

Christ is Our Cornerstone

A service of thanksgiving to God celebrating

75 years of grace to St. John's Ev. Lutheran, New Ulm, MN

August 6, 2023

Welcome in the name of Jesus to this special worship service today. It is truly a day to celebrate the goodness of God and rejoice in his many blessings. May your spirits be uplifted this morning as you consider the great things God has done!

We especially welcome our guests and visitors who have joined us to share our joy. We thank you for your presence here and pray that our sharing of God's Word may be a blessing to you!



Stand

The Call to Worship

In the name of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, we have gathered here today in the spirit of joy to thank our gracious God for his many blessings to us as individuals, and to us as a congregation.

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his faithfulness and love endure forever.

Come! Give thanks to the Lord for the 75 years of grace he has given us as a congregation in Christ.

We give thanks to you, O Lord, for preserving your Word among us, and giving us the privilege of sharing it with others.

Come! Give thanks to the Lord as we rededicate ourselves to the work of the kingdom he has entrusted to us.

We give thanks to you, O Lord, for establishing the work of our hands.

Come! Let us pray, praise, and give thanks to the Lord our God!

Be seated

Hymn: How Firm a Foundation (CW 800)

St. 1 – All

St. 2 – Women

St. 3 – Men

St. 4 – Choir

St. 5 – All (stand for the last stanza of the hymn)



1 How firm a foun - da - tion, you saints of the Lord,
2 "Fear not, I am with you, O be not dis - mayed,
3 "When through the deep wa - ters I call you to go,
4 "When through fi - ery tri - als your path - way shall lie,
5 "The soul that on Je - sus has leaned for re - pose

is laid for your faith in his ex - cel - lent Word!
for I am your God and will still give you aid;
the riv - ers of sor - row shall not o - ver - flow,
my grace all - suf - fi - cient shall be your sup - ply;
I will not, I will not, de - sert to its foes;

What more can he say than to you he has said,
I'll strength - en you, help you, and cause you to stand,
for I will be with you, your trou - bles to bless,
the flames will not hurt you; I on - ly de - sign
that soul, though all hell should en - deav - or to shake,

to you who for ref - uge to Je - sus have fled?
up - held by my right - eous, om - ni - po - tent hand.
and sanc - ti - fy to you your deep - est dis - tress.
your dross to con - sume and your gold to re - fine.
I'll nev - er, no nev - er, no nev - er for - sake!"

Text: A Selection of Hymns, London, 1787, ed. John Rippon, alt.
Tune: Genuine Church Music, Winchester, 1832, ed. Joseph Funk
Text and tune: Public domain

Confession and Forgiveness

Let us approach our God with humble and contrite hearts, fully aware of our sins yet confident in his mercy to us through Jesus Christ.

Almighty Lord God, we have come together to stand in your presence, to hear your Word, and to worship you.

But who may appear in your presence, heavenly Father, and who may call on your name for help?
Those who have clean hands and a pure heart; they shall receive blessings from the Lord.

O holy and righteous God, you alone can make us clean. We confess that we have rebelled against you and become unclean in your sight. Yet your mercies never end; they are new every day.

Have mercy upon us, O Lord, have mercy upon us.

Brothers and sisters in Jesus, let us confess our sins to the Lord.

Heavenly Father, we confess that we are unworthy to stand in your presence. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and action. Forgive us for Jesus' sake and restore to us the joy of your salvation. Give us the power to live as children who delight in learning and doing your will.

In the name of our Lord Jesus I assure you that God has heard your prayer. As God's servant and at his command, I declare to you that your sins are forgiven, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Since we have been justified by grace, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. It is God's own promise, and it cannot fail.

Let us pray.

Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, gracious Father in heaven:

We rejoice today in your goodness and grace, both of which we confess we do not deserve because of our many sins against you. Yet you are gracious and compassionate, abounding in love and mercy, and through your Son have freely given us pardon, peace, and eternal life.

