



Tatum Sorg, Kindergarten

Prairie du Sac, WI

December 2024

Dear Friends of St. John's,

I love Christmas! I always have, ever since I was a little boy. I would often sit underneath the Christmas tree, look up at it, and see the bubble lights twinkling and bubbling, feeling their warm rainbow glow, and breathing in the aromatic pine as I checked and double-checked whose presents were the biggest. I would watch "A Charlie Brown Christmas" every year, listen to my favorite Christmas album by John Denver and the Muppets, and look forward to seeing my Grandparents after their long trek from Nebraska to North Dakota. Truth be told, I loved their arrival because it meant my Grandma brought cookies with her and who does not want Grandma cookies? It was a magical time being a kid, and experiencing that one time of the year, where all was "right" and peaceful in the world of my youth.

I had a positive experience with Christmas as a kid. But I know not everyone does. For many of us, the holidays not only bring out the best of emotions and memories, but conversely, it can evoke painful memories and emotions of hurt. I have met many people who in their expectation of the holidays, often just tolerate Christmas or Easter for another year, hoping that maybe this year, the memories might change, or the pain would heal. Sometimes, the holidays become a reminder of who is no longer in our lives but is missing from them. We wait, expect, and then lament the holidays with great emotional expanse because they are often associated with how things should be, with who should be there, and with the feelings and emotions we want to feel. The holidays can be associated with grief rather than celebration. If this has been

your experience, know that you are not alone. Many of us know these disappointed expectations.

Christmas is a time of expectation. It is a time of waiting. When we are kids, it's difficult to wait for anything. But as adults, we know that waiting and expecting is part of the Christmas experience. Consider too that Mary waited for the arrival of her baby, and she treasured this time, fully expecting Jesus to be born. As a new father-to-be, Joseph waited on the time for Mary to give birth, and to welcome his beautiful son. The family to-be waited for the moment that this expected baby would arrive in the most humble of surroundings. This new family waited for his birth, who would be a gift for the entire world, throughout time. The world shined in that moment, where all was right and peaceful in that corner of the world.

Maybe our own little world, the world we expect and wait for, is a place where both celebration and disappointment exist. Where our own dreams of how life unfolds and surprises us in celebration are held in tension with the dreams of how life was meant to be, where we are left in disappointment. Yet here we are. We are alive. We are still here. And that is in itself, a gift. You are the gift. You are uniquely made to be a gift into this world where we live in both the brightness and the darkness of life's tensions. You are a gift to offer into the world, where your story of both joy and pain are unique to you, where you offer precious value, worth, and dignity as others are going through their own waiting and expectation. You are the gift of your own story to help others in theirs.

St John's, never forget who you are, and why you continue to follow the redemptive story of God. Never forget Whose you are during this time of transition, expectation, and waiting – named and claimed by God. Never forget Whose Spirit tends to you, guides you, and holds you close to the very heart who loves you and gives you the gift of life. I wish you and your family a very blessed holiday season, and a Merry Christmas.

Peace Be With You,
Pastor Jason

Thank you, Visiting 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 to 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



Parish Planning Council Members:

Executive Director	Nancy Passehl	(608) 219-1936
Assistant Exec Director	Marv Hupp	(608) 370-2657
Secretary	Cathy Yanke	(608) 434-4869
Treasurer	John Brennan	(608) 469-8786
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	John Ballweg	(608) 220-3894
PR and Social Concerns	Melani Wheeler	(608) 963-9540
Stewardship Board		
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 (h) 643-7810

Interim Pastor: Jason Hill jason@stjohnssaukprairie.org 643-2439

Pastoral Intern: Elise Iverson Uphoff elise@stjohnssaukprairie.org

Director of Music: Ruellene Seymour
ruellene@stjohnssaukprairie.org

Youth Director: Penny Johnson penny@stjohnssaukprairie.org

Financial Secretary: Bruce Fritsch bruce@stjohnssaukprairie.org

Custodian: John Hines john@stjohnssaukprairie.org

Office Coordinator: Linda Hines linda@stjohnssaukprairie.org

Sunday School Superintendent: Pastor Sally Williams
sundayschool@stjohnssaukprairie.org 643-2439

St. John's Lutheran Church: 643-2439 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.

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Wisconsin 53578

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Christ,
our strength
and refuge,
calling us
to serve



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
Stuffing Mix

Chicken/Beef Broth
Microwave Popcorn
Hot Chocolate Mix
Cornbread 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.

Sharon Krintz (5)
E8795 Hilltop Rd.
North Freedom, WI 53951

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

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

Neal Jessie (18)
380 Washington St.
Prairie du Sac, WI 53578

Karen Ballweg (22)
9389 Blackhawk Trail
Sauk City, WI 53583

Deane Yanke (29)
245 Sycamore Street
Sauk City, WI 53583

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

	<u>Lydia Circle</u> Thursday, December 12, at Darlene Holl's, 418 Lueder's Rd., Apt. 9, Sauk City	1:00pm
	<u>Martha Circle</u> Thursday, December 5, in St. John's Library, Ruth Dresser, hostess	9:30am
	<u>Ruth Circle</u> Monday, December 9, at St. John's Library, Marian DeGiovanni, hostess	9:00am
	<u>Sarah/Mary Circle</u> Tuesday, December 3, in St. John's Library	9:30am

In November, 23 ladies attended Circle Meetings. The Bible Study was led by Diane Elsing, Mary Weeks, Marian DeGiovanni and Kathy Lester. In December the Bible Study will be "In God's Garden: What fig trees teach us about Advent". This study will be led by Diane Elsing, Mary Weeks, Marian DeGiovanni and Kathy Lester.

