

The St. Johns Servant

St. Johns Lutheran Church

Park Rapids, Minnesota

December, 2019

Arise and Shine this Advent

Darkness vs light. It is a stark contrast. Though the initial creation is darkness, God speaks light into existence. Though a different darkness descends on creation at the Fall in to sin, God speaks words of hope and promise. Throughout the dark times of sin and death God keeps promising the light. And in the darkness of night God delivers us the "light that shines in the darkness" (John 1:5) with the birth of His Son. During this Advent season we will be celebrating God's promises of Light that are fulfilled at Christmas with the theme "Arise and Shine."



Advent services will be at noon and 6:00 p.m., Wednesdays, December 4, 11 and 18. The noon service will be followed by a light fellowship lunch. The evening service will be preceded by a meal starting at 5:00 p.m. We will be using the order of Evening Prayer for our service which we used last year. The opening of the service is titled, "The Service of Light" and the Psalm we use is Psalm 141. An audio recording of these is on our website if you would like to listen a few times to become familiar with the music.

Wednesday, December 4—Rising Light (Isaiah 60:1): Living in the light of Jesus, we prepare to celebrate His birth. Repenting of our sins, we put away the works of darkness and dress in the armor of light. Wednesday, December 11—Healing Light (Malachi 4:2): With repentant joy we anticipate the birth of our Savior. We listen to His Word and live according to it until He comes again. Wednesday, December 18—Eternal Light (Daniel 12:3): We look forward to Jesus' Second Advent, when we will be raised in glory to live in his presence and shine like stars forever. Come, Lord Jesus!

Christmas Eve services will be held on Tuesday, December 24 at 3:00 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. We will have one service on Christmas Day at 9:00 a.m. Arise, Shine for your Light has come!



Christmas Decorating

You're invited to come and help decorate the church for the Christmas season on Monday, December 2, starting at 9:00 a.m. We've gotten so good at decorating that we're usually done before noon. Coffee and rolls will be provided.

See page 6 and 7 for more Christmas Events



Ponderings from the Pew



"Expect to be attacked," Pastor Neubauer said in a recent sermon. Did the words resonate with you? Did you contemplate them, relate to them, apply them to your life? Expect to be attacked. Hmmm. It's not like we live in a war zone. Certainly, in our little neck of the woods, we live a peaceful existence. We come and go at will without fear. "Expect to be attacked" doesn't really seem to apply to us. Even on a spiritual level, we have it pretty easy right? There's no government pressure on where we worship. We don't live in fear of someone

suspecting we are Christians. In fact, being Christian can woo us into believing we are above harm; somehow exempt because God has our backs. And certainly He does for Christ has secured our salvation in eternity.

But what about while we are still here in a sinful world? Do you recognize where Satan is actively undermining you? Are you being "watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking (you) to devour" (I Peter 5:8)? Is your bad luck more than bad luck? Could it be that the Prince of darkness literally stalks us? I think so.

Our daughter, Chelsie's new home came with some repairs required. The heating system needs replacing and then the water heater seemed to quit. Arch went to replace the elements but could not get the tank to drain. So he installed a new water heater, moving the old one to her furnace room near the floor drain. When he tried again to drain the old one, the whole plug came out along with a whoosh of 50 gallons of water. It was not a good time to discover that: I) the floor drain couldn't handle the flow and 2) the floor slants away from the drain towards the common family room wall with carpet on the other side! As we frantically pushed water towards the drain with a narrow mop and a large piece of cardboard, Arch said, "Why us?" I said, "Why not us? We aren't special, and let's face it, Satan is alive and well, and clearly quite busy." We've been in his cross hairs before so our reactions to these kinds of ventures tends to be underwhelming – more like – oh, of course it went sideways! Owen helped our spirits by repeatedly poking his head in the room and asking, "so, how's it going?" LOL. The point is, is it just bad ju ju, or is it the devil chiseling away at us trying to get us to doubt God?

We aren't promised a struggle free life because we are Christians. Good and bad happen to everyone regardless of race, creed, color, religious or atheist beliefs, democrat or republican. This world is sinful. We all suffer the consequences here. Our hope is in our salvation. Our hope is in Christ. Our peace is in heaven with Him. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to His great mercy, He has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials...Though you have not seen Him, you love Him. Though you do not now see Him, you believe in Him and rejoice with joy...obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls." (I Pe I:3-9).

To God alone be the glory!

