



Word and Sacrament

Christian Education

Caring and Serving

stjohnsportage.com

The Cornerstone

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

Address Service Requested

March 2024

What's inside!

Easter Flower Fund	2
Embracing the Kingdom: A Journey of Faith with St. John's Lutheran Ministries	3
Lent and Easter Schedule	3
March Greetings from St. John's Child Development Center	4
Connected to Christ: Crusader News	5
National Lutheran Schools Week Memories	6
VFW's Patriot's Pen Essay: How Are You Inspired by America	7
February Fun with Youth Group	8
St. John's Ministries Monthly and Special Event Calendar	9
Luther's Large Catechism The Lord's Prayer—The Fifth Petition	10
Redemption: The Heart of Christ's Sacrifice	11

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.

5:30 p.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

Lent Service, Church Sanctuary

Lent Supper, Church Christian Life Center

Lent Service, Church Sanctuary

Weekly Events

Sundays:

9:15 a.m.

Mondays:

9:00 a.m.

1:00 p.m.

Tuesdays:

1:00 p.m.

Wednesdays:

9:00 a.m.

12:00 p.m.

1:00 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

Pastor's Open-Door Office Hours 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Pastor's Open-Door Office Hours 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Walkie Talkies, Levee Rd

Weekly Announcements Deadline

churchoffice@stjohnsportage.com

Pastor's Open-Door Office Hours 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Handbell Choir, Church Balcony

Adult Choir, Church Balcony

Strong Bodies, Church Narthex

Church Office Closed

January Memorials

March—2

School Kitchen
\$40.00
In memory of
Ron Eddy

School Dedicated
\$20.00
In memory of
Ray Konkel

Choir Fund
\$20.00
In memory of
Ray Konkel

St. John's Weekly Education and Bible Studies

Sundays:
9:15 a.m.

Christian Ed Hour,
Church Christian Life Center
Sunday School, School Cafeteria
Late Sunday Morning Bible Study,
All Purpose Room

9:15 a.m.
11:30 a.m.

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.

***Jr. Youth Group,** School Gym
***Confirmation Class,**
Church Christian Life Center
Sr. Youth Group, School Gym

7:15 p.m.

Thursdays:
8:00 a.m.
10:15 a.m.

Esther Bible Study,
Church Christian Life Center
Rachel Bible Study,
Church Christian Life Center

***Jr. Youth Group resumes March 27**
***Confirmation Class resumes April 3**

January Offerings

Unified Fund	\$67,190.39
Capital Improvements	\$1,525.00
Missions	\$235.00
Almoners	\$60.00
Orphanages	\$395.00
School Tuition Relief	\$300.00
Organ	\$0.00
Total Contributions	\$69,705.39

Easter Flower Fund

If you are interested in donating to the Altar Guild Easter Flower Fund, please fill in the information below and return it to the church office by March 25. Please make checks payable to **St. John's Altar Guild**.

A gift in loving memory of:

Given by:

"Embracing the Kingdom: A Journey of Faith with St. John's Lutheran Ministries"

As pastor of St. John's Lutheran Ministries, I find profound meaning in the words, "The Kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ." These words, set to music in Handel's Messiah, capture a timeless truth: amidst chaos, God's reign prevails.

In our journey of faith, we often ourselves asking, "Why do we pray for 'your kingdom come'?" Martin Luther offers insight, explaining that while God's kingdom unfolds regardless of our prayers, in this prayer we ask for its arrival within us. Jesus himself underscores this, proclaiming, "The Kingdom of Heaven is here! Repent and believe the good news."

At St. John's, we embrace this truth wholeheartedly. We recognize the arrival of God's kingdom in two profound ways: first, as the Holy Spirit instills faith in our hearts,

granting us forgiveness through Christ's sacrifice. Together, we strive to turn from sin and live according to His Word, fervently praying find for strength on our journey together, connected by Christ.

Second, we eagerly anticipate the kingdom's ultimate fulfillment when, on the appointed day known only to the Heavenly Father, Jesus returns with His angels. This divine intervention will bring an end to suffering—resurrecting believers and ushering in God's Kingdom of Glory. On that triumphant day, evil will be vanquished, and God's children will dwell with Him forever.

In alignment with our mission, St. John's pledges to embody this kingdom reality. As we navigate the complexities of our world, may we steadfastly pray and labor for its transformation within us (2 Corinthians 3 and 4), ushering in God's reign in our lives and communities.

