

ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH MESSENGER

CALLED TO WORSHIP / COMMITTED TO SERVE / CONNECTED IN FAITH

May 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.
In Person Worship or Watch
Live on Facebook

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



Senior Graduation Recognition will be held
May 25.

More information inside.

During the Summer months
Sunday Service time will stay at
9:00 am

Saturday Services will change to
Wednesday Worship Service
6:00 pm
Starting June 2— September 1



From Pastor Mark

May is the time of year when the glory of God's creation begins to break out into full flower after the long winter slumber. It has been good to see the rain at the beginning of this warming season after the long drought we have had. And, as I look out the window on a beautiful, sun-splashed day at the deep green grass and the penetrating blue sky, with the buds of leaves and flowers begin to open and spread out toward the life giving sun, it makes me think of the goodness of our God, as the author of creation and as the bringer of salvation.

And that makes me think of how wonderfully these thoughts are captured in the dear old classic hymn, "How Great Thou Art." There are often stories behind such beautiful hymns. And I would like to share with you the story behind this classic hymn, as related in the book "Amazing Grace," by Kenneth Osbeck.

"How Great Thou Art" is an inspiring hymn of praise and adoration that reminds us of God's unlimited power and love in creation and redemption. Although written in the past 1800's, the hymn has become familiar to congregations just since the close of World War II. It especially became an international favorite after Billy Graham's Evangelistic Team used it in their crusades during the late 1940's and early 1950's.

The original text was written by a Swedish pastor, Carl Boberg, in 1886. While visiting a beautiful country estate, Boberg was caught in a sudden thunderstorm. The awesome and violent lightning and thunder quickly ended, leaving clear brilliant sunshine and the calm, sweet singing of the birds in the trees. Falling on his knees in awe and adoration of Almighty God, the pastor wrote stanzas of praise. Swedish congregations began to sing his lines to one of their old folk tunes. The text was later translated into German and Russian and ultimately into English by the Reverend S.K. Hine and his wife, English missionaries to the people of the Ukraine. When war broke out in 1939, it was necessary for the Hines to return to Britain, where Mr. Hine added the fourth stanza to this hymn. These four stanzas, adapted by Stuart Hine, have since ministered to and inspired God's people worldwide:

"O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder consider all the worlds Thy hands have made, I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder, Thy pow'r throughout the universe displayed;

(Refrain)

When through the woods and forest glades I wander, I hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees; when I look down from lofty mountain grandeur and hear the brook and feel the gentle breeze;

(Refrain)

And when I think that God, His Son not sparing, sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in - That on the cross, my burden gladly bearing, He bled and died to take away my sin;

(Refrain)

When Christ shall come, with shout of acclamation, and take me home, what joy shall fill my heart! Then I shall bow in humble adoration and there proclaim, my God, how great Thou art!

Refrain: *Then sings my soul, my Savior God to Thee; how great Thou art! How great Thou art! Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to Thee; how great Thou art! How great Thou art!*

AMEN!

Sponsor a Camper

Sponsor a 7th grader going to Camp Onomia this year! We have 24 seventh graders going to Camp Onomia this coming summer, which costs \$460 per child. Each family pays \$125 toward the cost of camp and St. John pays the remaining \$335. The total cost to St. John this year is \$8,040. If you'd like to contribute towards this cost, please consider making a special donation to the General Fund!

Did You Know?
Fun facts regarding electronic giving at St. John:

- Almost half of all donors to St. John do so electronically.
- Electronic givers range in age from 26 to 91, with everything in between.
- Electronic givers live in Belle Plaine, Jordan, Shakopee, St. Peter, Hutchinson, Arlington, Carver, NYA, Henderson, Green Isle, New Prague, Cologne and Minneapolis.
- Several St. John members have their IRA distributions sent directly to St. John.
- Almost every business day of the month St. John receives electronic donations directly into its bank accounts.
- Approximately 40% of all donations in 2021 have been given electronically.
- Amazon donated \$135 to St. John in 2020 from users of smile.amazon.com
- Thrivent donated \$653 to St. John in 2020, and \$1,259 so far in 2021.

Want to join this group? Call the church office at 952-873-6492 or go to stjohnbelleplaine.org to find out how.

High School Graduates Honored May 25

Congratulations to our class of 2021 graduating high school seniors on achieving this important milestone in your life. On Sunday, May 25, during the worship service we will take time to recognize our seniors and honor them as they graduate and prepare to move on with their plans for the future.

