

ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH MESSENGER

CALLED TO WORSHIP / COMMITTED TO SERVE / CONNECTED IN FAITH

September 2023

A monthly Publication of
St. John Lutheran Church

Worship Schedule

Wednesday Worship

6:00 pm

Sunday Worship

9:00

Pastor

Pastor Mark Johnson

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

952-873-6492
office@stjohnbelleplaine.org
Web: stjohnbelleplaine.org



1999

2023



Mark your calendars for Sunday, September 10th when St. John Lutheran Church will celebrate the almost 25 years of service and ministry of Pastor Mark Johnson. Pastor Mark's last official day will be Sunday, September 10th, as he and Suzanne will begin their retirement journey together.

"Thanks for the Memories" and there have been many, and some significant milestones too, as Pastor Mark has faithfully provided spiritual ministry, service and leadership to this congregation.

Please join us for a breakfast reception **following the 9 a.m. service** to wish Pastor Mark well as he begins this new and exciting next chapter. A card box will be available for you to share your own personal good wishes and memories.

From Pastor Mark

It seems a little incredible to me that I am writing my last newsletter here. And yet I am. My time here at St. John will be ending on Sunday, September 10. My wife told me not to make any plans for the week of the 11th. I think she is going to spirit me off somewhere!

I've been a pastor for 37 years now, 12 of those years in Rothsay and 25 years here in Belle Plaine. It has been a deep and rewarding experience for me. There have been joys and challenges along the way. And now, a new chapter will be unfolding.

I am grateful for the time that we have spent together over these years. St. John is a warm and wonderful place full of great people. I have a lot of good memories. And I am sure that God will continue to lead you into a good and growing future.

It's also important for me to be clear that, after I leave, I will not be coming back to perform any more pastoral functions. I also won't be attending worship services. That would not be appropriate. You will have another pastor here and I intend to respect that.

This is a time of transition for both of us. Retirement will be new to me and I will have to live my way into it. I'm looking forward to that opportunity. And the church here will be going through a time of transition, as well, that will provide you an opportunity to intentionally reflect on your mission and ministry, leading up to calling a new pastor. Embrace this time and dig into this opportunity!

Sue and I will be living here for awhile but we will also be looking to move up into the metro area. In the meantime, I may see around town. I may also sit in on some worship services at other churches in the area. It will be different sitting and participating in a service and not being up front and leading it, and I'm looking forward to it.

I wish you all the best! You will always have a warm and special place in my heart.

May the Lord bless you and lead you into a great future!

All The Best -

Mark

Quilt Auction!
Saturday September 16th at Camp Onomia!

ONOMIA
Lutheran Outdoor Ministries on the Shores of Shakopee
www.CampOnomia.org

- Bake Sale: breads & cookies
- Silent Auction: gifts & crafts
- Overnight stay option: Stay over Friday or Saturday night, breakfast included for \$40 per person!
- Raffle quilt tickets are available at the auction or by calling the camp office. \$5.00 each.

Bring some friends!
Our annual Quilt Auction supports the summer youth camping programs at Onomia. Preview the quilts on our website! If you cannot make it to the live auction, and see a quilt that you'd love to own, this year there is a BID OFFER FORM that you can fill out. Give us your best offer on the quilt you love, send in the form, and that offer becomes the starting bid at the auction. If no one bids higher, the quilt is yours! We will ship it to you free of charge. Bid on one or several this way, but better yet... join us for a fun day in person. **Mark the date!**

Raffle Quilt
BIB
Ribbon
Blocks

Camp Onomia Quilt Auction Information

Camp Onomia
14202 Shakopee Lake Road
Onamia, MN 56359
320-632-3767

Non-profit Org.
US Postage
PAID
Permit No. 6
Ponoken, MN
55371

Our annual Quilt Auction is back at Camp Onomia on Sept. 16th, 2023!

1. 70 beautiful quilts.
2. Awesome Silent Auction items
3. Tasty Bake Sale snacks
4. Optional noon lunch
5. Raffle Quilt drawing
6. Fun, Excitement, Door Prizes

Support the summer youth ministries at Camp Onomia this year! Bring a friend!

