

# ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH MESSENGER

*CALLED TO WORSHIP / COMMITTED TO SERVE / CONNECTED IN FAITH*

**August 2021**

*A monthly Publication of  
St. John Lutheran Church*

## **Worship Schedule**

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

Sunday Worship 9:00 a.m.  
In Person Worship or Watch  
Live on Facebook

## **Pastor**

*Pastor Mark Johnson*

## **Office Staff**

*Audrey Zellman*

## **Treasurer**

*Rae Fimon*

## **Custodians**

*Curt & Cheryl Johnson*

## **Organist**

*Eileen Hanlon*

## **Accompanist**

*Sheila Schmidt*

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# JOIN US FOR SUNDAY SCHOOL

Sunday School will be starting soon.  
See registration link and information inside.



August 18  
Connect and Confirmation Small  
Group Leader Meeting  
7:00 pm

September 15  
Connect and Confirmation  
Orientation  
6:00 pm

## *From Pastor Mark*

I have a friend who is a pastor and at the close of his newsletter articles he always signs off, "On the journey with you..." It has caught my eye on more than one occasion and prompts me to reflect on this human journey that we share. The stages of life form an arc with a beginning, a middle and an ending. When we are very young, and just beginning the journey, it is big and full of newness and wonder. I remember Summer afternoons as a child that seemed to last forever. As we grow older, we become aware that this journey is limited.

I sometimes catch "This American Life," on public radio on Saturday afternoon and a few weeks ago there was a story of a young man who was hiking across America. He carried a sign with him called, "Walking to Listen," with the idea that he wanted to engage people in telling their stories and sharing their reflections with him. One person told him that his journey was like "reading a book with your feet." And a rancher in Texas shared this reflection (paraphrased here) - When I was young, the days were like high lines on the side of the road, set out at regular intervals with plenty of space in between them. As I grew older, they became more like fence posts. And now, they're like rail ties, flying by in rapid succession, picking up speed.

True. John Kennedy, in one of his speeches, reflected that even with the incredible diversity of human cultures we all share this same, small planet, we all breathe the same air, we all cherish our children's future, and we are all mortal. Within this incredible diversity we share these elements in common.

I suppose that the last two relate. We cherish our children's future because we are mortal. They will continue after we are gone. This life is limited, which gives it its beauty and meaning. It is a gift. We come from others, we sow the seeds of life and, in the end, as my Dad used to put it, "we go the way of all flesh." The limits of life define us and make this journey precious.

I remember as a child going with my family to visit my grandparents (my Dad's parents) on their little 80 acre farm by Beresford, South Dakota, a ways south of Sioux Falls. Down the county road from the farm about a mile, out in the countryside surrounded by cornfields, was the little "Nazareth" cemetery. We'd go visit the cemetery, pulling off the road and opening the rusty iron gate, because my mother's parents were buried there. My dad's grandparents were also buried there. They were original settlers in the area. I recently read "Giants in the Earth," a novel about the original settlers in the Sioux Falls area and thought "these are my people." For some, it was very hard. My dad's grandmother lived to be pretty old but she never talked about what it was like to be a settler. I think it was too painful, even to want to remember in later years. My dad's grandfather has a service decoration on his grave. He was born in 1843, so I think he must have been in the civil war. The math works out right. And now my dad's parents, who we used to visit every summer, are also buried in that cemetery. I remember, as a child, when we stopped at the cemetery the stern warning I'd get from my mom, "Don't step on the graves! And don't climb on the stones!" And she watched me to make sure I followed her advice. Frankly, I don't know what difference it makes to avoid stepping on graves but to this day, when I'm out in a cemetery, I watch where I'm walking.

The Jessenland cemetery, out on the scenic byway toward Henderson, is a local place of beauty with the stones sweeping up the steep hill from the church. I have walked through the cemetery and looked at the stones and wondered about the lives that have been lived. One shared stone has a man who was born in 1800 and died at the age of 91. His wife (I assume, because they share the same last name and tombstone together) was born in 1860 and died in 1905. Do the math on that one and there is an interesting story there. Another tombstone is from a man who was a veteran of the war in Korea. He survived and died not too many years ago. And along with his name and dates of birth and death are inscribed the simple epitaph, "Now he knows." That one got me thinking. I Corinthians 13. I did some reflecting on this in my Easter sermon this year.

