

ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH MESSENGER

CALLED TO WORSHIP / COMMITTED TO SERVE / CONNECTED IN FAITH

June 2020

A monthly Publication of
St. John Lutheran Church

Worship Schedule

In building worship services have been postponed till further notice. Watch our services on Facebook and for other options to come.

Pastors

Pastor Mark Johnson
Pastor Sarah Timian

Office Staff

Jillmarie Stich
Audrey Zellman

Treasurer

Rae Fimon

Custodians

Curt & Cheryl Johnson

Organists

Eileen Hanlon
Diane West

Choir Director
Bri Bergstrom

Accompanist
Sheila Schmidt

148 S. Chestnut St.
Belle Plaine, MN 56011

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Important Information

In cooperation with the Governor's directive to Stay Safe, services in our church building will remain closed. All scheduled meetings and activities are canceled until further notice.

The church office will be staffed Monday through Friday from 8:00 am-5:00 pm.

We do not take these steps lightly. We understand they are taken in the best interest of our neighbors. For now, we remain Connected in Faith even though we are separated by social distance. We will continue to post updates, prayers, videos etc. on our Facebook Page, and are still available by e-mail or phone.

Drive In Worship to begin in June!

Plans are underway to begin a drive in worship service in June on Wednesday evenings at 6:30 p.m., rain or shine. We will be starting out at the Stier Bus Garage parking lot and seeing how it goes from there.

Currently we are waiting on an FM Transmitter (which is on backorder right now). This will allow us to transmit our service for about a block - and allow our drive in worshipers to listen on their car radios. When our transmitter arrives we'll be set to begin.

Watch our Website and Facebook page for updates about when we will start and make plans to join us for drive in worship this Summer!

From Pastor Mark

As I write this, we continue to feel our way along through the unique times we are living through. There is no precedent or template (in living memory) for us to fall back on. We are inventing the wheel as we go along and nobody is really certain as to how things will continue to unfold. Presently, we are seeing the gradual opening of certain activities where appropriate distancing and protocols can be maintained. Among these activities there are discussions about gathering together at church. While we may have a right to open our doors, according to strict and limited protocols, it's another question if people will feel safe and ready to come back. And although we may have a limited right, the greater question is what is the best and most appropriate thing to do. Churches will be making different decisions about what is best for them at this time. The Minneapolis Area Synod Bishop writes, "We entered the time of pandemic saying that our desire to love our neighbor would guide us; that we would respect the best thinking of our elected and healthcare officials. This understanding and commitment has not changed."

In the meantime, we are looking for creative ways to stay connected. We have been recording our services in the sanctuary and having them post on Sunday morning during regular church time on our Website and Facebook page. We are also planning to begin a drive in service in June on Wednesday evenings at 6:30 p.m. We are starting out at the Stier Bus parking lot and we'll see how things go from there. If we need more space, we also have some other ideas. We will broadcast our service over an FM transmitter so that people can listen to it in their cars. We will have all the regular parts of our service for people to participate in, including taking an offering (with pails on poles!) - and providing for Holy Communion. You'll have to make plans to be with us each Wednesday evening (we're planning for rain or shine) for our drive in worship. I am frankly pretty excited about it and I look forward to seeing you there. Stay tuned to our Website and Facebook page for timely and developing information.

Our lives have been turned around and upended in a lot of ways. We are forced into separation from our loved ones and have to try different ways of staying connected. This can be particularly hard for those who have a loved one in a care facility or hospital and are not able to be there. On the other hand, I've also heard from folks who's extracurricular schedules have evaporated and who have a lot more time together now than they used to. And that can present it's own unique challenges.

Of course, we're not the first ones to face challenges. In the long history of humanity people have lived through wars and disasters and pandemics and dislocations of all kinds. Life goes on. And amidst all of the changes, and through all of the ups and downs, God is still God. God still loves and cares for us, even when things aren't easy.

