

# ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH MESSENGER

CALLED TO WORSHIP / COMMITTED TO SERVE / CONNECTED IN FAITH

January 2023

A monthly Publication of  
St. John Lutheran Church

## **Worship Schedule**

### **Saturday Worship**

6:00 pm

### **Sunday Worship**

8:00 & 9:15

9:15 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

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## **Mark it on Your Calendar!**

**January 22, 2023 will be St. John's Annual Congregational Meeting**

8:00 Worship Service

9:15 Sunday School

9:15 Annual Meeting

Reminder that the committee reports for the annual report are due January 6th.

Thank you

## From Pastor Mark

I have always loved history. Sue and I have enjoyed traveling in recent years to some historic places like Boston and Washington D.C. and Gettysburg. I look forward to traveling some more and soaking in the history of different places. I'd love to go to Europe and to Israel. My parents went to Israel and my Dad, as a pastor, had a real appreciation for standing in the places where he had studied and preached about so much. I'd like to do that, too.

The passing of the old year and the advent of the new reminds us that time and history roll on. We are ceaselessly swept along in the current of time from the past, to the present to what lies out in the future.

I have been reading lately about the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Orville and Wilbur Wright's 1<sup>st</sup> second powered flight at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina on December 17, 1903. Its fascinating to look at that historic photo of that fragile kite plane, a few feet off the ground, and to think of how the world has changed so rapidly since then. What would Orville and Wilbur Wright have thought if someone had proposed to them that, less than 70 years later, a man would walk on the moon!

And what will the world look like 100 years from now? What will technology be like that far into the future? What nation will be on top of the world then? What shape will the environment be in? Will, in fact, the world as we know it still be here? Will the Lord have returned?

Who knows? In the past 100 years the world has changed more than in all of human history combined and we are moving at an exponential pace. Will our wisdom as a human race be able to temper and put to good use our gathering knowledge? These remain open questions.

One thing is certain 100 years from now - those of you reading this article, along with me, will have passed into history. Our days on this earth will be lived. As I write this I look at the picture of my Dad that hangs in my office. A young man in his late 20's looks out from that picture and yet its been twenty eight years now since he passed away. And so, one day, we will be remembered in a picture, in an old recording, in a thought or memory as someone's friend or relative.

There is a verse in the Bible that says, "There is nothing new under the sun." On the face of it, there is much new. The world we live in today is vastly different than when that verse was written. The technology we take for granted today would seem like magic to people of ancient times. And yet, in another sense, at the root of what it is to be a human being, living out the days of our human lives, there is nothing new. The landscape of the human heart remains the same as it always has been - with its hopes and dreams, its meanness and pettiness, its longings and desires, its loves and hates, its aspirations and restlessness. The drama of our human experience is unique and yet, at the same time, common. The distinctive voice of our life blends into the common chorus of humanity. And finally, in the end, as my dad used to put it, "we go the way of all flesh."

In the midst of this changing world we are all on a mortal journey. The world around us goes as it goes and each day makes us a little older. But we are held in immortal hands as Isaac Watts wrote about in his great hymn, "O God, Our Help in Ages Past." A few stanzas from his hymn:

"Before the hills in order stood or earth received her frame,  
From everlasting you are God, to endless years the same.  
Time, like an ever-rolling stream, soon bears us all away;  
We fly forgotten as a dream dies at the opening day.  
O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come,  
still be our guard while troubles last and our eternal home."

By God's grace through faith in Christ we can live in hope that even though we are at this moment being swept along in the current of mortal time, and the world around us is changing in so many ways, yet at the same time we are, even now, being held in eternal hands of love and goodness. And that makes a big difference in how we can see our time here. Now we can be set free from the petty concerns of our own little wants and habits to serve a larger picture of truth and goodness. In our own small way, we can seek to make this world a better place in which to live, for ourselves and others, knowing that in the end, "He's got the whole world in his hands."

