Visionotes

St. John's Lutheran Church November 2023





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We are the church — together.

Worship in the Sanctuary: Saturdays at 5pm & Sundays at 9am Livestream Worship on YouTube: Sundays at 9am Weekly Online Worship at www.StJohns-LC.org Church Office: 608-882-4044, Mon-Thurs, 8am-4pm

St. John's Staff

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2023 Church Council

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Why Worship Leaders?

17th in a series of "why" questions about what we do as a church, particularly during worship



Forty people. That's how many people we recruit and schedule every weekend to assist in leading worship. These 40 people all contribute to

our vibrant worship life, either on Saturday or on Sunday. They are greeters and ushers, prayer leaders and communion servers, musicians and audio/visual technicians, readers and more. Some are up front. Some are behind the scenes. All of them matter, in more ways than one. Yes, it matters that they do their job. But they also send an important message.

I remember serving as an acolyte when I was in middle school. I loved it! I wore the robe and cincture; I liked the reverence and responsibility. My most memorable time serving was in the 7th grade when I extinguished the candles one by one during the Good Friday Service of Darkness. In 8th grade I was invited to pound the nail after each reading for Good Friday. These times made an impression on me. They taught me that I have gifts to contribute to the church — what an important lesson for us all.

When I was in high school, I can't tell you how many times I played my saxophone during worship. Our organist was also a songwriter, and she wrote pieces for alto sax and piano. She invited me to play often. I also sang solos and duets with my sister. I was excited to go to worship on those days I was providing music, because I knew I had something to offer. Then, somewhere along the line, I also realized that I had something to offer from the pew, too – my voice for the hymns, yes, but also my faith, my attention, and my sheer presence.

In college I assisted in leading worship on campus in a variety of ways. I probably did just about every leadership role there is, eventually preaching as well. I gained confidence in myself to be in front of people and to serve the church. I grew in faith and in my sense of community. God used these leadership opportunities to grow my sense of vocation.

Leading in worship is a great way to empower people of all ages, children included. I love it when our elementary children lead worship with me.

What a great experience for them and for us! Maybe it will start a habit of worship and service for a lifetime. Hopefully they will learn as I did that they have gifts to offer, and that we want them and God wants them.

Forty people is a lot of worship leaders. Could we probably get by with fewer? Probably. But we would miss out on the gifts they bring. All these leaders add to the vitality and hospitality of our worship life. By offering their gifts, our 40 worship leaders communicate much more than any words or actions could. Their leadership says that we all have gifts to share, that our gifts matter. **That worship is not a spectator sport but rather a full-participation event.** That we value participation over polished performance. That you don't have to be a clergy person to serve the church or to serve God. That the church wants and welcomes you and what gifts you have to offer.

It is not just the pastor's or church worker's job to lead worship and serve God. One of Martin Luther's (1483-1546) key contributions to the Reformation is his emphasis on the "priesthood of all believers." Unlike the medieval church, which taught that priests were above all others and only priests had a calling from God, Martin Luther taught that we all have a calling to serve God. You have gifts for God to use in the church and in the world. Every Christian has a calling from God to do God's work. Every Christian is capable and called to lead in worship.

It is very easy to approach worship with a consumer mentality. We are so used to being consumers and getting what we want. It's easy to come for worship for what we can "get" out of it. I've done the same thing; I've left worship at various churches and said, "Well, I didn't get anything out of that!" But what a limited approach that is to worship. Yes, I hope we all get something out of worship... that we get inspiration, hope, love, and strength for the days ahead. But worship is not just about what we get out of it; it's also what we put into it. And when we put ourselves into our worship, whether as a worship leader or from the pew, we'll likely get more out of it.

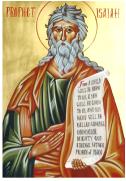
In Christ,

"Worship the Lord with gladness; come into his presence with singing." — Psalm 100:2

REACHING UP: WORSHIP & PRAYER

Icons of Faith: A 5-Week Sermon Series

Icon: a religious painting of a holy figure. This is one definition of "icon" that we'll consider over five weeks. Icons are packed full of symbols, most notably halos, letters, and colors. These traditional works of art date back to the very early days of Christianity, and they are still made today. Icons are typically painted on wood panels and are especially important in Eastern Orthodox and Catholic traditions.



Over the centuries, the church has at times opposed these images for being misused as idolatrous or graven images. But their use was reinstated for veneration and devotion. Lutherans teach respect for icons as inspiration for faithful living from saintly role models. As we look at icons in worship, we'll consider iconic people, both Biblical and modern, who are widely admired for having significant influence in a particular sphere, and how they inspire our faith.

- November 4 & 5... 1 Kings18:[17-19] 20-39 (Elijah at Mount Carmel)
 - Icons of Faith, Week 3: Elijah...and Mohammed Ali?
 - All Saints Weekend: Bring a token of remembrance of a loved one
- November 11 & 12... Isaiah 5:1-7; 11:1-5 (Isaiah's Vineyard Song)
 - Icons of Faith, Week 4: Isaiah...and Maya Angelou?
 - Bible Investigation Milestone (3rd Grade)
 - Beatles' tunes, by Lennon and McCartney, with Praise Team
- November 18 & 19... 2 Kings 22:1-10 [11-2-]; 23:1-3 (Josiah's Reform)
 Icons of Faith, Week 5: Josiah...and Bob Barker?
 Festival of Christ the King and End of the Church Year
 - Monday, November 20, 6:45pm Thanksgiving Worship
 - 6pm Meal, then worship with Pie Fellowship to follow
- November 25 & 26... Jeremiah 33:[10-11], 14-18 (Promise of the Messiah)
 The Season of Advent Begins, Week 1 of 4
- Wednesday, November 29, 7pm... First Midweek Advent Worship

MORNING PRAYER SERVICE, TUESDAYS @8:30

St. John's Prayer Chapel; a 20-minute service of prayer You are invited. All are welcome.

