

ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH MESSENGER

CALLED TO WORSHIP / COMMITTED TO SERVE / CONNECTED IN FAITH

May 2022

A monthly Publication of
St. John Lutheran Church

Worship Schedule

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

Sunday Worship 8:00 a.m.
In Person Worship or Watch
Live on Facebook

9:15 a.m. Worship Service

9:15 a.m. 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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Belle Plaine, MN 56011

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Last Day of Sunday School
And
Recognition of Sunday School Teachers, Helpers,
Connect and Confirmation Leaders
Sunday, May 1

Senior Graduation Recognition
will be held
May 22.
Come and congratulate our Seniors
at the 9:15 Service



Sunday Service time change
9:00 am
Starting May 29— September 4

Wednesday Worship Service
6:00 pm
Starting June 1— August 31

From Pastor Mark

Let's talk about worship. Particularly as we come out of the long Covid interruption we have been living through, it is an appropriate time to think about why and how we do what we do. It's time to re-think and reassess what it means to be a Community of Faith that meets together for worship, learning, fellowship and service.

Let's talk about worship. Why do we do it? In it's most basic sense, it goes back to an explanation that I remember one of my seminary professors giving: We worship God - because God is to be worshiped. Pretty plain and simple. This reflects the natural order of things. It is the natural response of the creature to the creator. We bow down before the one who makes us and who makes all things with a sense of awe and wonder. We worship God because God is to be worshiped.

That's a nice theological answer. On a more practical level, if you ask someone why they worship I suppose many folks would respond, "to get something out of it." And that's understandable. Hopefully, worship can provide a good sermon and uplifting music. Hopefully we can come away saying that we have "gotten something out of it."

But before we seek to "get something," we need to back up and ask what we are "giving" to the experience of worship. Is our heart and mind in the right state? Are we fully present? This is important. Lutherans are a liturgical church. The liturgy we use, like the Order for Confession, the Creed, the Prayers, the Music, etc. are the pieces and parts that form the body of our worship. The word liturgy means "the work of the people." That means there is some work to do on our part. Worship is not meant to be something passive but to be something we actively and intentionally engage. The words provide a vehicle for us to use collectively. But the words of the liturgy are not just something we say with our mouths but are also meant to be deeply engaged with and reflective in our heart. Worship is meant to be a vehicle where we, in community with other worshipping Christians, open ourself and immerse ourself and offer ourself to the living God.

So, before we ask how much we are "getting" from worship, we need to first ask how much we are "giving" to worship. Because, I believe, the more we give the more we will get. The giving comes first and is a first priority. Worship, in it's best sense, is meant to draw us out of ourselves and beyond ourselves into the living presence of God.

In this sense, I remember back when I lived in Rothsay. I had a town church and a country church and I'd shuttle between both of them on Sunday mornings. One morning, I was running late from my country church into my town church. I hustled in, a bit flustered and out of breath, and found myself up in the front of the congregation for the opening hymn. We were singing a familiar hymn like "Beautiful Savior." And as I looked out over the people, I saw Ida singing this dear old hymn. Her eyes were closed. She knew the words. She didn't have to look at the book. And I could just see on her face that she was really worshipping. She was really singing this hymn from her heart. And it spoke to me. Even though I was up front, I realized that I needed to get myself into worship, too. Ida's example made a big difference to me that day. I can still see her beautiful example of worship in my mind's eye and I cherish that memory.

Having said some things about what worship is, it would be good to say a few things about what it is not. It is not entertainment. We live in a culture that is saturated with entertainment. Entertainment is a passive thing. You sit back to be entertained. Entertainment is all about "what have you got for me?" I'm at the center of it. What's in it for me? And if I'm not getting something from it I'll just change the channel, or check out. Worship is not entertainment. Worship, as we've talked about, involves active and intentional engagement. God is at the center of it. Johann Sebastian Bach used to sign all of his music with the phrase, "Soli Deo Gloria," Latin for "To God Alone the Glory." He was not interested in being lauded as a fine entertainer through the music he had written. He intended his music to be a vehicle through which the glory was given to God. That's the idea. God is at the center of it.

Just as pertinent as that point is within the entertainment culture that we live in is the idea that worship is also not a product to be consumed online alone. I realize that this has been a necessary option during the times we have been living through. And, for some people who can't get out or who have some other special need, it will continue to be an option.

For most of us, however, while it can be okay if we need to use this option occasionally, it is not preferred. That's because, even though it can be convenient, worship is not meant to be a product to be consumed online, alone. It can be too easy to simply fall into the trap of convenience. I remember talking with a guy (not from St. John) at the gas pump when we were in the middle of the Covid lockdown. He said, "Boy, I like this online worship service. I can just roll out of bed and watch in my pajamas." I said, "Well, I'm glad that we have that option right now. We need to have that option right now. But don't like to too much! The time is coming when we'll need to get back together again."