In 1708, Isaac Watts, sometimes called the "father of English hymnody," wrote a beautiful and timeless classic hymn based upon Psalm 90 that is a timely reminder of God's faithfulness throughout the past and God's providential promises for the future. Let the words of this hymn of faith offer to you perspective and hope and promise:

*O God our help in ages past, our hope for years to come,
our shelter from the stormy blast and our eternal home.*

*Under the shadow of your throne your saints have dwelt secure;
sufficient is your arm alone, and our defense is sure.*

*Before the hills in order stood or earth received it's frame,
from everlasting you are God, to endless years the same.*

*A thousand ages in thy sight are like an evening gone,
short as the watch that ends the night before the rising sun.*

*Time, like an ever-rolling stream, bears all our years away;
they 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.*

From Pastor Sarah

GROWING

There's quite some time before harvest, but the seeds I planted— and wrote about— earlier this spring have begun to sprout. It's been kind of nice to look out to the window and see some green on the balcony. For the most part, it seems I haven't destroyed them yet.

They're growing!

Somehow, some way, those little seeds have turned into actual plants. Leaves and vines are filling up the flower pots. One that got planted a little later is just starting to break through the soil. It's actually been pretty easy to get them to this point.

It's not effortless, though.

As low-maintenance as these plants are, they do need some level of care and attention. There's been some thinning, pruning, and watering involved already. If and when they get to the point of producing, they'll need picking, too. Whether they even get to that point will also depend on how they grow in the next few weeks.

Growth takes effort. Good growth— intentional growth— takes more effort.

Once again, it's not just plants we're talking about. Planting seeds is a hopeful act. Growth takes effort. It takes some level of attention and personal investment to help what you planted mature into something more than an idea.

Some of the high school seniors stopped in last week to pick up their quilts before graduation. When they did, we asked what was next for them. I'm sure they've been asked that question a lot. They all had an answer, though. Whether it was work, college, travel, or trade school, each of them had a next step they'd decided to take— an idea that will take some effort to realize.

Now, graduation seems almost too easy of an example. You can't remain a high school student forever, so you have to grow into that next step. The rest of our lives don't just happen to us, though. We do keep growing and changing.

We're in a strange time, and it might seem like our growth has stalled. There are seasons that are like that. This might actually be a significant transition for all of us, though. Every day, we're constantly taking in and adjusting to new information. None of us can operate exactly as we always have. We are changing and adapting to a lot. Just doing that takes effort. Being intentional about how we do that will take more effort.

Some may feel that their lives haven't really changed much or that they've already adjusted to the new normal. I've talked with people who have said that. If this is the case, then I'd invite you to look further into how you could grow this summer. What hopes or ideas do you have? How could you take a step toward realizing them?

Every day takes some level of personal investment to make happen— time, energy, and attention. We have a chance each day to decide where we invest ourselves. We decide what we say or don't say, what we do or don't do, and ultimately, how we grow into tomorrow.

How will you grow this summer? What care and attention can you put into your days to be intentional about that answer?

**Unapproved St. John Lutheran Church Council Minutes
May 21, 2020**

President Matt Stier called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Present:

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

Opening Devotions: Pastor Mark shared a devotional prayer

Approval of Minutes: Members of Council reviewed the minutes from the April 16 2020 Council Meeting. Motion was made, seconded and carried to approve the meeting minutes.

Pastor Mark's Report:

We have been following the Governor's and the Health Care Directives through this time. Currently, we have our office open for our regular 8 - 5 hours Monday through Friday and our custodian and maintenance staff are here, as well. We continue to meet weekly for staff meetings, to provide our weekly worship services recorded on Wednesdays and posting for viewing on Sunday mornings, to be in touch with different groups and individuals according to needs, and to hold up in prayer all those we know of with a special need right now.

Our staff attended a Minneapolis Area Synod Zoom conference with Dr. Michael Osterholm on May 5 to help provide some insight into the current situation and to look ahead. In short, it appears that we will not be getting together in crowds for quite some time. Therefore, in the meantime, we are looking for ways to build our connection and caring for each other while we remain physically apart.

Currently, we are planning to begin providing a drive in worship service starting in the beginning of June. We will be in touch with a variety of people from our congregation to help facilitate the service. We will also continue to record the service and provide it online for those who are not able to be in attendance.

We are looking into ways to collaborate together with others in our congregation to provide connection and caring in other ways through this time. A number of ideas for providing practical and caring contact, as well as helping out with practical needs, are being considered. Watch for more details on this as they develop.

We will be conducting Zoom meetings with our Personnel and Stewardship teams, as well, to provide for such things as Spring staff reviews for our musicians and for a continued emphasis on giving and gratitude.

With uncertainty about when groups can safely meet again, over the Summer we will be looking into distance learning models for use with our Children's programs - Sunday School, Connect and Confirmation. If need be, we will also be considering options for confirming our ninth graders this Fall.

