



The Informer

November 2023

St. John's Lutheran Church

Volume 67 Issue 11



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From Pastor's Pen:

"Is not my word like fire, declares the LORD,
and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?" (Jer 23:29)

Dearly Beloved,

I realize that you may be expecting the usual November – *Let's count our blessings and be grateful* - epistle. I am sorry to disappoint, but there is something that is weighing heavy on my heart, and I wish to unburden it.

The goal of faithful ministry is supposed to be offering people a good conscience before God. Unfortunately, I feel that I have failed in this task. You see, offering people a good conscience before God, is not the same as telling people what they want to hear to make them feel good about themselves. I fear that I have done too much to deaden and weaken consciences, rather than awakening and strengthening godliness. Truthfully, you do not need me to help you with that.

We live in a time and among a people who are very good at giving us things to weaken our consciences. Rather than inspiring us to seek a good conscience before God we are programmed to strive for the approval of others even when it means acting contrary to God's will or speaking against His Word. The result is that instead of turning to God's commandments to inform and awaken our conscience, we establish our own criteria for judging ourselves – criteria which is often very generous. When we sin we do not turn to Christ in true repentance for forgiveness and seek to amend our wicked ways, but use the Gospel as an excuse to go on sinning. The easiest way to deaden and weaken our conscience before God is to stay away from His Word, which far too many of the sheep who have been placed under my care are doing.

Setting aside worship and God's Word makes it much easier to establish our own rules, call ourselves "good", and live with an untroubled conscience. The problem is that it leaves us with a bad and unclean conscience before God.

The prophet Jeremiah, speaking to people whose consciences had been deadened and weakened writes, "Is not my word like fire, declares the LORD, and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?"

For those of you who have gone camping, you know how important a fire is at night. On a cold night it keeps you warm. In the dark it gives light. The smoke chases off the bugs. You can grill hot dogs and marshmallows with it. You can purify water with it. It keeps animals away. And it's also fun just to sit and look at it. It's a very powerful tool. God said, that's what my word is like! A fire! It's powerful - it can penetrate your stony soul! It can warm up your cold heart! It can purify you! It can give you light in this dark world! It can distinguish the truth from error! It can feed you and purify you! It can drive away the prowling lion who seeking to devour you!

Luther said, "If you take the Word away it is like taking the sun away from the earth. If the Word were removed, what would the world be but a hell and a mere realm of Satan, though people of wealth, lawyers, doctors, etc., dwelt in it? For only the Word keeps a joyful conscience, a gracious God, and all of religion, since out of the Word, as from a spring, flows our entire religion."

As your pastor I ask your forgiveness for being "nice" to the point that I may have led to the deadening and weakening of your consciences. I say, "enough of that! Back to God's Word!" I call you to return to the Word in personal devotions, Bible study and worship so that you may truly recognize your sin before God, be Spirit led to confess that sin and ask for forgiveness. Then, you will surely find in Jesus Christ a good conscience before God.

In Christ' service,

Pastor Umbarger

Notes from the Balcony

Thanksgiving Hymn Challenge

The Lutheran Service Book includes four Thanksgiving hymns. One, LSB 895 *Now Thank We All Our God*, is a favorite hymn of one of our members. The other hymns in our hymnal are: #892 *Come, Ye Thankful People, Come*, #893 *Sing to the Lord of Harvest*, and #894 *For the Fruits of His Creation*. Can you match the following description with these hymns?

