



The **St. Johns Servant**

St. Johns
Lutheran Church

Park Rapids, Minnesota

February, 2020

Choir Come Back



The Senior Choir is starting up again Wednesday, February 5 at 6:00 p.m. If you love to sing, you're welcome to join them. They usually sing once a month for worship services.

Questions? Contact Sarah Kaufenberg at 651-260-3350.

Death By Chocolate Bake Sale is Back

Treat your sweetie with something chocolate on Valentines Day. The Bell Choir is hosting a Death by Chocolate Bake Sale on Sunday, February 9 between services. You're invited to stop by and pick up something scrumptious. If you like to bake, you're invited to bring treats, too. Remember, chocolate is "health food." Proceeds will go to St. Johns music ministry.



Youth Tubing at Detroit Mountain



All youth in Grades 5-12 are invited to go to Detroit Mountain for tubing on Sunday, February 16 from 3:00—7:00 p.m. We'll meet at church at 3:00 p.m. and return around 7:00 p.m. Cost is \$10 with a cap of \$20 per family plus money if you want a snack. Friends are welcome. You must have a waiver signed by parent/guardian before we leave. They are available at church. Sign up on the sheet at church or with Pastor Newton at 815-222-1359.

Join the Prayer Chain

The prayer chain is a simple way that you can minister to those in our church family and even people you've never met. How does it work? People call our prayer chain leaders, Anna Johnson and Bev Spoor, with a prayer request. They call the first person in each of 12 groups with the request and those people call the next person on the list in their group on down the line. The main point is that you then include the prayer request in your prayers. If you're interested in being a part of this ministry, please call the church office at 732-9783.

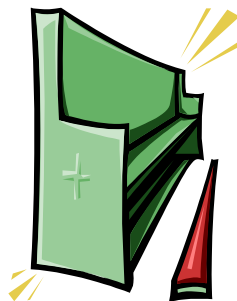


Lent Begins February 26

The season of Lent begins on Wednesday, February 26. Join us for worship each Wednesday at noon with lunch served by the Ladies Aid after the service or come at 5:00 p.m. for a meal and worship at 6:00 p.m.



Ponderings from the Pew



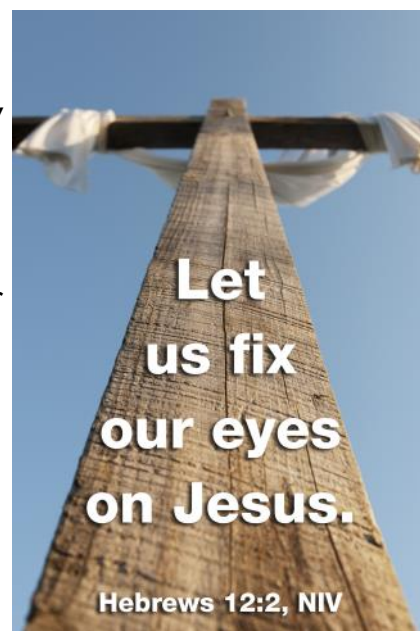
Focus on Me (God). This seems to be the theme in the “Jesus Calling” book by Sarah Young I haphazardly read. I’d love to say I read every day’s devotion faithfully on the day it’s designed to be read. You shouldn’t believe it if I try to convince you. No, I’m a hit or miss person, but the book sits on my desk, and I do try to pick it up kinda sorta regularly. It’s a good thing for me that God’s faithfulness is not as unreliable as mine. I do know one thing without question – God is faithful. God does not waver; He does not change. God’s faithfulness is not influenced by my feeble pleas, half hearted requests, or unpredictable devotions. No matter what – God is with me. And He is with you.

