



St. John's Lutheran Church

Mission Statement:

"Growing disciples who eagerly share Christ's Love!"

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- Church News-Calendar
- Christmas Letter from Bishop Laurie
- Letter from Pastor Halom
- Youth & Preschool News

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WHY DO YOU BUY GIFTS FOR CHRISTMAS?

It's a tradition that we all grew up with - gift giving. I still remember as a young child getting blessed by my family when we opened gifts on Christmas Eve between services. Then came the added bonus of receiving gifts from grandma and grandpa the very next day when we went to their farm in south central Wisconsin! Yes, as the youngest of my generation, I was spoiled and I knew it.

Over time, I remember the tradition changing as my cousins entered adulthood. We each had a secret Santa, which meant that I would receive fewer gifts and in turn even be responsible for someone else! (Thanks to mom and dad I was able to follow through since I still was without a job!) Eventually that tradition came to an end as well and the focus was less on gift giving and more on being present with family. In other words, presence>presents.

Every year families busy themselves and try to make sure that there isn't a vacancy under the tree. Black Friday has passed, Cyber Monday has passed, and now we anxiously await for the unwrapping of the gifts (unless you have an aggressive dog that thinks he smells something under the tree and can't help himself!) That's what December brings - a time of waiting.

That's also what the season of Advent is about. Waiting for the second coming of Jesus. We're told to wait with hopefulness. We're told to be alert. We're told to stay vigilant, for "about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father." (Mark 13:32) It's a hard ask, for Jesus still hasn't come back after two thousand years. Why would he come in our lifetime? It may be a hard ask, but it's an easy answer: love.

As much as we pressure ourselves to give every year for Christmas, my hope is that we give out of love. We give out of respect to God, who has given us all that we would ever need. We give because God first gave.

Around Christmastime, we often refer to Jesus as Emmanuel, which means God is with us. Presence > presents. I hope that you will feel God's presence and God's abundant love again this year. And in return, give God your presence. Give back to God as generously as God gives to you, because it's about love, God's love for us.

Pastor Martin

Office number: 715-568-5446

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St. John's Website: www.Stjohns-bloomer.org

Please Join Our Church Family In Prayer



As we enter the month of December please join our church family in prayer. Below you will find a list of those who we will be praying for. If you or someone you know would like to be added to one of the list please stop by the church office, call the office at 715-568-5446, or email the information to: stjohnsl-secretary@bloomer.net

Prayers of Healing For Our Church Family

Nancy Zogleman (Amanda Larson's grandmother); Art Klingenberg; Emmett Larson; Millie Hensel (Mother of Marcy Trubshaw); Wayne Zogleman (Amanda Larson's Grandfather); Kollin Hebert (friend of Eric & Jenn Larson); Pat Prill; Arlene Christianson; Renee Grambo; Steve Trubshaw; Dohna Kerckhove (Pat Prill's daughter).

Prayers For Our Active Military

Dalton Grambo, Danielle Shipman, Kelsey Leavens, Trenton Beaudette

Prayers For the Saints

Prayers for the week of Dec 3rd: Dorene, Jeff, Alicyn and Morgyn Turner; Janice Turner; Melissa and Kianna Turner; Jessica, Ross, Avery and Madelyn Waldofski; Jennifer, Luke, Morgan and Kayden Walta; Jessica and Dehija Walters.

Prayers for the week of Dec 10th: Bob, Cathy and Nathan Weber; Carol and John Weideman; Marie Weideman; Lon and Pat Wilson; Arnold and Marlene Windsor; Sharon Winfield; Sarah, Greg (Chojnacki) and Julie Wittrock.

Prayers for the week of Dec 17th: Brent, Janelle, Blaine, Camryn and Kelly Yeakey; Randy and Tami Yeakey; Pete, Stacie, Paige and Kendall Zeman; Amanda, Jeremy, DeLaney and Dyllon Zwiefelhofer.



