

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

607 10th Avenue  
Mendota, IL 61342



Phone: 815-539-5626  
Email: office@stjohnsmendota.org  
Website: www.stjohnsmendota.org

Periodicals

St. John's EAGLE (USPS 639-560) is published monthly by St. John's Lutheran Church, 607 10th Ave., Mendota, Illinois 61342-1935.

Periodicals nonprofit postage paid at Mendota, IL 61342-7935.

Postmaster, please send address change to St. John's Lutheran Church, 607 10th Ave., Mendota, IL 61342-1935. Melissa Nosalik, editor.



Find us on Facebook!



Search for our page "St. John's Lutheran Church, Mendota, IL" and join us.

We wish God's blessings on you & your family during this Christmas season.

St. John's staff

Interim Pastor Karen Tews, Melissa Nosalik, Laurie Zimmerman, Susan Garner, Karyn Bock, Rob Guardiola, Dawn Kendall, James Younger, Delle Vercimak, Vicki Wujek & Kevin Wohrley

December Birthdays, Anniversaries & Upcoming Events

God's continued blessings to the following members of our congregation...

75th+ Birthday



- Dec. 2 Al Huff
Dec. 7 Rita Randecker
Dec. 10 Betty Croisant
Dec. 10 Carol Fischer
Dec. 17 John Betz
Dec. 19 Myrintha Morton
Dec. 21 Carole Dancey

Congratulations

Happy 50+ Anniversary!

Elwood & JoAnn Kidd
December 6th — 65 years

December Calendar of Events

- 3 Spaghetti Dinner 4:30pm-7pm / Madrigals at 7pm
7 Sarah Circle 1pm
7 All Teams meeting 7pm
10 Quilt Silent Auction concludes
14 Allure (Heritage Health) 10am
14 Rebecca Circle 6pm at Carole Eich's home
17 Sunday School Christmas Program 9am
20 Stonecroft 10am
20 Angel Tree donations due
21 Church Council meeting 6:30pm
24 Christmas Eve worship 4:30pm
25 Office Closed — Christmas Day
26 Office Closed — Christmas holiday



Remember that December 31st is the last day for financial contributions for 2023.

When the snow and ice arrive this winter, please remember that the standard rule for canceling worship services and meetings is for you to stay safe! If either ice or snow would endanger your drive or entrance to the church, please stay home! Let safety be your guide.

St. John's Lutheran Church



ST. JOHN'S EAGLE

Volume 53, Issue 12

December 2023

Special items of interest:

- Worship in our Sanctuary continues each Sunday morning at 9am. If you are unable to attend, you can join us for virtual worship on our YouTube page. (Go to YouTube.com and search for STJ LUTHERAN MENDOTA.)
If you would like a pastoral visit when you are hospitalized, please contact the church office. Because of privacy laws, the hospital will not contact us.
St. John's offers Electronic Giving. If you are interested please contact Susan in the office. You can also give online through the link on our website.
The Annual Meeting of St. John's Congregation is scheduled for Sunday, January 28, 2024.



Inside this issue:

Church Council Highlights 2
Introducing Pastor Karen 2
Angel Tree Returns! 3
Spaghetti Dinner - Dec. 3 3
Christmas Program - Dec. 17 3
Birthdays & Anniversaries 4
Upcoming Events 4

From the Pastor...

Grace and peace to you in this holy Advent season.

Advent is a season of watching, waiting, and anticipating the coming of our Lord, Jesus. His birth is history, happening over 2000 years ago. And still our Lord and Savior comes to us again and again, throughout our lives, throughout the world, throughout history. Advent is a season to prepare our hearts and lives for what God is doing in our midst today.

This year many of us are watching and waiting. Whether we - or a family member or friend - deal with illness or grief, struggle with the inflation and its impact on our household finances, are anxious because of national and world events, or struggle with something else, we are watching and waiting and anticipating what will be. Those living in Gaza watch and wait for a cease fire and humanitarian aid. Those in Ukraine watch and wait and anticipate the end of war. Migrants watch and wait and anticipate a new home where they will be safe and secure. Victims of natural disaster watch, wait, and anticipate the return of some normalcy to their lives and the ability to return to their homes.

We, at St. John's, watch and wait and anticipate as well. We watch and wait what this time of pastoral transition will bring. We anticipate and pray for the pastor that will be called to serve St. John's in the fullness of time.

There is much to make us anxious and afraid in these days. And into the darkness of our winter days, and into the darkness of our world, we watch and wait and anticipate the light of Christ, with healing and hope, to come to us anew.

As you watch and wait, as you do Advent devotions and pray, as you make Advent offerings and provide gifts for those in need, be filled with the certainty that Jesus comes. Not just in Bethlehem. But in your home, in Mendota, in disaster areas, in the Middle East and Ukraine, at the southern border, in the hospitals and prisons, and in all the places where people long for him and wait for him.

Wait for the Lord, whose day is near.
Wait for the Lord, be strong, take heart! (ELW #262)

Blessings in Christ,
Pastor Karen

### Church Council Highlights

The following are some highlights from the November 16, 2023 meeting of our church council.