1. Rev. Fred Pratt Green (1903-2000), an English Methodist minister, wrote this hymn in 1970. Other hymns written by Green found in our hymnal are *When in Our Music God is Glorified* and *How Clear Is Our Vocation Lord*. Green's written works include plays, collections of poetry, and over 300 hymns. The first stanza of this Thanksgiving hymn thanks God the Father for His work and care of creation. In the second, we follow Christ's example of caring for others. The third stanza proclaims thankfulness for the work of the Spirit.
2. The Irish Anglican chaplain and rector, John S. B. Monsell (1811-1875), wrote this hymn. After serving in Ireland until 1853, he was transferred to England. His death resulted from a fall from the roof of a church under construction. In addition to writing about 300 hymns, Monsell also published eleven volumes of poetry. LSB 664, *Fight the Good Fight*, was also written by Monsell. His Thanksgiving hymn in our hymnal was first published in Monsell's *Hymns of Love and Praise for the Church's Year*. Of these hymns, he wrote, "[These hymns] are practical, not theoretical; not the cold musings of the head of one at ease; but the warm gushings of the heart." Monsell referred to Jeremiah 5:24, "Let us fear the LORD our God, who gives the rain in season, the autumn rain and the spring rain, and keeps for us the weeks appointed for the harvest" in regard to this hymn.
3. This hymn was written by Henry Alford (1810-1871). The fifth generation of English clergymen in his family, he was raised by his father as his mother died giving birth to Henry. An early scholar, by the age of eight, had written a collection of Latin odes. He was known as a poet, preacher, painter, musician, and writer. His greatest written work was a four-volume commentary on the Greek New Testament which took him twenty years to write. His determination to persevere in his task is attested to by an incident where after having been thrown from his horse on the way to a lecture, although wearing bandages and noticeably shaken, he arrived on time and completed his task. The Thanksgiving hymn in our hymnal was written for a rural church to be sung during a harvest celebration. This hymn invites the singers to join in thanksgiving to God, recounts the parable of the wheat and tares, and closes by inviting the Lord to begin the final harvest.
4. Martin Rinckart (1586-1649) was born in Germany and was the son of a cooper. Martin held Lutheran pastoral positions and eventually served as an archdeacon. During this time, the Thirty Years War caused great hardship to his city including a plague that killed over eight thousand people including Rinckart's wife. In one year, as the only pastor left, he officiated four thousand funerals, with as many as fifty in one day. A famine followed the plague and Rinckart organized help for the hungry people including contributing out of his own funds. In spite of terrible hardship, Martin wrote this hymn as a mealtime prayer for his family. His three-stanza hymn thanks God for his wondrous and bountiful blessings both now and in eternity.

Answers on page 6 of the Informer.

I am thankful for all of you this Thanksgiving as well as God's gift of music I am blessed to share with you.

Happy Thanksgiving,
Christine Engebrecht



Serving the Lord this Month

Ushers

Sat, Nov 4: Greg Burke, Chuck Brokaw, Todd Miller, Rick Newlon, & Larry Ripka
Sun, Nov 5: Evan Antolik & family
Sat, Nov 11: Greg Burke, Chuck Brokaw, Todd Miller, Rick Newlon, & Larry Ripka
Sun, Nov 12: Evan Antolik & family
Sat, Nov. 18: Greg Burke, Chuck Brokaw, Todd Miller, Rick Newlon, & Larry Ripka
Sun, Nov. 19: Evan Antolik & family
Thanksgiving Eve: Greg Burke, Chuck Brokaw, Todd Miller, Rick Newlon, & Larry Ripka
Sat, Nov 25: Greg Burke, Chuck Brokaw, Todd Miller, Rick Newlon, & Larry Ripka
Sun, Nov 26: Evan Antolik & family

Acolytes

Sun, Nov 5: Brayden Medinger
Sun, Nov 12: Lydia Merritt
Sun, Nov 19: Alice Schmidt
Thanksgiving Eve:
Sun, Nov 26: Joel Duffy



Greeters

Sat, Nov 4: JoAnn Sager
Sun, Nov 5: Marsha Boarts & Larry Dodge
Sat, Nov 11: JoAnn Sager
Sun, Nov 12: Marsha Boarts & Larry Dodge
Sat, Nov 18:
Sun, Nov 19: Marsha Boarts & Larry Dodge
Thanksgiving Eve:
Sat, Nov 25:
Sun, Nov 26: Marsha Boarts & Larry Dodge

Communion Assistants

Nov. 5: Kevin McAnally & Jonathan Schmidt
Nov. 19: Dennis Boarts & Glen McMillin
Thanksgiving Eve:
 Ralph Grotelueschen

Altar Guild

Margie Schaefer
 and Flo Moore

Eternal Candle

Nov. 5: Karen Schmidt
Nov. 12: Gail Massey, in memory of Diane McAnally
Nov. 19: Dennis & Marsha Boarts, in honor of their anniversary
Nov. 26: Kevin & Wendy Rossmiller, in honor of their 27th anniversary



Flowers

Nov. 5: Karen Schmidt
Nov. 12: Sharon DeWulf
Nov. 19: JoAnn Sager, in memory of Gary
Nov. 26: Dennis & Marsha Boarts, in honor of their anniversary