Prayers for the week of Dec. 24th: Garret, Kari, Trey and Skylar Zwiefelhofer; Suzette Zwiefelhofer; Adam, Liz, (Bohl), Emmitt, Henry and Lucy Anderson; Bill Anderson; Carrie, Aiden, Brennan and Calum Anderson; Jessica Anderson; Karen Anderson.

Prayers for the week of Dec. 31st: Kay and Richard Anderson; Doug, Shellie, Tayler and Zachary Asher; Karlien Asplund; Matt and Penni Asplund; Justin, Stacey, Bentley, Journey and Riley Babbit; Kay Baier: Yvonne Baier.

DECEMBER 2023 CALENDAR

Church News Items

DECEMBER 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26 9:00am Worship Service - 1st Sunday of Advent	27 8:00am Bible Study	28	29 2:00pm Bible Study 4:45pm Wednesday Meals 5:30pm - 6:30pm Faith Formation 6:45pm Worship Service	30 1:00pm Staff Meeting 5:00pm Property Committee Meeting	1 Butterbraid orders are due	2 9:00am - 12:00pm Church Decorating Day
3 9:00am Worship Service - 2nd Sunday of Advent 10:00am Fellowship Comm Meeting	4 8:00am Bible Study	5	6 10:30am Bloomer Clergy Association Mtg 2:00pm Bible Study 4:45pm Wednesday Meals 5:30pm - 6:30pm Faith Formation 6:45pm Worship Service	7 5:00pm Preschool Committee Meeting	8	9
10 9:00am Worship Service - 3rd Sunday of Advent 10:00am Music Mission Meeting 5:30pm Youth In Action-White Elephant Exchange, Bohl Residence	11 Butterbraid Pick-Up 8:00am Bible Study	12 6:00pm Preschool Family Event	13 2:00pm Bible Study 4:45pm Wednesday Meals 5:30pm - 6:30pm Christmas Caroling-Confirmation Class 5:30pm - 6:30pm Faith Formation 6:45pm Worship Service	14 9:30am Pastor's Conference	15	16
17 9:00am Worship Service - Silent Messengers 10:00am Social Event- Reception	18 8:00am Bible Study 1:00pm Staff Meeting 6:00pm Church Council Meeting	19  Poinsettia Orders/Dedications Due 1:00pm - 4:00pm Quilting Group	20 2:00pm Bible Study 5:30pm Wednesday Meals - Special Time 6:45pm Worship Service-Christmas Pageant	21 Preschool Class Christmas Party	22 Newsletter Submissions Due Preschool Class Christmas Party	23
24  NO MORNING SERVICE 4:00pm Christmas Eve Worship Service 8:00pm Christmas Eve Worship Service	25  MERRY CHRISTMAS!! No Preschool Office Closed 9:00am Christmas Day Worship	26 No Preschool	27 No Preschool 11:30am - 5:30pm Red Cross Bloodmobile at Middle School	28 No Preschool	29 No Preschool	30
31 9:00am Worship Service	1 HAPPY NEW YEAR!! No Preschool Office Closed 8:00am Bible Study	2 No Preschool 1:00pm Staff Meeting	3 Preschool Resumes Classes 10:30am Bloomer Clergy Association Mtg 2:00pm Bible Study 4:45pm Wednesday Meals 5:30pm - 6:30pm Faith Formation 6:45pm Worship Service	4	5	6

Deadline for January 2024 Newsletter

If you would like to submit anything for the newsletter, please make sure to get it to the church secretary no later than **December 22nd.**
Thank You!!

WEDNESDAY MEALS

Every Wednesday from 4:45 - 5:30 p.m. come and join your friends and family at St. John's for a DELICIOUS meal!

Cost is \$5 per person OR \$15 per family




BUTTERBRAID FUNDRAISER

Butter Braid sales have begun for our Youth's Holiday fundraiser! Order forms are due by Dec. 1 and can be found outside of Amanda's office or in the Narthex. Pick-up will be Dec. 11

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!!



