

THE MESSENGER

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

Christmas time nostalgia



With the holiday season in full swing, it is hard not to feel a bit nostalgic. Growing up, Christmas time was always

filled with family gatherings, festive music, delicious food, and of course making wish lists for dear old Saint Nick.

Growing up in Chicago, we didn't have a Walmart, and Target didn't arrive until I was preparing to graduate from high school. So, many of the ideas for Christmas wish lists came from window shopping at the Harlem Irving Plaza or the Brickyard Mall. Sometimes, if my sisters and I were lucky, we'd be able to snag the Sunday paper before my dad and rip through the advertisements to find the Toys-R-Us catalog.

Sure enough, once the catalog was discovered my mother would begin the traditional holiday ritual of determining which color marker scribbles in the catalog belonged

to which one of her children. I was always fond of using the blue erasable Papermate pen. After all, if I circled something at the start of the catalogue that grabbed my attention but later was more intrigued by something else, I wanted to make sure there was not any confusion about what I truly hoped to find wrapped beneath the tree on Christmas morning.

The struggle over Lego sets or action figures was most certainly a serious matter of discernment. Especially when one considered that Jolly Ol' Santa Claus had likely recruited dear mother as a spy for the ever-elusive North Pole's elves. One could never be too careful. Besides, who really knew what mom was up to whilst my sisters and I were safely whisked away to school enduring hours of reading, writing, and arithmetic? The best spies are always hiding in plain sight. Yes, drop us off at school so you and dad can both go "teach" at different schools. A convincing story.

My sisters and I knew better, we could see past this subterfuge,

and sure enough we'd be able to determine how things really worked. Alas, we never seemed to have much energy come Christmas Eve to stay up and catch Santa in the act. School Christmas programs, family gatherings on Christmas Eve, and even the late-night worship service on that day left us easily susceptible to the power of suggestion. "What's that mom, it's been a long day for everyone, and we should go get sleep?" Well, you don't have to pull my arm, I'd think to myself as I agreeably would head off to bed. In the morning I'd discover if the pen marks left in the catalog were decipherable and if mother was doing more than reporting back as to whether my sisters and I were naughty or nice.

Whatever you may find yourself hopefully expecting this Christmas, may you also know the gift of God's love ever patient and always with us.

The Lord's Peace be with you,

Rev. Jacob M. Lawler

DECEMBER 2024

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DECEMBER NOISY OFFERINGS

For December, the noisy offerings are going to the ELCA Good Gifts God's Global Barnyard. This special offering will also be done in conjunction with the Good Gifts Tree so folks can select an ornament to give a donation in memory, honor, or as a gift as well as contribute through the noisy offering to support the work of the God's Global Barnyard program.



NOTEWORTHY DATES

Some important dates for grades 6-12:

- December 22: Christmas Program
- February 14-16: Wisconsin Dells Youth Quake Retreat
- February 26 @ 7pm: Community Accompaniment Night (Buddy Bags Packing @ Wesley Methodist)
- April 13: Palm Sunday Breakfast
- April 30 @ 7pm: Community Accompaniment Night (Buddy Bags Packing @ Wesley Methodist)
- June 1: Confirmation Sunday



ADVENT WREATH LIGHTING SCHEDULE

- 12/1-Advent 1: Gawlik Family
- 12/8-Advent 2: Murphy - Bontz Family
- 12/15-Advent 3: Fisher Family
- 12/22-Advent 4: ***Volunteers Needed***



SUNDAY SCHOOL SCHEDULE

- 12/1: Christmas Program Practice
- 12/8: Christmas Program Practice
- 12/15: Christmas Program Practice
- 12/22: Christmas Program
- 12/29: No Sunday School (Christmas break)



LSSI HOLIDAY HOPE CHEST

On 12/8 after Christmas Program practice, youth will have the opportunity to shop for children's gifts as part of the LSSI Holiday Hope Chest program.



WISCONSIN DELLS QUAKE

Registration for the Quake in Wisconsin Dells has been completed. Bethel is partnering with St. John's this year and together we will have eight youth and three adult chaperones participating in the event. A member of Bethel has also graciously offered use of a minibus for transportation to and from the event. Mark your calendars for an informational meeting scheduled for December 15 following Christmas Program practice at Bethel.



TRUNK-OR-TREAT WAS A SUCCESS

St. John's once again hosted wonderful Trunk-or-Treat. The event continues to be a draw for the neighborhood and surrounding community. Thank you to all those who helped participate be that by decorating

cars, handing out candy, or passing out hot chocolate, apple cider or donuts.