So how do we focus on God during everyday life? We know that Colossians 3:2 says, “Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.” Ok. But I have a job that requires focus, too. Matthew 6:33 tells us, “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.” So... maybe if I read my devotional as soon as I open my eyes in the morning, the rest of my day can be about work, supper plans, feeding the cats, etc. Matthew goes on to say, “Therefore, do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.” Oh, well, now it’s making more sense. So, it’s not about a time of day to focus on God, and then go on to fuss and fret the rest of the time. It’s about recognizing God’s constant presence; of seeking God with trust that He will guide our path. It’s about living as a child of God with eyes that see the good and the bad through faith. Our hope is in God no matter what. Every breath is a breath as His child. We won’t be protected from all evil, but the evil we know is experienced as God’s own child. Its impact softened because He is our Father. Evil’s temporary triumphs are tempered by the knowledge that “neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor power, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord,” (Romans 8:38).

“What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?” (Romans 8:31). Indeed. Even when “we do not know what to pray for as we ought, ...the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words,” (Romans 8:26). God has given us His Spirit. He suffers with us in this life so that we will be glorified with Him in eternity. Evil can’t win. Satan doesn’t get to win no matter what he throws at us here. We get to look through loss and suffering to the glory that awaits us in heaven. We get to look, “to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God,” (Hebrews 12:2). “Consider HIM Who endured from sinners such hostility against Himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted,” (Hebrews 12:3). Jesus knew the pain and agony, the separation from His Father that was ahead of Him. He carried the cross anyway because of the JOY He also knew was His. Consider Him. Focus on Him.

To God alone be the glory!

Renee Anderson





Check Out Our Church Library

Have you checked out the books in our church library? There's a great selection for all ages and interests as well as videos. New and featured books are on the shelf on the back wall to your left. We have lots of fiction to your right and great books for kids, too!

It's easy to use the library. Just make your selections, write the date and your name on the card and place it in the basket on the desk. There is no strict deadline to return your books but a month or so is usually about right. Come in and get a great read today!



Get Ready to Give Blood



St. Johns will sponsor a blood drive on **Monday, March 16** from **noon to 6:00 p.m.** and **Tuesday, March 17** from **8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.** To schedule an appointment, call Elayne Luiken at 255-4865 or go online to www.vitalant.org, sponsor code: parkrapids.

We also need volunteers to help with the drive. If you can bring bars or cookies, work at registration, or help out in the kitchen, there is a sign-up sheet in the narthex next to the church office, or call Elayne at the number above. Please help us with this important, life-saving effort!

What's On The Lutheran Hour

- 2/02 "Gold Without Glitter"
- 2/09 "Break Through the No-Go Zone"
- 2/16 "Families and Joseph's Tears"
- 2/23 "Know-How"

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 lhm.org/sentradio.

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."

Baptism

01/05 Benjamin Arthur Bergerson
Devan and Amy (Luther) Bergerson



Funeral

01/25 Joyce Walsh





Stewardship Corner—Giving is an Obligation



... of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.
Genesis 28:22

Does the title of this article cause you to pause? Isn't giving supposed to be the free and joyous response of God's people who express their gratitude and praise of God through their giving? Certainly, our primary reason for giving is a response to the Good News of the Gospel. Knowing what God has done for us in Jesus prompts us to give and keep on giving. God never stops giving to us, and we imitate His nature through our giving.

God's people in the Old Testament were under an obligation to give. God commanded them to give a tenth (tithe) of their incomes for the support of God's work. In fact, there was a second and third tithe so the people were commanded to give much more than one-tenth of their incomes. However, as New Testament Christians who live under God's grace in Jesus, we are no longer obligated to tithe. As new covenant Christians, the motive for giving has changed from a command to give to giving cheerfully.

Are the Old Testament laws no longer relevant? Jesus said, "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them" (Matthew 5:17). Jesus came to keep all of God's commandments perfectly. He paid the price for our forgiveness by taking the curse of the Law upon Himself, freeing us from the demands of the Law. In Jesus, we are free to serve God with pure hearts. Although we are free from the law, we know that God wants the best for us and His laws give us order and purpose.

