

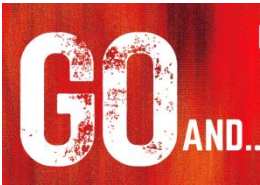


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NUMBER 2

February Chatterbox Newsletter



Have the Conversation

Conversation is my favorite topic! I love being a part of them, and love setting the table for them. I wrote an entire dissertation on the power and possibilities of them. Bringing people together to think aloud and be together in the practice of “wondering,” is truly an energizing experience for me. I am definitely an extravert in this sense, but I think even introverts can catch the energy that comes from having someone else beside you, supporting you, or challenging you, even if it means simply sitting in silence with one another. “Conversation” means that someone, or something, else is there, with you, for you – you are not alone.

Remember the Tom Hanks movie, *Cast Away*? Tom played a Fed Ex executive who found himself struggling to survive on an island all by himself, after his plane crashes. A few things from the wreckage of the crash have washed up on shore with him and are the only resources he has available to him as he scavenges for food, shelter, and safety from any predators. One of the items that washed up to shore, was a volleyball made by the Wilson Sporting Goods company. After a few days of having no one to talk to but



himself, Tom finally drew a face on the volleyball and named it “Wilson” so he would have a face and a name to converse with, and someone to think things through, as he planned out possible scenarios for rescue, or escape. Wilson, the volleyball, became an essential element for Tom’s survival, and there is a very powerful scene in the movie where Tom builds a raft and sets out to sea with Wilson, but Wilson slips overboard and is lost while Tom sleeps. Tom is bereft and cries uncontrollably at the loss of his trustworthy companion. Conversation and companionship are vital to life.

But, because it takes at least two people (or a volleyball 😊) to have a conversation, this also means that there is the opportunity for disagreement or misunderstanding between the two participants. I

believe this is both the risk, and the joy, of conversation. There will be disagreements, but it is only in considering the other perspective that we are moved to learn and grow. Only in being able to admit that we could be wrong about something, or that we don’t know everything, are we ever able to look at things in a new way, and consider all the different and various responses to our circumstances. And this is exactly where all of the energy is generated, bringing us most fully alive, and pushing us to participate in all that is.

Conversation is thus, a Spiritual Practice. I love watching people come together and talk about a book that they have read, or a program they hope to begin, or just to check in with one another. It is such a gift to watch the ideas and emotions that flow through a conversation wherever two or three are gathered. It takes creativity to be in conversation, processing new thoughts and responses to what is already out there for discussion. But it also takes listening. Being able to actively hear, and consider, the thoughts and ideas of other people is also essential to conversation. If you are only pausing your own speech long enough to think of what else you might say, then you are not actually engaging in conversation. You are, quite literally, just talking to yourself. You may have some good ideas inside of yourself, but they can never be fully realized unless you share them with the world around you. And those ideas can become

stagnant, and die on the vine, unless they are joined to other great ideas to help bring them to their fullest possibility. New vision means accepting something into yourself that causes you to shift your thoughts in a new direction. (By the way, this is the literal idea behind the word “repent” – to turn around or change direction.)

So, grab a friend, talk it up, listen to what’s going on with them too, and enjoy the conversation! This is exactly the point of life - all creation, coming together to be in conversation with God, engaging with, and participating in the unfolding of all that was, is, and ever shall be. Call me anytime... I’m always open for coffee and conversation.

Peace to you – Pastor Chris



GO AND...

HAVE THE CONVERSATION

Conversation is an exchange involving active listening as well as taking turns sharing ideas and stories. It can be easy for us to fall into monologuing, lecturing, or tuning out especially when we think we know the answers. As a result, we often avoid having difficult conversations. Faith-filled disciples are called to be honest and engage with each other in Christ-like love.

Questions to consider:

- What is your prayer as you consider engaging in a hard conversation?
- When was a time you had a hard conversation? What did it feel like? What did you learn from it?
- What is The conversation that you need to GO have and with whom?

Prayer: Engaging God, who is not afraid of any conversation, give me the words, wisdom, and heart to join in difficult conversations. Amen.