Renee'Anderson



Successful Blood Drive

Blessed are the volunteers, for without them, what would we do? I'd like to thank everyone who volunteered to work registration, serve or provide snacks, and especially those who donated blood during our blood drive on November 4 and 5. There were 117 donors who were able to successfully donate for a total of 147 blood products. This wonderful outcome could not be accomplished without the help of our volunteers and donors. Thank you so much, everyone, for your support!



Elayne Luiken, Blood Drive Coordinator



New Members Welcomed

On November 24 we welcomed several new families who have joined St. Johns over the past year. Our new members are:

Robert Adkins, Tina Amiot and McKenzie Laferriere, Dee Dierks, Megan Eskola, Rhonda Eskola, Teresa Etter, Neveah, Grace and Gavin, Ralph and Joane Hanson, Neal and Carol Holter, Carol Paurus, Daniel Schultz, Jim and Alice Sieving, Liz Smith, Lorraine Wilmes.

We're glad to have them join our church family!

Can't Get to Church? Watch it on DVD

If you or someone you know have not been able to come for worship services, St. Johns offers the DVD ministry. You can get a DVD of the worship service and even a small personal video player to use. Call the church office at 732-9783 for information.



What's On The Lutheran Hour

12/1 "Enough with the Self-Talk"

12/8 **"God's Yes"**

12/15 "Love is Enough"

12/22 "Christmas"

12/29 "Dreams"

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. You can also listen on Sirius XM Family Talk Channel 131, Sundays at 9:00 a.m. or any time on SENTRadio at Ihm.org/sentradio.





Stewardship Corner—Jesus is the Reason for the Season

Here we are, ready to celebrate the birth of Christ - a major event, even for those who don't believe in Him. It used to be that merchants would wait until after Thanksgiving to begin the celebration by filling their shelves with enticing gifts, decorations, and all the trappings but now we see that it often starts in October.

How different from the first Christmas! Mary and Joseph settled down in a stable. There were no photographers waiting outside to snap the first picture of the new king. No one knew what was happening! No one, that is, except for the parents and the host of Heaven who made the announcement. But to whom was this announcement made? To the powerful who would speed through the towns and villages, spreading the news? No, it was made to shepherds who were outcasts, hired hands who were so low on the social scale that they weren't even allowed to give testimony in a court of law. They weren't even allowed to come into the temple.

Yet these were the ones chosen by God to tell the good news. These ostracized creatures saw the angels with "...the glory of the Lord [shining] around them..." They heard the message the angels brought: "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior Who is Christ the Lord... You will find a baby...lying in a manger" (Luke 2:9, 11-12). They saw, they listened, and then they went to see for themselves. After receiving the Good News, they shared it. "When they had seen Him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this Child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them" (Luke 2:17-18).



If lowly shepherds could tell the story, can't we as well? "All who hear it were amazed," Luke writes, but he doesn't say all believed. All we're asked to do is tell the story. How could fear, uncertainty, or apathy hold us back? This is the biggest news mankind has ever received! As stewards of the Gospel, we have no choice but to follow the example of the shepherds and "spread the word concerning what has been told [us] about this Child."

A Note of Thanks for Recovery Bibles



The Board of Evangelism recently donated several Bibles for jail ministry. We received the following thank you note:

Thank you so much for your continued support of the jail ministry—both by donating Celebrate Recovery Bibles and with your prayers. The men and women who receive these Bibles are overwhelmed with gratitude—most have never had a Bible, and all are transformed in one way or another by God's Word. His Spirit is very active within the jail—and your generosity in His Name is so appreciated. Thank you. And may the Lord continue to bless all your ministries.

Katy Grisamore, Director of Jail Ministries Hubbard County detention Center On behalf of all the incarcerated men and women who attend Bible studies in the Hubbard County Jail

Park Rapids, Minnesota



Stewardship Review—October

Avg. Sunday Worship Attendance: 264

Total Offerings: \$34,452 Total Offerings, October, 2018: \$42,089 Budget/Week \$9,497 Total Expenses: \$35,981 Total Expenses, October, 2018: \$40,611 Budget/Month \$41,152

Difference - \$1,529 Difference \$1,478

Avg. Weekly Offerings \$8,613 Total Offerings, year to date: \$360,567 Avg. Weekly Expenses \$8,995 Total Expenses, year to date: \$370,897 Difference - \$10,330

CNB Checkbook Balance as of 10/31/19: \$14,695
Less dedicated accounts
- \$244
Difference
\$14,451

Our Healthy Balance Goal
Raised so far
\$42,296
\$31,704

Kitchen Remodeling Payable \$48,331 \$62,782

Requested Recipe

Linda Swanson brought these delicious bars for coffee one Sunday and several people asked for the recipe. Here you go—just in time for Christmas treats!

