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# THE PULSE BEAT



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## A WORD FROM THE PASTOR

Here we are once again at the beginning of a new year, and the end of the old one. We find ourselves already a generation into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It's rather amazing to think that our younger people have only known life since the 2000's and not before, while elders are approaching a century of life!

If you have read our council president Sandy Allen's article in this newsletter you already know, I have indicated I will be retiring from the ministry at St. John in 2024.

After a conversation with our synod Bishop Paul Erickson last November, he advised that summer is a good time to retire. So it looks like I will be doing so on or about July 1<sup>st</sup> of the coming year.

Pastors are among those fortunate enough to have a pension through the ELCA to draw on. It is a matter of deciding on how much to live on each month, & like many of us, estimating how long our resources and health will remain in good shape.

Pastors can retire, and un-retire as well, to continue working as possible interim pastors, knowing you will be called for a specific shorter period of time, such as 18 months to 2 years of work.

St. John congregation will also be going through those changes in the coming year. I have already given the council permission to move ahead with the process of connecting with the Greater Milwaukee Synod (ELCA) to take appropriate planning steps, such as beginning a required congregational self-study, & arranging for interim work when I leave.

Bishop Erickson indicated that announcing your plans to retire a year in advance is probably too long of a time period, while just a couple of months, or a few weeks notice, is probably too short of a time for a congregation to plan ahead.

Unlike in the business world, where employees are fortunate to get or give 2- weeks notice, of an employment change, a congregation is different. Given all the changes since the covid-19 pandemic of 2020-22, and before, a congregation is still a home base where God's mission is carried out among the people, God's body in the world!

The future for St. John will not look exactly like the past, though some of the basics of church life will continue: worship, cooperative confirmation, communion, leadership planning, visitation counseling, Bible study, leadership planning, funerals, baptisms, etc. These things will continue, simply under different pastoral leadership. We can't say what the longer term future holds for the church, at present, and yet we remain people of hope and trust in God to see us through!

And starting next summer, Prime Horizon's work with St. John will be expanding, from their once a week cooking class, as they hope to utilize St. John as a campus for teaching & serving persons with developmental disabilities, teaching them necessary life-skills. The vision for this mission is very promising indeed!

This work will be a great blessing to our St. John congregation, as we serve the community in new ways into the foreseeable future! Mission work like this also provides a continuity with our 20 plus year relationship with Luther Manor, which ended in 2018.

Some of our local congregations are certainly undergoing changes in pastoral leadership: Grace – Grafton, has new Pastor Chris Thomas, while Trinity, recently called Pastor Erin Coutts in 2023, to serve there. And Advent – Cedarburg has had Pastor Alexis Twito now for 3 years.

We will also build on the strength of what is now called our EPIC (ELCA partners in Christ) cooperating relationships with our sister churches in Cedarburg, & possibly beyond.

The signs of ministry and mission in our area are very encouraging and hopeful! Churches that serve the community, are those that will remain sustainable as vital congregations in the long term! In our hope in Christ St. John is one of those churches!

Details are of course, to be worked out in the near future! In the meantime it has been a great pleasure to serve the faithful folks, who follow Christ, as disciples in the St. John Grafton and Lakefield area, for nearly 15 years! God has blessed St. John faith community over the past 150 plus years. My prayer is that God will continue to do so, and to show the way, into the future our God has in mind for us. May we follow where God is leading in Christ, by the help of the Holy Spirit! Peace! *Pastor Jim*

## THOUGHTS FROM THE PRESIDENT

Welcome 2024! My mom always used to tell me that the older she got, the quicker the years went by. And wow was she right!

It looks like 2024 is going to bring changes for St. John! Some of them will just slide in under the radar, and not make many waves. But some of them will be big! While some of us will find these changes to be new and exciting, for others of us, the changes may feel scary and unpredictable, and make us feel nervous and unsure of our next steps. Regardless of how you view change, one of God's primary objectives in our lives is for us to change – for the better, even if our circumstances don't. He is way more interested in our hearts, and if we put our trust in Him, He will correct and shape us with His love.

Some of you may have heard that after long consideration, Pastor Jim will be retiring some time in 2024. He has not set a formal date yet, but will be discussing this with the congregation at our annual meeting. His retirement will bring with it a litany of questions on how St. John will go forward in calling a new pastor. My request to you is that before our annual meeting, please prayerfully think about your feelings about a new pastor. It's no secret that we have struggled to meet our budget over the last few years. We always seem to spend more money than we take in, and have been forced to use money from our contingency fund to balance. By calling a half time or three quarter time pastor instead of a full time pastor, we would be able to cut some money from our budget. But the calling of a pastor cannot be based on money alone. We need to identify our needs. I am proud of the people of St. John – you are a very strong congregation, and lead this congregation well. So what do we want our new pastor to handle? Leading worship every Sunday is a given. But what other items are non-negotiable and necessary? Please come to the annual meeting with your thoughts and ideas.