I think we are emerging into that time. I think it's time to reassess the place and role of worship in our life. Instead of being a product to consume online, worship, in it's best sense, is meant to be an experience within a gathered community of believers. You cannot get the real experience of worship online in the way that we are meant to get it within a community.

Christianity is not a private enterprise. By its very nature it is a communal enterprise. To use St. Paul's beautiful metaphor, we are meant to be the Body of Christ together, not simply a disembodied ear or eye or hand out there all by ourselves. Worship, in its best sense then, is also an inherently communal enterprise. We are meant to be together.

While God is at the center of a genuine worship experience, I think it's also important to point out that worship is also an opportunity for mutual fellowship and encouragement. We feel supported in the act of being together. So, if you watch the service online, I can't see you. I'm not with you. We are each apart from one another. I miss the encouragement and support of your presence. Worship is not just about us. It is also about us together in a community of gathered encouragement and support.

I read an article recently entitled "Why Churches Should Drop Their Online Services." It made some of the same point I'm making here. The cost of being apart is steep. We need human touch and interaction. We are embodied beings and worship is an embodied experience. We need to hear the babies crying and see our friend across the aisle. We need to say hello to the person who is going through a hard time. We need to hear the choir crescendo. We need to taste the embodied presence of Christ in the bread and wine. We need to engage our minds and hearts and senses.

While I don't think we'll be discontinuing our online service, I do think it's time to consciously reassess its proper place and value. It would be ironic if the isolation we were forced into during Covid becomes normative. We don't want that to happen.

Worship should not be simply measured by ease and convenience. We miss out on a whole lot if we don't make the effort to be together. And yes, it does take effort. We have to get out of our pajamas and get together. I can remember my Mom rallying us as kids and rallying my own kids to get out the door. It's not always convenient. It takes commitment and effort. But this is as it should be. Because, as Christians, worship should be a priority in our lives. We gather together to worship God because we believe that God is to be worshiped. In doing so together, we are mutually encouraged and edified. And we are sent out into the course of our daily lives, until we meet again, with the parting benediction to "Go in peace, and serve the Lord!"

I look forward to seeing you in worship. I miss you when you are not there. Thank you for the gift of your presence. It means a lot!



Save the Date

September 11, 2022

Mortgage Burning Celebration

Watch for more information to come



High School Graduates Honored May 25

Congratulations to our class of 2022 graduating high school seniors on achieving this important milestone in your life. On Sunday, May 22, during the 9:15 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:

Caelin Brueske	Walker Herrmann	Remi Meyer	Samuel Schultz
Aiden Cooper	Ashton Holbrook	Sydney Meyer	Kaylee Shackle
Alexis Edberg	Chase Jaworski	Elissa Moonen	Madelyn Siekmann
Austin Eyrich	Lillianne Kahle	Emily Nagel	Karim Tolbert
Elliana Fahey	Preston Kes	Abbie Perry	Zachary Tracy
Sydney Fors	Jade Laue	Raquel Peterson	Samual Vanzummeren
Derek Gruhn	Luke Luskey	Nathaniel Rosario	

Recognition of Sunday School Teachers, Helpers, Connect and Confirmation Leaders

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! We want to extend many thanks to everyone who helped make our youth program successful this year! Thank you for being GENER-OUR with your time and talents! We know everyone leads a busy life and we appreciate your dedication and commitment to our youth.

As we end this Sunday School year, we would like to take the opportunity to say THANK YOU to the many people who have shared their faith with the children at St. John.

Sunday School Teachers and Helpers:

Pre-K 3's: Allie Theas, Cassie Hughes Anderson, Lucy Leonard

Pre-K4's: Katie Klaverkamp, Katie Herrmann, Laura Mellgren

Kindergarten: Andrea Ander, Andrea Mahoney Hilgers, Jessie Stene

1st Grade: Bryn Davis, Jenny Hardel, Aimee Cecka, Julie Oldenburg

2nd Grade: Emily Aust, Jenny Petty

3rd Grade: Katie Wermerskirchen, Ashley Schultz, Ann Carstens

4th Grade: Shannon Swenson, Deanne Fogarty, Chris Potter, Katy Potter, Kamryn Stier

Music: Rachel Kelm

Children's Ministry Team: Sarah Leonard, Chelsey Crosby, Tara Henke, Chelsea Hutchison, Katy Potter, Allie Theas

