

Spirit *Alive!*

JULY 2023 NEWSLETTER OF ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

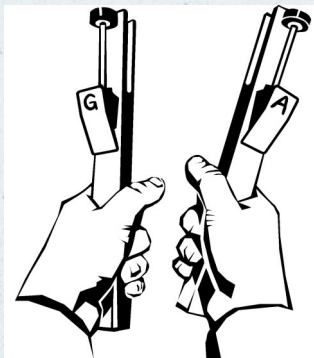
WHERE HAVE THE CHIMES GONE?

Short answer-back in the cabinet.

Long answer-there were approximately ten people who expressed an interest in forming a Chime Choir, which was great. The main issue became scheduling practice times. Those interested are also involved in other groups/activities which quickly became very difficult to choose a day/time that met the most needs.

It became apparent that this isn't the time to form this new group. Maybe once we have a minister and a church routine we can revisit having a chime choir.

Sincerely,
Pat Breitenfeldt



President—Amy Bazile
V. President —Ron Krueger
Secretary —Mandy Malueg
Pat Breitenfeldt
Mary Hoppe
Melissa Pfeiler
Linda Mielke
Brian Sawall
Shirl Tischauser
Kelly Trebus
Wanda Tucker
Please contact the council members for any concerns.

Pause Ponder Pray July 2023

In the summer of 2001, I was fortunate to travel to Europe with my cousin, Carol.

In Poland I had a conversation with our local guide that has had a lasting impact on my appreciation for my freedoms as a citizen of the United States.

She was so excited to share with me that one of her daughters was in America at that time as an exchange student. The guide was my age and had grown up under communist rule. She told me how her dad was taken to Siberia as punishment for not disavowing his Christian faith. She shared with me that as a person growing up under Communist control individual decisions **on anything** to do with your life was not allowed. You were told what job you would work, where you would live, when you would receive a stove or a refrigerator or an apartment, were just some of the examples she shared with me during our time together. Individual decision making or opinions were not allowed. Everything about a person's life was dictated by the government.

I was speechless. I couldn't even imagine what that was like.

July 4th is our day to celebrate the birth of our country. The United States of America was founded to protect five freedoms: speech, religion, press, assembly, and right to petition the government.

Disagreeing among ourselves is allowed. Having different opinions is allowed. Worshiping without fear of retaliation is allowed.

Do we appreciate what we have? Do we respect each other's differences?

This year on the Fourth – ponder during the fireworks how lucky YOU are to call this country home. Give a prayer of thanks for the freedoms you have that are so much a part of your life and your being you don't even think about them. You can grumble at will, speak your mind, attend church and even cheer for the Cubs or Bears without repercussion!!!

Happy 4th – praise to our Lord we live in the United States of America!!



Confessional

A portion of a confessional by the German Lutheran pastor Martin Niemoller regarding the silence of German intellectuals and certain clergy following the Nazis' rise to power and subsequent incremental purging of their chosen targets, group after group.

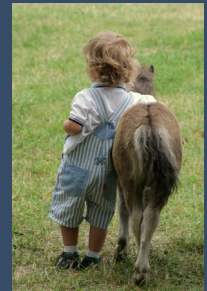
"First they came for the Communists
And I did not speak out
Because I was not a Communist
Then they came for the Socialists
And I did not speak out
Because I was not a socialist
Then they came for the trade unionists
And I did not speak out
Because I was not a trade unionist
Then they came for the Jews
And I did not speak out
Because I was not a Jew
Then they came for me
And there was no one left
To speak out for me



Proverbs 19:20

*"Listen to advice and
accept discipline, and at
the end you will be
counted among the wise."*

*Sometimes when we are
looking for an answer,
God sends us a friend.*



Attitude

Attitude is the difference between an adventure and an ordeal. We can control our attitudes by choosing where we put our hope when things go sideways as you find your way back to Jesus. If you listen closely enough in the chaos, don't be surprised if you hear the words, "You got this", whispered over you.