This idea was embodied in a story (possibly apocryphal, but interesting nevertheless) of the time that somebody asked Martin Luther what he would do if he knew that the world would end the next day. Luther apparently replied, "I would plant a tree." What's the point of planting a tree if you know the world is coming to an end? It is a way of acknowledging that I cannot control the "end of the world" or, for that matter, the "end of my own life." These things

are larger than I am. But when that time comes, I want to be found doing something that fosters life, something that makes this world a better place in which to live. I want to be found faithful.

I've always appreciated that story. And so as we launch out into a new year, who knows for sure the shape of things that lie ahead? As an old saying goes, "I know not what the future holds, but I know who holds the future." And maybe that's it – to appreciate the gift of our life and this world, to love the Lord, ourselves and others, and to be found faithful, as best we can, in this day we are living. And to leave the rest in God's good hands.

Pastor Mark

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### **January Children's Ministry Update**

Happy New Year! We pray the 2023 year has many blessings in store for you and your family.

We would like to thank all the children who participated in the Christmas program. The program was a unique and fun way for the Sunday School Children to share the story of Jesus' birth. We hope you enjoyed the program as much as we did! It took many hours of planning and practice for the program to come together. A BIG thank you to all of the children, parent volunteers, Connect leaders, and teachers. Thank you to Rachel Kelm for playing all the songs on piano as well.

Our first story theme of 2023 will focus on Joseph and Pharaoh.

#### **Important Dates:**

- **Sunday, January 1st:** No Class
  - 
  - **Sunday, January 22nd:** Sunday School Children sing during 8am service
  -
- Annual Meeting during Sunday School Hour - movie and snacks in youth room for children

#### **Connect Update**

In the last month Connect students have learned about Moses, the Ten Commandments, and Law and Judges. Our January lessons will continue to focus on the Old Testament of the Bible.

#### **Important Dates:**

- **Wednesday, January 5th:** No class
- **Wednesday, January 11th:** No class. Small group leaders meeting
- **Wednesday, January 18th:** Class resumes
- **Wednesday, January 25th:** Feed My Starving Children– Bus leaves at 6:00 pm



Coffee Hour hosts/servers are needed starting in February. Please consider signing up for a Sunday. Questions– call Sherrie 612-598-5309

Unapproved St. John Lutheran Church Council Minutes  
December 15, 2022

President Ben Aust called the meeting to order at 6:40 p.m.

**Present:**

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

**Opening Devotions:**

Pastor Mark opened the meeting by reading the Birth of Christ from the book of Matthew and a prayer.

**Approval of Minutes:**

Members of Council reviewed the minutes from November 17, 2022 Council Meeting. Motion was made, seconded and carried to approve the meeting minutes from October. A motion was made, seconded and carried to approve the agenda for December 15, 2022.

**Pastor Mark's Report:**

The various churches in our area gathered together again this year at St. John to celebrate our Ecumenical Community Thanksgiving Service on Monday, November 21, at 7:00 p.m. River Rock hosted the evening at our church because their facility would not adequately provide the space needed. Our musicians sponsored the Ecumenical choir and the musical accompaniment. I have always enjoyed the opportunity to gather our churches together in worship and we had a great time this year.

For many years I have been the custodian of our local church's Good Samaritan Fund that was set up to help transient people moving through town with gas, a meal or a room for the night. In the past couple of years we have collaborated with the local police department who administrate this fund for us. This works well since there is always an officer available. I invited an officer and the office manager from the department to join us for our regular, monthly clergy lunch this past week to discuss ways that we can possibly expand our fund to provide greater good to the community. We had a good and fruitful discussion around the table that I think will lead to this fund growing and evolving into a better resource to serve the needs of our community in a variety of ways.

