


THE PULSE BEAT



Volume 48, Number 11

December 2023

A WORD FROM THE PASTOR

Here we are at the last month of the year once again! I don't have to tell you about how time simply seems to fly past us more quickly. Time is the same, yet our perspective on time changes as we get older, so it seems to move faster!

If you look in a Bible Concordance (word-finder) at the back of many Bibles, you see there are 880 references to time, taking up 4 pages, along with another 209 references to "times." Which gives over 1000 time words throughout the entire Bible. So our Christian Scripture has something to say about the issue that plagues human existence, called "time."

The only thing I know of that captures time, and stops it, in a way, are photographs and films. A revealing comment was made by actor Robbie Coltrane, who played the gentle giant character Rubeus Hagrid, in the Harry Potter movies, between 2001 & 2012. Hagrid was a 9 & ½ ft. tall half-giant, with a kind character you may not expect from such a big man!

But Coltrane said at the 20th anniversary reunion of Characters in 2022, said: "My children will show the movies to their children, so you could be watching in 50 years time, easy. I'll not be here to see it, sadly, but Hagrid will." He said that the year before he died at age 72.

Yes, the strange issue of time meets us at the end of every year! And the Bible tells us some things about time. Romans 5:6, St. Paul writes: "**For while we were still weak, at the right time, Christ died for the ungodly.**"

In a Christmas reading, we hear: "*When the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children.*" (Galatians 4:4-5)

"When the fullness of time had come." God seems to decide when the time is right, or full.

But we, the followers of Christ, are challenged to learn what time it is, to know the time & how God is working in time. Such as: (Luke 19:44) A near future prediction – **They will crush you to the ground, you and your children within you, and they will not leave within you one stone upon another; because you did not recognize the TIME of your visitation from God.**"

Which tells us, God came to our world in Christ, the first Christmas, and still comes to us, in the presence of the Holy Spirit, to direct us to the doings of God.

In the "Complete Jewish Bible," translation, used by Messianic Jews, who refer to Jesus as "Yeshua," which I like, in the prologue of John 1, the passage uses the word "Shekinah," Glory. The definition is "Divine Presence."

So, to speak of God's glory, at Christmas, this time of year, or really, at any other time, we can know that the Divine presence, especially through the Holy Spirit, is still with us, as the "comforter, helper, and advocate," into the new year, and you can say, as long as time lasts! A comforting thought, at the end of the year for 2023, and the start of the new one, in 2024!

Christmas & New Year's blessings to you! *Pastor Jim*

THOUGHTS FROM THE PRESIDENT

The Christmas season has begun! I'm a little bit disappointed that the commercialization of the holiday has made sure that it was already beginning before we made it to Halloween, but a beginning is a beginning, I guess. Don't get me wrong – I love Christmas, and all of the things that go along with it! It just makes me sad that Halloween and Thanksgiving get totally overlooked in the rush to get to the commercialized Christmas season.

We all know that “Jesus is the Reason for the Season,” and that the ultimate goal is to celebrate the birth of Christ our Lord. But what can we do to spread that sentiment around a little bit to people who could surely use it?

Those of us who would like our Christmas to be more about Christ definitely have options. We can deliberately re-focus the season: fewer parties in the whirlwind, more modest decorations, less of a cornucopia of presents, more of an emphasis on family activities together and reading stories about Christmas. We can also work to continue talking to our family and friends about why the religious meaning of Christmas is important to us, and possibly help our kids and grandkids to spot how the culture wants them to buy, buy, buy without regard to whether it really makes them happy or satisfied. And wow, is this hard! The overwhelming message sent in society is not about the Christian Christmas, but about the enjoyable “stuff” of the secular Christmas that coincides with the Christian holiday.

But, hey, I'm preaching to the choir here! The people of St. John understand Christmas! We have always been a group of very generous givers and have embraced these Christmas holidays. As I write this, there is already a pile of gifts under our Angel Tree in the Narthex, to share with people less fortunate than we are. My kids always enjoyed this tradition, and carefully picked out gifts for the children they adopted.

