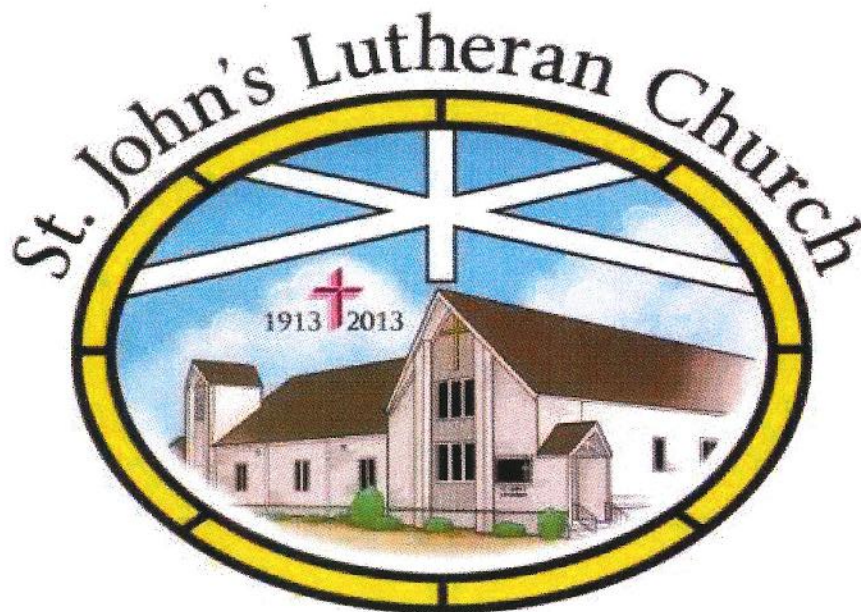


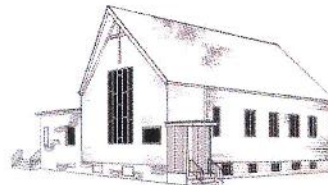
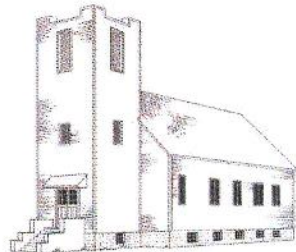
ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Lutheran Church Missouri Synod
Burt, Iowa

2022 Annual Report



Burt, Iowa



STATE OF THE CHURCH ADDRESS

Dear Friends in Christ at St. John's Lutheran Church,

My opening letter to this year's annual report comes in two parts. First, I will share with you a brief comment in reflection of the year now behind us. Next, I will offer my general outlook for the year ahead of us in God's grace.

With regard to 2022 at St. John's, this annual report itself is a testament to the work God has been accomplishing in our midst. I hope that as you read these statistics, financial statements, and various reports, you see how God has blessed us at St. John's in these concrete ways to grow in His Word, grow as a body of Christ, and show His love to the world around us. As I read through this report and consider some of the obstacles and potential set-backs we were given last year, especially our pastoral vacancy, and how we were able to continue with great vigor the work of the Lord and His mission to make disciples of all nations, I am reminded of the words of Lamentations 3:22-23:

The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases;
His mercies never come to an end;
they are new every morning;
great is Your faithfulness.

Take a moment as you reflect on this report to thank God for what He continues to accomplish among us because of His love for us, and to recognize that it is only by His doing that any soul should receive or grow in faith among us.

In looking forward to 2023, I hope to continue to consider this first half of our year to be not a time of pastoral vacancy, but of ministry recalibration. I am excited this next year to explore on a deeper level what it means and looks like for all of us to work together as the one body of Christ. I am particularly inspired to do so from St. Paul's words in Romans 12:4-8, where he says:

For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

What this means for me is that in the year ahead I will be renewing a focus on what it means to devote all of my time and energy to the pastoral ministry at St. John's. What this means for you is that you will have unique opportunities to explore how you might function in the body of Christ in serving St. John's many other ministries of evangelism and mercy in new and impactful ways. In working together as the body of Christ in these ways we will have the opportunity to continue to let God shape us as His city set on a hill to which people might flock to receive His Word of life for generations to come.

Joy in Christ,
Pastor Thomas Cowell
Feast of the Epiphany of our Lord, Anno Domini 2023

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

STAFF

Pastor:

- Pastor's Office: Rev. Thomas J Cowell
515-924-3388
- Email: pastor@stjohnsburt.org
- Cell phone: 319-464-5548
- Office Hours: Tuesdays, or by appointment

Office Manager/Secretary:

- Office Hours: Rosann Shipler
Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
- Church Office: 515-924-3344
- Church email: churchoffice@stjohnsburt.org
- Church website: www.stjohnsburt.org

Newsletter Coordinator

Linda Kerkove

Newsletter Printer and Assembler

Ann Heyes

Organist

Marcia Hanna

Assistant Organist

Kitty Bierstedt

Head Usher

John Schutter

Communications

Lynn Bierstedt and Tony Hatten

Janitor

Laura and Dick Knoll

Assistant Janitors

Trustees: Randy Reimers, Ben Borchardt,
Steve Madsen & David Haase

ONLINE CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Ask the church office to add your email to our Flocknote Announcements group.