Church News

Birthdays

Nov. 1— Jessica Dobbeleare
Nov 3— Gabriel Hart, Angela Fischer
Nov 4 — Nancy Krack, Karen Anderson
Nov 5 — Craig Clough, Noah Cobb, Nancy Davis, & Rylee Sherwood
Nov 6 — Sydney Heller & Norma Grotelueschen
Nov 7 - Jacob McMillin
Nov 8 — Denise Rogers & Donald Cass
Nov 10 —Jackie Wilson
Nov 11 — Jordan Fischer
Nov 14 - Gibson Cockerill & Robert Myers

Nov 15 — Alyssa Hartweg & James Vrbn
Nov 16 — Ashley Buck, Elliot Nickens & Maxwell Park
Nov 18— Marsha Boarts, Tatum Harford, Carole Hodshire, & Diane Ransom
Nov 19— George Aukee
Nov 20 — Ken Hill
Nov 21 — Pete Schaefer
Nov 22 — Zoey Bull, Jill Ryan & Lorin Soyke
Nov 23— Kyle Kern
Nov 25 — Dennis Boarts, Charlie Britton, Harvey Lampe & JoAnn Sager
Nov 26— Diane Kosche & Veronica McKay



Nov 27— Ingrid Hodshire, Hannah Rossmiller, Shirley Schlotfeldt & Kay Trask
Nov 28 — Bill Green

Weekly Attendance

<u>DATE</u>	<u>THIS YEAR</u>	<u>LAST YEAR</u>
10/1	98	150
10/8	132	133
10/15	136	137
10/22	133	119

Membership Report

Transfer Out:

Katie Aiello and family (10/05/23)
Trinity Fort Wayne

Address Update:

Don, Wanda, and Jason Cass
4502 Elmore Ave. 111
Davenport, IA 52807
(563) 200-1014



Join us on Wednesday,
 November 22nd at 6:30pm for
 Thanksgiving worship with
 communion.

Church News

Special Voter's Meeting

On Sunday November 12th at ~ 10:30am there will be a special SJLC Voters meeting. The meeting will discuss replacing a portion of the church roof in 2024. The meeting will discuss the plan, the roofers' bid and vote on the proposal. The church has a limited timeframe to approve the bid in order to get a slot on the roofers' 2024 schedule. Please make plans to attend the voters meeting in the Jansen room.

Nominating Committee

There will be a meeting on Thursday, November 9th at 6:30pm to discuss the slates for the 2024 boards.

Food Pantry Thanksgiving Baskets

Sunday, November 12th is the deadline for Thanksgiving basket nominations. If you know of a family who would be blessed to receive a basket, please fill out the slip below and return it to the church office. Baskets will be ready for you to take on Sunday, November 19th, if you would like to take it with you after church. Carrie will be at church on Monday, November 20th, 10:00am-noon for pick ups also. Questions may be directed to Carrie Homann, 309-523-3330



Thanksgiving Baskets

This year, we will only be asking for donations of hams and turkeys.

Name of member: _____

Name of nominated family: _____

Size of household: _____

Nominated family will pick up _____ Church member will deliver _____

(If the nominated family will be picking it up, please provide contact info so Carrie knows who she is expecting, and can contact them if needed)

Phone number for nominated family: _____

**PLEASE PRINT ALL INFORMATION.
RETURN TO THE CHURCH OFFICE BY SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 12th**

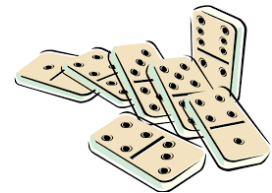
Church News

Youth Lock-Up

There is a lock-up planned for Friday, November 10th from 7-11pm. Invite your friends and come have some fun! We will provide the drinks and you can bring a snack to share. For our service project, we will be collecting items for Thanksgiving food baskets. A letter with the items we are asking for will be sent to all families of youths. The list is also posted on the bulletin board in the Education hallway.



