



Word and Sacrament

Christian Education

Caring and Serving

stjohnsportage.com

The Cornerstone

**850 Armstrong St.
Portage, WI 53901**

Address Service Requested

December 2023

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Worship Times

Saturdays:

5:30 p.m.

Sundays:

8:00 a.m.

9:00 a.m.

10:30 a.m.

Wednesdays:

10:00 a.m.

6:30 p.m.

Service of Word and Sacrament

**Service of Word and Sacrament
Coffee Hour and Fellowship,
Church Christian Life Center
Service of Word and Sacrament**

**Advent Worship, Church Sanctuary
Advent Worship, Church Sanctuary**

Weekly Events

Sundays:

9:15 a.m.

Mondays:

9:00 a.m.

4:30 p.m.

Wednesdays:

9:00 a.m.

12:00 p.m.

5:30 p.m.

5:00 p.m.

7:15 p.m.

Thursdays:

9:00 a.m.

Fridays:

Praise Band Practice, Church Sanctuary

**Strong Bodies, Church Narthex
GriefShare, Church CLC
Ends December 11**

**Walkie Talks, Levee Rd
Weekly Announcements Deadline
churchoffice@stjohnsportage.com
Advent Dinner, Church CLC
December, 6 and 13**

**Handbell Choir, Church Balcony
Adult Choir, Church Balcony**

**Strong Bodies, Church Narthex
Church Office Closed**

October Memorials

Undesignated

\$180.00

In memory of
*Robert & Dorothy
Johnson*

Donna Shaw

Marilyn Jahn

Adult Choir

\$30.00

In memory of
JoAnn Watkins

Evangelism

\$50.00

In memory of
Marilyn Jahn

October Offerings

Unified Fund **\$68,086.17**

Capital Improvements **\$1,790.00**

Missions **\$465.00**

Almoners **\$140.00**

Orphanages **\$590.00**

School Tuition Relief **\$360.00**

Organ **\$50.00**

Total Contributions **\$71,481.17**

St. John's Weekly Education and Bible Studies

Sundays:

9:15 a.m.

9:15 a.m.

11:30 a.m.

Christian Ed Hour, Church Christian Life Center

Sunday School, School Cafeteria

Late Sunday Morning Bible Study,
All Purpose Room

Tuesdays:

6:30 a.m.

9:15 a.m.

Men's Bible Class, Portage Airport

Tuesday Morning Bible Study,
Church Christian Life Center

Wednesdays:

4:30 p.m.

6:30 p.m.

6:30 p.m.

***Jr. Youth Group**, School Gym

Sr. Youth Group, School Gym

***Confirmation Class**,
Church Christian Life Center

Thursdays:

8:00 a.m.

10:15 a.m.

Esther Bible Study, Church Christian Life Center

Rachel Bible Study,
Church Christian Life Center

***There will be no Jr. Youth Group or Confirmation Class during the month of December.**

Altar Guild Flower Fund

If you are interested in donating toward Christmas poinsettias, please fill in the information below and return it to the church office by December 22. Please make checks payable to **St. John's Altar Guild**. Please do not place in an offering.

A gift in loving memory of: _____

Given by: _____

December Greetings from St. John's Child Development Center

Thank you mother (Tami Simonson) and daughter (Sumer Simonson) for cooking three beautiful turkeys for our center.



Child Development Center:
option 2
Office Hours:
M—F 7:00a—5:00p
cdcoffice@stjohnsportage.com

Debra Drew,
Director
ddrew@stjohnsportage.com



Crusader News

Connected to Christ



Connected to Christ through His Blessings

For you make him most blessed forever; you
make him glad with the joy of your presence.

Psalms 21:6 ESV

Throughout our lives, we make and break promises all the time. Many times, we make promises without even thinking. This makes our promise many times meaningless.

We are blessed that our God is not flippant with his promises. There are over 7000 promises that God makes in the Bible. He has kept everyone. One of the most important promises is the one made in Genesis 3:15: "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel." In this promise our loving God promised a Savior who would pay for our sins and rescue us from death and the devil.

Throughout this month, the school will focus on the theme, **Connected to Christ through His Promises**. Because our Lord was faithful to His promise, we have peace with God and can be confident of our eternal life in heaven. There is always hope because our loving Lord fulfills all of His promises.

-Jim Krupski, Principal

Stay up to date on school news and calendar events with our weekly school newsletter, The Crusader Chronicle, using this QR code with your smartphone camera:



THE PROMISE

School Christmas Program
Wednesday
December 20th
10:00 a.m. &
6:30 p.m.
At St. John's
Lutheran Church

High Honor Roll



Honor Roll





Thank You!!

