

St. John's News

December, 2020



Church: 507-433-2642

Pastor: Cell 320-336-8149

Church Office:

stjohns@stjohnsaustincms.org

Pastor James Groleau:

shepherd@jamesplace.net

St. John's Webpage:

www.stjohnsaustincms.org

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

Watch the service live on line by going to

www.stjohnsaustincms.org



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

Finally some good news. A growing church has begun to emerge in the United States. The hinge that swings the door toward a better future hangs on everyday followers of Jesus learning to disciple others to follow Jesus. This real shift happens when we see a change from a Christendom-world to a post-Christendom-world. This does not in any way change the doctrine of our church. It does change how things are done. What had worked so well for generations just doesn't any more. We need a new plan to convey those same unchanging doctrines founded on the whole of the inspired, inerrant, Word of God.

Widespread discipleship across the Church grows more interest in additional biblical education. Congregational members, in any church: small, big, tired, energetic, rural, urban, small-town, simple, sophisticated, almost-dead or vibrant must stop helplessly watching and started to learn the pattern of discipling others. Discipling is more than the transfer of biblical information and doctrinal truth. It requires relationships and action.

Paul says, "So I urge you to imitate me."

[1 Corinthians 4:16]

People following Jesus, and willing to count the cost [Luke 14:28], are no longer simply recipients of the gifted work of professional pastors. They create a strong interest in their own biblical understanding. Seeing it as a sacred investment in the future of others' souls.

What is needed is an increased focus on discipleship placing greater emphasis on Christian character and

quality, attached to Bible study. The recovery of trust in the Church will be built on the development of the character in its members and their reputation in the communities they serve.

The days of the great revivals are over for America for any foreseeable future. Evangelism is no longer going to be done in large groups. Introducing people to Jesus is connected to, and delivered through, a system designed to provide training and resources to believers who can then share those things with others. Your own Bible studies are one of the most fundamental resources to growing a church. With all of the "connected" technology available to us, and the endless social platforms which connect us, they still do not bring Christ to people in an effective way. The truth is, real connections make real Christians. True evangelism happens today over backyard fences and over coffee or kitchen tables.

All of this requires us to change. That is often not easy, but if your goal is Kingdom focused; if your heart is for the lost and those living in darkness, then seeing the need for change becomes more apparent and easier to grasp. Each part of this newsletter series has offered change, but you may have noticed it offered no easy, silver bullet, to get from where we are to where we need to be. The true challenge falls on you, as members of the body of Christ, to step boldly forward.

What comes next?

- It is critical that our greatest theological minds, respected seminary professors, and visionaries collaborate to create a Biblical education

that focuses on Christian character learned through Scripture.

- There is a lot at stake here. History proves it is easy to get “theologically sideways,” (aka heretical). What can start as biblical, Christ-centered, mission-focused work, over the course of a few short years, can go wrong if the focal point moves. All things must be seen through the lens of Holy Sacred Scripture, our doctrine and the Confessions. If these things appear to be in the way, we are going the wrong way. Holy Sacred Scripture, our doctrine and the Confessions are the way.
- The Christian Church in America has suffered greatly from the examples of failed character among its most public leaders. These things are often highly publicized failures, and sometimes mistakenly covered up. This helped propagate a culture of mistrusting in the Church. It propagated the lies and gossip that are always present. Pastors grow more and more untrusted. The vast majority of pastors demonstrate: integrity, honesty, humility, faithfulness with money, sexual purity, relational wisdom, and compassion. Still the “collective reputation” of church leaders is scarred by too many examples of: arrogance, pride, lust, adultery and gossip. As a result, the Church suffers.
- The fix for all of this is personal integrity in all aspects of life. Realizing you are sent to tell. We can no longer relegate the “telling” to pastors, missionaries and chaplains. The baptized people of God must own the mission of God, and developed a thirst for more biblical education.

For those who learn better by seeing rather than readings, how about a practical example to show how all the things shared in this monthly series work?

