

The St. John's Messenger

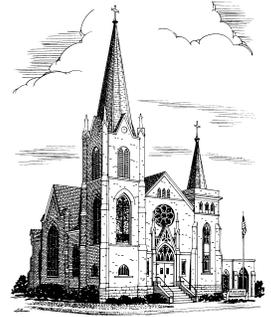
St. John's Lutheran Church and School

(Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod)

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Rev. Chris Cordes, Pastor ~ Mr. Dan Rick, Principal

www.stjohnsse.com



SEPTEMBER 2014

Church Attendance, Schmurch Attendance!

What is it about church attendance? However many times a month or year you go, what does God expect? (Are you agreed you are interested in God's opinion?)

Some just didn't grow up attending church, so for them three or four times a year is, like, super-holy because "That's 'way more than my parents ever went!". Others had the great example of attending church with their parents nearly every single Sunday, but when they reach a certain age and the parents indicate the young adult has a choice, they opt out of the weekly commitment. "After all, I'm free to choose how often. And besides, you don't get to heaven because you go to church."

One of the saddest drawbacks to true freedom in Christ – to the free gift of grace, for that matter– is that, when we realize we don't have to do anything to earn heaven and God's favor, the pressure's off! It's like we get stuck in the little child mentality: "If I'm not forced to do it, I don't need to do it."

It's true, isn't it? When nobody's telling us we have to do the dishes, wash the car, clean our room, go to church, give offerings, read the Bible, attend Bible class – well then, we don't! Or at least it's not as high a priority anymore.

The sad thing about this article is that most of the thinking above doesn't belong in the Christian's mind set.

Only when a child is young is it important to require church attendance. But even then you lose them from godly thinking and wisdom if you don't teach them why to go to church.

You have to model it, for sure, since dropping them off at church/Sunday School, or taking them only when you feel like it, never carries the right motivation. Never.

No, you teach from before they're aware of their surroundings, that you have joy in your heart to be in God's house. Just like the psalmist says, "I was glad with those who said to me, 'Let's go to the house of the LORD!'" (Ps 122, free translation) If you feel that sense of awe and privilege, your child will feel it too. And he/she will say, from the heart, "I love the house where you live, O LORD, the place where your glory dwells!" (Ps 26)

Church is not supposed to be an option! Did you realize that?

It's not supposed to be an obligation either, but if we're thinking openly, freely and in the atmosphere of grace, we don't allow anything that God loves and desires for us to be optional.

That's the up-side of grace: When we don't have to do something, we get to choose to do it of our own freed will. And, yes, there will always be a voice inside us that down's our enthusiasm, but that's from the ugly sinful nature, the nature we are not about to follow. (If God said he wanted you to kiss your friend or spouse, that old nature would put up a fuss when you wanted to plant a kiss!)

As God's freed people, released from the curse of the law, we look for ways to say "Thank you" to God, to show he is our Prime Reason for living, the One we follow – not because we have to, but because we want to.

I'd like to put a choke hold on my sinful nature. Martin Luther talked about holding it under the water until it drowns. Sadly, he added, the stinker can swim! No, we'll never be free of that old nay-saying voice (at least not until we die and go to heaven), but we can put a mighty choker on its neck to dominate it. "How?" you ask?

I'm glad you asked!

The answer is to stand inside the grace of your Savior, mentally standing right next to him, and just make the decision, "Church is what we do every weekend." You are able to decide not to deviate from that decision unless extremely sick. Even when traveling, you have the ability to plan church time, visiting one of our WELS or ELS churches, or if too far away, taking time for a family Bible reading together. (There are loads of stories to review in Genesis, Joshua, Acts, just to name a few.)

You can make that decision. It's just like when you accept a job somewhere, you make the decision to get up and get to work on time. You don't deviate from the plan; it's just a simple, self-regulating decision. Only with church attendance, look how your love for God is especially the motivation for going!

The truth is: that's the only right reason to go to church. But even if you don't feel it, don't give your old self permission to call the shots; just go anyway. In the doing, the heart changes too. And you can simply ask God to help you feel like his psalm writers. "How lovely is your dwelling place, O LORD Almighty!" (Ps 84)

Not wanting to slide backwards as a Christian, do this: Mature in the direction you know your dear God likes. Say it this way: "God's house is where I want to be. My decisions follow that mind set."

