

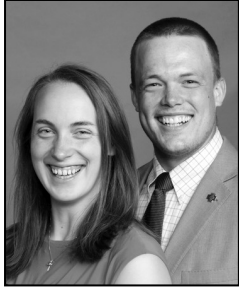


The **St. Johns Servant**

**St. Johns
Lutheran Church**

Park Rapids, Minnesota

May, 2018

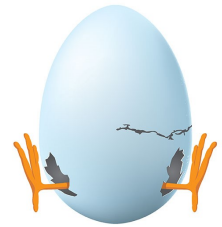


Joel and Sarah Newton are Coming to St. Johns

At the call service at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Joel Newton was assigned as our new associate pastor and his wife, Sarah, as a deaconess. We are so excited to have them, along with their son, George, join us. Watch for details as plans are made. We pray God's continued blessings on them as they wrap up their time at seminary and prepare to head north.

O Chicken of Little Faith

The Children's Choir has been hard at work practicing for their upcoming musical "O Chicken of Little Faith" which will be presented Saturday, May 12 at 2:00 p.m. The musical is about Faith, a girl spending the summer on her grandparents farm. She falls asleep and dreams that the chickens have become human sized and escaped. As they find their way back to the farm, Faith learns some "faith lessons." You're invited to come and enjoy this great show!



Confirmed in Christ



On Sunday, May 20 at the 10:30 a.m. service eight of our young people will publicly confess their faith through the Rite of Confirmation. The confirmation process includes two years of study and learning about being a communicant member of the congregation through service as acolytes.

The confirmands will display the knowledge they've learned over the past two years at an oral exam on May 2 at 5:30 p.m. The Board of Parish Fellowship will fortify the confirmands and their families with a good meal before the exam.

This year's confirmands are Kelsey Berghuis, Kobe Burton, Avery Clark, Isabelle Croskrey, Natalie Harvey, Trinity Heegard, Miriam Knaack and Grace Litzau. May God bless and keep these young people in faith everlasting.

Congratulations, Graduates!

This month marks a milestone for eleven young members of St. Johns as they graduate from high school. A reception will be held for them between services on May 20. Our graduates are Jordan Eischens, Hailey Heegard, Colin Hensel, Elizabeth Hensel, Karl Just, Brandon Knutson, Madison Neyens, Clayton Novak, Foxx Samuelson, Alexas Smith and Brianna Weckwerth. Please keep them in your prayers as they head out into the world.



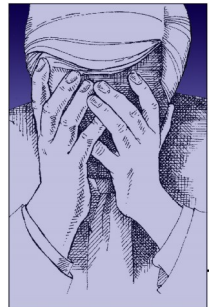


Ponderings from the Pew



Do you ever find yourself in a position where you understand how the outside world thinks Christians are nuts for believing in this unseen, unheard being out there somewhere? Have you ever been so desperate that you doubt God's existence? Have you ever been so angry at God you raved at Him? We exist in a world that is against us. We reside in a world where Satan is very much alive and well "prowling around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour." Bad things happen to good people. They do. Terrible, awful, unimaginable things happen to Christians every day. We are in no way exempt from trouble. We probably have the largest targets on our backs because we are Christians.

But how do we reconcile that to God's promise to never leave us or forsake us? How do we keep faith when traversing the valley of the shadow of death? What do we do when we seek but don't find; ask and don't receive? What if God's answer is no? What do you say to someone who is struggling to hang onto God; to their faith? People like to say God won't give you more than you can handle. I'm sorry, but that's hogwash. God brings us to our knees to remind us we need Him. It's so easy to profess great faith when life is roses and rainbows. Wake up with your life in shambles at your feet and see how easy it is to tell someone how amazing God is.



The thing is that God is amazing all the time, but life can be so hard for long periods of time, and we get tired. Yet, even in the darkest, most exhausting times, something inside us will cling to God as though our lives depend on Him. From nowhere it seems, some perfect piece of God's word will come to mind that eases our pain just enough to take one more step, and another and another and another. We can't give up on God because He never gives up on us. We are not ever truly hopeless because we are God's children. We know Him. Our hope, our survival is in Him. We suffer, but not the same as unbelievers because no matter how bad it gets, we know that God is there with us. He is there to walk beside us even when the answer is no. He doesn't leave us. He stays to go through it with us.

