

ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH MESSENGER

CALLED TO WORSHIP / COMMITTED TO SERVE / CONNECTED IN FAITH

May 2020

A monthly Publication of
St. John Lutheran Church

Worship Schedule

Has been postponed till at
least **April 5**. Watch for
updates to come.

Pastors

Pastor Mark Johnson
Pastor Sarah Timian

Office Staff

Jillmarie Stich
Audrey Zellman

Treasurer

Rae Fimon

Custodians

Curt & Cheryl Johnson

Organists

Eileen Hanlon
Diane West

Choir Director
Bri Bergstrom

Accompanist
Sheila Schmidt

148 S. Chestnut St.
Belle Plaine, MN 56011

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

Important Information

In cooperation with the Governor's directive to close non-essential services our church building will remain closed. All scheduled meetings and activities are canceled until further notice.

The church office will be staffed starting Tuesday, May 5,
from 8:00 am-5:00 pm.

We do not take these steps lightly. We understand they are taken in the best interest of our neighbors. For now, we remain Connected in Faith even though we are separated by social distance. We will continue to post updates, prayers, videos etc. on our Facebook Page, and are still available by e-mail or phone.

**Last Day of Sunday School
And
Recognition of Sunday School Teachers,
Helpers, Connect and Confirmation Leaders
Sunday, May 3 during the taped Service.
Information inside.**



**Senior Graduation Recognition
will be held
May 24.
During the taped Service.
More information inside.**

From Pastor Mark

“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit
be with you all.”

These are the words of the Greeting that we use in our worship service. They are taken from St. Paul's second letter to the Corinthians (13:14). And frankly, I miss greeting all of you with these words at our worship services on Saturday evenings and Sunday mornings. It seems very odd to me to not be worshipping at church on the weekends. I miss it. And I miss all of the other occasions where we gather to be with each other. Absence makes the heart grow fonder. Sometimes, you don't know how much you appreciate something until you miss having it.

Fortunately, this will only be for the time being. The greatest mandate that we have is Jesus' Commandment that we love one another as he loves us. And for now, loving and caring for each other means that we have to be apart. I look forward to the time when we can be together again.

In the meantime, I hope you are taking the opportunity to join us in our online worship that we post on our Facebook page each week, with a link to our Website. I am glad that we have this available to us during this time. For the past number of weeks, along with the sermon, we have been including the other parts of our regular worship. We've been doing this so that people who view it don't just listen but also have the opportunity to participate in the normal ways that we do during our worship times with our Confession, Prayer of the Day, Apostles' Creed and Lord's Prayer. We are also inviting viewers to get a piece of bread and a small cup of wine or juice so that we can participate, wherever we are, in Holy Communion. Even though we are physically apart from one another during this time, yet we are still spiritually connected, we are still the Body of Christ. I hope that our online worship each week can provide you with a sense of comfort and encouragement and support through such a unfamiliar and uncertain time.

Also, please check out our website for timely updates and information, as well as weekly Scripture readings, prayers and opportunities to reflect and share together.

Of course, we are not passing the offering plate during this time. However, we do need and want to keep up our support during these unusual times, as well. And so during each worship service, when it comes time for the offering, we show a power point slide of the different ways that you can continue to provide support through this time. If our office reopens after May 4th, you can bring your offering in, or you can mail it to St. John Lutheran, 148 S. Chestnut St. There are also easy and convenient online options. All you need to do is google St. John Lutheran Church, Belle Plaine MN and our website will come up. Click on it. You will see a green, rectangular "Online Giving" box. Click on that and you will see ways to give online, including ways to give through your smart phone with a GivePlus App or through Text to Give using 855-957-2362. Please pick the option that is right for you. And thanks for your continuing support!

We are traveling through an unprecedented time right now, at least in our own lifetimes. As I write this, there is talk of beginning to reopen certain things. It looks like that will be a phased approach, allowing some business and activities where people can maintain a safe distance. This, of course, depends upon testing and contact tracing and all the other things we are hearing about. I suspect that one of the later things to be phased in will be those occasions that draw people together into a crowd, like going to church to worship or to Target Field to watch the Twins. We will just have to watch to see how things develop. We are inventing the wheel. We haven't done this before. We don't have a template to follow.

In the meantime, we are having to put some things on hold, like funerals, baptisms, weddings, showers, etc. My heart goes out to everyone who is in this holding pattern right now. You are in my thoughts and prayers. Additionally, other staples of our regular calendar like Camp and the Ice Cream Social, etc. are up in the air. Please stay posted.

