



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



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

Journal
January 2024

A New Year's Message from Your Pastor ...

*"For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord,
plans for your welfare and not for harm,
to give you a future with hope." ... Jeremiah 29:11 (NRSV)*

The New Year has arrived! I do truly hope all of you had a wonderful and Merry Christmas! I wonder what God may have in store for us in the New Year.

As you make your New Year's resolutions, I humbly ask that you add this to your resolutions: please consider Bible reading to your list of resolutions. Opening the Bible to communicate with God and for God's word to speak to you is an important part of the Christian life. It is a way to keep in touch with and be touched by God.

In January, our Annual Meeting will take place on January 21st. In the coming year, our Council and committees will continue with their respective responsibilities of sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ through activities and projects. Bible Studies will continue Thursday morning, Adult Forum and Sunday School classes will gather. Confirmation classes will continue to meet, and Ash Wednesday & Lent will be here before you know it. I look forward to our shared ministry in the New Year!

On a personal note, thank you for all the cards, gifts and well wishes Steve & I received at Christmastime and for the New Year! We are so blessed to be here! Thank you!!

*God's Blessings & Peace,
Pastor Chris Schoon*

God's Blessing to all of you

And

**HAPPY NEW YEAR
2024!**



Doug Stahl	01/02
Stephen Kossak	01/03
Kyle Reuter	01/03
Charles Hoepe	01/03
Alexander Shoener	01/03
Addyson Barnes	01/07
Neil Miller	01/07
JoAnn Fox	01/10
Martha Johnson	01/11

Dale Robinson	01/14
Caitlyn Merkel	01/21
Marilyn Abbott	01/24
Nancy Gletty-Olson	01/27
Steven Vermeland	01/27
Keith Larson	01/27
Kelly Denault	01/28
Sharon Goode	01/29

Michael & Nancy Maroscia 01/06 40 Years!

Lee & Gerry Gehrke 01/24 54 Years!



Don't forget to sign up for the Feed My Starving Children event! Our session is scheduled for Wednesday, January 3rd, 2024. We will leave the Church at 12:45 pm. If you don't want to drive yourself, no worries! There's a spot for you in someone's car. If you've never been to FMSC before, consider coming along! Bring a friend or two! It's such a fun experience and what they do there makes a huge difference in children's lives!

Rebekah Circle

Date: Thursday, January 18th

Time: 1:00 pm

Location: St. John's Fellowship Hall

Lesson: #1, Session 3

A WONDERFUL CHRISTMAS PROGRAM
PUT ON BY THE CHILDREN OF ST. JOHN'S!



News from St. John's Committees

STEWARDSHIP MINUTES 12-6-23

The stewardship meeting began with an Advent prayer reminding us of the greatest gift we have ever received, our Lord, Jesus Christ. Present at this meeting were Karol Grandgeorge, Pastor Chris Schoon, Connie Hamer, Mike Hamer, and Mark Lee. The November minutes were approved as read.

There was a change from last month's information about the 2024 Lenten Breakfasts. The Federated Church in Sandwich will host those breakfasts. Our church is currently scheduled to bring food, serve, and clean-up on Wednesday, February 21st at 9:00 a.m.

Michael's November offering report: General Fund - \$18,395.15; Capital Fund - \$1395.13; Good Samaritan Fund - \$110; St. John's kitchen - \$300; Safe Passage - \$30; LSSI Giving Tree - \$624.65 + \$500 from Endowment=\$1124.65 (these monies are used to purchase any gifts or gift cards remaining on the tree).

The annual report had an error; the FMSC date should have been March '23. Connie will make the correction and resubmit it to Julie.

Pastor reported that the chili-cookoff is scheduled for Saturday, February 10, 2024.

In trying to decide about our January emphasis, we reviewed line items on the St. John's Financial Position Statement. There are several items that need to be brought up-to-date or deleted. The statement is a fluid document and needs constant updating. We will set up a meeting with Scott Horsch, church treasurer, to discuss needed changes. After considerable discussion, we decided to split January's emphasis between 2 of St. John's committees, Outreach and Fellowship/Hospitality. No other changes were made to the 2024 Mission Projects at this time. The 2024 Mission Projects Calendar is usually on the last page of our annual reports booklet which is distributed at the annual meeting.

Pastor has not heard back from LRIS (Lutheran Refugee and Immigration Ser-

vices) as to whether LRIS helps cities in dealing with migrant influx.

Michael will be placing giving envelopes in the parishioners' mailboxes this week. The envelopes are now undated. Congregants will need to let him know when they need more ordered.

