

# ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH MESSENGER

CALLED TO WORSHIP / COMMITTED TO SERVE / CONNECTED IN FAITH

**November 2023**

A monthly Publication of  
St. John Lutheran Church

*Worship Schedule*

Wednesday Worship  
6:00 pm

Sunday Worship  
8:00 & 9:15

Sunday School  
9:15

Interim Pastor  
Pastor Ted Vanderpan

Office Staff  
Rae Fimon  
Audrey Zellman

Custodian  
Wanda Savage

Choir Director  
Allison Vandermark

Organist  
Eileen Hanlon

Accompanist  
Sheila Schmidt

148 S. Chestnut St.  
Belle Plaine, MN 56011

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## Ecumenical Community Thanksgiving Service At Our Lady of the Prairie Catholic Church Monday - November 20, 2023 7:00 p.m.

An Ecumenical Community Thanksgiving Service will be held this year at Our Lady of the Prairie Catholic Church on Monday, November 20, 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. Refreshments will be provided 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 Ted*

As you receive this, we have just completed our Confirmation Sunday. We confirmed 24 ninth grade students on Sunday, October 29<sup>th</sup>. It is a real pleasure to see these young people make public profession of their faith. A tremendous amount of work goes into confirmation – not just for students. Adults have been guiding these young people for years through Sunday School, Connect and Confirmation. I want to say a big “THANK YOU” to all the adults that helped in the process. It is way that you have lived out your Christian faith and influenced other lives. It may not always have seemed like it was working, but you have helped lay a foundation of faith to build their lives upon. You make St. John’s ministry go!

Last month I told you about my normal weekly routine. I expect to be in Belle Plaine for Sunday worship and Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. Since then, I met with someone who has helped out at St. John in the past, Diana Hunstad. Diana is willing to serve if there needs to be a funeral on Thursday, Friday or Saturday. I would really like to be able to lead all the funeral services, but I realize that because I live such a distance from Belle Plaine that may not be possible. So, if you need to hold a funeral on those days, Diana is willing to lead the service. I want to remind you of our Thanksgiving Service on Monday, November 20, at Our Lady of the Prairie Catholic Church. We will not have our own Thanksgiving service, so this is an opportunity to pause with the people of Belle Plaine to say thank-you to God for all the blessings of the past year. If you are not able to join us that night, I encourage you to be deliberate of being thankful. Take time. Be intentional to reflect on the many blessings God has brought to your life and then to say thank you. It is so easy to just take the blessings for granted and then wonder where God is at when we face challenges or trials. Social science research and the field of psychology tell us that “being thankful” really does make a difference in how we experience life. Thankfulness increases our level of happiness – no kidding. There are lots of studies on it. Just google “psychology of happiness”, do some reading and you will find all sorts of information on how practicing gratitude affects our happiness. Anyway, it is November – take time to thank God for all the good in your life.

Notice elsewhere in the newsletter that I am offering some appointment times to talk about transition at St. John. But if you want to talk with me about other things – please call the office and go to my office phone. My cell phone number is on my phone recording. If you have a pastoral care emergency, please call. I generally don’t share my cell number in writing because computer robots will pick it up and start calling and texting me. Please, call if you want to talk.

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### **TRANSITION UPDATE**

You can contribute to a successful transition for St John by scheduling a 30 to 45 minute conversation with me, Pr. Ted!

We can meet you anywhere that works for you. It can be longer or shorter, or even include other things than what I have identified below. I look forward to hearing from you about the following:

- Who is St John, Belle Plaine? How are we perceived by the larger Belle Plaine community and what role do we play in it?
- What do we do well as a church? What are the most important things we do? What are we best at right now? What have we been really good at in the past?
- What do you think are the 3 to 5 most important things for us to focus on in the next five years? What could or should we do better?
- Are there any things we do now that we could stop doing?
- Who do you personally, want St John to be going forward?

Here are some times we could meet. You can reserve a time on a sign-up sheet on Sunday mornings or by calling the office.

Sundays – 10:30

Mondays – 5 & 6

Tuesdays – 1 & 2

If something else would work better for you, let me know. I look forward to talking with you.



