

THE MESSENGER

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH, STERLING, IL

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PASTOR'S POINTS

Looking back at 2021 & ahead at 2022



We've made it; 2022 is here!

After nearly two years of adapting, rolling with changes, and attempting to evaluate and reevaluate ministry in this new era, we now find ourselves at the start of another new year.

Honestly, I'm filled with a sense of hope for what 2022 will bring.

Certainly 2021 brought with it many challenges. From the lingering pandemic to special meetings about the congregation's budget and finances, our brave congregation sought to engage with the trials before us and navigated difficult waters.

As St. John's, together we rallied to meet the challenges of a mid-year budget shortfall with the help of members generously contributing to a matching gifts campaign. We've grown into deeper relationships with our Tri-Church partners at Immanuel and St. Paul to offer weekly opportunities for meaningful online worship services while also continuing our shared Confirmation program and starting monthly gatherings for our youth as we prepare for the national Youth Gathering.

We've also grown into deeper relationships with our ecumenical partners, finding ways to safely offer Vacation Bible School during the pandemic and to restart the UNITE Service Camp after suspending the program the previous year. By God's grace we've also found ways to work with many of our local nursing homes to restore a regular schedule of monthly

CHANGE IN PASTOR'S DAY OFF

Beginning in 2022, I'll be taking Fridays off rather than Mondays, as had been my custom since 2017. It is my hope that this change will allow for me to better address the needs of the congregation as well as my family. Should you like to know more about this change, please feel free to contact me. Blessings to you, and thank you for your understanding.

Peace, Pastor Jacob

communion services and visits for both our members and residents at Citadel of Sterling, Heritage Woods, Morningside of Sterling, Parkway Center and Regency Care of Sterling.

Indeed, 2021 brought with it many challenges. Yet rather than backing away, we leaned into the possibility of what could be with God's help and guidance. It is in this that I find hope for 2022.

There will most definitely be new challenges in this new year. We will likely find ourselves faced with complex decisions. I am confident that if, amid what may be, we pray and give thanks for what has been, what is and what will be, then we will most definitely find ourselves reassured that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ has been and continues to be with us every step of the way.

This journey that we are on is a journey of faith. I take heart in believing that God has and is providing

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JANUARY 2022

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Youth & Family Ministries news

SUNDAY SCHOOL & YOUTH GROUPS

We will continue to meet in person for Faith Formation groups at St John's. For the safety of our families, all students and teachers are required to wear masks for all indoor activities and events.

Preschool through second grade and third through sixth grade Sunday school classes will meet from 10:45am (or after 9:30am worship) until 11:30am. The third Sunday of each month, these students will meet in the sanctuary for music time with Julie McCord.

Thank you to the St. John's Sunday school children and youth who made Christmas cards for folks who are homebound, and thank you for your hard work on this year's youth worship/Christmas program.

No Sunday School/Faith Formation January 2nd for Christmas break.

HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH

- January 2nd: No meeting / Christmas break
- January 9th: 11am to noon at St. Paul
- January 16th: 11am to noon at St. John's
- January 23rd: Youth Gathering Getting Ready meeting and lunch from noon to 1:30pm at Immanuel
- January 30th: 11am to noon at St. Paul

TRI-CHURCH CONFIRMATION

Confirmation for seventh- and eighth-grade students meets



2022 YOUTH GATHERING NEWS

Current 8th through 12th grade students: We have officially registered for the ELCA Youth Gathering, July 24-28, 2022 in Minneapolis. **If you would still like to go, standard registration continues through January 21st.**

Standard registration deposit is \$140, due at the time of registration. Students who have already registered: Please make sure you pay the \$100 deposit (checks payable to St. John's Lutheran Church.) If you have received a Youth Gathering scholarship, the deposit is waived.

Based on the early registration rate, we anticipate the gathering will cost around \$1,000 per participant. We will continue to fundraise to offset the cost of this trip. Scholarships applications through the ELCA will remain open until funding runs out. Ask Gerad about the scholarships.

Our next "Getting Ready" meeting is Sunday, January 23rd from noon to 1:30pm at Immanuel Lutheran Church

in Rock Falls. Lunch will be provided.

Sign up for the Gathering e-newsletter, G-News, and get the latest updates at elca.org/gathering, facebook.com/youthgathering, instagram.com/elcagathering and twitter.com/elcagathering.

YOUNG ADULT VOLUNTEERS NEEDED; APPS OPEN NOW

If you are a senior in high school this year, or older, and will be at least 19 years old by July 22, 2022, applications for servant companions are now open. Please contact Gerad if you are interested in sharing a week of your time to help at the Youth Gathering. Your travel, room and board expenses will be covered. This is a great opportunity to serve, and to learn and grow in your faith. Our young adults who have volunteered for the gathering in the past have had life-giving experiences. For full details and to apply go to: elca.org/YouthGathering/Attend/Volunteer.

from 7 to 8:15pm Wednesdays at Immanuel in Rock Falls. **Class resumes January 5th.**

NOTE: The class has written their own version of the Lord's Prayer, which was used for Tri-Church online worship on December 26th

and will be used during upcoming worship services.