– Pastor Cordes.

St. John's Mission statement:

The continuing purpose of this congregation is to serve all people in God's world with the gospel of Jesus Christ on the basis of the Holy Scriptures.



September Schedule:

(Please note time changes)

Sep 7 – Sunday School & Teen/Adult Bible Class,
9:00 am!
– Worship, 10 am!
– Hog Roast dinner, 11:15 am

Sep 14 – Sunday School, 9:00 am!
– pre-service concert, 9:30 am
– Organ Dedication Worship, 10 am!
– dinner (potluck), 11:30 am

Sep 15 – no worship or Bible class

Sep 21 – back to regular schedule

Coming Events!



September 7 is Hog Roast Sunday! That's usually the Sunday we also install our new Sunday School teachers. So that's the day we also start Sunday School! Since the meal follows church right away, it seemed good to the Elders to change the schedule for September 7:

- 9:00 am – Sunday School and Teen/Adult Bible Class
- 10:00 am – Worship service
- 11:15 am – Hog Roast dinner

September 14 is Organ Dedication Sunday! You should have already received an invitation in the mail. We will dedicate our newly refurbished and expanded Wickes organ in the Sunday morning service. Note the time change for this day too!

- 9:00 am – Sunday School (no Teen-Adult Bible Class)
- 9:30 am – pre-service organ pieces (a mini-concert!)
- 10:00 am – worship service with organ dedication
- 11:15 am – organ presentation and a musical piece that utilizes the wide range of our organ's features
- 11:30 am – dinner and dinnertime entertainment



By the way, we are requesting members to bring potluck items and name them something musical. A little label beside your dish of pickles, for example, could call them Dill Piccolos. A dish of donuts could have a label that says "O to Joy".

September 15 – Because we hope all members will attend the Dedication Service, especially designed for Sunday morning, there will be no service or Bible Class on Monday.

President's Report to St. John's Church Council & Congregation

Summer is winding down! It is time to be thinking of our school and church activities that will be resuming this fall.

School starts August 25th. Many of our members have been giving the school staff a hand in preparing the school for the upcoming year. Thanks to everyone who pitched in to help out! I know that the staff and students appreciate it!

The playground has been installed and we offer big thanks to Principal Dan Rick, along with school board members Jon Meyer, Cole Trebesch, Bruce Beussman and Paul Maasz for heading up the construction project. Thanks, also, to all the members who helped it go together quickly. It looks great and our students will have fun with it!

We will enjoy our annual Fall Hog Roast on Sunday, September 7th, starting with a worship service at 10 a.m. Note that time change! It will be followed by our Fall Kick-off meal which will be hosted by the Church Council and Elders, along with their spouses. The money raised by it typically would go to the school for special projects as directed by the Elders. We hope everyone can join in the celebration of this fellowship.

Our next big event is the re-dedication of our organ. After many years of work and fund raising, the project is complete. Now it is time to celebrate! The dedication program will be part of our service on Sunday, September 14th. There will be several organists on hand playing for us. Come early to hear pre-service music which should begin about 9:30 a.m. Worship will begin at 10 a.m. After worship, we will be treated to an informative presentation about the organ's capabilities, followed by a brief program and pot-luck dinner downstairs. Be sure to attend this rare opportunity of dedication. Because this is a special service there will not be a Monday evening service on September 15th.

After our July 20th Annual Voters' meeting, we held a brain storming session in regard to the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities at St. John's Church and School. About 25 attended and the list we came up with was comprehensive. We adjourned, and scheduled a follow-up meeting for July 27th in order to complete our lists. We had about the same attendance for that meeting. We followed with discussion on re-evaluating our congregational mission statement. Watch for more to come as we plan for the future of St John's Church and School! Everyone's input is most welcome, so feel free to join our next meeting.

After one month into our new fiscal year, we find ourselves falling short on our budget with offerings. Vacations and lower attendance in summer months has historically caused this shortfall. When you think about it, it is not a good excuse. We are about 20% below where we should be at this time of the year! We certainly don't want to see the shortfall continue, and we ask each of you to pray how you might help. Please remember that your support is important when you are able to attend and also when you are not able to attend.

