

**2017-2018 ANNUAL REPORT**  
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Congregational Annual Meeting Agenda  
January 27, 2019  
Noon/Fellowship Hall  
St. John Lutheran Church

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Call to Order & Approval of Agenda  | Cheryl Schraeder,<br><i>Vice President</i>                     |
| 2. Opening Prayer  | Pastor Kari Bahe   |
| 3. Approval of the Minutes, Annual Congregational Mtg. 9/24/17   | Gina Kadlec, <i>Secretary</i>                                  |
| 4. Approval of the Minutes, Special Congregational Mtg. 1/28/18  |  |
| 5. Reports/Updates   |  |
| Pastor   | Pastor Kari Bahe   |
| President  | Kathy Fore, <i>President</i><br>{Cheryl Schraeder, <i>VP</i> } |
| Treasurer  | Jennifer Schurrer, <i>Treasurer</i>                            |
| 6. Elections   | Nominating Committee   |
| 2019 Minneapolis Area Synod Assembly   |  |
| o Friday, May 3/noon through Sat. May 4 @ 4pm. Lord of Life, Ramsey  |  |
| o 3 Lay Voting Members: 2 Adults, 1 Youth, {plus Pastor}   |  |
| ▪ <i>Thank you to Maggie Johnson, Jennifer Schurrer and<br/>            Pastor Rusert for serving as our 2018 Voting Members</i> |  |
| 2019 Cornerstone Christian Preschool Board   |  |
| o 3 Lay Members for 2019   |  |
| ▪ <i>Thank you to our 2018 board members:<br/>            Pat Kluge, Rhonda Roensch, &amp; Karen Kaehn</i>                       |  |
| Audit Committee  |  |
| o 3 Lay Members for 2019 Audit Committee   |  |
| ▪ <i>Thank you to our 2018 Audit Committee: Maggie Johnson,<br/>            Pat Kluge, &amp; Karen Kaehn</i>                     |  |
| Gustavus Adolphus College Convention   |  |
| o Saturday April 27, 2019  |  |
| o 1 Lay Voting Member  |  |
| ▪ <i>Thank you Maggie Johnson for attending last year</i>  |  |

Agenda  
January 27, 2019  
Noon/Fellowship Hall  
St. John Lutheran Church

- | 2020 Nominating Committee
  - o 3 members for 2020 {in addition to 2 outgoing council members}
    - *Thank you to our 2019 committee members: Sabrina Auel, Cheryl Hoversten, Kari Steinbrecher, Kim Forster, and Gina Kadlec*
- | Council
  - o Will Potter agreed to serve remaining 1 year of Council Member, Gary Luebben’s current term
  - o 2 Members for 3 year terms
    - *Thank you to the following outgoing members of Council: Kim Forster, Gina Kadlec, Karen Kaehn, Gary Luebben, and Eric Roensch*
- 2. Discussion/Approval of the 4 month budget
  - Special Congregational Meeting April 14, 2019/ 11:30 a.m. Sanctuary* Jennifer Schurrer
- 3. Unfinished business Cheryl Schraeder
- 4. New Business Cheryl Schraeder
  - | *Thank you to the Transition/Call Committee Members: Jessica Larson, Shane Steinbrecher—Co-Chairs Sabrina Auel, Brian Bourdeaux, Shane Dordal, Butch Hass, Eric Roensch {council rep} Chris Schmidt, Carolyn Schwab, and Wanda Thoreson*
  - | *Thank you to Sabrina Auel, and Melaine Nelson, Staff Members—Resignations effective 1/25 & 1/23* Cheryl Schraeder
  - | *Tool Kit @ St. Stephens, Bloomington 2/23/19 8:30 am – 11:00 am*  
Bishop’s Time: 11:20am Conference Assemblies: 12 noon
- 5. Closing Prayer Our Lord’s Prayer

**St. John Lutheran Church**  
**Annual Congregational Meeting**  
**September 24, 2017**

Council President Kathy Fore called the meeting to order at 12:08 p.m.

Pastor Bob Rusert began with an opening prayer.

Kevin Hiller made a motion to accept the agenda; Wanda Thoreson seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Maggie Johnson made a motion to accept the September 18, 2016, Annual Congregational Meeting Minutes; Sabrina Auel seconded the motion. Motion carried.

**Pastor's Report:**

Pastor Bob expressed to everyone how humbling it has been to be welcomed so lovingly to St. John. He believes that Council and the Call Committee are on a good path to find the next pastor to lead our congregation. The Call Committee will be holding three upcoming informational meetings that will be held on October 10, October 28, and December 3. Everyone is welcome to Pastor Bob's home following the December 3 meeting. Please bring an appetizer and beverage to share.

The ladies group donated 70 quilts to the hurricane victims, which were transported by DaRan Trucking Company.

**Old Business:**

The congregation approved allowing council to spend up to \$5000 for items not included in the budget. Sabrina sent the information to the senate for approval.

The topic of changing the Annual Congregational Meeting back to January was discussed. The reason it was moved to the end of September was due to the snowbirds being gone in January. If the meeting is changed back to January the budget will be more accurate. Wanda expressed her concerns that those members who are gone in the winter would not have a voice. It was suggested that there is a call in number. Dawn Bourdeaux made a motion to change the annual meeting back to the fourth Sunday in January and a call in number be allowed, as well as allowing absentee voting; John Frick seconded the motion.