We have been in discussions with Prime Horizon about broadening their use of our building in 2024. They provided a tentative proposal in November to utilize our building as a campus for a Life Skills Day Program for individuals with intellectual developmental disabilities, to focus on personal finance, job skills, resiliency, independent living and communications skills. Some of you know that they already host a cooking class at St. John weekly, and a part of expanding this would include them planting a small vegetable garden on site. We are very excited about this further partnership with Prime Horizon and hope for the support of the congregation.

It was sad news that after a long partnership with Groth Country Gardens they announced that they would no longer be providing flower arrangements for churches after the end of 2023. This will open up different opportunities for our congregation members. If you're a flower arranger, please feel free to design your own. If not, bouquets are readily available for sale all over the place – grocery stores, Walmart, and we have vases available to use. Maybe you have beautiful flowers growing in your garden that you'd like to share! We will ask the congregation to sign up and bring their flowers for Sunday morning. And if no one signs up – well it's kind of like treats. And we all know how that works.

Changes can be difficult, but they are inevitable. There will always be changes and we cannot avoid the fact that we will encounter change throughout our lives - some good, some not so good. I will put my trust in God, and I hope you will join me. God is aware of every change and circumstance, and we need to trust Him with the outcome of the changes in our lives. Whatever we need, He will provide, whatever we lose, He will restore in His own way. Blessings to all of you for a New Year filled with health, peace, prosperity and love!

*Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland. Isaiah 43:18-19*

Hugs and peace to you all, *Sandy*

**CHURCH LEADERSHIP**

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Website: [stjohngrafton.org](http://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.

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**FaceBook:** St. John Lutheran Church-Grafton, WI

**GENERAL INTEREST NEWS**

*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, Chris Heggenbarth (Robert & Borgne McClelland daughter-in-law), 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, 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



*Gracious God, we come before you seeking renewal in the new year. Renew our minds, our hearts, and*

*our spirits. May we be transformed by the power of your Holy Spirit, leaving behind the old and embracing the new that you have in store for us. Amen*



**Congregational Meeting**

Sunday, January 28, 2024

11:00 AM

Fellowship Hall

Annual Reports will be available on January 14th.

## STEWARDSHIP CORNER

Happy New Year!! Have you made your resolutions yet as to how you are going to improve yourself and your use of time in the coming year? No? Neither have I. But really, what are these resolutions, other than how are we going to be better stewards of the time that God has given us? Something that we should work at every day of our lives.

I recently read a book that raises a lot of questions for the reader. It is called "The Measure" written by Nikki Erlick. "It begins with what seems like an ordinary day, except that everyone in the world, 22 or older, receives a little wooden box outside their door. Inscribed on each box was the cryptic message written in the native tongue of its recipient: *"The measure of your life lies within."*

Within each box was a single string, initially hidden by a silvery white piece of delicate fabric, so even those who lifted the lid would think twice before looking at what lay underneath." Each individual had to decide for him/herself whether or not to look and see how long they would live.

The strings caused many problems: if your insurer knew you had a short string, would they deny coverage for tests etc. that the person thought would be covered? Would a bank deny a loan to a short stringer? Would a "short stringer" open fire in a mall or hospital, because he was going to die anyway? Some sold what they had and took the trip they always wanted, etc. Some had trouble dealing with the knowledge they would soon die.

"Long stringers" took risks that they would not normally take, because they knew they wouldn't die. The army wanted only "long stringers" because they wouldn't be killed, maybe maimed for life, but not killed.

"Long stringers" would know that an experimental treatment would work because it wasn't their time to die. The list goes on.

Eventually the two groups began to fear each other and to act against each other in various ways. It divided the country.

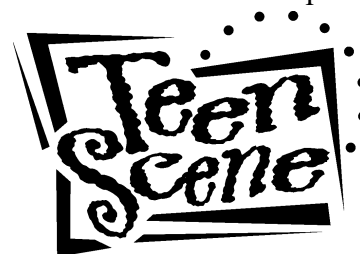
A third group decided not to look in their boxes, but continued to live as we have always lived. But they, too, had to make decisions such as do I marry a short stringer? Have children with him/her knowing they would not see them grow to adulthood? Obviously, there were many more ramifications.

As Christians we are told to live as if each day is our last. In other words, to be good stewards of our time, to use it for the good of others etc. So if you were to receive a box with a string in it, would you open it? Would you want to know the length of your life? If you opened it and it was a short string, would it change the way you live your life? Questions to ponder. I recommend the book to you. It is a good read.

*Sharlene Sandquist*

## EDUCATION & YOUTH

Happy New Year! I'd like to welcome 2024 with a class on January 28<sup>th</sup>. Class will begin at 10:45 and last until 11:15. We will begin with a snack and short lesson and make a fun craft. Hope a few youth can join us!



Here is the January calendar for confirmation classes:  
January 3 – Why should I follow Jesus; can't I just say I believe in him?

January 10 – Why should I pray when God doesn't answer my prayers?

January 17 – Why should I pray the Lord's prayer when it feels like I am going through the motions?

(make sure youth know The Lord's Prayer)

January 24 – Can someone lose their salvation?

January 31 - Can I be a Christian without going to church?

