

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

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The prayer chain has been very active these last several months. We are grateful for those who participate and offer prayer support to people going through difficult times. If anyone else would like to join the prayer chain, please contact the church office. The prayer chain is conducted primarily through group text messages with a few members receiving information by a phone call.

Find us on Facebook!

Search for "St. John's Lutheran Church" and join our page.



February Birthdays and Anniversaries

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

75th+ Birthday

Feb. 2 Elwood Kidd
Feb. 3 Joanne Politsch
Feb. 6 Carol Schinzer
Feb. 17 Bruce Wilhelm
Feb. 23 Elizabeth Robinson
Feb. 27 Jerrene Gray



Happy 50+ and Milestone Anniversary!

Jim & Dawn Mathesius
February 14th — 50 years

William & Marlene Simonton
February 14th — 61 years

Mike & Delle Vercimak
February 20 — 5 years

John & Sherri Bowne
February 28th — 40 years

Periodicals

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Please remember that the standard rule for canceling worship services during our snowy, icy, wintry months is for you to stay safe!

If snow, ice, or dangerously low temperatures would endanger your drive or entrance to the church, please stay home and join us virtually!

We will do our best to have the office open during our normal hours, but if school is canceled, it would be a good idea for you to phone the church office to be sure we are open before venturing out. Let safety be your guide.

St. John's Lutheran Church



ST. JOHN'S EAGLE

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Special items of interest:

- If you want Pastor Ken Gibson to know 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.
- **Worship in our Sanctuary continues** each Sunday morning at 9am. If you are unable to attend, we hope you will join us for virtual worship online via Zoom, Facebook Live, or on the St. John's website. (www.stjohnsmendota.org).
- We hope you are joining Pastor Ken for **daily devotions, Monday through Thursday mornings at 8am on St. John's Facebook page**. It's a nice way to start your day!



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SHORT MONTH WITH MANY THINGS HAPPENING by Pastor Ken Gibson

As we enter into the month of February, we look at a month that has only 28 days. So much happens in this short month that we often fail to grasp all that will take place. Not long after the Valentine cards our youth made for the elderly have been delivered, we will celebrate the start of our Lenten journey on February 17th with an Ash Wednesday service complete with imposition of ashes once again.

As Lent approaches, I always consider what the first Lenten time would have been like for Jesus. It was a time spent in the wilderness for Jesus, a time set apart to prepare himself for the mission he was being called to live. That time away served him well and prepared him to live out the mission for which God was calling him. In much the same way, we also need to consider how we are being called to serve the mission of God in this time and in this place.

I pray that our Lenten journey will be a time set apart to consider individually and corporately what God is calling us to consider. In your personal lives, I ask you to consider how you will spend your time in the "wilderness." During Lent, we will offer a youth-led worship every Wednesday evening, and we ask that you take part either in the flesh or through digital means. These Wednesday evening services combined with our worship offerings each Sunday during Lent will lead us as a community to our special Holy Week services.

Remember that when Ash Wednesday arrives, Easter will only be a little more than 40 days away. And as February comes to an end, we will have already celebrated almost a third of the Lenten season. May this short month be long in spirituality with the knowledge that Easter Joy is coming!!

2021 St. John's Church Council, Delegates & Committee Members

The newly-elected Church Council gathered via Zoom following the Annual Meeting on January 24th for a brief organizational meeting.

Executive Team includes: President — Ken Ladenburger; Vice President — Todd Zimmerlein; Secretary — Roberta Wendel; Treasurer — Carol Wheeler. The Church Council also includes: Ed Bock, Dorothy Brandner, Gary Duttlinger, Melvette Jones, and Dawn Kendall.

We thank the following members for volunteering to serve St. John's as committee members and delegates — Nominating Committee — Steve Florschuetz, Melissa Nosalik; Northern Illinois Synod Assembly Delegates — Shirley Pierson, Ed Bock, Karyn Bock, Myrna Simon (alternate).

Annual Meeting of St. John's Congregation

The annual meeting was held on Sunday, January 24th at 10:45am via Zoom. Council President Steve Florschuetz opened the meeting with remarks about all of the good that God has provided us this past year including our interim clergy and youth director, call committee, church council, staff, musicians, and the volunteers who make our ministry possible. Pastor Ken Gibson led the opening devotion, and thanked the congregation for the warm welcome that he, Yvonne, and Bob have received. They are very happy to be here with us.

Carol Wheeler presented the Treasurer's Report noting that we did spend more than we took in, but despite the effects of the pandemic and added expenses for updating the parsonage and pastor's moving, we ended the year better than expected. The congregation approved the 2021 Annual Budget which also included possible stained glass window repairs that could exceed \$10,000.

