

The Reed



Summer 2021

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

Pastor's Corner:

~ by Pastor Sara Vanderpan

What Do We Have to Celebrate?

As Celebration Sunday approaches, we look at some of the things we have to celebrate, so we can express our gratitude to a God who always has our back.

So, what DO we have to Celebrate? **Life!** God's greatest gift to us. As we've learned - especially over the past 18+ months of pandemic - life can be full of challenges, but it is to be celebrated. You are alive and, perhaps, you even found new ways to thrive. Congratulations! Welcome back and thanks be to God!

We celebrate **Pivots!** If you adapted and worshipped online, you accepted the challenge to pivot. If you sat with your children and enjoyed Miss Cathie's Thursday lessons, you understood the value of a pivot. Adapting and learning to pivot should be celebrated.

Now, especially, we celebrate **People!** If you feel fresh energy by being together again or find yourself smiling widely when you see a friend, you know the value of relationships. The treasure of being with other people is something to celebrate. So, welcome home and let's celebrate each other. Together again!

But wait, there's more... We celebrate a confident church council and congregation who moved forward with our million dollar remodel project, as well as a faithful staff who held everything together. We celebrate our resiliency and common sense, our openness to change and steadfastness while apart. We

celebrate good stewardship in reducing expenses to match the reduction in income. We celebrate being able to serve in the community in creative ways. The blessing go on and on!

And, even as we celebrate, we acknowledge that we traveled a tough path. We experienced darkness and we grieve our losses. Even so, we can celebrate knowing that God is with us through it all - ready to be a comfort, a consolation, and a hope as we move forward in uncertain times.

On Celebration Sunday, September 12, during 9:00 and 10:45 am worship, we will express our appreciation to each other and to God. We will also launch our fall theme, **Come as You Are**, which invites our attention to the many characters in Scripture who found their way to Jesus when they did not even know how much they needed him.

At 10:00 am, (between worship services), we will have activities and food outside the newly remodeled main entryway. Please join us! ♥

INSIDE...

Call Process Update

Fall Worship & Activity Schedule

Music & Arts Opportunities

Children's Ministry Overview

Combatting Teen Loneliness

The Call Process: Many Hands & Much Gratitude

~ by Pastor Sara Vanderpan

As we catch our breath and acknowledge the reality that the call process is a two way street of discernment that may not end up with both parties aligned, it is still an exciting time at St.



John's. Yes, the Call Committee chose a final candidate and we called for a meeting, but the final connection was not to be made. The candidate pulled out of the call process, determining to stay with his current congregation. A tremendous amount of work went into this potential call, but

fortunately our leaders are not out of steam yet!

Let's review...In the 15 months since Pastor Jeff Heiderscheid left St. John's, the congregation has moved confidently through the numerous steps of the call process. A Transition Team and then a Call Committee were assembled by the Church Council as it also invited members to volunteer. Each team accomplished the requested tasks with professionalism, discernment, and collegiality.

“The call process is a two way street of discernment.”

the crafting of the Ministry Site Profile, which continues to represent St. John's to pastoral candidates for this top leadership position.

When the Call Committee began its work this past May, the foundation was already built for a timely interview process. This team of capable people connected directly with Pastor Craig Peterson, Assistant to the Bishop in the Minneapolis Area Synod. Pastor Craig and the synod office studied the congregation's Ministry Site Profile and recommended six candidates for the Call Committee to consider.

Phone interviews, written questionnaires, and in-person interviews were conducted by the Call Committee this past June and

July in order to discern which candidate was called to serve St. John's as its next Senior Pastor. In August, the committee selected a candidate

and the council called for a Special Congregational Meeting. As mentioned above, this first candidate removed himself from consideration after his own days of final discernment.

Many expressions of gratitude are already owed to the three teams (over 25 leaders) who have been a part of this process. In addition, thank you to all members who are praying faithfully and sharing input regarding ministry and leadership needs. The process has been confident, orderly, peaceful, and joyful — signs of God's kind and gracious presence.