OR

- Go to stjohnsburt.org, click the "St. John's Publications" tab, and select "Announcements."

WORSHIP BY PHONE

St. John's offers homebound members the ability to listen to the Sunday service through their phone. If you are interested in utilizing this option, please contact the church office for the phone number which you will need to dial to listen to the service.

ST. JOHN'S FACEBOOK PAGE

You can find the St. John's Facebook page at: facebook.com/stjohnsburt. We use our Facebook page to post service livestreams, important reminders, and pictures of church events.

LIVE STREAMING

St. John's continues to stream all of our Sunday Divine Services as well as special Advent and Lenten services. The easiest way to access these videos is to go to stjohnsburt.org and click the following image on the homescreen:



Click on LIVE STREAMING to go to our YouTube page to see live stream of Church service and see recorded streams.

This will take you to our St. John's YouTube channel where you can find and select the live or recorded service you would like to view.

FLOCKNOTE MESSAGING SYSTEM

Flocknote is an email and text message service that will allow St. John's to send you announcements and other resources all from one place.

Here are the options for the types of communications you can receive from St. John's:

St. John's Cancellations:	A text message or voice call when church is canceled (Everyone please sign up for this one!)
St. John's Announcements:	A weekly announcements email as well as occasional reminders for our most important events
St. John's Council:	Reminders for council meetings
St. John's Volunteers:	Occasional notices for volunteer opportunities
St. John's Sunday School:	Occasional announcements/cancellations
St. John's Religion School:	Occasional announcements/cancellations
St. John's Prayer Chain:	Prayer requests once daily

The easiest way to sign up is to let the church office know which message options you would like to receive and if you would like to receive them via text message, email, or both.

ST JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH - 2023 BOARD OF OFFICERS

<i>Office</i>	<i>Officers</i>	<i>Term</i>	<i>Yr. Term Expires</i>
President (elected by the Council)	Jeff Schutjer	1yr	2023
Board Secretary	Stefanie Hatten	2yr	2023
Treasurer	Pam Reimers	2yr	2025
Financial Secretary	Vern Koestler	2yr	2023
Elders	Boyd Shipler	3yr	2023
	Jerry Koestler	3yr	2024
	Tony Hatten	3yr	2025
	Jeff Schutjer	3yr	2025
Trustees	Randy Reimers	3yr	2024
	Ben Borchardt	3yr	2023
	David Haase	3yr	2025
	Steve Madsen	3yr	2025
Usher (1)	John Schutter Elder - Boyd Shipler		2025
Board of Finance	Dave Kerkove	1yr	2023
	Barb Schroeder	1yr	2023
	Don Madsen	1yr	2023
	Trustee - Randy Reimers		
Sunday Superintendent	Karla Schutter Elder - Jeff Schutjer	3yr	2023
Board of Education	Barb Thilges	3yr	2023
	Stefanie Hatten	3yr	2023
	Brenda Schutjer	3yr	2024
	Elder - Tony Hatten		
Worship Committee	Janice Reimers Elder - Boyd Shipler	2yr	2025
Mission Board	Clark Christensen	3yr	2025
	Lynn Bierstedt	3yr	2024
	Usher - John Schutter		
	Elder - Jerry Koestler		
Christmas Committee	Joe & Tina Heyes	2yr	2023
	Lucas & Jessie Parsons	2yr	2023
	Steve & Vickie Madsen	2yr	2024
	Alfred & Peggy Schadendorf	2yr	2024
	Trustee - Steve Madsen		
Audit Committee (3)	Barb Schroeder	1yr	2023
President Appoints Chairperson	Elder - Jerry Koestler Trustee - Ben Borchardt		
Nomination Committee (4)	Lynn Bierstedt	1yr	2023
President Appoints One	Pastor Cowell Elder - Jeff Schutjer Trustee - Ben Borchardt		

SCHEDULED CHURCH SERVICES - 2023

REGULAR SUNDAY SERVICES

Adult Bible Study (All Year)	8:30	am
Sunday School (September-May)	8:30	am
Divine Service	9:30	am

LENTEN, HOLY WEEK, & EASTER SERVICES

Ash Wednesday Divine Service at Burt February 22, 2023	5:30	pm
Lenten Midweek Services at Trinity Wednesdays, March 1, 8, 15, 22, 29	6:00	pm
Palm Sunday Divine Service April 2, 2023	9:30	am
Holy Thursday Divine Service April 6, 2023	5:30	pm
Stations of the Cross Prayer Service April 7, 2023	12:00	pm
Good Friday Service April 7, 2023	5:30	pm
Easter Day Divine Service April 9, 2023	Time TBD	
Easter Breakfast	Time TBD	

