

# V i s i o n o t e s



We had a great year with Faith Corps and Soul Troop after school on Wednesdays.

We look forward to VBS in August! (see p. 33 for details)

**Worship Series: Consider the Birds (p. 5)**

**New Director of Faith Formation (p. 8)**

**Serve by Donating: LWR & MAJM (p. 25-7)**

**Omelet Brunch, June 11; Pig Roast July 8-9 (p. 7)**



**St. John's**  
LUTHERAN CHURCH

# WE ARE THE CHURCH TOGETHER

## Worship in the Sanctuary

Saturdays at 5pm and Sundays at 9am

## Livestream Worship on YouTube

Sundays at 9am

## Weekly Online Worship at [www.StJohns-LC.org](http://www.StJohns-LC.org)

Church Office: 608-882-4044, Mon-Thurs, 8am-4pm

### ST. JOHN'S STAFF

Pastor	Matthew Pook
Pastor of Congregational Care	Jerry Tews
Director of Faith Formation	Karla Wickersham
Office Manager & Children's Ministry Director	Chris Cole
Community Life Coordinator	Becca Pook
Custodian	Steve Schmitzer
Financial Director	Deb Herbers
Music Director	Sharon Magee
Communication Coordinator	Alyse Miller
Ministry Coordinator	Carolyn Butts
Technician	Einar Floan
Nursery	Kira Tortomasi

### 2023 CHURCH COUNCIL

President	Jeff Updike
Vice President/Life & Growth	Amy Larson
Secretary/Fellowship	Keith Miller
Treasurer	Brandon Mohrbacher
Building and Grounds	Sean Mangold
Memorials	Dan Millin
Music and Worship	Rena Smith
Mutual Ministry	Julie Creek-Hessler
Parish Education	Bethany Steindl
Social Concerns	Debbe Topel
Stewardship	Eric Peterson
Youth Ministry	Erika Stoker
Youth Representative	Dayne Miller

### Mission Endowment & Scholarship Fund Committee

Rhonda Crans, David Karr, Jenna Mangold,  
Lynda Moseley, Jonathan Schalow

### Mutual Ministry Committee

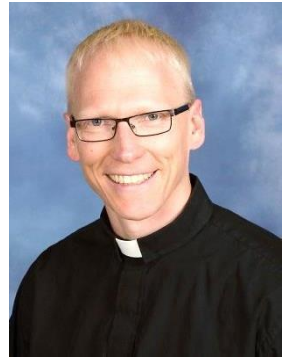
Jeanna Blume, Wanda King, Ann Legris,  
Joy Olson, Gordy Miller, Glenace Smelcer

## Why the Mission & Ministry Moment?

13<sup>th</sup> in a series of “why” questions about what we do as a church, particularly during worship

Worship is not a spectator sport; it’s a full participation experience. Worship isn’t a show put on by the professionals; it’s an experience hosted by leaders who empower all who’ve gathered to have a part. If worship were just for watching and consuming, the congregation would

stay seated and mostly be silent. Because it’s for participating, we have times for all people to stand, to sing, to pray, and to speak.



The preacher is not the only one in the congregation with something personal to say. Every one of us has a story to share – a faith story, a God moment, a spiritual insight, a holy encounter. Yes, you, reading this sentence, have a testimony to share about God in your life! You and I have opportunities nearly every day to speak of faith and share of God’s goodness. Oftentimes these opportunities come along with just one other person present. Or maybe it comes over a meal, or with a small group of people. Once in a while, you may speak to a room of people of diverse ages and backgrounds. This is what our congregation has come to call the Mission & Ministry Moment.

Beginning ten years ago, our congregation made room in our worship service to hear the voices of God’s people speaking from the heart. We had just finished our first experience with *Unbinding Your Heart*, a book and congregational journey of prayer and faith sharing. This is the same 6-week journey we took again this past April and May. Once again, God used this journey to teach us what a treasure our faith is, that we all have stories of God and God’s church to share, and that other people love to hear these stories. Sharing our stories strengthens our faith, spreads faith, and gives others courage to find their own stories to share.

I know of no other congregation that calls a time in worship the “Mission & Ministry Moment.” Some congregations may call it a “temple talk” or a “testimony time.” I’ve given workshops to church leaders about our “Mission & Ministry Moment” (shorthand MMM...because it’s “Mmm Mmm good”), and others have been hopeful to try it. We crafted the

name because it's a time to hear about the mission of God – how God is moving in our lives, and about the ministry of God's church – how God is working through our ministries to make a difference.

In our worship service, the MMM comes after we've sung our gathering song. It's the first thing we do in the "Word" movement of worship, right before the scripture reading. When we first started this in 2013, people were very hesitant. My invitations to speak were often declined. After all, it's not easy to speak in front of a crowd. For many people it is a genuine phobia, undergirded by a fear of judgment and negative evaluation. But over the years, the MMM has caught on beyond our expectations. People have realized that you don't have to be an expert in Bible or theology to have something to share; you just give it some thought and share what you know. We've also learned that our congregation receives these messages with grace and gratitude.

We have a Mission and Ministry Moment at almost every worship service, usually the same on Saturday and Sunday. Rarely do we miss. Sometimes people will step forward and offer to share an insight, story, or experience. Other times I invite someone to share based on what I know they might have within them to say. We give everyone a guideline of 3-5 minutes, and we clarify that the Mission and Ministry Moment is less about information and more about inspiration. We don't want to just hear about a past or future event; tell us why it matters to you. People have shared about impactful church ministries, top ten lists of things for which they are grateful, about people who cultivated their faith, how an experience brought them closer to God, and more. During the MMM we also receive new members, enjoy music or dance, offer special blessings, and celebrate milestones. Over ten years, it's become one of our favorite moments in worship, and I hope it's here to stay.

God is active in our world, in our church, and in your life. What story of faith do you have to share?

In Christ,



"I have told the glad news of deliverance in the great congregation; see, I have not restrained my lips, as you know, O Lord. I have not hidden your saving help within my heart, I have spoken of your faithfulness and your salvation; I have not concealed your steadfast love and your faithfulness from the great congregation."

