

THE GOOD NEWSLETTER

February

2023



ST. JOHN EVANGELICAL
LUTHERAN CHURCH

"God's Love in Action"

St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church
200 South Main Street
Charles City, IA 50616-2751
Phone: 641-228-3397

Website: www.stjohncharlescity.org



Find & like us on Facebook!

Subscribe to the E-Skinny by
emailing Kathy at
khoeft@stjohncharlescity.com

Worship service broadcasted on
KCHA FM 95.9 at
9:00 a.m. on Sunday

St. John Christian Preschool
641-228-7274

Preschool Director: Whittney Franke
wfranke@stjohncharlescity.com



Pastor Russ Leeper:
rleeper@stjohncharlescity.com

Office Secretary: Kathy Hoeft
khoeft@stjohncharlescity.com
Office Hours: 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

Business Manager: Rhonda Schmidtke
businessmanager@stjohncharlescity.com

Music Director:
Melanie Johanningmeier
mjohanningmeier@stjohncharlescity.com

Youth & Family Coordinator:
Laurie Heidebrink
lheidebrink@stjohncharlescity.com

Custodian: Jamie Carolan
jcarolan@stjohncharlescity.com

Pastor Russ Leeper :

Out for Blood...

This month many of our fifth graders will celebrate their First Communion. But this will NOT be their first time to come to communion. For years, they've come forward for a blessing, watching and waiting for the day when it will be their turn to start receiving communion.

It was in that sacred moment ... that holy time when the bread and wine and grape juice were being distributed and all gathered in line waited with expectation to receive the body and blood of their savior. As was our procedure at that church, I was serving the wine and juice and blessing the people who weren't communing.

"This is the blood of Christ shed for you." I repeated the words again and again as, one after the other, I offered to each the cup of forgiveness.

Suddenly, my rhythm was broken by the presence of a child. He was a child I knew well, one of the congregation's preschoolers ... someone I had seen at communion many times before, but because of his age, he was not yet communing. As usual, I pulled back the tray of cups and bent over to place my hand on his head for a blessing.

"Child of God," I said, "the Lord Jesus Christ loves you forever."

As I pulled my hand away, his head sprang back, his eyes glared up at me, and in a tone of voice that we seldom hear at communion, he yelled at the top of his lungs: "I want the BLOOD!!!"

I laughed and thought, "my sentiments exactly." A snicker went through the congregation. His mother quickly put her arm around him and gave him that gentle, yet firm, squeeze that says, "Shhh!", and he turned his head to think about other things.

Dear child, as we begin this season of remembering the one who shed his blood, thank you for reminding us all how desperately we need that blood and how urgently we need the cup of forgiveness. I carry your cry with me and hold it in my heart, that I may never take the blood of Christ for granted. To you, dear child, and all the others just like you who, even at such a young age, come to the communion table with yearning, may God strengthen you and give you peace until the day comes when you, too, will hear those precious words: "This is the blood of Christ shed for you!"

Peace,
Pastor Russ



Mike Brennan Art & Design

GriefShare Begins at St. John

GriefShare provides help and encouragement after the death of a spouse, child, family member, or friend. Sessions will be led by St. John members in a warm, caring environment. **A GriefShare orientation will be held Tuesday, February 21 at 6:30 PM in the chapel at St. John. The program itself will begin February 28 at 6:30 PM and run every Tuesday for 13 weeks. There is no cost to attend.**

Weekly topics include: Is This Normal?, Challenges of Grief, The Journey of Grief – Part 1, The Journey of Grief – Part 2, Grief and Your Relationships, Why?, Guilt and Anger, Complicating Factors, Stuck, Lessons of Grief – Part 1, Lessons of Grief – Part 2, Heaven, and What Do I Live for Now? There are three key parts to the weekly GriefShare experience: video seminar, group discussion, and personal study exercises in a workbook.

You are welcome to begin attending our GriefShare group at any point. Each session is self-contained, so you don't have to attend in sequence. You will be able to pick up any sessions you missed in our next 13-week cycle. You can learn more about GriefShare at www.griefshare.org.

Council...