Please continue to pray for our leaders and for our future pastor. That person is on their own path of discernment which will eventually converge with ours. And while we don't know the hills, valleys, and curves of the road ahead, we can be sure that we can trust in God that eventually we will all be in the same place with the opportunity to do good work together. To God be the glory! ♥

A high point for congregational involvement was in February and March when the Transition Team invited all active members to take the LEAD survey, then discussed the results in small group conversations open to all. The information from both efforts informed the team's main task:

Transition Team:

John Bittle
Linda Blakstvedt
Linda Brustad
Shane Johnson
Erica Pederson
Tanya Schneider
Gretchen Weiss-Smith
Ryan Windy
Pastor Sara Vanderpan

Call Committee:

Kim Blievernicht
Matt Bruch
Dan Cummings
Tamra Leif
Karen Libke
Nancy Ludemann
Erica Pederson
Karen Smith

Church Council:

Ryan Windy (President)	John Bittle
BJ Johnson (Vice President)	Barry Blievernicht
Melissa Bray (Secretary)	Linda Brustad
Matt Bruch (Treasurer)	Chuck Puleston
Pastor Sara Vanderpan	Jim Turner

Worship. Welcome. Connect with Each Other.

Through Worship, Activities, and Service, We Come Together Again

Sharing the bread and wine. Speaking the scripture. Singing our faith. Living as the body of Christ. Whether you are drawn to festival brass, organ and choirs, or prayers that are lifted in the silence of our hearts, St. John's pews are ready to be filled with your own self, your friends, your family. Come as you are and CONNECT with each other.

The entire worshipping assembly is the heart of Spirit-led worship at St. John's. We welcome new volunteers and need your participation! Please contact the info@stjom.org if you'd like to help with altar guild, tech desk, ushering, communion serving, scripture reading, or greeting! These opportunities are not just for adults; we love to have youth reading scripture, ushering, and more!

Online worship in the fall debuts at www.stjom.org or on our Facebook page at 9:00 am. Participate as it happens or experience worship later at your convenience. ♥



WEDNESDAY AFTERNOONS & EVENINGS (Beginning Sept 15)

- 3:15-4:30 pm ASKK (After School Kids Klub) *(learn more on page 5)*
- 4:30-5:30 pm YOUTH CHOIR *(grades 4-8)*
- 5:30-6:20 pm DINNER *(All are welcome!)*
- 5:45 pm CONFIRMATION *(9th grade)*
- 6:30-8:00 pm CHANCEL CHOIR *(9th grade to adult)*
- 6:30-8:00 pm CONFIRMATION *(7th and 8th grades)*



SUNDAYS

- 7:45 am BELL CHOIR
- 9:00 am WORSHIP *(also debuts online)*
- 10:00 am CHERUB CHOIR *(meets every other month beginning September 19)*
- 10:45 am WORSHIP

MONDAYS

- 1:00 pm WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY *(meets the second Monday of the month)*
- 6:00-8:00 pm TREEHOUSE *(meets every other Monday beginning September 6)*

WEDNESDAY MORNINGS

- 10:00 am SMALL GROUP BIBLE STUDY *(begins on September 8)*

THURSDAYS

- 10:00 am TEXT STUDY *(Sept. 16, 23, & 30)*
- 1:00 pm KNITTING *(1st and 3rd Thursdays of the month)*

SATURDAYS

- 9:00 am YOGA *(in the Harbor)*



Sing. Play. Be in Community.

Opportunities in Music and Arts for All Ages! ~ by Sarah Garner

Music and art are vital to our worship. There is a place for you to sing, play, and be in community at St. John's no matter your age or experience! The Holy Spirit helps connect us to God and one another through music and the arts. Come as you are and BE IN COMMUNITY!

St. John's Cherub Choir (K-3rd grade)

Begins Sunday, September 19th @ 10:00 AM



Busy clapping, marching feet, swooping voices! This is how Cherubs learn to worship with their whole body! Cherubs meet on Sunday mornings from 10-10:20 AM (every other month) and sing at 9 AM Worship four times a year. Parents enjoy coffee, treats

and connections with each other after worship. SING with us!

