

The Reed



SPRING 2020

Sharing the Stories of St. John's Lutheran Church of Mound, MN

Pastor's Corner:

A Bright New Space for a Renewed Mission

As you likely know, St. John's Lutheran Church of Mound has embraced our mission of "Sharing the Love of Christ." We do that through "Worshipping, Welcoming, Praying and Proclaiming."

In 2020, a large part of our focus will be on the "Welcoming" aspect of our mission as we address the much-needed update to the oldest, and most used, area of our building. Currently, our main hallway, bathrooms, and entrance are not very welcoming. In fact, we can say that the outdated style has actually become unwelcoming as visitors often have a difficult time finding our front door. Then, when they do enter the building they are met with an area where three hallways converge together. How do I find the office? Where is the sanctuary? Why is it so dark?

Our Remodel Campaign has worked to resolve those issues. The remodel schedule has already begun with Head Start preschool moving to the lower level of our education wing this past December. Their new space is working wonderfully for their children and staff, which has opened up their previous location for our future office space. During the months of January and February the Remodel Team has been finalizing the construction bids and working to select the company to complete the work.

The Remodel Finance Team has been exploring the process for raising additional pledges and gifts. The \$460,000 currently pledged (over 3 years) is an amazing start, however that amount will not cover the full construction. As you read this newsletter you will already be hearing more about additional fund-raising efforts to close this gap. Your giving thus far has been wonderful! Thank you for your generosity for this project! And we thank you for any additional gifts you are able to give. We anticipate construction will begin shortly after Easter. Such exciting times!

A great deal of excitement and enthusiasm for the project was again shown at this year's annual meeting and we want to thank Mark Paulson for his guidance and presentations as he continues to update the congregation on our progress. We are blessed with a great team leading the way!

- Pastor Jeff ♥

“ We anticipate construction will begin shortly after Easter! ”

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ILLUMINATING
OUR FAITH

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH
LENT 2020

WEDNESDAYS IN LENT

Journey to the Cross

FEBRUARY 26 - ASH WEDNESDAY

11:00 am Ash Wednesday Worship
(followed by OWLS soup luncheon)

5:15 pm Chili Cook-off

6:30 pm Ash Wednesday Worship
The Imposition of Ashes and Holy Communion

WEDNESDAY NIGHT LENTEN WORSHIP

"They Were There"

Holden Evening Prayer & mini dramas portraying people
that Jesus encountered on his Journey to the Cross
Soup & Sandwich Supper at 5:30 pm - Worship at 6:30 pm

March 4 - Nicodemus (John 3:1-17)

March 11 - The Woman at the Well (John 4:5-42)

March 18 - The Man Born Blind (John 9:1-41)

March 25 - Lazarus (John 11:1-45)

April 1 - Mary Magdalene (Psalm 130)

THE WEEK OF THE PASSION - Walk the journey to the cross together with your family and church community, all are welcome to journey together to the cross.

SUNDAY OF THE PASSION AND PALMS - APRIL 5, 9:00 & 10:45 AM

Palm Procession and Interactive Reading of the Passion

Passion Sunday begins with energetic shouts of "Hosanna" by the Cherub and Chancel Choir as we remember Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem, but the frenzy quickly fades as we speak the narrative of the Passion of our Lord, ending in Jesus' death. The morning ends with the recognition that we are just beginning the journey to the cross.

