

# ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH MESSENGER

CALLED TO WORSHIP / COMMITTED TO SERVE / CONNECTED IN FAITH

August 2023

A monthly Publication of  
St. John Lutheran Church

## Worship Schedule

### Wednesday Worship

6:00 pm

### Sunday Worship

9:00

#### Pastor

Pastor Mark Johnson

#### Office Staff

Rae Fimon

Audrey Zellman

#### Custodian

Wanda Savage

#### Choir Director

Allison Vandermark

#### Organist

Eileen Hanlon

#### Accompanist

Sheila Schmidt

148 S. Chestnut St.  
Belle Plaine, MN 56011

952-873-6492  
office@stjohnbelleplaine.org  
Web: stjohnbelleplaine.org



August 29th from around 6-7pm at Church will be our school year kickoff! We are still finalizing the details, but we plan to have crafts, music, and some other fun activities. If you have a special talent or activity you would like to share or you are interested in joining our planning team, please reach out!

Watch your email and facebook for Sunday School registration information.

Please email [youthsjlc@gmail.com](mailto:youthsjlc@gmail.com) If you're interested in joining the team. We welcome anyone to the meetings!



Watch your mail for more information  
on registration and other updates.



Sponsored by St. John Lutheran W-ELCA on  
Wednesday, August 2nd. Serving from 4p.m. to 7  
p.m. at the St. John Lutheran Gathering Area.

The menu includes Shredded Beef, Egg Salad, Ham Sandwiches, Perkins  
Pies, Cakes and Ice Cream Cups. Take Out is Available. Please call Sandy  
Schultz  
(952)215-8304, If interested in in Volunteering.

From Your Pastor

*“For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and your love for the saints, I have not stopped giving thanks for you and remembering you in my prayers. I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better...” (Ephesians 1:15-17)*

The above is a portion of a beautiful thanksgiving and prayer with which the Apostle Paul opens his letter to the church at Ephesus. Paul was filled with gratitude and thanksgiving for the saints in Ephesus. And I feel gratitude and thanksgiving for the saints of St. John. It has been a privilege to walk alongside you through all the joys and challenges of the past twenty five years. And I thank God for the opportunity that we have had to share in our mission and ministry together.

At the same time, as the writer of Ecclesiastes expresses it:

*“For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven...”*

Our season together is coming to a close. As I look back, I have seen a congregation that has grown and developed. In 2001, we conducted a feasibility study as a first step in determining our support and capacity for a proposed new addition to our building. The number one result that came back from that study was, “I believe we are becoming a friendlier congregation.” Since then, St. John has added many new members and families. They have been welcomed into the congregation and stepped in to volunteer and leadership roles. We have a healthy mix of long time and new members here, working side by side over the years. I’m thankful for that.

We took a much needed and significant step of faith in approving and building the handsome and functional addition we have onto our beautiful, classic Sanctuary. We dedicated the new addition in the Fall of 2003 and have faithfully gone through six three-year pledge cycles since then, paying off our mortgage last year. We also have acquired adjacent land for a proposed new parking lot that will eventuate some time in the future and provide much needed parking. I’m thankful for that.

During this time, in addition to faithfully paying our mortgage, the congregation also took a step of faith in twice calling an Associate Pastor. Mark Lepper served as Associate Pastor here from September of 2005 to May of 2011. Sarah Timian served as Associate Pastor here from September of 2015 to December of 2020. I’m thankful for that.

Over the years, St. John has developed a reputation in the community for families with children. I’ve heard of a number of new families who have joined because of this. We have been blessed with an excellent group of leaders and volunteers who have developed a strong Sunday School program. And we have also been blessed with many fine leaders and helpers to develop a strong Wednesday evening program with our Connect and Confirmation students. And, of course, let’s not forget the significant blessing provided to our congregation by our Confirmation families in hosting our Midweek Lenten dinners that have come to be something we look forward to each year. I love those Wednesday evenings together!

The caring dedication and commitment of our many fine leaders interwoven into these programs over the years has made a real difference. We have had kids come here who have been invited by their friends. That says something. I’m thankful for that.