We will be developing and confirming policies as a council around baptisms, weddings and funerals and getting in touch with those who are waiting for these things right now.

The Mission Trip for this Summer has been canceled and Confirmation Camp and the Ice Cream Social will not be held in June and are pending, possibly, for a later date.

We continue to put our strategic planning on hold and will reschedule that for a time when we can best engage ourselves and our congregation in that process.

Pastor Sarah's Report:

Online Ministry— We have continued to practice distance church, and have been maintaining an online presence to remain connected to and supportive of our faith community. Prayers, check-ins, worship videos and musical preludes for worship have all been part of the regular posting schedule. Additional items, such as announcements, church pictures, and updates, have been added as they arise.

Confirmation Camp— The Board of Directors at Camp Onomia elected to suspend June programming. They have tentatively rescheduled Confirmation Camp to August as they explore social distancing options. St. John will need to decide if they still wish to participate. With the uniqueness of this year, I would propose we either 1. Cancel or 2. Treat Confirmation Camp for this year the same way we would any other camp week of the summer, meaning it would be completely optional and parents would be responsible for transportation to and from camp. Camp Onomia will automatically transfer all registrations to the new week if no action is taken. Since we have already registered the class, we will need to contact each family and make sure that we know if they would like to cancel or keep their student registered.

Youth— The Mission Trip has been cancelled for this year. Kirk Franck has emailed the participants to inform and work with them regarding refunds or forwarding deposits to future trips.

Teacher and Leader Recognition— Ordinarily, we would be celebrating the end of the school year with teacher and graduating senior recognitions. Since we cannot gather in person right now, we have worked on other ways to say thank you and congratulations. The Sunday School, Connect, and Confirmation Teachers and Helpers were recognized on May 3, during the online worship service, and a thank you card was mailed to them.

Recognition of Graduating Seniors— The Class of 2020 will be recognized in the online worship service on May 24, and they have been invited to send in a picture to include in a display at the front of the church. They will also be able to pick up a quilt before graduation this week, and have been emailed instructions on when and how they can do that. A big thank you to all involved in making these things happen!

Ongoing Items— Preparation continues for sermons and worship leadership, newsletter articles, and communications with ministry teams and individuals. In addition, writing prayers, check-ins, and descriptions for links and videos to post online has become part of the new routine.

Staff Report Custodial: Curt discussed a few repairs that will be going on in the church. Ceiling fans have been installed in the gathering area, 3 doors will be fixed, light fixtures will be replaced and LED light bulbs will be used.

Treasurer: Rae presented the April financial reports for the General fund and Building fund

Transfers:

No Transfers in or out this month.

Ongoing Business

No new ongoing business to report this month

New Business

A. The council developed a standard policy for the process to allow weddings, baptisms and funerals during the pandemic. A motion was made to follow the ELCA and CDC guidelines, with pastoral staff holding functions at their discretion. Motion was made, seconded and carried.

B. The council discussed the attendance of our 7th grade youth at confirmation camp this summer. Camp Onamia has currently moved the date to August 9-13, 2020 as a tentative date for this group to attend. Discussion was had about making sure all the students would be able to go during the rescheduled times. There is an option to push this year's group into next summer 2021 to attend as a class. A motion was made to re-schedule this year for next year in June, making sure to have the two confirmation groups attend separately, and roll over any deposits made, into next year's cost. Motion made, seconded and carried.

C. The council discussed the rental of the Hayden house property, including rental amount, waiting list of interested renters, rental applications, lease agreement, maintenance and a rental manager. The plan is to have a new renter in the home by July 1, 2020. The council decided the following: Rental cost will be \$1300 a month, year to year lease, providing snow removal from the front sidewalk of the house, and mowing the lawn. A damage deposit of \$650, no pets, no smoking. A motion was made to have Audrey call the interested people on the waitlist, tell them the terms of the rental, have them come into the church office to pick up an application and to have all applications returned by Friday, May 29th at 4:00. Motion made, seconded and carried. The buildings and grounds committee will work on a lease agreement and look for a member to become a rental manager. The council also decided to wall off/section off a portion of the garage on the property for storage. All interested renters will also be required to provide a criminal background and credit check.

