



ST. JOHN
LUTHERAN CHURCH

THE HERALD

Volume 120, Issue 9

Welcomed in Christ. Called to community. Sent to serve.

September 2020

From the Council and Staff...

It's hard to believe we're approaching six months of life in a pandemic. We've learned a lot, and there is also much we don't yet know or understand. We, the Church Council and staff, have been encouraged by the St. John community's creativity and willingness to embrace change during this time. We've seen that we can still be a church community even though we're not gathering inside our building. We are thankful for the blessings of technology that have made it possible to connect like never before. We are also grateful for the amazing, continued support of the people of the St. John church community. Your prayers, words of encouragement, and financial contributions help to keep the ministry of St. John moving forward. Thank you!

As we look to the fall, we know that our church programming will look different. As the leadership of St. John carefully makes decisions about how to structure our fall, we keep our mission statement in front of us: *Welcomed in Christ. Called to community. Sent to serve.* We endeavor to balance communicating the gospel with providing a safe environment. We struggle with the reality that our practices must change and we know that as you read through our plans for this fall, you may feel the same way. We ask you to continue to pray for the church and its ministry, and are grateful for your support as we all approach the fall with patience and understanding, realizing that the church council and the staff are faithfully doing

their best to communicate the gospel and mitigate risk of exposure to COVID-19.

God's grace and peace to you all,

St. John Lutheran Church Council & Staff

Updates from the Council

Worship this Fall:

We have learned a lot about online worship and plan to continue providing online worship for the indefinite future. We will also worship outside as long as our weather permits. When we get deeper into the fall, the Church Council plans to begin by offering worship one week per month indoors. These worship services will look quite different: masks, social distancing, possibly no singing or communion, shorter worship services, and there will not be much opportunity for fellowshiping. But, they will be a wonderful chance to return to the sanctuary, to hear the organ and special music, and to see each other in person. Church Council will evaluate the need for these worship services and consider offering more opportunities. Please watch the newsletter and other communications in October for more information.

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Worship & Fellowship

New Member Orientation

If you are interested in joining St. John, we will have a new member orientation on Sundays, September 20 and 27. We'll plan on meeting via zoom, but will also check in with people about possibly meeting outside at St. John one Sunday. For more information, please contact Erin in the office at office@stjohnfargo.com or 701-232-8521.

Outdoor Worship

Sundays at 9:30am. Outdoor Worship is our goal for the Sundays until late fall/winter sets in. As we all know, weather could ruin this plan on any Sunday, and we would like you to get used to checking Facebook, emails, or the answering machine message at the church office for updated information the night before worship. We are also getting a new AM radio transmitter for those of you who want to stay in your cars and listen. In addition, **worship will be LIVE on Facebook**. Those of us who have been to outdoor worship have loved seeing each other. Everyone wears masks and we will continue to paint circles in the grass so family groups can sit together and keep social distance. Blessings to you all!

—St. John Staff

Please keep the following in mind when we worship outside:

- We will have a hybrid **lawn and parking lot** worship service. You are invited to bring your own lawn chairs or blankets and sit on the lawn while you worship with us. **Or**, you can drive into the parking lot and stay in your car if you prefer.
- **We encourage you to stay home if** you are high risk or if you are coughing and sneezing for any reason (even if it's just allergies). While outdoors and in cars is extremely low risk,

coughing and sneezing could add some risk for people around us, even outdoors.

- Please wear a facemask if possible, even while outdoors. St. John Lutheran's Church Council passed a resolution stating that the council "invites and encourages staff and members to wear facemasks in public when possible." Part of this is safety, but this is also about leadership. The CDC recommends that we wear facemasks when possible. This would be an opportunity for St. John to demonstrate leadership in this area by wearing facemasks while in public when possible.
- The building will be open for people to use the restrooms. We are asking that everyone wear a facemask while in the building, and that only one family uses the restroom at a time.
- "Weather permitting" in this case means that if it is rainy or too windy, we will not worship outdoors. We will do our best to publish any cancellation by 10:00pm the Saturday evening prior to worship. But, it would be best to check your email or our Facebook page or call the office before you leave if you're unsure.
- Finally, this will be a different worship experience, not necessarily a better worship experience. We are not encouraging people to mingle or to shake hands. We won't do communion. If you are going to talk to people you haven't seen for a while, please keep a 6-foot distance, even outdoors or if trying to talk through a car window. We have to remember that even though we may be comfortable with a shorter distance, others may not be. (And, as Midwesterners, we may not tell you how we feel.)



