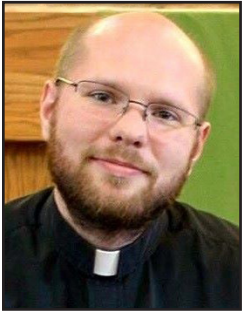


# THE MESSENGER

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH, STERLING, IL  
703 Third Avenue, Sterling, IL 61081 • 815.625.2634 • office@stjohnsonthird.org • StJohnsSterling.org • 

## PASTOR'S POINTS

### Preparing to spring ahead



Daylight Saving Time is just around the corner. Once again come March 10 we'll participate in the ritual of setting clocks

an hour ahead. While I enjoy the feeling that the sun is out later into the evening, I'm not all that excited about the lost hour of sleep. Sure, I know that an extra hour will be on its way hopefully in November, but let's be honest—waiting over seven months to gain back a lost hour seems like a bit much.

This starts to make me wonder about some of the other ways we try to “spring” forward. Sure, there are some healthy ways of preparing for something coming up like when folks engage in goal setting or start to name aspirations in a visioning process. Yet there are also those less-than-helpful springboards we encounter: things like obsessive comparisons, the idea that there must be a one-size-fits-all approach

to doing a ministry, or that if something doesn't meet or exceed an arbitrary metric that it must have failed.

When I was in college one of my absolute favorite roommates, John, and I devised our own kind of spring challenge to help us explore our creativity (which oddly involved an actual spring). Springy, as it came to be called, was a bed spring that we discovered poking out from one of our dorm mattresses. Springy was by no means all that impressive; it was no larger in size than your average run-of-the-mill expo dry erase markers. What was impressive about Springy was how easily it could be left in random locations within our dorm room and go totally unnoticed. Springy up hanging from the ceiling light? Nah, must just be that the pull chain is tangled. Bifold closet door randomly popping open? Springy, what are you doing in the track for the door?

John and I had become so adept at incorporating Springy into parts of the room that even when we

had to empty it out during school breaks, Springy could be hiding out in plain view. Returning to the room at the start of a new school year always brought the excitement of “will Springy still be there?” And as it turned out, Springy was always there right where we'd left it.

The springboard of Springy wasn't successful because of how many places Springy could hide, or that Springy had to be made into something other than a spring. It was successful because it allowed John and I to have fun with something as simple as a spring. No quantifying or comparing needed.

As we prepare to spring forward, I hope you find joy in this time. That it be more than just another season. Something that perhaps sparks your own creativity and curiosity. Perhaps even something simple that helps us each recognize the inspiration of the Holy Spirit at work among us.

God's blessings to you this Spring,

*Rev. Jacob M. Lawler*

## MARCH 2024

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# Youth & Family Ministries news

## SUNDAY SCHOOL SCHEDULE

3/3: Lesson 9-  
A Storm

3/10: Music &  
Popcorn

3/17: Lesson 10-  
The Centurions  
Servant

3/24: No Sunday  
School (Palm  
Sunday breakfast)

3/31: Activity-  
Easter Egg Hunt



### PALM SUNDAY BREAKFAST

Mark your calendars for March 24th—the Youth Palm Sunday Breakfast is coming! This youth-led event is always a highlight for our congregation. The freewill offering collected during breakfast helps support programming for youth events like the Quake and National Youth Gathering. Families: Look for the crew sign-up on March 3rd to indicate if you'd like to help with Set-up, Kitchen Team, Serving, and/or Clean-up Crew.

### MARCH NOISY OFFERINGS

For March, the noisy offerings are going to United Way of Whiteside County's Community Campaign. Donations help support community impact programs including the 2-1-1 Helpline offering Free Confidential Resources, Born Learning Academy helping parents teach their children, School supplies for local children, Let's Feed Our Children the free summer lunch program, and the LIFE Imagination Library that provides kids a free book every month.



### VALENTINES FOR SHUT-INS

Sunday School Youth made valentines for shut-ins and nursing home residents that were delivered throughout the month of February.



### CONFIRMATION CLASSES

Joint Confirmation Class returns to St. Paul on March 3. Students: Please be sure to remember to bring your Bible and Small Catechism to class! If you have misplaced either, please let Pastor Jacob know so arrangements can be made for class.



