St. John's News

November, 2021



Church: 507-433-2642 Pastor: Cell 320-336-8149

Church Office:

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Pastor James Groleau:

shepherd@jamesplace.net

St. John's Webpage:

www.stjohnsaustinlcms.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.stjohnsaustinlcms.org



THE MISSION OF ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Through Jesus Christ, we

<u>proclaim</u> God's Word,

<u>encourage</u> one another in faith,

<u>witness</u> to God's love and

serve all people.

In the few months ahead I'd like to put together a small group of courageous champions of change. The reason for the courage is because we are going to explore "CHANGE" and we all know change can be scary, or at least a little intimidating.

What we need is a new way to grow a church. That growth will not come from the old ways of doing things. Some of the old ways worked in the past. I've got shelves full of books, programs and projects which all have a proven track record – in the past. Those same programs and projects will no longer work in our American culture today. That is primarily because the American culture has radically changed over the last 20-30 years.

20-30 years ago, in American, most people who were not Christians were almost Christians. They knew something about God. They knew something about Jesus' saving work, and they know something about the Church. What they needed was a gentle nudge to get them in the door, and they would very often become regular attending members. Those day are, for the most part, gone. American culture today is much different. People are no longer mostly almost Christian. Now they're mostly not Christian. They have little to no knowledge of God, little to no knowledge of Jesus' saving work, and generally

only bad images of the Church which they get from television.

That means we as the Church need to adapt our efforts to fulfill the Great Commission. Problem number one is: Over half of today's Christians to not know the Great Commission, or what it says and teaches. The verses below may be very familiar to you, but they are not to most church attending Christians. They are Jesus' very final words before ascending back into heaven. Most Christians (51% according to a Bara survey in 2018) do not know them, or why they are important.



The Great Commission is:

Jesus said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations,

Baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son

Message from Pastor James

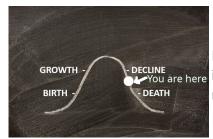
https://www.barna.com/research/ half-churchgoers-not-heard-greatcommission/ and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." [Matthew 28:18-20]

As the Church we need to adapt our efforts to fulfill the Great Commission. First we need to know the Great Commission. Then we need to learn how to fulfill it, and in doing so fulfill Jesus' command for all of us. We need to focus on the mission of making disciples. We need to build unity and community. It begins by praying for the Holy Spirit to blow truth into the hearts of those around us, using us as the tools or vehicles upon which that truth is carried.

That will not happen in large numbers. It will not happen quickly. It will be one soul at a time. It will happen over kitchen tables and backyard fences. It will happen through conversations that happen in relationships that build over time. In today's America you need to "earn permission" to talk about things like money, politics and religion. It is highly unlikely that you will effectively be able to share the Christian faith with someone you do not know. Today's America will not start coming to church because of a Friendship Sunday event, or a church picnic. Those things may help foster a growing relationship, but as a stand alone event, unlike in the past, today they no longer have any real value.

That means navigating changes. We need to creates spaces for people outside the faith to belong inside our building. It means making, sometimes difficult, choices to end old programs and projects that no longer serve the purpose for which they were started. It requires persists through what is sometimes seemingly overwhelming obstacles. It demands we trust God to accomplish what we know we cannot accomplish ourselves.

Satan's grip on our neighbor's souls may be firm, but God's love, forgiveness and salvation are vastly more powerful and Jesus has promised, "I am with you always, to the end of the age." We must keep our focus on the promises of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. [1 Timothy 2:3-4]



Many congregations think like the picture to the left. The "You are here" is where they feel they are, and they feel there is no real possibility of recovery.

The biggest change needed is to see that this second picture is possible. There is a way to rebirth or restart a church.



It will require vision, a more purposeful focus on God's mission, understanding shifts and changes in the neighborhood, and overcoming conflicts and divisions which may have been set in motion years or decades earlier. Congregations, after years or trying what used to work, have become tired, fewer in number, with resources limited or exhausted, feeling too close to death to muster the strength to try something new. They resolve to die on the vine with thoughts that their remaining resources can be offered to some other congregation or institution that will continue the fight.

There is another way. Rather than continue the patterns of the past, which have now well proven themselves to no longer work, we can willfully and selflessly, with great courageous effort, choose another path. It is not as difficult as you might think. It's just different and accepting the "different" is the first and biggest hurdle to overcome.