Let us also continue to pray for and seek to help those who are in need. There are so many people who's lives have been upended through illness or the loss of their livelihood. During these times, we can seek to support the food shelves and charities and the organizations that seek to provide help and support to people who need it. Let us be encouraged to be in thoughtful prayer and action in seeking to reach out, as we can, to make a difference for someone.

And finally, let us look for God's presence through this. Along with being a trying time, this can also be a time for a reassessment of ourselves and our values and the things that are most important in life. I've heard folks say that, as challenging as it can be to have everyone have to stay at home, along with working and keeping up with schoolwork and all the rest of it, that yet they have also had opportunities to connect and grow and eat together and share in ways that can sometimes get short shrift. Along with the challenges, we also see an increase in neighborliness, in people seeking to help each other. We see the love and compassion of God reaching out through many generous and caring hands and hearts in a lot of different ways.

God is watching over us. And yes, we will get through this. Stay safe and I hope to see you as soon as we can safely get together again. You are in my thoughts and prayers.

From Pastor Sarah

Sowing Seeds

Anyone who knows me fairly well could probably tell you I'm not great with plants. Those who know me really well could tell you that's an understatement. I never developed whatever gifts or skills are needed to be a master gardener— or even an average one.

Yesterday, I planted some seeds. Despite everything I just said, I found some flower pots and soil and got to work. With time and care, I am hoping to have a few vegetable plants in a couple of months.

There's a better than average chance this will end in disaster of some sort.

So...why even try? Part of the reason to do this was practical. I know I need to get outside, and growing a few herbs and vegetables will be useful in the long run. Part of the reason, though, was hopeful.

Regardless of skill level, there is an amount of uncertainty when you plant something. There's always a risk that the seeds won't produce or it will be a bad year or the weather will wreck the harvest, but seeds are planted anyway with the hope that all will go well.

Sowing seeds is an act of hope. It acknowledges the possibility of failure, but acts with good faith that the project will succeed.

This isn't limited to gardening. Any project that you begin or idea you share carries these possibilities and risks with it. On the one hand, the project might fail. The idea might be rejected. On the other hand, the results might exceed your expectations. The project or idea might take on a life of its own and become more than you ever imagined.

³⁰ [Jesus] also said, "With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it?"³¹ It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of the seeds on earth;³² yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade."

--Mark 4:30-32, NRSV

If you have a project or idea, I encourage you to start on it. Act in hope and faith— even if there's a chance it might not work. Plant those seeds and watch what happens.

Our pastors are recording our Weekly worship services. Please check our Facebook page or our website to view the services and to watch for updated information.

Unapproved St. John Lutheran Church Council Minutes April 16, 2020
Virtual Google Meeting

President Matt Stier called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Present:

x	Pastor Mark	x	Pastor Sarah	x	Matt Stier		Jim Eggers
x	Angie Kahle	x	Rae Fimon	x	Albert Koepp	x	Wendy Theis
x	Mya Holzemer	x	Sue Koenig	x	Chris Zellman	x	Chris Stier
x	Bob Fairbanks	x	Curt Johnson	x	Jennifer Nagorski		

Opening Devotions: Pastor Sarah shared devotions

Approval of Minutes: Members of Council reviewed the minutes from the March 19, 2020 Council Meeting. Motion was made, seconded and carried to approve the meeting minutes.

Pastor Mark's Report:

We have been following the Health Care Directives and the Governor's stay at home order which has recently been extended through May 4. We have been evaluating our decisions based upon these directives. Currently, we have suspended all activities at the church and closed the building and the office to the public. We will be deciding our next steps based upon events as they develop.

Since we are in this holding pattern right now, we have currently postponed two baptisms and two funerals which will be scheduled when we are all able to be together again. In addition, some other items for which the building has been reserved, like showers and, perhaps a wedding, are being canceled and will be rescheduled for later when we can gather together safely.

Some other annual staples on our calendar are also uncertain this year, like the Ice Cream Social. Also, the Board at Camp Onomia will be determining in May if they will have to cancel Summer programs. It appears likely that they will not have early Summer programming and may try to reschedule for later in August, if that seems feasible. We will have to make our own decisions later, as well.

A few of us have met, while respecting a safe distance, to record our worship services and post them online. While it is odd to be in an empty sanctuary, this is the next best thing we can do right now. It appears that quite a few people are using this platform to see our services and they have been well received. In addition to the sermon, we have been including the other regular parts of the service, including communion, so that people can not only listen but also be able to participate where they are. We also included some special music attachments for our Holy Week services. As our Mission Statement says, "We are Called to Worship," and even though we remain physically apart we also remain spiritually connected.

