



St. John's Lutheran

MESSENGER

A Publication of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church located in Miamisburg, Ohio, Established in 1819

March 2023

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. John 3:16

This quote from John's Gospel is undoubtedly one of the most familiar in all of Scripture. You may have memorized it in Sunday School or even committed it to memory as an adult. I have seen this verse referenced as "the gospel in miniature" because it so succinctly reveals God's intentions for us through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Many of us know this verse, but do we also know that the context of these words spoken by Jesus came in a conversation he was having with a Pharisee named Nicodemus? In this conversation it is clear that Nicodemus does not yet understand who Jesus is or what Jesus has to offer him. By the end of the Gospel Nicodemus will understand, and perhaps we will too.

During the season of Lent our assigned Gospel readings will bring us several stories from John's Gospel where we get to listen in on conversations Jesus has with various individuals. We will meet the Samaritan woman at the well. Jesus asks her for a drink of water and that simple request leads to a longer conversation where Jesus offers her living water. This woman, who is a foreigner, believes in Jesus and becomes one of the first evangelists as she tells everyone in her village about him and many come to believe because of her. We too can be inspired by her testimony.

We will also meet a man born blind who encounters Jesus and is healed by him. After receiving his sight all is not joyful for the man, however. He is basically put on trial by the religious authorities who keep harassing him to "turn in" the man who healed him. Jesus had healed the blind man on the Sabbath and the religious authorities saw that as an indication that Jesus was not sent by God. All of the questioning only strengthens the man's faith in Jesus, and hopefully deepens our convictions as well.

Finally we will also go to the tomb of Lazarus and witness Jesus raise him from the dead. In this story Jesus and Lazarus do not have a conversation, but Jesus does talk with his sisters Mary and Martha. They were disappointed that Jesus wasn't there to heal their brother before he died. Jesus promises that he is the "Way and the Truth and the Life." We, along with them, will witness Jesus call Lazarus out of the tomb, a foreshadowing of what will happen to Jesus after he is crucified. In this story we join Mary and Martha and Lazarus in rejoicing that Jesus has defeated death for Lazarus, a foreshadowing of our Easter celebration where we see that Jesus has defeated death for all of us.

Join us for Sunday worship during the season of Lent and let these powerful and amazing stories inspire you in your faith. I also invite you join us for our Thursday Zoom Bible study where we will look at these stories and other readings assigned for the upcoming Sundays. The study will meet from 7pm to 8:15 pm on March 2, 9, 16 and 30. There will be no class on March 23. I also encourage you to read the assigned scripture readings for each upcoming Sunday at home during the week to help immerse yourself in God's word during this season of Lent.

See you in church! Pastor Heidi Johns

PRESIDENT'S CHAPEL

Dear Siblings in Christ,

March 1st, 2023

As we enter 2023's Season of Lent, it is always a good time to reflect on the state of our individual and collective congregational mission and spiritual journey. Your church council had an offsite on February 26th to reflect deeply on this issue, and to lay the groundwork for the year to focus time and energy on moving our collective mission forward. As part of our input, we did a "flash survey" last Sunday morning to get your thoughts on two questions – (1) what is the best thing or biggest strength of St Johns right now and (2) What issues/concerns do you have for our Congregation going forward. Let's quickly explore what you said.

We had 31 responses including several youth. On Question (1), the words "friendly/friendship", "family", "community", "Pastor Heidi/Pastor", "fellowship", and a "sense of community" appeared in nearly every response. Several mentioned the worship experience, music videos, and contemporary music, and one clearly enjoyed our coffee bar! These statements were overwhelmingly positive, which means we have a good environment which visitors should find attractive. On Question (2), the *overwhelming* (~20) responses centered on "dwindling membership," "lack of children," "the empty space for the size of our congregation," "attracting new members," and so forth. A few responses were concerned about our Pastor leaving, needing more traditional music, needing more contemporary music, and getting people excited about our mission in order to be motivated to join.