It has been a blessing to see the Elders make visits to members we haven't seen for a while. It isn't always easy to meet with members because everyone has busy schedules; but they are meeting up with some and God willing, helping them to understand the importance and blessing of attending more regularly.

As a congregation, we have been taking applications for a church cleaning person to maintain the church proper. A list of duties has been set up. The goal is to have this person begin the position in September. Anyone wishing to apply can contact Pastor, Gary Kuelbs or myself.

Have a God blessed fall,

Steve Windschitl
President, St John's Congregation



Church Council Minutes **August 13, 2014**

Present: Jerry Dittbenner, Shorty Haus, Glen Kotten, Gary Kuelbs, Andy Lochner, Jim Mielke, Dan Rick, Dave Silfies, Steve Windschitl and Pastor Cordes.

Pastor Cordes opened the meeting with devotion and a prayer.

Minutes

Shorty Haus/Andy Lochner made a motion to approve the July 2014 minutes. Motion carried.

Pastor's Report

Pastor presented a written report.

Treasurer's Report

A written treasurer's report was presented.

President's Report

Written report was presented.

Finance Report

No report.

Board of Elders

Elder's continue to visit members who haven't been making it to communion regularly.

Hog roast is coming up on September 7th, Church that morning is at 10:00 A.M. and the hog roast will follow worship service. Bible study at 9:00 A.M.

Elder's are looking to add one additional member to help with the growing responsibilities of the congregation. Please contact Steve Windschitl or Jerry Dittbenner if interested.

Principal & Board of Education

Playground was successfully installed. Thank you to the ladies for putting together a lunch for the workers installing the playground and to the workers that assisted with the installation.

Swings and a balance beam have been ordered and could possibly be installed prior to the start of the school year.

Back to School is August 14, 2014. Pool party is at 8:00 P.M. August 14, 2014.

Enrollment for this school year is projected at 24; enrollment in preschool is projected at 3. Enrollment for last school year was 24; enrollment in the preschool last year was 6.

School starts August 25.

The soccer program will continue this school year.

Worship Committee

September 15 we will not have worship service or bible class.

September 14 service will be at 10:00 A.M. with organ dedication to follow the service and then a potluck dinner will follow.

Looking for a person to serve as chairman for the worship team.

Maintenance Committee

There are many maintenance tasks to be completed and all are encourage to share their talents and time. There will be a list of tasks in the narthex and school bulletin board.

Motion made by Shorty Haus, 2nd by Dave Silfies to repair the brick of the back wall of the church. Motion carried.

Motion made by Dave Silfies, 2nd by Shorty Haus ; \$1,000 and less maintenance projects may be started and completed without the approval of Church Council. Motion Carried.

Motion made by Shorty Haus, 2nd by Dave Silfies; all maintenance committee members get keys for the Church. Motion Carried.

Outreach

Vacation Bible camp was a success.

Corn Days and the parade are coming up.

Next meeting is Sunday October 5th after worship service.

The church picnic was amazing!

Stewardship

No report.

MVL/WELS

Enrollment at MVL is anticipated

Endowment and Trust Fund Committee

No report.

Old Business

Review of congregation strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and mission statement.

New Business

Next Church Council Meeting is Thursday September 11th at 7:30 P.M.

Jerry Dittbener/Shorty Haus made a motion to adjourn. Motion carried.

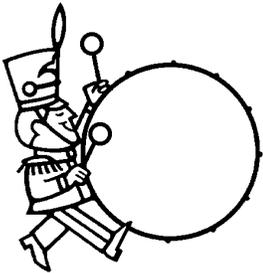
The meeting closed with The Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Glen Kotten
Secretary

Parade of Thanks!