Activities Room
Opening Soon!
Mondays & Wednesdays
2-4pm
Starting November 6th

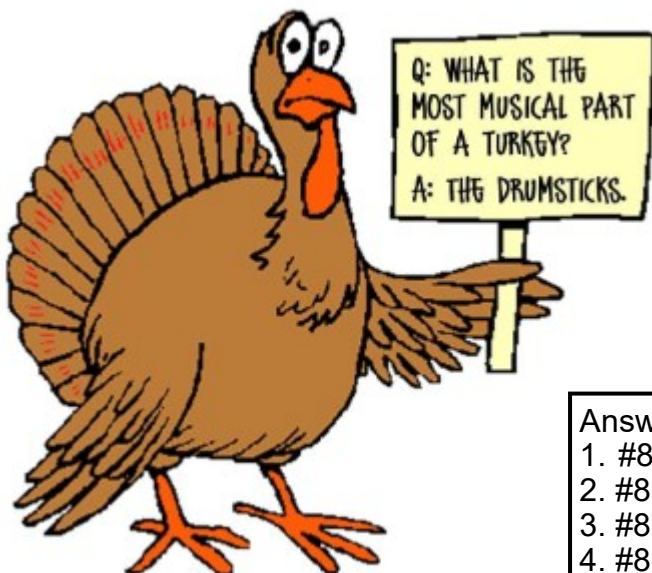


Join your St. John's friends, invite other friends and neighbors to the Activities Room (yellow room in the Ed wing) every Monday and/or Wednesday for cards, dominos, board games, and puzzle time.

Those present can decide what you want to play or if you simply want to chat around the puzzle table.

LWML

Mark your calendars for Saturday, December 2nd for Christmas Cheer! Watch the bulletin for more information.



Answers to Christine's Thanksgiving Hymn Challenge:

1. #894 For the Fruits of His Creation
2. #893 Sing to the Lord of Harvest
3. #892 Come, Ye Thankful People, Come
4. #895 Now Thank We All Our God

Church News

Thanksgiving Potluck

Sunday, November 19th

11:15am (ish)



Please join us on Sunday, November 19th after Bible study and Sunday school for a Thanksgiving Potluck. Table service and beverages will be provided. There will be a sign up sheet on the Information Table. We are also going to try something new: there will be a RSVP card in your bulletins. Please fill it out and give it to the ushers before you leave if that is easier for you and the Office will add you to the sign-up list.



Voter's Meeting Minutes

September 24, 2023

Meeting opened with a reading by Pastor Umbarger, and a prayer.

No new members.

Board Reports

1. Treasurer's report given by Norm Antolik
 - a. Elders' budget was adjusted as vicar expense is gone
 - b. Human Care - \$6000 going to food pantry
 - c. Utilities – MidAmerican was paid with credit card to get the cash reward from the credit card.
2. Board of Youth and Family report given by Rebecca Hinman
 - a. Upcoming events
 - i. October 29 Trunk or Treat
 - ii. November – lock up
 - iii. Thanksgiving potluck
 - iv. December – Comedy Sportz
 - v. December – Circa 21
3. Board of Outreach report given by Charlie Britton
 - a. Making visitor calls
 - b. Handing out packets to parents at Trunk or Treat encouraging them to bring their children to worship and Sunday School.
 - c. In process to see who is willing to stay on as fellowship callers, and looking for new members for 2024.
4. Board of Elders report given by Jim Homann
 - a. Church office is working on move away letters to members who moved. First and second letter have suggestions with other churches in their area, 3rd year letter is a dismissal letter.
5. Board of Trustees report given by Evan Antolik
 - a. Still getting bids on the roof, which has put the parking lot on hold.
 - b. Threat Assessment by Homeland Security was done. There is grant money available which will open in a few months. There will be more to come.
 - c. Few minor maintenance issues
 - d. Boiler should kick on soon
 - e. Will be working on landscape/grass
 - f. Sign will be updated – will start to include Bible verse weekly and events.
 - g. It was recommended that Trustees put the Courtyard on budget for next year
6. Board of Human Care report given by Carrie Homann – See attached report
 - a. Food Pantry numbers continue to increase, we having been giving out over 100 boxes each month since July. They are thankful for the increased funds given to the food pantry.
 - b. Blood Drive is October 21