This brings us to a simple truth that may be hard for us to comprehend or accept. *We cannot make people attend St Johns.* We *can* attempt to change our focus or grow interest in our *mission*, and that is likely the only way we will stabilize and grow in the future. Which brings us to our Council retreat, and what our recent (January) outreach preference survey is telling us. In addition to the holiday family tree and our Lenten barnyard ministry, our Congregation supports four regular mission areas – Helping Hands, Blue Star Mothers, Jeremiah's Letter, and Lutheran World Relief. Our members expressed their interest based on *your*

Percentage of member supports	HH	BSM	JL	LWR
0 = not interested	13.5	37.8	32.4	54.1
1=supportive	62.2	59.5	67.6	37.8
2 very supportive	24.3	0.0	0.0	8.1
3 passionately supportive	0.0	2.7	0.0	0.0

recommended giving preferences, which are shown in the table above. Helping hands had 86.5% supportive, Blue Star Mothers 62.2%, Jeremiah's letter 67.6%, and Lutheran World Relief at 45.9%.

While these are healthy numbers, with the exception of Helping Hands, and a bit with Jeremiah's letters, these are "check writing" ministries – we simply write a check, but do not have physical involvement with the ministry. That's OK, except anyone can write a check, and people don't need St John's to do that. Our hunger ministry, between HH and our downtown homeless meal ministry involves people actually helping out and being involved. This gives members involved in those ministries a personal connection with the mission cause.

Council is not advocating discontinuing any of these ministries, but we really believe they are not visible enough to our community to really attract passionate interest. So what *should* we do to increase our visibility to Miamisburg and to attract families interested in our outreach? To answer that, Council in 2023 will begin to reach out to our own back yard – Sycamore Village, Sycamore Glen, the Miamisburg Schools (high, middle, elementary) to interview community leaders to see *what community outreach gap can we help fill?* We will start that process this spring and summer and come up with plans for next fall in response to what we find out.

In addition, Council plans to restart a community meal service, setting ourselves as a goal to put on a Spaghetti Supper in the Spring time, and a Community Blood Drive/Breakfast in the fall, perhaps near Halloween so we can make the blood drive thematic. Our goal is to give families and seniors the opportunity to understand what St Johns has to offer, and to give them a friendly, family oriented opportunity to worship and participate in our mission.

(continued on next page)

My friends, there is no easy solution to the membership quandary. We all must expand our horizons and look for opportunities to attract the community or nature will take its course and we will have to merge with another organization or fade out. I'm not ready to embrace the latter, but to change we need to look hard at who we are and how we can help Miamisburg. God's mission doesn't end in the Sanctuary on Sunday mornings....it's also everything we do the rest of the week. Let's get to work.

Take care, and God's Blessings to all.

Brian Kent, President

WELCA MONTHLY MEETING

The 1st WELCA meeting for 2023 will be at Nancy McCabe's house at 6:30 on Monday, March 6th. Dinner will include Nancy's take on green everything!

All women are invited.



EASTER EGG HUNT

We will have our annual Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday, April 8 at 2pm. Invite your family and neighbors!

We need donations of candy or prizes by April 2nd.

EASTER BREAKFAST

We will gather Easter morning, April 9th at 9:00 a.m. for breakfast in the fellowship hall.

Signup sheets will be posted in the narthex.

MISSION TRIP

Parkview Methodist has invited us to join them on a trip to Red Bird Mission in the Appalachian Mountains of Kentucky, July 9-14.

The group will stay in cabins and do work projects in the local communities during the day.

If you would like more information, contact Brook Ñauta.



Save the Date - VBS will be June 19-23, 6-8pm at Parkview.

Please let Brook or Beth know if you are interested in volunteering.

More information to come.

PERSONAL CARE KITS FOR HELPING HANDS

The Discipleship Committee will be taking donations for Personal Care Kits to be given to Helping Hands for them to distribute to people in need to stay healthy in life's most challenging situations.



