

THE MESSENGER

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

Vacation Bible School memories



With Vacation Bible School coming up on June 23, my mind has been filled with memories of past VBS programs.

When I was in elementary school, about 2-3 weeks after the close of the school year I'd often find myself back in the classrooms for the school's VBS. In many ways, those days felt a bit like an extension to the school year. Several fellow classmates were around as were many of the same teachers now serving in slightly different roles.

When I was in the sixth grade, I was especially excited about VBS because I could start assisting with the lower grades. From then through high school, I found myself moving between several different activities. Sometimes I was a rotation leader helping to shuffle children from one activity to another. Other times I was helping with the craft projects, participating in skits, or leading games for one of the rotations.

There was always so much going on that there was never a dull moment. This was especially true when I was one of the kitchen helpers. Some of the years, there was a meal component for the VBS; other times just a snack time. Either way, the kitchen seemed to be a source of excitement and general good vibes.

One time I was on nugget duty. Every plate had to have six chicken nuggets and be ready to pass to the serving window for folks as they came through the line. At first, one of the gals in the kitchen had handed me a set of tongs to use and I was meticulously counting each nugget as I placed it on the plate. Of course, once the line showed up, I found myself falling behind. It was at that moment I discovered why so many school and church kitchens have absurdly large spoons. In a single scoop I could accomplish the task that had previously taken six times as long.

Now it wasn't just the fast pace of working in the kitchen that made those times exciting and an occasional source of amusement. It was those in-between times when

the food preparation was done but the lines had not yet arrived, or after the meal clean up but before the wrap-up gathering at the end of the day. In those agenda-free moments, there were exchanges of stories, suggestions for recipes, spontaneous prayers, and tales on how to make the perfect cup of coffee.

VBS was so much more than just another summertime event, or something just for the kids. It was an act of community building. Real community building is intergenerational—it builds on the diversity of both the people involved and the gifts they share, and it can happen in the most unexpected ways.

I'm so very thankful that the CommUNITY VBS we are partners in aims to be that kid of event where folks come together with their gifts ready to engage in service and support that enriches relationships and unites community.

In Christ,

JUNE 2024

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Youth & Family Ministries news

JUNE NOISY OFFERINGS

For June, the noisy offerings are going to Blue Feather Alliance. Blue Feather Alliance is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization working exclusively on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota. Over the years we have completed many projects primarily in the community of Manderson, South Dakota. Manderson is located on the reservation in Oglala Lakota County, one the poorest counties in the country. Our mission is to honor and serve the people of South Dakota's Pine Ridge Reservation by collecting and distributing food, clothing, and other life necessities.

LOOKING BACK

- On April 24, youth participated in a Buddy Bags assembly night at Wesley United Methodist Church
- Sunday school students once again provided cards for a Social Ministry Birthday Budy Celebration on May 7
- On May 12 (Mother's Day) Sunday School Students presented their mother's with gift bags they had assembled.



NATIONAL YOUTH GATHERING MEETING

June 9 there is a meeting following worship at Immanuel for participants and group leaders attending the National Youth Gathering.

CONFIRMATION SUNDAY

Confirmation Sunday for 2024 is on June 2. Be sure to come out to support our youth as they affirm their faith. There will be a cake social following service.



Camp Firelight
A SUMMER CAMP
ADVENTURE WITH GOD
JUNE 23-25, 2024
6-8 pm with a free dinner at 5:30
1st Presbyterian Church, Sterling, IL
For all students PreK-5th Grade

COMMUNITY
VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

CommUNITY VBS invites you to this amazing, FREE 3-day event from Sunday, June 23 to Tuesday, June 25 at First Presbyterian Church (410 Second Ave, Sterling)! We'll start with a free dinner for students and volunteers at 5:30 PM, then we'll have music, crafts, games, and Bible adventures from 6-8 PM!

Camp Firelight is for students age 4 to just finished 5th grade. Adults and older students are invited to volunteer!

After Camp Firelight, join us on Sunday, June 30 at 9:30 AM at Grandon Civic Center for a VBS Worship Service!

Be sure to register for VBS if you are a participant or a volunteer by scanning the QR code.