God is good – all the time. The words don't seem enough, but God is enough. He gets us through life even when it feels like Satan is winning. He gets us through life even when we don't understand why, or what or how come. His will is not our will. Yes, He could heal cancer, stop suicides, bring world peace, calm the storms, heal all pain and suffering. But though that may be what we pray for, it is not always His will. We can't understand. He is beyond our understanding. And yet this remains true – God is Good **ALL. THE. TIME.** May He bring that measure of comfort to all of us.

To God be the glory.

Renee' Anderson





Special Voters Meeting—March 25, 2018

Meeting called to order by Dr. Rod Helm, Executive Director. There were 44 voters in attendance.

Motion Jerry Grudem – Second Marty Steffel to reinstate into voting membership Jerry Eischens. Carried.

Motion Marty Steffel – Second Mike Poole to approve new voting member – Pam Siltala – Carried.

Motion Jerry Grudem – Second Pastor Neumann to reinstate into voting membership Madeline Yliniemi and Grant Nunn. Carried.

Pastor Neubauer reviewed the call process and what the voters had approved at the last voters meeting in regards to the candidates that the committee recommended. Recently Pastor Neubauer had a conversation with the placement agent from the seminary. Since our first choice Joel Newton's wife has a degree as a deaconess, he suggested that we place a call to her as well. The call committee met to create a job description for a part-time deaconess. The voters were given a copy of the job description as well as a plan on how to financially support this new position.

Motion Jody Yliniemi – second Russ Brown to issue a call for deaconess per printed proposal for a 10-15 hour per week position. Discussion. Carried.

Motion Russ Brown to adjourn – Lori Grudem second – carried.

Closed with Doxology.

Respectfully submitted,

Shirley Potter

What's On The Lutheran Hour

5/06 "Love One Another as I Have Loved You"

5/13 "Keep Them"

5/20 "Functional Atheist No More!"

5/27 "Impossible"

Listen to the Lutheran Hour every Sunday on KPRM 870 AM at 9:30 a.m. or KTIG 102.7 FM at 5:00 p.m. on Sundays.

The Lutheran Laymen's League sponsors the program on KPRM each Sunday. If you would like to help sponsor the program your gift may be placed in the offering and earmarked "Local Lutheran Hour."

† Funeral

4/12 Irene Russell



† Baptisms

4/15 Fletcher James Eidsmoe
Perry and Meghan (Compton) Eidsmoe

4/22 Martin David Hahn
Isaiah and Beth (Holzhueter) Hahn





Stewardship Corner—Giving During Worship



During the worship service, there is time set aside for us to give a portion of our money to God through the church. How do you view the time allowed for the offering? Do you see the time given to the collection of the money as an integral part of worshiping God or is it simply an intermission between the sermon and the closing of the service? When you give your money during the collection, does your monetary gift properly reflect gratitude and thanksgiving for all of God's gifts to you? Does your giving reflect your trust in the Lord?

Our giving should and must be considered an important part of honoring and worshiping our Lord. As Christians, when we acknowledge that God is the creator and owner of all, we start acting as caretakers of the money that God has entrusted to us rather than owners. We respond to God's gifts of creation and redemption by giving our money and ourselves. The offering of our tithes and offering during the collection is an important part of our worship. Giving puts our love, trust, and gratitude into action.

The Apostle Paul wrote the following verses to the Corinthian Church about the giving of the Macedonians to the needy church in Jerusalem: *"For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means...and this, not as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us"* (2 Corinthians 8:3-5). They gave generously because they first gave themselves. Their gift of money was an extension of what they were. In a significant way, our money represents who we are. Also, because of all the time and energy we spend in accumulating it. When we give, we should think of ourselves as personally crawling into the offering plate. As Christians, we know that, when we give, we are only returning to God what He has already given to us.



From the blessings we receive from God, He bestows us with the capacity to give generously from those blessings. *"And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work"* (2 Corinthians 9:8).

In our worship services, we give God our adoration and praise, and, during the offering, we worship Him through the giving of our money. May God grant us faithful hearts so that we give Him our first and best.

We're Remodeling Our Website

If you've ever checked out www.stjohnspr.org, you know there's a lot of stuff on it and it's hard to read on a smart phone. We're working on setting up a new and improved site that will be easier to navigate and provide more interaction opportunities. You can check out our progress periodically and watch for an invitation to join as a user if we have your e-mail address.

Stay tuned!





