

THE VOICE

St. John is called by Christ to be a Sanctuary That Welcomes and Serves All

Pastor Mark's Reflection

November 2022

I'm currently preparing for Reformation Sunday which commemorates the work of Martin Luther and other great reformers who recognized in the end, that the importance of the church is to share God's love and empower the faithful to be God's hands and feet. We remember our response to the call of ministry is not to gain favor with God, because that love is already with us. But rather, it is to know we are loved and to trust that Jesus is our true guide in life.

This basic understanding invites all of us to become co-creators with God. In doing so, we recognize that we live with a firm foundation of faith that will evolve and grow as we become more aware of the opportunities to give and receive the great peace of God that extends to each of us.

Several years ago, I remember doing my CPE (clinical pastoral education) at Detroit Sinai Hospital. I worked in the Pulmonary Care unit as well as in the emergency room. I would work an 8-hour shift once each week visiting with patients and with my others assigned duties outside the hospital thus creating an easy 60+ hour work week or more. Most of the time I was tired, and often dreaded the assignment at the hospital. Yet each week within that hospital I met Jesus several times during my shift. Sick, broken people with a powerful understanding of God's love who touched me and taught me, helping me understand that there is so much I do not know or understand. Giving, receiving, and reforming all the while.

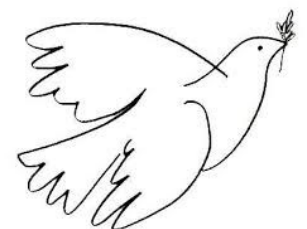
While I believe my core faith is strong (or reasonably strong) I know that there is still so much for me to learn in serving you. Part of that is accepting your expressions of love for me and my family and remembering Martin Luther's understanding that we are a "priesthood of all believers." Each of us has something to offer the community of faith!!

The Spirit of Reformation invites us to challenge certain structures and functions of the church when we do not see the evidence of The Peace in our midst. Over the next few months, we will experience that spirit as we move forward with the development of a shared music ministry with Antioch Lutheran Church. This spirit will continue to challenge us with the launch of our Pathways in Compassion nursing home visitation ministry.

At St. John we have been reforming all the while in the Midst of COVID and beyond. That Spirit of Reformation is very much alive and that is a good thing! But change can be scary and painful as much as it is exciting. Please never be hesitant to give me a call at 248-207-1312 if you ever have questions or concerns about the ministry!

May God Bless You and Keep You!

Pastor Mark



Fundamentally Sacred – Connection

For the past few months, I have been exploring ideas of our sacredness and the sacredness of the elements that sustain life. As we consider how we live, what we do, and how we do it – as individuals or any sort of collective – are we honoring our sacredness? Are we honoring the sacredness of the things we fundamentally need to live? Perhaps the first step in that is to identify what those needs are.

My third-grade teacher introduced the first set of fundamentals I learned about - food, shelter, air, and water - as “FSAW.” I have expanded this list to include some additional essentials of healthcare, education, and rest. As we begin our journey into the nursing home ministry of Pathways in Compassion, I realize that I have overlooked another essential – connection.

Of all the things we need, connection, or community, is the most abstract. I can easily illustrate the effects of failures in meeting the other fundamental needs I have suggested. Failures in connection are harder to quantify, yet their impact can be devastating.

The covid pandemic has led to many struggles with connection and community. At the same time, rates of depression, anxiety, and other mental health conditions have gone up – straining an already strained system. I imagine most of us can share anecdotes of disconnection we’ve experienced in the past 2+ years I imagine most of us would give anything not to have to go through something like this ever again.

Our collective foray into isolation has generally been less extreme than the isolation that some segments of our population experience. The Pathways in Compassion ministry seeks to address the disconnection faced in one of these

segments – those living in nursing homes and other care facilities. As we have been considering this area of need, another often overlooked segment of the population has been on my mind – the many separated from connection and community due to incarceration.

The great stigma against these people only furthers this disconnection. It’s easy to paste on a “bad person” label and move on. With so many people in need, why should we put our time and effort serving those who are serving time? Doesn’t being in prison or jail only prove that they are undeserving?

There are many problems with this line of thinking. Perhaps the biggest problem for our purposes is the fact that care to those in prison is explicitly detailed in how one is to properly serve God in Matthew 25.