JUNE BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

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

2

- Tori Leesman
- Andrew Marsh
- Vicki Merlak

3

- Alissa Marsh

4

- Dwight & Nancy Oltmanns
- Foster Peterson

6

- Darci Schmitt

7

- Jody Dirks

8

- Mont Cessna
- Vivian Johnson*

9

- Grant Peterson
- Kaydence Weeks

10

- Ruth Martin*
- Sharyl Rogers

11

- Martin Fisher
- Raymond Jamieson
- Robert & Jeanne Kuba*
- William & Jill McFalls

13

- Patrick & Marcie Davis
- Victoria Duffin
- Spencer Goss
- Dennis Winebrenner
- Jerry & Brinda Winger
- Karen Wolfe

14

- John & Martha Benson
- MacKenzie Forristall

15

- Gail & Sally Schreiner*

16

- Kerensa Pink

17

- Vicki Cooper
- Katherine Keaschall-Driessen
- Oliver Murphy

18

- Martin & Patricia Breed
- Corissa Grim
- William Grim
- Jill Lehman

19

- Chad & Dana Goff
- Kennard & Marlene Green*
- Lance & Brenda Greer
- Addison Perales

20

- Druann Bushman

21

- Andra Bielema
- Gary Dettman
- Robert Henson

22

- Bryce Johnson
- Jaycie Schmidt

23

- Ryan Reaver

24

- Kaylee Johnson
- Marilyn Prew*
- Jenna Wolber
- Keith Wolfe

26

- David & Linda Geil*
- Emily Grim
- Rhonda Miller
- Aaron & Dawn White

27

- Dalton Goss
- Timothy & Ronda Granzow
- Dwight & Nancy Oltmanns

28

- Mason Smith

30

- Russell Francis
- John Hay*
- Wayne & Betty Schmitt

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MADE
EASY**

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Tithe.ly app



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Check or cash

All donations will be included on your yearly contribution statement.

COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

PASTOR'S REPORT

- 4/18: Pastor completed the Northern Illinois Synod Anti-Racism Training.
- 4/21: Bre Evenson from LSSI provided a Temple Talk on Mental Health & Addiction Treatment
- 4/25: Conversation with Pastor Ebener continued with emphasis on visioning and goal setting
- 4/28: Meeting at Immanuel for National Youth Gathering.
- 4/28: Central Conference Annual Meeting at LOMC. Our Synod Assembly voting members attended
- 5/5: Pastor Ebener returned to facilitate a conversation with the congregation. The forum was well-attended and produced fruitful conversation. Pastor Ebener has extended offer to continue assistance
- 5/6: Planning continued for VBS
- 5/11: LOMC Work Day with Tri-Church that also served as a God's Work Our Hands Day
- 5/18: Youth Rummage Sale in conjunction with Community Garage Sale. Over \$700 was raised to help pay for the costs associated with youth programming. Unsold items will be donated to various secondhand and thrift stores in the community.
- 5/19: Pentecost Sunday; recent graduates recognized.

FINANCE REPORT

- Jack Flick was welcomed as a new member of the Finance Committee.
- The monthly financials were reviewed with two items of note:
 - Expense of \$2,340 (Acct. #3302) was a downpayment for repair of Bell Choir bells. \$5,000 was withdrawn from ELCA Music Fund to cover this downpayment. Remaining \$2,660 has been placed in the Sauk Valley Bank Music account until repairs are complete.
 - High cost of Nicor gas in April may have included 2 months of charges.

- Committee unanimously approved April financials as presented
- Templates for 2025 budget have been distributed
- April financials were approved as presented and approved by the Finance Committee.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

PERSONNEL:

- Committee met with Dawn Zeigler, Kyle Morgan, and Andrew Stutzke to discuss the Paid Leave for All Employees Act. A decision was made to front-load 40 hours of paid leave to satisfy the law. Any unused time will be paid at the end of the year at the usual rate.

SOCIAL MINISTRY:

- LSSI Birthday Buddy Celebrations are ongoing and a joy for everyone.
- Hotdogs, chips, and bottled water were sold at the Garage Sale to benefit the Youth Fund.
- Personal care kit collections end on 6/2; goal of 60 kits will be exceeded.
- School kit collections for LWR and ROE begin 6/16. We will collect hand sanitizers to supply with kits going to ROE.
- Mitten tree will go up in August or September. The Salvation Army Angel Tree will be our stand-alone holiday collection.
- Investigating possible participation in Hot Dog Days and doing concessions at Grandon Civic Center for summer concert series.