Connect Leaders:

Neal Williamson, Jennie Nagorski, Holly Stier, Jill Martin, Shara Hiles, Andrea, Brook Borresen, Deanne Fogarty, Heather Hornaman, Andrea Adelman, Margaret Schwichtenberg

Confirmation Leaders:

7th Grade: Sue Steinhagen, Dave Bungarden, Anne Carstens, Kim Thaemert, Matt Kes, Heather Kes, Wayne Nagel, Alex Hoff, Angie Hoff, Andrea Gerres

8th Grade: Karen Bessel, Jamie Peterson, Cayla Menke, Tonya Smith, Cassie Gerres, Diane Gerres, Teresa Latzke, Cody Schultz

Pizza Coordinator: Michelle Melheim





May Children's Ministry Update

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! We want to extend many thanks to everyone who helped make our youth programs successful this year! Thank you for being GENEROUS with your time and talents! We know everyone leads a busy life and we appreciate your dedication and commitment to our youth. As this year wraps up, we are starting to think about teachers for next year. If you're interested in teaching or helping out in any way next year, please contact us at youthsjlc@gmail.com!

Sunday, May 1st: **End of the Year Program**

VBS REGISTRATION NOW OPEN!

Vacation Bible School (VBS) will be **June 20-23!** VBS schedule is as follows: Children in grades Kindergarten through 6th attend from 9am-3pm. They will need one snack and a sack lunch each day. **Please register your child in the same class they were in for the 2021-22 school year.** The cost of VBS is \$50/child for Kdg.-6th grade or a \$150 family cap. Scholarships are available. Registration is now open! Click the link below:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSejkUdHr9I5-uQcoWVehes6ZUWBWaMmF5Sf_0teqsgHDIU7mg/viewform

VBS ON THE FARM Information and Registration (August 1-5):

We are excited to announce a wonderful summer camp opportunity: VBS on the Farm!

VBS on the Farm is a partnership between Prairie Oaks Institute (POI) and Cristo Obrero. POI seeks to be a catalyst of rejuvenation for people and the planet, creating space for renewal and fostering education opportunities around environmental sustainability. Cristo Obrero is a mission of the ELCA, accompanying Latino families with support, and building relationships with neighbors across cultures.

Our goal is to create a nature based, bilingual Vacation Bible School opportunity, giving children space to play in the beauty of nature, build relationships across cultures, and learn that God's love is for everyone.

Online registration is now open!

Registration of Participants:

<https://form.jotform.com/220616326455150>

Volunteer Registration:

<https://form.jotform.com/220615862577159>

VBS NEEDS: It takes many people to make the week of VBS successful. Here are a few things we are looking for during the week. We need the following:

Confirmation/Sr. High/Adult Helpers to help the counselors, lunch and any other needs during the week.

Meals for counselors (lunch and dinner Sunday-Thursday)

Housing for counselors (Sunday night-Wednesday night)

Upcoming Events

On our last day of the year, **May 1st**, *the Sunday School children will sing some of their favorite songs and partake in a children's sermon at 9:15 service.* We will also recognize and thank all of our Sunday School, Connect and Confirmation teachers and helpers. After service, there will be ice cream sundaes in the gathering area!

Connect Update

Thank you to all of our Connect teachers that helped to make this year great!

Our last night of class will be Wednesday, April 27th.

Unapproved St. John Lutheran Church Council Minutes
April 21, 2022

Vice President Chris Schultz called the meeting to order at 6:39 p.m.

Present:

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

Opening Devotions:

Pastor Mark and Council Members opened the meeting with a prayer.

Approval of Minutes:

Members of Council reviewed the minutes from March 17, 2022 Council Meeting. The minutes were amended to reflect facilitation by Vice President Chris Schultz. Motion was made, seconded and carried to approve the meeting minutes from March. A motion was made, seconded and carried to approve the agenda for April 21, 2022.

Pastor Mark's Report:

We have enjoyed the return of our Midweek Lenten times together on Wednesday evenings with our Confirmation students, families and leaders providing a Soup & Sandwich Supper followed by Holden Evening Prayer featuring a variety of speakers each week sharing on what their Christian Faith means to them. As I write this, we are entering Holy Week with services planned for Maundy Thursday and Good Friday at 7:00 p.m. Easter Sunday will feature special service times of 7:00 and 9:30 a.m. with an Easter Breakfast in between services beginning at 8:00 a.m.

Connect and Confirmation resume following our late Lenten Season this year with an eye on finishing classes, meeting with adult leaders to assess the year together, and making plans to celebrate the end of our current class year together. We have been blessed with really fine adult leaders and it has been very nice to be able to physically be together with each other for our class times this year instead of having to do everything online as we have had to do for the previous years.