By God’s good grace the COVID craziness will conclude. Maybe soon. When it does we need to get CASE started up again. In case you don’t know C.A.S.E. is Christian After School Education. It is the Wednesday afternoon program started here, as part of your instructions and desire when you called me, to grow and prosper the youth group.

When things get started again, come see how it works. CASE here at St. John’s started with 5 kids from our Sunday School and one from outside the congregation. In year 2 we had about 20. In year 3 we had about 40. All of that on a budget of nearly zero. We provide supplies, lessons, materials and food every week. Although I don’t have the actual numbers readily available to me I can tell you we’ve probably spent less than \$500 from the St. John’s budget over those three years. Last time I did the math we were averaging about \$1.20 per child for meals. The vast majority of that coming from outside the congregation.

These children come from within and from outside our congregation. They are connected to families of all walks of life. Those from money, and some struggling to get by. What they all have in common is a need for Jesus. Don’t we all?!

If those kids are told they are welcome, the families realize they are welcome. If families are welcome the church grows as CASE does. As our church grows so do the people in the pews. That is done by doing what St. John’s logo and brand states:

Proclaim God's Word,
Encourage one another in faith,
Witness to God's love and
Serve all people.



St. John’s Lutheran Church is poised to grow. This congregation has more opportunity to prosper than any I have ever seen. We are at the crossroads right now. The path we pick moving forward will affect this congregation's future. It can be a growing congregation or it can be one that simply fads away.

Additional Youth Items

I wanted to give an update on some youth related items. Since COVID came is has been profoundly difficult to find ways to continue to engage the youth connected to St. John’s. The senior youth have started up again, thanks to the awesome work of Kara Grant. Thanks much for that! Sunday School and CASE have been on hold since last March. Parents have expressed (and rightfully so) concerns about the close quarters for the children and teachers in our small classrooms. The Board of Ed. Has been compiling packets for the Sunday School that can be done at home. I would encourage you to use those.

CASE also is on hold. CASE is an after school program. In discussions with parents and kids we felt asking the kids to spend an additional two hours with masks on after a full day of school would be a challenge, so we have not been able to restart that program. I want all of you CASE families to know you are not forgotten. You continue to be in our prayers. My prayer is that we can get things started up again soon, but right now with the schools returning to distance learning and the spikes in COVID infections we have to remain on hold.

Confirmation classes have started. We have a class of nine students this year. Three are second year students who will be confirmed on Palm Sunday if all goes as planned. The other six are in their first year of confirmation and they will be continuing on next year. To deal with the COVID mess I have begin live streaming the class on YouTube. It is archived in the video library there, usually by end of Tuesday. I am emailing the handouts to those who are absent. We'll continue to do that through the rest of this class year. To watch simply go to YouTube and search for "St. John's Austin, MN" I'll work on improving the video and they'll be listed in the "Confirmation" playlist.

All of the youth at St. John's are the future of St. John's. Please keep them in your prayers.

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Thank you.

I'd like thank all of you who remembered my family and me during October Pastor appreciation month. Without a doubt these are challenging times at St. John's. The kind words from so many have been a true God-send. Though we haven't used the gift yet we will find a fun way for our family to have a little fun. Please continue to keep us in your prayers, and please know all of you are constantly, daily in ours.

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

Gossip: casual or unconstrained conversation or reports about other people, typically involving details that are not confirmed as being true.

The Bible clearly tells us to do more than discussing other people's lives. Leviticus 19:16 – "Do not go about spreading slander among your people. Proverbs 11:13 – "A gossip betrays a confidence, but a trustworthy man keeps a secret."

