

ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH MESSENGER

CALLED TO WORSHIP / COMMITTED TO SERVE / CONNECTED IN FAITH

April 2022

A monthly Publication of
St. John Lutheran Church

Worship Schedule

Saturday night
worship at 6:00 p.m.
In Gathering Area

Sunday Worship 8:00 a.m.
In Person Worship or Watch
Live on Facebook

9:15 a.m. Worship Service

9:15 a.m. Sunday School

Pastor

Pastor Mark Johnson

Office Staff

Rae Fimon
Audrey Zellman

Treasurer

Robin Fink

Custodians

Curt & Cheryl Johnson

Organist

Eileen Hanlon

Accompanist

Sheila Schmidt

148 S. Chestnut St.
Belle Plaine, MN 56011

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Lenten Service
Wednesday Evening
April 6, 2022
6:30 p.m.

Soup and Sandwich Supper Menu Starting at 5:30pm April 6
Soups: Cooks Choice Sandwiches: Cooks Choice Confirmation Group Serving: Ann Carstens/ Alex & Angie Hoff
For unlimited soup, sandwiches, fixings, desserts and drinks we suggest a donation of \$12/person, \$6 for children under 10.



Holy Week and Easter Services



Come Worship With Us!

Palm Sunday April 10 Services at 8:00 & 9:15	Maundy Thursday April 14 Service at 7:00 pm	Good Friday April 15 Service at 7:00 pm	Easter Sunday April 17 Services at 7:00 & 9:30
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Easter Breakfast



Join us for Easter Breakfast
served by the youth.
Starting at 8:00

From Pastor Mark

For some reason, my brother had three barrels of books that he hauled around from place to place as he moved. Big barrels. Full of books. He never really read them but he couldn't seem to get rid of them either. I don't know how many backs he broke helping him move those things. Then, in the Spring of 1997, he and his family were living in East Grand Forks and getting ready to move to Parshall, North Dakota. In the interim, the Red River flooded and four feet of water entered their apartment. Among some things they lost were those three barrels of books. That was actually a blessing. The flood delivered him from having to drag those things around with him everywhere he went.

The older I get, the more I think of life as a journey with different stages. When we're young, we are in the process of discovering who we are, what interests and passions we have, what we want to do for work, who we might marry, how we will make a home, what it means to be a parent, what goals we might aspire toward, etc. In this developing stage of life we are naturally acquisitive and adding things to our life, taking on new responsibilities, acquiring and managing the means to make our way. This is a good and natural part of life's process.

Along the way, we probably pick up and carry with us more than we need. At some point, it makes sense to look at what we can let go. Some of these things are on the outside, like those barrels of books. Some of these things are on the inside, habits and attitudes and priorities. What made sense holding and keeping at one stage of life may not make sense later on. There is a certain wisdom in acknowledging what we really need, what is enough, and letting go of the things that needlessly weigh us down. This makes sense. We need to exhale so we can inhale. We need to empty a cup of something bitter to fill it with something sweet. We need to lay some things down to make room for other things more needful.

This is a personal process. What are those things that, as you look at your life, make sense to lay down and leave behind so that you can move forward lighter and more freely? Are there old bitternesses you are hanging onto? Is there some anxiety that continues to gnaw away? Is there an unhealthy relationship that weighs upon you? What stuff is in the back of your closet, both physically and mentally and spiritually, that takes up needless space? Ask yourself, "Do I really need to keep this? Or should I let this go?"

One hard won lesson I have wrestled with learning is where the fence line is between what I can do and what I can't, particularly as it comes to other people's lives. I have wanted other people to do things or make changes and learned that, unless they want to do it for themselves, no amount of my concern and anxiety makes any difference. In fact, it can be counter productive. One of my seminary professors said, "There is only one Messiah. And you're not it."

This is why I keep coming back to the wisdom of the Serenity Prayer. There is so much wisdom packed into such few words: "God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change," - (a whole lot of things fall into this category) - "Courage to change the things I can" - (basically involving myself) - "And the wisdom to know the difference." This is the tricky part. Where is the fence line? What is and should be on my plate, and what shouldn't? What should I own and what should I let go of? What needs to be given over to God? (And probably repeatedly, because I will tend to turn right around and pick it up again).

