

# Visionotes

St. John's Lutheran Church  
May 2024



**Maundy Thursday**  
Holy Communion Milestone  
and Foot-Washing

## **Create a Wave of Peaceful Energy — p. 6**

Celebrate World Labyrinth Day on May 4

## **A Bittersweet Goodbye to Ashley Bowman — p. 8**

Let's send Ashley & Clark with joy!

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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](http://www.StJohns-LC.org)  
**Church Office:** 608-882-4044, Mon-Thurs, 8am-4pm

## St. John's Staff

Pastor	Matthew Pook
Pastor of Congregational Care	Jerry Tews
Office Manager	Chris Cole
Community Life Coordinator	Becca Pook
Children's Ministry Director	Callie Jones
Financial Director	Deb Herbers
Music Director	Sharon Magee
Interim Custodian	Jeff Herbers
Ministry Coordinator	Carolyn Butts
Communication Coordinator	Alyse Miller
Nursery	Mikayla Samuelson
Little Fish Preschool Teacher	Melissa Blake

## 2024 Church Council

President	Jeff Updike
Vice President/Mutual Ministry	Julie Creek-Hessler
Secretary/Fellowship	Keith Miller
Treasurer	Brandon Mohrbacher
Building and Grounds	Sean Mangold
Memorials	Dan Millin
Music and Worship	Rena Smith
Life and Growth	Kaye Crocker
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

# On Being New

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Should I talk to him, or not? What should I say? That was my internal dialogue one recent Saturday morning while I was working out at the high school weight room. I was the only one in the room when this young adult walked in. He was taking his time getting the lay of the land. He seemed new. I started off with a friendly “good morning” to break the ice. He greeted me back. I was glad we had at least acknowledged each other. I find it awkward when people in the same room don’t say a thing to each other. Then I noticed he was reading the rules and guidelines posted on the wall.

Not wanting to make any presumptions, I offered my name and asked if he came often. Indeed he was new, and I welcomed him. He was grateful and asked me a few questions regarding the rules and hours posted on the wall. We had a friendly exchange, then we both got into our routines. When I was getting ready to leave, I decided the situation required some hospitality. So, I re-engaged. “Mind if I give you a quick tour?” I showed him some of the features of the room – sound system, door props, and the best water fountain to use. He was receptive, and we talked some more, about fitness routines and sports background. I asked what brought him to town, and we realized we had mutual connections. I thought about inviting him to church, but that seemed a little forward at the time. Now I wish I had, but I’ll be more ready next time (“if you’d like to find a vibrant church...”). It felt good to make a connection, and I hope Sam felt a little more at home in Evansville. An exchange of grace.

It’s not easy being new. We’ve all been there. It’s uncomfortable. Research in psychology shows that trying new things can induce considerable stress. **Most people stick with what they know until the need to try something new is great enough to overcome their fear.**

Acknowledging this discomfort can give us empathy for someone engaging with the church for the first time. None of us can be perfectly certain about what we will encounter when gathering with the church; there’s something new and fresh constantly. But someone completely new to the church is taking a tremendous risk and making themselves

very vulnerable. They are facing discomfort head on and confronting their fear of the unknown. **Perhaps their need for spiritual support, faith connections, and holy community has compelled them into our midst.**

That's what motivated a friend of mine, a recently retired pastor, to be visiting churches for the first time. She is, of course, no stranger to church life, but it was still hard to be a guest. She visited many congregations and said that most often no one spoke to her. She visited one congregation five times, and the most the pastor ever said to her was "good morning." Five times! (Couldn't someone say, "My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I'm not sure we've met.") She even gave it a good effort and introduced herself to people. She told them she was new and asked what they liked about their church. They would politely give a response (one that sounded quite lame in her opinion, like, "I've always come here"), but then they wouldn't ask her anything in return. What's more, sometimes they physically turned away from her! Finally, she and her husband found a church that was friendly and engaging, able to ask questions and cared enough to listen. The 20-minute drive was worth it. In hospitality they found grace.

**What do you remember about visiting churches (and St. John's) for the first time?** I've been a guest before, too. I will never forget how Pastor Marcia Kifer welcomed me at Redeemer Lutheran Church in my hometown. I was a middle school guest with my friend Doug. She learned my name and took an interest in me. She offered me the grace of genuine hospitality when I was new. Years later, even after she left, Redeemer became my church home, and I was ordained into ministry there. We're still in touch, and her ministry to me inspires my own ministry today.

It's not easy to know what level of hospitality a particular guest would like. No one wants to be overwhelmed; few want to be ignored. But warm hospitality has the power to impart God's grace. In hospitality God lifts up both host and recipient.

In Christ,



*"Contribute to the needs of the saints;  
extend hospitality to strangers."  
— Romans 12:13*

# REACHING UP: WORSHIP & PRAYER

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## *Planting the Seed: Stories of the Early Church*

Imagine holding a seed in your hand. Though they come in various sizes, seeds are all quite tiny. It's hard to believe that something so small can grow into something so big as a tree or even produce countless fruits. In a similar way, it's hard to believe that a few dozen followers of Jesus soon became thousands and eventually millions and billions across the world and throughout history.



The growth of the church from its earliest days is evidence of the true goodness, beauty, and power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The same growth happens in our own lives. The seed of faith is planted in the human heart one story, one prayer, one action at a time. And that seed grows to produce a person who trusts God and loves their neighbor. God uses small things to make big impacts. We'll continue to explore the growth of faith and the church as we conclude our Easter series from Acts and First Corinthians.