Items that will be needed are:

- Bar soap
- Toothbrush & toothpaste
- Shampoo & Conditioner
- Deodorant
- Comb and brush
- Shaving supplies
- Feminine hygiene products

Items collected can be put in the red wagon in the narthex starting Ash Wednesday, February 22nd until Easter Sunday, April 9th. For more information, contact Cheryl Page 937-602-7952.

**THANKS FOR
DONATING!**
WE APPRECIATE YOUR GENEROSITY

Helping Hands sent a thank you to the church for the donation of \$537.73 from annual flower sales and December outreach support.

The generosity of this gift allowed Helping Hands to offer five days of groceries to Miamisburg School district families needing food assistance.

ST JOHNS THURSDAY BIBLE STUDY

The information below is for Pastor Heidi's Lenten Bible Study, March 2, 9, 16 and 30th.

Meeting ID: 845 9922 5539

Security Passcode: 139591

Invite Link

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84599225539?pwd=K1NxeNh6NWlUeFhNVkdMYk9INGFDZz09>





DIGGING DEEP INTO GOD'S WORD FOR LENT

There will be a couple of opportunities for you to dig deeper into scripture during the season of Lent. Both will focus on the scripture readings assigned for Sunday mornings during the weeks leading up to Easter.

You can engage in reading the Scriptures at home during the week from the provided weekly schedule listed below, or you can join us for four weekly sessions of Bible study via zoom on these same scripture readings. Of course you can also take part in BOTH of these opportunities!

The zoom study will take place on Thursdays March 2, 9, 16 and 30 (no class on the 23rd), from 7pm – 8:15pm. You can pick up a packet with the readings we will be studying on the table in the Narthex. These classes are each "stand alone" so please join us when you can, even if you can't attend every week! The Zoom link will be sent out via email on Wednesdays at Noon.

The schedule for weekly **at home** bible reading is as follows:

February 26-March 4;

Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7
Psalm 32
Romans 5:12-19
Matthew 4:1-11

March 5-March 11;

Genesis 12:1-4a
Psalm 121
Romans 4:1-5, 13-17
John 3:1-17

March 12-March 18;

Exodus 17:1-7
Psalm 95
Romans 5:1-11
John 4:5-42

March 19-March 25

I Samuel 16:1-13
Psalm 23
Ephesians 5:8-14
John 9:1-41

March 26-April 1

Ezekiel 37:1-14
Psalm 130
Romans 8:6-11
John 11:1-45

April 2-April 5 (Palm Sunday)

Isaiah 50:4-9a
Psalm 31:9-16
Philippians 2:5-11
Matthew 21:1-11
Matthew 27:11-54

Maundy Thursday-April 6

Exodus 12:1-14
Psalm 116:1-2, 12-19
I Corinthians 11:23-26
John 13:1-17, 31b-35

Good Friday-April 7

Isaiah 52:13-53:12
Psalm 22
Hebrews 10:16-25
John 18:1-19:42

Easter Sunday-April 9

Acts 10:34-43
Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24
Colossians 3:1-4
Matthew 28:1-10

Join Zoom Meeting on Sundays

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85711628176?pwd=V0dOK21vekJqNTIwM3hOT2UyNzkyQT09>

Meeting ID: 857 1162 8176

Passcode: 071964

One tap mobile

+19292056099,,85711628176#,,,,*071964# US (New York)

+13017158592,,85711628176#,,,,*071964# US (Washington DC)

Dial by your location

+1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

Meeting ID: 857 1162 8176

Passcode: 071964

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/kdSEte9ZyO>

REMINDER

You can always find the Zoom link for the simulcast Sunday services on St. John's website:

www.stjohnsmiamisburg.org

Click on the "In-Person Worship and Simulcast Link" menu option near the top of the home page.



Budget Report for January 2023

Income for January 2023: **\$8,470.07**

Expenses for January 2023:

Outreach	\$333.00	
Staff	\$5,357.91	
Facility Upkeep/Administration	\$1,222.53	
Property Insurance	\$0.00	
Utilities	\$1,000.77	
Committees	\$158.00	
		\$8,072.21

January Budget Balance (income - expenses): **\$397.86**

YTD Income: **\$8,470.07**
YTD Expenses: **\$8,072.21**

Description of categories:

Outreach: Benevolence, special benevolence.

