

*Sam Philo, 6<sup>th</sup> grade*

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Prairie du Sac, WI

April 2025

Dear Friends of St. John's,

Death. Resurrection. Salvation. These are the core of our Easter season, but what do they even mean?! If you are reading this, you haven't experienced death. We haven't been resurrected. Of any of these, perhaps some of us have tasted salvation through the wonders of mystery and grace. So, why is the Easter season based upon such difficult ideas?

The short answer is that life as a human is difficult, and it takes the majesty of God and salvation of Christ to overcome that! We need the extraordinary, the supernatural to overcome our humanness.

But wait! WAIT! Easter isn't about us being hopeless little humans. It's about the amazing assurance that no matter how hard things are, the fits and starts, the failures, that God is bigger than all of it; that Christ's death on the cross and resurrection on the third day, means that God will make use of us for glory. Easter is about the eternal hope, that God can use something even as profound as death to bring about life-saving grace and mercy.

Think of a daffodil. Last summer the daffodil had to die back, with long, stringy yellow leaves before disappearing completely, to rest and rejuvenate for this spring. It's during this time of dormancy (or apparent death) that it seems like nothing is going to come of

last year's beautiful flowers. Then, through the fits and starts of springtime freezes and thaws, hope comes through little heads of green poking through the soil (resurrection). Eventually, with patience, rain and warmth, this year's unique flower is revealed (salvation).

Easter is our reminder of God's renewing process. Last year's flowers are gone, and we rest on faith that the green shoots of this year will bring about God's creative glory in bunches of flowers. Easter is a reminder that God brings new life, even through our toughest circumstances, through the death and resurrection of Christ on the cross. Praise be to God!

With hope,  
Intern Elise



### **Holy Week and Easter Worship Services**

We will have Lenten worship services on Wednesdays, April 2 and April 9 at 1:00pm and 6:30pm. A light lunch is offered at noon on those Wednesdays. There will be no evening meals.

Worship services for Maundy Thursday will be at 1:00pm and 6:30pm on April 17. A light lunch is offered to all at noon. No evening meal is planned. Maundy Thursday's services center around the Last Supper and our practice of Holy Communion, "in remembrance of me" and includes the stripping of the altar.

On Good Friday, April 18, we will have worship at 1:00pm and 6:30pm. No meals are offered on Good Friday.

On Easter Sunday, April 20, we will have a Sunrise Service at 7:00am, and celebration services at 8:00am and 10:30am. There will not be any Sunday School or Adult Education classes that day.

All worship services, except the Sunrise Service, are available live on Zoom. A quick and easy way to join us on Zoom is to go to our website [www.stjohnssaukprairie.org](http://www.stjohnssaukprairie.org), then click on the Join Us Live for Worship button in the upper right corner. This will connect you to our worship services.

We encourage you to join us in person or via Zoom for these meaningful worship services!



### **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) 963-0325 |
| 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       | Todd Wyttenbach    | (608) 513-9797 |
| Women of ELCA           | Eunice Yanke       | (608) 643-8289 |
| Youth Board             | Tracy Pape         | (608) 574-0577 |
| Youth Member-at-Large   | Sean Jager         | (608) 434-0755 |

### The Staff:

Pastor: Sally Williams [sally@stjohnssaukprairie.org](mailto:sally@stjohnssaukprairie.org) 370-4501

Pastoral Intern: Elise Iverson Uphoff [elise@stjohnssaukprairie.org](mailto:elise@stjohnssaukprairie.org)

Director of Music: Ruellene Seymour

[ruellene@stjohnssaukprairie.org](mailto:ruellene@stjohnssaukprairie.org)

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

Financial Secretary: Bruce Fritsch [bruce@stjohnssaukprairie.org](mailto:bruce@stjohnssaukprairie.org)

Custodian: John Hines [john@stjohnssaukprairie.org](mailto:john@stjohnssaukprairie.org)

Office and Communications Coordinator: Linda Hines

[linda@stjohnssaukprairie.org](mailto:linda@stjohnssaukprairie.org)

Sunday School Superintendent: Dale Clason

[sundayschool@stjohnssaukprairie.org](mailto:sundayschool@stjohnssaukprairie.org)

St. John's Lutheran Church: (608) 643-2439

[www.stjohnssaukprairie.org](http://www.stjohnssaukprairie.org)

Like us on Facebook at St Johns Lutheran Sauk Prairie

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

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



**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

Christ,  
our strength  
and refuge,  
calling us  
to serve

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



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

Applesauce  
Peanut Butter  
Tuna  
Deodorant

Hamburger/Tuna Helper  
Pudding Cups  
Shampoo  
Toothpaste

Keep this list handy as you do your grocery shopping during the next few weeks.

