

Visionotes

St. John's Lutheran Church
October 2023



God's Work. Our Hands.

The Kriebs family helped clean up
Lake Leota Park during our all-
church service day in September.

Icons of Faith Sermon Series — p. 5

Reformation Weekend Oct. 28 & 29 — p. 8

Feature: Finding Home Among Lutherans —p. 12-15

Members share how they found a home at St. John's.

New Children's Ministry Director — p. 16

A big welcome to Callie Jones!

Get ready for the Annual Bazaar! — p. 20

Explore the Examen — p. 21-23

Christmas musical auditions are here! — p. 24



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

Pastor	Matthew Pook
Pastor of Congregational Care	Jerry Tews
Office Manager	Chris Cole
Community Life Coordinator	Becca Pook
Children's Ministry Director	Callie Jones
Custodian	Emily Schmitzer
Financial Director	Deb Herbers
Music Director	Sharon Magee
Communication Coordinator	Alyse Miller
Ministry Coordinator	Carolyn Butts
Nursery	Mikayla Samuelson

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	Jack Burton

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 Offering ?

16th in a series of "why" questions about what we do as a church, particularly during worship



Some are brass with felt lining; others are wooden. Some are deep wicker baskets. I've even seen some that are cloth bags with a rim and handles on opposite sides. Offering plates, that is. They are all fairly light and about the same size, no more than a foot in diameter. All these plates serve the same purpose: to receive monetary gifts to support God's mission and provide financially for the ministry of the church.

The practice of "passing the plate" is very familiar to many of us. I can remember as a child wanting to participate with the adults and touch the plate as it came by. Sometimes my parents gave me an offering to put in. As a young adult, I became more self-conscious about not contributing to the plate; I wondered if other people noticed. Somewhere along the way I learned to grab the plate with two hands, one under the rim and one over the rim. This way no one would know what or if I gave, and the hand on top of the plate reminded me to offer myself to God.

Still, passing the plate rarely left me feeling good. I was confused about my ability and responsibility to give an offering. With small jobs on the side of school, I didn't make a lot of money, and I was saving for college and graduate school. Surely the church didn't need my measly gift, right?

It wasn't until my late 20's that I learned the joy of giving. It was my internship pastor who invited me to give one-tenth of my income to the church (a tithe). He didn't require or demand it of me. He gave me a gracious invitation to know the joy of giving to God and contributing to my church. The Old Testament talks about tithing in a couple dozen places. Jesus talked about tithing only once, telling the religious leaders not to neglect what is more important: loving God and neighbors. Churches do well not to ignore tithing, nor over-emphasize it. A tithe can be a helpful guideline for charitable giving. I am convinced that it is not healthy to enforce tithing in the church. I've heard plenty of stories of people feeling obligated to give a tithe or a certain amount, or of showing tax returns to the church. This is not in the spirit of joyful giving.

I took my internship pastor up on his invitation to tithe, knowing I didn't have to, that I was free to follow the Spirit and my conscience. But I did it, and the practice of tithing led me to the joy of giving. I've been tempted at times, by a fear of scarcity, to hold back on this practice. But I have stuck to it ever since — and I've never regretted it. After tithing that first year on internship, I left Texas with money in the bank, ostrich boots on my feet, a big cowboy hat, and a large belt buckle. God had provided for all my needs and then some. My offering slowly started changing me.

I truly find great joy in giving to God. As Jesus said, "it is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). Giving is a natural expression of love. Giving an offering grows my love for the church and for God, and also grows my faith as I trust God to provide for me. Giving an offering sets me free from the temptation to idolize money. My money does not own me! I own my money, and everything I have belongs to God. I experience joy, love, faith, and freedom through my giving. If giving an offering can do all that, no wonder it's part of worship!

As electronic funds transfer ("Simply Giving" for us) has become more popular, the offering plate is becoming obsolete. St. John's no longer passes any plate or basket for offering. While we don't receive as much loose cash as before, our congregation has not declined in generous giving. I hope this change helps our members and guests to shed those feelings of giving by obligation. Instead, we have offering boxes at the entrances to the sanctuary for those who give by cash or check at worship. Many give by mail or online. We still pause during worship to invite one another into joyful giving, and we take a moment to celebrate God's work in this congregation, often with a "photo of the week."

Even without the plates, making a financial offering is an important act of worship, both expressing and growing our love and faith. God doesn't need our money; everything belongs to God already. Still, God uses our offering for good, for the sake of others, spreading love and hope. Most of all, God wants you and me to offer our lives to God, each and every day. There's no more satisfying way to live.

In Christ,



"Everything comes from you; all we're doing is giving back what we've been given from your generous hand."
— 1 Chronicles 29:14; MSG

REACHING UP: WORSHIP & PRAYER

Icons of Faith: A 5-Week Sermon Series

Only a select group of people ever attain iconic status, people who are widely admired for their tremendous influence on culture and society. History is full of icons. Icons who have died recently include Nelson Mandela, Maya Angelou, Muhammed Ali, Desmond Tutu, Bob Barker, and Jimmy Buffett.



