



Standard Worship Times

- Saturdays 5:30 p.m. — Abbreviated service
Sundays 8:00 a.m. — Communion at the rail
Sundays 10:30 a.m. — Abbreviated service

Livestreaming of the 8:00 a.m. service continues to be available at stjohnsportage.com/live.

Standard Worship Times may change due to Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter. Please see Weekly Events for changes.

Weekly Events

Sunday (17)

- 9:00 a.m. Coffee, Fellowship, and Christian Education Hour, Church CLC
9:15 a.m. Sunday School, School Cafeteria
9:15 a.m. Praise Band Practice, Church Sanctuary
11:30 a.m. Late Sunday Morning Bible Study, Church APR

Monday (18)

- 9:00 a.m. Strong Bodies, Church Narthex

Tuesday (19)

- 6:30 a.m. Men's Bible Study, Portage Airport
9:15 a.m. Tuesday Morning Bible Study, Church CLC
1:00 p.m. School Christmas Program Practice, Church Sanctuary

Wednesday (20)

- 9:00 a.m. Walkie Talkies, meet at St. John's
10:00 a.m. School Christmas Program, Church Sanctuary
12:00 p.m. Weekly Announcements Deadline, Email: churchoffice@stjohnsportage.com
5:00 p.m. Handbells, Church Balcony
6:30 p.m. School Christmas Program, Church Sanctuary
7:00 p.m. Sr. Youth Group, School Gym

Thursday (21)

- 8:00 a.m. Esther Bible Study, Church CLC
9:00 a.m. Strong Bodies, Church Narthex
11:00 a.m. Columbia County Healthcare Worship

Friday (22)

Church office closed

Saturday (23)

- 5:30 p.m. Advent 4 Service of Word and Sacrament

Sunday (24)

- 9:00 a.m. Advent 4 Service of Word and Sacrament
10:15 a.m. Coffee, Fellowship, and Christian Education Hour, Church CLC
10:30 a.m. Praise Band Practice, Church Sanctuary
5:30 p.m. Festival of Scripture and Carols
9:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Communion Candlelight

Monday (25)

Merry Christmas! All Ministries Offices Closed
9:00 a.m. Christmas Day Service of Word and Sacrament

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 or email churchoffice@stjohnsportage.com.

As God serves us today in Word and Sacrament, may we rejoice in His gifts of forgiveness, life and salvation.

- 1) Please complete either a Guest (blue) or Member (white) card found in the hymnal rack of the pews. You may place this card in the offering plate located in the Narthex.
2) To parents of small children, we love the sound of children in worship. Thank you for bringing your child to worship; they belong here! If your child is actively crying, we have a cry room with service audio near the restrooms.
3) Regarding the Lord's Supper today: If you are not a confirmed member of St. John's congregation or a congregation of The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, please speak to the pastor before communing. Pastor is readily available in the narthex before worship for this conversation. For those with medical need, the center section of the individual cup trays is filled with cups of grape juice (darker color). For those who have a gluten intolerance, gluten-free wafers are available. Share your need as you come forward to the altar.
4) Children are invited to come forward to the altar while the Lord's Supper is distributed; encourage them to bow their heads and fold their hands. While there, they will receive a Baptismal blessing from the Pastor.
5) We ask that if you have a mobile device, please silence it during the worship service.
6) Our elders and ushers are here to help with any of your worship needs today.

Thanks for worshipping with us!

Sermon Reflections

Three things from today's sermon I want to remember:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
\_\_\_\_\_
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
\_\_\_\_\_
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
\_\_\_\_\_
\_\_\_\_\_

## Please Pray

*Please notify the church office when one of our church family members is in the hospital, so that a pastoral visit may be made or arranged.*

### Thanksgiving

(birth, birthdays, baptisms, weddings, anniversaries, recovery):

Baptism of *Ethan Brian Smith*

### Medical

Paul Belton (father of *Michael Belton*)

Ned Seymour (father of *Kathleen Bernander*)

### Long-term Illness/Treatment:

*Stacie Wheeler, Tom Waddell, Ellowyn Kershaw,*

*Lani Kohrt* (daughter-in-law of *Don* and *Carol Kohrt*)

*Lisa Priske* (daughter of *Betty Mootz*)

### Mourning:

The family of *Lorraine Steinhorst* (mother of *Gary Steinhorst*)

### How Do I Get Someone on the Prayer List?

If you, or someone you know, would like to have a name added to the prayer list, please contact the church office. Prayer requests for Thanksgiving, Medical, and Mourning will remain on the list for two weeks. Prayer requests for Long-term Illness/Treatment will remain for one month unless the church office is notified with an update on the individual. Please be sure that you have the permission of the individual before contacting the church office to add them to the public prayer list.

## Christmas FAQ

### QUESTION: What is Advent?

**ANSWER:** Advent marks the beginning of the Church Year. Advent is made up of the four Sundays that come right before Christmas. In other words, the deeper into Advent you go, the closer you get to Christmas Day. For Christians, the First Sunday in Advent is kind of like the “New Year’s Day” of the Church Year calendar.

