



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



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

Journal
December 2023

A Christmas Message from your Pastor ...

*Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign.
Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son,
and shall name him Emmanuel. Isaiah 7:14 (NRSV)*



Advent is here. We anticipate the coming of the Christ Child. The altar colors change from green to blue in anticipation and hope. Our church and homes will be decorated with festive lights and Christmas greenery.

It is my hope and prayer that you will stop sometime during the hurry and scurry of the holiday season to contemplate what we're about as Christians. You've heard the saying, "Keep Christ in Christmas." I encourage you to try to slow down & take time to ponder Christ's coming into the world.

Advent begins the weekend of December 2nd & 3rd.

- We'll have a brief Advent Morning Prayer service on Tuesday, December 5th, 12th, & 19th at 9:00 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall with a time of fellowship after the service.
- Saturday, December 9th you are invited to a Progressive Dinner at church after worship. The Fellowship & Hospitality Committee has coordinated a progressive meal after worship beginning in the Welcome Center, salad in the Mary Martha Room and the meal in the Fellowship Hall followed by dessert. Sounds like fun! Join us!
- Parents, please note that Sunday School Christmas Program Practice is December 9th. In addition to Program Practice on December 9th - after Practice, Sunday School students will be making ornaments for the tree in the Welcome Center.
- On Sunday, December 17th our Sunday School children will present their Christmas Program. Come that day to see what the animals, shepherds, Wise Men, stars and Angels have to say about the coming of the Christ Child.
- On December 24th at the 9:45 a.m. worship service, we'll celebrate the 4th Sunday of Advent. Our Christmas Eve Service of Lessons & Carols will be at 4:00 p.m. Join us as we gather to welcome the Christ Child into the world and into our hearts.

Steve & I want to wish all of you a wonderful and blessed Christmas & best wishes into the New Year!

May you enjoy God's Blessings and Peace this Advent & Christmas Season and into the New Year!



Pastor Chris

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Christopher Dingman	12/06	Abigail Denault	12/20
Sharon Mueller	12/06	Doris Rogers	12/21
Evelyn Smith	12/07	Ed Stahl	12/21
Cindy Westbrook	12/07	Bob Mueller	12/21
Anita Beal	12/08	Sharon Rhea	12/22
Hudson Christopher	12/08	Becky Anderson	12/26
Taylor Johnson	12/11	Dave McKenzie	12/30
Johnny Johnson	12/14	Lorelei Killey	12/30
Kevin Anderson	12/19	Bruce Wold	12/31



Remember to have your LSSI giving tree gifts and gift cards back to the church by December 10th. Also remember, we ask that you DON'T wrap the gift but, gift wrap, tape and labels are always welcome and will be passed on to LSSI.

Proverbs 19:17 "Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will repay him for his deed." Let's be generous so these kids who don't have a family or are not with their family, will have a wonderful Christmas.



Joseph & Rosemary Underwood	12/02
Tom & Kathy Anderson	12/29 50 YEARS!
Martha & John Johnson	12/30



Rebekah Circle

What: Women's Gathering

Date: Thursday, December 7th

Time: 6:00 pm

Location: The Village Courtyard



St. John's Lutheran Church

Progressive Dinner

(will take place entirely within the church)

December 9th, 2023 6:00 pm (after worship)

\$20.00 per person

Sign up in the Welcome Center and please choose either a pork chop or a chicken breast as your main dish.

News from St. John's Committees

STEWARDSHIP MINUTES 11-1-23

The Stewardship meeting began with a Reformation blessing thanking God for “the rich heritage handed down from our fathers in faith.” Present at this meeting were Mike Hamer, Pastor Chris Schoon, Karol Grandgeorge, and Connie Hamer. The October minutes were approved as written.

We have not yet received names for gift purchasing for the LSSI Giving Tree. The date for returning unwrapped gifts with the attached tag has been *changed* to Dec. 10th. We have received gift card suggestions in the amounts of \$25 or \$50. We are hoping to complete the tree by this weekend.