Alvin Rogness, a contemporary of my dad and the former president of Luther seminary from 1954 to 1974, in a devotional book that he wrote in 1981 shares a reflection called "Cemeteries." It reminds me of my little country church, Little Bethany, ten miles north of Rothsay out in the countryside, with a little, white, wood framed church surrounded by a cemetery on three sides. Here, truly, is the depiction of the communion of saints, those still living and those passed on. We would finish a funeral service and go directly out the door and around the corner to lay a loved one to rest in their family plot. Anyway, here's what Rogness writes, all the more compelling since, in the intervening years, he has passed on:

"Whenever I preach in Singaas, my grandparents' church on the Minnesota-South Dakota border, my eye wanders through the window to see the gravestones nestled around the church with its white spire pointed heavenward. Sleeping there are five of my great-grandparents, my four grandparents, many uncles and aunts and cousins. In another prairie cemetery a few miles away my parents and our son rest side by side.

There have been many changes since 1870 when the immigrants established their church. My grandparents' homesteads are in the hands of others farmers and the grandchildren are scattered. The only piece of earth that the family now occupies is the graveyard. I find nothing melancholy about having them there. Here the rich past and the promise of a glorious resurrection come together....

I'm glad I can wander around the cemeteries of my family. My grandchildren love to go from marker to marker, listen to the recollections and legends I have to tell about their forebears, and be carried back into the roots of their

histories. And while I don't then preach a sermon on the resurrection, I know their young minds move from these dead to the celebrated company that awaits them.

Rarely now are people allowed to know death at first hand. No longer does a family live with the labored breathing of death in the next bedroom; no longer do the dead lie in state in the living room; rarely does a whole community assemble for the funeral. So death, such an integral part of life, is smuggled out and hidden from view.

At Singaas, the cemetery's sober reminder that death is real is matched by the pulpit's clarion word of resurrection."

*"But we would not have you uninformed, brothers and sisters, concerning those who have fallen asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep." (1 Thessalonians 4:13-14)*

What a lovely reflection by Alvin Rogness. And I love those verses from St. Paul's letter to the Thessalonians. We do grieve when a loved one dies because it is a natural expression of the love we have for them and the loss that we feel. But Paul writes that we do not need to grieve as those who have no hope. For we believe that Jesus died and rose again. We believe that God himself, in the person of Jesus, has shared this human journey with us, walked in our shoes, knows what we feel, and that through his death and resurrection has redeemed us from the final power of death. And that, as we consider it, provides a beautiful benediction over the passage of this earthly journey.

The church, I am glad to say, is the one unique gathering of people that walks with us all the way through the journey - from the birthing days of our baptism to the laying to rest of our mortal bodies - with all of the milestones and anniversaries along the way. God gives us to one another to bless, to teach, to learn, to worship, to serve, to reach out, to support, to care, to eat with, to lean on, to pray for, to pray with... And as God has given us to one another to love and care for, he also gives himself to us, in Word, in Sacrament, in the indwelling of his Holy Spirit. "Lo, Jesus tells us, "I will be with you always, to the very end..." And he is... Think about that...

On the journey with you,  
Pastor Mark

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Farewell Sunday for Bri Bergstrom

August 15, 2021

Following the 9 a.m. Service

Our St. John Choir Director, Bri Bergstrom, has accepted a position as Choir Director at the High School in St. Peter and will be moving there before the coming school year. She will also be stepping away from directing our St. John Church Choir. Bri has served as our Choir Director for eight years. We will miss her and we wish her well!

You are invited to join us at church for a Farewell for Bri on Sunday, August 15, following the 9 a.m. worship service. The choir will sing during the service and we will have cake and coffee after the service in Bri's honor. Please plan on joining us!

## Unapproved St. John Lutheran Church Council Minutes July 22, 2021

President Albert Koepp called the meeting to order at 6:36 p.m.

### **Present:**

X	Pastor Mark	X	Matt Stier	X	Albert Koepp	X	Wendy Theis
	Angie Kahle		Rae Fimon	X	Jen Nagorski	X	Sue Koenig
X	Chris Zellman	X	Steve Kelm	X	Ben Aust	X	Chris Schultz
X	Curt Johnson	X	Anne Herrmann				

### **Opening Devotions:**

Pastor Mark shared an opening devotion based on the last few verses of John 6.

### **Approval of Minutes:**

Members of Council reviewed the minutes from the June 17, 2021 Council Meeting. Motion was made, seconded and carried to approve the meeting minutes from June. Motion was made, seconded and carried to approve the agenda for July 22, 2021.

### **Pastor Mark's Report:**

Worship Services continue during the Summer to be held on Sunday mornings at 9:00 a.m. and on Wednesday evenings at 6:00 p.m. We had some issues with our live-streaming for a few weeks but that appears to be back to normal. I am also now able to conduct monthly holy communion services at both the Lutheran Home and Kingsway, as well as with members at home and hospital.