MAUNDY THURSDAY - APRIL 9, 6:30 PM

Confession & Absolution, Holy Communion, Washing of Feet and the Stripping of the Altar

The service begins with our confession of sin being met by the flood of God's forgiveness. At Christ's invitation, we eat the bread and drink the cup. Youth, Chancel and Bell Choirs mark the occasion with music underscoring Jesus' mandate to love one another. Darkness deepens, the room is stripped, the cry of the psalmist echoes, "Will your lovingkindness be declared in the grave?" (Psalm 88:11)

**CHRIST, YOU LEAD
AND WE SHALL FOLLOW,
STUMBLING THOUGH
OUR STEPS MAY BE.**

from our Lenten hymn
"Tree of Life and Awesome Mystery"

GOOD FRIDAY - APRIL 10, 6:30 PM

Living Stations of the Cross and the Adoration of the Cross

With boldness, we approach the throne of grace, the cross upon which Christ is lifted. The stations of the cross are acted before us in a dramatic and meditative manner. Chancel Choir anthems and assembly hymns intersect the meditations and drama. The service closes with our solemn obligation to revere the cross.

CHRIST IS RISEN INDEED, ALLELUIA!

THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD - APRIL 12, 9:00 & 10:45 AM

Holy Communion

Alleluias have been absent since before Lent began. Now it is a time for unbridled joy with the congregation singing a multitude of Alleluias. The tomb is empty; Christ is risen indeed! Join us with brass, timpani and choirs as we celebrate the Resurrection of our Lord!

The Lutheran Tradition of Spiritual Arts

Reflected within St. John's

~ by Sarah Garner

The music, art and environment within the St. John's sanctuary is a reflection of the influences of the Reformation, the teachings of Martin Luther, and the thoughtful shaping that has taken place throughout the Lutheran Church since those early days. By understanding what has come before, we can better see the richness of what we are fortunate enough to have now.

Music and art from Luther's perspective

In the first weeks of February 1522, the townspeople in Wittenberg Germany raided the parish church, demolishing statues and paintings and even violating gravestones. This was done with the support of church reformers and a decree from the local government to remove images and superfluous altars. The concern was that the reverence held for these images was overshadowing the worship of God.

Martin Luther was outraged. In response, he preached a series of sermons that redefined the use of art in the church, embracing its responsible use – as memorials, for the sake of remembering, rather than as idols for worship.

In another sharp contrast to other radical religious reformers of his time, Martin Luther regarded music as essential to evangelical worship. He wrote, "next to the Word of God, the noble art of music is the greatest treasure in the world." Luther himself was a singer, accomplished performer on the lute, and composed some of the greatest hymns of the Reformation.

The importance of music in worship continues in the Lutheran tradition today and is evident at St. John's of Mound.



The consistent use of sung liturgy, choral anthems and hymns which

proclaim our Gospel absolutely, weaves our congregation into the rich tradition of music inherent in the Lutheran Church.

Spiritual Arts and the ELCA

In 2005, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) presented a special project to renew the worship life of the church. In the document "Renewing Worship," our church declares: "Music,

the visual arts, and the environment of our worship spaces embody the proclamation of the Word...and assist the congregation to participate in worship, focus on the essentials, and to embody the Gospel."

St. John's commitment to the Spiritual Arts

In 2019, we began looking at our own worship space within St. John's, and the Worship Environment and Arts Team (WhEAT) was formed. The group is at the beginning of our journey to explore many artistic avenues in proclaiming the Gospel and bringing worshippers into relationship with God within our worship space.



Projects that WhEAT has spearheaded so far have been:

- Butterflies around our cross at Easter
- Fiery wands at Pentecost
- *The Saint John's Bible* exhibition and events
- Sand tables for candles of remembrance at All Saints
- New white paraments for festivals of Christ
- Stars filling our sanctuary at Christmastide

"Yet you, Lord, are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand." Isaiah 64:8

We are created in the image of God - what a wonderful truth for us to embrace! Just as God creates, so shall we. When we accomplish our God-given design to create, a part of us is filled and we experience the deep satisfaction of seeing what is created as part of God's redemptive work. We are telling and sharing the story of the Gospel through the word and act of creativity.