Stewardship Review—March

Avg. Sunday Worship Attendance: **236**

Total Offerings: **\$41,323**

Total Expenses: **\$27,683**

Difference **\$13,640**

Total Offerings, March, 2016: **\$38,710**

Total Expenses, March, 2016: **\$34,167**

Difference **\$4,543**

Avg. Weekly Offerings **\$10,331**

Avg. Weekly Expenses **\$6,921**

Difference **\$3,410**

Budget/Week **\$9,174**

Budget/Month **\$39,753**

CNB Checkbook Balance as of 03/31/17: **\$28,113**

Less Dedicated Funds **\$3,112**

Available Funds **\$25,001**

Less Healthy Balance **\$27,525**

Difference **- \$2,524**

Our Healthy Balance Goal **\$74,000**

Raised so far **\$27,525**

Still need **\$46,475**



Here's a Few Offering Pointers

St. Johns is a generous congregation and the bulk of our contributions come through the offerings given at worship services. Here are a few tips to remember when you're preparing your offering that will make things easier for you and for our offering counters:

1. Please use your offering envelopes if you have them. It makes it much easier for the offering counters if they don't have to check to see if you have an envelope number. If you haven't picked up your envelopes, stop by the church office and we'll get them for you.
2. For special offerings, please make out your check to St. Johns. We can't deposit checks made out to other organizations (like the Food Shelf, Pregnancy Resource Center, etc.). These checks will be sent directly to the organization.
3. You don't have to put a separate check or cash in each weekly offering envelope if you are giving monthly or twice a month. You can write one check and use one envelope for the month.
4. If you really want to be nice to the counters, don't fold your cash or check. Just slip it right into the envelope.
5. Consider automatic offerings. You can set up an automatic withdrawal from your account to St. Johns. You decide the amount and frequency. It's easy to set up and there's no extra charge to you. Stop by and see Ginny Ranisate if you're interested.
6. If you're good with numbers, detail oriented and available one Sunday a month, consider becoming an offering counter. We usually have teams of two counters and it takes about an hour to count. Once again, stop by and see Ginny or give her a call at 732-9783 if you're interested.



Release Time Wraps Up a Great Year

On April 25 we had our last Release Time class for this school year. We taught 110 students from 1st through 8th grade. Some classes studied the Old Testament some did the New Testament, some learned more facts about the Bible and how it is put together into one Book, some studied Martin Luther and the beginning of the Lutheran church and they all did some type of memorization work, for some it was the books of the Old Testament or the New Testament, the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, the Apostle's Creed and a few Bible verses.

The 4th graders did a Christmas play for the 1st through 3rd graders and some family and friends. We all shared birthday cake and ice cream in celebration of the birth of our Savior. We made valentines that we sent home to parents along with a simple note thanking them for sending their children to St Johns for Release Time and a few extra valentines were handed out to some lucky women in Sunday morning Bible study. We watched videos for Reformation, Christmas, Ash Wednesday and Easter.

We shared a few snacks and played a few Bible memory games and the 1st and 2nd graders made a few simple crafts to go along with their lessons. On the last day we all made our own ice cream sundaes and the younger grades decorated canvas bags to carry all their Release Time lessons home in. The older grades played memory games about all the lessons they had studied that year.

I know I will miss getting together with the other teachers every Wednesday morning to share ideas and experiences about our classes and how best to try to spread the gospel message to them. If you see any of our teachers please thank them for their devotion to this wonderful program: Kim Knaack, Ruth Knaack, Cheryl Breitbach, Sandy Phillips, Laurie Kimball and Pastor Neubauer.

Unless something unexpected comes up we all plan on returning next fall for another year of Release Time. In the mean time keep us and all of the students in your prayers. Also to all of you that donated extra money, craft supplies or snacks to our program, thank you!!! We really appreciate it.

Laurie Kimball, Release Time Coordinator



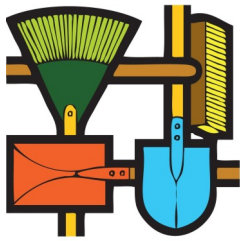
Enjoying ice cream and watching a video about the upcoming Splash Canyon VBS



Ascension Service

After His resurrection, Jesus spent forty days on earth encouraging and teaching His disciples. Then, right before their eyes, He ascended into heaven. You can read a detailed account of the event in Acts, Chapter 1.

You're invited to celebrate Christ's Ascension at a special worship service on Thursday, May 10 at 5:30 p.m. here at St. Johns.



Spring Clean Up

We're doing some spring cleaning around the church yard on Saturday, May 12 at 9:00 a.m. Bring a rake and join us!