We took a free-will mission support offering at our Saturday evening and Sunday morning services on December 3 and 4 to support two line items of mission giving that we put into our budget for this year. We are giving \$2,000 to Cristo Obrero, a new and growing and local Spanish ministry in Shakopee that is a part of our Southwest Metro Conference of the Minneapolis Area Synod. We also are providing \$800 of support for an overseas ELCA Missionary. The Missionary we have been supporting, Elisabeth Johnson, has retired from overseas work and so we will now be supporting the Rev. Jessie Derise in Thailand who is the Regional Representative for Asia. Much thanks to the support that came in and, for those who missed the offering, they can still turn in their support to our church office.

Christmas and New Year's are coming up fast and I have been coordinating with our office, musicians and worship helpers to get ready. Our schedule includes - Dec. 11: Sunday School Christmas Program at 9:30 a.m.; December 18: Sunday School sings at beginning of 8:00 and 9:15 services; Dec. 24: Christmas Eve Services at 3:00, 5:00 and 7:00 p.m.; Dec. 25: One Christmas Day Service at 9:00 a.m. Dec. 31: New Year's Eve (No Saturday Evening Service); Jan. 1: New Year's Day: One Service at 9:00 a.m.

I have met with the Personnel Committee and we have secured a slate of candidates for the church council for next year and are working on a couple of other areas. We will be forwarding a full slate to the church council to include in our 2023 annual meeting for passage by the congregation.

I have been enjoying teaching our Confirmation classes this year as we study the Reformation and the various items that make up the contents of Martin Luther's Small Catechism. I am thankful for the help of a good group of Small Group Leaders and for the good and attentive behavior of our seventh and eighth graders.

Of course, there is much that takes place behind the scenes in terms of planning, coordinating, communicating and preparation for preaching and teaching, pastoral activities including baptisms, funerals, weddings, outreach and visitation, working with staff, teams and committees, etc.

I enjoyed having our regular, monthly Holy Communion services at the Lutheran Home and Kingsway on the first Tuesday of the month. It was especially nice to gather around the familiar Christmas story and sing the familiar Christmas hymns together.

**Staff Reports:**

**Custodial:**

No report was presented.

**Treasurer:**

Robin walked through the monthly reports stating that revenue was down for the month of November and youth food expenses were higher than the amount budgeted. She answered questions from Council members.

**Transfers:**

No Transfers in or out this month.

**Ongoing Business:**

- A. Building and Grounds Committee
  - 1. Council reviewed a draft of the Property Improvement presentation. Additional revisions will be made based on the feedback received.
- B. Newsletter Article was reviewed, revised, and approved by Council to be included in the December Messenger.
- C. Staff Reviews
  - 1. Council received Pastor Mark's report.
- D. Revisit Mailing Newsletter
  - 1. A discussion was held to continue mailing the newsletter to the congregation unless Member requests to receive the newsletter digitally.
  - 2. There is a need to get the newsletter to members sooner so they can be informed of upcoming events in time to attend those events. Some suggestions were mentioned but additional discussion is needed.

**New Business:**

- A. Finalize Budget Proposal
  - 1. The preliminary budget was reviewed and discussed. A motion was made, seconded, and approved to finalize the budget proposal for the annual meeting presentation.
  - 2. A discussion was had regarding an issue with the internet availability and the need to consult a professional technology support service to troubleshoot issues. The Technology Committee will be notified.
- B. Housing Allowance
  - 1. For taxation purposes, Pastor Mark declared his housing allowance would remain the same as last year which was \$32,000.
- C. January Council Meeting/Membership List
  - 1. In support of the Annual Meeting on January 22nd:
    - a) There will be one service at 8 a.m.
    - b) The Annual meeting and Sunday School will start at 9:15.
    - c) Council will supply Coffee Hour and members from the Small Groups will serve.
    - d) January's Council Meeting will be moved to Thursday, January 12th.
    - e) The Executive Meeting will be moved to Sunday, January 8th.
  - 2. Membership list was tabled to February, 2023.