St. John's Youth Choir (4th-8th grade)

Begins Wednesday, September 15th @ 4:30PM

Popcorn, activities, singing, solfege (a musical exercise), and dinner! Wednesday afternoons are full of fun and music at St. John's! Youth Choir kids bus/walk to St. John's where they have snacks and activities during ASKK (After School Kids Klub) from 3:15-4:30 before heading to Youth Choir at 4:30 where they learn challenging literature that explores different languages, multiple voice-parts, and new instruments. At 5:30, kids head to dine with each other in Fellowship Hall! SING with us!



St. John's Bell Choir (9th grade to adult)

Begins Sunday, September 12th @ 7:45 AM

Shake, toll, table damp! Sunrise Sunday mornings are fun endeavor when you're



ringing bells! Under the direction of John Cornell, the twelve-member group rings a wide variety of literature with advanced techniques. Even if you're only available for a month-long stretch, you can ring here. PLAY with us!

Chancel Choir (9th grade to adult)

Begins Wednesday, September 1st @ 7:00 PM (normally meets 6:30-8 PM)

Spirituals, laughing, motets, rehearsing. Chancel Choir is central to our worship at St. John's. Come into our choir room and find a new face to sit next to, learn a new harmony, adventure into new languages. We are ready for your voice and can't wait to meet you! SING with us!



WhEAT (Worship Environment & Arts Team)

Connects every other month

Butterflies circling our cross, blazing candles remembering the saints, Holy Week art installations. These are the vision and work of WhEAT working in harmony with staff, council, and congregation. As we explore our new spaces, WhEAT needs those who love art, and are inspired by creativity to help us continue the important work of connecting to God through the beauty of art and our architecture.

Please contact Sarah Garner if you're interested in music and arts at St. John's (sarah@stjom.org). ♥

Children's Ministries Abound at St. John's!

~ by Cathie Samuelson

We love our kids at St. John's and you can tell! Just look at all the opportunities for children that we have to offer once again this fall. As always, if you have questions or are looking for more information, please reach out to Cathie Samuelson, our Director of Children's Ministries at cathie@stjom.org or 952.472.1416.



Faith Creek Sunday School is a time for relationship building and planting seeds to help support faith as children mature and grow. Children learn about God, about each other, and have fun!

Beginning Sunday, September 12th, children are grouped by age with classes for all children 3 years old to 4th grade that meet on Sunday mornings during the 9:00 worship time. Families and children are welcome to join us at any time during the year! Registration form on stjom.org.

Breakfast Club (5th - 6th grade) is the Faith Formation time for 5th-6th graders. It **begins on Sunday, September 19th** and meets on the 2nd, 4th, and some 5th Sundays of the month at 9:00am. (On the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month, students are encouraged to worship with their families and partake in communion.)

The Bible, Connect curriculum, games, and active learning activities are used. And of course, there will be a bit of breakfast!

Parent's Night Out (PNO) provides safe and fun childcare at St. John's for parents who would like an evening to themselves. PNO is held one Saturday evening per month from 5-8pm. A \$5/child donation is requested. A pizza dinner and snacks are provided. Open to members and non-members. Our first PNO this fall will be **Saturday, September 25th**.

After School Kid's Klub (ASKK) is an after-school program for 4th - 8th graders. Meets on Wednesdays at 3:00 pm (or when students arrive after school) and ends at 4:30 pm. Designed to be a fun and inviting place offering time to be in fellowship with other students. There will be snacks, time for homework, games, and special activities. At 4:30pm, students can stay and participate in the St. John's Youth Choir.

Bussing from Grandview or Hilltop is available. Shirley Hills' students can walk to the church.

Communion at St. John's -

St. John's has adapted the practice of communion of the baptized. Our Lutheran theology affirms that there are no prerequisites for the reception of the sacraments. They are not dependent upon one's age or faith. Nothing of one's own makes anyone a worthy recipient of either Holy Baptism or Holy Communion.

In the sacraments, God comes to the recipient. The one being baptized or communed receives the benefits of forgiveness, life, salvation, and faith through God's grace in the sacraments. Therefore, we offer communion to children of any age if the parents feel the child has expressed sufficient interest in sharing the meal and the parents and child attend Communion Workshop together.