### BUDDY BAGS UPDATE

Sunday School Youth and Families: Please note that the February 28th Buddy Bags assembly date has been **cancelled** due to scheduling conflicts. Please be sure to mark your calendars for April 24th as this is the next scheduled Buddy Bags assembly date. On that date we'll once again gather at 7pm at Wesley United Methodist Church (2200 16th Ave, Sterling, IL 61081) to help assemble Buddy Bags for students in the community.



### CONFIRMATION SUNDAY

Confirmation Students and Families: Be sure to mark your calendars for June 2nd—Confirmation Sunday! As we get closer to June, reminders will be sent out about preparing student's faith statements and selecting their Confirmation Verse (favorite Bible verse), as well as when to pick up a confirmation gown, and information on making a confirmation stole.



Join us at Immanuel Lutheran Church (501 8th Ave., Rock Falls, IL) on Sunday, April 14 at 4 pm for a concert by The Agape Ringers, Chicago's premier handbell ensemble. A freewill offering will be received and merchandise will be available for purchase. You can learn more about the ensemble at their website [www. AgapeRingers.org](http://www.AgapeRingers.org), and on Facebook and YouTube by searching for "The Agape Ringers." The program encompasses a wide variety of musical styles from transcriptions of classical works to Broadway hits to original compositions. **All are welcome!**

**April 14th at 4pm • Immanuel Lutheran Church • All Welcome!**

# MARCH BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

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

**1**

- Wayne Moore\*

**2**

- Martha Benson
- Hannah Hubbard
- Edward & Patricia Loos\*
- Elly Redfield
- Cody Walker

**4**

- Bradley Eakle
- David & Julie LeFevre
- Doug & Charlene O'Connell

**6**

- Dwight Oltmanns
- Gary Smith
- Douglas Zientara

**11**

- Mallory Sisson

**12**

- Olivia Barton
- Stanley & Nancy Rasmussen\*
- Crystal Scott

**13**

- Bradley Davis
- Marlene Green\*
- Jake Klocke
- Brian Luebke
- Jarrett & Kelli Vilmont

**14**

- Jennifer Bennett
- Elizabeth Hubbard
- Jim & Teri Moses
- Seth Schmitt
- Steve & Peggy Sucher\*

**15**

- Neil Morehead\*
- Joseph Vasquez

**16**

- Madison Leesman
- Peggy LeFevre
- Morgan Luebke
- Dennis & Elaine Winebrenner

**17**

- Russell & Marsha Francis\*
- Audra Goff

**18**

- Virgle Onnen\*
- Joshua Smith

**19**

- Jersey Schmidt

**20**

- Christopher Judd

**21**

- Jameson Kester

**22**

- John McCormick

**24**

- Cameron Di Raimondo
- Adam Duffin
- Nick & Noel Mapson
- Craig Mayer

**25**

- Amanda Smith

**26**

- Michelle Gawlik
- Alex & Kate Gomer

**27**

- Leonard Turner

**30**

- Damus Shipma

**LILIES ARE WANTED** to decorate the chancel for Easter. You can order on the group order or purchase your own. If you purchase your own lily and plan on picking it up, bring it to the church **no earlier than March 29th** and please place a tag on it with your name. Plants can be picked up after the Easter morning service, Sunday, March 31st. *Note: Payment should accompany the form. Make checks payable to St. John's Lutheran Church. Deadline to turn in this form is Friday, March 15th.*

**ORDER INFORMATION**

\_\_\_\_\_ (#) Lilies at \$13.50 per plant    \_\_\_\_\_ Will purchase own and bring to church by March 29th.

*All lilies should be white. Please return this slip to the church office whether you plan to purchase with the group or on your own.*