- Rev. Karen Tews attended the meeting as our new Interim Pastor. She will be in the office generally on Thursdays, plans to attend All Teams and Council meetings, and will teach our Confirmation class.
- Council approved the Educational Ministry Team's suggestion that the Sunday School start time be moved to 10:10am beginning on January 7th.
- The Service Team reported that attendance at fellowship after worship has been declining. They propose offering coffee fellowship following worship on the third Sunday of each month.
- Council appointed Troy Holland to fill the vacancy on the Benevolence/Ministry Enhancement Team.
- The Call Committee reported that Candidate #1 (who interviewed, but then withdrew their name from the process) met recently with the Committee to explain that the reasons for their previous withdrawal have been resolved, and that they would like to move forward with St. John's in the Call process. Council approved the Call Committee's recommendation to move forward. A special meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 29th with Assistant to the Bishop, Rev. Jen Beamsley in attendance.
- The next All Teams Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 7th at 7pm; and the next Council meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 21st at 6:30pm.
- The Annual Meeting of St. John's Congregation is set for Sunday, January 28, 2024 (following worship). All teams should have their annual reports turned in to the office by Thursday, January 4, 2024.

#### Finance Report Year To Date thru October 2023:

Budgeted Income \$269,360    Actual Income \$257,350  
 Budgeted Expense \$251,666    Actual Expense \$239,072

We are grateful for your continued financial support, through your offerings in person, through the mail, and through automatic giving. We are blessed to have such a faithful St. John's family.

### Introducing Pastor Karen

Thank you for inviting me to serve as your Interim Pastor, and for the warm welcome you have extended to me. I am excited to serve as St. John's interim pastor during this time of transition.

I grew up in Neenah, Wisconsin, graduated from Lawrence University in Appleton, WI, and the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Gettysburg, PA. I have served a number of congregations over the years, often working to revitalize struggling congregations.

I have two adopted daughters, Emily and Grace. You will likely see them in church on Christmas Eve. Emily is a high school teacher in Sheboygan Falls, WI, and Grace is in medical school at the Medical College of Wisconsin.

At this time in my ministry I am choosing to serve as an interim pastor in order to accompany congregations during the time of pastoral vacancy and transition.

I prefer to be called "Pastor Karen" but if that is uncomfortable for you, you may call me "Pastor Tews." I am available to you. You may call me, text me, or email me. Or catch me after church. My phone number is: (815) 821-2426. I keep my phone by my bed at night, so in the event of an emergency I am available. My email address is: pastortews@hotmail.com. I am glad to make home visits or have office visits; if you would like to schedule a visit please call me and we can set up a time that is convenient for you. I will typically be at the church on Thursdays.

I am looking forward to worshipping God with you, the relationships we will form, the ministry we will do together, and the preparation for your next called pastor.

### The Angel Tree Has Returned!



We invite you to come to the Fellowship Hall for the return of the Angel Tree. Once again, you can help brighten the lives of residents at Allure (formerly Heritage Health) with gifts listed on the Angel Tree tags.

Items needed include: hand lotion (must NOT say "keep out of reach of children"), soft candy (regular and sugar-free), circle word puzzles, large print books or magazines, stamps, stationery, diabetic socks, sweatshirts (adult XL, XXL, XXXL). Instructions are by the tree. Please bring your unwrapped items to the large box marked "Angel Tree" in the Fellowship Hall by December 20th. And then count yourself as a Christmas angel. Thank you!

**No Sunday School classes on December 24th or 31st.**  
**Classes resume on Sunday, January 7th at 10:10am.**



Our annual **Spaghetti Dinner** will be held on Sunday, December 3rd from 4:30pm to 7pm. We will be serving you a delicious dinner of spaghetti with meat sauce, breadsticks, salad, and homemade dessert. Our junior high and high school students are looking forward to serving you at your table again this year. Please invite your family and friends to join you for this freewill offering meal. All proceeds will support our mission trips and many other youth

activities. Following the dinner, you are invited to join us in the Sanctuary for a special performance by the Mendota High School Madrigal Singers.

Our talented St. John's Quilting Ladies will have several handmade quilts on display as part of a Silent Auction that will conclude on December 10th. We hope you will take some time to enjoy the beauty of these quilts, and place bids on your favorites. Proceeds from the Silent Auction will be donated to the Youth.

**Students** — Please plan to arrive in the Fellowship Hall by 4:15pm on December 3rd. We're looking forward to another fun and successful event!

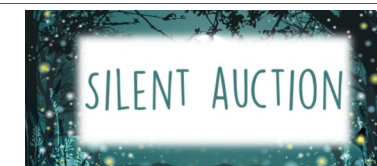


**The Sunday School Christmas Program will be held on Sunday, December 17th during 9am worship.**

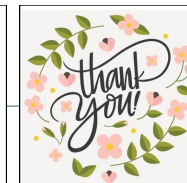
Practices will be held during Sunday School classes on December 3rd and 10th, so please do your best to attend.

Following worship on December 17th, everyone is invited to gather in the Fellowship Hall for cookies and refreshments in celebration of our Sunday School students and their terrific performance.

*Merry Christmas everyone!*



The Silent Auction of beautiful quilts created by our talented St. John's Quilting Ladies will begin on Sunday, November 26th. Stop in the Fellowship Hall to check them out and place a bid on your favorites! The auction will continue on Sunday, December 3rd; and final bids will be accepted on Sunday, December 10th. All proceeds from the silent auction will benefit St. John's Youth. We thank our Quilting Ladies for their efforts in creating the quilts and for their continued generous support of our youth.



We thank everyone who returned their completed Time, Talent & Financial Giving form. If you are still working to complete yours, please bring it to the office as soon as possible. Extra forms are available in the narthex, on the Information Booth, and in the church office.

These forms are used to update your current contact information and in scheduling our many worship volunteers.

Also, if you would like information on automatic giving, please speak to Susan Garner.