

St John's 75th Year Anniversary Celebration Summary

With Thanksgiving recently passed and our 75th-year anniversary celebration coming to a close, we want to thank all of you who participated and partnered with one another to give God the glory for His many blessings.

Under the theme of *Christ is our Cornerstone*, a series of events were held, and three projects were adopted.

EVENTS

Sunday, May 7 | Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Chorus Concert

Special thanks to the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Chorus, under the direction of Professor Aaron Christie, for kicking off our anniversary celebrations with a beautiful concert on Sunday, May 7th. Among those preparing for ministry and singing in the choir were four St. John members (Josh Koelpin, Daniel Wessel, Samuel Boeder, and Jacob Biesterfeld). A fifth St John member who is studying for pastoral ministry at WLS (Silas Dose) was vicaring at the time. Click [here](#) to view pictures from the event.



Sunday, August 6 | Anniversary Service

We are thankful for all those who faithfully prepared for and served as part of the [anniversary services](#) and for all who attended. Special thanks to:

- * Keith Wessel, who wrote a very uplifting and joy-filled service.
- * Katherine Schmoller, who skillfully designed the [service folder](#) (as well as the banners, bulletin inserts, etc.)
- * Philip Wels, who took the footage and made a [highlights video](#) of the day
- * Bill Pekrul, who snapped some [great pictures](#) of the service.
- * Our musicians - choir, organist, and handbells led by Craig Hirschmann, Jacob Behnken, and Becky Berg, They beautified our worship with the new [concertato](#) and several songs of praise.
- * Pastor Jeff Bovee, who skillfully led us in worship
- * Pastor David Kolander, who shared an encouraging message of how God has preserved us and kept us forever young through 75 years of word and sacrament.
- * Joseph Wessel, Silas Dose, and Justus Borgwardt, our sons currently preparing for pastoral ministry, who gave us cause for thanksgiving as they shared the word with us as lectors.



Sunday, August 6 | 75th Anniversary Luncheon at MLC

Following the services, a crowd of 240+ members of the St John family joined together for fun, fellowship, and a tasty burgers and brat lunch at the MLC gymnasium. Again, we are grateful for all who attended and/or served.

- * Jim Dretske prepared a [memorable slideshow](#) featuring faces and places that God used to bless us
- * Nathaniel Struffert/Pioneer Caterers served a delightful burger & brat meal
- * Pastor Guenther taught us about our past and provided many smiles and laughs with his hilarity and humor
- * Bill Pekrul again captured some smiles and silliness in these fun [pictures](#)



Sunday, September 10 | Organ Recital

We thank God for the many gifted musicians who lead us in our efforts to praise and worship Him. Special thanks to organists Jacob Behnken, Becky Berg, Craig Hirschmann, Jon Roux, Adrian Smith, and Wayne Wagner, who walked us through the church year in this special anniversary recital. The recital can be viewed/heard on our [YouTube](#) channel. Images of the event are also available on our [Facebook](#) page.



Sunday, October 15 | MLC College Choir Concert/Service

We are grateful for our partner in ministry, Martin Luther College, and for the beautiful service they shared in our sanctuary. Special thanks to MLC President Rich Gurgel (St John's member) for his uplifting message and to Professor Adrian Smith (St John's member) and the College Choir for the exceptional presentation of the gospel in song. We are blessed to have MLC in our community and thank the Lord for the many young men and women who are training there to serve in the public ministry. Photos from the service can be viewed [here](#).



