

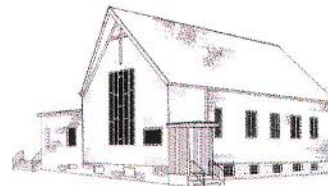
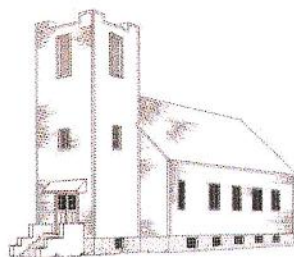
# ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

*Lutheran Church Missouri Synod*  
Burt, Iowa

## 2023 Annual Report



Burt, Iowa



# STATE OF THE CHURCH ADDRESS

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ at St. John's Lutheran Church

The grace of God, love of Christ, and power of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

It has been an exciting year of ministry at St. John's in 2023. I had the opportunity to be installed and begin serving as your pastor back in late June. Since then, there has been Rally Sunday, summer Family nights, Midweek education, Trunk 'r Treat, Children's Christmas program, and more! More important than the individual events however, is the truth that God's Word has continued to be taught and preached at our congregation. The Gospel of Jesus Christ continues to reach into your hearts and lives, forgiving sins. We also were blessed to gain the assistance of our Senior Vacancy Pastor Dave Simonson. I was especially pleased that we have been able to regularly offer Sunday morning Bible Study. Throughout my months with St. John's, I have been thoroughly impressed by your eagerness to serve and engage in God's word.

Entering into 2024, much of the direction for our congregations waits on the arrival of a new senior pastor. I encourage you to pray that God would continue to guide us and that His will would be done. In a way, Paul had an associate pastor of his own named Timothy. In 1 Timothy 4:13, Paul instructs him how he should proceed in his absence

Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching.

Let this be our goal and focus as well as we wait for the Lord to provide our senior pastor. Let us be devoted to Sunday morning worship, to encouragement in fellowship, and to the study of God's Word. I especially pray that the Lord would move more members of St. John's to attend Bible Study before worship on Sundays. Spending that time in God's Word with other Christians is a priceless treasure for your faith. Take advantage of the opportunities offered by the congregation throughout the year and especially during the busy Summer months.

As we confess in the Apostle's Creed, the Lord Jesus is himself seated at the right hand of the Father, guiding all things towards their completion. He certainly will continue to guide his people at St. John's in Burt in the year to come. The Gospel will continue to be shared on Sunday mornings, God's people will continue to turn to the Lord in prayer and praise, and we all continue to wait for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, the shepherd king of Israel forever.

Pray for your pastors and congregational leaders. Pray for your fellow members and those who have fallen away. Pray without ceasing.

But as for you, O man of God, flee [sinful desires]. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith.

Grace be with you! - 1 Timothy 6:11-12,21

**Pastor Briton Nelson - St. John's Lutheran Church, Burt, IA**

# FOR YOUR INFORMATION

## STAFF

### Pastor:

- Pastor's Office: **Rev. Briton Nelson**  
515-295-3518
- Email: [pastornelson@trinityalgona.org](mailto:pastornelson@trinityalgona.org)
- Cell phone: 608-415-8228
- Office Hours: Thursday or by appointment
- Interim Senior Pastor **Rev. Dave Simonson**
- Cell phone: 515-297-2046

### Office Manager/Secretary:

- Office Hours: **Rosann Shieler**  
Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
- Church Office: 515-924-3344
- Church email: [churchoffice@stjohnsburt.org](mailto:churchoffice@stjohnsburt.org)
- Church website: [www.stjohnsburt.org](http://www.stjohnsburt.org)

### Organist

Marcia Hanna

### Assistant Organist

Kitty Bierstedt

### Head Usher

John Schutter

### Communications

Lynn Bierstedt and Tony Hatten

### Janitor

Dick and Laura 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](http://stjohnsburt.org) web page to sign up.

OR

- Go to [stjohnsburt.org](http://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](https://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](http://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:

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

**Trinity Contact Information:** 520 N Garfield, Algona, Iowa 515-295-3518 [office@trinityalgona.org](mailto:office@trinityalgona.org)

## ST JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH - 2024 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	2024
Board Secretary	Stefanie Hatten	2yr	2025
Treasurer	Pam Reimers	2yr	2024
Financial Secretary	Dave Kerkove	2yr	2025
Elders	Jerry Koestler	3yr	2024
	Tony Hatten	3yr	2025
	Jeff Schutjer	3yr	2025
	Boyd Shipler	3yr	2026
Trustees	Randy Reimers	3yr	2024
	Steve Madsen	3yr	2025
	David Haase	3yr	2025
	Ben Borchardt	3yr	2026
Usher (1)	John Schutter Elder - Boyd Shipler		2025
Board of Finance	Dave Kerkove	1yr	2024
	Barb Schroeder	1yr	2024
	Don Madsen	1yr	2024
	Trustee - Randy Reimers		
Sunday Superintendent	Karla Schutter -Brenda Schutjer -Co Elder - Jeff Schutjer	3yr	2026
Board of Education	Barb Thilges	3yr	2026
	Stefanie Hatten	3yr	2026
	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	Steve & Vickie Madsen	2yr	2024
	Ben & Beth Borchardt	2yr	2024
	Joe & Tina Heyes	2yr	2025
	Lucas & Jessie Parsons	2yr	2025
	Trustee - Steve Madsen		
Audit Committee (3)	Barb Schroeder	1yr	
President Appoints Chairperson	Elder - Jerry Koestler		
	Trustee - Ben Borchardt		
Nomination Committee (4)	Lynn Bierstedt	1yr	
	Pastor Nelson		
	Elder - Jeff Schutjer		
	Trustee - Ben Borchardt		

# SCHEDULED CHURCH SERVICES - 2024

## REGULAR SUNDAY SERVICES

Adult Bible Study (All Year)	8:15	am
Sunday School (September-May)	8:30	am
Divine Service	9:30	am

## LENTEN, HOLY WEEK, & EASTER SERVICES

Ash Wednesday Divine Service February 14, 2024 - Burt	6:00	pm
Lenten Midweek Services at Trinity Wednesdays, Feb. 21, 28, March 6, 13, 20 - Burt	6:00	pm
Palm Sunday Divine Service March 24, 2024	9:30	am
Holy Thursday Divine Service March 28, 2024 - Burt	6:00	pm
Good Friday Service March 29, 2024 - Burt	6:00	pm
Easter Day Divine Service March 31, 2024	9:30	am
Easter Breakfast	TBD	