Let us embrace the kingdom, embodying its values of love and redemption, as we journey together in faith and anticipation of its glorious consummation.

In Christ's service together,

Pastor Greg Hovland



Lent Service Schedule

Wednesdays
10:00 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.
Lent supper is served at 5:30 p.m.

March 6
Misconceptions
(Luke 23:1-12)
Supper hosted by
St. John's School Staff

March 13
Truth
(John 18:33-40)
Supper hosted by
St. John's Athletics

March 20
Sympathy
(Luke 23:26-34)
Supper hosted by
Sherry A. and
Amanda C.

Easter Schedule

Maundy Thursday Service

March 28 at 10:00 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.

Good Friday Tre Ore Service

March 29 from 12:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Saturday Service of Word and Sacrament

March 30 at 5:30 p.m.

Easter Sunrise Service

March 31 at 6:00 a.m.

Easter Day Service of Word and Sacrament

March 31 at 8:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.

Easter Breakfast

9:00 a.m. in the Christian Life Center.

Volunteers are needed for Easter Sunday Breakfast.

- ⇒ Serving
- ⇒ Cleaning up
- ⇒ Donations: doughnuts, sweet rolls, and coffee cake
- ⇒ Monetary gifts are welcome to defray the costs of food items.

If you can help or offer donations, please contact Gary Zastrow, 608-742-4775.

Easter Egg Hunt

9:15 a.m. in the School Gym.

Donations to fill 1000 Easter eggs are greatly appreciated.
A box is in the church coat room for all Easter Egg Hunt donations.

March Greetings from St. John's Child Development Center

As I write this, it's Ash Wednesday and also Valentine's Day. The children are buzzing with excitement over the mail and cards they're receiving, some wearing red and pink shirts and dresses. It's a wonderfully cheerful morning. In each class I entered today, the children greeted me with hugs, and wishing me a Happy Valentine's Day. I thanked them and wished them a Happy Ash Wednesday. Their response? "What's that?" This interaction reflects the unique blessing we have at St. John's School and Center – the ability to engage in age-appropriate conversations about God and Ash Wednesday.

I took charge of the 4-year-old preschool class for the afternoon while they were outside. A slightly nerve-wracking experience for both them and me! We found a tree nut on the ground, sparking curiosity among the children. We decided to bring it inside and explore God's creation – discussing its where it came from and wondered how to open it.

Options were presented:

1. Step on it.
2. Hit it with a rock.
3. Use a nutcracker.
4. Employ a hammer.

The hammer won, as 4-year-olds tend to have a fondness for hammers, and a nutcracker was nowhere to be found in the center. We are truly blessed, and I am grateful for the children and families we have the privilege to serve.



Warm regards, Debbie and the Center Staff





Connected to Christ

Crusader News

FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S PEN...

We live in a world that spends a great amount of time talking about identity. As one reads or listens to the news the word identity shows up in many ways. We hear about social identities, political identities, and personal identities. When I hear students or their parents speak of their lives, I hear them talk how the things that are important in their lives such as sports, dance, gymnastics, or other groups with which they are involved. Students or even adults who play video games have fake identities that help them in the fantasy world they are experiencing. Other people find identity in the wealth they have accumulated or the social status they have achieved.



The problem with all of these different identities is that they are based on something temporal. All it takes is something to happen in a person's life such as being cut from a team, a layoff, or a financial issue that arises and the identity collapses upon itself. Over the past four years, we have watched as things going on around us have challenged our self-made identities or even destroyed them. This has led to a great increase in the amount of depression and in even suicide in our communities. What was once important is now gone. Sometimes when this happen, we lose a sense of value because it was tied to our identity as well.

As a Christian we do not have to rely on those types of identities. Our identity and value does not come from ourselves. It comes from the perfect sacrifice that Christ made on the cross for our sins. When man sinned God could have easily destroyed the rebellious people and started over, but instead He loved us so much that He sent His Son into the world to be our Savior. This established a

God made connection to us through His sacrifice. This is the reason that our theme for this month is: **Connected to Christ through His sacrifice**. It is based on Galatians 2:20- "I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." When we are going through tough periods of in our lives, (and there will be) we know that our value never diminishes. God's love for us never changes and never falters. The writer to the Hebrews says this clearly, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever" (13:8). If Christ is the same, His love for us is the same, our purpose is the same, our identity is the same, as it always is. Each school day we begin our day with the following:

I am loved by God.
I am a child of God.
As a child of God.
I forgive.
I respect.
I do my best.
I learn from my mistakes.

