

# St. John's News

September, 2020



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[www.stjohnsaustincms.org](http://www.stjohnsaustincms.org)

Live Radio Broadcasts of Worship services every Sunday, 9:00 a.m. at KAUS AM 1480

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THE MISSION OF ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Through Jesus Christ, we

proclaim God's Word,

encourage one another in faith,

witness to God's love and

serve all people.

## Message from Pastor James

### What makes the Church grow?

Last month we asked, "Can a dying church live?" The answer is 'yes!' So how? In these articles I've already explained that the predicted institutional church of 2030 will be a whisper of what it is now. Here's the good news, over the last decade a vibrant growing Church has begun to emerge...

- The Church discovered that it could carry a "lighter backpack."
- It invested in relational discipleship, and changed the congregational culture. This is the single most important shift to foster growth.
- The Baptized people of God assumed their rightful place as missionaries. This is the second greatest shift responsible for fostering a growing, vibrant Church.

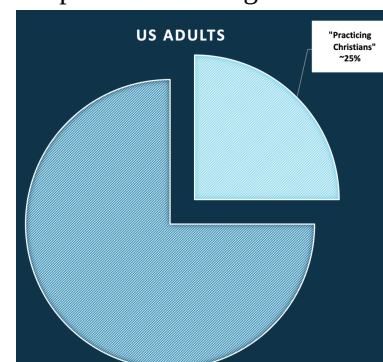
In spite of everything working against the Church, congregations with disciplined believers who embody an air of excitement and deep abiding trust in God, attracted people.

Unfortunately, a decade earlier most church leaders opted out of discipleship as a means to grow. They dismissed it, or didn't know how.

They didn't recognize the power of starting small, with a few people. Most of their churches just got older and smaller. They didn't try, or care to try. A few courageous pioneers made the jump and now the people of God see the Mission of God entrusted to them. So what did they do?

- They eat meals together.
- They build relationships together.
- They share life stories together.

- They speak grace and truth from the heart of God as they represent Jesus together.



- They trust the Holy Spirit to transform lives through the Word.

It's difficult to imagine what has emerged from a decade ago. A decade ago:

- Only 25% of the U.S. population said they worshiped at least once a month, and that their faith was very important to them.<sup>1</sup>
- Nearly all of the congregations in the U.S. were focused on the 25% and ignored the exploding, and ever growing, 75% that were distanced from God and His Church.
- Churches were tagged as bigoted, exclusionary, and judgmental.
- Pastors became distrusted. Many just gave up.

### What can we do? Look at Jesus.

What did Jesus do?

- Jesus was identified as a friend of sinners.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "A Snapshot of Faith Practice Across Age Groups" Barna, 2019.

<sup>2</sup> **Matthew 11:19** – The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!'

- Pharisees complained that He ate with tax collectors and sinners.<sup>3</sup>
- Jesus said: “The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.” (*He was sent by a missionary God who wants His people back.*)<sup>4</sup>
- Jesus said: “As the Father sent Me so I send you.” (*We are sent to be missionaries, too.*)<sup>5</sup>

In the very early church Christians acted with love and mercy toward others. They:

- Built hospitals.
- Built schools.
- Built orphanages.
- Built adoption agencies.
- Built retirement communities.
- Built low income housing.

They were the “builder generation.” Outstanding! Absolutely amazing! The problem is a decade ago institutions became distrusted, including the Church. Furthermore the Church relinquished its role of care to the government. This removed the true Christian influenced care from those care facilities.

That brought about a Church that became, in the view of the world, irrelevant. The Church died to the world. The Church needs to be alive! What is happening in growing, vibrant churches today?