REMINDER: if your student's school is cancelled or dismissed early due to weather, they will not need to attend Confirmation class that evening.

UPDATES FOR VOLUNTEERS

Sunday School teachers, VBS volunteers, all children and youth ministry volunteers: We continue updating our volunteer applications for anyone who works closely with children and youth. This also includes updating background checks for volunteers who have not had a background check completed within the past three years. Thank you in advance for your patience as we work through this process together. Thank you to volunteers who have already turned in their updated forms! And thank you for helping us to create and maintain safe spaces for our young people and volunteers!

JANUARY CHILDREN'S OFFERING

This month our offering goes to Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS). We especially remember the people who have recently fled Afghanistan



CELEBRATING THE BIRTH OF JESUS: Thanks be to God for the St. John's children, youth and adult leaders who brought us the story of our savior Jesus' birth through word, song and artwork. The St. John's Christmas program was also featured as part of a Tri-Church youth Christmas worship online on December 26th. Check it out on our YouTube channel: [youtube.com/StJohnsSterlingIL](https://www.youtube.com/StJohnsSterlingIL).

seeking safety. LIRS "is the largest faith-based nonprofit dedicated to serving vulnerable immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees in the U.S. Simply put,

we resettle refugees, reunite children and parents, and rekindle the American Dream." (LIRS.org) Thank you for your ministry of giving.

> CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

exactly what we truly need for what lies ahead. For nearly 168 years faithful members of our congregation have been on this journey at various moments, providing grace, compassion, understanding and wisdom to navigate a faithful path forward, believing that we are not individually leading the way forward, rather that it is God providing the way that is needed.

If you're reading this letter, chances are you've already said yes to what God has in store, and that, in and of itself, is a rare and genuine act of faith in this world: to embrace the unknown as the prophets of old did, not knowing what may come next, only that the Lord would be with throughout the journey.

It is for this very reason we pray:
O God, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go,

but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Siblings in Christ: We don't know what will come next. We don't know what trials or joys may be in store for us. Yet we do know, by faith, that God is with us every step of every day in this journey and that the Lord is providing exactly what we need.

Thanks be to God for each and every one of you who have said "yes" to this ministry we share at St. John's. As it says in hymn number 537:
*Christ within, our joy;
who, if we be faithful, can our hope destroy?
On our way rejoicing; as we forward move,
hearken to our praises, O blest God of love!"*

Yours in Christ,

NURSE NOTES

Naps: The good and the bad

Up to half of older adults report that they take naps. This may be attributed to everything from changes in sleep patterns with aging to cultural beliefs that afternoon naps are beneficial for health.

Naps can be good for you. They may help reduce daytime sleepiness and fatigue, often the result of poor nighttime sleep. And some research, including a recent study published in "General Psychiatry," suggests that naps could help brain functions such as processing memories and performing daily mental tasks (executive function).

Why naps might give the brain a boost isn't known for sure. One hypothesis is that sleep helps regulate immune system responses, so naps may boost the body's ability to counter inflammation associated with cognitive impairment.

But research has yet to show a definitive cause-and-effect relationship between napping and brain function, good or bad. Some studies tie long naps (90 minutes and longer) to a higher risk of brain health issues. This includes accumulation of amyloid-beta proteins, which can lead to dementia. Excessive napping tends to lead to reduced physical activity and socializing, which are both associated with maintaining healthy brain function. In addition, napping itself may be an early sign of cognitive problems.

While the news on napping is nuanced, getting enough sleep is essential for good health. Mayo Clinic experts advise that a quick nap — ideally, less than 30 minutes and earlier in the afternoon to avoid interfering with bedtime — may help recharge the brain. However, if you find yourself napping often or for long periods, speak with your doctor to rule out any underlying health issues.

*From the Mayo Clinic Health Letter.
Submitted by Nancy Rasmussen, Parish Nurse.*

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

1

- Patricia & Rick Douglas
- Linda & George Guerrero*

2

- Karen Goss
- Abigail Johnson

3

- Ryan McCord
- Jannet Taylor*

4

- Derek Bushman
- Jake Wolber

5

- Tammy Stewart

6

- Jeanne Kuba*
- Ada Plummer*

8

- Audrey Dykhuizen*

9

- Paige Holland
- Jason McCord
- Neil & Linda Morehead*

10

- Becky Puckett

11

- Brian Lehman
- Shawn & Karen Wolfe

12

- Jim Keime*
- Mark Megli
- Andrew Stutzke
- Kyle Winebrenner
- Gary & Jane Dettman*

