

The St. John's Messenger

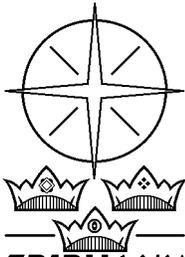
St. John's Lutheran Church and School
(Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod)
(507) 794-6200 • Fax: (507) 794-6202
Rev. Chris Cordes, Pastor ~ Mr. Dan Rick, Principal
www.stjohnsse.com



JANUARY 2015

Epiphany's Star

As we leave behind the Christmas rush, we do **not** leave behind our Savior! Quite the opposite, we find ourselves in tow behind several wise men, guided by a star to the real Star of God.



Those "Magi" had heard about the coming Savior from sin, and they wanted to find him personally. Think of it: He had come into this world during their lifetime! Imagine their intensity and passion to see him! They traveled great distances, they gave up a large part of their time, they expended great amounts of money just to find him. And when they did, their hearts were loaded and brimming over with joy.



Not a bad attitude for us, as we enter the new year and refocus our bearings on what –Who– really matters and how we can spend ourselves to follow him, the Star of the Almighty, the radiance of God's glory!

Happy New Year!
Pastor Cordes.

Online Bible Study?



You can study the Bible in a free class online – and it's orthodox, faithful, clearly from the Bible! Beginning Wednesday, Jan. 7, Rev. David Scharf, from Immanuel Lutheran, Greenville, Wisconsin, will lead a six-week study called "Breaking the Cycle, with Grace (a study of the book of Judges)."

Scharf says of the topic, "It has been said that nearly every doctrine of the Bible can be found in the biblical narratives in Judges. And yet, how often have we read, let alone studied this action-packed book of God's grace? In our lives, we go through cycles of ups and downs—we think God is pleased one moment and that he is not the next. Come and, with grace, break the cycle of uncertainty as we study a book full of God's love and patience!"

The study will be streamed live online twice every Wednesday night between Jan. 7 and Feb. 11 at 6 p.m. and 8 p.m. (Central Time).

Thousands of WELS members have participated in the Interactive Faith Bible studies, which are held twice a year and led by a WELS pastor or professor. Many congregations gather as a group for the study; other WELS members connect as couples or individuals. The studies are designed to have 10 to 15 minutes of lecture by the instructor, followed by 5 to 10 minutes for congregations to discuss a question or two, or do further study. Participants can interact with the instructor via the chat box.

To learn more or join the study, go to www.wels.net/interactivefaith.

Wow! A Class on Marriage!



Just what we all need for healthy marriages, starting January 25! Our Sunday Bible class will open some wonderful doors to healthy and healthier marriages. Unmarried people will gain insights for what may be coming their way. Married people will identify tools and insights that will help marriages, whether hurting or healthy.

This is the time to clear your schedule for Sunday morning (or Monday evening) Bible study hour!

We'll make use of the book *The Five Love Languages*, by Gary Chapman. Each person/couple will need a copy. Find them easily at Amazon.com or Barnes and Noble or other Christian book stores. If someone wants to purchase a couple extra for those who might not see this note, that would be a wonderful blessing.

Compassion Ministry

We've talked in our Elders meetings, and maybe a few other groups, about starting a Compassion Ministry. Members would be loosely organized to help those in various needs, especially (though not exclusively) inside our congregation. One or two would be responsible for keeping track of who has what needs, and connecting loving volunteers with those occasional opportunities.

Pastor is seeking your input: If we had such a Compassion Ministry, what would you like to see it do? What tasks and/or hurts happening with individuals or families would you like to see it provide some loving relief for?

Jot your thoughts down and share them with Pastor as he works at starting up this ministry of mercy.



Great letter of encouragement by Stewardship and Council!

You saw the letter come to your home via the mail last month. It was well written and worthy of our careful thought and loving decisions. Work hard at that goal so we can be good stewards of what we have, keeping our facilities and equipment well maintained, and purchasing other items that will help us in our kingdom efforts.

Voters' Meeting



At our January 25 Voter's meeting (6:30pm), among other topics, we'll be talking about our congregation's part in this summer's Synod Convention. In the rotation throughout our Minnesota District, St John's gets to provide a lay delegate this year to share in the discussions and decisions that shape our synod and its direction for the future. The delegate who gets to go will find himself pumped up and excited about our part in the kingdom efforts of this consortium of churches called the WELS. Be thinking of whom you would like to nominate to represent us and our District this summer!