**The Food Pantry cannot accept medications.**



### **Birthday Greetings**

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

Helen Bjelde (5)  
Oak Park Place  
800 Waldo Street  
Baraboo, WI 53913

Nick Lester (10)  
741 Water Street  
Prairie du Sac, WI 53578



Eldoris Lovell (12)  
1425 Hemlock St., Apt 118  
Sauk City, WI 53583

Jake Degenhardt (16)  
612 Eagle Crest Court  
Prairie du Sac, WI 53578

Jean Knuth (23)  
160 – 7<sup>th</sup> Street  
Prairie du Sac, WI 53578

Bob Straub (25)  
245 Sycamore Street  
Sauk City, WI 53583

Roger Allen (30)  
6890 Breunig Road  
Mazomanie, WI 53560

|  | <b>Women of the Church News</b>  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  | <b><u>Lydia Circle</u></b> Thursday, April 10, at Carol Benson's, 713 Madison St, Apt 111, Sauk City | 1:00pm   |
|  | <b><u>Martha Circle</u></b> Thursday, April 3, in St. John's Library, Ruth Dresser, Hostess          | 9:30am   |
|  | <b><u>Ruth Circle</u></b> Monday, April 14, in St. John's Library, Marian DeGiovanni, Hostess        | 9:00am   |
|  | <b><u>Sarah/Mary Circle</u></b> Tuesday, April 1, in St. John's Library                              | 9:30am   |

In March, 20 Circle members and 1 guest attended Meetings. In April, Circles will be meeting as shown above. The main focus in the March Study was on the verses Acts 10:1-48. Cornelius is non-Jewish but was a God loving man. Peter was very much accustomed to Jewish traditions. Peter sees that God shows no partiality, but in every people (or nation or group) anyone who fears and respects and loves Him and does what is right is acceptable to Him. This lesson was led by Diane Elsing, Mary Weeks, Marian DeGiovanni and Kathy Lester. In April we will learn more about Peter's faith journey and what God reveals to him in Acts 10. The study will be led by Diane Elsing, Mary Weeks, Marian DeGiovanni and Kathy Lester. **Any of the Circles would be very happy to welcome new ladies who would like to attend.**

The Sauk/Columbia County WELCA Spring Gathering will be hosted by Zion Lutheran Church E6787 Stone Church Drive, Rock Springs on Saturday, April 26th, 2025. (Sauk/Columbia County Conference is the new name; formerly Baraboo Conference.) Zion and Leland Lutheran Churches are sister churches and will be co-hosting this event. Registration will be from 8:30-9:30 a.m. Meeting begins at 9:30. Lunch will be provided for \$12/per person. Reservations should be made by Sunday April 20. You can pay at the time of registration.

Lisa Carlson Pickarts will be the speaker of the day. She is an area resident who has been an RN at Sauk Prairie Hospital for 44 years. Her career at SPH has spun from staff nurse in all departments to the Administrative Chief Nursing Officer. Caring for people of all ages with various needs within our community has been her joy and satisfaction. The daughter of Haakon Carlson, MD, she was influenced by his respect and caring for all people and his special focus on the poor and needy. Dr. Carlson created a clinic in 1999, called The Free Clinic based on Matthew 25:35-40

("For I was hungry, and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink.....") the start of one person reaching out has grown into a community organization serving thousands of people every year. Haakon was proud of his daughter and would be happy to know she has been the VP of The Good Neighbor Clinic for several years.

Dr. Carlson and his wife, Janice were active members of St. John's for many years....and since we all knew and loved them (and of course, Lisa) .... we would very much love to have a good representation from our church attending this meeting! Please give it some serious consideration and plan to attend. (Lisa is now an active member of Leland Lutheran Church.) We will carpool and you just need to inform Linda in the church office that you plan to attend (by April 18<sup>th</sup>) AND be at the church by 7:30 a.m. on Saturday, April 26<sup>th</sup> if you would like to be included in the carpool. The cost of the meal is \$12. It will be a wonderful program...and the meal is always delicious!!

Ruth Circle has been visiting Special Friends in February and March. Martha Circle will be visiting them in April and May.

The Bible Study Leaders Meeting for May will be on Tuesday April 29<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 a.m.

Be sure to read the Special Prayer found in this Visitor on April 20<sup>th</sup>.

### **Adult Education**

|          |  |   |
|----------|--|---|
| April 6  | Faith, Firearms, and Forging<br>9:15 education, 12pm demonstration                           | Rev. Jeff Wild                              |
| April 13 | A look at St. John's and the ELCA's<br>Youth and Young Adult Programming                     | Penny Johnson                               |
| April 20 | Easter: No Class   |   |
| April 27 | Good Earth: History and Action of the<br>Sauk Prairie Conservation Association               | Sauk Prairie<br>Conservation<br>Association |
| May 4th  | Gun Violence Prevention, Part 2:<br>Youth Perspectives, Family Stories,<br>and Mental Health | Janelle Hupp<br>and Cora Miller             |

## **Faith, Firearms, and Forging, April 6th, 9:15am Education and 12pm Demonstration**

Special guest, Rev. Jeff Wild, will come to St. John's to present on gun violence prevention and forging of garden tools using reclaimed pieces of firearms as based on Isaiah 2:4. Come to learn about this profound mission. During Adult Education, Rev. Jeff Wild will offer a presentation, and at noon, he will present a live forging demonstration of his work.