Our ThankOffering Service was on November 24th. We will continue to collect for this until December 15th. 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 Hanger, global ministries and other very important programs. If you haven't given yet and would like to contribute, just put your donation in an envelope marked THANKOFFERING and you can put 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 be meeting together on Thursday, January 16th at 10 a.m. Of course, we will have some food first of all! Please bring whatever you would like to share such as leftover Christmas Cookies, cheese, fruit..... anything you have on hand. We are hoping for good weather and a good crowd. All women of St. John's are most cordially invited. Please come.... and bring a guest if you can. We are very excited that Intern Elise has agreed to be our special speaker for the day. She will tell us about her faith journey, and we are very much looking forward to hearing her story. After that, we will have our special Candlelight Memorial Service honoring all members of St. John's who have passed away during 2024. Members of St. John's who have lost loved ones during 2024 are also invited to light a candle for their loved ones even if they were not members of St. John's. We hope to see you there.... so, mark your calendars and plan to come. This is always a very impressive and moving ceremony.

Christmas Cheer recommendations (\$200 each) for Hope House and Special Olympics were approved by all Circles.

So far, we have received \$255.57 for 6:8 in the Pennies for Poverty Jar. We are so happy so many have been generous in giving for this worthy cause. AND we still have time to add more.... the Jar will be on the name tag table until December 29th.

Sarah/Mary Circle has been visiting Special Friends in October and November. Lydia Circle will visit them during December and January.

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

There will not be a Bible Study Leaders Meeting in December since Intern Elise's talk will replace our Bible study in January.



Christmas Eve and Christmas Morning Service Times

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.

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

On December 29, we will have worship services at 8:00am and 10:30am as usual. There will NOT be Sunday School or Adult Education that day.

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 2025.

December Adult Education Schedule

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

- December 1: Hymns of Advent – Peter Heide
- December 8: Themes of the Gospel of Luke – Peter Heide
- December 15: Christian Nationalism – Peter Heide
- December 22 & 29: No Class – Winter Break

January Book Study: Immigration

Intern Elise will lead a book study on Immigration through a Lutheran lens January 26 - February 9 following her trip to the US-Mexico border in El Paso, Texas. The book discussed will be [They Are Us: Lutherans and Immigration](#) by Bouman and Deffenbaugh, which uses stories and faith to imagine how we may be a welcoming, united community.

The book can be purchased on Amazon at:

<https://tinyurl.com/ImmigrationBook>

Graphic Novel Bibles

Our new Graphic Novel Bibles are now available for youth and adults to read during services. These colorful, picture-based Bibles can be found near the sanctuary entrance, on the name tag table. An engaging, modern format may appeal to some readers. Buddy up with a friend if copies are already in use! Many thanks to the Memorial Fund for funding this addition to worship.



Milestone Ministry: Baptism Anniversary

All children of God who were baptized in 2024 are invited to take part in a special Baptism Anniversary celebration on Sunday, January 12 at either service or on Zoom. 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!

If you have any questions, contact Pastor Sally.



New Member Exploration

Are you interested in becoming an official member of St. John's? Mark your calendars for our new member installation on Sunday, February 16. Three classes will be held before the installation in January and February for all who are interested in learning more about the church and one another. More information will be sent out later this month. Please contact Pastor Sally if you are interested in joining or simply learning more about the possibility of joining. sally@stjohnssaukprairie.org or 608-643-2439.

Whether you're a member, a regular attendee, or a visitor we are happy to have you as part of this faith community!



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 address to the group. To contact Linda use linda@stjohnssaukprairie.org or call 608-643-2439.

SPECIAL PRAYER

We invite you to join us in prayer on the 20th day of December.

Dear Lord, don't let us miss You this Christmas season. Help us to simplify our activities and traditions so we can focus our celebration on Your birth. Thank You for being the Prince of Peace, and I ask You for that supernatural peace to reign in our hearts. Thank You for the simple but life-changing message of Your love for us. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

~ Melanie Chitwood



With Sincere Sympathy

We offer our condolences to the following families this month:

Janis Klaetsch on the death of her sister-in-law, Elaine (Klaetsch) Campbell.

Janel and Dan Endres and their family on the death of Janel's grandmother, Florence "Terry" Kohlman.

Eldoris Lovell, the Lovell family and the Deb and Dan O'Connell family on the death of Eldoris's step-grandson, Greg McKnight.

The many friends and family of Janice Carlson.

Lea Culver and her family on the death of Lea's mother, Sylvia Weiss.

The family and many friends of Claudia Fiorella Rios Mendoza.

Marian and Tony DeGiovanni and their family on the death of Marian's aunt, Eileen Wiederanders.