Motion carried. Dawn Bourdeaux made a motion to have a special meeting on January 28, 2018, to review the constitution and ratify the annual meeting date change; Carrie Steinbrecher seconded the motion. Motion carried.

### **Council, Lay Delegates, and Synod Elections:**

Maggie Johnson spoke about her experiences as the Gustavus lay delegate. She encouraged someone to sign up to be the delegate on April 21, 2018, in St. Peter. Wanda Thoreson showed an interest in attending the event.

The Synod Assembly will be held on May 4-5, 2018, at Lord of Life in Ramsey. Karen Kaehn and Kathy Fore both shared that they enjoyed attending the event in the past. Pastor Bob stated that the agenda started with workshops and other activities on Friday and ended around 3 p.m. on Saturday. Ideally, they would like to have a male, a female, and also a youth member attend. Pastor Bob will attempt to find a volunteers. The topic will be revisited at the meeting in January.

Kari Steinbrecher, Sabrina Auel, and Cheryl Hoversten all agreed to be on the nominating committee to help choose council members for next year.

Kathy asked for volunteers to be on the Audit Committee. The group typically meets once a year the month prior to the annual meeting. There are three accounts to audit, including the ladies group. Kathy made a motion to accept Maggie Johnson, Pat Kluge, and Karen Kaehn as members of the audit committee; Pat Kluge seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Kathy proposed that two members of the congregation and one member of council be on the Cornerstone board. Pat Kluge will be on the board. Rhonda Roensch agreed to be on the board until Sabrina Auel can step in permanently. The remaining person will be elected by council.

Dawn Bourdeaux made a motion to accept Pat Kluge and Rhonda Roensch as members to the Cornerstone board; Kari Steinbrecher seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Paul Larson asked how much time is left on the current council member's terms in office. Pat Peter's term on council ended. Karen Kaehn agreed to finish out Jason Nemeth's term, which ends in January 2018. Gary Luebben agreed to be on council for a two year term. Dawn Bourdeaux made a motion to elect three people for a one, two, and three year term at the meeting in January; Kevin Johnson seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Kathy Fore made a motion to accept Cheryl Schraeder, Dawn Bourdeaux, and Carolyn Schwab for three year terms on council, Gary Luebben for a two year term, and Karen Kaehn a one year term; Maggie Johnson seconded the motion. Motion carried.

### **Call Committee:**

Shane Steinbrecher relayed that the Call Committee meets the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month. The Call Committee has three upcoming events:

- October 10, 2017 at 6:30 a.m. to 8 p.m.
- October 28, 2017 at 9:30 a.m. to 11 a.m.

- o December 3, 2017, at 11:45 a.m. to 1:15 p.m.

Shane emphasized the fact that it is imperative that everyone participate in these events to allow the Call Committee to have a complete profile of the needs of our church.

**2018 Budget Review:**

Margaret Genung was unable to attend the meeting. There were 13 changes to the 2018 budget. Shane Steinbrecher proposed changing the format of the budget. Pastor Bob thinks we should try to have a balanced budget.

Paul Larson stated that St. John currently owes approximately \$200k on our long term loan, with six years remaining until we need to refinance our balloon payment.

Dawn Bourdeaux questioned the amount of the assets in the endowment fund. Kevin Johnson had sent an email to Dave Jackson. Two years ago it was at \$100k. We should have a quarterly report for the endowment fund. Paul offered to lead an endowment committee. He will talk to Bruce Weaver and Larry Thoreson to see if they are willing to be on the committee.

Shane Steinbrecher made a motion to accept the 2018 Budget; Kevin Hiller seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Shane Stenbrecher made a motion for the proposed 2019 Budget to have no deficit spending; Brian Bourdeaux seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Sharon Kriesel asked council why the carillon bells weren't turned on. Eric stated that lightening blew the amp. He will look into getting them repaired.

Janna Luebben thanked all the council members for their hard work.

Kim Forster thanked Pastor Bob for everything he has done for St. John.

Diane Gould made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Pat Peter seconded the motion. Motion carried.

The meeting closed at 1:39 p.m. with the Lord's Prayer.



*You are the body of Christ!  
Each one of you is a part of it.*

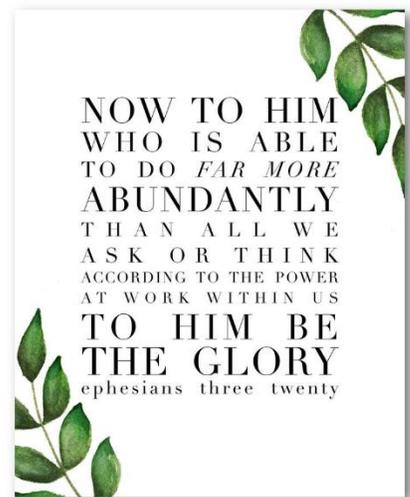
### **Pastor's Report**

I am a runner. The frustrating thing about long-distance running is that there is no other way to train than: "spending time on your feet". The encouraging thing about running is that there is no other way to train than: "spending time on your feet". It frustrates me, because I always want to be further along in my training than I am. It encourages me, because I know, in the end, that time on my feet will get me where I want to go {literally and figuratively}. It is a guarantee.

The same is true for this congregation. We need to spend time "on our feet". That will be frustrating and encouraging at the same time. It takes work, trust, and commitment.