Since you have made us your children by the Holy Spirit, set our hearts on fire to do your will. Remind us today not only of the blessings you have permitted us to see and enjoy, but also turn our eyes to those future opportunities for sharing your love that you will set before us, so that we may shine as your children in a dark world and share the hope you have placed within us. Hear us through Jesus Christ, in whose holy name we pray.

Amen.

Lesson: Job 19:25-27

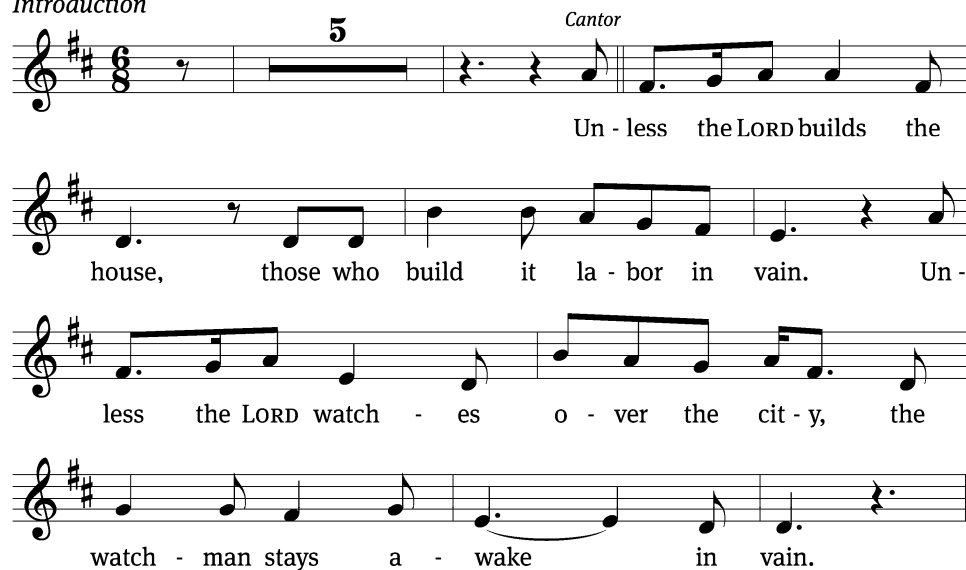
I know that my redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand on the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes—I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

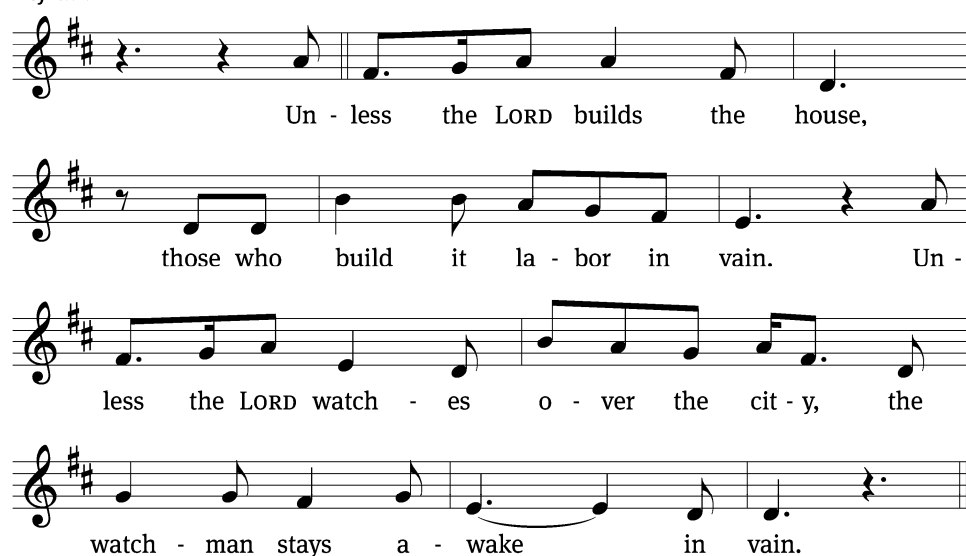
Psalm: Psalm 127b

Introduction



Un - less the LORD builds the
house, those who build it la - bor in vain. Un -
less the LORD watch - es o - ver the cit - y, the
watch - man stays a - wake in vain.