In a way, the Bible is a collection of stories about icons of faith. Kings David, Solomon, and Josiah are icons, as well as the prophets Elijah and Isaiah. These icons are ancestors in faith we want to know. Incidentally, they also have icons, as in religious paintings made for education and devotion, especially in Orthodox and Catholic traditions. Over five weeks, we'll read about five movers and shakers of Biblical times. We'll consider what modern icons they remind us of, and we'll learn from their witness of faith. *Our series "No Turning Back" continues for three weeks in October.*

- Sept. 30 & Oct. 1... Exodus 1:8-14; 3:1-15 (Moses & God's Name)
 - No Turning Back, Week 4: Turning from Self-Doubt
 - World Communion Sunday – Celebrating the Global Church
- October 7 & 8... Deuteronomy 5:1-21; 6:4-9 (Hear O Israel)
 - No Turning Back, Week 5: Turning from Confusion
 - "Bible Presentation" Milestone for 3-year-olds
- October 14 & 15... Ruth 1:1-17 [4:13-17] (Ruth)
 - No Turning Back, Week 6: Turning from Bitterness
- October 21 & 22... 2 Sam. 5:1-5; 6:1-5; Ps. 150 (David Anointed King)
 - Icons of Faith, Week 1: King David...and Jimmy Buffett?
 - Soul Troop leads worship
- October 28 & 29... 1 Kings 12:1-17, 25-29 (Kingdom Divided)
 - Icons of Faith, Week 2: King Solomon...and Desmond Tutu?
 - Reformation Weekend – Wear RED for our Lutheran Heritage
 - Brief Healing Service, Saturday, 6pm
 - Reformation Brunch hosted by high school youth

MORNING PRAYER SERVICE, TUESDAYS @8:30

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

A Celebration of the Global Church

St. John's is part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), with approximately 3.3 million members across the country. But that's not it. St. John's is also part of the Lutheran World Federation, a network of 77 million Christians in 99 countries across the globe. But there's more. We are part of a global movement of 2.5 billion followers of Jesus Christ! That is nearly one-third of the Earth's population. The movement that Jesus started with a group of friends has spread around the globe to every country and more than 3,400 languages! We are part of something big!



In worship on **September 30 & October 1**, we'll celebrate the global church, on World Communion Sunday, rejoicing in the faith we share with partners around the world. We'll sing a prayer of peace for every nation.

Bible Presentation for 3-year-olds

During worship on October 8th, St. John's will help parents fulfill the promise made at baptism to "place in their hands the Holy Scriptures" by presenting our preschoolers with the gift of God's word: a Bible especially for them.



Since children typically begin participating in our Children's Ministries (like B.A.S.I.C. and VBS) at age 3, we celebrate their growing faith with this milestone. Following worship, these children and their parents will have a brief orientation to learn more about their new Bibles. *If you or your child is in need of a Bible, contact the church office.*

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 Pooch at 608-490-3144.

Bible Investigation for 3rd Graders



St. John's celebrates our children's growing ability to read with a "Bible Investigation" milestone starting October 22nd. Our 3rd graders and their parents/guardians will investigate the ins and outs of the Bible together.

The Bible is much more than an old book, but how do we use it? What's in it? Pastor Matt will lead the investigation for three weeks at 10:15am following the Sunday service.

Healing Service — October 28th

On various Saturday evenings throughout the year, St. John's people meet in the front of the sanctuary after 5pm worship for a time dedicated to healing prayer.

In about 15 minutes we have the opportunity to light candles, receive anointing with oil, sit in silence in God's presence, and turn to God together for the healing we need in mind, body, and soul.



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.

Reformation: Celebrating Our Lutheran Heritage

We begin October celebrating the global church of all denominations on World Communion Sunday, and we end the month cherishing the specific contributions of the Lutheran tradition, with the key insight that we are **saved by God's grace alone, through faith alone, on the basis of scripture alone.**



In 1517, Martin Luther, a Catholic monk, nailed 95 grievances to the door of All Saints Church (Germany), specifically addressing indulgences. These indulgences were given to individuals as a way to reduce the amount of punishment one had to undergo for their sins. Sadly, church leadership saw this as an opportunity to steal money, and Martin Luther was questioning this practice.



We invite you to **wear red**, the color of the festival for **October 28 & 29** for worship. As we enter the Sanctuary, we will take a moment to make our **mark on a door**, but not quite like Martin Luther. Instead of our grievances, we will leave what we LOVE about the Church. And finally Sunday morning, we will celebrate the Good News that we are forgiven not through indulgences, but through the Love of Jesus Christ at a **delicious brunch.**

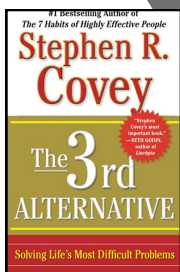
Whatcha Reading? with Dave Karr



[The Third Alternative](#) by Stephen Covey

"There is a way forward. It's not your way, and it's not my way. It's a higher way. It's a better way than any of us thought of before."

