

# GOOD NEWS FROM ST JOHN

September  
2018

NEWS FOR ALL

**Summer  
SUNDAY WORSHIP**

8:30am  
(June 10th—Sept. 2nd)

Holy Communion  
1st & 4th Sunday

**PASTOR**

Gail Sowell  
Cell/Emergency #  
715-352-2492  
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**

715-352-2524

stjohnelca@gmail.com

**WEBSITE**

www.stjohnelcaedgar.org

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

*Pastor's Ponderings*

Jesus said to the large crowds that were following him, "Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it? For if he lays the foundation and is not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule him, saying, 'This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.'"

I confess that I feel very much like that impetuous would-be builder. My last article to you was filled with idealistic dreams of raffling off a car and sides of beef and pork, and I (and the Joint Council) had planned an elaborate and finely-timed campaign for it, with special activities for kick-off in September and the drawing date in November. If you thought to yourself, "That'll never happen," you were right. No car was forthcoming, nor was the side of beef or pork. Instead, our present plan is to have a straightforward money raffle: \$1000 to the winner, \$500 for second place, \$100 each for third, fourth, and fifth place, with additional prizes yet to be decided. Only 500 tickets will be printed, so everyone has a decent chance to win. Tickets will be \$20 each. Selling all 500 tickets will give us the \$10,000 we hoped to raise for Puerto Rico; our cost will be cash prizes of \$2000. (By the way, if you're concerned about recent discoveries of unused donations to Puerto Rico, know that we have an actual person on the ground there, Pastor Lydia Morales Kulian, who works with Lutheran Disaster Response. She was formerly the pastor of my son's godparents when they visited their mother in Puerto Rico.)

We hope to have the tickets printed and ready for distribution by September 9<sup>th</sup>. Please volunteer to help us sell all 500 tickets!

With the start of the school year we return to our later worship times, 9:00 at St. John, 10:30 at St. Stephen. The Thursday worships are at an end, having been well-attended all summer, and we'll begin Bible Study at 6:30 every first and third Thursday evening.

One Wednesday in October (date to be determined) I plan to offer an event called "Faith, Fellowship, Food, and Fun" from 1:00-6:00 pm at St. John. This will involve a little bit of this, a little bit of that: Bible study, some Bible trivia, discussion of faith and every-day life, opportunities to share your own faith story *if you wish*, brief worship, and a meal. There will be a small charge for the meal; any ideas on what you'd like to eat?

May you be blessed with the freshness of fall and the return to all the usual activities of the season!  
— Pastor Gail

# Catching up on St. John Family News!

There's no other time like the good ol' summertime. A different pace, a little more time for family fun, and perhaps even a family get-away! However, it leaves us with a bit of catching-up to do! You may or may not have seen these special summer events that were in our weekly bulletins...



We baptized little McKenna Joy on Sunday, June 24 during the 8:30am Summer Worship Service. She was born on February 24, 2018 to Russel & Brianna Kraft who *we will be welcoming publicly as new members of St. John in the very near future!* Make sure to extend a warm welcome to these dear new members of our faith family. *May they be blessed as they worship & grow with us in Christ.*

## Congratulations and God's Blessings !



A healthy baby boy, **Elias Daniel**, was born to **Cody & Heidi Heidmann** on Tuesday, June 26. He weighed 8lbs. 5oz. and measured 20-3/4 inches. Elias is welcomed home by his sisters **Carlie & Emmalyn**. Welcomed also by grandparents **Dan & Cheryl Leffel**. Blessings to ALL!

.....  
*Amanda Lemmer and Stetson Oelke* were married at St. John on Friday, July 20th. God bless you as you journey together as husband and wife!



.....  
We bid a fond farewell to our dear brother *Leonard Leffel* at a service in honor of his life here at St. John on Monday, July 16th.

