

January 2023



Pursue Jesus — And Your Passions

If you struggle with making and keeping resolutions, you're not alone. It can be discouraging to focus on what you're doing "wrong" and all the difficult changes in store. Yet January offers great opportunities to listen to God's direction. After all, Jesus came to give us abundant life and wants us to pursue him. As you review the previous year, ask: What brought me joy? How did I grow? How did I help others? What did I do that no one else could have done? Whether your list includes spending time outside, mentoring or coaching young people or making crafts to give away or sell, continue doing what brings you joy. God gives us each unique gifts and circumstances, so live passionately for him this year!

St. John's Lutheran Church—Sherburn, Minnesota

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HAPPY NEW YEAR

From the Pastor



Rejoicing In The Christ Child

Luke 2:1-20

Leonardo da Vinci who is best known for his painting of the Last Supper. It took him almost three years to complete the painting. Many, however, do not know about the little ship which originally graced one corner of that magnificent painting. Da Vinci first painted what we see to be his portrayal of the Lord's Supper, that took place on Maundy Thursday, with Jesus, the apostles, the wine and bread, and the walls for the background. At that point the painting was really complete.

However, the lower part of the painting looked rather bare in the eyes of Leonardo, so with much caution and care he added a little ship to one of the lower corners.

When the painting was exhibited for the first time, Leonardo attended the showing disguised and unrecognizable to listen to the remarks of those who came to view his painting. To his amazement very few seemed to notice that Christ was at the center of the painting. It was as though He was totally absent from the painting. That little ship which he had added was getting most of the attention and was most admired. As soon as the people left the exhibit, he took his brush and wiped that little ship off the canvas so it would not continue to distract people from seeing Christ.

Could this be an analogy (comparison) between the painting and Christmas? Christmas is God's portrait. God's portrait is painted for us in the Gospel of Luke: The Christ Child is born and laid in a manger; The angel of the Lord appears to shepherds with this Good News: "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord"; the heavenly host of angels sing this most joyous praise: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men"; the shepherds hurry to Bethlehem to worship Him as their Savior, and after telling others, returned to their work, praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were told them about this Child. That is Christmas complete. God's gift to mankind!

But sometimes as humans we have a need to add to what God has already made complete. We do this by adding our own little ships that distract us from the true meaning and focus of Christmas. We all can list those distractions for ourselves, such as Christmas trees, Santa Claus, family dinners, toys and presents. We can also include the charitable opportunities to help the less fortunate in need of our help and assistance. Please do not misunderstand me, I know we do all these things to help enhance our Christmas and as a way to celebrate God's gift in Christ. But sometimes we become so overloaded, overburdened, overtired by adding more and more to our Christmas preparation that when Christmas comes we fail to see Christ in the manger.

St. Luke paints for us the most holy of days when Christ was born and placed in a manger for all the world to see. He was born of Mary and Joseph, to live, suffer, die, and rise for our salvation. If we do not see Christ in Christmas we are celebrating just another holiday. We are admiring little ships and fail to see the complete picture of God's grace born in the person of Christ.

After shepherds came to see, worship, and praise God for this child, Mary could only treasure and ponder all these things in her heart. We, too have 12 days to treasure, ponder and **rejoice in the Christ Child.**

God's blessings to all as we enter into a New Year!

~Pastor Steve

But Mary kept all these things
and pondered them in her heart.
Luke 2:19

WHAT ARE YOU KEEPING
IN YOUR HEART?

Installation Of Officers And Board Members

Sunday, January 8 services will include Installation of Officers and Board Members. All newly elected and those presently serving on a Board or as an Officer will be asked to come forward at the Installation part of the service.

Kingdom Builders (All Boards & Officers)

To kick off the new year we will have a meeting with the Kingdom Builders on **Wednesday, January 11 at 6:00 pm**. The boards will also have the opportunity to meet together to set budgets for the upcoming year and discuss duties and responsibilities of their board.



ANNUAL MEETING

Annual Voters' Meeting

The Annual Voters' Meeting will be held on **Sunday, January 22, 9:15 am**. The agenda includes the 2023 budget and the call of Vicar Jeff Hagen to be Pastor-SMP (Special Ministry Program) here at St. John's Lutheran Church.