Refrain



Un - less the LORD builds the house,
those who build it la - bor in vain. Un -
less the LORD watch - es o - ver the cit - y, the
watch - man stays a - wake in vain.

Verse

1 It is in vain that you rise up ear-ly and
go late to rest, eat-ing the bread of anx-ious
toil; for he gives to his be-lov-ed sleep. *Refrain*

Verse

(vain.) 2 Be-hold, chil-dren are a her-i-tage from the
LORD, the fruit of the womb a re-ward. Like
ar-rows in the hand of a war-ri-or are the
chil-dren of one's youth. *Refrain* (Un -)

Verse

3 Bless-ed is the man who fills his
quiv-er with them! He shall not be put to
shame when he speaks with his en-e-mies in the gate. *Refrain*

Text: The Holy Bible, English Standard Version
Text: © 2001 Crossway. Used by permission: OneLicense no. A-725067
Tune: © 2017 Phillip Magness. Used by permission: OneLicense no. A-725067

Lesson: Ephesians 2:12-22

Remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.

Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

Stand

The Gospel: Matthew 16:13-18

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?"

They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

"But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"

Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."

Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.

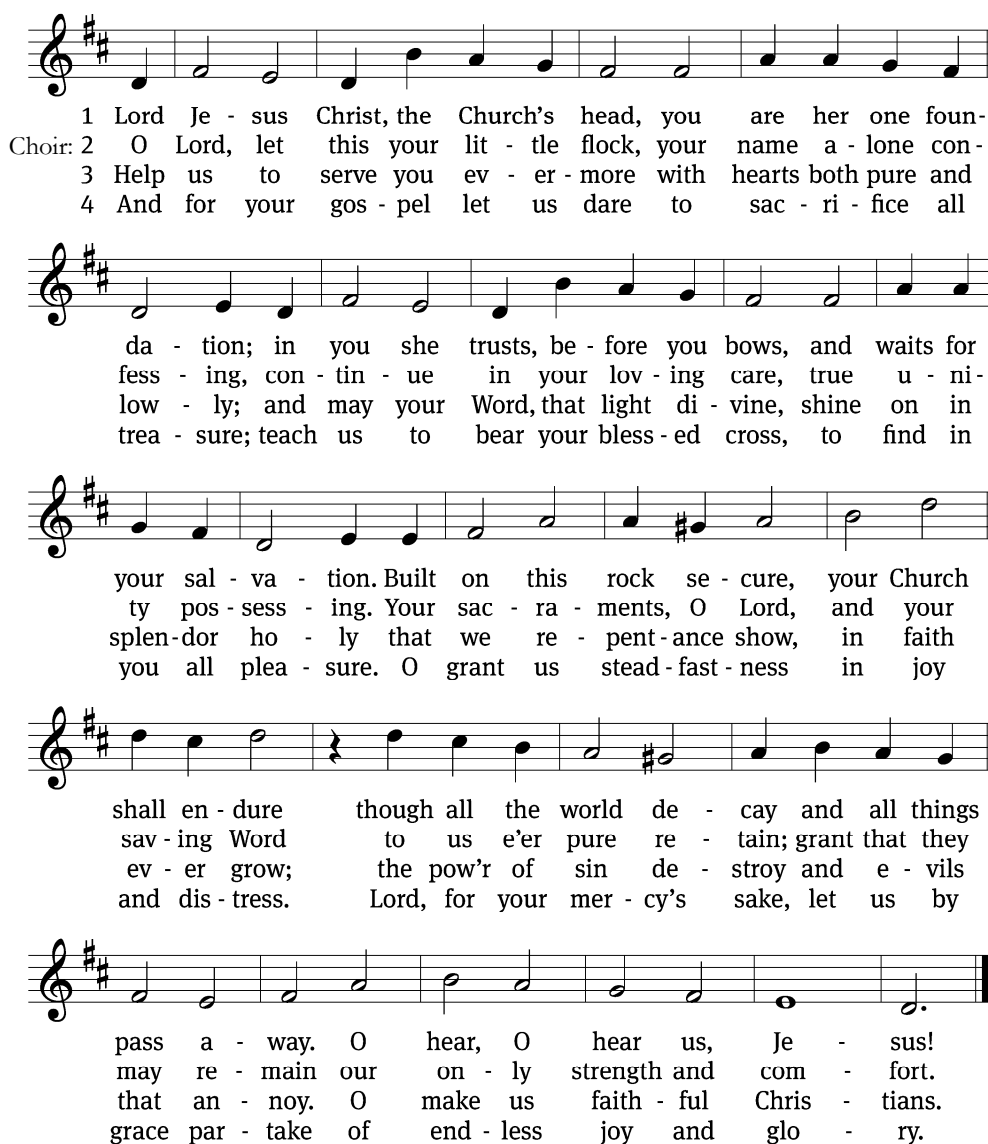
The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise be to you, O Christ!

