

# GOOD NEWS FROM ST JOHN

Feb./March  
2024

## NEWS FOR ALL

### SUNDAY WORSHIP

9:00am

Sunday School  
9:15am—10:00am  
(during the school year)

Holy Communion  
1st & 3rd Sunday

### PASTOR

Gail Sowell  
Office Hours: 9am-1pm  
Tuesday-Friday  
*(And by appointment)*

### SECRETARY'S HOURS

Monday-Friday  
9:00-1:00

### ADDRESS

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Items for print **MUST** be submitted by the 20th of the preceding month.

### *Pastor's Ponderings*

Most of you know that I'll be retiring on my 25<sup>th</sup> ordination anniversary: June 23, 2024, 10:00, joint worship service at St. John. Please save the date! This is a milestone I wasn't sure I'd reach. For the last couple of years it's taken me longer to do things, and I get tired much more easily. But by the grace of God it looks like I'll make it!

Some of you may not know that on the same day, immediately after the retirement service, I will be marrying my best friend. Mike Blank and I have known each other for over six years. It's been mostly by phone, since he lives in the Milwaukee area. We were aware of a growing affection between us, but it surprised both of us when we spoke of it. I took him out to lunch on his birthday, December 30<sup>th</sup>, and before we left the restaurant I said, "I love you." I wasn't sure how he felt—and I was quite blown away when he said, "I know. I love you too."

At our age, when you find the person you want to share the rest of your life with, you want that shared life to begin as soon as possible. Mike has insisted that I finish my full-time commitment to this parish before the wedding, and I know he's right. (He's right about most things!) (Yes, this is love talking!) He served as an ELCA pastor in the past, but his congregations weren't as kind and caring as St. John and St. Stephen, and he left ordained ministry. — *I am so very thankful for the ministry I've shared with "my" two congregations!* For 14-1/2 years I've felt supported and appreciated!

We met through his sister-in-law Janet, my dear friend from Via de Cristo since 2011. For most of the last 15 years, I've asked God frequently to bring a man into my life. Requirements: he must love God, love dogs, and not smoke. A few years ago I stopped praying for that. When I told Mike about it, he pointed out that God had already brought a man into my life—it just took us a while to recognize it.

Details for June 23<sup>rd</sup> are falling into place, and we'll share them with you as they unfold. One thing: **NO GIFTS PLEASE!** We'll be combining two households, already have everything we need, and truly have no room for more. — If you feel a need to make a gift, please designate it to Lutheran World Relief.

Our Lenten journey to the cross continues, and Jesus continues to show us what it means to "take up our cross and follow him." May Lenten blessings be yours!

# St. John Family News!



Photo capture by Bonnie Bargender. Thanks Bonnie!

The Sunday School students enjoyed playing a variety of games as their “SOUP-ER BOWL” food drive came to a conclusion on February 11.

Many thanks to those who donated to this effort. Because of your generosity, 4 boxes of non-perishable food items were delivered to Circle of Joy!

## Upcoming Easter Fun!

There’s going to be an EGG HUNT on Easter Sunday after church! Students, make sure to join us for this part of our RESURECTION CELEBRATION!



\*If “somebunnies” would like to donate candy or coins to put in eggs please let Bonnie or Marianne know. Thank you!

The ANNUAL MEETING of St. John ELCA was held on January 28, 2024 The following FUNDRAISERS are scheduled to take place in 2024:

- \*Brat Fries—5/31/24 and 6/7/24
- \*Breakfast in the Park—6/15/24
- \*Steam Show—8/23/24 through 8/25/24 Motion made, seconded & passed to have ONE stand at the Steam Show. Will not have the Food Stand at the upcoming show.
- \*Garage Sale—8/23/24 through 8/24/24
- \*Pancake Brunch—10/12/24



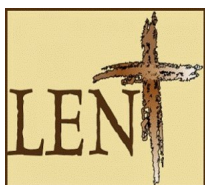
From the minutes . . .

So save these dates and join us! ALL helping hands are appreciated, and you will be blessed with friendly fellowship and the satisfaction of a job well-done as you participate.

Transition and Call Teams were reviewed: Volunteers Mary Jo and Cindy.

Pastor’s last day is in June. Discussed there will be a joint service at St. John, will have a potluck (women of the church to organize) and the meat will be catered in.

Discussion on Pastor staying in the parsonage and rent would be a “donation”.



ALL are invited and encouraged to join us as we continue in our Lenten Journey. Each Wednesday during Lent you are invited to join us for **Soup Supper at 5pm** followed by **Worship at 6pm**. These Mid-week gatherings will be held at:

- St. John on March 6th (Women hosting) and 20th (seeking volunteers yet).
- St. Stephen on March 13th.

Palm Sunday is March 24th and **Palm Sunday Brunch** will be served following the Worship Service until 11:30am. Watch for sign-up sheets!



Join us for Holy Week:

Maundy Thursday Communion Worship—March 28, at St. John, 6pm (no Soup Supper)  
 Good Friday Worship—March 29; St. Stephen at 12:30pm AND St. John at 6pm

Celebrate our Lord's Glorious Resurrection with us!