The Saints of God, on Earth and in Heaven

All Saints Day – November 1 – originally honored those who were considered especially holy: heroic figures from the Scriptures and martyrs who had given their lives nonviolently in witness to the faith. However, it is an especially Lutheran emphasis to honor all who have been baptized into Christ's death. All Saints Day resonates with the conviction that, in Christ, every saint is a sinner and every sinner a saint: *simul justus et peccator* (Latin). Lutherans especially remember that it is God's grace, apart from our works, that makes us saints. We find lasting rest only in the mercy of God.



We are united with the full community of sinners and saints, the living and the dead, in heaven and on earth. On All Saints Day, we celebrate our sainthood as forgiven sinners by God's grace. We pause to honor those who became saints through baptism, and to remember the saints who have gone before us to dwell in heaven with God.

In worship on November 4 and 5, we will name all of those who have received the gift of baptism at St. John's since last November. May God continue to bless these new members of the body of Christ:

Layla Meudt Addison Jensen Wyatt Hendricks Ryder Kopp Elijah Bitz Gia Durkin Mason Beyer Lola Beyer Jordan Schmaus Megan Powell Posie Powell Kennedy Fisher Jack Fisher Skyler Morton Magdalena Lawson Sophia Rademacher Emilee Thorland Kinsley Pulvermacher Maxine Johnson Molly Richards

In worship we will also name all members and friends of St. John's that we know have died since last November. We recognize that the grief journey is long. Please reach out to the family and friends of these loved ones as they feel the loss in their lives:

Kristine Combs Robert Eggleston Carl Gaulke George Welch Paula Ziegelmann Paul Fox

Peter Dukes James Crans, Sr. Phyllis Rodefeld Robert Tran Sharon Plantikow Julian Thompson Doris Schroeder Jodi Madsen Brenda Crocker Myron LaRowe Dave Nelson Harry Smelcer Dean Peterson Carrie Fiechter Teresa Kimberly Louie Harnack Shirley Nordeng Ronald Hatlen DeLoris Leeder Jon Senn Lillian Jones Scott Fredendall David Paugel Rose Cooper Avis Lawrenz Bridget Crull Helen Olsen Virginia Worm Maxine Sarow Merry Lawrence Marguerite Streicher Jane Anderson Betty Wilson Dan Miller Sandy Soto Eric Kluever Leland Volden Arnold Algrim Mary Abey Sandi Conant Bret Church Linden Egan Jeff Harding Carol Bailey James Miller

You are invited to bring a token of remembrance of a loved one to worship this weekend. These can be for someone who died recently or long ago. For example, you might bring a favorite photo, hat, mug, candy bar, or magazine.

Bible Investigation Milestone — November 12th

For three weeks this fall, third graders and their parents have been investigating the Bible. They have discovered the Old Testament and New Testament. Chapter numbers and verse numbers: they now know the difference! Where is Psalms or Revelation? They know the strategies, and will now receive a special tool to help them continue their investigating.



On **Sunday**, **November 12**, third graders and their families will celebrate the Bible Investigation Milestone at 9am worship. As a congregation, we value Lifelong Learning, and St. John's third grade milestone reflects just that.

Beatles Weekend

Our St. John's Praise Team will lead us in a worship service featuring the music of the Beatles on **November 11 and 12.**

We'll sing familiar tunes with different lyrics that will be sure to bring a new appreciation for our faith and this iconic band.



Ecumenical Thanksgiving Service



On Monday, November 20, you are invited for an ecumenical supper, worship, and pie fellowship at Creekside Place, hosted by St. John's and our church partners in Evansville. With the Thanksgiving holiday approaching, this is an opportunity for our community to

gather and share our gratitude to God and to each other. Supper will be served at 6pm with Creekside's Chef Jenny Wiedel in the kitchen. RSVP for the meal to the church office or Creekside by Monday, November 13. The menu will be a pasta bar with vegetarian and gluten free options with a suggested donation of \$10. The evening will continue with worship at 6:45pm right there at Creekside (no RSVP necessary). Following worship will be a delicious homemade pie fellowship at 7:30pm (If you're willing to bake, contact the church office). The whole community is invited. This will be our second ecumenical event held at Creekside; we gathered last spring for a meal and Good Friday service as a community. Let's end the year thanking God together.

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.

Poinsettias for Christmas Eve

In southern Mexico, there is a legend about a girl named Pepita. She had no gift to bring to Jesus at the Christmas Eve service. Her cousin Pedro said to cheer her up, "I'm sure that even the smallest gift, given by someone who loves him, will make Jesus happy." So, Pepita gathered a handful of weeds to lay at the altar. When she did, the bouquet of weeds burst into red flowers. From then on, poinsettias are known as the "Flowers of the Holy Night."



St. John's Altar Guild is making plans to decorate the sanctuary with these special flowers. **The 6-inch, \$15-plants from K&W Greenery can be requested with order sheets on the Ministry Table.** Poinsettias can be dedicated in memory or in honor of family and friends, which will be listed in the Christmas Eve bulletin. All orders must be in by Monday, November 27. Let's fill the sanctuary to celebrate the birth of Jesus on this "Holy Night."

Ecumenical Christmas Concert — An Annual Tradition

Each year the Evansville community begins the holiday season with the Ecumenical Christmas Concert. This year, St. John's is hosting the concert on **Sunday, December 3, 5:00pm.** <u>O Holy Light</u> by Mary McDonald shares a journey of the celebration of the Light of the world. Filled with beloved carols and exciting songs, this cantata captures the many moods of Christmas with a fresh voice.



The narration explores God's Light contrasted with the world's darkness, and how the Holy Light of Jesus will never be quenched. Mark your calendar and plan to enjoy an inspiring evening of music to set your heart and soul on the true wonder of Christmas. Singers from the surrounding community will share their gift of music to put Christ at the center stage of our season and our hearts.

Christmas Eve Poll — The Results Are In!

With Christmas Eve on a Sunday this year, St. John's inquired about your worship plans for the weekend. After tabulating the numbers, St. John's Christmas Eve services will be:

- Saturday, December 23, 5pm
- Sunday, December 24, 3pm
- Sunday, December 24, 5pm
- Sunday, December 24, 7pm

Mark your calendars and plan to join us for one of the four services on Christmas Eve (or Christmas Eve-Eve!) as we celebrate the arrival of our savior, Jesus Christ. Please note there will not be worship on Sunday at 9am.

