with publications. Interested volunteers can contact: minnesotasouthsages@gmail.com.

They Walk Among Us!

(from a Facebook post)

I was at the checkout of a local Walmart. The cashier rang up \$46.64 charges. I gave her a fifty dollar bill. She gave me back \$46.64. I gave the money back to her and told her that she had made a mistake in MY favor. She became indignant and informed me she was educated and knew what she was doing, and she returned the money again.

I gave her the money back -- same scenario!
I departed the store with the \$46.64.

They Walk Among Us!

I walked into a Starbucks with a buy-one-get-one-free coupon for a Grande Latte. I handed it to the girl and she looked over at a little chalkboard that said 'buy one-get one free.'

"They're already buy-one- get-one-free," she said, "so I guess they're both free."

She handed me my free lattes, and I walked out the door.

They Walk Among Us!

My sister has a lifesaving tool in her car designed to cut through a seat belt if she gets trapped. She keeps it in the trunk.

They Walk Among Us!

One day I was walking down the beach with some friends, when one of them shouted, "Look at that dead bird!"

Someone looked up at the sky and asked, "Where?"

They Walk Among Us!

While looking at a house, my brother asked the real estate agent which direction was north because, he explained, he didn't want the sun waking him up every morning.

She asked, "Does the sun rise in the north?"

When my brother explained that the sun rises in the East, and it has for some time; she shook her head and said, "Oh I don't keep up with all that stuff."

They Walk Among Us!!

I used to work in technical support for a 24/7 call center. One day I got a call from an individual who asked what hours the call center was open. I told him, "The number you dialed is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week."

He responded, "Is that Eastern or Pacific time?"

Wanting to end the call quickly, I said, "Uh, Pacific."

They Walk Among Us!

My friends and I went out to buy beer and noticed that the cases were discounted 10%. Since it was a big party, we bought two cases.

The cashier multiplied two times 10% and gave us a 20% discount.

They Walk Among Us!

I couldn't find my luggage at the airport baggage area, so I went to the lost luggage office and told the woman there that my bags never showed up. She smiled and told me not to worry because she was a trained professional, and I was in good hands.

"Now," she asked me, "has your plane arrived yet?"

So I replied, "No Ma'am, The Pilot told us we're circling the airport, 3rd in line to land"

They Walk Among Us!

While working at a pizza place, I observed a man ordering a small pizza to go.

He appeared to be alone, and the cook asked him if he would like it cut into four pieces or six.

He thought about it for some time before responding, "Just cut it into four pieces. I don't think I'm hungry enough to eat six pieces."

Yep, they walk among us.... bless their hearts



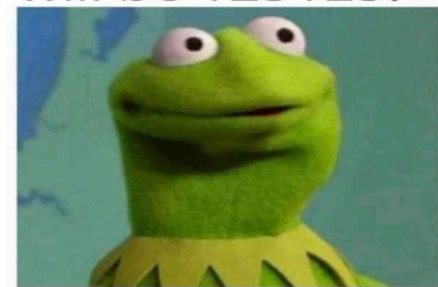
A blonde goes to the post office to buy

stamps for her Christmas cards. She says to the clerk, "May I have 50 Christmas stamps?"

The clerk says, "What denomination?"

The blonde says, "God help us. Has it come to this? Give me 6 Catholic, 12 Presbyterian, 10 Lutheran and 22 Baptist."

Just realized the
last day of 2023
will be 123123.





Sleep 101: What Happens When We Sleep?

In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for you, O lord, make me dwell in safety.

Psalm 4:8.

Sleep is closely connected to mental and emotional health, with links to depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder and other conditions. Getting enough sleep reduces stress, improves our mood and allows us to think more clearly and do better.

While seven hours of sleep per night is the general recommendation for adults, it's also important for that time to be **Quality** sleep. As an important contributor to nearly all the systems of the body, a full, **quality** night's sleep involves several cycles of set stages that each serves a purpose for our body, brain and spirit.

In **Stage 1, or Non-REM 1**, you've just dozed off and started transitioning to **Stage 2**, which involves further slowing of activity in the brain and body. It's much easier to be awoken during these early stages of the sleep cycle.

Stage 3 is the deepest part of non-REM sleep. In this stage, your muscles and body relax even more, and brain waves show a clear pattern of slowed activity that is markedly different from when the body is fully awake.