Church News

Bishop Laurie's Christmas Letter

Advent, Christmas and Epiphany blessings to you from Bishop Laurie Skow-Anderson, Synod Ministers, Elizabeth Bartsch, Sara Villarreal Bishop, Diane House, Lidixe Montoya, Randy Olson, Laura Ramlow



Mary the Brave: Mary the God Bearer

As a young pastor and working mom, I struggled with the challenges of balancing work and home life, often while carrying a child in my womb, arms, on my hip, in a front or back baby pack, or car seat. Now my children are adults, and I have the joy of watching them carry my grandchildren. They do it differently than I did, their car seats are much nicer than the ones we had, but like us, they carry their children with much love. I still carry my adult children and grandchildren and will always carry them, in my heart with much love. This Advent and Christmas season I'm reflecting on Mary, the God bearer. (In Greek it's Theotokos.) Mary carried Jesus. Like all parents she carried her child with love, but she is also the God bearer. It was a brave thing Mary did to bear God into the world.

To love is a brave thing. It is a brave thing to become a parent. Mothers put their own lives at risk bearing a child in their womb and giving birth. It requires a measure of bravery for parents to bring a child into this world filled with the bad news of climate disasters, gun violence, war, political upheaval, racism, food/water insecurity, and escalating health and higher education costs.

History has painted Mary to be quiet, meek and mild, submissive to God's will, but a closer read shows us that Mary was brave. Mary was neither meek nor superhuman. She had grit. She was faithful, courageous, strong and brave. Most of all, she was human. Her encounter with the angel Gabriel, the messenger of God made her brave. She knew that her pregnancy was dangerous and she could die giving birth. She also knew that as an unmarried teenaged mother it would cause upheaval in her family and community. She would give birth to Jesus during Roman occupation, a time of political unrest. Mary was *brave*. Her encounter with the living God made her brave. Her encounter with God gave her bravery and the faith to see that if God was calling her God would also protect her. It revealed to her that God chooses the people on the margins, those overlooked and underestimated. Bearing God in the world was to bring good news and hope to those oppressed.

****May Mary, the God Bearer, inspire us all to be brave! ****

This Advent and Christmas season, I invite you to be Theotokos, God Bearers. I invite you to carry the good news of Christ's birth, life, death and resurrection to all those we meet on this journey of life and the love of Jesus in your hearts always.

Bishop Laurie Skow-Anderson

Luke 1: 26ff In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you... "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, ... the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God... For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

Let's DECORATE!!
 This Saturday, Dec. 2nd,
 9:00 to 11:30am
 It is time to bring our sanctuary into the Christmas Spirit! All are welcome to come and help us decorate!

St. John's is beginning to set up Meals On Wheels
For January
 If you would be available for one or more weeks in January to drive and/or deliver meals, sign up in the narthex, or please contact
Janice Naset at 568-5615 -- or --
Martha Libersky at 568-4653
 Thank you for helping with this community project!

ST. JOHN'S IS HOSTING THE RED CROSS BLOODMOBILE DRIVE ON WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 27TH
At Bloomer Middle School.
Volunteers needed for the following:
 *Canteen: 11:15-2:30, 2:30-6 pm
 *Registration: 11:15-2:30, 2:30-6pm (2 shifts, 2 people per shift)
ALSO: 2 men for unloading at 10am and 2 for reloading at 6pm. SIGN UP IN NARTHEX
 Contact Sharon Schwartz for more information at 568-1998
Thank you!

Quilting Group
 Will be meeting on
Dec. 19th
 at 1:00-4:00 p.m.
Everyone is welcome!!

Children's Christmas Pageant
 Wednesday, Dec. 20th
 6:45 Worship Service

Pointsettia order forms are now available.
 Pick them up in the Narthex or outside of the church office. Please return no later than Dec. 19th with payment to the church office or drop into the safe outside of the office.
Cost is \$10 per plant.

Church Council Minutes

November 20, 2023

Call to Order - meeting was called to order at 6:15 pm by Dorene Turner, Council President.