As New Testament Christians, we live in God's grace. Secure in Christ's presence and love, we express our thanksgiving for Who God is and what He has done for us through our giving. We also know that giving is God's will. Therefore, we have an obligation to give. The Apostle Paul wrote, "So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith" (Galatians 6:10). We willingly and freely embrace the Law to give knowing it is God's will for us that we serve Him by serving others and extend His kingdom through our generosity. We can conclude by saying that giving is a wonderful opportunity and also an obligation.



Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord ...

1 Corinthians 15:58

We Need Offering Counters



Are you good with numbers? Love to use an adding machine? Detail oriented? Then we could really use you! We need more offering counters. Each team of two usually counts the offerings one Sunday a month. It's an interesting and sometimes challenging job but vitally important to our congregation. What good are all those offerings, if they aren't organized, counted, credited to contributors and deposited to be used for the work of the church? If you feel the call to crunch some numbers, please talk to Ginny and she will give you details.



Condensed Annual Financial Report Ending 12/31/19

	12/31/18	12/31/19
Current Assets	295,456	285,012
Fixed Assets	<u>1,230,448</u>	<u>1,230,448</u>
Total Assets	<u>1,525,904</u>	<u>1,515,460</u>
Liabilities/Dedicated Funds Payable	200,525	209,430
Equity	<u>1,325,379</u>	<u>1,306,030</u>
Total Liabilities and Equity	<u>1,525,904</u>	<u>1,515,460</u>
Income:	449,851	439,739
Less Expenses:		
Missions	75,000	75,000
Voters	228,660	254,688
Board of Elders	43,013	43,977
Board of Christian Education	21,427	18,617
Board of Church Properties	56,447	59,959
Board of Evangelism	956	1,705
Board of Parish Fellowship	473	178
Board of Stewardship	1,086	1,202
Board of Young People	1,468	1,420
Board of Public Relations	<u>2,494</u>	<u>2,365</u>
Total Expenses	<u>431,024</u>	<u>459,111</u>
Income Less Expenses	<u>+18,827</u>	<u>-19,372</u>

Have you Tried Our New Giving Options?

Now you can give with a credit/debit card on our website or on your phone. Just go to our website, www.stjohnspr.org and click on the "Give" tab on the top right of the home page. From there you'll reach a page where you can give securely by entering the requested information. You can create an account or give as a guest.



To donate using your phone, download the "GivePlus" app from your app store. You can search for St. Johns, then create an account and start giving.



Main Street Living Programs This Month



If you haven't checked out Main Street Living, this month is a great time to do so. Programs are broadcast Sunday mornings at 9:00 a.m. on KVRR Fargo-Moorhead .

Here's the "North" programs for February:

February 2: Rev. Dan Suelzle, Wittenberg Lutheran Chapel, Grand Forks, ND, presents the message: "The Presentation of Our Lord," based on Luke 2:22-32. "This Is The Life" program is: "The Point of No Return." This presentation discusses God's limitless grace.

February 9: Rev. Dave Suelzle, Grace Lutheran Church, Fargo, ND, presents the message: "The Salty Disciples," based on Matthew 5:13. "This Is The Life" program: "Mr. Big."

February 16: Rev. Leo Deitemeyer, First American Lutheran Church, Mayville, ND, presents the message: "The Heart of the Matter: A Holy Heart," based on Matthew 5:21-37, plus I Samuel 16:7. "This Is The Life" program is: "The Day We Lost Ella Mae." Social responsibility and Christian witness are the topics of this program.

February 23: Rev. Tim Schiller, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Alexandria, MN, presents the message: "Jesus' Transformation Is for Our Transformation" based on Matthew 17:1-9. "This Is The Life" program: "Out of Bondage" examines the Christian approach to alcoholism.

If you don't get KVRR you can watch the Minnesota South District version of Main Street Living on WFTC Channel 29 at 9:00 a.m. This month's programs are:

February 2: Pastor Tom Evans from Emanuel Lutheran Church in Inver Grove Heights, MN, presents "Simeon's Song—Our Song," be based on Luke 2:27-32.