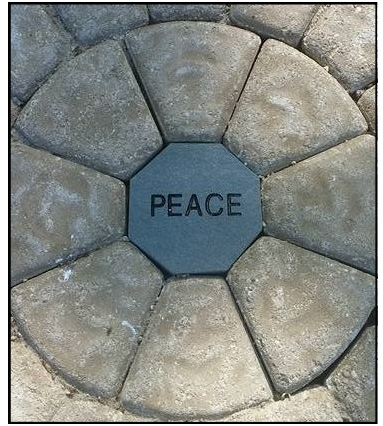


**Most of the New Testament consists of letters written by leaders to young churches. The book "First Corinthians" is actually the first letter that the Apostle Paul wrote to the church in Corinth.**

- May 4 & 5... 1 Corinthians 13:1-13 (Faith, Hope, and Love)
  - Planting the Seed - Week 5
  - All-Church Community Service Day, Sunday, 10:15am-12:15pm
- May 11 & 12... 1 Corinthians 15:1-26, 51-57 (Death Swallowed in Life)
  - Planting the Seed - Week 6
  - Youth lead worship
- May 18 & 19... 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 (One Body, Many Members)
  - Confirmation (Affirmation of Baptism), Sunday, 10:30am
- May 25 & 26... Acts 2:1-4 (Pentecost: Gifts of the Spirit)
  - Pentecost - Wear Red
  - Outdoor Worship, Saturday, 5:00pm

## World Labyrinth Day — May 4

The Evansville community is invited to celebrate **World Labyrinth Day, Saturday, May 4, 9:30am**. We'll be joining others around the world to create a wave of peaceful energy washing across the time zones. Walking is prayer when we are intentional and mindful. We will have a brief introduction and then pray as we walk the labyrinth together. Plan for 30 minutes, much of it in silence.



The labyrinth was dedicated on World Labyrinth Day in 2016. The Peace Garden & Labyrinth have come a long way since then! The Evansville Peace Garden & Labyrinth is located in Seminary Park, behind the Seminary Apartments, 26 S. Fourth Street. All ages welcome.

## Confirmation: Eighth Grade Milestone — May 18-19

For the past three years, 24 young disciples have been intentionally preparing to affirm their baptism and confirm their faith. Through interviews with Pastor Matt and personal faith expressions in their capstone projects, we know that these 24 are ready! This is a milestone in their journey of faith that marks their maturing relationship with Jesus.



**On May 19, worshippers at 9:00am will offer a blessing at the end of the service.** In worship at 10:30am we welcome extended families and guests as we pray for their futures and bless their ministry to the world. Eighth graders will display their Faith Boards sharing the important people, faith statements, and Confirmation memories in Fellowship Hall beginning Thursday, May 9. Take a moment to walk through the Faith Fair to see the youth of the church and hear their voices share about Jesus.

Thank you, small group leaders of our 2024 confirmands: Kate Cheramy, Steve Schneeberger, Abby McCullough, Larry Olson, Renee Zemke, Carolyn Butts, Noel Oscar, Evelyn Stencel, and Greg Waidley. Your caring commitment has blessed our young disciples and impacted their lives!

## Baccalaureate Worship — June 2

Every spring, St. John's hosts a baccalaureate service to honor the graduating class. On **Sunday, June 2**, we'll celebrate the accomplishments of students earning diplomas in high school and degrees from college and beyond. What a joy for the church to bless our graduates and send them into future endeavors!



**Save the Dates!**  
Outdoor Worship on  
Saturdays:  
May 25  
July 13  
August 31

## Whatcha Reading? with Becca Pook



### **The Watchmaker's Daughter** by Larry Loftis

The author of this biography is renowned for his spy-thriller novels. He takes the true story of Corrie ten Boom and writes it with all the suspense, drama, and emotion of WWII. The Nazis occupied Holland, and Corrie's family chooses to hide Jews and others in their home. This book is about the ten Boom's faith amidst the pain and horror of this time in history.



I am amazed at Corrie's courage. She shares the love of Jesus with the people around her whether they were Jews, Nazi soldiers, or hate-filled neighbors. When I think about the times I was nervous about sharing about God's grace, I roll my eyes at my fear. Here was a woman who was under such conditions I have never experienced, and she continued to trust God and share God's love. This story is empowering and inspiring. What a testimony to God's faithfulness!

# REACHING WITHIN: SPIRITUAL GROWTH & FRIENDSHIP

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## Holy Community Opportunity Ashley Bowman + Clark Brunner's Send-Off

The papers will all be written. The finals will all be taken. The regional church has endorsed her as a person ready for pastoral internship. What's left to do? Say goodbye.

Ashley Bowman is finished with her classes at Wartburg Seminary. Her and Clark are heading to St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Durham, NC where she will complete her final requirement before ordination: an internship.



St. John's has been supporting Ashley through prayer and scholarship in her call to ordained ministry. After her internship, she will move into seeking her first call. And who knows where God will take them next!



During worship on May 11 & 12, St. John's will celebrate and send-off Ashley and Clark. On Saturday, the evening will continue with a meal and fellowship. On Sunday morning, we will enjoy a reception after worship.

Community is a place to welcome and to say farewell. As seasons change, God's Church ebbs and flows. You are invited to join these two in this transition into a new adventure. Bring your blessings and prayers, and if you feel so moved, a gift they can carry with them into their next chapter.

Mark your calendars for this special weekend.

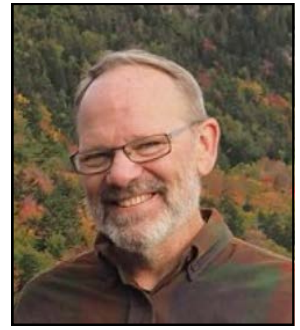
**MORNING PRAYER SERVICE, TUESDAYS @8:30**

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



# My Sense of Community

## by Gordy Miller



I came into this world in 1960 — a squalling, red, little potato-bodied boy. I'm sure my mom and dad looked at me and smiled. Friends, neighbors and close relatives likewise smiled and felt the pride of a parent. This was the community I grew up in.