Viewing begins at 11 AM
Noon Lunch
Live Auction begins at 1 PM!

The background of this postcard is our fabulous 2023 Raffle Quilt!

Unapproved St. John Lutheran Church Council Minutes

August 14th, 2023

President Ben Aust called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

Present:

| | | | | | | | |
|---|--------------------|---|---------------|---|---------------|---|---------------|
| X | Pastor Mark | X | Ben Aust | | Chris Schultz | X | Albert Koeppe |
| X | Jan Effinger | X | Teresa Latzke | X | Anne Herrmann | | Steve Kelm |
| X | Jaime Petersen | X | Cayla Menke | X | Jim Kerr | X | Tim Moonen |
| X | Jerold Stauffacher | | | | | | |

Opening Devotions:

Pastor Mark opened the meeting with his letter of resignation. He referred to a passage from Philipians 4: 6 regarding the transition.

Approval of Minutes:

Members of Council reviewed the minutes from the July 10, 2023 Council Meeting. Motion was made, seconded and carried to approve the meeting minutes from June. A motion was made, seconded and carried to approve the agenda for August 14, 2023.

Pastor Mark's Report

I have been in contact with our Children's Ministry Team and they are finalizing the schedule and details for our upcoming program year. Online registration is underway. Rally Sunday will be September 17 and provide kids and families an opportunity to meet their teachers and see their classrooms. Bible Sunday will be September 24 with our first graders receiving a Story Bible and our fifth graders receiving a Lutheran Study Bible. The team is still working out details around music and the Christmas program.

I have been in contact with our incoming eighth grade Confirmation Small Group leaders and they will be coming back for their second year with their groups. I have also recruited Small Group Leaders for a large incoming class of seventh graders. We are currently in the process of recruiting volunteers for our Connect program. I plan to have a meeting with leaders of these programs at the end of the month to familiarize everyone with schedules and details.

I have been following the first "transition checklist" from the Synod in regard to my impending retirement. Per the requirements, I have drafted a letter formally announcing my retirement that will be sent out to the congregation. I have also formally announced my retirement at worship on the first Sunday of this month. In addition, I will be having our Treasurer and Secretary sign and send into the Synod office the two forms respectively needed regarding financial obligations and church records.

I am in the process of organizing and cleaning out my well used office. If there is a flat surface in my office, I put it to work! I am also downloading my working files from my office computer to my personal laptop. I'm coming across a lot of memories in the process. It's become more real to me, as I am doing these things, that my time here is coming to an end. I have mixed feelings. I feel I'm ready to retire and take the next steps in my life. I will also always hold this dear place and these dear people in a special place in my heart.

I have been in touch with our President, Ben Aust, and kept apprised of the council's work toward securing an interim pastor. Once that has been completed, I plan to reach out to do some communicating and coordinating together to make the transition as smooth and seamless as possible.

It is a busy season right now with baptisms and weddings and funerals. I continue, as well, my usual duties of communicating and coordinating with staff, volunteers, teams, council and congregation as needs be. Study time and preparation for worship and preaching continues apace. I have shared Communion services with members and others at the Lutheran Home and Kingsway and have provided prayer and communion for other members in homes and hospitals and nursing homes

Staff Reports:

Custodial:

Tim Moonen reported to the council that the AC units are tentatively scheduled to be installed at the end of the month. We may qualify for an energy credit for the new units. Still looking for someone to do snow removal and now seeking bids for snow removal from private contractors. Looking at the security systems to see if we can get the doors on timers or fobs.

Treasurer:

Jerold Stauffacher walked the council through the monthly reports. Last year's numbers are skewed because we had a kick back from the government and this year we have not received one yet. For the overall revenue we are ahead a little bit after having a tough June and July. There was a discussion made to offer a QR code in the pews for members and guests to scan the QR code to give offerings.

