



VOLUME 60

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May Chatterbox Newsletter



BE CHURCH

What does it mean to be church? This is an “age-old,” as well as a “never-ending” question, right? We need to be asking this question every day, just as those who first gathered to seek God and be in communion with one another, asked it.

Whenever anyone asks me that question, I tend to re-phrase it a bit and ask instead, “How can I be the church in the world?” because it seems to me that we are created into community and therefore have “church” or community, as the very nature of who we are. So, the question then becomes “how might we live into the community we have been created to be?”

There is so much need out in the world, that sometimes it feels overwhelming. Consider the Middle East, for example. How are we in community with those created persons in Israel and Palestine? How are we to be in community with the millions of created persons who live in the multitude of tent cities across the world, because they have been forced from their homelands? How are we in to be in community with the created ecosystems that are struggling all around us as the climate changes, and the temperature of our planet continues to warm?

Being in community in the face of all the struggling and suffering, is, in fact, what it means to be church. So **HOW** do we do this? We turn to one another. We help wherever, and however, we can. We look to our closest neighbor, just one person at a time, and tell our stories, have a conversation, and see how we might come alongside them, to both give, and receive, support from one another. In turning to each other, we acknowledge that we are not alone, and that each of us has the light of God within us to share with the whole of creation. So start close in - reach outside of yourself and get to know someone else. Be community together.

You won't know the needs of your neighbor until you take the time to **be** a neighbor. This starts with a conversation, an opening up to someone close by, being vulnerable in sharing something of yourself with them, and then following the ripples that move out from there. Caring for the climate and earth's resources could be as simple as planting a tree, or committing to setting up a recycling center in your area, or choosing paper instead of plastic in the grocery store. Every little thing helps. Every action toward caring for your neighbor and the



earth around us, matters. This is how we are the church: loving one another, unconditionally as God loves us. Being church is who we are. Being church is how we love God. Go and be the church.

Peace – Pastor Chris



What does it mean to be church? The Holy Spirit is moving and blowing through, with, and for God's people. To *Go and...* means we pray, listen, share our story, serve with neighbors, ask, be honest, be present, rest, have the conversation, be intentional, tell the story, and be the church. Everybody has something to offer – Let's Go!

Questions to Consider:

- If you overheard someone talking in the grocery store about your congregation/ministry site, what do you hope people are saying?
- Use your imagination! What is your big dream for your congregation? (No limits!)
- What gifts, talents, and expertise do you hold and how can you share?
- I am going to *Go and* be church by _____.

Prayer: Holy God who gathers and sends us, we give you thanks for the gift of your Holy Spirit. Equip us, give us language to proclaim the Good News, and empower us to *GO* forth into the world. Amen

Suggested Song: Go to the World (ACS 991)

St. John's Congregational Council Meeting
April 15, 2024

Opening

St. John's Lutheran Church Council met Monday, April 15, 2024 at 7:30 pm at the church. Attending were Larry Wennekamp, Dave Groteluschen, Brian Bunkers, JoAnne Marxsen, Denise Stevenson, Pastor Chris Alexander and Karol Swan. Larry Wennekamp called the meeting to order. Pastor Chris led us in prayer.

The minutes from March meeting were read and approved by Brian, seconded by Dave. Motion Carried.

Karol went over the end of March financial reports. Motion to approve was made by Dave seconded by JoAnne. Motion carried.

Financial Report for end of March 2024

Beginning Monthly Balance	\$36,027.39
Monthly General Income	\$12,212.60
Monthly General Expense	\$12,808.93
Ending General Balance	\$35,474.17
YTD Income Required to meet Budget	\$43,272.90
YTD Ahead 2024 Budget	\$7031.30
Memorial Fund	\$2886.58

Old Business

- Concur the Confirmation event was a success. Thanks to all.
- Larry reported the Transitional Ministry Contract is updated and agrees with terms of January Annual Meeting
- Study Session scheduled for Thursday, June 20, 6-10 pm at home of Brian Bunkers. Strategic planning will be facilitated by Scott Fredrickson.

New Business

- Pastor Chris' vacation June 7-14,2024 was approved. Music and Worship Committee will find a substitute for service on June 9.
- Discussion and clarification of existing St. John's Funeral Policy.
- Chamber Dinner and reservations have been made and paid for by the church. Reimbursement by attendees can be made as offering if desired.
- Plans for God's Work Our Hands on September 8, 2024 will be spaghetti feed hosted by several committees.
- New Tables. Brian gave cost of \$400 per table for Mighty Lite brand. Possibly 12 tables. Brian will check more. Continue discussion for May meeting.
- Farm Lease Agreement for Gary Schreiber. 3.19 acres-Current \$700 (\$219.43/acre) New will be \$240 /acre total \$765.60 (per UNL recommendation) Motion approved By Dave seconded by Karol. Gary will be notified for 2025 crop year.
- Set up for voting for May 14 election will be done by Sam Welch and Brian Bunkers.