Suggested Song: Canticle of the Turning (ELW 723)



Ash Wednesday Service

The Ash Wednesday service will be on February 14th at 7:00PM. Communion and Ashes will be distributed. This day will begin our Lenten journey as Pastor reflects on “Spiritual Practice: God, Jesus, and Us” during the sermons this Lenten Season.

St. John's Lutheran Congregational Council
January 16th, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Opening

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

Minutes/Financial Reports

Larry made a motion to approve the last meeting minutes. Denise seconded it. Motion carried. The December financial reports were reviewed. Bethany made a motion to approve them. Denise seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Beginning Monthly Balance-\$14,607.56
Monthly General Income\$29,206.80
Monthly General Expenses-\$19,574.49
Ending General Balance-\$24,265.67
YTD Income required to meet budget-\$157,518.65
2023 Budget Balance-\$8,023.13
Memorial Fund-\$1115.36

Old Business

-Communion Discussion-The congregation's overwhelming report to have communion twice a month was positive. So, worship/music has decided to have communion the 1st and 3rd Sunday of every month. Celebration will be the second Sunday of the month. Denise made a motion to have communion twice a month. Bethany seconded the motion. Motion carried.

-Church Cleaning-Council decided it best to have two people taking care of the church cleaning so we always have someone available to clean if one or the other is unable to complete their duties for any reason. They both will be discussing their cleaning schedules.

New Business

-Stipend for Emma Moore for handling our YouTube Channel-Emma is putting lots of effort and time in helping us to create and develop our YouTube Channel. We have members that do watch it pretty regularly who are not able to make it to church. The members that do watch it are very appreciative of this option. We want to keep encouraging Emma because this is what she is going into as a career. As she learns she is just going to keep getting better. We talked about giving her a gift card or a stipend for her time.

-What should be filmed at worship and kept on file-Due to privacy issues if we have a personal number come across the announcements at church, Emma will blur it out on her YouTube channel. The best way to go about this would be to say the name of the actual contact to get ahold of rather than their actual personal number.

Rival Design Video-The video is complete, and we are excited to show you all at the annual meeting. Thank you to all of those who put in so much work to make this video happen for our church.

Proposed Budget-The budget was reviewed and discussed. Dave made a motion to accept the proposed budget for submission to the congregation for their approval at the Annual Meeting. Larry seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Pastor's Report-

Happy New Year everyone! It was a wonderful Advent and Christmas season with lots of Carols and a marvelous Children's Program, and we even got snow on Christmas Day! Now we begin a new year of ministry that fills us, and serves our neighbors. We are making plans for a special focus on spiritual practices in the Gospel of Mark for our Lenten meditations, which will include a Wednesday night bible study centered on 5 parables of Jesus. The Worship and Music committee has also been asking for conversation about adding a second communion service each month to our worship service and is making recommendations to the church council this month. Results of this conversation will be reported at our Annual Meeting on Jan 28.

Visits with those in residential communities, and home visits continue, as well as planning a wedding, teaching confirmation, and spending time with the Sunday School students in their opening gathering each Sunday. Monday night bible study resumes after taking a break for the holidays, and we will continue studying the Old testaments texts through a literary lens.

Our Ecumenical clergy partners are meeting this month to begin planning programming for Lenten Lunches happening again this year hosted by First United Methodist. St John's will be invited to choose one of the weeks to serve lunch and we will need some volunteers for this. Please look for more details on this by the end of the month.