A second part of this mini-series will be held on May 4th hearing from voices in our own congregation and community.

Contact Intern Elise or Pastor Sally with questions, [elise@stjohnssaukprairie.org](mailto:elise@stjohnssaukprairie.org) and [sally@stjohnssaukprairie.org](mailto:sally@stjohnssaukprairie.org)

## **Immigration Team**

Interested in St. John's role in supporting our immigrant neighbors? No experience is needed! Contact Intern Elise at [Elise@stjohnssaukprairie.org](mailto:Elise@stjohnssaukprairie.org)



## **First Communion, April 3, 6-7pm**

Save the date. Open to any youth and families exploring communion, and adults interested in revisiting the meaning of this sacrament. This is a great time to learn about this meaningful connection to our faith in Christ, especially as we approach the celebration of Easter. Contact Intern Elise with questions.

[Elise@stjohnssaukprairie.org](mailto:Elise@stjohnssaukprairie.org)

## **SPECIAL PRAYER** ☩ ☩

We invite you to pray on the 20<sup>th</sup> day of April.

O God of all hope and peace, we bring to you the needs of our broken and hurting world.

Our hearts are breaking with images of lives lost and torn apart by grief in Israel and Palestine.

We pray for an end to violence and warfare so that the challenging work of rebuilding may begin.

Help us, O Lord, to affirm our common humanity so that in our differences we may build together for justice and peace.

In Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.





### **With Sincere Sympathy**

We offer our condolences to the following families this month:

Dale Clason and her family on the death of Dale's sister, Rose Beulus.



### **Baby Celebrations**

We celebrate with Hailey (Coy) and Blake Zick on the birth of their son, Wayne Steven Zick. Wayne was born on February 21. Steve and Robyn Coy are his grandparents. Wayne is also welcomed by Aunt Carly Coy, Uncle Brendan and Aunt Mikayla Coy and Cousin Vivian Coy.

We rejoice with Michael and Katelynn Gorsuch on the birth of their son, Hudson William Gorsuch. Hudson was born on February 27. Hudson is welcomed home by sister Rylan and grandparents Jeff and Diane Gorsuch.



### **Baptism**

On March 23, 2025 Violet Dorothy Carlson, daughter of Jamin and Amelia Carlson was baptized at St. John's. Violet's godparents are Joah Carlson and Maggie Bormann. Her congregational sponsor is her great-grandmother Jayne Carlson.

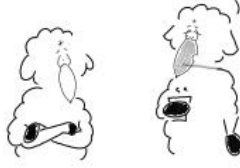


Dear Friends in Christ,

HOW LONG DO I HAVE TO  
LEAVE THIS MARK ON MY  
FOREHEAD? IT'S MAKING  
ME FEEL A BIT  
**SELF-CONSCIOUS.**



IT'S A MARK OF YOUR  
BAPTISM AND A REMINDER  
OF YOUR MORTALITY.



SO IT'S  
**PERMANENT!?**



PRETTY  
MUCH,  
YEAH.



*Agnus Day appears with the permission of [www.agnusday.org](http://www.agnusday.org)"*

It's hard to believe that Ash Wednesday has already been in our rearview mirror for about a month and now we're marching toward Palm Sunday and Easter. Ashes covered our foreheads as we began our Lenten journey. We were reminded that we are dust and that to dust we shall return.

Ash Wednesday isn't a particularly lighthearted service to say the least. We tucked away our A!!e!(@s (see me if you're not sure what that word is ) for the season as we repent and return to God. And that mark is permanent.

The reality of our humanness, our sin, and our mortality is permanent. That mark remains.

But so does another mark. The mark made on our forehead in baptism, in anointing, in a communion blessing is also permanent. The marks on Jesus' hands, feet, and side are permanent proclaiming to us that the promises of his life, death, and resurrection remain. His promises are permanent.

But I'm getting a little ahead of myself because it's not Easter yet. We remain in Lent a little longer; we still must journey to the cross in Holy Week.

I invite you to join us on Palm Sunday (I hear we're having another yummy brunch!), Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. These are important days in our church year.

Our culture wants us to skip ahead to Easter, but we cannot have Easter without the crucifixion. Let's gather together the week of April 13 in worship. We will join the crowd in waving our palm branches. Then we'll gather with the disciples at the Last Supper and later sit at the foot of the cross as Jesus is crucified.

Only after that can we come together to celebrate the empty tomb. Only after that can we fully understand (well, as much as we can ever understand) the magnitude of Christ's resurrection.

You have been marked. Christ's promises are for you, and they are permanent. May these promises sustain you on this journey.