## THANKSGIVING, ADVENT, AND CHRISTMAS SERVICES

Thanksgiving Eve Prayer Service November 23, 2023	6:00	pm
Advent Midweek services December 1, 6, 13, 20	TBD	
Christmas Eve Children's Program December 24, 2024	5:00	pm
Christmas Day Divine Service December 25, 2024	9:30	am

## TUESDAY MORNING

- |   |     |
|---|-----|
| Every Thursday (except the 2 <sup>nd</sup> Tues. of the month Sep.-May) | TBD |
| • Not held now but to be continued at a later time.                     |     |

## PARTNERSHIP RALLY SUNDAY - August 27, 2024

11:00 am

## WEDNESDAY CATECHESIS - First Day - September 13, 2024

6:00 pm

## QUARTERLY COUNCIL MEETINGS

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

## VOTER'S MEETING

3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday of January, April, July, & October	10:30	am
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\* 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 Nelson any time with pastoral care requests.

# MEMBERSHIP ATTENDANCE

## 2022

193 Communicants  
36 Baptized Children  
229 Total Membership

## 2023

190 Communicants  
35 Baptized Children  
225 Total Membership

### SERVICE AVERAGE ATTENDANCE IN 2024

Average attendance at Sunday Services	52
Average attendance at Lenten Services	10 (Held at Trinity)
Average attendance at Adult Bible Study	9
Average attendance at Sunday School	8
Average attendance on Tuesday Mornings	3

### CHURCH ATTENDANCE AT REGULAR SUNDAY SERVICES

5 services in <i>January</i>	34-55-49-52-52
4 services in <i>February</i>	58-59-57-61
4 services in <i>March</i>	54-51-72-51
5 services in <i>April</i>	73-71-54-51-46
4 services in <i>May</i>	51-71-65-34
4 services in <i>June</i>	47-41-36-54
5 services in <i>July</i>	55-48-41-62-72
4 services in <i>August</i>	37-57-37-41
4 services in <i>September</i>	39-58-43-54
5 services in <i>October</i>	48-52-52-51-45
4 services in <i>November</i>	61-41-54-48
4 services in <i>December</i>	51-62-51-67-27

### SPECIAL SERVICES - 2023

Ash Wednesday	25
Lenten Services	Service held at Trinity
Maundy Thursday	39
Good Friday	37
Thanksgiving Eve	26
Advent Services	Services held at Trinity
Christmas Day	27
Christmas Eve	115

# MEMBERSHIP UPDATES

## BAPTISM

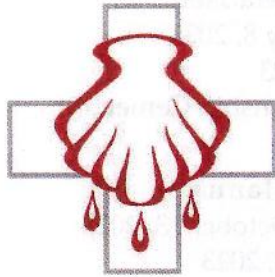
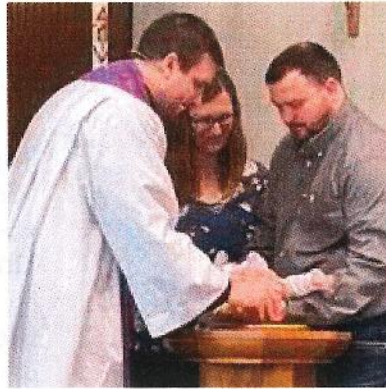
### Kayce Lee Smith

Born: December 23, 2022

Baptism: March 19, 2023

Parents: Alex and Kuleen Smith

Sponsors: Brent and Jodi Plathe  
Curt and Amy Brosh



### Bennett Jo Metzger

Born: May 24, 2023

Baptism: August 12, 2023

Parents: Brody and Hannah Metzger

Sponsor: Josh and Abbie Grimm

Officiant: Rev Russell Reimers

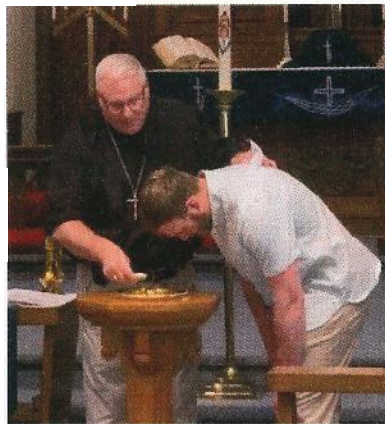


### Brody John Metzger

Born: December 29, 1994

Baptism: August 12, 2023

Officiant: Rev. Russell Reimers



## Adult Confirmation

April 26, 2023

Beth Borchardt

Carter Helmers

## Peaceful Release

January 2023

Alice Whilhemi

## Transfer In

November 2, 2023

Drew and Sierra Rasmussen  
Carter-B and Kendra-B



## FUNERALS

### Ruth D Nerem

April 1, 1922-January 18, 2023  
Service: January 21, 2023  
Interment: East Lawn Cemetery, Algona, Ia

### Patricia (Tish) Lavrenz

July 12, 1951-March 24, 2023  
Service: March 31, 2023  
Interment: Burt Township Cemetery

### Sheryl Ann Weaklend

September 4, 1938-April 8, 2023  
Service: April 15, 2023

### Alfred Whilhem Schadendorf Jr

January 19, 1939-September 26, 2023  
Service: October 2, 2023  
Interment: Fenton Township Cemetery

### Barb Meyer

July 20, 1937-February 17, 2023  
Service: February 25, 2023  
Inurnment: East Lawn Cemetery, Algona, Ia

### Roger Lee Lavrenz

September 13, 1944-March 29, 2023  
Service: April 11, 2023  
Inurnment: Burt Township Cemetery

### Merlin (Red) Jens Madsen

August 25, 1930-May 8, 2023  
Service: May 13, 2023  
Interment: Burt Township Cemetery

