



Evangelical Lutheran  
Church in America  
God's work. Our hands.



235 S. Green Street  
P.O. Box 245  
Somonauk, Illinois 60552

**Journal**  
**February 2024**

A February 2024 Message from your Pastor ...

*<sup>9</sup>As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. ...*

*<sup>12</sup>This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.*

*John 15:9-12 (selected verses from the NRSV)*

Valentine's Day is on February 14<sup>th</sup>, please take time to remember God's incredible love for us every day.

Ash Wednesday begins Lent on Valentine's Day, February 14<sup>th</sup>.

- There will be 2 **Ash Wednesday** services at **4:00 p.m. & 6:30 p.m.** with a **meal** provided in between services from **5:00 – 6:00 p.m.** The Union Congregational Church will be joining us at the 6:30 p.m. service.
- Soup suppers will be served every Wednesday during the season of Lent.
  - The **Lenten Wednesday evening** worship schedule is as follows:
    - February 21<sup>st</sup> at Union Congregational Church
    - February 28<sup>th</sup> at St John's Lutheran Church
    - March 6<sup>th</sup> at Union Congregational Church
    - March 13<sup>th</sup> at St John's Lutheran Church
    - March 20<sup>th</sup> at Union Congregational Church
  - The **meal** will be served from **5:00 – 6:00 p.m.**
  - We will gather for **Lenten services** after the meal at **6:30 p.m.** This year we will be singing Holden Evening Prayer at each service.
- A **Lenten Saturday morning breakfast** will be offered as well. All are invited to attend. We'll meet for 6 consecutive Saturdays during Lent beginning February 17<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 a.m.
- Also note: the Federated Church in Sandwich will host the Wednesday **Morning Lenten Breakfasts**, (February 21, 28<sup>th</sup>, March 6<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, & 20<sup>th</sup>) this year at 9:00 a.m.

As you read the above opportunities to gather for fellowship and worship, please consider joining us!

In a few weeks, we will celebrate St. Valentine's Day, please contemplate these verses from Scripture ...

*<sup>4</sup> Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant*

*<sup>5</sup> or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful.*

*<sup>6</sup> it does not rejoice in wrongdoing but rejoices in the truth.*

*<sup>7</sup> It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.*

*<sup>8</sup> Love never ends. 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 (NRSV)*



May we live out these words.

May you enjoy God's Blessings & Peace – Pastor Chris

## *“A Touch of Heaven” by Stephanie Redieske*

“Look around you,” Grandpa whispered as he gently rested his left hand on my right shoulder, and waved out in front of us with his right. “This is what I see every day now.”

I looked out over rolling emerald hills, towering, snow covered mountains in the distance, and glistening, white-capped waves crashing into the sandy coast. I had never seen so much natural beauty in one glimpse. I thought to take a picture, but I didn't want to move for fear of losing the moment.

A warm breeze blew my hair softly behind me, and the faint sound of chirping was growing closer. I looked up at Grandpa, watching his face as he undoubtedly recalled the exact species of bird we heard calling—one of his favorite pastimes. I briefly remembered the small Birdwatching Book that used to sit on the end table right next to his recliner in Grandma and Grandpa's living room. On occasion, I was known to flip through the book, looking at all the pictures of the colorful and exotic birds, wondering how Grandpa could remember them all.

“What kind of bird is it?” I asked quietly, watching as a single bird landed in a tree just a few feet away from us. Its feathers rustled and it let out a few more chirps before sitting still and gazing out upon the landscape.

“A blue dactyl. Isn't it beautiful?” Grandpa replied, moving his hand from my shoulder and guiding me toward the tree slowly; silently. We stopped just shy of the tree and took in the moment, embracing the nature, the life, the togetherness that it had been so long since we had felt with one another.

I stared up into the tree and noted the beauty of a bird I'd never seen before: striking black and deep blue with feathers that looked as soft as fur. It traveled alone, but seemed at peace in its solitude.

“Where does it come from?” I pressed, thinking how rare a find we must have stumbled upon.

“Lots of places,” Grandpa replied, “Mostly Argentina.”

I noted the curiosity that an Argentinian bird would be here on its own, but then reminded myself of the uncertainty of where “here” really was. I considered asking the question, but was filled with fear of what the answer might be.