Handel's Messiah: Festival Choir of Madison

Madison Chamber Orchestra and Festival Choir of Madison is teaming up for TWO nights of Messiah at Bethel Lutheran Church, Madison. Get your tickets online for either Friday, Dec. 8, 7pm or Saturday, Dec. 9, 7pm. You may recognize a certain soprano in the front row (Becca Poock!).









DAN MOONEY

Whatcha Reading? with Kitty VerKuilen

The Great Unexpected by Dan Mooney

Joel lives in a nursing home, and he's not one bit happy about it. He hates being told when to eat, when to sleep, when to take his pills. He's fed up with life and begins to plan a way out when his new roommate, a retired soap opera actor named Frank, moves in and turns the nursing-home community upside down.

Kitty says, "This book will promote interesting conversation. It's multigenerational and heartfelt."



REACHING WITHIN: SPIRITUAL GROWTH & FRIENDSHIP

November Adult BASIC

Each Sunday at 10:15am St. John's will host a variety of friends to share about their expertise and passions. Grab a mug, a snack, and a friend to grow in faith and connection. Here's our November schedule:



- **Nov 5:** Grieving the Loss of a Loved One at the Holidays with Shelley Meredith
- **Nov 12:** Dementia: Diagnosis, Now What? Planning Ahead with Karen Tennyson
- Nov 19: Pastor Bible Study with Pastor Matt
- Nov 26: Create your own Jesse Tree for Advent

St. John's Advent 2023 Devotional: The Promises of God



Twenty-nine St. John's writers are contributing

to a daily devotional book for the season of Advent, which runs from November 26 to December 24. We'll read sacred words from Jeremiah, Mark, Isaiah, Luke, and Psalms, all coordinated with weekend worship. Contributors will reflect on a promise of God that has sustained them in a particular time or season of life. Watch for your own copy, available mid-November, to remember God's promises for you.

"For in Jesus Christ every one of God's promises is a 'Yes.' For this reason it is through him that we say the 'Amen,' to the glory of God." (2 Corinthians 1:20)

Care Circle

The Congregational Care Faith Circle is a confidential gathering open to all who are enduring hardships. **Come on Tuesdays, November 14 & 28, 1:00-2:00pm.**

Grieving Loss During the Holidays: BASIC on Nov. 5th

The holiday season can be a difficult time if you've lost someone. And the first holiday without a loved one can be especially challenging, as you have to navigate how to spend the time without them. There are different ways to cope during the holidays, as everyone grieves differently — and there's no right or wrong way to grieve, whether it's the first year or the 21st year.



On Sunday, November 5, 10:15am during the Adult BASIC hour, Shelley Meredith will help you grieve in a healthy way during this special time of year. Invite family and friends who have experienced loss and/or who will grieve with you at Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Jesse Tree: BASIC for all on Sunday, Nov. 26

The Jesse Tree is a way of preparing for Advent by journeying through the stories on Jesus' family tree. Each day of Advent, you read a Bible story about someone on Jesus's family tree and hang an ornament symbolizing the story on your Jesse Tree. As you decorate your tree, you'll see how God prepared for Jesus to be born through many generations.



The Jesse Tree tradition is rooted in Isaiah 11:1: "A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots." Jesse was the father of David, Israel's greatest king. And Jesus is descended from the line of David. He is the branch God promised would grow from Jesse's family tree. Each symbol represents a story from within this family tree and a step toward the birth of Jesus.

On **Thanksgiving weekend**, **St. John's will host a Jesse Tree workshop Sunday**, **10:15am in Fellowship Hall** with families, great or small. What a great opportunity to prepare for Christmas!

Making Connections: St. John's Newest Members

Amanda Arrowood Everleigh, Landon, and Thatcher

The Arrowoods made their way to St. John's through Pathway Preschool. They found St. John's to be warm and welcoming. Amanda grew up near Wausau going to Catholic school and was confirmed in the UCC. Amanda manages the NICU at Meriter Hospital, and her husband Brian is a sheet metal journeyman at Air Temperature Services. Everleigh (8), Landon (6), and Thatcher (4) are their lovely children. As a family, they enjoy cooking, baking, reading, hiking, traveling, and crafting together.



Nancy Caraway

You may have seen Nancy at physical therapy if you go to Core PT in Evansville. She has been a physical therapist for 38 years — 18 at Core and 10 at the Manor. When she's not working, she enjoys walking her dog, exercising (especially Tai Chi), playing piano, writing poetry, and cooking.

Her friend, Jeanette Schunk brought her to worship at St. John's. She is no stranger to the church, though. She grew up in Albany; she was baptized Lutheran and grew up Methodist, and she has called Evansville home for 30 years.



Samantha and Kevin Geen Jameson, Everett, and Emersyn

The Geen family also connected through Pathway Preschool, and an invitation from their neighbors, Shane and Abby McCullough. They appreciated how welcoming St. John's has been since they have been participating in the life of the Church.

Sam manages the NICU at Meriter Hospital, and Kevin works with St. Mary's Medflight Unit. When they are not working, they are caring for their three kids: sons Jameson (10) and Everett (7), and daughter Emersyn (5). They like to volunteer with Special Olympics, camp, be outdoors, and go on vacations. Sam grew up Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, but has found a home at St. John's.



Carol Harnack



Carol was born and raised in Orfordville and worshiped with Orfordville Lutheran Church. She is mom to several children from her marriages to Roy and Louie. Now that she is on her own, she finds time to golf, play cards, and care for her flower garden.

What attracted Carol to St. John's? She liked the worship services and how St. John's welcomed her.

Rick Hatlen

Rick grew up on a farm in Magnolia and worshiped with his family at Cooksville Lutheran Church. He graduated from Evansville High School. He has degrees from UW Madison and Kansas State which equipped him to be a product developer at Milsco Manufacturing (thermal systems, driverless car, etc.).