Along with our worship services, we continue to maintain a connection online with prayers, Scriptures and opportunities for reflection and sharing. We will also be looking at other types of resources to maintain and strengthen the ways we can be connected in meaningful ways through our online resources. I am also continuing to be in contact with people personally, according to their needs, and also to simply be in touch. The Children's Team has been providing online weekly Sunday School lessons for use at home. We will also need to evaluate Connect and Confirmation programs through this time, as well.

Since I am by myself, I have been using my office to do some work. Jillmarie works remotely from home and, occasionally, comes into the office. Audrey is at home and maintaining any hours that she works. Curt and Cheryl have resumed their normal activities and easily maintain a safe distance in our large building. We are maintaining our staff communication as best we can through this time.

Our interviews with strategic planning consultants has also been put on hold for the time being, to be rescheduled when we have the opportunity. As events play out, we will have to determine what timeline and course of action makes the most sense to follow up on this.

Pastor Sarah's Report:

Online Ministry—In order to care for the health of our neighbors, we haven't been holding in-person meetings or worship services since March 14. The church ministry has shifted focus to developing and maintaining an online presence to remain connected to and supportive of our faith community. A small team of the staff and pastors has been meeting to record the worship videos. Thank you to everyone who has been helping with that.

Confirmation and Connect—Wednesday classes have been suspended for the remainder of the year. Students have been emailing in their Worship Notes after attending the online services. Confirmation Camp remains an open question. Camp Onomia's Board of Directors will be meeting in May to determine their summer plans.

Youth—YouthWorks has cancelled their June and early July Mission Trips. This includes St. John's Mission Trip, which was scheduled for June 20-26. YouthWorks has been in touch with Kirk Franck regarding our options, and we will know more as the conversation continues.

Ongoing Items--Preparation continues for sermons and worship leadership, newsletter articles, and communications with ministry teams and individuals. In addition, writing prayers, check-ins, and descriptions for links and videos to post has become part of the new routine.

Staff Report: Custodial: Curt did not have any new information

Treasurer: Rae presented the financial reports for the General fund, Youth fund, Technology Fund, Property Improvement fund, Memorial fund, and the Foundation and answered questions from the council.

Transfers:

No Transfers in or out this month.

Ongoing Business

The Camp Onamia alternative project discussion that was developed by Pastor Sarah has been tabled for now.

New Business

A. After a vote from the council to move forward, Rae applied for the small business loan to help support salaries and benefits (Federal CARES act) called the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP). St. John's was approved for \$57,600 to maintain salaries and benefits for church staff.

B. The council discussed the importance of Informing ministry teams/committees about upcoming church plans for opening/closure (Ice Cream Social, mission trip, church camp,etc.), so all can prepare if necessary. Pastor Mark will reach out.

Ministry Team Updates

1. Stewardship Committee - no meeting held
 2. Buildings and Grounds Committee - no meeting held, trees have been trimmed
 3. Personnel Committee - no meeting held
 4. Children's Ministry Committee - no meeting held - have begun work on video lessons
 5. Small Group/Faith Formation Committee - no meeting held
 6. Worship and Music Committee - no meeting held
 7. Technology and Communications Committee - no meeting held
- Festivals Committee - no meeting held

Motion was made, seconded and carried to adjourn at 7:20pm. Meeting was adjourned followed by the Lord's prayer.

Comment was made by council members that the virtual Easter Service was great and enjoyed by many. Adding the music was a great bonus!

Respectfully Submitted,
Angie Kahle, Secretary

High School Graduates Honored May 24

Congratulations to our class of 2020 graduating high school seniors on achieving this important milestone in your life. On Sunday, May 24, during the taped 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:

Garrett Boblitt
Abby Bristlin
Daniel Cooper
Matthew Fink
Aiden Fogarty
Madison Fors