It is time for some challenging decisions, maybe courageous decisions, that impact the future mission and ministry that will come to this congregation. I would encourage you to read Ezekiel 37 this week. Then remember Jesus' words: "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." [Matthew 19:26]

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

Together in the Word

Sunday: Adult Bible class at 10:00 a.m. Pastor James is leading discussion on the Catechism

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: Men's Bible Study - join us at 5:00 pm on Thursdays...

Worship Services

Sunday

Weekday

9:00 a.m. Worship (Traditional)

10:00 a.m. Adult Bible study and Sunday School

11:00 a.m. Worship (Praise) This is a more contemporary service.

Midweek

6:30 p.m. Wednesday service (Traditional)

<u>Men's Bible Study</u> - Join us each Thursday at 5:00 pm in the Council Room as we study how God speaks to us through the book of Acts concerning the central mission, inner workings and perpetual perils of His church here on earth,

Men's Breakfast will be Saturday, November 16th at 7:30 a.m., at Barley's Family Restaurant. Come and enjoy the fellowship.

Women's Bible Study - meets at 1:00 p.m. Tuesday afternoons. Do you like what you see in the mirror? If you said no, you aren't alone. Many of us just see the wrinkles or muffin top or bony elbows. We try to cover it up with makeup or just don't look in the mirror at all. But the truth is that we don't see ourselves the way God sees us. The lessons in **Mirror**, **Mirror** focus on looking at ourselves as God, our Creator and Redeemer, see us. God sees us through the filter of the cross, in the reflection of His Son, with the eyes of love. This Bible study will encourage you to see yourself this way, too. Watch the News & Notes for start date. Let the office know if you plan to attend so that we have enough books for everyone.



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.

Ruby's Pantry in Austin

700 12th Street Southwest, Austin, MN

DAYS AND HOURS

3rd Thursday of the Month Registration begins at 4:00 PM

Food bundles available 4:00-5:30 PM

goodnews@rubyspantry.org www.rubyspantry.org

Bob Rosel, Media Coordinator Ruby's Pantry Austin

FROGs (Faithful Retired Old Guys)

Calling all retired guys! Join us at the church on the first Tuesday of every month (**Nov. 2nd**). FROGs offers both a social component and a volunteer component. Come the first Tuesday of each month for coffee and fellowship. We will also be looking for ideas to serve, doing general maintenance or upkeep activities or other creative ways to serve the Lord here at St. John's. Volunteer to serve if you want. If not, just come for the fellowship. All are welcome... just show up!

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

<u>Script cards</u> are available after each Sunday service. Check out the new list of businesses available. Orders, with payment, must be in by the third Sunday of the month, <u>Sunday</u>, <u>November 21</u>. The cards should be here the following Sunday. Place your order and check on the Scrip table or bring it to the office. These cards help the ministries of our congregation so consider purchasing them.

<u>Lunch Bunch!</u> We have started our monthly lunch outing again. We choose a different restaurant each month. Call the office if you would like to come and get to socialize with fellow St. John's members.

November, 2021

Sudanese Ministry Spotlight

It is an honor for me, Rev. Gatluk Reat, to share about the ministry to Sudanese people in Southern Minnesota again this month.

This month I would like to share with you about some of the other leaders that God has raised up among the Sudanese people in Southern Minnesota.

Chang Rauch is a close friend and fellow leader among our Sudanese immigrants. Chang and I lived in the same village in Ethiopia before we



came to America and he accompanied us on our mission trip to Ethiopia in 2013. He works in the laboratory at Mayo Clinic in Rochester. His English is very good so he served as the interpreter for some guests at one of our recent worship services.

Mary Pouk is the wife of the late Simon Duop. Simon was one of the first Sudanese immigrants to be ordained in The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod. The Lord called Simon home to heaven several years ago but Mary continues to be a leader in our Sudanese community especially among the women.

The Lord has also raised up Kaway Guin as a leader in our community. Kaway works for Hormel in Austin.

Please pray for these important leaders in our Sudanese community. Their leadership will be vital to growing the ministry to the Sudanese immigrants in Southern Minnesota.

A short, seven-minute video has now been produced that tells about my ministry. If you would like to view the video or have any other questions please contact me at 651-399-3959 or gatluklul@yahoo.com.

It is that time of year when we need to get out the winter wear. The tree is up in the west entry with hats, gloves, mittens and scarves. If you need an item or know of someone who is in need please feel free to take the items. Donations are welcome.

Stewardship

1 Thessalonians 5:8 – "But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation." Our salvation is secure in Christ. He has done it all to save us. Therefore, our hope is secure, and our faith in Him is certain. And what goes with faith and hope? Love. Our good works of love flow forth from the certainty of our faith. Our giving back to the Lord's work comes from what He has first given us.