Michael's October offering report: General Fund - \$23,004.61; Capital Fund - \$1310.13; Good Samaritan Fund - \$100; MSHV - \$50; and Growing Hope - \$839.68

Karol reported that poinsettias for Christmas decorating will cost \$17.00.

Pastor will investigate whether one of the Lutheran services (LIRS, LWR, etc.) does anything to help our cities with the influx of migrants.*

Karol and Connie will be delivering LWR kits to Elgin on November 9th.

Mark has completed his drivers for November's Meals-on-Wheels.

Commitment letters (120) were mailed and Connie retyped the list of names and addresses.

We have tabled the decision for January's door offering until next month. Some considerations are The Sharing Pantry, Fox Valley Community Center Day Care, DeKalb Pregnancy Help (not certain of name), We Care Foster Program in Plano, or Lutheran Relief services*. Karol will do the article for whichever charitable organization we choose.

Connie will do the Safe Passage article for Dec. as well as Stewardship's annual report, minutes, and the task and door offering calendars.

Advent morning prayer breakfasts will be on Dec. 5th, 12th, and 19th. Usually, volunteers bring a light breakfast of fruit and pastries. Coffee and juice are provided.

We closed at 9:57 a.m. by praying The Lord's Prayer. Our next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, Dec. 6th at 8:45 a.m.

WORSHIP COMMITTEE MINUTES 11-1-23

The meeting began at 1:20 pm. Members present were Pastor Chris, Lois Spizziri, Toni Lundeen and Julie Horsch.

Report from the Altar Guild: Karol confirmed prices for Christmas poinsettias at \$17.00 per plant. The Christmas tree will be put up on December 5th and taken down on January 9th.

Music: Becky will play for Advent Morning Prayer on Dec. 5th.

Hymns were reviewed for Advent Morning Prayer services. Looking ahead: Ash Wednesday is February 14th, 2024 with worship at 4:00 and 6:30. Lenten meals will be from 5:00-6:15. Maundy-Thursdays worship will be March 28th at 6:30pm and Good Friday ecumenical service will be at 6:30pm, location TBA.

Accompanists for Christmas Eve are Becky Stephens for the 9:45 am service and Brad Haas for the 4:00 pm service.

Hymns for December were chosen.

Meeting adjourned with the Lord's Prayer at 2:13 pm.

**Merry
Christmas**





**Sunday School
students singing
during Sunday
morning Worship!**



Reading Buddies

with Wendy Merkel's kindergarteners



Sign up in the Welcome Center for the next session!

December 21st
10:00 am



Sunday School Christmas Program

December 17th
during 9:45 worship

Practice: December 9th at 9:00 am

Kids will make ornaments for the tree in the
Welcome Center after practice.



St. John's Lutheran Church Council minutes for November 9, 2023

Council members present: Bob Fraley, Mike Hamer, Wayne Karp, Jeanette Pfeiffer, Linda Skrzpiec, and Pastor Schoon

Lynn led with devotions.

Wayne called the meeting to order at 6:40.

Lynn moved to accept the consent agenda items. Mike seconded. Motion carried.

Wayne presented the treasurer's report. Our finances have improved a little bit over the past two months. We are paying our bills. Mike said that the endowment committee approved \$7000 to the general fund to be given to the church for whatever needs.

Committee Reports

Fellowship/Hospitality – There will be a progressive dinner December 9th inside the church.

Outreach – Jeanette continues to encourage and welcome new membership.

Finance – Wayne presented a proposed budget for 2024 and asked the council to look it over. Next month will be more detailed.

Missions/Stewardship – See journal

MOG – See journal

Parish Ed – The Sunday School kids will be reading a Thanksgiving poem at the service on November 18th.

Property – Drew trimmed the trees at the parsonage. Ward is working on scraping painting and caulking the large windows on the East and West.