## Recap of other St. John Summer events!



Many helping hands came together and grilled up some delicious burgers, brats, and hotdogs for **2 brat fries in June** (*the 1st and the 8th*). Much thanks to *Barb Borchardt & Marion Werner* who headed those up! They netted a profit of \$2418.95 to strengthen the summer ministry of St. John.

**Worship in the Park on June 14th** was a joint effort between The Mill Church, Edgar and St. John/St. Stephen Lutheran Parish and was attended by about 50 people. The offering received was just under \$200 and went to the Edgar Circle of Joy!

**Breakfast in the Park on June 16** at Oak Street Park, Edgar was a wonderful success! Over 250 people were served delicious pancakes, eggs with ham, potatoes, sausage, coffee, juice, milk, home-made bars, and ice cream all with warm smiles and friendly conversation. This annual event brought in over \$1500 as well as \$751 through the basket raffle and \$124 through the 50/50 drawing. *Many thanks to ALL who contributed their time, energy and resources to make this event a success!*

## Time for FALL transitions !



*Return to Regular Worship Hours*

Beginning September 9th we'll be returning to our regular Worship time of 9am at St. John with Sunday School beginning at 9:15am. St. Stephen will return to 10:30am.

**BIBLE STUDY at St. Stephen** will be on the **2nd and 4th THURSDAY** evenings at 6:00pm beginning September 13th. ALL are welcome!

## A Labor of Love and Honor



Have you been witnessing the evolution of our previously uncelebrated, basically unnoticed gazebo?

Over the summer, it has been elevated to a place of attractively, helpful recognition at the entrance to the St. John cemetery.

**Herbie Werner** has been the brains and brawn behind this project that serves to help direct those who come to honor those who have been laid to rest in the cemetery, as well other geneology seekers.

Others have dropped by to assist Herbie from time to time, and shared equipment to help him complete the project, but Herbie has been the main energy behind bringing this vision to reality.

*He cleaned and painted the gazebo...*



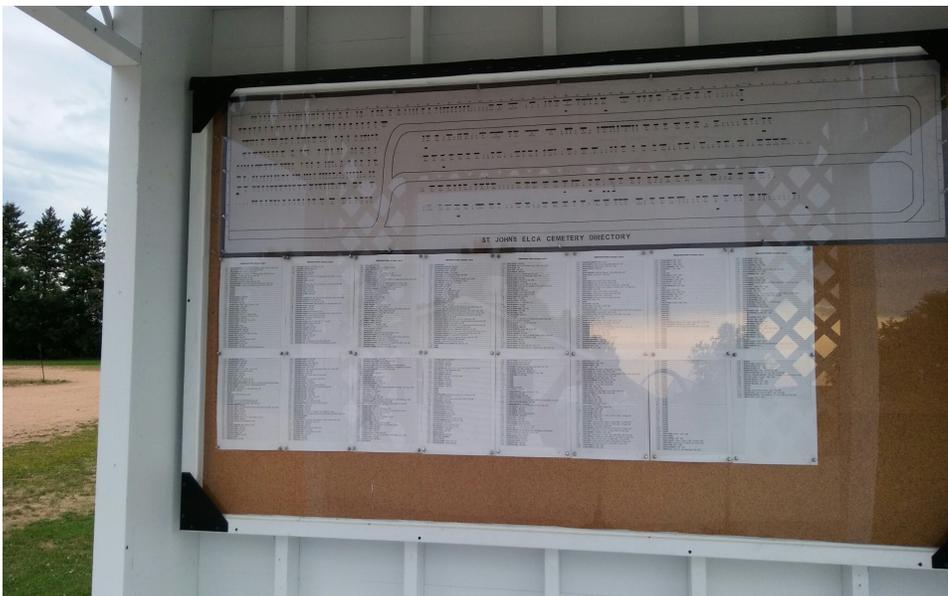
*Gazebo Continued...*



After building a level, firm foundation on which it could rest...

Herbie MOVED it to a more prominent location, closer to the cemetery.