Psalm 40:9-10

## REACHING UP: WORSHIP & PRAYER

### **“CONSIDER THE BIRDS” – A SUMMER WORSHIP SERIES**

When was the last time you noticed the birds? Have you stopped to hear them sing, watched them soar through the air, noticed how they care for their young? There are billions of birds in the world, far more than the number of people, perhaps



as many as 430 billion! Researchers estimate that about 10,000 bird species live on earth. Do you have a favorite kind of bird? Many species are mentioned in the Bible. The book of Job tells us that the birds are our teachers (Job 12:7-8), and Jesus directs our attention to the birds several times. In June and July, we will “Consider the Birds” through stories in both the Old and New Testaments. This is no wild goose chase! We’ll gain fresh perspective on life and declare the good news of God revealed through these most remarkable creatures.

**June 3 & 4...** Luke 12:22-31; Week 1: Raven

- Sunday Baccalaureate Service: Special Blessings for Graduates

**June 10 & 11...** Genesis 8:1-19; Week 2: Dove

- Sunday Omelet Brunch, after 9am worship

**June 17 & 18...** Exodus 16:1-21; Week 3: Quail

- “Reconciling in Christ” Weekend

**June 24 & 25...** Matthew 10:29-33; Week 4: Sparrow

- Made-To-Order Omelet Brunch, after Sunday 9am worship

**July 1 & 2...** Isaiah 40:28-31; Week 5: Eagle

**July 8 & 9...** Luke 22:54-62; Week 6: Rooster

- Camp Songs in Worship
- Pig Roast and Picnic Potluck, after both worship services

**July 15 & 16...** Matthew 23:37-39; Week 7: Hen

- Worship on the front lawn, Saturday at 5pm, weather permitting
- Youth Mission Trip Commissioning

**July 22 & 23...** Hebrews 12:1-3; Week 8: Cardinal

**July 29 & 30...** Psalm 102:1-17; Week 9: Owl

- Vacation Bible School Leaders Commissioning

## BACCALAUREATE SERVICE FOR HIGH SCHOOL & COLLEGE GRADUATES



Every spring St. John's hosts a baccalaureate service to honor the graduating class. On **Sunday, June 4, 2023**, we'll celebrate the accomplishments of students earning diplomas in high school and degrees from college and beyond.

What a joy for the church to bless our graduates and send them into future endeavors!

## RIC WELCOME WEEKEND ON JUNE 24-25

St. John's voted to approve our Welcome Statement in January 2019, a statement that explicitly welcomes a wide variety of people who have traditionally been excluded from the church. At that time, we also voted to become a Reconciling in Christ (RIC) congregation. As we strive to live into our Welcome Statement and to uphold our commitments as an RIC congregation, we will celebrate RIC Weekend, *Created Whole*, June 24-25.



## OUTDOOR WORSHIP ON JULY 15



Grab your lawn chairs and blankets, and join St. John's for worship outdoors this summer. We'll meet on the church lawn, right in front of the building, on Saturday, July 15, for worship at 5pm. It will be a complete service of Holy Communion, with songs, sermon, children's message, and more. The

outdoor setting allows us to enjoy Creation and worship the Creator. Come one, come all! We've got plenty of room outdoors to worship the Lord! *In case of rain, worship will be indoors in the sanctuary.*

## **REACHING WITHIN: SPIRITUAL GROWTH & FRIENDSHIP**

### **12<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL OMELET BRUNCH FUNDRAISER – JUNE 11**



After 9am worship on Sunday, June 11, St. John's will enjoy a delicious time of fellowship. Some of our own favorite chefs will be ready to cook your made-to-order omelet. Come kick off the summer and celebrate the blessing of life and Christ-centered friendships.

Proceeds benefit the High School Ministry's trip to Lake Traverse Reservation in South Dakota. **Invite friends and guests to enjoy a hearty breakfast and support St. John's 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> graders at this annual event.**

### **PIG ROAST AND PICNIC POTLUCK – JULY 8 & 9**

We will enjoy a time of fellowship and feasting with a summer Pig Roast and Picnic Potluck following 5pm worship on Saturday, July 8, and following 9am worship on Sunday, July 9. Keith Lynn will roast the pig for us; bring a side dish or dessert to share!



### **READER INVITATION**

Do you sponsor a child with Compassion International or another organization? Would you be willing to tell us more about that? Contact Chris Cole in the church office at [office@stjohns-lc.org](mailto:office@stjohns-lc.org).

**MORNING PRAYER SERVICE, TUESDAYS @8:30am**  
St. John's Prayer Chapel; a 20-minute service of prayer  
You are invited. All are welcome.



## **CHURCH COUNCIL HIRES KARLA WICKERSHAM TO JOIN OUR STAFF**

After an extensive search and interview process, the church council is pleased to announce that Karla Wickersham has accepted the position of Director of Faith Formation. Karla will join our staff on June 19 in this full-time position that coordinates learning and service ministries for all ages.

### **MEET OUR NEW DIRECTOR OF FAITH FORMATION**

Greetings! My name is Karla Wickersham, and my family and I have been members of St. John's for the past 10 years. I grew up in northern Wisconsin in the town of Merrill. My immediate family and I attended Saint Stephen's UCC church there. During that time, I enjoyed going to church and accomplished all of the things – I was baptized, completed communion, affirmed my faith in confirmation, and spent many summers at church camp. I met some wonderful families. Some of those family connections ended up in a lot of weekend babysitting jobs.



Through all of it, I have always felt God in my heart. It has always been easy for me to be kind, helpful, of service, loving, and forgiving. I believe I was blessed with parents and experiences that truly helped shape those traits that are alive and well within me today. With that said, it was early on that I felt my calling was to be a teacher. I was not only going to teach about my favorite subject, social studies, but also teach and show students how to be moral, kind, and productive citizens within a community. I have been teaching social studies at Evansville High School for the last 22 years.



## June/July 2023 Visionotes

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When I'm not at school, my husband and I enjoy staying active. We have three boys, Andrew (16), Matthew (14), and Joshua (11). We love to watch them play all kinds of sports. They are in football, basketball, and baseball. We also spend a lot of time outdoors. My husband and I often will get on the bike trail to ride or walk.



In addition to being active outdoors, I have been an active member of St. John's too. I am a member of the altar guild, a confirmation leader, and have even spent the last couple of summers teaching at Vacation Bible School. All of these things have been a part of my faith journey, and they continue to teach and show me how to love everyone and help one another. It is important for me to continue to learn how to be the best Christian I can be; some days are better than others. I try to guide not only myself, but also my family and my neighbors in the Christian way... even if that means to take an extra few steps on a snowy afternoon in Wisconsin to help snow blow their portion of the sidewalk.