Other than the four years I attended college, I have always lived in or near Evansville. As a child I walked to school just like all the other kids. At any point in that journey I was never outside of a parent or adult's view. The community watched over its kids. At times they reprimanded. Other times they smiled. At all times I knew they would have done anything to help if I had trouble. I also know they spoke with my parents about my occasional less-than-stellar behavior. This is the community I grew up in.

Times have changed in many ways since then. Community still exists. I think many of us still watch over our neighbors and neighborhoods. At church we do this in so many ways. Recently, I was talking with a young mother at church and suddenly, mid-sentence she dashed off to stop a small child who, with great agility, was attempting to leave the building. Community.

I have a surgery coming up (after writing this but before publication). Already I have church folks saying, "If you need help..." I have friends and relatives offering the same. Community.



To me, community is a willingness to see, to help, to care for, and to assist when another isn't able. This describes my church community at St. John's. Within it is my tribe, my family, my connection to mental and spiritual health. This community strengthens me and those around me.

I love our people! It doesn't matter that I'm not an outspoken or overly social person. **You are my family, my tribe, my community.**

## LifeFest: A Party with a Purpose

In February, St. John's high school youth experienced the energy and ministry of Life Promotions at Quake in Wisconsin Dells. The Spirit moved in the gathering and the hearts of our youth, so St. John's is taking a road trip to Oshkosh for more.



**On July 11-14, LifeFest will host music headliners** like We the Kingdom, Zach Williams, Newsboys, Matt Maher, Riley Clemmons, and many more. The days and nights are filled with hearing the Good News of Jesus through music and speakers. Plus there's a 5K, artzone, ferris wheel, bonfire worship, inflatables area, prayer times, dance party, and much more. Come for one day. Come for all four. Experience the Church in a unique way. *Contact the office or Pastor Matt for your tickets.*

## Lutherdale Travel Ministry: Smoky Mountains - Oct. 14-19

Share views of the Great Smoky Mountains and the experience of dazlings shows in Pigeon Forge and Gatlinburg with friends this fall! From **October 14-19**, Lutherdale Travel Ministry will go on a guided tour of the Smoky Mountains, visit historic downtown Gatlinburg, and enjoy a variety of music and entertainment.



Cost is \$989 per person (double occupancy), which includes 6 days/5 nights, transportation, 8 meals, and tickets to 4 separate shows. For more information and to reserve your spot, contact Lutherdale at (262)742-2352 or by email: [info@lutherdale.org](mailto:info@lutherdale.org). They will handle all travel details, but sign up at the Ministry Table to see who else will be on the bus with you!

### 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.**

# FEATURE: Mothers of Faith

Who are the women that nurtured that seed of faith God placed in your heart? Maybe she was your actual mother. Maybe it was a friend that encouraged you. Maybe it was a co-worker who prayed for you. God has blessed us with words, gifts, hugs, time, and service from women. Perhaps your faith has been impacted from the story of Lydia, one of the first female pastors. Or maybe the story of Esther's leadership in the Old Testament has empowered you. And who can forget the first people Jesus appeared to after his death: three women. Here are some St. John's siblings who share their stories of women in their lives who "mothered" their faith.



**Jeff Farnsworth:** When I was in fifth grade, we were at a very turbulent time in our home. Like with *American Idol*, family members tell their children what a great voice they have and, somehow, I reluctantly joined the junior choir at St John's. The Christmas program was right around the corner, and the choir director, Ellen Patterson, talked me into singing "What Child Is This?" for the program. I spent several afternoons at her home, which seemed at the time to be in the high-classed area of town on Garfield Street.

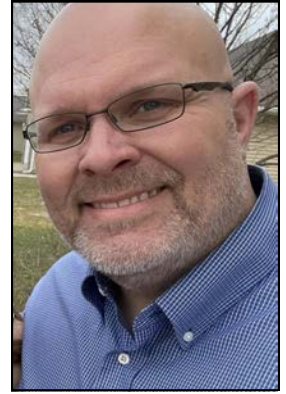
At the same time, another neighbor, Barb Patterson was over visiting with Ellen, and the two of them were the most calming influences anyone could ever want. At the time, I needed structure and consistency as well as to feel loved and appreciated. I was able to build my self-confidence because of those two God-loving women. (Sigh! It makes me tear up a bit thinking about those days about 55 years ago.)

**Dorothy Helgesen:** Growing up in the 1930s and 1940s, church was a very small part of my life. It wasn't until coming to Evansville after getting married in 1947 that I became more involved in a church. It is here that my faith grew. My husband and I met many young families at St. John's and these wives/mothers quickly became my friends. Our Dorcas women's group started, and we met monthly to read and study the Bible. From there, we became involved in many social events and different activities with these friends. It is these women who nurtured and grew my faith.



Even today, at 98 years old, I continue to be involved with the quilting group. When together, we have fun and support one another, all while helping to serve others.

**David Karr:** The person who taught me most about faith was my mother. She grew up in the 1940's in extraordinary poverty in southern Kentucky. She was eight years old when her father was killed in the line of duty. She helped her mother raise her two older brothers and a baby brother in a house with no indoor plumbing. Later, she put herself and her middle brother through college and graduated with honors. She cared for my ailing father for ten years with grace. She suffered other painful setbacks that came as no fault of her own.



Despite her hardships, she was a joyful and optimistic person who gave far more than she received. She taught me that God only gives us what we can handle. She believed a person should never ask the Lord for something they have already been given the strength or the means to provide themselves. In short, faith in God begins with having faith in the strength of creation. My gift of faith is to believe that we are meant to be present for each experience and already have what it takes to persevere. This has only strengthened my resolve as I've seen challenges in my life. My mother has been gone five years now, and I still see her wisdom bear fruit everyday.