The Children's Team has met recently and will continue to do so for the remainder of the Summer in preparation for the upcoming program year that will begin in September. I have helped make some calls to recruit some new team members, as well as some teachers and helpers. Retiring members of the team are mentoring new members and we are moving ahead blessed with a good group to help in this vital area of ministry.

We are planning for a Rally Sunday on September 12 with kids and parents having the opportunity to see classrooms and meet teachers. During worship, we plan to acknowledge and bless our teachers and volunteers for the year, have a backpack blessing for returning students, and distribute Bible story books to first graders and Bibles to fifth graders.

Our eighth graders who missed camp due to Covid last year went in two groups this past month: July 11-16 and July 18-23. I have been in contact with their families and with camp to communicate and coordinate things to help make this happen.

The Personnel Team is in the process of conducting annual staff reviews which will be summarized and submitted to the church council next month. The team is also actively looking for people to fill the staff positions of both the treasurer and the adult choir director. I and another team member have met with Bri and conducted an exit interview. These are important positions that we hope to find qualified candidates for in the near future.

I have been in touch with my southwest metro conference pastors providing information to them about the Joshua Group's two day retreat: "Now Is The Time - Intentional Time to Reflect and Plan for Post Pandemic Ministry." Also, the Joshua Group has come out with a brand new assessment tool called the iMap that helps leaders and congregations assess and plan for the future of their congregation's online presence. We are coming out of this time of Covid in a different place than we entered it. We have the opportunity to, perhaps, partners with the Joshua Group and other congregations in seeking to discern the best way to continue to grow faithfully forward.

Pastoral acts and care continue apace throughout the Summer with baptisms, weddings, funerals, visitations and the like.

I am working on coordinating a meeting with our Connect leaders and Confirmation Small Group leaders to begin flesh-

ing out our leadership, schedule, curriculum etc. for the coming year. I will also be in touch with ninth grade Confirmands and families who will be confirmed this Fall.

I have returned from my sister-in-law's wedding in Colorado and plan to be away the first part of August, as well. I have arranged for pulpit supply and on-call during these times. This is a good sized congregation for one pastor and self care is important. I would like to continue the "Solo Sunday" policy that the church council enacted when Pastor Sarah was here.

### **Staff Reports:**

#### **Custodial:**

Curt reported the following activities:

- Fiber Optics was installed and work continues to obtain the promised rate of speed and alignment with the fire alarm system.
- Curt presented the quotes for the replacement of the water softener. Motion was made, seconded and approved to replace the water softener.

#### **Treasurer:**

Monthly financial reports were reviewed by Council members.

#### **Transfers:**

No Transfers in or out this month.

#### **Ongoing Business:**

- A. A discussion was had on Workshop Retreat Planning. Pastor Mark will outreach to community churches. Council will revisit next month.
- B. Strategic Planning - Tabled
- C. Reopening
  - Coffee Hour/Fall Prep - Sherri Simcox will continue as Coordinator and is preparing to offer Coffee Hour again beginning in October. Thank you, Sherri!
  - Revisit Policy on Building Use by Outside Groups - Motion was made, seconded and approved to once again allow the gathering area/kitchen to be used by members of the Congregation and external groups. Please contact the church office to schedule your events.
  - Council will continue to follow guidelines set forth by the Minnesota Department of Health.
  - Food must be served by a server(s).

#### **New Business:**

- A. Farewell Sunday for Bri Bergstrom will be hosted by the Choir on August 15th after the 9:00 a.m. service. Bri has been the Adult Choir Director for the last eight years. Best wishes on your future endeavors.
- B. Personnel Reports/Staff Reviews - The following staff reviews were conducted and the remaining reviews will be done next month.
  - Accompanist/Alternative Worship Coordinator
    - The annual review for St. John's Choir Accompanist and Alternative Worship Coordinator, Sheila Schmidt, was conducted by Wendy Theis, Brenda Nyblom, and Pastor Mark Johnson on June 23, 2021. A copy of the review has been provided to all parties. Sheila is doing exemplary work in both of her roles.
  - Church Communications and Office Support
    - The annual review for St. John's Church Communications and Office Support person Audrey Zellman, was conducted by Marv Doeden and Pastor Mark Johnson on July 1, 2021. A copy of the review has been provided to all parties. Audrey is doing exemplary work.
  - Custodian.
    - The annual review for St. John's Custodian, Cheryl Johnson, was conducted by Dynelle Kruggel and Pastor Mark Johnson on July 16, 2021. A copy of the review has been provided to all parties. Cheryl is doing exemplary work.
  - Adult Choir Director
    - An exit interview for St. John's Adult Choir Director, Bri Bergstrom, was conducted by Dynelle Kruggel and Pastor Mark Johnson on July 16, 2021. Bri has done exemplary work for her eight years on staff.
- C. Open Forum - Council discussed a motion to provide Parent Representatives for future Camp Onamia gatherings as part of a policy change. The motion was seconded and approved.