Dec./Jan. Council Highlights:

- We continue to average over 125 views per service on our virtual platform, with well over 300 viewing the Christmas Eve service!!
- Continuing to gather ideas of how our Council can continue to build our vision for God's Love in Action, we look forward to building off of the ideas presented at further council meetings.
- Based on the information collected and feedback from the NE Iowa Synod office, we approved an agreement with the NE Iowa Synod to join the Collaborative Learning Program. The two-year agreement centers around a student-intern working with our congregation and staff under Pastor Leeper's mentorship while she completes her programming to be ordained as a Deacon. The contract is for a 1/2 time basis and we look forward to welcoming the candidate in the near future as details are still being worked out on her start date.
- Excited to announce that the lift project is in motion. Based on feedback from the special meeting in November, Jaime, the Randall Construction team, our Buildings and Grounds board as well as others are looking at plans to adjust the project to a one-entry system to eliminate the need for a separate entrance for the lift. Thank you for the feedback at the meeting and we will keep you up with the details as they come in!
- Donated our Monthly Benevolence to jumpstart an exciting new opportunity. Pastor Russ and Susan brought a proposal to start a GriefShare program to the church. This program is specifically designed to help create support groups for those who have lost significant others. They have already secured some volunteers to get trained as facilitators, and these funds will help the program get started. Be on the lookout for more details to come!
- Big thanks to the efficient and effective work of the Nominating Committee, all board positions have been filled and we look forward to welcoming the new members during the February board meetings.
- For those of you who may not know, the Finance Board has a regular "Thanks" offering that is designated to help different people, programs, etc. We felt it was important to recognize this generosity as it is a testament to our mission of God's Love in Action. Most recently their donation put \$2,828 to pay off the Charles City schools lunch account deficit for families in need.
- Remind that the Annual Meeting is Sunday, Jan. 29th after service in the Parish Hall.

Thank you and please let us know if you have any thoughts, questions, concerns, etc.

-St. John Lutheran Church Council

St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church, Charles City, Iowa
Approved by St. John Church Council – December 13, 2022

Our Mission

To be “God’s Love in Action”

God is calling us to fulfill this mission at this time through:

- being a welcoming place for all people.
- providing meaningful experiences for youth beyond Sunday School, Confirmation, and mission trips.
- offering opportunities for fellowship and getting to know each other.
- extending care to our community through service and compassion.
- communicating well with each other and our community.

Our Statement of Outcomes

In order for us to be faithful to our mission, we will be open to new ideas and work together to achieve the following outcomes at St. John:

Being a welcoming place for all people

One-year Outcomes:

- Make room in our sanctuary for people in wheelchairs.
- Update the Fireside Room.
- Enlist multi-generational worship greeters.
- Make more handicap parking.

Three-year Outcome:

- Install a lift.
- Look into installing pew cushions.
- Identify people who don’t feel welcome and explore how we can change that.
- Make our building accessible to all.

Providing meaningful experiences for youth beyond Sunday School, Confirmation and mission trips

One-year Outcomes:

- Create a calendar of regularly scheduled events for Youth beyond confirmation.
- Update the 3rd floor.

Offering opportunities for fellowship and getting to know each other.

One-year Outcomes:

- Have a Worship Service in the Park
- Host a congregational potluck.

Three-year Outcome:

- Schedule once a month speaker events.
- Bring Back the Fall Festival.

Extending care to our community through service and compassion

One-year Outcomes:

- Continue to participate in God’s Work, Our Hands Sunday.
- Create a caring phone ministry to St. John members.
- Start the GriefShare program.

Three-year Outcome:

- Establish a God’s Work, Our Hands program that’s active year-round.

Communicating well with each other and our community

One-year Outcomes:

- Create a procedure for helping people connect to our online service.

Three-year Outcome:

- Establish a regular event held with other churches.

Lent 2023...

Ash Wednesday
February 22, 2023

5:30 p.m. Worship with Communion &
5th grade 1st Communion



5th Grade Parents! The 1st Communion **parent/student/pastor instructional classes** will be February 5th and February 12th at 10:15am. Please put these two dates on your calendar.