During the Interim ministry period this past year, you participated in the congregational vitality survey, which is a tool to assess the strengths and challenges of a congregation. You identified multiple areas that need improvement. You began that work during the transition/interim time. But there is still heavy lifting to be done. It's a marathon, not a sprint.

We have work to do. Some of it is a bit mundane, like streamlining record keeping. Some of it is simple, like updating computers. Some of it is complex; like navigating heathier



systems of being church together. This does not mean we are a 'bad' congregation, or a desperate, declining congregation. It does not mean that we aren't doing amazing ministry. It does not mean this place isn't filled with friendly, faith-filled, committed people. You are some of the friendliest, faith-filled, fun, committed people I've met on my ministry journey!

It does mean, however, that we need to acknowledge that, we are not as healthy as we can be. But! The good news is this: we are guaranteed to become healthier if we do the work. Healthy congregations look critically at their culture and make adaptive changes where needed. Healthy congregations have a crystal-clear center and a shared identity and purpose. Healthy congregations trust their leaders and each other. And, like runners, healthy congregations aren't afraid of doing the work of "spending time on your feet".

I can't think of another group of people I'd rather be sharing ministry with. You clearly love God and each other. You clearly seek to serve other people in Christ's name. You worship beautifully and well together. You laugh {a great sign of health, by the way}. You seek God's path.

You've agreed that you want strong leadership from your pastor. You've indicated that you want some changes, and I'll continually remind you, that with change, there will be some conflict. In and of itself, conflict is not negative—God created us with uniqueness, so there will be conflict; we just need to be healthy in how we respond to each other when it occurs. It gets messy sometimes, we hurt feelings sometimes, but the thing is: we are a Christian community that is grounded in forgiveness and grace. So, we ought not be afraid of change, of trying new things, OR of going back to old things if needed. We need not be afraid of making mistakes. We need not rush. We need only to trust that God has a preferred future for us. We can do this! God will guide and provide. You do so many things well, so let's build on that and become even clearer about the race that is set out before us. All to God's glory alone. I thank God for you every day! Pastor Kari Bahe

## **PRESIDENTS REPORT**

2018 brought a change that was most welcome. We hired a new pastor!! The call committee worked diligently to find the right person to fill the needs and mission of St John. They chose and presented for vote Pr. Kari Bahe. She was unanimously approved by our congregation and started in September this year. If you haven't done so yet I urge you to make the time to meet with her and get to know her more. She is awesome. Look for new things to happen here at St John!

We also welcomed a new Music Director in February 2018. Jessica Gensmer joined our staff bringing her love of music to us all. She is such a joy and wonderful addition to our staff.

Cornerstone Christian Preschool is going strong. Thank you Director Lori Schleif and staff for providing the young people in our church and community with a loving and caring Christian education.

The Living Nativity was held on December 8 and 9 this year with 1,262 guests walking through Bethlehem with at least 100 of them going through 2 and 3 times. Donations totaled \$1,027.86 and \$176.00 was made in ornament sales and 505 pounds of food was donated and brought to CAER. Thank you committee members Pat Kluge, Wanda Thoreson, Eric Roensch and Kevin Johnson for all your hard work making the Nativity happen along with all the dedicated volunteers it takes to make this a success.

It was no surprise the Fall Festival was another success. The Women of St John along with the many volunteers that are needed to make it successful work hard for months ahead of the festival and it shows. They brought in \$4,662.73 which they donate to many programs and projects for our church. This year they donated \$8,972.00. Thank you, thank you, thank you!!

We have had 23 new members join our congregation since October 2017 (when the 2018 year started) There were 13 baptisms, 1 wedding and 2 funerals in 2018. We had 14 first Communicants and 10 students confirmed.

VBS was another success and Sunday School is enjoyed by all children attending. All this was possible because of the many volunteers stepping up. Without our volunteers we couldn't have all the programs so many of us, young and old, enjoy. Volunteers are greatly needed during our worship services. They include greeters, ushers, communion servers, lectors and sound board. They can be done by all ages. I encourage families to get involved. Children are never too young to start learning to volunteer. Confirmation students earn service hours for doing any of these jobs as well as so much more. There are sign-up sheets on the bulletin board in the Narthex. If you want to learn more about volunteering contact the church office.

As I step down from being your president of 3 years I want to take this opportunity to thank you for allowing me to serve you. I love this church, you are family and I wouldn't want it any other way. There were hard times to get through, lots of controversy at times but so many good times. We've been through a lot but came through healthy and happy. Thank you to all the council members I have served with over the years. I have loved and appreciated each and every one of you. Thank you for all your dedication and hard work for this congregation.

If you ever have a question or concern regarding St John please remember that anyone can attend the monthly council meeting held on the third Tuesday at 7:00 or simply call any council member to discuss. We are here to serve you, the members of St John.

With love and respect, Kathy Fore

### **2018 Treasurer's report**

In 2018 St. John Lutheran had general fund income of \$206,580, our total income (general fund and special request offerings) was \$288,299. We had total (general fund and special request expenses) expenses of \$268,978. The past year the council has focused on evaluating our financial procedures and policy with a focus on financial transparency and clean records. This was important because we want our members to be able to understand our church's financial status.