### **Ministry Team Updates:**

- A. Stewardship Committee - nothing new.
- B. Buildings and Grounds Committee - nothing new.
- C. Personnel Committee - Staff reviews are continuing. Looking to fill vacant positions- Treasurer and Adult Choir Director.
- D. Children's Ministry Team - Holly Stier and Andrea Gerres will move to Connect. Continue to plan for the return to in-person Sunday School in the Fall.
- E. Small Group/Faith Formation Committee - nothing new.
- F. Worship and Music Committee - nothing new.
- G. Technology and Communications Committee - nothing new.

Motion was made, seconded, and carried to adjourn at 8:36 p.m. Meeting was adjourned followed by the Lord's prayer.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Anne Herrmann, Secretary

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### **Sunday School Registration and Details!**

We hope you are having a wonderful summer! We are so excited to welcome students and families back into the church this fall and are starting to plan for the upcoming year!

**Please register your child(ren) using the below link found on our Facebook page or on our website, under connect/children's ministries as soon as possible. We would like to have an idea of class sizes prior to August 8th, 2021:**

#### **Here are a few important dates:**

- Sunday, August 8th: Registration Due
- Tuesday, August 31st: Teacher Orientation
- Sunday, September 12th: Rally Sunday
- Sunday, September 19th: First Day of class

*If you have not already committed to volunteering, please let us know how you would like to help!*

We will be sending out more details as we get closer to the beginning of the year. We pray you have a safe, fun and healthy remainder of summer!

The Children's Ministry Team

Sarah Leonard, Chelsea Hutchison, Tara Henke, Katy Potter, and Allie Theas





**The Youth Gathering** is July 24th - 28th, 2022 in Minneapolis. It is for youth going into 8th-12th grade this fall. I know it seems a long way away, but it will be here before we know it.

Registration for the gathering will be on Sunday October 3 at 7:00 pm.

Watch for more information and fundraisers.

## August Happenings at St. John

### August 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9am Worship Service			6pm Worship Service			
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
9am Worship Service			6pm Worship Service			
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Farewell for Bri 9am Worship Service			6pm Worship Service 7pm Connect/Confirmation Small Group Leaders Meeting	5:30pm Personnel Committee meeting 6:30pm Church Council		
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
9am Worship Service			6pm Worship Service			10am Shower in Gathering Area
29	30	31				
9am Worship Service		7pm Sunday School Teachers Meeting				

# August 2021



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Sherr Dandurand	2 Andi Otting Adam Schmidt Todd Theis	3 Emmaleah Cecka Ethan Hoffman Diane Koniaraki Emmett Stoutland Travis Zellman	4 Melissa Hagen Lainey Schwartz Tyler Stolee Jack Stoutland	5 Jim Koonst Samuel Schmidt	6 Julian Koepp	7
8 Brody Bessel Jack Buerkle	9 Michael Altringer	10 Lynn Johnson Irene Koepp	11 Lila Bungarden Mindy Chevalier Emma Koepp Justin Overline	12 Lucas Dandurand Téa Smith	13 Linda Jeurissen Karla Koepp Ken Theis	14 Eli Bergstrom Rachel Kelm Journey Whetzel
15 Dale Tesch	16 Heather Hornaman Katelynn Swenson Susan Volek	17 Hailey Oestreich	18 Zachary Fogarty Becky Luskey Anna Muehlenhardt Dan Sybrant	19 Angela Faucette Trevor Hutchison Scarlette Nagorski Brennan Veerkamp	20 Lavonne Behnke Mason Bungarden Rae Fimon Davina Stavnes Troy Weiland	21
22 Patty Laabs Michael Schoenbauer Jean Soller	23 Serena Davis Walter Koepp Remington Korb Theodore Korb Olivia Larson Leo Siekmann Colton Traxler	24 Cheryl Nagel	25 Teagan Dolly Abigail Meger Jerold Stauffacher	26 Josephine Berg Carter Fairbanks Diane Kerr Margaret Lawson Sarah Vycital David Zellman	27 Nathan Korb	28 Kellen Hornaman Rylan Williamson
29 Rosalie Creighton	30 Serena Davis Walter Koepp Remington Korb Theodore Korb Olivia Larson Leo Siekmann Colton Traxler	31 Diane Skelley Leif Tharaldson				