Even assuming that proper justice is being done with every soul we put behind bars, we are still to honor that person’s sacredness. We fall short in so many ways.

This topic was already on my mind when Pastor forwarded me an email from the ELCA focusing on the need for care for those with dementia in prison – expected to make up 1/3 the entire prison population in a decade. The piece highlighted the need and suggested one remedy – compassionate release. It’s worth noting that the prison environment itself is likely contributing to the rates of dementia within its population – disconnection being one of many the factors prisoners experience that can increase one’s risk of developing dementia.

Of course, on an individual level, there is very little we can do to provide compassionate release or dementia care for these people, aside from advocacy work. But we still can, and

should, heed our mandate not to forget about those it seems society would like to forget about.

On Monday, October 24th , I attended the first training for the Pathways in Compassion ministry. After talking about the program and its impacts, experiences and expectations, the conversation drifted to the concept of agency, in so many words, and the effect that not feeling important can have on a person's sense that they even have something to contribute to the world.

Yet, when we feel like we are valuable, when we feel like we are worthwhile, when we feel like the things we do have meaning, we can feel empowered to have an impact on the world. Recognizing the sin of inaction is a regular part of our worship service. Inherent to this confession of sin is the understanding that we can make a difference.

In the face of so much need, so many ways brokenness is experienced in this world, it is easy to forget how significant each and every one of us is. We may not be able to right every wrong, but we can do so much, especially when we work together. As I left the training, I found myself wondering, what world can we imagine? How can we get there?

For more information about dementia in the prison population, see the Scientific American article titled "Dementia in Prison Is Turning into an Epidemic: The U.S. Penal System Is Badly Unprepared."

<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/dementia-in-prison-is-turning-into-an-epidemic-the-u-s-penal-system-is-badly-unprepared/>

For an in depth analysis of the criminal justice system in the United States from the ELCA, please see the 2013 Social Statement "The Church and Criminal Justice: Hearing the Cries." Links to the statement and other

resources can be found at: <https://www.elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Social-Statements/Criminal-Justice>

Adopt an Inmate: <https://adoptaninmate.org/>

From the organization's website: It is an awful truth that many forgotten human beings languish in our nation's jails and prisons. Thus, they have little to no contact with the outside world. Incarceration carries with it a parade of emotions, including shock, fear, helplessness, shame, anger, frustration, anguish, and depression — surviving is a daily battle. Inmates without agency face extreme challenges that limit their chances for success both during and after their incarceration.

Receiving mail from the outside world has a profound impact on an inmate's daily life. A name called out at mail call signals to other inmates and staff that there is someone on the outside that cares for them – making them less vulnerable to violence and abuse. Many inmates never hear their name called.

Prisoner Visitation and Support: <https://www.prisonervisitation.org/>

Prisoner Visitation and Support (PVS) is a volunteer visitation program for people incarcerated in federal and military prisons throughout the United States.

Our mission is to provide prisoners with regular, face to face contact from the world outside of prison to help them cope with prison life, encourage personal growth, and prepare for successful reentry into society.

Our priority is to visit those prisoners who: do not ordinarily receive visits from family and friends, want or need visits, are in solitary confinement, are on death row, or are serving long sentences.



**COFFEE HOUR HOST/
HOSTESS NEEDED**

Coffee Hour is back, and we would like to have more volunteers to host. If you are interested but don't

want to host alone, perhaps you could ask a friend to help you.

We will show you where the supplies are kept and how to set up and clean up. If you would like to volunteer for this important ministry or need more information,

Please call Joanne Hagen at 248-474-8521.

**USHERS AND
GREETERS**

Needed for Sunday Services and any Special Services please contact for greeters [Keven Blaker](mailto:kblaker@att.net) kblaker@att.net

Church Office for ushers om@stjohn-elca.org 248-474-0584

Training will be provided!

**Sunday
School**

During service!
no need to arrive early,
no need to stay late!

Young people will begin service with the congregation. Before the scripture readings, Sunday schoolers will be invited to leave the sanctuary for their own special lesson, returning to the sanctuary before communion.

