

ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH MESSENGER

CALLED TO WORSHIP / COMMITTED TO SERVE / CONNECTED IN FAITH

February 2021

A monthly Publication of
St. John Lutheran Church

Worship Schedule

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

Sunday Worship 9:00 a.m.

Pastor

Pastor Mark Johnson

Office Staff

Audrey Zellman

Treasurer

Rae Fimon

Custodians

Curt & Cheryl Johnson

Organist

Eileen Hanlon

Choir Director

Bri Bergstrom

Accompanist

Sheila Schmidt

148 S. Chestnut St.
Belle Plaine, MN 56011

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



Ash Wednesday

February 17th

6:00 pm

See more information inside

Lenten Services

February 24 thru March 24

6:00 pm

See more information inside



From Pastor Mark

As I write this, I just got off a Zoom call with a number of pastors from the Southwest Conference of our Minneapolis Area Synod. We have monthly meetings together as local clergy to check in, see how things are going with each other, bring up questions, find support, etc. I am glad for this opportunity. It's too easy, as clergy people, to get stuck in our own little silos and so it's nice to be able to see what other folks are doing.

It's interesting to note how different churches are moving through this present time. There are a number of churches that have not opened up for in-person worship at all and are only doing things online. And then, there are another group of churches who, like us, are doing a hybrid mix of in-person, following strict protocols, along with online. Most of the churches are doing a live stream of their services and we will be doing that, as well. That means you will be able to watch our Sunday morning service live, as it happens. The service will also be recorded and archived for future viewing, as well. We are also looking into posting on You Tube, too. So watch for those forthcoming developments.

As the old saying goes, "necessity is the mother of invention." The conditions imposed by the pandemic are making all of us, at church, at school, at work, with our friends and neighbors, rethink how we do things. Even the most basic things that we take for granted. We are all feeling our way along through unfamiliar territory.

Christmas was one of the things we had to re-think recently. We offered a specially recorded service of Word and Song online, featuring members of our choir. Along with that, it was also quite unique and fun to gather at the farm of Dan and Kristin Schmidt on Christmas Eve for a live, outdoor, drive-in service. It was a crisp, cold, clear, beautiful evening. It worked out very well and I think everyone who was able to make it there really enjoyed it. And a big thank you to Dan and Kristin and our musicians and custodians and ushers and all the other volunteers who pitched in to make it happen.

As a pastor, it seems like once Christmas is done you turn around, blink twice, and it's Lent. Unfortunately, due to circumstances, we will not be able to sing "Holden Evening Prayer" as a congregation this year or have our Wednesday evening Soup and Sandwich Suppers. And I will dearly miss that! I love those Wednesday evenings together during Lent! They are very special.

We will, however, be having a regular worship service on Wednesday evenings. As we have been doing on Sundays, we will have an in-person option for those who choose to come. We will, as we do on Sundays, be following all of our usual covid protocols of masking, distancing, etc. We also plan to live stream our Wednesday Lenten services so that folks can watch on their computers. And, of course, the services will also be recorded and archived, as well for those who want to view them at a later time.

I am meeting with our Worship and Music Team to plan out these services. On Ash Wednesday, February 17, we will be talking about ashes, their meaning and significance in the Bible and what this symbol has to say to us today. However, this year, we will not be putting ashes on people's foreheads. The following five Wednesday evenings will feature special music and music from our choir members. For the message, I am planning on doing a series on basic Lutheran beliefs, featuring Martin Luther and the Reformation, the Word and the Sacraments, and the Apostles' Creed. From time to time, a review the basics is good for all of us. So we are Lutheran? What does this mean? What do we believe? And why do we believe it? Stay tuned for that.

Even though it's still winter, we are also thinking ahead to the warmer months. We will be sending out Camp information to our families. We are tentatively planning for a VBS / Day Camp. The Ice Cream Social is penciled in for June. A Mission Trip is being discussed. All of these things, of course, are weighed against the continued unfolding of the covid virus. There is hope in the beginning rollout of vaccines, as huge and time consuming a challenge as that is. As I write this, that has not been going well and we are all hoping it gets better. The hope of the vaccine is also playing off against the spread of a more infectious strain of the virus. So we will simply have to wait and see how things play out.

And finally, let us continue to live and love tenderly, with grace, compassion and understanding for one another. It's a hard time to live through. It's easy to become impatient. So let these difficult times bring out the better angels of our nature. Let us cultivate the good virtue of patience. Let us pray for one another, support our common mission, reach out in the ways we can, and put our faith in the good Lord. God does not forget about us in the hard times. God is especially close to us in the hard times. So let's open our hearts and keep looking up.