As we walk through these Christmas holidays, I have a few goals I will set for myself. I will try and take time to reflect on why Jesus came into this world and thank him for his sacrifice. I will try to spend less money on useless gifts and give more to charity, and spend more time with family and friends. And I will try and emphasize the meaning of Christmas to my family – especially my grandkids, who I am sure are furiously working on their Christmas lists. And you can't blame them. That's what they see around them everywhere. But there can never be too much encouragement to celebrate Christmas for the reason it exists in the first place. So Jesus really should be invited!

I look forward to celebrating Christmas with my family, and my St. John family, and to celebrate my many blessings with you all!

And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. Luke 2:10-11

Hugs and peace to you all, *Sandy*

CHURCH LEADERSHIP

Pastor James O'Reilly-Christensen

Office hours: Monday – Thursday,
9:00 am – 2:00 pm
920 988-9059 (Cell)

E-mail: stjohnpastor1@hotmail.com

Office Manager: Robin Fatla

Church office hours: Monday – Friday,
9:00 am – Noon
262-377-0410

E-mail: stjohnsecretary@hotmail.com

Website: stjohngrafton.org

Congregation President – Sandy Allen

Vice President – Dennis Jaeger

Secretary – Judy McMullin

Treasurer – Peter Viesselmann

Church Council:

- Dennis Jaeger – Worship
- Sue Dowe – Education/ Youth
- Sharlene Sandquist – Stewardship
- Robin Fatla - Outreach
- Roger Wendorf - Finance
- Joe Porth – Property & Grounds
- Mary Ellen Levra - Public Relations
- Jane Turowski - Financial Secretary

Organist

St. John Choir Director

Glory Rings Director

Flutist

OPEN

OPEN

Dale Allen

Sandy Allen

Newsletter staff:

Robin Fatla & Sheila Kapke

Newspaper Deadline:

Articles due by the 3rd Sunday of each month.

Church Phone Numbers:

Office: 262-377-0410 Fax: 262-377-0410

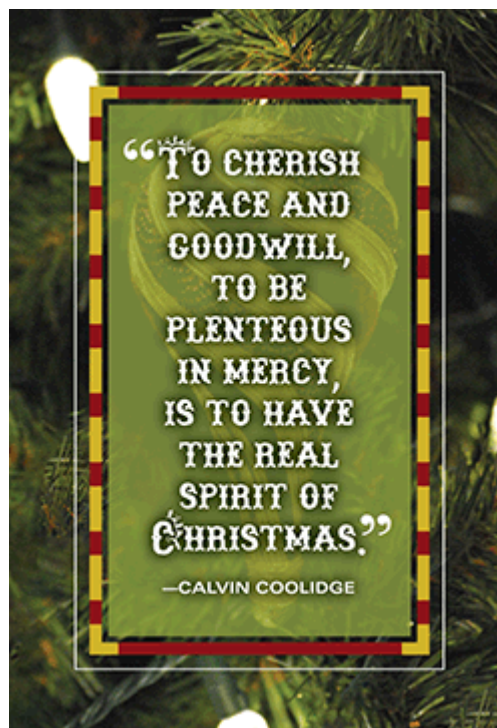
Pastor: 920 988-9059

E-Mail: (office) stjohnsecretary@hotmail.com
(pastor) stjohnpastor1@hotmail.com

FaceBook: St. John Lutheran Church-Grafton, WI

We keep in our prayers

:Paul Barnes (Jim & Carole Litvinoff’s nephew), Clarice Buchholz (Mary Jaeger’s mother), Anna Bullio (great-granddaughter of Florence Van Cleave), Emily Carney (friend of Kylene Wright), Cathy Collins (Florence Van Cleave’s daughter), Amanda Combs (friend of Laura Christenson), Don & Nan Donner (friend of Diane & Roger Wendorf), Pastor Dale Erickson (friend of Audrey Crowell), Henry Frier (Marian Witte’s son-in-law), Merry Lou Green, Mary Jaeger, Joanne Levenick, Rosemary Litvinoff (Jim’s mother), Scott Maronde (nephew of Gary & Sue Haas), Ken Matthews (Kayla Matthews’ father-in-law), Chuck & Cary Mueller (friends of Glenn Sievers), Alice Murphy (family of MerryLou Green), Duane O’Reilly (Debbi O’Reilly-Christensen’s brother), Sugeily Pineiro-Garcia, Susan Rand (Carole Litvinoff’s sister-in-law), Karen Rautenberg (Sue Dowe’s mother), Tom Rogahn, Kathy (sister of Jackie Rogahn), Renee Schauer, Harvey Salger, Wendy Tomter, Wendy Werner (Sandy Allen’s sister-in-law), Marian Witte **Military personnel:** Kyle Christenson **“Home away from home” members:** Jeanine Burhop (sister of the late Marilyn Speranza) – Lasata; Tim McClosky – at home with sister Merry Lou Green, John Clasen – Nursing home in St. Francis, Larry Samarija – assisted living home in New Berlin



WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

Assisting Minister:

- December 3 - Gary Haas
- 10 - Bob Butt
- 17 - Robin Fatla
- 24 - **morning** - Dennis Jaeger
- Christmas Eve** - Gary Haas
- 31 - Bob Butt

Lector:

- December 3 - Carol Butt
- 10 - Robin Fatla
- 17 - Dennis Jaeger
- 24 - **morning** - Borgne McClelland
- Christmas Eve** - Robert McClelland
- 31 - Judy McMullin

Usher:

- December 3 - Joe Porth
- 10 - Dennis Jaeger
- 17 - Monica Faretra
- 24 - **morning** - Roger Wendorf
- Christmas Eve** - Peter Viesselmann & Dennis Jaeger
- 31 - Bob Eichmann

Altar bouquets:

- December 3 - Robin Fatla/ Peter & Kathie Viesselmann
- 10 - Evie Tetzlaff/ Kim Galioto
- 17 - **OPEN/ OPEN**
- 24 - **OPEN/ OPEN**
- 31 - Jeanine Burhop/ **OPEN**

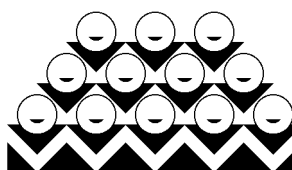
Fellowship:

- December 3 - **OPEN**
- 10 - Marian Meyer/ Evie Tetzlaff
- 17 - **OPEN**
- 24 - **OPEN**
- 31 - **OPEN**

Counting Team:

- December 3 - Dennis Jaeger Team
- 10 - Jim Litvinoff Team
- 17 - Peter Viesselmann Team
- 24 - Peter & Kathie Viesselmann
- 31 - Peter & Kathie Viesselmann

GENERAL INTEREST NEWS



Sandy Alen and Sharlene Sandquist are reorganizing the vocal and bell choirs for offerings during the Christmas season.

Rehearsals are currently scheduled for time AFTER the worship services on Sunday. If you would like to sing or ring, please let one of the ladies know - rehearsals will be starting soon.



The “Giving Tree” is now standing in the church entryway.

The mitten shaped tags are Christmas wish list items for the Family Promise guests.

You can help by choosing a tag, making the Purchase, and returning the gift, unwrapped with the tag attached, to the tree by December 10th.

* * * * *

Portlight Shelter Cookie Fundraiser.

Place your order by scanning the QR code on the enclosed flyer or call by December 1st - 262 268-2723. Pick-up will be December 17th between noon and 4 pm at the shelter, 1505 Sunset Dr., Port Washington.

* * * * *

Shelter statistics, Jan - Oct

- ◆ 2,198 nights of shelter provided
- ◆ 39 households:
- ◆ 12 with children - 27 without children
- ◆ 42 adults
- ◆ 21 children

New address:

Marian Witte
W5043 Garton Rd.
Plymouth, WI 53073
920 412-6373

Thanks to all who enjoyed an afternoon with Carol and The Keynotes recently. Through your purchases and donations, \$230 was donated to the Ozaukee Food Alliance.