This book is about resolving business and social issues. I've read the book several times and previously required my employees to read it before moving into managerial roles. The book reminds me that whenever we find ourselves in either/or situations, that another alternative exists. Finding it requires a willingness to know yourself, the other party, and be open to new approaches to problem solving.



REACHING WITHIN: SPIRITUAL GROWTH & FRIENDSHIP

October 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.



Oct 1: Dementia: Diagnosis, Now What? Planning Ahead with Karen Tennyson

Oct 8: QPR Suicide Prevention with Sean Mangold (90 Minutes)

Oct 15: All Things Nature with Butch and Cindy Beedle

Oct 22: Why I Love Being a Death Doula with Mindy Brice

Oct 29: Reformation Brunch

St. John's Hosts Ecumenical Christmas Choir

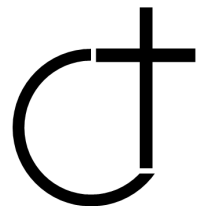
The Ecumenical Christmas Choir begins rehearsals **Wednesday, October 11, 7:30-9pm**, at St. John's. Cathy Nevel and Cindy Zblewski direct this ensemble of local singers from various Christian churches. Selections for the concert include several choral arrangements and a cantata, O Holy Night (Mary MacDonald). If you sing high or sing low, you are invited to join this 8-week experience. The concert is set for **Sunday, December 3rd, 5pm**. What a great way to prepare for the Christmas season!



Congregational Faith Circle

The Congregational Care Faith Circle is a confidential gathering open to all who are enduring hardships.

Come on Tuesdays, October 10 and 24, 1:00-2:00pm.



Making Connections: Abby & Shane McCullough

by Abby McCullough

Hello, we are the McCullough family! Shane grew up in Juda, and I am from nearby Oregon. We moved to Evansville in 2016 after living in Brodhead for 12 years. We have three active boys: Cade is in 11th grade, Brady is in 8th grade, and Rylan is in 5th grade this year.



Shane works primarily from home for UW Health in their IT department. I work for a tax & financial company in Madison, working from home and in the office. We also have our 3 year old (not so mini) mini-Australian shepherd, Copper, who can mostly be found sleeping and snoozing around the house.

Our boys keep us busy as they are active in many sports and extracurriculars including basketball, baseball, FFA, Student Council, Band, and horse riding — to list a few. Both Cade and Brady work part-time doing lawn care. We can be found at many games and tournaments for our boys and enjoy attending all ECSD sporting events. In our free time, we enjoy spending time together playing board games, fishing, kayaking, boating, hiking, watching sports, and playing in the backyard.

We fell in love with St. John's immediately after attending a service, meeting Pastor Matt, and seeing the youth offerings. It was an easy choice for us to become members. We love how friendly everyone is at St. John's! That feeling of connection and community has only strengthened in the years since we became members, and we enjoy helping out in a variety of ways when we can.

We like to sign up to help during Saturday or Sunday services. You will find Shane helping with ushering and communion. I enjoy greeting everyone coming to service, Cade often helps as Assisting Minister, Brady helps with acolyting, communion, and the Green Team, and Rylan likes to help with ushering.

Cade was confirmed at St. John's May of 2021, and Shane spent time as a confirmation group leader. Shane and I spent some years subbing for Confirmation and Sweet Wednesday group leaders. Brady is in his 3rd year of Confirmation this year, and I am a confirmation group leader. We really enjoy helping out with St. John's youth ministry, as our children have benefited greatly from the programs offered. We see it as a way to give back. Rylan is eager to start his confirmation journey next year. We enjoy helping out with serving meals as we can and helping at the Bazar each year.

We give to St. John's through Simply Giving. We set up a monthly contribution because we feel it's important to give back to St. John's as they provide so much for our family and our community.



When has St. John's been here for us? I would have to say, when hasn't St. John's been here for us? Whether it be supporting our boys through the youth ministry and showing them how the church and God is with them and supports them always, or when we get personalized notes or post cards from the office or Pastor Matt, the emails when a family member has passed, the remembrance of family members on All Saints weekend, the youth Bibles provided to read with our children when they were younger, to the prayer sheets and Daily Devotional books provided in the gathering area (which we read together before bed each night). St. John's is there for us always. We know that we can always contact someone when we are in need, and we also know that someone (or many someones) in our St. John's community are holding us in their thoughts and prayers. We could not ask for more. We are so thankful for Pastor Matt, the entire Pooch family, the church council and members, and the church community. We are blessed and thankful!



Feature: Finding Home Among Lutherans

There are many faith traditions around the world, so it's no surprise that the people who worship at St. John's come from a varied background of faith traditions as well. While many people are born into Lutheranism, others find it at other points in their life. Here are a few stories of members of our church finding their home here.