St. John also has a reputation of involvement in our community, playing a significant role in creating our community food shelf; working with partner congregations, and now partnering with our police department, in providing assistance to folks in need through the Good Samaritan fund; worshiping together in our ecumenical Community Thanksgiving service (I have looked forward to that every year); sharing together for a number of years in providing temporary shelter for homeless families through the “Families Moving Forward” program; and possibly, in the future, joining hands with churches, city and county in providing and supporting affordable housing in the community. I’m thankful for that.

I have very much enjoyed the preparation for and presiding at our times of worship together, our regular weekly services and also the special, seasonal services that take place during the year. I really enjoy leading the worship services, preaching, presiding at the Sacraments, offering the prayers of the community. I’m thankful for that.

Of course, I have also been privileged to be a part of times of great significance in people’s lives like the baptism of a child, the marriage of a couple, and the laying to rest of a loved one. These are unique, personal opportunities to be together in a special way and I have cherished those times that I have been able to share with others. This includes, as well, those many times of visiting, praying and sharing Holy Communion with folks who are homebound or in the hospital. My wife, Sue, has said that I should get a new Communion set. But I don’t want to. I still use the original set that I received from the Seminary before going into my first parish at Rothsay (a town you may have heard of). My old set is held together with black duct tape and I like it that way. It’s an old friend. We have history together. Over the years we have been in many homes, by many hospital beds, in many places. I’m thankful for that.

Of course, I also think back upon the very many people who have volunteered in so very many ways over the years to make our ministry happen. Worship preparation and support, youth education programs, preparing and serving food,

mission trips, church councils, teams, committees, boards... The list goes on, a lot of it behind the scenes. The old saying is true, it does take a village. It takes a group of willing people rolling up their sleeves and saying, "I can do that!" to make our ministry happen. I'm thankful for that.

Over the years, we've also been blessed by some fine staff members here; in the office, on our council, in our music programs... I see in my mind's eye many dear faces who have helped to carry their share of the work. I'm thankful for that.

During these last few years, we have also come through the significant challenge presented by the Covid pandemic. Forced to shut down for awhile, we had to improvise. We began providing worship services online and "in-person" services with a weekly drive-in service and a lovely (and cold) drive-in Christmas Eve service. In December of 2020, Pastor Sarah left to take a new call in Massachusetts, leaving us with one pastor. Gradually, we began to come back together, masked, distanced. Gradually, programs that were shut down began to come back in modified forms. Gradually, people who had been away began to come back.

We have come out of the pandemic in a different place than we went in. And we are not alone. Churches report that they are about 60% from what they were before the pandemic. Some folks have left and not come back. Some have lessened their presence and involvement. Some churches have ceased to exist. It has been a challenging time for churches. And, I think, we are still in the process of recovering.

That said, I believe that our Community at St. John is in good shape. We have a healthy congregation where young and old, new and long time member, get along well together and care about each other. That's not the case in every congregation. We are blessed. St. John has a good foundation upon which to build. I am thankful for that.

One chapter ends and a new chapter begins. What will the future hold for St. John? The congregation is about to enter into a time of transition. Instead of seeing this as a time to get through until another permanent pastor arrives, I believe it can be a deep, rich time. The time of transition allows the congregation to let go of the former pastor and to embrace a new one. There will be changes. That's okay. There will be challenges. That's okay, too. The Lord is with you. Pray your way through the process and support one another in love.

This is a time when St. John will be asked to assess where the congregation is and to dream about the future. What are our strengths? What are our areas for growth? What are we thankful for? What could we improve? How can we do this together?

What is our vision? Where does God want this congregation to go and grow? And how can we get there? What type of pastor(s) should we call? And what type of supporting staff might be necessary? And, while these questions are being asked, it's good to remember that this congregation has stepped up before and taken steps of faith. This is a strong and capable congregation that can meet a challenge. And so, instead of a mentality of scarcity and fear, I would encourage you to embrace the future with faith and to boldly go and grow in ways that God wants to lead you. Will that cost money? Yes. But instead of seeing it as an expense, look at it as an investment that will pay dividends, draw people into involvement, and provide a blessing for both this congregation and this community.

