

Like all of his hymns, "Joy to the World" is deeply informed by a Christian understanding of scripture. In particular, he based it on Psalm 98, which joyfully depicts all of creation singing a new song of joyful noise to the Lord. The third verse, however, draws on a different part of scripture, Genesis 3, when God declares that the ground will be cursed and thorns will come up from it because of the original sin of Adam and Eve. Jesus, as the redeemer of the world, frees even the ground itself from that "curse" of sin.

Today, we sing the hymn to a wonderful tune by the American composer Lowell Mason, who lived about a century after Watts. Like Watts, Mason had an incredible impact on our hymn singing. In addition to four well-known hymn tunes in the *ELW*, he wrote the music for "Mary had a Little Lamb," so he certainly had a knack for coming up with a catchy tune! He was also a pioneer in introducing music education to American public schools.

"Joy to the World" is a wonderful hymn to learn by heart. In four short verses, it captures so many key points of Christian theology. And, it's fun to sing, too!

Wishing you all a blessed and joyful Advent and Christmas!

Sincerely in Christ,

Pastor Will Layton



Christmas Party

Thursday, December 5, 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

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

Cookie Packing: Donna Busch, Bea Hansen

Sewing Day

An intergenerational sewing day is being planned for December 30! We hope that all generations will join in cutting, tying, sewing that day. There is a longer break this year, so this will help fill one day for those young people not in school. Bring a sack lunch and all are welcome—10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Our Quilts

In November, 2 60x80" tied quilts were taken to Open Closet at St. John, Dubuque.

Thank You

We received thank you notes from:

- ◆ Camp EWALU for support and prayers for their ministry.
- ◆ Bellevue Community Cupboard for the \$30 donation to their food share program.
- ◆ Bellevue Bread Basket in amounts of \$73.60 and \$30 to help alleviate food insecurities in our community.

Bakeless Bakesale Results

The Bakeless Bake Sale has received \$790. 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 10, or during the following weeks. To date we have collected \$177.55 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.

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Our Sympathy

William Turnmeyer (friend of Shirley Schroeder) died November 1 at the Harmony Nursing Home, Dubuque.

Kevin Cornelius died November 4 at Maquoketa Care Center.

Bill Smothers (Peggy Post's brother) died November 18 in Houston, Texas.

Congratulations

We ask God to bless Brooke Felderman and Colby Bragdon as they are married on December 7 in Chicago. Brooke is the daughter of David and Cathy Felderman.

We congratulate Mckenna Martens on winning first place for individual pork judging FFA junior division November 7 at the Iowa Pork Congress in Des Moines.



The Parish Twine

December, 2024

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

St. Paul's Lutheran Church, La Motte,



From the Pastor's Desk

Dear Friends in Christ,

As we continue the "Hymns by Heart" newsletter series this month, it was tricky to choose just one hymn to focus on for December! The hymns of the Advent and Christmas seasons include some of the most beloved and familiar hymns. Luckily, the Christmas Season continues from Christmas Eve until Epiphany (January 6th), so you can expect to read about a Christmas hymn in the January Newsletter. In fact, I'd love to hear what YOUR favorite Christmas hymn is—I have one hymn in mind for that article already, but if I hear from many of you that you'd like to read about another one, I'll write about it!

For this month, we'll focus on a hymn that is actually in the Advent section of our hymnal, though I imagine most of us associate it with Christmas: "Joy to the World!" I've often thought it was sort of funny that the *ELW* places this song in the Advent section. After all the very first words are "Joy to the World! The Lord is come!" Notice it doesn't say "The Lord *will be* coming!" Yet the hymn does go immediately into talking about the earth receiving her king, and hearts preparing him room. In other words, it's a hymn that celebrates *both* that Jesus *has* come, and that he *will be* coming again, and invites us to prepare for his return, even as we rejoice that he has *already* come to save us. It imagines a future day when Jesus comes again in glory to make all things right: "No more let sin and sorrow grow!"

Its the perfect hymn for the "already and not yet" nature of of Jesus' redeeming work. We know that Jesus has already come into the world to save it, and we also know that sin and sorrow do still grow in this world, as we wait for that final day when God's plan comes to fulfillment and all things are made new. That's what Advent is all about. We are not merely waiting for the celebration of Christmas as a remembrance of something that happened once long ago. In Advent we also wait and remember that Jesus will indeed come again to make all things right in God's new, perfect creation.

