

GOOD NEWS FROM ST JOHN

August
2019

NEWS FOR ALL

Pastor's Ponderings



Summer SUNDAY WORSHIP

8:30am

Sunday School
8:45am—9:30am
(during the school year)

Holy Communion
1st & 4th Sunday

PASTOR

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

SECRETARY'S HOURS

Monday-Friday
9:00-1:00

ADDRESS

120500 County Road N
Edgar, WI 54426

PHONE/EMAIL

715-352-2524

EMERGENCY PHONE

715-352-2492

stjohnelca@gmail.com

WEBSITE

www.stjohnelcaedgar.org

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

On July 30, 2008, I adopted my adult son, "Edward." He'd been coming to worship at Calvary for almost a year. I'll never forget the first time I saw him—he was with our sound-board man, and I decided to greet him after the service. He literally ran from me. That was my first clue to the fact that he was one very wounded young man.

Two weeks later he returned, and I caught up with him long enough to welcome him and introduce myself. I noticed that he had only one eye and was extremely thin. A very wounded young man indeed, and in need of some TLC.

Over the next couple of months I got to know him better. His story was very sad. His parents never married; his mother used drugs while pregnant (probably the cause of his missing eye); he lived in the basement of an apartment with his grandmother, two uncles, and three tarantulas! He showed me an old video where he was riding a trike, and his father said, "Look at the little freak!" In another video he was drinking beer—with his father—at age 13.

One Sunday he asked if he could play the piano "up front" after worship. Everyone there was amazed at his ability to create music—he was a natural! Then he moved to the organ; he loved to hang out in the nave (the sanctuary) for hours, playing with his eye closed. For him, music was truly an escape.

When I first met him he was 20 years old. He hadn't graduated from high school; his learning disabilities, mental illness, and negative social behaviors kept him from using the help that was offered. He was a prime example of a student who kept "moving up" from one grade to the next because no one wanted to hold him back for another year. He dabbled in drugs, drank whenever he could, engaged in petty thievery, lost job after job because of his irresponsible behavior. He was going nowhere fast—and the better I got to know him, the more I began to love him. I really wanted to help him change his life.

Edward is 3/16 Oneida, and the Oneidas take care of their own. He had access to medical, dental, and mental health care. For months I took him to literally dozens of appointments at the medical center for the Oneida Nation. He had a marvelous counselor who was able to identify issues that needed work; we probably saw her 12-15 times before he decided he wasn't going back. I learned that without the counseling he'd never surmount his multiple diagnoses of mental illness.

(continued on next page)

Pastor's Ponderings

Somewhere during this time I asked him if he'd like to be adopted. He lit up! No one had ever really wanted him before. From the date we filed the paperwork to the day of the adoption itself, we spent a lot of time shopping. Extra food—things he could take home to his Grandma's apartment; and clothes, shoes, an electric toothbrush.

My mother bought him a computer as a welcome into the family. I let him order a dozen DVDs he wanted; we spend a lot of evenings watching *Animusic* and the Trans-Siberian Orchestra. He didn't have a driver's license; I let him practice with my car, and on his third try he passed the driving test.

Adoption Day came, July 30, 2008. A number of people from Calvary were at the courthouse, and we had a reception back at the church. Sadly, the majority of members couldn't understand why I wanted to adopt him, because he was "weird," "scary," "too different." They couldn't see him as a child of God.

He moved in with me. I'd had the basement redone so he had a place all his own. After a couple of weeks, during which he'd been sleeping in his clothes, I told him we needed to do some shopping. This was our conversation: "Edward, we need to get you some jammies." "What's jammies?" "PJ's." "What's PJ's?" "Pajamas." "What's pajamas?" -- Here was a 21-year-old man who didn't know what pajamas are. All his life he'd slept in his clothes, because he never knew when his father or one of his uncles would come home drunk and he'd have to run, sometimes for his life.

That was a turning point in my understanding of my new son. We had virtually no common ground. It became sort of a race: could the love and healthy "stuff" I was showering on him let him know he could choose a better life before his backsliding to drugs and alcohol took him over again?

I lost the race. Shortly after Christmas of that first year he said he was craving the drugs he'd used (pot and his Grandma's supply of pain meds). I told him he couldn't live with me while using drugs. He moved out.

For the better part of a year I had given Edward every benefit of a healthy life, so many alternatives to the neglect and abuse of his first 19 years. It wasn't enough. As we approach the 11th anniversary of the adoption, I grieve for a life so broken that my love and passionate desire to help couldn't even make a dent. I've seen him only twice since moving to Edgar in 2009. He is now, as he has always been, in God's hands.