- c. There will be an Advanced Directive Class October 28 at 10:30am. This class is for anyone 18 years and older.
 - d. In the early stages of planning a congregational trip June 2024. It would include St. Louis, Eureka Springs Arkansas, Branson Missouri. The cost of chartering a bus has increased beyond what they are wanting to spend. We will need to be creative with transportation or scale back on the plans for the trip.
 - e. Fellowship committee is planning for in house and local activities. Next meeting is Wed October 11 at 4pm.
7. Executive Board report given by Rod Hopkins – see attached report
- a. The executive board is seeking members to fill or assist with a few positions in 2024. John Iwen is stepping down as Financial Secretary. Also need an assistant treasurer to work the Norm Antolik, with a goal of taking over as treasurer. Will be forming a nominating committee for board members for all boards. Brian Engebrecht will be leading the nomination committee.
 - b. Financial audit was conducted and completed by a committee that consisted of two members.
 - c. The executive board and parish planning committee are developing a job description for possibly calling a new church worker. A job description and salary will be agreed upon by the members and possibly be presented to the voters at the December voters meeting. Questions from members on if this would be a called vs non-called position, at this time they are thinking it will be a called position. Questions about budget, this will need to be a line item in the budget meeting in December.
 - d. October 12 Parish Planning meeting – if anyone has something they think this person should do they should give those recommendations to a board member.
 - e. Discussed the condominium that is owned by the church. We have had it since July 2013, paid \$60,000. We have put \$15,3000 into renovations. Currently is tax exempt as it was being used for a church worker. If we still have it after December 31st we may have to start paying taxes. Questions by members if it could be used by whomever accepts the called position, discussed that we do not know if they would want it. Motion made by Ralph Grotelueschen to sell the condo. Seconded by Larry Dodge. Voted on and passed unanimously. The items in the condo were discussed. It was decided that the boards should discuss the use/donation of the items left in the condo.

Norm Antolik stated that budget 2024 information from all boards is needed by December 1st.

Evan Antolik made a motion to dismiss the meeting. Jim Homann seconded. Motion passed. Voters meeting was closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted by Dawn Antolik

Church News

Advent Suppers

There are 3 weeks in Advent this year. Please start thinking if your family or group could host a supper. It's never too early to start planning!

Advent Schedule

"God Keeps His Promises"

Dec. 6th—6:30pm

Dec. 13th—6:30pm

Dec. 20th—6:30pm

Christmas Schedule

Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion—8:00pm

Christmas Morning Communion—9:00am

Please note, there will NOT be a New Year's Eve service this year



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
			9am - TOPS 10am - Midweek Bible	6:30pm - Board Meetings		8am - Men's Bible Study 9:30am - Adult Choir 5pm - Worship w/
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
9am - Worship w/ 10:15am - Bible Study / 10:15am - Confirmation	6pm - Chimes 6:30pm - 7th Grade 6:30pm - Heavenly	10am - Food Pantry 6:30pm - Guitar Jam	9am - TOPS 10am - Midweek Bible	6:30pm - Nominating	7pm - Youth Lock Up	8am - Men's Bible Study 9:30am - Adult Choir 5pm - Worship
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
9am - Worship 10:15am - Bible Study / 10:15am - Confirmation 10:30am - Voter's	6:30pm - 7th Grade 6:30pm - Heavenly	10am - Food Pantry 6:30pm - Guitar Jam	9am - TOPS 10am - Midweek Bible 6:30pm - Computer Class	11:30am - Ladies		8am - Men's Bible Study 9:30am - Adult Choir 4pm - Craft Fair 5pm - Worship
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
8am - Craft Fair 9am - Worship w/ 10:15am - Bible Study / 10:15am - Confirmation 11:15am - Thanksgiving	Informer Deadline 6pm - Chimes 6:30pm - 7th Grade 6:30pm - Heavenly	10am - Food Pantry 6:30pm - Guitar Jam	9am - TOPS 6:30pm - Thanksgiving	4pm - Stone		9:30am - Adult Choir 5pm - Worship
26	27	28	29	30	1	2
9am - Worship 10:15am - Bible Study /	6pm - Chimes 6:30pm - 7th Grade 6:30pm - Heavenly	10am - Food Pantry 6:30pm - Guitar Jam	9am - TOPS 10am - Midweek Bible			

St. John's Lutheran Church



1450-30th Avenue

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Fax: 309-792-0776

E-mail: office@stjohnsem.org

Walking in the Light of Christ!



Office Hours:

Monday – Wednesday 8:30am– 2:00pm

Closed for lunch from 12-1pm

Thursday 8:30am-12:00pm

Worship Schedule:

Saturday worship– 5:00pm

Sunday worship- 9:00am

Sunday School & Bible Study-10:15am

Thanksgiving Service with Communion-
Wednesday, Nov. 22nd @ 6:30pm