St. John's Lutheran School would like to thank all the volunteer grandparents! The students loved the company. We would like to thank the parents who helped prepare food, take pictures, and man the book fair. Your help was needed and appreciated. And thank you to our upper grade students for setting up the gym. It is not always the most fun, but you made the day beautiful! Thank you!



Thank you to all 99 grandparents who attended St. John's Lutheran School Grandparent's Day!
It was a glorious day!



WE LOVE OUR

GRANDPARENTS



The Christmas Choral Vesper Service will be held on Saturday, December 2 at 5:30 p.m. Come and share the Advent message and special music by the Handbells and the Adult Choir.

Advent 2023

Join us for worship

Wednesday, December 6

10:00 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.

Come early for Advent Dinner

hosted by *St. John's School Staff*

5:30 p.m. in the Christian Life Center

Menu: Chili

Wednesday, December 13

10:00 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.

Come early for Advent Dinner

hosted by *St. John's Child Development Center Staff*

5:30 p.m. in the Christian Life Center

Menu: Tomato Soup and Grilled Cheese

Wednesday, December 20

School Christmas Program

Connected to the Promise

10:00 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.

No Advent Dinner.

Christmas 2023

Join us for worship

Sunday, December 24

9:00 a.m. Service of Word and Sacrament

5:00 p.m. Festival of Scripture and Carols

9:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Communion and Candlelight

Monday, December 25

9:00 a.m. Christmas Day

Service of Word and Sacrament

Salvation Outline

The following seven points summarize basic information about the human condition and God's saving grace.

God loves you!

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16, ESV)

You are a sinner.

"for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God," (Romans 3:23, ESV)

God punishes sin.

"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 6:23, ESV)

Jesus took our punishment for sin.

"but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8, ESV)

Jesus rose from the dead.

"For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures," (1 Corinthians 15:3–4, ESV)

Jesus offers forgiveness of sins and eternal life to those who believe in Him.

"Then he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."" (Acts 16:30–31, ESV)

Salvation is free – a gift of God.

"For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast." (Ephesians 2:8–9, ESV)

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

2	Willa Coullard Evelynne Ross	15	Mirabella Belton James Kabele Andrew Krueger Jennifer Krueger	26	Traytin Dittberner Tonya Edwards Kelly Krueger Florence Schultz
3	Patrick Kirchenwitz Michael Kowalski Judy Rygiewicz Jessica Thompson	16	Alice Bernander Eden Eicher	28	Stephenie Hovland Heather Huston
4	Dorothy Lambert Brian Smith	17	Weston Koehler Charlotte Leeland Judy Mountford Carol Platt Cassidy Yaddof	29	Greg Hovland Hazel Hutchinson Liesa Zastrow
5	Randy Haase Jane Schwantz	18	Lucas Eicher	30	Kenneth Manthey Timothy Schmidt
6	Irma Brockley Dawn Mueller	19	Emma Hoppmann Amy Wolff	31	Suzanne Erdman Leo Fredrick Melvin Mravik Alexis Parchem Mary Schumann Carolyn Severson
7	Brigid Sutfin	20	Michael Belton Carol Pribnow		
8	Robert Chvojicek Tim Konkel	21	Dorothy Scales		
10	Carol Beckett	23	Mary Lehman Mark Sutfin		
11	Clarence York	25	Diane Helm		
13	Carol Kraucyk Charlene Phillips				
14	Connie Eddy Kevin Hurd				

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

December 11

♥ *Ryan and Megan Schroeder*

December 12

♥ *Dennis and Susan Bennett*
♥ *Eugene and Merrienne Mlsna*

December 19

♥ *Ken and Beth Manthey*

December 20

♥ *Ben and Melissa Chvojicek*

December 27

♥ *Joseph and Susan Schesny*

December 30

♥ *Anthony and Diane Bortz*

Love one another with genuine affection, and take
delight in *Honoring* one another.
Romans 12:10

