

Feb. / March  
2020

Pastor's Ponderings

**SUNDAY WORSHIP**

9:00am

Sunday School  
9:15am—10:00am  
(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**

W1000 Hwy N  
Edgar, WI 54426

**PHONE/EMAIL**

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

***I'M FRUSTRATED AS I BEGIN THIS EDITION OF PASTOR'S PONDERINGS***

I want to write about Lent, which begins with Ash Wednesday worship on February 26<sup>th</sup>. Years ago I wrote a poem about Lent, and I thought that would be a good way to start this column. But I can't find it, and I can't remember it. All I remember is the last line: *God lent us his Son. . . .*

Fortunately, as always, *God works all things for good with those who love God and are called according to his purpose* (Romans 8:28). The problem of *not remembering* is a major part of what Lent is all about! The season of Lent invites us to prepare for the "passion" of our Lord in Holy Week: his betrayal, arrest, suffering, and crucifixion. We're called to **fast**, to **pray**, and to do **acts of kindness**. These disciplines can help us remember that Jesus, God-in-the-flesh, *died* for us.

*Fasting* has been a Christian tradition since before the time of Jesus. In Matthew (6:16-17) Jesus tells his disciples what to do "*when*" they fast—not "*if*." Because it was such a part of life for our Jewish ancestors, there's not much in scripture that tells us *how* they fasted. If you choose to fast during Lent, there are various traditions. You might skip dinner one night, or eat dinner at noon and skip the evening meal every day. You could fast from "fast food" or going out to eat. Many people have traditionally given up a certain food or means of entertainment: no meat, no chocolate, no dessert—or be radical and give up TV and games!

In order for it to be a meaningful fast, it helps to pair it with the discipline of *prayer*. Ideally, when you're missing whatever it is you're fasting from, that will remind you to pray, and to remember that "we do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of the Father" (Matthew 4:4). And any kind of fasting that saves you money can be paired with the discipline of *acts of kindness to others*. You might intentionally give the money you save to someone in need, or to an organization that will direct your gift appropriately. – Of course, *acts of kindness* can be done without expense.

However you do your Lenten disciplines, I hope you'll include regular mid-week worship this year. After Ash Wednesday at St. Stephen, the soup supper and worship will rotate between St. John and St. Stephen.

Remember: God *lent* us his Son so that everyone who believes in him need not perish, but may have eternal life. And *that's* a gift you don't want to fast from!

# St. John Family News!

The **Installation of Officers** was part of the January 5th service. We extended our appreciation and pledged our support to those who were elected and were beginning their term of service. \* indicates our newly elected leaders in the list below:

## St. John ELCA Officers for 2020-2021

PRESIDENT: \*Cal Tackes

VICE-PRESIDENT: \*Rick Mueller

SECRETARY: Vicky Finke

TREASURER: \*Michelle Hollatz

DEACONS: \*Mitch Mueller,  
Sharon Schumacker,  
Cheryl Leffel

TRUSTEE: \*Shirley Rosien, Dan Leffel,  
Mark Bargender

FINANCIAL SECRETARY: Jennifer Drabek

FINANCE COMMITTEE:

\*Marion Werner, \*Morgan Mueller,  
\*Mary Jo Werner Vicky Finke,  
Tammy Leterski, Leon Werner

PARISH ED:

\*Bonnie Bargender, \*Trish Donlin,  
\*Michelle Hollatz, \*Niaomi Treankler

CEMETERY BOARD:

\*Terry Borchardt, Leon Werner, Ron Runge

AUDITING COMMITTEE:

\*Dan Rosien, \*Morgan Mueller, \*Naomi Sebold

ENDOWMENT FUND: Lana Strasser

MEMORIAL & IMPROVEMENT FUNDS: Cindy Manecke

ST. JOHN CHARITIES: \*Morgan Mueller, \*Rick Mueller,  
\*Dan Rosien, \*Cindy Manecke

*Let's support them with timely words of appreciation, encouragement and our prayers!*

## First Communion Sunday



It was with great joy that we welcomed the First Communion class of 2020 to the Lord's table on February 2. In preparation, they met with Pastor Gail and the St. Stephen First Communion class for the 2 Wednesday evenings prior to receiving communion for the first time. During those meetings they learned about the origins of the sacrament we call the Lord's Supper.