We continue to be in transition from the time of Covid and, looking ahead, will be planning to have a meeting of our various leaders to plan for staffing and scheduling of a resumption of a variety of things that have been on hold through this time, including ushering, greeting, communion, etc. After being off for two years, it will take some time to get these things reconstituted properly. We would like to try to get these things up and running again by this Fall.

After taking a big step of faith to provide much needed space for our congregation with the new addition to our building in 2003, St. John has faithfully and finally paid off the mortgage. A Mortgage Burning Committee was formed at our January Annual Meeting and they are meeting and planning a celebration in the Fall of the year when we can be together again after the Summer. The council would also like to communicate to the congregation that, although the mortgage has been paid, there is need to set up a new fund to provide need maintenance on a variety of items, including heating and cooling systems, etc. The Building and Grounds Committee is detailing a list of what and how much is needed to provide for these things and will be forthcoming in communicating that to the congregation.

Church attendance coming out of Covid times is a concern. While we are grateful to have an online option that was and, for some people, remains necessary, it is also true that an online option was never meant to replace an in-person worship experience. Please refer to my newsletter article in this issue where I address this concern more fully.

Regular weekly and monthly duties of the parish continue apace. Pastoral preparation, facilitation, coordination and outreach in a variety of ways continues to keep me busy.

Staff Reports:

Custodial:

Curt reported the parts for the furnace were received and installed.

Treasurer:

Robin walked through the monthly and quarterly reports and answered questions from Council members.
Employer Retention Credit - tabled until funds are received.

Transfers:

Transfer In - none

Out - none

Ongoing Business:

Strategic Planning was tabled at this time.

Foundation Loan Repayment was tabled at this time.

A discussion was had about restarting committees, sending out the newsletter by mail, and service times noting from Memorial Day through Labor Day there will be one service at 9:00 a.m. on Sundays and the Saturday service will move to Wednesday nights. Wendy Theis took the action to contact the office to reboot the newsletter team.

A discussion was had on rebranding the Building Fund envelopes to Property Improvement Fund.

The Building and Grounds Committee submitted a list of repairs for Council's consideration. Motion was made, seconded, and approved to purchase an 80+” television that will be used to display announcements in the gathering area.

The Mortgage Burning Committee has aligned on a date for the celebration. The celebration will take place on September 11th. There will be a Polka service at 9:30 a.m. with Polka music continuing through the event. Pulled pork sandwiches and chips will be served and dessert food trucks will be available for purchases. There will also be a fire pit for the burning of the mortgage.

New Business:

A motion was made, seconded, and approved to be the backup location in case of inclement weather for the Vacation Bible School (VBS) that is being hosted at Prairie Oaks (Cristo Obrero) August 1st through August 5th.

A motion was made, seconded, and approved to be a temporary daytime emergency shelter for Scott County.

A discussion was held regarding in person worship and Pastor Mark will address this topic in an upcoming newsletter. The membership list was also discussed. The membership list contains baptized and confirmed members. An active member is defined as a person that attends service twice a year or contributes. The quorum needed for the annual meeting is based on 10% of confirmed members being present. A standing agenda item will be added to the October/November Council agenda to review and update the membership list in preparation for the annual meeting. Last year, Council approved having two chaperones attend Camp Onamia with the youth. Pastor Mark will be attending Camp Onamia but if any parents are interested in attending, please contact a Small Group Leader or the church office. Chaperones are not involved in preparing or delivering any program material and there are no additional costs incurred to have chaperones attend.

No action was taken on an advertisement from a property broker to purchase property.

Ministry Team Updates:

Stewardship Committee - nothing new to report.

Buildings and Grounds Committee - presented list of repairs and noted that another tree needs to be removed from the parsonage property.

Personnel Committee - preparing for staff reviews.

Children's Ministry Team - nothing new to report.

Small Group/Faith Formation Committee - will be meeting to find volunteers.

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 8:23 p.m. Meeting was adjourned followed by the Lord's prayer.