Linus, from the cartoon "Peanuts," had to carry around his security blanket with him wherever he went. In some sense, the stuff we carry around can serve the same purpose, providing some function of security even if it no longer makes any sense (think three barrels of books). As we dig through our closets or root around out in the garage we think, "But I might need this." Really? Will you really need this? And if not, why are you hanging on to it? At a certain place on our journey, it makes sense to lean toward the process of letting go, pairing down, lightening the load. If we don't do it, someone else will do it for us. We won't be taking any of it with us. As Job says in the Bible, "Naked I came into this world, and naked I will leave it." I'm speaking here of physical things. We should also include our mental and spiritual closets. What things are we holding onto that no longer give us life? What can we give over to the Lord and leave behind? How can we be freed up to become more open to the Lord's will in our lives?

The letting go we practice can prepare us for the final letting go. It can be a scary thought, feeling like the trapeze artist getting rid of the security net. But when we let go, when we fall, what do we fall into? We fall into the good and loving hands of God. God is there. God will catch us. God is not going to miss us or drop us. God will hold on to us and bring us to our final home.

In the end, the only thing we can really possess at all is our relationship with this life giving God. And that's a good thing. God will not leave us or forsake us. That's the gospel truth. You can cash that check and count on it.

Unapproved St. John Lutheran Church Council Minutes March 17, 2022

President Ben Aust called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

Present:

X	Pastor Mark	X	Ben Aust	X	Chris Schultz	X	Albert Koepp
X	Matt Stier	X	Wendy Theis	X	Jen Nagorski	X	Steve Kelm
X	Robin Fink	X	Jan Effinger	X	Teresa Latzke	X	Tim Moonen
X	Curt Johnson		Anne Herrmann				

Opening Devotions:

Pastor Mark opened the meeting with a prayer.

Approval of Minutes:

Members of Council reviewed the minutes from February 17, 2022 Council Meeting. Motion was made, seconded and carried to approve the meeting minutes from February. A motion was made, seconded and carried to approve the agenda for March 17, 2022.

Pastor Mark's Report

Our Midweek Lenten Scheduled commenced on Ash Wednesday, March 2, with a Soup and Sandwich Supper in the Gathering Area at 5:30 p.m. followed by a Worship Service in the Sanctuary at 6:30 p.m. Due to the pandemic situation we have been living through I was unsure what to expect on Ash Wednesday and was pleasantly surprised to see a full house. It was really wonderful to be back together for a time of food and fellowship and worship and I know that many members of the congregation really cherish these Wednesday evenings together, as well. Many thanks to our Confirmation students, families and leaders for hosting our meal time.

And also, much thanks to our musicians and cantors for our Holden Evening Prayer Service and to our speakers who will be sharing with us on our theme, "What Does Being A Christian Mean To Me?" I'm looking forward to the rest of our Wednesdays that will be leading us into Holy Week.

Registration is being finalized at Camp Onomia for our seventh graders to attend Confirmation Camp this Summer on the week of June 12-17. Camp is a unique "plunge" experience of going for a week of learning and sharing and fun activities together in God's great outdoors. Because Camp is such a unique experience, it has always been a required part of our Confirmation program following the seventh grade year and, as such, St. John will once again provide a substantial subsidy for our campers to have this unique experience. Follow up with this group will happen as we get closer to June.

I met with our Children's Team regarding Vacation Bible School and, after discussion among themselves, they have decided to have Day Camp, hosted by counselors from Camp Onomia, on the week of June 20-23 (counselors arrive in town the day before). Registration is already taking place through the team online. They have also decided to promote the new opportunity of Vacation Bible School on the Farm that takes place later this Summer from August 1-5. This venture involves a collaboration between our Synod's local Spanish ministry, Cristo Obrero, at the host site of the Prairie Oaks Institute here in Belle Plaine. This will be a cross cultural learning and sharing experience.

It appears that we might finally be coming out of the pandemic we have been living through these past two years that has caused such disruptions in every way within our church and society. It has been challenging and I am grateful for the support of the congregation through this time. The live streaming and recording of our worship services has been necessary through this time. I believe we will continue to offer this. However, as we hopefully move into a new time now I think it is important to recognize that worship, in it's best sense, is not meant to be a commodity to be consumed by ourselves online but rather is meant to be experienced as part of a living community gathered together in the Lord's presence. I hope that we grow toward that goal of being together again and that our online worship will be used as an occasional backup option.

Regular weekly and monthly rhythms of parish life continue apace including times for preparation and facilitation for preaching, baptisms, weddings and funerals, visitation at homes and hospitals, staff and volunteer meetings, correspondences and coordination, etc. We are blessed with a busy and active parish.

Staff Reports:

Custodial:

Curt reported that there are nine furnaces between all the buildings. One furnace needs parts that have been on order and are expected to arrive in the June-July timeframe. Three of the furnaces need to be replaced. He is working on getting estimates for replacements.

