

GOOD NEWS FROM ST JOHN

May
2018

NEWS FOR ALL

Pastor's Ponderings

In the fullness of time. . . That's a phrase that was used a lot in the King James and other earlier translations of the Bible. We still find it in the NRSV (used at St. Stephen): **When the *fullness of time* had come, God sent his Son** (Galatians 4:4); **With all wisdom and insight God has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, as a plan for the *fullness of time*** (Ephesians 1:10). When God, in his divine wisdom, found that the time was right for his plans to continue to unfold—that was ***the fullness of time***.

Time is a big consideration in life in our Western world. When we're busy, it seems there's never enough of it. When we're eagerly waiting for something, it can't pass fast enough. For those who are "languishing," without meaningful quality of life, there's way too much time.

No, this is not a written sermon on "how God wants you to spend your time." It IS, however, advance notice of some upcoming time changes so you can work them into your schedule!

Beginning June 10th, our summer worship will begin half an hour earlier: **St. John, 8:30, St. Stephen, 10:00.** Beginning on September 9th (Rally Day!) we'll move back to the later schedule, St. John at 9:00, St. Stephen at 10:30.

Wednesday evening Bible Study will meet from **6:30 to 7:30 at St. Stephen on the first and third Wednesdays** of every month, beginning **June 6th**. Bring your Bible and your questions! (Note: This is a stress-free hour. You don't have to say anything, and you don't have to *know* anything. That's why we study the Bible, to learn. *Please* don't stay away because you don't really know anything about the Bible!!!)

Thursday evening worship will gather at **6:30** every Thursday beginning **June 7th** until further notice. Services will be at St. Stephen. It's a casual time of worship, using the same readings as the following Sunday; if kids are present, we'll have a kid's "sermon."
If attendance falls below 8 people 2 weeks in a row, I'll consider canceling the rest.

Note: Times and dates are ***probable***, but not set in stone.

(Continued on next page)

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

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

Pastor's Ponderings



"In the fullness of time God created summer vacations"—no, wait, that was a *human* creation. Please remember your congregation if you're not around for summer worship. The expenses of mission and ministry don't take time off, and your tithes and offerings are needed. If you travel, may God keep you safe till you return to us!

St. John Family News!

What a joyful resurrection celebration as 124 people gathered to worship our risen Lord on Easter Sunday, April 1. The sanctuary was adorned with Easter lilies and other spring flowers that were placed in memory/honor of our dear ones.



Who would have guessed that 2 weeks later, on Sunday April 15th, services would be cancelled due to hazardous road conditions related to nearly 30" of new snow and almost blizzard conditions at times.

Women's Spring Rally 2018

Chequamegon Conference of the ELCA

Before the snow clouds settled in, the Women of St. John were able to welcome the Women of the Chequamegon Conference of the ELCA for the 2018 Spring Rally.

They received a warm welcome by Bev Umnus (*Financial Secretary*), Judy Rhodes, and Nancy Sternweis (*Co-Recording Secretaries*), at registration which began at 8:30am. There was coffee, juice, muffins and fruit to enjoy in the Narthex, which proves to be a bright and cozy place to welcome guests for friendly fellowship.

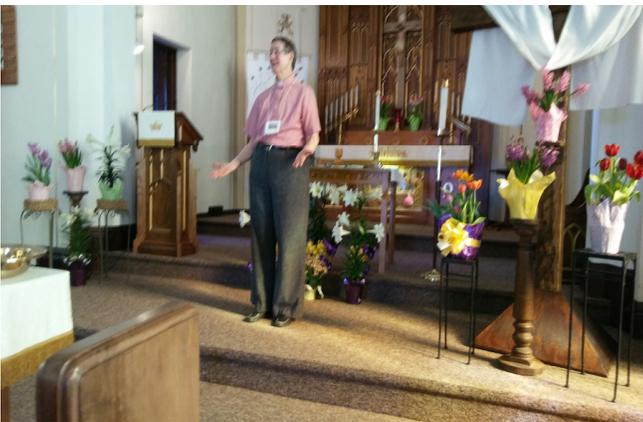


Women's Spring Rally continued . . .



After a pleasant time of catching up and renewing previous acquaintances and making new ones, the women gathered in the sanctuary. Pastor Gail extended a warm welcome and led us in a brief time of worship, prayer and communion.

The business meeting followed. It was led by Coordinator Roni Kaczor-Smith and was lively and informative. The Election of Leaders took place after a review of the Minutes and Activities since the last meeting. It was a delight to introduce and welcome **Mary Ann Aschbrenner** to the women as a representative from St. Stephen who is new to the Chequamegon Conference since the yoking of St. John and St. Stephen in July of last year.



After the business meeting the ladies were dismissed to the church basement which had been colorfully decorated in anticipation of their coming. The lunch menu included a variety of tasty soups, rolls, cheese & crackers, salad and delicious cheesecake for dessert.