- The story of Moses, and the Passover of the angel of death,
- God's command that the chosen people celebrate their deliverance from slavery every year,
- How Jesus faithfully went to Jerusalem every year to celebrate the Passover,
- Jesus' Last Supper with his disciples, and his command to *remember him* when they gathered. 125 were in attendance.



Pictured at left, front row (L-R): Carson Nowak, Kaden Bargender, Brady Donlin, Conner Finke.

Back row (L-R): Alexis Wiesman, Pastor Gail, Madelyn Schilling, Greenly Treankler.

Thanks to Trish Donlin, Niaomi Treankler and Shae Wiesman for sharing their photo captures !

**The Women of St. John** came together in a BIG way to extend a warm and hospitable welcome to the Synod Conference Coordinators of the Women of the ELCA as they met to do ministry planning for the year on Saturday, January 25th. *Many thanks to those who helped with organizing, set-up, cooking, serving, and clean-up.* Our guests were welcomed warmly with light refreshments as they arrived, and later refreshed with a tasty Soup and Salad Luncheon. *Thanks ladies for sharing your warm hospitality!*



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# Practice Not Perfect

Come and join us for the 11th annual Walking Together event! This day of learning and workshops is designed for people around the synod to collaborate, hear about best practices in congregational ministry, get inspired, and explore new faith practices that connect us with one another and with God!

The purpose of this Annual Event is to equip God's people to do ministry and build up the churches in the Northwest Synod.

This is a very practical event that will equip you with new ideas, inspiration, resources and materials that you can actually take with you to use in OUR congregation!

Registration DEAD; INE IS Feb. 14th. The cost will be covered for anyone who wants to go, but you need to let Pastor Gail know by the 14th.

Save the date, organize a CAR POOL!!



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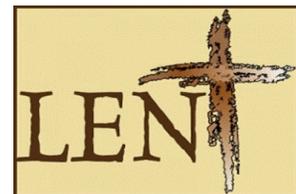
# Walking Together

February 22, 2020  
UWEC - Davies Center

Registration 7:00-9:00  
Event 9:00-4:00

**Car-pool available!** **Talk to Pastor Gail**

Information and registration can be found at:  
[nwswi.org/walking-together](http://nwswi.org/walking-together)



*The season of Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February 26th.* **Worship locations will again alternate:**

- Combined Ash Wednesday Service** at St. Stephen at 6pm. There will be NO Soup Supper.
- March 4th**—5pm Soup Supper followed by 6pm Worship at **St. John** (hosted by Sunday School)
- March 11th**—5pm Soup Supper followed by 6pm Worship at St. Stephen
- March 18th**—5pm Soup Supper followed by 6pm Worship at **St. John** (hosted by St. John Council)
- March 25th**—5pm Soup Supper followed by 6pm Worship at St. Stephen
- April 1st**—5pm Soup Supper followed by 6pm Worship at **St. John** (seeking volunteer hosts)

## Other Worship Opportunities ◻ ◻ ◻

**Maundy Thursday Communion Worship** (April 9th) will be at **St. John** at 6pm.  
There is NO Wednesday worship or Soup Supper that week.

**Good Friday services** will be at St. Stephen at 1pm  
at St. John at 6pm

**Palm Sunday is April 5th.** (*Pancake Brunch*) *We're still in need of volunteers to co-ordinate this event. Please talk to Cal Tackes if you're willing . . .*

**Easter Sunday** is April 12th this year.



**Giving Opportunity**—*Kim Borchardt (Daughter of Gerald & Barb Borchardt)* Is going on a short-term **mission trip to Guatemala** on a team from Peace Lutheran Church (*Antigo*) in April 2020! They will be serving Mayan widows and children in the mountainous communities surrounding Chichicastenago, Guatemala.

Team members pay for their own plane flights , room & board at the ministry's campus, as well as do fundraising to cover the cost of their projects which will include building homes for widows, providing shoes for widows & their children, installing latrines, water filters, and efficient wood stoves, assisting with feeding programs, and providing children with school shoes & supplies.