For everything there is a season and a time for everything under the sun.

My last day here will be Sunday, September 10.

It has been a privilege to be with you over these past twenty five years.

And now, as our time together comes to a close, I wish you all the best.

I will keep you in my prayers.

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord makes his face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you.

The Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.



The office hours will be as follows for the Summer  
**Starting Memorial Day thru August 12**

Monday– 8-12,

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday- 8-12, and 1-5

Friday– 1-5

Unapproved St. John Lutheran Church Council Minutes  
July 10, 2023

President Ben Aust called the meeting to order at 6:43 p.m.

**Present:**

X	Pastor Mark	X	Ben Aust		Chris Schultz		Albert Koepp
X	Jan Effinger	X	Teresa Latzke	X	Anne Herrmann	X	Steve Kelm
	Jaime Petersen		Cayla Menke	X	Jim Kerr	X	Tim Moonen
	Open Staff Position			X	Jerold Stauffacher		

**Opening Devotions:**

Pastor Mark opened the meeting with a request for council members to go around and say a prayer.

**Approval of Minutes:**

Members of Council reviewed the minutes from the June 12, 2023 Council Meeting. Motion was made, seconded and carried to approve the meeting minutes from June. A motion was made, seconded and carried to approve the agenda for July 10, 2023.

**Pastor Mark's Report:**

The last week of June our seventh grade Confirmation students spent a week at Camp Onomia. We have a long standing relationship with Camp Onomia that dates back well before my time here. We have a week at Camp at the end of seventh grade as a requirement for our Confirmation program because it provides a unique experience for our young people to be together in community in the great outdoors along with other youth from other churches. St. John has committed to supporting this opportunity for our Confirmation students each year by financially contributing most of the cost. And so, once again, I'd like to thank the church for their partnership with our young Confirmands and their families in helping to provide this excellent opportunity.

Our Children's Ministry Team is sponsoring a couple of family oriented get togethers for your kids and families this Summer. The first is a family potluck on July 13 and that will be followed up with another get together at the end of August. Thanks to our team for reaching out and keeping connected to our families during these Summer months. And I will also be in contact with the Children's Team as we make preparations for the upcoming Sunday School program year this Fall.

I will be meeting with some of our Connect and Confirmation leaders in the upcoming weeks to engage in preparations for our upcoming program year. We will plan to have teachers and helpers in place, a program and schedule set up, and communication about these things to our students and families involved. Much thanks, once again, to our many volunteers who help to keep our ministry vital in these areas.

As far as I am aware at this time, the church council has been provided with one candidate to serve as an interim pastor here after my retirement. The timing and details of transition are in process at the present time and the church council will continue to move forward in taking care of the necessary things to facilitate this process. I will also help in any way that I can to smooth this time of transition.

I continue my regular, behind the scenes, weekly and monthly parish activities including study and preparation for worship; communication and coordination with staff, volunteers and the congregation; planning, coordinating and communicating with teams and members for Fall programming; visitation, prayer and communion in homes and hospitals; participation in our local clergy group; communication and coordination with families around baptisms, weddings and funerals, etc.

Sue and I are back from performing a wedding for a friend in Portland, followed by a road trip down the West coast

and return trip across the country. We saw the ocean, the redwoods, the canyon-land parks. It was spectacular! We live in a big and beautiful country and it was fun to be able to get away for a while and see the sights!

**Staff Reports:**

**Custodial:**

Currently nothing to report

**Treasurer:**

Council reviewed the Treasurer reports that were emailed. Jerold Stauffacher mentioned that the June offering was down.

**Transfers:**

A. Transfers In: None

Transfers Out: Al & Sharon Schultz to West Union Lutheran Church

**Ongoing Business:**

A. Church Roll Update:

Anne mentioned that a meeting was held and they were informed about the computer system that was used to record memberships and they found that their numbers do not jive with the synod numbers. Additional meetings are scheduled to discuss further options.

B. Job Descriptions

The Personnel Committee mentioned that they are still looking to fill the maintenance position.