OLD BUSINESS

- Vitality Survey: Copies of survey and neighborhood data page will be available on Sunday morning. There was considerable conversation surrounding an update to our tri-fold brochure
- Pastor Continuing Education: All responses will be collated into one document. Once reviewed, it will be forwarded to Pastor Jacob to submit.

NEW BUSINESS

- Transfers totaling \$10,490.10 were made in March. \$10,000.00 was transferred from Undesignated Account #8005 to SVB checking. \$245.05 was transferred to Parish Nurse Account #7072 and \$245.05 to Music Account from Undesignated Account #8005. These 2 transfers move interest from ELCA to appropriate designated accounts. Transfers approved.
- Lois Rowzee has resigned from the Congregation Council due to health concerns. The Council unanimously approved, leaving position vacant.
- Aislinn O'Connell was elected to the vacant position on the Congregation Council. Welcome!
- Dave Geil, Chrissy Murphy, and Denise Norman comprise the Nominating Committee for the upcoming Annual Meeting. Three three-year terms and a one-year term will need to be filled for positions on the Congregation Council. At least two voting members of the congregations will need to be elected to attend the Synod Assembly. We may also elect one youth to attend the event. All members of the council encouraged to submit suggestions.
- Forms distributed to all departments and committees for the 2024 budget process. Due by 6/28
- Congregations of the Northern Illinois Synod have been invited to collect items for their local food banks. A congregational picture will be taken on 5/28 for submission to the Synod. Collections will continue through June.
- Additional suggestions discussed for reaching out to shut-ins and involving congregation members. Ideas included a shut-in tree with names that could be taken for contact, prayer partners, and secret Santa partners.

St. John's will be collecting children's tennis shoes and socks during the months of June and July for Another Child Foundation. These items will go to underprivileged children in Romania. There will be a bin outside the sanctuary door to place the donations. Thank you for your support of this ministry!

~Denise Carl



MOVING BEYOND THE PAGE

Join us for faith, fellowship, and book study on June 6 & 20 at 6:30 pm in the church library. Watch the Sunday Bulletin for our next book. Copies will be available upon request. Please speak with Pastor Jacob.

NURSE NOTES

Choosing a pet for your health & lifestyle

Pets are known to improve the lives of their human family members. Not only are pets great companions, but they also can boost your mental and physical health and your social life.

Most people can find a pet to love, no matter their health concerns. Talk to pet adoption coordinators about finding a good match for your health and lifestyle. Here are some general recommendations:

- *For people trying to lose weight or get more active* – Dogs can be especially great motivators for getting active. Find one that wants to join you on a walk, paddle or hike.
- *For people with depression or anxiety* – Pets can be comforting and provide a sense of purpose that contributes to self-worth. They can be loyal and loving regardless of what you are navigating. They also keep their owners on a schedule, which can be helpful for people with mental health conditions.
- *For people with weakened immune systems* – Avoid pets that are most likely to carry germs or parasites, such as kittens and puppies under 6 months old, reptiles, poultry, rodents, exotic pets, and sick or feral animals.
- *For people with limited mobility* – Consider your limits when choosing a pet. It might be difficult to haul big bags of food or keep up with an active pet. Pets can also be tripping hazards, so train them not to push or pull. And train yourself to watch for them.
- *For people with asthma and allergies* – Pets with fur or feathers can trigger itchy eyes and sneezing, so you may want to opt for another type. Alternatively, some dog and cat breeds, such as poodles and Siberian cats, are less likely to trigger people with allergies.

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

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

- None

WEDDINGS

- None

BAPTISMS

- None

MEMBERS RECEIVED

- None

MEMBERS REMOVED/TRANSFERRED

- None

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

- None

STAFF BIRTHDAYS

- Mont Cessna, 6/8

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
- Aislinn O'Connell

*Exec Committee member

CHRISTIAN ED

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

STEWARDSHIP

Vacant

PERSONNEL

- Denise Norman, chair
- Rev. Jacob Gawlik
- Dave Geil

FINANCE

- Nancy Breed
- Druann Bushman
- Mike Doughty
- Jack Flick
- 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
- Amy Smith
- Gary Smith
- Sharon Zinanni