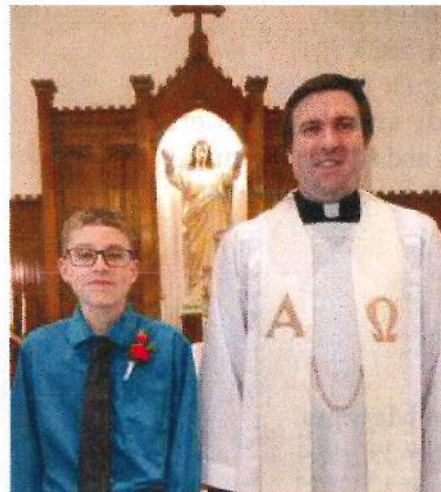
### Eugene "Gene" D Hanna

December 4, 1946-October 13, 2023  
Service: October 20, 2023  
Private Inurnment

## CONFIRMATION

### Caelum Matthew Blocker

Born: June 14, 2008  
Baptism: July 27, 2008  
Confirmation: May 21, 2023  
Parents: Michael and Doris Blocker  
Confirmation Verse: Isaiah 12:2  
*"Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid for the LORD GOD is my strength and my son, and he has become my salvation."*



### Kenna Rae Hatten

Born: July 22, 2009  
Baptism: August 16, 2009  
Confirmation: July 30, 2023  
Parents: Tony and Stefanie Hatten  
Confirmation Verse: Psalm 100:3  
*"Know that the Lord, He is God! It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people; and the sheep of his pasture."*



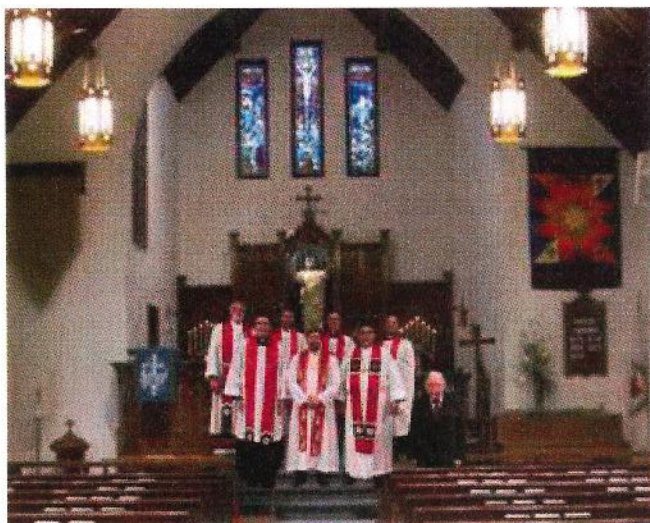
### Taylor Lynn Parsons

Born: June 8, 2010  
Baptism: July 18, 2010  
Confirmation: July 30, 2023  
Parents: Lucas and Jessica Parsons  
Confirmation Verse: Psalm 95:6-7  
*"O come let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the LORD our maker. For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand."*

## ORDINATION OF PASTOR BRITON NELSON to

### St. John's and Trinity Lutheran

On Sunday, July 25, 2023 Ordination Services and Installation Services for Pastor Briton Nelson was held at Trinity Lutheran Church at 4:00 p.m. A fellowship/meal was served following the Ordination in Trinity's Life Center.



### *Meet the Nelson Family!*

Briton Nelson was born September 30, 1996 and adopted into God's family through the waters of Holy Baptism on October 16, 1996. He grew up in Reedsburg, Wisconsin. After attending one year at Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota, he transferred to Wartburg College in Waverly, Iowa to study religion, graduating in 2019.

He then entered Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri and just graduated in May. While there, he served his vicarage at Messiah Lutheran Church in Clio, Michigan.

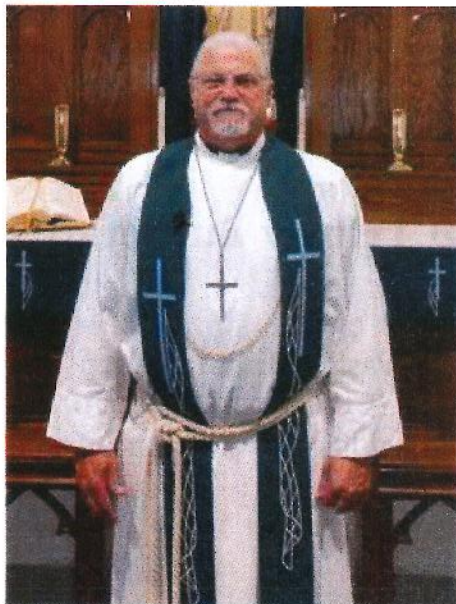
Briton met his wife Jade at the University of Northern Iowa while she was a freshman student there and he was starting his first year at Wartburg College. They married on June 6, 2020 at St. Peter's Lutheran Church in Reedsburg, Wisconsin. Their daughter Autumn was born in Saginaw, Michigan on December 15, 2021.

Briton's parents recently retired and moved to Cherokee, Iowa. Cinda (his mom) was an accountant and Jeff (his dad) worked for American Family Insurance. Briton's younger brother Mack just graduated from Marquette with a doctorate in Physical Therapy (DPT) and currently lives in Reedsburg, Wisconsin.

Jade has a degree in education from the University of Northern Iowa and taught middle school math last year at Word of Life Lutheran School in St. Louis. Her parents, Nick and Mechelle Carter, live in Marion, Iowa along with her younger sister Zoey. Jade's older sister Ariel lives in Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio.

Briton enjoy hiking, sports, and cooking. He and Jade are excited to take up gardening. They are very excited to be joining our church and community and look forward to meeting everyone soon!