Congregation Wish List

Last month a Wish List was published in the worship folder. By the Lord's grace, some have already stepped forward and committed funds for the items asterisked*. See the others below. Your Council hopes these can be covered by gifts over and above your regular offerings, since our budgeted expenses still make a difference for our ministry efforts.

For an inside understanding of the items on the list, and to see what we are still in need of...

The smart board in Mrs. Halvorson's room gets quirky. Sometimes its sound won't work, sometimes it just doesn't come on – and all of a sudden, the well-planned, exciting, colorful lesson for our children gets thrown for a loop. (Cost to replace: \$1500)

The projector in the computer lab is also playing tricks, especially with sound. Without the sound, no video clips can be shown to illustrate a point, and the teacher's sound effects, intended to bring home an important thought, cannot do the job we wanted. (Cost to replace: \$480)

New phone system (\$2,000)* – The current phone system sometimes just stops working! It's been patched for the last time and is working on its last wires. With an upgraded system, we will have not only a system we can count on, but also be more capable of communicating within the building. Our secretary will be able to converse hands-free, and good music will be heard by those waiting in line.

New, reliable, color copier (\$9,451) – We are currently spending a lot of effort, energies and frustrations with the machine we have. Sometimes it stops working entirely. Some teachers have found it so unreliable, they don't even bother trying to use it. Though a new machine will cost substantially at the start, we will actually save monthly on copies, especially black and white copies. With a new machine, we will be able to use full-color pictures in some of our publications (such as the covers of our worship folders). The new machine will also fold paper, so we don't have to find volunteers to fold bulletins, letters, newsletters, etc. (We have two folding machines, but they still do not work correctly after multiple repairs.) The new machine will also staple, punch holes and sort. All this means greater productivity and higher quality materials we can use in classrooms and worship services.

The back door to church is rusting to pieces, literally. Chunks of its insides have occasionally dropped down and caught on the threshold, preventing the door from closing. A new metal door (\$1500)* will replace our rusty and tired-looking door.

Gutters above the handicapped entrance (\$500)*. During the winter months, water drips from the roof and ice forms right on the sidewalk near the door, creating a hazard especially for our elderly and handicapped. A new gutter above that doorway would direct melting snow and wet safely away from the entrance.

Church basement floor – You've seen the cracks developing along the seams. Not only is it unsightly, the flooring is now starting to pull up enough in places that some of our members have tripped and fallen. The cost to repair and improve: \$1,000.*

Our electric piano in the balcony started smoking last month. The wiring and/or circuit boards inside were shorting out. It has served us well, especially for choir practices and performances, and has done so for such a long time that it would cost more to find parts and repair it than to simply replace it. A new piano (\$2,200) will allow us to do even more than the old one, including the use of more instrumental sounds, recordings of full accompaniments, and transcribing of new music as it is played.

Over-the-ear microphone for Pastor (\$130)* – This item will improve the sound of our worship services and recordings by eliminating quiet zones created when the speaker turns his head away from his chest (where the current mic has to be located). We had one formerly, but age and use eventually broke it, taking us back to the lapel version. With another mic, we will also have more flexibility when we have various speakers addressing the congregation from different locations in the room.

President's Report to St. John's Church Council & Congregation December 11, 2014

Thanksgiving is past, the Christmas season is upon us and the New Year will soon be at hand. It is the time of the year we think of giving gifts to others and to God. His promise is read in Proverbs 22:9 "A generous man will himself be blessed" and in Proverbs 11:25 "A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed". One of the divine secrets of the universe is that our God is a God of abundance. God can easily expand the size of the pie of resources when we are aligned with his agenda. A big part of his resource agenda is to invest freely in us so that we find joy in giving and helping others. Whether you give to ministry of the word or ministry of mercy you invite the God of abundance to keep his generosity promises!

The Christmas time generosity continues to grow at St Johns! The outreach team put together a day of care on December 6th so that parents could leave their children with us and take the day to go and do their Christmas shopping. Thank you to Laurie Hammerschmidt for heading that up and all those that volunteered to help care for the children and provide the necessities of the day.

We had a wonderful crew come in and decorate the church for Christmas. Many hands and several hours later it was done! A BIG thank you to the Hacker family for donating the trees and garland that beautifies our sanctuary. We also thank Lynn Hacker and Jan Dittbenner for the Thanksgiving display.

Our Christmas billboard looks great on Hwy 14, giving each passerby the message that they are welcome to come and worship at St Johns. I hope you have the opportunity to see it!