SELMI'S FALL FUN DAY OUTING

What a wonderful evening was had during the Selmi's Fall Fun Day. Youth from St. Paul, Immanuel, and St. John's came together to walk the corn maze, go on a hayrack ride, visit the petting zoo, and so much more. Our group started out with 10 amazing people, and we were later joined by 3 more friends for a total of 13 at this year's fun day.



COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

PASTOR'S REPORT

- Dorothy Mae Denny died on 11/12; a service was held on 11/18.
- Thirteen Tri-Church youth participated in a fellowship event at Selmi's in Rock Falls on 10/22.
- St. John's hosted Trunk-or-Treat on 10/31. This event continues to draw from the surrounding community. Thank you to all who participated.
- The All Saint's Sunday breakfast, hosted by the Adam's Rib, was a wonderful event.
- Bethel and St. John's will send 8 youth and 3 adult chaperones to the Quake in WI Dells. A member of Bethel has offered to use a minibus for transportation. There will be an informational meeting on 12/15.
- 12/1-St. John's will host the Joint Confirmation Class; volunteers are needed to provide/serve the meal.
- 12/8-Shopping for the LSSI Holiday Hope Chest gifts
- 12/12 LSSI will host their annual Holiday Get Together at St. John's

SECRETARY REPORT

- A question was raised about why minutes of the Budget Hearing are not taken. This meeting is informational, with no business being conducted. This is something that could be done with the distribution of the minutes prior to the Annual meeting. A comment was also made concerning the Proposed Budget and the Annual Report not being available prior to the date of those meetings. It would be helpful in both cases if the items were available at least 1 week prior to the meetings.
- Sterling Township expressed heartfelt thanks for our contribution to their Thanksgiving voucher program.
- The First United Methodist Church

expressed gratitude for our donation to the Loaves and Fishes breakfast program.

FINANCE REPORT

- The Finance Team unanimously approved the October financials as presented. The financials were approved by the council.
- The committee discussed:
 - The non-renewal notice for our insurance coverage, including workers' compensation coverage. Dave is researching coverage with other carriers.
 - Replacement of the roof. Dave Geil is currently working with three vendors—Boss, TCS, and Sterling Commercial Roofing. The replacement could be in excess of \$50,000. Regardless of who does the replacement and when, the question is how it would be paid. Depleting various funds is a possibility. A capital campaign was also suggested. The consensus was that no action could be taken until we heard from all roofing companies and settled on an insurance provider.
 - Nina had suggested providing a financial update in the Messenger to apprise the congregation of actual income and expenses in relation to the budgeted amounts.
 - The cost of repairing and refurbishing the bells is higher than estimated. However, sufficient funds are in the Music account at Sauk Valley Bank to cover the extra cost.
- Additional discussion:
 - The statement in the Finance minutes concerning new and existing roof leaks was clarified. There is no evidence of existing leaks. However, some columns have a discoloration that could be moisture, indicating a leak.

- A question was asked concerning the repayment of "loans" from existing accounts to cover expenses. It is believed that we have currently repaid "loans" to these accounts, but in the past (years ago), we took funds from the Building Reserve Fund that were not repaid.
- A motion was approved to publish monthly expenses vs. giving amounts in the bulletin and Messenger with the understanding that the figures would be a month behind.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

SOCIAL MINISTRY:

- The Mitten Tree collection ended 11/17; 40 scarves, 9 pairs of mittens, 58 pairs of gloves, and 51 hats were collected. The items were delivered to the Unit #5 District Office and they were pleased to receive them.
- The Salvation Army Angel Tree is ongoing in the East Room with 10 Angels remaining. Gifts are due in the church on 12/6. Items will be delivered to the Salvation Army on 12/7.
- There are two remaining Birthday Buddy celebrations this year. The congregation is signing cards. We will deliver cupcakes and gifts to the last of our buddies on 12/2. We will participate in this ministry in 2025 and have three buddies to celebrate.

PRAYER & CARE:

- This ministry is ongoing. All shut-in and nursing home members are contacted monthly. This month, the group has contacted two additional members who are experiencing difficult times. Plans are underway for the Christmas gifts for our shut-ins. Due to a large increase in mailing costs, offering envelopes will be taken to our members at the same time.

PARISH NURSE:

- Karen Wolfe has contacted Nancy Rasmussen about offering

an abbreviated version of CPR training for interested members. This “Friends and Family” version could be offered at a cost of \$10 per person. Karen will pass a clipboard to ascertain interest among the congregation and move forward accordingly.

PROPERTY:

- Dave Geil will retire as chair of this committee in January. A new chair is needed to fill the position.