Are you wondering why I spent two pages on this sad story? It makes me think of God, who showers us with blessings of all kinds, including his amazing grace and eternal love in this world and the next—and how many people are unable and/or unwilling to yield to him. The turning point for me with Edward was the pajamas. Millions of people don't know who/what God is because they've never been told, never been shown. God makes the rain fall on the righteous and the unrighteous (Matthew 4:45); how often do we, who should be "the righteous," neglect to give thanks to God for *all* he has done, is doing, and promises yet to do for us. How sad that telling others the good news of God in Jesus Christ is so rarely a priority in our lives.

One of our Lenten hymns (#96 in the LBW, the green hymnal) begins with these words: *Your heart, O God, is grieved, we know, by every evil, every woe; upon your cross-forsaken Son our death is laid, and peace is won.* I'm sad for God. I'm sad for all the Edwards in the world.

—Pastor Gail



RAFFLE And the WINNERS Are!

CONGRATULATIONS to these folks whose names were drawn Sunday, July 21, immediately following the worship service as WINNERS of our "Celebrating 100 Seasons" PACKER Raffle.

- 1st Place: 2 Packer Pre-season Tickets!** For Thursday, August 29, 7pm at Lambeau Field
Kansas City CHIEFS at PACKERS Winner: *Ashley Nelson*
- 2nd Place: Signed PACKER FOOTBALL** Winner: *Sue Huss*
- 3rd Place: \$75.00 Cenex GIFT CARD** Winner: *Jody Kirsch*
- 4th Place: framed PHOTOGRAPH of Aaron RODGERS** Winner: *Ann Bonsall*
- 5th Place: Packers/Vikings line-up FRAMED PHOTOGRAPH** Winner: *Pam Lenardt*
- 6th Place: Queen-size Quilt, Handmade by St. John Quilters** Winner: *Shirley Rosien*

However, these were not the only winners in this RAFFLE. St. John's Sunday School will be blessed by flood damage repair in their Sunday School wing, and the Edgar Community will be blessed by the \$200 donation made to Edgar's Circle of Joy Food Pantry. A total of \$4,300 was received from this fundraiser.

Many thanks to our GREEN BAY PACKERS (Go team!) and to others who donated items for prizes. Special thanks to our St. John Quilters for donating the beautiful Handmade Queen-size Quilt.

Barb & Terry Borchardt would like to THANK EVERYONE who helped make our RAFFLE a BIG SUCCESS! "We appreciate all you did to make our ticket sales GREAT!"

Lic. #R0004790A-31273



Reflections from Rose

I REALLY enjoy Sunflowers! They're so bright and cheery. They sprout in a carefree manner all over the world. Pollinated by bees, they spring up under my bird feeders, across fields, meadows, and at the side of the highways.



I love to watch them throughout the day as the young ones turn their heads to follow the sun. I learned this is called "heliotropism". The mature ones turn permanently eastward, warming their faces, and inviting increased visits from pollinating bees.



If you consult the Farmer's Almanac, it will tell you that in order to produce a real HARVEST that has tasty seeds, pure oil, and will serve as a livelihood for a hard-working sunflower grower, you need GOOD SOIL. For sunflowers GOOD SOIL is well-drained, slightly acidic, nutrient-rich, "with organic matter or composted".

The Lord tells us in his Word, that we need GOOD SOIL for spiritual growth as well. We see it in the parable of the farmer scattering seed. (Luke 8: 11-18) God's Word can sprout even in rocky or thorny soil. But It will only THRIVE in the soil of those with a good and noble heart, who hear the word and RETAIN it, and by persevering, produce a crop.

The summer brings different opportunities to be exposed to God's Word. There's evening worship at St. Stephen every Thursday at 6pm, as well as Bible Study every 2nd and 4th Wednesday also at St. Stephen at 6pm. Other community opportunities for people of Christian faith are out there as well.

Let's make use of them and turn our faces to follow the Son, by coming with an open heart, honestly looking into what God's Word says, and what that means for us.

May we see a bountiful harvest of spiritual growth this summer!



What's coming up?



THE Antique Steam & Gas Engine Show is August 23, 24, 25 this year. St. John/St. Stephen Lutheran Parish, ELCA will be serving food from our 2 food trailers. Plan now to roll up your sleeves and be part of the team! Sign-up sheets are posted!

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Mid-week Worship on Thursday evenings at 6pm will continue at St. Stephen through the end of August, as will the every OTHER (2nd & 4th) Wednesday evening Bible Study at 6pm.

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There still is a need for people to sign up and help out with the mowing of the lawn for what remains of the mowing season. Many thanks to those who have been working diligently to keep the grounds well-cared for! A Sign-up sheet is posted. No waiting!

Join us!



SAVE THE DATE! Sunday, Sept. 8th.