THANKSGIVING, ADVENT, AND CHRISTMAS SERVICES

Thanksgiving Eve Prayer Service November 22, 2023	6:00	pm
Advent Midweek services November 29, December 6, 13, 20	TBD	
Christmas Eve Children's Program December 24, 2023	TBD	
Christmas Day Divine Service December 25, 2023	9:30	am

TUESDAY MORNING/EVENING PRAYER

Every Tuesday (except the 2 nd Tues. of the month Sep.-May)	10:00	am
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PARTNERSHIP RALLY SUNDAY - September 10, 2023 TBD

WEDNESDAY CATECHESIS - First Day - September 13, 2023 6:00 pm

QUARTERLY COUNCIL MEETINGS

2 nd Sunday of January, April, July, & October	10:30	am
Special Council Meeting in December for Budget and Officers	10:30	am

VOTER'S MEETING - 3rd Sunday of January, April, July, & October 10:30 am

* Holy Communion, individual Confession and Absolution, prayer, and Christian counsel are always available for any member at any time. Please call, text, or email Pastor Cowell any time with pastoral care requests.

MEMBERSHIP ATTENDANCE

2021

194 Communicants
35 Baptized Children
229 Total Membership

2022

193 Communicants
36 Baptized Children
229 Total Membership

SERVICE AVERAGE ATTENDANCE IN 2022

Average attendance at Sunday Services	52
Average attendance at Lenten Services	26
Average attendance at Adult Bible Study	13
Average attendance at Sunday School	6
Average attendance on Tuesday Mornings	3

CHURCH ATTENDANCE AT REGULAR SUNDAY SERVICES

5 services in <i>January</i>	41-48-56-56-60
4 services in <i>February</i>	49-49-53-57
4 services in <i>March</i>	51-64-59-58
4 services in <i>April</i>	53-93-80-52
5 services in <i>May</i>	62-65-58-46-48
4 services in <i>June</i>	49-53-75-41
5 services in <i>July</i>	48-52-45-44-43
4 services in <i>August</i>	36-45-49-52
4 services in <i>September</i>	51-55-39-53
5 services in <i>October</i>	51-55-45-57-40
4 services in <i>November</i>	52-43-55-57
4 services in <i>December</i>	47-51-56-42

SPECIAL SERVICES - 2022

Ash Wednesday	33
Lenten Services	21-25-20-21-19
Maundy Thursday	32
Good Friday	46
Thanksgiving Eve	31
Advent Services	At Trinity
Children Program	80
Christmas Day	42
Christmas Eve	125

MEMBERSHIP UPDATES

BAPTISM

Noah James Fox

Born: October 4, 2021
Baptism: January 23, 2022
Parents: Jacob and Britni Fox
Sponsors: Justin Parsons - Rebekka Voss
Stephen and Ashley Vaske



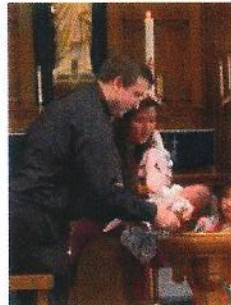
Jones Jacob Christensen

Born: June 7, 2021
Baptism: April 10, 2022
Parents: Jacob and Natalie Christensen
Sponsors: Dallas and Paige Grein



Magdalena Jo Cowell

Born: September 15, 2022
Baptism: September 25, 2022
Parents: Thomas and Hannah Cowell
Sponsors: Zachary and Alyssa Viggers
Anthony and Stefanie Hatten



FUNERAL

Ervin Kenneth Eimers

January 22, 1928-November 3, 2022
Service: November 9, 2022
Interment: East Lawn Cemetery, Algona

PEACEFUL RELEASE

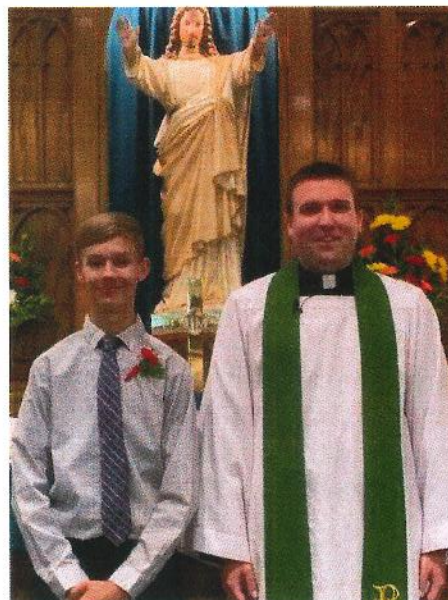
John Cherland - January 18, 2022

Jill Cherland - March 10, 2022

CONFIRMATION

Breckin Borchardt

Born: July 12, 2007
Baptism: September 15, 2007
Confirmation: June 19, 2022
Parents: Ben and Beth Borchardt
Confirmation Verse: John 20:31



In Memory



Celebrating 100 years
Ruth Nerem on April 1, 2022

CRADLE ROLL

This year **Noah James Fox, Jones Jacob Christensen** and **Magdalena Jo Cowell** received the gift of Holy Baptism at St. John's. Others on our cradle rolls are: **Amelia Cowell, Cora Christensen, and Rhett Briggs.**

Each new member baptized is presented with a hand embroidered napkin (by Ann Heyes), candle, and a Thrivent Baptism Medallion with each child's birth and baptism date on it. The medallion is engraved and given by Thrivent. A beautifully framed baptism certificate is given to the parents along with books entitled *The Baptism of Your Child*, a book set of small books for the parents to read to their child entitled: *Follow and Do Gift Set*, and also two Children's Bibles entitled: *The Jesus Storybook Bible* and *The Complete Illustrated Children's Bible*.