We accepted a few new members to our roster in December, we have an additional request waiting for transfer information. and we have seen some new faces joining us on Sunday mornings. I am excited that our ministry continues to grow and expand, and invite all of you to consider what other new ways we can be reaching out to our community to share our story and inviting our neighbors to join us. We have completed our welcoming video and hope to have it on all of our social media sites by the end of the month. Share it with your friends and invite them to come with you to see what new things are happening at St John's! Peace to you - Pastor Chris

Committee Reports

- Christian Ed-No updates-Annual Report has been submitted
- Worship & Music-Decided to have communion twice a month. 1st & 3rd Sunday.
- Evangelism-Jackson Moore has been working hard taking his PMA classes. He will need to preach two different occasions as a requirement for his class. He can either do the whole service or just the message. Pastor Chris & Jackson will come up with two different times.
- Finance Committee-Worked on 2024 Proposed Budget. Thank you to those who put in the time to get this finished!
- Social Ministry-No updates-Annual Report has been submitted
- Property Committee-BIG thanks goes out to the members who took the time to help scoop the snow! WE HAD LOTS! We appreciate all of your hard work!
- THANK YOU to Sharon, Kendra, and Diane for removing all our Christmas décor at the church! You ladies rock.

Adjournment

February Council Reps-Larry Wennekamp & Dave Groteluschen

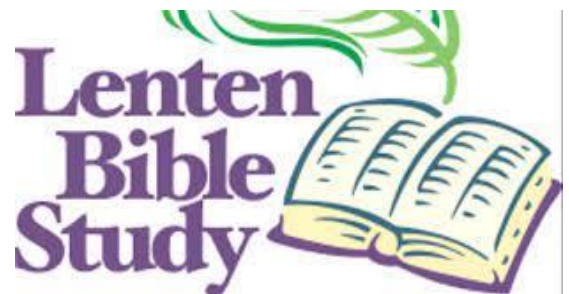
Next Meeting-February 19th @ 7:30.

Bethany made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Denise seconded. Motion carried. We closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted by Bethany Wilke, Council Secretary

Lenten Bible Study

There will be a Bible Study on Wednesday nights at 6:30pm instead of a service. The study will be with Dr. Amy-Jill Levine on a series called "Short Stories" (Parables of Jesus). Come join Pastor Chris in the group discussion.





Community Lenten Lunches

The Ecumenical Lenten lunches will be held at the United Methodist Church at noon on Wednesdays during lent. Come enjoy soup, sandwiches, dessert, and a Lenten message. All Ecumenical Partner Pastors will be preaching.

The dates are:

February 21st & 28th
March 6th, 13th, & 20th



2024 St. John's WEE SINGERS SCHEDULE

(KIDDOS AGE 4-GRADE 2)

SAVE THE DATES...

SINGING THE 2ND SUNDAY OF
EACH MONTH.

FEBRUARY 11TH
MARCH 10TH
APRIL 14TH
MAY 12TH

Quilting

Quilting takes place every Wednesday afternoon from 1:00-4:00 pm. Beautiful things are created one stitch at a time. So come get your stitches in!!



Thank you for all the money donations from the December 17th Children's Christmas program Bucket offering collected by the Sunday school children for the ELCA Good Gifts project.

\$999.33 was collected.

The students have made their choices where to spend the donations to make a difference in the lives of

others. They are displayed on a poster in the fellowship hall for all to view.

Thank You for your continued support for our youth.



February



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 8:50AM Sunday School 10:00 AM Worship Service with communion	5 Adult Bible Study 6:30PM	6	7	8	9	10
11 8:50 AM Sunday School 10:00 AM Worship Service Wee Singers	12 Adult Bible Study 6:30PM	13	14 Ash Wednesday Service 7:00PM	15 Eve Circle 1:30PM	16	17
18 8:50 AM Sunday School 10:00 AM Worship Service with communion	19	20 Tabitha Circle 6:30PM	21 Ecumenical Lenten Lunch noon Lenten Bible Study 6:30PM	22	23	24
25 8:50 AM Sunday School 10:00 AM Worship Service	26 Ruth Circle 7:00PM	27	28 Ecumenical Lenten Lunch noon Lenten Bible Study 6:30PM	29		
		<u>Council Reps</u> Larry Wennekamp Dave Groteluschen	<u>Altar Guild</u> Kendra Bunkers	<u>Lectors</u> 2/11-Doug Hartman	<u>Lectors</u>	<u>Cleaner</u> Deb Runge

Congregation Officers 2024

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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10785 280th St.
Columbus, NE 68601-8745

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