Megan Margenau and Pastor Jason Hill, and their families on the death of Megan's mother, Patti Smith.



New Baby Congratulations

We rejoice with Cody Egan and Ben Bisbach on the birth of their daughter, Wylie Dede Bisbach-Egan. Bob Egan is Wylie's joyful grandfather.

Please keep this new family in your prayers as they begin this exciting life milestone.



Baptisms

We celebrated the baptism of Amelia Kay Carpenter, daughter of Sabrina (Yanke) and Kolton Carpenter on November 10. Amelia's sponsors are Keith and Janelle Slotty and her congregational sponsor is Jon Sandeman. Amelia's grandpa is Steve Yanke and her great-grandmother is Eunice Yanke.



Dear Siblings in Christ,

As I sat among you at our November annual meeting, I found myself overwhelmed with gratitude. The transition of outgoing and incoming council members is often quite smooth and can go unnoticed at times. Yet the new energy they bring and the hard work they do (often behind the scenes) is very important and done with such humility and care.

I am very grateful for all of our leaders over the years. Today I want to lift up our outgoing council members: Nancy Kaufman, Director; Donna Nelson, Treasurer; Ellen Jorgensen, PR/Social Concerns; Lon Kaderavek, Properties; and Anne Klinkner, Stewardship. These faithful leaders led us through covid days, heating and cooling crises, Pastor Fred's retirement, asbestos removal and new carpet, budgetary concerns, and then just the 'normal' business of a council!

The common understanding of the word "gratitude" simply does not convey the magnitude of gratefulness and all that it offers as a way of being in the world. - Kristi Nelson, Wake Up Grateful

Thank you for dedicating your evenings to council and board meetings. Thank you for listening to the concerns and celebrations of the congregation. Thank you for supporting our staff. Thank you for faithfully serving God's Church.

We lift up Nancy Passehl, Marv Hupp, John Brennan, Melani Wheeler, and John Ballweg as they begin their terms as our new members of council. Thank you for answering God's call to serve St. John's in this way! Please extend your thanks and prayers to them!

With humble gratitude,

thank you

Dear St. John's Lutheran Church,

The Friends of Sauk Prairie Healthcare would like to extend our sincere gratitude for the use of the fellowship hall on Nov. 3rd to host our annual luncheon card party. Gathering family and friends together is truly a blessing. We also appreciate your continued support in sharing your space for our blood drives three times a year. These community events wouldn't be possible without your support. Thank you for all you do to help us serve our community!

Sincerely, Friends of SPHC Board of Directors

Hello
My name is

Intern

Greetings,

Advent is a season of waiting, and preparing. We are encouraged to watch for signs, to listen, to get ready for what is coming. The inner child in me, does not necessarily *like* the idea of so much waiting! Very few of us are naturally patient, so maybe that is part of the reason why the month of December is full of treats and goodies-to reward our patience as we wait for Christmas Day!

A few weeks ago, I watched my children's piano teacher sit at their sides as the kids played their songs and made mistakes throughout. Additional practice would have certainly helped that week, but instead my kids found themselves bathing in their piano teacher's grace. She was so patient, sitting silently, not moving a muscle if their fingers misstepped. She let the kids try to correct the mistake on their own. When they finished the piece, she would offer them some kind of genuine praise for either their performance, their progress, or their effort, no matter how closely it was played to the original intent of the composer.

I knew in the moment I was watching a master at her craft. She's a phenomenal pianist, of course, but her mastery was in patience, grace, and love! She met each child where they were for the day, and guided them, little step by little step, toward the eventual reward of a completed piano piece.

I see Advent like the waiting the piano teacher demonstrated. We wait and we wait, getting a little closer, listening as the sweet melody becomes clearer. The music stays the same as a piece is practiced again and again, just as Jesus' call to us stays the same. Throughout the church year, we are led and guided by Jesus' ever-present message of loving our neighbors, not storing up earthly things, and setting our hearts on the love of God in this world and for the next. We are the ones practicing, tuning our ear to the sound of the Gospel, and learning to glide our fingers along the keys to make beautiful music. May the waiting and preparation of this Advent, bring practice that makes beautiful music in your heart and light in the world around you. We give thanks for the patience and grace of our teacher, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Intern Elise

Fellowship Board Report

In October, we celebrated Pastor Appreciation month with church members volunteering to pray for our pastors and signing cards with words of appreciation.

In November, we honored our church family members who are 90 years of age and older. We served cheesecake during coffee time and cards were provided for church members to send words of love and friendship. Our pastors will deliver the cards along with "message rocks" when they visit these members.

We want to thank all of you who have helped the church throughout the year, whether by serving coffee, providing baked goods when we asked for help and for all that is done to serve our church family. Thank you.

Cathy McAlexander, Fellowship Board Chair



Offering Envelopes

The 2025 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, call the church office (643-2439) or email linda@stjohnssaukprairie.org and we will gladly give you envelopes.



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 15 in the fellowship hall between services with their wonderful baked goods.



H.E.L.P.—Red Sled Project

Help **E**xcite **L**ittle **P**eople will be collecting new and gently used toys and items for children and 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 donated items 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 11th**.



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, gender, 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 is **December 11th**.