C. Call Process

The Church council is still in search of finding an Interim Pastor. Please keep them in your prayers during this time of transition.

**New Business:**

A. Bell Tolling

The church council is currently looking for a candidate to do the Bell Tolling.

**Ministry Team Updates:**

A. Stewardship Committee - nothing new to report.

B. Buildings and Grounds Committee - nothing new to report.

C. Personnel Committee - see update under Ongoing Business.

D. Children's Ministry Team - There is no Vacation Bible School this year. They are hosting family nights instead. The next Family Event is scheduled for August 29th.

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

F. Worship and Music Committee - nothing new to report.

G. Technology and Communications Committee - see update under Ongoing Business.

Motion was made, seconded, and carried to adjourn the meeting at 7:48 p.m. Meeting was adjourned followed by the Lord's prayer.

Respectfully Submitted,

Teresa Latzke

# August 2023



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

# August 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 11:00 Lutheran Home Service 1:30 pm Kingsway Service	2 4:00 pm Ice Cream Social 6:00 pm Worship Service	3 5:00 pm TOPS	4	5
6 9:00 Worship Service	7 6:30pm Boy Scouts	8 9:30 4.0 Bus meeting	9 6:00 pm Worship Service	10 5:00 pm TOPS	11	12
13 9:00 Worship Service Council Executive meeting	14 6:30pm Boy Scouts 6:30 pm Church Council	15	16 6:00 pm Worship Service	17 5:00 pm TOPS	18 Wedding Rehearsal	19 Siemon Wedding
20 9:00 Worship Service	21 6:30pm Boy Scouts	22	23 6:00 pm Worship Service	24 5:00 pm TOPS	25	26
27 9:00 Worship Service	28 6:30pm Boy Scouts	29 5:00 pm School Year Kick off and Family event	30 6:00 pm Worship Service	31 5:00 pm TOPS		

**Save the Date**

# Retirement Celebration for Pastor Mark



Sunday, September 10, 2023

At 9:00 a.m.

Come for worship and  
celebration



JOIN US FOR VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

AT

REDEEMER LUTHERAN CHURCH

14226 West 280th Street  
Henderson, MN 56044

WHAT: You, your friends and families are invited to Vacation Bible School

WHERE: Redeemer Lutheran Church  
WHEN: August 14-17, 2023, 4:30-7:00 p.m.

A meal is provided to children and families each night.

Also, join our service on Sunday, August 20th

at 9:30 a.m. and sing in a program the songs

we learned in VBS. Following service we will

enjoy root beer floats/ice cream sundaes

provided by the men's group and fellowship

Ages 3-12. You do not need to be a member

of Redeemer. All are welcome! Share with your friends!

REGISTER: Please register by August 6th to help us

plan food and materials accordingly. Contact:

Betsy Ollhoff at 952-649-2499.

or Email: [eaollhoff@gmail.com](mailto:eaollhoff@gmail.com)

OR Sherry Krentz 952-292-7864 or

Email: [krentzfarms@hotmail.com](mailto:krentzfarms@hotmail.com)

HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!

Check us out and register at

[www.redeemerlutheranhenderson.org](http://www.redeemerlutheranhenderson.org)

or Facebook [redeemerlutheranhenderson](https://www.facebook.com/redeemerlutheranhenderson)

or email [redeemerlutheranhenderson@gmail.com](mailto:redemerlutheranhenderson@gmail.com)



