

## JOY TO THE WORLD!



Lily Weittenhiller, 6<sup>th</sup> grade

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Prairie du Sac, WI

December 2023

### **Jeremiah 29:11-12**

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on me and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart.”

Friends of St. John's,

I want to thank you all for welcoming me with such warm and inviting hearts. It is an absolute blessing and joy to be here among you. I have been looking forward to this time. I have heard nothing but kind words of affirmation about this congregation and I look forward to working beside you as we take the prayerful time to seek God's wisdom and vision for the next Lead Pastor position. It is a new chapter in your history, and while it can feel scary or uncertain, we can take trust in knowing that God indeed has plans for you as a congregation, “plans to give you hope and a future.” It is an exciting time too, as you have the opportunity to truly discern, question, listen, and examine who you are as a community of faith. Who is God calling you to be? What is the vision God has for you? Where will this congregation be led? Who will God present to you, to lead and serve you faithfully? What will the future hold for St. John's? I am truly excited to see how this process will unfold and how God will continue to hold you, guide you, and love you as we seek God's wisdom and blessing together.

I also wanted to share some biographical information about me just to give you some idea of who I am, and a bit about my ministry path. I am originally from Minot, North Dakota (go Magi!). I graduated from Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota and Warburg Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa. I have served as associate pastor at First Lutheran in Janesville, and St. John's Lutheran in Oregon. I left full time parish ministry in 2010 to study professional chaplaincy, and after serving as a chaplain resident at Meriter Hospital for a year earning my credentials, I started working for Agrace Hospice Care in the fall of 2011 as a chaplain. During my time at Agrace, I was honored and privileged to serve many patients and families as they navigated through the end-of-life process. I carry many stories and memories of these wonderful people and cannot begin to tell you how, because of these people and the experiences, I grew and found depth in my faith, my peace, my love for life, and my sense of call into the church again.

I am a single father of three wonderful and amazing kids: Collin – 18, Andrew – 15, and Emma – 11. Some fun facts: I am a massive fan of NHL hockey - my favorite team being the Toronto Maple Leafs and I love college football with my allegiance to BOTH the Badgers and the Michigan Wolverines. Favorite cereal is peanut butter Cap'n Crunch, favorite dessert is scotcheroo bars, MASSIVE fan of the British synth pop duo – Pet Shop Boys, come proudly from a military family, love all things aviation and one could say that I am “plane” nuts (EAA and Air Force) and all things Harley Davidson (but no motorcycle yet). LOVE all types of music including progressive rock/thrash metal (Rush, Genesis, Deep Purple, Metallica) to classical symphonies/operas (Mahler, Holst, Verdi) to smooth jazz/yacht rock (Steely Dan, Michael McDonald, Chris Botti). Favorite job was pizza delivery driver, favorite vacation spot is Punta Cana, avid Lego builder, autograph collector, live concert attendee, and fan of dry British humor (Monty Python).

I am sure you will learn more about me as we get to know each other. I am truly thankful to be here and look forward to our work together. May this season of Advent bring light, life, and love into our hearts as we celebrate the birth of our savior Jesus Christ – May he be the true gift we share and receive.

Peace Be With You,  
Pastor Jason



### **Parish Planning Council Members:**

Executive Director	Nancy Kaufman	(608) 963-0151
Assistant Exec Director	Nancy Passehl	(608) 219-1936
Secretary	Cathy Yanke	(608) 434-4869
Treasurer	Donna Nelson	(608) 393-4660
Evangelism Board	Gwen Ringelstetter	(608) 643-6922
Fellowship Board	Cathy McAlexander	(402) 689-5196
Lay Ministry Board	Gina Varley	(608) 544-5002
Member-at-Large	Roger Seymour	(608) 588-3198
Parish Education Board	James Newman	(608) 512-7623
Properties Board	Lon Kaderavek	(608) 434-2928
PR and Social Concerns	Ellen Jorgensen	(262) 995-3248
Stewardship Board	Anne Klinkner	(608) 393-6453
Women of ELCA	Eunice Yanke	(608) 643-8289
Youth Board	Tracy Pape	(608) 544-2727
Youth Member-at-Large	Sean Jager	(608) 434-0755

### **The Staff:**

**Pastor:** Sally Williams [sally@stjohnssaukprairie.org](mailto:sally@stjohnssaukprairie.org) (h) 643-7810

**Interim Pastor:** Jason Hill [jason@stjohnssaukprairie.org](mailto:jason@stjohnssaukprairie.org) 643-2439

**Director of Music:** Ruellene Seymour

[ruellene@stjohnssaukprairie.org](mailto:ruellene@stjohnssaukprairie.org) (h) 588-3198

**Youth Director:** Penny Johnson [penny@stjohnssaukprairie.org](mailto:penny@stjohnssaukprairie.org)

(c) 370-4279

**Custodian:** John Hines [john@stjohnssaukprairie.org](mailto:john@stjohnssaukprairie.org) (c) 393-2325

**Office and Communications Coordinator:** Linda Hines

[linda@stjohnssaukprairie.org](mailto:linda@stjohnssaukprairie.org) (h) 544-2409

**Sunday School Superintendents:** Joanna Jones and Miranda Jager

[sundayschool@stjohnssaukprairie.org](mailto:sundayschool@stjohnssaukprairie.org) 643-2439