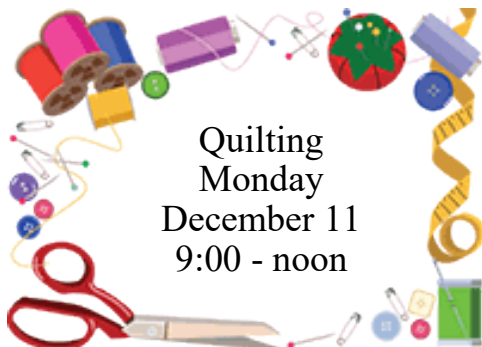
DECEMBER

<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
					1 Pastor's day off	2
3 9:30 am - Holy Communion 10:30 am - Fellowship hour	4	5	6 Noon - Pastor's Lunch 5:15 pm - Confirmation class at Trinity	7	8 Pastor's day off	9 9:00 am - Decorate the sanctuary
10 9:30 am - Holy Communion 10:30 am - Fellowship hour	11 9:00 am - Quilting 1:00 pm - Women's Bible study	12 10:00 am - Bible study at Village Pointe Commons	13 Noon - Pastor's Lunch 5:15 pm - Confirmation class at Trinity	14	15 Pastor's day off	16
17 9:30 am - Holy Communion 10:30 am - Fellowship hour	18	19	20 Noon - Pastor's Lunch 5:15 pm - Confirmation Christmas party at Trinity	21	22 Pastor's day off	23
24 9:30 am - Holy Communion 10:30 am - Fellowship hour 5:00 pm - Christmas Eve Candlelight worship	25  Christmas Day	26 10:00 am - Bible study at Village Pointe Commons	27 Noon - Pastor's Lunch	28	29 Pastor's day off	30
31 9:30 am - Service of Christmas Carols / Holy Communion 10:30 am - Fellowship hour						



Circle Meetings in December:

Sarah Circle: Monday, December 11, 1:00 PM
at church



THANKOFFERING

You can still make a Thankoffering of that “little extra” in response to that “little extra” received throughout the year! The offerings will be used for all the ministries and priorities of the Women of the ELCA.

Your check or envelope can be made out to Women of the ELCA and marked for Thankoffering. You may put it in the offering or send to Borgne McClelland, treasurer:
1754 Second Ave
Port Washington, WI 53074
By December 31st.

Lutheran World Relief (LWR)

Donations are still being welcomed for blanket and quilt shipping costs.

LWR uses the money to pay for the shipping of all the blankets and quilts sent to those in need around the world.

Please be generous so that all those with such serious needs are able to access a blanket or quilt.

Your check or envelope can be made out to Women of the ELCA and marked for Blankets. You may put it in the offering plate or send to Borgne McClelland, treasurer:
1754 Second Ave
Port Washington, WI 53074
by December 31st.

From the Worship Ministry



Altar Flowers
After a long and great relationship with St John, Groth's Country Gardens will no longer be providing altar flowers after the end of 2023. The Worship committee is currently looking for an alternate florist but has not been successful yet. If anyone has any ideas please talk to Dennis Jaeger. Otherwise, please look for more information soon!



- 12/3 *Dave Viesselmann*
12/3 *Ivan Garcia*
12/10 *Jan Gonzalez*
12/11 *Evie Tetzlaff*
12/17 *Merry Lou Green*
12/17 *Sugeily Pineiro-Garcia*
12/18 *Brian Boelkow*
12/20 *Barb Eichmann*
12/23 *Mark Lewra*
12/25 *Kayla Matthews*
12/25 *Amaia Lauters*
12/27 *Rebecca Dowe*
12/30 *Joan Salger*

Please notify Church Office if we have missed someone. Thank you!

STEWARDSHIP CORNER

Advent/Christmas blessings to each of you.

December is here and if you are like me, your mailboxes have been increasingly full with requests for money from different charities. As you read the material (if you do read it) all of them sound worthy of a donation. So how do you decide which ones to support?

I have finally settled on checking them out via Charity Navigator and deciding by what percentage goes to the actual program and what percentage goes to administration and publicity. Anything below 90% is unacceptable to me, with a few exceptions. Then I decide which ones to support on a regular basis, throughout the year. I have a limited amount for this purpose and I want it to go where it will do the most good.

