

# ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH MESSENGER

CALLED TO WORSHIP / COMMITTED TO SERVE / CONNECTED IN FAITH

January 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

Jillmarie Stich  
Audrey Zellman

### Treasurer

Rae Fimon

### Custodians

Curt & Cheryl Johnson

### Organist

Eileen Hanlon

### Choir Director

Bri Bergstrom

### Accompanist

Sheila Schmidt



### Mark it on Your Calendar!

January 24, 2021 will be St. John's Annual Congregational Meeting

More information inside

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## *From Pastor Mark*

Strategic Planning. What is it? And why is it important? We've had some discussions at our council meetings this past year about this. In 2003 we took a step of faith and added a new addition onto our building costing 2.2 million. Since then, we have been faithfully paying down the mortgage on our church home. In the next couple of years, we will pay it off. We'll burn the mortgage and have a celebration.

And then what? Spending time together in the process of strategic planning will allow us to finish our mortgage payments and to know specifically how we want to reinvest ourselves and resources in our ministry together. We are at a great time in our congregation's life to engage in this important process.

Why is strategic planning important? It will help us to answer some very important questions. How will we remain faithful in going and growing where the Holy Spirit would lead us? What is the direction of our vision and mission and ministry together for the future of our congregation? And, related to this, what type of staffing will we need to invest in to support our vision and mission?

Pastor Sarah has left for a new call. I am not planning to leave for the next couple of years, but I'm not getting any younger either. So we will want to be thinking of transition. What kind of pastor(s) will we be looking for? What other type of staff might we invest in that will strengthen and move our ministry forward? These are very important questions.

Along with this, what is the best way to use our property? A strategic plan will allow us to not make knee-jerk decisions but will allow us to thoughtfully engage these important questions together, not only for the near 3-5 year term, but also farther into the future. Where will St. John be in 20-25 years from now?

What is Strategic Planning? At it's best, Strategic Planning involves engagement with the whole congregation through a variety of ways: surveys, focus groups, larger meetings, etc. Through this process, everyone offers input and feels that they have been respected and heard. From the information we gather, we put together a well informed, thoughtful and wise plan that will provide a chart and compass as we walk into our future together.

Right now, under our present pandemic circumstances, we simply cannot engage our congregation in all of the in-depth ways that such an important process deserves. However, next year we hope that conditions will have changed so that we can be together again.

Our council has discussed working with a consultant to lead us through the Strategic Planning process. A consultant can provide the tools, experience and leadership necessary for the best experience and outcome. The council has preliminarily added a \$25,000 line item to next year's budget for this purpose, subject to congregational approval at our annual meeting. However, with one pastor next year, our 2021 budget is \$60,000 less than our 2020 budget - and that includes the cost of a consultant.

We have worked with consultants in the past, for about the same amount, to provide three year building appeals to pay off the mortgage on our building. Our vision, mission and ministry are why we have our building. So, the cost of a well done Strategic Plan is also an investment that will allow us to discern and invest and grow and thrive into the future.

2020 has been a challenging year. 2021 looks to be exciting. What will the future hold? How can we best meet it together? Good questions. Important questions. Faithful questions.

Unapproved St. John Lutheran Church Council Minutes December 17, 2020

President Matt Stier called the meeting to order at 6:41 p.m.

**Present:**

X	Pastor Mark	X	Matt Stier	X	Chris Stier	X	Wendy Theis
X	Angie Kahle	x	Rae Fimon	X	Albert Koepp		
X	Mya Holzemer	X	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 November 19, 2020 Council Meeting. Motion was made, seconded and carried to approve the meeting minutes from November.

**Pastor Mark's Report:**

It is a busy season of transition, after Pastor Sarah has left, involving Christmas, Confirmation, Baptisms and Funerals, Regular Worship Services, Communications & Coordination with Staff, Committees and Teams, etc. Some details:

I have met with the Worship Team, Choir Director, Accompanist and other Volunteers to plan and coordinate our two celebrations of Christmas during this unusual year: 1) A specially recorded service of Word & Song to be posted on our Website & Facebook page for families to access and worship together at their convenience. 2) A Live, Outdoor, Drive-In Service on Christmas Eve at the farm of Dan & Kristin Schmidt at 5:00 p.m. (asking folks to arrive at 4:30 to be parked).