**St. John's Lutheran Church:** 643-2439 [www.stjohnssaukprairie.org](http://www.stjohnssaukprairie.org)

Like us on Facebook at St Johns Lutheran Sauk Prairie

*Mission Statement: Christ, our strength and refuge, calling us to serve*

St. John's Lutheran Church  
100 Oak Street  
Prairie du Sac, Wisconsin 53578



**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

Christ,  
our strength  
and refuge,  
calling us  
to serve

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
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Prairie du Sac,  
Wisconsin 53578



Food, paper products and cleaning supplies may be brought to the table in the gathering area at any time. These items are distributed to many families in the Sauk Prairie community. The food pantry especially needs:

Soups  
Crackers  
Instant Coffee

Chicken/Beef Broth  
Microwave Popcorn  
Hot Chocolate Mix

Thank you for sharing with others.



### **Birthday Greetings**

We hope you take a moment to send greetings to the following people who have birthdays in December. The day is in parentheses.

Sally Degenhardt (6)  
612 Eagle Crest Ct  
Prairie du Sac, WI 53578

Marilyn Herschleb (12)  
129 Washington St.  
Sauk City, WI 53583

Deane Yanke (29)  
223 – 8<sup>th</sup> Street  
Prairie du Sac, WI 53578



Carol Anderson (31)  
S10976 County Road C  
Spring Green, WI 53588

## **THANK YOU**

### **Thanks to Our Staff**

We are blessed to have a wonderful, faithful, caring, and hardworking staff and I am very thankful to call them colleagues. Please take time to thank them all: Donna Nelson, John Hines, Lon Kaderavek, Bob Nelson, Ruellene Seymour, Penny Johnson, Interim Pastor Jason Hill and Pastor Sally Williams.

Linda Hines

	<b>Women of the Church News</b>	
	<b><u>Lydia Circle</u></b> Thursday, December 14, at Dorothy Halverson's, 9456 County Rd Y, Sauk City	1:00pm
	<b><u>Martha Circle</u></b> Thursday, December 7, in St. John's Library	9:30am
	<b><u>Ruth Circle</u></b> Monday, December 11, at Cathy McAlexander's, 2104 Mustang Dr., Prairie du Sac	9:00am
	<b><u>Sarah/Mary Circle</u></b> Tuesday, December 5, in St. John's Library	9:30am

Thirty ladies attended Circle meetings in November. The Bible Study the past three months has been about Holy Places. We continued this theme on November 21<sup>st</sup> with a presentation by Pastor Sally and Jan Floeter on their visits to the Holy Land several years ago. We will have a report on that event in the next Visitor. In October, the studies were led by Diane Elsing, Mary Weeks, Patty Barritt and Kathy Lester.

Our ThankOffering Service was on November 26<sup>th</sup> this year. We will continue to collect for this until December 17<sup>th</sup>. As we have said before, this is an opportunity to express our thankfulness to God for His many blessings. The offering goes to the National WELCA organization and provides funds for World Hunger, global ministries, and other important programs. Put your contributions in an envelope marked THANKOFFERING. If you haven't given it yet and would like to contribute, just put your envelope in the offering plate at any church service or give it to Linda in the office.

As we have done in the past, we will not have our regular individual Circle meetings in January. Instead, all Circles will meet together on January 11<sup>th</sup> at 10:00am in the fellowship hall. Of course, we will have some food first. Whatever you would like to bring such as leftover Christmas cookies, cheese, chips, fruit.... just anything you would like to share. We are hoping for good weather and a good crowd, and ALL women of St. John's are VERY cordially invited.

Interim Pastor Jason will lead the Bible Study and after that we will have our special Candlelight Service for the members of St. John's who died during 2023. Members of St. John's who have lost loved ones are also invited to light a candle for the loved one even if that loved one was not a member of St. John's. We hope to see

you there, so mark your calendar and plan to come. It is an impressive and moving ceremony.

We have received \$209.30 so far in the Pennies for Poverty Jar. Remember that we are giving this money to 6:8 this year. We are hoping we can give a nice amount to this very worthy organization. The Penny Jar will be on the name tag table until December 27 so we can make that total even higher!

Ruth Circle visited Special Friends in October and November. Martha Circle will visit them in December and January.

Remember to look in this Visitor for the Special Prayer to be read on December 20<sup>th</sup>.



### **Christmas Eve and Christmas Morning Service Times**

St. John's will NOT have a morning worship service on December 24, Christmas Eve.

Christmas Eve Candlelight services take place at 1:00, 3:00, 5:00 and 7:30pm. The 1:00pm and 5:00pm services will be available live on Zoom and will be available on Facebook later in the evening.

Christmas Day we will celebrate with **one** morning worship service at 9:00am.

On December 31 we will also celebrate with **one** worship service at 9:00am.

### **Winter Adult Education Schedule**

Here are the dates and subjects for Sunday morning adult education sessions for December. All are welcome!