Sauk Prairie Community Blood Drive

The American Red Cross is having a Blood Drive at St. John's on December 9 from 12:00pm to 5:30pm. For an appointment call 1-800-733-2767 or visit 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.



Stock the Schools

December's items for collection are hairbrushes, combs, scrunchies, headbands, hair ties, and nail clippers. Look for the red bin in the gathering area by the church office door to drop off your donations.

Sunday School News

Sunday School Christmas Program

Join our Sunday School students in celebrating the birth of Jesus through scripture and song on Sunday, December 15 at 1:30pm in the sanctuary. All are welcome! The program will also be zoomed, and you can access zoom with the same link as for our Sunday services. Our students are collecting an offering during the program to help with nutritional needs for children around the world through ELCA Good Gifts. They hope you will consider making a donation to their cause!

We hope to see you there!

THANK YOU

Thank you to Dave Sweeney, JoAnnah Sorg, Penny Johnson and Pastor Sally Williams for organizing and teaching us the Christmas Program! We appreciate you!

Confirmation News

Caring Tree Shopping

On Wed December 4, 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 1 at <https://tinyurl.com/CaringShopping>

Caroling at Maplewood

St. John's Confirmation students will skip class on December 11 and go caroling at Maplewood Nursing Home! We have jingle bells, songs, and good cheer to share. Senior Choir members are encouraged 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!

Thanksgiving Success

Thank you to all of the St. John's youth and adults who helped peel potatoes for the Sauk Prairie Community Thanksgiving Meal! The kitchen was packed with confirmation families 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. 19. 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 Lynn Esser, Alice Chenoweth, Brock Esser, Charlie Lueck, Ken Lueck, Milo Lueck, Cooper Rennie, Willy Pickett and George Colby for their hard work and awesome service to others.

Thank You to "Feed My Starving Children" Volunteers

St. John's confirmation families formed a team to help "Feed My Starving Children" this year. This team of volunteers worked to turn hunger into hope by packing nutritious meals for hungry children around the world, and our team packed over 2000 meals! We are very grateful for their expression of God's love to those families in need.

Serving in December

Greeters

Dec 1 (Front Door)
(Side Door)
Dec 8 (Front Door)
(Side Door)
Dec 15 (Front Door)
(Side Door)
Dec 22 (Front Door)
(Side Door)
Dec 29 (Front Door)
(Side Door)

8:00 a.m.

J/L Hines
T/G Wyttenbach
Jill/Sam Krueger
Parker Pape
Landon Pape
C/S Sprecher

10:30 a.m.

Doris Lohr
C/S Sprecher
Khloe Walker
Aubree Deuman

Ushers

December 1

8:00 a.m.

Butch Passehl
Nancy Passehl
Dale Haroldson
Hudson Ballweg

10:30 a.m.

Tom Varley
John Ballweg
Evelynn Brennan

December 8

Lon Kaderavek
Rob Richard
Dale Haroldson
Lilly Weittenhiller

Tom Varley
John Ballweg
Aubree Deuman
Paityn Hauge

December 15

Todd Wyttenbach
Gina Wyttenbach
Dale Haroldson

Michael Jolicoeur
Isabelle Jolicoeur
Kendra Frey

December 22

Lon Kaderavek
Rob Richard
Paityn Hauge

Tom Varley
John Ballweg
Claire Hansen
Michael Jolicoeur

December 29

Todd Wyttenbach
Gina Wyttenbach

Bryce Argall

Acolytes

December 1

8:00 a.m.

Joslyn Schultz
Liam Leith
Willy Pickett
Joslyn Schultz

10:30 a.m.

Willy Pickett
Elio Piccinelli
Clay Hutchins
Michael Jolicoeur

December 8

December 15

December 22

December 29

Assisting Ministers

December 1

8:00 a.m.

Jordan Small
Marv Hupp

10:30 a.m.

Jordan Small
Donna Knickmeyer

December 8

December 15

December 22

December 29

Jordan Small

Jordan Small

Jordan Small

Jordan Small

Readers

December 1
 December 8
 December 15
 December 22
 December 29

8:00 a.m.

Carrie Richard
 Gary Tomter
 Mary Halweg
 Kathy Lovell
 Patty Barritt

10:30 a.m.

Marilyn Herschleb
 Dale Clason
 Jude Hanna
 Marian DeGiovanni
 Jon Neubacher

Cantors

December 1
 December 8
 December 15
 December 22
 December 29

8:00 a.m.

Jeff and Kathy Ochsankehl
 Katie LaVigne
 Doug Slater
 Connie Burton
 Becky Weittenhiller

10:30 a.m.

Katie LaVigne
 Doug Slater
 Connie Burton
 Becky Weittenhiller

Communion

December 1
 December 8
 December 15
 December 22
 December 29

Set-Up

A/L Van Landuyt
 Rodney/Marsha Key
 Brooke Braund
 Rich/Jane Calenzo
 Jayne Carlson

Clean-Up

R/M Howard
 Donna Knickmeyer
 Henry Dean
 D/G Westphal
 H/S Kindschi

Communion Assistants 8:00 a.m.