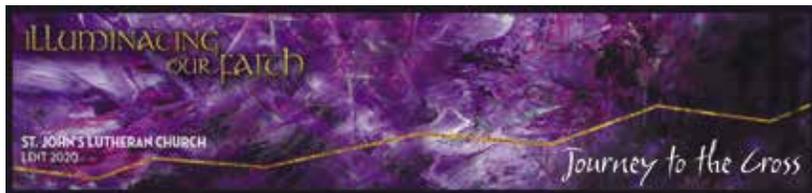
This creative process has been unfolding in beautiful and meaningful ways in our worship space at St. John's: from sand tables to stars. We encourage you to embrace the experience. ♥



Please join us on Sunday, May 17 as we celebrate the Spiritual Arts in Worship!

Questions of Faith about the Season of Lent

Pastor Deb Offers Information, Ideas, and Insights for the Curious



When my children were in Sunday School, before I went to seminary, they would often ask questions about what they learned. This got me to pay attention to what was happening in church, and prompted me to do some research on how to answer their questions.

As we enter the season of Lent, the traditions and events can spark a variety of questions, so I'm sharing some information you might be interested in season of Lent.

What is Lent, and why do we celebrate it at church?

Lent is the 40 day period before Easter when we prepare to remember Jesus' journey to his death and resurrection. Traditionally Lent is observed by practicing fasting, or giving up something. For example you may remember that McDonalds has a special on their filet of fish sandwich on Fridays in Lent. This is because some denominations give up eating meat on Fridays. Fasting echoes Jesus' time of temptation in the wilderness when he did not eat for 40 days.



Lent, however is about more than the physical act of not eating. We may decide that rather than giving something up, we will instead take something new upon ourselves, like daily prayer. Author Jan Richardson says Lent is about admitting to ourselves and others that we are not perfect disciples and that God loves us anyway. Because God forgives us and because we want better lives, we commit to doing better. Committing to

doing something specific in Lent helps us be better at following what Jesus teaches us.

Some ways you can practice Lent at home:

1. Commit to saying the Lord's prayer daily as a family.
2. Sing a favorite hymn or song about Jesus together at meals every day.
3. Make a prayer concern list, poster or jar, and pray for others each day.
4. Share the peace with your neighbors and family when you see them each day.
5. Make a gratitude jar, write what you are thankful for each day on slips of paper. Share at the end of each week.

What is Ash Wednesday and what are the ashes for?

Ash Wednesday begins the celebration of Lent. This is a day to admit we make mistakes and remember that God works with us to make things better, no matter how much we mess up. In worship we will confess our sins together, and be forgiven with absolution. We will then have ashes placed in the form of the cross on our foreheads and hear the words "Remember you are dust, and to dust you shall return."



Ashes remind us to be humble and that we are made of ordinary stuff, yet God breathes life into us so we may live out our identity in Christ. They remind us that human beings have been horrible and mean to each other over and over again in history, so we need to ask for continual forgiveness from God. At the same time, we are God's children loved and always forgiven.

(continued on next page)

Lenten Questions *continued...*

How do I talk to my children or grandchildren about Jesus' death on the cross? Should I bring them to Good Friday worship?

I used to dislike and avoid Good Friday services because it felt so sad and dark. It's hard to talk about sad things with children. Children's worship specialist, Carolyn Brown says that the best way to share what Good Friday is about is by telling the whole story, not just what happened on Good Friday. On her website she advises; "From an early age children can be told that people who were angry with Jesus killed him on a cross, but that God would not let Jesus stay dead and made him alive again on Easter. Over the years you can add the details. The younger

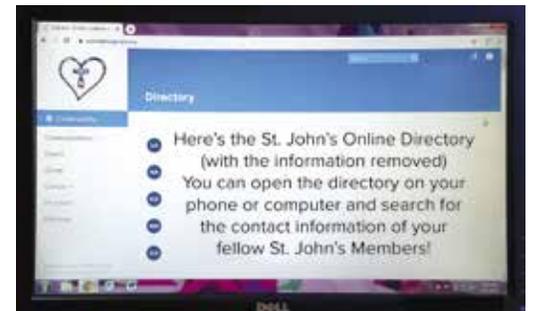
the children, the more they follow the emotions of the story rather than the facts, so always tell the whole story."