Transfers:

Motion was made, seconded and carried to approve the transfer in:

1. Kevin Wolpern is transferring in by affirmation of faith.

Transfers Out: None

Ongoing Business:

A. Church Roll Update:

a. Anne Herrmann reported that they finalized definitions regarding the member system. They are looking into cleaning up and organizing active and non-active members. They are looking at being completed with this for the annual meeting.

B. Job Descriptions:

The Personnel Committee mentioned they meet and still have not found a candidate for snow removal.

C. Call Process

See new business A.

New Business:

A. Interim Pastor agreement.

The Church council made an offer to Interim Pastor Ted Vanderpan. Pastor Ted has accepted the offer. The council is working on finalizing paperwork to the agreement. Official start date is September 1, 2023.

Ministry Team Updates:

- A. Stewardship Committee - nothing new to report.
- B. Buildings and Grounds Committee - See staff reports.
- C. Personnel Committee - See Ongoing Business B.
- D. Children's Ministry Team - Rally Sunday is scheduled for September 17th.
- 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.

Motion was made, seconded, and carried to adjourn the meeting at 7:36 p.m. Meeting was adjourned followed by the Lord's prayer.

Respectfully Submitted,
Teresa Latzke



September Children's Ministry Update

We hope you are having a wonderful summer! We are so excited to welcome students and families back to Sunday School this fall and are starting to plan for the upcoming year!

Please register your child(ren) using the link below as soon as possible:

[2023-2024 Registration Link](#)

Important Dates:

- **Sunday, September 10th at 9am:** Pastor Mark's last service–Farewell/Retirement Party following the service

- **Sunday, September 17th:** Rally Sunday

• **Backpack Blessing:** All school aged children from Pre-K to High School are encouraged to bring their backpacks to the 9:15 church service to receive a blessing for the school year.

- **Sunday, September 24th:** First day of class from 9:15-10:15 and Bible Sunday (1st and 5th Graders)

If you have not already committed to volunteering, please let us know how you would like to help!

We will be sending out more details as we get closer to the beginning of the year. We pray you have a safe, fun and healthy remainder of summer!

The Children's Ministry Team

Laura Mellgren, Chelsea Hutchison, Tara Henke, Katy Potter and Allie Theas



Coffee Hour will once again be starting in September and run through May.

Please consider signing up to help. Pick a Sunday of your choice.

Sign up sheets are located in gathering area by the kitchen.

Questions, contact Sherrie Simcox at 612.598.5309 or sherriesimcox@gmail.com

Confirmation, Connect and Wednesday Worship to Combine



Pr. Mark's retirement will bring many changes to our church life. During this time of transition, we will combine our Wednesday night Confirmation and Connect programs with Wednesday worship. This change is designed to help us through the time of transition and keep these important parts of our church stable. Much about Wednesday Worship, Confirmation and Connect will stay the same but one difference will be that the message during worship will be the confirmation lesson geared both to the confirmands and other worshippers as well. We may need to tweak some things as we live into the changes, but here is our schedule.

Pizza will be available for students between 5:20 & 5:50.

Confirmation, Connect and Worship will begin in the sanctuary at 6PM

At approximately 6:45, Confirmation and Connect students and leaders will be released to small groups after the sermon/lesson. (Once a month students will participate in the full worship service and not meet in their small groups.)

Small groups will meet for about 30 minutes to discuss the lesson.

Small groups will end at approximately 7:15 PM.

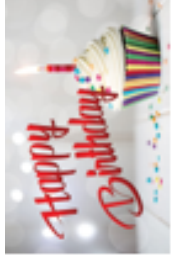
We have tried to keep things as normal as possible, adapt to the need for transitions, and provide an opportunity for people to worship outside of Sunday morning. Please note these upcoming opportunities to learn more about our fall programming.

Wednesday September 13 – 6pm - Confirmation and Connect Leaders Meeting

Wednesday September 20 – 6pm – Confirmation and Connect Parent Student Meeting

Transition by its very nature creates questions, uneasiness, and inevitable change. Together, we will adapt to what comes, then adapt some more, and each step of the way figure it out together. Transition by its very nature also creates opportunity for us to think about doing things in new ways we had never thought of before, which opens all sorts of exciting possibilities! So stay tuned for the bright future ahead of us.