And the tongue is a fire! The tongue represents the world of wrongdoing among the parts of our bodies. It pollutes the entire body and sets fire to the course of human existence—and is set on fire by hell. (James 3:6)

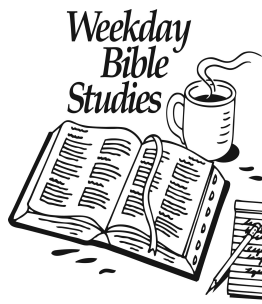
Ruby's Pantry in Austin

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 www.rubyspantry.org

Bob Rosel, Media Coordinator Ruby's Pantry Austin

Together in the Word



Sunday: Adult Bible class at 10:00 a.m. led by Pastor James
Total Forgiveness at 10:00 led by Thad Kusick, Elder

Becoming a Contagious Christian is the new Sunday Morning Bible study with Pastor James. In Becoming a Contagious Christian we will learn what has helped many believers reach the unchurched.

The Gospel of Luke at 10:00 led by Sandy Groleau

Tuesday: Women's Bible study meets at 1:00 p.m. at St. John's.

Wednesday: Gray Matters meets St. John's at 7:30 p.m. Join us for a free-flowing discussion.

Thursday: *Crossways* at 10:00 a.m. Study the entire Bible in two years. Led by Sandy Groleau, LCMS Director of Church Ministries. New members always welcome.

Men's Bible study at 5:00 p.m. - led by Dave Ruhnke.

Thank you to Kara Grant that the youth group is getting together again for fun and God's Word.

Stewardship

Philippians 1:5 – “[I always thank God] ... because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now.” God doesn't need anything we have. Yet He invites us to give so that we can indeed become “partners in the Gospel.” This is a gift of His grace: inviting us to do significant work in the Kingdom of God.



Shoe Away Hunger

Shoe Away Hunger If you have gently used shoes you no longer need, consider placing them in the box near the office. One pair of shoes can supply a family with seven days of essential groceries. Damaged shoes can no longer be accepted.

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

Upcoming Worship Opportunities

We will have two sermon series for Advent and Christmas. As we close the *God's Greater Story* sermon series on Romans we also come to the beginning of a new Church Year. The Sundays in Advent will follow a series on the "Jesse Tree." An ancient tradition in the Christian Church used as a countdown to Christmas Day. We will have some material you can use at home with your family that will coincide with this series.

The Wednesday services will call us to *Behold the Child* as we explore who Jesus is, why He came, and what He came to offer. Namely "peace on earth and good will among those with whom he is pleased." (Luke 2:14)

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11:00pm "Sermon: Why Did Jesus Come" This will be a modified Compline service, for those of you familiar with the Hours of the Church. This will be a candlelight service concluding at about midnight welcoming the New Born King.

On Christmas Day we will have a service at 10:00am with a message titled, "*Infinite Gifts in Finite Wrappings*." This will be a service similar to those of past years celebrating the wonder found in Jesus the Holy Christ of God.

Secret Sister Sign-up!



Would you like to be a secret Sister an encourager to a Christian sister? If you would, you can fill out the sheet provided in the weekly bulletin at church and drop it in the box provided on the table along the east wall of the church. If you are unable to attend church at this time and you would like to be a secret sister you can call me directly and sign up. You will be assigned your secret sister the end of December so you can start encouraging your secret sister in January 2021!

Ellen Petersen 433-6626

December Birthdays for Shut-Ins

17 Jewell Weeks

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

Radio Broadcast





LIFESTYLES OF RECONCILIATION SERIES



Go and Be Reconciled What Does This Mean

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Ambassadors
of
Reconciliation™

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Ambassadors of Reconciliation (AoR)

About Us

Ambassadors of Reconciliation is an international ministry founded to help Christians and their churches in carrying out their peacemaking responsibilities as Christ's ambassadors. Our mission is equipping Christians and their churches for living, proclaiming and cultivating lifestyles of reconciliation.

The ministry of reconciliation is given to the local church and every believer. Our purpose is to inspire and prepare the leader's of Christ's church around the world to carry out this vocation in more effective ways.

Ambassadors of Reconciliation is an independent, non-profit corporation. Our approach is based upon Holy Scriptures.