Lent is a special time of the church year when we remember our humanity and celebrate Jesus' divinity. Jesus did die on the cross and that was a very sad occasion. At the same time God loves us so much God raised Jesus to new life to tell us that our physical death in this world is not the end of the spiritual life God gives us as God's beloved children. May you be raised anew this Lent season and know more deeply how God cares and loves us all. ♥



You are Invited to Join St. John's Online Member Directory

St. John's now has an online member database and directory called Realm. All members should have received an email with the subject line "St. John's Lutheran Church: Join our online community!" This email contains your invitation to join Realm. To join, simply follow the instructions in the email. If you cannot find an email, contact Kristin at 952-472-1416 or kristin@stjom.org. You can access the information on Realm online on your computer or through an app you download to your smart phone or tablet to use as an online member directory.



SAVE THE DATE!

St. John's is partnering with Lifetouch Photos to take photos for our Realm online directory and Lifetouch printed directory. Lifetouch will be at St. John's April 14-18th to take a picture of everyone at no cost to you! You will receive a digital copy of your photo to add to the online directory. Plus, everyone who gets their picture taken will also get a free printed copy of the directory! Stay tuned for how to sign up for a picture time! ♥

SPECIAL EVENT ENVELOPES

If you received envelopes in the mail and you usually don't – don't throw them away! They are special event and holiday envelopes for the current year. We wanted to give those who give electronically the same opportunity to give to special occasions that our envelope users have. If you have any questions, contact Katie Clobes at 952.472.1416 or katie@stjom.org. We are so grateful for all your gifts to St Johns! ♥



Now is the Time to Plan for Summer Camp!

Camps Offered for Kids in 2nd - 7th Grades and the St. John's Foundation Covers Half the Fee! ~ by Cathie Samuelson

Even as we are slowly coming out of winter with dark nights and cold snowy days, summer will be here before we know it. And the time to start planning for summer camp is now...

So why is camp great for kids?

If you've been to Bible camp you're not surprised to hear about the benefits of summer camp. Camp can be one of the most rewarding and unforgettable experiences in a child's life. Here are a few reasons why:

Camp is action.

At camp kids are unplugged from gadgets. They are physically active and spend lots of time on the move. Kids enjoy the beauty of God's creation as they run, swim, jump hike, paddle, play and learn.

Camp promotes community.

Each cabin group is a small group within the larger faith community. Campers learn about themselves by living with peers and guided by trained staff.

Camp helps foster independence.

Camp teaches kids how to be active participants, ask questions, ask for help, and try new

things. They learn the responsibility of making decisions on their own with the safety net of insightful, caring counselors and staff in a safe environment.

Camp creates future leaders.

The camp experience offers kids a close-up look

at compassionate leaders through the camp staff. Not only that, kids get plenty of opportunities to be leaders themselves!

Bible Camp is an immersion into a lifestyle of discipleship.

Camp counselors model what it looks like when scripture prayer and worship are wrapped in a whole lot of fun! ♥



The following are highlights of summer camps being promoted through St. John's for summer 2020 at Shores of St. Andrew near New London, MN:

July 12-17: ANDY'S GANG for youth 2nd- 5th grade completed

July 12-17: TRAILBLAZERS for youth 5th- 7th grade completed

St. John's would like every child to have a camp experience, so the St. John's Foundation will pay half of each camper's fee! If you would like more information about camp, contact Cathie Samuelson at 952.472.1416 or cathie@stjom.org.



Time for the Harvest, Workers Needed

Seeking the Few, the Brave, the Listeners & the Leaders ~ by Dan Berkiel

When I was an employee at YouthWorks, there was a saying among staff members: “Adult leaders make or break the week.” I had the opportunity to live out this powerful truth last year on our mission trips.