The Advent of Christ has three parts. God’s Word tells us that Jesus not only came to earth as a man at Christmas, but that He comes to be with His church through His Word and Sacraments. Finally, God’s Word reminds us that He will return in judgement on the Last Day. If you think about it, there sure are a lot of great things to remember and look forward to during the season of Advent!

### QUESTION: Why do we celebrate Advent?

**ANSWER:** The word Advent means “coming.” During Advent, we prepare for the coming of the One who was born that first Christmas in a stable. We prepare for the One who saved us from sin, death and the power of the devil: our Lord Jesus Christ! What a wonderful and exciting time of preparation!



## Advent and Christmas Schedule

School Christmas Program, Connected to the Promise, Wednesday, December 20<sup>th</sup> at 10 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.



### Saturday, December 23

5:30 p.m. Advent 4 Service of Word and Sacrament

### Christmas Eve and Christmas Day

#### Sunday, December 24

9:00 a.m. Advent 4 Service of Word and Sacrament

5:30 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

## Altar Guild Flower Fund



### 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:

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Given by:

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## School Calendar

### Thursday, December 19

5:00 p.m. Boy's Basketball @ Sacred Heart, Reedsburg

### Thursday, December 20

10:00 a.m. School Christmas Program

6:30 p.m. School Christmas Program

### Christmas Break!

December 22, 2023 – January 2, 2024

### National Lutheran Schools Week!

January 21, 2023 – January 27, 2024

### Tuesday, January 30

100th Day of School!

## School Chapel Offering

### Each quarter the school chooses a non-for-profit to help.

We then bring in offering envelopes every Wednesday and place in offering plate when entering the sanctuary for school chapel. This quarter's offering goes to **Lead A Child**.

Lead A Child is an independent Lutheran Mission Agency, dedicated to *sharing the Good News of Jesus' love to children through Christian education in third world countries*. More information on this organization can be found at [leadachild.org](http://leadachild.org).

**St. John's Lutheran School has raised \$375.83 for Lead A Child as of 11/29/2023.**

Second Quarter Ends 1/12/2024.

## Crusader Cards

**Crusader Cards are on their way!** Watch for St. John's Lutheran School students selling Crusader Cards in December. They are full of great deals!

### Portage:

- Red Apple Restaurant
- Canape Sandwiches
- Edgewater Green House
- Portage Country Club
- The Ball Room
- Craig's Popcorn Corner
- J&J Fireball Lanes
- Dairy Queen
- Dino's
- Pizza Ranch
- La Tolteca

### Westfield:

- It's Poppin, Westfield
- Thal Acres Golf
- Tiffany's Buds and Beans
- Amish Market

### Pardeeville:

- Johnny B's Rolling Smoke
- The Crooked Branch Coffeehouse

### Montello:

- Oyster Cracker

## Bring your children to church.

To the parents of young children, may we suggest:

God gave children vibrant energy that sometimes causes them to wiggle and make noise. They belong right here with God's people where you have so faithfully brought them. Stick with it!

Quietly explain the parts of the service, and the actions of the pastor, ushers, singers, etc. **Check out the Kids in the Divine Service booklets in the busy bags.**

## A Gift from Prayer Shawl Ministry

**St. John's Prayer Shawl Ministry would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas!** To share our greetings, we are offering a gift to you, an angel ornament. The ornaments will be available at the School Christmas Program, Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day. Take one for yourself and feel free to take one for a friend.

Merry Christmas!

## Sunday School

Join us this Sunday at 9:15 a.m. in the school cafeteria for the last Sunday School of the year. We will not have Sunday School on Christmas Eve or New Years Eve. Have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

## Support our Ministries

### Support St. John's while you shop!

Shop for gift cards with RaiseRight. You can place your order on Tuesday and pick up on Thursday. Or, stop in the church office and pick up a card from our stock.

Visit: [raiserright.com](http://raiserright.com)

Click: **Sign Up**

Enrollment Code: **Please call the church office, 608-742-9000 for the enrollment code.**

Festival	\$25 & \$50
Kwik Trip	\$25, \$50, & \$100
Pizza Ranch	\$25
Walgreens	\$25
Walmart	\$25
Culvers	\$25
Portage Movie Theater	\$10

### BoxTop\$ for Education is a great way to support St. John's School!

All you have to do is download the Box Tops for Education app and scan your receipt. It's that simple!



## Reminder

**Please be considerate of our disabled worshipers' parking needs.** If the driver is not disabled, it would be best if he or she would drop an individual at the door and use a regular parking stall when possible. Then, we will be sure we have enough handicap parking for our disabled drivers. We appreciate our caregivers and drivers.

### Beware of texting scams this Christmas and New Year.

When receiving unsolicited texts requesting personal information, offering unrealistic offers, or a text from Pastor Hovland asking for gift cards, always verify the legitimacy of the sender before sharing any sensitive details or engaging in financial transactions.