A trip to Feed My Starving children is scheduled for Wednesday, January 3rd. We will leave St. John's at 12:45 p.m.

Pastor reminded us that Ash Wed. 2024 is February 14th. We are considering doing Lenten services with Union Congregational & any other church that might want to participate. They are also considering using Holden Evening Prayer. We would still have the soup/suppers wherever we worship.

We adjourned our meeting at 10:07 a.m. by praying The Lord's Prayer.

WARSHIP COMMITTEE MINUTES 12-6-23

The meeting began at 1:35 pm with prayer. Pastor Chris, Lois Spizziri, Toni Landeen and Julie Horsch were present.

12 poinsettias were ordered, the church was decorated for Christmas and a new banner was put in the Welcome Center. Trumpets scheduled to play for Christmas Eve service.

Review of Lenten plans. Ash Wednesday will be at 4:00 and 7:00 with services at 6:30 every Wednesday after that.

Time & Talent has been tabled until Diane shows Julie the process of recording in Church Windows.

Discussed returning Bibles to pews.

Hymns for January were chosen.

Meeting adjourned with the Lord's Prayer at 1:58.

Reading Buddies

with Wendy Merkel's
Kindergarteners



watch for a sign up sheet in the
Welcome Center for the next session!

Door Offering for January

At the December Stewardship committee meeting, it was decided to divide the January Door Offering between the Hospitality/ Fellowship and Outreach Committees. The Outreach committee is responsible for contacting guests that attend a worship service to invite them to come again and tell them we were happy to see them. Jeanette Pfeifer has been working with this and is able to give the guest a water bottle with St. John's information on it. This is an expense that needs to be covered plus any postage for mailings that are done. The Hospitality/ Fellowship Committee plans activities and outings to promote friendship and fellowship for our congregation and community. Some of the activities are paid for by the participants, but there is money needed to help pay for entertainment and to help defray expenses for the other events.

St. John's Lutheran Church Council minutes for December 14, 2023

Members present: Jim Beal, Bob Fraley, Drew Hallman, Mike Hamer, Scott Horsch, Jeanette Pfeiffer, Lynn Skrzpiec, and Pastor Schoon.

Pastor opened with devotions and prayer.

The meeting was called to order at 6:30. Bob led the meeting due to Wayne testing positive for COVID.

Drew made the motion to approve the consent agenda. Lynn seconded. Motion was approved.

Scott went over both the Treasurer's report and the 2024 budget. A budget of \$244,333 was proposed, slightly increasing from last year. It includes a 3 percent raise across the board to all staff and a Synod payment of 15 percent. Scott explained the amounts set aside for all the activity accounts.

Committee reports

Fellowship/Hospitality – Progressive dinner went well. There will be a chili cookoff on February 10th.

Outreach – Jeanette has been sending a Christmas poem to all families who have lost loved ones over the past year.

Finance – Wayne has not set a date to meet. The audit committee will meet on December 21st. Bob explained that Doug Stahl has recently turned over the bookkeeping of the cemetery to Bob Fraley.

Mission/Stewardship – See report.

MOG – No report.

Parish Education – The Sunday School program will be Sunday, December 17th during the service.

Property – the use of a lift was donated by Ron Gengler to do many jobs around the church. Ward repaired, caulked, and painted the upper outside windows and trim. Drew trimmed the trees at the parsonage. The branches will need to be removed at some point. Drew and Tom Frieders repaired the fascia at the parsonage. Thank you to all those who helped. Drew related that he is still in discussion with the old copier company regarding our past contract. The company is claiming the contract runs through July of 2024. Midwest Dirt Works agreed to do our snow removal for another year.

Worship – The church has been decorated for Advent. Hymns have been planned. Discussions are ongoing with the Congregational Church regarding sharing Lenten services. Holden Evening Prayer has been chosen for Lent.

Tech - Jim updated our software. He recommended that one of our two Facebook pages at some point should be removed.

Pastor's report – see report. The office will be closed on Christmas. Pastor will be off from the 25th through the 28th.

Old business

The council was encouraged to ask members to consider being on the council.

New business

Mike made the motion to approve the 2024 budget. Drew seconded. Motion carried.

Scott explained we had around \$35,000 budgeted in 2023 for the Synod. Because of our financial issues earlier in the year we have only paid out \$7800 to them. Mike made the motion to pay \$5000 more to them before the end of the year. Jeanette seconded. Motion carried.