Reconciliation Ministries

Our Christian Reconcilers™ and Certified Christian Conciliators™ provide consulting, conflict coaching, mediation, arbitration, and group reconciliation services. We serve individuals with personal, business or legal disputes, in addition to churches, schools and other organizations in conflict. ([Matthew 18:15-17](#); [1 Corinthians 6:1-8](#); [Philippians 4:2-9](#); [Galatians 6:1](#))

Please prayerfully consider signing up for the Bible study that is offered to our congregation. Be an active participant in healing and reconciliation.

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. After the first Sunday in Jan. 2021 and over the next months we have a lot of opening to sponsor the radio broadcast, please prayerfully consider sponsoring a radio broadcast. Contact us if you would like to sponsor one of these open broadcasts 433-6626.

Dec. 6, 2020 Given by Loraine Andree in memory of Loraine and Edward's parents Mr. & Mrs. Lawrence Hockemeyer and Mr. & Mrs. Rudy Andree

Dec. 13, 2020 Given by Richard and Kaaren Wuertz in memory of their parents Lorenz and Velma Wuertz and Glen and Bernie Hovland.

Dec. 20, 2020 Given in memory of Mary Siegfried by her family.

Dec. 27, 2020 Given in memory of Dalvin Augustin and in remembrance of Dalvin and Janet's wedding anniversary by Janet Augustin and family and friends.

Jan. 3, 2021 Sponsored by John and Carol Schleicher with thanks to our Savior-God for His blessing throughout their 50 years of marriage which began with the wedding in St. John's sanctuary on Dec. 26, 1970.

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

LWML NEWS

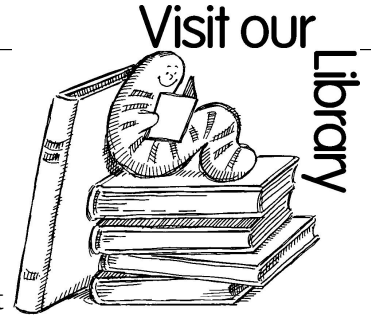


Congratulations and thank you to the Youth in our church who have taken up a challenge of filling mite boxes. What a great mission project! What a blessing their example is to us! It is time to reveal secret sisters. Send a card, make a phone call, or if you want, leave a gift at church. What a fun, uplifting way to encourage our Christian sisters. We hope you will sign up again. We are isolated enough and need to support each other. Cards are available in Schleicher Hall. With all this distancing they are a good way to stay connected. We pray you have a blessed Christmas as we keep ourselves focused on the birth of our Lord and Savior. Have a safe and healthy Christmas. In Christ's love, Fran Strouf and Sandy Grant

LWML would like to remind the members of St. John's that we have a selection of cards for every occasion. The cards are in the card case in Schleicher Hall. Please come and check them out. The price is on the back of the box, just put your money in the little envelope and slip it in the slot. LWML Thanks You

From the Library

The book, Angels to Watch Over Me, looks thick and it is. BUT between the covers are four complete Christian romances by four different authors to wanting you to keep reading until the end.



Romance # 1—the book title—is written by Pamela Griffin. Marcia “Shae” Stevens has just found out her sister Tiffany has entered her secretly in a contest to win a date with a Hollywood movie star, namely Keith Travers. And she won, but now Tiff is in hot water with her sister. And the story continues to a pleasing end.

Romance #2 Crossroads by Tracie Peterson and Jennifer Peterson. Leslie is watching her five year old brother Travis plus minding the book store her parents own. Travis talks to his parents excitedly as a 5 year old would about coming home and bringing him a present. This 25th anniversary vacation doesn’t end the way it should. You cheer Leslie on as she deals with her little brother’s grief, managing the book store with her aunt’s help, and meeting a new unexpected friend in her life. The book gives insight into how a 5 year old deals with his own grief. You just want to wrap Travis in your arms and hold him tight and take away all the pain.

Romance #3 A Question of Balance by Veda Boyd Jones. Three high school friends, Sarah, Maggie and Ellen are meeting to celebrate Ellen’s 30th birthday. Sarah is late—she finds it difficult to forget her job as a pediatric doctor doing leukemia research and going anywhere socially. As they are sitting in a restaurant they see three attractive men checking them out and the story continues.