After lunch, the group remained downstairs where Pastor Gail gave a travelogue highlighting a number of the places she has been privileged to visit. She also shared how travel has served to develop her as a person and shape her faith and perspectives in many ways. Pastor had also arranged a magnificent display of many photographs, artwork, souvenirs and an intriguing assortment of memorabilia from a variety of her travel destinations. *This writer is sad to say that there are no pictures to share of these treasures which Pastor Gail took much time to attractively display. (sigh...)*

And in conclusion . . . It always takes many hands behind the scenes before, during, and after these special events.

Many thanks to those who helped in the planning, decorating, setting up, cooking, serving, and cleaning up for this special activity which serves to build up the church by supporting, encouraging and promoting unity among our women. Together we commit ourselves to grow in faith and engage in ministry and action to promote healing and wholeness in the church, the society, and the world.



Whose kid is this anyhow?

More helping hands would have been joyfully welcomed, but there was definitely a sweet spirit of camaraderie and even some time for shenanigans!

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WOMEN OF THE ELCA

The W/ELCA group will be meeting on Wednesday, May 2, at 6:30 PM. At this meeting we will finalize the plans for the Salad Supper.

SALAD SUPPER;

We will be holding a Salad Supper on **Monday, May 14, at 6:00 PM** in the church basement. We are inviting all women, spouses, family and friends. Also we are inviting St Stephen’s church, women, men, families, and friends. For St John’s we ask that you bring a salad, large enough to feed the number of your guests. This is going to be a social gathering, playing bingo for entertainment. There will not be a special program. Please sign up on the bulletin board in the narthex **by May 8th**.

(continued next page)

WOMEN OF THE ELCA *(continued)*

SYNODICAL CONVENTION:

I attended the synodical convention of April 20th and 21st. One of the speakers gave a presentation titled "180 Degrees". Her presentation challenges us to face the future of our women's organizations with transforming ideas. She started by telling us of a church that had taken all the pews out. The members of the church questioned how we could have a church service without pews. It was noted that in the Bible there is no mention of pews. The members stood for worship. They formed a circle for prayers. It was suggested that from this circle we turn 180 degrees, facing outward, and look to what is outside the circle, even outside the church, to increase our membership and activity.

After hearing her presentation, I did a lot of thinking about her ideas, and I decided that it is time for a change before I burn myself out. I am encouraging a whole new format, with new leaders. We tried changing the times of our meetings, but the results were very minimal. I would like to see a whole new reorganization of our women's group, with new ideas.

I will continue to serve for the rest of this year. I have held the leader position for ten years and I would like to turn it over to someone else. I have been elected as Conference Rep to Synod for the next two years. Please let's continue to have an active group. The funeral groups will continue to serve as needed.

Thanks for your support.

Bev Umnus, President of W/ELCA

Bev has served faithfully with excellence for many years in the leadership of the Women of St. John. Let's make sure to offer her our words of encouragement and support as she makes this transition to serving the Church in a new way. At the same time, let's envision what we would like to see the Women's ministry of St. John look like. *How will we support and encourage each other as Christian women to grow in our faith, be active in ministry, and strengthen the ministry of St. John? Don't be afraid to speak up, step out and dream.*

WOMEN'S STEWARDSHIP PROJECT—for April, May, and June is Baby Layette kits. Items needed are:

Sleepers (without feet), gowns, sweaters, socks, onesies, and receiving blankets.

Items must be *like new* if not new. Yard sale season has begun.

A bassinet is in the Narthex for your donations. Thank you!



Quilters



The Quilters will meet on Tuesday, May 1 at 9:30am. This will be their LAST meeting for the season. Many thanks to those who have faithfully supported this ministry with your time, energy and creativity. You are "SEW" much appreciated. Much appreciation to those who have helped the group obtain the supplies that are needed to create these warm blessings to be shared. Those who have helped to get the quilts to their destinations are truly appreciated as well.

Quilting usually resumes in October after the Potato Pancake Brunch. Rest your fingers and your back, but don't loose your needle and thread!

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ATTENTION, WOMEN! It's come to my attention that "some people" would prefer a change/changes in our Women's Bible Study every month. Please provide your choices **IN WRITING** to Sherry or Rose by May 20, 2018, so we can schedule our summer studies.

- Day: first Tuesday of the month or second Tuesday of the month?
- Alternating?
- Place: St. Stephen or St. John? Rotating schedule?
- Time: 1:00 or a different time?

Majority rules, Ladies. Please make your desires known ASAP!