September 2023



| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|--|--|---|---|--|---|
| | | | | | 1 | 2 |
| | | | | | Caren Grotberg | Madden Carlson Jamey Jeurissen Kim Meierbachtol Derek Scheer Joseph Stoutland Todd Theis |
| 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| Joshua Hanson Brenda Holtberg Avery Mohlin Terry Siemon | Allison Hanek Chloe Oldenburg Cole Schwartz Rachel Soller | Tricia Bauer Charlotte Koepp Wayne Nagel Karim Tolbert | Wyatt Borresen Mark Meierbachtol Ethan Perkins | Sandra Wolpern | Declan Johnson Austin Overline Sydney Pankonin Kris Schmidt | Landry Kelm Cayla Menke Carli Jo Stier |
| 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |
| John Busse | Bruce Koepp Henry Posthumus Joshua Sparby Lydia Sparby | John Koenig Jaydon Thaeernt | Jason Schmidt Esther Stoppelmann Brooklyn Theas | Amy Franck | Cadence Bauer Cheryl Johnson Margaret Meierbachtol Jackson Stauffacher Linda Stier | Josh Henning Jill Martin Tony Roff |
| 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 |
| Harlie Bristlin Miranda Widmer | Elliana Kopesky Margaret Schwachtenberg Holly Stier James Stradcutter | Elliana Fahey Levi Schmidt Kristin Stier Carson Tester Jeffrey Wolff | Nora Andert Susie Koepp | Amanda Berg Elliot Halvorson Jason Stier Emmett Wolf | Chase Hager Ashley Seaver Tiffany Stier | Maynard Schmidt Justin Stauffacher |
| 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |
| Mallory Kelm Sheila Weldon | John Franck Steven Kelm Michael Schmidt | Jordan Johnson Jean Peterson | Matthew Traxler | Caelin Brueske Janet Effinger Kase Heinz Laura Koepp Jeffrey Scott Wendy Theis Colin Weldon | Dan Herrmann Elizabeth Herrmann Katie Klaverkamp Corey Koepp Autumn Laue | Claire Otto |

September 2023

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|---|---|--|--------------|--------|----------|
| | | | | | 1 | 2 |
| 9:00 Worship Service | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| | Office Closed Labor Day | 11:00 Lutheran Home Service 1:30 pm Kingsway Service | 6:00 pm Worship Service 7:00 pm Worship Choir | 5:00 pm TOPS | | 9 |
| | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |
| Pastor Mark's Retirement Celebration 9:00 Worship Service | 6:30 pm Church Council 6:30 pm Boy Scouts | | 6:00 pm Worship Service 6:00 pm Connect/Confirmation Leaders Orientation 7:00 pm Worship Choir | 5:00 pm TOPS | | 16 |
| | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 |
| Rally Sunday 9:00 Worship Service 9:15 Sunday School | 6:30 pm Boy Scouts | | 6:00 pm Worship Service 6:00 pm Connect/Confirmation Student/Parent Orientation 7:00 pm Worship Choir | 5:00 pm TOPS | | 23 |
| | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 |
| Bible Sunday 8:00 & 9:15 Worship Services 9:15 Sunday School 12:00 pm Girl Scouts meetings | 6:30 pm Boy Scouts | | 5:30 pm Pizza 6:00 pm Connect/Confirmation 6:00 pm Worship Service 7:00 pm Worship Choir | 5:00 pm TOPS | | 30 |



| September 3 Worship Assistants |
|--|
| Altar Guild: Renee Meuleners |
| 9:00 |
| Greeters: Connie Bergs Lay Reader: Jan Effinger Communion Assistants: Jan Effinger, Lynn Jeurissen, Beth Beuch Ushers: Chris Schultz , Luke Schultz, Logan Schultz, Rob Schultz, Mark Schultz, Wayne Koepf, Aaron Leonard Dave & Sara Bungarden , Ron & Dianne Rasmussen |