I value and appreciate our partnership together in this ministry. And I look forward to continuing to walk together with you into the adventure of the year that lies ahead!

Unapproved St. John Lutheran Church Council Minutes
January 14, 2021

President Matt Stier called the meeting to order at 6:52 p.m.

Present:

X	Pastor Mark	X	Matt Stier		Chris Stier	X	Wendy Theis
X	Angie Kahle	x	Rae Fimon	X	Albert Koepp		
X	Mya Holzemer		Sue Koenig	X	Chris Zellman		
X	Bob Fairbanks	X	Curt Johnson	X	Jennifer Nagorski		

Opening Devotions: Pastor Mark shared opening devotions.

Approval of Minutes: Members of Council reviewed the minutes from the December 17, 2020 Council Meeting. Motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve the meeting minutes from December. President Matt Stier added one addition to the meeting agenda. Motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve the addition to the agenda.

Pastor Mark's Report:

Christmas services during this pandemic year took the form of a pre-recorded special service of Word and Song, featuring members of our choir, that was available for families to view and worship at their convenience. We also offered a live, outdoor, drive in service at the farm of Dan and Kristin Schmidt. It turned out to be a lovely evening with a number of attendees in cars and others gathered around campfires. Since this year was different, I wrote a special letter to the congregation detailing all of this.

Since the Annual Meeting will be held under hybrid circumstances this year, in-person and online, I wrote a special letter to the congregation detailing all of this, along with an RSVP card to be returned by January 14. We are compiling reports for the Annual Report at this time and getting ready to print. Much thanks to Jenn Nagorski and Melanie Fogarty's small group for volunteering to help assemble the reports to be mailed out to everyone.

Strategic Planning: We have discussed this at some length at our council meetings and I wrote a special article about it in my January Newsletter article to introduce the idea to the congregation, explain what strategic planning is, why it's important for us right now, how it's best done, and the possible cost / investment involved. I trust this can also serve as a template for council members in conversation with congregation members.

I composed a year end email blast to send out to all our members with a friendly invitation to consider a year end gift to our church. A number of folks graciously responded. As I write this, Rae is still in the process of finalizing and auditing the books. It has been a challenging year for everyone and much thanks to all those who have supported us financially this past year and who will continue to do so in this coming year.

I held a Zoom Meeting with all of our Connect and Confirmation leaders. Thanks to them for keeping such a personal contact and touch with our students during this unusual year. We discussed how things are going with their groups, online lessons and worship notes, Lent, Camp, among other things. We will continue to be in contact and discussion as classes and groups resume in January after a Christmas and New Year break.

Children's Team: Wendy Theis and I are still planning on being in touch with our Children's Ministry Team members to discuss the past months and best ways to move ahead together.

Lent: Unfortunately, we will not be able to gather and sing Holden Evening Prayer this year and have our Soup and Sandwich Suppers. I will be in discussion with our Worship Team, as well as Connect & Confirmation leaders, to discuss suitable alternative worship opportunities this year.

Regular and ongoing items continue, as usual, including preparations for preaching and teaching, staff coordination and

communication, planning and correspondences, pastoral acts and outreach, etc.

Staff Report: Custodial Updates:

Curt informed the council that the wires have been pulled for the setup of the Live Streaming and should be ready to go in plenty of time for Lent services. Window repairs are completed, TV's are coming. Back service elevator is on the dock to be fixed.

Treasurer:

Rae presented the December financial reports. She reviewed the reports she will present to the council at the annual meeting.

Transfers:

Transfers In - none

Transfers out - none

Ongoing Business

Annual Meeting - January 24th, 2021 10:00am (virtual OR in person) Preparation has been ongoing for the setup of the annual meeting via Zoom. The church office will be sending the emails to invite members to join with the Zoom meeting link. Annual reports were sent to members on the 14th. Thank you to the Confirmation small groups and the leaders who helped to compile the annual reports for mailing, Jen Nagorski and Melanie Fogarty, Mindy Chevalier, Shannon Swenson - many hands make light work!

Strategic Planning will continue to be on the council's ongoing business moving forward. The council will continue to plan for this following the Annual meeting.

New Business

Sunday School - this group is continuing to communicate and determine the process they will develop to move forward with getting kids back to Sunday School.

Confirmation Camp - 7th and 8th graders - Pastor Mark has been in touch with Camp Onamia regarding the plans for church camp this summer as well as options for the 8th grade class from the cancellation of camp last summer. The plan is to have this year's 7th grade class attend June 13-18, 2021 and then hold VBS similar to how we have been doing it June 20-24, 2021. For 8th grade families, they will have 3 different date options to choose from. If none of the dates work, they can be reimbursed any payment they have already made.

