



VOLUME 52

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August Chatterbox Newsletter

The "Go And..." theme for August is **Share Your Story**, and they are inviting us to share something ourselves with others, so I thought I would share something about my faith formation with you this month.

In the community where I grew up, most of my friends were either Catholic or Jewish. Outside of my home congregation, I never really met any Lutherans, and I knew only a few folks who were from the Mainline Protestant churches, like Presbyterians or Methodists. By the time I reached the age of confirmation, I was also starting my first real dating experience. His name was Richard and we were in the same 7th grade homeroom. Richard's family happened to be Jewish, but neither of us saw our religious differences as a problem. We were best friends and our dates consisted of hanging out with our shared group of friends, going to movies, riding bikes, and hanging out at the swimming clubs during the summers. Religion was never really a point of conversation for any of us, except each year when Richard and some of our other friends had to miss school for their Jewish High Holy Days of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Then we would talk about the difference between his Jewish faith and my Christian traditions, but those differences were considered just a point of information, and were not seen as a something that effected our friendship in any way that mattered.

It wasn't until I started asking questions during my confirmation class that I began to understand the issues surrounding the differences in our faith traditions. In confirmation, my Pastor explained the Kingdom of God to us as that special place we are invited to be through our faith in Jesus Christ. And it dawned on me that Richard's family believed that Jesus was a prophet, but did not believe that Jesus was the Christ, and therefore might not be a part of this kingdom my Pastor was describing. So I asked my Pastor if Richard and my other Jewish friends were also a part of this Kingdom of God. He told me that they would need to change their faith and confess that Jesus was the Messiah, Son of God, the Christ, before they could participate in the Kingdom that was promised.

As you can imagine, this did not sit well in my 7th grade heart or head. Why would the God who loved everyone, not want my friends to be a part of the Kingdom? So, I challenged my Pastor pretty regularly during our classes together about why a God of love would exclude some people from the promises of the Kingdom, especially since the Old Testament tells us that the Jewish People were God's **Chosen** People. I never received a satisfactory answer, and my faith in this "God of Love" started to fade. One of the things I learned early in my friendships, was that, if you had a friend who asked you to choose between them and any of your other friends, you should pick the friend who didn't make you choose. How then could I choose between God and my friends? My friends, won. After confirmation, I never went back to my home congregation.

This time in my life was very formative in my religious understanding, so when I began asking questions about God and spirituality in my college religion classes, I always led with this question on inclusion and acceptance of faith traditions beyond Christianity. I still never got an answer. But, here, I was given even more questions to ask about God and was invited to explore more and more about how God is active in our world. This exploration set me on a life-long discovery of the relationship between God and humanity. And I know that this 7th grade experience was one of the main things that drove my passion for participating in the Tri-Faith Initiative here in Omaha. Isn't it amazing how seeds planted, even in rocky ground, can still grow when showered in love?

Just so you know... Richard and I dated for four more years, and have remained friends. We still don't talk much about the specifics of our religious traditions, but we do both understand that we are beloved children of God, and that is enough.

Peace to you – Pastor Chris

August 2023:



GO AND...

SHARE YOUR STORY

Children freely share their stories – often full of actions, sound effects, and details (sometimes minute) that bring a story to life. We all have a story to share: stories of families, friendships, histories, and faith. We connect the dots and see our connections.

Questions to Consider:

- When was the last time you listened to a child tell a story? What did you hear?
- What is a biblical story that connects with your own story?
- What is your story? Where are you GOING to share your story?

Prayer: Creator God, our story starts and ends with you. Give us the wisdom to see where and how we might share our stories and the courage to share them. Amen.

Suggested Song: Jesus Loves Me (ELW 595)



As part of the “Go and...”, we have been invited by Bishop Johnson to gather as one church together on Sunday, August 27th at Our Savior’s Lutheran Church in Plainview, NE from 2:00-4:00pm. There will be a worship service and time for fellowship and conversation afterward. Please sign-up if you are interested as we need to let them know how many will be attending.

Ready, Set, Go! In the Great Commission, Jesus calls us to GO.