Treasurer:

Robin walked through the monthly reports and answered questions from Council members.
Employer Retention Credit - tabled until funds are received.

Transfers:

Transfer In

By Affirmation of Faith:

Mark and Chandra Meierbachtol and Ira

Nate and Alicia Shutes and Henrik

From previous parishes:

Michael Cope

Don and Margaret Meierbachtol

Michael Meierbachtol

Rev. Marvin Mueller

Debbie Svikel Kruger

Out - none

Ongoing Business:

Strategic Planning was tabled at this time.

Foundation Loan Repayment was tabled at this time.

Volunteers (Back-ups)

Curt/Cheryl - Chris Schultz, Marv and Rhonda Doeden

Jan Effinger on powerpoint - still needed

Chris Zellman on video - Chris Schultz

A discussion was had on starting the following transitional items in September:

Communion

Readings with Readers

New Business:

Motion was made, seconded and carried to accept recommendations for salary adjustments for musical staff.

Rebranding the Building Fund Envelopes - tabled for additional discussion

The Building and Grounds Committee presented a proposal to Council.

List of Repairs - Wendy Theis will follow up with Kim Meierbachtol.

Easter Services and Breakfast

Services will be at 7:00 a.m. and 9:30 a.m.

Breakfast will be served at 8:00 a.m.

Ministry Team Updates:

Stewardship Committee - nothing new to report.

Buildings and Grounds Committee - presented proposal.

Personnel Committee - nothing new to report.

Children's Ministry Team - nothing new to report.

Small Group/Faith Formation Committee - nothing new to report.

Worship and Music Committee - Transitional items.

Technology and Communications Committee - nothing new to report.

Mortgage Burning Committee - looking for a chairperson

Motion was made, seconded, and carried to adjourn the meeting. Meeting was adjourned followed by the Lord's prayer.

Respectfully Submitted,

Anne Herrmann, Secretary

April Children's Ministry Update



It's hard to believe that it's already April and that there are only 4 weeks left of Sunday School. As we wrap up the 2021-2022 Sunday School year, the Children's Ministry Team would like to extend a few thank yous.

- Thank you, Rachel Kelm, for preparing and directing the Preschool - 4th grade children in music this year! It is truly a blessing to have children grace us with their gift of music as well as individuals who are willing to share their gift of music with the children and congregation.
- Thank you, teachers, for your time and talents you dedicated for the year to ensure children know God. St. John is blessed to have wonderful people work with our children to share their love of God in a variety of ways.
- Thank you, families, for supporting the Children's Ministry. We had many parents volunteer in the classrooms this year and it is a tremendous help for our teachers. If you enjoyed helping in your child's classroom this year, please consider volunteering as a teacher next year!
- Thank for your generosity! Unlike many other churches, St. John offers a Sunday School Program at NO CHARGE. We appreciate the weekly offerings that your children bring to their classroom. Just \$1 a week can help us to purchase art supplies for the entire year. If you are unable to donate \$1 a week for the Sunday School program, we also have a "giving tree" located downstairs. If you want to purchase an item from the giving tree, please remove that item from the wall and deliver it to your child's classroom. We will update the giving tree items, as needed, throughout the year.

Upcoming Events

Sunday, April 10th: **Palm Sunday:** Sunday School children will sing at the beginning of both 8:00 and 9:15 services. Children should be dropped off in the gathering area with their class at 7:50.

Sunday, April 17th: **Easter Sunday--NO SUNDAY SCHOOL**

Sunday, May 1st: **Last Day of Sunday School & End of Year Sunday School Program**

VBS REGISTRATION NOW OPEN!

Vacation Bible School (VBS) will be **June 20-23!** VBS schedule is as follows: Children in grades Kindergarten through 6th attend from 9am-3pm. They will need one snack and a sack lunch each day. **Please register your child in the same class they were in for the 2021-22 school year.** The cost of VBS is \$50/child for Kdg.-6th grade or a \$150 family cap. Scholarships are available. Registration is now open! Click the link below:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSejkUdHr9I5-uQcoWVehes6ZUWBWaMmF5Sf_0teqsgHDIU7mg/viewform

VBS ON THE FARM Information and Registration (August 1-5):

We are excited to announce a wonderful summer camp opportunity: VBS on the Farm!