**Can't join us ?
copies of lessons
available upon
request**

**Interested in
helping with the
Sunday School
ministry at St
John?**

Contact Ashleigh Altermann @
ms.fancyfood@gmail.com

**FALL
SCHEDULE**

October 9
Comfort to others

October 23
Practicing Humility

November 13
Who or What is God?

November 27
Experiencing God as Light

December 11
A Teacher of the Way—Who
Was Jesus

You're invited to

WNW

Wednesday Nights Wherever

WHEN: NOVEMBER 9 AT 7:00PM

Where: Zoom, Meeting ID 837 4910 7021. Find the meeting link on St. John's website or in the eNews.

Get to a comfortable place with an internet connection and hop on Zoom for discussions of faith in action. We'll reflect on the needs in our immediate and global community and focus on ways we can help make a difference.

RSVP? Not needed, just log on!

There will be no in-person WNW this month. We hope, instead, you can enjoy some time with loved ones.

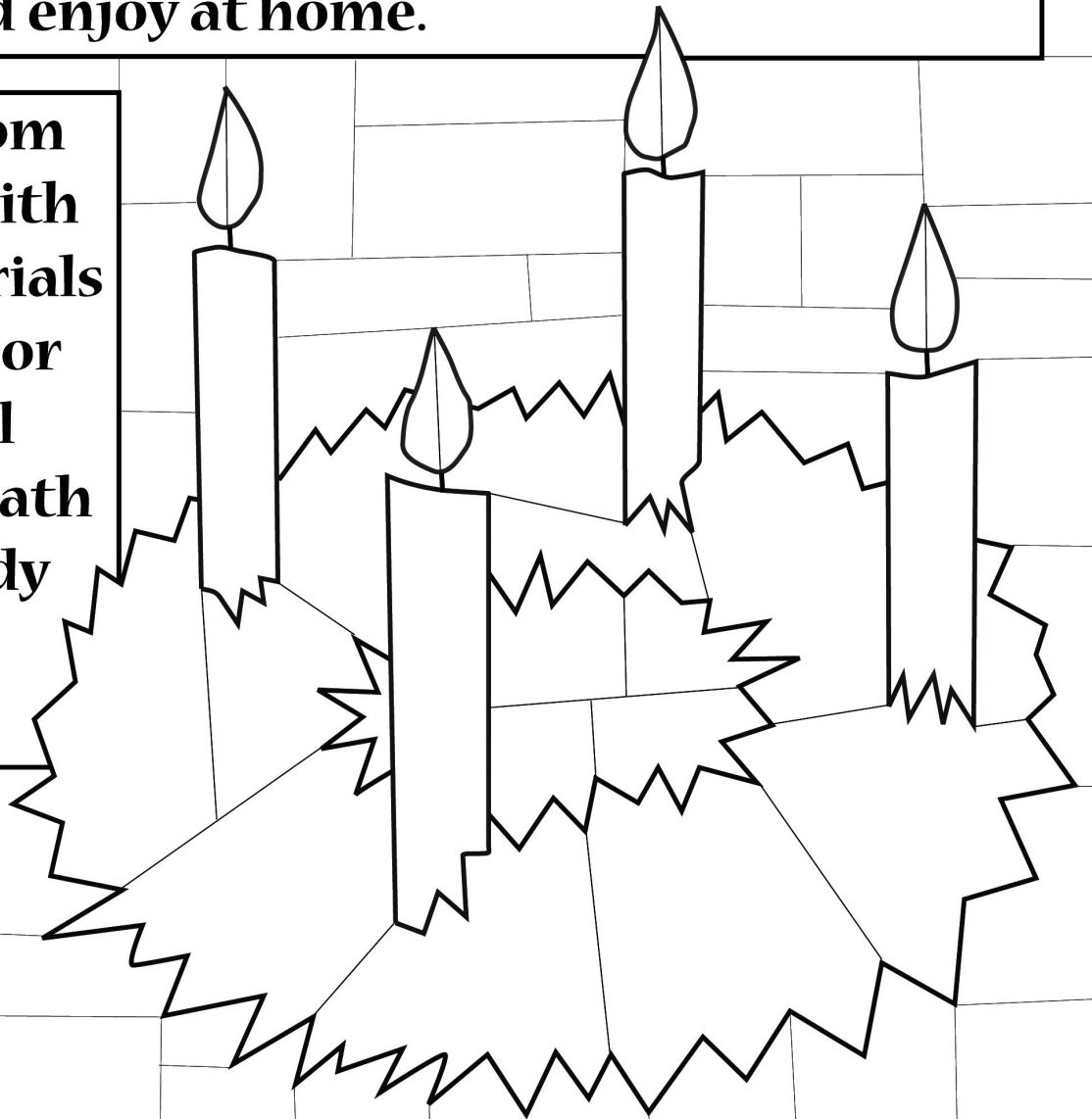


Advent Wreath Making

Sunday,
Nov. 27th,
After Service

Celebrate the start of the new church year and the Advent season by making an Advent wreath to use and enjoy at home.

Create from scratch with the materials provided, or give a well loved wreath you already have an update.





11/1 Ellen Zatolokin
 11/2 Loraine Stear
 11/3 Elaine Pearson
 11/6 Michael Varns
 11/8 Brent Canup

11/8 Eva Paulson
 Ward Varns
 11/13 Jordan Sailus
 11/18 John Cameron
 11/19 Janet Henkel
 11/22 Dennis Mahle
 11/24 Diana Canup
 Noah Christopherson
 Lorraine Varns
 11/25 Isabella Weller
 11/28 Lola Rohlfs



LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF

**LWR Kits Wrap-up
 Patty Oates**

Thanks to everyone who helped to make it another successful year for our Lutheran World Relief Kits project. We were able to assemble and send 105 School Kits and 107 Personal Care Kits! Our quilters were also able to make and send 15 quilts.

Our Kit assemblers and packers this year were JoAnn Adams, Elaine and George Anderson, Dianne Brundage, Marsha Grimstad, Nancy Janik, Sandy Kennedy, Andy Kurmas, Linda Marshall, Loretta Myers, Shirley Niesyto, and Patty and Bob Oates. Many thanks to all of these hard workers.