I closed my eyes, breathed in, and was overwhelmed by the combination of the fresh air and Grandpa’s cologne—a scent I didn’t realize how much I had missed until this very moment. Time didn’t seem real, and I couldn’t put a finger on just how long it had been since I had last seen him, but I was certain it had been too long.

“So this is where you’ve been,” I stated, reaching out for Grandpa’s hand.

“Yes,” he said simply. “I’ve been getting it ready.”

He said the words as if it should be obvious—obvious that he had been here all this time, obvious that he was preparing, obvious what he was preparing for; but, I still could not understand.

“Ready?”

He smiled and nodded. “Someday, when the time is right, you will join me here. So will Grandma, and your Mom, and your aunt, and your cousins. Someday, we will all be together again, in this place.”

And I suddenly understood. This was our own piece of heaven.

“But I miss you,” I admitted, and for the first time since I’d found myself here, I knew I was frowning. My heart felt as though it was wrenching out of my chest, knowing that someday wouldn’t be soon—that I still had a long life ahead of me without Grandpa. He wouldn’t be at my birthdays, my wedding, wouldn’t get to see me be a mother, and watch my babies grow. I would be missing him. Always.

“I miss you, too,” he stated calmly, “But I’m always with you. Watching. Preparing. Waiting.”

There was a brief moment of silence as I reconciled the truth. What a blessing to see him, hear him, feel his presence; and yet, what a cruelty to know that it was an ethereal experience, and I couldn’t have him back in my life each day. I racked my brain for an answer—for some way to take him home with me, but I knew it was impossible, and that I had no choice but to savor each second I had left with him.

“I’m proud of you,” he beamed, and I knew it was true. He pulled me into his warm embrace and squeezed, “I am so, so proud of you. And one day, we will celebrate your accomplishments and your successes together, here.”

I felt tears welling up in my eyes, knowing this was the start of goodbye.

I squeezed him tightly, and quietly whispered, “I love you, Grandpa.”

“I love you, too, sweetie.”

I found comfort in his words, but the facts remained: I knew that this moment was fleeting—that sooner than later, I would be back on Earth, and he would be here, and there was no way of knowing when I would see him again. The thought made me squeeze him even tighter, as if I could hold him tight enough that the moment would never have to end.

And then it felt as though he disintegrated from the air around me. I was floating downward, through the plains and into the soil, into the clouds, and delicately descended until I felt the softness of my pillow beneath my head.

I hesitated to open my eyes, breathing in and hoping against hope that Grandpa’s cologne would still fill the air. Instead, I smelled bacon cooking a few rooms over, and when I opened my eyes, I could feel the fresh tears on my cheeks.

There are dreams that make you cry because you’re sad, dreams that make you cry because you’re afraid, dreams that make you cry because you’re happy, and dreams that make you cry because you’re loved.

Earth would never be the same without Grandpa, but I was eternally grateful for that brief touch of heaven.

## St. John's Lutheran Church Council minutes for January 11, 2024

*Present, Jim Beal, Drew Hallman, Mike Hamer, Scott Horsch, Wayne Karp, Pastor Chris Schoon, Lynn Skrzypiec. Guest Jackie Eade.*

*Devotions: Wayne*

*Call to order: 6:33pm*

*Motion to approve Consent Agenda items from December: 1st: Mike 2nd: Drew*

*Treasurer's Report.*

*Gave Statement of Financial Position report, Budget vs Actual Report for 2023, and payroll schedule for 2024.*

<b>Month</b>	<b>Pastor Pay Dates</b>	<b>Pay Period</b>	<b>Staff Submission Dates</b>	<b>Pay Date</b>
January	15 & 31	Jan 1-Jan 28	January 26th	January 31st
February	15 & 29	January 29-Feb 25th	February 23rd	February 29th
March	15 & 31	Feb 26-March 24th	March 22nd	March 29th
April	15 & 30	March 25-April 19th	April 21st	April 26th
May	15 & 31	April 29th - May 26th	May 24th	May 31st
June	15 & 30	May 27th-June 23rd	June 21st	June 28th
July	15 & 31	June 24th - July 28th	July 26th	July 31st
August	15 & 31	August 30th-July 27th	August 23rd	August 30th