Chocolate Cream Cheese Peanut Butter Bars Ingredients

Cookin Pass and Topping

Cookie Base and Topping

I pouch (I lb I.5 oz) Betty Crocker™ peanut butter cookie mix

3 tablespoons vegetable oil

1 tablespoon water

1 egg

Filling

1 1/4 cups semisweet chocolate chips

1/4 cup butter or margarine

1 package (8 oz) cream cheese, softened

2/3 cup crunchy or creamy peanut butter

3/4 cup powdered sugar

1/2 cup whipping cream



Heat oven to 350°F. Spray bottom only of 13x9-inch pan with cooking spray. In large bowl, stir cookie base and topping ingredients until soft dough forms. Shape 6 (1-inch) balls of dough. On ungreased cookie sheet, place balls 2 inches apart; flatten in crisscross pattern with fork. Press remaining dough in pan. Bake cookies and base 10 to 12 minutes or until edges are light golden brown. Cool 10 minutes. Reserve cookies for topping.. In small microwavable bowl, microwave chocolate chips and butter uncovered on High 1 minute to 1 minute 30 seconds, stirring every 30 seconds, until melted and stirred smooth. Spread evenly over bars. Refrigerate until firm, about 30 minutes. In medium bowl, beat cream cheese, peanut butter, powdered sugar and whipping cream with electric mixer on low speed until blended. Beat on high speed about 2 minutes or until light and fluffy. Spread over chocolate layer. Crush reserved cookies; sprinkle over cream cheese layer. Press in lightly. Refrigerate until set, about 30 minutes. For bars, cut into 9 rows by 4 rows. Store covered in refrigerator.



Christmas at St. Johns

Luminaries

The youth will be selling luminaries on Sundays and Wednesdays in December through December 18. You may purchase (free will donation) a luminary in honor or memory of someone. The luminaries will then be outside for our Christmas Eve services.



Ladies Aid Christmas Potluck

All ladies are invited to the Ladies Aid Annual Christmas potluck on Thursday, December 5 at noon. There will be a gift exchange which could be homemade, re-gifted or new items but no more than \$10 value.



Classic Chorale Christmas Concerts

The Park Rapids Classic Chorale will present "Oh, How Beautiful the Sky" Christmas concerts here at St. Johns on Friday, December 6 at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday, December 8 at 3:00 p.m. There will be a free will offering and treats following the concerts.



An Acoustic Christmas

Eric and Krista Norquist, along with special guest, Alyssa Schroeder, will perform an acoustic Christmas concert here at St. Johns on Saturday, December 7 at 3:00 p.m. The **Lutheran Laymen's League will serve goodies following the concert. A freewill offering will** be taken to support the local Lutheran Hour.



Bid on a Basket

Place your bid on one of the many baskets displayed in the social hall. Proceeds from the baskets will go to kitchen remodeling expenses. Bids will be taken until December 15 so be sure to check back frequently and make sure someone hasn't outbid you.



Cookies and Carols

On Sunday, December 15, we'll gather in the fellowship hall during coffee hour to sing our favorite carols and indulge in our favorite cookies, which will be furnished by members like you! Please bring a dozen or two of your favorite cookies or candy. After singing, the Board of Fellowship will make up gift packages of goodies and deliver them to our shut-ins. Please join us in this yearly tradition here at St. Johns.





A Handbell Christmas Service

If you love listening to the handbell choir, you're in for a special treat at the 8:00 a.m. worship service on December 22. Every song features bells from the prelude to the postlude. Come and worship with bells!



Sunday School Christmas Program

St. Johns Sunday School will present the "Colors of Christmas" at the 10:30 a.m. worship service on Sunday, December 22. The special Christmas Choir will join them to sing several songs.





This is A Great Time to Invite

"Someone You Know"

Remember seeing those inserts in the bulletin about "someone you know" who needs to hear the Good News of Jesus? This program from the Minnesota North District is designed to help you reach out and share the message with them. With all these Christmas events happening this is a great time to invite someone to attend an event with you. You can also go to the "Someone You Know" tab on the district website, mnnlcms.org, and watch a short video from Pastor Monty Meyer with tips and hints on how to reach out to someone you know this Christmas.