Be seated

Hymn of the Day: Lord Jesus Christ, the Church's Head (CW 861)

In celebration of our 75th anniversary, members of St. John's funded this commissioned setting of "Lord Jesus Christ, the Church's Head," written by John Behnke, a nationally known Lutheran composer.



1 Lord Je - sus Christ, the Church's head, you are her one foun-
Choir: 2 O Lord, let this your lit - tle flock, your name a - lone con-
3 Help us to serve you ev - er - more with hearts both pure and
4 And for your gos - pel let us dare to sac - ri - fice all

da - tion; in you she trusts, be - fore you bows, and waits for
fess - ing, con - tin - ue in your lov - ing care, true u - ni-
low - ly; and may your Word, that light di - vine, shine on in
treasure; teach us to bear your bless - ed cross, to find in

your sal - va - tion. Built on this rock se - cure, your Church
ty pos - sess - ing. Your sac - ra - ments, O Lord, and your
splen - dor ho - ly that we re - pent - ance show, in faith
you all plea - sure. O grant us stead - fast - ness in joy

shall en - dure though all the world de - cay and all things
sav - ing Word to us e'er pure re - tain; grant that they
ev - er grow; the pow'r of sin de - stroy and e - vils
and dis - tress. Lord, for your mer - cy's sake, let us by

pass a - way. O hear, O hear us, Je - sus!
may re - main our on - ly strength and com - fort.
that an - noy. O make us faith - ful Chris - tians.
grace par - take of end - less joy and glo - ry.

Text: tr. William J. Schaefer, 1891–1976, alt.; Johann Mentzer, 1658–1734, abr.
Tune: Friedrich O. Reuter, 1863–1924
Text and tune: Public domain

The Sermon: Ephesians 2:19-22

Former St. John's pastor, Rev. David Kolander

Stand

Response: Create in Me a Clean Heart (CW 942)

Cre - ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re - new a right
spir - it with - in me. Cast me not a - way from your
pres - ence, and take not your Ho - ly Spir - it from me. Re -
store un - to me the joy of your sal - va - tion,
and up - hold me with your free Spir - it. A - men.

The musical score is written on five staves in G minor (three flats). The melody is simple and hymn-like, with lyrics written below each staff. The final note of the fifth staff is a double bar line.

Text: The Lutheran Hymnal, 1941, rev.
Tune: The Lutheran Hymnal, 1941, rev. James E. Engel, 1925–1989
Text and tune: Public domain

Be seated

A Litany of Thanksgiving and Praise

Lord God Almighty, who alone does wonders in this world and among your people:

We thank and praise you this day for your amazing grace and goodness to us. We especially thank you have been with us and blessed us as a congregation throughout seventy-five years of grace.