St. John's Ministries Monthly and Special Event Calendar

December

- Sa 02 Boys Basketball Tournament**
6:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m., School Gym
Christmas Choral Vesper Service
5:30 p.m., Church Sanctuary
- M 04 Health and Wellness**
1:30 p.m., Church Christian Life Center
- Tu 05 Parent Teacher League (PTL)**
6:30 p.m., School Cafeteria
- W 06 Advent Worship Service**
10:00 a.m. and 6:30 p.m., Church Sanctuary
Advent Dinner hosted by School Staff
5:30 p.m., Church Christian Life Center
- Th 07 Heritage House Monthly Worship**
11:00 a.m., Heritage House
- F 08 Cornerstone Submission Deadline**
12:00 p.m., churchoffice@stjohnsportage.com
Submission Guidelines can be found on our website,
stjohnsportage.com/resources/the cornerstone submission guidelines
- Su 10 Blood Pressure Screening**
9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m., Church Nursery
- M 11 Tivoli Monthly Worship**
10:00 a.m., Tivoli
- Tu 12 Executive Committee**
6:00 p.m., Church Christian Life Center
- W 13 Advent Worship Service**
10:00 a.m. and 6:30 p.m., Church Sanctuary
Advent Dinner hosted by CDC Staff
5:30 p.m., Church Christian Life Center
- W 20 School Christmas Program**
10:00 a.m. and 6:30 p.m., Church Sanctuary
- Th 21 Columbia County Health Care Monthly Worship**
11:00 a.m., Columbia County Health Care
- Su 24 Festival of Scripture and Carols**
5:30 p.m., Church Sanctuary
Christmas Eve Communion and Candlelight Service
9:00 p.m., Church Sanctuary
- M 25 Christmas Day service!**
9:00 a.m., Church Sanctuary

Altar Guild December Schedule

1. Claudia Fairfield
269-4012
2. Gretchen Halvorsen
333-8559
3. Lora Foster
745-8108

January (proposed)

- Th 04 Heritage House Monthly Worship**
11:00 a.m., Heritage House
- Tu 07 Board of Stewards**
6:00 p.m., Church Christian Life Center
- W 08 Tivoli Monthly Worship**
10:00 a.m., Tivoli
Altar Guild
1:30 p.m., Church Christian Life Center
- Tu 09 Executive Committee**
6:00 p.m., Church Christian Life Center
- F 12 Cornerstone Submission Deadline**
12:00 p.m., churchoffice@stjohnsportage.com
Submission Guidelines can be found on our website,
stjohnsportage.com/resources/the cornerstone submission guidelines
- Su 14 Blood Pressure Screening**
9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m., Church Nursery
- M 16 LWML**
6:30 p.m., Church Christian Life Center
- Th 18 Columbia County Health Care Monthly Worship**
11:00 a.m., Columbia County Health Care
- M 22 Board of Finance**
4:30 p.m., Church Christian Life Center
- Tu 23 Board of Stewards**
6:00 p.m., Church Narthex
Board of Elders
6:00 p.m., Church Christian Life Center
Prayer Shawls
6:00 p.m., Church All Purpose Room



Calendar events are subject to change. For the most up-to-date calendar information, please visit our website, <http://www.stjohnsportage.com/st-johns-calendar>. To schedule your group activity, please contact the church office at 608-742-9000 opt. 4.

Luther's Large Catechism

In this edition of the Cornerstone, we continue to publish portions of Luther's Large Catechism for your continued growth in God's Word. The text for this series is taken from the Triglotta, a public domain version of The Book of Concord. For a more up-to-date reading, consider purchasing Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions at cph.org.



The Lord's Prayer

The Second Petition *Thy Kingdom come.*

As we prayed in the First Petition concerning the honor and name of God that He would prevent the world from adorning its lies and wickedness with it, but cause it to be esteemed sublime and holy both in doctrine and life, so that He may be praised and magnified in us, so here we pray that His kingdom also may come. But just as the name of God is in itself holy, and we pray nevertheless that it be holy among us, so also His kingdom comes of itself, without our prayer, yet we pray nevertheless that it may come to us, that is, prevail among us and with us, so that we may be a part of those among whom His name is hallowed and His kingdom prospers.

But what is the kingdom of God? Answer: Nothing else than what we learned in the Creed, that God sent His Son Jesus Christ, our Lord, into the world to redeem and deliver us from the power of the devil, and to bring us to Himself, and to govern us as a King of righteousness, life, and salvation against sin, death, and an evil conscience, for which end He has also bestowed His Holy Ghost, who is to bring these things home to us by His holy Word, and to illumine and strengthen us in the faith by His power.

Therefore we pray here in the first place that this may become effective with us, and that His name be so praised

through the holy Word of God and a Christian life that both we who have accepted it may abide and daily grow therein, and that it may gain approbation and adherence among other people and proceed with power throughout the world, that many may find entrance into the Kingdom of Grace, be made partakers of redemption, being led thereto by the Holy Ghost, in order that thus we may all together remain forever in the one kingdom now begun.