**More information can be seen on the bulletin board.** Kim would appreciate your prayer support as well as any financial help you might be able to share. Financial assistance needs to be in her hands by Feb. 15th. *Talk to Gerry or Barb if you need assistance.*



## A Little "Re-cap"

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It was noted at the ANNUAL MEETING that while St. John's 4 main ANNUAL FUNDRAISERS were approved, and serve to build up our GENERAL FUND, we are still in need of coordinators for the 2020

\*BREAKFAST IN THE PARK and RAFFLE (Saturday, June 13th) and the

\*POTATO PANCAKE BRUNCH and RAFFLE (Sunday, Oct. 11)

Steve Robers and Rose in the office can help with information needed for planning, but **MORE people** are needed to contribute time and effort to make these fund raisers successful.

Help is also needed to repaint the ice cream stand before the STEAM SHOW this year. Shirley Rosien is heading up that project, but helping hands are needed and would be MUCH appreciated.

We are still gathering Email addresses (*to be shared with Rose in the office or with Cal*). They are a valuable organizational tool and helpful in sharing Church Council information.

A reminder too, that new ideas are welcome, especially when presented in a positive manner. A kind word of appreciation to those who make the effort goes a long way!

Many thanks to those who give your strong support to St. John through your time, energy, and resources. It's seen and APPRECIATED!

# Women of the ELCA

Next Bible Study—Tuesday, February 11th, at 1pm. (at St. Stephen).

Next General Meeting—Sunday, March 1st immediately following worship.



## *Needed A Conference Coordinator*

*Please consider volunteering for this position.  
(You could co-chair with someone.)*

*It is a great opportunity to work with other  
women of faith helping us all to grow in the  
image of God.*

*If interested call Roni at 715-613-0127*

News from Lori Wells Conference President  
Follow us on Facebook at Women of the  
Northwest Synod  
And on our website at [www.nswiswo.org](http://www.nswiswo.org)

**LADIES' BIBLE STUDY** – *Gather* offers three multi-session Bible studies per year in winter, summer and fall and two, one-month devotional studies in May and December. Summer studies are free to download and try. All others require a subscription to *Gather*. A selection of past Bible studies are also available for purchase.

[Winter 2020: We are called!](#) by The Rev. Kathryn A. Kleinhans, Ph.D., Dean of Trinity Lutheran Seminary at Capital University, Columbus, Ohio.

Reformer Martin Luther used the word “vocation” or “calling” to refer to all aspects of human life. We are called to respond to God not just in our personal relationship with God but in our relationships with family and friends, in our work, and in our communities.

This four-part Bible study will explore stories from both the Old and New Testament. As we reflect on how our biblical forebears heard and responded to God’s call, we will gain insight into how God is calling us—and how God may be calling others through us.

### **Session 1: Hearing God’s Call**

This session focuses on men and women in the Old Testament. Some of them heard and recognized God’s call clearly. Others struggled to realize that it was God who was calling them or exactly what God was calling them to do. What can we learn from their stories?

### **\*Session 2: The Call of Jesus (February 11, at St. Stephen)**

This session focuses on Jesus’ calling of the disciples, on Jesus’ call to Saul (Paul) on the road to Damascus, and on Jesus’ call to all Christians to take up the cross and follow. As Christians, how do we see ourselves in these stories today? How do we respond to the call of Jesus?

### **Session 3: Called to Serve**

Jesus is clear that one of the central ways we respond to God’s call is by serving others. When we serve others, we are recognizing Christ present in their need. When we serve others, they see Christ visible in our loving service. This session engages scriptural texts that help us focus on the questions, “Who is my neighbor, and what does my neighbor need?”

### **Session 4: Calling Networks**

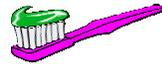
The title of this Bible study, “We Are Called!” reminds us that calling is not something private or individualistic. Our callings are always interwoven with our relationships and our communities. This session focuses on how we support others in hearing and responding to God’s call.



# St. John Women's STEWARDSHIP PROJECT

The St. John Women's STEWARDSHIP PROJECT for the months of **January through March** is PERSONAL CARE KITS. The needed components are listed below. *There will be a tote to receive your donations in the narthex.*

## Personal Care Kits



Bath-size **towels** (approx. 52" x 27") dark color recommended.  
Bath-size bars (4-5 oz.) of **soap**, any brand, in original wrapping.  
Adult-size **tooth brush** in original packaging. Multi-packs may be used by sealing an individual in a business envelope.  
NO plastic bags or wraps.