Adopt A Chap Update

We sent out five boxes of jerky, crackers, Slim Jims, gum, nuts, trail mix, cookies, Christmas booklets, Christmas cards made by the Release Time students and some military Bible Sticks to our adopted chaplain Vince Bain to share with the soldiers under his care in Kuwait.



Thanks to everyone who brought in items for the boxes and to the Release Time students and staff for the beautiful cards!

Watch for future updates!





Board



Christian Education: October minutes were approved.

Reports:

Release Time Report from Laurie Kimball was read.

VBS - No report.

Sunday School – No report, but the teachers on the board stated that the teachers met to share information. Practice for the Sunday School Children's Service will be the three Wednesdays of Advent from 3:30-5:00 p.m. and also from 10:00 a.m. – noon the day before. There are some issues with material working for all grade levels. Connie Fondow is currently creating her own program for the little children. She is following the same story as the other classes. Offering for September and October was given to Lutheran Island Camp. There is a Bible study planned for the teachers beginning in January.

Preschool – Kim Neubauer reported that she currently has 37 children enrolled--9 three year olds and 28 four year olds. Children this year are very high energy and need a little more one on one. State inspection was on October 24, passed with no issues. Parent/Teacher conferences will be held on November 19 and 21. There will be no school on November 27- 29 for Thanksgiving.

Adult Education – No report. Please note in the bulletin day and time of the Bible studies and classes that are available.

Old Business: Children's Service was discussed with a suggestion that we see if Pastor Neubauer would be able to create a poster to inform the congregation of the upcoming service as well as possibly designing a flyer that could be handed out the week before practice starts to remind families.

New Business: Voters meeting will be held on the 24th with a potluck after the second service. A new member welcome will be the same Sunday between services.

Church Properties: Kitchen update on final items to be finished. Discussed a few lighting issues—yard light, etc. Carpet for back entry should be in and installed shortly.

Elders: no report.

Evangelism: The Mentor/Confirmand pizza party was well received by the 15 mentors and 26 students who attended.

The Diamond Willow residents who are attending the monthly BINGO event continue to enjoy the evening.

Adopt-a-Chap boxes will be sent out the last week of November. We will include 100 copies each of "The Christmas Story" booklet and "God's Word of Encouragement – A Special Armed Forces Edition" booklet. Several Bible sticks will also be sent along with the snack supplies brought in by St. Johns members.

It was suggested that the board purchase an additional box of 100 copies of "The Christmas Story" to be taken to the Hubbard County Jail for distribution to inmates.

Doug Kingsley will once again coordinate St. Johns involvement in the Toys for Boys and Girls and Tiny Tots community program.

We discussed the possibility of facilitating a trivia event in March. Funds generated would be appropriated to the St. Johns kitchen fund.



Parish Fellowship: Old Business:

New Member Welcome – Sunday, November 24 between services. Each board member will furnish two dozen cookies and Elayne Luiken will order ten kuchens from Chop and Pops bakery in Nevis. Julie Kingsley will pick them up on Saturday, November 23. Ginny Ranisate will send special invitations to the new members.

We will serve a potluck lunch after second service on November 24, before the semi-annual voters meeting.

Our board will serve the Wednesday night meal during Advent on December 11. Tentative menu is: chicken wild rice casserole (Loree Grudem's recipe), taco hotdish, lettuce salad, pudding cups with whipped cream.

New Business:

Christmas decorating the church will take place on Monday, December 2, beginning at 9:00 a.m. We'll furnish rolls and coffee.

Cookies and Carols will be Sunday, December 15 between services. Elayne will put a notice in the bulletin on December 1st and 8th, asking everyone to help furnish cookies. We'll assemble cookie trays and deliver them to the shut-ins. Elayne will line up a pianist and someone to lead the singing.

Public Relations and Stewardship: did not meet.

Young People: November Event: Sky Zone and Chik-fil-A, 11.30.2019. Depart from Church at 9am. Return to Church around 3pm. Lunch at Chik-fil-A (we'll provide enough money for a meal either original chicken sandwich meal (including med. fries and med drink) or eight count nuggets meal (also with med.

fries, med. drink). Bring your own money if you'd like extras or a milkshake or something). Cost: \$10 (plus an extra \$3 if you need socks). Everyone needs a new waiver. (This was later rescheduled to December.)