**For the protection of the church facility,** the only door unlocked during church office hours is the side entrance on Armstrong Street (near Franklin Street). Feel free to park on Armstrong Street near the entrance, if you plan on stopping by.

## Volunteer Opportunities!

**We still need people willing to assist with the operation of the projector at each of our services.**

If you are interested in helping, please email [churchoffice@stjohnsportage.com](mailto:churchoffice@stjohnsportage.com).

**St. John's is ready to use Church Music Solutions for music during church services when an organist is not available.** We are looking for volunteers to attend training and run the Church Music Solutions program as needed. Any volunteers please contact Bob Fairfield, Elder. Thank you.

## Get Involved!

**Board for Evangelism** leads the members of the congregation in outreach into the community. Seek to keep the reaching out of lost souls for Jesus Christ. Train all Board members to effectively share their faith. Lead classes on "Everyone His Witness" to the congregation. Keep the evangelism ministry of St. John's in front of its members and its community. Be responsible for proposing, evaluating, and then distributing mission funds from the congregation's offering for mission work. Chairperson Jim Atkinson, 608-697-7052 [jim@atkinsonrealtor.com](mailto:jim@atkinsonrealtor.com).

## Daily Lectionary

This week's readings comes from the Daily Lectionary found in the Lutheran Service Book page 299.

<b>Sunday,</b> Is. 33:1-24 & Rev. 5:1-14	<b>Tuesday,</b> Is. 40:1-17 & Rev. 7:1-17	<b>Friday,</b> Is. 43:1-24 & Rev. 9:13-10:11
<b>Monday,</b> Is. 34:1-2, 8-35:10 & Rev. 6:1-17	<b>Wednesday,</b> Is. 40:18-41:10 & Rev. 8:1-13	<b>Saturday,</b> Is. 43:25-44:20 & Rev. 11:1-19
	<b>Thursday,</b> Is. 42:1-25 & Rev. 9:1-12	

## Weekly Offerings

**December 10 (includes Advent midweek attendance)**

In-person Attendance: 490

Unrestricted Unified Received: \$11,397.48

Restricted Contributions Received: \$450.00

TOTAL: \$11,847.48

**Weekly Unrestricted Unified Needed: \$12,885.00**

YTD Unrestricted Unified Giving: \$301,078.94

**YTD Budgeted Unrestricted Unified Need: \$309,240.00**  
(week 24)

## Life Thoughts

**December 17 – Advent III** – Those who believe cannot help but speak. God's love for every human life has filled our mouths with shouts of joy (Psalm 126:2). We have His permission to give voice to this Gospel in all circumstances and without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17-18). Our time has come to bear witness to the Light (John 1:6-7). Confess and do not deny (John 1:20) the sanctity of life!

## Stewardship Thoughts

**1 Thessalonians 5:18** – "Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." Christians express their thanks to God in many ways: in prayer, in giving to the Lord's work, in acts of service to others, in faithful living in their daily callings. Everything we do to honor God in our lives is a means of returning thanks for the Lord's many gifts to us.

## LCMS Memory Verse Challenge

*Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.*

Isaiah 40:1

## Coffee Hour

**Adopt a Sunday! It's a fun and easy way to get to know your church family.** We encourage families and groups to "Adopt a Sunday" by hosting coffee hour on Sunday mornings. Hosting coffee hour involves providing a simple snack, making coffee, and enjoying fellowship time with our church families. Sign up in the Christian Life Center or email [churchoffice@stjohnsportage.com](mailto:churchoffice@stjohnsportage.com)

**December 17:**  
Sherry Aberle

**December 24:**  
Open

## Contact us: 608-742-9000

**Church:**  
option 4  
Office Hours:  
M—Th 8:00a–3:30p  
[churchoffice@stjohnsportage.com](mailto:churchoffice@stjohnsportage.com)

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

**Child Development Center:**  
option 2  
Office Hours:  
M—F 7:00a–5:00p  
[cdfcoffice@stjohnsportage.com](mailto:cdfcoffice@stjohnsportage.com)

Debra Drew,  
Director  
[ddrew@stjohnsportage.com](mailto:ddrew@stjohnsportage.com)

**School:**  
option 3  
Office Hours:  
M—F 7:30a–3:15p  
[schooloffice@stjohnsportage.com](mailto:schooloffice@stjohnsportage.com)

Jim Krupski,  
Principal  
[jkrupski@stjohnsportage.com](mailto:jkrupski@stjohnsportage.com)

**St. John's Elder Directory:**  
Bob Fairfield 296-4012, Chairman  
Roger Baerwolf 617-6088  
Ken Chvojicek 697-2102  
Bill Hageman 279-0272  
David Hall 493-2125  
Patrick Kirchenwitz 575-3959  
Ron Mueller 369-1845  
Pete Smith 697-3807  
Gene Thompson 697-4786  
Mark Witt 697-0224

To schedule your group activity or add a loved one to the prayer list, please contact the church office at 608-742-9000 option 4 or email [churchoffice@stjohnsportage.com](mailto:churchoffice@stjohnsportage.com).