At Assembly, the keynote speaker encouraged participants to write their name on an image of feet. She then invited all attending to take a name/image home to keep in prayer. Our person to pray for during the year is Leon Dorn, and we will be praying for him on Sunday mornings throughout the year as we celebrate being church together. If you would like to check out more about the “Go and...” you can visit <https://nebraskasynod.org/go-and/>



St. John's Lutheran Congregational Council

July 10th, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Opening

St. John's Lutheran Congregational Council met with Tracey Moore, Brian Bunkers, Denise Stevenson, Dave Groteluschen, Larry Wennekamp, Bethany Wilke and Pastor Chris. President Tracey Moore called the meeting to order and Brian Bunkers led the opening prayer.

Minutes/Financial Reports

Larry made a motion to approve the last meeting minutes. Dave seconded it. Motion carried. The June financial reports were reviewed. Brian made a motion to approve them. Larry seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Beginning Monthly Balance-\$32,511.27

Monthly General Income\$7,207.60

Monthly General Expenses-\$10,975.00

Ending General Balance-\$28,781.09

YTD Income required to meet budget-\$78,759.30

2023 Budget Balance-\$4,767.18

Memorial Fund-\$2092.85

Old Business

-Roster Update-As a council we discussed membership qualifications that are written in our Constitution. It has been decided to send letters to members who have not met those specific qualifications. We value all our members at St. John's and would love to hear back from you one way or another. We will put return postage on postcards being sent out and if we do not hear anything back with a post card or phone call within 30 days, we will dismiss these names from our active member roll. Brian made a motion to approve the sending of letters and return postcards. Dave seconded the motion. Motion carried.

-Video Recording Update-A committee met with Kara Allbaugh from Rival Design at church. She took pictures and a brief verbal outline was given. Pat Cuda will also be in contact with her to send pictures. The church video recording is in progress and a preview will be given as soon as it's finished.

-Adult Bible Study-Pastor Chris is working on the schedule. This will be an ongoing Bible Study on "Reading the Bible" on Monday evenings throughout the program year. There will be an interruption of this study for a special Lenten Bible Study based on the Parables to be presented on Wednesday evenings during the six weeks of Lent.

-God's Work Our Hands-The social ministry committee will be having a meeting to discuss a plan and giving out specific jobs.

-Pastor Chris Absent-September 24th-October 6th Pastor will be taking vacation days for a wedding out of town. We will be looking for a supply pastor. Pastor would like a week of continuing ed August 16th-23rd. Pastor Scott can preach on Sunday the 20th.

New Business

-Semi Annual Meeting Agenda-We ran through the agenda for our semi-annual meeting on July 23rd.

-Discussion on Church Outreach-We are looking for possible outreach ideas. We had a discussion on rethinking what Church really is and how we can reach our community.

Pastor's Report

I am in serious planning mode for the next program year! I've been researching some ideas for Advent and Lent in order to meet with the Worship and Music Committee tomorrow, as well as exploring possible VBS materials and Bible Study Series for Adult Education so I can meet with the Education committee at the end of the month. It's always so much fun to be creative and start getting things set up for all of us to participate with one another in our spiritual development. This is one of my favorite parts of ministry in the parish.

I have also been out visiting our members who are unable to be with us on Sunday Mornings and taking communion to them as well. It's always fun to hear their stories of their connection to St John's, and lately, many of the extended family members of the person I am visiting are coming out to participate in communion as well - which means even more stories! This is also a very fun part of ministry.

We are planning a trip to visit the Tri-Faith Commons in Omaha and attending a Shabbat Service at Temple Israel while we are there. It looks like we will have a good group attending this summer, and perhaps we will set a second date in the Fall as well to pick up anyone who is interested but is unable to attend this summer.

It is turning out to be a terrific summer so far - and we have even gotten some much needed rain, so all is well!

Committee Reports

-Christian Ed-On July 24th a meeting will be held to talk about Sunday School education and a VBS program for next year.

-Worship & Music- Christ Revealed in Carols (6 different Carols during advent), Bringing back The Passing of the Peace to our worship 5th Sunday will be Stump the Organist, Discussion on Funeral Planning Guide, September 10th will be a themed Sunday with Sunday School Songs for the congregation to sing. Evangelism-Working on God's Work Our Hands & finalizing what needs to be done.

Property Committee-Working on setting a date for the basement prep, Holmberg's are working on AC outside unit, fixed one sprinkler, changed filters in the parsonage and humidifier in the basement.