PROJECTS

Commissioned Concertato

Generous donations from St. John members fully funded a special [concertato](#) based on *Lord Jesus Christ, the Church's Head*, composed by [John Behnke](#). Thank you! We enjoyed the [St. John choir's performance](#) at our anniversary service and hope that it will be used by other choirs across Christendom



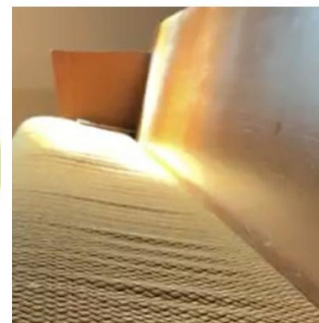
Ministerial Education Endowment

St John has been blessed to have nearly 200 sons and daughters of our congregation prepare for public ministry at [MLC](#) and [WLS](#). Many have gone on to serve as pastors, teachers, and staff ministers in our synod. Currently, more than a dozen of our members are studying to serve in those capacities. In addition to our prayers and encouragement, we want to support them financially. An open-goal endowment fund is being established to help us do that for many years to come. At the time of this writing, nearly \$14,000 has been received. The endowment will remain open for contributions indefinitely. To participate, simply direct your gift to the Ministerial Education Endowment Fund and place it in the offering plate or take/mail it to the church office.



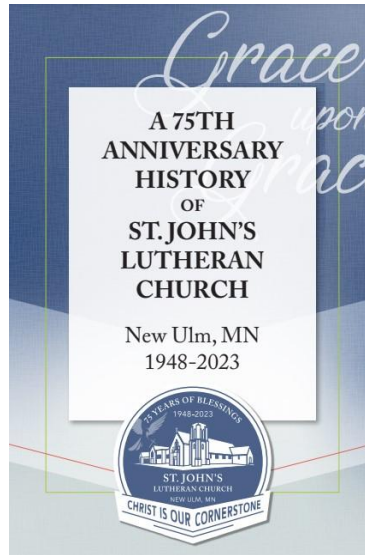
Sanctuary Seating and Flooring

As part of an upcoming larger renovation, we are gathering an anniversary offering with a goal of \$75,000 to beautify God's house. Our 57-year-old sanctuary has aged well, but new floor tile is needed, and the pews could use some touch-ups and fabric changes. The plan also calls for more flexible seating in the front, a contemporary color palette, and improved accessible options. At the time of this writing, nearly \$40,000 has been received. This special campaign will come to a conclusion at the end of 2023. Future support for the project can be directed to the St John Building Fund.



Historical Booklet

Pastor Emeritus Wayne Laitinen conducted extensive research and developed a very interesting and up-to-date history of St John titled *Grace Upon Grace*. It highlights the many ways in which God has showered blessings on our congregation over 75 years. Print copies were produced for those who pre-ordered the booklet, and a [digital version](#) can be read online. A [digital version](#) of 1998's 50-year anniversary booklet (titled *Not Unto Us*) is also available.



COMMITTEE

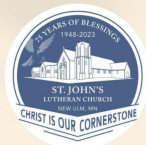
We wish to thank the members of the anniversary planning committee who freely gave many hours to prepare for and execute the events and communications that went into our year-long celebration.

Laura Balza, Music/Arts
Ann Vogel/Communication
Roger Klockziem, Finances

Denise Karstens, Event Planning/Meals
Pastor Rob Guenther, Worship
Pastor Emeritus Wayne Laitinen, History

Wendy Ristow/Secretary
Steve Balza, Chair

Ex Officio: Lisa Goeglein, Communication and Katherine Schmoller, Graphic Arts



St John's 75th Anniversary Committee (L-R)
Roger Klockziem, Wendy Ristow, Pastor Guenther,
Laura Balza, Steve Balza, Denise Karstens,
Lisa Goeglein, Katherine Schmoller
Inserts: Wayne Laitinen, Ann Vogel

CONCLUSION

No celebration, service, project, or reflection can adequately thank God for his abundant blessings on our little flock. Nonetheless, our heartfelt expressions of appreciation and gratitude were sanctified by the Spirit and received as pleasing in God's sight. We pray that He will continue to be present among us, that He will keep us steadfast in His word, and that many more will come to know Him as Lord and to gain the everlasting inheritance that He has given us in Christ.