**St. John Financial Results**  
**Six Months Ending June 30, 2023 and June 30, 2022**

<b>General Operating Fund</b>	<b>June 30, 2023</b>	<b>June 30, 2022</b>	<b>Year Over Year Increase</b>
Income	\$ 168,376	\$ 178,962	-6%
Expenses:			
Personnel	(120,625)	(110,340)	
Office	(8,842)	(9,540)	
Property & Maintenance	(30,313)	(24,662)	
Ministry	(10,717)	(12,162)	
Other	(3,202)	(3,733)	
Benevolence:			
Minneapolis Area Synod	(6,600)	(7,600)	
Belle Plaine Fire Dept	(300)	-	
Camp Onomia	(1,500)	(1,750)	
Lutheran Social Services	(1,000)	(1,000)	
Net Receipts / (Expenditures)	<u>\$ (14,723)</u>	<u>\$ 8,175</u>	
Cash Balance at January 1 (excl. all loans)	\$ 69,619	\$ 7,829	
Net Income / (Expenditures)	(14,723)	8,175	
Misc. cash not affecting income	(127)	202	
Loan from St. John Foundation (from 2014-2016)	-	39,782	
Cash Balance at June 30	<u>\$ 54,769</u>	<u>\$ 55,988</u>	

**Property Improvement Fund**

	<u>June 30, 2023</u>
Income (Donations, Rent, Investments)	55,172
Expenses	<u>(13,613)</u>
Net Receipts / (Disbursements)	<u>41,559</u>
Hayden House Loan Balance at January 1	125,664
Principal Payments	<u>(2,060)</u>
Hayden House Loan Balance at June 30	<u>123,604</u>
Liquid Assets at June 30, 2023	<u>205,799</u>

**CALLED TO SERVE THROUGH OUR GIVING**

**Offering Received the week of**

<b>June 29– July 5</b>	<b>July 6-12</b>
General Fund—\$5,179	General Fund—\$11,929
Improvement Fund—\$1,120	Improvement Fund—\$1,035
<b>July 13-19</b>	<b>July 20-26</b>
General Fund— \$4,711	General Fund— \$1,493
Improvement Fund- \$835	Improvement Fund- \$455

St. John Lutheran Church  
148 S. Chestnut St.  
Belle Plaine 56011

Non-Profit Organization  
U.S. Postage Paid  
Permit No. 16  
Belle Plaine, MN 56011

Change Service Requested



August 6 Worship Assistants
<b>Altar Guild:</b> Lana Hanson
<b>9:00</b> <b>Greeters:</b> Greg & Linda Schwichtenberg <b>Lay Reader:</b> Mindy Chevalier <b>Communion Assistants:</b> Mare & Mindy Chevalier, Angela Faucette <b>Ushers:</b> <b>Albert Koepp</b> , Dorothy Koepp, Kevin Koepp, Matt Stier, Bruce Volek, Tim Carlson, Josh Koepp <b>Brent Koepp</b> , Mitchell Koepp, Jackson Stauffacher, Justin Stauffacher, Tim Moonen

August 20 Worship Assistants
<b>Altar Guild:</b> Lana Hanson
<b>9:00</b> <b>Greeters:</b> Connie Bergs <b>Lay Reader:</b> Bryn Davis <b>Communion Assistants:</b> Nick & Bryn Davis, Teresa Latzke <b>Ushers:</b> <b>Brent Schwichtenberg</b> , Greg Schwichtenberg, Bruce Schmidt, Richard Laabs <b>Chris &amp; Annette Moylan</b> , Steve Schroeder, Lee Sauter

August 13 Worship Assistants
<b>Altar Guild:</b> Lana Hanson
<b>9:00</b> <b>Greeters:</b> Chris & Annette Moylan <b>Lay Reader:</b> Anette Moylan <b>Communion Assistants:</b> Chris & Annette Moylan, Kirk Franck <b>Ushers:</b> <b>Brent Schwichtenberg</b> , Greg Schwichtenberg, Bruce Schmidt, Richard Laabs <b>Chris &amp; Annette Moylan</b> , Steve Schroeder, Lee Sauter

August 27 Worship Assistants
<b>Altar Guild:</b> Lana Hanson
<b>9:00</b> <b>Greeters:</b> Marvin & Rhonda Doeden <b>Lay Readers:</b> Bonnie Vinkemeier <b>Communion Assistants:</b> Marvin & Rhonda Doeden, Bonnie Vinkemeier <b>Ushers:</b> <b>Chris Schultz</b> , Luke Schultz, Logan Schultz, Rob Schultz, Mark Schultz, Wayne Koepp, Aaron Leonard <b>Dave &amp; Sara Bungarden</b> , Ron & Dianne Rasmussen