His parents, Liz and Dick, began worshiping at St. John's in 2008. His brother Ron was also a member at St. John's until his recent death in May. These are the special people that God used to bring Rick to St. John's. When he's not working or caring for his mom, Rick enjoys boating, motorcycle riding, football, and projects.



Penny and Phil Molina

Penny grew up in Illinois and went to Catholic school and college in Boston. She moved away from Chicago to Viroqua with her son and for her son's education. Her career includes working with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, owning a public relations firm for 22 years in Chicago, and is now co-owner of Stillpoint Flower Farm with her husband.



Phil grew up in Kansas City but has lived all over the Midwest. His background is in marketing and sales, specifically with Pillsbury. He now spends his time with American Family Insurance in their marketing office, but also, he and Penny host many weddings and events at their flower farm. These two were looking for an inclusive congregation that reflected some of the traditions of their Catholic faith, and after searching the RIC website, they found St. John's just a few miles away.

Angela Suarez and Emilee Thorland

Angie was born and raised in Evansville and worshiped at St. John's as a kid. She has three adult children, and she is helping raise her three granddaughters: Sophia (11), Emilee (9), and Tatianna (3). When she's not taking care of them, she enjoys crafting and quilting.

You might see her and her mom, Wanda King, on Tuesdays and/or Thursdays sewing away in the North Basement. And her granddaughters aren't the only children she cares for: she is also a school bus driver at Evansville, making sure every child gets to school and home safely.



Women's Retreat — January 19-21, 2024

You won't want to miss this weekend at the Prairie Center (not the Barn/Farm House) at Bethel Horizons in Dodgeville. This year we welcome guest speaker Julie Van Hove from Defined Ministries (definedministries.com). She has spent 25+ years in ministry. Julie has a heart for God and for women who want to define who they are through their identity in Christ.



It's time to take time for you, ladies. Cost is \$175 for the whole weekend which includes lodging, food, and entertainment. Contact Becca Poock or Chris Cole with questions. Register now at the Ministry Table or church office with a \$50 non-refundable deposit.

Men's Retreat: February 2-3, 2024

Did you know in the US, 42% of men have 5 or fewer close friends? Even worse, 15% of men report they have NO close friendships. (American Survey Center, 2021)



These statistics magnify the need for friendship, and with St. John's, we'd take it a step further to say, "Christ-centered friendship." It is difficult to prioritize relationships when most of us have to-do lists, jobs, and commitments, but Jesus loves us too much to leave us to our own demise. God wants us to have friends that really know us and accept us for who we are. The Church is designed to be a community who will listen to us and pray for us when hard times come. You are not alone, Brother. Let's prioritize Christ-centered friendship in our lives.

When: Friday, Feb. 2, 5pm (depart) – Sat., February 3, 6pm (arrive home)
Where: Bethel Horizons, Dodgeville, WI (hotel-style rooms)
Cost: \$113 for lodging, three meals, supplies (due to office by Dec. 1)
Who: Men of St. John's, our guests, and Pastor Matt

This time away will allow us to relax and bond with other men of faith. We will support each other, read the Bible, pray together, and get outdoors. And we'll put our hands to work on service projects around Bethel Horizons. Contact Becca Poock or Pastor Matt with questions. Register now at the Ministry Table or church office with a \$50 nonrefundable deposit.

Prayer Team

The Prayer Team of St. John's is ready to pray with you — for healing, hope, wisdom, gratitude, and more. See the welcome desk and pew racks for a prayer card to fill out and return in the offering boxes, to the office, or see our website for a confidential online request form.

For more information on the prayer team, contact Becca Poock at 608-490-3144.

REACHING OUT: SERVICE & INVITATION



Council Matters by Erika Stoker

Church Council met on October 9th for our regular monthly meeting. Treats were provided by Julie Creek-Hessler: cookies! We prayed for each other in triads. Amy Floan from the Lutherdale Board joined us to let us know about the camp's 80th Anniversary Celebration next year. Keep an eye out for more information.

Our church is in good shape for the last quarter. We are so blessed! We received a quote for a new roof but was also told that it should last another 2-5 years. Thank you to Logan Ihlenfeldt: he spruced up our side yard with plantings and refurnished benches for his Eagle Scout project. We now have a nice outdoor seating area on the east side of the building.

Little Fish Preschool opened on October 2nd. The eight 3-year-olds are enjoying the classroom with Melissa Blake and Chapel Chat with Pastor Matt. Our children and youth ministries are in full swing with lots of kids joining us for BASIC, Soul Troop, Faith Corps, Confirmation and Sweet Wednesday. The high school youth are planning a trip to New Orleans next year.

The council has been reading the book "When Church Stops Working" (Root/Bertrand).We had a great discussion. We will continue to discuss this book for the next several months.

There is one spot open on Church Council for next year. Elections will be held in December.



Veterans Reflect on Service and Faith

In 1921, an unknown World War I American soldier was buried in Arlington National Cemetery. The ceremony took place on November 11, giving universal recognition to the celebrated ending of WWI fighting at 11 a.m., November 11, 1918 (the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month). The day became known as "Armistice Day." After World War II, Armistice Day changed to honor all veterans. The first celebration using the term Veterans Day occurred in Birmingham, Alabama on November 11, 1947. Later, U.S. Representative Edward Rees of Kansas proposed a bill that would change Armistice Day to Veterans Day. In 1954, Congress passed the bill that President Eisenhower signed proclaiming November 11 as Veterans Day. Read the reflections of several of St. John's veterans.



Kristian Finfrock Army (1995-2000)

What did your faith in God look like during active duty? It was there but not developed. I never had church in my life so my faith was believing and praying, but not much more. My grandmother would take us to church and Awanas, but I was never a "member" of a church.

How did you connect with God when serving? I did attend chaplainled services occasionally, especially while in training and deployed. Did you feel like you had a "church"? No. I feel like I had a group of like-minded individuals that would occasionally attend service, but not a "church," per se.

Did you connect with the chaplain? No, other than attending service and praying before missions.