**Maureen Anderson:** I thank God for blessing me with my mother, Donna Mae Agnes Veronica Bavidio Long. Her childhood wasn't easy; my mom was only three when her mother passed away. She spent the next few years going between her Italian immigrant grandparents, aunts, and uncles, and — when her father remarried — her stepmother (who was not a warm and fuzzy person).

My mom persevered and was a kind, generous, God-loving woman. She raised me to also love God, respect others, and know that Jesus is always by my side, even when things get tough.

My mom sang in the church choir, taught Catechism to children with special needs, was in the women's Church Guild, and was always helping friends and family.

When I had trials in my life, my mom would listen to me and allow me to shed a few tears. But then she would remind me of how many blessings I had in my life and to remember that no matter what I'm going through, someone else always has it worse. I still hear her voice when I'm struggling with something.

My mom was such a fun person. She loved to tell jokes, and always had a few in her purse that she'd pull out whenever she had the chance. We spent every Wednesday night together, driving to and from our Sweet Adelines Chorus rehearsal and going out with friends afterward. She spent the last years of her life in assisted living due to poor health. She survived triple bypass heart surgery, three bouts of breast cancer, and never once complained or said "why me?"

I was able to be by her side on the day she passed. She had such grace and devotion to our Lord. We played music, held hands, and right before she passed, she looked me in the eyes, smiled and said "I see Him!" I smiled back through my tears, and said "Of course you do. Jesus is waiting to take you home." Then she took one last breath, and passed peacefully. That day was Easter Sunday, which happened to fall on April Fool's Day that year. I'm sure she's telling jokes in heaven, and living her best eternal life with Jesus!



“Community is much more than belonging to something; it’s about doing something together that makes belonging matter.”  
– Brian Solis,  
Digital Anthropologist & Futurist



**St. John's Commitments**  
We commit ourselves to renouncing racism, promoting social and economic justice, and caring for the environment.

## Internship Matters

St. John's has been approved as an internship site with Luther Seminary in St. Paul, MN, and Luther has matched us with an intern to begin ministry with us July 8. More details will be coming soon!

**Serving as an internship host site will be a wonderful opportunity for us to shape a future leader of the church.** Our congregation is vibrant, alive, and full of the Spirit. We try new things and welcome new people. We will show grace, hospitality, and support to a future pastor. In turn, the intern/vicar will be a blessing to us... and a gift to congregations in the future. Funding for this expansion in our ministry comes from our daily ministry offerings. St. John's has budgeted \$21,000 for 2024. Together with our generosity and support, this will be an enriching experience for us all. Please join in praying for our pastoral intern and for us to be prepared to receive them.

**Kyle Kasten:** Hosting an intern provides great experiences for the St. John's community. I had the opportunity to serve on two different internship committees, both having exceptional impacts on our congregation, helping us to welcome new thoughts and ideas into our worship practices. Both Vicar Nancy and Vicar Kris brought different experiences to our congregation, and these unique strengths helped us grow as a community.



It is important for St. John's to host a pastoral intern because it helps us strengthen our faith and expand on our congregational experiences. Pastoral interns can have a huge impact. My stepson, Jack, still holds his experiences with Vicar Kris in very high regard. Jack's involvement in the church grew exponentially while Vicar Kris served at St. John's. Vicar Kris' connection with Jack, and many other youth, provided for a meaningful experience that has had a lasting impact on our family's involvement.

As an educator, I equate hosting a pastoral intern to the student teaching experience. When I was a beginning teacher, classroom instruction only provided one component of what it would take to be a teacher. An internship experience provides structure and learning opportunities that new teachers can use in their future classrooms. **Welcoming a pastoral intern doesn't only benefit the church, but also helps build informed, experienced, and confident pastors, strengthening the Church in Evansville and beyond.**



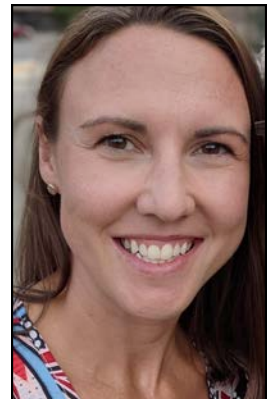
**Julia Schiefelbein-Egan:** St. John's has been blessed to welcome three interns, or vicars. Each brought their own unique talents, passions, perspectives and ideas. I know many in our congregation formed very meaningful connections with Maria, Nancy, and Kris. I was able to serve on the internship committee for each, meeting monthly for support and check-in's and completing formal evaluations for their respective seminaries. Intimately learning about a seminary student's training and preparation was eye-opening!

We are so blessed to have a welcoming and open church to host another intern, and I'm excited to see what the upcoming year has in store for us. We have the chance to foster another future pastor who will have far-reaching impacts on so many people's lives. **Pastor Matt still talks about how influential his own internship year was, and our congregation continues to reap those benefits.** Going out of your way to build a relationship with our new vicar will enable him to jump right into our congregation's life, and there's a lot of life here!

Many people in our congregation have first-hand experience with the time and energy required to train someone in a new position or career — student teachers, healthcare trainees, apprenticeship programs, students, or simply a new coworker. It can be a lot of effort at times. I'm so appreciative Pastor Matt, Pastor Jerry, and all our staff are willing to put in this extra work. Our entire congregation can help with this by being truly open to an intern's new ideas and by looking for ways to nurture their passions. The entire process and the end result are so rewarding, not to mention fun. I'm very excited St. John's has the opportunity to welcome another vicar.

**Stephanie Kvalheim:** Sometimes during the prayers of the church, we ask the Holy Spirit to raise up pastors and leaders among us. I've spoken those prayers aloud as an Assisting Minister, and I have wondered, "How do we participate in the answering of this prayer?" Well, hosting an intern pastor is a tangible way to do just that!

In recent years, we've had the privilege of hosting three pastoral interns, and each time, it has been an impactful experience for all involved.