- Christians are disciplined to step over the “us and them” mind set between the church and a hostile world. (*For example the Church should stop picking on the schools. There are many awesome Christian teachers right here in Austin. Some are members of our own congregation. If there’s a problem, and there are some, point to the individual, not the whole group.*)
- They demonstrated love and mercy personally, not just through institutions.
- They ran toward needs to fill them. They actively looked for them.
- They functioned like the early Church (*That is the outlawed, persecuted Church that we’ve been looking at in the “God’s Greater Story” series as we work through the book of Romans.*)
- They told the story of Jesus. They introduced people to a person. That person is Jesus.
- Believers gathered together welcoming “sinners” into their communities. (*“Sinners” would be anyone that others dislike simply because they are different.*)

As churches began to try to grow again they made plenty of mistakes, they saw lots of failures, but they persisted. They kept trying new things, looking for glimmers of success. Those glimmers were pilot lights that opened doors. They found places to learn. They explored models of others’ successes. They miraculously began to see growth and new souls being born into God’s family as people came to the waters of Holy Baptism, called out of darkness into His marvelous light.<sup>6</sup>

They were encouraged. The anger and distrust toward Christians was overcome one person at a time, across kitchen tables and backyard fences. **Not from pulpits and media campaigns.** The beliefs, values, and behaviors of the 75% outside the Church were much, much different than those who were in the Church imagined, because the culture had changed so much. What they learned was nearly everything they had been doing for decades was now a barrier to bringing people in.<sup>7</sup> The growing churches realized change was necessary to survive.

### Why do we have to change?<sup>8</sup>

3 **Luke 15:2** – The Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, “This man receives sinners and eats with them.”

4 **Luke 19:10** – The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.

5 **John 20:21** – Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.”

6 **1 Peter 2:9** – You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.

7 To dig much deeper into this subject I’d strongly recommend the book: “*Canoeing the Mountains: Christian Leadership in Uncharted Territory*” by Tod Bolsinger

8 **1 Corinthians 9:20-23** – To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the Law I became as one under the Law... that I might win those under the Law. To those outside the Law I became as one outside the Law... that I might win those outside the Law. To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means

It is now much more difficult to reach the average American with the Gospel than it was 50 years ago.

On the scale below:

- “1” is a person with no faith, and not far (or not started) in their journey to becoming a Christian.
- “10” is a person in whom the Spirit of God has worked through the Word to bring them to faith in Jesus Christ.



In 1960, the “average” unbelieving person in America knew:

- x some basics of the Christian faith, including the deity of Jesus.
- x absolute truth exists, and the Bible is trustworthy.
- x they viewed the Church, Christians, and Christian leaders in a favorable way.
- x they has a positive experience of church in their own personal life background.
- x they experienced a sense of guilt when they broke fundamental laws, like getting caught lying.

Let’s put the 1960s average unbelieving person in America at an 8 in their faith walk.



By comparison let’s put the average unbelieving American today at a “3.”



In today’s world, the “average” unbelieving person in America does not know:

- x the basics of the Christian faith, including the deity of Jesus.
- x absolute truth exists, and the Bible is trustworthy.
- x or see, the Church, Christians, and Christian leaders in a favorable way.
- x or have a positive experience of church in their own personal life background. They may not have any experience, with church, of any kind.
- x they do not experience a sense of guilt when braking fundamental laws, like getting caught lying.

Now the holy Spirit can work through the Word anyway He wants. Right? But at how He worked in the book of Acts!

- Cornelius and his household. (Acts 10)
- Lydia and her household. (Acts 16:11-15)
- The jailer at Philippi. (Acts 16:16-34)

The thing is all of them were closer to our 1960’s “8s” than our 2020 “3s.” So, the things that worked years ago: friendship Sunday, congregational evangelistic campaigns, invitations to Christmas Eve worship, or Bible study at church

I might save some. I do it all for the sake of the Gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings.

don't work like they used to. In fact the way Homiletics (that is preaching) is generally taught remains utterly out of touch with the way we need to reach the culture of today.

Churches keep acting like the world is full of 7s, 8s, 9s. The problem is the world has become full of 1s, 2s, and 3s. Today, for the most part, it takes more personally invested time. Evangelism and outreach requires a relationship. That means it takes longer and it takes a one-on-one personal investment. It requires the people of a congregation to demonstrating integrity, valor, honor, honesty and Christian love over the long haul, because there is a longer journey to get across the scale to a "10" and they are starting with people who have a general mistrust of the Church.

That's why it is critical that churches think differently. Growing congregations:

- allow and expect their pastor and staff to spend time outside the church building, building relationships with people and institutions throughout the community.
- help members share their faith, and the hope it offers, in a comfortable way.
- create community outside the church where 4s, 5s, and 6s can share life with the 9s and 10s that love them. *(This is done by building relationships, not policies, procedures, and programs.)*

As people visit our church, or as you meet people on the street, follows a simple pattern.