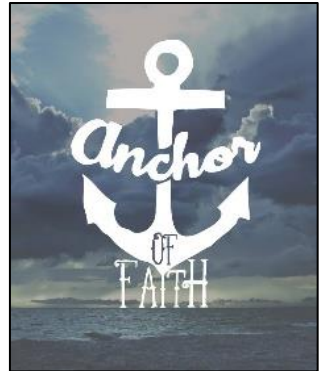
I think it's so important that we all learn to live moral, loving, and forgiving lives. St. John's church continues to reinforce all of that by providing so many opportunities for all ages. I am grateful that my family and I can continue to practice our faith here. It has taught and shown us and so many others the purpose of God in our lives. It has been a place that radiates healthy activity, as well as a place of peace and tranquility. That's why we love it here: St. John's has allowed my family and me to continue our faith journey together. Pastor Matt has taught us how to commit and live a life that is in the truth of God's word and no other.

*Please join us in welcoming Karla to her ministry with us on staff!*

## ANCHORS OF FAITH

### *A series for adults to explore the foundations of Christianity*

For those who grew up active in the church, the beliefs and practices of our faith have been rooted into their hearts and minds over the years. Lifelong Christians have anchored their lives in scripture and sacraments, worship, and prayer. But for those who did not grow up actively engaged in the church, the treasure of faith in Jesus may be still largely unknown. Those less familiar with Christianity ask many great questions about who God is, how to read the Bible, what God wants for our lives, and how to pray. Even lifelong Christians delight in revisiting the foundations of Christian faith.



In a 7-week small group series on Sunday evenings this summer, we're inviting adults to explore the anchors of our faith: the Bible, the Church, Holy Baptism, Holy Communion, the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments. No question is off limits; no experience necessary. We'll soak together in God's amazing grace. Contact the church office to join. *We meet Sundays, 7-8pm: June 11, June 18, June 25, July 9, July 30, August 6, August 27.*

### STAY CONNECTED WITH ST. JOHN'S



Website: [StJohns-LC.org](http://StJohns-LC.org)



Facebook: [facebook.com/St-Johns-Lutheran-Church-Evansville-WI-145437998849063/](https://facebook.com/St-Johns-Lutheran-Church-Evansville-WI-145437998849063/)  
(no account needed to view)



Twitter: [twitter.com/StJohns\\_53536](https://twitter.com/StJohns_53536)  
(no account needed to view)



Daily Nudge sign-up (text message devotions):  
[trunc.us/dB47CB](https://trunc.us/dB47CB)

## **REFLECTIONS OF FAITH FROM SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS**

St. John's is proud of all our graduating high school seniors. They have been leaders in our youth ministry and servants in the church. St. John's is pleased to be awarding four scholarships to high school graduates as they pursue higher education. (Another ten scholarships will soon be announced for returning college students.) We are pleased to share portions of their scholarship essays to offer a glimpse of their faith and the impact of our church on their lives.

### **Elizabeth Halverson**

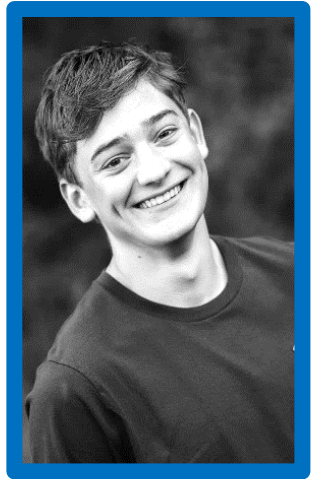
"I've always enjoyed being a member of St. John's. The church has made me a better person and will continuously help me grow a stronger faith. I opened up more when I started confirmation. Prior to confirmation, I was nervous in Sunday school. Being from a different school district (Albany) and not being familiar with the kids my age was uncomfortable. I soon realized that I had amazing leaders and a small group that helped me feel like I belonged. Soon after, Pastor Matt introduced me to Lutherdale. At Lutherdale, I learned about others' faith journeys and started to feel my own.



"Being involved with St. John's has given me so much more than I realized. I've grown in my faith, and I'm a better person. It has given me a better understanding of how to help others in their community. Being a faithful servant helped me make one of my biggest choices in my life. I want to pursue a health science field of study to further my education and assist others. I love helping people and doing service projects. Everything done through St. John's has made me realize that I can continue to help my community in the future. St. John's has been right by my side, just like God is."

**Hayden Kraus**

“I have been a member of St. John’s for the past ten years. I was baptized catholic, but my family wanted to attend St. John’s because of all the activities they provided for children and families. As we began our faith journey at St. John’s, we quickly realized it was a great place to be. I attended Sunday School, Bible School, had my first communion, and was confirmed at St. John’s.



“Confirmation for me was challenging and fun.

Middle School is hard which came with a lot of different feelings. Pastor Matt showed me grace and compassion and shared a story of when he lost his best friend. He checked on me frequently knowing I was having a hard time. The lessons I learned while being in confirmation are ones I will take with me in life – grace, dignity, forgiveness, and understanding. One of my fondest memories is meeting Dee and Rollie Jeans. They were so kind to me and very eager to share their faith. They showed interest in my schoolwork as well as basketball and football. They even attended my confirmation ceremony. Those are the type of relationships you make at St. John’s – forever ones. Because of St. John’s Lutheran Church, I have developed a deeper loving relationship with God and a much deeper appreciation for helping and benefiting humankind.”

**Tucker Peterson**



“My experience with St. John's can most accurately be described as joyous. I cannot think of any other community that is so enriching. Throughout my time in middle school I spent countless nights at St. John's as I sought my confirmation. I remember my excitement on Wednesdays to have fun and explore my faith with friends. These feelings were further fulfilled at events such as Lutherdale. I adore how St. John's helped to

connect me with my faith and how Pastor Matt made church lively and gleeful.

“What I appreciate most about St. John's is its emphasis on community. Fellowship is highly prioritized. Anyone and everyone is welcome and accepted. St. John's truly embodies the notion that a church is not a place but a people. I will be forever grateful for how my time at St. John's has enhanced my character.”