December 1
 December 8
 December 15
 December 22
 December 29

Patty Barritt
 Kris Frey
 Brooke Braund
 Jayne Carlson
 Marilyn Herschleb

10:30 a.m.

Gerry Westphal
 Audrey Luetscher
 Elio Piccinelli
 Dale Clason
 Gerry Westphal

Technology Team

December 1
 December 8

 December 15

 December 22
 December 29

8:00 a.m.

Lisa Davis
 Ellen Jorgensen

 Ellen Jorgensen

 Reid/Liam Hart

10:30 a.m.

Ellen Jorgensen
 Sandberg family
 Brock Esser
 Sean Jager
 Brock Esser
 Alyssa Himebauch

Sunday Stewards

December 1
 December 8
 December 15
 December 22
 December 29

8:00 a.m.

Cathy McAlexander
 Cathy Yanke
 Cathy McAlexander
 Nancy Passehl
 Gwen Ringelstetter

10:30 a.m.

Gina Varley

 Sean Jager
 Gina Varley
 Gina Varley

Coffee Servers

December 1	Linda Michaels
December 8	Dottie Maly
December 15	Cathy and Larry McAlexander
December 22	Patty and Steve Barritt
December 29	Donna and Doug Nelson

Christmas Eve Worship Assistants

Ushers

1:00pm Lon Kaderavek, Nellie Kaderavek
3:00pm Lon Kaderavek, Dale Haroldson
5:00pm Lon Kaderavek,
7:30pm

Candlelighters

1:00pm Kate Endres, Violet Richard, Liam Leith, Brooke Braund
3:00pm Liam Leith, Kiptyn Suchla, Henry Dean, Charlie Lueck
5:00pm Leah Kruchten, Carter Kruchten
7:30pm Bryce Argall

Readers

1:00pm Donna Knickmeyer
3:00pm Dale Haroldson
5:00pm
7:30pm Cathy Yanke

Communion Assistants

1:00pm Kris Frey
3:00pm Crystal Lautenbach
5:00pm Mary Weeks
7:30pm Ruth Lohr

Technology Team:

1:00pm Lee LaVigne, Reid Hart, Liam Hart
5:00pm Sandberg family

Stewards

1:00pm Nancy Passehl
3:00pm Cathy McAlexander
5:00pm
7:30pm Cathy Yanke

Christmas Day Worship Assistants

Ushers: Todd and Gina Wyttenbach

Reader: Denny Dederich

Communion Assistant: Alice Chenoweth



All Saints Sunday

On November 3 we gave thanks for the lives of those who have been gathered into our heavenly home since All Saints Day of 2023. Those we miss are:

Dean Pfaff
Dede Egan
Vernus Ladd
Rev. Eldor Fruehling
Evelyn Gorsuch
Sterling Walsh
Marilyn Gilding
Sandra Frey
Jean Jessie
Bernice King

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

Call Committee

The Call Team is progressing well and meets every week. The main committee task now is completing the Synod document called "Ministry Site Profile" (MSP). Please continue to keep us in your prayers as we invite the Holy Spirit to work within us to be the voice of the Congregation. We expect to submit the MSP before Christmas. After receiving and approving our document, the Synod identifies Pastors who are interested in this Call. We will communicate with the congregation once we have submitted the MSP and are starting to prepare for interviews. It is exciting to think that our new Pastor is already listening for this Call! Please let our committee know if you have questions. Contact our team leader, Nancy Passehl at 608-219-1936. The committee members are Mary Weeks, Steve Kindschi, Steve Barritt, Sean Jager, Kristin Ryan and Nancy Passehl.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING November 17, 2024

(In building and via Zoom platform)

PPC Executive Director, Nancy Kaufman, confirmed at least 50 active members were present and called the meeting to order at 8:58 am. The purpose of the meeting is to approve the 2025 budget, vote on nominees for the Parish Planning Council, approve Nominating Committee members for PPC recruiting, and approve Synod Assembly volunteers.

The minutes of the October 2023, Congregational meeting were published in the November Visitor as well as in the November 3 and 10, 2024 Sunday bulletins in lieu of reading them at the meeting. Motion to approve the minutes as provided was made by Donna Nelson and seconded by Brian Weeks. Motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Nancy described the 2025 budget changes that were printed and available for review in the bulletin. She pointed out those most significant changes including the administration budget that include salary expectations for a new senior pastor. The salary budgeted follows the synod's guidelines for salary which is based on years of experience. Health insurance premiums increase each year, and the youth trip was in 2024, so there will not be that expense in 2025. A motion to approve the budget was made by Janelle Hupp and seconded by Tracy Pape. Motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Nancy thanked our outgoing board chairs (Lon Kadaravek, Ellen Jorgensen, Anne Klinkner, Donna Nelson and Nancy Kaufman) for their years of service. She then moved on to list nominees of Nancy Passehl to Executive Director, Marv Hupp as Assistant Director, John Brennan as Treasurer, John Ballweg for Properties, Melani Wheeler for PR and Social Concerns. There is an opening for the Stewardship Board Chair. A motion to approve the nominees was made by Jayne Carlson and seconded by Marilyn Herschleb. Motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Third, we approved the Nominating Committee to recruit members for additional PPC members that includes Pastor Sally, Nancy Kaufman as the outgoing PPC Director, three congregational members (self-nominated) that include Mary Weeks, Dale Haroldson, and Donna Nelson. Three PPC members will be determined. A motion to approve the nominees was made by Marv Hupp and seconded by Melani Wheeler. Motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Our final topic was to accept nominations for attendees to the Synod Assembly in May 2025. We can send 3 adults (either 2 males and 1 female or 2 females and 1 male), 1 young adult (under

