

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Periodicals

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

St. John's staff

Pastor Elise Rothfus, 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 all of those celebrating birthdays and anniversaries!

75th+ Birthday



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

Congratulations

Happy 50+ Wedding Anniversary!

Elwood & JoAnn Kidd
December 6th — 66 years

December

- 1 Christmas devotion, cookies & cocoa 4:30pm, Lighting of the Courtyard Christmas Tree 5pm
- 4 Prayer group in Chapel 9am
- 5 Sarah Circle at Stonecroft (Waldorf Room) 1pm
- 5 All Teams meeting 7pm
- 8 Spaghetti Supper 4:30pm to 7pm / Madrigals at 7pm
- 9 Congregational book read 6:30pm
- 11 Prayer group in Chapel 9am
- 11 Christmas Caroling beginning at OSF St. Paul at 4pm
- 15 Sunday School Christmas Program 9am worship
- 18 Prayer group in Chapel 9am
- 18 Stonecroft worship 10am
- 19 Allure 10am
- 19 Executive Team 5:45pm / Church Council 6:30pm
- 20 Longest Night Advent Service at Zion Methodist 7pm
- 22 Open House at the Parsonage 3pm to 5pm
- 24 Office Closed
- 24 Christmas Eve worship 4:30pm & 7pm
- 25 Office Closed
- 26 & 30 Office closing at 12:30pm
- 31 Office Closed

St. John's Lutheran Church



ST. JOHN'S EAGLE

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Special items of interest:

Worship in our Sanctuary continues each Sunday morning at gam. 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 Pastor Elise to 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 **Wednesday prayer group** meets from gam to approximately 9:30am every Wednesday to lift up prayers on behalf of the St. John's community. You can pray aloud or silently, come frequently, or on occasion. All are welcome!



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Dear friends in Christ,

Waiting isn't easy. You know this. Whether it's a sense of excitement – like seeing beloved family you haven't seen in a long time - or dread and worry – like medical appointments and tests, waiting is difficult. Time is out of our control, and most of us like to be in control. And when we aren't in control or we are anxious in our waiting, we may be impatient with others. We may fill our time with mindless activity to distract us from our waiting.

Generally speaking, Americans aren't good at waiting. And this puts us Christians at odds with our immediate gratification and consumer culture. A hundred years ago, it was still common to only put up, or decorate, a Christmas tree on Christmas Eve in homes - and then keep it up after Christmas Day. Now, Christmas decorations are in stores in September, and some lights and trees are up before Thanksgiving. And many people take the decorations down a day or two after Christmas. And Christmas is done and over.

Being in a liturgical church like ours then becomes a counter-cultural event. For weeks we are asked to prepare and to wait for Christmas – the promised coming of Jesus Christ among us, when it seems "Christmas" is already around us. Our schedules may not permit much time for preparing our hearts anew for Jesus between holiday gatherings, music programs, or final papers and exams.

So what might it look like to wait with intentionality? What are some practices that help us to mark time in a meaningful way?

Advent calendars and weekly advent candles are familiar ones for many of us. Opening a calendar flap or lighting Advent candles at mealtime can be combined with a brief Scripture and prayer from a devotional book or the Sunday worship readings. (Our culture has grabbed onto Advent calendars – you can find all sorts for sale now; most having nothing to do with "Advent" as Christians speak of it.)

Write out four Scripture verses on post it notes, one for each week of Advent, beginning December 1. Put the post it note on a bathroom mirror or your seat at the table. Read it frequently and memorize it.

Search out "Advent" music and create a playlist for your car rides or cooking time.

Blue is our color for Advent. Can you decorate a place in your home that reflects "blue" even as you put your other regular Christmas decorations up?

What other ideas might you have to call your attention to waiting for Christ's arrival? I'd love to hear them!