Worship & Fellowship Cont'd

Volunteer Opportunity:

Outdoor Worship

On Sundays that we have outdoor worship (weather permitting), we're looking for volunteers to hand out bulletins, guide people to the circles in the grass, help set up, etc. Volunteers will need to arrive at 9:00am.

If interested, please email Dawn at: ldpapenfuss@gmail.com or dawn@stjohnfargo.com or text at 701-388-4200. Let her know which Sundays you can help and she will get back to you if we do outdoor worship those days.

Live Online Worship

We've had wonderful online attendance for worship throughout the pandemic, and it has proved to be a good option for those who are out of town or sheltering in place. St. John will continue to offer online worship on **Sundays at 9:30am** and **Wednesdays at 7:00pm**. There are three options for attending worship remotely:

Facebook Live: To join us for worship on Facebook Live, you do not need a Facebook account, but you can create one for free at [facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com). Go to **facebook.com/stjohnfargo/live**. If you're logged in with an account, we invite you to click "like" under the big picture at the top. If you have any problems getting connected with Facebook Live, give Jeremy a call sometime during the week and he will be happy to help get you set up!

Worship on Zoom:

Join the zoom meeting on your computer by copying and pasting this link into the URL box on your browser: <https://zoom.us/j/96954699012?pwd=VmJSV3F0SzBoUURqQlITR1ZJaDBFZz09>

or by phone by following the instructions below. You can click on the link at stjohnfargo.com.

Worship by Phone:

Dial: 1-312-626-6799

It will ask for your meeting ID.

Dial: 969 5469 9012 then press #

It will ask for your participant ID.

Press #

It will ask for your meeting password.

Dial: 502823 then press #

It will tell you that you are in the meeting, and how many other people are listening by phone. In just a moment, you will hear the service. You will not be able to talk back. Thank you for joining us for worship! If you would like to stay for fellowship hour, please stay on the line.

Zoom Fellowship Hour

After worship on **Sundays (around 10:10am)**, everyone is invited to a virtual Fellowship Hour. This will be a time to talk, laugh, catch up, and maybe make a new connection! Stay for 10 minutes or the whole hour, we all can appreciate a little bit more togetherness!

For Fellowship Hour, please use the same Zoom information as listed in the "Live Online Worship" article on this page to log into Zoom on your computer or to call in by phone. If you're already logged in for worship and would like to attend fellowship, just stay logged in.

New to Zoom?

If you have trouble logging into Zoom, feel free to call or email the church during the workweek at 701-232-8521 or office@stjohnfargo.com. One of the staff can assist you.

Worship & Fellowship Cont'd

Adult Forums

Adult forums will return in September with a series on World Religions. If you're interested in hearing more about Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, and other religions, please join us on Zoom at 10:15am on Sunday mornings starting in mid-September. For more information, please contact the office at office@stjohnfargo.com or 701-232-8521.

MUGG Night

Men Under God's Guidance

All men are invited to a virtual MUGG Night. On **Monday, September 14 at 5:30pm** join us over Zoom for a time of fellowship. You can join the meeting by copying and pasting this link into your browser: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84224519213?pwd=MUD6VTVGc0VtIjpvU01pQjVVGdDNNQT09>

Women & Wine

Thursday, September 25 at 6:30pm outdoors at Marcia Bettenhausen's: 409 15th Ave S, Fargo. All women are invited for a time of food, drinks, and fellowship! This month, there will also be a special pour painting session!

