



Prairie du Sac, WI

January 2025

Dear Friends of St. John's,

There's an old saying that reads, "All good things must come to an end." I have been trying to find the most adequate and expressive words to share with you about my leaving St. John's. I knew this time was coming, and like all things that must end, I am feeling some anticipatory grief around it. I have been grieving my departure for some time, often becoming teary during worship watching you all come forward to receive communion and placing in your hands the body of Christ. The connection that I have felt with you all, in conversation with you, laughing with you, praying with you, working with you, and crying with you, has been life changing. You have reaffirmed my passion for congregational ministry over and over, and I cannot thank you enough for such a gift.

When I started my time with you, you gave me the time and space to begin the transition process with a very capable and talented team of people. I was honored to work beside them in their visioning and processing of the information they received, and ultimately reported on. The process of the TNT group was definitely a successful venture, and I know that this work was important for the continuation of the call process once it was handed off to the call committee. As I write this, the call committee is submitting the ministry site profile this week after their very dedicated commitment to process and complete it. Yet their work continues, and I ask that you keep them in your thoughts and prayers as the Holy Spirit calls your next lead pastor.

You have heard me say repeatedly that you are an incredible church. You truly are. You are a church that appreciates tradition, and yet you look ahead. You are a church that loves to share your abundant gifts into the world, and yet you are looking to see how you can be visible to bring Christ into the local community, where the diversity of God's creative beauty hopes for peace and equity. You have this time, as an amazing opportunity to grow yourself as a church, to expand your potential to reach as far as you can into the places Christ wants to go, to honor the God who made

you and the same God who made your neighbors. You have so much potential to grow in faith and love towards each other, and into the greater world. Believe that you matter in this world, in your place as a church, as a community of fervent faith and ignited by the sparks of the Holy Spirit. You are doing and you will continue to do beautiful and great things to share the love and peace of Christ himself.

Many of you have asked me what is next for me. Right now, I am almost done with my own paperwork the ELCA asks of us pastors to fill out when we are open for call. This paperwork has been good for me to process my own theology, ministry, and hopes for a future within the local and wider church. Once completed, I send this to our synodical bishop, and then await a possible opening that would align with my gifts. I am also considering what another interim might look like. I may go back into hospice chaplaincy. Who knows? I am open to the Holy Spirit's leading and where she could take me.

This entire experience could not have been life changing and call re-affirming without some very incredible people I am honored to have worked with. Thank you to the entire TNT, PPC, and Executive Teams. You are all so gifted and I thank you for sharing your time, wisdom, and vision for the future of St. John's. I cannot thank the church staff enough for their dedication, influence, and gifts in making sure St. John's is the amazing place it is: Thank you Linda, Ruellene, Penny, John, and Bruce. I am honored to have worked with you. Thank you to Intern Elise. You have inspired me with your fire, your vision, and your calling. You are talented beyond words my friend. And I will be honored to call you an ordained colleague soon. And finally, I cannot thank Pastor Sally enough for being a true partner in this ministry. You are without a doubt, one of the strongest, most talented and gifted pastors I have had the privilege to work and partner with. Thank you for your wisdom, your advice, your listening, and your gentleness. Finally, I could not have dedicated myself to this experience without the love of my life, Megan. You have shown me grace, love, and peace as only a loving heart can. Thank you love.

St. John's, you will be missed very much. I will pray for you, hold you up, think about you often, and give thanks for you. You have given me so much: thank you, thank you, thank you. Alright, St. John's, I will preach one more time on January 26th (my 51st Birthday!!!!) and we will celebrate together.

Peace to You,
Pastor Jason



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	Currently Open	
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 Director: Bruce Fritsch bruce@stjohnssaukprairie.org

Custodian: John Hines john@stjohnssaukprairie.org

Office Coordinator: Linda Hines linda@stjohnssaukprairie.org

Sunday School Superintendents: 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.

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Christ,
our strength
and refuge,
calling us
to serve

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 23
Prairie du Sac,
Wisconsin 53578



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

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------------|
| Pancake Mix | Syrup |
| Canned Stews | Flavored Rice pouches |
| Hot Cocoa Mix | Granola Bars |
| Crackers | Chicken or Beef Broth |
| Dish Soap | Shampoo |

You may bring your donations to the table in the gathering area at any time.



Birthday Greetings

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

Marge Erlandson (4)
1425 Hemlock Street
Sauk City, WI 53583

Mel Lohr (4)
S9591 Church Road
Prairie du Sac, WI 53578

Jim Weeks (13)
890 Prairie Street
Prairie du Sac, WI 53578

Arlene Foell (18)
7343 Tetiva Road
Sauk City, WI 53583

Carol Benson (19)
713 Madison St., Apt. 111
Sauk City, WI 53583



THANK YOU

The Quilting Group of St. John's extends their condolences to the Betty Fisher family and also thanks them for their kindness in naming the Quilting Group as a beneficiary of Betty's memorials. They are honored to be a part of Betty's legacy.