And if faith was not a part of that season, then how has your faith changed your life now? Faith became a major part of my life with the birth of my daughters. I wanted them to be baptized and connected to a faith family. I was blessed with knowing Jeff and Deb Herbers and then St. John's through them. It has completely changed my life for the better. What would you say to your younger self? Get involved in a faith group. Be a leader. Put all of your trust in God. Be better than you think you are able and capable of!

Steve Halverson, Army (1984-1992)

I am an Army Veteran. My service started in November 1984, five months after high school graduation. I went to basic training at Fort Dix, NJ and Power Generation School in Fort Belvoir, VA. After graduating Advanced Individual Training, I was stationed at Friedburg, Germany in the 3rd Armored Division for 2 years. While there, I deployed to many field training exercises and small and large arms/weapon missions. I was then stationed at Fort Hood, TX and joined the 2nd Armored Division. I did a



tour in the Mojave Desert, CA. I quickly figured out why they call it Death Valley: extreme heat & terrain.

In 1988 I moved back to Stoughton, signed up for college, and joined a National Guard unit. In November 1990, our unit was activated to go to Desert Storm. We were deployed over to Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Kuwait City. After the war, I came back home to my soon-to-be wife, Ann, and was fully out of the military by 1992. I did look forward to letters and packages from Ann, family, and friends while overseas. Letters were really the only way of frequent communication even if it was delayed. We had only a handful of opportunities to call home during Desert Storm. In fact, it cost so much money for an overseas phone call that I was only able to talk to my family once in two years on the phone.

When I was in the Army I wasn't connected to a church; we were always on the move. During my service, there were at least a dozen times I feared for my life. I prayed to God that I'd make it out alive and safely back home. While in Desert Storm I did go to the prayer services with our chaplain. It was a place to decompress and talk about how we were doing and what we needed. It made me feel better about our situation and supported by the chaplain and God.

I'd say my faith is better now and after being deployed to some of the worst places in the world, where basically life means little to nothing. It has made me appreciate my family and friends and what freedom really means. We were very fortunate that we lost no one over in Desert Storm from my unit; the sad reality is after 30 years, one-third of our unit has passed away and another one-third is sick because of the effects of war. St. John's has been there for myself and my family in times of need and has meant a lot to me throughout the years. Being raised Catholic in my younger years, St. John's has been a breath of fresh air to me.

Gregg Peckham Army (1985-1993, 2001-2018)

What did your faith in God look like during active duty?

Faith was good.

How did you connect with God when serving? Before a mission I would give a prayer.

Did you feel like you had a "church"?

Didn't need a building to have faith or God.

Did you connect with the chaplain?



I remember when it was over 100 degrees in the field, Chaplain would bring us ICEE pops to cool us down, talk, and give us a prayer.

Did you stay connected to a congregation back home?

The Lutheran church was there for us. I didn't have to worry about my family.

And if faith was not a part of that season, then how has your faith changed your life now?

I thank God every day for getting me home to my family.

What would you say to your younger self?

I would tell my younger self to always have faith and to live life to the fullest.





Greg Waidley Navy (1987-1995)

I served in the US Navy from 1987 to 1995. For six of those eight years, I was stationed aboard the USS Nimitz (aircraft carrier) as a nuclear-qualified electrical operator.

I have to admit that I didn't attend church much

during my time in the Navy, and I certainly wasn't a member of a church. However, my grandfather was a Methodist minister, and I always had faith in God. In fact, I served with a diverse group of sailors, and on occasion, we had conversations about each other's backgrounds and religious upbringings.

When I got out of the Navy, I enrolled in college back in Tennessee. During that time, I lived close to my grandparents, and we had many insightful conversations about God and faith. After college and graduate school, I moved around a lot (again!), and it wasn't until I finally settled in Evansville in 2004 to start a family that I began looking for a church.

Looking back, I suppose the best thing that I did was to engage those who I knew had a strong faith and for whom I had a healthy respect. I listened to them, thought about what they said, and I guess my faith grew just enough over the years to the point that I was ready to be receptive to God when He called me to St. John's.



Jeremy Steindl Marine Corps (1996-2005)

I served in the United States Marine Corps from April 1996 to February 2005. The Marine Corps' motto of "God.Country.Corps." is instilled during bootcamp and is a reflection of our devotion to our

faith, country, and service. Sunday mornings were a time to "get away" from the every-minute stresses of bootcamp. It was highly recommended to go to church, even if it was at least to have a change of pace. I, of course, went, and it was very relieving to be in a peaceful place. Nobody could do wrong in the chapel, and everyone was welcome. I never lost my faith in God, but God and church just didn't seem to be a top priority after bootcamp. I was not part of a congregation prior to my service, which I believe is partially the reason why I did not prioritize my faith. Bethany and I married while I was active duty in North Carolina. Being in a new place, we did not really attend church, as we relied heavily on our military friends. I was deployed with the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit in October 2001, shortly after the terrorist attack on Sept 11th. In November 2001, I was in Afghanistan as a part of Operation Enduring Freedom. There is an old saying that if you don't believe in God, you will when your life is on the line. When in Afghanistan was about the time when prayers were said more often over the next four months than any other time in my life. We did not have a chaplain while incountry, and we were on our own. We did have some discussions about God and our faiths among ourselves. Everyone comes from a different religious background, which led to many different views, but we all had faith in God.

Shortly after returning from deployment, Bethany, our two-year-old son Marcus, and I moved to San Angelo, Texas. Bethany really wanted to find a church and start attending worship again. We found a small

Baptist church while we lived in Texas. We really loved that church. We made many friends within the congregation; I coached the church youth baseball team. It was perfect. Then our second son Tristan was born with many complications. To be closer to family, I left the Marine Corps, and we moved again, back to Evansville, Wisconsin. Bethany began attending St. John's again, and I soon followed her.



I have had some pretty rough times in my life. Times that many people do not know about; none which are related to my military service. Trusting my faith and talking to God has helped me overcome these tough times. My faith has also rewarded me with much joy and happiness.

I don't know if I would give myself any advice. I have always had faith in God, but how I practiced my faith (or didn't) seemed to be a part of God's plan for me. I have always found God, whether in a Methodist, Baptist, or Lutheran Church, or in a foreign country. I am thankful God has always been a part of my life in one way or another.