"Joy to the World" was written by one of the great hymn writers of all time, Isaac Watts. Watts was a Congregational minister who lived in England from 1674 to 1748. Twelve of his hymns are in *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, including such favorites as "Alas, and Did My Savior Bleed," "Jesus Shall Reign," "Oh God Our Help in Ages Past," "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross," and, of course, "Joy to the World!"

As a Congregationalist, Watts grew up in a family that practiced their faith in a way that was actually illegal in England at the time—the were known as nonconformists." If you remember the story of the Pilgrims and other Puritans who came to colonial New England in the 1600s in order to be able to freely practice their faith, the Watts family were the part of that story we don't hear about as often: they were among the congregationalists who remained in England but practiced their faith according to their conscience, in defiance of the laws of the time. Young Isaac's father was even imprisoned twice for his non-conformist views. By the time Isaac was college-aged, nonconformist Christians had gained greater freedom to worship, but they were not allowed to attend the universities or to hold jobs within the government. Nevertheless, Watts was able to receive a good education and become a minister of a Congregational chapel in London.

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Holy Communion:
1st, 3rd, & 5th Sundays
of each month
plus major festivals

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

Sunday School
St. Paul's—after worship

Women of ELCA Christmas Party
Dec. 5—12:00 p.m.

Pastor's Vacation
Dec. 2-8

St. John's Council
Dec. 9—6:30 p.m.

Christmas Eve Worship
St. John's—6:00 p.m.
Salem—7:00 p.m.
St. Paul's—8:00 p.m.

Joint Christmas Day Communion Service
St. John's—10:00 a.m.

Worship Attendance:

	St. John's	St. Paul's
Oct. 27	53	29
Nov. 3	35	14
Nov. 10	28 Thankoffering	9
Nov. 17	34	17
Nov. 24	30	9
Nov. 28	Thanksgiving	13

**Joint Council Annual Budget and Planning Meeting
Trinity Parish Jackson County, November 4
at Salem Lutheran, Andrew - 6:30 PM**

Members present: Gloria Heacock (SP), Jolene Duschen (SP), Ruth Hingtgen (SP), Chad Uhlenhake (SP), Julie Busch (SJ), Rich Busch (SJ), Tom Harmon (SJ), Linda Hueneke (SJ), Deb Decker (SJ), Mark Hueneke (SJ), Duane Tietjen (SJ), Judy Hueneke-Kremer (SJ), Chuck Cornelius (SA), Peggy McMurray (SA), Mary Ann Goetler (SA), Julie Yarolim (SA), Duane Bahr (SA), Pastor Will Layton & Rev. Laurie Finn

The meeting was called to order by chairperson, Jolene Duschen with two prayers shared by Pastor Will. The materials were presented on a paper copy and on a power point presentation outlining the agenda for the evening's meeting.

Parish Council Committee – Volunteers from SJs and SPs are still needed to fill the two vacating seats. No one has responded yet to be a part of that committee. Andrew indicated they have a candidate and will approve that individual during their annual meeting.

The survey results were shared in regarding the Survey-Monkey that was sent to all members of both the parish group and each church council. Overall, the feedback was positive, and a full copy of those results will be kept in the secretary's official binder.

The group spent a great deal of time on worship times and events for the remainder of the year. The schedule will be as follows:

Christmas Eve 2024 – Communion at all three services w/Pastor Will

- St. John's, 6:00 p.m.
- Salem, 7:00 p.m. (begin with children's program)
- St. Paul's, 8:30 p.m.

Christmas Day – St. John's only at 10:00 a.m. with communion

Annual Meeting Dates in 2025

- St. John's, January 19 following worship (Pr. Will)
- Salem, January 26 following worship (Pr. Will)
- St. Paul's, Jan. 26 following worship (Rev. Laurie)

Ash Wednesday – March 5 with communion

- 12:00 p.m., St. John's (no evening service)
- 6:00 p.m., Salem
- 7:30 p.m., St. Paul's

Soup Supper and Worship Location Schedule (Supper at 6:00 p.m. and Worship at 7:00 p.m.):

- March 12 & April 2, St. Paul's

March 19 & April 9, Salem
March 26, St. John's

Maundy Thursday April 17 with communion

- Salem, 12:00 p.m. (no evening service)
- St. John's, 6:00 p.m.
- St. Paul's, 7:30 p.m.