September	15 & 30	August 26th - Sept 29th	September 27th	September 30th
October	15 & 31	Sept 30th -Oct 22nd	October 25th	October 31st
November	15 & 30	October 28th - Nov 24th	November 22nd	November 29th
December	15 & 31	Nov 25th -December 31st	December 27th	December 31st
<b>Salaries</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>Pay Period</b>		
Pastor	55,573	Bi-Monthly	Chris Schoon	
Custodian	18.4	End of Month	Diane Wold	
Adm Asst.	15.45	End of Month	Julie Horsch	
Pianist/Org	103	End of Month	Rebecca Stephens, Margaret Page, Toni Lundeen, Jessica Orte- ga, Brad Haas	
Fin Secretary	2,699	End of Month	Mike Hamer	
Treasurer	2,699	End of Year	Scott Horsch	
Scott Horsch	1/1/24			

## *Committee Reports*

### Fellowship

*Change of plans for Chili Cook-off February 10th. Instead there will be Pizza and Game night. Pizza, soda and water will be supplied. Free will offering to cover cost.*

### Outreach No Report

### Finance

*Audit will be done January 14, 2024*

*Budget will be presented to Congregation at Annual Meeting.*

### Stewardship

*Soup Supper/Lenten Services will alternate between St. John's and Congregational Church.*

*The Federated Church is Hosting Lenten Breakfast. St. John's will serve Feb. 21st.*

*February Emphasis is Personal Care Kits.*

### MOG

*Current Money Market \$84,102.22 as of meeting.*

*The Hewlett-Packard printer was purchased and working well.*

*There was overpayment of \$721.00 and will be paid back to General Fund. Wayne Karp stated that the money actually was undesignated funds for MOG.*

*Connie made addendum to minutes stating the funds should not be transferred to general fund and Nancy Miller is adding to unspecified memorials. There was pew replacement discussion.*

### Parish Ed

*Sunday School Christmas Program went well.*

### Property

*Fire extinguishers were inspected. Some signs need to be taken care of.*

### Worship

*Will meet January*

*17th Pastor's Report*

### New Business

*Council was notified that Kaydence Eade will be attending Youth Group Gathering in July. St. John's has designated funds and will cover cost of the trip.*

*A big Thank You to Outgoing Council Members Jim Beal and Lynn Skrzpiec for their time and talents.*

*Motion to Adjourn Meeting: 1st: Drew 2nd: Lynn*

*Meeting adjourned 7:13*

*Closed meeting with Praying the Lords Prayer.*

# News from St. John's Committees

## MOG MINUTES 1-2-24

The meeting was called to order by chairperson, Kathy Anderson, at 7:00 pm. Pastor Chris Schoon led us in prayer with A New Year's Blessing; thanking God for a new opportunity to love, give, work, and be all that God wants us to be. Present this evening were Kathy Anderson, Pastor Chris, Nancy Miller, Linda Johnson, Lynn Skrzypiec, and Connie Hamer.

Linda Johnson moved and Kathy Anderson seconded to accept the October minutes as printed. The vote was unanimous in favor. The year end report was also distributed to the committee members.

Nancy Miller gave the treasurer's report. The money market value is currently \$84,102.22. It is probably more but has not been updated due to the date and the holiday. Nancy also explained the stock purchases on the transaction sheet. Nancy also organized the memorials as to which were specifically donated and which were unspecified. Specified funds include: audio/visual - \$100; Lexan - \$415; and Pews - #2350.28. The unspecified memorial fund totals - \$9322.33. Connie Hamer moved and Linda seconded to accept that printed report. Nancy reported that Scott Horsch will be a legal co-signer as of 1/8/24. She will also meet again with Resource during the first quarter of 2024. Connie Hamer moved and Lynn seconded to move a \$721 overpayment from the MOG's accounts back to the St. John's General Fund. The motion passed unanimously.

There was a general discussion about what churches are currently doing when replacing pews. When it is time for that project, we are certain a committee will be formed to deal with those details.

The Hewlett Packard Laser/Color printer was purchased and is working well. A service contract was not purchased.

Committee members will seek a new member as this was Connie's last meeting.