Feel free to reach out to Sue Dowe at [sadowe1966@gmail.com](mailto:sadowe1966@gmail.com) with any questions.



- 1/5 Lincoln Porth
- 1/5 Shamir Garcia
- 1/5 Asher Christenson
- 1/15 Pat Lampe
- 1/19 Kathie Viesselmann
- 1/19 Cara McMullin
- 1/20 Bob Schmidt
- 1/20 Sarah Mentzel
- 1/22 Maren Foti
- 1/22 Carol Butt
- 1/23 Roan Christenson
- 1/28 Kyleene Wright
- 1/29 Cole Granrath

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



- 1/20/2001 Steven & Latasha Reindl
- 1/26/1972 Tom & Jackie Rogahn

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



**Bible study in January:**  
Monday, January 8, 1:00 PM at church

**QUILTING DATES**

**Monday**  
**January 8 & 22**  
**9:00 - noon**

**WORSHIP ASSISTANTS**

**Assisting Minister:**

- January 7 - Robin Fatla
- 14 - Gary Haas
- 21 - Dennis Jaeger
- 28 - Bob Butt

**Lector:**

- January 7 - Florence Van Cleave
- 14 - Sandy Allen
- 21 - Bob Butt
- 28 - Carol Butt

**Usher:**

- January 7 - Sue Dowe
- 14 - Fritz Dowe
- 21 - Jim & Carol Litvinoff
- 28 - Tom Rogahn

**Altar bouquets:**

- January 7 - Dennis & Mary Jaeger/  
**OPEN**
- 14 - **OPEN/ OPEN**
- 21 - Robin Fatla/ **OPEN**
- 28 - **OPEN/ OPEN**

**Fellowship:**

- January 7 - **OPEN**
- 14 - **OPEN**
- 21 - **OPEN**
- 28 - **OPEN**

**Counting Team:**

- January 7 - Borgne McClelland Team
- 14 - Dennis Jaeger Team
- 21 - Jim Litvinoff Team
- 28 - Peter Viesselmann Team





# JANUARY

<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
	<i>1</i> <b>New Year's Day</b> - Office is closed	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>  Noon - Pastor's Lunch	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i> Pastor's day off	<i>6</i> <b>Epiphany</b>
<i>7</i> 9:30 am - Holy Communion  10:30 am - Fellowship hour  11:00 am - choir rehearsal	<i>8</i> 9:00 am - Quilting  1:00 pm - Women's Bible study	<i>9</i> 10:00 am - Bible study at Village Pointe Commons	<i>10</i>  Noon - Pastor's Lunch  5:15 pm - Confirmation class at Trinity	<i>11</i>	<i>12</i> Pastor's day off	<i>13</i>
<i>14</i> 9:30 am - Holy Communion  10:30 am - Fellowship hour  11:00 am - choir rehearsal	<i>15</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>17</i>  Noon - Pastor's Lunch  5:15 pm - Confirmation class at Trinity	<i>18</i>	<i>19</i> Pastor's day off	<i>20</i>
<i>21</i> 9:30 am - Holy Communion  10:30 am - Fellowship hour  11:00 am - Church Council 11:00 am - choir rehearsal	<i>22</i> 9:00 am - Quilting	<i>23</i> 10:00 am - Bible study at Village Pointe Commons	<i>24</i>  Noon - Pastor's Lunch  5:15 pm - Confirmation class at Trinity	<i>25</i>	<i>26</i> Pastor's day off	<i>27</i>
<i>28</i> 9:30 am - Holy Communion  10:30 am - Fellowship hour  <b>11:00 am - Annual Meeting</b>	<i>29</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>31</i>  Noon - Pastor's Lunch  5:15 pm - Confirmation class at Trinity			

# January 2024 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.
- Education hour - 11:00 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"*

# Puzzle!

After solving the equations, write the words on the correct numbered lines below. Complete Ephesians 1:3 (NIV) to discover how God shows his great love for us.

- |                        |                         |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| 14 - 7 = ___ Father    | 10 + 15 = ___ in        |
| 10 + 9 = ___ heavenly  | 10 - 5 = ___ God        |
| 9 + 9 = ___ the        | 6 - 3 = ___ to          |
| 12 + 12 = ___ blessing | 12 - 6 = ___ and        |
| 2 - 1 = ___ Praise     | 6 + 6 = ___ Christ      |
| 7 + 7 = ___ has        | 18 - 9 = ___ our        |
| 11 + 11 = ___ every    | 22 - 11 = ___ Jesus     |
| 13 + 13 = ___ Christ   | 1 + 1 = ___ be          |
| 8 + 8 = ___ us         | 7 + 6 = ___ who         |
| 10 + 10 = ___ realms   | 2 + 2 = ___ the         |
| 8 + 9 = ___ in         | 10 + 5 = ___ blessed    |
| 5 + 5 = ___ Lord       | 4 + 4 = ___ of          |
| 10 + 11 = ___ with     | 10 + 13 = ___ spiritual |

1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22		
23	24	25	26		

**Ephesians 1:3, NIV**

Answer: Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ; Ephesians 1:3, NIV