<u>Congregational Meeting, November 7th</u> after the 11:00 service. The main purpose of the meeting will be to set a budget for 2022. Chicken and potatoes will be provided from Pizza Ranch. Members are asked to bring a salad or dessert to share.

LWML NEWS

Boxes are out for college student donations. Snacks or other small useful items will be greatly appreciated. We will be meeting on Monday, November 8 at 3:00 pm to put these gifts of love together. We have 7 students to send to.

The quilters put in a long day of work cleaning up the quilting room. We appreciate all the generous donations we have had and for now cannot take any more fabric. We can, however, always use more mission-minded help.

There is a shelf in the quilting room with prayer shawls and lap robes to be taken to anyone who needs comfort and prayers. We thank Sheila Roberts for the beautiful shawls she made and donated.

LWML dues this year are \$12. You can pay Ellen Petersen or leave it in the church office. You do not need to be active to support the LWML but we always welcome anyone to attend our meetings.

Please remember your Secret Sister thru the coming holidays-a card is always appreciated.

Harvest, leaves falling, beautiful sunsets, pumpkins, mums, a nip in the air, and the promise of turkey for Thanksgiving. What a wonderful time of year. God's blessings, Sandy Grant

November Birthdays	RADIO MINISTRY
02 Sydney Rupe	Members of St. Johns and Friends,
04 Laura Grant 07 Dick Heuton	Thank you to all who have supported the Radio Broadcast and continue to support it. God
11 Cyndi Johnson	is faithful in providing us with sponsors of the radio broadcast as we have needs. We are
15 Devon Maas	fairly full from now until the end of the year but in January we will start having several
17 Steve Binder	openings again. We are thankful to be able to continue this ministry because of the
17 Larry Waters 23 Kathleen Lange	support of our members, friends, and listeners. If you would like to make a donation to St.
26 Jodi VanPelt	Johns Radio Broadcast you can mail your donation to St. Johns or to our home, The
27 Ava Grinstead	Petersen's 2805 5 th AVE SW, Austin, MN 55912. The weekly fee is \$150.00 you can
27 Stan Rasmussen	donate the total amount or any part of the amount please make checks payable to St. Johns
29 Michael Brandt	Radio Broadcast.
November	November sponsors are as follows:
<u>Anniversaries</u>	Nov. 7, 2021 Sponsored by Michael & Susan Gosha to the Glory of God!
09 Richard & Annette Kiehne	Nov. 14, 2021 Sponsored by Cheryl Qualey and family and friends in memory of Cheryl's
	parents Harry and Lois Anderson.
Ochoro	Nov. 21, 2021 Sponsored by Pastor John and Carol Schleicher in memory of Pastor John's
	parents Rev. Curtis and Mary Schleicher.
27 Doug & Donna Peterson	
Peterson	Nov. 28, 2021 Given in memory of James "Christy" Christiansen by his wife Janice,
	Children Joel & family, Kent, Dean & family, and Sarah Hague & family.
	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

On October 31, the Social Ministry Board will be handing out bags for the collection of nonperishable food. The bags will have a list attached with the most needed items. Please bring the bags to the chairs in the choir area.

The Salvation Army will be serving even more people during the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays, so this donation will be of great use and much appreciated. Thank you for your participation and your generosity!



Give Blood!

Every 2 seconds someone in the U.S. needs blood!

Austin Blood Drive

Tuesday, November 16, 2021 12:00 PM - 06:00 PM

Call 800-733-2767 or visit RedCrossBlood.org enter: Austin MN to schedule an appointment.
Walk-ins accepted.

Soon to be in our library is *The Lighthouse* by Michael D. O'Brien. We were suppose to read only the first two chapters for our Bible study lesson, but I couldn't stop! (Yes, I know this book isn't in the Bible, but was suggested by one member of our group—it was a good choice.) Ethan McQuarry was hired for the summer to help the aging light house keeper. As the story continues he fell in love with the place and did not want to leave. He learns many of the ins and outs of the light keepers duties and eventually takes over when the light keeper becomes ill and has to leave the island. He is asked to stay and does. He finds the



solitude pleasant and at times very lonely. Along the way we learn of his upbringing or the lack there of. He becomes a well read man and knowledgeable in many areas. His interactions with people are few and far between, but often profound.

As you read this story you grow to understand Ethan and his life. He doesn't know God, but yet Ethan is very aware of a "presence". I found the Holy Spirit leading him (Ethan) throughout the book. I think men would enjoy this in particular especially those who live a solitary life. BUT it's a book for all and to be enjoyed by many.