- ✓ listen to their story...including their place of brokenness.
- ✓ share your own story later...in a way that might connect with theirs.
- ✓ share the piece of God's story that offers good news.

Using passing connections with people, or more permanent relationship with a friend or neighbor, 3s and 4s are sometimes nudged to 5s and 6s. The relationship process that includes the truth of God's Word is used by the Holy Spirit to bring someone to believe in Jesus.

Where there's more sowing of the Word all studies have shown there are more people moved by the Spirit.<sup>9</sup> That Word is shared through relationships not robotically forcing it on them, or just handing them a Bible as they walk by. Anything you send through the mail or handed out as a gift is most probably a waste of time and money for the vast majority of Americans today. They won't open it. They won't read it. *(Unless you promise there's a \$10 bill hidden in it. Then they'll open it take the money and throw the rest away.)*

If you want your church to grow you'll just have to be nice to people. How hard is it to be nice to people?

The early Church encouraged their members to:

- became a friend of sinners.
- live lives of disciplined integrity and compassion.
- be always prepared to give an answer.
- invite people into small groups with Jesus at the center.

Most churches over the last two decades have:

- ignored the reality of a profoundly changed world around them.
- continued a two decade pattern of shrinking away.
- failed to keep a mindset of leaving a legacy of a Church for their children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren.
- spent most of their time blaming someone else.
- continued to search for a quick easy magic answer.

A few (a very small 16%) saw a need to change, and change radically.

- They disciplined a few and began to relationally disciple others knowing that discipleship always includes the mission.

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9 **Isaiah 55:10-11** – As the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

- They took baby steps beginning with the BLESS pattern (*see below*).

Like I've said, we're headed for change. Change can be challenging, even a little alarming. (It really isn't that bad.) This month I've got an assignment for you. Sit down, pause, and think about what St. John's has looked like to the people of Austin over the last ten years. Make a list of everything that is "right" and "wrong" with our church based on what I've written above. Then read the book of Acts this month. There is a lot going on in that book, but I want you to focus on the relationships and how the Spirit used those relationships to bring people the Word through which people were brought to faith. Write down what you think needs to change at St. John's to become a relational, missional, and radically hospitable church.

The fire alarm is ringing. The year 2030 doesn't look pretty and it's coming fast. This is the most difficult challenge you will have. To make it a bit easier read the BLESS pattern below. Start practicing it every time you gather. You'll start acting your way into a new mind set, and start to think along the lines of Luke 10 and the sending of the 72.

The BLESS pattern is a means to help build genuine relationships. We live in a culture that is *street-smart* to programs. They can smell them coming. You'll have to actually care about people, invite them into your homes, and learn who they are, and become their friend.

**B** – Begin with prayer (*For yourself at first. With them when the time is right.*)

**L** – Listen

**E** – Eat

**S** – Serve


**S** – Share

This is the recipe to building relationships and discipling people to disciple others.

There were a lot of facts and data this month, but I hope you can see some answers beginning to break through. Next month we'll look deeper into what it means to "disciple" our fellow faithful.

Pastor James Office Hours	
Monday	9-11:30 a.m.
Wednesday	9-11:30 a.m.
Thursday	9-11:30 a.m.

On Tuesday Pastor James is working at home but can be reached by phone: 320-336-8149

<p align="center"><b>September Birthdays for Shut-Ins</b></p> <p>30 Rodger Bliese</p> <p>Our shut-ins would appreciate a card, phone call or visit DURING THE MONTH. A LIST OF ALL THE SHUT-INS IS ON THE BULLETIN BOARDS</p>	
	

### **Ruby's Pantry in Austin**

As we transition from summer into fall our Ruby's distributions continue at the Mower County Fairgrounds the 3rd Thursday of each month. With concerns about how many people we can safely have in our church building it's possible we may be at the fairgrounds for a few more months. There has been a noticeable drop off in volunteers for June and July so we are asking our area churches for any help they can give us in soliciting volunteers. If you have any individuals or groups who may be willing to help please have them call Grace Lutheran Church at 433-3445. As always, you are invited to stop out during any of our distributions to see the work we are doing in Christ's name to help our neighbors. Thank you for considering helping and please continue to pray our efforts will reach those who need it most.