- December 3: Presentation by 6:8 on the Sycamore Project
- December 10: Presentation by Hope House
- December 17: Text Study on the Christmas Scriptures
- December 24 & 31: No Class – Winter Break



## Milestone Ministry: Baptism Anniversary

All children of God who were baptized in 2023 are invited to take part in a special Baptism Anniversary celebration on Sunday, January 7 at either service. Please mark your calendars and invite your congregational sponsors to attend worship with you and your children that day. A letter of invitation will be sent in December. We look forward to celebrating with you!



## New Member Exploration

Have you been visiting St. John's and are interested in becoming a member? Or perhaps you know of someone looking for a new church home. We will receive new members on Sunday, January 28 at the 8:00am worship service followed by a reception in their honor. In the weeks preceding this reception we will have some orientation classes. More information on those classes will be shared in the near future. Please see Pastor Sally Williams with any questions.

# SPECIAL PRAYER

We invite you to join us in prayer on the 20<sup>th</sup> day of each month. On December 20<sup>th</sup>, please repeat the following prayer:

Jesus, the Light of the World, as we celebrate your birth, may we begin to see the world in the light of understanding you give us. As you chose the lowly, the outcasts, and the poor to receive the greatest news the world had ever known, so may we worship you in meekness of heart. May we also remember our brothers and sisters less fortunate than ourselves in this season of giving. Amen.

— *Karen L. Oberst*



Dear Friends in Christ,

Advent is upon us! We have entered the time of preparing for Christ. In society this often looks like shopping, baking, and present wrapping, but as Christians this time is to be set aside for slowing down, opening our minds and hearts to see where the Spirit is at work, and to recenter Christ in the middle of our everything.

It's hard work, though, isn't it? There are so many competing activities and responsibilities that are always pulling us in other directions and worship, prayer, and faith can easily start to feel like one more thing we have to do.

I wonder if in those moments we need to say, "NO!" For me, those aren't the moments I need to give myself a break and skip the faith stuff, but instead are exactly the moments I need to tell the rest of the world to stop for a moment so I can rest with and in Christ at the center of it all.

It reminds me a bit of Pastor Jason's sermon on "This Little Light of Mine." He asked the congregation if we were going to hide it under a basket and some of our children boldly shouted out NO! What a proclamation to the rest of us.

Are we going to run ourselves ragged keeping up with society? NO! Are we going to permit the expectations of others to allow us to live against our values and our mission from God? NO! Are we going to let others blow out the light that shines within us and keep us from proclaiming the coming of Christ? NO!

I pray this Advent might be filled with more noes to the things that are weighing you down and far more yeses that bring life.

Yes, to worship and faith.

Yes, to community and relationships.

Yes, to resting in the promises wrapped up in Advent and the action we're called to in the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

God has already said yes to us. I wonder what it might look like if we live into that yes. There is nothing wrong with presents and feasting, by the way. I love all things Christmas. Lately I've just been wondering what it might look like to live into that yes on a deeper level this year, even when it's hard, uncomfortable, and often messy.

The Spirit is always at work. I can't wait to see what the Spirit's up to here at St. John's this Advent and Christmas season!

Blessings,



## Stewardship Thanks

Thank you to all who have returned commitment pledge cards. We are grateful for those who can and do support our ministry. Pledge cards are one sign of commitment to our common ministry. You can continue to turn these cards in via the mail, the offering plate, or simply email Linda with your commitment for 2024.



St. John's is a proud supporter of Just Bakery of Dane County. By purchasing baked goods through Just Bakery, we are supporting the neighbor in need of hope. Look for the Just Bakery representative to be at St. John's on December 17 in the fellowship hall between services with their wonderful baked goods.

## Fellowship Committee report

- 90th Birthday Celebration. Cheesecake was served during coffee time. Mylar balloons and signed birthday cards were delivered to each celebrant.
- Interim Pastor Jason Hill was welcomed during coffee time on November 5.
- Coffee server and Coffee sponsorship signup sheets for 2024 will be posted soon. Please consider volunteering. This is a great opportunity and a simple method for families to demonstrate to their children how easy it is to serve their fellow church members.
- A welcome fellowship will be held January 28, 2024, for our new members.
- A SYNOD Congregation Leadership event will be hosted by St John's on February 17, 2024. Coffee, treats and lunch will be served. We will need additional volunteers that day to perform various functions.

Thank you, Cathy McAlexander, Fellowship Chair



## **With Sincere Sympathy**

We offer our condolences to the following families this month:

Dede and Bob Egan, Gina and Tom Varley and their families on the death of Dede and Gina's Aunt Lil.

Brian and Diane Williams, and Jeff, Sally and Molly Williams on the death of Brian's sister and Jeff's aunt, Marcia Erickson.

Roxann and Chris Grinde and their family on the death of Roxann's uncle, Robert Schutz.

Todd and JoAnnah Sorg on the death of Todd's aunt, Lana Elliott.

Tom and Leslie Lochner and their family on the death of Tom's grandmother, Elaine Lochner.



## **New Baby Congratulations**

We rejoice with Marilyn Herschleb on the birth of her great-grandson, Asher Bay. Asher's parents are Bailey and Desiree and his grandparents are Brett and Rhonda Herschleb.



## **St. John's Prayer Chain**

St. John's has an email Prayer Chain that is open to all. If you would like to have prayers for yourself or a loved one, please let Linda in the office know of your need. We use first names only in prayer requests. If you would like to be a Prayer Partner let Linda know to add your email to the group. To contact Linda use [linda@stjohnssaukprairie.org](mailto:linda@stjohnssaukprairie.org) or call 643-2439.



