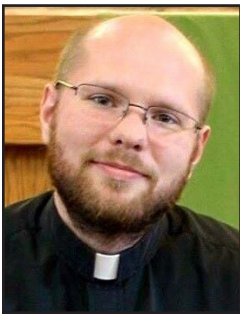


# THE MESSENGER

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

### Looking forward to ELCA Youth Gathering



During the middle part of this July, I'll have the honor of joining members of St. John's and Immanuel for the ELCA

Youth Gathing in New Orleans. Together the youth and adult chaperones will have opportunities to learn about the history of the city and surrounding community, participate in service events, in addition to attending a mass gathering for worship at the Smoothie King Center with over 12,000 young people and adult leaders. It is certainly going to be a significant life-changing faith formation event for the youth who are participating from over 1,200 ELCA congregations this year.

I am personally excited to be returning to the ELCA Youth Gathering, as the last time I was able to fully participate in the event was when it was held in Atlanta in 2003. While I was the Vicar at St.

Paul in Alliance, Ohio, the 2012 Gathering in New Orleans had an abundance of male chaperones for the gathering and I stayed behind to assist with Vacation Bible School. Then in 2015 while serving at Redeemer in Maple Valley, WI, the congregation was unable to raise sufficient funds for the youth to attend the Gathering in Detroit. In 2018 St. John's youth joined those at St. Paul and Immanuel for the Gathering in Houston and the group had sufficient male chaperones so I did not attend. We are also very much aware that the 2021 Gathering in Minneapolis was postponed to 2022 and then eventually cancelled due to the pandemic.

When church workers and ministers are asked what some of the things were that led them into ministry, two items are often cited as being especially formative. The first of those being participation in summer camp as either a camper or counselor. The other is participating in the Youth Gathing as either a high school student or an adult chaperone.

At this year's Gathing in New Orleans, those who participate in the event will find themselves walking beside and serving with future pastors and deacons, future youth workers and congregational leaders. Those who will help care for those who will come after us will be just discovering their call to ministry and in a simple-yet-significant way our group from St. John's and Immanuel will be a part of that story. Likewise, the support of our congregation and its generosity that makes this possible will enable us to serve alongside those who will be in various ministries generations after us in places near and far.

Thank you, dear members of St. John's, for supporting this ministry and opportunity for our young folk in our community and by extension the future ministry of so many others.

Peace to you,

## JULY 2024

Branches News Briefs.....	2	Saying Thanks.....	5	Parish Register.....	6
Birthdays & Anniversaries.....	3	Nurse Notes.....	5	July Calendar & Events.....	7
Council Highlights.....	4	About St. John's.....	6	School Kit Collection.....	Back

# Youth & Family Ministries news

## JULY NOISY OFFERINGS

For July, the noisy offerings are going to Grace Place Campus Ministry at Northern Illinois University. Grace Place is a joint ministry between the Northern Illinois Synod of the ELCA and the Episcopal Diocese of Chicago. The current ministry traces its roots back to 1957 when a Lutheran Campus Ministry group began meeting near the NIU campus for weekly bible study and fellowship time. The goal of Grace Place is to be a beacon of hope where everyone can feel love being poured out. Participants at Grace Place gather weekly on Wednesday nights for worship and a community meal where everyone is invited to share in God's expansive love.

## STAY TUNED FOR VBS HIGHLIGHTS

The CommUNITY VBS Camp Firelight was held June 23 to Tuesday, June 25 at First Presbyterian Church with a community worship service on Sunday, June 30. Be sure to check out the August newsletter for pictures of this amazing event.

## THE YOUTH GATHERING IS HERE

Youth and Adult leaders from Immanuel and St. John's are heading to New Orleans, LA for the 2024 ELCA Youth Gathering! From July 15 – 20 we'll be joined by thousands of high school youth and their adult leaders from across the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as we gather for a week of faith formation known as the ELCA Youth Gathering. Through days spent in interactive learning, worship, Bible study, service and fellowship, young people grow in faith and are challenged and inspired to live their faith in their daily lives. Please keep our travelers in prayer. Do make sure you are also participating in worship on July 14 as we send off our Youth Gathering participants.

## OUR 2024 CONFIRMANDS

Congratulations to our Confirmands, Elly Redfield and Caylee White who made public affirmation of their faith on June 2. On that Sunday as a community of faith together we promised to support these youth and pray for them in their life in Christ.