February 9: Pastor David Edge from Shepherd of the Pines Lutheran Church in Rice, MN will preach on Matthew 5:13-16.

February 16: Pastor Kurt Klaus from Messiah Lutheran Church in Lakeville, MN presents the message, "No Excuses" based on Matthew 5:21-37.

February 23: Pastor Nickolas Kooi from Emmaus Lutheran Church in St. Paul, MN presents "Listen to Him," based on Matthew 17:1-8.

You can watch all of the archived programs at any time on line! To reach the website for archived programs you will first need to go to the MSL Network site at www.mainstreetliving.com and then click on "North (Fargo)" or "Twin Cities."





Stewardship Review - December, 2019

Avg. Sunday Worship Attendance: 220

Total Offerings: \$44,113	Avg. Weekly Offerings \$11,028	Budget/Week \$9,497
Total Expenses: <u>\$51,090</u>	Avg. Weekly Expenses <u>\$12,773</u>	Budget/Month \$41,152
Difference - \$6,977	Difference - \$1,745	

Yearly Summary:	Yearly Summary, 2018:
Total Offerings: \$439,739	Total Offerings: \$ 449,851
Total Expenses: <u>\$459,111</u>	Total Expenses: <u>\$431,024</u>
Difference - \$ 19,372	Difference \$ 18,827

CNB Checkbook Balance	\$53,819	Our Healthy Balance Goal	\$74,000
Less Dedicated Accounts	\$ <u>438</u>	Raised so far	<u>\$42,766</u>
Difference	\$53,381	Still need	\$31,234

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. You can also give online at our website www.stjohnspr.org or with your phone. Check out the article on Page 5 for details.
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.





Board



Christian Education: Approved December minutes.

Reports:

Release Time: Report read and approved from Laurie Kimball.

VBS: Melissa Koch gave an update from Sarah Kaufenberg. Suggested that VBS dates of either August 2-6 or 9-13 from Sunday to Thursday. Suggested times are evenings and after discussion a time of 5:30 – 6:00 with a light supper provided. Theme this year is Rain Forest Explorers.

Adult Education: The new book club will probably start in February. There is no Adult Instruction Class scheduled for this spring, the plan by Pastor Neubauer is to have a class next September.

Pastors Report: Pastor Knaack has been designated as the visitation pastor for the congregation.

Preschool: Currently we have 37 children enrolled with 2 more being added in the middle of January. Enrollment stands at 10 in the 3 year old class and 29 in the 4 year olds. Kim Neubauer is excited to share that they have started the New Year with perfect attendance with no issues with the flu.

Sunday School: Discussion centered around the small numbers of children attending Sunday School and issues with the new material selected for this year. Lori Griess will call Concordia and ask that samples of material be sent for grades PK-6. Christmas Program dates for December 2020 were narrowed down to two different possibilities of either 10:30 a.m. service on December 13 or the afternoon on December 20. Discussed the need for a change for Connie Fondow and Shelley Lof's classes due to the noise between the two rooms they currently have. Sarah Newton will be

leading a Bible study for the teachers on the fourth Thursday of the month at their home. Sunday School offering continues to be sent to Lutheran Island Camp.

Old Business: None

New Business: Continuing discussion of the lack of numbers in Sunday School and what can be done to increase participation. Talked about sending a letter to members and asking for their input to help with determining what we can do to encourage the children and parents to become involved.

Church Properties: Looked into roof leak in kitchen when it got warm. The pole light in front has been replaced. Carpet tiles have been installed in the rear entry.

Elders: Rev. Bill Knaack was accepted by the Elders as Pastoral Assistant with Visitation, Teaching, Preaching and Counseling duties. To assist the Pastors in caring for the spiritual well-being of the members of the parish. Worked on assigning assisting elders.