## **Offering Envelopes**

The 2024 offering envelopes are ready for you to take home. If you give your offering electronically you will not have envelopes on the tables. If you want envelopes, or if your name was missed, please leave a note for Linda or call the church office (643-2439) and we will gladly give you envelopes.



## H.E.L.P.—Red Sled Project

Help Excite Little People will be collecting gently, used toys for children and items for teens this holiday season. The program is based out of the First United Church of Christ, Sauk City, but has become a community-wide project. All items donated are distributed to children/teens in the Sauk Prairie area.

Items should be taken to the Washington Avenue doors and placed in or near the large bins to the left of the doors (outside, against the building) or placed in the decorated box in St. John's west hallway (behind the library).

The deadline for donations is **December 11<sup>th</sup>**.



## Sauk Prairie Area Caring Tree

St. John's is part of the Caring Tree community-wide effort to reach out to those in need during the Christmas season. Members may pick a tag from the Caring Tree set up in the gathering area. Most tags have ideas for hoped-for gifts for a particular child identified only by a number, age, sex, and size. You may purchase this gift and return it unwrapped with the tag attached and leave it under the tree.

Other tags ask for gift cards for local restaurants or more general "stocking stuffer" items that are appropriate for children, teens, or adults.

The Caring Tree also accepts financial gifts to allow volunteer shoppers to purchase gifts. Watch for the marked envelopes on the tree.

The deadline for returning gifts to is **December 11<sup>th</sup>**.



**American  
Red Cross**

## Sauk Prairie Community Blood Drive

The American Red Cross is having a Blood Drive at St. John's on December 11 from 12:00pm to 5:30pm. For an appointment call 1-800-733-2767 or visit [redcrossblood.org](http://redcrossblood.org).

## Stormy Weather Approaching



How will you know if St. John's is closed for worship services and Sunday School? You can call the church office (608-643-2439) after 7:00am; the answering machine message will state the times of service or the news that the church is closed. You can also look at our facebook page. If you have any doubt about road conditions and your ability to maneuver, don't risk a fall or an accident. Please stay home and join us via ZOOM.

# Sunday School News

Please join our Sunday School students in celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ on Sunday, December 17<sup>th</sup> at 1pm as they share Christ's story through word and song in their Christmas Program. We also invite you to support their offering project through donations to Porchlight, Inc, a ministry to reduce homelessness. Financial gifts can be made out to St. John's Lutheran Church with 'Porchlight' in the memo line (we will send one check to them). We will also be collecting much needed items:

- Deodorant (travel size) and/or Twin-Size Sheets
- Gloves and/or Toothpaste & Toothbrushes (Travel Size)
- Razors (travel size) and/or Twin-Size Blankets
- Dish Soap and/or Laundry Baskets
- Floor Cleaner and/or Bathroom Cleaners (ex: bleach)
- Paper Towels and/or Sponges
- 13-gal Garbage Bags and/or Pillows
- Toilet Paper and/or Laundry Soap
- Bowls & Cups (Microwave safe)

We hope to see you there!

## THANK YOU

Thank you to Dave Sweeney, JoAnnah Sorg, Miranda Jager and Joanna Jones for organizing and teaching us the Christmas Program! We appreciate you!

# Confirmation News

## Caroling at Maplewood

St. John's confirmation students will skip class on December 13 and go caroling at Maplewood Nursing Home! We have jingle bells, songs, hot cocoa and treats afterwards. Senior Choir members are welcome to join us. We also need drivers to take us to Maplewood (leave church about 6:00pm). **If you can help transport students**, please email penny@stjohnssaukprairie.org, thank you!

## Caring Tree Shopping

On Wednesday, December 6, St. John's Confirmation students and adults are invited to go shopping for the Sauk Prairie Caring Tree. We'll leave St. John's after confirmation class (6:45pm), shop at Walmart in Baraboo, and return to St. John's around 8:00pm. Registration is required, and we need drivers! Sign up before Noon on Sunday, December 3 at:

<https://signup.com/go/zOFORKD>

## Thanksgiving Success

Thank you to all the St. John's youth and adults who helped peel potatoes for the Sauk Prairie Community Thanksgiving Meal! The kitchen was packed with members from St. John's who spent their day off preparing pounds and pounds of potatoes! We are grateful to everyone who took the time out of their day to share God's love via their efforts to help others.

## Thank You to Food Pantry Volunteers

We give a great big "Thank You!" to the volunteers who helped serve our community members in need, by working at the Sauk Prairie Food Pantry on Saturday, Oct. 21st. Sauk Prairie Food Pantry is a critical resource for our neighbors in the villages of Prairie du Sac, Sauk City, Merrimac, and the Bluffview Community. Thank you to Jennifer Brennan for leading the volunteers, and to Robin Lueck, Charlie Lueck, Jessica Kruchten, Carter Kruchten, Leah Kruchten and Madyn Ludowitz for their hard work and awesome service to others. We are very grateful for their expression of God's love to our area families in need.