## Vacancy Senior Pastor Dave Simonson

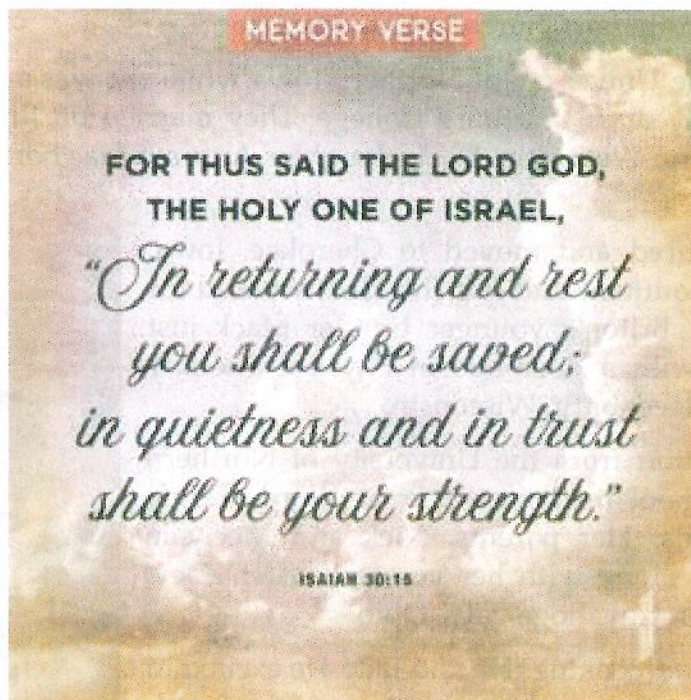
Pastor Dave Simonson was born and raised in southern Wisconsin. I attended Concordia College in St. Paul where God solidified my faith and pointed me to a life of service to His church. I taught 7th and 8th grade at Nativity Lutheran School in Detroit, Michigan. From Nativity God led me to the seminary in St. Louis. I Vicared at Mt. Olive Lutheran church in San Antonio. After completing my seminary training, I served as pastor at Our Savior Lutheran Church in Momence, Illinois.

In 1993 I was called to Trinity Lutheran in Jefferson, Iowa. While serving in Jefferson, our three children, Tara, Zech, and Hannah, grew and graduated from high school.

In 2010, my ministry path led me to the Intentional Interim Ministry. After serving St. Paul Webster City and St. John's Fento-n, I spent 9 years at Immanuel, Spirit Lake. In 2022 I retired from full time ministry. It is my hope to serve in vacancy or interim capacity as God provides. It has been pure joy to serve God's people at St. John's Burt and Trinity Algona.

We at St. John's are so grateful to have Pastor Dave here to help us through this vacancy and it has been a real pleasure to get to know him as he Preaches the Word to us on Sundays! Special thanks!

- Rev. Dave Simonson



# Farewell to Pastor Thomas and Hannah Cowell

## Penelope, Amelia, and Magdalena

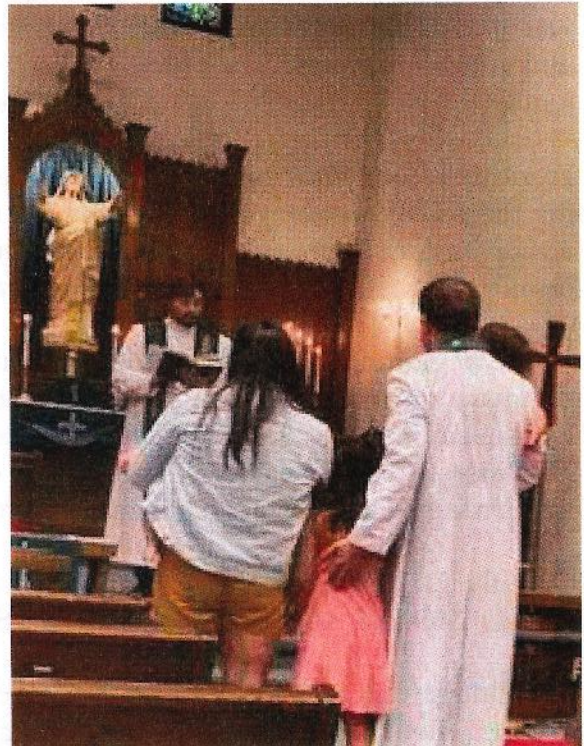
On Sunday, August 13, 2023 Pastor Cowell preached his last service to St. John's and Trinity. He accepted a Call to Christ Lutheran Church in Platte Woods, Missouri.

During his last service at St. John's, Pastor Briton Nelson commissioned him to transition to his new call.

Following the services both churches hosted a Farewell Reception for the Cowells at Trinity Life Center.

Pastor Cowell was called to St. John's from Fort Wayne Seminary 6 years ago and we thank him for his faithful service to us and leading us in His Word and love of our Lord and Savior. We also thank him for taking on the challenge of being the only Pastor called to help Trinity, Algona when their two pastors took calls. The last year was a challenging one for Pastor Cowell as he ministered to both churches as the only Pastor.

You always truly preached the Word in its truth and showed us love and compassion. You and Hannah, Penny, Amelia and Magdalena are truly missed!



# 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. Pastor Cowell was installed by District President, Steve Turner at Trinity and also installed at St. John's during the church service.

At the beginning of 2023 with the decision to submit an application to the seminaries to receive a seminary graduate as our associate pastor. In late April the assignments were made from the St. Louis Seminary. St. John's and Trinity received the placement of Seminary Pastor. Pastor Briton Nelson was placed as an associate pastor to both churches. On June 25, 2023 Pastor Briton Nelson was Ordained and Installed at both churches.

On July 8, 2023 Pastor Thomas Cowell accepted the call to Christ Lutheran Church in Platte Woods, MO and August 13th was his last Sunday.

The Elders from St. John's, Elders from Trinity, Pastor Briton Nelson. President Steven Turner met to discuss our next steps after the vacancy of Pastor Cowell. It was decided and both churches vote at a special Voter's Meetings on July 30th to call a Senior Pastor. The Elder's from both churches met on July 25 with both Financial people to discuss what we could do to help Pastor Nelson with both churches till a new Senior Pastor is called. Pastor Turner presented the name of Pastor Dave Simonson from Spirit Lake, Iowa who recently retired to serve as a vacancy pastor till we could have a Senior Pastor called and Installed. Pastor Dave Simonson has accepted the call to be Senior Pastor and began his work on August 20th. Nominations papers for congregation input were put out and returned to Pastor Turner and then a committee was formed to start the process of calling a Senior Pastor for both churches.

On Monday, September 11 the Call Committee from both churches met to begin the process of calling a Senior Pastor from a list that was accumulated from IDW President Steve Turner. Meeting several different times the committee recommended a Call Pastor and then Burt and Trinity held a congregational voting meeting at Trinity in October to discuss the candidates and with a unanimous vote it was decided to call Rev. Nicholas Thackery of Fort Dodge. After deliberation Pastor Thackery declined the call!

A new list was compiled by President Turner and our first meeting to receive the new sets of Pastors on the list was given out. On January 2, 2024 a meeting was held to review these sets and names were picked to interview these candidates. The committee met the following week to interview 3 of the candidates that they had decided on. A Voter's Meeting will be held to vote to place a call on January 28.