**Noah Schwengels**

“I have been involved with St. John’s since 2013. Going to St. John’s has allowed me to grow in faith and find Jesus.

“After being involved with Soul Troop, I began confirmation, which was by far the biggest part of my faith journey. This taught me the real meaning of what it is to be connected with God and Jesus at all times. [The experiences I have had at St. John’s] not only help me now but will also help me in college. It helps

me know that God is with me in good times and in bad. It also helps me to know that when I make mistakes, God will forgive me. God will always be with me. God will help me through difficult times and will help me to learn from my mistakes.”

**ST. JOHN’S WELCOME STATEMENT**

Jesus commands us to love one another. We welcome all, regardless of race or culture, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or relationship status. We welcome all without regard to addictions, physical or mental health, past misdeeds, socio-economic circumstances, immigration status, or anything that too often divides us. We welcome and celebrate diversity and uniqueness.

**We welcome you.**

## **2023 GRADUATES – HIGH SCHOOL AND BEYOND**

### **High School**

**Brayden Engelkens** – Blackhawk Technical College for Business Communication Management

**Adison Etringer** – UW-Platteville for Mechanical Engineering (Biomedical)

**Kendra Finrock** – University of Tennessee-Knoxville for Mathematics (Air Force ROTC)

**Brianna Grover** – Madison College for Obstetric Sonograph

**Elizabeth Halverson** – Madison College for Radiology

**Samantha Ihlenfeldt** – Basic Training for the Air Guard, then UW-Madison for Psychology

**Lee Jorgensen** – Work

**Hayden Kraus** – University of Dubuque for Sports Management and Communication (minor in Finance and Coaching)

**Caleb Maguigad** – UW-LaCrosse for Exercise Sports Science

**Maria Messling** – Western Illinois University for Law Enforcement and Justice Administration

**Dayne Miller** – Work

**Tucker Peterson** – UW-Madison for Mechanical Engineering

**Branden Ruthe**

**Noah Schwengels** – Fox Valley Technical College for Film & Videography

**Tristan Steindl** – Madison College for Welding

**Kira Tortomasi** – Edgewood College for Child Life

### **Higher Education**

**Bryan Bartlett**, UW-Madison, Mechanical Engineering (certificate in Computer Science)

**Kelli Butts**, Blackhawk Technical College, Nursing

**Nolan Hammond**, Syracuse University, Sports Analytics (minor in Economics and Finance)

**Emma Jorgensen**, UW River Falls, Agriculture Business

**Alyse Miller**, Madison College, Visual Communication

**Ashton Miller**, Edgewood College, Nursing

**Grant Powell**, Edgewood College, Business

**Ashley Rudser**, UW-Milwaukee, English and Italian (minor in Music)

**Kellan Sunness**, UW-Madison, Economics

**Mia Tortomasi**, University of Minnesota – Twin Cities; Speech, Language and Hearing Sciences (minor in Spanish)

**Kaylee Trawicki**, Blackhawk Technical College, Human Resources

**Nathaniel Rudser**, UW-Madison, Mechanical Engineering



## MAKING CONNECTIONS: ST. JOHN'S NEWEST MEMBERS



### **Melissa Fisher, Kennedy and Jack**

Originally from Oklahoma, Melissa is a nurse working in telemedicine. She has an MBA and is passionate about finding resources for those in need and less fortunate. She was looking for a church family for the kids, and they found it at St. John's. Her daughter Kennedy is in 4<sup>th</sup> grade and enjoys Soul Troop and dance. Jack is in 1<sup>st</sup> grade and has lots of fun at Faith Corps. Melissa looks

forward to her pending wedding with Mike Harnack. They all like to play sports, watch sports, play games, and travel. Melissa was attracted to the welcoming congregation. "The church was and still is a place of comfort for me."

### **Steven McComb**

Although Steve did not have much church background, he was attracted to Pastor Matt's sermons and engaged in worship. He is married to Abigail (Farnsworth) McComb, who has been connected to St. John's her whole life. He is dad to Alliyah (16) and Brennyn (13). Steve enjoys doing home repairs and renovations. He works on cars and anything else he can work on with his hands. When he's not working, he likes to fish and play sports outdoors. Most of the week he is a process engineer with Angi Energy Systems in Janesville. And he will help out at the family ceramics shop from time to time (Farnsworth Ceramics, in downtown Evansville).





**Jenny Katzenmeyer**

Jenny grew up in Evansville at Zion Lutheran Church (Center Township). After some time away from church, it was a few funeral services and worship at Christmas that attracted her to St. John's. She even lent her singing voice for caroling with us in December! Jenny has worked at JC McKenna Middle School for 24 years, working with students with special needs. She has two grown sons, Chase and Gunner. Chase was just married in May, and Gunner is a track and field athlete while being a student at UW Platteville. She loves spending time with her boys.



**Jack Gibson**

Jack spent much of his life in Wisconsin. He retired from the telephone company in Madison after 32 years, then he and his wife Sharon moved out to California to be near their two adult children and three grandchildren. After living there for 19 years, they returned to Wisconsin in 2016 to enjoy their retirement near family and friends. Jack likes to make beautiful things out of wood and care for his yard (in spite of the bunnies.) Jack now joins Sharon in membership with St. John's.



**Erik and Sheryl Gould, Derek and Dawson**

Friends and neighbors invited the Gould family to St. John's. Erik works as a Systems Administrator at Epic, and Sheryl is a veterinarian at Badger Veterinary Hospital in Beloit. When they are not working, Sheryl, Derek, and Dawson are on the ice playing hockey. Erik enjoys time in the skies working on his pilot's license. They enjoy playing volleyball, baseball, or soccer. And they also love to travel and host foreign exchange

students; right now it is Lana from France. St. John's was a good fit because it is close to home, involves children, and serves in the community. The Goulds appreciate that all are welcome at St. John's.

**Vicki Hackbarth**

You may have seen Vicki in worship with a certain special someone...Carl Anderson. It was he and Pastor Matt that attracted her to St. John's. She and Carl take care of horses, dogs, cats, and lambs over on County Road A. In her retirement, Vicki likes to ride horses, be outside, bake, and love on any animal. Together, they also connect with Carl's three daughters and three grandchildren.