Opening Devotion – Pastor led the council in reminiscing about Thanksgiving traditions and memories.

Approval of the Agenda -A motion was made by Terri Smith to approve the agenda with flexibility, seconded by Alicia Bonczyk. Motion carried.

Approval of last Council Minutes - A motion was made Barb Ross to approve the minutes from the October 23, 2023 meeting, seconded by Sarah Wittrock. Motion carried.

Financial Report - [Profit & Loss.](#) [Balance Sheet](#)

	Year to Date(Jan-Oct 2023) (w/estate gift of \$349,201.25)	Year to Date(Jan-Oct 2023) (w/o estate gift \$349,201.25)
Income	\$ 540,885.65	\$191,684.40
Expenses	\$ 211,992.56	\$211,992.56
Difference	\$ 328,893.09	- \$ 20,308.16

CD's	\$100,000	\$50,000	\$150,000
Location	Security Financial Bank	Security Financial Bank	Security Financial Bank
% APR	5.25	5.25	5.25
Timeframe	12 months	6 month	12 months
Expires	8-8-24		8-3-24

All money is insured through FDIC

A motion was made by Alicia Bonczyk to accept the financial report. Seconded by Barb Ross. Motion carried. Note: the following transfers were made from the council funds to cover payroll, Portico, insurance \$2,000 on Aug 29th; \$3,000 on Sept 14th; \$1,500 on Sept 15th; \$5,000 on Sept 27th.

Old Business-

Budget meeting: October 2nd , Pastor, Barb, Victoria and Dorene.

Baby grand piano opportunity: No update.

Appreciation Days –

New Business –

Appreciation Days – Council will be in charge of organizing for 2024. *Possible suggestions:*

~Card and gift from Council

~Cards from congregation

~Single large card from congregation

Finalize Budget- discussion on current budget proposal, suggestions made for a few adjustments.

Fundraising Suggestion – raffle baskets donated by council to raise funds for Youth Gathering.

Committee Reports-

A. [Appreciation Days](#)

B. [Pastor's Report](#) A motion was made by Janelle Yeakey to welcome Ava Rihn as a member of St. John's Lutheran church through baptism. Seconded by Sarah Wittrock. Motion carried.

C. Discipleship – needs to be started again, looking for 4-6 people;

D. [Fellowship Minutes](#) -

(Continued on page4)

Youth & Family News

Church Council Minutes (continued)

Important Dates to Notice

There will be NO Faith Formation on Wednesday, December 20th for the Christmas Pageant and Wednesday, December 27th due to the Winter (Christmas) Break. We hope that all our students and their families have a wonderful week and Christmas/New Year.

Subs Needed for JAM

Thanks to all our returning teachers this Fall for JAM, we are looking for people who would be interested in substituting on Wednesday nights. Please contact Amanda Larson for more information so we can get you on a list. Also, if there is a specific age group you want to work with or would not like to work with, please let us know that information as well.

Christmas Pageant

Wednesday, December 20th will be our Christmas Pageant for our Faith Formation students. The pageant will take place during worship at 6:45PM. Please come and join our youth as they share the story of Jesus' birth. Dinner will take place at 5:30PM in place of Faith Formation this evening.

Youth in Action

Our December YIA will take place on Sunday, December 10th at the Bohl's residence for a White Elephant gift exchange. We look forward to joining our high school youth to plan some super fun monthly events for the 2023-24 academic year. If you have any questions, please reach out to Amanda Larson;

715-279-6962 mobile,

amanda_stjohnspreschool@aol.com.

Christmas Caroling

The confirmation students are going to be going next door to the apartments to sing Christmas carols on Wednesday, December 13th from 5:30-6:30PM.

High school students are welcome to join!
Music books will be provided.