**Ministry Team Updates:**

Stewardship Committee - nothing new to report.  
Buildings and Grounds Committee - see update under Ongoing Business.  
Personnel Committee - see update under Ongoing Business.  
Children's Ministry Team - nothing new to report.  
Small Group/Faith Formation Committee - nothing new to report.  
Worship and Music Committee - nothing new to report.  
Technology and Communications Committee - nothing new to report.

Motion was made, seconded, and carried to adjourn the meeting at 8:34 p.m. Meeting was adjourned followed by the Lord's prayer.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Anne Herrmann, Secretary

## ROOFTOP FURNACES



### THE BUILDING FUND

Now that the mortgage has been paid, it seems fitting that the "Building Fund" be renamed to the Property Improvement Fund. Funds will be used for the maintenance and improvement of our properties.

### BUILDING & GROUNDS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Building and Grounds Committee met to compile a list of maintenance and improvement projects. The maintenance items have been grouped together under "Needs Remediation". Other maintenance items have been grouped together under "Scheduled Maintenance". Finally, the improvement projects have been grouped together under "Improvement Projects".

### ROOFTOP FURNACES

The rooftop furnaces are over 20 years old. Repairs have been made but they are reaching their lifespan. Replacement furnaces are currently out of stock due to supply chain constraints. Council has approved placing an order for three (3) rooftop furnaces at an estimated cost of \$32,868. This estimate does not include installation costs. We anticipate installation to occur in the spring of 2023.



### SKYLIGHT REMOVAL

Your continued support of the Property Improvement Fund will allow projects such as the removal of the skylight and repair to the roof and back entryway to move forward. Estimated cost of \$30,000.



### SCHEDULED MAINTENANCE

FURNANCES, CARPETING, PEW CUSHIONS

There are seven (7) furnaces with air conditioning units that will be placed on a rotating replacement schedule. The cost of each unit is estimated at \$10,000.

The carpeting on the main floor is also over 20 years old. The committee recommends replacing the carpet with carpet squares. This will allow damaged squares to be replaced when needed. Cost is estimated at \$100,000.

Pew cushions are also seeing their age and should be replaced at a cost of \$5,000.

### IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

PARKING LOT, TABLES & CHAIRS, PATIO, SIGNAGE, AIR CONDITIONING IN SANCTUARY

Development of a parking lot is estimated at \$75,000 - \$80,000.

Upgrading tables to lighter material will aid setup and takedown for events. New chairs are an additional consideration.

Creating a patio between the front entry steps and the front entryway will provide an outdoor gathering area. With donated labor, the cost is estimated at \$3,000.

Adding permanent signage to the front entryway will enhance the exterior appearance. Estimated cost \$6,000.

Update Sanctuary with air conditioning. Cost estimated at \$25,000 - \$30,000.



# January 2023



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Elroy Koopp Hope Lawler Sean Lawler Jenny Petty Jodi Savage	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 Weston Mellgren	9 Jason Gruhn	10	11 Joyce Chaves Owen Herrmann Jeff Petersen McKimley Schwartz	12 Tory 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 Faith Adelmann Scarlett Wolf	18	19 Earl Gransee Ryland Johnson Dick Peterson Pamela Shackie	20 Janah Bauleke Klara Hager Ashton Holbrook Easton Wolf	21 Tara Henke Isla Sinnamon
22 Brian Hillstrom	23 Scott Hagen Grant Johnson Aaron Leonard Alyssa St. Germain	24 Blake Andert James Carter Tony Theis Andre Westerfield	25 Jason Hagen Clara Meierbachtol Maxum Meyer Carol Schultz Joshua Wolf Terry Zellman	26 Thomas Chaves James Kerr Jennifer Korbel Michael Kritzman	27 Elijah Hoff Noelle Hoff Pierce Nagorski Piper VanZummeren	28 Trevor Gruhn Mark Johnson Teresa Latzke Emily Nagel
29 Robin Burkman Cole Hanek Stella Hansen	30 Bryan Holzemer Carter Johnson Garrett Korbel Renee Meuleners	31 Larry Hanson Charlie Schwartz Ken Wilson				