## November Children's Ministry Update

In October, we focused on Matthew 21-22. We learned that it's not only what we say, it's what we do, God wants us to be messengers, God wants us at his party, and to love God and your neighbor. 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 10th** 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](mailto:youthsjlc@gmail.com). We are in need of help with the following areas:

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

### Important Dates:

- Nov. 5th: Christmas Program Casting** (roles will be sent home during Sunday School) & **2nd Graders** and family serve at social hour at 9am  
**Noisy Offering** at 9:15 service
- Nov. 12th & 19th : Christmas Program Practice**
- Nov. 26th - NO CLASS - Thanksgiving break**

**2024 SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL MISSION TRIP**  
**(JULY 7-12<sup>TH</sup>, 2024)**  
**STUDENTS IN GRADES 8-12**  
**(DURING THE 2023-2024 SCHOOL YEAR)**

Plans are underway for a 2024 Senior High Mission Trip to Benton Harbor, MI, through Youth Works. Participants will partner with local organizations to meet ongoing needs in the community. Students may serve all or part of the week at a food shelf, clothing distribution center, or by assisting with painting, cleaning or simple repair projects. During a week in Benton Harbor, our group will partner with local organizations to serve the city across age and racial divides. In the evenings, we will tour the community and learn about the city and area. We'll also will experience local BBQ, visit a Lake Michigan beach, and explore Benton Harbor's sister city, St. Joseph. Contact Tim or Molly Moonen or Kirk Frank if you're interested.



### MISSION TRIP



***If you have an announcement for the bulletin***, please let the office know by noon Thursday so it can be added.

***Is your group planning a meeting in the church?*** Please let the office know so it can be put on the calendar to make sure the doors will be unlocked for you.

***The deadline for newsletter articles is the 20th of each month.*** This is to make sure it get into the newsletter and that the newsletter gets out on time.

Unapproved St. John Lutheran Church Council Minutes  
October 9th, 2023

President Ben Aust called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m.

**Present:**

X	Pastor Ted	X	Ben Aust		Chris Schultz	X	Albert Koepp
X	Jan Effinger	X	Teresa Latzke	X	Anne Herrmann	X	Steve Kelm
X	Jaime Petersen		Cayla Menke	X	Jim Kerr	X	Tim Moonen
X	Jerold Stauffacher	X	Wendy Theis	X	Molly Moonen		

**Opening Devotions:**

Pastor Ted opened up with a request for the council to repeat verse John 3:16 out loud with him and to keep it as a reminder as this month he wants to change the focus on transition to what we are really all about. Pastor Ted said a prayer.

**Approval of Minutes:**

Members of Council reviewed the minutes from the September 11, 2023 Council Meeting. Motion was made, seconded and carried to approve the meeting minutes from September. A request to change item B under New Business - Mission Trip to be moved to number V - after Approval of minutes on the agenda. A motion was made, seconded and carried to approve the change and agenda for October 9th, 2023.

**Pastor Ted Report:**

Pastor Ted reported that they have launched confirmation on Wednesday nights and is going well. 9th graders will be confirmed on October 29th. He mentioned he has made some slight changes to Sunday morning worship and everything seems to be going well. On Pastoral Care, he has visited the care facilities and has also had a funeral and everything went well.

Ted mentioned that he would like to get the Church committees up and running. After fall break he is going to interview people from the congregation and bring his report to the council.

**Staff Reports:**

A motion was made, seconded and carried to ask the church staff to submit short written reports for six months and the council will evaluate the value of the reports.

**Custodial:**

Tim Moonen reported to the council the following items:

- Heating units are installed and complete. First maintenance for all the heating units have been scheduled.
- Found someone for snow removal.
- A new water heater has been installed.
- Received an estimate for the entrance sign.
- Looking at replacing the fridge in the kitchen.
- Working on switching the clocks to digital clocks.

Tim brought to the council the request for the nick nacks in the kitchen to be removed.

**Treasurer:**

Jerold reported the monthly and quarterly reports and answered questions from Council members. He mentioned confirmation revenue is down for this year. Expenses were a little high this month which was to be expected due to two pastors for a short period. Jerold has started working on the budget for next year to present to the council next month.

**Transfers:**

No Transfers in or out this month.

**Ongoing Business:**

**A. Church Roll Update**

- a. Scheduling a meeting with Pastor Ted to discuss creating a Membership status letter.

**B. Job Description**

- a. Wendy Thies discussed with the council, on behalf of the Personnel committee, that the Personnel committee is currently working on the reviews for the staff members and have a date set for October 25th. The Personnel committee is

asking for input from the council on what the staff job descriptions should look like.

C. Venmo Account

- a. Jerold received confirmation that the church can not open a Venmo account without a cell phone number. He brought the question to the council if we should purchase a tracfone in order to open an account. Jerold is going to research more information on requirements from Venmo and cost on the tracfone and bring the information to the council meeting next month.