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



## JULY BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

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

**1**

- Ann Baither\*
- Johnathon Imel

**4**

- Nicole Dettman
- Cole Heald
- Lois LeFevre\*
- Randy & Teresa Stewart

**6**

- Mark Sciacero
- Carman Thorp\*
- Sophia Torres

**7**

- Teri Holldorf

**8**

- Adan Ramirez

**9**

- Kandra Cook

**10**

- Elsie Iben\*
- Shauna Kramer

**11**

- Robert & Patricia Henson\*
- Brian & Jill Lehman
- Devin O'Connell
- Douglas Schmitt

**14**

- Kay Iben

**15**

- Kaylen Blumhoff
- Michael Clark
- Eric Douglas
- Jerry McCormick
- Brittany Schmitt
- Hunter Wolfe

**16**

- Brandon Johnson

**18**

- Marcie Davis
- Randy & Julie Johnson
- Charles Lehman
- Nathan Stahr

**19**

- Sarah LeFevre

**20**

- Brad Barron

**21**

- David & Lori Gonzales
- Debbie Kibodeaux
- Dina Razo

**22**

- Gary Cassens
- Brian & Jamie Luebke

**23**

- Molly Benson
- Kayla Schmitt

**24**

- Kevin Amesquita
- Wayne Schmitt\*
- Mark Sisson
- Tim Smith

**25**

- Chad & Kerensa Pink
- Erika Smith

**27**

- Anna Breneman
- Bradley Lauts
- Mark Oelrichs
- Parker Rogers
- Christine Rucker

**28**

- Tom & Sharon Leesman
- Matt Murphy

**29**

- Madeline LeFevre
- Sandra Westbo

**31**

- Teresa Stewart



# NICIL

Northwestern  
Illinois Center for  
Independent Living

## July Special Offerings

The special offerings for July have been designated by the Congregation Council to be donated to the Northwestern Illinois Center for Independent Living (NICIL). NICIL is a non-profit, non-residential center serving Carroll, Jo Daviess, Lee, Ogle, and Whiteside counties. In 1985, NICIL opened its doors with a mission of supporting people with disabilities to live in the community of their choice. Living independently means different things to people. For some, it is the freedom and ability to make choices on how to live their life. For others, it may mean living free from the restraints of institutional care. No matter the definition, the choice to live as one chooses is the basis of the independent living program. The NICIL Team works with consumers on the goals of their choosing. They do not tell consumers what to do. Instead, they talk about options and give support so the consumer can make an informed choice.

Please consider a generous donation to the Special Offerings during July. Many people in our community struggle with their ability to live independently. Your generosity will ensure that this agency will have the ability to continue to support those in need of this assistance.

## COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

### PASTOR'S REPORT

- 6/2: Confirmation Sunday. Elly Redfield was Baptized and Confirmed; Caylee White was Confirmed. A cake reception was held following the service. Many thanks to the Redfields and Whites for providing food and drinks.
- 6/14-6/15: Synod Assembly. Thank you to Denise Carl and Larry Kradle for attending as voting members. On 6/16 Denise and Larry joined during the sermon to reflect on the assembly. Three resolutions were passed. Synod staff have prepared a bulletin insert for congregations to share.
- A schedule for the upcoming Sunday School program year is in the works.
- Pastor Makayla, Pastor Bree, and Pastor Jacob are hoping to set a time to review and revise lesson plans for the upcoming school year's confirmation classes.

### REPORT OF THE SECRETARY

#### COMMUNICATIONS:

- A card was sent to Pastor Josh Ebener to express sympathy for the passing of his mother. A card was also sent to Pastor Jacob and his family for the passing of his grandmother.

### FINANCE REPORT

- The Finance Team unanimously approved the May financials as presented.
- The committee discussed and approved a withdrawal of \$20,000.00 from the Charles Morris Fund held with the ELCA to help cover payroll and expenses.
- A check (#37454) has been missing since December 2023. The account will be monitored and action will be taken, as necessary.
- The May financials were approved.

### COMMITTEE REPORTS

#### SOCIAL MINISTRY:

- The committee met on 6/8 and used the meeting time to finish assembling the health kits. The committee donated 78 kits to the First United Methodist Church for distribution locally.
- Mitten tree collections will begin in late August ("Christmas in July")
- The committee will partner with Tri-Church to provide a cook-out and game time for our Birthday Buddies.