Please wear a mask and bring your own chair and snacks/drinks. To allow for social distancing, please RSVP either on Facebook, by calling Marcia, or by contacting the office. (701-232-8521 or office@stjohnfargo.com).

Wednesday Bible Study

Wednesdays at 2:00pm on Zoom. Everyone is welcome to join us! As of August 12, we have been studying the book of Jonah. Here is the Zoom link: <https://zoom.us/j/93602092643?pwd=MndGcW5KdlBzVkrhS0Z6T29UY0Zudz09>

Thursday Bible Study

Thursdays at 10:30am on Zoom. Please join us for this pastor-led Bible study as we dive deeper into the text for the coming Sunday.

Here is the Zoom link: [https://zoom.us/j/91458607719?](https://zoom.us/j/91458607719?pwd=cFY1NkkrNFZUcitRRkZ3L1g3V0dOdz09)

[pwd=cFY1NkkrNFZUcitRRkZ3L1g3V0dOdz09](https://zoom.us/j/91458607719?pwd=cFY1NkkrNFZUcitRRkZ3L1g3V0dOdz09)

Daily Devotions

A word of thanks to all the St. John members who have written devotions for our community of faith during this time of social distancing!

If you are interested in sharing a devotion please contact either Pastor Brian or Pastor Erick. Thank you for sharing Christ's love with others!

—Pastor Brian

Daily Devotions can be found at stjohnfargo.com or on our Facebook page. To get them emailed to you, please email office@stjohnfargo.com.

Join the Facebook Group!

Want to join the **St. John Friends** Facebook Group?? This is a separate page from our public and formal "St. John Lutheran Church - Fargo, N.D." Facebook page. To find the group, log into Facebook and in the search bar, type in "St. John Friends." The group should pop up in your search results. Click on the group, and there will be an option to request to join. Once your request is approved by one of our Admins, you're good to go! This is a fun Facebook group because members may share more personal things about something in their family or at church. We include pictures of events. It's casual and "real."



Children, Youth, & Family

Blessing of the Backpacks

It's back-to-school time again, and even though school will look a bit different this year, we want to pray over you! If you're a student this fall, whether you're a child or a child at heart, bring your backpack to worship on **Sunday, September 13 at 9:30am**. Whether you're at outdoor worship or worshipping with us online, you're invited to receive a blessing for the coming school year (while observing social distancing, of course)!



Cross+Walk Sunday School

Cross+Walk Sunday school has always had a focus on family faith formation, and this year we get to double down on family. Thanks to Zoom, we will still get to meet as one large group, for a short time of songs, stories, and a bit of silliness. But where this digital environment really shines is in Family Small Groups. You and your family will have a setting to sit together and open the Bible. We put together step-by-step guides to walk you through a simple Bible activity and to talk together about the promises of God for you and the world. And you'll be paired up with another family or two for a comfortable and intimate group to walk through this together.

Cross+Walk Sunday School will start on **Sunday, September 27 from 10:15am-10:45am on Zoom**. Parents/guardians, you're invited to an **orientation meeting on Zoom** on either Wednesday, September 16 at 8:30pm or Sunday, September 20 at 6:30pm. Please sign up for one meeting or the other on Signup Genius: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30e0a4aadaa2aa4f85-crosswalk1> or by contacting Erin at ebjerke@stjohnfargo.com or 701-232-8521.

Blessings,

Erin Bjerke, Youth Education Director

Confirmation

There will be a confirmation parent and student meeting on **Wednesday September 23rd at 6:00pm** on Zoom. A zoom link will be emailed out to each family a couple of days before our meeting. Families will also receive a letter with that zoom link and other important information prior to the meeting. If for any reason your family is unable to attend the Zoom meeting on September 23rd please let Pastor Brian know and he will contact you directly about what was covered and answer any questions you may have.

Confirmation is scheduled to begin this year on the first Wednesday of October (Oct. 7th). We are planning on meeting virtually on Zoom to begin the year and we intend to continue to stay in conversation with the St. John council and the St. John COVID-19 Task Force regarding the possibility of meeting in person if we believe at some point it can be done safely. If you have any questions, please contact Pastor Brian at pastorbrianhansen@hotmail.com. We are looking forward to meeting with you all on September 23rd at 6:00pm! See you soon!