Some charities are not listed on Charity Navigator (many of the Lutheran charities are not) and then you/I have to decide in faith, whether to give to them or not.

We have just completed our Stewardship Emphasis to support the work and witness of St. John, in this community. THANK YOU to each of you, who responded with a pledge of financial support, and also turned in your Time and Talent worksheet. As I have been pointing out all this past year, stewardship is so much more than the giving of money to church and charities. It is also the giving of your time to the various activities of the church, your neighbor and community, the care of creation, being stewards of God's grace and love etc. Stewardship is involved in all we do and have. I pray that we will all be better stewards in all of its aspects in 2024.

Sharlene Sandquist

YOUTH/ EDUCATION

Confirmation Class Schedule for December:

- December 6th - Why did Jesus get baptized?
- December 13th - Is believing in Jesus really the only way to get to heaven?
- December 20th - Christmas party



The EPIC churches (Advent, Faith, St. John, and Trinity) will present a combined Sunday School Program on Sunday, December 17th at 11:15 am at Advent L.C. in Cedarburg. All are invited to attend the children's presentation of *Echoes of the Manger*

Rehearsals and Performance

Sun., Nov. 26	10:30-11:15 AM	Music practice
Sun., Dec. 3	10:30-11:15 AM	Parts assigned; speakers will have a read through Music practice
Sun., Dec. 10	10:30-11:15 AM	Read through with all speakers. Walk through staging with all participants. Music practice.
Sat., Dec. 16	10:00 AM-12:00 PM	Full dress rehearsal
Sun., Dec. 17	10:30 AM	All children should be there for costumes and rehearsal.
Sun, Dec. 17	11:15 AM	Performance



Decorating the
Sanctuary
Saturday, December 9
9:00 am

Christmas Eve
Candle Light Worship
Sunday,
December 24
5:00 pm



There will be **NO** Wednesday Advent services **NOR** Christmas Day service at St. John.



The Worship Ministry will be ordering 12 poinsettia plants for inclusion in the sanctuary decorations.

There will be a sign-up sheet if you would like to purchase one. The cost is unknown at this time.



Happy



baking!

Community Events

The Lutheran A Cappella Choir of Milwaukee
“And the Glory of the Lord”

Friday, December 1, 7:30 pm
Mt. Carmel L.C.
8424 W. Center St., Milwaukee

Sunday, December 3, 3:00 pm
St. Luke’s L.C.
6705 Northway, Greendale
Tickets are \$15 for either performance

Blue Christmas
Time for Reflection
December 3, 3:00 pm

Not feeling the joy?
Need quiet time?

Join fellow community members in a time that honors loss and grief along with providing hope. Fireside readings, light refreshments, and a parting remembrance.

All are welcome!
Cedarburg Community Methodist Church
W68 N563 Evergreen Blvd.

Holiday Cookie Walk

Saturday, December 9
10 am - 11:30 or until sold out!
St. Paul’s L.C., Random Lake
705 Grand Ave.

We supply the box, you choose your favorites - sold by the pound, not the dozen - so you get more!
Suggested donation \$10 per pound
Over 50 varieties to choose from.

GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN

A Night of Carols and Stories
Tuesday, December 12
6:00 pm

Water Street Brewery
1251 Gateway Dr., Grafton
JOIN US FOR A FUN AND FESTIVE NIGHT!

RSVP:
PASTOR@GRACEGRAFTON.COM
o call 262 377-3934

Treasurer's Update As Of October 31, 2023

The St John Lutheran Church Council would like to thank you for your generosity. Without your financial support, the mission and ministry of St John would not be possible. The Council would also like to keep you updated on the financial situation at St John.

The **Unified Budget** supports the work of the church through education, evangelism, worship, youth programs, stewardship, public relations, utilities & property upkeep, mission support, salaries, office expenses, and insurance. These items are all included in our line-item budget.