#### OLD BUSINESS

- Vitality Survey Goals: There was considerable conversation about updating our tri-fold brochure, including forming a task force to execute this project. Karen Wolfe volunteered to lead this project. Shari Baker will lead the effort to establish a program for ministering to shut-in and homebound members. Both are a great start to working on our goals. Several questions were asked concerning worship streaming. There is no way to identify users unless they tell us they use it.
- Budget Forms for Committee Chairs: Forms have been distributed to all departments and committees for the 2024 budget process. They are due on or before 6/28. Only 2 have been received to date.
- Ballot for Annual Meeting: 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. It is recommended that an alternative is also elected. We may elect one youth to represent St. John's at the event. All members of the council are encouraged to submit suggestions.

### NEW BUSINESS

- Approval of Transfers: Transfers totaling \$18,340 were made in May. \$11,000 was transferred from Undesignated Account #8005 to SVB checking to assist with payroll, taxes, and expenses. \$5,000 was withdrawn from ELCA Music Fund and deposited in Undesignated Account #8005, then transferred to the Music tiered savings account #6997 to cover refurbishing the bells. \$2,340 was transferred from Music fund #6997 to SVB checking to cover the downpayment on refurbishing the bells. Transfers approved.
- Personnel Committee: There is a vacancy on the committee due Lois Rowzee resigning. At all times, an elected member of the Congregation Council must be part of this committee. It would be ideal to fill the position with a sitting council member. We will reach out to the congregation as well.
- Stewardship Committee: We have not had a sitting Stewardship Committee for a couple of years. Last year, Pastor Jacob wrote a stewardship letter that was sent to the congregation. It is time to put something in place for our annual stewardship drive. Denise Norman will provide a temple talk on 6/23 to address this opening.
- Approval of New Confirmands: Elly Redfield and Caylee White were confirmed on 6/2. Motion of approval carried.
- Special Offerings: A motion to designate the July Special Offerings to the Northwestern Illinois Center for Independent Living (NICIL), the August Special Offerings to First United Methodist Church, Loaves and Fishes, and the September Special Offerings to Rock Falls Methodist Church, Bear Necessities was approved.



## Celebrate and Support LOMC!

*"Connecting the Word of God with the World of God"*

Tri Church (St. John's and St. Paul, Sterling and Immanuel, Rock Falls) is hosting a special event for LOMC (Lutheran Outdoor Ministries Center) to celebrate and support their outdoor ministries.

**We invite you to join us** for this celebration on Saturday, August 17th from 5 to 7 pm at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Sterling, located at 1701 16th Avenue. A picnic style meal featuring ribeye steak sandwiches will be provided. In addition, outdoor games will be available.

**We invite you to support LOMC** as 2024 marks their 50th Anniversary! A 50th Anniversary Campaign appeal focused on "Generosity to the past and gifts for the future" is underway, "hoping to raise \$100,000 to honor and uplift God's ministry of the outdoors at LOMC."

**We invite you to make a gift** or pledge at this event. Staff and board members from LOMC will be available to share their joy for the camp and answer any questions.

To RSVP, please scan the QR code by August 5. Your RSVP is your "ticket" to this celebration. You may also RSVP on the sign-up sheet at your church.

*The Tri Church congregations are most grateful for your support of LOMC in funding the future!*



Scan to RSVP!



### SAYING THANKS

Thank you to everyone who donated items for the rummage sale and/or bought items at it. Also, thank you to Social Committee for the selling of hot dogs and chips and to Hannah and Eve Gawlik for the mini bake sale. We raised \$793.11 for the Youth Ministry account. A special thank you to Michelle, Hannah and Eve Gawlik, Brynna Carl, Mont Cessna, Mike, Tammy and Sarah Doughty, Larry Kradle, Rhonda Stutzke, Shari Baker and Marcia Keime for helping to set up, helping the day of, and helping to take down the rummage sale. Your support of St. John's youth is very much appreciated.

*God bless,  
Pastor Jacob*

To Friends of Fish at St. John Lutheran,

Thank you for your gift of hygiene kits. One kit can help an entire family. It is nice to give away more than food. We appreciate the food items you have given us. It adds variety to our shelves. You have helped for many years.

*Thank you again,  
Beth Mathew*

### NURSE NOTES

## RSV vaccine for older adults

The respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) is a potentially scary infection for infants and young children, but it also can be serious or even life-threatening in older adults. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that RSV causes up to 160,000 hospitalizations and 10,000 deaths of older adults in the U.S. each year.