Lent Services - these will start on February 17th with Ash Wednesday - the worship committee is meeting to make specific plans, but the council wanted to make sure to send information to members that services will be in person and also live streamed for Lent. The sanctuary can hold 22 members if they are all single, and up to 88 if in family groups. 40 can be seated in the gathering area.

The council received a resignation letter from Jillmarie Stich in the front office. The personnel committee will be posting for this open position soon.

Ministry Team Updates

Stewardship Committee - nothing new

Buildings and Grounds Committee - nothing new

Personnel Committee - meeting next week

Children's Ministry Team - nothing new - ongoing discussion about resuming Sunday School

Small Group/Faith Formation Committee - nothing new

Worship and Music Committee - planning for Lent Services

Technology and Communications Committee - getting Live Streaming going

Festivals Committee - nothing new

Motion was made, seconded, and carried to adjourn at 8:31pm. Meeting was adjourned followed by the Lord's prayer.

Respectfully Submitted,
Angie Kahle, Secretary

St. John Lutheran Church
Unapproved Annual Meeting Minutes
January 24, 2021

- I. **Call to Order:** The Annual Meeting was called to order at 10:05am by President Matt Stier. Attendance was taken with 43 members present in person and 55 members present via Zoom meeting, with a total of 98 signatures/attendees.
 - II. **Opening Devotions:** Pastor Mark opened the meeting with a devotion and prayer.
 - III. **Approval of Minutes of January 2020 Annual Meeting:** The Agenda was reviewed and noted one correction. Resolution II, Elections - Church council should read Four (4) Three-year terms - Ending 2024 (not 3).
Secretary's minutes from the 2020 Annual Meeting held on January 26th, 202 were reviewed. A motion was made and seconded, to approve the meeting minutes of the 2020 Annual Meeting.
 - IV. **Reports**
 - A. **Pastor:** Pastor Mark's report as written
 - B. **Congregation Council:** President Matt Stier's report as written.
 - C. **Treasurer's Report/Resolution I:** Rae Fimon presented the treasurer's report, (Page 11). All Financial Reports were reviewed and questions from the congregation answered. Rae explained the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) Loan that St. Johns received. Rae announced that our current mortgage balance is \$199,771 and final payment will be September 15, 2022. Rae provided a summary of the WELCA fund.
Resolution I: Auditing Committee: Motion was made, seconded, all in favor, none opposed, to approve the reports as audited and presented.
 - D. **Committees:** All committee reports as written on page 12.
 - V. **Elections**
 - A. **Resolution II**
Church Council Members: Chris Schultz, Steve Kelm, Anne Herrmann, Ben Aust, Sue Koenig
Personnel Committee: Brenda Nyblom, Dynelle Kruggel
Foundation Committee: Brenda Nyblom
Assistant Head Usher: Jason Schmidt
 - B. **Synod Assembly** from the floor: Amy Franck, Brent Koepp, Sue Steinhagen - the group will choose 1 youth representative.
 - C. **Nominating Committee** from the floor: Janet Effinger, Kirk Franck
Motion was made, seconded, all in favor, none opposed, to approve the nominations as presented.
 - VI. **Approval of the 2021 Budget:** 2021 Financial Commitment was reviewed, questions were answered. Motion was made, seconded, all in favor, none opposed, to approve the 2021 Financial Commitment.
 - VII. **On-Going Business:** none
 - VIII. **New Business**
 - A. **Recognition of outgoing Church Council Members - Resolution III - Bob Fairbanks, Chris Stier, Mya Holzemer, Sue Koenig (Sue has agreed to serve out Jim Eggers one year term) and Jim Eggers.**
 - IX. **Adjournment:** Motion was made, seconded and all in favor, none opposed, to adjourn the meeting at 11:14am followed by the closing prayer
 - X. **Closing Prayer**
-

Unapproved Re-Organizational Meeting of the Church Council
Sunday, January 24th, 2021

Attendance: Pastor Mark, Council Members: Matt Stier, Albert Koeppe, Wendy Theis, Angie Kahle, Sue Koenig, Chris Zellman, Jen Nagorski, Ben Aust

President Stier called the meeting to order at 11:30 am and welcomed the new council members. 3 of the 4 new members were not present at this meeting.