Hope

Sometimes we ask for help and God gives us hope. The next time you find yourself looking for a way out, look for evidence of God on the move in someone's life around you. They have probably been asking God to give them a little hope, and what God is giving them is YOU.

Be Gracious

Growing up as part of a family one has the opportunity to learn that most times, being "right" isn't as important as staying in our relationships. We also learn to say we're sorry and make amends when we've hurt someone's feelings. All of this is a good warm-up for the rest of our lives. We will encounter people we disagree with every day, and Jesus calls us to love those people, not just tolerate them. Jesus never told us to be "right" He told us to be gracious.

*"Let your speech always be
gracious,
seasoned with salt,
so that you may know how you ought to answer each person."
Colossians 4:6 (ESV)*

PRAYER BRINGS HEAVEN TO EARTH



When you received Jesus as your Savior, you began to live in two homes — earth and heaven. You were born the first time into your earthly family. Now you have been born again into the family of God. You are a citizen of both worlds. Your new heavenly home is the biggest one. It is God’s home. It is yours because you are united to Jesus, and heaven is where he lives.

But we don’t need to wait until we die to visit heaven. Prayer is the airline to our heavenly homeland. We walk heaven’s streets and view its wonders each time we fellowship with the Lord.

—Ben Jennings

FINDING FREEDOM

What does freedom look like to you? In *GraceLaced*, Ruth Chou Simons lists examples such as running unhindered, viewing a mountaintop overlook and enjoying iced tea with lemon. Because our good, creative God made us each different, our descriptions of freedom vary too. I think of deep breaths, an unhurried pace, genuine smiles, lack of regrets and deep belly laughs.

I love to laugh. Recently, during a demanding season of family celebrations, hardships and surprises, I realized I was laughing less. I felt bound to the next task on my long to-do list, but even good efficiency can shackle our spirits.

A good laugh — beyond a quick chuckle — offers many physical and emotional benefits. According to the Mayo Clinic, laughter relieves stress and pain, boosts the immune system and stimulates organs and endorphins. So today I’m determined to laugh loudly and joyfully while remembering my freedom in Christ.

—Janna Firestone

GOD’S GOT YOU

In Roman 4 Paul writes: “If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. . . . For this reason the promise depends on faith, in order that it may rest on grace” (v. 14, 16, NRSV). Here and elsewhere, Paul firmly explains that we are saved through God’s grace, or unconditional love, made known most profoundly in Jesus Christ. But this passage raises a question: If belief (trust, faith) reckons us as righteous before God, what if we don’t trust, can’t believe, have lost all faith?

Pastor Martin Luther (1483-1546) assures us that even this is a gift of God: “I believe that by my own understanding or strength I cannot believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to him, but instead *the Holy Spirit has called me through the gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, made me holy and kept me in the true faith*” (*The Small Catechism*; emphasis added). Later in Romans, Paul declares that when we feel so lost (unbelieving, lacking in faith) that we don’t even know how to pray, the “Spirit himself intercedes for us” (8:26, NIV). Rest assured, dear one: God’s got you.

—Heidi Hyland Mann

PRAYER FOR JULY 4TH

The following lines are from a long prayer, “That America Fulfil the Promise of Its Founding,” by Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan. Though written in 1945, it rings true yet today. (Full text at <https://tinyurl.com/nhc8747x>.)

O God, who is Liberator and Redeemer, Lawgiver and Judge, ...

May America remain loyal
to the principles of the Declaration of Independence,
and extend their application
to ever-widening areas of life.

Keep out of our life all manner of oppression,
persecution,
and unjust discrimination;
save us from religious,
racial and class conflicts;
may our country be a haven of refuge
to the victims of injustice and misrule.

Instruct us in the art of living together,
of reconciling differences of opinion
and averting clashes of interest,
of helping one another
to achieve a harmonious and abundant life ...

That the Star-Spangled Banner,
the symbol of our American democracy,
may ever wave o’er the land of the free
and the home of the brave. Amen.