Year-To-Date income	\$ 92,690
Year-To-Date expenses	\$133,150 (including \$12,920 for Mission Support)

The result is that St John currently has a deficit in our Unified Budget of \$40,500. We do have \$25,000 in the contingency fund as shown below to help cover any year-end deficits, but we don't want to deplete that fund. Please prayerfully consider your support of the ongoing mission of St John Church as we reach the end of the year.

Mission Support is an important part of our Unified Budget. St John has distributed \$12,920 to the budgeted mission agencies for 2023 including the ELCA, Lutheran Social Services, five mission partners, and six local community agencies.

The **Contingency Fund** is outside of the Unified Budget, and is used as needed for unforeseen expenses and to offset any year-end differences between income and expenses in the Unified Budget. Any balance remaining at the end of the year will carryover to next year. Income to this fund comes from direct gifts (such as Thrivent member directed gifts), interest on savings accounts or CDs, building and utility expense sharing from Prime Horizon, and fund raising activities such as the chili dinner.

Current amount in the fund \$24,991

The **Property Fund** supports any extraordinary maintenance of the building and property that is not covered under Unified Budget expenses.

Current amount in the fund \$9,683

The **Memorial Fund** receives gifts for memorials and honoraria. Families of the deceased can make a request to the Council to use the memorials for specific purposes, or the funds can be used for other projects as voted upon by the St John Congregation.

Current amount in the fund \$134,890

This year's receipts to the fund include memorials for Walt Thompson, Sue Travis, Harold Immekus, and Marian Carraway.

The most recent distribution from this fund was for the upgrade to the sound system.

This update does not include all funds at St John. A detailed listing of all budget expense line items and funds is posted on the bulletin board in the hallway, or you can contact the treasurer Peter Viesselmann, or any Council member.

FAMILY PROMISE FUNDRAISER

Support Family Promise of Ozaukee County and our Portlight Shelter this holiday season!

Portlight Shelter

COOKIE FUNDRAISER

All cookies made and decorated by Portlight guests, and Family Promise staff and volunteers.

\$5 Single Cookie

Single 4" decorated cookie cut out

\$25 6-Pack

6 pack of 4" decorated cookie cut outs

\$50 Assorted Holiday Box

50 pieces of sweet, sweet goodness!

Includes: peanut blossoms, jolly rancher stars, chocolate no bake oatmeal, pecan fingers, coconut macaroons, colored & decorated sprits, snickerdoodles, and thumbprints



Scan to Order by 12/1
Pick-up 12/17 between
12-4 PM at Portlight



December 2023 Pulse Beat



1193 Lakefield Road
Grafton, WI 53024

"In God's Word, Serving You and the World"

Worship Schedule

- Sunday Morning - 9:30 a.m.

IT IS OUR MISSION as people called by God into the Congregation of St. John Lutheran Church to:

- Proclaim the Gospel in worship and daily life.
- Study and teach God's Word.
- Fellowship among people of this congregation.
- Serve people in our surrounding community.

This is the **MISSION** and **MINISTRY** that we accept as fellow Christians at St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church of Lakefield.

"Faithfully Serving Christ Since 1866"

A CHRIST-CENTERED
CHRISTMAS
ADVENT READING PLAN

Explore the true meaning of Christmas as you travel through God's Word. Discover God's promises he fulfilled through the birth of His only Son, the **KING OF KINGS.**

1 Isaiah 7:14	2 Isaiah 9:6-7	3 Malachi 3:1	4 Micah 5:2-4	5 Luke 1:5-7	6 Luke 1:10-15	7 Luke 1:18-22	8 Luke 1:24-25
9 Luke 1:26-29	10 Luke 1:30-33	11 Luke 2:1-5	12 Luke 2:6-7	13 Luke 2:8-14	14 Luke 2:15-20	15 Matthew 1:18-21	16 Matthew 1:22-25
17 Matthew 2:1-3	18 Matthew 2:4-6	19 Matthew 2:7-9	20 Matthew 2:10-12	21 Romans 1:5:13	22 Galatians 4:4-5	23 Philippians 2:8-11	24 James 1:16-18
25 John 3:16							