**Ryan Lindemann**

Ryan works at JDR Engineering in Madison, but his heart is in Evansville. He and Jana Crocker were married just over a year ago. Ryan has two children, Lyle (15) and Maelle (13). He likes to spend his free time hunting, fishing, golfing, or playing soccer. Coaching and cooking are also two of his specialties. The Crocker family brought Ryan to St. John's, but we know God is the one who drew Ryan to stay.





### **Sandra Lindemann**

Sandra retired from the City of Evansville, and she enjoys using her hands to make a difference in the world. You will see her quilting both Tuesdays and Thursdays with St. John's; it's been a life-giving connection for her. Sandra found St. John's through friends; she attended a concert at St. John's and came as a guest for worship. Sandra is not only an artist with her quilts, but she also makes beautiful cards. Speaking of cards, she plays cards with her monthly card

club. Sandra has three adult sons. (Read about Ryan above!) She loves animals, landscaping, and gardening. And she is a super sports fan, especially football, baseball, and soccer.

### **Kurt Bennett**

Both born and raised in Evansville, Kurt and Madison (Hennig) moved back to town after ten years in the Twin Cities. Madison grew up at St. John's, and Kurt is now joining her in membership; Pastor Matt officiated their wedding in 2018. Together they have two dogs, two rabbits, and some chickens are on the way. His day job is at Medtronic working on quality and medical reporting. The Bennetts are working on filling their aquarium after the move, and Kurt likes to dabble in woodworking and 3D printing. Madison also likes to create with material; she is a quilter. Welcome back to Evansville!





**Luke, Sr and Dana Vike,  
Luke, Jr and Lauren**

The Vikes were attracted to St. John’s acceptance of all people regardless of race, age, sexual orientation, etc. “All people are created equally and should be able to worship together.” Dana works at the WI Department of Justice as a Program & Policy Supervisor. Luke Sr is a 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher at Edgerton

Community Elementary School. He coaches Luke Jr’s summer baseball team in Evansville. Luke Jr (5<sup>th</sup> grade) also plays on a tournament baseball team. The family likes fishing, baseball, and music. Lauren is a 1<sup>st</sup> grader who participates regularly in Faith Corps. Welcome Vike Family!



**OUR MISSION STATEMENT**

*Reaching Up, Reaching Out, Reaching Within...  
because GOD reaches out to us.*

**OUR CORE VALUES**

- |                                  |                                    |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <i>Inspiring Worship</i>         | <i>Uplifting Prayer</i>            |
| <i>Faithful Service</i>          | <i>Caring Invitation</i>           |
| <i>Lifelong Spiritual Growth</i> | <i>Christ-Centered Friendships</i> |

**CONGREGATIONAL CARE FAITH CIRCLE**

Pastor Jerry facilitates a Congregational Care Faith Circle twice monthly on Tuesdays. This confidential gathering is open to all who are enduring hardships such as illness, loss through death or moving, physical deterioration, unexpected caregiving, or just life in general. God has made a place that we can gather safely, for quality conversation, in the presence of people who care – the Church.

**Come on Tuesdays, June 13 and 27, and July 11 and 25, 1:00-2:00pm.**



## **REACHING OUT: SERVICE & INVITATION**

### **MISSION PARTNER: STUDYING AT WARTBURG SEMINARY**

**By Ashley Bowman**

This has been a difficult semester. I've had to confront a lot of the harmful things that I experienced in Christian communities in the past. I didn't realize how much I had been carrying with me until going through some of my coursework. More than ever, I have relied heavily on the support I've gotten from St. John's. My Hebrew Bible project for the semester was on



Jonah 3. I found myself focused on the Israelite people who would have been reading the text while in exile, holding out hope that God had a plan for them even though they were struggling.

This semester I learned that every sermon I preach should be a proclamation of the good news of the gospel, no matter what. I learned that in the midst of a hopeless situation in Nazi Germany, Dietrich Bonhoeffer still held onto hope that the church could triumph over evil, and never completely stopped believing in the goodness of (at least some of) his fellow humans. I reflected about the protective factors that LGBTQ+ young people have in our town and in our church community, and learned some of the ways that we can continue to grow in building trust and support.

This summer I will be a chaplain intern: working in a hospital; visiting Evansville's assisted living homes; calling and visiting with people; and spending time praying one-on-one with whoever is in need. Stop by for drop-in chaplain hours sometime after worship, or give me a call – I would be honored to pray with you!

Cell phone: 518-577-7796

Email: [AshleyBowman915@gmail.com](mailto:AshleyBowman915@gmail.com)



## COUNCIL MATTERS

Positive forward momentum was the theme of our most recent Church Council meeting. We continue to hear from new and long-term members about a strong spirit of welcome and vitality in our congregation. Council discussed plans to organize a congregation-wide prayer network to lift up every household. A draft of a comprehensive personnel manual is ready for additional readers and revisions. Council voted to pursue St. John's hosting our own three-year-old preschool in the south basement, pending a qualified teacher. This would pick up the baton from Pathway Preschool, our wonderful tenant for the last 10 years, when it closes at the end of this school year (Pathway also offered 4K, which the school district has brought into its own facility and staffing). Council named building projects to be prioritized by the Building & Grounds Committee, including a new roof, the possibility of solar panels, the use of the south basement (where Pathway 4K was located), and an assessment of previous building plans prior to the onset of the pandemic. A total of \$15,000 has been designated and approved for college students for next year from the three scholarship funds of St. John's. Council approved the purchase of new Bibles from Memorial Funds designated for education. Pastor Matt presented 17 confirmation students for full membership.

## DINNERS AT THE LAKE – JUNE 10, JULY 14, AUGUST 11, 4:30-7PM



Head to Elkhorn for a Wisconsin Fish Fry at Lutherdale! Experience a delicious meal with a great view AND support the ministry of Lutherdale! Wisconsin Fish Fry includes: Hand-breaded Cod (baked or fried), Parmesan Lemon

Oven Roasted Red Potatoes, Macaroni & Cheese, Seasoned Vegetable, Rye Roll w/ Butter, Creamy Coleslaw, Tartar Sauce & Sweet Treat. Buy meal tickets in advance, online, or at the door. Sales tax & gratuity included in price of meal ticket. \$18 Adult | \$10 Youth (10 & under) Dining options include inside and outside dining, or carryout service. Non-alcoholic beverage included for dine-in service.