LIVING AS POETRY OF GOD

For Christians, the Scriptures are our first source of guidance for how to live, and within them, Jesus is primary. But God speaks through nonbiblical voices too: preachers and teachers not found in the Bible, and even literature that isn’t directly Christian. God, who used King Cyrus of Persia to free the exiled Israelites, can use *anyone* to call us to right living. Take, for example, Walt Whitman’s description of life as poetry when we live certain ways, and God as “the greatest poet”:

“This is what you shall do: Love the earth and sun and the animals, despise riches, give alms to every one that asks, stand up for the [vulnerable], devote your income and labor to others, hate tyrants, argue not concerning God, have patience and indulgence toward the people, ... and your very flesh shall be a great poem and have the richest fluency. ... The known universe has one complete lover and that is the greatest poet. ... His love above all love has leisure and expanse.” (From the preface to *Leaves of Grass*, 1855)

IT'S A MIRACLE!

I believe in miracles. While I believe in the possibility, under God, of any kind of miracle, I am committed especially to the miracle of the changed life. When a human being goes from despair to hope, when a lost soul comes home, or when a mean and destructive person becomes kind and fruitful, the greatest of all miracles has occurred.

AN ABUNDANCE OF GIFTS

In 2022, people set some amazing Guinness World Records. A Nebraska man paddled more than 37 miles in a hollowed-out pumpkin boat. A Vermont teen wearing 4-inch heels walked more than 600 feet across a tightrope. And an Oregon man found and alphabetized all 26 letters in a can of alphabet soup in 2 minutes and 8.6 seconds. (The toughest part, he says, is distinguishing subtle differences between letters such as M and W.)

Your talents might not earn you any world records, but they certainly can grow faith and change lives. Whether you're good at teaching, singing, writing, cooking or accounting, the church can put those skills to productive use. Romans 12 lists many more qualities you may not realize are spiritual gifts: graciousness, serving, generosity, acts of mercy, loving and honoring others, extending hospitality, rejoicing and weeping with people, making peace.

You might not be able to outperform the alphabet soup record. But God abundantly blesses each of us to “outdo one another in showing honor” (Romans 12:10, ESV) and in sharing his love.

—Stephanie Martin

KEEP TRYING

In *The God Who Stays*, contemporary Christian musician Matthew West writes about the pandemic's fear-filled early days. After his concert tour was abruptly canceled in March 2020, he rode to an airport “feeling utterly hopeless about a world that was spinning out of control.”

Then Arthur, his ride-share driver, began singing along to the radio — and the song happened to be West's “The God Who Stays.” West joined in, jokingly asking how he sounded. “Not so good,” Arthur replied, not knowing West's identity. “You keep trying.” The driver shared how those lyrics uplifted him during life's difficulties, and West later recalled that conversation during lockdown, while wondering where God was. The musician realized he had “settled for a socially distant relationship with the One who is nearer than I dare to believe, closer than the air I breathe.” But West pictured “God running toward me with open arms like the prodigal's father,” and he resolved to keep trying — and to grow closer to the God who always stays.

THE GLADDEST THING OF ALL



BELIEVE
the
GOOD NEWS

Turn around and believe that the good news that we are loved is better than we ever dared hope, and that to believe in that good news, to live out of it and toward it, to be in love with that good news, is of all glad things in this world the gladdest thing of all. Amen, and come Lord Jesus.

—Frederick Buechner, *The Clown in the Belfry*

WELCOMED BACK TO THE FOLD

When her beloved dogs “returned home from an adventure smelling of eau de skunk parfum,” Pastor Joanna Loucky-Ramsey refused to let them in the house. Instead, she cleaned and cared for them outside, slowly reintroducing them to “full participation in family life” once the stink eased.

“The odor left by the skunk could serve as a metaphor for our sin or for the sin others perpetrate against us,” she writes. “As much as God loves us, he hates the sin that hides the lovely fragrance of the image of God within each of us. God wants to welcome each of us into his family and into the heavenly home he has prepared for us, but we need to be ‘deodorized’ from the eau de sin parfum that would mar the entire experience of being in God’s fragrant presence.”