Join Us for a Wild White Water Adventure with Splash Canyon VBS

Vacation Bible School will take place June 4-8 from 8:30 a.m.—noon. Kids ages PK4-6th grade are invited to join us for a white water rafting adventure. Cost is \$5 per child with a cap of \$10 per family. Registration forms have been sent home with Sunday School, Release Time and ABC students. You can also register on-line at our website (unless it's temporarily down during our website remodel).

Help of all kinds is needed—leaders, helpers, crafters, snacks, games, decorations and more. If you're interested in being a part of VBS, please talk to VBS director, Sarah Kaufenberg.



We Need A Canoe and Some Other Stuff, Too



We will be looking for paddles, life jackets, artificial Christmas trees, an inflatable boat, stuffed woodland creatures, rocks, logs, blue tarps, and a lightweight canoe to use for our VBS decorations. If you have items to donate please bring them in to church. Make sure your name is on them so we can get them back to you.

We will also have a donation board up with items needed soon. Thanks for helping make our VBS a success!



Thanks for Food Shelf Donations

Wow! During March we collected 210 pounds of food and \$470 for the Hubbard County Food Shelf. Great job!



Board

HIGHLIGHTS

Christian Education: Release Time: Laurie Kimball reported that they are getting ready to wrap up the last month of Release Time for the year. All teachers plan on returning for next year. On the last day of class grades 1-4 will be decorating canvas bags for taking their books and supplies home. Decorations will include some of their memory work and pictures. All students will make ice cream sundaes for a treat. They are working on ideas to improve the days when videos are shown to the groups.

Sunday School: Brandi Backmann reported that Sunday School is going well. The kids sang in church on Palm Sunday. The last day of Sunday School will be May 20.

VBS: No report this month.

Preschool: Kim Neubauer reported that enrollment stands at 41 students; 22 three year olds and 19 that are 4. So far, 13 students have enrolled for next year. Parent teacher conferences will be held on April 17 and 19.

Old Business: Since the Preschool Committee was unable to meet before the March board meeting, it was determined that the board could review the committee report and approve or disapprove committee recommendations for the 2018-2019 school year. The board approved the following recommendations:

To offer:

- 2 classes of 3 year olds (Mon/Wed AM and Tue/Thur AM)
- 2 classes of 4 year olds (Mon/Wed PM and Tue/Thur AM)
- 1 class of 4's to meet 3 days a week
- 1 class of 4's to meet 4 or 5 days a week

Tuition prices will be raised \$5.00 per month.

-2 day week class – \$85

-3 day week class -\$115

-4 day week class -\$140

--5 day week class - \$160

- Registration fees will remain the same (\$40 for non members and \$0 for members of St. Johns).

New Business: We looked at “Classroom Guideline and Disciplinary Procedure for Religious Education Programs of St. Johns Lutheran Church” and decided to table any decisions about it until the next meeting.

Church Properties: Cordless microphones will have to be replaced in the future due to new regulations from FCC.

Working on electrical needs around the church. Spring clean-up around the church, first weekend in May if weather and coordination of volunteers can come together.

The three offices in front will get suspended ceiling and new LED lights installed in April. With the other pastor's office painted. Boiler room on painter's schedule.

Back entry doors being addressed on opening problem.

Elders: Worked on assisting elders and ushers for April/May.

Evangelism: The trivia event held in March for hurricane recovery efforts was discussed. Only minor changes will be needed when we host another such event.

March Food Shelf donation statistics have not been given to St. Johns yet. We will report them when they are available.

The confirmand/mentor pizza gathering will be held on April 18. Connie Fondow will ask Ginny Ranisate to mail the reminder invitations. We are hopeful that Pastor Neubauer will be the “MC.”

We will decide on an appropriate event for summer at our May meeting.



The decision to replace the outside benches in the front of the church will be finalized by the middle/end of summer. We are aware of the fact that there is a couple in the congregation who wish to financially assist with this project. Perhaps there are others who are interested.

The board brainstormed and offered up suggestions for possible future events and projects.

Connie will check with Pastor Neubauer for possible names of inactive members to send cards to.

Parish Fellowship:

Old Business: Meal for Confirmands – Wednesday, May 2. There are eight confirmands. Ginny Ranisate will send out invitations for the meal to the confirmands, their families and mentors. Elayne Luiken will contact the elders to invite them also. Menu: Taco Bar, Tortilla Chips and Salsa, Fresh Fruit, Ice Cream Sundaes. Elayne and Loree Grudem will prepare the taco meat the day before at 1:00 p.m. We'll meet at 3:30 p.m. on Wednesday to prepare the meal.