Romance #4 A Class of Her Own. Laura Chapman has finally come to a decision—she is going back to school. Finding her way as a widow is one thing, but to do it with her two teen agers adds a lot more stress. Follow Laura as she returns to college and the challenges she faces.

I found these stories hard to put down. Read all of them in less than two weeks in spite of summer activities. They are all wonderful examples of how God is involved in our lives. Find this book and many more in our church library.

ST. JOHN’S CHURCH SPECIAL VOTERS’ MEETING

November 1, 2020

A special voters’ meeting was called by Dale Siegfried on Sunday, November 1, 2020, at 12:15 p.m.

We were led in devotions and prayer by Pastor Groleau.

Dwight Schettler, President of Ambassadors of Reconciliation, attended by Zoom. Dr. Phil Johnson, assistant to the President for mission formation, LCMS Minnesota South District was present in person.

Tim Carlson, elders chairman, read a statement concerning the need for engaging the services of the Ambassadors of Reconciliation. A motion was made and seconded to approve to hire the Ambassadors of Reconciliation to provide our congregation with their services. St. John's undesignated cash assets of \$14,000 will be used for payment. After much discussion by the elders and congregation, the vote was called for. We were led in prayer by Thad Kusick prior to the vote. The motion was passed by ballot with 30 yes votes and 21 no votes.

Pastor Groleau closed the meeting at 1:26 p.m. with prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Donna Bailey, Council Secretary

ST. JOHN'S CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING

November 10, 2020

The November 10, 2020, meeting was called to order by President Dale Siegfried at 7:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Tim Carlson, David Ruhnke, Kara Grant, Kathy Carlson, Pastor Groleau, Dick Heuton, Dale Siegfried, Lori Siegfried.

OPENING PRAYER: Pastor Groleau

SECRETARY'S REPORT: See old business in these minutes.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Net Operating Loss: (\$45,013.14). Decrease in Designated Funds: (\$7,865.01). M/S/P to accept the Treasurer's report, as written.

ELDERS' REPORT:

Elders met on Monday Nov 2, 2020 – 600pm

Elders Kusick, Watkins, Kiehne, Carlson and Pastor James attending.

Opening Devotion – LHM for Oct 7, 2020 – “The Lord is at Hand”

Bible Study - The Promise of Christ from October 2020 Lutheran Witness led by Richard Kiehne

Old Business:

Reconciliation within St John's – Dale Siegfried present for this discussion. Target dates to submit contract, check, our Constitution/Bylaws and Nov 1 2020 Congregation meeting minutes to AoR is Nov 6. Remainder of requested documents is no later than Nov 20, 2020.

New Business –

Approved transfer in for Susan Gosha and Michael Gosha from St Olaf Lutheran Church in Austin.

Dave Watkins to work with Dave Ruhnke (Trustees) to develop an acceptable Child Protection Policy to meet Grinnell Mutual insurance company guidelines. They will work with Youth and Family/Ed boards on this.

December Elders Meeting will be on Monday Nov 30 at 630pm. We closed with personal prayer petitions and the Lord's Prayer.

TRUSTEES' REPORT:

The entire brick window sill has fallen out of the southwest window in the courtyard. Adam Meyer will fix that this week or next. Our insurance company requires a sexual misconduct policy to protect children/youth and vulnerable adults that Board of Elders will establish. Also, a key policy, also required, will be established by Board of Trustees. The sillcock outside the northeast door was repaired and is operable again.

BOARD OF EDUCATION and YOUTH & FAMILY BOARD:

In attendance: Patty Shatek, Alisha Meyer, Nicole Kramer, Lori Siegfried

Back in August Nicole Kramer agreed to serve on the Education/Youth and Family Boards. We welcome Nicole to the board.

The two boards discussed goals and will update the goals that were presented last year. This will be reviewed at the next meeting of the boards in November.