—Pastor Brian

Milestones Ministry

Upcoming Milestones:

Blessing of the Backpacks (all ages): Sunday, September 13 during worship at 9:30am

Confirmation Bibles (6th Graders): Sunday, September 20 during worship at 9:30am

Entering Sunday School (3-year-olds): Sunday, September 27

Bible (2nd Grade): October 11 & 18

For more information, please contact Erin at ebjerke@stjohnfargo.com or 701-232-8521.

Children, Youth, & Family Cont'd

A Note from Jeremy...

What a crazy summer, and now school is starting again for our youth! Erin and I have been spending time this summer talking about how we can best serve youth and families during what seems to be a never ending time of social distance. We're looking for ways not just to "make do" with an online format for things, but ways to take advantage of a rough situation. Being able to meet online at any time has allowed us to make connections we couldn't otherwise do! We're looking forward to this upcoming year and excited to see how God works in new ways.

Peace,

Jeremy Maahs, Youth Programming Director

"Little Blessings"

On Sunday mornings, keep an eye out for our short video series "Little Blessings" on our Facebook page (facebook.com/stjohnfargo) and YouTube channel! Jeremy and Erin will share the "Little Blessings" that have happened in the life of our congregation during the past week.

We'd love to hear from you! If you have a "Little Blessing" that you'd like to share with the rest of the congregation (and the Internet), let us know. Email Erin at ebjerke@stjohnfargo.com.

Subscribe to our YouTube channel! (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCXrwmohWpPtMZblfHODVAOw>) When you subscribe to the St. John Youth YouTube channel, your kids can easily find all of our past Cross+Walk and children's message videos.

Family Game Time

Please join us on Zoom for some fun for the whole family! On **Sunday September 13, from 4:00pm-5:00pm**, everyone is invited to join us for some

Jackbox games. You'll need a computer or tablet to connect to Zoom and a smartphone or tablet to use as your game controller. Here is the Zoom link: <https://zoom.us/j/93085213181?pwd=emIKd0FONkNsajJURzl5ZWJseGx1dz09>

Questions? Email Erin at ebjerke@stjohnfargo.com.

Kids' Coloring Time

Tuesdays from 2:30pm-3:15pm on Zoom.

Erin will be hosting a time for kids to get together over Zoom and color! Erin will email out a coloring sheet that you can use, or use your own. This will be a time to catch up with each other and hang out while we do something creative.

Here is the Zoom link: <https://zoom.us/j/98851753584?pwd=alB3WmlhVEoxWnQ2UlpBd2lzL3ZoQT09>

Parent Small Group

Next meeting: Monday, September 14 from 8:30pm-9:30pm on Zoom. This is a time for parents to connect with one another and talk about what's on their mind, including the unique challenges of parenting an elementary schooler during the pandemic, and take time to center themselves and pray.

Here is the Zoom link: <https://zoom.us/j/91826363600?pwd=MWV5VExidVF5bTFvSkhaY2RCU0ptdz09>

We will continue to meet about once per month in the late evening. For more information, please watch emailed announcements or email Erin at ebjerke@stjohnfargo.com.

Thank you to Kate Syverson for facilitating this group!

Children, Youth, & Family Cont'd

Preschool News

St. John Christian Preschool is pleased to announce that we intend to open this fall. A great deal of planning and consideration have gone into our environment, policies, and procedures to keep children and staff safe. We continue to watch updates and changes in recommendations so it is difficult to give an absolute clear view of what preschool will look like in September.

Here is what we know now:

- **Each family will be required to sign a COVID-19 liability waiver in order for their child to attend.**
- We will have temperature checks and questions when you arrive with your child each day.
- Teachers will wear face shields when in close proximity to students.
- Children are not required to wear masks.
- If any child or staff member has a positive COVID test, we will follow the guidelines from the ND Department of Health for cleaning and required quarantining of those exposed.
- Our center's ability to stay open will rely on open communication between staff and families. If anyone in your household has tested positive, is awaiting test results, or has been exposed, we ask that you inform us and do not send your child until you have a negative test result.