Reminder!

There will be one service only on Sunday, January 1 at 9:00 am.

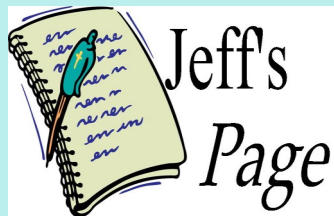
No Sunday school or Bible classes.

Pastoral Visits

Due to the privacy act, if you are hospitalized and would like a visit from the pastor or to be included in the prayers, you or a family member need to contact Pastor Wilson, Vicar Jeff, or the church office.

Please continue to use the offering envelopes that you received last year until the box is empty. Last year In order to save on cost and discarding outdated envelopes we went with envelopes with no dates printed on them. We will continue to use this format and you can pick up a box as needed. If you ran out or are getting low on envelopes there are boxes located in the front entry.





Unlikely Recipients and Witnesses

I find it hard to believe that we have celebrated Christmas and are preparing for the season of Epiphany!

Have you ever had an experience where you have been shown evidence of a truth, where the truth—so hard to see though it's right in front of our eyes—is revealed? And once we see it, we can't un-see it.

The Church Calendar has a season devoted to this kind of experience. It is called Epiphany—a striking realization that changes everything. Following Christmas, Epiphany celebrates the manifestation of Jesus Christ, and one of the primary biblical stories referenced during this season is of the wise men visiting Jesus after His birth.

This is a familiar story, found in Matthew 2:1-12, but I encourage you to go read the text again. In summary, wise men from the east come to Jerusalem hoping to find the newborn King. Herod, fearful of a potential royal rival, encourages the wise men to find Jesus and report back so that he can also worship Him (but really so he can seek out and destroy the threat to his throne). The wise men are led by a star to the house where Jesus is and, in perhaps the greatest epiphany of all time, they fall down and worship Jesus, offering Him precious treasures before returning home without reporting back to Herod.

Though now a familiar part of our Christmas narratives, these Magi were unlikely recipients and unlikely witnesses of the gospel of Jesus Christ, which has beautiful implications for us as we enter into the season of Epiphany.

Matthew only tells us that these men were from “the east,” but many scholars interpret that to mean Babylon or Persia, places inhabited by enemies of the Jews. While Herod, the representative of the Jewish people, rejects Jesus, the nations, as represented by the Magi, recognize Jesus. He came to His own, but His own did not receive Him (John 1:11). In a wild plot twist, God invites the least likely to worship a Jewish King to be among the first to worship Him.

Like the wise men, we are all unlikely recipients of the King and His kingdom. We, too, were once far away, but we have been brought near through the blood of Christ (Eph. 2:13). The Magi were guided by a star, and like them, we cannot find Jesus on our own. This Epiphany season, be reminded of Christ and of the glorious humility God demonstrates in the Incarnation. Though we are the least likely, we have received the good news and have been invited to worship the one true King.

Not only were the Magi unlikely to receive the gospel, they were also unlikely to be some of its first witnesses. These wise men from the east had no business seeking out the King of the Jews. After all, according to Jewish tradition, this king was only coming to save Jews, not Gentiles. The epiphany of the Magi is our first taste that the gospel is meant for all of those who will come from the east and from the west to worship Christ the King (Matt. 8:11). The wise men lay prone, literally falling down in front of King Jesus, foreshadowing that one day the nations will also pay homage to Him; every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that He is King (Phil. 2:10).

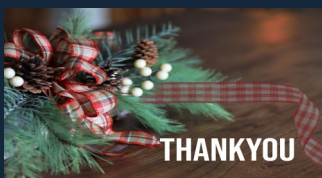
But the wise men did not stay in Bethlehem. Matthew tells us that after worshipping Jesus, “being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way” (Matt. 2:12). The wise men become some of the first missionaries of the kingdom of God. The Epiphany of Christ the King is the beginning of a holy revolution. Jesus is not simply King of the Jews, He is the true King of the Nations. It is not enough for Him to have the allegiance of a single people group. He wants allegiance from every tribe, tongue and nation (Matt. 28:19)

Just like the Magi, we are unlikely witnesses to Christ's gospel message. We were once in darkness, but we have now seen the light (Eph. 5:8). The Epiphany season helps us to remember the shocking reality of the kingship of Jesus Christ. We are called to remember that we once walked in the domain of darkness. We walked in ignorance. We walked in futility. Our minds were darkened, and our hearts were dead. But in God's great mercy, He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of His beloved Son (Col. 1:13).