Loucky-Ramsey continues: “Just as our dogs needed our help to get rid of the smell of skunk, we need God’s help to purge us from the offense of sin that permeates our nature and masks who God created us to be. That’s what Jesus accomplished by his death and resurrection: to make us new and whole.”

—adapted from The Wired Word



DOLPHIN — Because dolphins often swim alongside ships, they've been used to symbolize Christ's presence, guiding people through earthly life and into eternal life. Although they're mammals, dolphins have been depicted as the fish that swallowed Jonah. Jesus compared his three days inside the tomb to Jonah's three days inside the fish, so dolphins also came to symbolize resurrection.

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THANK YOU

Thank you to the following: Mike and Grace Miller for rewiring the eternity candle in the Sanctuary; the several members who donated and volunteered for funerals; Ron and Brenda Krueger for washing the Parish Hall windows; all who are donating and volunteering towards the upkeep of our building; and to those who are ensuring worship happens each week at St. John's. It truly takes a team to make all of this happen and we thank you!

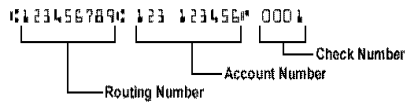
SIMPLY GIVING

We have had several inquiries about setting up automatic withdrawal donations to the church. If you are interested in this, please fill out the form on the next page and return it to the church office in a enclosed envelope. If the office is closed, please place the form in the office dropbox or visit the website at: <https://www.stjohnsmarion.org/information-forms/> and fill out the form that is linked to Online Giving. You can also give online on the homepage by clicking on the donate button or scanning the QR Code in this newsletter.



AUTHORIZATION FORM

Name of the organization: St. John's Lutheran Church

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY	ENVELOPE/DONOR #	DATE
Effective date of authorization: ____/____/____		
Type of authorization: <input type="checkbox"/> New authorization <input type="checkbox"/> Change donation amount <input type="checkbox"/> Change donation date <input type="checkbox"/> Change banking information <input type="checkbox"/> Discontinue electronic donation		
Last Name		First Name
Address		
City		State Zip
Email Address		
DATE OF FIRST DONATION: ____/____/____	FREQUENCY OF DONATION: <input type="checkbox"/> Weekly – Mondays <input type="checkbox"/> Semi-Monthly – 1 st and 15 th <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly on the 1 st <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly on the 15 th	FUNDS: <input type="checkbox"/> General/Operating \$ _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Building \$ _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ \$ _____ <div style="text-align: right;">Total \$ _____</div>
CHECKING / SAVINGS	Please debit my donation from my (check one): <input type="checkbox"/> Savings Account (contact your financial institution for Routing #) <input type="checkbox"/> Checking Account (attach a voided check below)	Routing Number: _____ Valid Routing # must start with 0, 1, 2, or 3 Account Number: _____  <p style="font-size: small; margin-top: 5px;"> ⑆ 23456789 ⑆ 23 23456 ⑆ 000 ⑆ └─── Routing Number └─── Account Number └─── Check Number </p>
	I authorize the above organization to process debit entries to my account. I understand that this authority will remain in effect until I provide reasonable notification to terminate the authorization.	
Authorized Signature: _____		Date: _____

If using a checking account, please attach a voided check at the bottom of this page.

Month End: **May 2023**
General Fund: **Year to Date**
 Revenue \$ 70,528
 Expenses \$ 75,021

**Financial Condition-
 Balances as of May 31st**
 General Fund \$ 22,709
 Building &
 Church Improvements 96,996
 Benevolence Fund 2,318
 Special Funds 45,289
 Check EFT 25
 Total \$167,336

Current Debt Balances Due:
 Endowment \$ -
Loan Payments:
 Endowment \$ 3,034

ENDOWMENT LOAN

The endowment loan is paid in full.

UPCOMING PARISH HALL PROJECT

The goal for the Parish Hall project has not been reached. The cost is estimated to be \$22,000 to \$25,000. In your giving, please consider donating towards this project.