Blessing of BACKPACKS will be Sunday, Sept. 8. We want to ask God's blessing on our young people as they prepare to begin a new school year! So gather up your backpacks FILLED with all your supplies, and bring them with you to church that day!



RALLY SUNDAY for our 2019-2020 Sunday School term is on the calendar for **Sunday, September 8th** too! We're getting ready to come back refreshed and revved-up for new adventures in faith as we begin anew in Sunday School! Make sure to be here for this NEW BEGINNING! We would WELCOME new teachers and helpers to the team. If interested, please talk to Bonnie Bargender.

September 1st is when we return to our STANDARD Worship times!
That means: St. John worship at 9am AND St. Stephen worship at 10:30am !



ADVENTURES OF THE CHURCH MICE

WE'RE SO EXCITED, SUNDAY SCHOOL IS ALMOST READY TO START! We just can't wait till the children come back, it gets really lonely during the summer because most of them are gone all the time. (Poor Pastor Gail, sometimes she doesn't even get to do Children's Time!) So we want to tell all the parents and grandparents to plan for RALLY DAY, September 8 right after Labor Day! We hear there'll be the BLESSING OF THE BACKPACKS that day too! And of course there'll be snacks (won't there???) for the children (maybe we'll get some too.) SEE YOU SOON!

WANTED: A FULL-TIME ALTAR GUILD replacement. Members of the ALTAR GUILD make a valuable contribution to the worship services of the church by preparing and maintaining the altar furnishings, filling the candles, preparing for communion and making sure additional items needed for baptisms, confirmations, and special seasonal decorations are in place. No experience necessary, training and help will be provided. Altar guild members generally serve in teams of two. Interested? Please talk to Judy Totzke.

Women of the ELCA

Every woman that is a member of St. John is a member of the women's group. All are WELCOME and encouraged to participate in our activities. Each woman of St. John is assigned to a funeral group and is relied upon to help serve in the time of need.

Next St. John/St. Stephen combined Women's Bible Study—Tuesday, August 13, at St. John, at 1pm. We'll conclude our study of Esther by examining the last chapters which are full of hope for the future of the Jews. The defeat of their enemies is to be celebrated in a feast, the festival of Purim. Instructions are given for the celebration of the festival. As women of faith, full of love for God and others, we will consider ways to find and use our voices in our present circumstances—"for such a time as this."

Next General meeting—Sunday, Sept. 8th at 10:10am, immediately following the morning service.

The **Women's Stewardship Project** for the months of July, August, and September is **SCHOOL KITS**. Back-to School sales have started and this is the best time to stock up on these necessary items!

Items needed are:

- 70-count notebooks (*wide or college ruled*)
- Blunt Scissors
- 30-centimeter ruler (*or a ruler with centimeters on one side and inches on the other*).
- Ballpoint pens (*NO gel ink*)
- Pencil sharpener
- 2-1/2 inch erasers
- Crayons (*16 or 24 size*)

A tote is placed in the Narthex to receive your donations. Thank you for your generosity!

Today and every day, **Lutheran World Relief Quilts** and **Kits of Care** give families around the world some of life's essentials, as well as a reminder that they are not alone. From chronic poverty and conflict to drought and typhoon, the intensity of humanitarian needs continues to increase. Your quilts and kits are urgently needed!

Education is one of the strongest tools a community has for breaking the cycle of poverty. Ensuring that girls attend school, especially in places where their access is deprioritized, has even stronger results. School Kits contain essential supplies to help children – and in some cases, adults – continue learning in the face of serious obstacles. That learning leads to a better life for them, their families and their communities.

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In support of our Sunday School Department, the women will be placing out a donation jar to receive funds to help with the cost of special projects done by our students. Other specific needs for the Sunday School will be posted on the bulletin board. *Thanks for your generous support!*

Women of the ELCA Purpose

As a community of women, created in the image of God, called to discipleship in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to grow in faith, affirm our gifts, support one another in our callings, engage in ministry and action, and promote healing and wholeness in the church, the society, and the world.

Leadership Openings

Members of the congregation are needed for positions on the Church Council for the next term.

Elections will take place at the October Quarterly Meeting, but suggestions should be made at the July 28th Quarterly Meeting NEXT Sunday. Positions that will be opening up at the end of this year are as follows:

PRESIDENT (3 yr. term) Steve Rober's term complete
Cal Tackes will "move up"

VICE PRESIDENT (3 yr. term) currently held by Cal Tackes

TREASURER (3 yr. term) currently held by Bev Umnus

DEACON (3 yr. term) currently held by Shirley Rosien

TRUSTEE (3 yr. term) currently open

FINANCE COMMITTEE (2 yr. term)

Marion Werner

Sonia Heidmann

Jennifer Drabek

These are all completing their term.