	Women of the Church News	
	<u>Lydia Circle</u> Combined Circles Meeting, Thursday, January 16 St. John's fellowship hall	10:00 am
	<u>Martha Circle</u> Combined Circles Meeting, Thursday, January 16 St. John's fellowship hall	10:00 am
	<u>Ruth Circle</u> Combined Circles Meeting, Thursday, January 16 St. John's fellowship hall	10:00 am
	<u>Sarah/Mary Circle</u> Combined Circles Meeting, Thursday, January 16 St. John's fellowship hall	10:00 am

As we have done in the past, we will not have our individual Circle meetings in January. Instead, we are looking forward to all Circles meeting together on THURSDAY, JANUARY 16TH, AT 10:00am. ALL women of St. John's are invited to this event, so...Mark your calendars now and plan to attend. First of all, we will have some food and coffee. We are asking you to bring whatever you would like to share...such as leftover Christmas cookies, cheese, fruit...or any finger food you happen to have on hand. We are happy to say we will have a very important speaker, our wonderful intern, Elise! She will be telling us about her faith journey, and we are definitely 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 that loved one even if that person was not a member. This is always a very impressive and moving ceremony. So we hope you will come....and bring a guest if you can.

In December 27 ladies attended Circle Meetings. The study "In God's Garden: What fig trees teach us about Advent" was led by Diane Elsing, Mary Weeks, Marian DeGiovanni and Kathy Lester led the study.

Our ThankOffering Service was on November 24th. The total amount received for this offering was \$370.00!

Christmas Cheer money was given to Hope House and Special Olympics. (\$200 each)

We have received \$374.36 so far in the Pennies for Poverty Jar. This money will be given to 6:8. We are very grateful to all who contributed to this fund. 6:8 is a wonderful organization and they do so much for our community.

Lydia Circle is visiting Special Friends in December and January. Ruth Circle will visit them during February and March.

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

There will be a Bible Study Leaders Meeting for February on Tuesday, January 28th at 9:00am in the church library.

Respectively submitted, Ruth Dresser



Baptism Anniversary Celebration

We look forward to celebrating with all those baptized in 2024 on Sunday, January 12 at either worship service or via Zoom. A letter will be sent home to all of our families this month with more information. Contact Pastor Sally with any questions.



New Member Classes and Installation

Are you interested in becoming an official member of St. John's? Mark your calendars for our new member installation on Sunday, February 16. Two classes will be held before the installation on February 2 and February 9 at 9:15am 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. Whether you're a member, a regular attendee, or a visitor we are happy to have you as part of this faith community!

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>

SPECIAL PRAYER

We invite you to join us in prayer on January 20th.

Lord, grant us inner peace as we navigate the New Year. Help us to find tranquility in Your presence and to let go of worries and fears.

Lord, we look toward You, our hope, our peace, and our comfort in this New Year. As we enter into the unknown of the coming year, we ask for Your guidance and wisdom. Illuminate our path with Your light so that we may walk in Your ways and make choices that align with Your will. Help us to seek first Your kingdom and trust that all other things will be added unto us. Amen.



With Sincere Sympathy

We offer our condolences to the following families this month:

Roger and Marcia Howard on the death of Roger's sister, Barbara.

Dennis Fisher, Tracy Hehenberger, Jay and Nicole Fisher, Dana and Nic Mueller and their families on the death of wife, mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother, Betty Fisher.

Carol and Stan Mallon on the death of Carol's brother, Jerome Ernst.

Kathi Matthews-Risley and her family on the death of Kathi's mother-in-law, Betty Risley.



Baptism

We welcome a new sister and a brother in Christ through Baptism:

Harlow Ann Goodwin, daughter of Kyle and Tayler (Breunig) Goodwin was baptized on December 1. Her sponsors are Macy Breunig and Matthew Katzman. Harlow's congregational sponsor is Arielle Kaufman.

Emerson Jay Woider, son of Brandon and Nicole Woider was baptized on December 8. Sponsors for Emerson are Sarah and Johnny Fehling, Lacy Markle and Lee Hellenbrand.



Dear Friends in Christ,

“Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow.” - Albert Einstein

Happy New Year! How 2024 is over already I'm still not quite sure but here we are facing down a brand-new year that will bring several traditions, a bunch of mundane things, and a lot of things we could never see coming (and maybe that's a good thing?).