Besides doing all the outdoor labor at the cemetery, Herbie was doing detailed paper work at home on his dining room table. He laid out to-scale graphics of the cemetery and the memorial stones and labeled each one with its letter and number by designated location.

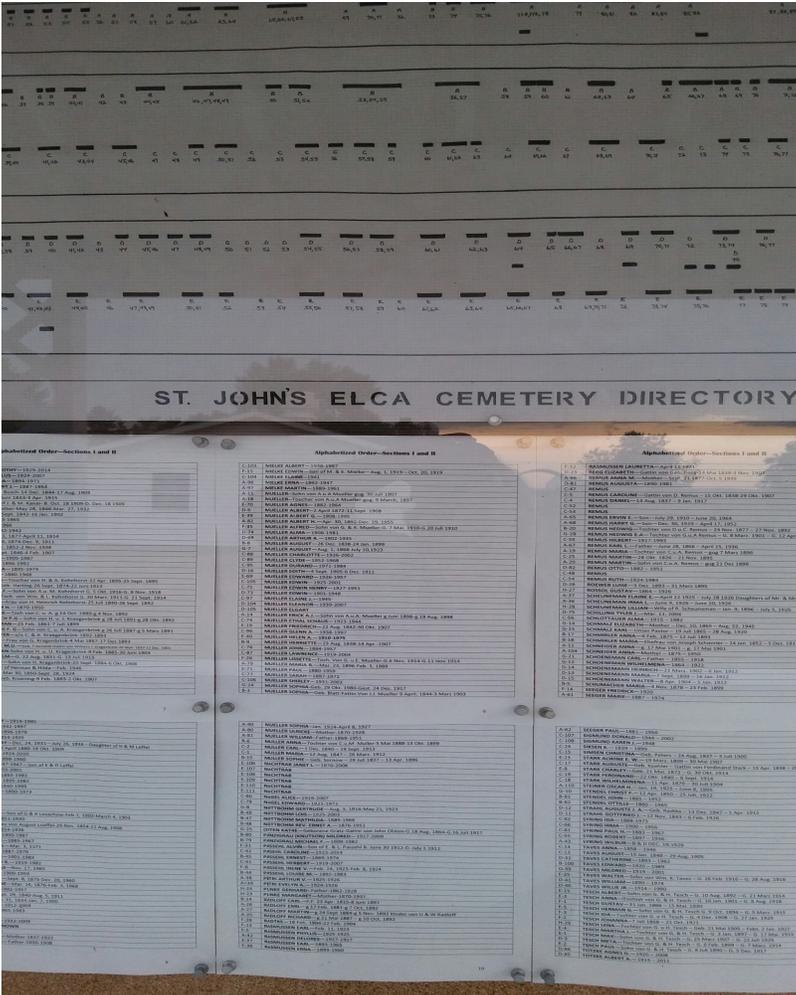


A weather-resistant plexi-glass case was built by Herbie to enclose the directory for the cemetery.

Some remodeling of the gazebo itself was done to make the inside more protected from weather.

There has already been positive feed-back from people who have visited the cemetery and found the gazebo to be both an attractive and helpful resource.

# From Vision to Helpful Reality . . .



# HUGE Thanks!

**MUCH** APPRECIATION to Herbie (*and his helpers*) for the many, many hours of planning and labor that were invested in this project that will serve to assist those who come to pay respect or gather information for years to come!

**A note of thanks**— many thanks to the Treankler Brothers, *Garrison and Griffin* for maintaining the cemetery lawn so well over the summer! That takes hours of careful work as well.

Rose gets much feedback regarding how well the St. John Cemetery is cared for...it means a lot to families!

In addition, thanks to those who make it their special concern to give to the **cemetery fund**. It's a special way to honor those whose lives are represented on the memorial stones and to make sure the grounds are well cared for.