Christmas cards were created by the students of St. John's school with the guidance of Jack Draper, the Elders and the teachers. Thank you for passing on the message of our Saviors birth to the members and friends of St Johns!

Our stewardship team is working on getting together a wish list of needs for the church and school. It will have a range of items needed and tasks to complete. These will range from large to small items and easy to more difficult tasks. When you see the list please tackle an item or two, as with any large need, many hands will make the load lighter for the congregation to bear!

Our congregation continues to grow a member or two at time. Have you noticed the growing 20 something crowd? It is encouraging seeing them with us and giving a hand doing the Lords work. We very much appreciate it. AND I hear a more comments that we are a friendly congregation, reaching out to the new visitors and to each other in conversation along with helping as needed!

We are recipients of the greatest gift this Christmas season, God's only Son to be given up for our sins. This gift of salvation bears fruit in us as we, joyful members at St. Johns, accomplish the decorating, the daycare, the maintenance, the care and conversation with each other. Receiving such a great gift from God inspires us to give back in so many ways, it is amazing. We are truly blessed and thankful to God for those blessings!

Another opportunity for members and guests alike is that St John's Church will again be offering Dave Ramsey's Financial Peace University every Thursday evening for 9 weeks at 6:30 pm until 8 pm starting January 22, 2015, then running every Thursday evening thru March 19, 2015. The class will discuss handling money God's way & creating an environment of satisfaction and ideas for growing the blessings you have been bestowed. Families will also get help on what is prudent and good stewardship. This class can guide everyone in some way and give ideas to any age, gender and income level on handling money wisely. There is a cost of \$89 to each family unit signing up for the class, a \$10 saving from the online pricing, while supplies last! We plan to offer childcare upon request for families that need someone to watch their children while in class. See Dave Silfies or call the church office for more details on the FPU class.

Have a very Merry Christmas and prosperous New Year!

Steve Windschitl
President, St John's Congregation

Learn, Love, Live for Christ

St. John's Lutheran Church & School Church Council Meeting
December 11, 2014

Present: Gary Kuelbs, Don Guhlke, Jesse Cordes, Shorty Haus, Dave Silfies, Glen Kotten, Steve Windschitl, Pastor Cordes, Jerry Dittbenner, Jim Mielke

- I. Opening Devotion & Prayer
 - A. Church Council meeting started with bible study on the topic of fellowship.
 - B. Motion made to approve minutes Shorty Haus, 2nd Gary Kuelbs; Motion Carried.
- II. Pastor's Report
 - a. Written report
- III. President's report
 - a. Written report
- IV. Finance Committee report
- V. Board of Elders
 - a. Elder's recommend to accept transfer into membership from Beautiful Savior, Oregon - Tony Cordes, Shorty Haus 1st, Don Guhlke 2nd; motion carried.
 - b. Elder's planned for Pastor's absence January 6-20th, 2015.
- VI. Principal's Board of Ed.
 - a. No report
- VII. Worship Committee
 - a. Written Report
- VIII. Outreach Committee
 - a. Drop and shop daycare was a success.
- IX. Maintenance Committee
 - a. Priority items continued to be worked on.
- X. MVL/WELS
- XI. Stewardship Committee
 - a. Looking for additional members for Stewardship team.
- XII. Endowment & Trust Fund Committee
 - a. No report
- XIII. Old Business
 - a. Leadership Conference in Arizona January 8-12, 2014.
- XIV. New Business
 - a. Motion by Dave Silfies, 2nd by Shorty Haus, to Approve Wills Workshop on February 21, 2015; motion carried.
 - b. Next Church Council January 15, 2014
- XV. Motion to adjourn by Shorty Haus; motion 2nd Jim Mielke; motion carried.

Close with prayer.

Respectfully submitted, Glen Kotten, Recording Secretary

Ladies Aid

The Ladies Aid met on Wednesday, December 3rd, at 2pm for their monthly meeting and Christmas party. We moved to the church proper to enjoy the school children's recitations and Christmas carols. We thank the children and their teachers for making our party special. The basement had been decorated for Christmas by the Hosanna Circle. They also deserve a word of thanks.



The Ladies Aid provided a treat for the school children as they returned to their classes.

The Giving Tree has been set up for our shut-ins. Thank you, Laurie Halvorson for doing this once again. All congregation members are invited to take a card from the tree and visit our shut-ins. There are meditations located by the tree to deliver to our shut-ins as you visit.