# January 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 9:00 Worship Service	2 Office Closed	3 11:00 Lutheran Home Service 1:30 pm Kingsway Service	4 6:30 pm Adult Choir	5 Oak Crest Kindness retreat	6 12:30 pm High School Student Council meeting	7 6:00 pm Worship Service
8 8:00 & 9:15 Worship Services 9:15 Sunday School Council Executive meeting	9 6:30 pm Boy Scout meeting	10	11 4:00 pm Audit Committee 6:00 pm Connect/Confirmation Small Group meeting 6:30 pm Adult Choir	12 6:30 pm Church Council	13	14 6:00 pm Worship Service
15 8:00 & 9:15 Worship Services 9:15 Sunday School 1:00 pm Girl Scouts meeting	16 6:30 pm Boy Scout meeting	17	18 5:30 pm Pizza 6:00 pm Connect/Confirmation 6:30 pm Adult Choir	19	20	21 6:00 pm Worship Service
22 Annual Meeting 8:00 Worship Service 9:15 Sunday School 9:15 Annual Meeting 2:00 pm Cub Scout meeting	23 6:30 pm Boy Scout meeting	24	25 6:00 pm Bus leaves for Feed My Starving Children 6:30 pm Adult Choir	26	27	28 6:00 pm Worship Service
29 8:00 & 9:15 Worship Services 9:15 Sunday School	30 6:30 pm Boy Scout meeting	31				

<b>January 1 Worship Assistants</b>	
<b>Coffee Hour:</b> No Coffee <b>Altar Guild:</b> Robin Find & Diane Skelley	<b>Pizza Helpers:</b> No Pizza New Year Break <b>Pizza Patrol:</b>
<b>9:00</b> <b>Acolytes:</b> <b>Greeters:</b> <b>Lay Readers:</b> <b>Communion Assistants:</b> <b>Ushers:</b> Marc & Mindy Chevalier, Andy Steinhagen, Bruce Koepf, Tammy Koepf	<b>Only One Service</b>

<b>January 8 Worship Assistants</b>	
<b>Coffee Hour:</b> <b>Altar Guild:</b> Robin Find & Diane Skelley	<b>Pizza Helpers:</b> No Pizza– Leader meeting <b>Pizza Patrol:</b>
<b>8:00</b> <b>Acolytes:</b> <b>Greeters:</b> <b>Lay Readers:</b> Olivia Jeurissen <b>Communion Assistants:</b> <b>Ushers:</b> Marc & Mindy Chevalier, Andy Steinhagen, Bruce Koepf, Tammy Koepf, Vincent Holtberg & Dominic Veerkamp	<b>9:15</b> <b>Acolytes:</b> <b>Greeters:</b> <b>Lay Readers:</b> Meredith Carstens <b>Communion Assistants:</b> <b>Ushers:</b> Chris & Annette Moylan, Steve Schroeder, Wyatt Fogarty & Jacob Petersen

<b>January 15 Worship Assistants</b>	
<b>Coffee Hour:</b> <b>Altar Guild:</b> Robin Find & Diane Skelley	<b>Pizza Helpers:</b> Amanda Berg & Trisha Anderson <b>Pizza Patrol:</b> Angie Hoff & Kristy Konopacki
<b>8:00</b> <b>Acolytes:</b> Tom Nagel & Jack Nagel <b>Greeters:</b> <b>Lay Readers:</b> <b>Communion Assistants:</b> <b>Ushers:</b> Albert Koepf, Dorothy Koepf, Kevin Koepf, Matt Stier, Bruce Volek, Tim Carlson, Josh Koepf, Kolin Stier & Austin Oldenburg	<b>9:15</b> <b>Acolytes:</b> <b>Greeters:</b> <b>Lay Readers:</b> <b>Communion Assistants:</b> <b>Ushers:</b> Lee Sauter, Bob Fairbanks, Greg Rosario, Daron Anderson