I have taken over the voiced over powerpoint lessons and accompanying worksheets for Confirmation, uploading them to Google Docs for all to access. Audrey Zellman and I are coordinating to file and record the follow up worksheets and worship notes that are sent in by our Confirmands. I will be following up with communications to our Small Group Leaders, as well. We will be meeting together on January 6 to discuss how the year has been going and how we plan to move ahead together.

I have met with our Nominating Team and we have all of our council positions filled, as well as other positions. We will be submitting our slate of incoming volunteers to our council and to our congregation at our annual meeting.

I will be meeting with our Children's Team as we move into the coming year to discuss how the past months have been going and to decide best ways to move ahead into the coming year together.

Preparations for next year include reports and items for the annual meeting. Also, I am thinking ahead to possibilities for the Lenten Season next year (since it is likely that we will not be able to meet in our usual way by February / March). I will be discussing ideas with the Worship Team, as well.

Strategic Planning: We have discussed the importance of this at our council meetings at this stage in our congregation's life together and have included it in our budget for next year. I will also be writing my January newsletter article about this to introduce the idea to the congregation, explain what it involves and why we want to do it, as well as discussing the methods we would like to use and the cost / investment involved.

Regular and ongoing items continue, including regular staff meetings, worship, sermon and class preparations, outreach, communication and coordination with teams and committees, pastoral care, etc.

Pastor Mark also made his declaration of \$30,000 of his salary to his housing allowance for 2021. Motion was made to approve the housing allowance, seconded and carried.

### **Staff Report: Custodial Updates:**

Curt let the council know that the back elevator is in need of some service. Curt informed the council that the cost to repair the elevator would be around \$1500. One of the women's groups in St. John has offered to possibly help cover some of the cost. It is still a useful elevator for some events and activities. Curt will get a quote and connect with the group to discuss cost options. The council suggested giving Matt Kes some payment for allowing the church to use his lift while doing some church repairs. Matt Kes has asked that a non cash donation be made to church in his name. The council voted to donate \$1000. Motion made, seconded and carried.

### **Treasurer:**

Rae presented the November financial reports. The General Fund, Building fund and General operating fund were reviewed.

### **Transfers:**

1. Transfers In - none
- Transfers out - none

### **Ongoing Business**

1. Annual Meeting - January 24th, 2021 10:00am (virtual OR in person)
2. To hold the meeting the council will conduct a Zoom (virtual) meeting.
3. The council did a "practice" run of a virtual meeting tonight. It went well, but we will do another full run through prior to the Annual meeting. The next practice will be held on January 14th, prior to the monthly council meeting.

A. The council will practice the process with the council and committee members for a second time on January 14th to work out issues. An invite will be sent to all council committee members (Stewardship, Buildings and Grounds, Personnel, Children's ministry, Small Group/faith formation, Worship and Music, Technology and Festivals).

Postcards will be sent to the congregation. Information needed back to church will be: Indicating how many voting members will be present, and providing email for Zoom link. Members will have 3 options to RSVP (return postcard, call church office OR email church) Office will keep track of info. Cards and a letter will be sent after Christmas between Christmas and the New Year.

B. Members will have the option of joining virtually via Zoom, or coming to church in person for the meeting. If in person, social distancing will be required.

4. The council decided that red and green cards will be sent to members prior to the annual meeting to use for voting purposes. Members will receive these cards along with the Annual report. Jen Nagorski has offered the help of her Connect group to assemble mailings for members. Thank you to Jen and her Connect students!
5. All of the council members will be in attendance in the gathering area on annual meeting day. We will have 4-5 on computers to monitor the chat, count votes, and provide assistance whether members are attending virtual or are at church in person.

### **Budget**

Rae presented the budget again during this council meeting. She indicated the only change made was to increase the pulpit supply from \$1200 to \$1800. The council then met separately to discuss staff salaries. The council made a motion to freeze salaries as is for this year. With discussion around the fact that the council recognizes the hard work and services the staff has provided and we thank them. Motion seconded and carried. The council then made a motion to submit the budget to the congregation. Seconded and carried.