# Financial Corner

## St. John Financial Results Six Months Ending June 30, 2021 and June 30, 2020

General Operating Fund		Year Over Year	
	June 30, 2021	June 30, 2020	Increase
Income*	\$ 157,354	\$ 172,057	-9%
Expenses:			
Personnel	(103,656)	(152,513)	
Office	(8,460)	(10,709)	
Property & Maintenance	(20,026)	(20,531)	
Ministry	(7,373)	(13,901)	
Other	(2,177)	(1,897)	
Benevolence:			
Minneapolis Area Synod	(6,000)	(6,000)	
Belle Plaine Fire Dept	(300)	-	
Camp Onomia	(1,500)	(1,500)	
World Hunger (2019)	-	(250)	
Lutheran Social Services	(1,000)	(1,000)	
Net Receipts / (Expenditures)	\$ 6,862	\$ (36,244)	
Cash Balance at January 1 (excl. all loans)	\$ (82,735)	\$ (84,836)	
Net Income / (Expenditures)	6,862	(36,244)	
Misc. cash not affecting income	377	(236)	
Loan from Building Fund (from 2018 - 2019)	44,500	61,500	
Loan from St. John Foundation (from 2014-2016)	54,519	53,977	
Cash Balance at June 30	\$ 23,523	\$ (5,840)	

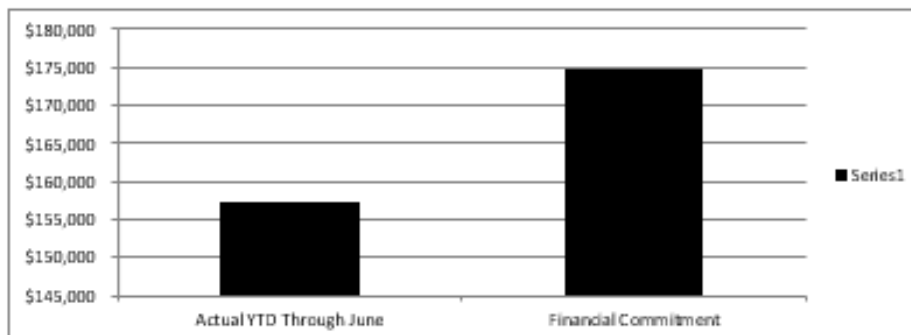
\* 41% of Contributions were received electronically in 2021 - thank you!

Building Fund		
Receipts**	\$ 54,376	\$ 48,742
Principal	(59,909)	(57,568)
Interest	(3,451)	(5,792)
Loaned to General Fund	-	(7,000)
Net Receipts / (Disbursements)	\$ (8,984)	\$ (21,618)
Loan Balance at January 1	\$ 208,857	\$ 325,224
Principal Payments	(59,909)	(57,568)
Loan Balance at June 30	\$ 148,948	\$ 267,656

\*\* 34% of Contributions were received electronically in 2021 - thank you!

Actual Income Compared to 2021 Financial Commitment:

Actual YTD Through June	\$ 157,354
Financial Commitment	\$ 174,628



August 1 and 8 2021 Ushers	
<b>Chris Schultz</b> Rob Schultz Mark Schultz Wayne Koepp Aaron Leonard Matt & Dominick Fogarty	<b>Brent Koepp</b> Mitchell Koepp Jackson Stauffacher Justin Stauffacher Todd Kruggel

August 15 and 22, 2021 Ushers	
<b>Curt &amp; Cheryl Johnson</b> Bryn Davis Corey Johnson Craig Johnson	<b>Chris &amp; Annette Moylan</b> Mike & Zach Olson Jason & Trevor Gruhn Steve Schroeder

August 29 and September 5, 2021 Ushers	
<b>Myron Bratsch</b> Kirk Franck Matt Kes Jeff Eppen Brian Siekmann	<b>Arvin &amp; Midge Bessel</b> Lee Sauter Bob Fairbanks Greg Rosario Daron Anderson

*In Memory*

Memorials were given to the General Fund, Building Fund and Sunday School in memory of Dave Laabs by Family and Friends

Memorials were given to the General and Building Fund in memory of Bob Moody by Family and Friends.

## CALLED TO SERVE THROUGH OUR GIVING

### Offering Received the week of

#### July 1-7

General Fund—\$8,147  
Building Fund—\$2,314

#### July 8-14

General Fund—\$1,451  
Building Fund—\$549

#### July 15-21

General Fund—\$6,989  
Building Fund—\$4,105

#### July 22-28

General Fund— \$5,715  
Building Fund- \$465