Peace,



### **Fellowship Board Notes**

We are making the switch from Styrofoam cups to paper coffee cups as we feel a responsibility to reduce our carbon footprint. As with many decisions, we have attempted to look at all sides of the issue and have looked at the cost/benefit implications of our decisions. The cost of the Styrofoam is \$40 per 1000 cups, as opposed to \$100 per 1000 paper cups. We continue to invite church members to bring their reusable /travel coffee cups to use during coffee time.

At this time, we have received two donations to help offset the additional cost of the paper cups. If you, too, feel the call to help St John's be a responsible caretaker of the earth, please contact Pastor Sally, Intern Elise, Linda Hines or Cathy McAlexander.

## ***Palm Sunday Breakfast***

St. John's Fellowship Board will be hosting the annual Palm Sunday Breakfast on April 13 with serving from 9:00am to 10:30am. Breakfast is free and all are welcome!

Please join us for a wonderful meal including egg and ham souffle, pancakes, fresh fruit, coffee cakes, juice, tea and coffee. Vegetarian and gluten-free options are available.

See you there!

# Sunday School News



## **Vacation Bible School**

VBS will be back this summer! This is scheduled for Monday August 4<sup>th</sup> through Thursday August 7<sup>th</sup> and will run each day from 9 am to 2 pm. Vacation Bible School is open to kids who have completed kindergarten through 6<sup>th</sup> grade. There is no cost to attend but kids will be asked to bring their own lunch. Watch for more details to come!

## **Sunday School Offering**

We encourage our Sunday School students to keep bringing in their offerings for Good Gifts. This year's offering is going to nutrition for children. One child receives foods high in protein and vitamins for a month for \$25. Many of these children have lost one or both parents and this program is a way we can be the feet of Jesus – bringing his message of nourishment and care. We will collect our final offering on Sunday, May 4 (the last day of Sunday School). Thank you for your generosity!



## **Stock the Schools**

As a community project, St. John's is 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. Some of these items can be used in school and some at home. April's items are gift cards to Piggly Wiggly, Hansen's IGA, Walgreen's or Kwik Trip gas cards. Since these are smaller items, please drop off your donations in the church office or the offering plates. Thank you for helping those in our community that are in great need.

# Middle and High School News



## **Affirmation of Baptism is Sunday, April 27**

Join St. John's as we celebrate the Affirmation of Baptism with our 9<sup>th</sup> grade students! Sunday, April 27 at the 10:30 Service, ninth grade students will complete their confirmation program by affirming the promises made at their baptism. Parents, Mentors and Confirmands are asked to arrive at 9:30am to prepare for service. We'll have a small reception and professional photographs prior to the service, and all are welcome to celebrate this important life milestone.

## **Sixth Graders - Orientation to Confirmation is May 7**

On Wednesday, May 7 we begin the process of introducing the incoming confirmation class to our confirmation program. Students who are currently enrolled in the Sixth Grade, along with one adult, should attend. We'll talk about confirmation requirements, introduce confirmation education, talk about mentorship, and review the confirmation expectations. We will meet from 6:00pm – 7:00 pm.

## **Young Adult Updates**

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

## **Hospice and Newborn Kits for GHM**

We are in need of a few more items for the Hospice and Newborn Kits that we send to Global Health Ministries. Would you like to help out by donating?

- Ivory Soap (bath-size bars)
- kitchen gloves (size - medium)
- small nail clippers
- band-aids (3/4 inch)
- cloth diapers (store bought)
- vasoline (4 oz.)
- wash cloths (both adult size and for baby)

You can bring your items to the bins in the fellowship hall.  
Thank you.

## **THANK YOU**

Thank you, Donna Nelson and your Lenten Lunch Kitchen Crew, for providing us with a delicious meal each Wednesday in Lent. Your cooking and serving skills are beyond compare! We also thank all the volunteers who provided our delicious desserts. Thank you to all!



### **Office Coordinator Position**

As you all know, Linda Hines has announced her retirement in June 2025. We will be filling this full-time position in May/June 2025. Please let the Executive Director Nancy Passehl (608-219-1936) know if you are interested in this opening.

## Serving in April

### Greeters:

April 6 (Front Door)  
(Side Door)  
April 13 (Front Door)  
(Side Door)  
April 20 (Front Door)  
(Side Door)  
April 27 (Front Door)  
(Side Door)

### Early Service

Don/Vi Bohler  
Rich/Kris Frey  
T/G Wyttenbach  
Evie Brennan  
Drew Brickl  
J/L Hines

### Late Service

Gerry/Deb Westphal  
Doris Lohr  
Aubree Deuman  
Ginny Nimmow

### Ushers:

April 6

### Early Service

Todd Wyttenbach  
Gina Wyttenbach  
Kendra Frey  
Mason Ramirez  
Rob Richard  
Joslyn Schultz  
Lillianna Weittenhiller

### Late Service

Tom Varley  
Gina Varley  
Chesney Braund  
Brooke Braund  
Isabelle Jolicoeur  
Michael Jolicoeur  
Tom Varley  
Gina Varley