Graduating High School Seniors are:

Jaelyn Borresen

Zachary Fogarty

Jacob Olson

Kierstyn Dietel

Morgan Hagen

Becca Schwichtenberg

Carter Fairbanks

Derek Hoffman

Hanna Tharaldson

Luke Fogarty

Tristan Lindahl

Piper VanZummeren

Wendt Graham

Church Accountant and Office Support

St. John Lutheran Church is searching for applicants for the part time position of Church Accountant and Office Support. St. John Lutheran Church is located in Belle Plaine, MN and is a welcoming ELCA community with more than 800 active members. The job involves working from 8:00-noon Monday through Friday for \$21/hour, partly as the daily accountant for St. John and partly as the morning receptionist. Qualified individuals will need a two-year accounting degree or equivalent experience. In addition, individuals are expected to show initiative and communicate efficiently and effectively for a Christian environment. Interested individuals are invited to apply by submitting an application (available at www.stjohnbelleplaine.org), letter of introduction and resume to:

personnel@stjohnbelleplaine.org or

St. John Lutheran Church
Attn: Hiring Committee
148 S Chestnut St.
Belle Plaine, MN 56011



Unapproved St. John Lutheran Church Council Minutes
April 15, 2021

President Albert Koepp called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m.

Present:

X	Pastor Mark	X	Matt Stier	X	Albert Koepp	X	Wendy Theis
X	Angie Kahle	X	Rae Fimon	X	Jen Nagorski	X	Sue Koenig
X	Chris Zellman		Steve Kelm	X	Ben Aust		Chris Schultz
X	Curt Johnson	X	Anne Herrmann				

Opening Devotions:

Pastor Mark shared opening devotions from John 3:16.

Approval of Minutes:

Members of Council reviewed the minutes from the March 18, 2021 Council Meeting. Motion was made, seconded and carried to approve the meeting minutes from March. Motion was made, seconded and carried to approve the agenda for April 15, 2021.

Pastor Mark's Report:

We have finished our special Midweek Lenten "Holden Evening Prayer" services with our weekly themes of "Basic Lutheran Beliefs." We held special Holy Week services on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. We had two service times for Easter Sunday at 8:00 and 10:30 a.m. Thank you to our choir director, accompanist, and the members of our choir who were present and helped to facilitate the musical parts of our services. After Lent and Holy Week, we have resumed our schedule of Saturday evening services at 6 p.m. and Sunday morning at 9:00 a.m. We continue to live-stream and record our Sunday morning services.

Strategic Planning: I have contacted and scheduled 2 consultants to meet with the council for the purpose of leading the congregation through a thoughtful and engaged strategic planning process that includes visioning, staffing and property considerations. If all goes well, we can decide upon a consultant, form a strategic planning team, and begin making preparations for a process that can happen this Fall.

A First Communion class was held on Sunday evening, April 11, at 5:00 p.m. for our fifth grade students and their parents. Eleven families participated and we will be having a First Communion Sunday for them, together with their families, on April 18. Per our current pandemic protocols, our First Communion participants will receive Communion in their pews together with their families using the little Communion cups we have for that purpose.

A New Member Orientation is planned for Sunday, April 18, at 1:00 p.m. in the Gathering Area of the church. A Welcome Sunday for all participants will be held on the following Sunday, April 25, to recognize and welcome our new members.

We had a Connect and Confirmation Leaders meeting on the Wednesday after Lent and discussed arrangements to finish out this year. We have three class sessions remaining, as well as an end of the year celebration. We looked ahead briefly to next Fall. We also discussed Camp for our 7th and 8th graders, as well as a Mission Trip that is proposed for June of this year to South Dakota.

The Personnel Team has forwarded to the Council some documents it has refined and edited for the council's consideration and approval as church policy. These documents include a probationary period for new hires, a grievance policy and forms for employees, and a disciplinary step policy, as well. We continue to be in the hiring process for a morning Accounting and Office Support person and will keep the council informed.

The Small Group team organized and carried out a special Easter outreach to people who may have had some difficulty in getting out during this past year. Much thanks to our group and the volunteers who helped to make this outreach successful.

Baptisms, Wedding Planning and Funerals continue according to current protocols. Regular and ongoing staff and

congregational communication and coordination continue, preparation and facilitation of various activities, etc.

Staff Reports:

Custodial:

We are experiencing a slight delay implementing Fiber Optics. This is due to an underground board that needs to be installed. There should be no additional expense to the Church.

Curt reported two new projects will need to be done over the summer. The first is sidewalk and curb in the front of the church. The second is to address the low spot in the north parking lot. Council will look forward to a proposal from the Buildings and Grounds committee.