This is our certain and long-lasting identity.



Even when we fail at these, know that God's love never fails us. We can be confident of this, and we can live in that confidence knowing that as a child of God I no longer live for myself, but Christ lives within me. That is an absolute and solid identity.

-Jim Krupski, Principal

National Lutheran Schools Week

March—6



Memories from January 21—27

Monday

Connected to Jesus

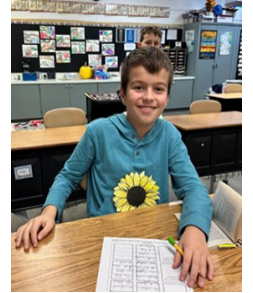
Dress as a plant

National Lutheran Schools Week provides more than 1,800 preschools, elementary schools and high schools with the public opportunity to proclaim and celebrate God's work among us in schools of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

We thank God for the opportunity to provide excellent academic preparation for the children we serve. We are most grateful for the opportunity to share Jesus' amazing love with children and their families.

National Lutheran Schools Week gives us an opportunity to proclaim these great blessings within the communities we serve.

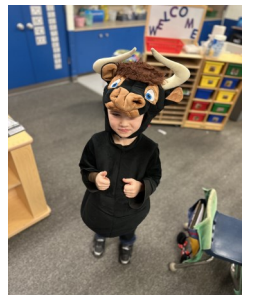
Our schools are amazing incubators for faithful witness of God's love for us through Christ by teachers and students alike.



Tuesday

Connected to Creation

Dress as an animal



Wednesday

Connected to the Holy Spirit

Dress as food



Thursday

Connected to the World

Dress in the colors of the flag from a different country



100th Day of School

Memories from January 30



Collection of 100 things.



Dress like you are 100 years old.



Every year over 68,000 students in sixth through eighth grades enter the VFW's Patriot's Pen essay contest. The contest encourages students to research America's history and draft a 300 to 400-word essay sharing their views on a patriotic theme chose by the VFW's Commander-in-Chief. This year the Portage VFW Post 1707 received 11 submissions from Wayne Bartels Middle School and St. John's Lutheran School. For every 15 entries received, Post 1707 is able to send one of the essays to the District for further competition. Congratulations to St. John's student's Kole Bielke (7th-grade) for her 2nd place entry and Julia Witkowski (8th-grade) for her 3rd place entry!



2023-2024 Patriot's Pen essay theme,

"How Are You Inspired by America?"



How am I inspired by America? I am inspired by America's respect for all cultures. It all started with the coming of immigrants. Immigrants started coming to America in the 1500s. They welcomed all cultures and let them keep their customs and beliefs.

In the 1500s the Spanish came and brought iron tools and weapons. They were not welcomed at first and were used as slaves. When the Europeans came to America they were welcomed. They brought technologies, ideas, plants, and animals. Europeans brought fruit such as oranges, apples, bananas, other food items such as wheat, rice, oatmeal, sugarcane and onions. They brought useful tools such as guns, iron weapons, and iron tools. The Europeans brought lots of animals such as cattle, horses, pigs, and sheep.

In the 1800s the Asians came to America to work in gold mines, take agricultural jobs, and factory work. The Asians brought language stories, their religious customs, their foodways, special music, songs, and dance. In the same period of time as the Asians, the Russians came to America struggling to leave home.

The Russians were very poor, not having a place to call home. The majority of Russians fleeing to America were farmers coming to farm land and peasants looking for a place to call their own. The Russians brought their own hobbies to America. Some were dancing, acts, play music, and skating. The Russians were not accepted in America at first. People labeled them as dangerous avoiding them and not welcoming them. When the Russians came there were about 3 million of them. They and so many other countries have made America an amazing country.

Without immigrants, America would not be what it is today. Immigrants have brought their religions, dances, animals, and traditions. These things have shaped America to its diversity today. America is a place I'm proud to call my country. It is amazing how many different cultures can be found. I only listed some cultures that have come to America but every culture is important and a reason why America is a place for all.

