

ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH MESSENGER

CALLED TO WORSHIP / COMMITTED TO SERVE / CONNECTED IN FAITH

November 2022

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

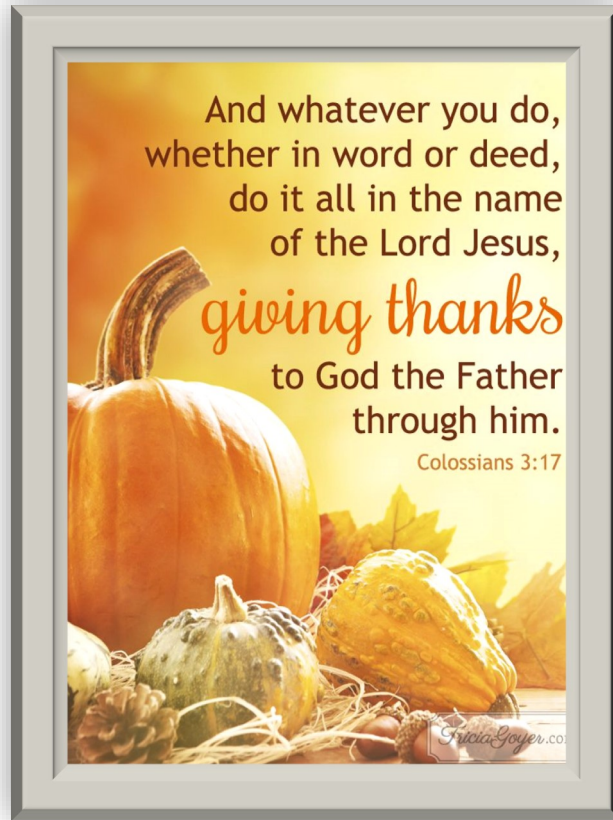
Eileen Hanlon

Accompanist

Sheila Schmidt

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Ecumenical Community Thanksgiving Service At St. John Lutheran Church Monday - November 21, 2022 7:00 p.m.

An Ecumenical Community Thanksgiving Service will be held this year at St. John Lutheran on Monday, November 21, at 7:00 p.m. The service is sponsored by the congregations of St. John Lutheran Church, Our Lady of the Prairie Catholic Church, First Presbyterian Church, Redeemer Lutheran Church, West Union Lutheran Church, River Rock Christian Missionary Alliance and Presence Church. River Rock will be hosting the Service this year and providing the refreshments after the Service.

The Thanksgiving Worship is also intended to remember the needs of others. Designated offerings (indicated in the check memo line) will go to either the Good Samaritan Fund (to help transient people in our area) or to the Belle Plaine Food Shelf. Undesignated and cash offerings will go to the Food Shelf.

In addition, worshipers are also encouraged to support the Belle Plaine Food Shelf by bringing donations of nonperishable food items.

The sponsoring churches of our annual Ecumenical Service thank you for your participation and support and wish for all of you a happy Thanksgiving!

From Pastor Mark

“Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all the lands! Serve the Lord with gladness! Come into his presence with singing! Know that the Lord is God! It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him, bless his name! For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.” (Psalm 100)

Giving thanks to the Lord is a healthy spiritual practice that dates back millenia. Psalm 100, cited above in it’s entirety, is about 3,000 years old. This is one example of praise and thanksgiving to God in the Scriptures. One Psalm that I’ve liked ever since I was in high school is Psalm 103 which opens with the beautiful words:

“Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name! Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits. He forgives all my sins and heals all my diseases; he redeems my life from the pit and crowns me with steadfast love and mercy. He satisfies me with good things so that my youth is renewed like the eagle’s.” These are just the opening lines. You’ll have to get out your Bible and read the rest of this great Psalm for yourself.

In the United States, our tradition of having a special day of Thanksgiving is often traced back to the time in 1621 when the early colonists joined together for a special time of thanks, feasting and celebration following a good harvest. For the early colonists, this was extremely important since a bad harvest might, and sometimes did, lead to starvation over the course of the harsh winter months. Although the farmer labors to plant and cultivate a crop, it was commonly recognized that the food and sustenance drawn from the earth was a gift from God. It was, therefore, appropriate to remember and give thanks to God. Certainly the early colonists were thinking of those verses from Psalm 104 which say:

“All of these look to you to give them their food in due season. When you give it to them, they gather it up; when you open your hand, they are satisfied with good things.”