Hosting an intern is a collective effort. Pastor Matt and Pastor Jerry, along with church staff, will certainly feel the added responsibilities of mentorship. However, the support and involvement of the entire congregation are equally vital. Maybe you can move boxes and furniture as we help the Vicar get settled into his home for the next year. Consider volunteering for the Internship Committee, which coordinates support, feedback, and communication among our church, the seminary, and the intern. **Be a welcoming presence! Extend an invitation to dinner at your home, or to an event or activity you enjoy.**

Remember, our pastors are people too, with interests and lives beyond their work. Ask around – many St. John’s members still share lasting memories or friendships with past vicars.

It's important to acknowledge that there will be moments of discomfort as we navigate this experience together. We'll probably hear a few awkward or clunky sermons. We'll hear ideas we may disagree with. Be gracious and keep an open heart and mind. The uncomfortable moments come when God is asking us to grow in faith!

A pastoral internship is sure to be an encounter to transform us all – Vicar Christopher AND St. John’s. How fortunate we are to be a thriving congregation that can support this need in the greater church. Let’s embrace the opportunity with enthusiasm and commitment, recognizing that **hosting an intern pastor is a calling to actively participate in God’s work of raising up leaders in our midst.**

**Bethany Severson:** I have been on the internship committee for all three of our interns, and one thing that was apparent is that each intern is very different in how they learn and how they need to be led. Each Vicar brought great ideas and plans with them and in the process of being an intern learned how to be part of and lead a congregation.



Vicar Maria was like a sponge and accepted all of the ideas and leadership that were offered. She was able to integrate herself (as well as her husband) into the congregation. She understood that in order to lead a congregation, one needs to be part of the congregation. She understood that in order to lead a congregation,



one needs to be part of the congregation. Our time with Vicar Nancy was unfortunately cut short and was affected by the start of the COVID pandemic. We quickly learned that she needed to be given deadlines and a list of tasks to complete. This is not a bad thing, but it was different from our previous intern. It was a great learning experience for the internship committee that we needed to individualize each internship year for the Vicar instead of having the same expectations.



The most recent intern, Vicar Kris, also had his internship affected by the COVID pandemic, when worship moved online and he had to preach a sermon to an almost empty sanctuary. As he stated, this was a very difficult process because the feedback from those you are speaking to helps to build momentum to make the sermon great. The pandemic presented

a lot of challenges that were very unique to the internship year, like when it would it be safe to resume in-person services, how we could implement more RIC practices, and how a Vicar can properly present ideas and maintain cohesiveness within the congregation.

As we prepare to bring our fourth intern, it is an exciting time for our congregation. **Each experience allows our congregation the opportunity to build on what we learned from previous experiences and help to form the next generation of pastors.**



### **Our Mission Statement**

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

### **Our Core Values**

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

# Making Connections

## New Members of St. John's

### Bob and Cathi Fischer

Bob and Cathi are not strangers to Wisconsin, although they have spent quite a bit of time outside the Badger State. They raised 11 children and have a HUGE family (Just ask them how many!). Bob was busy in the auto industry, and Cathi worked outside the home doing office managing and caregiving. Now in their retirement they like to hunt, fish, garden, do crafts with the grands, cook, and sew. They found St. John's through a funeral of a friend, but they stayed for the age diversity, openness, and upbeat sermons.



### Leora Gunn

Lee grew up at St. John's. She has two adult children and 2 grandchildren. Newly retired, you might find her walking, hiking, traveling, or doing yoga. She feels at home at St. John's. The community and support are what keeps her coming back to grow in her faith.

### Scott Haakenson

Scott was born and raised in Evansville. His wife and three kids worship at the Catholic church, but Scott was confirmed in the Lutheran church at St. John's. He spends his days at Stoughton Trailers as a staff accountant. But when he's not at work, you can find him reading cooking, hiking, golfing, boating, or doing yardwork. He has also worked a lot with his mother Carole whose estate was hit by the February tornado. Positivity, spiritual growth, and being part of a community are what drew Scott to St. John's.





### **Kay and Mark Hoffmann**

St. John's attracted Kay and Mark with it's all-inclusive, comfortable surroundings, and they have friends and relatives that are members. As retired people, Mark likes to golf, fish, sing, travel, and volunteer. In addition to these

things, Kay likes to read, watch sports, puzzle, and create diamond art. Kay spent 30 years as a Childcare Teacher, and Mark spent his days as a Construction Electrician.

### **Scott + Stacy Norton, Lilly + Chase**

The Nortons live on a hobby farm in Evansville. Lilly (12) and Chase (10) drew their parents to St. John's. Stacy actually grew up with her grandma, Janet Wienke, worshipping with St. John's. Stacy works at home as a bookkeeper, and Scott is a supervisor at a pharmaceutical company. They like to fish, be outdoors, cook, and read. The kids are into animals and sports. The Nortons are glad to be back in a faith community.



### **Carol Sharp**

Susie McFarlin and Sarah Bauer, St. John's members, and many others welcomed and invited Carol to be a part of St. John's. She loves gardening, cooking, and believe it or not, cleaning! Carol has been in Evansville eight years, and just felt "called" to the Church.





### **Benjamin Van Galder**

Ben is a chef at Bistro 525 in Madison. He grew up in Evansville and lived in Wyoming for some time. He is engaged to Aubrey Rinehart, who brought Ben to her the faith community she grew up in. Aubrey spends her days doing landscape maintenance, and they both fill their extra minutes planning the wedding. Ben likes to play video games, and they both love to travel. Ben was attracted to St. John's for the sense of community, love, and kindness. He liked how St. John's focuses on values and the Word of God.