During my first year and a half at St John’s, one of my favorite memories has been working with those who dedicated time to the students. I have had the privilege to witness the impact a loving and caring adult can have on a student’s life.



In the process of meeting with each adult who participated in our mission

trips, I always asked what their thoughts were on working directly with high schoolers or middle schoolers. Everyone seemed to express similar sentiments: “I don’t know how well I can connect with this age group, but I’ll certainly try.”

The result of their effort was an incredible week of missions. I witnessed adults and students making inside jokes, encouraging one another, and singing as loudly as they could to Toto’s song, *Africa*.

Part of my role here at St John’s is to seek out the people who want to put in the effort to care and love our students. Please notice my choice of words here. Student ministry is more about effort than talent. People get A’s for efforts here, because that’s often what it takes to positively impact a student’s life. It’s not being up to date on latest social media trends or pop culture. It’s not about being funny or having a lot of charisma. The truth is that students care much more that adults are consistent than if they are “cool.”

This is often a hurdle for adults thinking about volunteering with our student ministry.



2019 High School Mission Trip to San Francisco.

Often the volunteer’s mindset needs to change from, “I’m a chaperone,” to “I’m a leader.” We’re asking adults to go from simply being present, to participating. We ask adults to lead and foster students in their relationship with Jesus. Motivating students to pursue a deep relationship with Christ is why we do what we do. Understanding the why is the key to moving from chaperone to leader.

A student ministry is nothing without great leaders. It cannot be built upon a great (or in my case, half-decent) youth director or great funding. A ministry that leads students to Jesus is built upon the effort of its leaders to care and love students individually.

You might think that you’re not the right person to be a leader in the ministry. Not everyone is able - for a variety of valid reasons. But Jesus said, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few.” – Matthew 9:37. This is frequently true, so I am incredibly thankful for all the workers we do have here at St John’s.

Who knows, maybe you’d make a great leader? Maybe you’re the type of person who is willing to belt out 80’s songs in a van full of teenagers. Or perhaps you can listen to people’s stories. What I do know is that a conversation about where you might fit in wouldn’t hurt. So, if you are feeling the stirrings of a call to be a part of our student ministry, let’s talk. I’ll even pay for the coffee. ♥

Did you know?

You can stay up-to-date on all the St. John’s Youth News by subscribing to the STJ Students Newsletter!

You can find the link to the January Student newsletter in the latest E-news.

Or contact Dan at dan@stjom.org or 952.472.1416 to be added to the mailing list.



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A Meal of Love To Ease a Difficult Time ~ by Pastor Jeff

When tragedy strikes and a funeral must be planned, there are many decisions and preparations to be made by loved ones. One of the most comforting ways St. John's cares for these families is by preparing and serving a wonderful meal following the funeral. For decades, a dedicated group of volunteers has come together in the days and hours before the service to decorate and set tables, prep food, collect baked goods people donate, and then graciously serve and host the meal the day of the event. Many hours and loving hands go into these moments.

What makes a group of people continue doing this act of love over these past decades? I asked directors Mary Shephard and Linda Blakstvedt what this ministry has meant to them: "First and foremost, we feel this is a service to people who are overwhelmed with the grief they are experiencing. Losing a loved one is never easy and we provide a way for people

to relax and mingle with the ones who have come to share in the final goodbye. We receive joy, love, satisfaction and contentment in, hopefully, helping to make a difficult time a little more bearable for a grieving family."



This team has been fluid throughout the years but a core group has continued the ministry for many decades. Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this important ministry including Mary Shephard, Linda Blakstvedt, Donna Lindstrom, Dee Lind, Ruth Olsen, June Larson, Barb Dunn, Shirley Bren, Aleda Jacobson, Marie Jorland, Shauna Kleinheksel, Marlys Nelson, Helen Melsness, Joyce Matheson, and Val Satterstrom. ♥