FROM THE GALLERY

- Druann Bushman attended the meeting to learn about and support the conversation about replacing the church building's roof.

OLD BUSINESS

- We continue to address the goals established by the Vitality Survey. Karen Wolfe and Chrissy Murphy are working on the project to replace our outdated brochure with an updated postcard that will include three of our ongoing ministries—Trunk-or-Treat, CommUNITY VBS, and Buddy Bags. A QR code will be included that will take the user to our website. Stahr Media will receive the updated information as it becomes available.
- We will continue to pray for the members of St. Paul as they are still in a state of transition following Pastor Dahleen's resignation and acceptance of a new call. Interim pastors and pulpit supply pastors are extremely limited in our Synod and the Central Conference.

NEW BUSINESS

- In October, \$13,000.00 was transferred from Undesignated Account #8005 to Sauk Valley Bank checking. \$274.56 was transferred from Sauk Valley Bank checking to the Sauk Valley Bank Memorial Account #0108. \$54.00 was transferred from the Families in Need Account #7765 to Sauk Valley Checking. The transfers totaling \$13,328.56 were approved.

- On 11/13, Christian Gianni Law notified us that an additional disbursement from the Charles Morris Estate would be made. The check has been received and temporarily deposited into Undesignated Account #8005. A motion was approved to retain \$17,500 in the Sauk Valley Undesignated Account #8005 and send the remaining \$20,000 to the ELCA to be held in the Charles D. Morris Account #0134.
- Additional funds are needed to cover the cost of repairing and refurbishing the handbells, which are over thirty years old. All hammers and three bells needed to be replaced. The final invoice amount was \$4,753.25; a downpayment of \$2,340 was paid when the bells were shipped for repair. \$2,340 will be withdrawn from the ELCA Music Savings Account, leaving a balance of \$422.35 in that account. The remaining balance on the invoice after applying the ELCA withdrawal is \$1,413.25. The Memorial Committee has approved the use of monies from the memorial accounts of Ruth Cornils, Arlene Johnson, Harvey Johnson, and Alice Davis for to cover the remaining cost of the handbell repairs. A motion carried to approve the use of \$1,413.25 from these memorial funds for the remainder of the repair cost.
- Church Mutual notified the church in a letter dated 10/25/2024 and received on 11/1/2024 that they would not renew our coverage and workman's compensation policy with them. The decision was based on the condition of our property, namely the roof. To our knowledge, the roof was not inspected by them and the decision was based solely on their belief that the roof was last replaced in 1995. Dave Geil had called Church Mutual in September, during the budget process to ascertain what an expected increase might be for the

coming year; no mention of the non-renewal was made at that time. Dave was told at that time that an increase would be in the neighborhood of 25-30%. Dave is actively working with three carriers to obtain appropriate coverage for our facility. It is expected that something will be in place prior to 1/1/2025 but will be at an increased cost. The increase may double our current line item for this coverage. If this goal cannot be accomplished by 1/1, all efforts will be made to establish at least a liability coverage plan during the interim of placing a permanent policy.

- Dave Geil has contacted three local vendors and received bids for replacing the roof on the main building and flashing the educational wing. The bids are Total Construction Services (TCS), \$69,400; Boss Roofing, \$72,215; and Sterling Commercial Roofing, \$150,000. It is recommended that we proceed with TCS. A deposit of one-half of the estimate is required. As stipulated in our constitution (C12.05.d.), the Congregation Council cannot authorize this payment without the congregation's approval. This special meeting of the congregation has been scheduled as stipulated in the constitution and will be held on 12/8/2024.

SAYING THANKS

A special thank you for all that came and supported our All Saints Breakfast. Also to all our young helpers, great job!

*Peace and blessings,
Adam's Rib*

Thank you to everyone who brought cookies for the "Festival of Trees". It was greatly appreciated.

Thank you to those who assisted in preparations for All Saint's Sunday. Special thanks to those who helped Adam's Rib in the breakfast on All Saint's.

Thank you, St. John's Family! Because of your generosity, the Social Ministry Committee delivered 40 scarves, 9 pairs of mittens, 58 pairs of gloves, and 51 hats to the Unit #5 District Office for distribution at the elementary schools of our community. Many children do not have proper coverings for the approaching cold weather. You helped ensure that all children are safe from the cold this winter.





ELCA World Hunger

ELCA World Hunger Speaker

Norm Moline from the ELCA World Hunger Committee will be at St. John's on December 8th to give a talk in honor of ELCA World Hunger's 50th Anniversary. He will have a presentation following the service in the fellowship hall. He will also speak for a few minutes during the service. An offering will be collected in honor of the anniversary.



