

THE GOOD NEWSLETTER

December 2021



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 is now live streamed &
can be viewed on our website or the St John
Charles City YouTube channel
& will be broadcasted live on
KCHA FM 95.9 at
9:00 a.m. on Sunday

The live broadcast is also recorded and is
available on the St. John website & YouTube

Pastor Russ Leeper:
rleeper@stjohncharlescity.com

Rev. Anita Nuetzman
Part time Visitation/Preaching Pastor

Office Secretary: Kathy Hoeft
khoeft@stjohncharlescity.com
Office Hours: 8:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Business Manager: Linda Hughes
lhughes@stjohncharlescity.com

Music Director:
Melanie Johanningmeier
mjohanningmeier@stjohncharlescity.com

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

Custodian: Jamie Carolan
jcarolan@stjohncharlescity.com

St. John Christian Preschool
641-228-7274

Preschool Director: Whittney Franke
wfranke@stjohncharlescity.com
Teacher: Carleen Laue



Pastor Russ Leeper :

Beary Christmas

Some things you never forget, especially when it's a first. Like the first time I saw a bear on my morning walk. I was hiking through the woods in the city park where we lived in Northern Wisconsin. I looked through the trees and spotted a bear on a somewhat distant hillside. It was walking away from me and this made me very happy. I stopped in my tracks and stared. Surprisingly, the bear stopped and stared at me, too. We looked at each other for a few seconds and then I realized that it was probably better for me to pretend to be disinterested and keep moving. As I glanced back over my shoulder, I saw the bear lumbering up the hill and out of sight. It was only then that it dawned on me that even though the bear was now a safe distance away, it was walking up the hill that I had just been on five minutes earlier! Clearly the bear and I had been in each other's space, and I didn't even realize it!

Seeing a bear in the woods was just a normal part of life in that part of the world. For most people who lived there, it wouldn't have been a big deal. But for me, a newbie, it was a rite of passage. Being able to say, "I saw a bear the other day," made me feel just a little more like a local. And the fact that I left the experience unharmed, well, that was icing on the cake. Most of all, though, it was the fulfillment of an expectation. From the day we arrived in that town, I'd been looking forward to the moment when I would see my first bear in our new home. It was a moment that I had anticipated with both fear and excitement. And yet, even though I'd been anticipating my "bear moment" for a year and a half, when it finally came, it caught me completely off-guard.

I imagine that's how it was at the first Christmas in Bethlehem, too. People had been anticipating and waiting for a "God moment" for a long time. Not a year and half, but hundreds of years! With both fear and excitement, they were waiting for the moment when God would come to them as a messiah ... a deliverer... a savior. But even though they had been anticipating the moment for so long, when it finally came, they were caught completely off-guard. God surprised them by coming as a baby born to a poor family in a place they didn't expect.

This month we observe the season of Advent. It's a time of anticipation and a time when we remember that God still comes to us in wonderfully unexpected ways ... and often catches us off-guard. As we anticipate and celebrate the birth of our savior this month, expect the unexpected. I hope God catches you off-guard, too, and that God's love comes to you in a completely new way! The bears may be sleeping, but God is still out there waiting to surprise you!

Peace,
Pastor Russ

The worship service at St. John has gone LIVE!!!

Equipment to live stream our worship service was installed. So, each Sunday, at 9:00 a.m. you will be able to watch the worship service live by going to www.stjohncharlescity.org, click on the Worship & Sermons tab, and choose YouTube. You can also go to YouTube and in the search box type St. John Lutheran Charles City IA to watch the worship service. The service will be recorded at that time & will be available after 10:00 a.m. to watch any time.

IN DECEMBER...

The Board of Deacons invites everyone to St. John on December 4th starting at 9:00 a.m. to help trim the tree & decorate the church for Christmas!

St. John Books will close
December 29th at 3:00 p.m.



If you would like to donate to the **Poinsettias** for Christmas, call the office at 641-228-3397

Angel Tree
Angel tree is accepting donations to go towards food baskets. Please bring your donation to St. John & if writing a check, make it out to St. John & write Angel Tree on the memo line.