This time of year we hear a lot about setting new year resolutions. I'm awful at those. I break them before I even fully commit to making them in the first place. They're usually about less sweets, more movement, and...hm...I can't think of other examples probably because they don't last longer than a week! Does any of this sound familiar to you? If you're a diehard resolution setter and achiever, please let me know your secret. If you're more like me, I wonder if we might try something different together?

Choosing a word to guide our year.

City Mom Collective writes, “Instead of making a specific resolution to lose weight or eat more veggies, why not choose a word that you'd like to focus on instead? I have done this in the past, and it can be a surprisingly helpful way to set the tone for the new year. Whether you want to give yourself more “grace,” allow yourself to “relax,” or simply bring more “joy” into your home, the possibilities are endless when it comes to picking a word for the year.”

My word is curiosity. Sometimes I'm too quick to give an answer or think I already know the answer. It's easy to make assumptions and keep my blinders on. Curiosity gives me permission to ask more questions, to think more deeply, and better understand a particular position, situation, or person. It also gives me an opportunity to think differently about my faith. What is God up to? How is God calling me to be more curious when I read scripture or while I pray?

What might your word be? What word might guide your year? Your relationships? Your faith?

If you choose to try this practice I'd love to hear your words!

I look forward to jumping into this year of unknowns with curiosity remembering that there is one True Word that holds us fast!

With Curiosity,

Hello
My name is

Intern

Hello Friend,

The calendar has turned over again to a new year. Another season of holidays has passed. For some, and maybe for you, these are not happy times. The reality is that all of us have troubles; for some they are more significant than others.

God's promise of salvation, of light in the darkness, is promised to us no matter what. God's promise is there for us in and out of every season. While the festivities of our celebrations come and go with Christmas, New Years, Easter, birthdays, anniversaries, God is always there with a promise of love and open arms.

"God is our refuge and our strength, an ever-present help in trouble." Psalm 46:1

What does it mean that God is right at your fingertips, already filling in the cracks of your heart? How does it change your next right step to know that God is already there at your side? But what if you can't feel God's presence?!

Let's admit that God's presence isn't always the easiest to tease out. The prophets of the Old Testament, especially the prophet Habakkuk, normalize that many of us go long stretches without hearing God's voice in our midst!

So here we are in January, which may be a time of celebration for you or not. God's ever-present help may be right at your fingertips, or not. You might know your next right step, or not. There is a tool for all of us in this moment: prayer.

I hope that in your prayer you will open your random, rambling thoughts to God; strike up a casual conversation; let your feelings without names spill out of your heart so God can scoop them up! Your prayers look and sound different than mine since there isn't a 'right way' to pray. What is the same from prayer to prayer is that God is always listening. God's promise of love and light is waiting for you, always.

Thanks be to God,
Intern Elise

News from the Internship Committee

The Intern Committee and Elise are looking for sermon feedback from the congregation. The Lutheran tradition emphasizes the preaching of the gospel and encourages listeners to provide constructive feedback regarding their sermons. We will have an insert in the bulletin with questions for your responses when Elise preaches in January, March, and May. Please include your name so she may contact you if she would like more conversation. Thank you for your support and prayers in growing our interns.

Our first opportunity to provide feedback for Intern Elise is January 12, 2025. Please check your bulletin for the feedback insert on that day.



Wanted: Mobile Meals Delivery Volunteers!

St. John's has committed to delivering meals the weeks of January 20-24 and January 27-31. We need two volunteers every weekday. One should plan to drive his/her car on the route, and one should plan to "run" the meals to the houses. Meals are ready for pickup at the Sauk Prairie Hospital near the employee entrance (**see the new map on the kiosk) between 11:20 and 11:30 a.m. Total delivery time is usually one hour. Routing and delivery instructions are provided when you pick up the meals. This is a very rewarding volunteer experience.

If you are available to help, please add your name and phone number to the schedule on the kiosk.

**check out the new pick-up area on the map below the sign-up

News from the Fellowship Board

We want to thank everyone who participated in helping the church this past year whether by serving coffee, providing baked goods when we asked for help, providing food and help for Palm Sunday Brunch, cleaning the kitchen, serving funeral lunches and for everything else that was done to serve our church family.

We invite you to continue to volunteer to serve Sunday coffee during the coming year. A signup sheet can be found on the kiosk in the church foyer.

Thank you.

Cathy McAlexander, Fellowship Board Chair



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; 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. We will send you an email if we have your address. 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 watch us on ZOOM.

Thank You



Thank you to all the many hands that helped with our candles for the Christmas Eve services. Those who helped set up the candelabra, those who put fresh candles out for each service, those who helped to put the candelabra away at the end of the evening and especially those who kept an eye on the burning candles to save us from a fire during our services. It takes many volunteers to create such a beautiful service, and we thank you all for helping.