Our first step was to review our credit use and to establish a St. John Lutheran Credit Card policy. One piece of the policy is that our credit card is to be used for ease of transactions but needs to be paid off each month. To be able to roll this out we needed to pay off our credit card balance. Due to the seasonality of attendance at church we had been using the credit card to allow us to cover bills during

our leaner months. It was important to start to establish a financial cushion that could help ensure we can pay our bills during the summer and be able to replenish the financial cushion during the fall, winter, and spring. Our stewardship team communicated this need to the congregation and together, we stepped up and paid off the credit card in full and started to establish the financial cushion. Thank you for your financial gifts for ministry! The next step was for us to establish new credit cards in our church's name along with financial guidelines specifically for credit card use.

Our second step was to review our financial documents. We received help from outside experts in non-profit organizations and the ELCA to guide us in establishing best practices for the handling of financial matters in churches. It became clear that our procedures needed updating. For example: the previous chart of accounts had many old accounts present that caused our financial documents to be inaccurate, those closed accounts have been removed. In addition, we transitioned many of our small groups from individual checking/savings accounts to fund balance accounts. Our small group leaders were critical to this transition. We also improved our labeling of accounts and standardized our coding within our financial software platform. All of these changes were done by consent of the Council, and with the intent to become compliant with best practices in handling church finances and to provide for clear, standardized, and full financial reporting to the congregation.

Our third step was to review our financial handling practices to ensure we helped communicate clearly with those responsible for our finances. The procedures implemented by Council help to ensure we are paying for legitimate expenses while establishing a clear audit trail. This will allow us to complete a full bank reconciliation of all our accounts each month. This will help ensure all our financial documents are accurate and transparent. Our financial policy also helps to ensure we safe guard assets and segregate duties to help protect our staff, members, and financial assets. The council passed these procedures and they were implemented January 1. These procedures and policies help us to responsibly steward all God has entrusted to us.

The congregation at our 2017 annual meeting asked that council prepare a balanced budget with realistic income scenarios. To help gain a better understanding of our expected income the Stewardship team launched a pledge drive. We are thankful to all who pledged and to all who give to the ministry here.

However, the projected monthly income {your pledges plus our most faithful forecasting} falls short of our monthly income. This means we will either need to decrease the number of programs and ministry opportunities we offer, or we will need to increase our giving. A four-month spending plan will be presented at the Annual Meeting, along with a plan to meet again in April to reevaluate where we are financially. Proceeding in this manner will allow us some additional time to create a 12-month budget, after discussion at the annual meeting. Council is proceeding in this cautious manner, to be good

stewards---we have new leadership and therefore, need time to pray, work, and vision together, as we seek to follow God’s will for us.

I want to thank everyone involved in establishing the financial procedures for St. John Lutheran. And for the help in moving our financial documents, reporting, and procedures to align with best practices for today’s congregation. We are now able to make full use of the tools available in our software for reporting our financial goals and status. Staff and leadership will now be able to ascertain our financial picture in real-time, thus making us wiser stewards of the gifts you give. This will allow us to have better conversations about financial health and goals as we go about our work for the sake of God’s mission.

**Year in Review**  
**September 1, 2017 through December 31, 2018**

**Baptisms:** 13  
**Confirmed:** 10  
**Cradle Roll:** 28  
**Funerals:** 2  
**New Members:** 22 including children  
**Weddings:** 1

8,496 total people attended our church in 2018  
 Participating Households: 189 (at least one member of household attended at least once)  
 Average Weekly Attendance: 163

**2008 to 2018 Average Weekly Attendance by Year:**

Attendance:	256	235	197	145	187	166	185	187	182	182	163
Year:	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018

**Pastoral Acts**

**September 1, 2017 through December 31, 2018**

**Baptisms:**

September 17, 2017 Grayson Arnold Bost, Parents Tim jr. and Lindsay Bost.  
October 29, 2017 Holly Rae Freiberg, Parents are Josh and Mindy Frieberg  
December 3, 2017 Paisleigh Grace Oban-Bach, Parents are Alyse Oban and Eric Bach  
March 18, 2018 Bennett John Schifsky, Parents Stephen and Brianna Schifsky  
April 8, 2018 Bria Muriel Pastick, Jon and Lisa Pastick  
April 29, 2018 Kensy Jo Ann Weyek, Andrew and Jennifer Weyek  
June 3, 2018 Finn Raymond Guttormson, Zachary and Paige Guttormson  
June 10, 2018 Magnuson Carl Sarff, Justin and Kat Sarff  
June 17, 2018 Landon James Matthew Anderson, Matthew and Kelsey Anderson  
August 26, 2018 Grayson Allan Loew, Marcus Loew and Cassie Johnston  
October 28, 2018 Sylvie Evelyn Akre, Parents Jason and Sheena Akre  
December 9, 2018 Hannah Jean Schlicht, Parents Mark and Rachel Schlicht

**New Members:****October 8, 2017:**

Jessica Kremer, son Johnny  
Dave and Kathy Pesola  
Mark and Shantel Meyer with son Kraig  
Matt and Jamie Mongeau with daughters Isabella and Hannah  
Mike and Kathy Knutson  
Garl and Glenice Knutson

**July 9, 2018**

Andrew and Jennifer Weyek, Waylon and Kensy  
Marcus Loew and Cassie Johnston, Grayson