THE .25 CENT GIFT STORE FOR KIDS
will be December 5th! Store hours are 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., St. John Sunday school students can start at 11:00 a.m. Donations of gently used Christmas themed items, craft items, or toys are needed! You can bring your donated items to the St John office by Friday, December 3rd. Thank you!

The Sunday School Christmas program will be on **December 12, 2021, during the 9:00 a.m.** worship service. Preschool through 2nd grade will be presenting "The Christmas Story" & 3rd through 6th grades will be acting out "A New Star".



Music Sunday

"We are Waiting for a Savior" Joint music program with St. John and Messiah.

Features: choir, instrumentalists, piano/organ duet, scripture readings

Sunday, Dec. 19 at 9:00 am

Christmas Eve
St. John will have two worship services on Christmas Eve:
4:00 p.m. Candlelight service &
6:30 p.m. Candlelight service

OF NOTE...

Wednesday Night Suppers in December:

Dec 1: Chili, grilled cheese, fruit, banana pudding dessert

Dec 8: BBQ meatballs, French fries, scalloped corn, cake

Dec 15: Pork loin, cheesy potatoes, green beans, cottage cheese, "Pokie" cake

Dec 22: Yummy chicken, scalloped potatoes, mixed veggies, doughnuts



Thank you to our St. John family for so generously stocking the Blessing Box so far! The Blessing Box is getting a lot of use by neighbors and friends in our community. Please continue dropping off items as you're able. Non-perishable food items and personal care products are welcome.

We are looking for individuals or families who are willing to be the monthly "Blessers." These would be people willing to adopt the Blessing Box for a month at a time to help this ministry succeed and thrive.

"Blessers" job description:

- *Check on the blessing box at least twice a week during your month
- *Re-organize and clean as necessary.
- *Watch to make sure the shelves are stocked.
- *Keep tabs on what items are moving and which are not. Helps our congregation target most useful items.
- *Watch the weather to make sure items are safe for the conditions.

We have some strategies to do all these things. If you volunteer, we'll give you more information

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!

**The office will be closed
December 27th
For the Christmas holiday.
There will be NO Sunday School on
December 26th & January 2nd.**

Altar Flowers & Radio Broadcast
Call the office at 641-228-3397 to sign up to sponsor altar flowers &/or radio broadcasts in 2022

Dartball at St. John

Dartball is a team activity at St. John. Matches are played at St. John and other participating churches. For more information call Dennis Sande at 228-4113. A full schedule can be picked up in the St. John office.

Matches start at 7:00 p.m. & dates are:

- December 1st at St. John;
vs Pleasant Valley
- December 8th at St. John; vs Immanuel
- December 15th at St. John; vs Baptist

Interested in serving your St. John congregation with your time in 2022? Please contact the church office or a member of the nominating committee (Carol Brahn, Kathy Waldorf, Kurt Hoeft, Ann Prichard, or Craig Begemann) if you are willing to serve on church council or one of our boards (building & grounds, deacons, family, finance, parish ed., stewardship, youth, or executive).

People's Page...

December birthdays of our members who are 80 & older!

12/2 Arlene Thomas
12/3 Bette Gullickson
12/11 Judy Hauser
12/11 Connie Swant
12/21 Ed Exline
12/22 Mary Jean Zilm
12/28 JoAnn Knowlton
12/30 Dorothy Rodda
12/30 Donna Gambaiani

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

December 2, 1961 Bob & Marian Dight
December 23, 1961 Gary & Janice Dana
December 26, 1960 Lawrence & Doris Hibbs
December 29, 1971 Mark & Ann Kabele
December 31, 1960 Kip & Judy Hauser
December 31, 1952 Larry & Donna Stewart

Celebrating the baptism of:

Margaret "Margot" Ann Smith,
11/7/2021

With sympathy, the funerals of:

Jackie "Jack" Leroy Hulbert, 10/29/2021
Matthew Ray Lovik, 11/23/21

Memorials were given in memory of...