April 20

**(7:00am)** Todd and Gina Wyttenbach

Butch Passehl  
Rob Richard  
Joslyn Schultz  
Caden Argall

April 27

Gina Wyttenbach

Affirmation Sunday

Todd Wyttenbach

### Acolytes:

April 6

### Early Service

Willy Pickett  
Kate Endres  
John Brennan  
Emma Gilchrist

### Late Service

Elio Piccinelli  
Claire Hansen

April 13

April 20

April 27 Affirmation

### Assisting Ministers

April 6

### Early Service

Marv Hupp  
Patty Barritt  
Donna Knickmeyer  
Patty Barritt

### Late Service

Clay Hutchins  
Patty Barritt  
Patty Barritt

April 13

April 20

April 27 Affirmation

### Readers:

April 6

### Early Service

Marilyn Herschleb  
Carrie Richard  
Mary Halweg  
John Hines

### Late Service

Natalie Nurkala  
Kathy Lovell  
Doris Lohr  
Jude Hanna

April 13

April 20

April 27 Affirmation

**Cantors:**

April 6  
 April 13  
 April 20  
 April 27 Affirmation

**Early Service**

Bill Burton  
 Melani Wheeler  
 Senior Choir  
 Chris Stephan

**Late Service**

Bill Burton  
 Melani Wheeler  
 Senior Choir  
 Chris Stephan

**Communion Set/Clean Set Up**

April 6  
 April 13  
 April 17 (Maundy Thurs)  
 April 20  
 April 27 Affirmation

Deb Corrao  
 Marilyn Herschleb  
 Linda Michaels  
 John Brennan  
 Jayne Carlson

**Clean Up**

Roger/Marcia Howard  
 Audrey Luetscher  
 Gwen Ringelstetter  
 Aubree Deuman  
 Gerry/Deb Westphal

**Communion Assistants Early Service**

April 6  
 April 13  
 April 17 (Maundy Thurs)  
 April 20  
 April 27 Affirmation

Patty Barritt  
 Kris Frey  
 Mary Weeks  
 Evie Brennan  
 Mary Weeks  
 Jayne Carlson

**Late Service**

Dennis Fisher  
 Audrey Luetscher  
 Marilyn Herschleb  
 Aubree Deuman  
 Mary Weeks  
 Dale Clason

**Technology Team**

April 6  
 April 13  
 April 20  
 April 27 Affirmation

**Early Service**

Ellen Jorgensen  
 Ellen Jorgensen  
 Lee LaVigne  
 Ellen Jorgensen

**Late Service**

Sean Jager  
 Bryce Argall  
 Bryce Argall

**Coffee Servers**

April 6  
 April 13  
 April 20  
 April 27 Affirmation

Palm Sunday Breakfast – Fellowship Board  
 Donna Nelson  
 Allan and Lisa Van Landuyt

**Sunday Stewards**

April 6  
 April 13  
 April 20 (7:00am)  
 April 27 Affirmation

**Early Service**

Todd Wyttenbach  
 Marv Hupp  
 Todd Wyttenbach  
 Todd Wyttenbach  
 Tracy Pape

**Late Service**

Gina Varley  
 James Newman  
 Roger Seymour  
 Roger Seymour



## **Call committee update.**

We are optimistic with the recent developments in our call process for a senior pastor. Although this is a critically important process for our church, we want to thank our congregation for all your thoughts, inputs, patience, and prayers during this time. There are many churches currently searching for new pastors, even though there are not enough applicants to fill all these openings. Also, with the Lenten season upon us, many pastoral candidates may be busy in their current missions.

We have been working with the synod for several months to best present our church and community to those interested in becoming our next pastor. We currently have received a Rostered Minister Profile of a candidate from the synod and are making plans to interview this candidate in March. Confidentiality is essential during this process so we cannot share details at this time, but we will keep the congregation informed of our progress on a regular basis.

In the book of Acts, chapter 11, where the followers of Christ Jesus were first called Christians in Antioch, God sees when a church is without a pastor, can bless it in a pastor's absence, can bless it by providing a pastor, and will continue to bless it when a pastor arrives. Be encouraged that the Lord can grow a church without a pastor. (Acts 11:20-21). No pastor will be perfect, just as no congregation is perfect, but pray that our new pastor will "preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke, and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction." (2 Timothy 4:2).

Please feel free to reach out to our call committee if you have any questions. Peace be with you.

Nancy Passehl, Mary Weeks, Kristin Ryan, Sean Jager,  
Steve Barritt, Steve Kindschi

## **Thank you**

Thank you to the following volunteers who completed St. John's audit for 2024: Jon Cafilisch, Crystal Lautenbach, Donna Knickmeyer, Gina Wyttenbach, Paul and Ann Kippley. Cathy Yanke was the Stewardship Board member who helped with questions and locating files. We are grateful to you all for sharing your time and talents with St. John's.