**The QUARTERLY MEEING will be on October 21st.** That's when we will have LEADERSHIP elections. Members of the congregation are needed to fill the positions listed below for the upcoming term beginning in January of 2019.

- Council Secretary (3 yr. term)
- 1 Deacon (3 yr. term)
- 1 Trustee (3 yr. term)
- 3 finance Committee (2 yr. term)
- 3 Auditing Committee (1 yr. term)
- 1 Cemetery Board (3 yr. term)

We will be placing nomination forms in the Narthex, along with a "nomination box". We should begin making nominations now. If you are asked to serve, please be willing to step out of your usual comfort zone and try a new ministry. God uses ordinary people to accomplish extraordinary things in HIS strength. There's always a learning curve and brothers & sisters in Christ to help you learn the ropes! We are a BODY, fit together to work as one strong unit. We need YOU!



Below you'll find **Pastor Gail's PONDERINGS for the August News**, which has ended up being combined with this September issue. Didn't want you to miss out!



What response would I get if I invited you all to an “in-depth theological discussion of the apostle Paul”? My guess is, you’d be leaving in droves and might never come back! “Theology” simply means “talk about God.” Lutheran seminaries offer (that means, *require*) classes in “systematic theology,” which pretty much involves dissecting the Bible from beginning to end to try to pin God down somehow. (That’s not really what they do, but it sure feels like it!)

About 30 years ago some people involved in the worship of the Roman Catholic Church and mainline churches (Lutheran, Presbyterian, Methodist, United Church of Christ, Reformed, Episcopalian) established a three-year “lectionary cycle.” Year A is based on the gospel of Matthew; Year B on the gospel of Mark; and Year C on Luke’s gospel. The gospel of John is used often in Year B (since Mark’s is the shortest gospel, only 16 chapters) and during certain seasons of the “church year.” In addition to the gospel for the day, each Sunday or other day of worship has an appointed reading from the Hebrew Scriptures (what we call the *Old Testament*), a psalm, and a “New Testament” reading selected from the books of Acts through Revelation. The four readings for the day are called the “periscopes” (*per-RICK-a-peas*).

The apostle Paul wrote seven New Testament letters, and five others are often attributed to him (but that attribution is contested by many New Testament scholars). Saul (his birth name) was a Pharisee, well-educated perhaps under Gamaliel, the best-known rabbi in the years following Jesus’ resurrection. He was viciously opposed to the “renegade” Jews who followed Jesus. We first meet him in Jerusalem, holding the cloaks of the men who are stoning Stephen, the first martyr among Christ’s followers. After that he went to the San Hedrin and got warrants for the arrest of “people of the way.” He set off for Damascus to bring them bound back to Jerusalem to stand trial. On “the way” he was blinded by a bright light, fell to the ground, and heard a voice from heaven saying, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?” He answered, “Who are you, Lord?” and heard, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.” He was led into Damascus, where he stayed in the house of a man named Judas.

After three days a follower of “the way,” Ananias, was commanded by God to go to him; he went reluctantly because he feared Saul would arrest him. Ananias laid his hands on Saul, and he received his sight; he was baptized even before eating and drinking. And he became the first “apostle to the gentiles,” traveling all over the world as it was known then, teaching and preaching and sharing with everyone the good news of God in Jesus Christ.

Because he was so well educated, Saul/Paul wrote eloquent Greek letters to the churches he founded and others he’d heard of. His writing is difficult to read in Greek, and the translations into English are often cumbersome and awkward.

Now I get to the purpose of this article. When a letter from Paul is the “New Testament reading” for the day, I often omit it, because it’s so wordy and “theological” that it would take a great deal of time to explain it. It’s my intention to preach a sermon on Paul’s second letter to the Corinthians later this summer, because what he has to say is important to our faith. In the meantime, if you wonder why we rarely read Paul’s letters, this is why. – *Have a great summer!* —*Pastor Gail*

## ST. JOHN WOMEN OF THE ELCA

We have now reached the Fall quarter. Where did the summer go?