14

- Robert Richardson
- Matt Stanley
- Aaron White

15

- Cara Goff
- Corey Olson
- Noah Tupper

16

- Brynna Carl
- Evan Karrow
- Zachary Schmitt

18

- Clark & Barbara Smith*

19

- Alec Gallegos
- Michael Miller

20

- Sarah Doughty
- Karen Onnen*
- Brianna Razo

21

- Ronald & Julie McCord

22

- Janet Carl*
- Michael Jackley

23

- Rebecca Verhulst
- Newell & Kandra Cook

24

- John Oelrichs

25

- Richard Caudillo
- Paige & John Holland

26

- Julie LeFevre
- 27
- Fisher Potts

28

- Kathleen McFalls

29

- Dennis & Patrice Redfield*

31

- Kathleen Sciacero
- Jackson Strehlow

**Indicates 80-plus-year birthdays and 50-plus-year anniversaries.*

SAYING THANKS

Ongoing thank you to our St. John's family for the love and support we have received this past year. 2021 was indeed a very difficult year for Michelle, me, and the children. Throughout the year we had several vet visits for our dog, Grant. As well as the sudden and unexpected death of Michelle's mom, Samantha, in October and then my grandfather Robert's death in December. In all of this it has been your prayers that have kept us going. God bless you and thank you.

~ Pastor Jacob & family

Many thanks to our Church Family for their Christmas cards, well wishes, and goodies this past Christmas season. They are all greatly appreciated. Best wishes to each of you in this new year and may you have had a very merry Christmas.

With love,
~ Pastor Jacob, Michelle
and the kiddos

We sincerely thank you for helping us to target and meet the needs of the children in our communities through your support of the Let's Feed Our Children program. Your gift has been invested in a service that is helping to create healthier, stronger children in order for them to grow up to be our future leaders.

~ Let's Feed Our Children



Adam's Rib hosted a Christmas party for the Self Help Riverview Haven ladies in December. The following thank-you notes were received:

Thank you for the food, fun, fellowship and gifts. It is all appreciated! ~ Doris Clark, Connie Welch, Mary Kay D., Ann, Kelsey, Betty & Virginia Wood

Thanks! We had a wonderful time and loved the gifts! Hope your days are filled with joy and blessings! ~ Lupe

COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

PASTOR'S REPORT

Pastor received a transfer request from Mont Cessna to St. John's. We welcome Mont as a new member!

Gift wrapping at the mall, the Sights and Sounds hot chocolate booth and the author fair were successful. Pastor thanked all who made the Sunday School Christmas program a success.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Amendment to the November minutes: A 2 percent increase for staff was approved at the November meeting.

TREASURER'S REPORT

As of December 21st, account balances were as follows:

- Checking \$12,453.34
- Undesignated: \$2,399.23
- Building: \$1,287.70
- Parish Nurse: \$1,843.18
- Music: \$2,101.63
- Contingency: \$15,292.73

On Pledge Sunday, 42 cards were received totaling \$97,300.

A special council meeting is set for January 4th to review the budget before the annual meeeting.

OTHER BUSINESS

The Congregational Life Committee made gift bags for homebound members, and the youth created Christmas cards for them.

A letter was received from Good Neighbor Emergency Center noting that the center will be dissolved at the end of 2021.

Gerad reported that Sunday School and Confirmation numbers are down and he has been reaching out to families to keep in touch.

Nominations for church council are needed as Andrew Stutzke and Andrew Doughty will be leaving the council.

The council voted to change the church's insurance deductible from \$1,000 to \$2,500 for a \$1,356 savings.

PURPOSE STATEMENT

The purpose of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church is to continue discovering God's will for us in His kingdom through prayer, Bible study and building relationships.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. Jesus is our Lord and Savior.
2. We make prayer, Bible study and dialog the center of our decision making.
3. We are willing to change as we discover God's mission for us.
4. We invite everyone. Jesus said, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations." ~ Matthew 28: 19a
5. We recognize and give thanks for our blessings.
6. We act for the discovery and fulfillment of God's mission.

COUNCIL AFFIRMATION STATEMENT

The Council affirms that ministry is a core tenant of our Mission and that established ministries will continue and the opportunity for expanding into additional ministries will be evaluated when presented. The Council fully understands the complex nature of ministry, but as long as God's people are willing to engage in good works, we will do everything in our power to support those ministries.