The wise men are only the beginning. Like their epiphany all those years ago, our epiphanies of the lordship of Jesus Christ fuel the Great Commission. We have seen the truth, and we cannot un-see it; we must go and tell others. Eventually, all people will recognize the kingship of Christ, and at His Name every knee will bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Phil. 2:10-11). It is this vision—this epiphany—that sends us, unlikely recipients and unlikely witnesses, to testify of the good news of Jesus Christ.

May God bless you, watch over you, protect you, and guide you as we come together in our church home to worship, pray confidently, and confess that Christ is Lord.

Vicar Jeff

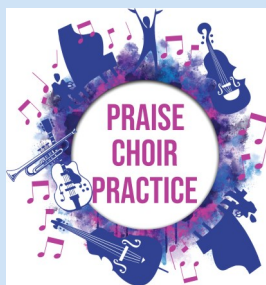


♦ Thank you to everyone who participated in

the choir and those who provided special music during the Christmas season.

- ♦ Thank you to Steve Roben for making risers for the Sunday school program.
- ♦ Thank you to the adults and youth who helped with the Christmas story during our 5:00 Christmas Eve service.
- ♦ Thank you to Dressens for providing candy and peanuts for the Sunday school Christmas bags this year.
- ♦ We thank those who come and remove the snow from the parking lots and sidewalks!

Thank you for the kindness shown to each of us and our families at Christmas and this past year. God's blessings to each of you in 2023. ~With Christlike love—The staff at St. John's



Choir

The praise choir will meet on **Wednesdays, January 11 and 18 at 6:30 pm** for the month of January. The

next blended praise service is scheduled for Sunday, January 22.

Friendship Club

We will not meet in January. Mark your calendars for **Monday, February 6!** Meet at the Pizza Ranch in Fairmont at 11:30 for our Valentine's get together.

LWML



The January meeting for LWML is scheduled for **Wednesday, January 11 at 2:00 pm.**

Receipts

What a way to end the old and start the New Year! Receipts of \$150,000. was taken to Fareway and another \$150,00.00 to HyVee! The only way that was possible was for all of you who have saved receipts for the LWML!! Thank you thank you thank you!! You made our day!

Keep saving your receipts! Totals to date:

\$720.05 Fareway \$1,867.68 Hy-Vee

Church Events Cancellations: Please listen to the following radio stations and also check your emails for cancellations of church events

Fairmont

KSUM 1370 AM and 106.5 Lakes FM

Blue Earth

KJLY 104.5 FM

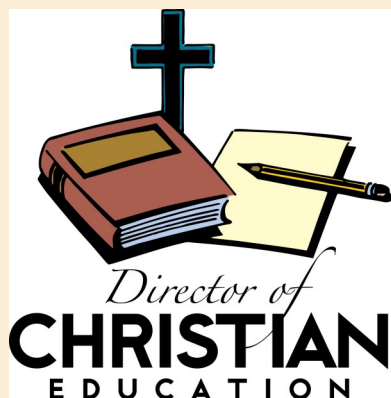
Jackson

KKOJ 1190 AM and KRAQ 105.7 FM

You can also check the church website & Facebook

Website: sjlsherburn.com

Facebook: [stjohnslutheransherburnmn](https://www.facebook.com/stjohnslutheransherburnmn)



How are your New Year's resolutions going? As I sit writing this in the year 2022, I can predict how mine will turn out in 2023. Not good, so I usually refrain from making resolutions. I ask again, how are your New Year's resolutions going? If you spend any time on social media this time of year, then you may see some debates among Christians about whether you should make resolutions. This article is not going to come out for or against resolutions. It will instead talk about the daily renewal we as Christians are offered.