Thinking about this, I like the way that Martin Luther explains the fourth petition of the Lord’s Prayer in his small catechism: *“Give us this day our daily bread.”* Martin Luther explains:

“God gives daily bread, even without our prayer, to all people, though sinful, but we ask in this prayer that he will help us to realize this and to receive our daily bread with thanks.”

Then Luther asks the question, *“What is meant by daily bread?”* I particularly like the way he expands on the notion of “daily bread” to mean not only the food that we eat but also much more than that. Notice how he goes on to explain:

“Daily bread includes everything needed for this life, such as food and clothing, home and property, work and income, a devoted family, an orderly community, good government, favorable weather, peace and health, a good name, and true friends and neighbors.”

Cicero, a Roman writer, once remarked: *“A thankful heart is not only the greatest virtue, but the parent of all other virtues.”* St. Paul writes to the Philippians: *“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and supplication, together with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God which passes all understanding will keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.”*

Paul is instructing the Philippians here to present all of their needs to God. But I am particularly struck by the little clause that seasons the middle of his instruction, *“together with thanksgiving.”* If we only focus on what we feel is lacking, pretty soon our hearts and minds become gloomy and despairing. The antidote for this is, as Paul suggests, is to also remember all that we have for which to be thankful.

There is a rich tradition of giving thanks in the hymns that we offer to God as part of our worship together. A small sample would certainly include: *Blessed Assurance; Praise to the Lord, the Almighty; Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing; For the Beauty of the Earth; We Plow the Fields and Scatter; Great is Thy Faithfulness; Come, Ye Thankful People, Come; Now Thank We All our God.* As I think about St. Paul’s instruction to the Philippians to remember their needs before God - *“together with thanksgiving”* - I am particularly struck by how well the hymnwriter Johnson Oatman (1856-1922) expressed this idea in his hymn *“Count Your Blessings.”* The first verse goes:

“When upon life’s billows you are tempest tossed, when you are discouraged, thinking all is lost, count your many blessings, name them one by one, and it will surprise you what the Lord has done.”

“Name them one by one,” he writes. What a powerful spiritual practice this can be, and what a helpful tonic for the sore and troubled soul. It may not mean that all the troubles and challenges we face in life will vanish. But it does mean that, amidst all of these things, our hearts and minds can also remember what is good and right and well with us. A thankful heart makes for a strong heart.

For a Christian, every day serves as an opportunity for reflection, prayer and thanksgiving. However, I am also glad that we have a particular holiday this month that is set aside for the purpose of giving thanks. It serves as a regular reminder in the course of the year of the importance of this practice.

Toward this end, once again, I am pleased that St. John is joining with other congregations from our area for our yearly Ecumenical Community Thanksgiving Service. The number of participating congregations in this service has increased over the past couple of years and this service is one of those special times when our various faith communities can come together for the express purpose of praising the goodness of God together. Please see the accompanying article on this year’s service and I hope to see you there.

Wherever these words may find you on your own journey in life, know that God is good, that he loves you enough to give his only Son so that you might receive forgiveness and mercy and the hope and promise of new life in him. Remember that all good things come from the generous and life giving hand of the Lord. Reflect upon the beauty of creation, the promise of redemption, the support of loving relationships. All of these and every other blessing come from the God who knows you and loves you more than you can imagine. And so may your heart be warmed as you meditate upon God’s goodness with a thankful and grateful heart - as you count your many blessings, count them one by one.

Pr. Mark



The annual W/ELCA Christmas Dinner for all Congregation and Community members, family and friends will be held on Tuesday, December 6th in our Gathering area here at St. John.

Social hour will begin at 6
Dinner to follow at 6:30.

A Chicken and Bar-B-Q Beef dinner will be served by Cindy's Cafe.

Ticket prices will be \$15.00.

Tickets will be available during the month of
November in the Church office to purchase Monday thru Friday and also on
each of the Sundays between and after the Church services



November Children's Ministry Update

In October, we focused on lessons about Joseph and his brothers. We learned that even in bad times, God is always with us, and we can trust that God can turn bad things into good. This month, we will be practicing for our Christmas Program and focusing on the Christmas story.