New Business: We discussed using some of our board's funds to purchase some equipment for the kitchen such as another electric skillet. Elayne will do research on brands and prices.

Public Relations and Stewardship: did not meet.

Young People:

Easter Breakfast: Saturday set-up went well. Six youth showed up to help. Completed set-up and prep in about 30 minutes. Sunday morning breakfast – served pancakes, egg bake, and sausage, bananas and oranges. Beverages were coffee, milk, apple juice, and orange juice. Ran out of egg bake and orange juice. The left over milk, bananas, and

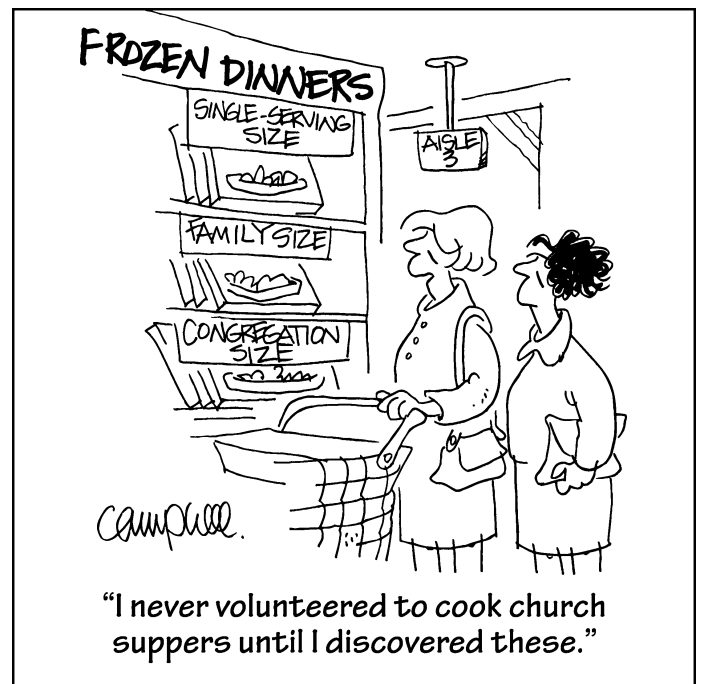
oranges were used by ABC Preschool. The pancake mix and extra syrup are in the cupboard to be used for a later activity.

Dinner/Game Night: Dinner will be turkey tetrazzini, salad, and dessert. Brandi Backmann will buy salad, dressing and dessert.

Senior Recognition: Dee Persons has folder with info. She will not be here that day, but will work on setting up other junior parents for it.

Ga-Ga Pit: Shelley Lof has talked to Dustin Lof about the ga-ga pit and the material cost can be expensive. This could also be a good Eagle Scout project. First step – check with the Board of Church Properties to ensure that this would be approved. Brandi will check with them.

Summer activities: At this time we will continue with plans for: June – Biking to Dorset; July – River Tubing; August – Evergreen Park.





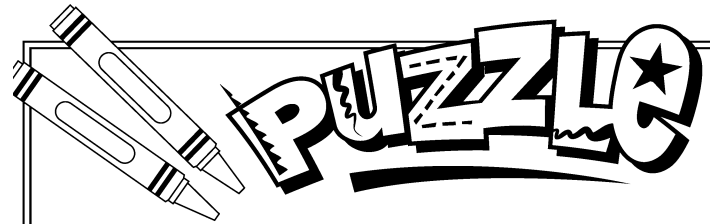
Sunday School News



5/03 Emma Mayer
 5/04 Ava Glatzmaier
 5/08 Emma Ravnaas
 5/11 Elsie Forbes
 5/20 Camdyn Quinn
 5/21 Elijah Benson
 5/27 Brock Knutson
 5/31 Kasen Girtz

Baptismal Birthdays

5/01 Samuel Leckner
 5/04 Sawyer Eidsmoe
 5/04 Gemma Leckner
 5/06 Clinton Koch
 5/11 Eastyn Walker
 5/13 William Sanquist
 5/24 Elsie Forbes
 5/26 Wyatt Goodwater
 5/26 Nicklaus Sowers
 5/28 Jacob Lof
 5/30 Walter Harrison III
 5/30 Hunter Harrison
 5/31 Khloe Harrison



WORTHY OF RESPECT

On Mother's Day, we celebrate our moms and everything they do for us. How does God tell us to treat our moms?



Directions: Using the key below, fill in the blanks to complete Deuteronomy 5:16, NIV.