Scott explained through inquiring that The House of the Little Ones is no longer operating. It closed during COVID. There was discussion as to where the noisy offering money should go. Pastor will inform the congregation. It was tabled until next month until Scott gets more information.

Jim asked about does the Synod own our property and assets. Pastor explained we as a congregation are the owners. Jim asked when the ELCA was formed. Mike looked it up and found it was 1988.

Bob explained the Cub Scout sponsorship offer has bounced from our church to the Lions Club to now the Somonauk schools.

There was discussion regarding payroll.

Jim made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Drew seconded. Meeting was adjourned at 7:40.

Meeting ended with the Lord's prayer.

In God's service,

Bob Fraley



MEETING

Annual Congregational Meeting

10:30am Sunday, January 21st



Stewardship Committee

8:45am Wednesday, January 3

Property Committee

10am Wednesday, January 3



Worship Committee

TBA



Rebekah Circle Meeting

1:00pm Thursday, January 18



Church Council

6:30pm Thursday, January 11



MOG Committee

6:30 pm Tuesday, January 2



Endowment Committee

6:30 pm Tuesday, February 6



LWR LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF WORK DAYS

January 16th 9:00 am to 3:00 pm and 7:00 pm to 9:00pm
Bring a Lunch

January 17th 9:00 am to 3:00 pm Bring a Lunch

January work days will be used as usual to work on the quilts and to cut out more school backpacks. We would like to remind people that when they do their winter closet cleaning, we can always use old sheets and blankets for the quilts. We also use mattress pads if they are in good shape. We also use cotton and wool materials to cut blocks for tops and for backs. Thanks in advance for your generosity. We also work hard at getting more quilt kits and school backpacks made for people to sew at home. If you are able to 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

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!

Remember:

GOD'S WORK, OUR HANDS!

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
<h1>January</h1> <h1>2024</h1>	1	2 6:30 pm MOG mtg.	3 8:45am Stewardship 9:00am <u>Women of the Bible Speak</u> book study 10am Property Comm. Mtg 12:45pm Feed My Starving Children No confirmation class
7 8:30am Sunday School 8:30am Adult Forum 9:45am Worship Noisy Coin Collection	8	9	10 6:30pm Confirmation @ St. John's
14 8:30am Sunday School 8:30am Adult Forum 9:45am Worship	15	16 LWR Workday 9am-3pm 7pm-9pm	17 LWR Workday 9am-3pm 6:30pm Confirmation @ St. John's
21 8:30am Sunday School 8:30am Adult Forum 9:45am Worship 10:30am Annual Meeting (after worship)	22	23	24 6:30pm Confirmation @ St. John's
28 8:30am Sunday School 8:30am Adult Forum 9:45am Worship	29	30	31 6:30pm Confirmation @ St. John's

Thursday	Friday	Saturday
4 9:00am Bible Study	5	6 5:00pm Worship
11 9:00am Bible Study 6:30pm Council Meeting	12	13 5:00pm Worship
18 9:00am Bible Study	19	20 5:00pm Worship
25 8:45am Bible Study	26	27 5:00pm Worship

The Parents Corner

This year, at the Somonauk Library, I acquired a daily devotional of Martin Luther's writings titled "Faith Alone" and it was edited by James C. Galvin. The very first page I read began with Luther writing that we know God through his promises and his commandments. The first requires of us faith and the second requires action.

I must confess that when I was parenting, I focused more on God's guidance for our behavior when I was teaching my children. I do not remember saying much about God's promises. I did stress that everything we have comes from God and we should acknowledge our gratitude, and that a promise was always to be kept.

I could have emphasized that God promises much... love, forgiveness, salvation, the Holy Spirit, everlasting life, peace, joy, freedom, growth, encouragement, excellence, strength, blessing, His presence, answered prayer, grace and Christ's return.

I did try to emulate God by never promising my children something I couldn't make happen. Through my life I have benefited by God's love and power. I wait in faith for all His promises to come true.

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.

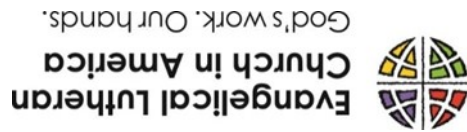
Stewardship /Missions Ministry: Lynn Skrzypiec

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.

Newsletter of St. John's Lutheran Church
January 2024



We're on the Web:
www.elcastjohns.com

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

Church Office 815-498-3667
office@elcastjohns.org

Follow and like us on Facebook

*[www.facebook.com/stjohnslutheran
churchsomonauk/](http://www.facebook.com/stjohnslutheranchurchsomonauk/)*