Rae reported an increase in the water bill due to a running toilet and Curt has since replaced all the flippers in toilets to ensure proper sealing.

Treasurer:

Rae presented the quarter-end financial reports and answered questions from Council members.

Transfers:

There were no transfers in or out during the month of March.

Ongoing Business:

Council reviewed and asked for the words “or after” be removed from the Probationary Period Policy and that a signature line and date be added for the Council. Members of the Executive Committee will be able to sign on behalf of the Congregation. Motion was made, seconded and carried to approve the amended version of the Probationary Period Policy.

The Personnel Committee presented the Employee Grievance Policy and Discipline Policy. Council tabled discussion on these policies until the next meeting.

Strategic Planning - Council will be interviewing two companies on Thursday, April 22nd.

The James Company - Scott Jacob is a pastor in Two Harbors. He will be available for an interview at 6 p.m. via Zoom. Chris Zellman will arrange the call. Pastor Mark will forward his email address. Council members will meet in the Gathering Area for the call.

The Joshua Group - Steve Wentworth has experience with Strategic Planning. He will meet with Council members at 7:15 in the Gathering Area.

Reopening

Singing - Last year Council voted to follow the MN Department of Health guidelines during Covid-19. The Worship and Music Committee presented updated guidelines from the MN Department of Health that now allows Congregational singing wearing face coverings. Hymn books will be replaced in the pews so singing can resume for April 24th services.

Revisit Policy on Building Use by Outside Groups - a discussion was had on allowing outside groups to once again use the church facilities. As Covid-19 cases continue to fluctuate, Council will continue to limit the use of the facilities to services only.

New Business:

A discussion was had on the Capital Campaign/Building Fund. The three-year appeal has expired but we still have one year left on the mortgage. Council will look at opportunities to address the congregation through former committee member outreach, temple talks, and newsletters.

Ministry Team Updates:

Stewardship Committee - nothing new

Buildings and Grounds Committee - nothing new

Personnel Committee - meeting this week to review candidates for the Church Accountant and Office Support position.

Children’s Ministry Team - will be in need of new members. Working on Vacation Bible School registration. Hoping to return to in-person learning this fall.

Small Group/Faith Formation Committee - received thank you cards for the Easter Outreach.

Worship and Music Committee - researched MN Department of Health guidelines for congregational singing.

Technology and Communications Committee - nothing new

Motion was made, seconded, and carried to adjourn at 8:05 p.m. Meeting was adjourned followed by the Lord’s prayer.

Respectfully Submitted,
Anne Herrmann, Secretary

May 2021



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
						Brody Curriess Richard Laabs Tyler Shackle
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	Lowell Hiles Craig Johnson Samuel Karl Christopher Zellman Mark Koepp Diane Rasmussen Scott Stier	Aiden Cooper David Einertson Amy Muehlenhardt Miranda Weckman	Trisha Anderson Ryan Creighton Stephen Wolff Graham Theas	Caleb Tracy		Kelsey Gynild Lily Klaverkamp Mitchell Koepp Alex Pederson Matt Stier
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Hannah Skluzacek	Rachel Fahey Jack Fogarty Taylor Jaworski Tom Peterson Allison Theas	Aiden Ladd Abigail Lawler Chris Moylan Jan Palmer	Domingo Rosario	Kaylee Koepp Nolan Schroeder	Abby Bristlin Ciara Fahey Ryan Stier	Lila Auferdhar Adalean Berg McKay Karl Mary Pesta Kyle Siemon
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
Les Bessel Adella Gruetzmacher Brian Vycital	Sadie Beckrius Amy Eppen Kimberly Jaster Kimberly Thaemert	Aimee Cecka Rex Ernst Kevin Koepp Loren Kruschke Andrew Siemon	Matt Hanson Wyatt Herrmann Lou Longhenry	Kendall Hutchison Molly Moonen Timothy Moonen Nicholas Rosario	Jaxon Witt Ryan Maier Raquel Peterson Kiersten Skelley	Matt Fink Vincent Holtberg
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
Daniel Cooper Aubrey Davis Andrea Geires Ewald Gruetzmacher	Jayce Henke Preston Kes	Katelyn Bauer Addison Kahle Weston Koepp	Grace Brueske Trevor Carstens Ron Nagel	Mike Campbell Gavin Fogarty John Grammis Hazel Koepp Alexis Meyer	Kylee Gehrtel	Cassandra Koch Jerry Meger Maren Posthumus Lavonne Rickaby
30	31					
Bruce Baker Cody Buszmann Manley Stier Katelyn Theis	Luann Buerkle Melanie Fogarty Hayvn Moonen Greg Rosario McKenzie Schwichtenberg					