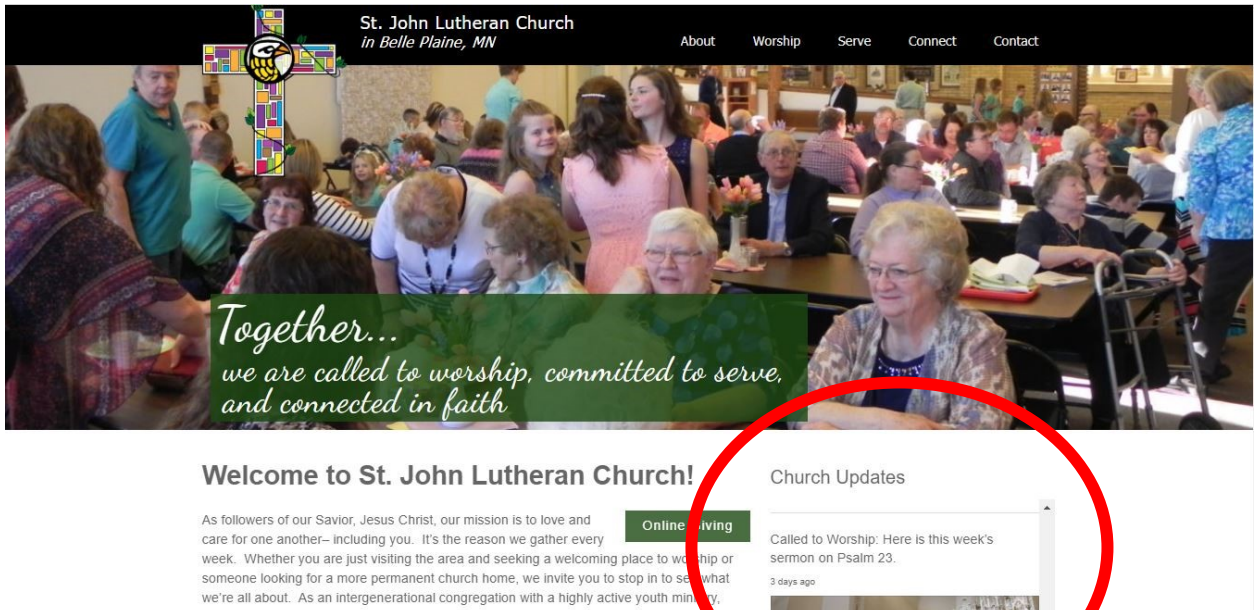
Trevor Gruhn
Vivian Herrmann
Elizabeth Hilgers
Alexis Meyer
Avery Mohlin

Zachary Olson
Andi Otting
Michael Ritsch
Nicholas Rosario
Hannah Skluzacek
Amara Smith

Do you have internet but don't have Facebook?

You can still see everything we post on our website!
Just look in the lower right corner under "Church Updates"

www.stjohnbelleplaine.org



The screenshot shows the website for St. John Lutheran Church in Belle Plaine, MN. The header includes the church name, location, and navigation links: About, Worship, Serve, Connect, Contact. The main banner features a photo of a church service with a green overlay containing the text: "Together... we are called to worship, committed to serve, and connected in faith". Below the banner, there is a "Welcome to St. John Lutheran Church!" section with a paragraph of text and an "Online Living" button. To the right, a "Church Updates" section is circled in red, showing a post titled "Called to Worship: Here is this week's sermon on Psalm 23." dated "3 days ago". A red arrow points from the text "Facebook posts and videos are here!" at the bottom to the circled "Church Updates" section.

Facebook posts and videos are here!

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 GENEROUR 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: Amanda Berg, Allison Theas, Megan Holzemer & Havyn Moonen

Pre-K4's: Cayla Menka, Julie Oldenberg & Tea Smith

Kindergarten: Emily Aust, Megan Malz & Kiya Williamson

1st Grade: Bryn Davis, Ann Carstens, Katie Hermann, Kathrine Wermerskirchen, Jessica Stene & Elissa Moonen

2nd Grade: Shannon Swenson, Bree Weckmann, Katie Klaverkamp & Savannah Berg

3rd Grade: Cassie Gerres, Elizabeth Koonst, Heather & Matt Kes, Amanda Schultz, Stephanie Paulson, Nicole Koepp, Jennifer Hardel & Kerri Williamson

4th Grade: Kristin Stier, Josh Koepp & Kamryn Stier

Music: Rachel Kelm

Subs: Alex & Angie Hoff, Kristy Konapacki, Jenn Nagorski, Stephanie Paulsen, Brook Borreson, Adrea Adelman, & Margret Schwichtenberg

Connect Leaders:

5th Grade: Ann Carstens, Andrea Gerres, & Sue Steinhagen

6th Grade: Karen Bessel, Diane Gerres, Teresa Latzke & Neal Williamson

Confirmation Leaders:

7th Grade: Erin Carlson, Mindy Chevalier, Sara Fahey, Melanie Fogarty, Heather Hornaman, Molly Moonen, Jenn Nagorski, & Shannon Swenson