**New Business:**

- A. Ben followed up with Lainey Schwartz regarding the use of the gathering space for a workout class. He provided Lainey with the requirements for the use of the gathering area.
- B. Mission Trip update
  - a. Molly Moonen attended the council meeting to discuss the 2024 Mission Trip. Kirk and Molly are in the works of organizing a High School Mission Trip going to Benton Harbor, Michigan July 7-12th. More information will be sent out. They are asking for \$5,000.00 from the Jr/Sr. High youth fund plus additional funds if needed to help pay for the transportation rental and meals for the ride there and back. A motion was made, seconded and carried to approve the funds for the mission trip.
  - b. A discussion was held regarding the purchasing of script cards and the high inventory volume. A motion was made, second and carried to suspend script card purchases until the council determines a max inventory allowance on script cards. A motion was made, second and carried to table this motion until next month's meeting until further discussion regarding the purchasing of script cards.
- C. A discussion was held regarding the option to eliminate offering plates on Sunday or to keep them. The council has agreed to keep the offering plates as is.
- D. A discussion was held regarding eliminating the library in the gathering area wondering if we can get rid of the books and the shelves. Tabled to discuss at the next meeting.
- E. A discussion was held regarding Christmas worship. Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday so he mentioned that we should focus on Christmas Eve worship in the afternoon and evening only.

**Ministry Team Updates:**

- A. Stewardship Committee - nothing new to report.
- B. Buildings and Grounds Committee - See Custodial reports.
- C. Personnel Committee - See On Going Business, item B.
- D. Children's Ministry Team - nothing new to report.
- E. Small Group/Faith Formation Committee - nothing new to report.
- F. Worship and Music Committee - nothing new to report.
- G. Technology and Communications Committee - nothing new to report. A meeting is in the works.

Motion was made, seconded, and carried to adjourn the meeting at 9:57 p.m. Meeting was adjourned followed by the Lord's prayer.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Teresa Latzke



The Annual W/ELCA Christmas Dinner for all Congregation and Community members, family and friends will be held on Tuesday, December 5th in our Gathering area here at St. John. Social hour will begin at 6, dinner at 6:30. A Bar-B-Q Rib and ham dinner including Au Gratin potatoes, stuffing, peas & carrots, fruit salad and a desert will be served by Cindy's Cafe.

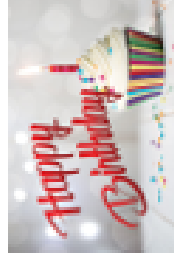
A vegetarian meal is available upon request. Ticket price is \$20. Entertainment following the meal will be provided by the Wendt Sisters from the Mankato area. Tickets will be available for purchase during the month of November in the Church office Monday thru Friday and between Church services and at Coffee time.

Advent starts December 3.

Let's get together and decorate the church of the season.  
Please watch the church bulletin and Facebook for date and times.



# November 2023



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
				Dana Baker Brett Holbrook Andrea Jeurissen Josh Koeppe Colt Oldenburg	John Hilgers Logan Schultz Elisa Theis	Maverick Borresen Gilbert Brislin Albert Koeppe Amita Lambrecht
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Alyssa Baker Adraime Nelson Robert Schultz	Nicole Bauleke Angela Hoff Marcy Ritsch Samuel Schultz		Lincoln Kelm Annette Moylan Tom Stolee	Elisa Davidson Thaine Maier	Carter Brink John Koeppe Ellie Marina Olivia Petersen Val Peterson Michael Sirek	Elliot Luterman Austin Mohlin Troy Shackle
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Shannon Swenson Gavin Theis	Arianna Hiles Bradley Pederson	Josalyn Henning Shelly Trost	Hazel Husfeldt Chris Potter	Corwin Schroeder Carol Stoppelmann Elsie Wolff	Richard Koeppe	Logan Anderson David Bungarden Katie Graff Skyler Jonason Justin Kruger Janene Meyer
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Susan Koenig	Paul Traxler		Kristine Konarski Neal Williamson		Mallory Benner Karmen Grubin Jim Lange Jackson Nagel Thomas Nagel	Monica Braesch Amy Rettig
26	27	28	29	30		
Shara Hiles Sawyer Kelm Marcy Leonard	Marv Doeden Laura Mellgren David Otto	Blakely Buszmann Caleb Eppen April Westerfield	Virginia Bessel Cole Eggers	Koben Hutchison Amy Stolee		