Good Friday April 18 – no communion

- Salem, 7:00 p.m.
- St. Paul's, 7:30 p.m.

Easter Vigil – with communion at St. John's only 8:00 p.m.

Easter Sunday – regular worship times with supply pastor at SP's and SJ's and Pastor Will in Andrew.

5th Sunday Discussions: It was discussed that Pastor Will and Rev. Laurie will determine the 5th Sunday locations, and it was brought up that Pastor Will needs to get a hold of those preparing communion to give preparers ample lead time and communication to indicate when Pastor Will presides.

Worship in the Park: The park is reserved by Ruth Hingtgen and is set for Sunday, August 24.

Muster on the Maquoketa: The event is still slated to take place in 2025; however, the date is unknown, and Pastor indicated there may be different planning taking place in terms of the worship service with area pastors.

Reports of the staff: Pastor presented his list of appointments and commitments for the month (copy in the secretary binder). Rev. Laurie also gave a report in which she is looking at her first year and matching up her hours and time spent in various areas to the time that was allotted within her contract. She will provide more of an accounting to see how year one matched up to the expectations of her letter of agreement between the parish and the Iowa Episcopal Diocese.

Budget: A budget and details of the HR pieces for Pastor Will and Rev. Laurie were shared with the group. The officers and treasurers of the parish committee met in October to formulate an idea of a budget based upon 2024's income and expenditures. The agreement was made to extend a 4% increase to both Pastor Will to bring him into the SEIA synod guidelines and to provide Rev. Laurie a similar percentage. The committee decided to also extend to the clergy a debit card on the account to cover their travel expenses, incidentals, discretionary, and any conference registrations with a set dollar amount set forth in the budget. A motion to approve this transaction was made by Duane Tietjen (SJ) and seconded by Tom Harmon (SJ).

The budget: The budget was presented with an explanation of costs and figures with areas of concentration on travel expenditures, conferences and

continuing education because those areas are not always known or set at the beginning of the new year. The group decided to go ahead and approve the presented budget (budgets for TPJC are available upon request from either TPJC secretary or treasurer). One feature that had changed was the percentage splits between the three congregations based upon 2023 attendance numbers for the 2025 budget. Salem has decreased to 42% from 45%, St. John's has increased to 36% from 35% and St. Paul's has increased to 22% from 20%. The motion to approve the 2025 TPJC budget was approved by Rich Busch (SJ) with a second from Mary Ann Goetler (SA). Motion carried.

The last items discussed during the meeting included the topic of WELCA for all three congregations and if they'd like to join into a formed group although Pastor said more information was needed from all three congregations with their input or thoughts on that topic from people who would attend or lead. The use of joint Sunday School materials was brought up but tabled until the leaders of those programs at each church can also give feedback on what is currently used for the curriculum and if they'd use the material from the ELCA. The official signed parish document was given to the parish secretary and will be framed and placed in the office of the parish agreement which is at St. John's.

The meeting ended at 8:30 PM with the Lords Prayer. The group will meet next in one year – Monday Nov. 3rd, 2025.

Respectfully submitted,
Julie K. Busch, Treasurer St. John's
Secretary TPJC Parish Council

St. Paul's Council met on November 14. Minutes will be forthcoming.

Christmas Program

St. John's Christmas Program will be Christmas Eve at 6:00 p.m. Looking for kids to participate. Contact Katie Steines to sign up khinks33@yahoo.com.

Poinsettias

Sign the list at St. John's by December 8 if you would like the us to order one for you @ \$9 which can be given to Brenda Hueneke. Please note if it is to be in honor or in memory of someone.

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 2024 contribution for your statement of giving. Any received after that date will be considered a 2025 contribution. For any questions, get in touch with financial secretary, Deb Decker, 542-0452

Prayer Concerns

Avela Bahr, Billie Bohy, Norma Bormann, Marilyn Bradley, Richard Bradley, Carlton Busch, Kimberly Busch, Tricia Busch, Janell Daugherty, Paul Dent, Max Elliott, Carl Ganzer, Jessica Harmon, John Hinke, Gary Hughes, Anthony Jensen, Marilyn Knief, Sharon Konrardy, Rod Miller, Rev. Duane Priebe, David Schroeder, Liam Schroeder, Shirley Schroeder, Diane Wallace, A. J. Walter, Duane Westphal, Rita Wiegert.

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
- 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.