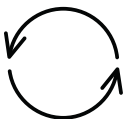
### **Mike + Stacy Wagner, Leah + Kenzie**

These four were drawn to St. John's through Pastor Matt's care and ministering during the death of Stacy's father. The Wagners each have their own calling. Mike works as a shop teacher at Beloit Memorial High School, runs a dairy cattle hoofing company, and is a seed distributor. Stacy keeps herself busy with her own cleaning service. Leah is an associate accountant studying for her CPA. And Kenzie served in the Army and is a bartender. They like to travel as well as Stacy likes to garden, camp, knit, crochet, and collect rock/shells. Mike likes to hunt and enjoy his ATV. And Leah also likes to cook and bake.



## **5 WAYS TO GIVE**

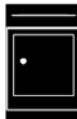
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# REACHING OUT: SERVICE & INVITATION

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**Council Matters** by Erika Stoker

The church council strives to follow our mission statement of *Reaching Up, Reaching Out, Reaching Within... because God reaches out to us*. We keep this statement at the forefront as we make decisions for our church.

## **Reaching Within:**

Worship attendance for Holy Week was up this year. We are almost back to pre-Covid numbers! The council is really working on ways to make it easier for everyone to participate in worship services. We discussed making bulletins available for those watching us on YouTube. How would we get them out? We landed on putting a few in a box on the front porch where they could be picked up before the services.

## **Reaching Out:**

We had a great conversation about how to keep the post-high school/college-aged members connected to St. John's. What do they need from us even though they have moved away? Some possible ideas are Trivia or Bingo nights at area businesses, a "Where are they now?" Mission and Ministry series, and continuing to send out the Visionotes.

## **Looking Forward:**

The council continues to discuss and make decisions concerning our building. Some things that are on the agenda for the near future are a new roof, new outside doors, and fixing a leak in the fireplace room. The staff and council are always thinking about new ways to use the Sunshine Room in the basement. Currently it is being used as a Youth room, but its future is open for whatever may be best for the mission of St. John's.

### **Stay Connected with St. John's**



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

**Facebook** St. John's Lutheran Church; Evansville, WI

**YouTube** St. John's Lutheran Church Evansville, WI



# Spring All-Church Service Day

Have you found your project for service day? Check out the lists on the Ministry Table or online to make Sunday, May 5 a great day! We will serve the schools, the city, The Heights, Care Closet, and work on several other projects.



"God's Work. Our Hands" is a nationwide motto for the Lutheran church (ELCA.) And St. John's keeps this "faithful service" value at the core of who we are. There is something holy that happens in our hearts and minds when we humbly serve God and serve our neighbors.



**So clear your morning schedule May 5, 10:15am-12:15pm.** Find your St. John's t-shirt. And get ready to use your hands and feet to love this holy community.

## Open Table Meal — May 13

Evansville Lion's Club, Retirement Income Strategies, and Kathy Wells are hosting the **May Open Table Free Community Meal on Monday, May 13, 5:15-6:30pm.**



Find a seat with your community at Creekside Place, 102 S. Maple St. Menu includes spaghetti with meat sauce, fettuccine Alfredo, salad bar, desserts, & beverages (vegetarian/vegan/gluten free options). Bring a friend or make a friend at this meal that welcomes all!

## Looking Ahead to Summer



Mark your calendars for these important dates!

- Outdoor Worship on Saturdays: May 25, July 13, August 31
- June 9: Made-to-Order Omelet Brunch
- June 22 + 23: Reconciling in Christ Weekend
- July 10: Ecumenical Meal + Hymn Sing at Creekside
- July 14 + 15: Pig Roast + Potluck
- July 29-August 2 Vacation Bible School

# Baby Kits for Lutheran World Relief

A new baby is a blessing, but bringing a baby into the world can be a difficult and scary thing for a mother living in poverty. Keeping a new baby healthy, clean, and comfortable can take a lot of resources. The items included in a Baby Care Kit provide the basics a family needs to care for their newest members and introduce them to the world with pride. Donate any or all items, and a team will assemble them. Not feeling like shopping? Each kit costs \$3.10 to ship. Consider donating to the LWR Shipping Fund. We'll collect Baby Care Kits in May & June.



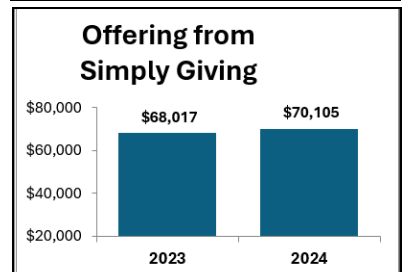
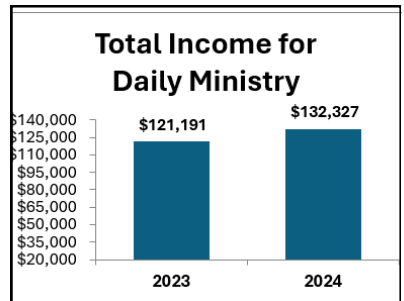
Each Baby Care Kit includes the following, size 6-24 months:

- Two lightweight cotton t-shirts (no onesies)
- Two long- or short-sleeved gowns or sleepers (without feet)
- Two swaddling blankets, medium-weight cotton or flannel, or crocheted or knitted with lightweight yard, between 36"-52" square or rectangle (can mix/match)
- Two or three bath-size bars (8-9 oz each) of gentle soap, in original wrapper; no mini or hotel size bars
- One jacket, sweater, or sweatshirt with hood, or include a baby cap
- One cotton or cotton-blend hand towel (dark color recommended), sized 15"x 18"x 25"x 30"
- Two pairs of socks
- Four cloth diapers, flat fold preferred
- Two diaper pins or large safety pins

## First Quarter Financial Report

Thank you for doing your part to provide resources for our mission and ministry together. St. John's people are faithful in their giving to our daily ministries — so much so that 56% of our giving to St. John's mission is from Simply Giving, our convenient electronic funds transfer. Simply Giving contributions are a great way to give consistently. Choose a checking/savings account and avoid credit card fees. Contact the church office for details to enroll or to update your giving any time.