Pastor's Report to the Church Council

We finished Lent, Holy Week, and Easter well - Lots of Worship services with opportunities for communion with one another! We celebrated the Confirmation of two of our students and walked with them in their first Communions. It was lovely. Then we entered Holy week with an Easter service for our friends at Prairie Village, Communion visits with our members at Meridian Gardens, a Maundy Thursday service with guest preacher Rev. Dr. Scott Frederickson, an Ecumenical Good Friday service with our sister churches in Columbus held at Grace Episcopal, and then a Good Friday service in our own space that evening with a dramatic reading of the Passion story. Then Easter morning brought a grand celebration of the Risen Christ with a Sunrise service followed by a terrific breakfast together and an Easter Egg Hunt for the kids! We hosted many extended families of our members, and got to meet and greet many new faces throughout the week. What a whirlwind of Worship and fellowship with our members and neighbors!

As we step into the final weeks of our program year together, I will continue visits with our members living in residential facilities in Columbus, and those for whom attending church on Sunday mornings is a struggle. Planning for VBS is happening and I will continue to visit with the Sunday School children on Sunday mornings.

This month I am presenting the Bible Study for the Women of the ELCA at their Spring Gathering in Grand Island, and will be attending a dinner for the Columbus Chamber of Commerce where St John's will be recognized for 15 years of partnership with the Columbus Community.

We are also preparing to recognize our seniors who are graduate this year from either High School or College, and plan a service to thank all of our teachers, musicians and volunteers who have helped us throughout our program year at St Johns.

Grab a breath while you can... there's always something meaningful and memorable happening at St John's! A **BIG THANK YOU** to all who come together to help us connect to one another and to our community, sharing the love of God everywhere we go!

Committee Reports

- Christian Education- JoAnne- Bible School events are on track as scheduled
- Evangelism- Help with spaghetti feed on September 8. Jackson Moore proposed if there is any interest in doing a float for Columbus Days Parade in August. Dave will contact Jackson about feasibility and details.
- Property Committee- Trevor Luchsinger, Sam Welch, Larry Wennekamp and Brian Bunkers trimmed bushes, cleaned up the rocks, light bulbs, pest control, mower serviced plus more. Thanks for keeping our church up. Lakefront Sprinklers will see to sprinkler system and do 4 weed/feed treatments for \$750. Master Care can clean upholstered chairs for \$4 each. Further discussion in September for October action.
- Finance- Brian updates on CD's
- Stewardship/Time and Talent- Plan meeting to see how we can recognize volunteers.
- Social Ministry- Spaghetti Feed planned. Pill bottle program continues.

Next Meeting Monday, May 20, 2024 at 6:30 pm

May Council Reps are Brian Bunkers and Larry Wennekamp. Motion to adjourn by Brian seconded by Dave. We closed with the Lord's Prayer

Respectfully submitted by Karol Swan- Council Secretary



Sunday School Teacher, Musicians, & Helper Recognition

Recognition will be held on Sunday, May 19th for the Sunday School teachers, helpers, and our musicians. Please thank these people when you see them for their stewardship.

May 19th is also the last day of Sunday School.



Taitum Klug, daughter of Ben and Crystal Klug will be graduating from Lakeview High School in May. In high school she is involved in Fellowship of Christian Athletes, FBLA, FFA, girl's wrestling, and student council. She plans to attend the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to study advertising and public relations.

Emily Stevenson graduated in December from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln with a bachelor's degree in Hospitality, Restaurant, and Tourism Management. She is currently employed at Glacial Till Cider House & Tasting Room in Ashland, Nebraska, and enjoys bartending and coordinating events there. At the end of May, Emily is moving to Chicago for her next adventure. She is excited to start her career, meet new friends, and explore the city's culture. Any prayers and guidance are appreciated as she looks towards her future.

Congratulations to both graduates!!

VBS Schedule for May and June

MAY 1 VBS T-SHIRT ORDERS DUE.

MAY 5 VBS VOLUNTEER'S INFORMATIONAL MEETING AFTER CHURCH

MAY 26 VOLUNTEERS WELCOME TO HELP W/ VBS DECOR AFTER WORSHIP

MAY 28-31 VBS FOOD TRUCK PARTY 8:30-12 (TUESDAY-FRIDAY)

MAY 31 VBS FAMILY HOT DOG PICNIC @ NOON

JUNE 2 VBS KID'S PROGRAM PRACTICE 10AM SHARP

JUNE 2 VBS PROGRAM 11:00AM - ALL INVITED

JUNE 2 NOON POTLUCK - EVERYONE WELCOME - PLEASE BRING A DISH TO SHARE





VBS MISSION MOMENT 2024
(WE NEED YOUR HELP)

THIS YEAR INSTEAD OF DAILY \$ OFFERING AT VBS, WE WILL FOCUS ON OUR 'FOOD TRUCK PARTY' THEME AS WE WILL BE SEEKING OUT MORE ABOUT GOD, AND ABOUT HOW WE CAN PRAY TOGETHER EVERYDAY.