[goodnews@rubyspantry.org](mailto:goodnews@rubyspantry.org)

[www.rubyspantry.org](http://www.rubyspantry.org)

Bob Rosel

Media Coordinator Ruby's Pantry Austin

**Youth Group Kwik Trip Car Wash Cards.** We still have a couple cards to sell. Each card cost \$36 for five Ultimate washes to use at any Kwik Trip with a car wash. Cards are available at the church office. Contact Kara Grant with questions.

Bonnie and Merrill Meyer wish to thank everyone for the cards, calls and prayers. The Lord be praised for his love and healing power.

### **Youth Fundraiser**

Youth and Family is having a Fundraiser to help the youth get to the National Youth Gathering in Houston, Texas. We are planning on having a rummage sale this fall. If you would like to donate larger items and have only Partial or ALL of the proceeds to go toward the youth fundraiser, that is an option. So start going through your stuff and save it for the rummage sale. There is a place to store your donated items at the church. Contact the church office for more information.

**TAKE IT TO THE LORD IN PRAYER.** DO YOU HAVE A PRAYER CONCERN OR THANKSGIVING? COMMEND IT TO THE LORD THROUGH YOUR OWN PRAYERS, BUT ALSO THROUGH THE LOVING SERVICE OF OUR PRAYER CHAIN. IF YOU HAVE AN ITEM YOU WOULD LIKE INCLUDED ON THE PRAYER CHAIN, PLEASE CONTACT MIRIAM LUEHMANN AT 437-7619 OR [Miriam.Luehmann@icloud.com](mailto:Miriam.Luehmann@icloud.com)

### **Radio Broadcast**

Fellow Members of St. Johns,

We would like to thank everyone for supporting St. Johns Radio Broadcast. The sponsors for the upcoming weeks are as follows.

Sept. 6, 2020 Sponsored by Merrill and Bonnie Meier in thankfulness to God for their 63<sup>nd</sup> wedding anniversary they will celebrate Sept. 8<sup>th</sup>.

Sept. 13, 2020 Sponsored by Ken and Winnie Greenlee in thankfulness to God for their 64<sup>nd</sup> wedding anniversary they will celebrate Sept. 15<sup>th</sup>.

Sept. 20, 2020 Sponsored Rosalie Seltz in memory of her husband Dick Seltz also Dick and Rosalie parents Rev. and Mrs. Paul Seltz and Mr. and Mrs. Willard Critchfield.

Sept. 27, 2020 Given in memory of Dalvin Augustin by his wife Janet Augustin and family and friends.

You can listen to the radio broadcast live on KAUS Radio Sunday mornings at 9:00 a.m.

God's blessing to all of you, Clayton and Ellen Petersen

## Men's Bible Study

In 1 Peter 3:15, God calls on us to - *Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.*

### September Birthdays

01 Debbie Binder  
02 Miriam Luehmann  
03 Hannah Green  
03 Hope McAlister  
05 Katy Hodge  
06 Rebecca Thor  
12 Jan Christiansen  
13 Brantley Steinbrink  
14 Andrea Funke  
14 Cindy Hovey  
15 Carol Schleicher  
16 Jonathan Grant  
17 Due Downey  
17 Sherri Wessels  
17 Nathan Wradislavsky  
20 Alisha Meyer  
22 Heather Meyer  
22 Brian Wollenburg  
23 Francine Strouf  
25 Barbara Donkers  
27 Kiley Kusick  
27 Wayne Strouf  
28 Arnie Mulso  
29 Dave Grant  
29 Mariah Green  
30 Rodger Bliese

### Anniversaries

01 Bill & MeriJo Lonergan  
05 Lyle & Holly Wasko  
07 Tanner & Christina  
Bergstrom  
08 Gary & Donna Barclay  
08 Albie & Connie Gilsrud  
08 Merrill & Bonnie Meier  
11 Dave & Sharry Watkins  
12 Tim & Kathy Carlson  
13 Bruce & Pam Reistad  
15 Ken & Winnie Greenlee  
19 Jason & Angela Grant  
24 Adam & Alisha Meyer

How prepared are you? How do you explain the reason for your hope? How do you defend your faith? Do you wish you were better able to answer the questions or comments that follow? Yes, me too!