**Funerals:**

November 18, 2017 Monica Ellen Fiduk  
October 27, 2018 Duane Gudim

**Weddings:**

September 23, 2017 Jerome and Jessica (Wright) Holzheau

**First Communicants: March 29, 2018**

Abryana Montroy  
Addison Swenson  
Avery Helm  
Benjamin Petersen  
Catlin Stevens  
Chad Williams, Jr.  
David Gensmer  
Emma Ruschmeier  
Grace Katter  
Kole Helm  
Nathan Esler  
Noah Flaten (June 3, 2018)  
Samuel Acker  
Zachary Kranitz

**Confirmation Students: May 6, 2018**

Ava Wark  
Gina Pogones  
Ryan Petersen  
Nick Peterson  
Tucker Paulsen  
Chase Loudon  
Emily Kutzler  
Thomas Katter  
Cassi Gould  
Teagan Braun

**2017-2018 COUNCIL POSITIONS**

Kathy Fore-President  
Cheryl Schraeder-Vice President  
Jennifer Schurrer-Treasurer  
Gina Kadlec-Secretary  
Eric Roensch-council member  
Karen Kaehn-council member  
Kim Forster-council member  
Gary Luebben-council member  
Dawn Bourdeaux-council member  
Carolyn Schwab-council member  
Will Potter-council member

## **WORSHIP AND MUSIC REPORT**

This is a great worshipping congregation! We worship well together. We are blessed with great music and an abundant willingness to try new things. While some congregations argue over worship style or music, we do not. That is because we focus on worship as an act of praise, not something to be approached with a consumer mentality. Worship isn't about individual wants for us. Worship is central to what we do together, so we seek to be intentional, excellent, and theologically faithful. Our Music Ministry Director, Jess Gensmer, has gotten off to a wonderful start. She has provided us with a music ministry that is energetic, creative, and theologically grounded. Forming special choirs, coaching the praise teams, and sharing her giftedness has given us the opportunity to sing our praises to God, reflect peacefully, and rejoice. Peg Dale, our principal organist also encompasses a ministry that is theologically grounded and beautifully shared. Her music enhances our praise and her ministry of calm, caring presence on the bench and in our midst is a blessing we give thanks to God for. Plus, her humor adds joy to every weekend! Volunteers round out our worship and music so that we can gather every Wednesday and Sunday to hear God's word, sing His praises, and know His way for the rest of the week. Thank you to all who work "behind" the scenes, and those who work "out front", and those "back" in the sound booth! We always encourage more to be involved with participating in worship. We love it when children participate in worship as well! Lent this year will bring Holden Village Evening Worship to us. If you've never experienced this musical, peaceful, restful, and renewing way of worshipping, be sure to come to worship on Wednesdays during Lent. Thanks be to God for the way He gathers us, commands us, and renews us through worship! --Pastor Kari Bahe

## **CHRISTIAN EDUCATION REPORT**

### **Sunday school Program**

Sunday School Enrollment 2017-2018:

*Nursery (4)*

*Preschool (7)*

*Kindergarten (11)*

*1st Grade (3)*

*2nd Grade (18)*

*3rd Grade (14)*

*4th Grade (12)*

*5th Grade (13)*

6th Grade (16)  
**Grand total: 98**

**Sunday School Budget/Expenses:**

Sunday School Budget	\$3,200.00
Sunday School offerings	+ \$348.11
Sunday school expenses	-\$3,348.26
Sunday School Calendars	+38.50

**Sunday School Total at end of year +238.35**

**3rd Grade Bibles were given out September 24, 2017 in class with Pastor Bob (approx: 12).**

**Fundraisers:**

Operation Christmas Child was rolled out in November 2017 - 86 shoe boxes were donated.

Calendars were purchased in October 2017 the total to purchase the calendars were \$97.50 we sold \$136.00 dollars for a profit of +\$38.50. (submitted by Michelle Strom)

**Adult education**

St. John offers a Thursday women's bible study that is non-denominational and have around 30 women attend each week.

**Youth work camp mission trip**

Youth Work Camp Mission trip was to Greeley, Colorado this year from June 23<sup>th</sup> through July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018. We had students: Teagan Braun, Caitlin Hackbarth, Elizabeth Hackbarth, Noura Kassem, Chase Loudon, Molly Schmidt, and Matthew Trutna. Our chaperones were: Dan Hackbarth, Maren Hackbarth, and Janna Luebben. Special thanks to the congregation for supporting this mission through prayer and financial support. Students paid their entire cost through fundraisers (wreathes and Nelson Nursery Gift Cards) and the many generous donations from individuals and groups.

**Confirmation**

St. John Confirmation program for 7<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> grade youth is organized by Pastor Bob and Dan Hackbarth. Last year we had the following 10 small group leaders: Lori Acker, Chelsie Cabek, Cindy Hermann, Angie Benson, Bill Ruschmeier, Dan Hackbarth, Chris Schmidt, Pastor Bob, Tammy Schmidt, and Jeff Rolshau. We used curriculum called "Here We Stand" and studied the Old Testament during the 2017-2018 season. 10 young people affirmed their faith on May 6, 2018. Also on November 10-12, 2017, Eleven 8<sup>th</sup> graders participated

in a Confirmation Camp weekend retreat at Luther Crest Bible Camp near Alexandria, MN. A group of our students also collected

### **6<sup>th</sup> Grade Breakaway class**

In January we have the 6<sup>th</sup> graders transition from Sunday school into Wednesday night classes. This serves as a great way to get them in the habit for confirmation that begins in 7<sup>th</sup> grade. This class is high energy and lots of fun. Kari Steinbrecher has been organizing this and doing an amazing job. We had 22 6<sup>th</sup> graders in 2018.