St. John's Staff

thank you!

A big Thank You to our "Technology Team" Lisa Davis, Ellen Jorgensen, Charlie Kruchten, Jeff and Nicole Sandberg family, Roger Seymour, Alyssa Himebauch, Sean Jager, Lee LaVigne and our confirmation "shadows" for their dedication, flexibility and team spirit in making audio/video on Zoom continue to happen for our congregation.

Sunday School

Thank you to everyone who contributed to our fund for this year's Sunday School project – Nutrition for children through the ELCA's Good Gifts. We collected \$360.00 at our Christmas Program. A heartfelt thank you to Dave Sweeney and JoAnnah Sorg for organizing our Sunday School Christmas program, along with our amazing teachers and helpers! Also thank you to Penny Johnson, Miranda Jager, Joanna Jones, James Newman, Ruellene Seymour, Ellen Jorgensen, our tech and usher crew for all their help with the students, and John and Linda Hines for their important behind-the-scenes work. We will resume classes after Christmas break on Sunday, January 5 at 9:15am.

The 5th and 6th graders of Sunday School will be holding a Bake Sale on Sunday, February 9 between worship services. All proceeds go to God's Global Barnyard.



Stock the Schools

In cooperation with the Sauk Prairie community, St. John's will be collecting items to be given to Sauk Prairie students in need. Each month we will have different items to collect that will help our local students. January's items are: granola bars, pencils, pens, colored pencils, washable markers, folders, glue sticks and 3-inch binders. Look for the red bin in the gathering area by the church office door to drop off your donations.



SAVE THE DATE! GAME NIGHT IS COMING!

FEBRUARY 28, 2025

6:30pm to 9:00pm

All Ages Welcome!

Join us for fun and games, snacks and laughter! Fun for all ages! St. John's Youth Board, Parish Education Board and the Fellowship Board are organizing an evening of fun here at St. John's. Everyone is invited! (Those under 12 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.)

Confirmation News

Christmas Carol Success at Maplewood

St. John's confirmation students and members of the Senior Choir had a wonderful experience when they sang Christmas Carols at Maplewood Nursing Home and The Pines Assisted Living! They sang traditional songs, carried jingle bells, and spread cheer to the residents. Afterwards, students shared hot cocoa and treats to celebrate the holiday season with their confirmation classes.

Thank You for Supporting the Caring Tree

St. John's Confirmation students and adults shared their time and energy to support families who otherwise would struggle to share in this joyous time of year, when they went shopping to fill 50 tags for the Sauk Prairie Caring Tree! Students were very successful at finding just the right gift for youth-in-need. It was wonderful to see our St. John's Youth recognize the small gesture of selecting a toy, art kit, or even basic clothing for other kids their own age, sharing God's love within our community.

Volunteer Help Need for Wednesday Night Meals

St. John's offers a fellowship meal before each confirmation class (5:30-6:00pm). Confirmation families are asked to help – volunteer to set-up, clean-up or donate desserts. Please sign-up at <https://tinyurl.com/WedNightMeal> to fill the many empty spots. Thank you!

Worship Jobs for Confirmation Students

The Feb–May session of Worship Jobs for confirmation students is open. Each student must register for at least 3 jobs during this season, and you can sign-up at <https://signup.com/go/ezEUbpl>. “Tech” jobs count as well, but have a different sign-up sheet located at <https://signup.com/go/CpcMdqT>

Those Serving in January

Greeters:

Jan. 5 (Front doors) T/G Wyttenbach
 (Side doors)
 Jan. 12 (Front doors) Rich & Kris Frey
 (Side doors)
 Jan. 19 (Front doors) Khloe Walker
 (Side doors) Austin Urban
 Jan. 26 (Front doors) John Hines
 (Side doors) Linda Hines

10:30 a.m.

G/D Westphal
 John & Ellen Mast
 Austin Urban
 G/D Westphal

Ushers:

January 5
 Nancy Kaufman
 Rob Richard
 Paityn Hauge
 January 12
 Dale Haroldson
 Kathy Lovell
 Lon Kaderavek
 Kendra Frey
 January 19
 Rob Richard
 Lon Kaderavek
 Austin Urban
 January 26
 Gina Wyttenbach
 Todd Wyttenbach
 Joslyn Schultz

10:30 a.m.

Laura Hutchins
 Claire Hansen
 Wolfgang Reich
 Diane Reich
 Laura Hutchins
 Neelah Ganshert
 Tom Varley
 Gina Varley
 Brooke Braund
 Chesney Braund

Acolytes:

January 5
 January 12
 January 19
 January 26

Brooke Braund
 Liam Leith
 Kate Endres

10:30 a.m.