Sandy Thompson

What denomination did you connect with previously? Catholic.

What do you miss? I have thought about this a lot, and there is nothing that I miss.

What brought you to St. John's? My mom wanted to check out St John's but didn't want to go alone on Easter so my daughters and I joined her. It was like finding home.

What do you appreciate about the Lutheran tradition? I appreciate the openness and that all are welcome. I like that in my experience it's okay to ask questions and that we are not told to just believe because those higher in the church say so. I appreciate that it is taught that grace is given freely and not something that must be earned through penance.



Sarah Bauer



What denomination did you connect with previously? We went to non-denominational churches for the most part. They seemed to have a touch of Baptist.

What do you miss? Sometimes I miss the way service is structured.

What brought you to St. John's? I went to a few weddings that Pastor Matt presided over, and thought to myself "I need to hear this guy preach."

What do you appreciate about the Lutheran tradition? I really like that love, grace, and inclusion are the prevalent factors in the teaching. I grew up with the "angry God" syndrome that some people preach.

Phil & Penny Molina

What denomination did you connect with previously? Catholic.

What do you miss? Our friends, the prayer kneelers, St. Patrick's Day parties, and being a part of Pope Francis' flock.



What brought you to St. John's? Searching for an inclusive and traditional church where all are welcome, we found St. John's on the Reconciling in Christ (RIC) website. We were thrilled to find an inclusive church outside of Madison in Evansville. We were initially encouraged that St. John's took the many steps needed to become an RIC church, and are now proud to see how the community works towards maintaining its RIC commitments. Being able to view the church services online before attending gave us insights into the beliefs held by the church community, see the familiar traditions of the catholic service and admire the style of the Pastors which, all combined, brought us to St. John's.

What do you appreciate about the Lutheran tradition? That it evolved from Catholic traditions taking the good and leaving behind much of what was not in keeping with Christ's teaching.

We have learned to appreciate Martin Luther's courage to stand up to the Catholic Church. We know from personal experience it is not easy. But like Martin Luther, we needed to follow our own moral compass and have our own personal reformation. We embrace our new Lutheran faith traditions, and are blessed to be learning and praying with the faith-filled community of St. John's. Besides, the Lutheran food traditions are delicious!

Gordy & Sue Miller

What denomination did you connect with previously? Gordy was raised American Baptist. Sue was raised Methodist. We both started attending a conservative Baptist church in our late teens and attended evangelical Christian/Baptistic churches until we switched to St. John's.



What do you miss? Some of the people.

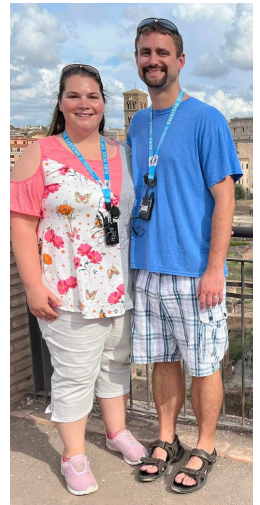
What brought you to St. John's? We were struggling with the increasing emphasis on politics and political power — not from the leadership but from some of our fellow members. Opinions on individual rights, guns, and human value were shared more openly than a love for Christ and the people he came to save. Gordy had done work for the Poochs and knew them to be good people even when no one important was watching, so we visited St. John's. At our first visit we knew more people than we did at our old church after more than 20 years. It was an easy decision.

What do you appreciate about the Lutheran tradition? Coming from a service structure where everything could be different from week to week, we appreciate the consistency. We love reciting the Apostle's Creed and the Lord's Prayer in every service. Maybe if you've had it your whole life it might get overly familiar but for us, it provides a centering point. If nothing else, we all agree on these two things.

I (Sue) have loved learning the liturgical calendar. It is such a beautiful way to add religious cycles into our yearly rhythms. Lastly, I don't know if this is a Lutheran tradition but I have appreciated the way St. John's teaches a physical aspect to our faith -- water as a reminder of baptism in Christ (all water not just the singular event) and breathing as a reminder of the Spirit. Using the physical motion of the Holy Trinity reminds me that God loves and seeks not just my eternal soul but ALL of me: Body, mind and spirit.

Erik & Sheryl Gould

What denomination did you connect with previously? Erik was raised Catholic and I (Sheryl) was raised Lutheran — Missouri Synod. We attended an adult class at our previous church, Bethlehem Lutheran in Sun Prairie, where we learned about the differences between all the Christ-based denominations. Erik decided that the few differences between Catholicism and LCMS were not important to him or against his current faith and elected to join LCMS so we could raise our kids in one faith.



What do you miss? I miss a lot of the traditional LCMS versions of the creeds, Lord's Prayer, and several songs (Kyrie, This is The Feast) but I'm glad we get to do them sometimes. And I'm enjoying learning and singing the new versions.