What is this daily renewal? Luther in his explanation of Baptism in the Small Catechism asks, "What does such baptizing with water indicate?" His answer is "It indicates that the Old Adam in us should by daily contrition and repentance be drowned and die with all sins and evil desires, and that a new man should daily emerge and arise to live before God in righteousness and purity forever." Because of this, Luther encourages us to start each day by making the sign of the cross and saying, "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen." The invocation reminds us of our baptism because we are baptized in the name of the Triune God.

Why should we start every day with this renewal? In simple terms, we are all sinners in need of God's forgiveness. Remembering our baptism reminds us of the gifts given through baptism. "Baptism works forgiveness of sins; rescues from death and the devil; and gives eternal life" (Luther's Catechism q. 248). A daily renewal of our Baptism continues the work of forgiveness in our lives. We forget we are God's child, because we are sinners. Remembering our baptism tells us who we are. We then live out our lives as God's children.

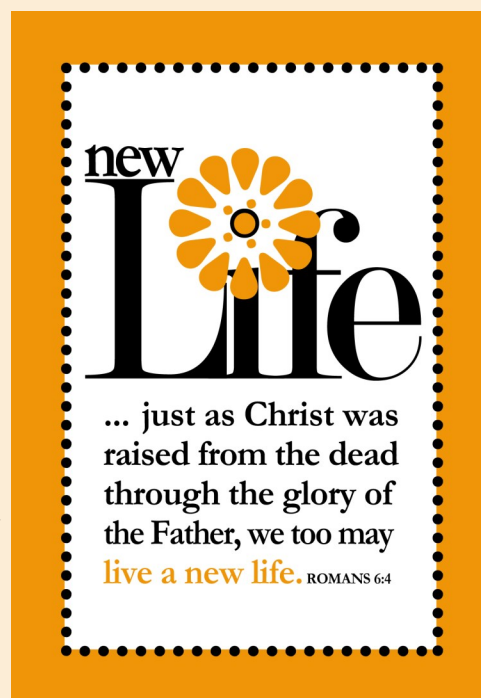
As we live out our lives as God's children, we share the forgiveness we have been given with others. A few days before my father died, his face became very concerned and he began to cry and repeat, "I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I'm sorry." Hopefully the idea of a pastor feeling guilt over sin does not come to anyone as a surprise. A family member looked at him and said, "It's okay." I looked at them and said, "It's not okay." Then I turned to my father and said, "I forgive you; we forgive you, and God forgives you because of Jesus." My father's face changed, he smiled, and he still had some tears coming down, but he was now relieved.

Does your family share the forgiveness God has given you with each other? Are you able to admit when you are wrong? Parents, relieve your children of the guilt they carry. Children, forgive your parents. Sometimes we are flippant with saying, "I'm sorry." If I may be so bold, then this year I encourage you to admit when you are wrong by saying, "I am sorry. I was wrong."

Upon this confession, may you also hold fast to the forgiveness earned by Jesus on the cross, for you, given to you through your Baptism. Daily renew to stand firm in your forgiveness this year and always!

"We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life" (Romans 6:4).

~Andy



7th & 8th Graders

Confirmation classes will resume on **January 4 at 3:45**. Please make sure that you are working on your 10 service logs.

The next FFF for Jr. High will take place on **Wednesday, January 4, 5:00 pm** (following confirmation class). Make sure to stay and join the fellowship and fun.



Sr. High FFF
Wednesday, January 11
6:00 pm
Wednesday, January 25
6:00 pm

Thank you St. John's members for supporting the youth in the Christmas greens fundraiser and to Sherburn Nursery for ordering the Christmas items. The support that each of you have given to the youth has been outstanding and great encouragement for our youth! Many thanks!

3rd-6th Grade Group

The next gathering for this group will be held on Sunday, **February 5 at 4:00 pm**. More information to come.



Kids Against Hunger Pack is **February 18!** We have two options to serve: one at 8:30 am and one at 9:00 am. Watch for more info.