The Corn Days Parade was held on a hot and steamy August 16th. Approximately 35 members participated in our parade entry! We had a fantastic time, singing our way through the route and declaring the praise of our Lord! We had the privilege of observing the parade attendees enjoying the music, while we also passed out school bracelets, brochures and candy along the route. Very special thanks to: Dave and Char Zimmerman, electrical and decorating help; Mike Walden, electrical help; Deb Hemming, use of sound equipment; Rachel Cordes, music selection, director and accompanist; Pastor Cordes, parade walker and "THE NEW REV"; Mr. Rick, parade walker and uniform shirts; Glen Kotten, parade walker; our seven sign-carriers – Ethan Silfies, Tim Haag, Ella Beussman, Matt Beussman, Molly Landkammer, Tatyana Soloviyov, and Chris Leopold; Dennis and Pam Dittbenner, float decoration and assistance; Corey Schewe, use of his truck; Jerry Dittbenner, use of his hay rack and bales; Judy Draper, cutting out the wooden signs and assembling them; and all the singers, both children and adults. I don't have all your names, but you know who you are.... THANK YOU!!!



We want everyone to know that we also could not have had such a successful event without the kind and gracious help from Ed Pautzke of Springfield. Ed made 3 trips to Sleepy Eye to assure our sound system was the best it could be, then he also rode along and did the sound mixing.

Paula Windschitl, Reporter

The final word: God blessed our event. God was praised and proclaimed. God blessed those who participated and those who listened. God is GOOD!

MLC Ladies Auxiliary & Homecoming Events

The annual meeting of the **MLC Auxiliary** will be held on Saturday, October 25th. Watch for more information in the next newsletter.

MLC's Homecoming weekend will be September 26-28. The football game will be on Saturday, September 27th at 1:00 pm vs. Greenville. There are MANY Homecoming activities to participate in, so check out the web site at www.mlc-wels.edu/homecoming. Kids will especially have a blast at the Family Fun Zone from 10:00 a.m – 1:00 pm on Saturday, the 27th!

Paula Windschitl, MLC Auxiliary Contact



LWMS Fall Rally to be held September 20th

The Fall Rally of the LWMS will be held at Zion Lutheran Church in Olivia on Saturday, September 20th. This will be a half-day rally, with registration opening at 8:00 a.m. and the closing devotion at noon, followed by a luncheon. The program for the day will be "It's Alzheimer's - It's Time for Extraordinary Love" presented by Pastor Curtis Seefeldt, Director of Church Relations for the Lutheran Home Association. What is the impact of Alzheimer's disease and how might Christians serve others in Christ-like love? Pastor Seefeldt will discuss Alzheimer's disease and dementia, demonstrate how to provide emotional and spiritual care for the patient as well as emotional and spiritual support for those providing care. If you are planning to attend the rally, please RSVP to Paula Windschitl, reporter. The hosting congregation would like to have an estimate of how many to plan for.



Thank you to those who remembered the LWMS with your offering envelope this past month. Contributions to support the LWMS will be forwarded to our area treasurer by the first part of September.

Ladies Aid

The Ladies Aid met on Wednesday, August 6th at 2:00 pm for their regular monthly meeting. President Marlys Lochner presided at our meeting. Pastor Cordes based our devotion on Matthew 4. When we are tempted by the devil and this world we have God's Word to protect us.

A motion was made, seconded and passed to pay for 5 copies of the large print Meditation Booklet at the cost of \$18.50 each.

A motion was made, seconded and passed to reimburse the church's General Fund \$275.00 for 25 copies of the Forward in Christ subscription.

A newsletter from the Lutheran Home was received offering to give us a presentation of their mission. This will be considered, and possibly presented to a wider audience in our church.



The Pie Sale at Sleepy Eye Corn Days was a success. Thank to our coordinators Mickey Meyer and Rita Lochner, all the pie bakers, Youth Group and everyone else who helped. Eighty-nine pies were sold! The amount of the proceeds are not available at this time.

Bake Sale

The latest CAMM newsletter was read by Marcia. It gives us an insight of that mission.

Pastor Cordes led us in the Lord's Prayer and table prayer to close the meeting.

Our next meeting will be a joint meeting with the Hosanna Circle on Thursday, September 4th at 6 pm. Come join us!

Marilyn Deibele
Secretary

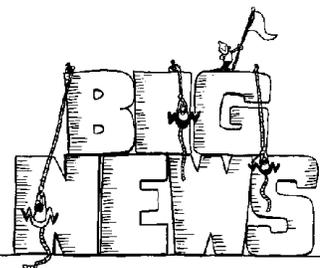
August Altar Flowers



We would like to thank Julie Ibberson for sharing flowers with us from the funeral of Lola Robertson; and Dan and Lynn Hacker for the flowers in honor of their 40th wedding anniversary! We greatly appreciate these gracious acts of contribution.