## MY FAITHFUL SERVICE

BY RENAE SMITH



I really don't feel as if I have "served" nearly as much as I have "been served" by God and St. John's. While our boys were growing up, I wanted to be a part of their faith education and was fortunate to serve many years as a Sunday School teacher and confirmation leader. It was truly rewarding to see my own children and their peers growing in faith and service for God. Vacation Bible School was always a highlight for us with the music, games, projects, and so much more. It has always amazed me how God provides the energy, materials, time, and even ideas for everything, from Sunday School crafts to Bible School games and Confirmation connections. God was and is clearly there beside me with every step I take.



St. John's served me in the past and continues today with gentle nudges to take advantage of so very many fleeting opportunities. At this point in my life, I feel honored to serve in other ways – Church Council being my newest commitment. Although a "newbie," I am learning while I continue to grow in faith. I am amazed with the positive and supportive energy that I see all around me. One of the things I love most about our Church (and also follows the model Jesus set for us) is our congregation's patient willingness to not judge or criticize, leaving room for small steps with lots of love. Thank you, St. John's!



"If you think you are too small to be effective, you have never been in bed with a mosquito."  
– **Betty Reese** (mother of Reese Witherspoon)



**FAITHFUL SERVICE HIGHLIGHT:**

**ST. MARK'S FREE FRIDAY COMMUNITY MEAL**

**By Amy Floan**

Jesus said, "For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me." - Matthew 25:35

Once a month, servant workers from St. John's and I head into Madison and feed Jesus. We arrive at St. Mark's Lutheran Church on Madison's south side at 10:30am, ready to work



where we are needed to get the Free Friday Community Meal ready to be

served at noon. Often our tasks are to clean and cut vegetables for a lettuce salad, to clean and cut fruit for a fruit salad, to wash dishes, and to set the tables. Every Friday people gather at St. Mark's for this free community meal. Sometimes people come to the Friday meal for economic reasons, sometimes they

come to be part of a community, and sometimes they come for both. Whatever the reason, they come! The hot meal is delicious, filling, and nutritious. Volunteers have a chance, too, to enjoy the meal and sit with others who have come for lunch. We clean up the leftovers, sending as much as we can with the people who came, do dishes, and wash the tables. Along the way, we are fed – physically and spiritually.



*If you are interested in helping with this ministry, contact the St. John's office.*

## CHARITY HIGHLIGHT: LUTHERAN BIBLE TRANSLATORS

Fewer than 550 of the more than 7000 languages in the world have translations of the complete Bible.

**About 180 million people today do not have any Scripture available in their language.**

Most of these people belong to minority languages, and many struggle to maintain their identity in the shadow of majority culture. Often they have no written language of their own. Lutheran Bible Translators (LBT) is working to change this. As an independent Lutheran organization, their mission is to make God's Word accessible to those who do not yet have it in the language of their hearts. God is transforming the lives of people around the world as they read and use God's Word in their heart language.



Lutheran Bible  
Translators

Since 2018, St. John's has supported Rev. Carl and Kelsey Grulke and family in their mission work with LBT. They have been in Botswana, Africa, to help in translation projects for people who do not have God's written word in their own language. Like all LBT missionaries, the Grulkes team up with local partners to navigate the intricacies and challenges of translation. Their mission inspired us to partner with them to help share God's word with more of God's people. Our 2023 daily ministry budget includes a commitment of \$1000 for the Grulke's mission in Botswana.

## STEWARDSHIP WORD OF THE MONTH



**Private or Personal** – Money is one of those topics that people tend to avoid in social conversations. Our culture has made finances to be a very *private* matter. You have to know someone pretty well to ask them how much they paid for their house, the amount of their annual salary, or their total liquid assets. Is it a good thing that we treat our finances so privately? What if we dropped our defenses about money? What if we truly believed that money is a gift

from God and that it's our job to manage it? Instead of holding our money so privately to our hearts, we could learn a lot from each other through honest talk about money; we could better encourage each other to use our money well. Our finances don't have to be private. Yes, they will probably always be a very *personal* matter. But our personal finances also impact many other people. When we pool our personal finances together in generosity, we can do something more, something greater as a community. In this way, our *personal* finances become beautifully *communal* and even holy.

**FAITHFUL SERVICE OPPORTUNITY FOR THE MONTH:**

**MADISON AREA JAIL MINISTRY**

“We hold Christian values, grounded in the Lutheran tradition, that all people are children of a benevolent and forgiving God and are worthy of compassion and love. We pray for a just, safe, and compassionate legal system that recognizes the power of people to transform their lives and communities.” This is the mission of Madison Area Jail Ministry. This vital



ministry is collecting new or gently used items to support those being released in the coming months. This is an opportunity for St. John's to be generous and put God's Love into action for our neighbors.

- Men's shoes sizes 10-12
- Women's shoes sizes 7-9
- Gender-neutral pants
- Summer clothing

# 5 WAYS TO GIVE

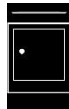
**AUTOMATED**



**MAIL**



**DROPBOX**



**ONLINE**



**IN PERSON**



## BABY CARE KITS NEEDED FOR LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF (LWR)

A new baby is a blessing, but keeping a new baby healthy, clean, and comfortable can take a lot of resources. Through June St. John's is collecting items for Baby Care Kits. The items included provide the basics a family needs to care for their newest members and introduce them to the world with



pride. **Donate any or all items, and a team will assemble them.**

Each Baby Care Kit includes the following, size 6-24 months:

- **Two** lightweight cotton t-shirts (no onesies)
- **Two** long- or short-sleeved gowns or sleepers (without feet)
- **Two** receiving blankets, medium-weight cotton or flannel, or crocheted or knitted with lightweight yard, between 36"-52" square
- **Four cloth diapers, flat fold preferred**
- **One** jacket, sweater, or sweatshirt with hood, *or include a baby cap*
- **Two** pairs of socks
- **One hand towel (dark color recommended)**
- **Two** bath-size bars (4-5 oz each) of gentle soap, in original wrapper; no mini or hotel size bars
- **Two** diaper pins or large safety pins



### GREEN LIVING TIP By Lindsay Trustem

Summertime is the perfect time to visit a local Farmers Market or roadside farm stand. Buying local food supports farmers in our area and reduces the number of miles food has to travel. When fresh food doesn't have to travel far, chemicals don't have to be added for preservation. Buying fresh food locally also gives you the opportunity to buy what's in season. Some local places you can support:

**Market at the Willow**, Evansville, Sundays 11:30am-2pm – Starts 6/18!

**Honey Hills Farm Stand**, Hwy 92 & Hwy 14, Brooklyn,

Carter & Gruenewald parking lot OR 15933 W Holt Rd.