Annette Kiehne

ST. JOHN'S CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING

October 12, 2021

The October 12, 2021, meeting was called to order by President Dale Siegfreid at 7:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Kara Grant, Dick Heuton, Marsha Jensen, Pastor James, Thad Kusick, Ruth Oelkers, Stan Rasmussen, Dale Siegfreid, Lori Siegfreid, Doraine Graff

OPENING PRAYER: Pastor James opened with prayer & a Bible study from the The Lutheran Witness.

SECRETARY'S REPORT: Marsha Jensen moved to accept the Secretary's Report for September 14, 2021. S/P.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Net Operating Loss: \$23,504.73. Net Designated Asset Gain: \$7,161.34. Net Income (Loss): \$16,343.39. Stan Rasmussen moved to accept the Treasurer's Report as written. S/P

ELDERS' REPORT: Thad Kusick __Pastor James, Dave Watkins, Richard Kiehne and Thad Kusick_were in attendance October 4th at 6:30.

We started the meeting with a Portal of Prayer Devotion and a then a Bible Study on Careless Talk that talks about gossip. This Bible Study was from AoR and is available to everyone via printable or electronic version.

We continued conversations around the AoR report.

We discussed the 2022 budget and set numbers for next year.

Pastor and Elders meet on Saturday September 25th to prioritize the AoR report. This has been done. We are finalizing a report to the congregation on "What does AoR report mean."

TRUSTEES' REPORT: Marsha Jensen

Doormats by the doors were trimmed of the ragged edges. We are trying Velcro on the east door to keep mat from moving.

The Spruce-Up Committee has been meeting & developing a list of needs & are exploring possible solutions to keep our building looking well kept & tidy. A box full of used & burned out fluorescent bulbs was taken to Fox Electric for safe disposal. We completed the Trustees' portion of the 2022 Budget.

BOARD OF EDUCATION and YOUTH & FAMILY BOARD: Board of Education has not met.

Youth group started September 8th and we have had 7+ youth attend each Wednesday night. Saturday, October 8th eight youth were treated to a "behind the scenes" tour of the Hormel Nature Center by our very own naturalist Sydney Rupe. Afterwards we went to Kara and Eric Grant's home for pizza and games.

The youth are starting to plan our trip to the 2022 National Youth Gathering: "In All Things" July 7th – 15th. St. John's youth will be traveling by van with youth from Zion's Lutheran Church in Albert Lea. St. John's currently has 8 youth and 2 adults who are planning to attend. Pastor James and Kara Grant are the chaperons from St. John's. The estimated cost for this trip is \$1,329.00 per person. We are planning to raise funds for this trip and would appreciate prayers surrounding the planning of this awesome experience!

STEWARDSHIP: Stan Rasmussen The Stewardship Board will meet the 1st Tuesday of the month. Stewardship Sunday will be November 28. The 2022 envelopes will be distributed the first part of December.

SOCIAL MINISTRY: Sharry Watkins The Social Ministry Board met on October 5 with four members present. We discussed the yearly November food drive for the Salvation Army. Bags will be handed out on October 31 with a list of foods the Salvation Army needs.

We completed addressing the birthday cards for those with birthdays in October. They will be mailed out by the Elders. We discussed willingness to help LWML with their potluck meal & to assist if there would be an October 31 event for the children. A couple board members volunteered to deliver some Portals of Prayer that haven't been picked up yet. Our next meeting will be on November 2 at 4:00.

EVANGELISM: Ruth Oelkers

Evangelism October 7, 2021

Members present: Ruth Oelkers, Dave Grant and Sue Downey

We started our meeting with a Lutheran Hour Devotion.

We talked about our needs for the upcoming year and created our budget for 2022.

We looked over the Elders AoR list and we feel that #2 and #14 is happening right now at St. John's.

We have a question on #3, who is this core group or what are we looking for in this core group of people? We need direction on this.

We talked about our new members and if we can have a new member reception. We would like to put up family photos and information and introduce them to everyone in some way. We are talking with Pastor James with our options for this.

Bethlehem Church (next to Ellis School) has invited Austin churches to participate in their Trunk-or-Treat event held on Halloween, Oct. 31 from 5:30-7:30 pm.

Since we haven't had our Hallelujah Harvest fest for 2 years we feel it is a way of getting us out in the community. We can ask our congregation to donate candy, volunteer at the event or to bring your "Trunk" and participate. We would like to purchase small bags to put candy in and put a label on them that reads, God Loves You – St. John's Lutheran Church – 1200 13th Ave NW.