The Family Board is planning our annual large-group **Lent Event for Sunday, February 26th** for children and their parents in the Parish Hall during the Education Hour.

Mid-Week Lenten Services 2023 Worship service is at 5:30 p.m.

“The Last Words of Christ”

We will focus on Jesus’ last words on the cross, woven together with encounters Jesus had with others in His ministry. Each week we’ll read scripture, sing, watch a short video drama, and hear a devotion on that week’s theme.

March 1 – “First Word from the Cross: The Paralytic”

Matthew 9:1-8; Luke 23:34

March 8 – “Second Word from the Cross: The Rich Young Ruler”

Mark 10:17-27; Luke 23:39-43

March 15 – “Third Word from the Cross: John the Beloved”

John 19:23-27

March 22 – “Fourth Word from the Cross: Martha”

John 11:1-6, 17-27; Matthew 27:45-46

March 29 – “Fifth Word from the Cross: Matthew”

Matthew 10:40-42; John 19:28-30

Of Note...

Beginning February 6th, the St. John office hours will be 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Other staff will be following their normal schedules. Phone calls will be answered, if possible, otherwise leave a message when prompted. Should you wish to email a message, the staff page on the St. John website lists our emails.

**The Business Manager's hours are Fridays from
8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.**

Guy's Night Out at St. John!

Guys come to St. John on **February 26th from 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.**

to eat supper & play cards/board games! Bring your sons, fathers, uncles, friends to enjoy an evening of fellowship & fun. Tickets are \$5.00 for adults, \$3.00 for boys ages 6-18, & under 6 is free. Tickets may be purchased in the church office until February 24th!



Ladies Luncheon will be Sunday, March 26th!

After Worship Social Time

has been an enjoyable way to reconnect with each other! Coffee & a treat are served in the Parish Hall each Sunday! If you would like to volunteer to bring the treats, please sign up on the chart just inside the doors on the table or call Kathy in the office. What you choose to bring for a treat is entirely up to you! Coffee & napkins are provided by St. John.

The Prayer Shawl Group is starting up again for 2023. We will meet on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays of the month in the Fireside Room. That will be the 2nd and 16th in February. We could use some knit, crocheted, quilted or fleece shawls. It's time to get back in the swing and support this ministry. Please work on some at home if you can't attend the group. There will be coffee and conversation and all are welcome at any level of knitting ability. We are happy to help if needed. For questions contact Janet Petefish at petefishj@mchsi.com



People's Page...

February birthdays of our members who are 80 & older!

2/3 Donald Knowlton
2/21 Duane Ortmyer
2/28 Marilu Wohlers



February anniversaries of our members who have been married 50 or more years!

2/1/1969 Dale & Helen Bond
2/14/1969 Steve & Diane Barr
2/14/1960 Jim & Donna Gambaiani
2/14/1964 Lenis & Nadonne Buseman

Wednesday Night Supper

Menus will be published weekly in the bulletin and on the frontpage of the St. John website.

Cost: \$5.00 for adults
Children through 12th grade free thanks to Kans for Kids

Acolytes for February 2023

Sundays...

Feb. 5 & 12: Simon Schmidtke & Erin Gassman

Feb 19: Simon Schmidtke & Rylie Keyes

Feb. 26 Talan Eckhoff & Rylie Keyes

Ash Wednesday, February 22:

Erin Gassman & Talan Eckhoff

New Council & Board Members – 2023

Executive Council: President, Josh Johnson; Vice-President, Kim Watkins Secretary, Ron Hoffman

Council at Large:

3 Yr. - Shirley Holm, Cherie Schafer, Justin Chase

Building & Grounds:

3 Yr. – Don Tieskotter, Gaylen Hicok; **2 Yr.** – Lenis Buseman

Deacons: 3 Yr. – Susanne Hawke, Wayne McClintock

Family Board: 3 Yr. – Carly Marten, Carolyn Marth

Finance Board: 3 Yr. – Ron James, Sharon Tieskotter, **1 Yr.** – Evan Marten

Parish Ed: 3 Yr. – Stacey Vance, Stacy Eckhoff

Stewardship: 3 Yr. – Nadonne Buseman, Sandy Hicks

Youth Board: 3 Yr. – Sue McDonald, Dennis Sande



With sympathy, the funerals of:

Steven Leroy Shankland, 1/5/2023

Marilyn Ruth Frank Obermeier, 1/12/2023

Carl Raymond Johnson, 1/16/2023

Memorials were given in memory of...