Clay Hutchins
 Carly Jorgenson
 Clay Hutchins
 Willy Pickett

Readers:

January 5
 January 12
 January 19
 January 26

Donna Knickmeyer
 John Hines
 Nancy Kaufman
 Mary Halweg

10:30 a.m.

Donna Knickmeyer
 Jude Hanna
 Dale Clason
 Bob Nelson

Cantors:

January 5
 January 12
 January 19
 January 26

M/J Hupp
 Liz Ziehlsdorf
 Bill Burton
 Kids of Kingdom

10:30 a.m.

Doris Lohr
 Liz Ziehlsdorf
 Bill Burton
 Kids of Kingdom

Assisting Ministers: 8:00 a.m.

January 5 Donna Knickmeyer
 January 12
 January 19 Marv Hupp
 January 26 Janelle Hupp

10:30 a.m.

Donna Knickmeyer
 Jude Hanna
 Jude Hanna
 Jude Hanna

Communion

January 5
 January 12

Set-Up

A/J Chenoweth
 A/J Chenoweth

 Lilly Weittenhiller
 Jayne Carlson

Clean-Up

Ginny Nimmow
 Barb Salveson
 Sarah Warmke
 YOUTH
 G/D Westphal

Communion Assistants 8:00 a.m.

January 5 Patty Barritt
 January 12 Kris Frey
 January 19 Violet Richard
 January 26 Jayne Carlson

10:30 a.m.

Gerry Westphal
 Audrey Luetscher
 YOUTH
 Dale Clason

Sunday Stewards

January 5 Gwen Ringelstetter
 January 12 Marv Hupp
 January 19 Roger Seymour
 January 26 Roger Seymour

8:00 a.m.**10:30 a.m.**

Sean Jager
 John Ballweg
 Gina Varley

Coffee Servers

January 7 Cathy and Larry McAlexander
 January 12 John and Linda Hines
 January 19 Doug and Donna Nelson
 January 26

Technology Team

January 5 Ellen Jorgensen
 January 12 Ellen Jorgensen
 January 19 Lisa Davis
 January 26 Sean Jager

8:00 a.m.**10:30 a.m.**

Sandberg family
 Ellen Jorgensen
 Penny Johnson
 Sandberg family

Thank you

Thank you for remembering our family this Christmas season with your kind cards, well-wishes, gifts, and hugs. We continue to be grateful to be part of this loving faith community!
 Thank you, Pastor Sally, Jeff, and Molly Williams



St. John's thanks our TNT (Transition Team) and our Call Committee for the many hours that they have worked to help us in our search for a new Lead Pastor.

The members of the TNT Team are Kristin Ryan, Gary Tomter, Donna Knickmeyer, Megan Tarnutzer, Marv Hupp, Jordan Small, Derek Rosenstiel, and Pastor Jason. The purpose of the TNT Team was defining who we are as a St. John's church family and identifying our needs for our new pastor. Gathering the history of our church, identifying our priorities, and sketching out our future is work that must be done as a first step in finding a new pastor. Upon completing their tasks, the TNT Team handed over all the information that they gathered to our Call Committee to continue the work of finding the new pastor.

Our Call Committee members are Nancy Passehl, Steve Barritt, Steve Kindschi, Kristin Ryan, Mary Weeks and Sean Jager. They have spent many hours in meetings filling out the required paperwork for our Synod office to use in matching us up with a strong potential candidate for our next Lead Pastor. As stated in Nancy Passehl's article in this *Visitor*, we are hoping to hear from the Synod soon with some guidance in conducting interviews of our candidates. Then we will begin the exciting process of interviews!

Please give these dedicated members of both the TNT Team and the Call Committee a word of thanks when you see them on a Sunday morning. Change is not always easy, and these folks have done a great job on behalf of St. John's!

thank you

Dear St. John's Family,

Thank you for the wonderful cards, gifts and words of kindness given to us during the holidays and throughout the year. Your friendliness, grace and kindness take the "chore" out of our jobs, it is a pleasure to work with you. Thank you for thinking of us.

John and Linda Hines



Call Team Update

The Call Team will submit our Ministry Site Profile document to the Synod by mid-December. This did not come without hard work and answering hard questions.

Please thank your Call Team (Mary Weeks, Kristin Ryan, Steve Kinidschi, Steve Barritt, Sean Jager and Nancy Passehl) when you get a chance. The team met each week since October for 2-3 hours a week plus 3 hours of homework each week. This document is thorough, and the answers are well thought out.

