

This time of year is an especially good time to be in church. The Christmas worship services are some of the most beautiful and joyful parts of the whole year, as we come together to celebrate the birth of Jesus and remember the Good News of God's love coming into the world as one of us.

I pray that this joyful season brings many blessings to all of you and your loved ones.

Sincerely in Christ,

Pastor Will Layton



## The Parish Twine

December, 2023

St. John's Lutheran Church, St. Donatus, IA

St. Paul's Lutheran Church, La Motte,



## Women of the ELCA

### Christmas Party

Thursday, December 7, 12:00 noon

Everyone is welcome to come to our Women of the ELCA annual Christmas party. Please bring a dish to share and 2-3 dozen cookies to be shared and to pack for those unable to attend or shut-ins. Bringing a gift to exchange is optional.

**Luncheon & Tables:** Ruth Tietjen, Bea Hansen, Donna Busch

**Program:** Linda Hueneke, Betty Schroeder

**Devotional:** Pastor Will, "God's topsy-turvy kingdom" beginning on p. 32 of November/December *Gather* magazine.

**Gifts & Decorate Tree:** Deb Decker, Tracey (Mark) Hueneke.

**Cookie Packing:** Donna Busch, Bea Hansen

### Our Quilts

In November, 4 tied quilts were taken to Open Closet at St. John, Dubuque.

### Thank You

- ♦ From Lutheran World Relief thanking us for our gift of \$100 to LWR Quilt and Kit Shipping Fund.
- ♦ From Almost Home for our \$50 gift for their Shelter at St. John, Dubuque.

### Bakeless Bakesale Results

The Bakeless Bake Sale has received \$1,045.33. These funds are used for our Unit to carry out local and area missions. Any additional donations to this, as it is our fundraiser for the year, will be greatly appreciated.

### Thankoffering

Thank you to all who donated on our special Thank-offering Sunday, November 12, or during the following weeks. To date we have collected \$323.68 between St. John's and St. Paul's. These funds will be sent to Churchwide to further our wider ministries.

Let us continue to express thankfulness by feeding a thankoffering box each day to be brought to next year's Thankoffering service.

The Women of the ELCA unit St. John's and St. Paul's are so appreciative of your support of our "Bakeless Bake Sale" fundraiser. The money you gave goes into our local treasury and then is used to support our missions throughout the year—purchasing supplies for quilts which are given out within our area to a number of organizations, along with needed items for personal kits and baby kits which are sent on through Lutheran World Relief use some of the monies. Some of the funds are used for local ministries and parish expenses.

Our Unit is welcome to all and encourages more to participate in some way—please reach out to us. We meet the first Thursday at 10:00 a.m. to tie/sew with a sack lunch and then Bible Study at 1:00 p.m. Sewing is the third Wednesday from 10:00-2:00. It is good fellowship as we do God's work. We have been able to get several younger women/girls involved this past year and a half with our intergenerational sewing days during the summer and at Christmas break. We also have women who do some sewing at home of quilt tops and binding the finished quilts.

The Jackson and Clinton county ELCA Units make up Cluster V. We have a gathering twice a year at one of the churches. The next one will be April 27 here at St. John's. Our planned program will be from the Wartburg Seminary.

Our Unit is also part of the Southeast Iowa Synodical Women's Organization. The SWO works to provide information, programming and support to all the Clusters and Units in our Synod. Each year we meet as a group for a Gathering. In 2024, it will be June 14-15 at Zion Lutheran in Clinton. The local Unit does have some funds to help with costs, and you are encouraged to watch for upcoming information and make plans to join us! Website: <https://www.seiasynod.org/swo>.

The Churchwide level is based in Chicago, and develops programs and materials for all of us. A convention/gathering is held every three years, and it is so exciting that the 2026 one will be in DES MOINES on July 16-19. Our Synod women will be involved and so looking forward to this as are many women in the Midwest! Checkout the website at: <https://www.womenoftheelca.org>.

#### Pastor:

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#### Church Office:

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#### Marge's Email:

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#### Holy Communion:

1st, 3rd, & 5th Sundays of  
each month  
plus major festivals  
(every Advent Sunday)

#### Sunday Worship

St. John's—8:30 a.m.  
St. Paul's—10:00 a.m.

#### Sunday School

St. Paul's—after worship

#### Women of ELCA Christmas Party

Dec. 7—12:00 p.m.

#### St. John's Council

Dec. 4—6:30 p.m.

#### Pastor's Vacation

Dec. 8-12

#### Christmas Eve Worship

St. John's—6:00 p.m.  
St. Paul's—8:00 p.m.

#### Joint Christmas Day Communion Service

St. John's—10:00 a.m.