PARISH REGISTER

DEATHS

- None

WEDDINGS

- None

BAPTISMS

- Paul Heppel 1/16

MEMBERS RECEIVED

- None

MEMBERS REMOVED/TRANSFERRED

- None

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

- None

STAFF BIRTHDAYS

- Andrew Stutzke 1/12

WHO'S WHO AT ST. JOHN'S

PERSONNEL

- Rev. Jacob Gawlik, Senior Pastor
Rev. Leo Patterson, On Call/Visitation Pastor
Gerald Von Holten, Director of Youth & Family Ministries
Rev. Mark & Rev. Cynthia Rich, Missionaries to Tanzania
Dawn Zeigler, Minister of Music & Bell Choir Director
Julie McCord, Praise Sunday Director
Nina Peters, Office Manager
Andrew Stutzke, Systems Administrator
Kyle Morgan, Technical Director
Mont Cessna, Facility Maintenance
Stahr Media, Newsletter & Website
Nancy Rasmussen, Parish Nurse
Jan Klocke, council rep to Tri-Church

CONG. COUNCIL

- Andrew Stutzke, president*
 - Dave Geil, vice president*
 - Kandra Cook, secretary*
 - Teri Holldorf, treasurer*
 - Andrew Doughty
 - Jan Klocke
 - John Lichner
 - Chrissy Murphy
 - Shawn Wolfe
- *Exec Committee member

CHRISTIAN ED

- Tammy Doughty
- Brian Luebke
- Chrissy Murphy

CONG. LIFE

- Denise Norman, chair
- Lois Anderson-Rowzee
- Michelle Gawlik
- Nancy Rasmussen
- Pat Redfield
- Jannet Taylor

ENDOWMENT

- Mike Doughty, chair
- Art Frey
- John Lichner
- Rhonda Stutzke
- Shawn Wolfe

PROPERTY

- Dave Geil, chair
- Art Frey
- Tom Leesman
- Ken Smith

SOCIAL MINISTRY

- Vacant

FINANCE

- Teri Holldorf, chair
- Nancy Breed
- Druann Bushman
- Mike Doughty
- John Lichner

MEMORIAL

- Dave Geil, chair
- Brian Luebke
- Nancy Rasmussen
- Jannet Taylor

STEWARDSHIP

- Jan Klocke, chair
- Nancy Rasmussen

WORSHIP ARTS

- Dawn Zeigler, chair
- Denise Carl
- Shawn Wolfe

WORSHIP TECH

- Anita Carl
- Dan Eads
- Charlene O'Connell

PERSONNEL TEAM

- Denise Norman, chair
- Lois Anderson-Rowzee
- Dave Geil

SJLC Activities ~ Jan. 2022

January Open/Close:
Jan Klocke

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
<p>The Congregational Annual Meeting will follow worship on Sunday, January 23rd.</p> <p>Please join us to hear about the great things that are happening at St. John's and vote on important issues.</p>						1
2 <i>FISH collection</i> 9:30-Worship Acolyte: <i>Noah R.</i> 10:45-Pastor's Bible Study	3	4	5 6:00-Worship 7:00-Confirmation (Immanuel)	6 Lunch/Dinner with Pastor Jacob 7:00-Al-Anon	7	8 9:30-Prayer Shawl Coffee Hour
9 9:30-Worship Acolyte: <i>Josie P & Elly R.</i> 10:45-Pastor's Bible Study 10:45-Sunday School 11:00-HS Youth Group (St. Paul)	10	11	12 6:00-Worship 7:00-Confirmation (Immanuel)	13 Lunch/Dinner with Pastor Jacob 4:15-Exec mtg 7:00-Al-Anon	14	15
16 9:30-Worship Acolyte: <i>Jason M. & Logan W.</i> 10:45-Pastor's Bible Study 10:45-Sunday School 11:00-HS Youth Group	17	18 6:00-Council mtg	19 1:30-Parkway communion 2:30-Heritage Woods communion 3:30-Morningside communion 6:00-Worship 7:00-Confirmation (Immanuel)	20 Lunch/Dinner with Pastor Jacob 2:30-Regency communion 3:30-Citadel communion 7:00-Al-Anon	21	22
23 9:30-Worship Acolyte: <i>Olivia B.</i> 10:30-Congregational annual meeting 10:45-Pastor's Bible Study 10:45-Sunday School Noon-Youth Gathering Getting Ready meeting and lunch (Immanuel)	24	25 6:30-NAMI group	26 6:00-Worship 7:00-Confirmation (Immanuel)	27 Lunch/Dinner with Pastor Jacob 7:00-Al-Anon	28	29
30 9:30-Worship Acolyte: <i>Jersey S. & Caylee W.</i> 10:45-Pastor's Bible Study 10:45-Sunday School 11:00-HS Youth Group (St. Paul)	31	<p>GIVING MADE EASY</p> <p>3 SECURE WAYS TO MAKE YOUR DONATION</p>  <p>ONLINE StJohnsOnThird.org</p> <p>MOBILE Tithe.ly app</p> <p>IN PERSON Check or cash</p> <p>All donations will be included on your yearly contribution statement.</p>				

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Join us for worship at 9:30am Sundays
and 6:00pm Wednesdays.

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