Kloe



I am inspired by America because of all of the people who loved this country and wanted to keep this country free and safe, by serving for the Army, the Military, the Air Force, the Navy, or for the National Guard. When I go to cemeteries I see the American flags beside the headstones, and the engraved words on the headstone "Thank You for Your Service" and it makes me appreciate all of the people who have fought and died for this country, and even the ones who came back wounded. When we sing The National Anthem, I always imagine myself being there, as if I was fighting, and I would see the soldiers running past me, firing guns and lighting the cannons as they are risking their lives to protect this country, the place they love. I also am inspired by the police, firefighters, and EMT who are all around me, protecting us, even when

we don't notice them. We see police, firefighters, and EMT's all the time, whether it's on the road, in the store, or even when we are on a walk and see them drive by us, we don't realize how much they do to keep us protected and safe. When I drive past a house, when I'm in the car and see the American Flag flying outside peoples houses I feel a slight relief that we live in a free country and that we have people protecting us twenty four seven. After realizing all that we have in this country, I am inspired by this because of all of the people who have served and died for this country. I am so happy that I live here and have so many people that protect me and will fight for this country and they will fight to keep us safe.

Julia

February Fun with Youth Group!

March—8

In February, Youth Group headed to Cascade Mounting for some fellowship and fun in the snow!

Thank you to the Grosnick family for the pizza!



Check the calendar for more Youth Group gatherings during the Lenten Season.

<https://www.stjohnsportage.com/youth-ministry>

St. John's Ministries Monthly and Special Event Calendar

March

- Sa 02 Gideon Presentation**
Beginning of 5:30 p.m. service
- Su 03 Gideon Presentation**
Beginning of 8:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. services
- 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
Altar Guild
1:30 p.m., Church Christian Life Center
- Tu 12 Executive Committee**
6:00 p.m., Church Christian Life Center
- Th 14 School Play grades K–4**
1:00 p.m. and 6:30 p.m., School Gym
- M 18 Evangelism**
3:00 p.m., Church Christian Life Center
- Tu 19 Board for Christian Ed**
6:30 p.m., School Cafeteria
LWML
6:30 p.m., Church Christian Life Center
- Th 21 Columbia County Health Care Monthly Worship**
11:00 a.m., Columbia County Health Care
- M 25 Board of Finance**
4:30 p.m., Church Christian Life Center
- Tu 26 Board of Elders**
6:00 p.m., Church Christian Life Center
Prayer Shawls
6:00 p.m., Church All Purpose Room
- Th 28 Maundy Thursday Service**
10:00 a.m. and 6:30 p.m., Church Sanctuary
- F 29 Good Friday Tre Ore Service**
12:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m., Church Sanctuary
- Su 31 Easter Sunrise Service**
6:00 a.m., Church Sanctuary
Easter Breakfast
9:00 a.m., Church Christian life Center
Easter Egg Hunt
9:15 a.m., School Gym

April (proposed)

- Tu 02 PTL Meeting**
6:30 p.m. School Cafeteria
- Th 04 Heritage House Monthly Worship**
11:00 a.m., Heritage House
- Sa 06 Chili Madness Cook-Off,**
6:30 p.m., School Gym
- M 08 Tivoli Monthly Worship**
10:00 a.m., Tivoli
- 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 15 Evangelism**
3:00 p.m., Church Christian Life Center
- Tu 16 Board for Christian Ed**
6:30 p.m., School Cafeteria
- Th 18 Columbia County Health Care Monthly Worship**
11:00 a.m., Columbia County Health Care
- Sa 20 LWML Spring Rally**
7:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m., Church Christian Life Center
- Tu 23 Board of Elders**
6:00 p.m., Church Christian Life Center
Prayer Shawls
6:00 p.m., Church All Purpose Room

Save the Date!



April 6, 2024

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

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 Fifth Petition

And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.

This part now relates to our poor miserable life, which, although we have and believe the Word of God, and do and submit to His will, and are supported by His gifts and blessings, is nevertheless not without sin. For we still stumble daily and transgress because we live in the world among men who do us much harm and give us cause for impatience, anger, revenge, etc. Besides, we have Satan at our back, who sets upon us on every side, and fights (as we have heard) against all the foregoing petitions, so that it is not possible always to stand firm in such a persistent conflict.