30 years old) and 1 high school youth. Pastor Sally is also a voting member. Alice and Joe Chenowith and Jordan Small (under 30) self-nominated. Nancy Kaufman will find an additional person to attend. A motion to approve the nominees was made by Megan Tarnutzer and seconded by Alexi Suchla. If any adult over 30 or a high school youth is interested, please contact Linda Hines in the church office.

An update on the Call Committee progress by Nancy included Interim Pastor Jason will be with us through the end of January. The last two years have been busy and included building issues including heat and AC, new roof, carpeting, and intern/not an intern/intern again, hired a financial secretary, and Pastor Fred retired. We look forward to the next years that will include a new pastor as well as our future and changes that will happen in the transition. Jerry Kaufman made the motion to adjourn the meeting and was seconded by Donna Nelson. Director Nancy Kaufman asked if there were any objections and after receiving none, she adjourned the meeting at 9:11 am.

Respectfully submitted, Cathy Yanke

PARISH PLANNING COUNCIL MINUTES

DATE: November 5, 2024

Present: Donna Nelson, Nancy Kaufman, Nancy Passehl, Jason Hill, Lon Kaderavek, Eunice Yanke, Tracy Pape, Roger Seymour, Gina Varley, James Newman, Gwen Ringelstetter, Anne Klinkner, Cathy McAlexander, Sean Jager, John Brennan, Bruce Fritsch

Absent: Cathy Yanke, Sally Williams, Ellen Jorgensen

Call to Order/Opening Remarks:

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m. by Nancy Kaufman. Nancy K asked for approval of the agenda. Motion to approve was made by Eunice and seconded by Tracy. Motion carried. A devotion/prayer was then given by Nancy P for Cathy Y.

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 2024 Treasurer Report submitted by Donna Nelson.

Our first six-month CD for \$60,000 is maturing November 9, 2024, and the funds will be deposited into the savings account.

There has been a good response to the stewardship message of our need for income. Our October 2024 income was \$14,000 more than September 2024 and \$7,000 more than last year. Paypal and Venmo payments were added this month and were used 9 times. Income received was \$1,000.

October, 2024 report numbers.

Current Month Income	Year-to-Date Income	Current Month Expenses	Year-to-Date Expenses	Year-to-Date Budget
\$44,918	\$390,004	\$46,553	\$481,378	\$511,053

A motion to approve the financial report was made by Lon and seconded by Cathy M. Motion carried.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Evangelism: Gwen Ringelstetter reported:

- Pet Blessing pictures were taken Oct 13th after 10:30 service to be displayed on bulletin board.
- Sunday Steward duties 10/6 and 11/3 late services and will plan a coffee service date
- Senior (over 90) cards will be signed.
- Pray for all 7 pastors and our intern on 10/13/2024.

Fellowship: Cathy McAlexander reported:

- We honored our pastors during October by church members volunteering to pray for the 7 pastors we honor and signing cards for them.
- In November we celebrated our age 90+ members with cards signed by church members, served cheesecake and provided "message rocks" for the pastors to deliver with their cards.

Lay Ministry: Gina Varley reported:

- Several board members mentioned that congregants had spoken to them about doing one service permanently.
- Still working on combining worship volunteer jobs into a single online sign up
- Decorating the altar for Thanksgiving on Saturday November 16th at 8 am
- Putting up Christmas Eve candles after late service on Sunday December 22nd. Please come if you are able!

Parish Education: James Newman reported:

- Parish Ed met on October 8, 2024. Penny Johnson and James Newman were in attendance.
- Recapped start of Sunday school and Hayride.

- Recapped start of Confirmation.
- Discussed Confirmation activities throughout the month of October.

Properties: Lon Kaderavek reported:

- Windows in parsonage should be done in November.
- Added extension to downspout in rear of church hallway to keep water from coming under windows.
- We received our insurance renewal and rates are going up. John Ballweg and Lon will review this.

PR & Social Concerns: Ellen Jorgensen reported:

- The committee is making a transition to the new committee chair.

Stewardship Board: Anne Klinkner reported:

- Venmo and Paypal have been set up. Nicole will get the links and QR Codes to us so we can disseminate the information to the congregation. Thank you, Nicole, for all of your time and effort spent on this.
- Periodic Giving Topics will be shared during 2025 to emphasize the monetary needs of the congregation and how each need is an important expense.
- Time and Talent Surveys and pledge sheets have been or will be:
 - Put in the Narthex on a table along with a box to place each form in during the month of October 2024. Thank you, Roger Seymour, for all of your work on that.
 - Emailed in the Friday emails to the congregation.
 - Mailed via US Postal Service along with the letter we revised and approved at our meeting tonight to those who receive correspondence by US mail only.
 - The letter will be published in the November 2024 Visitor as well.
- The current year deficit was discussed. A paragraph was added to the letter we are sending out with the time and talent and pledge forms to increase awareness of this. We will include this paragraph in a separate email to the congregation each week during October 2024 so additional Ordinary Income funds can be raised to offset our deficit.
- Crystal Lautenbach, Gina Wyttenbach and Jon Cafilisch will return for the 2024 Financial Review to be conducted in January 2025. Anne will ask Brian Weeks too.