## Serving in December

### Greeters

Dec 3 (Front Doors)  
(Sanctuary)  
Dec 10 (Front Doors)  
(Sanctuary)  
Dec 17 (Front Doors)  
(Sanctuary)  
Dec 25 (Front Doors)  
(Sanctuary)  
Dec 31 (Front Doors)  
(Sanctuary)

### 8:00 a.m.

C/S Sprecher  
C/C Thompson  
Rich/Kris Frey  
C/S Sprecher  
Evelynn Brennan  
Chesney Braund  
**(9:00am)**  
Gina/Todd Wyttenbach  
**(9:00am)**

### 10:30 a.m.

B/D Dederich  
Dale Clason  
Dale Clason  
Gina/Tom Varley  
Kiptyn Suchla  
Ella/Hannah Stephan

### Ushers

December 3  
  
December 10  
  
December 17  
  
December 25 **(9:00am)**  
December 31 **(9:00am)**

### 8:00 a.m.

Lon Kaderavek  
Dale Haroldson  
Sophia Hanson  
Lon Kaderavek  
Dale Haroldson  
Liam Leith  
Lon Kaderavek  
Dale Haroldson  
Brooke Braund

### 10:30 a.m.

Wolfgang Reich  
Diane Reich  
Ryan Jorgenson  
Kim Larson  
Bill Burton  
Madyne Ludowitz  
Tom Varley  
Jeff Ochsankel  
  
Todd/Gina Wyttenbach  
Kathy Lovell, Michael Jolicoeur  
Braylin Breunig, Evelyn Bahe

### Acolytes

December 3  
December 10  
December 17  
December 31 **(9:00am)**

### 8:00 a.m.

Violet Richard  
Willy Pickett  
Chesney Braund  
Joslyn Schultz

### 10:30 a.m.

Tyler Jorgenson  
Willy Pickett  
Clay Hutchins

### Assisting Ministers

December 3  
December 10  
December 17  
December 31 **(9:00am)**

### 8:00 a.m.

Patty Barritt  
Jude Hanna  
Jordan Small  
Donna Knickmeyer

### 10:30 a.m.

Clay Hutchins  
Jude Hanna  
Alyssa Himebauch

### Readers

December 3  
December 10  
December 17  
December 25 **(9:00am)**  
December 31 **(9:00am)**

### 8:00 a.m.

Gary Tomter  
Marilyn Herschleb  
Janelle Hupp  
Denny Dederich  
Kathy Lovell

### 10:30 a.m.

Dale Clason  
Jon Neubacher  
Doris Lohr

**Cantors**

December 3  
 December 10  
 December 17  
 December 31 (9:00am)

**8:00 a.m.**

Marv/Janelle Hupp  
 Melani Wheeler  
 Chris Stephan  
 Bill Burton

**10:30 a.m.**

Doris Lohr  
 Melani Wheeler  
 Chris Stephan

**Communion**

December 3  
 December 10  
 December 17  
 December 25 (9:00am)  
 December 31 (9:00am)

**Set-Up**

Jayne Carlson  
 Rodney/Marsha Key  
 Kendra Frey

**Clean-Up**

Holly/Steve Kindschi  
 Ginny Nimmow  
 Violet Richard

**Communion Assistants 8:00 a.m.**

December 3  
 December 10  
 December 17  
 December 25 (9:00am)  
 December 31 (9:00am)

Jayne Carlson  
 Kris Frey  
 Brooke Braund  
 Alice Chenoweth,  
 Alice Chenoweth

**10:30 a.m.**

Marian DeGiovanni  
 Gina Varley  
 Violet Richard

**Technology Team**

December 3  
 December 10  
  
 December 17  
  
 December 25 (9:00am)  
 December 31 (9:00am)

**8:00 a.m.**

Ellen Jorgensen  
 Liz/Malcolm Leith  
 Henry Dean  
 Liz/Malcolm Leith  
 Lee LaVigne  
 Lisa Davis

**10:30 a.m.**

Sean Jager  
 Jeff/Nicole/Audrey  
 Sandberg  
 Sean Jager  
 Ellen Jorgensen

**Sunday Stewards**

December 3  
 December 10  
 December 17  
 December 25 (9:00am)  
 December 31 (9:00am)

**8:00 a.m.**

Nancy Kaufman  
 Lon Kaderavek  
 Gwen Ringelstetter  
 Nancy Passehl

**10:30 a.m.**

James Newman  
 Gina Varley  
 Gina Varley

**Coffee Servers**

December 3  
 December 10  
 December 17

Linda Michaels  
 Donna Nelson  
 Steve and Patty Barritt

*Merry Christmas*



## **Christmas Eve Worship Assistants**

### **Ushers**

1:00pm Lon Kaderavek, Ken Lueck, Lee LaVigne, Parker Pape  
3:00pm Lon Kaderavek, Bill Burton  
5:00pm Lon Kaderavek, Dale Haroldson, Bill Burton  
7:30pm Anne Klinkner, Caden Argall

### **Candlelighters**

1:00pm Charlie Lueck, Liam Hart  
3:00pm Kiptyn Suchla, Braylin Breunig, Liam Leith, Henry Dean  
5:00pm  
7:30pm Caden Argall, Tyler Jorgenson

### **Readers**

1:00pm Patty Barritt  
3:00pm Crystal Lautenbach  
5:00pm Dale Haroldson  
7:30pm Cathy Yanke