Sunday School Students, Pre-K through 4th grade, will perform the Christmas program on **Sunday, December 11th** at 9:15am. If you would like to volunteer with our youth at St. John, but can't commit to teaching every Sunday, then the Christmas Season is an ideal time to sign up as a short term volunteer! By volunteering, you can help make this Christmas program one to remember for yourself, our children, and our congregation. If you are able to help with our Children's Christmas Program, please contact youthsjlc@gmail.com . We are in need of help with the following areas:

1. Costumes (inventory current costumes and order or make those that are needed)
2. Set / Props (build, set up and take down)
3. Music Assistant - play piano so Rachel can direct music
4. Classroom helpers - Assist teachers in any way to help direct the children (5 weeks commitment!)
5. Serve Jesus' birthday cake at coffee hour

Important Dates:

Nov. 6th: Christmas Program Casting (roles will be sent home during Sunday School)

Nov. 13th & 20th : Christmas Program Practice

Nov. 27th - NO CLASS - Thanksgiving break

Connect Update

In the month of October, Connect learned about the birth of Jesus, Temptation, and The Apostles. They have received catechisms and are working weekly on memorizing the Lord's Prayer and the Apostles Creed. In November, they will complete a service project at Feed My Starving Children in Chanhassen. They will also cover bible lessons about Hope & Healing, Miracles & Parables.

Important Dates:

Nov. 2nd: NO CLASS - Service Project at Feed My Starving Children (NO PIZZA)

Nov. 9th: Pizza 5:30 / Class 6:00

Nov. 16th: Pizza 5:30 / Class 6:00

Nov. 23rd: NO CLASS - Thanksgiving Break

Nov. 30th: Pizza 5:30 / Class 6:00



**DIAPERS
& WIPES**

The Ministry Continues To Grow

"And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.'" Mat. 25:40

We began the diaper and wipes ministry in February of this year and since then God has allowed us to bless...

- A young couple expecting their first baby
- A family recovering from an abusive situation
- A young family expecting triplets

Because of your partnership, people know about the diaper and wipes ministry and we are getting calls from the police station, the local school, and members of the community. We praise God for this opportunity and we also trust that He will provide so that we can continue to meet the needs of those in our community.

Recently we became aware of several families with children in the Special Education program at Chatfield Elementary who are in need of pullups, diapers, and wipes. I will be bringing some supplies for each family this Monday, but they anticipate a continued need.

You can help by donating...

- funds for diapers (designated on the check, envelope, or online giving)
- Unscented wipes
- Size 6 diapers
- Size New Born Diapers
- 2T-3T Pullups (gender neutral if available)
- 4T-5T Pullups (gender neutral if available)

With your help and with God's blessing we can help ensure that no child in our community is in want for the basic necessity of diapers and wipes.

All donations can be brought to River Rock Church on Sunday from 10 am-12 pm or you can connect with Pastor Nathan for a pick-up.

Call/Text: (913) 633-2769

Email: nathan@riverrockchurch.com

We are looking for groups and or individuals who would like to volunteer at The Feast on November 20. There are a variety of times (hour-and-a-half increments) and opportunities available to help. If you are interested, fill out the google form (<https://forms.gle/ZgSGo2KaCuGHfjBUS>) or contact Sara Bungarden (sabungarden@gmail.com) to get signed up.



Unapproved St. John Lutheran Church Council Minutes
October 27, 2022

President Ben Aust called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

Present:

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

Opening Devotions:

Pastor Mark opened the meeting with a prayer.

Approval of Minutes:

Members of Council reviewed the minutes from September 19, 2022 Council Meeting. Motion was made, seconded and carried to approve the meeting minutes from September. A motion was made, seconded and carried to approve the agenda for October 27, 2022.

Pastor Mark's Report:

Connect and Confirmation Parent and Student Orientation was held September 14 for all fifth through eighth graders. It was a busy evening of registrations, information sharing, sign ups, schedules passed out, fees paid, questions asked and program specific time spent.

I am beginning to teach the Confirmation classes and this year we are covering Martin Luther and the Reformation, as well as Catechetical subjects like the Lord's Prayer, the Apostles' Creed, the 10 Commandments, the Sacraments of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion, as well as some basic Christian life topics. We are off to a good start and I'm looking forward to the coming year.