Nick Bitz Army (1998-2005)

What did your faith in God look like during active duty?

There was a lot of exploring different religions including Christianity.

How did you connect with God when serving? Through prayer

Did you feel like you had a "church"?

No, I never made the effort to find a church. But I did explore different churches when I was in basic training. It was a way to get away from the drill sergeant.

Did you connect with the chaplain?

No, our chaplain was not very outgoing. The chaplain's assistant was a little weird. But there was this Mormon that was the kindest person. Not that I would go to the temple, but you could look up to this guy as a good role model.

Did you stay connected to a congregation back home?

No, but I would attend when I went back home on leave with my family. It was always strange because they knew I served, and they were always thanking me for my service.

And if faith was not a part of that season, then how has your faith changed your life now?

Kristin, my wife, had a big part in my faith story. If I wouldn't have met her when I did, I wouldn't be the Christian I am now.

What would you say to your younger self?

Nothing. This is what God intended.



Our Mission Statement

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

Our Core Values

Inspiring Worship Faithful Service Lifelong Spiritual Growth Uplifting Prayer Caring Invitation Christ-Centered Friendships





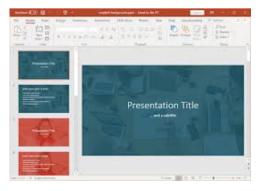
Faithful Service Highlight: Projection and Sound Technicians

Each week there is a little Holy Spirit magic that happens in the back of the Sanctuary. Someone is sliding a button to turn on a microphone. Tapping a mouse to turn on the video. Checking to make sure that YouTube is broadcasting the video LIVE. Advancing the PowerPoint slides to the flow of the worship service. Clicking the right window on the computer screen to drag over to the projector screen on the wall. And before any of that, the first mission is to turn on ALL the power strips and buttons.

As technical as that sounds, there is a solid group of people who make "the machine" work every Saturday and Sunday worship services. It takes two people — one to run the sound and video and one to run the PowerPoint. The group is mighty who serve in this way, but the mighty are few.



Just imagine how "unwelcoming" worship would be if we did not have these servant-hearted technicians? Those with hearing impairments would miss hearing the Good News of Jesus. Those who are homebound would never hear or see worship with St. John's, their Church family. The service would lack images and photos that accent the preaching and teaching for those visual learners. The music leaders would need to sing really loudly to be heard. And most of us would be looking down into our bulletins to follow along, missing the faces and Spirit moving among the congregation.



Thank the technicians the next time you are in the Sanctuary or watch on YouTube. These jobs are teachable. The service is honorable. Maybe God is calling you or one of your middle/high school youth to join the Holy Spirit magic in the back.

St. John's 4 Desserts

Our Evansville Ecumenical Care Closet provides Thanksgiving baskets each year to 75+ client-friends. St. John's is supplying ingredients "4" the dessert again this year. Our goal is 75 of the following 4 ingredients: 15 oz can pumpkin puree, 12 oz evaporated milk, pumpkin pie spice (2oz), and yellow cake mix. <u>Bring any or all of these 4 ingredients to the church building by</u> <u>Monday, November 13.</u> In case you're curious, here's the recipe to go with the ingredients:

Great Pumpkin Dessert

(15 ounce) can pumpkin
 (12 fluid ounce) can evaporated milk
 3 eggs
 1 cup white sugar
 4 teaspoons pumpkin pie spice
 (18.25 ounce) package yellow cake mix
 34 cup butter, melted
 ½ cups chopped walnuts



Preheat oven to 350°. Grease a 9x13 inch baking pan. Combine pumpkin, milk, eggs, sugar and spice. Mix well, and pour into pan. Sprinkle dry cake mix over the top, then drizzle with melted butter. Top with walnuts. Bake 1 hour or until a knife inserted near the center comes out clean.



Green Living Tip: America Recycles Day by Lindsay Trustem

The 25th annual America Recycles Day (ARD) is Monday, Nov. 15th. ARD is the only nationally-recognized day dedicated to promoting and celebrating recycling in the United States. Improper recycling is detrimental to the recycling ecosystem; "when in doubt, throw it out." You can take the #BeRecycled pledge by proactively learning what materials are collected for recycling in our community, acting within November to reduce the amount of waste you produce, being more cautious to recycle properly, buying ecofriendly products & sharing the pledge with friends, family, neighbors & coworkers to encourage more participation. According to the EPA, the recycling rate in 1960 was less than 7% & currently it is more than 32%. Little changes to be more green, lead to positive long lasting impacts on Creation.

A Wonderful Tradition Enters its 18th Year: St. John's Holiday Bazaar on November 18th!

Join St. John's for a day of shopping locally! The joy of this day extends beyond St. John's with generosity to local, national, and international communities.

- Local: St. John's will directly help the **Evansville Fire Department** with a new combustible gas leak detector, a cost of \$3500.
- National: St. John's will help communities with flooding relief in Vermont and Kentucky as well as tornado relief in Minnesota. Visit Lutheran Disaster Response online for more information.
- International: St. John's will aid vulnerable migrant children and their families from Central America who are forced to flee their communities because of poverty, lack of opportunities, displacement, and chronic violence in the region. Visit www.elca.org/ammparo for more information.
- Three-in-One: St. John's will also put money aside for the Mission Endowment Fund. This is the congregation's endowment, and it gives away about \$8000 each year, near and far, based on the interest earned. It's a wonderful, charitable opportunity that keeps giving. Contributions are given to local, regional, and global charities.

St. John's Holiday Bazaar is not just about the shopping and good food. It's about reaching out to our neighbors near and far.

Find your place to be a part of this exciting day! We can only do it if we do it together!



Questions? Please contact Kate Cheramy <u>k8cheramy@yahoo.com</u> or Allison Hilliard <u>allisonvrieze77@gmail.com</u>



Faithful Service Opportunity: Holiday Bazaar on November 18th! How can you help? Where do we start?