# PARISH PLANNING COUNCIL MINUTES

DATE: March 4, 2025

**Present:** Nancy Passehl, Marv Hupp, John Brennan, Sally Williams, Elise Iverson Uphoff, Eunice Yanke, John Ballweg, Tracy Pape, Roger Seymour, James Newman, Todd Wyttenbach, Gwen Ringelstetter, Melani Wheeler

**Absent:** Cathy Yanke, Cathy McAlexander, Gina Varley, and Sean Jager.

## Call to Order/Opening Remarks:

The meeting was called to order at 6:04 p.m. by Nancy Passehl. Nancy P asked for approval of the agenda. Motion to approve was made by John Ballweg and seconded by Melani Wheeler. Motion carried. A devotion/prayer was then given by John Ballweg.

## Secretary Minutes:

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

## Treasurer report:

The committee reviewed and discussed the February 2025 Treasurer Report submitted by John Brennan.

February report numbers

| Current Month Income | Year-to-Date Income | Current Month Expenses | Year-to-Date Expenses | Year-to-Date Balance | Year-to-Date Budget |
|----------------------|---------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| \$36,998             | \$106,723           | \$47,879               | \$110,859             | (\$4,137)            | \$104,202           |

A motion to approve the financial report was made by Roger Seymour and seconded by James Newman. Motion carried.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

**Evangelism:** Gwen Ringelstetter reported:

- Working on the new member's bulletin board.

**Fellowship:** Cathy McAlexander reported:

- The kitchen was cleaned by volunteers.
- Pastor Jason was honored during a farewell coffee. Our prayers and best wishes go with him.

- New members were welcomed at a Fellowship coffee on February 16.
- Birthdays for Diane Elsing, Marilyn Larson, and Molly Williams were celebrated at Fellowship coffees with refreshments provided by their families.
- We provided bar cookies for Game Night on February 28.
- Church members have purchased tickets to attend entertainment presented by the "Looney Lutherans".
- We have received an anonymous donation to purchase paper coffee cups to replace the use of Styrofoam cups during coffee time and other church functions. We encourage others to donate toward paper cup purchases so that we can continue to use paper coffee cups and reduce our carbon footprint.

**Lay Ministry:** Gina Varley reported:

- Still looking into communion vessel replacements
- Discussed summer worship schedule.
- Easter flower orders will be taken between services on March 9 and March 16, 2025.
- Started conversation about Intern Elise's safety training seminar report.

**Parish Education:** James Newman reported:

- Dale Clason is taking over as Sunday School Superintendent for the remainder of the school year and next year.
- The Sunday School bake sale brought in \$711.
- Confirmation students will be leading Lenten worship.
- Affirmation of Baptism is on April 27, 2025.
- Sally has begun a series of adult ed classes focused on grief.

**Properties:** John Ballweg reported:

- The Properties Board met on February 26, 2025.
- Waiting to hear from Willow Creek on their opinions of adhesive around the edge of some carpet tiles.
- Purchased more ceiling tiles and LED bulbs to have on hand for replacement as needed.
- Briefly discussed investigating the cost of installing ceiling fans in the Fellowship Hall to help with air movement.

**PR & Social Concerns:** Melani Wheeler reported:

- Clarified Just Bakery pick-ups and process of ordering etc. Melani has gotten some interest in drivers. We will plan on PRSC selling items on March 16, 2025.
- Food Pantry items: they cannot accept medications, will have Linda put a note in with the next visitor.

- Discussed the Safe Gun take back/ all very excited about this and we are supportive.
- Next meeting same 2nd Tuesday of the month, but at 6:30 p.m.

**Stewardship Board:** (Cathy Yanke/Todd Wytenbach) reported:

- We will continue publishing information regarding uses for money given in bulletins and Visitor. Each month will be different.
- A visual poster will be in the gathering area with a write-up for each month to highlight that month's focus.
- Envelopes for giving—will continue the discussion about envelope distribution, to who and how along with other ways to give. The update on online giving was in last month's PPC notes.
- The annual financial review/audit was held on Thursday, February 13, 2025. Volunteers include Jon Calfish, Crystal Lautenbach, Donna Knickmeyer, Paul and Anne Kippley, and Gina Wytenbach. Results will be shared after our board reviews the findings.

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

- Circles cordially invite new ladies to join them for their monthly meetings and Bible Study. Bible Studies are very interesting and each Circle provides a chance to make new church friends.
- Save April 26, 2025, on your calendar to attend the WELCA Spring Gathering of the Baraboo Conference at Zion Lutheran Church. More details of the day to come.
- Are you interested in becoming a WELCA Board member? Talk with Ruth Dresser or Eunice Yanke.
- Bible Study Leaders meeting for the study to be discussed in April will be on Tuesday, March 25, 2025, at 9:00 a.m.