Finance Committee-no updates.

Stewardship Committee-On November 5th they will be celebrating Stewardship Sunday and serving sloppy joes. Sending out notes in Chatterbox on Stewardship and what it actually is.
Social Ministry-September 10th is the spaghetti feed.

Adjournment

August Council Reps-Larry Wennekamp and Tracey Moore. Next Meeting-August 21st @7:00. Dave made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Denise seconded. Motion carried. We closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted by Bethany Runge, Council Secretary



Appreciation From the Stewardship Committee

Stewardship definition from the ELCA

“Although some think of Stewardship as only a financial response to God’s Love, stewardship encompasses so much more than money. It is about how we use all that God has entrusted to our care-our time, our talents and our treasures- to love God and our neighbors, both inside and outside of the church walls and our homes.” (elca.org)

Our church community, being an Agriculture community, knows the true definition of Stewardship, “The careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one’s care” (Websters Dictionary) We care for our land and livestock that allows them to thrive. As with our church community, our membership shows Stewardship qualities continually. We are blessed with a multitude of resources generously given, to allow our church to thrive. The Committee thanks the congregation for sharing, for their Stewardship and for living their lives in Christ.

We will be celebrating our Stewardship with an after-church dinner Sunday, November 5.



Sunday School, Confirmation,
and Adult Bible Study

Sunday School and Confirmation begins on Sunday, September 10th beginning at 8:50 am to 9:50am!!
Adult Bible Study will begin on Monday, Sept. 11th at 6:30pm.

If anyone interested in videotaping the service on Sunday mornings when Jackson and Emma are not able to be at church, please let Jackson know. Thanks for volunteering!



“God’s work. Our Hands.”

“God’s Work. Our Hands.” Sunday will be on Sept. 10th. It is a day to celebrate who we are — one church, freed in Christ to serve and love our neighbor and the community.

St. John’s will be hosting a community spaghetti feed on that day from 5:00-7:00pm. There will be a sign-up sheet for donations of food and to help.

Invite your friends and neighbors to come enjoy a community meal. Free will donations will be accepted and proceeds will go to the Platte County Food Pantry.



Columbus Days August 10-13, 2023

We will be having a booth at Columbus Days again. If you would like to help, please let Jackson know or sign-up on the sheet on the bulletin board. We will only be doing Saturday the 12th this year.





August



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<u>Office Hours</u> Tues. and Thurs 9:00 AM-1:00 PM Pastor is in Columbus on Sun. to Tues.		1	2	3	4	5
6 10:00 AM Worship Service With communion	7	8	9	10	11	12 Columbus Days Booth 8:00-5:00
13 10:00 AM Worship Service	14	15 Tabitha Circle 7:30PM	16	17 Eve Circle 1:30PM	18	19
20 10:00 AM Worship Service	21 Council Meeting 7:00PM	22	23	24	25	26
27 10:00 AM Worship Service 2:00-4:00 Worship Together Our Savior's Lutheran Plainview, NE	28 Ruth Circle 7:00PM	29	30	31		
		<u>Council Reps</u> Larry Wennekamp Tracey Moore	<u>Altar Guild</u> Joyce Lindstrom	<u>Cleaner</u> Deb Runge		

Congregation Officers 2022
 President: Tracey Moore
 Vice President: Brian Bunkers
 Secretary: Bethany Wilke
 Financial Secretary: Doug Hartman (income)
 Treasurer: Pam Goering (expenditures)

Council members: Denise Stevenson, Dave Groteluschen,
 Larry Wennekamp
 Please put your committee and organization meetings on the
 calendar in the Narthex on the information desk or send to
 Pat Cuda at stjohnshellcreek@gmail.com



ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH
10785 280TH ST
COLUMBUS, NE 68601

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

"A COUNTRY CHURCH WITH A WORLDWIDE MISSION"

SUNDAY SCHOOL
School Year, Sunday at 8:50 A.M.

WORSHIP
Sunday 10:00 A.M.

Cell Phone 701-226-8140 Pastor Alexander
Office Phone 402-564-8707

Website: www.stjohnlutheranshellcreek.weebly.com
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Columbus, NE 68601-8745

From Hwy 30: 5 Miles North on 18th Ave 4 1/2 Miles east on 280th St.