The following officers were appointed:

President: Albert Koeppe

Vice President: Wendy Theis

Secretary: Anne Herrmann

Treasurer: Rae Fimon

It was decided that the executive committee consisting of President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer, along with Pastor Mark, will meet on the Sunday of each month of the week prior to the Council meetings. Monthly council meetings will be held on the 3rd Thursday of each month at 6:30 with agenda and reports e-mailed out to the board ahead of time. All meetings will be held in the gathering area at church.

The next Exec board meeting will be Sunday, February 14th at 10:00am and the next Council meeting will be held on Thursday, February 18th at 6:30pm.

Board members will be chosen to be liaisons to church committees. This will be decided at the next council meeting in February since not all members were present.

All council members (new and existing) will be installed at the 9:00 service on Sunday, January 31st. This will be done via acknowledgement by Pastor Mark during the service.

Motion made, seconded, and carried to adjourn the meeting at 11:44am.

Respectfully Submitted,
Angie Kahle, Secretary

Ash Wednesday is February 17 Midweek Lenten Services

Our Midweek Services begin with Ash Wednesday on February 17 and will continue each Wednesday at 6:00 p.m. during the Lenten Season. Due to pandemic restrictions, we will not be having our regular Soup & Sandwich Suppers.

After Ash Wednesday, the next five weeks will feature cantors and members of the choir sharing the beautiful, familiar Holden Evening prayer service. The message series for this year will feature a weekly reflection on "Basic Lutheran Beliefs."

Worshippers may attend in-person, masked and distanced as we are doing on Sundays. The services will also be live streamed on Facebook. In addition, they will be recorded and archived for people to view at a later time.

Connect and Confirmation students will be filling out Lenten Service sheets each week and turning them in to Pastor Mark. Lesson sheets are found in our Google Doc file. Students should also continue to turn in their regular Sunday morning worship sheets, as well.

Note: Saturday Evening Services are on Hiatus during Lent

Our Saturday evening services will be on break during the Lenten season beginning on February 20 and resuming again on April 10. Please join us for our Midweek services during the Lenten Season.

February 2021



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		Randall Anderson Myron Bratsch Lueella Bromagnum Cassidy Burkman Robin Fink Deborah Hagen Rick Martin Josie Schmidt Linda Schwichtenberg	Alverna Laabs Mary Laue Dave Menke Elissa Moonen Austin Oldenburg Brock Pavlicek Mark Siemon	Marci Kiewel Mikayla Olson Connor Vycital Graham Wendt	Alexis Edberg Cheryl Flynn Rebecca Johnson Joanne Musick Zoe Otting	Jane Baker Carsen Laadd Katherine Wernerskirchen
7 Lynn Jeurissen Kim Koepp Brent Schwichtenberg Amara Smith	8 Maddie Fors McKayle Siemon Sherrie Simcox	9 Elizabeth Koonst- Kopesky Marty Siemon	10 Bryn Davis Tucker Kritzman Luke Luskey	11 Karen Bessel Delores Merkle y	12 Sienna Anderson Alissa Henning Derek Hoffman Angela Kahle Lavonne Moore Jacob Olson Larry Schmidt	13 Courtney Eppen Sydney Fors Sharon Schulz
14	15 Julie Adelmann Maria Jonason Aiden Koepp Evan Koepp Leah Schaefer	16 Kathy Stauffacher Dominic Veerkamp	17 Nick Davis Josh Schultz Virgil Youngblom	18 Savannah Berg Crosby Carlson William Costello MaryAnn Koonst	19 Jacob Koepp Dale Mercado Michael Ritsch	20 Dennis Aretz Connie Haas Sydney Paulson Tabitha Rose Brian Schmidt Jacob Siemon
21 Benjamin Hagen Evan Muehlenhardt	22 Baylen Anderson Beverly Stier Thomas Weiland	23 Marcy Boblitt Brian Fahey Pamela Koepp Allan Schulz	24 Charles Koepp Jonathan Vinkemeier	25 Sven Berg Tyler Gruhn Becca Schwichtenberg Sue Steinhagen Jason Thmert	26 McKenzie Koepp Ally Schultz Eva Tharaldson	27
28 Bennett Londin Zachary Tracy						

In Memory

Memorials were given to the Building Fund in memory of Gilbert Fries by Friends and Family.

Memorials were given to the General, Building, Organ Repair, Music, and Children's Ministry Funds in memory of Warren Wolf by Friends and Family.

CALLED TO SERVE THROUGH OUR GIVING

Offering Received the week of

January 7-13
General Fund—\$11,417.13
Building Fund—\$3,150.00

January 14-20
General Fund—\$9,251.91
Building Fund—\$3,539.00

January 21-27
General Fund—\$3,122.88
Building Fund—\$1,540.00