For *the coming of God's Kingdom to us* occurs in two ways; first, here in time through the Word and faith; and secondly, in eternity forever through revelation. Now we pray for both these things, that it may come to those who are not yet in it, and, by daily increase, to us who have received the same, and hereafter in eternal life. All this is nothing else than saying: Dear Father, we pray, give us first Thy Word, that the Gospel be preached properly throughout the world; and secondly, that it be received in faith, and work and live in us, so that through the Word and the power of the Holy Ghost Thy kingdom may prevail among us, and the kingdom of the devil be put down, that he may have no right or power over us, until at last it shall be utterly destroyed, and sin, death, and hell shall be exterminated, that we may live forever in perfect righteousness and blessedness.

From this you perceive that we pray here not for a crust of bread or a temporal, perishable good, but for an eternal inestimable treasure and everything that God Himself possesses; which is far too great for any human heart to think of desiring if He had not Himself commanded us to pray for the same. But because He is God, He also claims the honor of giving much more and more abundantly than any one can comprehend,—like an eternal, unfailing fountain, which, the more it pours forth and overflows, the more it continues to give,—and He desires nothing more earnestly of us than that we ask much and great things of Him, and again is angry if we do not ask and pray confidently.

For just as when the richest and most mighty emperor would bid a poor beggar ask whatever he might desire, and were ready to give great imperial presents, and the fool would beg only for a dish of gruel, he would be rightly considered a rogue and a scoundrel, who treated the command of his imperial majesty as a jest and sport, and was not worthy of coming into his presence: so also it is a great reproach and dishonor to God if we, to whom He offers and pledges so many unspeakable treasures, despise the same, or have not the confidence to receive them, but scarcely venture to pray for a piece of bread.

All this is the fault of the shameful unbelief which does not look to God for as much good as will satisfy the stomach, much less expects without doubt such eternal treasures of God. Therefore we must strengthen ourselves against it, and let this be our first prayer; then, indeed, we shall have all else in abundance, as Christ teaches [Matt. 6, 33]: *Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.* For how could He allow us to suffer want and to be straitened in temporal things when He promises that which is eternal and imperishable?

Church Word: Mercy



Many Lutheran pastors begin their sermons with the greeting: “Grace, peace, and mercy be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.” St. Paul used this blessing to begin both his letters to Timothy and St. John used it for one of his letters.

This word is used in the ancient Kyrie Eleison prayer: “Lord, have mercy.” This prayer appears as the congregation’s response to prayer in worship services of the 4th century (300s AD). To this day, Christians still pray it in traditional worship services.

The word mercy is love in action. It is the response someone who cares has when he sees another in pain and suffering greatly. When God shows mercy, He acts out of compassion to save, help, and heal. Most of the time, the person suffering cannot help themselves. All the time, they do not deserve mercy. But still, mercy comes from the love and grace of God.

Sometimes, the person asking for mercy is about to be sentenced for a crime and hopes for a punishment less severe than he should receive. God’s mercy is always for the sake of his Son, who took the punishment we deserved, atoned for our sins on the cross, and suffered for us in full. God is merciful for us, forgiving our sins and granting us everlasting life.

Yet mercy does not end with God. Because God is merciful to us, we are merciful to our suffering neighbors. Since the very beginning of the church, Christians have sought to be channels of God’s mercy to all who suffer. They have visited the sick and brought healing where they could. They have fed the hungry, clothed the naked, sheltered the homeless, visited the imprisoned, befriended the lonely and those grieving, and cared for orphans and widows. In us, they see God, who is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and full of faithful love. Most importantly, we bring the good news of God’s greatest mercy — salvation in Christ Jesus, our merciful Lord.

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The Marks of the Church

The word “Church” is used in many ways by Christians. We call our buildings churches. We name our local gatherings of Christians churches. We talk about national organizations of Christian believers, congregations, colleges and seminaries, and churches. We even call worship services church — in a way. Strictly speaking, the Church is all those who have faith in Christ. Even though only God knows for sure who is a Christian or who is not, the public confession of Christians and their good works reveal them to us and to the world. The same thing is true for the Church as a whole. When the Gospel is preached and the sacraments are offered, there you will find the *visible Church*. So, these things are called the *marks of the Church*.

The Means of Grace are the instruments the Holy Spirit uses to call people to faith in Christ and to strengthen and maintain that faith. He places these gifts into the hands of the church and the pastors he calls to shepherd them. They are the masks God wears to seek and to save the lost. He calls them together to receive these gifts, to encourage each other

and to thank and praise him. This *divine service* is what we often call worship.

