



St. John's Lutheran Church, New Ulm, MN
September, 2022 *Fortress*

The Need to Read

Three pastors met for lunch to discuss their churches' problems. As it turned out, all three had a rodent infestation at their properties.

"I don't know what to do," said the first. "I've put down traps. I've put down poison. I've even bought a cat who lives at church. But still... the rats!"

"I hear you," said the second. "I've done the traps and the poison. I've bought *three* cats and finally called the exterminator. But even he didn't seem to do much about the problem. Still... the rats!"

"I feel for you guys," said the third, "but I don't have any rats anymore. I got rid of them all."

"How?!" the first two pastors shouted in unison, "You've got to tell us your secret!"

"It's simple," replied the third pastor. "I just confirmed them. Now I only see the rats at Christmas and at Easter."

That joke is maybe more sad than it is funny. Looking at the confirmation pictures in our basement sometimes makes my heart ache at how many of those confirmed in the faith (who swore they would rather suffer anything, even death, before they abandoned the faith) still attend church on a regular basis and how many don't.

Pastors sometimes refer to this as "confirmation equals graduation syndrome." That is, some people think that once they've been confirmed in the faith, they've graduated from church and need not attend anymore. How far from the truth that is.

The author to the Hebrews compares growing in knowledge and trust in the Word of God to eating food. He wrote, ***"In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil."*** (Hebrews 5:12-14)

On average, how many times a day do you eat? Just once? Twice or more? Do you have a snack or two thrown in? How many *minutes* in a given day do you think you spend on food preparation

and eating? But if you didn't spend that time eating you know what would happen to you. Without nutrition your muscles would atrophy. You would grow slow and dull. Eventually you would die.

On average, how many minutes in a given day do you spend on spiritual food? You know what will happen if you don't spend that time on spiritual nourishment. Whether you were confirmed ten years ago or fifty years ago, you still need that daily nourishment from the Word. Without it your faith will atrophy and die.

Thank God then, that by that very Word, God offers and gives forgiveness for all the times we've neglected such spiritual food, ignored the Word, and needed milk again instead of solid food. Thank God that he sent Jesus to live a perfect life in our place and to perfectly love and keep God's law. Thank God that Jesus' death on the cross paid for our apathy toward his Word, for all the times we've let other matters crowd out time for his Word, and for every one of our sins. And thank God that he doesn't take his Word away but gives us new opportunities to grow in our understanding and in our trust in his promises.

So, this fall, as school begins again, as we resume our fall schedule at St. John's, as we kick off our mid-week Bible Classes, as more opportunities to grow in the faith return from our relaxed summer schedules... What better time to renew our commitment to spend time in the Word, to feed on the spiritual milk and meat that God offers to us there, to grow in our faith – in God's gracious promises to us – and to strengthen our resolve to live for him? As students go back to school, what better time to renew our resolve to go back to school ourselves – either formally in Bible Class, or informally as we read the Word and solid devotional materials?

I haven't seen this summer's movie hit, that remake of Top Gun (Maverick) yet, but I still remember the iconic line from the 1986 movie. Tom Cruise's character declared, "I feel the need! ...The need for speed!" Well, every Christian ought to feel the need... The need to *read!* That is, in thanks to Jesus for the forgiveness that is ours, we long to dig deeper into his Word, to read what it has to say, and to grow in our faith.

I look forward to seeing many of you back in Sunday School and Bible Class this month as we all have greater opportunities to grow in our faith! See you soon!

Your servant in Jesus,
Pastor Guenther

September Sermon Texts

September 4	Philemon 1, 7-21	Free At Last!
September 11	Hosea 3	Faithful Love to the Faithless
September 18	Luke 16:1-13	Be Like the Scoundrel
September 25	Hebrews 13:1-6	Jesus is Always the Same

Bible Classes meet in the Church Basement
The class can also be found online at bit.ly/SJBibleClass

Sundays at 9:30 am	Book of Job	Pastor Jeff Bovee
Thursdays at 10:30 am	Great Pray-ers of the Bible	Pastor Rob Guenther
Thursdays at 7 pm	Minor Prophets	Pastor Jeff Bovee
Fridays at 9:30 am	Women's Class: <i>The Screentape Letters</i>	Pastor Rob Guenther

Women of St. John's

The September Women of St. John's meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 6th at 7 pm in the church basement.

We will be hosting a game night to start off the Fall season with fun and fellowship.

Refreshments will be served. All ladies are welcome to attend. Please bring a friend and join us for an evening of laughter and games!