Sung:

**Now thank we all our God With hearts and hands and voices,
Who wondrous things has done, In whom his world rejoices;
Who from our mother's arms Has blessed us on our way
With countless gifts of love And still is ours today.**

We praise and thank you, Lord Jesus Christ, that we your congregation have grown from a small, daughter congregation to the church that it is today. We especially thank you for those who have preached and taught here, and for your members of this body from whom your message of forgiveness and peace has been spoken both privately and publicly for the salvation of many souls.

Sung:

**God the Father, Son and Spirit, ever bless-ed Trinity,
Humbly now our thanks we offer, all unworthy though we be.
Freely you have showered blessings countless as the ocean's sands,
Blessings rich and overflowing on the labors of our hands.**

We praise and thank you, O Holy Spirit, for giving us each spiritual gifts that we may share in the joy of working for you. We especially thank you this day for your grace to us, that over our history over 200 sons and daughters of St. John's have been moved to serve in the public ministry of the gospel.

Sung:

**Dear Lord, to your true servants give the grace to you alone to live
Set free from sin to serve you, Lord, they go to share your living Word,
The gospel message to proclaim that all may know your saving name.**

Dear Father, as we look behind at years of grace fill our hearts with gratitude and praise. As we look to the future, fill our hearts with courage and strength. As we look at each other, remind us each of the blessed fellowship we share through your Son, and unite us in our resolve to lift high the cross of our Lord Jesus. As we look at your world, call many more to faith that they may enjoy fellowship with us and with you, both now and forever.

Sung:

**We all are one in mission; we all are one in call,
Our varied gifts united by Christ the Lord of all.
A single great commission compels us from above
To plan and work together that all may know Christ's love.**

Lord Jesus Christ, we offer you our praise:

Sung:

**Crown him with many crowns, the Lamb upon his throne;
Hark how the heav'nly anthem drowns all music but its own.
Awake, my soul, and sing of him who died for thee,
And hail him as thy matchless King through all eternity.**

As we have united our voices in praise, so also now we unite them in prayer:

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

Stand

The Sacrament

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Life up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is good and right, so to do.

We give you thanks, Lord Jesus, that you come to us so graciously in this sacrament, giving us your glorified body and blood and personally bringing to us forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation. May we always come before you in humble repentance, yet clinging in faith to the promise of forgiveness you give us in this bread and wine. May we also receive it in joy, marveling at the mystery that you bind yourself to us in this sacrament, uniting us both to you each other. Receive our thanks, Lord Jesus, for this priceless gift!

Amen.

Our Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my ✠ body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; this is my ✠ blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

Amen.

Be seated

The Celebration of the Lord's Sacrament

Distribution Hymn: Father, God of Grace, You Knew Us (CW 566)



1 Fa - ther, God of grace, you knew us, chose us, named us
2 We, your crea - tures, sinned a - gainst you, and our guilt was
3 Coun - sel - or, you bring as prom - ised from the Fa - ther
4 Lord, your change-less Word has fed us, span-ning time, tran-
5 For - ward lead us; Christ, we fol - low, drawn by Word and

as your own, through e - ter - nal a - ges plan - ning
crim - son red. Son of God, you came in - car - nate,
and the Son right - eous - ness ful - filled, ac - com - plished,
scend - ing space. Wa - ter, bread, and wine sus - tained us
prom - ise true: "To all na - tions preach the gos - pel;

to re - deem us in your Son. Praise the Fa - ther,
crushed the craft - y ser - pent's head, died our death, now
free for - give - ness, heav - en won. Praise the Spir - it!
when the dark - ness hid your face. Keep us with you,
I am ev - er - more with you." Keep us faith - ful!

God who loved us ere cre - a - tion was be - gun!
live tri - um - phant: praise the first - born from the dead!
He as - sures us our sal - va - tion's work is done!
faith - ful Shep - herd, by your sav - ing means of grace!
Then, Lord Je - sus, quick - ly come; make all things new!

Text: Paul E. Eickmann, 1928–2006, abr.

Tune: John Goss, 1800–1880

Text: © 1999 Northwestern Publishing House. Used by permission: OneLicense no. A-725067

Tune: Public domain

Stand

Thanksgiving

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
his mercy endures forever.