What brought you to St. John's? We chose to switch to St. John's because we'd been living in Evansville since 2015 and found it very difficult to consistently attend our church in Sun Prairie, though we loved the active and kid-friendly church. Recently, one of the pastors there was called to another church out-of-state and the other pastor we knew well retired. It seemed like the perfect time to make a change. I knew our neighbor, Abby McCullough and family, were happy at their church, so I asked her where she went. After I started looking into St. John's more, I found that actually a lot of our friends and neighbors belonged there. We attended for Easter, and that was all it took for us to see that it was the right place for us.

What do you appreciate about the Lutheran tradition? I love that Lutheranism, especially the ELCA, is much more accepting of everyone. It's important to me that the Bible is at the core of Luther's teachings and it's not as political as Catholicism. By the way, I also love the bread at St. John's; so much better than a wafer!

Norway & Sweden — August 6th-17th, 2024

St. John's is embarking on another adventure across the ocean. This time to many of native Wisconsinites' roots: Norway and Sweden. Trans World Travel will be managing St. John's tour to places such as Stockholm, Karlstad, Oslo, Lillehammer, Borgund, Fjordland, Gudvangen, Flam, and Bergen. The cost per person (double occupancy) is \$5,689. We will fly with KLM Royal Dutch Airlines out of Chicago. A \$500 deposit is due with registration; an additional \$2,000 is due November 1.



For more details pick up a brochure in the Gathering Area, or email Becca outreach@stjohns-lc.org for a digital copy. There are limited spots on the bus, so reserve your spot now.

Welcome New Children's Ministry

Director: Callie Jones

We are happy to welcome Callie Jones to our staff as Children's Ministry Director! You may have seen her behind the piano over the last couple of years, and now we are blessed to have Callie share her many gifts with St. John's children and their families. Callie brings a wealth of experience to this position, along with natural gifts for ministry with children.



Callie will lead our ministries with children and their families from birth through 5th grade, including BASIC, Splash, Faith Corps, and Soul Troop. Contact Callie at children@stjohns-lc.org. Welcome, Callie, to this ministry position!

Chris Cole isn't going anywhere!

Our thanks to Chris Cole for serving as the Children's Ministry Director for the past four years, continuing even as she took on the role of Office Manager. Moving forward, Chris's responsibilities will shift toward increased administrative support for all ministries.



Chris: Your dedication to sharing the love of Jesus with the youngest of our community was beautiful. Through VBS, BASIC, Faith Corps, Soul Troop, Splash!, and many other ministry moments, you have planted the seed of faith in St. John's littles. Thank you, Chris! We look forward to you shining your light from the office manager's desk for years to come.

Thanks to Karla Wickersham

Our thanks to Karla Wickersham for her three months of service as Director of Faith Formation; Karla is returning to the classroom as a Middle School science teacher in Evansville. She continues to volunteer with our youth, and we thank Karla for her ministry with us. Council and staff are discerning our future staffing needs and configuration. Regarding ministries of learning and service, please contact Pastor Matt or Office Manager Chris Cole.

REACHING OUT: SERVICE & INVITATION



Council Matters by Erika Stoker

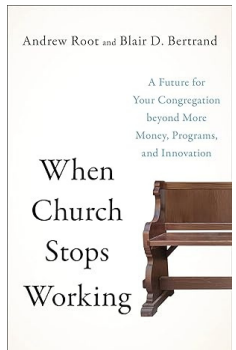
I am filling in for Keith Miller who is out touring the country and enjoying his retirement.

Council met on September 11th for our regular monthly meeting. Treats were provided by Renae Smith: veggies and dip and yummy fruit pizza. We prayed for each other in triads. Jack Burton joined us for his first meeting as our youth representative. The treasurer's report let us know that we are in good shape... still! Pastor Matt will be attending four mini retreats this year for leadership learning and relaxing. Dan Millin will be checking into our Memorial Fund to see what may be happening with future memorials. Worship participation is up 52% from this time last year.

Karla Wickersham, our Director of Faith Formation, has moved back into teaching for the district. We wish her the best of luck and thank her for her time on staff. Callie Jones was approved as our Children's Ministry Director. She is working with Chris Cole to learn the ropes.

Many things are upcoming and starting at St. John's: a Norway/Sweden trip, Men's group, Youth gathering in New Orleans, children's ministries, and BASIC. We are waiting on our license for our Little Fish Preschool so we can welcome our first class of three year olds.

Council was invited by Pastor to read the book "When Church Stops Working" to further our council education.



Stay Connected with St. John's



Online at www.StJohns-LC.org

On Facebook at facebook.com/St-Johns-Lutheran-Church-Evansville-WI-145437998849063/

With Daily Nudge Text Message Devotions at trunc.us/dB47CB

Charity Highlight: Lutheran Disaster Response



Lutheran
Disaster Response

Our offering gifts to St. John's do God's work near and far. Our 2023 budget includes a commitment of \$2000 to **Lutheran Disaster Response**, the ELCA ministry that coordinates response efforts after a disaster. They bring God's hope, healing, and renewal to people whose lives have been disrupted in the U.S. and around the world, collaborating with other response organizations and religious entities. When the dust settles and the headlines change, they stay to provide ongoing assistance to those in need.