The church, in this sense, is also called the church militant — the fighting church — because it is at war with the world, the devil and his forces, and our sinful desires. These earthly organizations formed by members of the Church are plagued by the same things individual Christians are. The sinful self of its members means that congregations also sin, are persecuted by the world, tempted by the devil, and suffer along with the Christians who form them. Unbelievers may also belong to them, all the while deceiving themselves and others, behaving like any other Christian.

Yet, as flawed as they are, God loves his people and chooses to use them to proclaim his Gospel, create faith, forgive sins, and bring the lost home. After all, the Lord of the Church, her Good Shepherd, laid down his life for them. And the day will come when he will return to bring his bride, the church, home to enjoy the marriage feast which has no end.

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The Measure of Our Generosity

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
LCMS Stewardship Ministry
Newsletter Article – December 2023



If you open up the Small Catechism, you'll find a shortened version of the Third Commandment: "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy." But if you look up the list of the Ten Commandments in Exodus, you'll find the full version:

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. (Ex. 20:8–11)

Why did Luther shorten this commandment for the Small Catechism? Was it so that the kids wouldn't have so much to memorize? No, it was because Luther knew that all the details of the Third Commandment were part of the "shadow" of the Old Testament (Col. 2:16). Or as St. Paul puts it, there is "letter" in the Old Testament law and "spirit" (2 Cor. 3:6). The details of not working on Saturday were fulfilled by Christ. That part of the Sabbath regulation no longer applies. But the spirit of the law does remain: We need to dedicate sufficient time each week to hearing God's Word and giving it honor and respect. Or as Luther sums it up in the Small Catechism's explanation to the Third Commandment: "We should fear and love God so that we do not despise preaching and His Word but hold it sacred and gladly hear and learn it."

The same sort of analysis applies to our giving. In the Old Testament, God commanded the Israelites to give a tenth of their income to the Levites so that those men could dedicate their lives to serving in God's house, teaching the people, conducting worship, etc. In the New Testament, there is a rigid requirement listed about handing in your tax forms to church to make sure you've given enough. But the mandate to have a full-time ministry, which is the spirit of that law concerning tithing to the Levites, is right there in 1 Corinthians 9:14: "The Lord has ordained that those who preach the Gospel should make their living from the Gospel."

The New Testament church's job is significantly larger than the job of Old Testament Israel. We are commanded to preach the Gospel to all nations. There was only the temple to maintain in the Old Testament, but we have churches, schools, universities and seminaries, plus missionaries everywhere. So you tell me: Can we really undertake the work of the ministry if our giving doesn't even measure up to Old Testament levels of generosity?



St. John's Ev. Lutheran Church

850 Armstrong Street
Portage, Wisconsin 53901
phone (608) 742-9000
fax 742-7154

Rev. Greg Hovland,
Senior Pastor
(c) 608-571-3360
ghovland@stjohnsportage.com

Rev. Rod Armon,
Pastoral Care
raron@stjohnsportage.com

Catharine Daily,
Ministries Coordinator—Church
cdaily@stjohnsportage.com

Office Hours:
M—Th | 8:00a–3:30p

St. John's Lutheran School *A Nationally Accredited School*

430 West Emmett
Portage, Wisconsin 53901
phone (608)742-9000

Jim Krupski,
Principal
jkrupski@stjohnsportage.com

Amanda Kohn,
Ministries Coordinator—School
akohn@stjohnsportage.com

Office Hours:
M—F | 7:00a–3:15p

St. John's Child Development Center

A Five-Star Rated Center
426 West Emmett
Portage, Wisconsin 53901
phone (608)742-9000

Debra Drew,
Director
ddrew@stjohnsportage.com
cdcoffice@stjohnsportage.com

Office Hours:
M—F | 7:00a–5:00p

St. John's Elder Directory

The elders listed below are available to talk and pray with you. Feel free to contact us wherever you are, with whatever you may be going through.

We CARE and are here for you:

Bob Fairfield 296-4012, Chairman

Roger Baerwolf 617-6088
Ken Chvojicek 697-2102
Bill Hageman 279-0272
David Hall 493-2125
Ron Mueller 369-1845
Pete Smith 697-3807
Gene Thompson 697-4786
Mark Witt 697-0224



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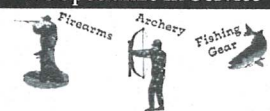
DURWARD'S GLEN

W11876 McLeish Road • Baraboo, WI 53913

Reservation and event space information
is available online at: durwardsglen.org
or call the office at: (608) 356-8113

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