### **Vacation Bible School**

VBS 2018 Sunday, July 29 Through Wednesday, August 1 from 5:30-8pm.

This year's theme was "Shipwrecked: Rescued by Jesus." We purchased our kit through Concordia supply. We had 35 or so volunteers and 40 kids registered. We had several things donated by the congregation towards the supplies and decorations.

After VBS was over we were able to pass along our decorations to another church.

We had \$455.00 donated by members, \$307.75 worth of supplies (in kind donations) and our money spent was 1029.09. Which came out to \$881.84 of money spent.

Submitted by Carrie Stevens and Sabrina Auel

### **Cradle roll**

We currently have 28 children participating in our Cradle Roll program at St. John. 16 of our children were invited to start Sunday School this year as they made the transition from Cradle Roll to Sunday School. We had 13 children that were under age 3 who were baptized at St. John from September 1, 2017 to December 31, 2018.

Cradle Roll serves children from birth to age three at the time of their baptism. When they are baptized, the children are entered into the Cradle Roll program. All children have a wooden heart with their name on it, that is placed on our Cradle Roll tree located in the Sunday School hallway.

The children receive an age appropriate "Splash" mailing every month. They are invited to Sunday School in the fall after they turn three. At that time, they receive their wooden heart to remind them of their baptism and that they are a child of God.

Cradle Roll is an important part of our Christian Education program here at St. John. It keeps our baptized children and their families connected to the church.

God's Blessings! Respectfully submitted, Emily Carr Cradle Roll Coordinator

### **CORNERSTONE CHRISTIAN PRESCHOOL**

Cornerstone Christian Preschool currently has 39 students enrolled ages 3 years old to 5 years old. This is an increase of 11 students from last year.

Our 3 year old class has 15 students

Our 4/5 year old morning class has 18 students

Our 5 year old "All Day" class has 7 students

We currently have two teachers, Lori Schleif and Bethany Moos. We have two part time aides, Elizabeth Leckelt and Pam Podobinski that work with the classes daily.

We continue to run an educational program that is high energy and provides lots of fun for the students.

In 2018 Department of Human Services deemed that grass is not an appropriate "Fall Zone" under the outside play equipment on our playground. A bid was obtained to comply with DHS requirements in the amount of \$3998.00. We had \$2000.00 in our account from fundraising, received a donation in the amount of \$1250.00 from North Country Concrete, were blessed with \$706 from a free will offering from parents at our Christmas Concert this year and earned \$299.00 from a Lifetouch picture fundraiser. We currently have \$4255 raised for our playground Fall Zone. I hope to have the playground corrected this Spring.

Thank you for your continued support, Lori Schleif Director

### **CAER FOOD SHELF**

St John continues to give a monthly benevolence to CAER food shelf in Elk River as well as provide volunteers each month to hand out food. Our Live nativity collected food for CAER (505lbs) and our Confirmation students collected food for CAER on Halloween. We also continue to have a food drop off cart in the Narthex. In addition to our monthly benevolence we took a collection last fall that totaled \$1,059.34. Marge Niebergall has been filling in as Coordinator since the fall when Bobbie Leitzke resigned due to health issues. We are still looking for a permanent Coordinator.

## **GREAT RIVER FAMILY PROMISE**

GRFP is an interfaith non-profit organization committed to helping low-income families in the Zimmerman-Elk River-Rogers-Monticello-Big Lake-Becker areas. St John is one of 10 churches in these communities that provide shelter and meals for one week, 4 times a year. St John hosted 5 weeks in 2018 because GRFP is short 3 host churches. We provided supper, van rides to and from the day center in Elk River, and overnight facilities for 7 families in 2018. 5 families found permanent housing and 2 families chose to leave the program without housing. Each host week requires 2 adults volunteers for each evening meal, 2 adults to sleep at the church overnight, one van driver at 7 each morning and one van driver at 4:45 each afternoon. On Saturdays the families are at the church all day, which requires 8 - 10 volunteers. Zimmerman Community Church is our support church and provides the Saturday morning breakfast. At the end of each host week, which run Sunday to Sunday, there are countless bags of bedding and towels to be laundered. Once a family has moved into their housing, they continue to receive aftercare mentoring in the areas of parenting, finances and life skills from the case manager at the day center.

Great River Family Promise was founded on the belief that we are compassionate people who want to make a difference. Their promise has been to link those in need with those who want to help. They receive no government funding. All of the funding is from donations from people within our communities and church families. Many cannot volunteer their time due to work and family commitments, but can still help by donating financially. Ongoing expenses include the salaries of the 3 employees at the day center, gas cards for guests, rent and utilities at the day center. There are several fund raisers each year including plant sales in the spring and a Christmas silent auction/soup supper/entertainment.

Our weeks to host for 2019 are the weeks of April 28, May 5, September 15 and November 24. Thank you to all who provide meals, play with the children, sleep at the church, drive the van, wash the bedding, donate financially to GRFP and pray for the families, volunteers, employees and staff. We do receive feed back from our guests after they have moved into their permanent housing. One father said, "I was scared to come in the program, because of the stereotype "shelters". GRFP showed him that this program is not your typical shelter, and he received so much encouragement and love from volunteers on every shift, at every church, was welcomed with open arms and helped open his eyes to the goodness in people. "Each volunteer makes a difference in the lives of those we serve. Thanks be to God! Lori Schleif and Janna Luebben, co-coordinators for GRFP St John

## **PERSONNEL REPORT**

This past year we have had two big changes – A music director and a full-time pastor for our church!!