### **Communion Set/Clean-up**

1:00pm Marilyn Herschleb  
3:00pm  
5:00pm  
7:30pm

### **Communion Assistants**

1:00pm Kathy Lovell, Kris Frey  
3:00pm Crystal Lautenbach, Marilyn Herschleb  
5:00pm Roxanne Zick, Mary Weeks  
7:30pm

### **Technology Team:**

1:00pm Jeff, Nicole, Audrey Sandberg  
5:00pm Bryce Ballweg,

### **Stewards**

1:00pm Roger Seymour  
3:00pm Roger Seymour  
5:00pm Gwen Ringelstetter  
7:30pm Cathy Yanke

Please be aware that St. John's records our worship services while on Zoom and those services are later posted on facebook. If you prefer not to be seen on camera, please speak with a pastor.

# Young Adult Updates

New job? Accepted into a new program? Won an award? Need prayers for something specific? Please email Pastor Sally at [sally@stjohnssaukprairie.org](mailto:sally@stjohnssaukprairie.org) or message her on Facebook with any updates, so that we may continue to celebrate and pray for you in your life in Christ.



## Stock the Schools

December's items for collection are jars of peanut butter and jelly, toothpaste, toothbrushes, and lip balm. Look for the red bin in the gathering area by the church office door to drop off your donations.



## All Saints Sunday

On November 5 we gave thanks for the lives of those who have been gathered into our heavenly home since All Saints Day of 2022. Those we miss are:

Beverly Clason  
Bev Christenson  
Neva Virnig  
Robert Knuteson, Sr.  
Paul Bringle  
Jeannine Robertson  
Marvin Beuthin  
Bonnie McGuine  
Tom Luetscher  
Shirley Bruckert  
Bette Shively  
Marlene Steinke  
Inez Zitlow  
LaVonne Knuth  
Ray Bolton

Please keep the families of these loved ones in your prayers this holiday season.

## Meet the Parish Planning Council

In continuance with our series on the different boards that make up our Parish Planning Council, this month we spotlight the WELCA Board.

Have you ever wanted to learn more about the activities the Women of the ELCA (WELCA) board organize and participate in during the year? Here are the ways you will see their faith in action at St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church.

There are four Bible Study Circles (Martha, Sarah/Mary, Lydia and Ruth) that meet during the day. Please check the Visitor and bulletin for Circle locations and times, and join us for Bible study, coffee and conversation. We would love to expand our Circles! As always, the Circles continue to connect with Special Friends, often with calls and cards, in place of in-person visits due to health concerns.

The Women of the ELCA collect, assemble, and ship items for Lutheran World Relief. The quilts prepared by our Quilting group are shipped along with the Lutheran World Relief Kits.

Items for kits for Global Health Ministries for Hospice and Newborn kits are assembled and shipped as well.

Members attend the WELCA South Central Synodical Retreat each year.

WELCA has three collections each year and the proceeds from each are distributed to different charities.

- Thankoffering services are held, and offerings are collected for nationwide WELCA ministries.
- Christmas Cheer gifts are collected and distributed to different charities each year.
- We also collect Pennies for Poverty in the jar in the narthex.

If you are interested in becoming more involved with these activities, we welcome you with open arms. Please contact Eunice Yanke at 608-643-8289.

# PARISH PLANNING COUNCIL MINUTES

DATE: November 7, 2023

**Present:** Donna Nelson, Nancy Kaufman, Nancy Passehl, Cathy Yanke, Sally Williams, Jason Hill, Ellen Jorgensen, Sean Jager, Tracy Pape, Roger Seymour, Gina Varley, James Neuman, Eunice Yanke, Gwen Ringelstetter, Anne Klinkner, Cathy McAlexander

**Absent:** Lon Kaderavek

## **Call to Order/Opening Remarks:**

Meeting was called to order at 5:58 p.m. by Nancy Kaufman. Nancy K asked for approval of the agenda. Motion to approve was made by Donna and seconded by Gina. Motion carried. A devotion/prayer was then given by Nancy K. We started with an introduction of all members to welcome the new members.

## **Secretary Minutes:**

The October minutes were submitted online by Cathy Yanke. A motion to approve minutes was made by Donna and seconded by Gina. Motion carried.

## **Treasurer report:**

The committee reviewed and discussed the October 2023, Treasurer Report submitted by Donna Nelson. We had a good month and income matched expenses this month. A motion to approve the financial report was made by Gina and seconded by Nancy P. Motion carried.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Evangelism:** Gwen Ringelstetter reported:

No report provided.

**Fellowship:** Cathy McAlexander reported:

- We celebrated Pastor Appreciation month with church members signing up to pray during the month of October, for the clergy associated with St John's. Cards were signed by the congregation for each pastor. Pastor Sally's favorite deserts were served during coffee time on October 22.
- Members who are age 90 and older were honored on October 29, with cards signed by the congregation, cheesecake served during coffee time and mylar balloons were delivered to them with their cards.
- Cookies and coffee were served following the French Horn Quartet Concert on October 29.

- Interim Pastor Jason Hill was welcomed, and All Saints Day was celebrated with cake at the November 5 coffee time.
- Our coffee time goodies on November 19 will be from Just Bakery.