**BULLETIN INFORMATION**

From \_\_\_\_\_

In memory of (deceased person(s)) \_\_\_\_\_

In honor of (living person(s) or special occasion) \_\_\_\_\_

As a gift: \_\_\_\_\_



## COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

### PASTOR'S REPORT

- Margery Spooner died 2/2. A private graveside service was held with Pastor Patterson officiating.
- Moving Beyond the Page group will start reading the ELCA World Hunger 2024 Lent Study. The first conversation will be 3/7.
- On 2/4 Sunday School teachers and helpers briefly met after Sunday School classes to discuss possible reconfiguration of class groupings due to gaps in ages in the upcoming school year.
- The season of Lent kicked off on 2/14. Dried palms from last year's Palm Sunday were once again used to make Palm Ash for the services. Thank you to Shawn Wolfe who assisted in the burning of the palms.
- Planning is underway for VBS 2024. The VBS planning team met on 2/12 to review the chosen curriculum, Camp Firelight. The theme verse is Proverbs 3:5a - "Trust in the LORD with all your heart". The group discussed once again designating Buddy Bags as the recipient of the freewill offering collected during VBS. The next scheduled meeting is 4/8.
- Congregational Resourcing Event (CRE) is on 3/16 at Sauk Valley Community College. If you would like assistance registering for the event, please stop by the church office. More information can be found on the synod's website: [nisynod.org/programs/cre](http://nisynod.org/programs/cre)

### REPORT OF THE SECRETARY

- The minutes of the 1/11 meeting with Pastor Josh Ebener were inadvertently not approved at the 1/16 meeting. They are now approved.

- The 2/6 Special Meeting of the Congregation Council was approved.
- Under Lenten Soup Supper, February 21, 2024--serving will begin at 5:30 pm, not 5:00 pm as stated in the 1/16 minutes. The amended minutes are approved.

### FINANCE REPORT

- The Finance Committee unanimously approved the January Financials as presented. The January financials as presented were approved.

### COMMITTEE REPORTS

#### WORSHIP ARTS:

- The committee met on 1/26. They continue to solicit volunteers to assist with various worship duties. Dawn continues to work at obtaining musicians for worship but will record music, as needed. Pastor Jacob will touch base with Kyle Morgan to remedy streaming issues. A question was raised about a "real-time chat" option during the livestream. Pastor Jacob stated that he believes this option is available but is not active currently. The logistics of responding to live chat during worship could be problematic.

#### SOCIAL MINISTRY:

- The committee did not meet in February but will meet again on 3/9. A birthday card is being passed for members of the congregation to sign for the next Birthday Buddy celebration.

### OLD BUSINESS

- Pastor Ebener is open to continuing our discussion of the Vitality Survey. This new discussion would focus on goal

setting and visioning for the future. One of the areas that we will discuss is any survey response where the leadership and the congregation varied significantly.

- There is continued concern that the website does not accurately reflect our ministries and committees.

### NEW BUSINESS

- Transfers totaling \$7,100.00 were made in January. \$7,000.00 was transferred from the Undesignated Account #8005 to the SVB checking account. \$100.00 was transferred from the Families in Need Account #7765 to the SVB checking account.
- Sterling Buddy Bags was chosen as the Lenten Self-Denial recipient.
- Our constitution states that we are incorporated under the laws of the State of Illinois; however, we have been unable to find any documentation either in our files or in the files of the Secretary of State of Illinois that supports this premise. It is felt that to ensure our incorporation status, we should submit the required form. The fee for this submission to the state is \$50. Incorporation is important as it protects individual members from personal liability associated with the negligent actions of fellow members. The act of continuing with this application was approved.
- The continuing education opportunity of interest for Pastor Jacob was approved at the 2/6 council meeting. The "Letter of Endorsement from Ministry Site" that is needed as part of the process for Pastor Jacob's application will be completed promptly.

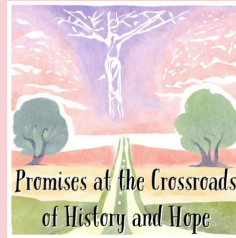
## NURSE NOTES

# Ways to reduce dementia risk

Researchers continue to look for ways to prevent or reduce the risk of dementia. You probably already know to exercise, eat healthy and keep your brain engaged. Here are some other strategies recently found to have a positive effect:

- *Use your hearing aid* — When hearing loss is present, a hearing aid can help you tune into conversations with others. With this, you maintain social connections and help areas of your brain stay active.
- *Watch less television* — Watching TV is considered a passive cognitive activity, which means it doesn't exercise your brain.
- *Read more* — Schooling in childhood helps build up your brain reserve. But even if you didn't get very far with formal education, evidence suggests that reading in your later years makes up for that deficit by maintaining your reserve.
- *Avoid vitamin deficiencies* — Eating foods packed with vitamins and minerals, such as vegetables and fruits, helps provide your brain with optimal fuel. If you can't get enough nutrients through your diet, a daily multivitamin-mineral supplement may help. Excess alcohol consumption is a common cause of vitamin and nutrient deficiencies, so keep your alcohol consumption to a moderate level.
- *Optimize sleep* — A good night's rest rejuvenates your brain. Wake up every day around the same time to set your internal clock. Have a relaxing bedtime routine that avoids TV or digital devices. If you snore or still feel tired after a full night's sleep, talk to your health care team about the possibility of sleep apnea.
- *Improve your vascular health* — Managing high cholesterol, diabetes, and high blood pressure keeps blood circulating smoothly to the heart and brain.
- *Keep your step count high and brisk* — Walking has been shown to reduce dementia risk, as well, with the greatest reduction occurring at just under 10,000 steps a day. You'll see even bigger benefits with more steps per minute.