Staff: Pastor's pay and expenses, staff salaries and benefits, FICA, worker's comp.

Facility Upkeep/Administration: Maintenance/repair and office expenses.

Property Insurance: renewed in April.

Committees: Discipleship, Learning, Worship & Music.

Utilities: Gas, electricity, water and trash services.



- March 8
Aiden Ring
- March 11
David Helter
- March 22
Brian Kent
- March 28
Marilyn Boyd

Congregational Contacts

Pastor Heidi Johns Interim Pastor 513-255-6279

Council Members

Brian Kent	*President	*Executive Committee 937-885-3529/937-572-3025
Everett Morris	*Vice President	937-760-1099
Linda Kent	*Church Treasurer	937-885-3529/937-572-7815
Cathy Zimmer	*Secretary	937-212-9283
Judy Kuemmel	*Financial Secretary	937-321-1198
Garry Andrews		937-848-2090
Ida Geary		
Cindy Kemper		937-840-8182

Organizations, Boards and Staff

Karen Doyle	Church Secretary/Messenger Editor	937-866-3780
Tom Hoffman	Board of Trustees Chairman	937-859-8871/937-654-1218
Cheryl Page	Discipleship Committee Chairman	937-602-7952
Brook Nauta	Learning Committee Chair	513-217-0564/937-367-1473
Ida Geary	WELCA President	937-626-7765
Doug McCabe	Organist	937-866-8669
Brook Nauta	Children's Choir	513-217-0564/937-367-1473

Christian Education

Barb Hoffman	Pre-k through 1 st Grade	937-859-8871/937-231-6341
Brook Nauta	2 nd Grade through 6 th Grade	513-217-0564/937-367-1473
Robin Skelding	Confirmation	937-748-5405

Ministry Contacts

Nancy McCabe	Prayer Chain	937-866-8669
Beth Knight	Son-Rise Breakfast @ First Lutheran	330-692-2092





St. John's Lutheran

St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church

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Miamisburg, OH 45342

Phone: 937-866-3780

Office Hours: M-T-T-F 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon

Web: www.stjohnsmiamisburg.org

Email: secretary@stjohnsmiamisburg.org

HAPPENING'S IN MARCH

- March 2 7:00 p.m. Lenten Bible Study via ZOOM
- 7:00 p.m. Girl Scout Leaders Meeting
- March 3 5:00 p.m. TWIGS Scrapbooking Event
- March 4 9:00 a.m. TWIGS Scrapbooking Event
- 10:30 a.m. Dayton Tamil Academy
- March 6 6:30 p.m. WELCA Monthly Meeting
- March 8 6:30 p.m. Girl Scout Troop #30200
- March 9 7:00 p.m. Lenten Bible Study via ZOOM
- March 10 5:00 p.m. TWIGS Scrapbooking Event
- March 11 9:00 a.m. TWIGS Scrapbooking Event
- 10:30 a.m. Dayton Tamil Academy
- March 14 6:00 p.m. Girl Scout Troop #35159
- 6:00 p.m. Girl Scout Troop #3330-2023
- March 16 7:00 p.m. Lenten Bible Study via ZOOM
- March 18 10:30 a.m. Dayton Tamil Academy
- March 19 6:00 a.m. SonRise Breakfast
- March 28 6:00 p.m. Girl Scout Troop #35159
- 6:00 p.m. Girl Scout Troop #3330-2023
- March 30 7:00 p.m. Lenten Bible Study via ZOOM

Sunday's at 7:30 p.m. - AA/Al Anon meets in Fellowship Hall

Monday's & Friday's at noon - AA Group meets in Fellowship Hall

*Please notify the office of any meetings and/or events that need to be included in the calendar.
This will ensure rooms are not double booked.*