It was brought to our attention that it would be a good idea to publish in the church newsletter how Sunday school is being handled during the pandemic. Patty will put a brief note in the December newsletter to inform the congregation as to how Sunday school is being presented this year. The board intended to include this information in the November newsletter but we missed the deadline for that publication so it will be in the December newsletter.

The youth held a rummage sale October 9th and 10th. The rummage sale was a success and the youth made about \$1500. We want to thank members of the congregation for their support by donating items for the sale. The remaining items that did not sell were donated to Rachel's Hope, Epilepsy Foundation and Salvation Army. Many thanks to the FROGS for hauling donations to the Salvation Army.

On October 27th the boards will put together additional Sunday school packets to be distributed. It was also decided that we will go ahead and order additional materials from CPH for the next quarter.

We also briefly discussed options for a Christmas Program but nothing was decided. We will be communicating with the Pastor as to what options are available.

The youth will be having a pizza and movie night on Friday, November 20th.

The youth have set a challenge for themselves to see how many LWML Mite boxes they can fill in the next 3 months.

Next meeting will be Tuesday, November 17th at 5:30 p.m.

STEWARDSHIP BOARD:

The board met on Nov. 4 with two members present.

We plan to make the year 2021 offering envelopes available on Nov 29, They will be on a table along the east wall of the sanctuary.

We have received the order form for the year 2022 envelopes Will order them around Feb. 1 next year.

The SCRIP program continues.

The board will meet again on Jan. 6.

SOCIAL MINISTRY:

The bulletin boards in Schleicher Hall have been updated for College Student and Shut-in Members.

Social Ministry handed out St. John's Church information pamphlets and Bibles to customers during last month's rummage sale.

The November food drive "Pack the Pew" is going on until the end of November. Donations will be given to the Salvation Army Food Bank in Austin.

Sumner School Backpack Program has been combined with a larger backpack program including all the schools in Austin. Funds in the Sumner program account will continue to be used for student needs. We are currently waiting for a list of winter clothing items and other clothing requests from the school and will be shopping for those items in the next week.

BUDGET COMMITTEE:

The Budget Committee met on Monday October 19th to review the 2021 Proposed Budget: Pastor and Support Staff Expenses. As a committee we did not find any areas of the budget that needed a recommendation for change. It appeared that all committees proposed a budget that appropriately reflected the changes our church has seen during the pandemic and were responsible with their portions of the funds. The Budget Committee would like to present the 2021 Proposed Budget: Pastor and Support Staff for church members to review and vote on at the upcoming all member voting meeting on Sunday November 22nd. Submitted by Kara Grant Budget Committee Chair 2020

EVANGELISM:

Church brochures have been updated with the service days and times. They can be found on the usher stands as well as in the tract rack in Schleicher Hall. Church magnets have also been placed on the usher stands and are for all members and visitors to take and use.

The board talked about outreach ideas with Pastor James. We will be placing an ad in the Shopper with information on our holiday services.

A reminder was given for the fall voters meeting on November 22. A board report will be written and submitted.

PASTOR'S REPORT:

The COVID-19 situation continues and as I'm sure many of you have heard the number of infections has risen in Minnesota and the surrounding states. Please continue to take all necessary precautions when coming to church. Clean your hands, wear your mask, etc. It is wonderful that the 9:00am Sunday service is filling to near capacity.

To alleviate the possible over crowding at the 9:00 service we have added an additional Sunday service. I would encourage you to take a look at the 11:00 Sunday service. Like the 9:00am service it is archived on our churches website (StJohnsAustinLcms.org/sermons/). If you appreciate that style of music and worship please join us there to lighten the load at the 9:00 service. I know that time slot is not the most convenient for everyone, but it is another worship time available to the congregation.

We also have a Wednesday 6:30pm service which is a duplicate of the preceding Sunday 9:00 service. There we can, if necessary, utilize the entire sanctuary providing the possibility for extreme social distancing.

Bible studies have been going on and I would encourage everyone to join at least one. During these times delving into God's Holy Word is even more necessary to feed and nourish the soul. This COVID craziness causes a lot of disruption, but we will continue to work toward getting back to normal. Hebrews 10:24-25 "Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together..."