Stage 4 is the only stage of **REM (Rapid Eye Movement)** sleep. During this time, brain activity picks up significantly, and most of the body—except the eyes and breathing muscles—experience temporary paralysis. Although dreams can happen during any stage, the most intense dreaming takes place during **REM** sleep. This stage is believed to be essential for the brain, enabling key cognitive functions, like memory and ability to learn. As the night goes on, it's normal to spend a greater percentage of time in **REM** sleep with most of it occurring in the second half of the night.

Sleepers who awaken during earlier stages, such as people with **Sleep Apnea**, may struggle to properly cycle into these deeper sleep stages. People with **insomnia** may not get enough total sleep to accumulate the needed time in each stage.

Benefits of power napping. There is a lot of discussion when the topic is napping. There are right ways to provide a quick rest that result in a productive day. The recommendation by The Sleep Foundation is to limit the time to 20 to 30 minutes.

Some tips for limiting your naptime to have the best results are :

- Set an alarm
- Find a comfortable nap space
- Turn off the lights or close the blinds
- Allow yourself to truly rest—don't use your phone or think about work.

<https://www.sleepfoundation.org/stages-of-sleep>
Wellness champions, Concordia Plans

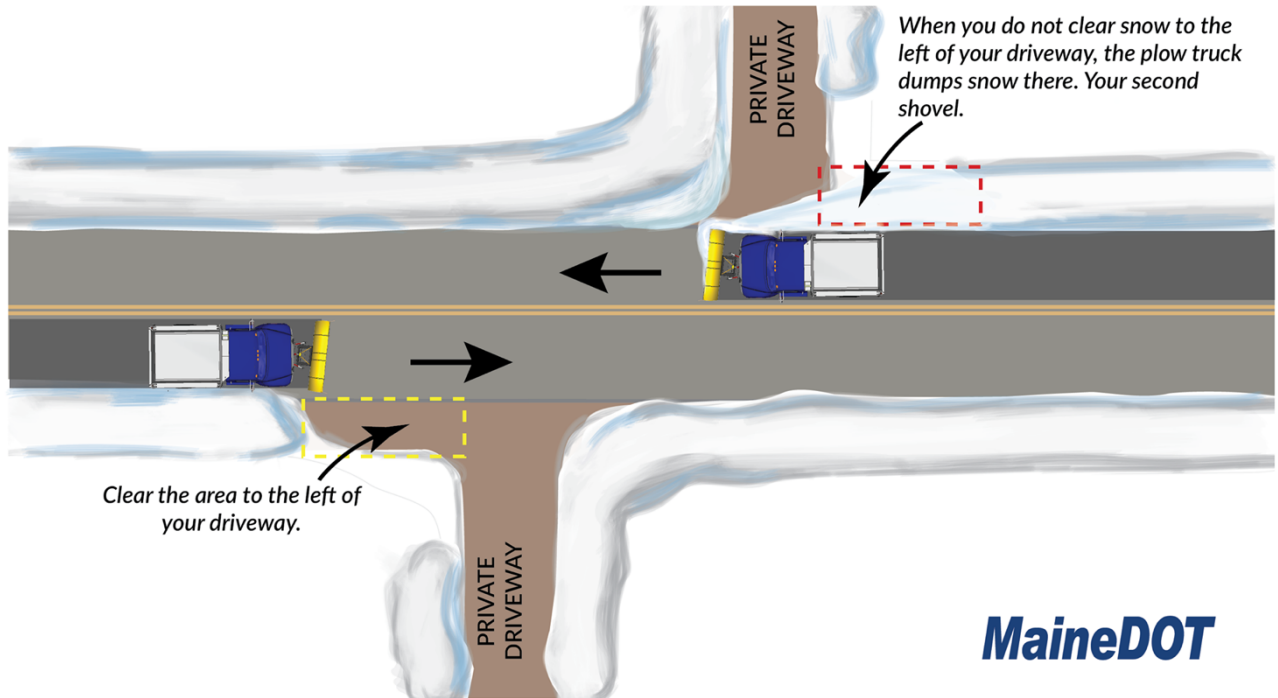


Food for Thought

Certain foods can help with depression. For example, bananas can help enhance your mood because they help with the production of serotonin – a chemical needed for nerve cells and for the brain to function. Similarly, oatmeal, eggs, chicken, and peanuts can calm the brain and improve mood and sleep.



How to Prevent the "Second Shovel"!



Source: Healthline

Since this is the last issue of SAGACITY for this year . . .