Steven LeRoy Shankland: Kay Tjaden, Cherie Schafer, Don & Shirley Holm, Paul & Yolanda Van Ausdall, Guy & Karol Carpenter, Dale & Helen Bond

Marilyn Obermeier: Frank & Jeanette Anderson

Carl Raymond Johnson: Cherie Schafer, Dennis & Diane Niezwaag

Arla Wright: Marlene Huffman

Youth & Families...

Even though some of us may not enjoy the cold and wish we could skip winter – we can take some comfort in the fact that we know it will warm up again eventually. And we can take comfort in the consistency of the changing of the seasons every year.

“As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease.” Genesis 8:22

Blessings, Laurie

Family Board

The Family Board is planning our annual large-group **Lent Event for Sunday, February 26th** for children and their parents in the Parish Hall during the Education Hour.

We are planning a **Guy’s Night on February 26th from 5-7pm** with supper, fellowship time, and cards and board games. Tickets are \$5 for adults and \$3 for boys ages 6-18. Under 6 is free. Tickets may be purchased in the church office until February 24th.

We have also scheduled the **Ladies’ Luncheon for Sunday, March 26th**, so put that on your calendars.

Confirmation

Our third session of classes began in January and the students are taking either The Sacraments or Grace.

Sunday School News

Attention: **5th Grade Parents!** The 1st Communion **parent/student/pastor instructional classes** will be February 5th and 12th at 10:15am. Please put these two dates on your calendar now.

The 5th grade students will be baking the bread for Ash Wednesday during Sunday School on February 19th at 10:05 am (during Sunday School) and then will be receiving Holy Communion for the first time on Ash Wednesday (February 22nd), during the 5:30pm worship service.

February is SOAP MONTH here at St. John. Please send donations of soap/shampoo with your Sunday School students each week of February. Donations will be put into the Blessing Box for those who don’t have access to the hygiene products they need at home. Thank you to all who feel called to donate to this worthy cause!

Youth

Youth Hour is meeting each Sunday on the 3rd Floor during the Education Hour. This is open to our St. John 7th-12th grade students and their friends.

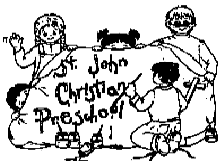
After School Program

We have 22 kids enrolled in our After-School Program, which is each Wednesday from 3:35-5pm. The After School Program will take a break for Lent beginning on February 22nd and will resume after Easter.

Vacation Bible School

Save the Date! VBS 2023 will be during the evenings of June 26-29, 2023.





St. John Christian Preschool...

Love is definitely in the air at St. John Christian Preschool, but perhaps not in the way that you traditionally think of during this month of greeting cards and chocolate. We feel honored to be able to share God's love with each of our 29 little ones each and every day. And you know what the really AWESOME thing is? It doesn't take very long before our little ones start sharing God's love right back!

January was very full of new and exciting things to explore. We learned all about Outer Space. We talked about the stars and constellations, and Ursa Major and Minor. We even learned about the forces push and pull, and how they help things move. We worked on our small motor skills by using scissors and we did a lot of writing (in our older classes) to help with some Kindergarten Readiness skills. Our older friends did a month study on Exercise and some of our friends brought in some fun exercise equipment from home for us to try, like a small trampoline and some hand weights! (We're SUPER strong!) We also worked on our self-help skills by working on putting on our coats, zipping them up, and putting on our backpacks! We're all doing quite well! ☺

We are continued to be blessed with a small but mighty preschool board of two, hard-working, dedicated women. The support they each provide is invaluable to the success of our program!

SJCP would like to announce that we are holding an ONLINE ONLY Book Fair this year. The Book Fair will be Monday, February 13 - Sunday, February 26. This event is available to the community and the proceeds go straight to the preschool. You can find our online fair here:

<https://www.scholastic.com/bf/stjohnchristianpreschool>. We will also be starting our Scratch Cupcake "all school" fundraiser in March, so be on the lookout for that information!