We will have two sermon series for Advent and Christmas. As we close the "God's Greater Story" sermon series on Romans we also come to the beginning of a new Church Year. The Sundays in Advent will follow a series on the "Jesse Tree." An ancient tradition in the Christian Church used as a countdown to Christmas Day. We will have some material you can use at home with your family that will coincide with this series.

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Thank you for the warm welcome you gave to the Sudanese ministry. Pastor Reef and his congregation ask me to express their gratitude for the kind welcome they received. That service was

planned quickly when the opportunity lent itself. The original plan (back in January) was to introduce the two congregations with a potluck and conversation. COVID kicked that celebration down the road, but we hoped the combined service would help us get to know each other a little bit. Please do continue to keep them in your prayers.

Lastly in reference to the troubles here at St. John’s. The special voters’ meeting was difficult. We had been given assurances that the meeting would be run holding to the proposed agenda. That failed the moment the microphone was turned on.

In the book “Total Forgiveness” we learn we should not allow ourselves to become enslaved to sin of others. The endless untruthful gossip and abusive conduct does not excuse mine. I should have handled that situation more calmly. For that I apologize. Please allow me to repeat again, my family and I are being cruelly mistreated in this church by a small number of people. This has gone on for months and months. My family and I are in pain. We have never been treated with such contempt in our lives. My family and I are in pain. For those of you who want to hurt us, you win. We are hurt.

I know this situation is troubling. It is to no one more than me. I’ll ask the congregation again to be patient while we work through this.

1 Peter 5:10 – After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, the one who called you into His eternal glory in Christ Jesus, will Himself restore, empower, strengthen, and establish you.

(Addendum: I appreciate the Council has resolved the Pastor’s reports should be returned to the Council record.)

God’s peace be with all of you,

Pastor James.

OLD BUSINESS:

Pastor's reports from September and October were not included in the Council minutes for those months. The Pastor did go over these reports and discuss them and they will be attached to the November council minutes.

NEW BUSINESS:

M/S/P to accept into membership Susan Gosha and Michael Gosha from St Olaf Lutheran Church in Austin.

New Business: After some discussion it was decided to follow the procedures below regarding upcoming council meetings.

1. Each board will try to email their report to the council secretary prior to the monthly meeting.
2. Each board will have a copy of their report to give the council secretary to take notes on during the meeting.
3. The council secretary will email a draft of the council minutes to each member of the council.

ADJOURNMENT: M/S/P to adjourn @ 8:40 p.m.

CLOSING PRAYER: Lord's Prayer

Respectfully submitted: Lori Siegfried, filling in for Donna Bailey; and Donna Bailey, Council Secretary, filling in the blanks

St. John's Lutheran Church Financial Recap
January 1, 2020 through October 31, 2020

Undesignated Assets	Balance 1/1/20	Activity	Balance 9/30/2020	Notes
Cash	\$199,211.92	\$254,710.48	\$453,922.40	Undesignated Assets represent the funds available for general operating purposes.
Prepays/Other Assets	13,831.09	(5,165.65)	8,665.44	
Buildings & Land	3,096,411.00	(268,719.00)	2,827,692.00	
Liabilities	(5,171.02)	(25,838.97)	(31,009.99)	
Net Operating Income (Loss)		<u>(\$45,013.14)</u>		
Designated Assets				
Building Fund	107,467.19	638.53	108,105.72	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	1,729.69	8,846.87	
Scrip Fund	15,452.11	(15,452.11)	0.00	
Sumner School Fund	8,746.72	0.00	8,746.72	
undesignated		0.00	0.00	
Endowment Fund	41,316.30	(327.22)	40,989.08	
	<u>205,095.40</u>		<u>197,230.39</u>	
Increase (Decrease) in Designated Assets		<u>(\$7,865.01)</u>		
Net Income (Loss)		<u>(\$52,878.15)</u>		

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

December, 2020

NEWSLETTER



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