In otherwise healthy adults, RSV often looks like a common cold. But in infants and certain high risk children and adults, RSV infection is more likely to cause lower respiratory tract diseases such as pneumonia or inflammatory airway illness such as bronchitis.

For years, there was no way to prevent the virus in adults other than basic germ-fighting measures such as washing hands and disinfecting surfaces. But this year, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved and the CDC recommended two RSV vaccines — known as Arexvy and Abrysvo — for adults age 60 and older.

This fall, adults 60 and older talk to their healthcare teams about receiving influenza, RSV and COVID-19 vaccines. Your team can answer questions you have about any vaccine.

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

### MOVING BEYOND THE PAGE



Join us for faith, fellowship, and book study on July 11 & 25 at 6:30 pm in the church library. We will be discussing *In His Steps* by Charles M. Sheldon. Copies are available upon request from various sources. Please speak with Pastor Jacob to learn more.

## 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

- Elly Redfield

### CONFIRMATION STUDENTS

- Elly Redfield, 6/2
- Caylee White, 6/2

### 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
- 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 ~ July '24

July Open/Close:  
Dave Geil

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
*HC=Holy Communion	1 6:00-Men's Group	2	3 6:00-Worship	4 Church Office Closed 7:00-Al-Anon	5	6
7 FISH collection 9:30-Worship Acolyte: Josie P. Asst.: Chris Rucker	8 6:00-Finance Committee mtg	9	10 6:00-Worship	11 5:00-Exec mtg 6:30-Moving Beyond the Page 7:00-Al-Anon	12	13 10:00-Social Ministry meeting
14 9:30-Worship Acolyte: Kennedie V. Asst.: Jeff Fischer	15	16 ELCA Youth Gathering 6:00-Council mtg	17 ELCA Youth Gathering 1:30-Parkway HC 2:30-Heritage Woods HC 3:30-Morningside HC 6:00-Worship	18 ELCA Youth Gathering 2:30-Allure of Sterling HC 3:30-Citadel HC 7:00-Al-Anon	19 ELCA Youth Gathering	20 ELCA Youth Gathering
21 9:30-Worship Acolyte: Kiersten B. Asst.: Mike Doughty	22 Nwsltr. items due	23 6:30-NAMI group	24 6:00-Worship	25 6:30-Moving Beyond the Page 7:00-Al-Anon	26	27
28 9:30-Worship Acolyte: Logan W. Asst.: Teri Holldorf	29 9:00-Newsletter Assembly	30	31 6:00-Worship			

## The Cross



The accepted symbol of Christianity is the cross. Worldwide, it is the singular reminder of what Jesus did for us. He died on a cross; it was the price He paid for our redemption. The cross is visibly displayed throughout if one walks through our church building. It might be impossible to count all of them. One such cross hangs rather inconspicuously between two of the stained-glass windows in the East Room. That cross, while being yet another symbol of Jesus' sacrifice for us as Christian people, also has a story of its own and symbolizes a significant event in the history of St. John's.

During the nighttime hours of Thursday, February 2, 1984, hymnals were lit in a pile under the grand piano in the sanctuary. The fire grew to enormous heights and burned through the ceiling of St. John's. Much of the sanctuary was damaged and the beloved stained-glass window depicting Jesus with the children was blown out of its frame. The glass remnants lay scattered in the alley on the west side of the church.

Lois Cooperrider, wife of the late Reverend Luther Cooperrider, who served as pastor of St. John's from 1962 until 1973, still lived in their home at the time of the fire. The back yard of the home is adjacent to the alley behind the church. As the story goes, in the early morning hours after the fire had been extinguished, Lois, a small but determined lady, was seen in the alley retrieving pieces of glass from the window that was destroyed. From those pieces, she enlisted the expertise of an unknown person to fashion a cross. It is that cross that hangs in the East Room. It is unclear where the cross was stored for many years, but it was found during the time of the renovation of the East Room in roughly 2012. Not only is it a symbol of sacrifice and redemption on the part of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, but it is also a symbol of unity during a time of trial in the life of St. John's Lutheran Church.

The fire took place just a few days after the installation of the Reverend Charles Steinke. The first sermon preached by Pastor Steinke was to a "standing room only" crowd on Sunday, February 5, 1984, in Room 7 of the Education Wing. That Sunday stands as a reminder of the unity, solidarity, and brotherhood that came from the tragedy of the fire. The cross that hangs in the East Room will remain as a symbol of that time in the history of our community of believers.

# 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 (ROE) 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](mailto:office@stjohnsonthird.org).

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