AUDITING COMMITTEE (yearly)

Naomi Sebold

Troy Wiesman

Leon Werner

These are all completing their term.

CEMETERY BOARD (3 yr. term)

Gerald Borchardt's term is complete

PARISH ED COMMITTEE (yearly) *Currently serving are:*

Bonnie Bargender

Vicky Finke

Michelle Hollatz

Cindy Manecke

LUTHER LEAGUE (appointed)

Position is currently vacant

B3.01. Sunday School Superintendent shall be appointed by the council and be responsible to the pastor and the congregation council. He/she shall see that the Sunday School functions in an orderly and efficient manner. This may be a shared position, with two members holding the title of Superintendent. He/she shall call meetings before the opening of Sunday School in the fall, and as needed throughout the year. With the team of Sunday School teachers, the Superintendent shall propose curricula, which shall be examined and accepted/rejected by the pastor.

B3.02. Parish Education Committee shall consist of four members, recruited or appointed by the Superintendent and/or council and responsible to the pastor and the council. The term of office shall be two years; members may succeed themselves once. Working with the Sunday School Superintendent, they shall order necessary material for Sunday School, discuss new curricula, plan the year's schedule and any extra activities (Christmas Program; special music during worship, or other activities such as puppet shows).

Although we don't have LEADERSHIP elections until October, NOW is the time to begin praying about how YOU can serve to strengthen the congregation and begin making and ACCEPTING nominations.

The July 28th Quarterly Meeting would be an excellent time to begin making suggestions!

We will begin putting in print the Job Descriptions for the various Offices of Leadership.

The job description for TRUSTEES and DEACONS (*Taken from the St. John by-laws*) is printed on the following page.

Leadership Job Descriptions

B3.03. Confirmation Teacher may be separate from the Sunday School, depending on the structure of the education program in a given year. He/she shall work closely with the pastor to ensure the appropriateness of the curriculum and other learning

B3.04. Youth Leader(s) shall be appointed by the council and be responsible to the pastor and the council. He/she/they shall plan various activities with the youth of the congregation (*generally those who have been confirmed*) and make every effort to retain the youth as active members.

Job Descriptions for Trustees and Deacons -- St. John ELCA, Edgar WI

BYLAWS, C11.01.01

“The **Board of Trustees** shall be responsible for maintaining and protecting property of the congregation. The trustees need not perform all repairs themselves, but shall see that needed repairs or enhancements are taken care of.”

St. John has established the “trustee of the month” practice, which gives the staff someone to contact in case of special need or emergency. With three trustees on the council, each one should be “trustee of the month” only four times a year.

“The **Board of Deacons** shall have general oversight of its worship life, to the end that everything be done in accordance with the Word of God and the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The deacons shall be responsible for leadership in the services of worship such as serving communion and in other ways assisting the pastor.”

St. John has established the “deacon of the month” practice, according to which each deacon shall serve as communion assistant once a quarter.

C12.02.01

The members of the Congregation Council except the pastor shall be elected at a legally called meeting of the congregation during the month of October. Their term of office shall be for three years, with the term of office beginning on January 15 and ending on January 14. Newly elected Congregation Council members shall be installed at worship the Sunday prior to the date they assume office.

“One new member shall be elected to the Board of Trustees and to the Board of Deacons each October in order to assure that there will always be two experienced members on each board.”

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B3.07. Auditing Committee shall be appointed by and responsible to the congregation council. There shall be three members who do not serve on the council. They shall audit the books of the treasurer after the closing of the books at the end of each year and prior to the annual meeting.

B3.08. Financial Secretary shall be appointed by and responsible to the congregation council. The term of office shall be three years. The duties of this office shall be to keep accurate records of each confirmed member’s giving and to prepare quarterly statements and year-end statements for the same. This is a confidential office. The financial giving of congregation members is not to be shared with anyone.

We need . . .

B3.05. Improvement Fund Treasurer shall be appointed by the council and be responsible to the pastor and the congregation council. It shall be the duty of the treasurer to receive all improvement fund monies and keep accurate record of such monies. A report shall be submitted each year for the annual meeting.

YOU!

B3.06. Memorial Fund Treasurer shall be appointed by the council and be responsible to the pastor and the congregation council. It shall be the duty of the treasurer to receive all memorial fund monies and keep accurate record of such monies. A report shall be submitted each year for the annual meeting.

GOOD NEWS

St. John Lutheran Church ELCA
120500 County Road N
Edgar, WI 54426

We're on the Web
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August 2019



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Please remember to check your bulletin for updates. If you would like to have us e-mail the Newsletter to you, please let us know.

Deadline for September 2019 News



August 19th

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."