**Youth Committee:** Tracy Pape reported:

- St. John's Game Night Final Preparations Time of Arrival
- o Volunteers
- o Participants
- Set-Up Details Game Night Activities Prizes Clean-up Additional information: Confirmed food and drinks

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

- No report was provided.
- Roger shared appreciation to those that contributed in the preparation, and the participation of the congregation in St. John's Game Night and is looking forward to hosting another one.

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

No report was provided.

## **Pastor/Intern Reports**

**Lead Pastor's Report:** Not applicable.

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

- Thank you to Marv Hupp who attended the LEAD event in February.
- Lent begins with Ash Wednesday at 1 p.m. (ecumenical) and 6:30 p.m., Wednesday March 5, 2025, and the Wednesdays to follow will follow the same schedule. A noon meal will be offered.
- Elise and I will both be gone for spring break. Rev. Dan Odden will be assisting and leading worship in our absence. We will have other pastors on call to cover any pastoral emergencies.
- We welcomed 13 new members in February 2025. Please reach out to them and introduce yourselves. Keep an eye out for families and individuals sitting alone in worship and/or the fellowship hall.

### **Intern Elise's Report:**

#### **Risk and Safety Team**

- A group to evaluate risks at St John's in addition and to propose safety considerations around or within the building, and during programming.
- The February 2025 meeting included a favorable discussion
- Travis Hilliard, who has partnered with St. John's before, is supportive and would like to offer future collaboration.

#### **Faith, Firearms, and Forging**

- April 6, 2025, Rev Jeff Wild will present at St. John's. Fellowship Hall would be an appropriate-sized room for his Adult Ed presentation. If he is able to bring his forging equipment, this is held in the parking lot.
- May 4, 2025, is likely to be another session on gun violence prevention. Dr. Hupp and an 8th grade youth are interested in presenting to the congregation about gun violence prevention and mental health aspects.
- The Sauk Prairie Police Dept. is interested in hosting a Safe Surrender event at St. Johns. A date has not been set.

#### **Intern Update**

- Continued weekly Supervision meetings between Intern Elise and Pastor Sally, and monthly meetings as needed, with Internship Committee
- A condensed Approval process with the Synod has been approved, allowing Intern Elise to receive a First Call quickly after finishing Internship.

- Immigration book study was well attended and engaging.
- Preparing for Lent and a lot more preaching with it
- March 23, 2025. is next Congregational Sermon Evaluation
- 9th Grade Confirmation class continues to go well, with Wednesday, March 12, 2025, being the service, they are hosting.

**Old Business:**

- Call team update
- Steward sign-up for March 30, 2025, at 10:30 a.m. and May
- Lead Event Update – Marv and Sally shared their positive experience and encouraged all to attend if given the opportunity.
- Cathy Yanke and Cathy McAlexander – update
- The work to repair the organ is underway and is going well.

**New Business:**

- Summer Worship Service will begin at 9 a.m., Memorial Day through Labor Day.
- Security Update
- Office Coordinator Position included in church service announcements until April 1, 2025.
- Safety Teams
- Firearms and Forging – Mini session, first session April 6, 2025, and second session May 4, 2025, stay tuned for additional information.
- Task for Team established, consisting of John Ballweg, Sally Williams, Marv Hupp, Elise Iverson Uphoff, and Nancy Passehl.
- Roger Seymour invited all committee members to collaborate together for a congregational free Spaghetti Dinner on March 27, 2025, at St. John's.

The next meeting is Tuesday, April 1, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. Devotion will be given by Gina Varley. Melani Wheeler made a motion to adjourn our meeting, and the motion was seconded by Marv Hupp. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 7:27 p.m. with The Lord's Prayer led by Nancy P.

Respectfully submitted by Tracy Pape.

## 2024 FINANCIAL REPORT

Checking Account Beginning Balance 1/1/2024 \$ 24,543.96

### **Receipts for 2024**

|   |                            |
|---|----------------------------|
| Donations: Current, Loose, Sponsored, Misc. | \$401,922.13               |
| Benevolence, Special Benevolence            | \$ 31,668.50               |
| Building Fund, Organ Fund, Columbarium      | \$ 30,890.00               |
| WELCA                                       | \$ 3,258.15                |
| Memorials                                   | \$ 1,520.00                |
| Youth                                       | \$ 3,441.89                |
| Fellowship                                  | \$ 2,300.49                |
| Interest                                    | \$ 2,661.30                |
| Parish Education                            | \$ 3,361.41                |
| PR & Social Concerns                        | \$ 919.44                  |
| Restricted Income                           | \$ 4,156.28                |
| Facility Use                                | <u>\$ 5,447.20</u>         |
| <b>Total Receipts</b>                       | <b><u>\$491,546.79</u></b> |