Next steps

This document tells the candidate the complete picture using information gathered from all of you, starting with the hard work from the TNT and Call Teams. The reader will know our strengths, gifts, talents, ministries, and our challenges. The document now goes to the Synod which takes the time needed to match our information with the candidates applying for a lead pastor. This will take time; how much time depends on the Synod and the candidate roster. The Call Team will meet in mid-January to develop interview questions and hold a mock interview.

We are such a blessed Congregation and have so many dedicated people who believe in our mission to serve. Our challenges include defining the meaning of welcoming. Over the past few months working on the Call Team, and now serving as your Executive Director, I have heard too many instances where visitors have come here to St John's and have never had anyone talk to them. As a congregation, we are in a partnership with God, each other, and the community. We must do better than that. It doesn't just fall on the PPC, the TNT, or the Call Team to make this better. It falls on all of us. You are the face of our welcoming.

Additionally, we see our bulletin or the kiosk with blank spots for volunteering. We have the Sunday School Superintendent and the Stewardship Board Chairperson vacant. In turn, that requires staff to help with those jobs and takes away from their required duties. You have the talents and skills to fill these roles.

Transparency is important, which means we need to be open and honest and share the load. The work of many hands makes it easier on all. We all need to ask ourselves how I might do my part. Volunteer, seek out new people and longtime members you don't know. Together we will accomplish great things.

Submitted by Nancy Passehl

**Parish Planning Council Minutes
December 3, 2024, 6:00 PM**

Present: Nancy Passehl, Marv Hupp, John Brennan, Cathy Yanke, Sally Williams, Elise Iverson Uphoff, Eunice Yanke, Roger Seymour, Gina Varley, Gwen Ringelstetter, John Ballweg, Cathy McAlexander, Melanie Wheeler, Sean Jager

Absent: Tracy Pape, James Newman, Jason Hill

Call to Order/Opening Remarks:

Meeting was called to order at 6:03 p.m. by Nancy Passehl. Nancy P asked for approval of the agenda. Motion to approve was made by Gina and seconded by Eunice. Motion carried. A devotion/prayer was then given by Cathy M.

Secretary Minutes:

The November minutes were submitted online by Cathy Yanke. A motion to approve minutes was made by Marv and seconded by Sean. Motion carried.

Treasurer report:

The committee reviewed and discussed the November 2024; Treasurer Report submitted by John Brennan.

November report numbers

Current month income	Year-to-date Income	Current month expenses	Year-to-date expenses	Year-to-date budget
\$41,983	\$431,948	\$48,473	\$(48,473)	\$(6,489)

Reminder that December is often the biggest month for stock donations. Per our new policy this year, we will liquidate/sell all stock donations upon receipt. We still love these donations, and they have great tax benefits to the donor.

Our current savings in \$67K and we have a \$50K CD currently maturing. A motion was made to split the money to \$25K to our savings and \$25K back into a new 6-month CD. The additional money will help with our current deficit and to pay for the organ repairs. Motion was made by Marv and seconded by Gina.

We have had a few requests to again start putting the financial status in the weekly bulletins. Transparency is the main reason, but giving ownership over the situation to the congregation is another. A motion to approve the financial report was made by Eunice and seconded by John Ballweg. Motion carried.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Evangelism: Gwen Ringelstetter reported:

- No report provided

Fellowship: Cathy McAlexander reported:

· In November, we honored our church members who were 90 years of age and older by having the church members sign “Thinking of you” cards and serving cheesecake during coffee time. We provided “message rocks” for each which the pastors delivered to them along with their signed cards.

· We will invite church members to share their “extra” Christmas goodies during coffee time on December 29

Lay Ministry: Gina Varley reported:

- No report provided.

Parish Education: James Newman reported:

· Upcoming Confirmation events include, Caring tree shopping, Christmas caroling, and helping at food pantry in December and January.

· Sunday School's Christmas program is on December 15th at 1pm. This will be broadcast over zoom.

Properties: John Ballweg reported:

· Rocky's Masonry has replaced all of the Parsonage basement windows with glass blocks.

· We've accepted a proposal from Justin Frosch to clear snow from the parking lot and sidewalks around church.

· The Simplicity snowblower at church has been serviced and is ready to go as well.

· Snowmaking has been outsourced to Mother Nature again this year.

PR & Social Concerns: Melanie Wheeler reported:

- No report provided

Stewardship Board: (Anne Klinkner) reported:

· Welcome, John Brennan.

· VENMO AND PAYPAL UPDATE. Since Venmo and Paypal have been added as additional methods of giving, approximately \$1,000 has been received in current giving from them.