Lynn Leroy Poppen: Don & Shirley Holm,
Bob & Bev Friend

Evelyn Lucille Paape Schmidt: Beverly
Reint, Bob & Beverly Friend

Algie Slindee: Don & Shirley Holm, Bob &
Bev Friend, Dave & Shirley Ripley

Jack Hulbert: Leona Howe

Our Generosity in October

Your offerings to St. John were shared beyond our walls in October in the following ways:

8% of our regular October offering (\$3286.22) went to support the mission of the larger church.

2% of our total offering goes to support our community needs. In October (\$1069.08) was given to the Messiah Food Pantry to provide Thanksgiving meals to those in need.

8% of our Thank Offering gifts are designated each quarter. This year's third quarter offering was split between the Floyd County Red Kettle Fund (\$1000.00) and our St. John Blessing Box for supplies (\$998.57).



The Advent wreath is a Christian tradition that symbolizes the passage of the four weeks of Advent. It is a circular candle holder that typically holds five candles. During the season of Advent one candle on the wreath is lit each Sunday until all of the candles, including the fifth candle, are lit on Christmas Day. Each candle represents an aspect of the spiritual preparation for the celebration of the birth of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

- 1st candle** – the Prophecy Candle or candle of hope
- 2nd candle** – the Bethlehem Candle or the candle of preparation
- 3rd candle** – the Shepherd Candle or the candle of joy
- 4th candle** – the Angel Candle or the candle of love
- 5th candle** – Christ Candle



Youth & Families...

But Jesus said, "Let the children come to Me, and do not hinder them; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." Matthew 19:14
Blessings, Laurie

AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

We have an awesome group at the After School Program this year! We have 16 kids enrolled! How great is that?!? 😊 This program is for 4 year-olds attending preschool through 5th grade students. It's never too late to join us! We could use some donations of cotton balls for an upcoming project if anyone feels called to donate.

FAMILY BOARD

Thank you to everyone that donated to our **25¢ Gift Store** for children. This will be a great opportunity on December 5th for parents to bring children to purchase gifts for siblings, parents, and grandparents.

PARISH EDUCATION BOARD

CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

The **Sunday School Christmas Program** will be on **December 12, 2021 during the 9:00 a.m.** worship service.

The Preschool through 2nd Grade classes will be presenting "The Christmas Story" and entertaining you with a couple of songs. The 3rd through 6th Graders will be acting out the Nativity in a skit called "A New Star."

(The snow date will be January 9th at 9am.)

There will be NO Sunday School on December 19th or 26th or January 2nd. We will resume on January 9th.

CONFIRMATION

This year, for our confirmation "service to others" day, we will be holding a Food Drive(thru) on Wednesday, **December 22, from 5:00-7PM.** Donations of non-perishable food items, which will be donated to the local food pantry, can be dropped off under the canopy by the Narthex doors during that time. (Any monetary donations will go to ELCA World Hunger.)

YOUTH

The Youth will be holding a **Reception** on **December 12th at 10:00 am** in the Parish Hall. Plan on bringing the whole family here after the Christmas Program for a treat!

THE .25 CENT GIFT STORE FOR KIDS

will be December 5th! Store hours are 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m., St. John Sunday school students can start at 11:00 a.m. Donations of gently used Christmas themed items, craft items, or toys are needed! You can bring your donated items to the St John office by Friday, December 3rd.

Thank you!



St. John Christian Preschool...

For the many blessings that come from Heaven above; we thank you, Lord, with heart and soul and sing of Your great love!

We are very blessed here at St. John Christian Preschool. We have twenty-nine little ones who enter our preschool center with shining smiles and happy hearts each week. It's easy to love your job when you are surrounded by such enthusiasm!

During the month of November, we talked about letters Tt, Pp, Ii, and Oo. We also talked about how THANKFUL we are for all the blessings God bestows upon us each and every day! We celebrated the end of November with a Thanksgiving feast. Each little one brought enough 1-bite items to share with all of his or her friends in the class. Even though 15 raisins did not look like much on their own; when everyone combined their "little bites" we were surprised at the feast that we were able to create.