- Our sick child policy will be more restrictive. You will receive details in the parent handbook prior to the parent meeting.
- There will be 2 main classrooms with 2 teachers and 13 children in each class.
- Each class will spend time in their home classroom, drama room, literacy room, and Fellowship Hall and as much outdoor time as we can.
- Classes will not mingle and students will stay with their teachers and group at all times.
- Parents will be allowed in the building with masks to drop off and pick up children for the first two weeks.

Each classroom will be assigned a door to enter and exit. One classroom will enter and exit using the main building doorway and the other class will use the East door to lower exposure. Over time we will transition to drop off and pick up at the doorway to reduce the number of people in the building.

—Jana Bruhschwein, Preschool Director



Announcements

St. John Foundation Board Meeting

If you have a project or special need, please consider making a funding request to the St. John Foundation. Applications for funding requests can be completed online: <http://stjohnfargo.com/ministries/st-john-foundation/> or on paper by contacting the church office at 701-232-8521.

Requests are due Tuesday, September 1 at

4:00pm. The Foundation Board will meet that day at 5:00pm over Zoom.

Music Notes

The Church Council, Dawn Papenfuss, and the rest of the staff are doing their best to figure out how we might gather as choirs this fall. While we may not be able to do everything, it may be a great chance to learn something new. We hope to have an announcement soon!

Announcements Cont'd

LWR School Kits

School Days are coming for kids around the world. St. John supports the international work of Lutheran World Relief (LWR) by collecting supplies for school kits that are shipped and distributed through LWR. Most of the school bags that St. John put together in 2019 were sent to Peru.

We invite you to start gathering up the supplies listed below. We will have a box available on Sundays when we meet for outdoor worship to drop your donations in. Please contact the church office with questions (701-232-8521, office@stjohnfargo.com). Thank you for your support of Lutheran World Relief!

School supply list:

- (4) 70-sheet notebooks
- (1) 30cm or cm/inch ruler
- (1) pencil sharpener
- (1) blunt scissors
- (5) unsharpened #2 pencils with erasers
- (5) black or blue ballpoint pens (no gel ink)
- (1) box of 16 or 24 crayons
- (1) 2 ½" eraser

These supplies will be packed in school bags supplied by St John.

AmazonSmile

Did you know that you can donate to St. John by shopping on Amazon.com? It's easy! When you do your Amazon shopping, just go to [smile.Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com/smile) and choose St. John Lutheran Church as your charitable organization. Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of eligible AmazonSmile purchases to St. John!

Char Grant Nominated for Senior of the Year Award

St. John member Char Grant has been nominated for Bethany Retirement Living's annual Senior of the Year Awards!

The Senior of the Year Award ceremony will be held virtually this year on September 24, 2020. This ceremony recognizes nominated individuals age 65 and older who have made a significant impact in the areas of Business, Community Involvement, Education/Arts, Faith, or Healthcare/Wellness in the counties of Cass or Richland in ND or Clay in MN.

EaND Synod Assembly

Pastor Brian and Pastor Erick both participated in the Eastern North Dakota Synod assembly via zoom this year. They were joined by Joel Kangas, Larry Papenfuss, Hannah Papenfuss, and Mike Williams as lay representatives. The assembly elected Eastern North Dakota's new bishop, Tessa Moon-Leiseth (incidentally, the first female bishop of North Dakota). Originally from McVille, she'll be taking over in a couple of months.

Groups & Committees

The Church Council, along with the St. John COVID Task Force, are considering how we might safely meet in small groups inside the building later this fall. We will let you know how we will proceed (and what we as members need to do when we re-enter the building) sometime in September. We encourage you to reach out to your group members and committees and consider meeting virtually or socially distanced outside. It would be a great way to keep the momentum going in our various ministries.