A	C	D	M*	N*	O*
E	F	G	P*	R*	S*
H	I	L	T*	U*	Y*

" _____ your _____

 and your _____,

 the _____ your _____ has

 _____ 5:16, NIV

Answer: "Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God has commanded you," Deuteronomy 5:16, NIV

Our last day of Sunday School will be May 20.

Thanks to all our Sunday School staff, students and parents.

It's been a great year!

We'll see you next Fall!

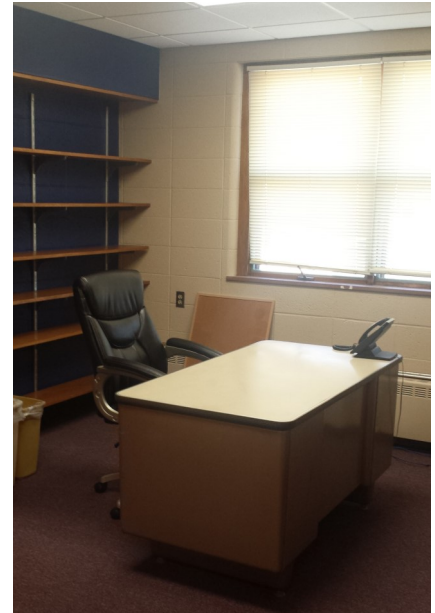


More about the Newtons

Joel is from Rockford, Illinois where his parents still live. He graduated from Concordia, Seward, Nebraska in 2014. Sarah is from Eagle River, Wisconsin, a town that Pastor Neubauer says is the “Park Rapids of Wisconsin.” She graduated from Concordia, Mequon, Wisconsin also in 2014. Joel and Sarah met at seminary where he was training to be a pastor and she a deaconess. They both were assigned to field work at the same church and got to know each other while carpooling to the church. They have been married almost two years and have a son, George (almost a year old).

Joel enjoys sports, literature, writing, woodworking, fountain pens, poetry, and weightlifting. Sarah enjoys reading, writing, running, music, guitar, choir, art, and graphic design.

While the Newtons were on vicarage in Seymour, Indiana, he joined a dart ball league. It's a cross between baseball and darts. Maybe we can get him to start a league here!



Pastor Newton's office is ready with fresh paint, new lights and ceiling.

Food, Fun and Games at the Confirmand/Mentor Pizza Party

There was plenty of food, fun and conversation at the confirmand and mentor get together on April 18. Our mixer was Mingo. Teams got a “mingo” card and had to find other attendees who fit the bill on each of the squares. Once we had a couple teams get “mingo” (one line filled) we went on to black out. We found attendees who could whistle “Jesus Loves Me,” had taught Sunday School, sang in the choir or played in the bell choir. A couple people obligingly had a hole in their sock (yes, that was one of the spaces to fill) and we got to hear Sue Litau recite the First Commandment. It was a great time!



Double checking to make sure a team really had their card filled for black out.



Caleb Arola and Jerry Grudem “bond.”



**St. Johns
Lutheran Church**

803 West First Street
Park Rapids, MN 56470

Phone: 218-732-9783

Fax: 218-237-9785

Website: www.stjohnspr.org

Pastor James Neubauer

Pastor Bill Neumann



The Lutheran Church -- Missouri Synod

Nonprofit Organization
U.S. Postage
Park Rapids, Minnesota
Permit No. 6

Address Service Requested

Inside this issue:

<i>Joel and Sarah Newton Coming to St. Johns</i>	1
<i>O Chicken of Little Faith</i>	1
<i>Confirmed in Christ</i>	1
<i>Congratulations, Graduates</i>	1
<i>Ponderings from the Pew</i>	2
<i>Special Voters Meeting Minutes</i>	3
<i>What's on the Lutheran Hour</i>	3
<i>Funeral and Baptisms</i>	3
<i>Stewardship Corner</i>	4
<i>We're Remodeling Our Website</i>	4
<i>Stewardship Review</i>	5
<i>Here's A Few Offering Pointers</i>	5
<i>Release Time Wraps Up a Great Year</i>	6
<i>Ascension Service</i>	7
<i>Spring Clean Up</i>	7
<i>Join Us for a White Water Adventure</i>	7
<i>We Need a Canoe and Some Other Stuff, Too</i>	7
<i>Thanks for Food Shelf Donations</i>	7
<i>Board Highlights</i>	8
<i>Sunday School News</i>	10
<i>More about the Newtons</i>	11
<i>Food, Fun and Games</i>	11