We will have our monthly meeting on Wednesday, Sept 5, at 6:30 PM, in the church basement to plan for the packing of the kits, discuss selling pies at the Pancake Breakfast, plan for the Fall Retreat and any other agenda items that need to be discussed.

On Sunday September 16, there will be a special WELCA meeting immediately following the church service. A letter was given to all women of the church concerning the status of the Women's Group. I am turning over the leadership of the group, hopefully to get new ideas and new members. Please attend this important meeting. I will not be there, so bring your ideas for change. My prayer is that the group will continue to be active and not disband. I will be the contact person for the Conference.

On Saturday, September 22, the Day of Enrichment (Leadership Training) will be held in Osseo. I will be attending so contact me if you want to go. (715-223-7983).

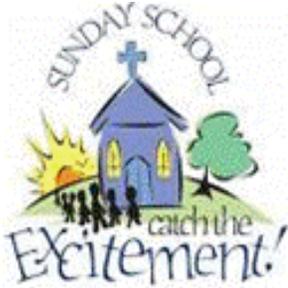
The Chequamegon Conference Fall Retreat will be held on Saturday, September 29, at Zion American at Granton. The theme is CAMPING WITH CHRIST. Registration is \$15 which is due by September 14, or \$20 after Sept. 14. There is a poster on both the north and south bulletin boards. Please read for the special features. It has suggestions for the type of clothing to wear and what to bring. We will discuss this at the monthly meeting.

We are still collecting school items for the kits, or any other items needed for the other kits.

Bev Umnus, President

715-223-7983

**The next Bible Study is** Tuesday, Sept. 11 at St. Stephen.  
All studies will begin at **1pm**. Come and share in this time of study, sharing of ideas & understanding, and growing together in Christ.



**Rally Sunday** is September 9th. We will be returning to our regular worship time of 9am and SUNDAY SCHOOL will begin again! We are excited to welcome back our young people for another year of learning and growing in our walk with Jesus together!

We are blessed to welcome back our wonderful teaching staff and will have a time of commissioning them before they and the students are dismissed to their classrooms on that Sunday.

Michelle Hollatz & Morgan Mueller—Co-teachers

4K/5K

Bonnie Bargender—3rd Grade

Vicky Finke—4th & 5th Grade

Marianne Mueller—5th, 6th, & 7th Grade

Lavone Runge—8th Grade

Niaomi Treankler—sub as needed/group projects

Shae Wiesman—sub as needed/group projects

Lana Strasser—Music Director

Pastor Gail —Freshman/Confirmation Class

Please remember to pray for these dedicated individuals, and encourage them with your helpful support and words of appreciation.

It has been a blessing to have Lavone working with our upper classmen, preparing them for Confirmation and membership at St. John. However, she has come to the decision that this will be her last year of teaching. She would welcome the opportunity to train her replacement, and we are ALWAYS looking for new teachers to come and share their love, and God-given strengths & abilities to enrich our students.

**Our Sunday School Leadership Team is excited to announce** that there will be a dedicated “classroom” for the cradle roll children and their parents! The nursery room (at the bottom of the staircase by the elevator) will now be dedicated to those children who aren’t ready for structured classes just yet.

They would love to see a parent or two volunteering to “staff” the classroom each Sunday so that parents can trade off watching each other’s children and participating in church services. There will be a sign-up sheet in the room.

Anyone interested in volunteering to help tend our precious little ones, please talk to one of our teachers at your first opportunity.

## Reflections from Rose



*It certainly has been an eventful summer!*



The celebration of my aunt’s 90th birthday went very well...she was SURPRISED!

What surprised us both was that right ON the day of her birthday we completed an item we each had on our bucket list—ZIPLINING! We went to a place in Bailey’s Harbor that had a course of lines over the Ridges Sanctuary. It was beautiful and BREATH-TAKING in more ways than one! What a wonderful memory.