Our next Communion Workshop will be **Thursday, September at 6:30 pm**. The children that attend will be welcomed to the Lord's Table on Sunday, October 3rd. Another class will be offered in the spring prior to Holy Week.

Club 456 is a monthly ministry for students in 4th - 6th grade providing opportunities for fellowship, fun and service. Past events have included activities at church, bowling, as well as volunteering at Gale Woods and Feed My Starving Children. Friends are always welcomed and encouraged! Our first event this fall will be **Mini Golfing at Big Stone on September 18th**.



Worship with Little Ones

- **The Pray Ground** is the space near the front-left section of the sanctuary. This area is designed for young children to quietly engage in age-appropriate activities while experiencing worship in the sanctuary along with their families.
- **Busy Bags** are 'quiet bags' with activities for kids located towards the back of the Sanctuary.
- Our **nursery** is a wonderful, safe, and caring place staffed by experienced caregivers for younger children who are more comfortable in a room full of toys than in the worship service. ♥



The Most Connected, Yet Loneliest Generation

Can You Be “Irrationally Positive” About Our Teens?

~ by Dan Berkiel

Everyone needs someone who is irrationally positive about them. – Fred Peterson, Founder of TreeHouse.

Teen mental health can be a difficult topic for an adult to wrap their mind around, especially when considering the circumstances of teens today that aren't relatable. Today's adults didn't grow up with limitless information at their fingertips, have bullies follow them online under the guise of a fake account, or have the constant pressure teens feel when scrolling through Instagram and comparing their lives or appearance to ones they see online. Throw a world-wide pandemic on top of that, plus all of the circumstances adults can relate to, (problems at home, bullies and trouble in school, etc.), and you begin to realize that teens today face unprecedented challenges to their mental health. They are the most connected, yet the loneliest generation. Teens face a crisis of belonging.

In the book, *Belonging: Reconnecting America's Loneliest Generation*, the authors detail research with two shocking takeaways. First, there is no significant statistical difference in feelings of loneliness of teens who are a part of a church and teens who are not. Seems a little backwards, right? Teens don't feel a sense of belonging by just attending things or being a part of a group. As a church, we really do pour a lot of energy into programs which, based on this research, may not meet the basic emotional needs of teenagers.

The second finding is a little more encouraging. As the number of trusted adults increases, reported feelings of loneliness, isolation, and stress decrease. 62% of teens with zero trusted adults reported feeling “completely alone.” Compare that to just 9% of teens with five trusted adults. That's an 86% reduction.

As I was reading this book, I found myself relating to a lot of the stories relayed through interviews. As our church begins to think about how to best share the love of Christ with the next generation, I would strongly encourage this approach to be deeply rooted in relationships rather than programs. Sometimes, it can be easy to say to the community “Come to our church, we have [insert

cool catchy program name here].” Rather, I think this research really illuminates the fact that gen z and millennials are interested in real, genuine, and authentic relationships. We have an opportunity to provide those things and to show teens that Jesus truly offers those characteristics that young people are yearning for.



The authors found that feelings of belonging typically followed the same progression: feeling noticed, feeling named, and feeling known. Feeling noticed means learning the person's name and using it. No more, “I'm bad with names.” Young people feel connected to people when people are intentional about remembering their name. Feeling named means that you show in some way that you're thinking about them. Maybe that means letting them know that you

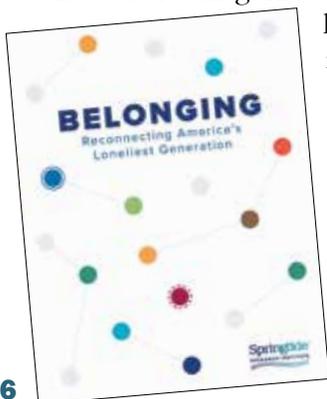
noticed when they weren't at church last week and that you missed them. Or perhaps that means letting them know something you appreciate about them.

“**You are uniquely qualified to provide a sense of belonging for those young people.**”

Finally, I'll quote from the authors.