Council Digest

The St. John's Church Council met on August 16. A summary of reports and actions not reported elsewhere in the Fortress follows:

Ministrations

Transfers In

David Hirsch from Hope Lutheran, Manhattan, KS

Nick and Diane Roman from St. Paul's Lutheran, N. Mankato, MN

Mark and Jane Haefner from Grace Lutheran, Seward, NE

Transfers Out

David and Marlene Wendler to St. Martin's Lutheran, Watertown, SD

Pastoral Acts

Baptisms

31 Jul Lailah Joy Schaefer
7 Aug Wyatt Geraline Uecker

Deacon Brad Price reported the attendance trends in July for each of the three summer service times, including online viewing. The report highlighted our blessings of coming together as a family of believers around the Word of God.

Pastor Guenther reported for the Board of Youth and Education as a St. John's Representative to the St. Paul's Lutheran School Board for Child Discipleship (BOCD). The enrollment (continues to increase) and the fully staffed school has had registration already. Kirstie Klug accepted the one-year, grades 1-2 call to teach. Sarah Strackbein will be a half-time paraprofessional this school year. Installation for Phil Scriver is Sunday, August 28, 2022, at 9:30 am.

The school support agreement is still in the process of being resolved. St. Paul's began to implement some monthly financial reporting to St John's. St John's has provided feedback so that the reports meet the information needs of the St. John's council and board.

Board of Elders chairman, Jason Mohror, reported on his committee's work to align Mrs. Emily Stoering's synod pension and salary with her years of service and current St. John's policy. The elders and council have a recommendation for release set for the next voters' meeting.

Evangelism Board chair Jesse Zahrt updated the council members on upcoming events as school begins and MLC students return.

- August 28: MLC Welcome Back/Fellowship Sunday. This is also Phil Scriver's installation day.
- September 10: Summer Send-off (5-7pm, outdoor worship at 7:15pm, volunteers?)
- October 29: Trunk or Treat

Board of Elders chairman, Scott Deters, shared the various bids for the kitchen remodel. Current funds are in place to cover a large majority of the project. Specialty items may need to be placed on the wish list. Yet, this should not hinder the project moving forward.

Council members enjoyed some fellowship after the meeting at the President's house.

Future meetings:

Next council meeting - Tuesday, September 20, 7 pm

Next voters' meeting - Tuesday, October 25, 7 pm

Submitted by Jon Schaefer,
Congregational President

Opportunities to Share Your Musical Talent

What a privilege and joy to praise our Savior and proclaim the gospel message through music!

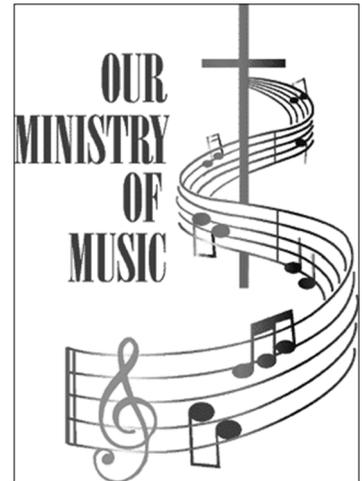
Choir

The St. John's Mixed Choir serves to enhance our worship by bringing God's Word to his people in song.

Anyone 8th grade and older are welcome to participate in the Mixed Choir. There is no audition and you do not need to know how to read music.

Rehearsals will be held in the St. John's balcony on Wednesdays from 7 - 8 pm. The first rehearsal will be on Wednesday, September 7.

If you have any questions please contact Bethel Boeder at betheljeb@gmail.com or 507-217-0182.



Handbells

Anyone 8th grade and older are welcome to participate.

Rehearsals will be Wednesdays from 6 - 7 pm. The first rehearsal will be Wednesday, September 14.

If you have any questions, please contact Becky Berg at rberg@mvlhs.org or 989-280-7674. Please leave your name and phone number if you receive the voicemail.

Archives

Many Hands Make Light Work

The House St. John's Members Built for Their Pastors - 1992

The parsonage that would house St. John's pastors for the next 54 years was a cooperative effort of financial sacrifice and sweat-equity rarely seen today. It was yet another manifestation of the Gospel at work in the hearts of God's people. Upon completion, the upstairs provided 1,694 feet of living space. The basement, though equal in space, was initially left unfinished. The downstairs had a walk-out to the back yard and provided a furnace room as well as washer and dryer space. One half of the basement could be curtained off to afford room for three Sunday school classes. This was especially important as the church expansion project would not be realized for another four years.

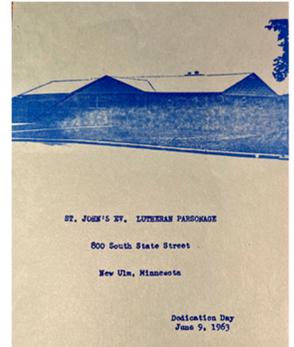
The following is an excerpt from Pastor Nitz's history of the 1962 parsonage project as printed in the dedication pamphlet.