There have not been any new monetary requests, and all memorial funds have been transferred to MOG.

The church audit will be completed before the annual meeting (Jan. 21, 2024) and Nancy has the MOG information ready.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>. Lynn moved and Linda seconded to adjourn the meeting at 6:50pm. We then joined together in praying The Lord's Prayer.

## **STEWARDSHIP MINUTES 1-3-23**

The first Stewardship meeting of the 2024 year was called to order at 8:52 am. Present at this meeting were Mark Lee, Lynn Skrzypiec, Karol Grandgeorge, Pastor Chris Schoon, Mike Hamer, and Connie Hamer. Pastor led us with A New Year's Blessing giving thanks for our blessings and being grateful for new opportunities.

The Dec. minutes were approved as read. The annual report was submitted to the church office in December.

The Federated Church will be hosting the Lenten breakfasts. We are serving at the first one on Feb. 21<sup>st</sup>. Mark and Lynn have offered to work at the first one. Connie will ask Julie to put out a sign-up sheet for pastries. Pastries should be dropped off at St. John's on the 20<sup>th</sup> because servers will be leaving at 8:00 am on the 21<sup>st</sup> to set up at The Federated Church. The service begins at 9:00 am.

Michael reported on the Dec. offering as follows: General Fund - \$30,517.39; Capital Fund - \$2546.23; Good Samaritan Fund - \$100; Safe Passage - \$432.27; Fellowship/Hospitality - \$200; and Sharing Pantry - \$306.

The year end total for the General Fund was \$230,785.42.

A group from St. John's is going to Feed My Starving Children today at 12:45 pm. Salem Lutheran has asked that we call their church office directly with information about joint trips in the future.

The pizza/game night is still scheduled for Feb. 10<sup>th</sup>.

Karol reported that LWR needs fabric for quilts. Also, Cindy Karp needs 9-month T-shirts and footless sleepers.

Karol will include our February emphasis, Personal Care Kits, in her monthly LWR article.

Connie will write an article for the March emphasis which is our Sunday School.

Plans for the Lenten services and soup suppers are still in progress. The



Ash Wednesday (Feb. 14<sup>th</sup>) service and meal will definitely be at St. John's. The first service is at 4:00 pm; meal is 5:00-6:00 pm; and the last service at 6:30 pm. More information on the rest of the services and meals will be forthcoming.

Lynn will make inquiries about NI Food Bank guidelines.

We will not be having a March meeting. Our next meeting is Wednesday, February 7<sup>th</sup> at 8:45 am.

We adjourned at 9:52 am by praying The Lord's Prayer.



JIM & ANITA Beal 02/26



Reagan HALLMAN	02/01	Drew MILLIGAN	02/16
CHRISTINE SCHOON	02/02	TONI LUNDEEN	02/17
DON RUBIS	02/03	OLIVIA ROGERS	02/17
Renee HALLMAN	02/05	TYLER STAHL	02/18
MEREDITH STAHL	02/06	Lee GEHRKE	02/22
CINDY KARP	02/06	DESTINY EATON	02/22
AMY KILLEY	02/11	ELFRIEDE KORALLUS	02/25
SUSAN WHITE	02/13	JESSICA WOLD	02/25
EMILY DENAULT	02/13		

# Rebekah Circle

Date: Thursday, February 15th

Time: 1:00 pm

Location: St. John's Fellowship Hall

Lesson: Act Boldly with Balance

Leader: Karol Grandgeorge



# MEETING

## **Endowment Committee**

6:30 pm Tuesday, February 6



## **Stewardship Committee**

8:45am Wednesday, February 7

## **Property Committee**

10am Wednesday, February 7



## **Worship Committee**

1:30apm Wednesday, February 7



## **Rebekah Circle Meeting**

1:00pm Thursday, February 15



## **Church Council**

6:30pm Thursday, February 15



## **MOG Committee**

6:30 pm Tuesday, April 2



# LWR Lutheran World Relief Work Days

**FEBRUARY 20th 9:00 am to 3:00 pm and 7:00 pm to 9:00pm**  
**Bring a Lunch**

**FEBRUARY 21st 9:00 am to 3:00 pm Bring a Lunch**

February at St. John's is the month we do Personal Care Kits for those with less in this world. Each kit needs to have:

- 1 light weight bath towel (no larger than 27" by 52", and a dark color)
- 2 bars of soap to equal at least 8 ounces. Please check ounces.
- 1 sturdy comb (no rat tail or picks)
- 1 adult toothbrush in original package
- 1 nail clipper

You may purchase the above items and place in the bins in the Welcome Center. If you can not shop, you may donate by putting your offering in a blue envelope and marking it for Personal Care Kits. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

During work days in February, we will be sorting donations, taking apart things, cutting pieces, tying quilts and finishing edges. We will also be working on getting more school backpacks ready for sewing. The quilt kits to sew at home are in the hallway across from the kitchen. If you are interested in sewing school backpacks at home, please see Connie Hamer or Karol Grandgeorge.

We enjoy fellowship with each other as we work on projects to help those less fortunate. Someone usually brings a treat or two to enjoy for break or with our lunch. Please come spend a few minutes helping with our projects.

There is such a great need in this world!

## GOD'S WORK, OUR HANDS!

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
<h1>February</h1> <h1>2024</h1>			
<b>4</b> 8:30am Sunday School 8:30am Adult Forum 9:45am Worship Noisy Coin Collection	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> 6:30 Endowment Committee Meeting	<b>7</b> 8:45am Stewardship 9:00am <u>Women of the Bible Speak</u> book study 10am Property Comm. Mtg 1:30pm Worship Comm. 6:30pm Confirmation @ St. John's
<b>11</b> 8:30am Sunday School 8:30am Adult Forum 9:45am Worship	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> Ash Wednesday (Hosted by St. John's) 4:00pm - worship 5-6:00pm - meal 6:30 - worship
<b>18</b> 8:30am Sunday School 8:30am Adult Forum 9:45am Worship	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> LWR Workday 9am-3pm 7pm-9pm	<b>21</b> LWR Workday 9am-3pm Lenten Service (Hosted by UCC) 5-6:00pm - meal 6:30 - worship
<b>25</b> 8:30am Sunday School 8:30am Adult Forum 9:45am Worship	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> Lenten Service (Hosted by St. John's) 5-6:00pm - meal 6:30 - worship

Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>1 9:00am Bible Study</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3  5:00pm Worship</p>
<p>8 9:00am Bible Study</p>	<p>9</p>	<p>10 5:00pm Worship  Pizza &amp; Game Night after worship</p>
<p>15 9:00am Bible Study  6:30pm Council Meeting</p>	<p>16</p>	<p>17 5:00pm Worship</p>
<p>22 9:00am Bible Study</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>24 5:00pm Worship</p>
<p>29 9:00am Bible Study</p>		



# The Parents Corner

With every church year, we are reminded of God's plan for God's people by reliving the life and purpose of Jesus. We begin with anticipation and preparation for His birth. Following that great joy, we enter a season of light as wisemen seek and find the child who will save all humankind.

Now we begin Lent, the time when we contemplate the reason why Jesus' mission was necessary. When you read the bible, you will become acquainted with people who could live in peace and love with God and often don't do very well. We learn of Adam and Eve, who live in beauty and prosperity and walk with God. Until Eve wants more, and an unchivalrous Adam waits and watches to see if eating the only fruit forbidden to them will strike her dead. Cain's jealousy slays his brother, Abel. Abraham, the father of many nations, for fear of his life, lies about his wife being his sister. Esau carelessly sells his birthright for a pot of stew while his brother, Jacob, defrauds their father. Before Moses delivers the Jews from slavery in Egypt, he has been banished from the country for murder. And so it goes from story to story.

Yet, while being sinners, these people were also saints. They believed in the love of God. The prophets told them of unending, unknowable love, and God showed them that again and again. And then, the Word was made flesh. The Word, the Power that spoke into being the ideas of the Creator, came to give us the strength of His Spirit, which is love. We glimpse His love for us through our love for our children, even when they disappoint us. Thanks be to God. May we be as devoted.