- Cards with Paypal and Venmo codes on them will be put in the pews. The codes will be printed in the bulletin as well. Anne talked to Linda Hines and let her know.

- STEWARDSHIP. Our Stewardship efforts to encourage additional giving for 2024 from our congregation have been helpful. There was an increase of \$14,000 in current giving when October 2024 was compared to September 2024 revenue or income.
 - Pastor Sally and Intern Elise are adding a sentence into worship before the Offertory each week
- MONTHLY GIVING CAUSES. More work will occur on these in 2025.
- TIME AND TALENT SURVEY. The Time and Talent Survey response has been good this year. The forms that were available at Rally Sunday, in the Narthex and online were all used by members. Anne will collate the results and share them.
- PLAN AND GOALS FOR 2025. Anne shared her 2025 Plan and Goals with the Stewardship Board. Anne reminded the board we need to evaluate the new and changed processes and giving methods next year to determine if they are effective or if we need to make changes to any of them. They include the Administrative Manual, Investment Policy, Gift Acceptance Policy and related form and the Venmo and Paypal giving methods. Vanco is adding Apple Pay and Google Pay as well so we will have to evaluate that and see if we want to add the enhanced features.
- Communication with the congregation on our financial results on a regular basis will be important so we can address a deficit situation sooner if one occurs.

Women of ELCA: Eunice Yanke reported:

- ThankOffering Service was November 24. Collection of monetary donations will be until December 15.
- Gather magazine did arrive in time for December Circle meetings. An email from Gather was sent stating that they have revamped their printing and mailing schedule so that we will be receiving magazines and Bible Studies timelier once again.
- January 16 at 10am we will have our Combined Circles meeting. We will hear from Intern Elise about her faith journey and have our annual Candlelight Memorial Service.
- Christmas Cheer money will go to Hope House of Baraboo and Special Olympics.
- Pennies for Poverty Jar is still out for donations. We will count this year's total on December 29

Youth Committee: Tracy Pape reported:

- Canceled | January Alive Youth Night due to the Synod restructuring their Youth Committee.
- "Parked" until 2025 | Parent's Time-Out

- This is a set time for parents to drop off their children at the church, allowing parents some free time to themselves. (Babysitting type event).
 - Host this event in 2025 in conjunction with SP Holly Jolly. Create a sign-up for students and adult volunteers to participate. Also, create a sign-up for parents, that includes the age, name of children, and parent contact information. Suggestion donation for the service provided and advertise all proceeds go to the St. John's Caring Tree.
- St. John's Game Night | February 2025. Is in discussion at this time for February 28, 2025, | 6:30 pm - 9 p.m.
 - A glance at the confirmation calendar
 - December 4, 2024, | Sauk Prairie Care Tree Shopping
 - December 11, 2024, | Christmas Caroling
 - December 18, 2024, | Sauk Prairie Food Pantry

Member at Large: Roger Seymour reported:

- No report provided.

Youth member at Large: Sean Jager reported:

- The second trimester of school starts on the 3rd of this month.
- Winter sports teams have games and meets this month. Our youth are involved in a number of events. Visit <https://badgerconference.org/public/genie/77/school/4/?categories=426> to see the dates and times.
- Winter break starts on December 21st and ends on January 2nd.

Pastor/Intern Reports

Interim Jason's Report:

- I want to thank all of you who offered your sympathies and condolences with both Megan and I for the death of Megan's Mother. Thank you for all the cards, hugs, and words of care. Patti had been dealing with years of dementia, and the family knew her death was eventual, but as many of you know, it's never an easy thing when you receive that phone call confirming it. Thank you to Pastor Sally who officiated the funeral.
- Super grateful to have participated in this year's ecumenical Thanksgiving service at St John's. It was really special to lead worship with "fellow" area pastors. It definitely gives us cause to celebrate how we are thankful as people of faith but also as human beings who share in this journey of a lifetime. My hope and prayer is that this opportunity to come together as different congregations and pastors continues to grow.

Sally's Report:

- We had about 60 people at the Ecumenical Thanksgiving Service. Everyone, including the pastors, expressed gratitude for the opportunity to worship together again. We are in conversation about future ecumenical work together. Intern Elise created a great service!
- I am in the process of finding a new quilter(s) to take over making the baptism quilts. If you know of anyone I can invite please let me know.
- I will hold New Member classes in January/February. Installation and reception will be on Sunday, February 16.
- I am inviting all of you to participate in the lighting of the advent wreath as a way for the congregation to connect names and faces. Thank you to the Passehls and Hupps for doing the first Sunday. I will send a separate email tomorrow to fill the rest of the slots. Thank you in advance!
- Please continue to reach out to families/individuals you don't know during the coffee hour, especially.
- Welcome to our newest PPC members! We're glad to have you on board!