Next meeting is November 4, 2021 at 4pm.

PASTOR'S REPORT: Pastor James

In September I listed a number of planned initiatives. We did not dig any further into the Laurel Community School. Although there was interest among a number of families, it did not rise to the level that would warrant the trip for them to come to speak to us. We may have further discussions with the Circuit at a later time.

Community

Pre-COVID we had intended to start number of new initiative including:

- ① PABLO People of the Book Lutheran Outreach. A group that helps facilitate bringing Jesus to people outside the Church. www.poblo.org
- ① OAfC On Going Ambassadors for Christ –A group that facilitates outreach within communities for the LCMS www.oafc.org

The "Year with the Catechism" series is going well. Our average weekly church attendance is at about 60 across the three services, and Sunday morning Bible study is about 25. I would like to see this increase. We have some work to do and that work must start and remain founded on the Word of God.

Youth

CASE came back stronger than I had anticipated. This is a ministry that continues to grow, and we

are exploring possibilities to duplicate it in other congregations. The primary principle of CASE is to teach Lutheran Doctrine and biblical life application to the youth that attend. We are averaging about 20-25 youth. Here is another place where we can do the work of reaching families for Christ. About half of the youth that come are not members of our church. Feel free to come in anytime to spend some time with the youth. Those links and relationships are what connects people to the Church. We are working with some other local LCMS congregations and the MNS District to add to the effort to connect these families to a church. We are planning a few major events throughout the year.

Seniors

This month I would like to meet with a few people to explore any improvements or additions we can make to service those members who cannot come to church. Many of our shut-ins are still experiencing some loneliness. It is imperative our congregation strive to remind each of them of their precious place as a child of God and a member of this congregation. I would like to get an organized group of people who can help to ensure each one is attended to.

<u>OLD BUSINESS:</u> Pastor James said some people have asked about the wisdom of having the Boy Scouts meet at our church. The Boy Scouts' problems occurred prior to 1976, & we, the church, have no legal liability. The Cub Scouts will start meeting here soon, also.

NEW BUSINESS: Boards need to get goals & objectives in to the secretary, Sandy, by Nov. 1st for the semiannual meeting on Nov. 7th. Meat & potatoes will be ordered from the Pizza Ranch. Congregation is asked to bring side dishes such as salads or desserts. We will eat at 12:15 with the meeting to follow.

ADJOURNMENT: Marsha Jensen moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 p.m. S/P

CLOSING PRAYER: The Lord's Prayer

Respectfully submitted: Doraine Graff, Council Secretary

St. John's Lutheran Church Financial Recap <u>January 1, 2021 through September 30, 2021</u>

<u>Undesignated</u>				<u>Balance</u>	
<u>Assets</u>		Balance 1/1/21	Activity	9/30/2021	<u>Notes</u>
	Cash	\$432,709.04	(\$25,154.36)	\$407,554.68	Undesignated Assets
	Prepaids/Other Assets	16,179.66	3,091.20	19,270.86	represent the funds
	Buildings & Land	2,827,692.00	0.00	2,827,692.00	available for general
	Liabilities	(2,143.91)	(1,441.57)	(3,585.48)	operating purposes.
Net Operating			(\$22.504.72)		
Income (Loss)			(\$23,504.73)		
Designated					
<u>Assets</u>					
	Building Fund	108,942.05	6,454.96	115,397.01	Designated Assets
	Needy Family Fund	1,167.08	0.00	1,167.08	represent all of the
	Women's Ministry Fund	1,923.46	0.00	1,923.46	various funds that
	Musical Equipment Fund	283.68	0.00	283.68	for the designated
	Library Books Fund	444.17	(35.00)	409.17	purpose.
	Choir Robes Fund	3,111.00	0.00	3,111.00	
	Memorial Fund	20,427.21	(938.00)	19,489.21	
	Praise Band Fund	3,135.40	0.00	3,135.40	
	Youth Fund	8,846.87	(188.57)	8,658.30	
	Sumner School Fund	6,589.61	(2,301.28)	4,288.33	
	undesignated	0.00	0.00	0.00	
	Endowment Fund	40,989.08	4,169.23	45,158.31	
		195,859.61		203,020.95	
Increase					
(Decrease) in Designated					
Assets Net Income			\$7,161.34		
(Loss)			(\$16,343.39)		

November, 2021

November, 2021 NEWSLETTER

U S Postage Paid Permit No. 82 Austin, MN Non-Profit Organization



ST. JOHN'S NEWS

Return Service Requested