Remember our Shut-ins

The Hosanna Circle has taken over the Campbell Products Collection. Save the Upc's from the labels. You may bring the labels to the collection box in the church basement.

Block 3 is up to serve.

The Ladies Aid will not meet in the month of January. Our next meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 4, 2015. All ladies of the congregation are invited to attend all of our meetings. We closed the meeting by joining in the Lord's Prayer and table prayer.

Marilyn Deibele
Secretary

Hosanna Circle

The Hosanna circle met December 2nd to decorate the church basement. We discussed our upcoming bake sale scheduled for December 14th. We will be researching how we can support New Beginnings, a home for unwed mothers, doing sewing projects and purchasing necessities for them. We briefly talked about an women's Advent event for 2015.

Our next meeting will be will be January 8th at 6:00 pm to undecorate the basement. We hope to count labels and package them for submission.

Respectfully,
Connie Trebesch and Mickey Meyer

Bake sale thank-you

A big thank you to all who donated to our Craft and Bake sale. Also thank you to all who supported it. We raised \$561.75 which will be used for future projects. We were able to leave baked items for coffee during Bible Class.



Principal's News

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year! Like all the other Christian church year seasons, my faculty and I used this past Christmas season to teach Scripture-based lessons to our children. Every Christmas season our church and classrooms display a set of five candles. Three purple candles, one pink candle, and a centered white candle.



What purpose do these candles serve? During the first week of Advent, our classrooms turned off the lights, each of our faculty members read a morning devotion, and a chosen student lit one purple candle. This candle is called the “Prophecy Candle.” The Prophecy Candle reminds us that long before Jesus was born God promised to send a Savior. During the second week of Advent, we again turned off the lights, read our devotion, and a student lit two purple candles. The second purple candle is called the “Bethlehem Candle.” The Bethlehem Candle reminds us that Jesus was born to be the Savior of all people. This routine continued every school day to start our morning! During the third week of Advent, once again the lights were off, devotions were read, and we lit two purple candles and one pink candle, the “Shepherd Candle.” The Shepherd Candle reminds us that Jesus has come into our hearts and into our lives. During the fourth week of Advent, our classrooms lit three purple candles and the pink candle. The fourth candle is called the “Angel Candle” which reminds us that Jesus will come again with all his angels on the Last Day.

Our Children's Christmas Eve service was a wonderful service and the children's story reminded everyone of the promises and blessings of the Christ child. The fifth candle, the “Christ Candle” was lit on that night to remind us that Jesus is the fulfillment of the other four candles. It is truly a joy for my faculty and I to teach these lessons to our students and give them the real meaning of Christmas year after year. May you also find joy every Christmas season and I pray for God's blessings for all of you.

Grades 1-4

Winter is chilly but we are keeping warm and busy this January!

In our Bible lessons we continue to learn about Jesus’ public ministry.

We see how he strengthened the faith of the disciples and others by his preaching and showed his almighty power through his miracles.

This month in Math class Grade one will be learning how to read a thermometer, add 2-digit numbers, and tally. Grade 3 will be writing numbers in expanded form, multiplying by four, writing fractions greater than one and squaring numbers.

READING...

Grade 1 is moving fast with SUPERKIDS stories and phonetic skills!

Grade 2 is doing an author study of Kevin Henkes.

Grades 3-4 will be sharing reading of a novel.

Grade 1-4 will study God’s marvelous Solar System this month in Science. We will learn about the planets and our place in the solar system.



Stay warm!

Mrs. Halvorson

Word of Thanks

(from Pastor)

My family and I thank all of you for your beautiful cards, encouraging words and loving gifts given us over the holidays! We are deeply grateful to our Lord for all of you and for the privilege of being included in this wonderful church family!