Women of ELCA: Eunice Yanke reported:

- 28 Ladies attended Circle Meetings

- WELCA Retreat in Wisconsin Dells was very successful and interesting. The keynote speaker was Rev. Brenda Crossfield from UW-Platteville Campus Ministries.
- Support from Retreat was sent to Campus Ministries and River Haven Homeless Shelter in Pardeeville.
- Still collecting Pennies for Poverty money until December.
- ThankOffering Sunday is November 24.

Youth Committee: Tracy Pape reported:

- Upcoming Events Parent's Time-Out | Saturday, December 7, 2024, this is a set time for parents to drop off their children at the church, so parents can have some free time to themselves. (Babysitting type event)
 - Host this event in conjunction with SP Holly Jolly on Saturday, December 7, from 9 am to noon.
 - Create a sign-up for students and adult volunteers to participate.
 - Create a sign-up for parents, which includes the age, name of children, and parent contact information. Share parent sign up, one-to-two weeks in advance.
 - Suggestion donation for the service provided and advertise all proceeds are for the St. John's Caring Tree.
- Alive Youth Night is on hold. The Synod organizing committee is working on events, but this is on our watch list, if there isn't a firm commitment before Jan. 3.
- Campus Visit for our confirmation/teenage students to UW-Madison LCM. Unfortunately, they are going through a transition time, we really gave it our best shot but couldn't get a date on the calendar for Winter/Spring. This idea is on a list of items for next year.
- St. John's Game Night | February 2025 St. John's committee collaboration, Game Night! To get this event off the ground and idea share, Roger Seymour and James Newman will join us, November 13 at 6 pm. All are welcome, if this is an event that you have some expertise in, please join us at 6 pm in the Fellowship Hall.
- St. John's Lock In | Friday, March 14, 2025
 - Create a sign-up for students and adults (sign-up shifts), Allow students to bring friends, Have the event led by the students to generate interest, Needs more discussion.

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:

- Attended the South-Central Synod Fall Conference both at Peace Lutheran Church in Waunakee, and at Holy Wisdom Monastery at the beginning of October. Was very inspired by our plenary speaker Rev. Karoline Lewis who is the preaching professor at Luther Seminary. Enjoyed the time to connect with fellow pastors, have some great conversation, and be inspired by the ongoing work of our synodical and churchwide bishops in such an ever-changing world within and outside the church.
- Continue to be thankful for our community partners at Hooverson Funeral Home. They have asked me a few times to offer a pastoral presence at graveside services for non-church members this fall, and I have appreciated those connections very much. It is a natural extension of my ordination to certainly attend to those who might not otherwise have a church home but are needing some sort of closure, and I am happy to offer that every time.
- I had such a FUN time leading a group of confirmation youth to Treinen Farm along with some pretty awesome chaperones! The kids had a good time navigating through this year's corn maze along with exploring the farm. The only bit of concern was a lost cell phone in the vat of corn kernels but was easily found with its own ring tone!
- Submitted my final TNT report to current executive director Nancy Kaufman and incoming executive director Nancy Passehl. Report included the three main phases of transition process that the TNT implemented, facilitated, and ultimately reported on with congregation and PPC. Report also reflected major findings and areas of concern and hopes for congregation's future, as well as identifying gifts and critical ministry tasks that the next lead pastor would be able to offer in their leadership and service.

Sally's Report:

- This is the last PPC meeting I'll miss due to grad school through May, possibly longer. I look forward to rejoining you in December. Thank you for your solid leadership and support to me in this process.
- Thank you to our outgoing PPC members! You have been faithful leaders and shown your heart for service over the years. Words fail to express our full gratitude!
- We are hosting the Thanksgiving service on Wednesday, November 27. The pastors at Concordia United Methodist and First United Church of Christ are joining us.

- Elise and I completed her 3-month evaluation. She is a great ministry partner and continues to grow in her understanding of pastoral identity and ministry. She also has been very well received by the congregation and is working well with the internship committee.
- The pastoral team will be at a Boundaries Education Day on November 7 (pastors are reachable via phone/text if an urgent situation arises). Clergy are required to regularly complete this training in order to remain in compliance with the expectations of the greater church. These topics vary each time, but usually cover healthy and safe relationships within the parish and community, issues of anti-racism, technology and social media boundaries, etc.

Intern Elise report:

Below are notes for the Internship Committee and Intern's work.