Whenever we eat this bread and drink this cup,
we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Almighty God, you have built your church on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. Continue to send your Word into all lands, that your name may be known and praised to the ends of the earth. Continue, we also pray, to dwell among us with your Word and sacraments that we, building upon the firm foundation of this Rock, may persevere through all trials and sorrows of this life and enter at last, along with all your children, into the eternal joys of heaven. Through Jesus Christ our Lord we pray, and know that you hear us.
Amen.

The Blessing

May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word.

And may the blessing of God Most High – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit – be with you and remain on you, now and forever.

To God be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations. Amen.

Hymn: Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow (CW 617)

The musical notation is written on three staves in G major (one sharp). The melody is simple and hymn-like, using mostly quarter and half notes. The lyrics are written below the notes.

Praise God, from whom all bless - ings flow; praise him, all
crea-tures here be - low; praise him a - bove, ye heav'n - ly host;
praise Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost. A - men.

Text: Thomas Ken, 1637–1711
Tune: Trente quatre Pseaumes de David, Geneva, 1551, ed. Louis Bourgeois
Text and tune: Public domain

Be seated

Service Participants

Presiding Minister: Pastor Jeff Bovee

Preacher: Pastor David Kolander

Lectors: Justus Borgwardt, Silas Dose, Joseph Wessel

Organist: Prof. Jacob Behnken

Choir: Prof. Craig Hirschmann

Handbells: Becky Berg

Piano: Laura Balza

Soloists: Kathy Wurster, Jon Laabs

Trumpet: Dan Borgwardt, Josiah Smith

Trombone: Jennifer Uher, Joseph Wessel

Oboe: Ella Wurster

Service Design: Prof. Keith Wessel

Cover Design: Katherine Schmoller



St. John's Lutheran Church, New Ulm, MN

75th Anniversary

St John's was founded in 1948 as a daughter congregation of St. Paul's Lutheran Church. The fledgling congregation of 81 worshipers met for the first time in the basement auditorium of St. Paul's Ev. Lutheran School, then located at the corner of 3rd North and N. State. Professor Martin Albrecht of Dr. Martin Luther College led the service. On the weekend of October 19, 1947, a city-wide canvass, consisting of St. Paul's members and many students of DMLC, went to every house in New Ulm to see if there were any others who were interested. The results moved the voters of St. Paul's to ask the Minnesota District Mission Board to approve the new mission.

January 4, 1948, marked the formal organization of St. John's. Pastors Hinnenthal and Schmidt of St. Paul's were present at this meeting to give their congregation's blessing. The Minnesota District Mission Board was represented to see the mission off to a strong start. Prof. Albrecht, who had spent the past months exhaustively following up on community contacts, was called to be the shepherd of the new flock. Professor Hoenecke was elected as temporary chairman and Alvin Roloff became the temporary secretary.

Later that year, the two lots where the church now stands, were purchased for \$5,500. Groundbreaking was May 19, 1948 and by February 13, 1949 the basement church was dedicated.

The members planned to pay as they built to avoid carrying exorbitant debt. The debt for the basement church was paid 13 years later and plans began to build the superstructure. By the fall of 1966 the exterior of the sanctuary, as it looks today, was complete.

As the congregation grew in souls, there was an acute need for Sunday school rooms, an area for adult Bible study, and office space. The Lord met our needs by opening the hearts of His people in 2005 when the office wing on Washington Street was added. A covered walkway graces the front of the offices with gothic arches to match the lines of the existing building and give an old world touch.

From its inception, St. John's Lutheran has been a member of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod and, as such, is unapologetically a Christ-centered, Bible based church. We are a confessional church body because we follow the Lutheran Confessions (1580) which are a correct exposition of the inerrant Word of God. As people who have freely received the Gospel, we are eager to share that Word to everyone who is tossed about by the empty philosophies of the world and looking for peace with God.

To that end, we also cooperate with St. Paul's Lutheran School to help parents teach their children the way of salvation.