Can you believe it is that time already?! We are gearing up for our 2023-24 Fall Registration and we would like to thank you for choosing SJCP for your little one's earliest educational experience. Current families (those with children currently enrolled in the 2022-23 school year) will begin registration on Monday, January 30th. New families will begin registration on Monday, February 6th. Registration will run from 7:45am-4:00pm each of those weeks, and will run until we are full. Children who will be 3 on or before September 15, 2023 and all children 4 and 5 years old are welcome. Scholarships are available later in the summer. A minimum registration fee of \$30 is due at time of registration. Please call 228-7274 or email us at wfranke@stjohncharlescity.com for more information.

We would also like to remind everyone that the preschool is still selling Kwik Star gift cards. Please stop down or call if you are interested in purchasing a gift card (228-7274.) The preschool receives 5% of the card's face value.

Last, but certainly not least, we are blessed with the many forms of support that the St. John congregation provides us. From financial gifts, to prayers, to the smiles that we receive when we pass a member of the congregation in the hall, we feel loved. In a world full of many difficulties, thank you for sharing your support with our youngest friends and making them feel special, needed and important.

With HIS love,
Whittney Franke

February 2023 Schedule...

Sundays: 9:00 a.m. Worship in Sanctuary
Communion is the 1st & 3rd Sunday
10:05 a.m. Education Hour

2/1/2023 9:00 a.m. Do Day Quilters
 2/2/2023 1:00 p.m. Prayer Shawl group
 2/5/2023 10:15 a.m. 5th grade Communion meeting
 2/6/2023 **SJCP new family registration**
 2/12/2023 10:15 a.m. 5th grade Communion meeting
 2/13/2023 SJCP Valentine tea
 2/15/2023 9:00 a.m. Do Day Quilters
 2/16/2023 1:00 p.m. Prayer Shawl group
2/22/2023 Ash Wednesday
5:30 p.m. Worship/Comm./5th grade 1st Communion
 2/25/2023 Van Hauen/Maloy wedding
 2/26/2023 **10:00 a.m.** Family board Lent Event
 5:00 p.m. Guy's Night Out

Board Meetings:

Building & Grounds 2/7/2023 6:00 p.m.
 Council: 2/14/2023 7:00 p.m.
 Deacons: 2/12/2023 11:00 a.m.
 Family Board: 2/8/2023 7:00 p.m.
 Finance Board 2/12/2023 5:00 p.m.
 Parish Ed: 2/12/2023 8:00 a.m.
 Stewardship: 2/21/2023 2:00 p.m.
 Youth Board: 2/5/2023 8:00 a.m.

Wednesday Night Schedule

3:30 p.m. After School
 5:00 p.m. Supper
 6:00 p.m. Confirmation
 7:00 p.m. Trinity Choir

Lenten Wednesday Night Schedule

5:00 p.m. Supper
 5:30 p.m. Worship
 7:00 p.m. Trinity Choir

February Birthdays!

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 Meghan Korbel	2 Rylee Van Horn	3 Donald Knowlton	4 Carter Kellogg Paula Kruthoff Kyndra McDonald Laurel Schlump
5 Carol Bauer Melia Lantz Karmen Mehmen Rusty Rogotzke	6	7 Bob Frascht Liz Hamm Angel McKenzie Diane Niezwaag Sandie Quade	8 Amber Hicks	9 Isaac Hervert	10 Samuel Northrop	11 Cody Van Horn
12	13 Viva Boerschel June Montagne Samantha Prigge	14 Kayla Streich	15	16 Henry Page Kathy Waldorf	17	18 Brayton Quade Caleb Streich
19 Alison Mehmen	20 Cassie DeBower Kierstin Heim Andrew Miller Alison Pettit Ron Venz	21 Duane Ortmyer	22	23 Barbara Garden	24 Dennis Petefish	25 Shirley Holm
26 Hunter Northrop Keaton Schmidtke	27	28 Greg Buenger Michael Exline Lori Gassman Marilu Wohlers				