# November 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 5:20 pm Pizza 6:00 pm Connect/Confirmation 6:00 pm Worship Service 7:00 pm Worship Choir	2 5:00 pm TOPS	3	4
5 Noisy Offering 8:00 & 9:15 Worship Services 9:15 Sunday School 4:30 pm Girl Scout meeting	6 6:30 pm Boy Scouts 7:00 pm Coffee in the Kitchen	7 11:00 Lutheran Home Service 1:30 pm Kingsway Service	8 6:00 pm Worship Service 7:00 pm Worship Choir	9 5:00 pm TOPS	10	11
12 8:00 & 9:15 Worship Services 9:15 Sunday School 4:30 pm Girl Scout meeting	13 6:30 pm Boy Scouts 6:30 pm Church Council	14	15 5:20 pm Pizza 6:00 pm Connect/Confirmation 6:00 pm Worship Service 7:00 pm Worship Choir	16 5:00 pm TOPS	17	18
19 8:00 & 9:15 Worship Services 9:15 Sunday School 4:30 pm Girl Scout meeting	20 Newsletter article deadline 7:00 pm Community Thanksgiving Service at OLP	21	22 7:00 pm Worship Choir	23 Thanksgiving Day Office Closed 6:00 pm Mary Koepp Family in Gathering Area	24 Office Closed	25
26 8:00 & 9:15 Worship Services	27 6:30 pm Boy Scouts	28 6:30 pm Cub Scout Pack meeting	29 5:20 pm Pizza 6:00 pm Connect/Confirmation 6:00 pm Worship Service 7:00 pm Worship Choir	30 5:00 pm TOPS		





November 5 Worship Assistants	
<b>Coffee Hour:</b> 2nd Grade Students <b>Altar Guild:</b> Renee Meuleners & Wendy Theis	
<b>November 8 Pizza Helpers:</b> No Class <b>November 8 Pizza Patrol:</b>	
<b>8:00</b>  <b>Greeters:</b> Kevin & Sandi Wolpern <b>Lay Readers:</b> Sandi Wolpern <b>Communion Assistants:</b> Greg & Linda Schwichtenberg, Sandi Wolpern <b>Ushers:</b> Albert Koeppe, Dorothy Koeppe, Kevin Koeppe, Matt Stier, Bruce Volek, Tim Carlson, Josh Koeppe	<b>9:15</b>  <b>Greeters:</b> Ron & Diane Rasmussen <b>Lay Reader:</b> Phoebe Einertson <b>Communion Assistants:</b> Phoebe Einertson, Cheryl Flynn, Renee Meuleners <b>Ushers:</b> Scott & Tricia Ruud, Alex Ruud, Griffin Ruud, Jerry Meger

November 12 Worship Assistants	
<b>Coffee Hour:</b> <b>Altar Guild:</b> Renee Meuleners & Wendy Theis	
<b>November 15 Pizza Helpers:</b> Jenn Nagorski, Kerri Williamson <b>November 15 Pizza Patrol:</b> Mandy Posthumus	
<b>8:00</b>  <b>Greeters:</b> Angela Faucette <b>Lay Readers:</b> Bryn Davis <b>Communion Assistants:</b> Angela Faucette, Nick & Bryn Davis <b>Ushers:</b> Albert Koeppe, Dorothy Koeppe, Kevin Koeppe, Matt Stier, Bruce Volek, Tim Carlson, Josh Koeppe	<b>9:15</b>  <b>Greeters:</b> Sue Koenig <b>Lay Reader:</b> Sara Bungarden, Cindy Schoenbauer, Peg Longhenry <b>Communion Assistants:</b> Marv & Rhonda Doeden, Cheryl Flynn <b>Ushers:</b> Scott & Tricia Ruud, Alex Ruud, Griffin Ruud, Jerry Meger

November 19 Worship Assistants	
<b>Coffee Hour:</b> <b>Altar Guild:</b> Renee Meuleners & Wendy Theis	
<b>November 22– No Pizza Thanksgiving break</b>	
<b>8:00</b>  <b>Greeters:</b> Connie Bergs <b>Lay Readers:</b> Bonnie Vinkemeier <b>Communion Assistants:</b> Bonnie Vinkemeier, Terry Siemon, Dave Latzke <b>Ushers:</b> Brent Schwichtenberg, Greg Schwichtenberg, Bruce Schmidt, Richard Laabs	<b>9:15</b>  <b>Greeters:</b> Zoe Otting <b>Lay Reader:</b> Brent Koeppe <b>Communion Assistants:</b> Brent Koeppe, Beth Beuch, Teresa Latzke <b>Ushers:</b> Brent Koeppe, Mitchell Koeppe, Jackson Stauffacher, Justin Stauffacher, Tim Moonen