| September 10 Worship Assistants |
|--|
| Altar Guild: Renee Meuleners |
| 9:00 |
| Greeters: Lay Reader: Communion Assistants: Ushers: Myron Bratsch , Kirk Franck, Matt Kes, Jeff Eppen Scott & Tricia Ruud , Alex Ruud, Griffin Ruud, Jerry Meger |

| September 17 Worship Assistants | |
|---|--|
| Coffee Hour: Altar Guild: Renee Meuleners | |
| 8:00 | 9:15 |
| Greeters: Katherine Wermerskirchen Lay Readers: Michelle Melheim Communion Assistants: Randy & Deb Kruger, Michelle Melheim Ushers: Myron Bratsch , Kirk Franck, Matt Kes, Jeff Eppen | Greeters: Ron & Diane Rasmussen Lay Reader: Brent Koepf Communion Assistants: Brent Koepf, Peg Longhenry, Cindy Schoenbauer Ushers: Scott & Tricia Ruud , Alex Ruud, Griffin Ruud, Jerry Meger |

| September 24 Worship Assistants | |
|--|--|
| Coffee Hour: Altar Guild: Renee Meuleners | |
| 8:00 | 9:15 |
| Greeters: Wesley Koepf Lay Readers: Rene Meuleners Communion Assistants: Renee Meuleners, Terry Siemon, Patty Laabs Ushers: James & John Karl , Dan Herrmann, Tim Bristlin | Greeters: Sie Koenig Lay Reader: Steve Schroeder Communion Assistants: Steve Schroeder, Dave Bungarden, Tim Moonen Ushers: Brent Koepf , Mitchell Koepf, Jackson Stauffacher, Justin Stauffacher, Tim Moonen |

Financial Corner

St. John Financial Results Seven Months Ending July 31, 2023 and July 31, 2022

| General Operating Fund | | | Year Over Year |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|
| | <u>July 31, 2023</u> | <u>July 31, 2022</u> | <u>Increase (Decrease)</u> |
| Income * | \$ 193,493 | \$ 235,971 | -18% |
| Expenses: | | | |
| Personnel | (137,293) | (127,587) | |
| Office | (10,141) | (10,365) | |
| Property & Maintenance | (34,005) | (26,352) | |
| Ministry | (11,341) | (12,154) | |
| Other | (3,424) | (4,695) | |
| Benevolence: | | | |
| Minneapolis Area Synod | (7,700) | (8,700) | |
| Camp Onomia | (1,750) | (2,000) | |
| Belle Plaine Fire Dept | (300) | - | |
| Lutheran Social Services | (1,000) | (1,000) | |
| Net Receipts / (Expenditures) | <u>\$ (13,461)</u> | <u>\$ 43,118</u> | |
| Cash Balance at January 1 | \$ 69,619 | \$ 7,829 | |
| Net Income / (Expenditures) | (13,461) | 43,118 | |
| Misc. cash not affecting income | (127) | 202 | |
| Cash Balance at July 31 | <u>\$ 56,031</u> | <u>\$ 51,149</u> | |

* 2022 Includes \$40K Employee Retention Credit

Property Improvement Fund

| | <u>July 31, 2023</u> |
|---|----------------------|
| Income (Donations, Rent, Investments) | 63,551 |
| Expenses (Prop Taxes, Repairs, Ins, Mortg Interest) | (14,994) |
| Net Receipts / (Disbursements) | <u>48,557</u> |
| Hayden House Loan Balance at January 1 | 125,664 |
| Principal Payments | (2,385) |
| Hayden House Loan Balance at June 30 | <u>123,279</u> |

| CALLED TO SERVE THROUGH OUR GIVING | |
|--|---|
| Offering Received the week of | |
| July 27– August 2 General Fund—\$5,585 Improvement Fund—\$1,175 | August 3 –9 General Fund—\$4,530 Improvement Fund—\$550 |
| August 10-16 General Fund— \$5,647 Improvement Fund- \$1,000 | August 17-23 General Fund— \$2,098 Improvement Fund- \$610 |

**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