Poinsettias

Marlys Lochner (2)

Andy and Rita Lochner (2)

Steve and Mickey Meyer (2) in memory of Arnie and Millie Meyer and Herb and Chris Wandersee

Melvin and Lois Lendt (2) in memory of parents, Lois's brother-in-law and two sister-in-laws

Beverly Bartz (1) in memory of Harold Bartz

Dennis and Pam Dittbenner(1)

Steve and Paula Windschitl(2)

Loren Meinert (1) in memory of Violet and Delbert Meinert

Brad and LeAnn Berkner (2)

Ken and Penny Mathiowetz (1)

Rich and. Connie Trebesch (4) in memory of parents and Grandparents

Jerroll and Jan Dittbenner (2)



Poinsettias

**Thank you to those who donated poinsettias
to beautify our holiday worship services!**



In Memory of Barry Schewe

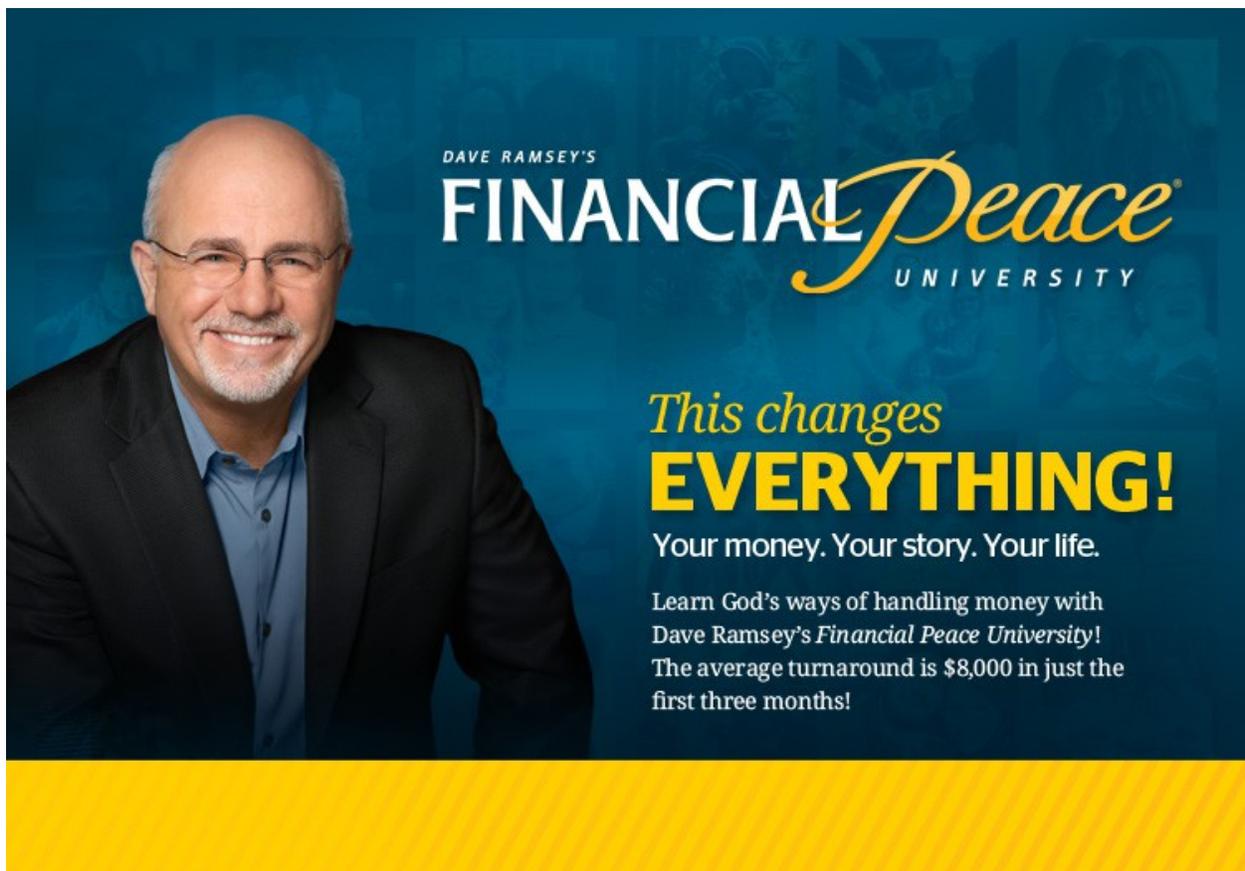
**St. John's Church
Family & Friends - \$55**

Financial Peace University Class

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If you wish to discuss this more with someone see Dave Silfies or Steve Windschitl. They will be the presenters for the class. Ask about references, many have been pleased by taking the class!

The signups need to be in by January 11th and we would like a minimum of 10 families to offer the class. There is a sign up form in back of church or just let one of the presenters or Lisa at the School office (794-6200) know you would like to attend.



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FINANCIAL *Peace*[®]
UNIVERSITY

This changes
EVERYTHING!

Your money. Your story. Your life.

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The average turnaround is \$8,000 in just the
first three months!