Our expenses are slightly under budget thus far in 2024, which is good. But our income is under our budgeted projection by \$4401. Most of our income is from our generous offering gifts. We will continue to trust one another to give with joy and trust God to provide.





## Green Living Tip

# Recycling: Embracing Infinite Potential

by Leah Kinmonth-Purdy

Recycling is a cornerstone of sustainability, yet, not all materials are created equal in the recycling realm. Understanding which items can be infinitely recycled versus those that cannot is crucial for maximizing environmental impact. Items like glass and aluminum are champions of infinite recycling. Glass, once melted down, can be reshaped endlessly without losing quality. Similarly, aluminum retains its properties through multiple recycling cycles. Embracing these materials in our consumption habits fosters a perpetual reuse loop, drastically reducing the demand for virgin resources.

Certain plastics pose a significant challenge. Plastics like PET (polyethylene terephthalate), used in bottles and containers, degrade in quality with each recycling iteration. Consequently, they eventually reach a point where they cannot be further recycled and are downcycled into lower-grade products or disposed of in landfills. **Educating ourselves and others about the recyclability of various materials is essential for making informed choices.** Opting for products packaged in infinitely recyclable materials and supporting initiatives to improve recycling infrastructure can drive positive change. Here are some refined recycling pointers:

**1. When it comes to aluminum foil, scrunch it up to the size of a baseball before tossing it into your recycling bin.** Opting for aluminum foil over plastic wrap is a sustainable choice.

**2. Those tiny metal bottle caps pose a recycling challenge, as they can't typically be processed through standard recycling systems.** However, you can collect them in a tin can, seal the can shut, and then include it in your recycling bin.

**3. Remember, not all recycling facilities operate the same way.** Acceptable items might vary depending on your location and service provider. For precise guidelines, consult your municipality's website or your recycling provider's resources.

As custodians of our planet's resources, it's crucial to recognize our role in preserving them. We share a responsibility to steward this Earth sustainably. By adhering to mindful recycling practices, we fulfill our duty to care for and protect our environment for future generations.

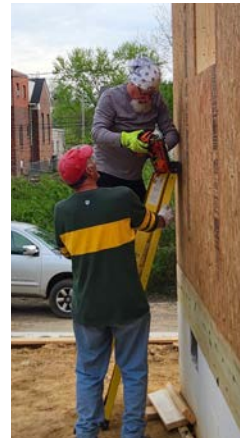


## ACTS29 in Kentucky

St. John's sent 12 servant-hearted people to serve a week in Hazard, Kentucky in April. As they sat in the car on their long trip home, here are some of the words that welled up within them:



**Keith Miller:** I saw God this week when he put me in the path of a deaf man living his life in rural Kentucky. I used my old sign language skills to talk with him every day. He told me that when he's with Jesus in heaven, he'll be able to hear.



**Martha Stadt:** We saw God in giving us the ability to do something I never thought possible — build a house!

**Lea Kuqo:** I saw God in all the faces, hands, and camaraderie of the mission team. We all played a crucial role in our quest of helping as much as we could. Without everyone we had on this trip working together, the amazing work we did for the people of Hazard, Kentucky would not have happened.

**Brenda Muth:** I saw God in the beautiful Kentucky valley, and the relationships we built with each other, with our host organization and contractors, and our homeowner and her brother. We experienced kindness and acceptance. I also reflected on the spirit of Dave Persons who was not with us on this trip, but loved mission trips.





## Love in Action: Culture & Faith

By Ruchelle Elliot

Did you know that the Philippines has 111 dialects? Tagalog, our national language, and Cebuano are the most spoken native languages. English is taught in school from pre-K until college. The Philippines is one of only two Asian countries with Roman Catholicism as the predominant religion; I grew up in a Catholic household.

Our values bind all Filipinos wherever we are in the world. The westerners shake hands, the east Asians bow down, while some southeast countries clasp their hands. Filipinos have our own cultural trademark called pagmamano. It is an honorific gesture that communicates warmth and respect when younger people greet or say goodbye to their elders. It is done by taking the elder's hand and touching it lightly on your forehead — a distinct way of showing respect and receiving blessings from them. "Po" and "opo" are words Filipinos use to show respect when talking to elders or someone they respect. "Opo" is a polite way to say 'yes,' and its contraction "po" punctuates or ends a sentence. "Kumusta po." (How are you?) "Opo, kumain na "po" ako." (Yes, I have already eaten)

I left the Philippines 17 years ago; staying connected to my roots is very important to me. My parents instilled the importance of strong faith in God. A few of my childhood core memories are hearing mass every Sunday as a family. I always look forward to exchanging "Peace be with you." and singing The Lord's Prayer. Every morning at Catholic schools in the auditorium, all the students and faculty members gathered to sing the national anthem and pray the rosary. My grandparents own a life-size statue of Pieta, we would gather as a family every 3 o'clock in the afternoon around it and pray. Each year our family prepares The Pieta for the Holy Week procession led by the local church.

As a Filipino-American who is also in an inter-racial marriage, it is important to me to have a husband who shares the same faith and values. We work consciously together to raise our daughter in practicing Filipino and American values, traditions and cultures. And make sure that she grows up in church like her mommy and daddy. We are blessed to be members of the church that genuinely welcomes everybody.

## Missionary Moment: The Grulkes in Botswana

Greetings from Botswana! We are excited to be sharing with St. John's about the awesome things that God is doing through Bible translation here. The biggest excitement is the dedication and launch of the Shekgalagari New Testament on March 9. It was a wonderful event, filled with joy, laughter, prayer, preaching, and songs. We were blessed to have many guests join us from Lutheran Bible Translators, as well as important people from the Bakgalagari people as well. The Kgosi (chief) encouraged the people to be proud of their language; she said that the people have been hidden, but now we are coming out!