November 26 Worship Assistants	
<b>Coffee Hour:</b> <b>Altar Guild:</b> Renee Meuleners & Wendy Theis	
<b>November 29 Pizza Helpers:</b> Ashley Schultz & Jessica Nagel	
<b>8:00</b>  <b>Greeters:</b> Jamey, Linda & Olivia Jeurissen <b>Lay Readers:</b> Janet Effinger <b>Communion Assistants:</b> Albert Koeppe, Janet Effinger, Lynn, Jeurissen <b>Ushers:</b> Brent Schwichtenberg, Greg Schwichtenberg, Bruce Schmidt, Richard Laabs	<b>9:15</b>  <b>Greeters:</b> Marv & Rhonda Doeden <b>Lay Reader:</b> Dave Bungarden <b>Communion Assistants:</b> Marv & Rhonda Doeden, Dave Bungarden <b>Ushers:</b> Brent Koeppe, Mitchell Koeppe, Jackson Stauffacher, Justin Stauffacher, Tim Moonen



# Financial Corner

## St. John Financial Results Nine Months Ended September 30, 2023 and September 30, 2022

General Operating Fund			Year Over Year Increase (Decrease)
	September 30, 2023	September 30, 2022	
Income *	\$ 243,228	\$ 290,843	-16%
Expenses:			
Personnel	(177,253)	(161,106)	
Office	(12,666)	(13,613)	
Property & Maintenance	(42,223)	(33,997)	
Ministry	(15,784)	(16,111)	
Other	(2,833)	(5,238)	
Benevolence:			
Minneapolis Area Synod	(9,900)	(10,900)	
Camp Onomia	(2,250)	(2,500)	
Belle Plaine Fire Dept	(300)	(300)	
Lutheran Social Services	(1,500)	(1,500)	
Net Receipts / (Expenditures)	\$ (21,481)	\$ 45,578	
Cash Balance at January 1	\$ 69,619	\$ 7,829	
Net Income / (Expenditures)	(21,481)	45,578	
Misc. cash not affecting income	455	201	
Cash Balance at September 30	\$ 48,593	\$ 53,608	

\* 2022 Includes \$40K Employee Retention Credit (ERC), 2023 is down 3% from 2022 without ERC.

### Property Improvement Fund

	September 30, 2023	
Income (Donations, Rent, Investments)	71,800	
Expenses (Prop Taxes, Repairs, Ins, Mortg Interest)	(57,340)	Includes \$43.5K for three new HVAC units
Net Receipts / (Disbursements)	14,460	
Hayden House Loan Balance at January 1	125,664	
Principal Payments	(3,098)	
Hayden House Loan Balance at September 30	122,566	
Liquid Assets at September 30, 2023	177,663	

CALLED TO SERVE THROUGH OUR GIVING	
Offering Received the week of	
<b>September 21-27</b> General Fund—\$4,822 Improvement Fund—\$450	<b>September 28–October 4</b> General Fund—\$6,696 Improvement Fund—\$1,065
<b>October 5-11</b> General Fund— \$6,692 Improvement Fund- \$1,180	<b>October 12-18</b> General Fund— \$4,095 Improvement Fund- \$1,151
<b>October 19-25</b> General Fund- \$1,751 Improvement Fund- \$320	

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



**EAT, GATHER &  
BE GRATEFUL**

**THE  
FEAST**

**A BELLE PLAINE  
COMMUNITY EVENT**

Find us on  
**facebook**  
The Feast - Belle Plaine, MN

**GRACIOUSLY FUNDED BY MOODY ENTERPRISE**

An event for community members to come together and show gratitude for each other and celebrate our wonderful community. Activities, open gym, arts & crafts and a warm meal will be served.

**Sunday, November 19**

*Join Us* **11:00 AM - 2:00 PM**

**Oak Crest Elementary**

**- Free Will Donation -**  
Free will donation goes towards scholarships for our youth!

**Interested in meal delivery? Call - (952) 649-2499**

**The Feast** is fast approaching and we are looking for groups and or individuals who would like to volunteer at the event on Sunday, November 19. 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/j3F3shK3iFUpD3ip8>) or contact Sara Bungarden ([sabungarden@gmail.com](mailto:sabungarden@gmail.com)) to get signed up.