New for Men's Bible Study this fall - In our new study, *Forensic Faith*, a veteran cold-case detective J. Warner Wallace helps you rethink and share your Christian beliefs. He teaches the principles investigators use to assist you in developing a clear, evidence-based faith. Learn why you have a duty to defend the truth and become a better communicator by learning the skills of professional case makers.

It is true that even more today than ever in our lives, we as Christians need to be able to defend what we believe and why we believe it.

Join us at Men's Bible Study every Thursday, starting September 10th, at 5:00 PM. Let's become better disciples together when we witness to others.

In Christ,  
David Ruhnke, moderator

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### **MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL SPRING VOTERS' MEETING OF ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH HELD AT AUSTIN MINNESOTA ON SUNDAY, JULY 26, 2020 AT 9:55 A.M. PURSUANT TO THE BY-LAWS**

The annual Spring Voters' meeting of St. John's Lutheran Church was called to order at 9:55 a.m. by President Vance Oelkers with 39 members present. This meeting was delayed two months because of the pandemic (COVID-19). The meeting was held in the worship area with social distancing, families 6 feet apart, and everyone wearing a mask.

**OPENING PRAYER:** Given by Pastor James Groleau.

**SECRETARY'S REPORT:** M/S/P to accept the secretary's report from October 6, 2019, as written.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** End of June 30, 2020, Net Operating Income is \$13,197.46 and Net Decrease in Designated Assets is \$(14,116.90). M/S/P to accept the treasurer's report, as written.

**SALE OF PARSONAGE:** The parsonage was sold, without the help of a realtor, for \$228,500.

**ELECTION OF OFFICERS & BOARD MEMBERS:** After much discussion, M/S/P to approve the revised list of officers and board member nominees for 2020-2021. Note: the "M/S/P" was for the names on the list of officers and board members with an asterisk (\*) behind their name. (*this list will be published at a later date.*)

**TRUSTEES:** Since the north and west church exit doors were sometimes left unlocked or unlatched, the locks have been changed and new keys have been purchased. The old, or former, keys will still open the east exit door (the one by the office).

**CLOSING:** The meeting was closed by Dale Siegfried, chairman, with a short inspirational/motivational talk and the Lord's prayer.

Respectfully submitted, Donna Bailey, Council Secretary

**ST. JOHN'S CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING**  
**August 11, 2020**

The August 11, 2020, meeting was called to order by President Dale Siegfried at 7:00 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Darrel Bahn, David Ruhnke, Dick Heuton, Lori Siegfried, Dale Siegfried, Richard Kiehne, Pastor James, Sharry Watkins, Kathy Carlson, Bob Bailey

**OPENING PRAYER:** Pastor Groleau

**SECRETARY'S REPORT:** M/S/P to accept the secretary's report for July 14, 2020, as written.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** Net Operating Loss: \$(29,320.94). Net Decrease in Designated Assets: \$(13,531.27). M/S/P to accept the Treasurer's report, as written.

The council directed the treasurer to invest the proceeds from the sale of the parsonage with LCEF.

M/S/P that Pam Reistad's name be removed from U.S. Bank, LCEF, and Edward Jones; and that R. D. Heuton's name be added to the same.

**ELDERS' REPORT:**

The August 10<sup>th</sup> meeting was opened with Bible study and prayer.

We accepted the transfer in of Lee Grant and son. We approved the transfer out of Tony and Lisa Flerlage and family.

The next elders meeting will be Monday, August 31, at 6:00 p.m.

**TRUSTEES' REPORT:**

The parsonage was sold for \$230,000 and netted \$228,529.50 after closing costs. Property/ casualty insurance will be \$718 less per year without the parsonage.

The attic insulation installed last November led to a savings in natural gas consumption of 11% based on heating degree days. That amounted to a saving over the last heating season of \$524.

Landscaping around the north church sign has been renewed with new plantings and new rock.