**Lay Ministry:** Gina Varley reported:

- We will be decorating the sanctuary for fall/Thanksgiving on Saturday morning Nov. 11th
- Our next meeting will be Tuesday, Nov. 14

**Parish Education:** James Newman reported:

No report provided.

**Properties:** Lon Kaderavek reported:

No report provided.

**PR & Social Concerns:** Ellen Jorgensen reported:

- Thank you to those who have signed up to host yard signs this summer. Please feel free to start returning them to the workroom at your earliest convenience.
- Look for Just Bakery between services on November 19th.
- Hope House Shelter will be speaking to Adult Ed on December 10th.
- Restroom resource/hotline will be reviewed next meeting.

**Stewardship Board:** Anne Klinkner reported:

- The Fall Campaign and the format of the documents used as part of the Fall Campaign mailing was the primary subject of discussion at this meeting. The documents were finalized. Anne will send the letter, pledge form and time and talent survey to Linda.
- Cathy and Anne will contact some area churches to see what giving platforms they have, the cost, any known issues with them and the ease of using the platforms for donations. Cathy will create a spreadsheet to summarize the results. The results will be given to Cathy as we get the information.
- Our financial review personnel this year will be Crystal Lautenbach, Gina Wyttenbach, Jon Cafilisch and Brian Weeks. The audit date will be discussed at our November 2023 meeting.
- Roger will work on the Investment Policy and the related documents and we can start discussing them at the November 2023 meeting.

**Women of ELCA:** Eunice Yanke reported:

- 27 women attended Bible Study Circle meetings in October
- Gather magazine continues to arrive later than our Bible Study Leaders meeting. We have been told things are improving and will get the January/February issue before the new year.

- Nine ladies attended the South-Central Wisconsin Synodical Women's Organization WELCA Convention on October 7th. The speakers and workshops were very informative, and we learned many new things.
- St. John's will hold the Thankoffering service on Sunday, November 26.
- The Pennies for Poverty Jar money will be collected and sent to our local 6:8 group for their work in our community.
- Christmas Cheer monies will be donated to Special Olympics and Hope House of Baraboo.

**Youth Committee:** Tracy Pape reported:

- Because of switching chairpersons, youth board has not met. We will have an email meeting this month to discuss the following agenda items:
  - Potato Peeling for Sauk Prairie Thanksgiving Meal to help with the Sauk Prairie Thanksgiving Meal. We need 15 students to help peel potatoes, 12Noon-1pm on Wed Nov 22 in the St. Al's kitchen. Penny will organize the students, and we need Adult Chaperones. Please consider signing-up as a chaperone at <https://tinyurl.com/popeeling> and bring your own peeler.
  - Caroling at Maplewood Instead of class, confirmation students will go caroling at Maplewood Nursing Home Dec. 13! We need drivers to take us to Maplewood (arrive at 6:15pm, return to St. John's about 6:45pm). If you can help transport students, please email Penny ([penny@stjohnssaukprairie.org](mailto:penny@stjohnssaukprairie.org)), thank you!
  - Caring Tree Shopping on Wed Dec. 6, Confirmation students will be invited to go shopping for the Sauk Prairie Caring Tree. We'll leave St. John's after confirmation class (6:45pm), shop at Walmart in Baraboo, and return to St. John's around 8:00pm. We need drivers! If you can drive, please register at Caring Tree Shopping 2023
  - The 2024 ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans! The trip is scheduled for Monday, July 15, 2024 through Saturday, July 20, 2024. Six youth will attend.
  - Our next committee meeting will be Wednesday Dec. 13, 2023 at 6:00pm in the Church Library.

**Member at Large:** Roger Seymour reported:

No report provided.

**Youth member at Large:** Sean Jager reported:

No report provided.

## **Pastor/Intern Reports**

### **Interim Jason's Report:**

No report provided yet.

### **Sally's Report:**

- Thank you for the questions about why our Sunday School students are singing in the balcony. Here is the information behind the decision:
  - We do not have permission to video or take pictures of some of our students.
  - Some of our students will not participate because they feel very uncomfortable being up front, so we get more students participating if they're upstairs. Our tech is set up for choirs upstairs vs downstairs.
  - Our students are not performers. Their singing is worship leadership, helping us as adults praise God. Placing them up front encourages the sense of performance. You are always welcome to turn around to see them sing if desired. Typically, all special music is done from the balcony with a couple exceptions - the accompanists playing the piano and this last week Melani sang downstairs because the balcony was full of other special music groups.
- I attended our synod's Fall Summit in October where we had the opportunity to do some anti-racism training and learning about Land Acknowledgement statements. More to come on both these things as we get Pastor Jason settled.
- Ten students and parents joined me for a First Communion class on November 2. They were a blast! Many of them will receive their First Communion on Nov. 12. A few will receive it on another day that works for their families.
- With the carpet being replaced some of our typical meetings and work will be disrupted. There will be no confirmation or meal on Wednesday, November 29. Please get any Visitor articles to Linda by November 15.
- Interim Pastor Jason and I have been busy coordinating schedules and talking about different ways he can engage with the members of St. John's and the community. Welcome Pastor Jason!