*- President Jeff Schutjer*

*- Elders: Boyd Shipler, Jerry Koestler and Tony Hatten*

## CRADLE ROLL



This year **Kayce Lee Smith and Bennett Jo Metzger** received the gift of Holy Baptism at St. John's. Others on our cradle rolls are: **Noah Fox, Jones Christensen, 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*



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 Hannah Cowell for serving on the altar guild for the last few years.

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, Betty Koestler, Shirlee Alt, Stefanie Hatten and Lisa Haase.**

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 library 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

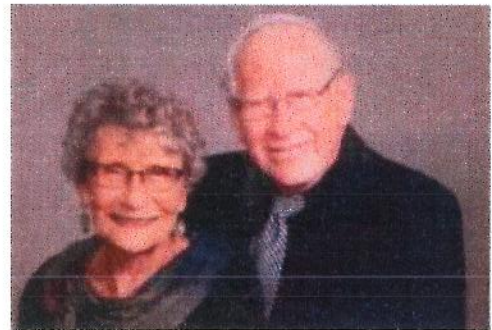
Other Subjects:

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!

A new book was given to the Church Library by Mary Schmidt. This book was given to her by Rev. Henry Friedrich who wrote the book and had it published.

## **"Our Life, Our Love, Our Labor"** Rev. Henry Friedrich



This beautifully written book was written by 95 year old Rev. Henry Friedrich about the life he and his wife Evelyn (Meyer) Friedrich as they began their life in Christ. Both of them were baptized into Christ and attended country schools in their respected areas and later met to begin this journey! Evelyn was born and raised in the Fenton and Burt Lutheran Churches. The pages of the book detailed their life, their love, and their labor for the 67 plus years God granted them to live together. Much of what is written is an account of the ministry carried out at the locations, in the congregations where God called them to serve.

*"Evee's account was lost through electronics, and the summary is based on what was remembered from Evee's entertaining of the children in the various vacation trips taken by auto over the years." - Son Brian*

This is an amazing book of their life together and their time preaching the Word to all his congregations and living that life of God through the people he has met and his work in the church.

To this day even as Evelyn passed on November 27, 2022 Henry resides at Homestead Asst. Living in Algona and is the Chaplin at the center, leading Bible Study, Reading of the Portal of Prayers and being an inspiration to the residents there. God has truly blessed Henry and all of us who have known him for so many years!! - *written by Rosann Shipler*

*Mary Steven and Deb Steven, Librarians*

# SUNDAY SCHOOL

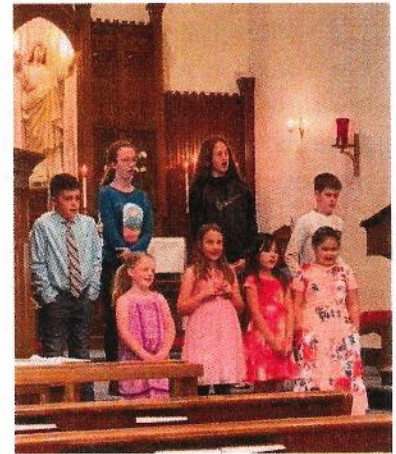
Sunday School began this year building on what we have been doing for the past several years and that is teaching and reading the scriptures. Pastor Nelson has been instrumental in putting together the curriculum in age appropriate lessons for us. This has helped the teachers be able to spend more time reading, preparing and teaching rather than modifying curriculum for the different ages.

Our year began with the Fall of Jericho. As we dug deeper into the Old Testament, we learned about God sending prophets to His people, Israel. Prophets like Gideon, Samson and Samuel, told the people what God wanted them to know. Just like today, those messages were not always what the people wanted to hear but rather what God knew they needed to hear.

As we read, we learned how the people rejected God and demanded a king to rule them, just like all the other nations. We learned how Saul was made King over all of Israel and David was the next anointed king. The Bible tells us that David was a "man after God's own heart." God promised David that his kingdom would never end. Those promises extend far beyond David and far beyond Israel. Indeed, God kept that promise through the sending of His son, Jesus as a baby. Born in the City of David, Jesus is the King of Kings. So the promise for David is a promise for us - Christ's Kingdom will never end!

As we look forward to our Spring Sunday School schedule, we anticipate the Bible stories of Jesus and his earthly ministry. We will be learning about his Temptation in the wilderness, his miracles, the parables he taught as well as the Lord's Supper, his crucifixion and his resurrection.

- St. John's Board of Education



The Sunday school students would like to thank Lavonne Boderius for her generous donation to our Sunday School. With this gift, along with our Sunday school offering since September, we were able to purchase 2 goats, 1 hen and 6 chicks for Lutheran World Relief!

## OUR DEDICATED STAFF



Kindergarten - 1<sup>st</sup> Grade

2<sup>nd</sup> Grade - 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade

4<sup>th</sup> Grade - 6<sup>th</sup> Grade

7<sup>th</sup> Grade - 8<sup>th</sup> Grade

Board of Education

Jessica Parsons

Karla Schutter

Lisa Haase

Stefanie Hatten

Brenda Schutjer, Barbara Thilges,

Stefanie Hatten, Karla Schutter

*"So shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it." Isaiah 5:11*

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



# 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 Nelson and Simonson 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.

## Midweek Service Project

On Wednesday December 20, 2023 the St. John's Lutheran Religion School children met at 6 p.m. in the church basement. They made bags for the Care team that contained: socks, soap, deodorant, a razor, toothpaste, shampoo and conditioner. They had enough supplies to make 25 kits for the local Care team

Also that evening the children make 15 plates of goodies for the shut-in members at church. The trays were then split up and delivered to the shut-ins by the children.

We also helped the Christmas Committee fill bags of M & M's that was given out after the children's Christmas Eve. program

Kelly Fitzgerald and Jessie Parsons did the shopping for the supplies and the funds were provided by an Action Card from Thrivent that was applied for by Darrel Schmidt.



# ST. JOHN'S FAMILY VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL



Our Vacation Bible School for 2023 was once again extended to the entire St. John's family! In June, we went fishing at Smith Lake during Iowa's free fishing weekend. Lucas & Ryder Parsons made sure everyone had fishing poles and enough bait to last all afternoon!