THRIVANT CHOICE DOLLARS

We are grateful for the ways Thrivent Members share generosity. To designate your Thrivent Choice dollars visit thrivent.com/thriventchoice, call 800-847-4836, or contact your local Thrivent financial professional. Designating dollars is an important step to take each year by March 31st.

NEW MEMBER SUNDAY

If you are a new member we will be recognizing you! Please keep the date of September 17th on your calendar. We will be asking for our new members to come forward during both the 8a.m. and 10:30a.m. services.

Prayers

- ◆ Andy Shulz
- ◆ Becky Van Buren
- ◆ Beverly Genskow
- ◆ Corrine Kroening
- ◆ Dave Krueger
- ◆ David Soik
- ◆ Dennis Johnson
- ◆ Doug Brandenburg
- ◆ Huston Burmeister
- ◆ Evelyn Rieckmann
- ◆ Jaden Stuhr
- ◆ Judy Allen
- ◆ Karla Kroening
- ◆ Karol Freeland
- ◆ Kristy Crum
- ◆ Lynn M.
- ◆ Nathan Nick
- ◆ Patty (Fournier) Beck
- ◆ Parker Wolff
- ◆ Scott Brandenburg
- ◆ Will Wege

Prayer for Those In Assisted Living

- ◆ Karen Aschenbrenner
- ◆ Anne Erdman
- ◆ Gloria Krieser
- ◆ Lois Miller

Prayers for The Family and Friends of

- ◆ Jerry Siegel
- ◆ Terry Mykisen



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ANNOUNCEMENTS

CAMELOT WORSHIP

Every first Wednesday of the month, a Camelot service is offered at the Camelot apartments at 3p.m.

EMERGENCY SPIRITUAL HELP

Please call the church office if you are ill, in the hospital, or in need of spiritual help. There are Pastors and Lay Leaders trained.

FOOD PANTRY

Food pantry needs for July are peanut butter and jelly. Food pantry wants are paper towel and dish soap.

UPC LABELS

St. John's Lutheran Church will no longer be collecting Best Choice and/ or Clearly Brand UPC labels.

CONFIRMATION/SUNDAY SCHOOL

The restart date for Sunday School will be September 10th. Teachers are NEEDED. The goal is to form a team so each volunteer would only teach one Sunday a month. Please contact

the church office to volunteer so we can continue to offer this service to the future of the church! The restart date for Confirmation will be September 13th. You may register at: <https://forms.ministryforms.net/viewForm.aspx?formId=7512f5eb-31a2-40d3-aaee-8f6736c5abcd> or there will be registration forms in the Great Room and you may leave the form in the office Dropbox.

SCRIP CARDS

Mama's House of Hope has teamed up with St. Vincent De Paul to help ANYONE in need within the Marion/Tigerton/Wittenberg area. To help with this very worthy cause St. Vincent De Paul is doing an ongoing fundraiser. Ten percent of all SCRIP cards, to any SHELL station, that are being sold will be donated to St. Vincent De Paul. These cards are good for gas or anything in the store. Cards can be obtained from Jackie Suehring or the church office. If you would like several cards, please contact the church office, Jackie Suehring, or Pat Breitenfeldt (St. Vincent De Paul board member).

CALL COMMITTEE UPDATE

An update from the Call Committee to keep you informed on the process for calling a new Pastor.

We completed extensive interviews over the last few months with two applicants. The candidate that was a fit for St. John's withdrew his application for personal reasons. The other candidate was not a fit for our congregation.

We wait patiently and ask for God's Guidance as He leads our next Pastor to us. We ask for continued prayers as we continue through the process of calling our next pastor! We will continue to keep you informed as the call process continues.

St. John's Church Council Minutes – May 16, 2023

Council members present: Amy Bazile, Kelly Trebus, Linda Mielke, Mary Hoppe, Melissa Pfeiler, Mandy Malueg, Ron Krueger, Shirl Tischauser, Brian Sawall, Wanda Tucker, Pat Breitenfeldt. **Also present:** Sheri Fuhrman **Absent:** none

Meeting called to order by Amy Bazile at 6:45 p.m. Mandy opened with devotions and prayer.