After the kitchen and mechanical room floors were flooded twice recently, a partial blockage in the soil pipe under the church was discovered and subsequently cleaned.

Continued diagnosis of air conditioning problems has led to replacement of several relays, discovery of a seized compressor and unsolved wiring problems in the chiller.

**EDUCATION & YOUTH & FAMILY BOARDS:**

Suggestions were made for possible new board members. Lori will contact several people regarding joining the boards.

The Youth rummage sale was briefly discussed and possible dates of August 21, 22 or August 28, 29 were suggested. Kerri will talk to Kara Grant to see if the youth would be able to prepare for the sale at one of those times.

Sunday school was discussed regarding when it would start and how it might look. A tentative calendar of lesson dates was distributed by the pastor. Kerri plans to contact parents of the children in the congregation to see how they feel about Sunday school in the fall.

The board decided to meet again on Thursday, August 6<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 p.m. following the back-to-school announcement from the governor.



The Boards met again on August 6<sup>th</sup>. Under the current status of the pandemic, it was decided to hold off on a decision regarding the start of Sunday school as the Austin Public Schools had not released the plans for the upcoming school year as of this meeting date. The pastor is working on developing a Christian education outreach with the use of technology. Also, some discussion was held regarding providing families with a take home Sunday school curriculum for the month of September.

It was also decided to put the Youth rummage sale on hold at this point due to the current situation.

The Hallelujah Harvest Festival will not take place this fall due to the pandemic.

Nicole Kramer has agreed to join the board. Kerri has resigned from the board and we thanked her for all her time and effort she put forth for the youth of St. John's.

Our next meeting is set for August 27<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 p.m.

**STEWARDSHIP BOARD:**

The Board is now filled with five members; thus we will begin meeting. The SCRIPT card sales continue 10:00-10:30 a.m. on Sundays between the services.

**SOCIAL MINISTRY:**

Pam Waters was to be head of the board this year, but Kara Grant has volunteered to take her place since Pam has some health issues.

Shoe collection will be taken to Minneapolis on Friday.

Backpacks are on hold for now due to the pandemic.

**EVANGELISM:**

No meeting was held. We will not be having a coat drive this year due to the pandemic..

**PASTOR'S REPORT:**

See Pastor's Report directly following the Council minutes.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

None

**NEW BUSINESS:**

After the 9:00 a.m. service on August 23<sup>rd</sup>, there will be a congregational meeting.

**ADJOURNMENT:** M/S/P to adjourn about 8:00 p.m.

**CLOSING:** Closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted: Bob Bailey, Substitute Council Secretary

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**Pastor's Report:**

**The COVID-19 situation** continues to make it difficult to do what the Church should be doing, bringing Jesus to people. The three worship services we currently hold, Sun 9:00am, 10:30am, and Wed 6:30pm continue to slowly grow. I am glad to see more new faces in church. Still there are many who have chosen to remain home, and I respect that decision. People need to measure their own situations and act accordingly to keep yourself and your family safe.

I would like to reiterate the message from the elders. We would ask everyone to wear your mask throughout the church service. Some people are uncomfortable coming to church and would be willing to attend if everyone wore a mask. For the sake of our brothers and sisters in Christ I would ask all of **you to do that. I would encourage** everyone to read 1 Corinthians 8. We should do nothing that would hinder someone from being fed in our church.

**St. John's has a new special phone number** which will be used to provide additional spiritual care.

**The number you dial is: 518-906-1379, then select open '1' for "Live Radio." You will then automatically hear an abbreviated recorded service from the previous Sunday.** This broadcast is updated generally on Tuesday. More features and details may be made available later but the initial release of this new system is up and running. The work on other technologies to bring Bible studies and other spiritual care to members of all ages to St. John's is planned to be up and running by September. Our intention is to include an on-line church with services, Bible studies, discussion groups and more. If necessary this will be the platform for Sunday School, CASE, and Confirmation.

Visiting shut-ins remains impossible. The various care facilities remain in a lock-down state. Although I would like them to allow clergy in to visit members, I respect that their decisions are being made with the care for our members and all their residents in mind. Please pray for our shut-ins. They are more cut off from our community than any other group.