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



## Continue to Join us for Mid-Week Lenten Worship!

Please continue joining us for mid-week Lenten Worship Midweek at 12:15 pm at

Immanuel and at 6:30 pm at St. John's with Tri Church Congregations. Food will be available prior to each worship beginning at 11:30 am and 5:30 pm respectively. You are welcome to sign up to assist in providing food outside the church office. All are welcome!

**3/6: Sarah—God Declares and Delivers**

**3/13: Ishmael—God Hears and Helps**

**3/20: Isaac—God Protects and Provides**

## March Special Offerings

The special offerings for March have been designated by the Congregation Council to be donated to the Lutheran Outdoor Ministries Center (LOMC). In supporting LOMC, St. John's is helping to bring the "Word of God to the World of God". People of all ages are encountering God through creation, God's Word, worship and fellowship at LOMC. Your support makes this possible! LOMC is gearing up for Spring Retreats and Summer Registration is now open. LOMC celebrates its 50th Anniversary this year with a festival celebration planned during Autumn Fest on October 12. Please mark your calendars and make plans to participate. You can learn more about all that is going on at LOMC at [lomc.org](http://lomc.org), and please consider a generous donation!



## Food Pantry Sunday!

The Congregation Council has once again designated the first Sunday of each month as Food Pantry Sunday. A receptacle will be available for donations. We stopped focusing on

this during the pandemic and have not resurrected the practice of intentionally making donations. Considering the increasing need in our community we would like to increase our community involvement once again. All non-perishable food items are acceptable and welcome.

## PURPOSE STATEMENT

St. John's is a Lutheran family striving to build relationships that will serve our community and God's World

## 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

- Margery Spooner, 2/9

### WEDDINGS

- None

### BAPTISMS

- None

### MEMBERS RECEIVED

- None

### MEMBERS REMOVED/TRANSFERRED

- None

### CHANGE OF ADDRESS

- None

### STAFF BIRTHDAYS

- None

## WHO'S WHO AT ST. JOHN'S

### PERSONNEL

- Rev. Jacob Gawlik, Senior Pastor
- Rev. Leo Patterson, On Call/Visitation Pastor
- Daudi & Kellen Msseemmaa, Missionaries to East Africa
- Dawn Zeigler, Minister of Music & Bell Choir 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
- Council Rep for Tri-Church, Vacant

### CONG. COUNCIL

- Paul Wolfe, president\*
  - Dave Geil, vice president\*
  - Denise Norman, secretary\*
  - Larry Kradle
  - Marci Fisher
  - Rhonda Stutzke
  - Karen Wolfe
  - Chrissy Murphy
  - Lois Rowzee
- \*Exec Committee member*

### CHRISTIAN ED

- Michelle Gawlik
- Chrissy Murphy
- Jan Klocke
- Denise Carl
- Mont Cessna

### STEWARDSHIP

Vacant

### PERSONNEL

- Denise Norman, chair
- Lois Anderson-Rowzee
- Rev. Jacob Gawlik
- Dave Geil

### FINANCE

- Nancy Breed
- Druann Bushman
- Mike Doughty
- Dave Geil

### FUNERAL

- Dave Geil, chair
- Linda Geil, chair
- Druann Bushman, chair

### MEMORIAL

- Dave Geil, chair
- Rev. Jacob Gawlik
- Brian Luebke
- Nancy Rasmussen
- Jannet Taylor

### PROPERTY

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

### WORSHIP ARTS

- Dawn Zeigler, chair
- Denise Carl
- Karen Wolfe
- Shawn Wolfe

### SOCIAL MINISTRY

- Paul Wolfe
- Shari Baker
- Marsha Keime
- Larry Kradle
- Denise Norman
- Lois Rowzee
- Amy Smith
- Gary Smith
- Sharon Zinanni