As a result, interim Pastor Bob Rusert left us in September and will be taking another position as interim pastor.

October 1<sup>st</sup> after more than a year of diligent searching by the Call Committee, we welcomed our new pastor, Pastor Kari Bahe.

Jessica Gensmer joined St John as Music Director January 12, 2018 with her first Sunday Worship Service on February 4.

### **STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT**

The Stewardship committee was redeveloped and formed by pastor Bob this summer before leaving. There are five members and our pastor on the committee, Maren Hackbarth, Mary Haas, Tom McChesney, Pat Kluge, Paul Larson and Pastor Bahe.

We have met many times, discussing St John's finances and need for financial stability. Our goal is to help promote giving to grow St John and support activities and staff. We know that we need financial backing for people and programs to grow. There can't always be a concern about the budget or money.

We did create and promote the pledge drive this year. It has had mixed success. Since this hasn't been done for a few years it was good to get 63 pledges returned, but the pledged amount of \$134,900 is only about half of the budget we need. Hopefully as education continues on the church's needs and how our budget works we can improve our pledging in the future.

We plan to continue to work with you and present more time for discussion and education on giving, tithing, and growing in our church. You are always welcome to join us if this is an area of interest in your life.

### **SPECIAL PROJECTS REPORTS**

#### **The Living Nativity 2018**

This is a year round process of planning, set design and advertising.

This year we had 1262 people enjoy O Holy Night with roughly 100 people going through the second or third time. With many people "**Thanking and Blessing Our Church**" with doing this outreach for our community.

We collected 505 lbs. of food donated to C.A.E.R. and cash donations.

The second year of the freewill offering to support the Living Nativity generated 1027.86 and 176.00 in ornament sales.

This year we also received moneys from the Easter Breakfast to help fund the event. We also did a Spaghetti dinner to raise 3400.00 to help offset budget cost. With these funds we have purchased equipment that we will no longer need to rent. This includes a power distribution box, power cable, L.E.D. lighting with plans to add more as we make changes and upgrades to the whole experience.

Plans for the next year are already under way with painting the containers, building a Prayer Chapel in place of a tent and other modifications to make set up and tear down a more efficient process. This year we were able to pack the majority away in one day. Thanks to all that helped many hands make light work. Want to be added to email list to get notifications of work days send a message to [kevin@johnsonshardwarehank.com](mailto:kevin@johnsonshardwarehank.com)

Thanks to all who participated in The Living Nativity. Here is a breakdown of what it takes to put together this amazing 2 night community event:

Cast members: 90 adults, children and animals for sets and city.

Many hours of sewing and planning go into having all the costumes ready for the cast. If you would like to help with this contact Wanda Thoreson.

Building of sets props and city: Around 30 people and countless hours over a two month city setup period.

All the props, sets and city walls have been built and painted by volunteers. As you see it's an ongoing process. We will now begin preparing for next year. A lot is done during the summer when weather is better for painting and building. Interested in helping make plywood look like stone walls and houses? Contact Pat Kluge or Kevin Johnson.

Lighting and sound is the part that brings the city to life. This is mostly done the last week prior to opening night and is done in the evening so effects can be seen. Contact Eric Roensch to help with this project.

Hospitality: kitchen, serving beverages, greeting and parking control requires around 15 volunteers.

Kitchen help prepares Levi's lentil soup and the flat bread that is served to our guest of Bethlehem; they also prepare all the hot chocolate, apple cider and coffee. To help in this area contact Gina Kadlec, Kim Forster or Janna Luebben

Thanks to all that served supper to volunteers and cast members on Nativity nights.

Mark your calendar for next year's Journey December 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> 2019 and start thinking about where you can volunteer.

Serving Our Lord with this community outreach

The Living Nativity committee.

### **St John Auction 2018**

The Auction committee would like to thank everyone that contributed in any way to make the auction a success. We raised a total of \$3,156 from the items sold!

Be it donating, bidding, or helping set up and working the wagons.

Please take the time to thank the Hillers for their time and equipment for the Auction.  
Thanks Kevin, Nancy and Dan

Your committee members are:

Butch Hass, Kevin Hiller, Kevin Johnson, Harry Kluge, Keith Larson, Paul Larson, Bret Olson, Eric Roensch, Larry Thoreson

### **Church Community Dinner Report**

The St. John Community Dinner was started in April 2009 and is held on the third Thursday of each month. This dinner is free for the Zimmerman community and for all the members of St. John.

Thank you to all the volunteers who have given so much time and energy to make this program a success. We hope to continue to serve great food and fellowship to the Zimmerman community in the upcoming year.

### **THE WOMEN OF ST. JOHN 2018**

During 2018 the Women of St John donated money to the Youth work camp, Alaska Mission Trip, Honduras Mission Trip, Bibles for the 3<sup>rd</sup> graders, Court Yard project, O Holy Night, Great River Family Promise, CAER, Passing the Bread, Sunday School curriculum, Vacation Bible School, laptop for Pr. Kari, Quilters back packs, money toward the TV for the basement, Koala changing tables for the bathrooms, painted the bathrooms, and cleaned

and sealed tile in the bathrooms. The donations totaled approximately \$7,100. The Women have also reserved approximately \$3,300 for repairs to the parsonage.