### From the Pastor's Desk

Dear Friends in Christ,

As I write this newsletter article, my mind keeps going back to the funeral I attended for a high school friend this past week. I've found myself thinking something that I'm sure many of you have also experienced: how good it was to see so many old friends that I just haven't kept in touch with over the years, but also what a shame it is that it took something like that to bring us all back together.

As I think about that, I'm also wondering if the church has gotten to be a little like that over these past few years. Most of us simply don't see one another as much as we used to. We still come together and fill every pew when there's a funeral, but from one week to the next there just aren't as many of us getting together.

Now, when I say that, the last thing I want to do is turn this into a guilt trip. I know there are pastors who have tried to guilt folks into coming back to church, but I think that kind of misses the point. After all, ever since Covid hit almost four years ago now, so many of our routines have been interrupted. I'll be honest, if I wasn't the pastor, I'm not sure whether I would've stayed connected to church without that weekly routine of gathering with my fellow Christians under one roof to sing and pray and hear God's Word and receive the Lord's supper together. Once those usual routines and habits are broken, it's terribly hard to get them going again. Some of the pastor groups that I really appreciated before the pandemic have just recently really started getting back together again, and others still haven't gotten that routine up and running. But I hope they will, just like I hope eventually more of us will be able to re-build our routines of gathering weekly with our church community.

So, I want to ask you all to do one of two things:

- ⇒ If you haven't been regularly gathering with us lately, I hope you will. We miss you, like we miss any old friends we haven't seen in a while. And the whole church misses you! Our gatherings of the Body of Christ are missing something when you aren't here! Also, church is fun. You get to catch up with your friends and neighbors and meet new ones. You can sing hymns and songs that you love, or maybe even better yet, find other people to complain to when the pastor picks hymns and songs you *don't* love! And you can receive God's gifts: the living Word of God, Holy Communion, forgiveness, fellowship. These things are good for us all to receive—so OK, maybe one little guilt trip. Your dentist will tell you that it's good for you to floss, your doctor tells you to eat your vegetables, and I suppose your pastor ought to tell you that it's good for you to come to church. Hey, it's definitely more fun than flossing!
- ⇒ If you're among of the folks that *have* continued to be in church regularly, please don't give anybody else a hard time when they show up some Sunday and you haven't seen them here in a while. Just greet them like an old friend that you're glad to see, and be thankful that it didn't take a funeral to get a chance to see them. OK? OK.

**Council Notes**

**Worship Attendance:**

	<u>St. John's</u>	<u>St. Paul's</u>
Oct. 29	21	22
Nov. 5	29	23
Nov. 12	34 Thankoffering	16
Nov. 19	26	12
Nov. 23	Thanksgiving	15

**St. John's Council Meeting—November 6**

Meeting called to order by Richard Busch

Members present: Pastor Will, Richard Busch, Judy Hueneke-Kremer, Tom Harmon, Deb Decker, Mark Hueneke, Duane Tietjen, Gloria Petesch, and Dianne Strickler

**Devotions:** Provided by Pastor.

**Pastor Report:** Pastor provided report for October and November.

**Secretary Report:** Correction to October Secretary report. Tom Decker is on Tuckpointing and Church Roof committee, Richard Busch is not. Bender's Fundraiser was a brat stand on October 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>.

**Treasurer Report:** BSB checking, MIF, Sunday School, Memorial Fund— Tom H will identify if some could be moved to a CD.

**Old Business:**

- **Shared Ministry:** Richard shared final items that need to be completed. Next meeting is Monday, November 27. Each congregation to meet on December 17 concerning Trinity Parish of Jackson County final agreement.
- **Fundraisers:** Brat stand, \$560 – was not a good weekend based on weather; Farm Auction, \$1,179 – seller was very generous with donation to St. John's.
- **Building and Grounds:** Mark locked in fuel price. Gravel was placed on garage driveway and additional areas. Lectern from Clinton can be placed below altar steps. R & S Tuckpointing has provided a bid of \$95,000 for tuckpointing repair. Waiting for a bid from T & T Tuckpointing. Tuckpointing repair to be completed first then roof replacement.
- **Motion carried** to have a congregational meeting on December 17, 2023 to vote on Trinity Parish of Jackson County shared ministry and vote on Tuckpointing and roof replacement for St. John's.

**New Business:**

- **Office Changes:** Suggestion made to move desk up-stairs for audio video items. Motion carried to purchase a round table and coat rack to add to office to facilitate better meeting area. Pastor and Deb will make purchase.
- **Church cleaning:** Julie T. will clean church in December, but will not be cleaning in January or February.
- **Church** will be in the basement starting January 7, 2024.