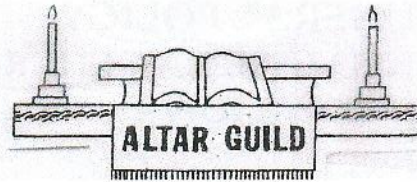
Debra and Mary Steven, Beginners Program Coordinators

ST. JOHN'S/TRINITY PARTNERSHIP

One of the most significant undertakings of our Partnership with Trinity, Algona of this past year was our participation in both joint Partnership senior pastor and associate pastor call committees and voters' meetings. The process began with our decision to reshape our Partnership to be served jointly by one Partnership senior pastor and one Partnership associate pastor.

From there our Partnership call committee gathered names of pastors and conducted interviews for the senior pastor position, which resulted in Pastor Cowell being called as our Partnership senior pastor.

Next we continued the process for our Partnership associate pastor, which resulted in two pastors being called and declining our call. This left us at the beginning of 2023 with the decision to submit an application to the seminaries to receive a seminary graduate as our associate pastor. We are now waiting and praying that God would see fit to supply us a pastor through these means.



The Altar Guild is made up of faithful volunteers that take care of the preparations before each worship service. Their job at St. John's is to be sure that Holy Communion and Baptism is set up at appropriate times, flowers available weekly, linens, permanents and candles are changed for all Sunday Services and major festivals.

Thank you to these dedicated people:

Worship Chairperson: **Janice Reimers** (elected office)

Orders all worship materials during the year.

Holy Communion: **Janice and Pam Reimers, Rosann Shipler, Barb Schroeder, Hannah Cowell, Betty Koestler, and Shirlee Alt**

Set up and remove communion ware and prepare linens for services.

Holy Baptism: **Ann Heyes**

Embroiders Baptismal napkins for each child's baptism

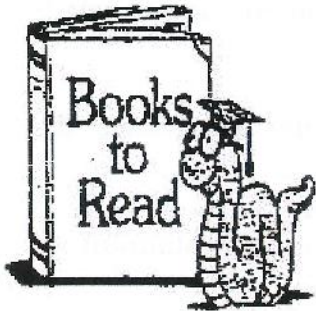
Debra Steven - Medallions given and engraved by Thrivent

Paraments: **Pam and Randy Reimers**

Altar Flowers: **Vickie Madsen**

If you would like to purchase flowers for the altar on a given Sunday in memory of a loved one or in celebration of an anniversary, Baptism, or special event, please contact Vickie Madsen.

LIBRARY NEWS



St. John's Library is available to all and we encourage you to use it often at your convenience. We have many books and DVD's now available.

We also have a rack in the back of the church that has many brochures for your convenience to take. These brochures are informational about many different subjects.

Examples:

- A Simple Explanation of Church History
- A Simple Explanation of Prayer
- A Simple Explanation of Baptism
- A Simple Explanation of Heaven and Hell
- A Simple Explanation of Fellowship in the Lord's Supper
- A Simple Explanation of Lutheranism
- A Simple Explanation of the Church Year

Other Subjects:

- Biblical Response to Suicide
- Biblical Response to Abortion
- Biblical Response to Homosexuality
- Biblical Response to Transgenderism

Feel free to take as many as you want to read and share them with family and friends!

Mary Steven and Deb Steven, Librarians

FUNERAL POLICY
ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH
BURT, IOWA

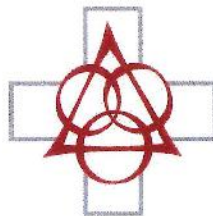
In the event that the funeral of your loved one takes place at St John's Lutheran Church, one of the Funeral Committee: Ann Heyes, Jessica Parsons, Barb Harms, or Joan Peymann will contact the family on serving the lunch. If you are working with a funeral home, the funeral home will typically arrange these details on your behalf.

Meal Choices:

1. A noon meal of scalloped potatoes and ham, buns, salads, cake, coffee and drink.
2. A noon meal of Hamburger Hot Dish, bun, salads, cake, coffee and drink.
3. A noon meal of sandwiches, salads, cake, coffee and drink.
4. Afternoon lunch of sandwiches and cake or salads and cake, coffee and drink.