Evangelism: Doug Kingsley reported (via phone conversation) that some of the Christmas gift requests were not returned. He and Julie took care of supplying the needed items and submitted an invoice to Ginny Ranisate for about \$90.00. It is understandable that some people may have forgotten or missed the return date for a variety of reasons. Next year he will record the names of those parishioners taking ornaments off the tree to assist with contacting people who may have inadvertently forgotten.

Deb Luther is taking care of the Diamond Willow monthly BINGO facilitation. It appears that the residents prefer the fourth Tuesday of the month for this well received activity.



It was decided that the board will request that Ginny order Recovery Bibles for the county jail each June.

We will consider sending Chaplain Bain boxes of supplies for the troops again around Easter. Connie Fondow will check with Synod to see if there is a specific Easter devotional booklet recommended for the troops.

The board will make a decision by the February meeting whether or not to proceed with a March trivia event.

Members discussed, at length, the desire for community and St. Johns congregational outreach activities.

Parish Fellowship Public Relations, Stewardship and Young People: did not meet.

Chaplain Bain Update

We extend our New Year's greetings from the desert! Needless to say, the past week or so has been a little more stressful than we would have liked. By God's grace, tensions have eased and hopefully wiser decisions will be made as we move further into this new year.

As for Easter, if all remains reasonably calm, it appears as if we might be back home around the Easter weekend. That is what we are planning. There are many facets to this operation which are beyond our control. We shall continue to pray for God's direction and safety for this planning process.

Yes, the booklets you sent were appreciated. We are well resourced right now. I will try to provide better information about our scheduling when it becomes more certain.

Thanks again for your ongoing support. Please share our thanks to the congregation. They have been a great blessing for us during this deployment.

Have a blessed day!

CH (CPT-P) Vince Bain

Camp Arifjan, Kuwait

"For God and Country"



What We're Doing Next

Chaplain Bain wrote in one of his previous letters, "Our soldiers are big fans of the coffee creamers. I have never been with a unit that had such an affinity for this product. If the congregation is so moved to assist in this area it would be greatly appreciated." This week the Board of Evangelism sent coffee creamers via Amazon delivery. We are also shipping Easter booklets and mini folded flags for the soldiers to carry in their pockets. The total cost of this endeavor is \$124. If you wish to contribute to the project you may write a check to St. Johns earmarked "Chaplain Bain" and drop it off at the church office. Thank you!



Sunday School News

Perfect Attendance—January

- PK3 Kellan Eidsmoe
- PK4 Thatcher Eidsmoe, Colton Nilson
- 1st Sawyer Eidsmoe
- 2nd Clinton Koch, Alex Lof,
Sophia Neubauer, Kryton Nilson
- 3rd Zachary Harju, Khloe May
- 5th Max Harju, Sawyer Harvey, Aiden May
- 7th Laura Kaufenberg, Leo Kaufenberg



- 2/01 Harlow Komppa
- 2/13 Brandi Novak
- 2/13 Kolt Safratowich
- 2/15 Laura Kaufenberg
- 2/23 Gunar Clark
- 2/25 Tony Meier
- 2/26 Kelly Kimball
- 2/28 James Trandem

Baptismal Birthdays

- 2/03 Theodore Komppa
- 2/04 Annie Mayer
- 2/6 Neveah Etter
- 2/7 Owen Christensen
- 2/08 Henli Maier
- 2/10 Ava Kimball
- 2/28 Ryan Maves



A friend in Jesus

In the Bible, Jesus shares what it means to be a true friend.

Directions: Use the heart key to fill in the missing vowels from John 15:14, 17, NIV.

“Y _ _ r _ my fr _ _ nds _ f
y _ _ d _ wh _ t _ c _ mm _ nd. ...
Th _ s _ s my c _ mm _ nd:
L _ v _ _ _ ch _ th _ r.”