Youth Ministry Pictures

We are looking for pictures that anyone may have taken last year (2022-23 academic year). If you have any pictures that you're able to share, whether it's from JAM, confirmation, lock-in, or a youth trip, please contact Amanda Larson or Pastor Martin. We can forward you a link to a Google Drive. Otherwise, photos can get emailed to: stjohnslutheran.bloomer@gmail.com



(Council Minutes Continued)

E. [Preschool Minutes](#) – calendar fundraiser, staff engaged in CPR training

F. Social Ministry Minutes - none

G. [Property Minutes](#) –

H. [Worship & Music Minutes](#) –

I. [Youth Minutes](#) –

Additional Items and Announcements

Next Meeting: Monday December 18th at 6 pm

Adjournment - a motion was made at 9:05 pm by Alicia Bonczyk to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Janelle Yeakey. Motion carried. Members Present: Pastor Martin, Janelle Yeakey, Barb Ross, Dorene Turner, Alicia Bonczyk, Jamie Keller, Jeff Cole, Sarah Wittrock, Terri Smith. Others Present: NA

Fed and Forgiven First Communion retreat

This format will cover the entire first communion instruction in just one day including some good ol' fashioned camp fun! It will be held at Luther Park Bible Camp on **Friday, Jan. 19th**. Cost is \$20/person and includes lunch. All ages are welcome and parents are strongly encouraged to attend. Those interested should contact Pastor Martin! **Please sign up by Christmas.**

NEWS FROM PRESCHOOL STAFF!

Amanda



Sneak Peak Into the Program

Mrs. Larson has a lot packed into the month of December. During this month of holiday spirit, our various themes that will be explored are Arctic Animals and Christmas.

The children follow weekly focus walls that teach them their letters, shapes, colors, and numbers. As their teacher, I try to integrate these subject areas into the curriculum plans and daily activities that the children can choose from. It's going to be a busy and festive month! Make sure to follow our Facebook page to see what our students are up to.



Family Christmas Party

Tuesday, December 12th we will be hosting our Christmas party for all our families to come together. There will be cookies to decorate, ornaments to make, and other fun activities for everyone to enjoy! The Christmas party will begin at 6:00PM and will be located in the dining hall.

Class Christmas Parties

Thursday, December 21st and Friday, December 22nd we will be having our class Christmas parties for our students to enjoy. We are looking forward to enjoying some holiday cheer before we leave for break.

Thanksgiving Feast Recap

Our Thanksgiving feasts were a success for all our students to enjoy with their loved ones that could attend. We are extremely grateful for our students and their families.

Important Dates to Save

Monday, December 25th through Tuesday, January 2nd we will be closed for Winter (Christmas) Break. We hope that our students enjoy the day with their families, and we look forward to having them back in class on January 3rd and 4th.

Calendar Fundraiser

2024 calendars should be done before we leave for Christmas break. If you are interested in supporting the preschool, please contact Amanda Larson for more information.

Giving Tree

We have a giving tree set up in the preschool shared space if anyone is interested in supporting the preschool program with some additional supplies we could benefit from. Please reach out to Amanda Larson if you have any questions about this opportunity. As always, we appreciate your continued support.

Wait List

Registration is currently full for the 2023-24 academic year. For those who are interested in enrolling your child in our program, we do have an active waitlist that we started. If anyone has any questions, please contact Amanda Larson at mobile (715)279-6962 or email amanda_stjohnspreschool@aol.com. We are excited to welcome new students to our program, and we hope to see some familiar faces returning as well.

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ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH
1403 Newman Street
Bloomer, WI 54724

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

715-568-5446
Email: stjohndl-secretary@bloomer.net

PASTORAL/ CONGREGATIONAL CARE

Need a visit? Yearning for Holy Communion? Have a problem? Want to suggest ways we can be of more help to you and your family? Feel you'd like to pray with someone?

CALL: Pastor Martin Halom

Church # 715-568-5446, extension 11

Home # 715-568-1515

Cell # 517-505-6509

Email: pastormartin@bloomer.net



Christmas Service Schedule

Christmas Eve: (Sunday)

No morning service

4:00 p.m.

8:00 p.m.

Christmas Day: 9:00 a.m.