Meal/Services Information:

- The family will pay for the cost of the main dish.
- If you are working with a funeral home, they will take care of this expense for you as a part of your funeral planning package.
- The congregation will provide the salads, desserts, drinks, and tableware.
- The family is welcome to make a donation to the St. John's Funeral Committee to go toward purchasing supplies.
- The committee will contact members of St John's congregation to furnish salads and cakes as well as to serve at the funeral lunch.
- The ushers for the month at St. John's will help set up and take down the tables and chairs.
- The family is welcome to order a catered meal from a local restaurant or grocery store.
- If the family orders a catered meal, the committee will provide congregation members to serve the meal.



MISSION BOARD

The Mission Board held the Rally Day Picnic on Sunday, August 28th, at 11:00AM. It was held on the shore of Smith Lake. A brief service was held in which Pastor Cowell gave a short sermon. Pastor Cowell installed the Sunday School teachers and presented the 3rd grade students with their Bibles and Catechisms. Pastor also blessed the students' school backpacks for the upcoming year.

St. John's was responsible for the meat, buns, condiments and bars. Trinity was responsible for the sides: baked beans, potato salad, chips and drinks.

Clark and Allison Christensen BBQ'd the pork and beef patties. Karla Schutter served snow cones. St. John's also furnished a decorated cake in honor of pastor Cowell on his 5th year of service.

On Sept.18th volunteers picked up trash along the section of Hwy 169 that is sponsored by Trinity and St. John's.

Pastor May was invited to speak at our Sunday School and Adult Bible Class on the activities of Lutherans in Africa.

A special thanks to Deb and Mary Stevens and Mary Blocker for organizing the gifts for our adopted family of eight at Christmas.

On Dec. 28th, St John's went ice fishing with Lucas Parsons and Legends Guide Service on Budd Lake in Fairmont, Minnesota. The group caught 407 fish!

Sincerely, the Mission Board, Lynn Bierstedt, Clark Christensen, Elder: Jerry Koestler, Pastor Cowell



Rally Day - September 2022 at Smith Lake with Trinity

Highway Clean-up with Trinity



PASTOR JAMES MAY VISIT



On Sunday, December 4, 2022 Pastor James May, missionary with Lutherans in Africa came to inform us of his work in Africa. Since Lutherans in Africa started its work in 2010, it has been a growing ministry. Rev. May has more requests for seminars around the continent than he has time to schedule. Rev. May is serving more than a dozen countries in Africa. During his time there he has coordinated and helped build the campus from its inception and has worked out of a small compound in Karen, Kenya (just outside of Nairobi). Thanks to generous financial support LIA has been able to purchase a larger piece of land that will allow them to build a new Lutheran School of Theology that will not only be the home base for our missionaries to live but also to study in classrooms.

We all could see from the time he visited before the progress that has been done to the site.



With the skill and the hard work of the people, he has completed several building projects and now the students have a building to live and learn in. They are a self-sufficient place where they grow their own food and work together to spread the Gospel to all people.

Pastor May's family has grown and several of his children are now students in college in the United States and his son is in the military.

Our yearly missionary money has been designated to go to Lutherans in Africa to help Pastor May and other missionaries with the work across Africa.



Did you Know:

There are more Lutherans in the country of Ethiopia than there are in the entire United States.

Pastor James May and family!

* Check out our "Evangelism and Charity at St. John's" booklet in the back of church for more ways we are helping spread the Gospel and God's love to our community and world.

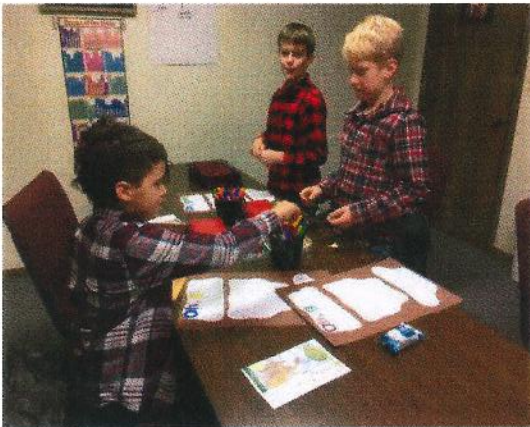
SUNDAY SCHOOL

We began this fall finishing out Year C of our Sunday School curriculum. Our lessons began in Exodus with the Israelites in the desert. Time after time, God showed His faithfulness to the Israelites as He provided for all of their needs. Water from a rock, bread from Heaven, and miraculous victories over their enemies are just some of the ways He took care of His people.

We learned about the spies and how Rahab hid them from the people of Jericho. Marching around the city for 7 days, the Israelites followed God's directions and the walls "came tumbling down."

From the walls of Jericho we then followed the Bible readings to the New Testament and read about the birth of John the Baptist as well as his ministry. December brought us the Christmas story and incorporated the Flight to Egypt found in the book of Matthew.

It is hard to believe that half of the Sunday school year is already over but we look forward to learning more about our Savior in the New Year. We will continue in the book of Matthew as well as John where we will read about the Wise Men, Jesus' Baptism, the Sermon on the Mount along with several parables leading us into the Transfiguration of Christ and his death and resurrection at Easter.