Worship – See report

Tech – None

Pastor's report – See report

Old Business

Bob reported that the Somonauk Lions Club would be interested in sponsoring a Cub Scout troop.

New Business

The Council will begin asking members to consider leadership positions for next year. Wayne reported that the money lost this year is basically the same amount the church gives to the synod. The finance committee is recommending budgeting 15 percent for the synod next year.

Scott Horsch has developed a contingency plan in case another financial problem were to occur.

Committee reports are due to the office by the first week in December.

Mike moved to adjourn. Jeanette seconded. Meeting was adjourned at 7:26.

In God's service,
Robert Fraley



Dekalb County Safe Passage

Dear Congregation,

St. John's continues to support worthy local organizations and charities whenever possible. Safe Passage has been our December emphasis for many years. Safe Passage (SP) is Dekalb County's *only* Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Crisis Center. As per their website, their mission is "to promote the right of all to nonviolent and abuse-free relationships through advocacy, intervention, and prevention. SP is funded through state and federal grants, private donations, and the support of some local agencies. SP was founded in 1981 as a grassroots non-profit organization run by volunteers who wanted to create a safe place in the community for victims of domestic violence." Their services include: crisis intervention; emergency shelter; long-term transitional housing; case management; counseling; legal and 24/7 medical advocacy; community prevention education; and offender intervention services. All survivor services are completely free, confidential, and available to all no matter age, gender, or when the abuse occurred. SP's vision is a world without violence where all are safe. As mentioned in previous articles, SP is attempting to build a new facility. Their website includes photos of their current facilities which are outdated and in constant need of major repairs. In addition, they lack shelter for about 15 victims each month. They hope to break ground on the new facility, named New Beginnings, in the Spring of 2024.

St. John's and Safe Passage thank you for your past and present support. A donation for Safe Passage may be put in a blue envelope or brought into the church office at any time. Please remember to mark the intent of your donation, and thank you once again.



MEETING

Fellowship & Hospitality

2pm November 30



Stewardship Committee

8:45am Wednesday, December 6

Property Committee

10am Wednesday, December 6



Worship Committee

1:30pm Wednesday, December 6

Rebekah Circle Meeting

6:00pm Thursday December 7
@ The Village Courtyard



Church Council

6:30pm Thursday, December 14

MOG Committee

7:00 pm Tuesday, January 2



Endowment Committee

6:30 pm Tuesday, February 6

LWR Lutheran World Relief Work Days

DECEMBER 12th 9:00 am to 3:00 pm and 7:00 pm to 9:00pm Bring a Lunch

DECEMBER 13th 9:00 am to 3:00 pm Bring a Lunch

The work days in December will be used as usual to work on the quilts and to cut out more school backpacks. Since donations come in constantly, we usually have some taking apart and sorting to do. We also work hard at getting more quilt kits and school backpacks made for people to sew at home. If you can sew and are looking for something rewarding to do, consider sewing a quilt top from the basket in the hallway by the kitchen. If you are interested in sewing school backpacks, see Connie Hamer, Doris Miller or Karol Grandgeorge for help.

Let's all attend Advent morning prayer and then stay to work for a few minutes on LWR projects. Everything will be set up and ready, so after coffee and a treat, you will be ready to do a little work. Remember that even in this busy season there are people in this world less fortunate!

GOD'S WORK, OUR HANDS!