In September the Women of St. John participate in the Fall Festival which was a great success with the help of many volunteers. We had a profit of \$6,250 from crafts, lunch and sold 2,090 raffle tickets. We had over 40 vendors come with all their treasures. A huge "THANK YOU" to everyone!

In December, the Women of St. John had their annual Brunch, sold \$860 worth of cookies at the Cookie Walk and delivered cheer baskets to 24 shut-ins.

The Women of St. John also manage the flower chart and pay Zimmerman Floral. If the flower chart has a blank Sunday the Women of St. John pay the bill so please remember to check the flower chart and sign up. God's Blessings The Women of St. John

#### **ST. JOHN QUILTING GROUP**

Put together and delivered 43 Lutheran World Relief kits! That's a new record! Thank you to all who helped by donating supplies!

They also delivered 37 lap quilts to Shriners Hospital! And Graduation quilts to area high schools for their over night parties. (St. Francis, Big Lake, Princeton, Zimmerman, Elk River, and a private school in Elk River)

#### **CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE:**

The Constitution Committee worked on updating our current Constitution to be updated with the current ELCA Model Constitution. Thank you to Pastor Bob Rusert and Kathy Fore for your help. The updated Constitution has been given to Pastor Kari Bahe for review. The committee will be working with Pastor Bahe on any recommendation or changes she presents after her review. Once this step is completed it will be given to Council. We will also be working on updating the bylaws. Thank you, Constitution Committee  
Pastor Kari Bahe, Gary Luebben and Dawn Bourdeaux

#### **BUILDING AND GROUNDS**

A lot has been accomplished this year. We have updated the Pastor's office, Sabrina's office, fellowship hall and some hall way lighting with efficient LED lighting. Plans are to continue with the Kitchen and other class rooms. This has made a noticeable difference in the electric bill. This is also a cost savings as they produce less heat than the old fluorescents.

This is all accomplished by volunteers of the Green Hat Crew that meets on the second Wednesday and Last Saturday of the month from 8-10. If you would like to help on this crew contact Kevin Johnson, Ed Fore, Will Porter or Eric Roensch to be added to email list for projects coming up. We continue to do what we are able to do to save money's for the church. We do bring in trades people were needed.

Projects for this year are to replace Air conditioning in the Sanctuary and Education wing.

And continue the maintenance of the Church like. Painting areas needing repair, changing out filters and lights were needed. Many things are done though out the year to keep our Church building and Grounds maintained. And this is all done by the help of many.

Thanks for everyone involved in Making St. John SHINE

In The Lords Service, Building and Grounds

### **GIVING TO OTHER MINISTRIES**

#### **OPERATION: CHRISTMAS CHILD**

See: Sunday School Report

#### **ST JOHN ALASKA VBS MISSION 2018**

The Mission took place at Fort Yukon, Alaska this year from July 6<sup>th</sup> to July 16<sup>th</sup>. There were about 40 children who attended. Our mission team was JoAnn Nielsen from Lindstrom MN, Amy Holchin (teenager) from North Carolina, and Wanda Thoreson from St John Zimmerman. The lesson was "Fishers of Men." This is the 15<sup>th</sup> year of working with the Alaska Mission through LAMP (Lutheran Association of Missionaries and Pilots) which has evolved into Lutheran Indian Ministries.

The school was held in the Tribal Hall this year as the former Episcopalian Parish Hall was being torn down to be rebuilt. What a blessing this is. Last year the rain poured through the roof and into the light fixtures. That gave us a dangerous situation so children had to be brought to St Stephens Episcopalian Church to continue VBS as best as possible without tables.

Through the years, there have been obstacles to overcome in order to bring the word of God to the children of Ft Yukon. However, the behavior of the children is evident today.

They are respectful and obedient which is a total change from what we encountered in the beginning. I believe the children came to know us and trust us and look forward to that plane dropping us at the airport each year.

Shortly after arrival in the village, our team met with the Assembly of God minister Jeremiah, his wife Sharnay, and two youth directors, Josh and Cheyenne. Their mission has grown. They increased the size of their church by double and have living quarters for each of their youth directors now. Pastor Jeremiah leads a youth camp down river for the young children and, also, for the teenagers. It appears that the mission in Fort Yukon is in good hands if God's message to St John is "Job well done my good and faithful servants."

There were many gifts given by our congregation for the mission this year including \$685 in monies. Thank you from the bottom of the hearts of the VBS team and from the hearts of the people in Fort Yukon. Respectfully submitted, Wanda Thoreson

### **Breaking Free**

In November 2018, we had a collection for this mission, and it totaled \$125.00.

### **Helping Honduras Kids**

Thank you so much for all the donations for Helping Honduras Kids in Honduras. These items have been packed up and ready to ship. The shipment will be done in January and I will be in Honduras in February to see the kids when the shipment arrives. I hope to bring back photos for all of you to see the difference you make. Thank you again for your generosity. Cheryl Schraeder

### **Mitten Tree**

Once again the amazing people of St. John and friends contributed over 200 hats, mittens and scarves to our annual St. John Mitten Tree! The items were divided up and delivered to Westwood and Zimmerman Elementary, Passing the Bread and CAER. Thanks to you many children will stay warm this winter!! You are all blessings! Deb Christensen