Another wonderful memory was the trip to the Netherlands with Pastor Gail. It was filled with the beauty of many rivers, canals through the cities, bountiful flowers and a pace of life very different from what we see everyday. We saw more bicycles than I’ve seen in the whole rest of my life I think, and of course I must make mention of the graceful windmills. We tasted new foods and came to appreciate pancakes in a whole new way! It was an amazing relaxed time of so much beauty and precious time of fellowship with my dear sister in Christ. Alas, Pastor Gail was the Yachtzee Queen this trip, beating me more times than I care to admit, and that carried right over to another game we both enjoy called “Lost Cities” but it was fun all the same!

Of course, when we landed I discovered that my husband Jeff had been in the hospital with cellulitis since 3 days after we left. Since then it’s been pretty intense, but things seem to be getting better. Thanks so much for the encouragement of your prayers, cards and kind words of caring. God is at work and blesses us even when it isn’t all sunshine, windmills, and flowers. *Praise his name!*

## Adventures—and Reconciliation!—of the Church Mice



**Oh my goodness gracious, it's been a LONG lazy time since we last reported on "The Adventures of the Church Mice."** It was such a wonderful experience, all 4 of us together on vacation. It was the first time ever that we all took off from our churchly duties at the same time! We finally got to really know each other!

**Tully and Twink:** You know, it wasn't all smooth sailing. You know how it is, the way church mice do things at *one* congregation is the way *all* church mice *everywhere* "should" do things. We 2 from St John, we're used to working behind the scenes. We don't often appear in public, but we're glad to share our experiences and learnings in the newsletter, I think it's called "The Good News from St. John." So we were really uncomfortable when Miri and Frederick wanted to be up front, to be noticed by everyone. *Especially* on our EUROPEAN VACATION!

**Miri and Frederick:** Well, can you blame us? Here we were thousands of miles away from home, where no one knew who we were so we didn't have to worry about what they'd think of us! OF COURSE we wanted to be noticed! We wanted everyone, especially the Dutch mice, to see how fine and fancy American church mice are! The only problem was, there aren't nearly as many old churches (or new ones either) in "The Kingdom of the Netherlands" as there were in Spain and Portugal and Italy.

**Tully and Frederick:** But we had a chance to visit one very old church while Rose and Pastor Gail wandered around an old town looking for some place to eat. (It seems they were *always* eating!) We decided just to sit together, the 4 of us, and think about what it means to be church mice in a yoked parish, where the 2 congregations are trying to figure out how to, what do you say, "share and share alike?" Miri prays a lot, and we let her pray for all of us, to not be so critical of each other and try to appreciate each other more.

**Miri and Twink:** And it was easier after that. Especially when we got to Groningen, the next to the last day of our adventure overseas. Rose and Pastor Gail had some adventures of their own that day. We have to say, we didn't think their first choice was a very good one. They went to a CAT CAFÉ! I mean, really, it's a café where 8 cats live! They went through 1 door that had to be shut completely before they could go through the second door, and they had to wash their hands first, and then they had to read the "house rules" before they were allowed to touch any of the cats. Some people actually go there just to visit the cats, they don't even eat or drink anything! I don't see why someone doesn't open a MOUSE café!!

**Miri and Tully:** Anyway, we didn't go into the Cat Café with them, but when they came out we joined up with them again and wandered through the town. We could see why they call it the "World Cycling City!" There were even more bikes than in Amsterdam (where they have literal parking lots for bikes because so many people ride everywhere!)



## Adventures—and Reconciliation!—Continued . . .



**Twink and Frederick:** We heard organ music coming from a church and they walked all around the whole building looking for an open door, they wanted to go in and listen. Of course WE could get in through a small crack under a door (although it wasn't so easy for me, Frederick, and Miri because we're a lot bigger than our friends from St. John). We got to hear the organist practice for the next worship service, all sorts of hymns. Some of them sounded familiar in places but we didn't really recognize any.