“For some years already, the congregation felt that a more suitable parsonage ought to be provided for its pastor. Various homes were considered, but none in the area were thought to be suitable.

“In August 1961, two lots were given to the congregation with the stipulation that they used for a future parsonage. These lots were ideally situated across Lincoln Park from the church - at Eighth Street South and State. In September 1961, the congregation elected a Parsonage Planning Committee.

“Early in Spring, the Planning Committee presented plans which the congregation accepted. The Planning Committee now continued to function as the Building Committee. Soon the bids of the contractors were accepted. Excavation commenced on June 19, 1962. By the end of July the entire house was enclosed.

“The pastor's family moved into the parsonage on February 7, 1963. Since that time, many projects have been completed by volunteer labor from the members. Other projects are still to be completed as spare time becomes available. All the wiring, painting, varnishing, landscaping, sodding and numerous other projects have been done entirely by members of the congregation.

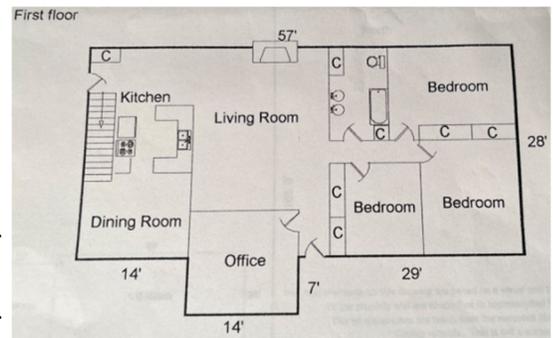


GIFTS AND DONATIONS

“Besides the many hundreds of hours of donated labor, many tangible gifts from the members and the contractors kept the cost to the congregation down to a minimum and produced a truly deluxe home. We will try to list all of them.

Two building lots; fireplace; trucking; top soil; sod; many gallons of paint and varnish; china cabinet in the dining room; all wiring including material (boxes, outlets, switches, cable, junction box, etc.); buzzer system; outdoor planter; flowers; clothes line poles; entire ceiling in basement all purpose room and study; drape rods; landscaping, including some shrubbery and trees; cash gifts of close to \$1,000, which went through our treasurer's books and were paid for some of the items listed above; shutters, curtain rods and numerous other smaller items.

(Note: as you inspect the home, you will find that some of the items listed above have not been installed as yet, but soon will be as time permits.)



“The former parsonage was sold and the congregation realized \$12,487.25 from the sale. It was necessary to borrow \$8,500.00 from the bank in order to meet our bills as they came due. These notes have now been paid since the sale for the parsonage. (Almost \$230.00 interest was paid on the notes.) Total building bills paid by our treasurer, amount to \$23,196.86, as of today. Closer to \$1,200.00 of that, however, includes the special gifts and interest. Therefore the congregation's actual cost of the parsonage amounts to about \$22,000.00. (According to some who know the true value of homes in this area, we have learned St. John's parsonage could be worth close to \$30,000.00.)

SOLI DEO GLORIA!

Fast forward from the dedication in 1963 to 1994. Pastor David Kolander was the pastor and his family lived in the parsonage described above. The congregation determined that the expanding ministries of St. John's required a second pastor. After Pastor Bovee arrived, the congregation purchased a second parsonage on 517 South Jefferson for his growing family. In addition to those two parsonages and a church building, Eventually, two other houses which shared the 600 block of S. Washington with the church were purchased in anticipation of possible, future, sanctuary expansion.

At the turn of the new millennium, the trustees were wrestling with the increasing responsibilities of maintaining four houses, the church building (superstructure and basement) as well as their corresponding properties. The prospect of a church addition was on the horizon.

When Pastor Kolander took a call to Brookfield, Wisconsin in of April of 2001, St. John's decided to give their pastors the option to purchase the parsonages. In May of 2002 Pastor Laitinen purchased the State Street home and in 2004 Pastor Bovee purchased the Jefferson residence.

The congregation's generous provision for the families of its shepherds was yet another manifestation of the Gospel at work in the hearts of God's people.

Respectfully Submitted,

Pastor em. Wayne A. Laitinen
St. John's Lutheran Church Archivist

In Loving Memory

<i>Elmer Rolloff</i>	Undesignated Building Fund Endowment Fund	\$275 \$30 \$20
<i>Erna Zahn</i>	Undesignated	\$250



Church Library

Summer was wonderful, right? And now it is over. Now we have to concentrate on learning and schooling, and Bible classes, and Sunday School. Getting the kids eased into homework.