### **Disbursements**

|                             | <b><u>Budgeted</u></b>     | <b><u>Actual</u></b>       |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Administrative Expenses     | \$448,443.63               | \$410,062.96               |
| Benevolence                 | \$ 49,450.00               | \$ 46,450.10               |
| Evangelism                  | \$ 600.00                  | \$ 332.33                  |
| Fellowship                  | \$ 3,000.00                | \$ 2,487.86                |
| Lay Ministry                | \$ 10,000.00               | \$ 7,061.16                |
| Memorials                   |                            | \$ 13,701.79               |
| Parish Education            | \$ 11,770.00               | \$ 11,018.65               |
| PR & Social Concerns        | \$ 3,250.00                | \$ 1,289.37                |
| Properties (and new carpet) | \$ 51,850.00               | \$ 50,174.30               |
| Restricted Expense          |                            | \$ 1,921.28                |
| Special Benevolence         |                            | \$ 20,392.99               |
| Stewardship                 | \$ 2,100.00                | \$ 1,856.44                |
| WELCA                       | \$ 2,500.00                | \$ 3,080.88                |
| Youth                       | <u>\$ 30,300.00</u>        | <u>\$ 14,050.99</u>        |
| <b>Total Expenses</b>       | <b><u>\$613,263.63</u></b> | <b><u>\$583,881.10</u></b> |

Transfer to/from other accounts \$111,432.79

Checking Account Ending Balance \$ 43,642.44

## Summary of 2024 Financial Report

|                                | 1/1/24<br>Beginning<br>Balance | Change in<br>Value of<br>Investments | Receipts<br>Interest<br>Dividends | Disburse-<br>ments | Transfers    | 12/31/2024<br>Ending<br>Balance |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------|--------------|---------------------------------|
| Checking Account               | 24,543.96                      |                                      | 491,546.79                        | (583,881.10)       | 111,432.79   | \$43,642.44                     |
| Savings Account                | 103,154.49                     |                                      | 1,049.51                          | -                  | (31,238.93)  | \$72,965.07                     |
| Memorial Savings Account       | 14,150.40                      | -                                    | 40.45                             |                    | (12,182.79)  | \$2,008.06                      |
| Bank of Prairie CD's           | -                              |                                      |                                   |                    | 125,000.00   | \$125,000.00                    |
| Commonwealth Stocks<br>Account | 183,913.42                     | 9,317.94                             | -                                 |                    | (193,011.07) | \$220.29                        |
| <b>Totals</b>                  | <b>325,762.27</b>              | <b>9,317.94</b>                      | <b>492,636.75</b>                 | <b>-583,881.10</b> | <b>0.00</b>  | <b>\$243,835.86</b>             |



## Find Strength and Hope in the Cross

It is difficult as we kneel before the cross to hear the voice of the gospel. We might imagine that it waits for us at Eastertide, that tonight the law says its peace and come Sunday the gospel will finally win the day, but that is not so. The gospel spells freedom for those held captive to sin. The resurrection only matters for those who know they are dead.

We, who are both saints and sinners, kneel before the cross today or tonight and hear it speaking to us as both verdict and promise. It is true: each of us is guilty of our participation in the world's suffering. We, each bearing the image and likeness of God in our very skin, do not respect that image in one another, much less the world we inhabit, God's good garden.

We do not respect God's creations—one another, or the world we live in. We put one another on the crosses at which Jesus now joins us. We must admit this or there is no need for the salvation Christ brings. We must admit we are in bondage to these patterns of human violence and environmental degradation before we can be liberated from them.

This is the promise of Good Friday: we will be liberated from these crosses—the ones we hang on and the ones on which we hang one another. These crosses, at once symbols of the divisions between us and a symbol of the end to all divisions, promise that God will not abandon us in our suffering. God comes to us just like this, just as we are, but God does not leave us this way. This is the cross—evidence of our sin, and sign of God's love.





## **Happy April Birthday!**

*The day is in parenthesis*

### **Our Youngest:**

|                     |                        |
|---------------------|------------------------|
| Emerson Woider (16) | Bennett Robertson (18) |
| Remy Robarge (26)   | Samuel Robertson (26)  |

### **Our Sunday School Students:**

|                         |                    |
|-------------------------|--------------------|
| Henry Ganser (1)        | Elianna Greene (4) |
| Sofia Stephan (4)       | Emery Trager (4)   |
| Zeke Kaul (5)           | Tatum Sorg (5)     |
| Jack Schulenburg (10)   | Ethan Ballweg (15) |
| Hank Lochner (15)       | Henry Hart (17)    |
| Emily Ramirez (17)      | Lyla Ballweg (19)  |
| Lauren Schulenburg (21) |                    |

### **Our Youth:**

|                     |                         |
|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Carter Kruchten (3) | Reid Hart (16)          |
| Andrew Deuman (23)  | Isabelle Jolicoeur (23) |
| Wyatt Frey (28)     | Graysen Dunn (29)       |
| Cora Miller (29)    |                         |

### **College and Career-age Young People:**

|                     |                   |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| Meadow Liedtke (15) | Charlie Homp (22) |
|---------------------|-------------------|