September 2020

St. John Lutheran Church

6	7	8	9	10	11	12
9:30 AM OUTDOOR WORSHIP			2:00 PM Wednesday Bible Study (Zoom)	10:30 AM Bible Study (Zoom)		
9:30 AM Worship (Facebook Live)			7:00 PM Wednesday Worship (Facebook Live)			
10:10 AM Fellowship (Zoom)						
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Blessing of the Backpacks	5:30 PM MUGG Night (Zoom)	6:30 PM - 8:30 PM Church Council (Zoom)	2:00 PM Wednesday Bible Study (Zoom)	10:30 AM Bible Study (Zoom)		
9:30 AM OUTDOOR WORSHIP	8:30 PM - 9:30 PM Parent Small Group (Zoom)		7:00 PM Wednesday Worship (Facebook Live)			
9:30 AM Worship (Facebook Live)			8:30 PM Cross+Walk Parent Meeting (Zoom)			
10:10 AM Fellowship (Zoom)						
4:00 PM - 5:00 PM Family Game Time (Zoom)						
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
New Member Orientation	5:00 PM Newsletter Deadline		2:00 PM Wednesday Bible Study (Zoom)	10:30 AM Bible Study (Zoom)		
Presentation of Confirmation Bibles			6:00 PM Confirmation Parent/ Youth Meeting (Zoom)	6:30 PM Women & Wine		
9:30 AM OUTDOOR WORSHIP			7:00 PM Wednesday Worship (Facebook Live)			
9:30 AM Worship (Facebook Live)						
10:15 AM Adult Forum (Zoom)						
10:45 AM Fellowship (Zoom)						
6:30 PM Cross+Walk Parent M. (Zoom)						
27	28	29	30			
New Member Orientation			2:00 PM Wednesday Bible Study (Zoom)			
9:30 AM OUTDOOR WORSHIP			7:00 PM Wednesday Worship (Facebook Live)			
9:30 AM Worship (Facebook Live)						
10:15 AM Adult Forum (Zoom)						
10:15 AM Cross+Walk Sunday School Starts (Zoom)						
10:15 AM Entering Sunday School Learning Session						
10:45 AM Fellowship (Zoom)						

Sundays At-a-Glance

This is our anticipated schedule for Sundays in starting in mid-September and going through October. Please note that it is subject to change due to weather or the spread of COVID-19.

9:30am: Worship (Outdoors & Online)

10:15am-10:45am: Adult Forum (Zoom)

10:15am-10:45am: Cross+Walk Sunday School (Zoom)

10:45am: Fellowship (Zoom)

Worship, Adult Forum, and Fellowship will all be accessible using the same Zoom link.



St. John Church Council

2019-2021	Amanda Holt	President
2019-2021	Charlotte Ronson	Vice President
2019-2021	Ron Twedt	Vice President
2019-2021	Gail Reiersen	Worship & Music
2019-2021	AJ Klein	Membership
2020-2022	Kate Syverson	Youth Education
2020-2022	Michael Westhoff	Social Concerns
2020-2022	Sadie Thompson	Youth Programming
2020-2022	Mike Williams	Property

Contact Us

St. John Lutheran Church

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701-232-8521

email: office@stjohnfargo.com

website: www.stjohnfargo.com

The Ministry Team of St. John:

All the People of God, along with

Senior Pastor: Rev. Dr. Erick J. Thompson

Associate Pastor: Rev. Brian Hansen

Director of Music/Organist: Dawn Papenfuss

Youth Education Director & Office Secretary: Erin Bjerke

Youth Programming Director: Jeremy Maahs

Office & Finance Manager: John Bell

Facility Assistant: Jordan Erickson

St. John Christian Preschool Director: Jana Bruhschwein

Preschool Teachers: Kellie Knodel, Cheryl Dietz, Katie Mare, Katie Maple, Michele Wangen

Accompanists: Suzanne Schultz & Marcia Bettenhausen

Handbell Director: Jessica Westgard Larson

Articles accepted before

5:00pm on September 21st for the October 2020 *Herald*.