Submitted by Lois Spizzirri

## Church Staff

### A. Administration

- i. Office Secretary: Julie Horsch

### b. Business

- i. Financial Recorder: Mike Hamer
- ii. Treasurer: Scott Horsch

### c. Facilities

- i. Building Superintendent: Diane Wold

### d. Worship

- i. Accompanists: Jessica Ortega, Toni Lundeen, Becky Stephens, Margaret Page

## Church Council

President: Wayne Karp  
Vice-President:  
Secretary: Bob Fraley

## Congregation Council

Andrew (Drew) Hallman  
Michael Hamer  
Connie Hamer  
Cindy Karp  
Jeanette Pfeifer

## **Lutherdale Bible Camp Representatives-2024**

Karol Grandgeorge, Nancy Miller

## **Synod Assembly Representatives-2024**

Pastor, Lynn Skrzypiec

## **Cemetery Ministry Team**

Bob Fraley, Glen Reuter, Doug Stahl

## **Endowment Ministry Team**

Mike Hamer, Wendy Merkel, Jeanette Pfeifer, Dale Robinson

## **Finance Ministry Team**

Chuck Hoepe,

Bob Mueller, Joanne Robinson

## **Memorial and Other Gifts Fund Team**

Kathy Anderson, Connie Hamer,

Nancy Miller, Lynn Skrzypiec

## Church Ministries & Organizations Contacts

Altar Guild

CROP Walk: Mark Lee & Mike Hamer

Growing Hope: Jerry & Toni Lundeen

Global Missions: *In need of leadership*

Habitat for Humanity: Karol Grandgeorge

Hearts & Hands: Stella Gardner

House of the Little Ones: Linda Johnson

LSSI Christmas Hope Chest: Karol Grandgeorge & Julie Horsch

LWR Projects (Mission Quilts, Baby Care Kits, School Kits,

Personal Care Kits, Sewing Kits): Karol Grandgeorge

Meals on Wheels: Mark Lee

Midwest Shelter for Homeless Veterans: *In need of leadership*

Our Sharing Pantry: Doris Miller

Partners In Mission - Uganda, Africa: *In need of leadership*

Prayer Chain: Karol Grandgeorge,

## Parish Education

### Confirmation

- a. Primary Instructor—Pastor Chris & Scott Horsch
- b. St. John's Congregational Council

### **3N1: 7—12 gr. Youth Ministry:**

Coordinators: Jason & Kim Boczko

from Salem Lutheran Church, Sandwich

Youth Ministry Connection from St. John's—Julie Horsch

**Esther Circle:** Jeanette Pfeifer

**Rebekah Circle:** Connie Hamer

**Sunday School Coordinator:** Nancy Miller

## Chairpersons/Ministry Summaries

*(Listed alphabetically by ministry)*

**Cemetery Ministry:** Doug Stahl

Oversees the care of the church cemetery, maintenance and improvements.

**Communications Ministry:** Bob Fraley

Seeks to improve communication with members and the community.

**Fellowship & Hospitality Ministry**

Plans activities and recreational outings to promote friendship and fellowship in our congregation and community.

**Finance Ministry:** Scott Horsch

Proposes the budget and administers incoming and outgoing funds.

**Outreach Ministry:** Jeanette Pfeifer

Reach out to the community by welcoming new neighbors with bread, hosting/participating in community events, following up with visitors, and bringing God's love to St John's 'special members' from cradle roll through the homebound.

**Parish Education Ministry:**

Oversees Sunday School Program, Summer Bible Day Camp, and youth related activities.

**Property Ministry:** Drew Hallman

Oversees the care of the church facilities and grounds, maintenance and improvements.

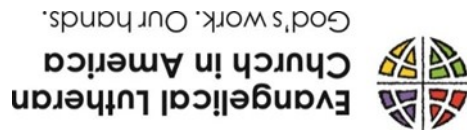
**Stewardship /Missions Ministry:** Lynn Skrzypiec

Provides opportunities for members of our congregation to use their gifts and resources, which includes raising funds for special projects. Provides a variety of opportunities to do God's Work with Our Hands. Organizes activities, publicize events and coordinate participation. Please join us in any way that works for you.

**Worship Ministry:** Cindy Karp

Striving to provide Spirit filled worship opportunities in an atmosphere of hospitality.

Newsletter of St. John's Lutheran Church  
February 2024



**We're on the Web:**  
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