- Attended the 3-day Synod Fall Conference for rostered and lay leaders in Madison, which included preaching presentations, fellowship, and networking with future colleagues.
- Elise has preached 1x/month and will continue with this through January.
- Elise led a graveside committal at Sauk Cemetery.
- Project and program development for: All Saints Service (including multicultural learning around All Saints tables and Day of the Dead Bread), Illustrated Bible grant, communion bread baking, replacement of communion vessels.
- Weekly Supervisor - Intern meetings and monthly Internship Committee meetings continue with positive outcomes.

Old Business:

PPC Retreat Follow-up Nancy K has noticed a lot of new people attending worship lately. We continue to welcome new people.

Annual Meeting/Budget The annual meeting is scheduled for Sunday, November 17, 2024, following the 8:00 a.m. worship service. Please attend if you are able. Anne will write up a high-level overview of the 2025 budget for Nancy K.

Call Committee update The Call Committee is headed by Nancy P and is working very hard. Nancy P and the committee are targeting a mid-December 2024 date to complete their first section. There are three remaining sections after that. Once those sections are complete, the Call Committee will have an opportunity to have a mock interview after we come up with a list of questions we wish to ask before we start the actual candidate interviews.

Sunday Stewards Nancy K passed around the sign up for Sunday Stewards through December 2024.

Stewardship Update The stewardship message regarding the current year deficit resulted in an increase of \$14,000 in current giving for the month of October 2024 when compared to September 2024.

Nancy K suggested the Stewardship Board consider adding the number of attendees at worship and the total offering for the prior week in the bulletin each week. We will investigate this.

New Business:

Reconciled in Christ (RIC) This should be included in our agenda for 2025. The entire RIC process will take 2 years.

Outgoing PPC members Nancy K thanked the outgoing members for their work over the past years. Lon K and Anne have six years of service, Ellen Jorgensen has 2 years of service, Donna Nelson has 12 years of service and Nancy K has enjoyed at least 4 years working with the PPC. Nancy listed some things she would like to see the new board pursue and other ideas were presented by the board members present.

- Discussion should continue on only having one worship service every week. The once-a-week service during the summer months allowed members to meet new people since both the 8:00 AM and 10:30 AM attendees were worshipping as one group at 9:00 AM.
- Having services no longer than one hour is a desirable goal. Pastor Jason and Pastor Sally are adjusting the services as needed right now to target a one-hour service. The Lay Ministry Committee should work with the pastors to identify what components of our worship service we value. Opportunities are
- Have the 8:00 and 10:30 worship services be different.
- Have the Forgiveness one time per month as part of the worship liturgy.
- Determine if we need to recite the creed each week.
- Say the Psalm response instead of singing it each week.
- Sing fewer verses of the selected songs for worship services. Sing only the verses that are sending the message of the service each week.

Identify a way to interact with the PTO boards or equivalent groups in each of the schools and post what activities are happening in the schools each week on the kiosk so congregation members can attend and support the activities our youth are engaged in. That could help us engage with our youth better. We could even provide refreshments to the sports our youth are involved in.

The Council thanked Nancy Kaufman for her service.

The next meeting is Tuesday, Dec 2, 2024, at 6:00 pm.

Devotion will be given by Eunice. Lon made a motion to adjourn our meeting, and the motion was seconded by Donna. Motion carried.

Meeting Adjourned at 6:50 pm. with The Lord's Prayer led by Nancy Kaufman.

Respectfully submitted by Anne Klinkner for Cathy Yanke.



Happy December Birthday!

The day is in parenthesis.

Our Youngest:

William LaBerge (6)

Anna Troeller (30)

Our Sunday School Students:

Olive Rennie (4)

Dylann Fisher (5)

Evelyn Haffeman (6)

Audrey Maestri (15)

Nellie Kaderavek (18)

Sylvie Miller (19)

Paisley Stuetgen (19)

Evan Ryan (21)

Gibson Koenig (23)

Harper Wasserberg (29)

Our Youth:

Savannah Acker (2)

Elio Piccinelli (2)

John Brennan V (5)

Landon Schultz (9)

Lily Fauerbach (11)

Michael Paul (11)

Josie Kinney (14)

Destiny Bailey (15)

Lillianna Weittenhiller (15)

Hannah Stephan (16)

Kate Endres (19)

Parker Frosch (24)

Willy Pickett (26)

Hudson Ballweg (28)

College and Career-age Young People:

Wyatt Urban (29)

Donating to St. John's

Donating to St. John's has gotten easier with the addition of Venmo and Paypal. Below are the QR codes you will need. Thank you!

St. John's

Venmo: <https://www.venmo.com/u/StJohnsPds>



St. John's

Paypal:

https://www.paypal.com/donate/?hosted_button_id=HXZCYWTV6CYEA



Nativity of our Lord

The Nativity of Our Lord is the story of God's reign spilling over the boundaries set by the powerful people of the world and into the margins. Dark nights and fragile infants interrupted by migrant laborers and choirs of angels point to a vision of the world as it should be, where "being connected" to the right people is replaced by being interconnected through a spirit of unity that brings us all out of the margins and into the center of life. In the infant Jesus, God declares a new standard for power, a word of hope, "good news" for all who are fragile, all who are weak, all who are overlooked, all who are despised, all who are abandoned, all who are homeless, all who are hovering between life and death. The festival of the incarnation is indeed "salvation to all" (Titus 2:11).