Financial Corner

St. John Financial Results Three Months Ending March 31, 2021 and March 31, 2020

General Operating Fund			Year Over Year
	March 31, 2021	March 31, 2020	Increase (Decrease)
Receipts *	\$ 77,475	\$ 97,852	-21%
Expenses:			
Personnel	(51,293)	(79,058)	
Office	(4,805)	(6,269)	
Property & Maintenance	(10,344)	(12,179)	
Ministry	(1,344)	(13,241)	
Other	(1,323)	(871)	
Benevolence:			
Minneapolis Area Synod	(3,000)	(3,000)	
Camp Onomia	(750)	(750)	
Lutheran Social Services	(500)	-	
2019 World Hunger	-	(250)	
Net Receipts / (Expenditures)	\$ 4,116	\$ (17,766)	
Cash Balance at January 1 (Excl. Loans)	\$ (82,735)	\$ (84,836)	
Net Income / (Expenditures)	4,116	(17,766)	
Misc. cash not affecting income	377	(236)	
Loan from Building Fund (2018 & 2019)	44,500	54,500	
Loan from St. John Foundation (2014-2016)	54,384	53,843	
Cash Balance at March 31	\$ 20,642	\$ 5,505	

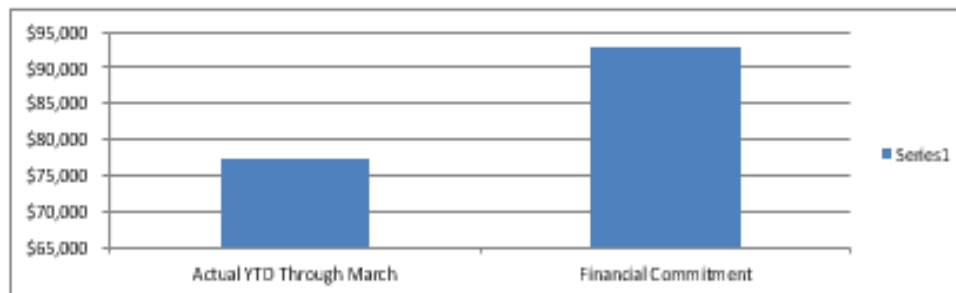
* 41% of Contributions were received electronically in 2021 - thank you!

Building Fund			
Receipts **	\$ 23,972	\$ 27,429	-13%
Principal	(29,815)	(28,579)	
Interest	(1,865)	(3,101)	
Net Receipts / (Disbursements)	\$ (7,708)	\$ (4,251)	
Loan Balance at January 1	\$ 208,857	\$ 325,224	
Principal Payments	(29,815)	(28,579)	
Loan Balance at March 31	\$ 179,042	\$ 296,645	

** 39% of Contributions were received electronically in 2021 - thank you!

Actual Income Compared to 2021 Financial Commitment:

Actual YTD Through March	\$ 77,475
Financial Commitment	\$ 92,742



May 2, 2021 Ushers	
8:00	10:30
Curt & Cheryl Johnson Bryn Davis Corey Johnson Craig Johnson	Scott Ruud Alex Ruud Griffin Ruud Dale Mercado Jake Mercado Jerry Meger Alex Meger

May 9 and 16, 2021 Ushers	
8:00	10:30
Myron Bratsch Kirk Franck Matt Kes Jeff Eppen Brian Siekmann	Brent Koepp Mitchell Koepp Jackson Stauffacher Justin Stauffacher Todd Kruggel

May 23 and 30, 2021 Ushers	
8:00	10:30
Terry Siemon James & John Karl Dan & Wyatt Herrmann Tim Bristlin	Chris & Annette Moylan Mike & Zach Olson Jason & Trevor Gruhn Steve Schroeder

In Memory

A Memorial was given to the General Fund in memory of Debbie Bristow by Leroy and Joan May.

Memorials were given to the General Fund and Building Fund in memory of Doris Wigand by Bruce and Sue Volek and Mary Koepp.

A Memorial was given to the Building Fund in memory of Willard Laabs by Bruce and Sue Volek.

Memorials were given to the Building Fund in memory of Lorraine Koepp by Family and Friends.

CALLED TO SERVE THROUGH OUR GIVING

Offering Received the week of

April 1-7
General Fund—\$6,092
Building Fund—\$4,295

April 8-14
General Fund—\$6,459
Building Fund—\$1,400

April 15-21
General Fund—\$8,041
Building Fund—\$5,421

April 22-28
General Fund— \$2,716
Building Fund- \$910