**Tully and Miri:** We sat down under the pulpit and listened for a while, then we remembered something from Colossians Pastor Gail reads at some weddings: *"As God's chosen mice (oops, it's really "people") clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord has forgiven you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace."*



**Frederick:** It felt like God was telling us we had to really care for each other and not insist on doing things our own way.

**Twink:** It wasn't right for us to be selfish for our own ways. If we put our 4 mousey heads together, and our mousey hearts, we could be really good examples of what Jesus wants everyone to do: love each other!

**Tully:** So while Rose and Pastor Gail were visiting a Dutch Christian Book Store, we listened to beautiful music and prayed together and finally realized that God had CALLED US to be "yoked," just like the people of St. Stephen and St. John.

**All 4:** So THAT'S why the title of this edition includes the **RECONCILIATION** of the church mice!



Tully



Twink



Frederick



Miri

### Coming on the horizon



**Partnering for Puerto Rico** our JOINT Mission Project with St. Stephen to minister to the great need in that country in the wake of last year's hurricane.

**Annual Potato and Buttermilk Pancake Brunch** will be on Sunday, October 14th. This includes a Basket Raffle so put on your thinking caps, and SAVE the date!

**Confirmation** will be on October 28th. The Community **Thanksgiving Eve Service** will be on Wednesday, November 21. Keep in mind that **Christmas program practices will begin on November 4** and continue each Sunday through December 9th. The Sunday School Christmas Program and Cookie Walk are scheduled for December 16. Keep your eyes on the weekly bulletins for regular announcements each week. If you miss a service, pick up a bulletin anyway so you don't miss a thing!

**Don't skip over this!**



Northwest Synod of Wisconsin  
 Evangelical Lutheran Church of America  
 God's Work. Our Hands.

## Meet The New Synod Staff!

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**Rev. Laurie Skow-Anderson**  
 Bishop

- Preach, teach, and administer the sacraments
- Provide pastoral care and leadership
- Ordain, Commission, and Install rostered leaders
- Lead in the mission of the church
- Help strengthen the unity of the church
- Representing the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin in regional and national gatherings

**Elizabeth (Liz) Bartsch**  
 Assistant to the Bishop for Administration

- Maintain payroll and general synod bookkeeping
- Organize registration for events
- Coordinate the annual synod assembly
- Serve as the office receptionist
- Offer rostered leader and congregational support
- Organize synod events
- Work closely with Synod Council
- Assist with the candidacy process



**Rev. Greg Kaufmann**  
 Assistant to the Bishop for Leadership

- Call process
- Financial reporting of the Siebert Grant Faithful Innovations Network
- Liaison to Lay School of Ministry
- Liaison to the Synod Resource Center
- First Call Theological Event Coordinator

These have become some of Pastor Gail & Rose's FAVORITE people over time! They are EXCELLENT resources to help in the building up of Christ's Church and the individuals that make it up. There are others that aren't mentioned on these pages too. But we have NEVER been turned away when seeking help! They are passionate about the health of the Church.

**Elizabeth Bartsch** has been responsible for setting up "Soul Support" to help strengthen and inform Church Secretaries. Rose finds that to be EXTREMELY valuable. She also works to set up and organize the annual "Walking Together" which serves to encourage and strengthen individual members of congregations (YOU!).

Try to become more aware and participate in some of the Synod activities. You will begin to appreciate the encouragement and these individuals behind them too!

**Let's get to know them  
BETTER!**



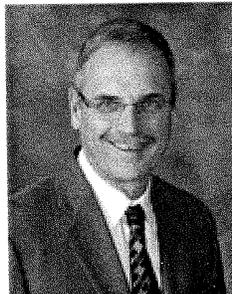
**Northwest Synod of Wisconsin**  
Evangelical Lutheran Church of America  
God's Work. Our Hands.