WORSHIP TECH

- Anita Carl
- Dan Eads
- Charlene O'Connell

CONG. LIFE

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

SJLC Activities ~ June '24

June Open/Close:
Rhonda Stutzke

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
*HC=Holy Communion						1
2 Confirmation Sunday <i>FISH collection</i> 9:30-Worship <i>Acolyte: Brynna C.</i> <i>Asst.: Jeff Fisher</i>	3 6:00-Men's Group	4	5 6:00-Worship	6 6:30-Moving Beyond the Page 7:00-Al-Anon	7	8 10:00-Social Ministry meeting
9 9:30-Worship <i>Acolyte: Catie P.</i> <i>Asst.: Teri Holldorf</i> 11:30-National Youth Gathering Team Mtg. @ Immanuel	10 6:00-Finance Committee mtg	11	12 6:00-Worship	13 5:00-Exec mtg 7:00-Al-Anon	14 Synod Assembly	15 Synod Assembly
16 9:30-Worship <i>Acolyte: Caylee W.</i> <i>Asst.: Shawn Wolfe</i>	17	18 6:00-Council mtg	19 <i>Nwsltr. items due</i> 1:30-Parkway HC 2:30-Heritage Woods HC 3:30-Morningside HC 6:00-Worship	20 2:30-Allure of Sterling HC 3:30-Citadel HC 6:30-Moving Beyond the Page 7:00-Al-Anon	21	22
23 9:30-Worship <i>Acolyte: Elly R.</i> <i>Asst.: Denise Norman</i> 5:30-VBS Free Dinner 6:00-VBS @ First Pres.	24 5:30-VBS Free Dinner 6:00-VBS @ First Pres.	25 5:30-VBS Free Dinner 6:00-VBS @ First Pres. 6:30-NAMI group	26 6:00-Worship	27 9:00-Newsletter Assembly 7:00-Al-Anon	28	29
30 9:30-VBS Outdoor Worship @ Grandon						

June Special Offerings

The special offerings for June have been designated by the Congregation Council to be donated to Grace Place Campus Ministry. This ministry located at Northern Illinois University has a rich history of ministering to the NIU community in DeKalb. In 1957, Lutheran Campus Ministry began meeting with interested students at a property near campus for weekly bible study and fellowship time. From there, the Lutheran Campus Ministry worked with area campus ministries and parishes to minister to the NIU staff, faculty, and students. In February of 2008, there was a campus shooting that killed 5 students and injured 17 more people. Within a few days, Lutheran Campus Ministry became a place of refuge. The building was open around the clock for students and community members to begin the process of healing. Outside of the building, 6 crosses were erected, one for each of the victims plus one for the shooter, these crosses stood as beacons inviting everyone to come and begin the process of healing. In the following months, the leaders of Lutheran Campus Ministry and Canterbury House had conversations about how they might be able to do more together in a formal partnership than as separate ministries. Their goal was to be a place where everyone could feel the love that had been poured out. It was in these conversations that Grace Place Campus Ministry was born, a joint effort between the Northern Illinois Synod of the ELCA and the Episcopal Diocese of Chicago. When they began worshiping in the Fall of 2011, the six crosses that once stood as beacons of hope were built into the altar still being used today. A resolution was passed at the 2022 Northern Illinois Synod Assembly that spoke to the significance of this ministry and asked that congregations be encouraged to receive a special offering to be sent in support of this Lutheran Campus Ministry. Please consider a generous donation to support this ministry, the young people, and others who seek solace there.



SCHOOL KIT COLLECTION

The Social Ministry Committee will begin collecting items for school kits beginning June 16th. The collection period will conclude September 15th. We had a great response last year and have asked St. Paul and Immanuel to partner with us again this year for assembly. Our time together was an awesome time of fellowship and stewardship. Our goal among the three churches this year is a lofty one—600 kits! Some of the kits will be shared again with the Regional Office of Education (ROC) in our community. Bins will be available to receive donations in the entry area outside the east sanctuary doors and the narthex. Monetary donations will be accepted if you prefer that we do the shopping for you. Please include these items for each kit:

- Four 70-sheet notebooks of wide or college-ruled paper
- One ruler with centimeters on one side and inches on the other
- One pencil sharpener
- One pair of blunt scissors
- Five unsharpened #2 pencils with erasers, secure with a rubber band
- Five black or blue ballpoint pens (no gel ink), secure with a rubber band
- One box of 16 or 24 crayons
- One 2½ inch eraser
- One sturdy drawstring back-pack style cloth bag, approximately 14"x17" with shoulder straps



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.

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