Lutheran Disaster Response strives to help the church continue to be church in the midst of disaster, following Christ's call to bring hope and healing to our neighbor in need. Some key areas of work include:

- Providing emotional and spiritual care for people who have been affected by a disaster and for leaders who respond to a disaster
- Coordinating volunteers through our local affiliates
- Assisting refugees in holistic ways by meeting varied needs of the community
- Promoting disaster risk-reduction by helping communities build their assets, thereby reducing the effects of likely disasters
- Providing long-term recovery efforts by addressing the unmet needs months or even years after a disaster strikes

Green Living Tip: Holy Pumpkin Season!

National Pumpkin Day is celebrated every year on October 26th! It is a day to celebrate one of the most beloved gourds on earth! Pumpkins are so much more than silly Jack-O-Lanterns. They are full of antioxidants which are beneficial for gut health in humans & wildlife.

Purchase locally grown pumpkins to use for fall/Halloween decorations. This supports our local farmers & cuts down on carbon emissions since your pumpkins don't have far to travel.

If you carve your pumpkins, you can cook the seeds to eat as a tasty treat & utilize the flesh to make soups & other savory foods like muffins. Do not bleach or draw on your pumpkins; let them age naturally & get creative with carving. Pinterest has tons of pumpkin recipes & carving ideas!

Faithful Service Highlight: Ecumenical Care Closet



The Evansville Ecumenical Care Closet at 206 S. Madison Street offers a food pantry and re-sale store of gently used household items and clothing. Proceeds from the store help purchase food for the pantry.

All people are welcome to shop in the store, and customers may use the food pantry once a month. It is a collaborative ministry of local churches. Pastor Matt currently serves as board president.



Many St. John's members offer their time weekly to unloading groceries for the pantry, sorting through donations, organizing the re-sale store, and serving customers when it is open. Maybe you find your afternoons a little light on activity during the week, or maybe you are looking for connection on Saturday mornings. The Care Closet is a great opportunity to serve God and our neighbors! Your gifts of time, food, clothing, household goods, and more are always welcome. *If you are interested in volunteering at the Care Closet, contact Manager Jeanette Jones at 882-4532.*

by Lindsay Trustem

When done with your pumpkins, **DO NOT throw them away.** Pumpkins that end up in the landfill contribute to groundwater contamination. Pumpkins are 90% water, as they decompose they create methane (CH₄), a greenhouse gas that is more powerful than carbon dioxide (CO₂).

Leave your carved pumpkins on your porch or in your yard for wildlife to enjoy. You can cut out the front of your pumpkin & fill with birdseed! You can cut your pumpkins into pieces & scatter in your yard or slice horizontally & hang from your trees.

If you prefer not to carve your pumpkins, when you are done with them, you can ask a local farmer if they can use them to feed their animals.



Faithful Service Opportunity: St. John's Holiday Bazaar — November 18th

Calling all faithful bazaar servants – new, experienced, old & young alike! Mark your calendars for Saturday, November 18th for a day of craft fair/ dining/ silent auction/ cookie buffet/ canning/ resale shopping and more (Kids Shop, gift baskets, and YOUR IDEAS!)



St. John's hosts the event to raise funds for a variety of projects, and we need your help to make it successful. Please keep this Reaching Out event in your prayers and offer what services you can to this worthy cause. Anyone interested in helping out in any area or have amazing ideas to share to make the event spectacular, please come to the planning meeting on **Tuesday, October 24th at 7pm**. Contact Kate Cheramy at k8cheramy@yahoo.com or Allison Hilliard at allisonvrieze77@gmail.com with ideas, thoughts, and ways you would like to help St. John's mission and ministry fundraiser. We are in need of Shop Leaders, volunteers, and donations to make this event truly special: "As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace." 1 Peter 4:10

"The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others."

— Mahatma Gandhi



Our Mission Statement

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

Our Core Values

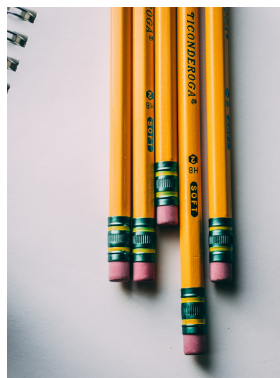
Inspiring Worship
Faithful Service
Lifelong Spiritual Growth

Uplifting Prayer
Caring Invitation
Christ-Centered Friendships

Abbie's Assurance: A Practice of Stillness & Listening

by Abbie Kriebs

I am not a summer person. I don't care for heat, water does not call to me, and I have no problem eating ice cream in January. Also? I like structure. And let me tell you: there is no siren song that rings louder for me than the call of a new school year. Those of you who bemoan the shortening days and the disappearance of warmth, step aside; I smell freshly sharpened Ticonderogas and just cracked the spine on a never-been-read textbook.