It is our hope that as the teachers share their love for Christ and God's Word that the lessons they prepare and teach, open the hearts and minds of our students to the love God has shown to us through his Son Jesus Christ.

"Love the Lord God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. Take to heart all these words that I give you today. Repeat them to your children. Talk about them when you're at home or away, when you lie down or get up." - Deuteronomy 6:5-8

St. John's Board of Education

The Sunday school students are working towards the goal of purchasing water fowl for Lutherans in Africa with their Sunday offering.

OUR DEDICATED STAFF

Preschool - 1st Grade

Jessica Parsons

2nd Grade - 5th Grade

Lisa Haase

6th Grade - 9th Grade

Stefanie Hatten

Adult Class

Kitty Bierstedt, Jeff & Brenda Schutjer,
Barb Schroeder, Peggy Schadendorf

Board of Education

Brenda Schutjer, Barbara Thilges,
Stefanie Hatten, Karla Schutter



Please pray for our Sunday school and all the families as we continue to grow in Christ.

ST. JOHN'S VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

In 2022, the Board of Education decided to host monthly activities for our families. In June, we took advantage of Iowa's free fishing weekend and had a picnic and fishing at Smith Lake. Lucas Parsons made sure everyone had enough bait and fishing gear to have a great afternoon of fishing! During our picnic time, Pastor Cowell brought us a message from the Bible - it was a timely message about fishing! Drawing on the different passages about fishing, from the great catch of fish to fishing for men, Pastor Cowell taught us how Christ is still in the business of doing miracles and is still "fishing" for faithful followers.



July took us to the Bancroft pool for a refreshing afternoon of swimming. Pizza was brought in for the families and we had great fellowship together at the local park. Pastor Cowell shared Bible stories about water. Not only is water refreshing, it is also cleansing. Pastor reminded us how we are cleansed through the waters of Baptism.

August brought us full circle back to church. We had an evening of games and potluck for our church families. John Schutter grilled pork burgers and everyone brought a dish to share. We had a wonderful time of fellowship and hearing God's Word once more. Kerplunk was the game of choice and a fun time was had by all who attended.



Fishing Day VBS



Games at the VBS Potluck

WEDNESDAY CHRISTIAN CATECHESIS

Wednesday Christian Catechesis at St. John's continues to both be a blessing to our congregation as well as a learning and growing experience for everyone involved! Each student continues to work on their Catechesis goals and objectives from home while also attending instructional classes with Pastor on Wednesday evenings. Included in the students' goals and objectives are assignments such as memorizing the Catechism, reading chapters from the Bible, and praying as a family. I am blessed to have a group of children who all come to class with a positive attitude and a willingness to learn.

I am likewise exceedingly proud of our Catechesis parents as this program continues. The parents have faithfully embraced their vocation as Christian mothers and fathers and have been willing to try new things and be actively involved in raising their children in the Christian faith. I think the parents would agree that their closer connection with the Christian education of their children has also opened doors for them to be more open to discussing and practicing their faith at home.

I also want to offer a reminder that our Wednesday classes are always open to the congregation to attend. Ask for a schedule and feel free to sit in on any topic that interests you. You will find out that the content that the children are learning is beneficial to Christians of any age. You will also find out that we have an incredible group of young Christians at St. John's, both in terms of the children as well as their parents, whose eagerness to grow in the faith is an inspiration to us all.

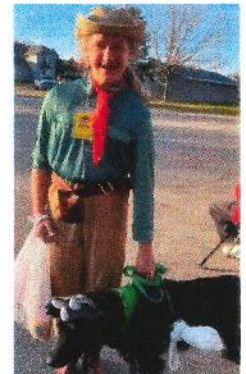
- Pastor Thomas Cowell

CHURCHES OF BURT TRUNK OR TREAT



On Monday, October 31, 2022 we held our annual Churches of Burt Trunk or Treat at the Burt Presbyterian parking lot. Members from both churches and the community were there with decorated vehicles handing out candy and serving a hotdog meal.

A special thank you Trinity Lutheran Quilters for coming and giving each kid a heart pillow. These pillows are made by the TLC Quilters in the Trinity church basement.

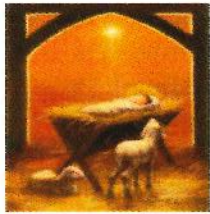
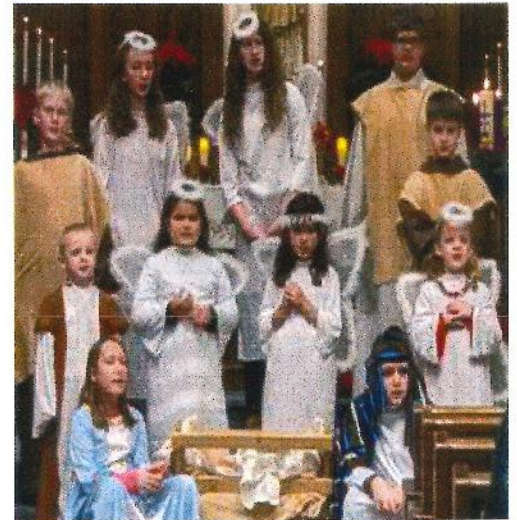


Many thanks to everyone who hosted a trunk, Burt Presbyterian and St. John's Lutheran Church for providing the meal, and Hannah Cowell for coordinating this event!