8th Grade: Karmen Gruhn, Mya Holzemer, Deana Siekmann, & Marjorie Tracy

Pizza Coordinator: Michelle Melheim

May 2020



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 Brody Curtiss Richard Laabs Tyler Shackle	2
3 Lowell Hiles Craig Johnson Samuel Karl Christopher Zellman Mark Koepp Diane Rasmussen Scott Stier	4 Aiden Cooper David Einertson Miranda Weckman Amy Muehlenhardt	5 Trisha Anderson Ryan Creighton Stephen Wolff Graham Theas	6 Caleb Tracy	7	8 Kelsey Gynild Lily Klaverkamp Mitchell Koepp Alek Pederson Matthew Stier	9 Hannah Skluzacek
10 Rachel Fahey Jack Fogarty Taylor Jaworski Thomas Peterson Marlene Schultz Allison Theas	11 Aiden Ladd Abigail Lawler Chris Moylan Janice 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 Leslie Bessel Adella Gruetzmacher Brian Vycital
17 Sadie Beckius Amy Eppen Kimberly Jaster Kimberly Thacemert	18 Aimee Cecka Rex Ernest Kevin Koepp Loren Kruschke Andrew Siemon	19 Matt Hanson Wyatt Herrmann Louis Longhenry	20 Kendall Hutchison Molly Moonen Timothy Moonen Nicholas Rosario	21 Ryan Maier Raquel Peterson Kiersten Skelley	22 Nolan Anderson Matthew Fink Vincent Holtberg	23 Daniel Cooper Aubrey Davis Andrea Gerres Ewald Gruetzmacher
24 Jayce Henke Preston Kes	25 Katelyn Bauer Addison Kahle Weston Koepp	26 Grace Brueske Trevor Carstens Ronald Nagel	27 Mike Campbell John Grannis Hazel Koepp Alexis Meyer	28 Kylee Gehrke	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						

There are now two new ways to give to St. John

You can now give to St. John through a text or through an App. To learn how to use the App or text go to our website, www.stjohnbelleplaine.org, click on "Serve" and then "Giving" and click on the instructions for the App or Text.

Financial Corner

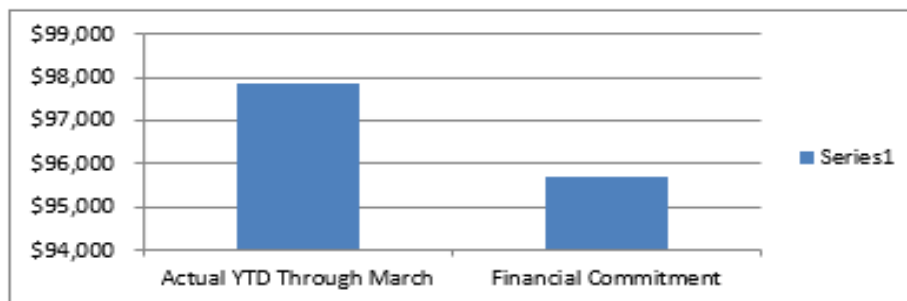
**St. John Financial Results
Three Months Ending March 31, 2020 and March 31, 2019**

General Operating Fund			Year Over Year
	March 31, 2020	March 31, 2019	Increase
Income	\$ 97,852	\$ 88,977	10%
Expenses:			
Personnel	(79,058)	(75,346)	
Office	(6,269)	(5,831)	
Property & Maintenance	(12,179)	(10,429)	
Ministry Teams	(13,241)	(8,265)	
Other	(871)	(1,702)	
Benevolence:			
Minneapolis Area Synod	(3,000)	(3,000)	
Camp Onomia	(750)	(750)	
2019 World Hunger	(250)	-	
Net Receipts / (Expenditures)	\$ (17,766)	\$ (16,346)	
Cash Balance at January 1 (Excl. Loans)	\$ (84,836)	\$ (64,346)	
Net Income / (Expenditures)	(17,766)	(16,346)	
Misc. cash not affecting income	(191)	(269)	
Loan from Building Fund	54,500	35,000	
Loan from St. John Foundation	53,798	53,308	
Cash Balance at March 31	\$ 5,505	\$ 7,347	

Building Fund			
Receipts	\$ 27,429	\$ 28,566	-4%
Principal	(28,579)	(27,111)	
Interest	(3,101)	(4,569)	
Net Receipts / (Disbursements)	\$ (4,251)	\$ (3,114)	
Loan Balance at January 1	\$ 325,224	\$ 435,544	
Principal Payments	(28,579)	(27,111)	
Loan Balance at March 31	\$ 296,645	\$ 408,433	

Actual Income Compared to 2020 Financial Commitment:

Actual YTD Through March	\$ 97,852
Financial Commitment	\$ 95,688



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