All of the Team reports, the 2021 Ballot, and the Benevolence/Ministry Enhancement distribution were approved.

Copies of the Annual Report are available in the church office.

The next Annual Meeting is scheduled for Sunday, January 23, 2022.

Church Council Highlights

The following are some highlights from the January 24, 2021 organizational meeting of our church council.

- The Council elected officers who comprise the Executive Team (listed on page 1).
- The Council approved moving forward with a partnership with Wartburg Theological Seminary for an Internship Program. They are in the process of creating an Internship Program committee.

Finance Report Year To Date thru December 2020:

Budgeted Income \$352,672	Actual Income \$315,924
Budgeted Expense \$363,586	Actual Expense \$333,829

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.



During Lent this year, we will journey together in a "back to the basics" kind of way. Soon, each family will be mailed a copy of *Luther's Small Catechism*. As you may recall, the Small Catechism was developed by Luther for the heads of households to teach to their children. Over the years we have, in the Church, mostly regulated the learning of the faith to the pastors and the Sunday school teachers etc. In truth, Luther wanted us to learn these tenants of faith at home.

Our midweek Lenten services held on Wednesdays at 6pm will include our youth presenting a drama based upon a young person learning the Ten Commandments and a surprising conversation breaks forth. This drama, **NOT TEN SUGGESTIONS**, was written by Pastor Ken and his seminary classmates while on one of their annual January retreats. The material is truly "home grown."

It is our sincere hope that you attend in person or virtually and enjoy our youth presenting this drama each Wednesday in Lent beginning on Ash Wednesday, February 17th.

"Virtual Worship" Information for February



The **Zoom log-in information** for our February worship services has been set so that the Meeting ID and Passcode are the same for each week during February. **This is not an error.** We hope that it will make it easier for those logging in to Zoom. The log-in information will also be emailed to you each Saturday at noon.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8191024353>

Dial up: 1 312 626 6799
Meeting ID: 819 102 4353
Passcode: 316316

You are also able to **watch the worship services via Facebook Live** even if you don't have a Facebook account yourself. Search for St. John's Lutheran Church Facebook page. Once you find us, simply scroll past any invitations to create a Facebook page and you'll see the Facebook Live video.



Worship will also continue to be **shared on our website** (www.stjohnsmendota.org).



St. John's Youth News

"Growing Together in our Faith as we Serve Others"



Last year's 8th grade confirmation class will be confirmed on Pentecost Sunday, May 23, 2021. More information will be shared with those students & their families as the date approaches.

Confirmation Classes Continue



Confirmation classes for our 7th and 8th grade students continue to meet weekly on Sunday mornings at 10am. We will follow the lead of Mendota elementary school district #289 — if school is meeting in-person, our Confirmation classes will also be held in-person with class offered virtually on Zoom for any students who may be quarantined. Masks will be required and social distancing will be practiced. If school is conducted via remote-learning, we will hold class on Zoom only. An email containing the login information will be sent to all confirmation students and families on Thursday prior to class. If you have not done so already, please return your registration form to the church office so we can be sure to have accurate contact information.

Confirmation Camp Information



We are making plans for our Confirmation Camp experience at Lutherdale Bible Camp in Elkhorn, Wisconsin! We plan to attend camp the week of June 20th to 25th. This is a week of Confirmation Camp that is so very special to faith formation in our young people.

Registration for Lutherdale and payment of the \$100.00 deposit must be completed online at www.lutherdale.org by February 3rd. St. John's will cover the remainder of the fee due for each of our youth. If you need financial assistance for the deposit, please contact Pastor Ken (in private) at 815-861-9554. Scholarships are available.

High School Youth

Our High School youth plan to meet with Pastor Ken twice a month. We will meet in person in the Fellowship Hall while practicing safe social-distancing and wearing masks, and we will also offer the meeting virtually via Zoom. The next gathering will take place on Sunday, January 31st at 4pm. Pizza will be provided to our in person group. Hope to see you there!

High School Mission Trip to Sky Ranch



Our High School Youth will be traveling to Sky Ranch Lutheran Camp in Fort Collins, Colorado for a week of service in July. Sky Ranch is a ministry of the congregations of the Rocky Mountain Synod of the ELCA, and whose mission is to "facilitate an encounter with Christ on the mountaintops." Pastor Ken has been taking high school youth to Sky Ranch since 1992 and is excited to offer this opportunity to our students. The group would leave from Mendota on Friday, July 9th and return on Sunday, July 18th. In addition to their time at Sky Ranch, they will stop for visits (and some overnights) at Wartburg Theological Seminary, Wartburg College, Midland University, and other ELCA congregations. **Our high school youth are asked to contact Pastor Ken with any questions, and to commit to the trip by Ash Wednesday, February 17, 2021.**