Principal News

Welcome back congregational members to the new school year at St. John's! I would also like to welcome back all of our faculty, staff, and students to the start of the 2014-2015 school year! There have been four new projects this summer and they all have made a great improvement to our school.



As you may well know, we have installed our new playground. Already, the playground is a huge success with our school children and even community children. I would like to thank everyone who helped make this project happen. I would also like to give a special thank you to those members who installed the playground on July 26! Thank you for your hard work on a rainy day!

Mrs. Halvorson's classroom looks better than ever! Grades 1-4 can now read books in a new reading loft! The reading loft has carpet and pillows which will make reading even more fun for our younger students.

The east school entrance and east hallways going down to the school bathrooms have been painted. Thank you to Tonya Kowalke, friend of the faculty, for doing a wonderful job. The hallways and stairways display more of a modern style appearance and the paint seems to add more light to the area.

Finally, our school has had a big technology upgrade. Every classroom desktop computer has been replaced with a laptop. The laptops accommodate our Smartboards for class lessons and student research projects. We have also added iPad touchscreen tablets! The iPads will be used by the students for extra lesson practice such as math facts and language arts!



St. John's has surely been blessed by God with these new projects!

If you do have any questions about our school or our classrooms, please email me at principal@stjohnsse.com or call our school phone number at 507-794-6200. Our website is also a great place to see the latest pictures and events. Go on the internet and type in: www.stjohnsse.com/school I would be more than willing to provide you with updates or information about St. John's Ev. Lutheran School.

Grade 1-4

We welcome another group of active, eager learners to our Grade 1-4 classroom this September! Above all, we are blessed with another year to grow in our faith and knowledge of our wonderful Savior from sin.

In our **Christ-Light** Bible lessons we will be studying the New Testament this year. We will see the fulfillment of God's promises to his people in our Savior Jesus as we follow his birth, ministry, suffering and death, and resurrection.

First graders are making new friends and enjoying having a desk of their own. We are all excited to continue the adventures of the **Superkids!** **Superkids** is our new reading program that was begun at the Kindergarten level last year. It encompasses Spelling and Language skills as well. This program is taught interactively with the Smartboard each day and also provides online activities for students to use at school and at home.

Psalm 139:14 "I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made."

All grades will study the **Human Body** in Science this month. While the younger children will learn the bones and organs, the older children will focus on body systems.

Blessings abound from the Lord through our members! We are already enjoying our awesome, new, **Library Reading Loft**. This is a must-see addition to our room. Designed and built by Judy and Jack Draper, it was specially tailored for the needs and uses of this age level. We couldn't be more thankful or tickled!

So many more things are happening as we accustom ourselves to a new school year. We will keep you updated each month on our progress and activities!

I ask that you keep us and all our school children and teachers in your prayers this year as we walk hand in hand with our Savior. What a wonderful journey it will be!

In Christ,
Mrs. Halvorson

Thank You!

Thank you to Armin & Leona Lendt who donated towards the new piano mover in Mrs. Halvorson's classroom. We can now finally easily and safely move our piano as needed!

Also, thank you to Brad and Le Ann Berkner for their gift to help with expenses of the Library Loft that was recently built in Mrs. Halvorson's Grade 1-4 classroom.

God bless you for your kindness in his name!
Mrs. Halvorson

A decorative border consisting of several pencils pointing in various directions, interspersed with small dots and swirls.

Reading Library Loft

Come and see our new READING LIBRARY LOFT! Grade 1-4 classroom has an exciting addition this fall thanks to the talents of Master builder Judy Draper and husband Jack!

We are looking forward to using this beautifully built and designed library space and carpeted loft for years to come! THANK YOU, "Grandma and Grandpa" Draper for sharing your God-given talents for the benefit and enjoyment of our school children!

A black and white line drawing of a woman sitting on a stack of books, reading a book. A young boy is sitting on the floor next to her, also reading a book.