## Meet The New Synod Staff!

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**Rev. Erin Nelson**  
Director for Evangelical Mission

- Congregational Vitality
- Align the synod with Future Directions 2025
- Mission Support & Stewardship Initiatives
- Call Process



**Rev. Randy Olson**  
Assistant to the Bishop for Leadership

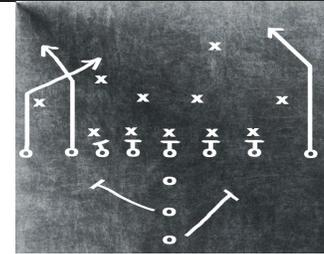
- Assist with call process
- Candidacy for rostered leaders
- Bridge builders
- Pastoral Care

**Deacon Laura Ramlow**  
Assistant to the Bishop for Communication and Faith Formation

- Maintain and create all digital and printed communication
- Assist congregations with communication questions and concerns
- Synod Youth Board Coordinator
- Malawi Companion Synod Coordinator
- Coordinator of Faith Formation (first third of life ministry, cross-generational ministry, youth workers, etc.)



**Many thanks to these folks for their dedicated service!**

**#OntheLIGHTERside : )**Football terms at Church

**BACKFIELD-IN-MOTION**—Making a trip to the back (restroom or water fountain) during the service.

**BENCHWARMER**—Those who do not sing, pray, work or apparently do anything but sit.

**INSTANT REPLAY**—The preacher loses her notes and falls back on last week's illustrations.

**STAYING IN THE POCKET**—What happens to a lot of money that should be given to the Lord's work.

**TWO-MINUTE WARNING**—The point at which you realize the sermon is almost over and begin to gather up your children and belongings.

**QUARTERBACK SNEAK**—Church members quietly leaving during the closing hymn.

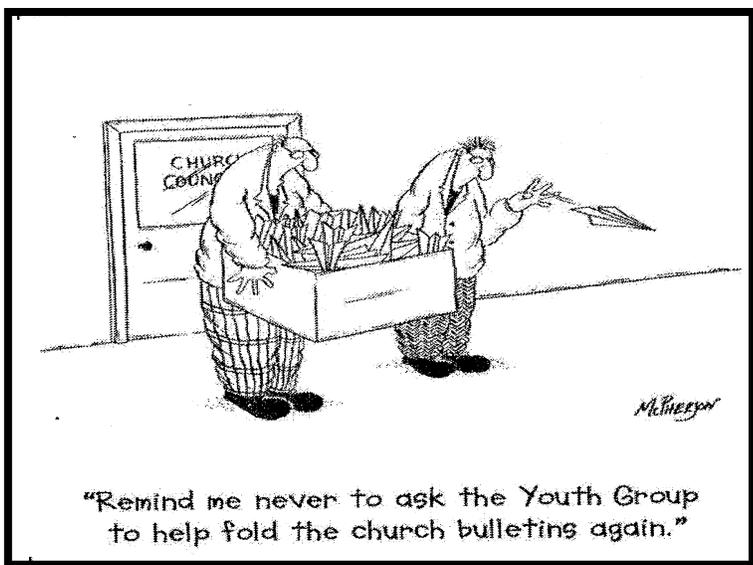
**SUDDEN DEATH**—What happens to the attention span of the congregation if the preacher goes into "overtime".

**BLITZ**—The rush for the restaurants following the closing prayer.

**END RUN**—Getting out of church *quick*, without speaking to any guest or fellow member.

**FLEX DEFENSE**—The ability to allow absolutely nothing said during the sermon to affect your life.

So you say you think you are a "FREE AGENT" ? What other team are you thinking about "playing " for ??



Just a bit of "Secretary" humor,  
I have WAY too much  
fun at my job !

; ) Rose



## GOOD NEWS

St. John Lutheran Church ELCA  
W1000 Hwy N  
Edgar, WI 54426

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



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**Deadline for October 2018 News**



**September 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."*