I look forward to September from June 1st. And October? Anne Shirley said it best: "I'm so glad I live in a world where there are Octobers."

I yearn to savor this season — to slow time down and soak it all in.

As I write this, we just came off of four (yes, four!) different trips to Urgent Care in three weeks with one member of our family or another. Our second year of school-at-home got off to a rocky start with me finally committing to a curriculum on Labor Day (Did I mention that August was also brutal? It involved ants. In our basement. Lots of ants.). There are too many things that need my attention and too many directions I and my family need to be going...

And yet, that little commandment hidden in the tenth verse of the forty-sixth chapter of Psalms is there, reminding us that we must "Be still, and know that I am God!" (NRSV)



One way that I've been increasingly trying to fold stillness into my life is the practice of "the examen." Handed down in the Ignatian tradition, one of the many threads that make up the modern Catholic faith, the examen is a practice of asking yourself two questions (or more) at the end of each day that help to deepen your ability to listen to God, practicing discernment as you listen to a pattern of answers over time.

A good friend of mine is pursuing her master's in Christian Spirituality and Spiritual Direction from Loyola University, named for Ignatius of Loyola. She sent me a picture book a year ago called "Sleeping With Bread: Holding What Gives You Life" by Dennis, Sheila, and Matt Linn. In it, the authors describe what the examen has meant for them, how it has altered the shape of their lives, and ways to incorporate it into your own life and the life of your family.

The basic idea is that at the end of the day, you intentionally quiet your body and mind and then ask yourself some version of these two questions:

1. When did I feel consolation today?
2. When did I feel disconsolation (desolation) today?

And then you sit in silence and wait for God to bring to mind the answers. Another way to ask these questions is: "What was I most grateful for today/least grateful for today?" or "What brought me peace/what didn't?" You could ask any version of these two questions, focusing on a high and a low, and write down those answers in a notebook, much like you would a prayer journal.

You would close your examen by giving thanks to God for what you have experienced, in life and in what God has shown you in the moment of the examen. If you feel comfortable, you can also share those moments with a trusted friend as a way to experience God's love together, someone who can support you in sharing the hard moments and rejoice with you in your moments of consolation.

The examen can be used as a daily, lifelong practice, or it can be used for a shorter time in a season when you are trying to make a big decision or seeking discernment in a specific area of life. Looking back at the patterns of consolation and desolation can show you trends in your life of what is bringing you joy, what's draining you, and what you might need to move toward and away from as you take your next steps.



There's no "wrong" way to practice the examen process, so choose questions that make sense to you — and change them up if necessary. Just as with passing the peace and prayer journaling, when you practice the examen, experiment with what helps you most draw closer to God's love, receiving it with open hands, an open mind, and an open heart.

Over the last year, my husband and I have been trying to make several medium-sized decisions all surrounding one big one: what do we want our day-to-day life to look like? Do we want to stay in our current house in the country, or move to town? Which town? Should we try a new job in a new state? Or a new job in a different part of this state? Should our oldest do another year of school at home? What do we want the building blocks of our life to look like, really?

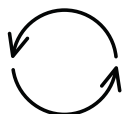
These are questions we've been running through over and over, each checking in with the other as we wait for answers to appear, for some peace to guide us one direction or another. The structure of the examen — what brings you consolation; what brings you desolation — has helped us to put words to our feelings and guide us even as we are frustrated by the lack of clarity, as we have felt like we are drowning in a constant state of decision soup.

A year in, we're closer to some of the answers, and still very far from knowing the whole story. But knowing that each day has a chance to check in again, to get still and listen — to God, to each other, to wise counsel — has been an anchor in an extended season of chaos.

If you practice any kind of examen — or if you choose to give it a try! — I'd love to hear about it. Email me at a.e.kriebs@gmail.com.

5 WAYS TO GIVE

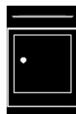
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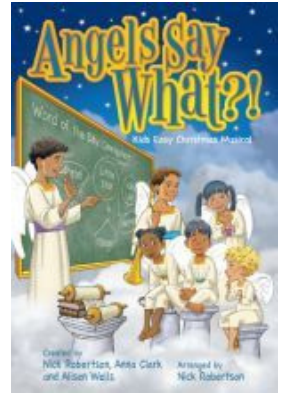


CHILDREN'S & YOUTH MINISTRIES

2023 Christmas Program: Calling All Kids 1st-5th Grade

We are SO EXCITED about this year's Christmas program titled "Angel's Say What?!" and WE NEED YOU!!

In this upbeat musical, we will join angels Hallie, Lou, Joy, Gabriel, and Little Star as they announce the good news and reflect on what it means to be a part of the greatest story ever told. It's going to be awesome and SO MUCH FUN!!