Feeling known “adds the all-important dimension of unreserved acceptance. Freed from the fear of rejection, young people feel safe having open, honest conversations about their lives – hopes, anxieties, challenges, and joys... This kind of acceptance has immeasurable significance as an antidote for severe loneliness, isolation, and stress. We see clearly in the data that accepting young people without judgment is an essential condition for deep belongingness to occur.” In other words, young people to belong need people who are “Irrationally positive about them” (p. 68).

My prayer is that you would notice those young people on the periphery and the young people in the margins. You are uniquely qualified to provide a sense of belonging for those young people. Even if you feel like that's not the case, rest assured knowing that God equips those he calls. As a church, let's be irrationally positive about the people who feel like they have no one, who feel alone, and who feel like they aren't wanted. ♥



Gratitude and Joy for a Journey Completed

Renovation Project A Testament to Faithful Prayers and Commitment

~ by Pastor Sara Vanderpan

A debt of gratitude is owed to the many people who carried the vision for an enhanced entrance and fellowship space that equaled the warmth and hospitality of St. John's. The vision was never far from our minds but was finally realized - with new offices, bathrooms, and large meeting room added - in the summer of 2021. To God be the glory!

In addition to the visionaries who paved the way through the years, the many members who gave sacrificially in financial support will remain largely unnamed, but never forgotten. The debt of gratitude owed each one is difficult to express. If you are reading this and have dreamed of, prayed for, or given to this remodel project, thank you!

Through the past ten months of construction (pre- and post-construction, too) the staff's flexibility and contributions - hourly fire walks for five months during occupied hours; weekly Facebook updates (thanks, Kristin!); moving offices and equipment twice; team participation - were steadfast and faithful. All this was done amidst the restrictions of the pandemic, the resignation of a second pastor, the acquisition of live stream equipment, and crafting weekly and holiday worship services for our growing online faith community. God's strength was given in triple measure.

The staff, church council, and various teams would also deal with unwelcome surprises along the way, like the bursting of boiler pipes on Super Bowl Sunday, and the quick changes of plans (and costs) due to structural and electrical findings behind the walls. Accidents and obstructions were also navigated these past months, like a backhoe slicing a main electrical cable into the building, finding asbestos in the tunnel areas and side flooring, and uncovering what was first thought to be an abandoned well under the front parking lot. All of these incidents required careful attention and triggered additional conversation with the appropriate leaders. Our finished new spaces will long have "miracle" written into each layer!

We will celebrate and give thanks on September 12 for these teams and people, but our gratitude will live on for years to come! ♥

There are too many individuals to list in the space we have, but here is a list of the teams who worked - or are still working - on the project.

- Remodel Team
- Construction Team (in-project management)
- Locks and Hardware Team
- Low Voltage/Technology contributors
- Welcome Desk/Coffee Counter Team
- Furniture Team
- Use of Great Hall Team
- Finance Committee
- Church Council & Staff

Giving & Financial Update

Now is the Time for Giving

First of all, thank you for your faithful giving! Our current financial situation is that, despite a conservative budget, year-to-date giving is lagging behind by \$37,409. As of July 31, 2021, the reduced giving has been offset by reduced expenses due to ministries not fully operating. However, expenses will increase as ministries return to full swing in the fall and full-time pastor positions are filled.

So, NOW IS THE TIME...If you are able, please consider resuming or increasing your weekly giving to St. John's to fund the ministries we have planned for the remainder of 2021. More details and data, including the income statement and balance sheet are included in your end-of-summer giving statement mailing. As you know, this is an exciting time to be a member at St. John's and we thank you for your generosity!

If you have any questions on your pledges or how you can give, you can login to your Realm account and check or contact Katie at katie@stjom.org or 952-472-1416.

~ Katie Clobes

'Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.'

~ 2 Corinthians 9

St. John's Lutheran Church of Mound
2451 Fairview Lane
Mound, MN 55364

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
Mound, MN
55364
Permit #18

Before and Afters! Thank You and Thanks be to God!

Renovation Final Steps: Furniture is being ordered. Once that arrives and is in place, plans will be made for an official GRAND OPENING! Stay tuned for more information.