We had a kick-off for Sunday School and the beginning of a new program year with Rally Sunday on September 18 where we recognized our new Sunday School, Connect and Confirmation leaders and helpers, Distributed Bible Story books to our first graders and Lutheran Study Bibles to our fifth graders and had a backpack blessing for all students as they start this new year.

I met with all our ninth grade students and parents on September 25 to get ready for their upcoming Confirmation service at the end of October. We made sashes, got measured and paid for gowns, drew pew assignments in the Sanctuary, handed out Faith Statement and Bible verse worksheets. I am meeting the Sundays of October 2 and 9 after our second service individually with all our Confirmands to review their Faith Statements and Bible verses which we will publish, along with their picture, on Confirmation Sunday. Letters to all 9th Graders and families went out October 4 with information about a Saturday class picture taking, rehearsal, family brunch, speaker, gifts and recognitions.

I met with fifth graders and their families on Sunday evening, October 2, for a First Communion class. All participants will celebrate, together with their families, their First Communion at both of our services on Sunday, October 9.

We resumed passing the plates for the offering on September 18 and coming forward for Communion and Reading lessons on September 25. To date, with everything happening, we have not had time to put together a schedule for Readers and Communion assistants to the end of the year yet, so I have been contacting and plugging them in on a weekly basis. Renee Meuleners has been working with the Altar Guild to provide set ups for our worship times. We could use a volunteer coordinator.

Regular and ongoing parish duties continue, including weekly and monthly communication and coordination with staff, program leaders, families and the congregation; pastoral activities including baptismal, wedding and funeral meetings and facilitation, visitation at hospitals and homes, formal and informal counseling sessions; study time, preparation, and

delivery of worship service orders, sermons, classroom teaching, etc.

I will be coordinating our upcoming Fall Ecumenical Thanksgiving Service with my local parish colleagues at a meeting in October. I always look forward to getting our churches together for this special time each year.

Staff Reports:

Custodial:

Curt reported the issue with the camera for the livestream was addressed. A donation of office chairs was accepted to replace outdated chairs. A discussion was had on the Aluminum Can Fundraiser Project. The students no longer support the project. The contents of the trailer needs to be sorted and bagged; then taken to the recycle center. The labor costs of this effort outweighs the proceeds. A motion was made, seconded, and approved to discontinue the fundraiser.

Treasurer:

Tabled to next month.

Transfers:

No Transfers in or out this month.

Ongoing Business:

The Building and Grounds Committee presented a proposal to order the rooftop furnaces. A motion was made, seconded, and approved to purchase the furnaces estimated to cost between \$52,000 - \$60,000. It was noted that the cost does not include crane rental or labor.

New Business:

Staff reviews are in progress and should be completed in the next two weeks.

Ministry Team Updates:

Stewardship Committee - nothing new to report.

Buildings and Grounds Committee - see update under Ongoing Business.

Personnel Committee - see update under New Business.

Children's Ministry Team - Children's Christmas Program is scheduled for December 11th. Watch the Newsletter for other updates from this team.

Small Group/Faith Formation Committee - nothing new to report.

Worship and Music Committee - nothing new to report.

Technology and Communications Committee - see Custodial Report.

Motion was made, seconded, and carried to adjourn the meeting at 7:55 p.m. Meeting was adjourned followed by the Lord's prayer.

Respectfully Submitted,
Anne Herrmann, Secretary

November 6 Worship Assistants	
Coffee Hour: Sue Volek & Diane Gerres Altar Guild: Robin Fink and Diane Skelley	Pizza Helpers: Ann Pederson & Molly Holm Pizza Patrol: Amanda Berg & Trisha Anderson
8:00	9:15
Acolytes: Kallie Thaemert & Kylee Perry Greeters: Lay Readers: Kallie Thaemert Communion Assistants: Ushers: Curt & Cheryl Johnson, Bryn Davis, Cory Johnson, Craig Johnson, Kallie Thaemert, Tylor Menke	Acolytes: Logan Anderson & Josephine Berg Greeters: Lay Readers: Communion Assistants: Ushers: David & Sara Bungarden, Louis Longhenry, Ron & Dianne Rasmussen, Allison Blake, Mya Bommelyn