### **Old Business:**

- Board members sign-up for Sunday Steward and devotion sign up for 2024
- PPC Retreat Follow-up--Reminder to greet new people and look for new ways to engage with others
- Carpet--On track to be completed late Nov./early Dec.

- Exhibit between services—consider asking Lutheran based services to provide exhibits between services to educate congregants regarding options available. Could be the day after Lead Conference in Feb. 2024.
- Congregational Meeting—no concerned feedback regarding meeting agenda with providing notes prior to meeting. Plan to continue this at future meetings.
- Childcare update—We are officially no longer a considered site for this program. The current Camp 4K will continue to be held here for now.

**New Business:**

- Devotion sign-up—completed above with Sunday Steward Schedule
- The synod is considering St. Johns for the Lead Conference to be held here on Feb. 17, 2024
- Next step for call process
  - Jason and Sally met with Synod representative, Marie to talk about our questions, hopes, and concerns, and how we will reflect on who we (St. John’s) are, our plans and dreams for future years. Thoughts include reflecting on why we do the things we do, where we struggle, growth opportunities. Consider asking the question of why do people come to St. John’s?
  - A transition committee will be created with volunteers to explore these questions.

Next meeting is Tuesday, Dec 5, 2023, at 6:00 pm. Devotion will be given by Cathy Y. Donna made a motion to adjourn our meeting, and the motion was seconded by James. Motion carried.

Meeting Adjourned at 6:57 pm. with The Lord’s Prayer lead by Nancy Kaufman.

Respectfully submitted by Cathy Yanke.

Monthly Stewardship Update

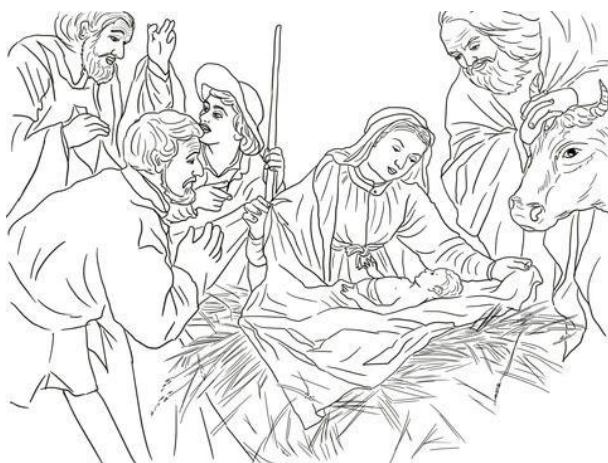
<b>October 2023</b>	<b>Monthly</b>	<b>Year-to-Date</b>
Total Income	\$37,276	\$451,917
Total Expenses	\$37,313	\$460,988



## A Place at the Stable

Each Christmas many people make the trek “home” to friends and family—with all its wonders and challenges. Some travel great distances and others a few miles to experience a sense of connection and “being counted.” Joseph makes this journey with Mary, to be counted among his tribe for the government. Rather than a warm reception, a rich meal, or an extra bedroom, Joseph and Mary are dislocated and relegated to a stable. Yet it is precisely here that the great home-coming takes place. In the stable Jesus arrives and what began as an order of the Roman Empire becomes the in-breaking realm of God. The sense of family expands as shepherds, perhaps without place or family to be counted, enter. And, as the writer of Titus (Titus 3:4-7) shares, through the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior, we see ourselves in the presence of God’s home-coming as heirs. No matter who we are, or the journey traveled, the promise through this infant in Bethlehem is that we are called “The Holy People, The Redeemed of the Lord” (Isa. 62:12) and welcomed to God’s in-dwelling in the creation.

Christmas day calls each of us to experience home in a new or unique way, particularly God’s home among us and our place in the story. We come home not merely to a biological or created family, but take our place in the unfolding story of God. With the nervous parents, the smelly shepherds, and the chorus of messengers, we come to the stable where there is a place for each of us to again experience God’s overarching love and promise.





## Happy December Birthday!

*The day is in parenthesis.*

### Our Youngest:

William LaBerge (6)                      Gibson Koenig (23)  
Anna Troeller (30)

### Our Sunday School Students:

Olive Rennie (4)                      John Brennan V (5)  
Dylann Fisher (5)                      Evelyn Haffeman (6)  
Josie Kinney (14)                      Audrey Maestri (15)  
Lillianna Weittenhiller (15)                      Nellie Kaderavek (18)  
Kate Endres (19)                      Sylvie Miller (19)  
Paisley Stuetgen (19)                      Evan Ryan (21)  
Harper Wasserberg (29)

### Our Youth:

Savannah Acker (2)                      Elio Piccinelli (2)  
Landon Schultz (9)                      Lily Fauerbach (11)  
Michael Paul (11)                      Destiny Bailey (15)  
Hannah Stephan (16)                      Parker Frosch (24)  
Willy Pickett (26)                      Hudson Ballweg (28)

### College and Career-age Young People:

Wyatt Urban (24)



### Thank you, Office Angels

My duties have been made lighter and brighter by many of you who have stopped by the office with a warm smile, a kind word and encouragement each day. Your cheerful voices on the phone have brightened my day. And those who have come to my aid by volunteering to come in weekly or monthly to help with specific “chores”, I am especially thankful. I thank you all and am grateful for all of you each day!

Linda Hines