JOHN 15:14, 17, NIV

Answer: “You are my friends if you do what I command. ... This is my command: Love each other.” John 15:14, 17, NIV

Lessons this Month

- February 2 A Mountain Message—
Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount
- February 9 A Weather Wonder—
Jesus Calms a Storm
- February 16 A Life Restored—
Jairus’ Daughter
- February 23 The Fish and Bread Sign—
Jesus Feeds 5000



There's "Snow" Stopping Us Here at St. Johns Thanks to Sanquist Construction

This snowy, stormy weather has been unbelievable, "just like the old days" (as those of us old enough to remember have been saying) but it hasn't stopped our regular schedule here at St. Johns. We had our regular Sunday worship service on December 29 in spite of the storm and nothing's been cancelled due to the weather and snow piles. ABC Preschool students have been enjoying playing in the "snow mountains."

A huge thank you goes out to Sanquist Construction for keeping our parking lots plowed and cleared out! We appreciate all their hard work and the great job they do!

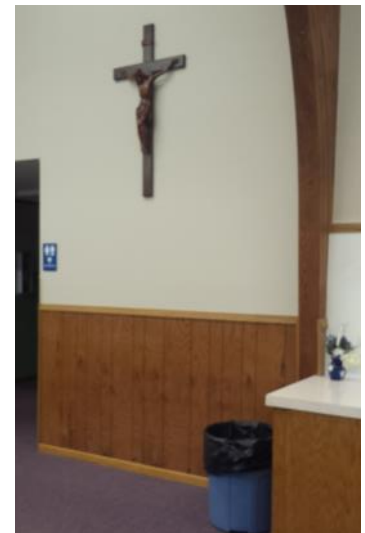


A Sneak Peak at The Next Phase



Have you noticed the card cupboard has moved? It's now in the opening where the double doors to the kitchen used to be. The original plan was to make a new cupboard to go in that spot but we discovered the card cupboard would fit. Jerry Eischens and crew are planning to reconfigure it to accommodate the sound system. Also, in the plans is extending the counter along the north wall with space underneath for carts.

Donations to the kitchen remodeling project are welcome and appreciated! Your gift may be placed in the offering and earmarked "Kitchen."



While you're checking out the cupboard's new location, take a look at the cards available. They're a great deal. Most boxes are \$5 for twelve cards. Proceeds go to the Ladies Aid. You can drop your payment in the slot in the cupboard or bring it to the church office.

Something Fishy at Sunday School

Melissa Koch's 2nd and 3rd grade Sunday School class—Zach Harju, Clinton Koch, Alex Lof, Sophia Neubauer, Kolt Safratowich and Khloe May—made fish key chains to go with their lesson about *Fishers of Men*.





**St. Johns
Lutheran Church**

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*Pastor James Neubauer
Pastor Joel Newton
Pastor Bill Knaack
Deaconess Sarah Newton*



The Lutheran Church -- Missouri Synod

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Inside this issue:

<i>Choir Come Back</i>	1
<i>Death by Chocolate Bake Sale</i>	1
<i>Tubing at Detroit Mountain</i>	1
<i>Join the Prayer Chain</i>	1
<i>Lent Begins February 26</i>	1
<i>Ponderings from the Pew</i>	2
<i>Check Out Our Church Library</i>	3
<i>Get Ready to Give Blood</i>	3
<i>What's on The Lutheran Hour</i>	3
<i>Baptisms and Funeral</i>	3
<i>Stewardship Corner</i>	4
<i>We Need Offering Counters</i>	4
<i>Condensed Annual Financial Report for 2019</i>	5
<i>Have You Tried Our New Giving Options</i>	5
<i>Main Street Living for February</i>	6
<i>Stewardship Review—December</i>	7
<i>Here's a Few Offering Pointers</i>	7
<i>Board Highlights</i>	8
<i>Chaplain Bain Update</i>	9
<i>Sunday School News</i>	10
<i>There's "Snow" Stopping Us</i>	11
<i>A Sneak Peak at the Next Phase</i>	11
<i>Something Fishy at Sunday School</i>	11