~ Pastor Elise

Church Council Highlights

The following are some highlights from the November 21, 2024 meeting of our Church Council:

- Council continued their discussion of the book, *Growing Young*, focusing on how we keep Jesus at the center of how and why we minister with young people.
- The Council received the treasurer's report, pastor's report, and an update on the fall stewardship appeal and process we have used this year, with generated engagement and enthusiasm.
- Council continued discussion about goals for 2025, using the sticky notes offered by the congregation on Reformation Sunday.

Finance Report Year To Date thru October 2024:

Budgeted Income \$271,729 Actual Income \$283,591
Budgeted Expense \$281,064 Actual Expense \$278,264

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

The Longest Night — An Advent Service of Hope and Healing

Friday, December 20th — 7pm to 8pm — Zion United Methodist Church

The Longest Night is an Advent service especially for those who find the "joyous" holiday season difficult due to grief, loss, familial conflict, or estrangement. The service includes an opportunity to light a candle of remembrance. If you have a friend for whom you think this service would be meaningful, please consider inviting and accompanying them to the service. For more information, please contact Pastor Elise who will be participating in this service.

Open House at the Parsonage

Pastors Elise and John and family are hosting a Christmas open house at the parsonage on Sunday, December 22nd, from 3pm to 5pm.

Christmas Caroling with the Choir

You are invited to join members of the choir for Christmas caroling on Wednesday, December 11th. We will meet in the lobby at OSF St. Paul at 4pm. Then, we will sing at Allure at 4:30pm, and Stonecroft at 5pm. Music will be provided. All ages are welcome to join the fun and spread some holiday cheer!

Join us for Christmas Services!

Christmas Eve worship will be offered at 4:30pm and 7pm. Both services will include Holy Communion and candle lighting.

The 4:30pm service will be family-friendly. Children are invited to bring a bell for a special way to join in the worship. The choir and praise team will lead music in that service.

Sunday, December 29th, the First Sunday of Christmas, will be a Service of Lessons and Carols.

Remember that December 31st is the last day for financial contributions for 2024.

The church office follows the lead of our local school districts when it comes to closing because of wintry weather conditions. If the schools are closed, it is likely we are closed also. Please call before coming to the office.

Sign Up for Salvation Army Bell Ringing

The Mendota Area Ministerial Association is sponsoring bell ringing at the Beck's/Cindy's plaza. St. John's is asked to provide ringers primarily December 20th from 5pm to 7pm, and December 21st from 11am to 7pm. You can sign up for a two hour shift by using the QR code. It's a great opportunity to bring a friend!



The Sunday School Christmas Program will be held on Sunday, December 15th during 9am worship. Practices will be held during Sunday School classes on December 1st and 8th. (Please make every effort to attend the practices.)

Following worship on December 15th, everyone is invited to gather in the Fellowship Hall for cookies and refreshments. *Merry Christmas everyone!*

No Sunday School classes on December 22nd or 29th.
Classes resume on Sunday, January 5th at 10:15am.

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). Please bring your unwrapped items to the large box marked "Angel Tree" in the Fellowship Hall by December 15th. And then count yourself as a Christmas angel. Thank you!

Join us for the Lighting of St. John's Courtyard Christmas Tree

Sunday, December 1st

All ages are invited for an interactive devotion with cookies & cocoa at 4:30pm, followed by tree lighting at 5pm.

Family-friendly event. Invite your friends and neighbors!

ST. JOHN'S ANNUAL Spaghetti SUPPER

Sunday, December 8th

Spaghetti, meat sauce, salad, bread & homemade desserts!

Serving from 4:30pm to 7pm / MHS Madrigal Singers at 7pm
Your freewill offering will support our many youth activities.

Good News from Anthony and Riley Windau!

Anthony and Riley extend an invitation to everyone at St. John's to attend their Ordination to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament at Anthony's home church, Kingo Lutheran, (1225 E. Olive Street, Shorewood, WI) on Saturday, January 4, 2025 at 1pm. Please let Anthony know if you plan on attending so they can be sure to have enough bulletins and cake.

Anthony and Riley are serving two churches in Dixon, IL — Immanuel Lutheran Church and St. Paul Lutheran Church.