VBS on the Farm is a partnership between Prairie Oaks Institute (POI) and Cristo Obrero. POI seeks to be a catalyst of rejuvenation for people and the planet, creating space for renewal and fostering education opportunities around environmental sustainability. Cristo Obrero is a mission of the ELCA, accompanying Latino families with support, and building relationships with neighbors across cultures.

Our goal is to create a nature based, bilingual Vacation Bible School opportunity, giving children space to play in the beauty of nature, build relationships across cultures, and learn that God's love is for everyone.

Online registration is now open!

Registration of Participants:

<https://form.jotform.com/220616326455150>

Volunteer Registration:

<https://form.jotform.com/220615862577159>

Connect Update

During Lent, students are expected to attend the Wednesday Evening Lenten Services at 6:30 p.m. with their family and fill out family worship sheets. There will be **no** regular class or pizza for Connect students during the season of Lent (March 2nd - April 13th). Classes resume on April 20th. Our last day of class will be a Connect Celebration on Wednesday, May 4th. We will send details via email and post on the Connect / Sunday School Facebook page.

REMINDER: The 5th and 6th grade Connect students are expected to have completed **10 sermon notes** by the end of our Connect year in May. Lenten services do not count towards the sermon note requirements.

April 2022



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
Angela Koepp Melissa Seaver Bonnie Vinkemeier Andy Weidon	3 Piper Potter Katelyn Schmit	4 Lariana Rund Riley Stier Graham Theas	5 Lilie Adelmann Dynelle Kruggel Jesse Lutterman Milton Meierbachtol Ann Pederson April Stier	6 Lariana Rund Riley Stier Graham Theas	7 Lana Hanson Nathan Muehlenhardt Alec Rund Danika Schroeder	8 Derek Gruhn Travis Latour Katy Potter Deana Sielmann
						9
Beth Beach Cassie Fink Jake Mercado Colin Sammons Alicia Shutes	10 Vivian Herrmann Alex Hoff	11 Nicole Schultz	12 Teresa Bratsch Lu-Ann Dahn Peyton Schwichtenberg Kiya Williamson	13 Grayson Klaverkamp Tyler Moylan	14 Joseph Adelmann Allison Skluzacek	15 Emma Martin Cody Schultz
						16
Brook Hagen Matthew Kes	17 Elizabeth Hilgers	18 Sophia Petersen Sabrina Sammons	19 Judy Brown Sally Simcox	20 Amando Jo Rosario Mark Simcox Bruce Volek	21 Armin Dahn Sandy Schultz Bonnie Tronnes	22 Armin Dahn Sandy Schultz Bonnie Tronnes
						23
Hunter Hornaman Larry Ruehling Jase Sanoye	24 Jackson Korbel Nolan Lutterman	25 Christopher Hiles Diane Latour Jamie Lindahl Chris Stier Samantha Tharaldson	26 Andrea Anders	27 Kade Skelley	28 Isabella Koepp Dominica Wolf	29 Jennifer Fairbanks Colt Henke Wesley Hilgers Bailey Kes
						30

Financial Corner

St. John Financial Results Two Months Ending February 28, 2022 and February 28, 2021

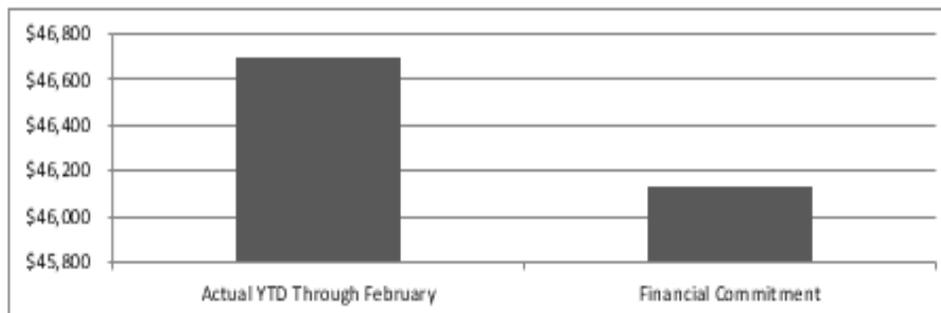
General Operating Fund			Year Over Year
	February 28, 2022	February 28, 2021	Increase (Decrease)
Income*	\$ 46,695	\$ 45,130	3%
Expenses:			
Personnel	(36,358)	(34,522)	
Office	(3,049)	(3,111)	
Property & Maintenance	(6,320)	(6,657)	
Ministry Teams	(2,333)	(631)	
Other	(929)	(979)	
Benevolence:			
Minneapolis Area Synod	(3,200)	(2,000)	
Camp Onomia	(750)	(500)	
Net Receipts / (Expenditures)	\$ (6,244)	\$ (3,270)	
Cash Balance at January 1 (Excl. Loans)	\$ 7,829	\$ (82,735)	
Net Income / (Expenditures)	(6,244)	(3,270)	
Misc. cash not affecting income	201	377	
Loan from Building Fund (2018 & 2019)	-	44,500	
Loan from St. John Foundation (2014-2016)	39,782	54,339	
Cash Balance at end of February	\$ 41,568	\$ 13,211	

* 48% of Contributions were received electronically in 2022 - thank you!