Pastor Cowell brought us a fishing/water message from the Bible. This year we turned to Exodus and learned how God turned the water of the Nile into blood and all the fish died. This was after Pharaoh would not let the Israelites go. Each e age. judgment that God delivered upon the Egyptians was in direct correlation to one of the many gods the Egyptians worshiped. This is in stark contrast to what God allowed Ezekiel to see when He said to him, "And wherever the river goes, every living creature that swarms will live, and there will be very many fish." Ez 47:9a. We learned that God's river is flowing with abundant life even to the end of th



July took us to the Bancroft pool for an afternoon of family fun and swimming. We had a picnic in the park and Pastor Cowell led us in another timely Bible lesson about water. Just as water is refreshing for our bodies, God's Word is refreshing for our souls. We were reminded that the habit of daily Bible reading will nourish us in countless ways.



Pastor Nelson combined our August St. John's family potluck picnic with a meeting for our Sunday school and Midweek families. He was able to convey some of his ideas for our Sunday school and Midweek classes before we started with our new year. After the meeting, everyone was able to participate in some outdoor games on the lawn!

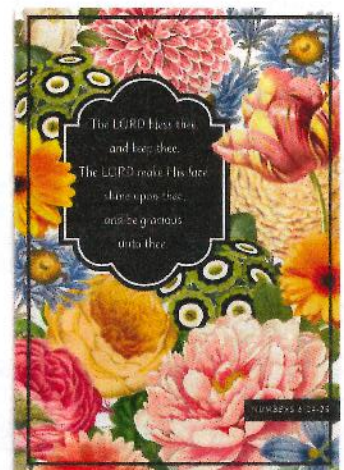


## Christian Cards

We have boxed cards and individual cards for you to purchase. If you wish to purchase a box of cards they are available in the Ushers closet. All individual cards are 50 cents and the boxed cards are marked. Please use the marked envelope for your purchase that is available in the card rack and leave it in the church office.

Monies given are being used to purchase more cards as needed!

- Rosann Shipler, coordinator



# CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

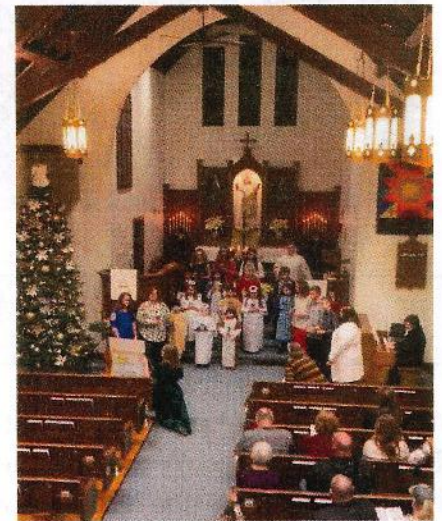
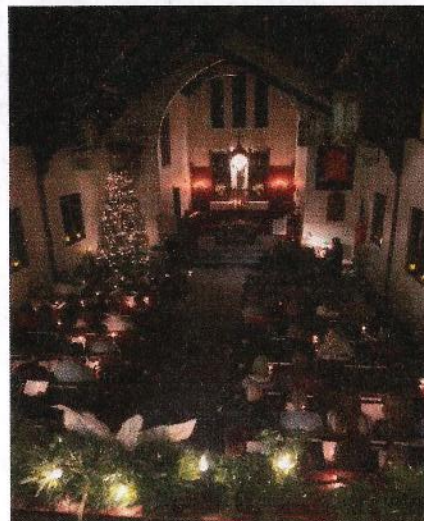
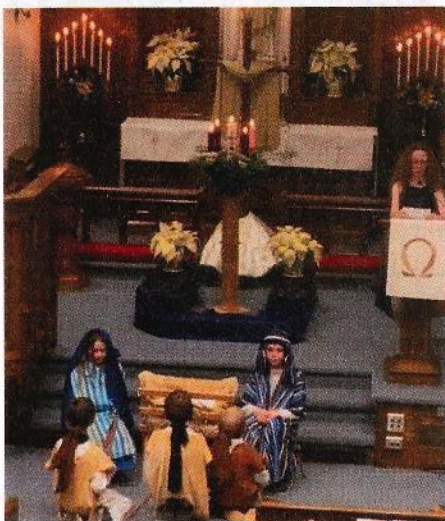
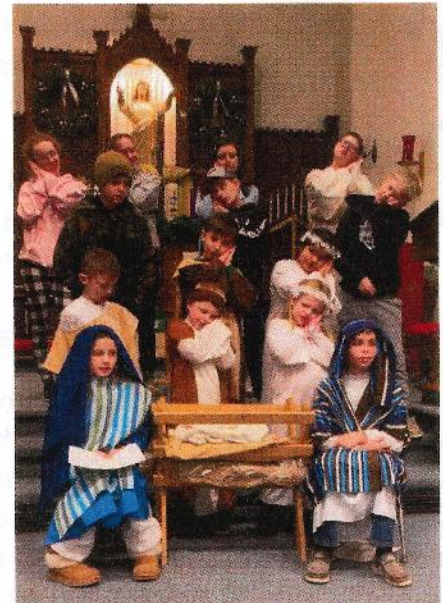
The students of St. John's were able to share with us all the Christmas Story once again on Christmas Eve. Seventeen students from Kindergarten through High School brought us the message of the long awaited Messiah being born in Bethlehem. Our program was *King of Kings* and it told of the true nature of the baby lying in the cradle - He was God. Leaving his throne in Heaven, he became one of us to take on flesh and bear our sins.

*On this the Nativity of our Lord, we sing praise to the one of blessed birth  
With a joy that extends past common words, to God Himself, made man to  
dwell on earth.*

It was the Wisemen who first noticed his birth was royal and they came looking for the King of the Jews in a palace in Jerusalem. The star shone where the child was and they went to Bethlehem and brought him gifts worthy of a King - gold, frankincense and myrrh.