November 13 Worship Assistants	
Coffee Hour: The Theis Families Altar Guild: Robin Fink and Diane Skelley	Pizza Helpers: Amanda Schultz & Molly Holm Pizza Patrol: Kerri Swanson & Katie Klaverkamp
8:00	9:15
Acolytes: Kylee Perry Greeters: Lay Readers: Communion Assistants: Ushers: Curt & Cheryl Johnson, Bryn Davis, Cory Johnson, Craig Johnson	Acolytes: Greeters: Lay Readers: Communion Assistants: Ushers: David & Sara Bungarden, Louis Longhenry, Ron & Dianne Rasmussen

November 20 Worship Assistants	
Coffee Hour: The Choir in honor of new director Altar Guild: Robin Fink and Diane Skelley	Pizza Helpers: No Pizza– Thanksgiving break Pizza Patrol: No Pizza– Thanksgiving break
8:00	9:15
Acolytes: Kallie Thaemert & Allison Blake Greeters: Lay Readers: Tom Nagel Communion Assistants: Ushers: Myron Bratsch, Kirk Franek, Matt Kes, Jeff Eppen, Brian Siekmann, Leah Theis, Muriel Hilgers	Acolytes: Vincent Holtberg Greeters: Lay Readers: Communion Assistants: Ushers: Tim Moonen, Dale Schmidt, Samuel Schmidt, Dick Bristow, Muriel Hilgers

November 27 Worship Assistants	
Coffee Hour: No Coffee Altar Guild: Robin Fink and Diane Skelley	Pizza Helpers: Aimee Cecka & Nicole Alt Pizza Patrol: Kim Halvorson & David Bungarden
8:00	9:15
Acolytes: Luke Schultz & Mason Bungarden Greeters: Lay Readers: Communion Assistants: Ushers: Myron Bratsch, Kirk Franek, Matt Kes, Jeff Eppen, Brian Siekmann	Acolytes: Greeters: Lay Readers: Communion Assistants: Ushers: Tim Moonen, Dale Schmidt, Samuel Schmidt, Dick Bristow

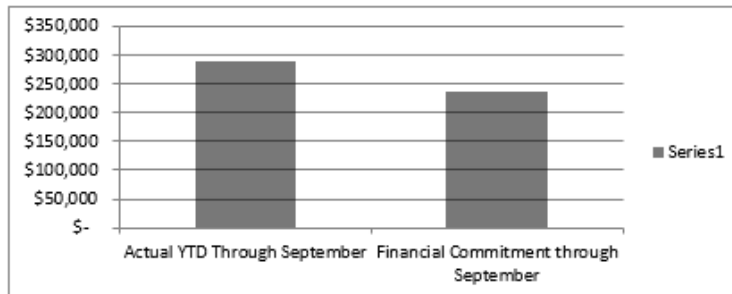
Financial Corner

St. John Financial Results Nine Months Ended September 30, 2022 and September 30, 2021

General Operating Fund			Year Over Year
	September 30, 2022	September 30, 2021	Increase (Decrease)
Income	\$ 290,843	\$ 284,188	2%
Expenses:			
Personnel	(161,106)	(153,119)	
Office	(13,613)	(13,179)	
Property & Maintenance	(33,997)	(30,672)	
Ministry	(16,111)	(8,737)	
Other	(5,238)	(3,662)	
Benevolence:			
Minneapolis Area Synod	(10,900)	(9,000)	
Camp Onomia	(2,500)	(2,250)	
Belle Plaine Fire Dept	(300)	(300)	
Lutheran Social Services	(1,500)	(1,500)	
Net Receipts / (Expenditures)	\$ 45,578	\$ 61,769	
Cash Balance at January 1 (excl. all loans)	\$ 7,829	\$ (82,735)	
Net Income / (Expenditures)	45,578	61,769	
Misc. cash not affecting income	201	376	
Loan from Building Fund (from 2018 & 2019)	-	-	
Loan from St. John Foundation (from 2014-2016)	-	54,656	
Cash Balance at September 30	\$ 53,608	\$ 34,066	

Actual Income Compared to 2022 Financial Commitment:

Actual YTD Through September	\$ 290,843
Financial Commitment through September	\$ 236,358



CALLED TO SERVE THROUGH OUR GIVING

Offering Received the week of

September 29– October 5

General Fund—\$12,305
Building Fund—\$1,670

October 6– October 12

General Fund—\$4,032
Building Fund—\$347

October 13– October 19

General Fund—\$2,665
Building Fund—\$835

October 20– October 26

General Fund— \$2,007
Building Fund- \$545

**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