Building Fund			
	February 28, 2022	February 28, 2021	
Receipts	\$ 12,208	\$ 16,593	-26%
Principal	(87,906)	(19,846)	
Interest	(580)	(1,274)	
Net Receipts / (Disbursements)	\$ (76,278)	\$ (4,527)	
Loan Balance at January 1	\$ 87,906	\$ 208,857	
Principal Payments	(87,906)	(19,846)	
Mortgage Balance at end of February	\$ -	\$ 189,011	

Actual Income Compared to 2022 Financial Commitment:

Actual YTD Through February	\$ 46,695
Financial Commitment	\$ 46,127



April 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
						6:00pm Worship Service
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
8:00 & 9:15 Worship Services 9:15 Sunday School 2:00 pm Girl Scouts meeting	6:30 pm Boy Scouts	11:00 Lutheran Home Service 1:30pm Kingsway Service 7:00pm Ice Cream Social meeting	5:30pm Soup and Sandwich 6:30pm Lenten Service 7:15pm Adult Choir			6:00pm Worship Service
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Palm Sunday 8:00 & 9:15 Worship Services 8:50 Council Executive meeting 9:15 Sunday School	6:30 pm Boy Scouts		6:30pm Adult Choir	Maundy Thursday 7:00pm Worship Service	Good Friday 7:00pm Worship Service	6:00pm Worship Service
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
Easter Sunday 7:00 & 9:30 Worship Services 8:00 Easter Breakfast	6:30 pm Boy Scouts		6:00pm Connect/Confirmation Leader meeting 6:30pm Adult Choir		6:30pm Church Council	6:00pm Worship Service
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
8:00 & 9:15 Worship Services 9:15 Sunday School	6:30 pm Boy Scouts	6:30 pm Cub Scouts meeting	5:30pm Pizza 6:00pm Connect/Confirmation 6:30pm Adult Choir			6:00pm Worship Service



April 3, 2022 Ushers	
8:00 Service	9:15 Service
Curt & Cheryl Johnson Bryn Davis Corey Johnson Craig Johnson	Scott Ruud Alex & Griffin Ruud Dale & Jake Mercado Jerry & Alex Meger

April 10 & 17, 2022 Ushers	
8:00 Service	9:15 Service
Myron Bratsch Kirk Franck Matt Kes Jeff Eppen Brian Siekmann	Brent Koopp Mitchel Koopp Jackson Stauffacher Justin Stauffacher Todd Kruggel

April 24 and May 1, 2022 Ushers	
8:00 Service	9:15 Service
James & John Karl Dan & Wyatt Herrmann Tim Bristlin	Chris & Annette Moylan Mike & Zach Olson Jason & Trover Gruhn Steve Schroeder

Acolytes for April 8:00 Service		
April 3	Madi Theis	Bailey Kes
April 10	Bailey Kes	Lela Stier
April 17 Easter Sunday	Brody Bessel	Joseph Petersen
April 24	Josephine Berg	Lela Stier

Acolytes for Lenten Services		
April 6	Ruby Schultz	Izzi Lindahl
April 14 Maundy Thursday		
April 15 Good Friday		

Wednesday Night Kitchen Helpers		
April 20	No Pizza– Leaders Meeting	
April 27	Katie Herrmann	Heather Kes
May 4 End of Year party	Kim Thaemart	

Wednesday Night Gathering Area Helpers		
April 20	No Pizza– Leaders Meeting	
April 27		
May 4		

CALLED TO SERVE THROUGH OUR GIVING	
Offering Received the week of	
February 24– March 2	March 3-9
General Fund—\$5,847	General Fund—\$5,566
Building Fund—\$1,731	Building Fund—\$1,515
March 10-16	March 17-23
General Fund—\$6,219	General Fund— \$5,954
Building Fund—\$660	Building Fund- \$905
March 24-30	
General Fund—\$3,524	
Building Fund—\$1,020	