Intern Elise's Report:

- Facilitated an All Saints Table for members of the congregation to bring items of remembrance for loved ones who have died, and have them on display for a week in the gathering space. The table was well utilized. Repeating the table next year would create a tradition people might anticipate and increase use of this means of reflection and celebration.
- Received funding from the Memorial committee to purchase five graphic novels, illustrated Bibles for use during worship or any time people visit St. John's.
- Baked homemade communion bread with high schoolers and two adult volunteers.
- Assisted in coordinating the Thanksgiving Eve worship leadership of ecumenical pastors, and preparing the worship liturgy bulletin.
- Teaching roles began through Adult Education hour leadership and 9th grade confirmation class teaching.
- Continued with regular Internship Committee and Supervisor meetings.
- Discussion about a Gun Violence Prevention training that will be offered.
- Buttons that say St John's will be available to wear in the community to help with our visibility, our brand, and identity.

Old Business:

- Welcoming—asking each of us to make an effort for new and current people in the congregation
- Sunday steward, devotion, and advent wreath lighting sign ups
- Call Team update—group is working hard and meeting often to complete the document that they plan to complete and submit to the Synod mid-December.

New Business:

For new members and reminder to all:

- We meet the first Tuesday of every month at 6:00 in the library. All PPC members and pastoral staff attend. Voting members are all the PPC staff. We must have a quorum to hold the meetings so please let me know ahead of time if you cannot attend.
- Each meeting starts with a devotion to lead off the meeting reminding us to invite God to be with us. I will pass around a sign up for the devotion openings.
- Each PPC member is responsible to be a Sunday Steward. A Sunday Steward stands near the pastors in the receiving line at the end of each service in case someone has a question that you can assist the pastor. You also gather the \$\$\$s collected from the altar. You ask someone other than a family member to assist you.
- Visitor articles - All Visitor articles are due to Linda H no later than the 20th of each month.
- Reports for each Board - Please make sure your report is sent to Cathy Yanke by 9 pm, the night before the meeting so she can send out a compiled list of reports for your review before the meeting.
- Explain goal of 'parking lot items' is to continue discussion on these topics that are not quick decisions to keep them current.

“Parking lot” items:

- One service—Lay Ministry
- RIC (Reconciled in Christ)—conversations to begin after lead pastor is hired
- TNT—bucket list of items brought up by members that need additional discussion

Next meeting is Tuesday, January 7, 2025, at 6:00 pm. Devotion will be given by Sean. Melanie made a motion to adjourn our meeting, and the motion was seconded by Sean. Motion carried.

Meeting Adjourned at 7:40 pm. with The Lord's Prayer lead by Nancy P.

Respectfully submitted by Cathy Yanke.

Organ Repair/Rebuild

St. John's organ is scheduled to be repaired coming soon! The builder has given us the firm date of January 14 to begin removing the pipes and refurbishing them. The pipes will be out of the organ for about 4 weeks.

The Stewardship Board would like to invite anyone who is interested in making a donation to the organ fund in memory of or in honor of someone to contribute to the repair costs if you are interested.

You can contribute in person at the church office, place an envelope in the offering plate with your donation and the name of the persons you would like to memorialize or honor, or make a notation on your electronic donation of the same. A list of donors along with whom they honor will be published in a bulletin celebrating the completion of the organ's repair. We have collected \$23,840.00 so far.

Donating to St. John's

There are many ways to give our time, expertise, and resources for the mission of the church and work of the Gospel. We recognize and celebrate giving in all ways including offerings sent in by mail, given in person in the offering plate, and those sent through online methods given in person, by mail, and online.

St. John's

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



St. John's

Paypal:

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





Happy January Birthday!

The day is in parenthesis.

Our Youngest:

Rylan Gorsuch (4)
Harvey Pickett (31)

Knox Kruchten (7)

Our Sunday School Students:

Molly Philo (6)
Kellan Robarge (12)
Maddie Keller (18)
Brantley Dean (27)
Lincoln Wasserberg (27)
Brielle Schell (31)

Clare Kaderavek (12)
James Johnson (14)
Cole Haug (23)
Emma Naggs (27)
Cadence Schwartz (30)

Our Youth:

Kaden Ballweg (2)
Noelle Small (13)
Parker Pape (18)
Sophia Hanson (29)

Jordan Signorile (7)
Douglas Jolicoeur (15)
Declan Ryan (23)
Nicholas Keyser (31)

College and Career-age Young People:

Jack Boerger (7)
Chesney Schonenberger (17)
Karley Blau (29)

Leo Hartman (16)
Andrew King (31)