Adventures of the Church Mice



Hi, this is Twink (Merry Twinkle) from St. John writing this month. The 4 of us don't really like summer very much, it gets pretty lonely here. St. Stephen's Sunday School has already ended, and St. John's will be done on May 13th. We really miss the pitter-patter of little feet! Well, not so little compare to ours, but littler than the grownups. I heard Pastor Gail telling Rose about her plans for Children's Time during the summer. She has some fun things ready! So please, children, don't stay away all summer! (and if you bring snacks, we'll help you clean up!)

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As we think about summer and a break from Sunday School here are some words of WELCOME !

To parents of young children:

RELAX! God put the wiggle in children; don't feel you have to suppress those wiggles in God's house.



Consider sitting toward the front where it is easier for your little ones to engage. Quietly explain the parts of the service and actions of the Pastor, musicians and leaders. Sing the Hymns, pray and voice the responses. Children learn behavior by mimicking you. If you have to leave the Sanctuary with your child, feel free to do so. But PLEASE come back.

As Jesus said, "Let the children come to me."

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SAVE these DATES!

- May 13th** (*Mothers Day*) we will celebrate our Mothers (*and Fathers*) too! It's also the LAST Sunday School class for the term. We will be acknowledging special accomplishments by students, expressing our appreciation to our teachers and having an appropriate end-of-the-year celebration with the young people!
- May 20th** will be Graduate Recognition Sunday—Join us as we celebrate this accomplishment with Cole Literski and his family.
- May 28th** is Memorial Day. The VFW Honor Guard will be at St. John Cemetery around 9:15am.

**Coming in
JUNE**

- Brat Fries** in Stratford at ProVision on Friday, *June 1* and Friday, *June 8th*.
- Worship in the Park**, at Oak Street Park on *Thursday, June 14th* at the beginning of *Edgar Carnival Days*.
- Breakfast in the Park**, at Oak Street Park in Edgar on *Saturday, June 16th*.
- Time to start creating those RAFFLE BASKETS!**

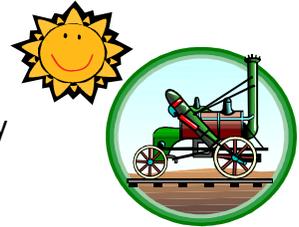




NORTHWEST SYNOD ASSEMBLY—Many thanks to Dan & Cheryl Leffel who have agreed to go and be our representatives at the Assembly on **June 2-3**, at UW Eau Claire, Davies Center. There will be a Bishop election!



And of course you'll want to make sure to get the **STEAM SHOW** on your calendar for *August 24-26!* We'll be serving refreshments from our 2 food stands, and many helping hands will make for light work and LOTS of fun!



Reflections from Rose

Administrative Professionals Day! What a blessing. I was so encouraged as I was taken out to lunch, received flowers, cards, gifts, thoughtful words of appreciation and even a special poem of blessing ;) It's kind of funny to me. It's always my desire to provide administrative assistance at St. John, but I don't really consider myself "professional".

Before coming to St. John, my experience for many years had been in nursing, as an LPN. Added to the mix was working as an Early Childhood Teacher at a day care and as an Assistant in the Early Childhood Special Ed classroom in the public school. All of this transpired while I was busy being a mom and then "grandma". It's been my joy to try on many different "hats" and *learn to keep on learning*. I'm sure that many of you share similar stories. It's because of YOUR patience and the indulgence of a generous "learning curve" that I hold my position here at St. John. What a blessing!

Pastor Gail shared a poem with me that she had received at Via de Cristo. It takes an "artistic" look at this kind of life journey. Makes me think of Bev as she tries on a new "hat", of the Quilters and their variety of talents, and the variety of their uniquely quilted creations, of the Women's group and their journey of transition, and of all of us really, as we keep on learning, growing, and stepping out to try new things.

Art Appreciation

Author: Joy Morgan Davis

Lord,
Sometimes when I look
At my life
It seems like a homespun
Patch-work quilt . . .
Quaint, but not quite "together"!
There are bits and pieces of
Cloths and colors
Scraps of material,
The days of my life . . .

When you began to put together
The days of my life
You must have known
Where each piece would go . . .
You've told me that I am
Fearfully and wonderfully
Made . . .
And I believe you, Lord,
I do!

• I may not be a velvet tapestry,
• But even crazy-quilts
• Have purpose,
• To give warmth and
• Cozy comfort and
• Color to a room!
•
• Whatever I am, Lord,
• You made me . . .
• Lovingly,
• Carefully,
• Reverently,
• And exactly right!

• *This goes out to all you "CRAZY-QUILTS"*
• *out there. We're all in the same unique*
• *crazy-club. The human race.*
• *What a BLESSING!*

Until next month —Rose



Question of the Month:
Where and when was this decorative Spring/Easter tree found?
Need a hint?
Ask Sharon Schumacker!

GOOD NEWS

St. John Lutheran Church ELCA
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We're on the Web
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May 2018



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Deadline for June 2018 News



May 21st

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."*