Election of New council members

Pastor Mark and the nomination committee have connected with candidates for nomination to the council. Information will be given at the annual meeting.

Call for a new pastor

At this time, the council has decided not to call for a new pastor.

### **New Business**

1. Facebook live of Church Services

2. The council has discussed how we could provide a synchronous experience for the congregation on the same day that the church service is happening (Sunday Mornings). Curt will look at the cost to stream and connect the equipment needed to run Facebook live to provide this for the congregation to make viewing more immediate and "live". Using Facebook live will allow the services to also still be recorded and viewed anytime - for any members who can connect to Facebook.

3. Smart TV's for sunday school/Connect/Confirmation classrooms

Curt mentioned that smart TVs were on sale now. The council discussed installing TV's into the classrooms for the ongoing need to incorporate technology and projection for teachers and lessons.. The council decided instead of doing all 7 classrooms, that we would start with 3 at this time. Curt will look into the purchase and installation, mounting them to the wall. The council made a motion to proceed with the purchase and installation of 3 TV's. Seconded and carried.

### **Ministry Team Updates**

Stewardship Committee - nothing new

Buildings and Grounds Committee - nothing new

Personnel Committee - nothing new

Children's Ministry Team - will be connecting soon to discuss how to move forward with Sunday school.

Small Group/Faith Formation Committee - nothing new

Worship and Music Committee - Christmas eve service and recorded service - more info coming.

Technology and Communications Committee - nothing new

Festivals Committee - nothing new

Motion was made, seconded, and carried to adjourn at 8:48pm. Meeting was adjourned followed by the Lord's prayer.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Angie Kahle, Secretary

## **Annual Meeting / January 24**

Our Annual Meeting this year will be held on Sunday, January 24.

Our schedule for that morning will be:

\*9:00 a.m. Worship Service

\*10:00 a.m. Annual Meeting

We need a quorum of 90 Confirmed members.

During this pandemic year, our council is offering two choices for members to attend:

\*In-Person at the church with masks and distancing

\*Online through Zoom

All members are receiving a letter with an RSVP card that has further directions. We ask that you please respond back to the church by January 14 to let us know if you can attend, and in which way, so we can make the necessary preparations.

Mark your calendar! And thanks for getting back to us!

# January 2021



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 Elroy Koopp Hope Lawler Sean Lawler Jenny Petty	2 Jonathan Schulz Diane Stier
3	4 Melissa Arola Todd Kruggel Brad Latzke	5 Matthew Fink Steve Latzke Megan Schmidt	6	7 Rhett Traxler	8 Minnie Aust Donna Cooper Violet Holtberg Olivia Jeurissen	9 Jason Gruhn
10	11 Joyce Chaves Owen Herrmann Jeff Petersen Jodi Savage McKinley Schwartz	12 Troy Armstrong Shannon Hansen Montana Meyer Ron Rasmussen Nolan Swenson	13 Kevin Bauleke	14 Sharon Adelmann Dale Schmidt Cindy Schoenbauer	15 Arlene Latzke	16 Tanya Edwards Amanda Schultz
17	18 Faith Adelmann Raelynn Connelly	19 Earl Gransee Ryland Johnson Dick Peterson Pamela Shackle	20 Klara Hager Janah Heckers Ashton Holbrook Tammy Stier Easton Wolf	21 Tara Henke Isla Sinnamon	22 Brian Hillstrom	23 Scott Hagen Grant Johnson Aaron Leonard Dusty Llewellyn Alyssa Meierbachtol
24	25 Blake Andert Tony Theis Andre Westerfield Jason Hagen Maxum Meyer Carol Schultz Joshua Wolf Terry Zellman	26 Thomas Chaves Jennifer Korb Michael Kritzman	27 Elijah Hoff Noelle Hoff Joyce Laabs Pierce Nagorski Piper VanZummeren	28 Trevor Gruhn Mark Johnson Teresa Latzke Emily Nagel	29 Robin Burkman Cole Hanke Stella Hansen	30 Bryan Holzemer Carter Johnson Garrett Korb Renee Meuleners
31 Larry Hanson Charlie Schwartz Ken Wilson						