**We continue though two sermon series:**

The first is called "The Change Series." Once a month for 6-8 months we will explore what St. John's can do for the Kingdom, and how we as a church can grow by spreading the truths of the Bible and God's love for all people. By the time you read this you will have heard sermon #2 in this series. Later in the series I plan to put a Bible study together to explore these things more intensively. If you're looking for something to read I would suggest, "Canoeing the Mountains" by Tod Bolsinger. This book covers something that will cause you to really pause and think about where our church must go to survive.

The second series is called "God's Greater Story." It will run for about three or four months and will walk through the book of Romans. This book was written by St. Paul to explain in detail what the Christian faith is, what it means to be a Christian, and how Christians act differently from the world around us. He was teaching those small congregations in Rome how to grow as a church. He gives perfect examples for us to follow today.

**Offerings.** I'd like to bring up, again this month, I am very sensitive to, and understand, that the COVID situation has hit some people harder than others. For those who are able please do not forget your church. Most of the bills that accumulate have not stopped during this time. It's hard to believe that our doors were shut back in February and the situation is still troubling us. I would like to thank all of those who are able, and have continued to give during this time. Please make your first offering a sacrifice of prayer and praise each day as we continue to work through this process and strive to bring the saving Gospel to our members and then to all those around us.

The last issue is a very important one. I would ask for your prayers for the Sudanese ministry here in Austin. Pastor Reef is a Sudanese man who is now a LCMS Pastor. He is working diligently to pull this ministry back together. This ministry has seen some great turmoil since Pastor Simon Dup was called home. Pastor Reef is a wonderful man with a true heart for the people of God. They began meeting in our church before the COVID situation. That worship service will be starting up again soon on Sunday afternoons. Please pray for Pastor Reef and the souls for whom he cares.

God's blessings to each of you.

Pastor James

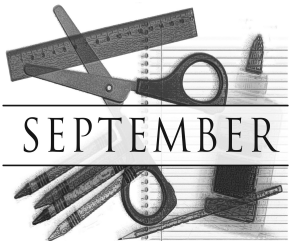
**St. John's Lutheran Church Financial Recap**  
**January 1, 2020 through June 30, 2020**

<b>Undesignated Assets</b>	<b>Balance 1/1/20</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Balance 7/31/20</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Cash	\$199,211.92	\$268,387.01	\$467,598.93	Undesignated Assets represent the funds available for general operating purposes.
Prepays/Other Assets	13,831.09	(2,103.47)	11,727.62	
Buildings & Land	3,096,411.00	(268,719.00)	2,827,692.00	
Liabilities	(5,171.02)	(26,870.48)	(32,041.50)	
<b>Net Operating Income (Loss)</b>		<b><u>(\$29,305.94)</u></b>		
<b>Designated Assets</b>				
Building Fund	107,467.19	(3,401.48)	104,065.71	Designated Assets represent all of the various funds that can be contributed to for the designated purpose.
Needy Family Fund	1,667.08	(500.00)	1,167.08	
Women's Ministry Fund	1,923.46	0.00	1,923.46	
Rachel's Hope Fund	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Musical Equipment Fund	283.68	0.00	283.68	
Library Books Fund	394.17	100.00	494.17	
Choir Robes Fund	3,111.00	0.00	3,111.00	
Memorial Fund	14,481.11	5,946.10	20,427.21	
Praise Band Fund	3,135.40	0.00	3,135.40	
Youth Fund	7,117.18	(223.78)	6,893.40	
Scrip Fund	15,452.11	(15,452.11)	0.00	
Sumner School Fund	8,746.72	0.00	8,746.72	
undesignated		(15.00)	(15.00)	
Endowment Fund	41,316.30	0.00	41,316.30	
	<u>205,095.40</u>		<u>191,549.13</u>	
<b>Increase (Decrease) in Designated Assets</b>		<b><u>(\$13,546.27)</u></b>		
<b>Net Income (Loss)</b>		<b><u><u>(\$42,852.21)</u></u></b>		

St. John's Lutheran Church  
1200 13th Avenue NW  
Austin, MN 55912

**September, 2020**

**NEWSLETTER**



# ST. JOHN'S NEWS

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