January Birthdays

1	Ronnie Beckius
1	Keith Petersen
2	Emily Anderson
2	Matt Larson
3	Mason Bliesmer
4	Norma Brolsma
4	Ethan Harris
4	Evan Roben
5	Melissa Cutler
5	Chris Kahler
5	Westen Eggestein
6	Jersey Anderson
6	Don Hoffmeyer
6	Jenny Hall
6	Michele Evans
6	Trisha Striemer
7	Elayna Hansen
8	Katelynn Kennedy
8	Chuck Larson
8	David Swanson
10	Jarred Anderson
10	Abby Dubbels
11	Evelyn Keithahn
11	Brittany Lutz
13	Janet Klug
13	Kristy Studer
14	Megan Ambrose
14	Stephanie Kneeland
14	Gary Manzey
15	Gary Armbrust
15	Brenda Carlson
15	Scott Hansen
16	Mike Reigel
18	Shanna Amborn
19	Cameron Dressen
20	Reinold Hagen
20	Dorothy Janssen
20	Lucas Larson
21	Jenna Eisenmenger
21	Paul Stueven
22	Berkeley Schubert
22	Matt Holm
22	Lexie Steele



JANUARY BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

24	Gunnie Buchmeier
24	Ryan Claussen
24	Steve Steuber
24	Emily Sparks
24	Genevieve Clow
25	Sue Crissinger
25	Dale VanderWert
26	Char Kitner
26	Steve Sparks
26	Sue Forstrom
26	Ryder Thate
27	Angelina Arnold
28	Melody Bliesmer
28	Mark Crissinger
28	Wyatt Harris
29	Marlo Maschoff
30	Lilly Krogman-Gibson
30	Steve Wilson

December Attendance

December 4: 209

December 11: 84

December 18 8:00: 79

December 18 SS Program: 262

December 24 Family Service: 216

December 25: 91



January Anniversaries

1	Shane & Lori Hargrove
12	Wes & Savannah Whitehead
25	Gary & Velda Roush
27	Paul & Connie Markquart

Sherburn Legion New Years Eve

Sherburn Lions Club

Serving Prime Rib

5-8:00 pm

Cost: \$25/person

January 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
9am Worship No Sunday School Elder: Brian 1	2	3	3:45pm 7th & 8th Grade Confirmation 5pm Jr. High FFF 4	5	6	7
8am Worship 9:15am Sunday School/BC/SALT 10:30am Worship Elders: Dennis/Ryan 8	10am Temp Lake Ridge Service 9	10	2pm LWML 3:45pm 7th & 8th Grade Confirmation 6pm Kingdom Builders 6pm Sr. High FFF 6:30pm Praise Team 11	12	13	14
8am Worship With Communion 9:15am Sunday School/BC/SALT 10:30am Worship With Communion Elders: Brad/Jamie 15	16	17	3:45pm 7th & 8th Grade Confirmation 6:30pm Praise Team 18	Circuit Pastors @ Jackson 19	20	21
8am Worship 9:15am Sunday School 9:15am Voters' Meeting 10:30am Worship Elders: Clint/Guy 22	23	24	3:45pm 7th & 8th Grade Confirmation 6pm Sr. High FFF 25	26	27	28
8am Worship 9:15am Sunday School/BC/SALT 10:30am Worship Elders: Brian/Ryan 29	30	31				

St. John's Lutheran Church
317 South Main Street
P.O. BOX 760
Sherburn, Minnesota 56171

The Lutheran Hour

Radio Broadcast: KSUM, Fairmont 1370 AM—Sundays @ 11:00 a.m.

January 1: **"Out of Egypt"** Guest Speaker: Rev. Dr. Anthony (Tony) Cook

"Out of Egypt I called my son." With these words the Gospel of Matthew reveals the rich and interconnected history of the young nation, Israel, and the young Savior, Jesus. Follow them on their journeys to discover the true Israel and what He means to your life today. (Matthew 2:13-23)

January 8 **"Gifted"** Lutheran Hour Speaker: Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler

What if we learned to see this world and everyone in it as gifts from God? (Colossians 1:16)

January 15 **"Gifts to Share"** Lutheran Hour Speaker: Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler

A body of water becomes stagnant when there is no outflow. The same could be said of us. (Colossians 1:29)

January 22 **"Whatever You Do"** Guest Speaker: Rev. Dr. Jason Broge

The mundane just isn't mundane when seen through heaven's eyes. (Colossians 3:17-21)

January 29 **"Hopelessly Hopeful"** Lutheran Hour Speaker: Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler

Having hope for humanity is not the same thing as hoping in humanity. (Colossians 1:27)