### WORSHIP TECH

- Anita Carl
- Dan Eads
- Charlene O'Connell

### CONG. LIFE

- Denise Norman, chair
- Lois Anderson-Rowzee
- Michelle Gawlik
- Nancy Rasmussen
- Pat Redfield
- Shari Baker

# SJLC Activities ~ Mar. '24

March Open/Close:  
Larry Kradle

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
*HC=Holy Communion					1	2
3 FISH collection 9:30-Worship Acolyte: Elly R. Asst.: Teri Holldorf	4 6:00-Men's Group	5	6 11:30-Lenten Lunch @ Immanuel 12:15-Lenten Worship @ Immanuel 5:30-Lenten Supper hosted by Handbells & Worship Committees 6:30-Worship	7 6:30-Moving Beyond the Page 7:00-Al-Anon	8	9 10:00-Social Ministry meeting
10 9:30-Worship Acolyte: Caylee W. Asst.: Shawn Wolfe	11 6:00-Finance Committee mtg	12	13 11:30-Lenten Lunch @ Immanuel 12:15-Lenten Worship @ Immanuel 5:30-Lenten Supper hosted by Social Ministry Committee 6:30-Worship	14 5:00-Exec mtg 7:00-Al-Anon	15	16 Congregational Resource Event @ Sauk Valley College
17 9:30-Worship Acolyte: Kiersten B. Asst.: Denise Norman	18	19 6:00-Council mtg	20 Nwsltr. items due 11:30-Lenten Lunch @ Immanuel 12:15-Lenten Worship @ Immanuel 1:30-Parkway HC 2:30-Heritage Woods HC 3:30-Morningside HC 5:30-Lenten Supper hosted by St. Paul @ St. John's 6:30-Worship	21 2:30-Allure of Sterling HC 3:30-Citadel HC 6:30-Moving Beyond the Page 7:00-Al-Anon	22	23
24 9:30-Palm Sunday Worship Acolyte: Kennedie V. & Sarah D. (Palm Sun.) Dayon F. & Martin F. (Procession) Asst.: Denise Carl Palm Sunday Breakfast	25	26 6:30-NAMI group	27	28 9:00-Newsletter Assembly 6:30-Maundy Thursday Worship Acolyte: Brynna C. 7:00-Al-Anon	29 6:30-Good Friday Worship	30
31 9:30-Easter Worship Acolyte: Josie P. & Catie P. Asst.: Chris Rucker						

## SAYING THANKS

Thank you to all who remembered me with visits, phone calls, cards and prayer during my recent hospital stay. Special thanks to Pastor Leo and Jacob for their visits and prayers.

God Bless You All!  
Howard F. Janssen

## MOVING BEYOND THE PAGE

Join us for faith, fellowship, and book study on March 7 & 21 at 6:30 pm in the church library. We'll be discussing the ELCA World Hunger 2024 Lent Study. Copies will be available upon request. Please speak with Pastor Jacob.



# LENTEN SELF-DENIAL OFFERING: STERLING BUDDY BAGS

The Congregation Council is pleased to announce that Sterling Buddy Bags has been named the charitable organization to receive all Lenten Self-Denial offerings. Since, 2015, Sterling Buddy Bags packs weekend food bags for kids to take home, providing two breakfasts and two lunches every weekend. Around 150 Sterling school students find this bag in their lockers every Thursday. They estimate that they pack around 6,100 bags each school year, providing 24,000 meals for kids that are food-insecure. Many kids count on their school breakfast and lunch as their main meals for the day and need simple nutritious food they can fix themselves on the weekends. Sterling Buddy Bags is supported by gifts of money and volunteers from all over the community. While their original grant of \$1,500 was spent long ago, they have never run out of money! They appreciate monetary donations as well as volunteers and food supplies. Please prayerfully consider Sterling Buddy Bags as you make decisions concerning your self-denial offering during this Lenten season.

The Messenger is a monthly publication of St. John's Lutheran Church, a church of the Northern Illinois Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Join us for worship at 9:30am Sundays and 6:00pm Wednesdays. If you would prefer to receive The Messenger via email, contact the church office at [office@stjohnsonthird.org](mailto:office@stjohnsonthird.org).

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