The mission statement was read together.

Member Comments: A Thank You was received from a graduate for the gift on Baccalaureate Sunday.

Secretary's Report: The meeting minutes for April 2023, were reviewed. A motion was made by Ron, seconded by Mary, to approve the Council minutes as presented. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report: A motion was made by Kelly, seconded by Wanda, to approve the April 2023 financial statements as presented. Motion carried.

Vital Statistics: Jordan Tellock requested a transfer of membership to Christ Church in Mequon on May 9th, 2023. Charles Schwan passed away May 12, 2023. The funeral was held on May 19, 2023.

Old Business: Items of Old Business considered were:

- **Call Committee Update** – A call was offered to a candidate. The call was declined. A temple talk will be given to update the congregation.
- **SOUL T-Shirts** – Pat Mielke has agreed to be part of the design team. Gwen Fischer has also agreed to assist.
- **Father's Day Gifts** – Sheri will order gifts.
- **Other Old Business** – None

New Business: Items of New Business considered were:

- **New Member Sunday**– New member Sunday will be held September 17, 2023. Treats will be provided following services.
- **Phone Quote** – Unitel will no longer servicing the current phones the church has. It has been recommended the church upgrade. Quotes will be requested from multiple carriers.
- **Sunday School Time in Fall** – September 10, 2023 is Rally Sunday. Sunday School staff was discussed. Nominating committee will reach out to potential teachers.
- **Any Other New Business** – None

Action Team Reports: The following Action Team reports were provided:

- **Worship and Music**– A meeting was held with an audio company to discuss updating the sound system, etc in the Come Alive space. A quote will be brought to council once available. Planning for Pastors is challenging. Council has suggested a Pastor once a month.
- **Property**– The sanctuary tripping hazard was discussed. Property is evaluating a more permanent solution. There will be a "worker bee weekend" June 30-July 1 to install the vinyl siding on the shed. The church signs will be changed with updated worship times.

Closed Session: none

The next meeting will be on June 20, 2023, at 6:45 pm.

The meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

EVENTS CALENDAR

CHURCH CALENDAR

Church Services

Sanctuary

July 9 -Worship w/ communion (Pastor Bob Wilkenson) 9:30a.m.

July 2, 16, 23-Worship in Sanctuary 9:30a.m.

July 30-Worship w/ communion (Pastor Bob Wilkenson) 9:30a.m.

July 5, 12, 19, 26-Wednesday Worship at Veterans' Park 6p.m.

Quilting-Every Wednesday 12:30p.m.

Yoga

July 10, 17-9a.m.

July 6, 13, 20-5:30p.m.

Confirmation Classes

Meet with Confirmation Mentors Throughout Summer Months

Confirmation Class will resume on September 13th at 6:45p.m.

Confirmation Sunday for the 9th Graders will be October 29th at 9:30a.m. with Pastor Gary Froseth

Handing Out Bibles

September 10th at both 8a.m. & 10:30a.m.

New Member Sunday

September 17th at both 8a.m. & 10:30a.m.

Sunday School

Classes will resume on September 10th at 9:15a.m.

All Saints Day

Sunday, November 5th

Fall Dinner

Tentatively, Sunday, November 12th



SEPARATION FROM SIN

David praises God for his love and compassion.
 What does God do for people who fear him?

Directions: Using each grid pattern marked below, find the word that appears in all three of those squares. Write the words in the spaces below to complete Psalm 103:12, NIV.

FROM as is can	<i>NORTH</i> from far	at the EAST <i>FROM</i>
is <i>South</i> AS	<i>ab</i> do far <i>EAST</i>	the <i>THIS</i> up as
WEST <i>THAT is</i> East	far <i>down</i> WEST	THE be AS West



... so far has he removed our transgressions from us.

PSALM 103:12, NIV



St. John's Lutheran Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

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