Ministry Team Updates

1. Stewardship Committee - no meeting held
 2. Buildings and Grounds Committee - will be meeting soon
 3. Personnel Committee - will be meeting soon
 4. Children's Ministry Committee - had a meeting, still have children's ministry on hold
 5. Small Group/Faith Formation Committee - will be meeting
 6. Worship and Music Committee - will be meeting to discuss outdoor drive-up service
 7. Technology and Communications Committee - no meeting held
- Festivals Committee - no meeting held, but may have Ice Cream Social in August

Motion was made, seconded and carried to adjourn at 8:23pm. Meeting was adjourned followed by the Lord's prayer.

Respectfully Submitted,
Angie Kahle, Secretary

Our staff attended a Minneapolis Area Synod Zoom conference with Dr. Michael Osterholm on May 5 to help provide some insight into the current situation and to look ahead. Below is a link to the video of that call for you to view.

<http://mpls-synod.org/>

Click on the video under the featured resource on the right side of the home page.



Ice Cream Social

Due to the Stay Safe order and the disruption to our church community from COVID-19, the Ice Cream Social Committee has decided to postpone the annual summer event. Our team will reevaluate options and considerations later this summer to decide if a fall Ice Cream Social is a possibility for our congregation.

Have you changed your address, phone number or email? We would like to keep our database up to date so we can keep in contact with you. Please let us know if any of your contact information has changed by calling the church office at 873-6492 or send to our email office@stjohnbelleplaine.org.

Thanks

Do you have internet but don't have Facebook?
You can still see everything we post on our website!
Just look in the lower right corner under "Church Updates"

www.stjohnbelleplaine.org

St. John Lutheran Church
in Belle Plaine, MN

About Worship Serve Connect Contact

*Together...
we are called to worship, committed to serve,
and connected in faith*

Welcome to St. John Lutheran Church!

As followers of our Savior, Jesus Christ, our mission is to love and care for one another— including you. It's the reason we gather every week. Whether you are just visiting the area and seeking a welcoming place to worship or someone looking for a more permanent church home, we invite you to stop in to see what we're all about. As an intergenerational congregation with a highly active youth ministry,

Online Living

Church Updates

Called to Worship: Here is this week's sermon on Psalm 23.
3 days ago

Facebook posts and videos are here!

June 2020



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 Robert Holtberg Adam Jeurissen Curtis Johnson Adrik Pederson	2 Lauren Koepp Nathaniel Rosario Quinn Streich	3 Colton Adelmann Sally Hilgers Parker Trost	4 Greysen Hiles Corinne Mercado	5 Janet Hanson Colin Thaves	6 Evelyn Boeckman Daxon Herrmann
7 Annie Leonard Brooke Moylan Kaylee Shackle	8 Brooke Borresen Jacob Petersen Taylor Tesch	9 Andrea Adelmann Wilma Bartels Mary Sue Meger Evan Nasby Lacy Schultz Carson Unze	10 Georgia Carlson Katie Maier Sharon Sirek	11 Heather Kes Kensi Petty	12 Larry Koniarski Elsie Leonard Isabella Lindahl	13 Jase Schroeder
14 Aiden Fogarty	15 Julie Tesch	16 Leann Fahey Cassie Gerres Aiden Winterfeldt John Winterfeldt	17 Kamryn Stier	18 Courtney Fogarty Larry Kiewel	19 Lorraine Koepp Matthew Nicholas Manley Winterfeldt	20 Alexander Adelmann Ervin Koepp
21 Austin Heinz Alec Koepp Catherine Otto Anessa Smith	22 Diane Schmidt Jim Steffen	23 Arvin Bessel Jennifer Meyer Diane West	24 Allison Koepp Jamie Petersen Marci Schroeder Leah Theis	25 Riaya Buddenhagen Reese Potter	26 Wesley Koepp Peggy Longhenry Kallie Thaumert Annalee Tupy	27 Debbie Bristow Heather Creighton Brian Paulson
28 Isabelle Stier	29 Chris Moore Matthew Olson	30 Sarita Altringer Kyah Bauer Taylor Johnson Mike Smith				

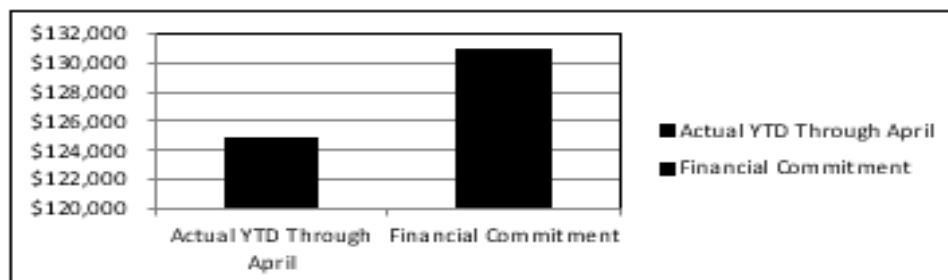
There are now two new ways to give to St. John

You can now give to St. John through a text or through an App. To learn how to use the App or text go to our website, www.stjohnbelleplaine.org, click on "Serve" and then "Giving" and click on the instructions for the App or Text.