Here is a snapshot of what to expect and how you can help the Bazaar:

- **Resale Shop:** Gently-used, good condition items can be donated Saturday, November 11, 4pm-Tuesday, November 14, 4pm. This upscale rummage sale needs time to sort and set-up, so items must arrive promptly. *Leaders: Jan Schuh & Wanda King*
- **Quilt Shop:** Wall hangings, table runners, quilts of any kind these pieces of art can be tied or quilted. Please price your pieces.
- **Cannery Row:** Think salsa, jams, jellies, pickles all items that have been processed through water-bath or pressure-cooker methods.
- **Silent Auction:** Consider a big ticket item to encourage a friendly bidding competition. *Leader: Angie Schroeder*
- **Crafty Corner:** Knitting, crocheting, painting, woodworking, sewing, beading it will ALL be sold at this shop. *Leader: Sara Tortomasi*
- **Gift Baskets:** See the Christmas tree in the Gathering area for specific baskets and needs for this shop. Leader: Lindsey Jobe
- **Bakery:** You might consider sweet breads, pastries, cupcakes, pies, or fancy bars. These items should be individually wrapped. All items must be packaged and priced.
- "No Grown-Ups Allowed" Shop: This is a perfect place for kids to shop for family members and/or teachers. \$1, \$2, or \$3 items are available, as well as a shopper to help with choosing and counting money. Items needed are hanging on the tree in the Gathering area. *Leaders: Sandy Thompson, Ashley Thompson, Katrina Thompson*
- **Cookie & Candy Shop:** Put those gloves on and start loading your container! Bring in your cookies and candy to be displayed on the longest buffet table in the Sanctuary. Guests will grab a container, fill it up, and move to the checkout to weigh and pay.
- **Turkey Luncheon:** served to-go between 11am-1pm. Guests can do a little shopping, then take lunch to go. And the Dining Room will have **three reservation times to buy tickets:** 11:00, 11:45, & 12:30. Sign-ups for food preparation for the meal, volunteering during the Bazaar, and set-up/clean-up will be in the Gathering area.
- **Frozen Foods:** Sometimes cooking is not our gift. Or maybe having enough time is the problem. The Bazaar is opening a NEW shop with frozen foods for all your holiday needs. Check out the freezer for pie, cookies, meatballs, twice baked potatoes, meatloaves, and more. Signup if cooking up some of these items is a breeze!

ST. JOHN'S HOLIDAY BAZAAR SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2023 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM

An Annual Celebration of Community

craft fair shopping, silent auction bidding, quilts and a upscale resale shop, cookies, candies, and bakery buffets, a variety of canned goods and frozen goods, premade gift baskets for everyone, and a "No Grown Ups Allowed" kids shop where children are able to purchase items for family and friends

Turkey Casserole Dinner Served in the Dining Room and To-Go 11:00am , 11:45am, or 12:30pm

 \$12 for adults; \$6 for kids 10 and under (Gluten free option available)
 St. John's Lutheran Church, 312 S. Third St, Evansville

ALL PROCEEDS TO * EVANSVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT * VERMONT FLOODING + MINNESOTA TORNADO RELIEF * MIGRANT CHILDREN IN CENTRAL AMERICA

Faith Expressed in Generosity

Thanks for doing your part to provide resources for our mission and ministry together. St. John's people have increased their giving to our daily ministries by 4.5% over last year. Simply Giving, our convenient electronic giving funds transfer, has increased by 5% from one year ago. It's a great way to give consistently, and it helps the church depend on incoming resources. Contact Financial Director Deb Herbers for details to enroll or to update your giving.

Year-to-date Profit Loss as of September 30, 2023

Our income is under our projected budget amount, but we are also under budget with our expenses. This means we are in the positive year to date to the amount of \$13,891. Our budget is balanced annually, but it is weighted throughout the year. So, we are ahead of where we budgeted. This is primarily because of staffing transitions and careful spending. Please help us finish strong in the final quarter of the year and get closer to our budgeted income.

	Actual	Budget	Over (Under)
Income	\$350,672	\$368,719	(\$18,047)
Expenses	\$336,781	\$379,003	(\$43,292)
Net	\$13,891	(\$10,284)	

Are you a THRIVENT member? We have received over \$2,120 in Thrivent Choice Dollars as of September 30th. If you get the opportunity to designate your choice dollars for a charity, please consider St. John's.

"Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they just have the heart." — Elizabeth Andrew



NEW Missionary: Greetings from Wittenberg!

My name is Rev. Bridget Gautieri (she/her) and I am the current Coordinator of the ELCA Wittenberg Center. I started this position with an orientation week in Minneapolis on July 10th, 2023, was ordained at my home congregation in New Jersey on August 12th, and flew to Germany on September 1st. In addition to welcoming US and worldwide tourists to Wittenberg, I am responsible for planning new and innovative study opportunities, engaging with local and international church partners, and leading worship services in and around Wittenberg. I'm also here to help strengthen the relationships between the ELCA, its companion synods in Germany, and the German National Committee of the Lutheran World Federation.

Even though I just started working in Wittenberg, I am no stranger to Germany. I studied for one semester in Eichstätt, Germany in 2015 while at Roanoke College, and one semester in Leipzig, Germany in 2018 while at United Lutheran Seminary (ULS). After graduating with my Master of Divinity from ULS in May 2020, and with the support of the NJ Synod, I decided to move to Leipzig to teach English and to be with my partner, Pallas, who is an EU-citizen. Over the past three years, I taught English in Leipzig and served as a bridge pastor for the American Church in Berlin. My call to ordained ministry has always been very strong, and I am so grateful and excited to be doing what God is calling me to do, in the birthplace of the Reformation of all places!

I was very touched by Becca Poock's email connecting me with you all at St. John's Lutheran Church in Evansville, Wisconsin. It means a lot to me as an out lesbian to be sponsored by an RIC congregation. Thank you for your prayers and support, and I look forward to partnering together in Wisconsin, Wittenberg, and online. St. John's will be in my prayers as you reach up, out, and within, because God reaches out to us.