Our Monday Morning Quilters were JoAnn Adams, Penny Brugman, Janet Caudle and Maria Gilligan. If you have a sewing machine, you should consider joining this group. You can work at home if you prefer.

We thank those who delivered all of the boxes to Lutheran High Westland where they were loaded onto trucks to begin the next leg of their journey: Wolfgang Henkel, Bob Oates, Allan Charlton and Loraine Stear.

We also thank Thrivent for their generous donation of \$250 in the form of a gift card which was used to purchase notebooks and other school supplies and Provident Dentistry of Novi who donated 100 toothbrushes.

A special thanks to all of our diligent shoppers who go without individual recognition but without whom there would be no kits!



Members:

Toni Lewis	Chris Janik
Bill Davis	Diana Canup
Dave Rowe	Ward Varns
Keven Blaker	Dick Rudorffer
Ron Fisher	Ellen Zatolokin
Fran Copp	Delores Winquist
Larry Urevig	Carol Sterling
Gene Kohli	Eunice Gould
Diane Stanton	Eva Paulson
Lois Makee	Tammy Kilpatrick
Earl Hagen	Lillian Niemi
Mary Galloway	Jodi Oulette
Marlou Grudt	

Family and Friends

Richard Charlton	Erin Cameron
Barbara Camp	Patty & Pete Herman
Leeanne Stenson	Linda Steusloff
Greg Santavy	Kyle Soderlund
Ken Sandberg	Val Blanchett
Karen & Roy Juntunen	Marshall & Jessie Anderson
Barbara Trager	Jaden Henkel
Brent Canup Jr.	Barry Shiek
Brent Canup Sr.	Courtney Dimiceli
Pat Holland	Cheryl Cottongin
George Austin	Mardee Thomas
Jim Frattini	Rosalind McLendan
Susan Pearlman	Mary Rellinger
Val Burkhardt	Carol Collins
Bob Niesyto	Jeffrey Wetzel
Kristin Stoneback	
Jane Borsvold	



Serving in the Military including overseas:

Michael Jamieson (Nader)
Collin Doolan (Fisher)

Please send prayer list updates to the church office at om@stjohn-elca.org. Many Thanks to Pat Gransee for sending out cards to the people on our prayer concerns list. If you have someone on the list to whom you would like a card sent, contact the office. Thank you!