We presented our new afternoon friends (4/5 year olds) with their very own Bibles on Monday, November 1st (All Saints Day). It is always such an EXCITING day! We then ask each of our friends to bring their Bibles back to preschool on Wednesday's so that we may "read" the Bible story together with Pastor Russ. What an awesome opportunity to expand our literary skills using GOD'S WORD!

We do not have the words to offer enough thanks to everyone who supports the preschool. In addition to our amazing preschool staff: Carleen Laue, our substitutes and parent volunteers, Foster Grandma Cynthia Kinney, and myself, we have a church staff who supports us on every level. Pastor Russ and Pastor Anita make frequent visits to our preschool to talk with, sing with, laugh with and read the Bible story with our little ones. Jamie Carolan and Julie Heddens keep our preschool so sparkling clean that even visitors comment on how amazing our preschool looks! Kathy Hoeft is quick to answer our phone when we are tied up with our little ones and Linda Hughes keeps track of all of our financial transactions. Our preschool is also greatly impacted by the six women who serve on our preschool advisory board. These moms take extra time out of already busy schedules to ensure that our preschool is all that it can be. Last, but most certainly not least, we remember the CONGREGATION who supports us financially and spiritually. All of these people working together provide an early childhood education for many of the youth of Charles City. At St. John Christian Preschool, we not only offer opportunities for our little ones to learn their colors and their letters, but we are also teaching them about God's great love! THANK YOU FOR HELPING US DO THIS AMAZING WORK!

Blessed Beyond Wonder,

Whittney Franke



December 2021 Schedule...

- Sundays:** 9:00 a.m. **Worship in Sanctuary**
Communion is the 1st & 3rd Sunday
10:05 a.m. Sunday Education Hour
- Dec 4:** 9:00 a.m. Decorating St. John for Christmas
- Dec 5:** 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. .25 cent store for kids
- Dec 7:** 9:00 a.m. Compassion fund meeting
- Dec 12:** Sunday School Christmas program during the Sunday worship service
 Followed by a Cookie Reception in Parish Hall
- Dec 15:** 9:00 a.m. Do Day Quilters
- Dec 19:** **9:00 a.m.** Music Sunday with Messiah Lutheran at St. John
- Dec 24:** **Christmas Eve worship at 4:00 p.m. & 6:30 p.m.**
- Dec 27:** Office closed

Wednesday Night Activities...

- 3:45 – 5:00 p.m. After School
 5:00 – 6:00 p.m. Supper
 6:00 – 7:00 p.m. Confirmation
 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. Trinity Choir

Board Meetings:

- Building & Grounds: 12/7 5:00 p.m.
 Council: 12/14 6:00 p.m.
 Deacons: 12/4 8:30 a.m.
 Family Board
 Finance Board 12/9 7:00 p.m.
 Parish Ed 12/5 11:00 a.m.
 Stewardship 12/21 2:30 p.m.
 at Quade's
 Youth 12/12 11:00 a.m.

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS!

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
			Tony Lessin Dennis Niezwaag	Judy Hughes Arlene Thomas	Julie Begemann Adam Ferch Bette Gullickson	Eugene Heitz
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Jiles Lantz	Gina McClintock		Sierra Hinz	Judy Kelly Monte Waldorf		Judy Hauser Lorie Hoeft Amanda Keyes Connie Swant Kim Watkins
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Tara Dean	Carson Holm Donald Tieskotter	Joan Semelhack Carol Tyler	Tom Litterer	Austin Lacour Jason Walker	Bev Friend Jordan Smith	David Boehmer
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Jill Connell Paul Van Ausdall	Rhys Johnson	Ed Exline Hayden Heyer Nathan Korbel	Mary Jean Zilm	Lynn Hoeft	Marlene Huffman Natalie Keyes	
26	27	28	29	30	31	
Kynsie Eckhoff	Danielle Reetz	JoAnn Knowlton	Hazel Hansen Susan Leeper	Donna Gambaiani Dorothy Rodda		