# Financial Corner

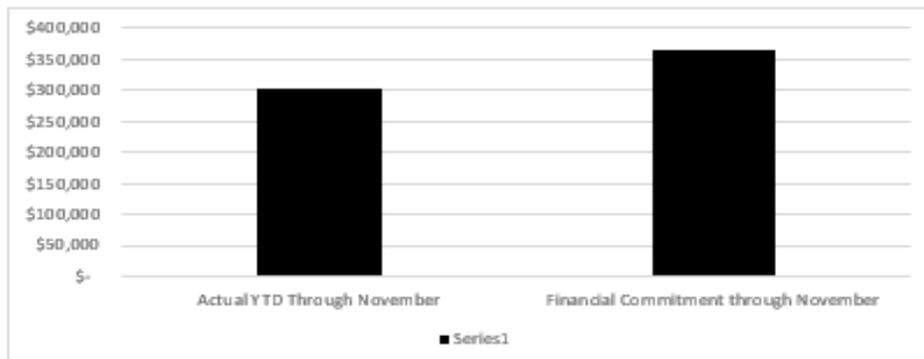
## St. John Financial Results Eleven Months Ended November 30, 2020 and November 30, 2019

General Operating Fund			Year Over Year
	November 30, 2020	November 30, 2019	Increase (Decrease)
Income	\$ 301,337	\$ 336,397	-10%
Paycheck Protection Loan Forgiveness	\$ 54,839		
Expenses:			
Personnel	(271,853)	(281,016)	
Office	(17,008)	(15,568)	
Property & Maintenance	(34,742)	(33,885)	
Ministry Teams	(17,797)	(19,958)	
Other	(3,295)	(4,351)	
Benevolence:			
Minneapolis Area Synod	(10,000)	(11,000)	
Camp Onomia	(2,500)	(2,750)	
World Hunger (2019)	(250)	-	
Belle Plaine Fire Dept	-	-	
Lutheran Social Services	(2,000)	(1,500)	
Net Receipts / (Expenditures)	\$ (3,269)	\$ (33,631)	
Cash Balance at January 1 (excl. all loans)	\$ (84,836)	\$ (64,346)	
Net Income / (Expenditures)	(3,269)	(33,631)	
Misc. cash not affecting income	(1,237)	237	
Loan from Building Fund (2018 - 2019)	45,500	54,500	
Loan from St. John Foundation (2014 -2016)	54,204	53,665	
Cash Balance at November 30	\$ 10,362	\$ 10,425	

Building Fund			
Receipts	\$ 98,163	\$ 125,311	-22%
Miscellaneous Expenses	-	(141)	
(Loaned to)/Received from General Fund	10,000	(19,500)	
Principal	(106,491)	(100,945)	
Interest	(9,669)	(15,215)	
Net Receipts / (Disbursements)	\$ (7,997)	\$ (10,490)	
Loan Balance at January 1	\$ 325,224	\$ 435,544	
Principal Payments	(106,491)	(100,945)	
Loan Balance at November 30	\$ 218,733	\$ 334,599	

### Actual Income Compared to 2020 Financial Commitment:

Actual YTD Through November	\$ 301,337
Financial Commitment through November	\$ 364,425



# Ushers Needed

*Are you willing to serve?*

## **Looking for Ushers:**

We are in need of ushers to fill teams. Historically we had "8:00 AM" teams (early service) and "10:30 AM" teams (late service). With the current COVID-19 pandemic we currently only have 1 service on Sunday morning with an additional evening drive in service on Saturday evening. Currently both teams are covering all services. We are especially in need of ushers on the "10:30 AM" late service teams. If you are interested contact the church office or contact Brent Koepf, Head Usher at 612-860-0386 (email [koepfbw@frontiernet.net](mailto:koepfbw@frontiernet.net)) or Andy Steinhagen, Assistant Head Usher at 612-581-7523 (email [suesimcox@yahoo.com](mailto:suesimcox@yahoo.com)).

**Thank You for your service!**