*To think, the one who first ruled from on high would for us be made so humble and low. Not just in a manger, but on  
a cross to die so that grace and truth may to all be known.*

Christ is on his throne today, ruling as he always has. But we sing *Joy to the World!* Because Jesus Christ will come again as *King of Kings!*



Thank you to all who helped with the Christmas program this year! A special thank you to Sierra Rasmussen for leading the bell choir. Thank you to Kitty Bierstedt who played the piano for us. We appreciate the choir providing special music for us. Thank you to the Sunday school teachers along with Tina Heyes for helping with the practices. It is a joy to work together to share the message of Christ's birth!

*Therefore make heard now the good and glad sound: Christ Jesus is born in whom all life is found! To Christ alone be  
all glory and praise; to Him forever do our voices raise!*



# CHURCHES OF BURT TRUNK OR TREAT



On Tuesday, October 31, 2023 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. The cold weather did not spoil our fun for the kids and parents of the community.

We had only 5 trunk cars that braved the frigid weather. St. John's was in charge of the lunch for the evening and Jessie Parsons headed up the event. We served hot dogs, chips, bars and a drink. The Presbyterian Church was so gracious as hosts to let us serve inside the church entrance where it was warmer. That allowed the families to eat inside also.

A special thank you to all who hosted a trunk; Shirlee Alt, Walt Reesma, Barb Bauer and Karly Reutzel and Jesse Waltman for handing out candy and popcorn outside. Also, special thanks to the Kossuth County Sheriff Dept. for coming, the Burt Fireman for bringing the fire truck and Amanda Heyes who gave out decorated cookies at the truck. Ann Heyes and Rosann Shipler helped serve the lunch. Big thanks to those who made bars/cookies for the evening!!



# EASTER EGG HUNT

On Saturday, April 8, 2023 St. John's invited the Community and surrounding areas of Burt to a Easter Egg Hunt. We thank the Burt Library Coloring group for filling all the eggs and the youth for hiding them. After the hunt we enjoyed refreshments in the St. John's basement. 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!

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



# MISSION BOARD

The Mission Board held our Rally Day Picnic on Sunday, August 27, 2023, at 11:30 a.m. It was held on the shore of Smith Lake. A brief service was held in which Pastor Nelson gave a short sermon. Pastor Nelson installed the Sunday School teachers from both St. John's and Trinity and presented the 3rd grade students with their Bibles and Catechisms. He also blessed the students' backpacks for the upcoming school year.

St. John's was responsible for bringing the meat, buns and condiments. Trinity was responsible for the sides: baked beans, potato salad, chips and drinks. Each family attending the rally brought a pan of bars or cookies to serve for dessert. Wendell Jr. and Teresa Christensen BBQ'd the pork patties and hot dogs. Snow cones from our machine were made available, too.

This year volunteers picked up trash along the section of HWY 169 that is sponsored by Trinity and St. John's.

St. John's also assisted Trinity with the Shrove Tuesday meal and Pastor Cowell's going away dinner.

A special thanks, again, to Deb and Mary Stevens and Doris Blocker for organizing and delivering the gifts for our adopted Family of 8 at Christmas.



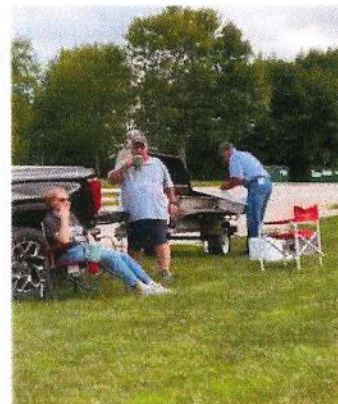
Sincerely, The Mission Board

**Lynn Bierstedt, Clark Christensen, Elder: Jerry Koestler, Usher: Jon Schutter and Pastor Nelson**



**Rev. Briton Nelson leading service at Rally Day**

**Reyna Fitzgerald**  
receiving her  
Bible and Catechism



# 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, Lisa Haase or Cheryl Batt* 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.

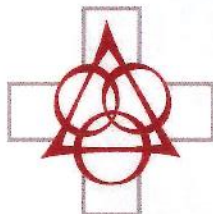
#### Meal Choices:

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.

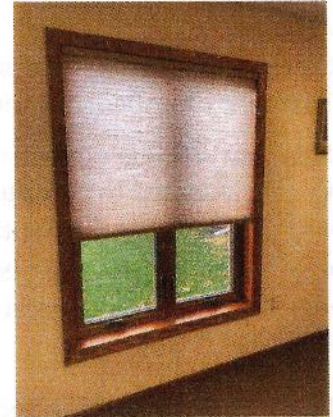
Funerals that we served and helped serve this year were: **Ruth Nerem, Barb Meyer, Tish Lavrenz, Roger Lavrenz, Merlin "Red" Madsen, Alfred Schadendorf, and Eugene "Gene" Hanna.**



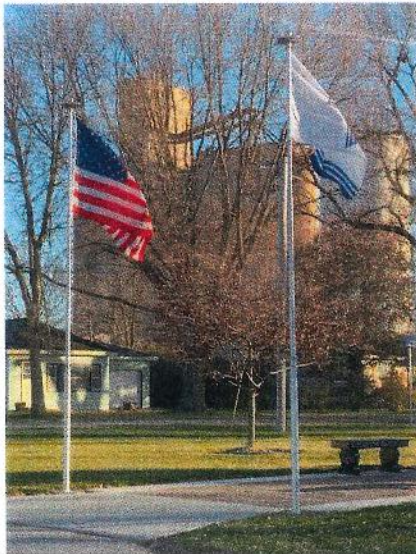
# HAPPENINGS AT ST. JOHN'S

## Dedication of New Windows and Flag Poles

**Window Project** - Due to problems with the windows in the new addition it was decided that they should be replaced. So in September the Anderson Renewal Company installed 15 new windows. When the windows were completed there was enough money available so window blinds were purchased for the Offices, balcony, conference room upstairs and Sunday School rooms. A donation was given to also put the blinds in the triple windows in the balcony.

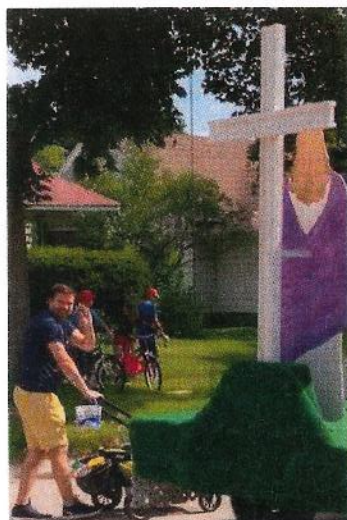


Memorial money from **Eugene (Bucky) and Lorraine Drager** memorials was used along with donations from the church members. These windows will beautify our church for many years to come.