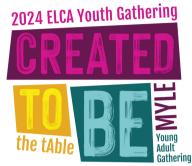
In Christ+ The Rev. Bridget Gautieri

Coordinator of ELCA Wittenberg Center Service & Justice Home Area, Europe Desk

CHILDREN'S & YOUTH MINISTRIES

"Created To Be" — 2024 ELCA Youth Gathering

Thousands of high school Christians from across the country will be meeting in New Orleans, July 16-20, 2024. The last time this incredible event happened was 2018 in Houston, TX. The event includes opportunities for service, worship, fun with friends, learning, and play. Twenty youth and adults have already committed to participate in the 2024 Gathering.



Though the cost per person is around \$1,500, we fundraise most of what is needed so that we can keep the out-of-pocket costs low for families. Watch for more opportunities to financially support this lifechanging event through the months to come. Our group also welcomes your prayers as we prepare for our time in New Orleans.

> Next Fundraiser: Saturday, December 2nd , 4pm-9pm Parent's Night Out! *More info to come.*

The Way: Field Trip to Deer Park Buddhist Center

Although the church building will be shut down on Wednesday, November 15, the middle school Confirmation youth, small group leaders, and parents are boarding school buses at 6pm and heading north to visit the Deer Park Buddhist Center in Oregon.



Buddhism is one of the world's largest religions and originated 2,500 years ago in India. Buddhists believe the human life is one of suffering, and that meditation, spiritual and physical labor, and good behavior are the ways to achieve enlightenment, or nirvana. St. John's youth will have an opportunity to experience a different spiritual building and meet people who follow Buddha. Make sure to ask St. John's youth about their experience!

There will be <u>NO</u> Confirmation or Sweet Wednesday on November 22nd for Thanksgiving Break.

2023 Noisy Offering: Water Filter Update

Our 2023 Noisy Offering continues to be a great success as we reach the end of the year. This year we have chosen to purchase Water Filters from ELCA Good Gifts. These water filters are capable of purifying water without electricity or chemicals. Our Noisy Offering has collected \$1,447.10 from January to October. Each individual water filter will cost \$30, which allows us to currently purchase 48 filters!



Wouldn't it be great to purchase a total of 52 filters for another \$120? Listen for the "tink" as the coins hit the bucket!

Children, Youth & Family (CYF) Calendar Highlights for November 2023:

- Sunday, November 5: Bible Investigation (3rd graders) workshop at 10:15am (2 of 3)
- Sunday, Nov. 12: Bible Investigation Milestone 9am, Final workshop 10:15am (3 of 3)
- Wednesday, Nov. 15th <u>NO Soul Troop / Faith Corps</u>
- Wednesday, Nov. 22nd NO Soul Troop / Faith Corps
- Sunday, Nov. 26: NO BASIC, Family BASIC Jesse Tree Activity

Questions about ministries for children 5th grade and younger? Contact Callie Jones at <u>children@stjohns-lc.org</u>!

IN OUR THOUGHTS & PRAYERS

St. John's Members

Marjorie Klitzman Michael Adams John Almond Arnold Klug Diane Quinn Kira Tortomasi Adam Kopp Jeanette Schunk Jeff Farnsworth Warren Yoerger

Family & Friends

Braiden Bergum	Bryan Walker	Sandra Zahn	Wendy McClure
Olivia Frances	Rosemary Wangard	Geogean Nicholson	Barb Buttchen
Michael Shumann	Bill Springer	Craig Thompson	Orrin
Laura Scott	Heidi Nash	Valerie Troxel	Kristin Davis
Trudie Kelley			

Partners in Mission:

Rev. Carl and Kelsey Grulke & family, in Botswana Rev. Bridget Gautieri in Germany Ashley Bowman, Wartburg Theological Seminary Bethlehem Lutheran Church, New Orleans

Men and Women in Service:

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

Condolences to:

Raquel Michel and family as they grieve the death of her father, Robert Eggleston. Cindy Armour and family as they grieve the death of her mother, Phyllis Rodefeld. Sherri Biddick and family as they grieve the death of her husband, Bret Church. Ryan Egan and Julia Schiefelbein-Egan and family as they grieve the death of their daughter, Linden.

Congratulations to:

Logan and Makenzie Schoenenberger on the birth of their son, Hank. Chris Patchak and Chelsi Pulvermacher on the baptism of their daughter, Kinsley. Brenna and Phil Johnson on the baptism of their daughter, Maxine. Nicole and Rob Richards on the baptism of their daughter, Molly. Brad Miller and Michelle Hoppe on their marriage. Cindy and Butch Beedle on the birth of their granddaughter, Rowen. Renae and Kevin Smith on the birth of their grandson, Theodore. Courtney Bergsma and Justin Nimtz on their marriage.

The holidays are not always joy-filled. Sometimes they are filled with grief and sadness. Mark your calendars for our upcoming **Blue Christmas service on December 16th at 5pm**, where God will meet us right where we are.

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 a spirit of gratitude in our community

Generous God, you give us all that we need, yet we fail to recognize the gifts you give us. Open our eyes to the blessings all around us. Move us to celebrate with joy and thanksgiving your unending love. Teach us to give thanks every day.

For Israel and Palestine

Prince of Peace, the land in which you were born continues to experience unrest. Bring forth justice and compromise, humility and compassion, from the people and their leaders. Grant success to peace talks so that all people may live in safety. Spirit, bring comfort to the frightened and hope to the hurting.

For government elections

Jesus, our Servant-Leader, our common life faces challenges and opportunities. Raise up leaders with hope and vision to lead us in good and healthy ways of living together. Thank you for the freedom to vote in this nation. Give our elected leaders wisdom and humility to govern well. Inspire us all to live in harmony.

We pray in the name of Jesus, Amen.

Bible Study on Thursdays at 1:00pm with Pastor Matt

You are invited to join Pastor Matt every Thursday afternoon at 1:00pm for Bible Study in the lounge. Each week we'll preview the upcoming weekend's scripture reading through reflection and conversation. No experience necessary. Come when you can; our group is different every week. What remains constant is that we always laugh and learn together.



312 South Third Street Evansville, WI 53536

Adress service requested

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