Therefore, there is here again great need to call upon God and to pray: Dear Father, forgive us our trespasses. Not as though He did not forgive sin without and even before our prayer (for He has given us the Gospel, in which is pure forgiveness before we prayed or ever thought about it). But this is to the intent that we may recognize and accept such forgiveness. For since the flesh in which we daily live is of such a nature that it neither trusts nor believes God, and is ever active in evil lusts and devices, so that we sin daily in word and deed, by commission and omission, by which the conscience is thrown into unrest, so that it is afraid of the wrath and displeasure of God, and thus loses the comfort and confidence derived from the Gospel; therefore it is ceaselessly necessary that we run hither and obtain consolation to comfort the conscience again.

But this should serve God's purpose of breaking our pride and keeping us humble. For in case anyone should boast of his godliness and despise others, God has reserved this prerogative to Himself, that the person is to consider himself and place this prayer before his eyes, and he will find that he is no better than others, and that in the presence of God all must lower their plumes and be glad that they can attain forgiveness. And let no one think that as long as we live here, he can reach such a position that he will not need such forgiveness. In short, if God does not forgive without ceasing, we are lost.

It is therefore the intent of this petition that God would not regard our sins and hold up to us what we daily deserve, but would deal graciously with us, and forgive, as He has promised, and thus grant us a joyful and confident conscience to stand before Him in prayer. For where the heart is not in right relation towards God, nor can take such confidence, it will nevermore venture to pray. But such a confident and joyful heart can spring from nothing else than the [certain] knowledge of the forgiveness of sin.

But there is here attached a necessary, yet consolatory addition: *As we forgive*. He has promised that we shall be sure that everything is forgiven and pardoned, yet in the manner that we also forgive our neighbor. For just as we daily sin much against God, and yet He forgives everything through grace, so we, too, must ever forgive our neighbor who does us injury, violence, and wrong, shows malice toward us, etc. If, therefore, you do not forgive, then do not think that God forgives you; but if you forgive, you have this consolation and assurance, that you are forgiven in heaven, not on account of your forgiving, for God forgives freely and without condition, out of pure grace, because He has so promised, as the Gospel teaches, but in order that He may set this up for our confirmation and assurance for a sign alongside of the promise which accords with this prayer, Luke 6, 37: *Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven*. Therefore, Christ also repeats it soon after the Lord's Prayer, and says, Matt. 6, 14: *For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you*, etc.

This sign is therefore attached to this petition, that, when we pray, we remember the promise and reflect thus: Dear Father, for this reason I come and pray Thee to forgive me, not that I can make satisfaction, or can merit anything by my works, but because Thou hast promised and attached the seal thereto that I should be as sure as though I had absolution pronounced by Thyself. For as much as Baptism and the Lord's Supper, appointed as external signs, effect, so much also this sign can affect to confirm our consciences and cause them to rejoice. And it is especially given for this purpose, that we might use and practice it every hour, as a thing that we have with us at all times.

Redemption: The Heart of Christ's Sacrifice



In the rich tapestry of biblical narratives, the story of Ruth stands as a poignant testament to redemption. Boaz, Ruth's kinsman redeemer, plays a pivotal role in this event of restoration and grace. Through his act of redemption, Ruth is not only saved from destitution but is also grafted into the lineage of Jesus, the ultimate Redeemer of the world.

But what exactly do we mean by "redemption"?

At St. John's Lutheran Ministries, we understand redemption as a central theme in Christ's atoning sacrifice for us. It encompasses the concept of gaining possession through payment, as Dr. Luther eloquently describes in relation to the meaning of the second article of the Apostle's Creed.

According to Scripture, Jesus Christ redeems us, purchasing and rescuing us from sin, death, and the power of the devil with His innocent sufferings and death.

Contrary to misconception, Jesus isn't paying off Satan as if Satan holds power over Him. Rather, it is the holy and righteous God who requires payment. Sin separates us from the presence of God, and by His grace. He sends His Son to redeem us from the grips of eternal death.

Through His sacrificial love, Jesus fulfills the role of the bridegroom who pays the dowry for His bride, the Church, with His own body and blood on the cross. He clothes her in His righteousness through baptism and presents her as His own, redeemed and forever His possession.

At St. John's, we embrace the profound truth of redemption, recognizing it as the heart of Christ's sacrificial love for humanity. As we reflect on His divine act of redemption, may we find comfort and hope in the knowledge that we are redeemed and loved by our Savior, Jesus Christ, now and for eternity.



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
rarmon@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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