- **Christmas Schedule:** Motion carried to not have service the morning of Sunday, December 24, 2023. To have a service Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

**Next Meeting:** December 4, 2023 at 6:30.

Meeting adjourned and closed with the Lord's Prayer.

**St. Paul's Council Meeting was on November 9.**

**Meeting Notice**

Congregational meetings will take place at both congregations following worship on Sunday, December 17, following worship to approve the parish agreement with our congregations and Salem, Andrew. The meeting at St. John's will also include approving the necessary building repairs and the start of the related fundraising campaign. The final text of the proposed parish agreement and other related details will be provided to all church members soon.

**Christmas Program**

St. John's Christmas Program will be Christmas Eve at 6:00 p.m. Families interested in their children participating in the program should contact Pastor Will.



**Prayer Concerns**

Avelda Bahr, Norma Bormann, Marilyn Bradley, Carlton Busch, Tricia Busch, Paul Dent, Max Elliott, Jessica Harmon, Gary Hughes, Dennis Keil, Marilyn Knief, Rod Miller, Declan Olsen, Rev. Duane Priebe, Dale Schroeder, David Schroeder, Liam Schroeder, Shirley Schroeder, Lynne Scott, William Turnmeyer, Diane Wallace, Mary Kay Walton, Mickey Walton, Richard Walton, Duane Westphal, Rita Wiegert.

**New Member at St. John's**

Rev. Blake Shipman, development officer at Wartburg Theological Seminary. Pastor Shipman will also be our guest preacher at both churches on December 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**New Address or Phone?**

Please let us know of any new addresses or phone numbers in order to keep our records up to date.

**Our Sympathy**

Charlene Oberman died November 23. The funeral will be Friday, December 1, at 11:00 a.m. at Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Stillwater, MN, with visitation beginning at 10:00 a.m. The committal service here at St. John's cemetery will be Saturday, December 2, at noon, with luncheon to follow at St. John's.

**Readings with Bruce**

Readings in the Evening with Bruce continues each Wednesday, 7:00 p.m. on St. John's/St. Paul's Facebook.

**Poinsettias**

Sign the list at St. John's by December 10 if you would like the us to order one for you @ \$13, which can be given to Brenda Hueneke. Please note if it is to be in honor or in memory of someone.

**Fund Raiser**

The Sanders Family will offer rag rugs for sale following church services in the basement at St. John's on December 10<sup>th</sup>. The cost of each rug will be \$30, and all proceeds will benefit St. John's building repairs. If this time does not work for you, please call 563-495-2052 to schedule another time.

**End of year contributions**

If you are planning to make an end of the year contribution to St. John's, please make sure you do so by December 29 so that it can be recorded as a 2023 contribution for your statement of giving. Any received after that date will be considered a 2024 contribution. For any questions, get in touch with financial secretary, Deb Decker, 542-0452

Also, please let her know if you will want offering envelopes for 2024.

**Saving Can Tabs**

Please continue to bring tabs to church. There is a container in the entryway at St. John's for collecting them. We also are still collecting stamps for Lutheran World Relief shipping.

*December Birthdays*

- Dec. 2 — Mckenna Martens
- Dec. 4 — Emma Sanders
- Dec. 5 — Travis Hingtgen
- Dec. 8 — Jody McPhail
- Dec. 6 — William Isaac Decker
- Dec. 9 — Amanda (Hueneke) Ruden Mark Hueneke
- Dec. 11 — Mathilda Layton Judy Michels
- Dec. 12 — Linda Hueneke
- Dec. 13 — Rosalyn (Bormann) Geier Pyper Kettmann
- Dec. 14 — Judy Hueneke-Kremer Addison Willimack
- Dec. 15 — Jennifer (Hueneke) Shaw
- Dec. 16 — Jeremy Berendes
- Dec. 19 — Brenda Hueneke
- Dec. 20 — Brianna Busch Kate Sainci Kris Swift
- Dec. 21 — Katie (Felderman) Adams Mckayla Martens
- Dec. 22 — Mark Felderman Kelly Voss
- Dec. 23 — Sara Hankemeier
- Dec. 24 — David Felderman
- Dec. 27 — Addysen Felderman
- Dec. 28 — Elijah Leary
- Dec. 29 — Gloria Heacock Jason Hueneke Chad Uhlenhake
- Dec. 30 — Brigham Bormann Carlton Busch Hailey Feller Sue Hilborn Nicole Kremer

*Anniversaries*

- Dec. 18 — Bob & Carol Blum
- Dec. 29 — Gerald & Donna Millwright

*Please let us know of any errors or omissions.*