MUSICIANS WANTED!

MUSICIANS! Please share your gifts with us for the Advent or Christmas season! The children's Christmas program is on December 22 @ 9:30 am and the Christmas Eve candlelight service is at 6:00 pm. Please contact Dawn Zeigler.



SPECIAL CONGREGATION MEETING ON DECEMBER 8TH—PLEASE READ!

The Congregation Council has called a special meeting for Sunday, December 8th, immediately following worship. As mandated by the constitution, the Congregation Council may enter into contracts of more than \$10,000 for items not included in the budget only after approval by the congregation at a Congregation Meeting. This expenditure is needed as a down payment for the installation of a new roof on the building.

Prayer and Care

NEW MINISTRY



St. John's has recently formed a new ministry called "Partners in Prayer and Care Ministry". The goal is to contact members of St. John's who are shut in, living in a nursing home, or going through a difficult time to let them know they are not forgotten and we are here for them.

If you know anyone that would like a call, visit, or any additional help, please let one of our ministry members know or fill out a prayer card located outside the East Room. Members can be found on pg. 10 of this newsletter.

Please also let us know if you would be interested in helping with this ministry. Thank you!

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

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

1 •Julienne Draper*	13 •Jerry and Jackie McCormick	22 •Holly Grim •Alayna Wolfe
3 •Jeremiah Kramer •Mark Smith	15 •Donna Siebert	23 •Newell Cook •Chance Perales
4 •Aleena Kester	18 •Marci Fisher •Dorothy Frey*	28 •Jackie McCormick
5 •Pat Henson •Brantley Judd •Betty Steinke*	19 •Jerry and Mary Lou Baker* •Shawna Kester •Logan White	29 •Brice Taylor
7 •Shawn Wolfe	20 •Tom and Nancy Breed	31 •John and Myra Oelrichs
9 •Kohen Tupper	21 •Nancy Rasmussen* •Shelbi Shipma •Beverly Williamson*	



HELP NEEDED—ALTAR GUILD AND OFFERING COUNTERS!

With the end of the year quickly approaching, new schedules for duties throughout the church will be formulated and mailed. Two such areas where our volunteer base has dwindled are in the weekly offering counting process and setting the table for communion by the Altar Guild volunteers. Offering counters are typically scheduled for one Monday or Tuesday per month and the task usually takes less than an hour. Communion set-up or clean-up is typically scheduled for a month of Sundays and requires less than an hour each week. With

fewer volunteers, most people serve both a clean-up and a setup month during the year. With more volunteers, we could decrease the number of times needed for each person to serve. Please contact Dave Geil (499-0437) or Denise Norman (631-9506) if you are willing to join the offering counters. Contact Denise if you would like to join the Altar Guild. It takes all of us to serve within St. John's. Please consider one or both of these ministry opportunities.

Seeking online information

The internet holds a vast amount of medical information. It's important to not use what you read online to diagnose or treat health conditions. Instead, discuss your concerns with your healthcare team. But if you want additional information, use these tips to tune in to reliable online sources:

- *Check the address* — Sites that end in .gov are from government agencies. Sites with .edu are from government agencies. Sites with .org are generally nonprofit organizations. Sites with .com are from commercial entities. Sites with any ending can be reliable, but use the most caution around .com sites. They may have profit motives that are not always transparent.
- *Check the “About Us” page* — reputable site or app generally has at least basic information about who runs it, which institutions are affiliated with it and who funds it. Also check for a “Contact Us” option, or something similar, for user feedback and questions.
- *Check the date* — Reliable sources tend to include a date on each page, telling you when the information was current. A lack of date doesn't disqualify the site, but proceed with more skepticism.
- *Check the sources* — Reliable sites often list their sources of information usually including links to established guidelines or quality medical studies.
- *Check the privacy* — Be skeptical of site or apps that ask for personal information or use high-pressure sales tactics. Some sites require you to register with an email address and password. But asking for a social security number, credit card or bank information is a red flag. Don't share sensitive information without first checking with a trusted relative or a financial services or medical professional.

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



DECEMBER SPECIAL OFFERINGS

The Congregation Council has designated the December Special Offerings to the April House Children's Advocacy Center of Whiteside County. Please read about the Center. We believe you will be called to make a

generous offering in support of this ministry to safeguard the well-being of abused children and youth.

The April House Mission is to bring together a multidisciplinary team of professionals committed to providing healing and justice for children who have endured physical abuse, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, child sexual abuse materials, neglect, and exposure to violence in a child-focused, trauma-informed environment.