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

The Christmas story is so much more than just a story. It is the true account of the birth of a Savior for all people. Jesus was born as a human so He could fulfill the Law on our behalf and die as the perfect sacrifice for sin. Jesus is the true light that gives life to everyone. This year the kids from preschool through high school told the story of Christ's birth during the Children's Christmas program.

This year's program was called *LIGHT A CANDLE*. In God's word we hear about the Light that God promised to send His people. That Light is the Messiah, who brings the gift of salvation through His birth. This humble, human birth brought not only light into a darkened world, it brought hope. That hope rested in God's plan to bring us back to Himself through the work of Jesus Christ. It is in the manger we see that Light.



*Light a candle for the newborn King,
Light a candle bright and clear,
This Light will shine so brightly,
For the Savior now is here!*



God still continues to give us gifts today. When we believe in Jesus Christ, he gives us forgiveness, life and salvation. These gifts bring us true light and help us reflect God's love to those around us. As the children told of His birth, it was this light that was reflected to all who came to hear the message.

The St. John's Christmas program has always been on Christmas Eve. This year, tradition gave way to Epiphany (January 8) due to a snowstorm on Christmas Eve! Even though it was a few weeks later, the Christmas joy was still in the children's hearts!

Thank you to all who helped with the Christmas program this year! A special thank you to Brenda Schutjer who led us in the bells as well as Kitty Bierstedt who played for us!

Thank you to Rosann Shipler and Kelly Fitzgerald for sharing their photos of the evening with us!



THRIVENT FINANCIAL

Reported by Deb Steven

Advocates for St. John's in 2023 are: Debra Steven, Darrel Schmidt, Doris Blocker, Vern Koestler, Clark and Allison Christensen. We have space for an additional advocate if any of our church Thrivent members are interested in joining this group.

This year's funds were used to:

- Donated to Adopted Family
- Engraved the Baptism Medallions
- Confirmation Crosses to the Confirmands
- Christmas Decorations

These projects are funded by Thrivent Choice Dollars that are directed to us from our members. Under Thrivent's Choice program, members who meet minimum requirements are given Choice Dollars to allocate to the organization of their choice. These dollars are given at no cost to the member. Thrivent members who have Choice Dollars available have until March 31, 2023 to allocate dollars from 2022.

Choice dollars that are not allocated by that date will be lost. Please consider allocating your Choice Dollars to St. John's who is registered as an eligible recipient for choice Dollars. In order to see if you have Choice Dollars available and to allocate those dollars, call 1-800-THRIVENT (1-800-347-4836) or access your account through Thrivent.com. Your Choice dollars need to be allocated each year or they will be lost.

Every Thrivent Member is also eligible for two \$250.00 Thrivent Action Cards per year, which can be used to help the church or community in a variety of charitable ways. If you have an idea for how you would like to use your Action Cards at St. John's, please contact Pastor Cowell and he can help you with the application process.

HAPPENINGS AT ST. JOHN'S



Easter Egg Hunt

On Saturday, April 16, 2022, St. John's hosted an Easter egg hunt for the children of Burt and surrounding communities. The youth of St. John's hid the eggs outside around the church yard.

After the hunt we enjoyed refreshments in the St. John's basement and relief from the cold weather that morning! We also passed out Christian books and Bibles to any child who needed one. Around 50 kids and parents joined us for this fun event.