This event was a big milestone, but it was not without its challenges. Due to the situation in the Red Sea, the cargo ship with our Bibles was forced to turn around, delaying arrival past the launch date. But God provided! The printer had enough leftover materials from our order to print 300 New Testaments and shipped them by air in time for the event. The speakers of Shekgalagari are spread out in Botswana; more than 800 miles separate them from north to south. We are planning a tour of mini launches that will make these printed New Testaments available to every village we can reach with our 4x4 truck. We are also excited about the audio recordings that we were able to produce with the help of Faith Comes by Hearing. Those recordings and Kelsey's smartphone app are going to make it much easier for people to use the newly published Bible in the way that fits them best.

We are also continuing to work on the Shiyeyi project. Carl has enjoyed working with the Wayeyi team and getting back to Bible translation, not just logistics. We also plan to be back in the US over the summer to share with churches about our work here. Thank you for your prayers and support of our ministry here and we look forward to seeing you again! Modimo a le segofatse! May God bless you!

# CHILDREN'S & YOUTH MINISTRIES

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## Ministering to St. John's Children

By Callie Jones

We ended the '23-'24 school year with over 90 kids registered for our Wednesday afternoon and Sunday morning children's programs. These programs would not be possible without the support of our children's ministry volunteers. Their roles often extend beyond teaching Bible stories; they are mentors, guides, and sometimes even a shoulder to lean on for the children under their care.

I was incredibly fortunate to step into the role of Children's Ministry Director this year to find myself and the children supported in so many ways by our volunteers. This year we had many seasoned volunteers return for another year of service, as well as a few new ones join the team: Pastor Matt, Becca Pooch, Jessica Westby, Sharon George, Chris Cole, Deb Herbers, Jeff Herbers, Allison Hilliard, Ann Legris, Lindsey Jobe, Marabeth Cole, Carlyn Challgren, Laura Brusberg, Jen Stokstad, Jessica Mohrbacher, Renae Smith, and many middle school youth.



To all of our children's ministry volunteers, thank you for your unwavering faith, boundless energy, and the love you pour into the hearts of our children.

### **Children, Youth & Family (CYF) Calendar Highlights for May 2024:**

- May 11 & 12: Youth lead worship
- May 15: Last Wednesday of Faith Corps, Soul Troop, and Confirmation
- June 2: Bike Rodeo at 11:00am

# Little Fish Preschool

Monday, October 2nd, 2024, was St. John's first day of Little Fish Preschool! Our hard work was finally paying off and we could welcome children and families into our new ministry. Melissa Blake, our Little Fish teacher, has been busy at work teaching the children all about the world around them. It's a big job to teach little minds.

Her little ones have grown leaps and bounds. On that first day there was some excitement mixed with nervousness. The littles played near each other, with toys and books they seemed to be familiar with. They were not so sure about the whole "sharing thing."

If anyone were to walk into the classroom today, they would see so much interaction and confident independent play — and MUCH more sharing. The mornings are filled with smiles. There are invitations to play with blocks, or "go camping." Their joy is abundant.



On May 22nd, we will say our goodbyes for the summer and send the preschoolers into their next adventure.

Looking ahead at the 2024-2025 school year, we have five spots available in the Little Fish classroom. **Are you someone who needs preschool for your three year-old child, or do you know someone who is looking for a place for their child? Give the church office a call at 608-882-4044 to set up a tour!**

# IN OUR THOUGHTS & PRAYERS

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## St. John's Members

Michael Adams	Barb Nieman	Marie Gallman
Adam Kopp	Tammy Landen	Todd Carpenter
Jeanette Schunk	Kent Englund	Arnold Klug

## Family & Friends

Braiden Bergum	Tom Timm	Lori Koch	Billy Outlaw
Barb Buttchen	Mike Feirn	Mark Baenen	Vickie Wienke
Jodi Seyer	Sarah O'Sullivan	Monica Gulesserian	Neil Libby

## 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, Evi & Joey Kahana

## Condolences to:

**Carol Golz** as she grieves the death of her nephew Ken Farberg.  
**Aaron (Renee) Zemke and family** on the death of his father Jim Zemke.  
**Kristie Rogers and family** as they grieve the death of her father Ronald.  
**Chad (Kelly), Jayson (Courtney), Kelli (Jason), and families** as they grieve the death of their father Alan Butts.  
**Donald (Karen) Krajeck and family** as they grieve the death of his sister Coralyn Smith.  
**Diane Guernsey and family** as they grieve the death of her aunt Lyla Higgins.

## Congratulations to:

**Rebecca Heger and Larry Foley** on their wedding.

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## 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.

# POINTS OF PRAYER

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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 St. John’s Disciples**

Jesus, you call us to follow you and make disciples of all nations. Give us the courage to live out this calling with our families, friends, and neighbors. Open our eyes to see those who don’t know You or are struggling to find others who do. Lead us to be faith-filled people as Your Church.

## **For our Evansville Ecumenical Care Closet**

God of Compassion, we ask your blessing on the ministry of the Care Closet. Thank you for the many faithful volunteers who sustain this caring outreach. Give wisdom and guidance to our manager Jeanette Jones as she learns the needs of our community and leads us to help meet them. Use us to feed the hungry and support the needs of others.

## **For those persecuted for their Christian beliefs**

God our protector, we know you are always with us and work to protect us. Send your power to overcome the violence and evil against your disciples around the world. Bring healing and comfort to families and friends of victims. Guide us as we lead towards peace.

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

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## **A Prayer you’ll hear at many St. John’s tables:**

Come Lord Jesus, be our guest, and  
Let these gifts to us be blessed. Amen.

It’s printed on the wall in the fellowship hall, and we often say it ahead of mealtimes at St. John’s, too!



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