To understand what a Children's Advocacy Center (CAC) is, you must understand what children face without one. Without a CAC, the child may end up having to tell the worst story of his or her life over and over again to doctors, police, lawyers, therapists, investigators, judges, and others. They may have to talk about that traumatic experience in a police station where they think they might be in trouble or may be asked the wrong questions by a well-meaning adult that could hurt the case against the abuser.

When police or child protective services believe a child is being abused, the child is brought to the CAC—a safe, child-focused environment—by a caregiver or other safe adult. At the CAC, the child tells their story once to a trained interviewer who knows the right questions to ask in a way that does not retraumatize the child. Then, a team that includes medical professionals, law enforcement, mental health, prosecution, child protective services, victim advocacy, and other professionals make decisions together about how to help the child based on the interview. This is called the multidisciplinary team (MDT) response and is a core part of the work of CACs. CACs offer referrals to therapy, medical exams, courtroom preparation, victim advocacy and other needed services.

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

- Dorothy Mae Denny, 11/12

WEDDINGS

- None

BAPTISMS

- None

CONFIRMATION STUDENTS

- 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, Paul Wolfe

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

- Rhonda Stutzke
- Aislinn O'Connell

PERSONNEL

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

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

PARTNERS IN PRAYER & CARE

- Shari Baker
- Stan Rasmussen
- Nancy Rasmussen
- Larry Kradle
- Sharon Zinanni
- Jamie Luebke
- Pat Redfield
- Rev. Jacob Gawlik
- Art Frey

SJLC Activities ~ Dec. '24

December Open/Close:
Paul Wolfe

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1 <i>FISH collection</i> 9:30-Worship <i>Acolyte: Kiersten B.</i> <i>Asst.: Chris Rucker</i>	2	3	4 6:00-Worship	5 7:00-Al-Anon	6 4:00-Youth Fundraiser Order Pickup	7
8 9:30-Worship <i>Acolyte: Logan W.</i> <i>Asst.: Mike Doughty</i>	9 6:00-Menz Group 6:00-Finance Committee mtg.	10	11 6:00-Worship	12 5:00-Exec. mtg. 6:30-Moving Beyond the Page 7:00-Al-Anon	13	14 10:00-Social Ministry meeting
15 Poinsettia orders due 9:30-Worship <i>Acolyte: Noah R.</i> <i>Asst.: Jeff Fischer</i> 11:45-Dells Quake mtg. @ Bethel	16	17 6:00-Council mtg	18 <i>Nwsltr. items due</i> 1:30-Parkway HC 2:30-Heritage Woods HC 3:30-Morningside HC 6:00-Worship	19 3:30-Citadel HC 7:00-Al-Anon	20	21
22 9:30-Worship SS Christmas Program <i>Acolyte: Sarah D.</i> <i>Asst.: Teri Holldorf</i>	23	24 Church Office closed @ Noon 6:00-Christmas Eve Service <i>Acolytes: Brynna C. & Hannah G.</i> <i>Asst.: Shawn Wolfe</i> 6:30-NAMI group	25 Church Office closed	26 7:00-Al-Anon	27 9:00-Newsletter Assembly	28
29 9:30-Worship <i>Acolyte: Caylie W.</i> <i>Asst.: Shawn Wolfe</i>	30	31 Church Office closed @ Noon	*HC=Holy Communion			

MOVING BEYOND THE PAGE

Join us for faith, fellowship, and book study on
November 21 & December 12 at 6:30 pm in the
church library. We will be discussing *Night* by
Elie Wiesel.

Please speak with Pastor Jacob to learn more.



IMPORTANT MESSENGER UPDATE—PLEASE READ!

Beginning with the January 2025 monthly newsletter, the publication will no longer be **MAILED** to members and other acquaintances. We will, however, continue to mail the printed copy to our shut-in and nursing home residents. Several options will be available for reading the Messenger. A limited number of printed copies will be available at worship on Sunday

mornings. The remainder of newsletter recipients who received a mailed version will need to sign up to receive an email link to view and read the newsletter. **Please call the church office (815-625-2634) or email Office Manager, Nina Peters, at office@stjohnssterling.org to add your name to this email list.** A second option is to **read the newsletter on St. John's website at www.stjohnssterling.org.** We apologize for any inconvenience this might cause. As our members have decreased, our mailing list numbers have also reduced. We no longer meet the USPS requirements for bulk mailing at a lower cost. Mailing at the first-class rate would increase our mailing costs dramatically. It is for these reasons the Congregation Council made this difficult decision.

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@stjohnssterling.org.

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