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
<h1>December</h1> <h2>2023</h2>			
3 8:30am Sunday School 8:30am Adult Forum 9:45am Worship Noisy Coin Collection	4	5 9:00am Advent Morning Prayer Ladies Christmas Party St. John the Baptist Catholic Church 6:00pm	6 8:45am Stewardship 9:00am <u>Women of the Bible Speak</u> book study 10am Property 1:30pm Worship comm. 6:30pm Confirmation @ Salem
10 8:30am Sunday School 8:30am Adult Forum 9:45am Worship	11	12 9:00am Advent Morning Prayer LWR Workday 9am-3pm 7pm-9pm	13 LWR Workday 9am-3pm 6:30pm Confirmation @ Salem
17 8:30am Sunday School 8:30am Adult Forum 9:45am Worship SS Christmas Program during worship	18	19 9:00am Advent Morning Prayer	20 6:30pm Confirmation @ Salem
24 9:45am Worship 4:00pm Christmas Eve Worship 8:30am Adult Forum 9:45am Worship 31	25	26	27

	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2 5:00pm Worship
	7 9:00am Bible Study 6:00pm Rebekah Circle @ The Village Courtyard	8	9 9:00am Sunday School Christmas Program Practice 5:00pm Worship 6:00pm Progressive Dinner
	14 9:00am Bible Study 6:30pm Council Meeting	15	16 5:00pm Worship
	21 8:45am Bible Study 10:00am Reading Buddies	22	23 5:00pm Worship
	28	29	30 5:00pm Worship

The Parents Corner

I was listening to Michael Medved on his radio program tell of he and his wife ridding themselves of their television set and buying a DVR to better control what their children were watching. I thought that was an impractical idea unless the children were kept away from their friends and their families entirely. Other family's rules can be different... or non-existent.

I grew up in an adult family of mother, father, grandmother and uncle. We ate breakfast and dinner together every day and I listened to adult conversation and adult discussion. Did that have an impact on me? Of course.

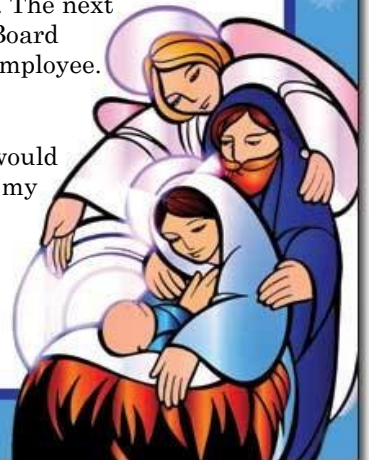
This country was still in the Great Depression when I was born and my grandmother thought President Roosevelt's giveaways were wonderful. Mom, dad and Uncle Carl thought they were very bad for the country. First, peoples' needs are more quickly met at the family and local level. Then men thought the national government is usually late with assistance and taxpayer money is used indiscriminately. Mom was afraid people were being taught not to take responsibility for each other.

Even before our country entered World War II, our table talk included German submarines sinking our merchant ships and killing our merchant seamen. With increasing fearfulness, there was worry about the safety of the German immigrant citizens in our neighborhood.

When war finally happened, there was discussion about enlisting in the military. My uncle could not serve for health reasons and would be there when mother would have her baby at Christmastime. My dad then signed up immediately. The next day, the president of his company went to the Selective Service Board and had dad's enlistment declined because he was an essential employee. Dad was disgruntled. Mom was relieved.

During countless meals, my family prepared me for the world I would live in and gave me the assurance of God's love to help me make my way. I was made aware that when trouble comes, God is there to help. Trust in the Lord. Always.

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

Jim Beal
Andrew (Drew) Hallman
Michael Hamer
Jeanette Pfeifer
Lynn Skrzypiec

Lutherdale Bible Camp Representatives-2023

Karol Grandgeorge, Nancy Miller

Synod Assembly Representatives-2023

Pastor, Mike & Connie Hamer

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, , Dave McKenzie,
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: Jim Beal

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.

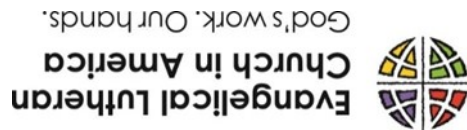
Stewardship /Missions Ministry: Lynn Skrzypiec

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: Lois Spizzirri

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

December 2023
Newsletter of St. John's Lutheran Church



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www.elcastjohns.com

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