<b>January 22 Worship Assistants</b>	
<b>Coffee Hour:</b> <b>Altar Guild:</b> Robin Find & Diane Skelley	<b>Pizza Helpers:</b> No Pizza– Feed My Starving Children <b>Pizza Patrol:</b>
<b>8:00</b> <b>Acolytes:</b> Dominic Veerkamp <b>Greeters:</b> <b>Lay Readers:</b> <b>Communion Assistants:</b> <b>Ushers:</b> Albert Koepf, Dorothy Koepf, Kevin Koepf, Matt Stier, Bruce Volek, Tim Carlson, Josh Koepf, Kolin Stier & Lauren Koepf	<b>Only One Service</b> <b>Annual Meeting</b>

<b>January 29 Worship Assistants</b>	
<b>Coffee Hour:</b> <b>Altar Guild:</b> Robin Find & Diane Skelley	<b>Pizza Helpers:</b> Erin Carlson & Nicole Koepf <b>Pizza Patrol:</b> Shannon Swenson & Katy Potter
<b>8:00</b> <b>Acolytes:</b> <b>Greeters:</b> <b>Lay Readers:</b> Leah Theis <b>Communion Assistants:</b> <b>Ushers:</b> Brent Schwichtenberg, Greg Schwichtenberg, Juls Robbins, Olivia Jeurissen & Allison Blake	<b>9:15</b> <b>Acolytes:</b> <b>Greeters:</b> <b>Lay Readers:</b> <b>Communion Assistants:</b> <b>Ushers:</b> David & Sara Bungarden, Louis Longhenry, Ron & Dianne Rasmussen, Meredith Carstens & Taylor Menke

# Financial Corner

St. John Financial Results  
 Eleven Months Ended November 30, 2022 and November 30, 2021

General Operating Fund			Year Over Year
	November 30, 2022	November 30, 2021	Increase (Decrease)
Income	\$ 359,456	\$ 350,307	3%
Expenses:			
Personnel	(198,103)	(189,720)	
Office	(16,702)	(15,716)	
Property & Maintenance	(41,148)	(42,407)	
Ministry	(20,357)	(12,490)	
Other	(6,087)	(4,656)	
Benevolence:			
Minneapolis Area Synod	(13,100)	(11,000)	
Camp Onomia	(3,000)	(2,750)	
Cristo Obrero	(2,000)	-	
Foodshelf	(1,500)	-	
Missionary	(2,000)	-	
Belle Plaine Fire Dept	(300)	(300)	
Lutheran Social Services	(1,500)	(1,500)	
Net Receipts / (Expenditures)	\$ 53,659	\$ 69,768	
Cash Balance at January 1 (excl. all loans)	\$ 7,829	\$ (82,735)	
Net Income / (Expenditures)	53,659	69,768	
Misc. cash not affecting income	162	378	
Loan from St. John Foundation (2014 -2016)	-	44,744	
Cash Balance at November 30	\$ 61,650	\$ 32,155	
Property Improvement Fund at Nov 30 (formerly known as Building Fund)	\$ 161,597		

**Actual Income Compared to 2022 Financial Commitment:**

Actual YTD Through November	\$ 300,569
Financial Commitment through November	\$ 313,563



## CALLED TO SERVE THROUGH OUR GIVING

### Offering Received the week of

<b>November 23– November 30</b>	<b>December 1-7</b>
General Fund—\$4,815	General Fund—\$10,082
Building Fund—\$942	Building Fund—\$1,720
<b>December 8-14</b>	<b>December 15-21</b>
General Fund—\$1,222	General Fund— \$5,345
Building Fund—\$416	Building Fund- \$985

**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**