Altar Flowers

The Flower Chart is now located in the office area. If you would like to order flowers you may sign in there or you may send an email or call in your request to the office.

The request should show the date and designation (what you would like to say in the bulletin) for flower order. Or you could complete an envelope with all information and turn in with your payment to the office by placing in the offering trays. The cost of the flowers is \$35.00.

N O V E M B E R 2 0 2 2

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Church Office Hours: Monday— Thursday 9:30am—3:30pm 248-474-0584		1 8a Renaissance Academy 6p WAZA TC	2 8a Renaissance Academy 7p Succoth Church	3 8a Men's Breakfast 8a Renaissance Academy 10:30a Bible Academy	4 8a Renaissance Academy 7p Succoth Church	5 5p Succoth Church Event
6 10a Worship 11a Coffee Hour 12:30p Succoth Church 4p AA	7 10a Quilters 6p WAZA TC 6:30p HHAV	8 7a State Elections 8a Renaissance Academy 1p Prayer Shawl Ministry 6p Leadership Team 6p WAZA TC	9 8a Renaissance Academy 6p WAZA TC 7p WNW (Zoom) 7p Succoth Church	10 8a Men's Breakfast 8a Renaissance Academy 10:30a Bible Academy 6p WAZA TC	11 8a Renaissance Academy 4:30a NISU setup 7p Succoth Church	12 7a NISU 9a WAZA TC
13 10a Worship & Sunday School 11a Coffee Hour 12:00p Succoth Church 4p AA	14 10a Quilters 6p WAZA 6:30p HHAV	15 8a Renaissance Academy 6p WAZA TC	16 8a Renaissance Academy 6p WAZA TC 7p Succoth Church	17 8a Men's Breakfast 8a Renaissance Academy 10:30a Bible Academy 6p WAZA TC	18 8a Renaissance Academy 7p Succoth Church	19 9a WAZA TC 6pm Event in MPR
20 10a Worship 11a Coffee Hour 12:00p Succoth Church 4p AA	21 10a Quilters 6p WAZA 6:30p HHAV	22 8a Renaissance Academy 1p Prayer Shawl Ministry 6p WAZA TC	23 8a Renaissance Academy 6p WAZA TC 7p Succoth Church	24 9a Succoth Thanksgiving Service	25 8a Renaissance Academy 7p Succoth Church	26 9a WAZA TC
27 10a Worship & Sunday School 11a Coffee Hour 12:00p Succoth Church 4p AA	28 10a Quilters 6p WAZA 6:30p HHAV 7p St John Board Meeting	29 8a Renaissance Academy 7p Pastoral Support Committee meeting	30 8a Renaissance Academy 6p WAZA TC 6:30p WNW In-person 7p Succoth Church	For most to date calendar information see online calendar at http://www.stjohn-elca.org/calendar Calendar key: RA = Renaissance Academy WNW = Wednesday Nights Wherever HHAV =Hearts, Hands, and Voices BAC= Bethlehem Activity Center Bold Print= St John activities		



ST. JOHN
LUTHERAN CHURCH



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www.stjohn-elca.org



STAFF

Pastor
Office Manager
Director of Mission Advancement
Director of Music

Rev. Dr. Mark Fisher
Marie Cook
Ashleigh Altemann
Sean Michael Jackman

BOARD MEMBERS

John Dresden

Mark Switzer

LEADERSHIP TEAM

Worship and Music
Spiritual Development and Outreach
Mission Advancement
Member Care
Young Families and Children
Stewardship Of Resources
Communications

Janet Henkel
Kevin O'Brien
Ashleigh Altemann
Kris O'Brien
Karen Boczkaja
Dave Androvich
Elaine Pearson

Gilda Bingham

Tom Bosanko

Nancy Janik

Glenn Ming

The Staff at St. John is here to serve you. If you have questions or concerns, please give us a call; we will be happy to talk to you.

This issue was mailed on 10-27-2022

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NOTICE: The Wednesday Nights Wherever in person meeting will be held this month.
Wednesday November 30 @ 6:30pm
We hope you will come out and join in with food and fellowship exploring matters of faith and spirituality. Going forth this meeting will be held the last Wednesday of the month.
2nd Wednesday's each month is the Wednesday Nights Wherever Zoom meetings