This month I am introducing four DVDs, that were donated to the church library. They are the four Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. They are word for word adaptations of each Gospel. The same actor portrays Jesus in all four DVDs. There is a choice at the beginning to pick the NIV(2011) version, or the King James Version, or a Spanish version. Subtitles are also available. The narrator, using exact words from the Bible, tells the story while actors portray the actions. The scenery is in Morocco which is very similar to Israel's countryside. The DVDs vary from 123 minutes (Mark) to 205 minutes (Luke). They would be a unique way to read the Bible, and more interesting?

There are also two more romance books available. Kelly Irvin wrote "The Beekeeper's Son." An Amish man, horribly scarred from an accident, just keeps his bees making honey until a newcomer to the order shows friendliness and friendship, so maybe God has a plan. In "Saving Grace," Denise Hunter writes how a woman who runs a crisis pregnancy center can help a young unmarried woman having a baby. Each is shown grace to solve the problem.



Happy reading and watching.
LeiLani Rahn,
Church Librarian

Cards of Caring

Our St. John's Cards of Caring group meets six times a year to make cards to remember our homebound and thinking of you members, our Befriend a Mission LWMS families, and members over 85 years. Cards are made and sent for birthdays, anniversaries, and for holidays. We also send confirmation, sympathy, and get-wells cards.

Our first meeting is scheduled for Saturday, September 10th from 9 am until 12 pm noon. You may come and go as you wish. We meet at 403 N. Minnesota St. (across from the Glockenspiel). We welcome those in 7th grade and older, male and female. MLC students are also welcome.



All materials are furnished. No skills are needed. We recycle cards and create cards using stamp set, etc. This is an opportunity for fellowship and service to the Lord.

Please contact Lois Willems at 507-676-1230 if you have questions.

Staff Minister

Online Church Directory – I am getting ready for the **2023 Edition of St. John's Church Directory** which will be printing in January. There is not a whole lot that needs to be done, but there are two things that need to be updated. 1) Add New Members and 2) Update pictures of those members already listed.

New Members can fill out an information sheet for their family which are available in the new narthex on the table and take to the church office. If you see me before or after church, ask me to take your picture or submit one that you already have taken. Once I have your information entered, go to instantchurchdirectory.com to sign up or download the church App for your phone.

Those that are already in the current directory can update their pictures. They don't have to, but it's always nice to have a current picture. Summer is a good time to think about updating your pictures as many have a chance to get together with family or are involved in activities that may be great for a new picture.

If you haven't tried the online **Instant Church Directory App**, try it on your phone or computer. It is secure and only available to our members and pictures or other information can be updated easily. Download the App for your Android or iPhone by visiting instantchurchdirectory.com and download. You can also visit the Apple Store or Google Play to download the FREE App. Just type in **Instant Church Directory**. I have found it to be very easy to access. Identify St. John's, New Ulm, Minnesota as your church and sign in with your name and email address. The first time you will get an email to verify it is you. Once you are verified and signed in on your phone it only takes a second to open and use to find the members of St. John's.

If you prefer, you can email a photo to sm.dretske@stjohnsnewulm.com and I will update it for you. If you have changed address, phone numbers, or have children now in college or military, please fill out and update information on sheets available in the new narthex and leave in the office. Save time and include names and only information that is new.

Visiting the Homebound -I continue to have the privilege of joining the pastors in visits to members who are homebound—sharing the Gospel in Word and Sacrament. If you are not on our list to be visited but would like to be included, please call the church office or me at 507-217-7604 to get on the list.

Streamed/Recorded Services – If you are watching on YouTube, please **hit SUBSCRIBE**. You will not need to pay a monthly fee. It only means that our St. John's New Ulm "Channel" will show up under your Subscribed Channels in the YouTube App in order to access it easily. If you choose to accept notifications, you will receive a notification on your computer or mobile phone whenever St. John's New Ulm uploads or streams a new video. Thanks for watching our services and subscribing to the St. John's New Ulm YouTube channel.

Respectfully submitted,
Jim Dretske

St. Paul's Lutheran School

SEP 10,
2022

SUMMER

SEND-OFF

Fireworks & Fun!

5:00-7:00 PM:

BOUNCE HOUSES • GAMES
FOOD • MUSIC • & MORE!

Join us for OUTDOOR WORSHIP at 7:15
& stay for the HERMANNFEST FIREWORKS
on the St. Paul's School grounds!

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN SCHOOL • 126 S PAYNE ST



For more information see our website:
JohnandPaulMinistries.com

This event is complimentary through John and Paul Ministries and the Raider Event Committee.