Respectfully Submitted,
Anne Herrmann, Secretary

May 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8:00 & 9:15 Worship Services 9:15 Last Day of Sunday School 2:00pm Girl Scout meeting	6:30pm Boy Scouts meeting	11:00 Lutheran Home Service 1:30pm Kingsway Service	6:30pm Adult Choir			6:00pm Worship Service
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
8:00 & 9:15 Worship Services	6:30pm Boy Scouts meeting	5:15 pm Women's Group meeting (WELCA)	6:30 pm Adult Choir			6:00pm Worship Service
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
8:00 & 9:15 Worship Services 8:50 Council Executive meeting	6:30pm Boy Scouts meeting			6:30pm Church Council		6:00pm Worship Service
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
8:00 & 9:15 Worship Services Graduation Recognition at 9:15 service	6:30pm Boy Scouts meeting					
29	30	31				
9:00 Worship Service	Memorial Day Office closed					

May 2022



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

Financial Corner

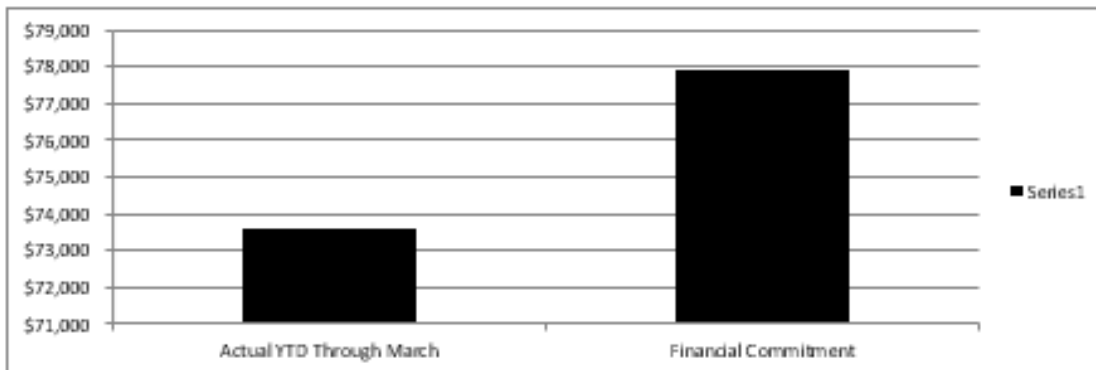
St. John Financial Results Three Months Ending March 31, 2022 and March 31, 2021

General Operating Fund			Year Over Year
	<u>March 31, 2022</u>	<u>March 31, 2021</u>	<u>Increase (Decrease)</u>
Income *	\$ 73,610	\$ 77,475	-5%
Expenses:			
Personnel	(53,907)	(51,293)	
Office	(4,385)	(4,805)	
Property & Maintenance	(12,007)	(10,344)	
Ministry	(3,458)	(1,344)	
Other	(4,450)	(1,323)	
Benevolence:			
Minneapolis Area Synod	(4,400)	(3,000)	
Camp Dnomia	(1,000)	(750)	
Lutheran Social Services	(500)	(500)	
Net Receipts / (Expenditures)	<u>\$ (10,497)</u>	<u>\$ 4,116</u>	
Cash Balance at January 1 (Excl. Loans)	\$ 7,829	\$ (82,735)	
Net Income / (Expenditures)	(10,497)	4,116	
Misc. cash not affecting income	174	377	
Loan from Building Fund (2018 & 2019)	-	44,500	
Loan from St. John Foundation (2014-2016)	39,782	54,384	
Cash Balance at March 31	<u>\$ 37,288</u>	<u>\$ 20,642</u>	

* 44% of Contributions were received electronically in 2022 - thank you!

Actual Income Compared to 2022 Financial Commitment:

Actual YTD Through March	\$ 73,610
Financial Commitment	\$ 77,931



May 1, 2022 Ushers	
8:00 Service	9:15 Service
James & John Karl Dan & Wyatt Herrmann Tim Bristlin	Chris & Annette Moylan Mike & Zach Olson Jason & Trover Gruhn Steve Schroeder



May 8 & 15, 2022 Ushers	
8:00 Service	9:15 Service
Brian Schmidt Jonathan Schmidt Jason Schmidt Doug Hillstrom Dave Latzke Jerold Stauffacher	Lee Sauter Bob Fairbanks Greg Rosario Daron Anderson

May 22 & 29, 2022 Ushers	
8:00 Service	9:15 Service
Marc & Mindy Chevalier Andy Steinhagen Bruce Koepp Tammy Koepp Michael Gustafson	David & Sara Bungarden Louis Longhenry Ron & Dianne Rasmussen

Acolytes for May 8:00 Service		
May 1	Josephine Berg	Mya Bommelyn
May 8		

CALLED TO SERVE THROUGH OUR GIVING	
Offering Received the week of	
March 31– April 6	April 7-13
General Fund—\$8,478	General Fund—\$7,528
Building Fund—\$1,985	Building Fund—\$1,757
April 14-20	April 21-27
General Fund—\$10,844	General Fund— \$2,841
Building Fund—\$1,903	Building Fund- \$845