**Combs**-sturdy  
**Metal nail clippers**



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## ADVENTURES of your CHURCH MICE . . .



Hi there, this is Miri Mouse (the original St. Stephen Church Mouse!) We were so excited to see 5 kids receive their first communion! (and I hear there were 7 at St. John too!) The BEST part is they used REAL bread instead of those funny old wafers, and bread is more crumbly and we found some good nibbles after church was over. They (the kids not the nibbles) were so adorable but I hope they won't feel too old now to play with us Church Mice! We just have to get Pastor Gail to bring us out sometimes.

Pretty soon it'll be time for soupers, that's what we call soup suppers, and then maybe we'll find more nibbles. There are some really good things on Wednesday nights at both churches, so you all come and share with us! Bye for now!

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## One More Time . . .

CHECK YOUR MAILBOX! End-of-the-year giving statements are out, as well as 2020 GIVING ENVELOPES.



Ash Wednesday at St. Stephen at 6pm  
(NO Soup Supper)  
Soup Suppers at 5pm  
Worship at 6pm beginning March 6  
(Locations will alternate)

St. John is still looking for volunteers to host SOUP SUPPER on Wednesday, April 1st (*no foolin'*).

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St. Stephen Lasagna/Spaghetti Dinner, Sunday, February 16 at 11:30am



**Palm Sunday Brunch**  
**Sunday, April 5, 2020**  
**10am-11:30am**



Watch for a sign-up sheet for supplies. We also need someone to be responsible for coordinating this event!



## Reflections from Rose

Well, there ya have it! Punxsutawney Phil says we will have an EARLY Spring. Although the date on my calendar still reads the same (March 19th) as it did BEFORE good ol' Phil poked his head out for a peek.

I don't know the official records, but it seemed like there have been A LOT of days with measureable snow fall this year. I have to thank Dean Manecke, Gerald Borchardt, Steve Robers, Dan Leffel and others who have helped with snow management at St. John this year. Thanks so much!

A dear friend from St. John called the office one morning and directed my attention to one of the devotionals she had read from a book on the table in the office wing. She had really enjoyed it and wanted to share the blessing with me.

In it, the question is asked by a little 4-year-old boy, "Why does God let it keep snowing so much?" His mother answers him "God is making it snow because He thinks we've been going too fast and should slow down." The connected Bible passage for that day is Psalm 131 which talks about stilling and quieting our soul.

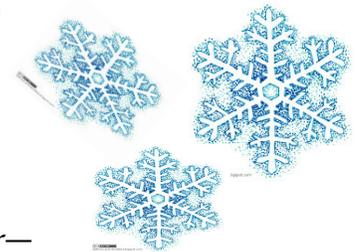
The next day's meditation also relates to snow and how heavy snow seems to bind us together and move us to help one another (*Bible reference: Philippians 2: 5*). I have to say I was BLESSED and encouraged.

More recently (TODAY as a matter of fact) part of my Bible reading was 1 Corinthians 10:31 "*Whatever you do; do it all for the glory of God.*" The meditation pointed out that ultimately, WHAT we specifically DO on a day-to-day basis is not as important as HOW we do it. We are to do our work with "*compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience* (Colossians 3:12). Our WORK is not to be separated from Christ-like living.

What we do matters, but HOW we do it, WHY, and WHO we do it for matters more.. Each day we can choose to work in a stressed-out way, or in a way that honors God and reflects the character of Jesus in our work.

God is an amazing teacher. Repetition and reinforcement...it makes me stop and think.

Thanks Enola!



## Bet I can Make You Smile . . .



"TO ENCOURAGE OUR CONGREGATION TO SIT IN THE FRONT PEWS, I'VE INSTALLED CELL PHONE CHARGING STATIONS IN THE FIRST THREE ROWS."

Worry is like a rocking chair—



You can make a lot of motion, but it doesn't get you anywhere!

## GOOD NEWS

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

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

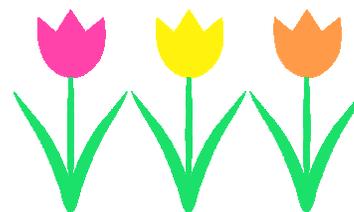
## February / March



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### Deadline for April 2020 News



**March 23rd**

Joint Mission Statement of St. John/St. Stephen Lutheran Parish, ELCA:

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