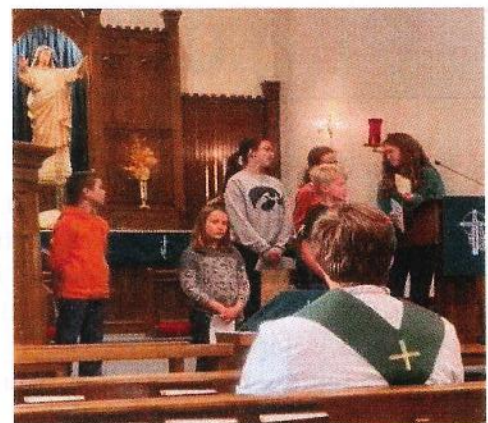


A **dedication** was held for the 2 flag poles located east of the church at the entrance of the centennial rock sitting area that were given in memory of **Merlin (Red) Madsen** by his family. The 2 flags flying are a reminder to the family that Red served his country and his Lord. The poles were purchased and installed by the Noon Kiwanis group from Algona. This is a two-fold memorial as the donation received for this project is used to help children in our area with projects like providing bicycle helmets, dictionaries for 3rd graders in local school districts, fishing derby, youth events at the YMCA and much more.

A New Crab Apple Tree was planted in Memory of Red Madsen by Boyd and Rosann Shipler in the area by the Flag Poles.



Pastor Cowell - Burt Day Parade



Pastor Appreciation - Pastor Nelson

In December 2022 Lucas Parsons took a group of youth and parents Ice Fishing and on January 20, 2023 they held a Fish Fry for all to enjoy!!



# 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, 2024 to allocate dollars from 2023.

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 Darrel Schmidt and he can help you with the application process.

# LUTHERANS IN AFRICA

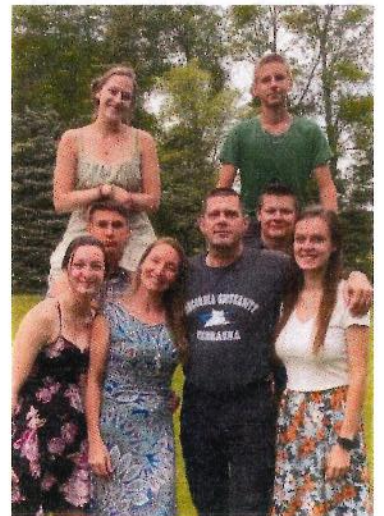
St. John continues to support Pastor May and his work in Africa as our Mission Giving. There are millions of Lutheans in Africa. There are more Lutherans in the country of Ethiopia than there are in the entire United States.

Pastor James May founded Lutherans in Africa in 2010 and started teaching Lutheran doctrine to Lutherans in Africa at that time.

Ever since LIA 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.

From the beginning LIA's staff is growing, thanks to all the gifts from you. We have been able to purchase a larger piece of land that will allow us to build a new Lutheran School of Theology that will not only be the home base for our missionaries to serve from but will include classrooms and dormitories for students to come for training. Keep us in your prayers as we continue to spread the word to all those in Africa.

*James May Family, Missionary to Nairobi, Kenya*



# GREETERS AND USHERS

If you can not Greet on your given assigned Sunday, feel free to switch with someone and be sure to let the church office know!!!

## January

- 7 Barb Harms and Donna Haase
- 14 Lynn and Kitty Bierstedt
- 21 Dave and Linda Kerkove
- 28 Jerry and Betty Koestler

## February

- 4 Jesse and Kelly Fitzgerald Family
- 11 Cheryl Batt
- 18 Gordon and Mary Shipler-Olson
- 25 Larry Behnkendorf

## March

- 3 Ben and Beth Borchardt
- 10 Carter and Maci Marlow
- 17 Jeff and Brenda Schutjer
- 24 Tony and Stefanie Hatten
- 31 Easter

## April

- 7 Tony and Stefanie Hatten
- 14 Terry and Vicki Briggs
- 21 Rolland and Joan Peymann
- 28 Bud and Mary Lou Marlow

## May

- 5 Terry and Vicki Briggs
- 12 Eric and Amber Thomas Family
- 19 Terry and Wanda Tieman
- 26 John and Karla Schutter

## June

- 2 Darrel and Mary Schmidt
- 9 Harold Lavrenz
- 16 Drew and Serria Rasmussen
- 23 Craig and Debra Steven
- 30 Boyd and Rosann Shipler

## July

- 7 David and Lisa Haase
- 14 Donnie Madsen
- 21 Peggy Schadendorf
- 28 Lucas and Jesse Parsons Family

## August

- 4 none
- 11 Shirlee Alt and Barb Thilges
- 18 Barb Schroeder and Steve Rahe
- 25 Terry and Vicki Briggs

## September

- 1 Lynn & Kitty Bierstedt
- 8 Joe and Tina Heyes & Rialyn
- 15 Doris and Michael Blocker and Caleum
- 22 Kenna Hatten and Taylor Parsons
- 29 Peggy Schadendorf

## October

- 6 Darrel and Mary Schmidt
- 13 John and Karla Schutter
- 20 Barb Harms and Donna Haase
- 27 Janice and Pam Reimers

## November

- 3 Steve and Vickie Madsen
- 10 Jerry and Betty Koestler
- 17 Jeff and Brenda Schutjer
- 24 Larry Behnkendorf

## December

- 1 Drew and Serria Rasmussen
- 8 Jesse and Kelly Fitzgerald Family
- 15 David and Lisa Haase
- 22 Joe and Tina Heyes and Rialyn
- 29 Boyd and Rosann Shipler

## ASSISTANT USHERS 2024

- January Ben Borchardt
- February Boyd Shipler
- March Terry Briggs
- April Tony Hatten
- May David Haase
- June Drew Rasmussen
- July Steve Madsen
- August Jeff Schutjer
- September Larry Behnkendorf
- October Lynn Bierstedt
- November Randy Reimers
- December Joe Heyes