December Event: Lock-In (overnight) at Trinity Lutheran Church, Bemidji, December 13-14. 5-12th grade welcome, need to RSVP (sign-up sheet forthcoming)

Advent Meal, December 18. Mac and Cheese with super cool toppings.

Luminaries

January Event: Three Bears Waterpark (date TBD), - 12th grade





Sunday School News

Perfect Attendance--November

PK3 Kellan Eidsmoe PK4 Thatcher Eidsmoe 1st Sawyer Eidsmoe

2nd Clinton Koch, Sophia Neubauer

3rd Zachary Harju, Khloe May

5th Max Harju

7th Vivian Harju, Laura Kaufenberg,

Leo Kaufenberg



12/08 Maxwell Harju

12/9 Grace Hockett

12/24 Owen Christensen

12/25 Abby Eskola

12/28 Theodore Komppa

12/30 Gavin Smith

Baptismal Birthdays

12/04 Alex Lof

12/05 Zachary Harju





Many traditional decorations convey the meaning of Christmas.

Directions: Use the picture cives to the right to complete the words. Then write the boxed letters in order to complete 2 Counthiens 9:15, NIV



___ &

shepherd's staff

tree that keeps its leaves

shines to lead the way

green for eternal life, red for Jesus' blood

sounds to announce good news

has no beginning or end

Thunks but to _od fou _is indesc__balle gifl!

2 COHINIMIANS 9:15, NIV

Yesteven condes contes evergeteen, stats hollwist benines, bells, wreadh; The shortes God for his indesemboble gift 2 Coninchies es (EDV VEIV



Sunday School
Christmas Program
Sunday, December 22
10:30 a.m.
Featuring the St. Johns
Christmas Choir



Main Street Living North Programs for December

"Main Street Living" is a locally produced TV program that includes a 30 minute worship service led by participating pastors of the Minnesota North and North Dakota Districts of our LCMS, along with a 30 minute Lutheran Hour program (normally "This Is The Life," along with occasional church-season specials). Programs are broadcast at 9:00 a.m. Central time on FOX station KVRR Fargo-Moorhead Channel 15 and archived on www.mainstreetliving.com. Click on "North (Fargo)" under the picture.

December 1: Rev. Kirk Peters, St. Matthew Lutheran Church, Hazen, ND, presents the message: "The King is Coming" based on Matthew 21:1-11. The Christmas season LHM Animated Series Program is: "The City that Forgot About Christmas" (Benji thinks the hustle and bustle of Christmas only makes people more grouchy, but Grandfather has a different view.)

December 8: Rev. Dan Voth, Immanuel Lutheran Church, Grand Forks, ND, presents the message: "You Brood of Vipers - - Repent!" based on St. Matthew 3:1-12. The Christmas season LHM Animated Series Program is: "The Stableboy's Christmas" (A family experiences the excitement of the holidays, while trying to keep the true meaning of Christmas at the center of their preparations.)

December 15: Rev. Bruce Blocker, Immanuel Lutheran Church, McIntosh, MN, presents the message: "The 3 C's of Christmas" based on Matthew 11:2-11. The Christmas season LHM Animated Series Program is: "Red Boots for Christmas" (One shop in the small town of Friedensdorf doesn't have any Christmas decorations, and has no Christmas spirit inside the store.)

December 22: Rev. Matthew Harrison, President of the LCMS presents this year's Christmas message. The Christmas season LHM Animated Series Program is: "Christmas Is" (A journey back in time to the first Christmas where Benji and Waldo rediscover the feeling and message of this significant day.)

December 29: Rev. Roger Paavloa, President of the LCMS Mid-South District, presents the message: "Satan Fails; Prophesy is Fulfilled" based on Matthew 2: 13-23. The Christmas season LHM Animated Series Program is: "The Puzzle Club Christmas Mystery" (It's Christmas, and some mysterious events have occurred which require some special investigative talents.)



Release Time students made cards for soldiers on November 20 and then enjoyed special treats. The older kids had cupcakes and the younger group had turkeys (thanks to the creativity and patience of Laurie Kimball and Lois Just). And, no, Pastor Neubauer did not do all the cards for his class. Wonder what the kids are looking at out the window?





St. Johns Lutheran Church

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Pastor James Neubauer Pastor Joel Newton Pastor Bill Neumann



The Lutheran Church -- Missouri Synod

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