**Beloit Farmers Market**, Saturdays 8am-1pm

**Dane County Farmers Market**, Saturdays 6:15am-1:45pm



## SCHOOL KITS FOR LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF (JULY AND AUGUST)



Education is one of the strongest tools a community has for breaking the cycle of poverty. Lutheran World Relief (LWR) School Kits contain essential supplies to help children – and in some cases, adults – continue learning in the face of serious obstacles. That learning leads to a better life for them, their families, and their communities. This glorifies God.

The items below are included in each kit. All items should be new.

- **Four** 70-sheet notebooks of wide- or college-ruled paper,
- **One** 30-centimeter ruler
- **One** pencil sharpener
- **One** pair of blunt scissors (safety scissors with embedded steel blades work well)
- **Five** unsharpened #2 pencils with erasers
- **Five** black or blue ballpoint pens (no gel ink)
- **One** box of 16 or 24 crayons
- **One** 2 ½" eraser



Dozens of St. John's people stepped into service with all kinds of projects for our Spring Community Service Day. Jill and Stella Karr picked up trash at Wind Prairie Park.

**Save the date of September 10, 2023, for our Fall Community Service Day.**

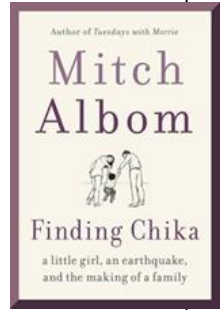
## WHATCHA READING?

BY JEFF HERBERS

Finding Chika by Mitch Albom

Born days before a devastating earthquake in poverty-ridden Haiti. Losing her mother at the birth of her little brother. Being taken in by an aunt and then being lucky enough to be accepted into the Have Faith Haiti Orphanage run by Mitch Albom. All by the age of 3.

Mitch Albom shares the true story of how Chika Jeune joins he and his wife Janine to become a family. Albom writes this as a way to relieve the grief of a parent who has lost a child. Each chapter documents another year of Chika's life and the progression of a non-curable disease. The book shares the struggle of searching for new cures. The fear and frustration of not being in control. The resignation that there is nothing left to do but pray. All this it done in a way that engages the reader to its ultimate ending. I will admit that this wasn't what I would call a fun, exciting read—but rather a poignant, heart-felt expression of family, faith, and loving our neighbor.



Last  
minute  
care  
before  
the big  
occasion



**MINISTRY WITH OUR CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

**CONGRATULATIONS AND BLESSINGS TO OUR 2023 CONFIRMANDS**



2023 Confirmands. *Front row:* Isabella Ganoung, Grace Nienhaus, Cade Kleisch, Alyn Holland, Mia Burton. *Second row:* Ella Samuelson, Emilio Guzman, Corinne Walker, Miranda Andersen, Olivia Schmitzer, Kayla Trustem, Pastor Matt. *Third row:* Matthew Wickersham, Logan Ihlenfeldt, Noah Bitz, Kolten Wallisch, Zi’Ahn Lyons, Grayson Kraus.



Laying on of hands by family, friends, and small groups.



## MILESTONE REFLECTIONS ON THE LIFELONG JOURNEY OF FAITH

**Isabella Ganoung:** God is my guidance. When I am unsure, have fear, or just lost, I know who I can turn to. I sort of think of Jesus as my teacher. Living through his way strengthens my body, mind, and soul. My faith has been a part of my life for a very long time. I consider church a safe and supportive space. **I plan to keep God a part of my life every day by praying and being thankful for what I have.** I will also make choices based on his way. I will try to serve others as often as I can in ways big and small, through meal packaging/delivering, cleaning, and most importantly serving with respect and kindness. One of the many gifts God has blessed me with is public speaking. I will continue to spread his word through worship.



**Alyn Holland:** When I was 8 years old, I lost my mom to a car accident. It made me very sad, and I think I was probably a little angry, wondering why God took my mom from me. When I was in 5<sup>th</sup> grade my grandma asked if I wanted to start going to church with her. I said yes because I wanted to learn about God and thought it would make me feel closer to my mom. After going for a little bit, I decided I wanted to be baptized. In my journey I now see God when I am with my family, playing basketball with friends, in listening to music, and just in everyday things. For example, I'm pretty sure that when I see cardinals outside my window, it is God's way of letting me know my mom is with me and watching over me. **I feel thankful and peaceful when I'm in confirmation class learning more about God and how God loves us all and saves us.** I know that I have many people in my life that are supporting me and my journey with God. I'm still learning and have more to learn, but I look forward to continuing my journey with the Lord. I know that God is with me always, and I look forward to all of the amazing things that he has in store for my life.





**Mia Burton:** I see God in many places, especially in those in my confirmation group. My confirmation group has been meeting since 6th grade and consists of six of my classmates and our leader Johann. Our group meets every Wednesday at the church for praise, group discussions about our faith, and getting to know each other more deeply. I have grown closer to church and God because of my relationships within our

confirmation group. We always share our high and lows and can support each other. I look forward to meeting with them each week. **God guides me deeper in faith through the discussions we have, and I feel close to God during these times.** I am thankful that God has put these people in my life; through them and the church I am being led in the right direction. I know God is with me not only here at church but throughout my life.



**Ella Samuelson:** I see Jesus in my life every day, at school, sports, home, and other places I go in my everyday life. My grandma Barb has been a big part of my faith. My family goes to visit my grandparents pretty often, and when we do we go to their church. My grandma does a lot for her church and has taken me with her to help with these activities since I was young. **She has shown me new ways to see God through how she serves and helps people** – helping with Sunday school, serving and delivering meals,

gathering new ideas for her church, and so much more.