(LORD, THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR GIVING US OUR DAILY BREAD—FOR GIVING US WHAT WE NEED TO LOVE AND GIVE TO OTHERS. DURING OUR VBS WEEK, WE WILL SHARE THE GOOD NEWS WITH THOSE AROUND AND PLEASE BLESS ALL OF OUR CHEFS AS THEY GO OUT AND DO GREAT THINGS FOR YOU... AMEN!)

DURING VBS THIS YEAR WE WILL COLLECT & DONATE TO HELP THE NEED OF FOOD IN OUR COMMUNITY. WE WELCOME YOU TO HELP OUR 2024 VBS MISSION PROJECT AND DONATE IF YOU SO WISH TO DO SO. WE HAVE CHOSEN 3 LOCAL CHARITIES TO DONATE TO: YOUTH FOR CHRIST, SALVATION ARMY FOOD PANTRY & PLATTE COUNTY FOOD PANTRY.

CHILDREN ARE WELCOME TO BRING A FOOD ITEM TO VBS EACH DAY TO FILL OUR GROCERY CART AND SERVE OUR COMMUNITY IN LOVE!

CONGREGATION IS WELCOME TO PARTICIPATE THE WEEK OF VBS...ALSO MONETARY \$ GIFTS WELCOME!

TOP NEEDS:

YOUTH FOR CHRIST:

2 LITER BOTTLES OF ANY KIND OF DRINKS (NOT DIET), CAPRI SUNS/KOOLAID BOX DRINKS, INDIVIDUALLY WRAPPED SNACKS...CHIPS, FUN FRUITS, GRANOLA BARS, CASE OF WATER, ETC.

PLATTE COUNTY FOOD PANTRY/ & SALVATION ARMY FOOD PANTRY:

CANNED OR BOXED FOODS: SOUPS, MAC & CHEESE, RAMEN NOODLES, PASTA & PASTA SAUCE, PEANUT BUTTER & JELLY, SUGAR, FLOUR, RICE, TUNA, CRACKERS, PANCAKE MIX & SYRUP & CEREAL.

ATTENTION ALL ST. JOHN'S CHURCH KIDS

The St. John's WELCA organization has a great deal for this summer. We would like to help sponsor campers by helping to pay for any church camp attended.

The WELCA organization will **pay up to \$100** of your church camp fees.

In order to be eligible for camp reimbursement, you must return this registration form. Forms are on the bulletin board.

Forms may be given to: Kendra Bunkers, Sharon Hartman,
Chris Luchsinger, or Pat Cuda
by June 15th.

Name _____ Age _____

Parent's Name _____

Address _____

Name of Camp and Location _____

Date of Camp _____

Fee of Camp _____



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL



It's time to sign-up for VBS or help
volunteer.

VBS will be held May 28th-31st from 8:30am-
noon at St. John's Church.

Children's Day and Pot Luck on
Sunday, June 2nd.

Come join the fun!!

Please mail or give form(s) to Bethany Wilke, 7027 Shady Lake Road, Columbus, or
Chris Luchsinger, 610-38th Street Columbus.

REGISTRATION FORM

(Preschool-4thGrade 5th Grade & up are helpers)

CHILD'S FIRST & LAST NAME _____

PARENT NAME _____ PHONE # _____

HOME ADDRESS _____

CHILD'S AGE _____

CHILD'S LAST SCHOOL GRADE COMPLETED _____

CIRCLE YOUR CHILD'S T-SHIRT SIZE

3T/4T, 5T/6T, YS (6/8), YM (10/12), YL (14/16) OTHER SIZE _____

DOES YOUR CHILD HAVE A FOOD ALLERGY? YES/NO

FOOD THEY ARE ALLERGIC TO _____



May



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Office Hours Tues. and Thurs 9:00 AM-1:00 PM Pastor is in Columbus on Sun. to Tues			1	2	3	4
5 8:50AM Sunday School 10:00 AM Worship Service with communion	6 Adult Bible Study 6:30PM	7	8	9	10	11
12 8:50 AM Sunday School 10:00 AM Worship Service Wee Singers	13	14	15	16	17	18
19 8:50 AM Last Day of Sunday School 10:00 AM Worship Service with communion	20 Council Meeting 6:30PM	21 Tabitha Circle 7:00PM	22	23 Eve Circle 1:30PM	24	25
26 10:00 AM Worship Service VBS set up	27 Memorial Day	28 VBS 8:30-noon	29 VBS 8:30-noon	30 VBS 8:30-noon	31 VBS 8:30-noon plus picnic & grab bag	
		<u>Council Reps</u> Brian Bunkers Larry Wennekamp	<u>Altar Guild</u> Barb Welch	<u>Cleaner</u> Deb Runge		

Congregation Officers 2024
 President: Larry Wennekamp
 Vice President: Dave Groteluschen
 Secretary: Karol Swan
 Financial Secretary: Doug Hartman (income)
 Treasurer: Pam Goering (expenditures)

Council members: Denise Stevenson, JoAnne Marxsen,
 Brian Bunkers

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
Email: stjohnshellcreek@gmail.com
10785 280th St.
Columbus, NE 68601-8745

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