St. Stephen: 7am-Sunrise Worship 8am-Breakfast  
 St. John: 9am-Easter Worship



## St. John WOMEN of the ELCA

The next **General Meeting** of the Women is Sunday, March 17 immediately following the Worship service.  
**Bible Study** has continued to meet monthly, the next study is March 12th at St. Stephen at 1pm.

The 2024 Officers are as follows:

President-Shirley Rosien	Sunshine Ministry-Lavone Runge, Sue Robers, Judy Totzke
Vice President-Pam Stahel	Altar Guild-Judy Totzke
Secretary-Naomi Sebold	Funeral Contact-Shirley Rosien
Treasurer-Mary Jo Werner	

**It's all in your perspective . . .**

When Forest Gump died, he stood in front of St. Peter at the Pearly Gates. St. Peter said "Welcome, Forest, we've heard a lot about you." He continued "Unfortunately, it's getting pretty crowded up here and we find that we now have to give people an entrance examination before we let them in. "Okay" said Forrest. "I hope it's not too hard. I've already been through a test. My momma used to say, "Life is like a final exam. It's hard."

"Yes, Forest, I know. But this test is only three questions. Here they are."

- 1) Which two days of the week begin with the letter 'T'?
- 2) How many seconds are in a year?
- 3) What is God's first name?
- 4) "Well sir," said Forest, "The first one is easy. Which two days of the week begin with the letter 'T'? Today and Tomorrow."
- 5) St. Peter looked surprised and said, "Well, that wasn't the answer I was looking for, but you have a good point. I give you credit for that answer."

"The next question," said Forest, "How many seconds in a year? Twelve."

"Twelve?" said St. Peter, surprised and confused.

"Yes sir. January 2nd, February 2nd, March 2nd . . ."

St. Peter interrupted him. "I see what you mean. I'll have to give you credit for that one, too."

"And the last question," said Forest, "What is God's first name? It's Andy."

"Andy?" said St. Peter, in shock. "How did you come up with 'Andy'?"

"I learned it in church. We used to sing about it." Forest broke into song, "Andy walks with me, Andy talks with me, Andy tells me I am his own."

St. Peter opened the gate to heaven and said, "Run, Forest, Run!"



## Reflections from Rose

What a roller coaster ride the weather has been! Setting record highs in the 60's followed by single digit temps the very next day! It's kind of exciting, you never know what's coming next!

Speaking of surprises, what wonderful news it is about Pastor Gail's upcoming wedding! Retirement was going to be a bit difficult (she's been putting it off ...). It has been her joy to serve here at St. John & St. Stephen. It's been a very bittersweet finish line for her to think about crossing. It's also been MY great joy to work alongside her and have her as my very dear soul-sister/friend. All the adventures we've shared. All the joys, trials, challenges, and prayers together. A very sweet chapter in our earthly journey. So very glad that God brought our paths together.

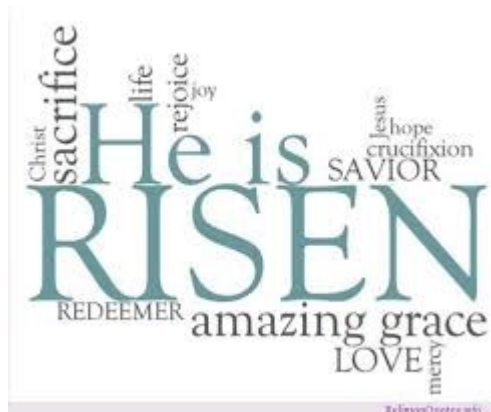
NOW she stands at the beginning of a brand new EXCITING chapter, and together we rejoice! It's been my privilege to get to know Mike as a friend a little bit over time. He's kind, smart, has a great sense of humor and a heart for God. He really enjoys music (and cool cars). Mike has been kind enough to drive us to the airport (and pick us up) while we were on adventure a time or two. And now, he obviously has a heart for Gail and she is "head-over heels" twitterpated with him (in LOVE). Remember the "Bambi" movie?

James 1: 17 "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows"

I rejoice over the good gift of this blossoming relationship between Gail & Mike, as well as the wonderful gift of having Gail in my life.

Ephesians 2: 8-9 speaks of another unspeakably wonderful GIFT from God that He brings us through His son Jesus Christ, His life, death on the cross, and resurrection "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.

Blessings as you walk through this reflective season of Lent and anticipate Easter Joy!



**GOOD NEWS**

St. John Lutheran Church ELCA  
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Edgar, WI 54426

We're on the Web  
[www.stjohnelcaedgar.org](http://www.stjohnelcaedgar.org)

**February / March 2024**



**Deadline for April 2024 News  
March 25th**

**See Inside for Articles:**

- Page 1 Pastor's Ponderings
- Page 2 St. John Family News
- Page 3 S.S. Soup-er Bowl  
Holy Week / Easter  
St. John Women of the ELCA
- Page 4 Reflections



*St. John/St. Stephen Joint Mission Statement:*

*"Saints united to be the body of Christ in the world, freed by grace to live faithfully, witness boldly, and serve joyfully."*