She appreciates her church community and plays an active role in this community. She has taught me that serving others can be fun, and that I have talents to give to my community through helping out with planting trees, VBS, and helping to clean up our community during service days. I have also experienced Jesus through family traditions like praying with my family daily before we leave for school, reading of the Christmas story from the Bible before we open any presents, and giving to those in need. **All these family traditions help me to see and live in the way of Jesus.**

## SOUTH DAKOTA TRIP FOR HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH: JULY 16 – 21

Twelve high school youth and three adults are heading to the Lake Traverse Reservation in South Dakota. They will drive to an experience where they will meet God and neighbors from a different culture and part of the country. Pray for God to draw near to them and shine through them as they travel this summer. Pray for each by name, for Jesus to reveal more of who he is to each of them.



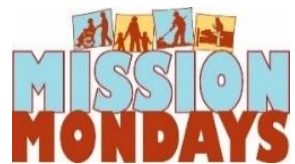
**Youth:** Saffron Blume, Rocky Jaworski, Charlotte Nyhus, Mikayla Samuelson, Sawyer Hookham, Kenny Gleed, Jack Burton, Andrew Wickersham, Colten Gaulke, Isabelle Nellen, Emma Hammond, and Colton Richards



**Adults:** Pastor Matt, Jessica Nellen, Michelle Samuelson

## MISSION MONDAYS FOR YOUTH – JUNE 26, JULY 10, & AUG. 7

All youth who have completed grades 8-12 are invited to join together in service for a couple hours and play together for a couple hours.



Come for one, two, or all days. Text Pastor Matt if you plan to serve!

Kira and Shen Tortomasi served with our group last year at Second Harvest Food Bank.

## TWISTS AND TURNS: VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL (VBS)

### REGISTRATION IS LIVE!

Online registration is open! Head to St. John's website for the link.

Or email Chris Cole, Children's Ministry Director,  
[children@stjohns-lc.org](mailto:children@stjohns-lc.org).



### VBS: SERVANT LEADERS NEEDED

Our 2023 Vacation Bible School (VBS) is July 31-August 4, 9am-12pm and St. John's is looking for servant-hearted people to fill many roles! I am sure there is a place for your talents during this week.

Here are some VBS Leader FAQs:

- **What leadership positions are available?** Rotation Leaders (teach a small group of children using a planned curriculum); Snack Leaders (help prep, serve, and clean up); Small Group Leaders (middle/high school youth that care for, guide and engage with a small group of children)
- **As a Rotation Leader, do I need to plan activities?** You do not have to plan these, we are willing to choose activities from our curriculum. If you want to help plan, that would be great!
- **As a Rotation Leader, do I need to gather and prep supplies?** Most of this will be taken care of for you; there may be some minor daily prep that you will assist with.
- **If I wanted to be a Snack Leader, do I need to come up with all the snacks?** That will be done for you. Your job will be to prep, serve, and clean up.

If you have any more questions, please call or email Chris Cole at 608-882-4044; [children@stjohns-lc.org](mailto:children@stjohns-lc.org).



## IN OUR THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS



Marjorie Klitzman  
Michael Adams  
Ron Hatlen

### **St. John's Members**

John Almond  
Bret Church  
Arnold Klug

Diane Quinn  
Adam Kopp  
Jeanette Schunk

### **Family and Friends**

Lynette Kendrick  
Brenda Crocker  
Cheris Correa  
Amber Valdez  
Braiden Bergum

Jan Meyer  
Lori Koch  
Carol Anderson  
Tom Timm  
Sarah O'Sullivan

Alice Pickering  
Olivia Frances  
Rhonda Hill

### ***Partners in Mission:***

Rev. Kyle and Anna Svennungsen & family, in Slovakia  
Rev. Carl and Kelsey Grulke & family, in Botswana  
Ashley Bowman, Wartburg Theological Seminary  
Bethlehem Lutheran Church, New Orleans

### ***Men and Women in Service:***

Matt Forster, Nate Madsen, Bailey Olin, JJ Rogers, Tyler Schnell, Hunter Speropulos, Marcus Steindl, Mark Trawicki, Heather Ihlenfeldt, Branden Samela, Samantha Ihlenfeldt

### ***Condolences to:***

**Sue White** as she grieves the death of her sister Sandi.

### ***Congratulations to:***

**Jeffrey and Megan Powell** on the baptisms of Megan and their daughter Posie.

**Melissa Fisher** on the baptism of her daughter Kennedy and her son Jack.

**Katie and Nick** Byers on the birth of their son Beau Ronald.

**Tanya and Thomas** Lawson on the birth of their daughter Magdalena Lynn Lawson.

**Chelsi Pulvermacher and Chris Patchak** on the birth of their daughter Kinsley Kaye Puvermacher.

## **POINTS OF PRAYER**

Together we lift up these prayer concerns. Start by reading the prayer topic and “holding” those people or that situation before God. Say the topic over and over in your mind, or aloud, and raise it before God. Then continue in agreement with the petition of prayer. We pray:

- **For summer travel and rest**

*God of renewal, bless as us we move into the months of summer. Lead us all to green pastures and springs of living water where we may be refueled and refreshed. Grant us traveling mercies on our journeys. Teach us to live in the moment of each day, giving thanks to You for all the blessings we have, and turning to You in times of need.*

- **For the poor**

*God of compassion, whose Son became poor for our sake, help us to see the face of Christ in those who are poor, and in serving them to serve you. Give us generous hearts so that those living in poverty may have adequate food, clothing, and shelter. By your Spirit move us to affirm the dignity of all people and to work for just laws that protect the most vulnerable in society.*

- **For Lutherdale Ministries and summer Bible camps**

*Holy Spirit, fill all Bible camps with your passion and power. Fill the campers with hunger for your love and a passion for all that is provided by you. Lead the staff to creatively build lives in Christ.*

**We pray in the name of Jesus, Amen.**

### **A Prayer to Begin Summer**

*by Vinita Hampton Wright; IgnatianSpirituality.com*

For more light in the day, we thank you,  
For gentle mornings, we thank you,  
For nighttime conversations, we thank you,  
For friends and family, we thank you,  
For gardens and all manner of creatures, we thank you.  
Help us, Creator and lover of our souls.  
Help us love this earth.  
Help us dwell wholeheartedly in our lives this day.  
Help us pray as we walk, work, play, rest, and create. **Amen.**





312 South Third Street  
Evansville, WI 53536



Church Office Hours:  
8:00am. to 4:00pm. Mon.-Thurs.  
Phone: (608) 882-4044

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