Speaking Roles, Solos & Choir Parts Available

There are several roles and solos available for this show! Speaking roles will be assigned to our 3rd-5th graders. If you are not cast in a lead role, you will be cast as part of the choir — which is in the entire show. We need everyone, and we need everyone to audition! Please be prepared to sing (if you are interested in a solo) and read/act for us.

Volunteers

We always need adult helpers (set & costume design, rehearsal helpers, sound technicians, etc.). Please contact Callie Jones if you are interested in helping!

Rehearsals

Rehearsals are extremely important! Your presence/absence affects everyone, so if you are going to commit, we need you to make these a priority. Rehearsals will take place Sundays from 11:15-12:00pm, beginning October 22.

Important Dates:

- AUDITION: Sunday, Oct 15 @ 11:15am
- DRESS REHEARSAL: Saturday, Dec 16 @ 9am
- PERFORMANCE: Sunday, Dec 17 @ 9am

You will receive a full rehearsal schedule at auditions.

Questions about auditions, rehearsals, or volunteering?
Contact Callie Jones at children@stjohns-lc.org

Wednesday Afternoons: Faith Corps and Soul Troop



Faith Corps (K-2nd grades) and Soul Troop (3rd-5th grades) fill the church building on Wednesdays after school until 4:30pm. These two groups gather for spiritual growth through fun activities with friends in a large-group setting. Snacks, music, devotion, and games are just the beginning of the fun.



Sunday Mornings: B.A.S.I.C.



B.A.S.I.C. (Brothers And Sisters In Christ) meets on Sunday mornings, from 10:15-11:15am, and focuses on children 3 years old through 5th grade.

Kids and small group leaders will gather for Bible stories, songs, crafts, and fun. Then kids will break into small groups to talk about God in their daily lives, pray together, and build friendships with each other and their leaders. Children who are 3 years old by September 1, 2023, are welcomed into this ministry.

Splash!

Families with children under three are invited to a gathering just for littles and their families.

Stay tuned for upcoming dates!



Children, Youth & Family (CYF)

Calendar Highlights for October 2023:

- Sunday, October 8: Bible Presentation (3 years old by Sept. 1, 2023) at 9am worship, workshop with families to follow at 10:15am
- Sunday, October 15: Christmas Program Auditions at 11:30am
- Sunday, October 21 & 22: Soul Troop leads worship
- Sunday, October 22: Bible Investigation (3rd graders) workshop at 10:15am (1 of 3)
- Sunday, November 5: Bible Investigation (3rd graders) workshop at 10:15am (2 of 3)

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

IN OUR THOUGHTS & PRAYERS

St. John's Members

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

Family & Friends

Amber Valdez	Tom Timm	Michael Schumann	Heidi Nash
Braiden Bergum	Sarah O'Sullivan	Laura Scott	
Jan Meyer	Olivia Frances	Bryan Walker	
Lori Koch	Bill Springer	Rosemary Wangard	

Partners in Mission:

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, Tyler Schnell, Hunter Speropulos,
Marcus Steindl, Mark Trawicki, Heather Ihlenfeldt, Branden Samela, Samantha Ihlenfeldt

Condolences to:

Liz Hatlen and family as they grieve the death of sister Betty.
Sarah Bauer as she grieves the death of her grandmother, Dan B Miller.

Congratulations to:

Brenna and Phil Johnson on the birth of their daughter, Maxine.

A Prayer for Autumn Months *(author unknown)*

O God of Creation, you have blessed us with the changing of the seasons.
As we welcome the autumn months,
may the earlier setting of the sun
remind us to take time to rest.
May the brilliant colors of the leaves
remind us of the wonder of your creation.
May the steam of our breath in the cool air
remind us that it is you who give us the breath of life.
May the harvest from the fields remind us of the abundance we have been given and
bounty we are to share with others.
May the dying of summer's spirit remind us of your great promise that death is
temporary and life is eternal.
We praise you for your goodness forever and ever. Amen.

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 families and marriages.

God of love, strengthen the bonds of couples and families. Guide husbands, wives, and partners in your way of forgiveness. Give hope to families that are distressed.

For the Church.

Jesus, you are the sure foundation of the Church. As the world changes around us, guide the Church to see the places where it needs to re-form. Give the Church courage to be the light in the darkness. Use the Word of God to speak words of grace and forgiveness. Send the Holy Spirit to empower the Church to share God's Story.

For the people of Morocco and Libya

Holy Spirit, you swept over the face of the waters when you created the world. Sweep over the people of Morocco and Libya as they live through the aftermath of the flooding. Dry up the water and restore the earth. Give safety, food, and clean water to your children.

We pray in the name of Jesus, Amen.

**Christ in Our Home Devotionals
Available at Welcome Desk**

This daily devotional resource is a great way to read the Scriptures and grow in faith. The current edition (Oct-Dec) is available at the Welcome Desk in the Gathering Area. Whether alone or with your family, let these one-page readings be a guide for prayer and reflection as you draw near to God as we close the (devotional) book on another year.





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