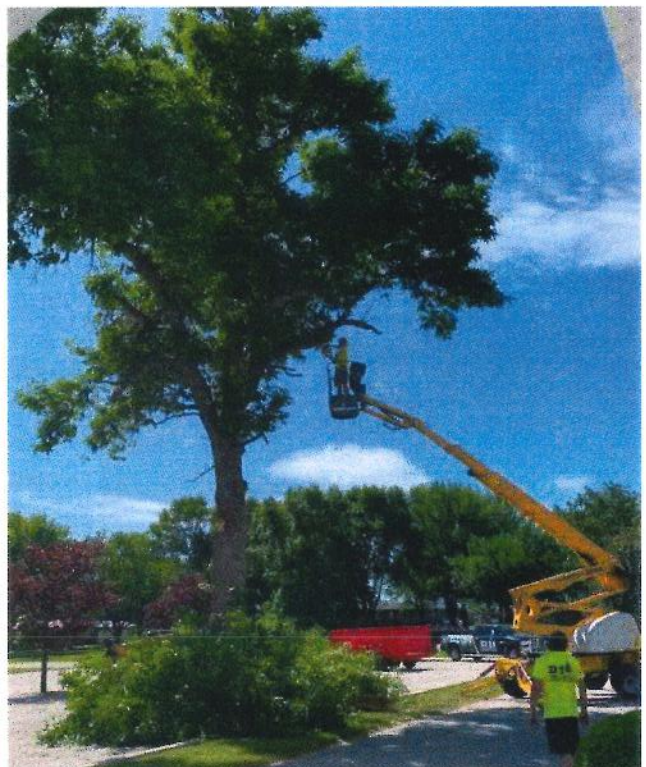
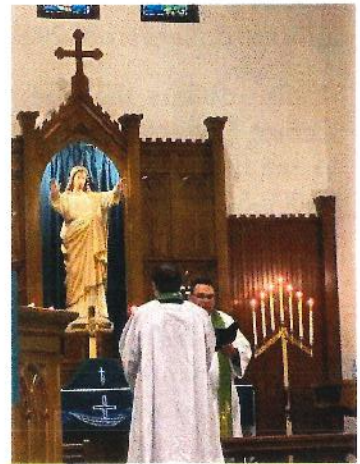
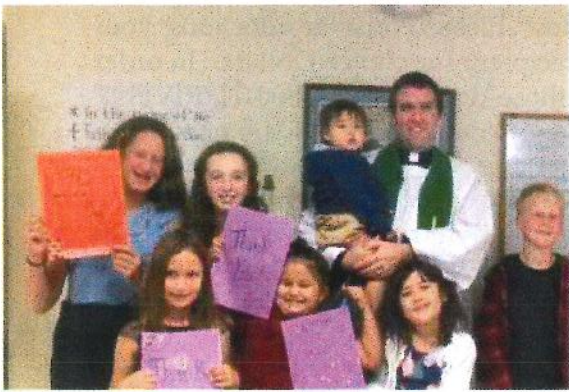
We thank all those who brought their children and grandchildren to celebrate the joy of the Risen Christ with us! We also thank Hannah Cowell for coordinating this event.

Alleluia! Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia

HAPPENINGS AT ST. JOHN'S



Fishing Day - December 28, 2022
Thank You Lucas Parsons for helping us fish and for cleaning all those 407 fish!!



GREETERS AND USHERS

January

- 1 Jerry and Betty Koestler
- 8 Lynn and Kitty Bierstedt
- 15 Al and Peggy Schadendorf
- 22 Boyd and Rosann Shipler
- 29 Dave and Linda Kerkove

February

- 5 Jerry and Betty Koestler
- 12 Mary Gifford
- 19 none
- 26 Terry and Vicki Briggs

March

- 5 Heine and Joan Peymann
- 12 Gordon and Mary Shipler-Oleson
- 19 Janice Reimers and Pam Reimers
- 26 Cheryl Batt

April

- 2 Tony and Stefanie Hatten Family
- 9 (Easter)
- 16 Ben and Beth Borchardt Family
- 23 Terry and Vicki Briggs
- 30 Al and Peggy Schadendorf

May

- 7 Barb Harms and Donna Haase
- 14 Ann Heyes
- 21 Hannah Cowell, Penny, Amelia, Magdalena
- 28 Lucas and Jesse Parsons Family

June

- 4 Darrel & Mary Schmidt
- 11 Harold Lavrenz
- 18 Terry and Vicki Briggs
- 25 Cheryl Batt

July

- 2 David and Lisa Haase
- 9 Donnie Madsen
- 16 Bud and Mary Lou Marlow
- 23 Al and Peggy Schadendorf
- 30 none

August

- 6 Boyd & Rosann Shipler
- 13 Shirlee Alt and Barb Thilges
- 20 Barb Schroeder and Steve Rahe
- 27 Jeff and Brenda Schutjer

September

- 3 Lynn & Kitty Bierstedt
- 10 Vern and Joan Koestler
- 17 Jesse and Kelly Fitzgerald Family
- 24 Kenna Hatten and Taylor Parsons

October

- 1 Darrel and Mary Schmidt
- 8 John and Karla Schutter
- 15 Barb Harms and Donna Haase
- 22 Joe and Tina Heyes & Rialyn
- 29 none

November

- 5 Terry and Vicki Briggs
- 12 Steve and Vicie Madsen
- 19 Al and Peggy Schadendorf
- 26 Larry Behnkendorf

December

- 3 Jeff and Brenda Schutjer
- 10 Jesse and Kelly Fitzgerald Family
- 17 Kitty and Lynn Bierstedt
- 24 Hannah Cowell, Penny, Amelia, Magdalena
- 31 Boyd and Rosann Shipler

ASSISTANT USHERS 2023

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------|
| January | Jerry Koestler |
| February | Boyd Shipler |
| March | Ben Bochart |
| April | Tony Hatten |
| May | David Haase |
| June | Terry Briggs |
| July | Steve Madsen |
| August | Jeff Schutjer |
| September | Larry Behnkendorf |
| October | Lynn Bierstedt |
| November | Randy Reimers |
| December | Joey Heyes |