Financial Corner

St. John Financial Results
Four Months Ending April 30, 2020 and April 30, 2019

General Operating Fund			Year Over Year
	April 30, 2020	April 30, 2019	Increase
Income	\$ 124,763	\$ 121,714	3%
Expenses:			
Personnel	(103,547)	(101,597)	
Office	(7,741)	(6,988)	
Property & Maintenance	(14,933)	(13,881)	
Ministry Teams	(13,242)	(9,082)	
Other	(1,251)	(2,053)	
Benevolence:			
Minneapolis Area Synod	(4,000)	(4,000)	
Camp Onomia	(750)	(1,000)	
World Hunger (2019)	(250)	-	
Lutheran Social Services	-	(500)	
Net Receipts / (Expenditures)	\$ (20,951)	\$ (17,387)	
Cash Balance at January 1 (excl. all loans)	\$ (84,836)	\$ (64,346)	
Net Income / (Expenditures)	(20,951)	(17,387)	
Misc. cash not affecting income	(236)	(650)	
Paycheck Protection Loan (2020)	57,600	-	
Loan from Building Fund (from 2018 - 2020)	61,500	36,500	
Loan from St. John Foundation (from 2014-2016)	53,888	53,352	
Cash Balance at April 30	\$ 66,965	\$ 7,469	
Building Fund			
Receipts	\$ 35,420	\$ 46,504	-24%
Capital Appeal Expenses	-	-	
Miscellaneous Expenses	-	-	
Loaned to General Fund	(7,000)	(1,500)	
Principal	(38,211)	(36,224)	
Interest	(4,029)	(6,016)	
Net Receipts / (Disbursements)	\$ (13,820)	\$ 2,764	
Loan Balance at January 1	\$ 325,224	\$ 435,544	
Principal Payments	(38,211)	(36,224)	
Loan Balance at April 30	\$ 287,013	\$ 399,320	
Actual Income Compared to 2019 Financial Commitment:			
Actual YTD Through April	\$ 124,763		
Financial Commitment	\$ 130,984		



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

Our pastors are recording our Weekly worship services. Please check our Facebook page or our website to view the services and to watch for updated information.

The Pastors received a letter from the Minneapolis Synod Bishop Ann Svennungsen, which included the information below. We wanted to share it with you.

As your bishop, and in alignment with both Presiding Bishop Eaton and Governor Tim Walz, I strongly ask **congregations to refrain from in-person worship for the foreseeable future** (in certain contexts, drive-in worship is allowable).

I quote my colleague, Rev. Shari Prestemon, Conference Minister, Minnesota Conference of the UCC:

The question here is not whether our faith and faith communities are “essential” to our lives as people of faith; we know they are! The question is whether [opening] our church building doors is “essential” to practicing our faith and advancing the recovery of our communities. We know our churches provide life-giving, Spirit-nurturing meaning to our members and communities as well as often important services. Consider whether or not resuming in-person activities is necessary [while infection rates are still high] to the fulfillment of your mission and purpose. Can you still fulfill your mission and purpose while worshiping, meeting, and planning virtually? What, if any, in-person activities are “essential” to the operation of your church life that you would feel confident about resuming given all known factors?

As hard as it is to encourage you not to return to familiar practices, I am confident that this is the right decision. We can continue to find creative ways to be in relation to each other and to deepen our relationship with God.

We entered the time of pandemic saying that our desire to love the neighbor would guide us; that we would respect the best thinking of our elected and healthcare officials. This understanding and commitment has not changed.

It is tempting to say we want to “return to normal.” Instead, let’s spend time and energy discovering a deeper commitment to justice and health for our neighbors, offering gracious invitation to all, and building life-giving Christian community.

Rev. Ann M. Svennungsen

Bishop