



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 Martin
- Letter from Pastor Gary Hedding
- Youth & Preschool News

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Christmas is Coming!

OK, by the time you read this newsletter you are already well aware of that. The advertising for gift giving through every media from print to digital is almost as pervasive as we had leading up to the presidential election. For we, who are followers of Jesus and who "are growing disciples who eagerly share Christ's love", Christmas is all about the incredibly good news that God is intimately present in the world through Jesus of Nazareth, the anointed one of God, to redeem the world.

The revelation of God in the birth of Jesus demonstrates God's overwhelming love for all of creation and God's dedication to being part of that creation. The birth of Jesus is God's participation and experience of every birthing, seeding, cell dividing, and spawning moment in creation. Jesus' presence on this planet convinces us that God wants God's toes to feel sand, water, grass, toe-stubbing rocks, and squishy mud. Baby Jesus' first breath was a confirmation of the holiness of every lungful of air or gill full of water that we creatures take in that power our lives. The infant Jesus' growth to maturity is a testimony to the power of the dynamic physiologies we share. Jesus' first handful of dirt in his mouth affirms God's love for dirt, sand, and rocks, and his first bath was a blessing for the water of the earth.

May this Christmas, by means of every word and every song, assure you and the whole creation that we are living in the very presence of our mighty, just, and overwhelmingly gracious God, shown in Jesus. Merry Christmas.

Peace,

Pastor Gary Hedding
Interim Pastor

Office number: 715-568-5446

Like us on Facebook! St. John's Lutheran Church - Bloomer, WI

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

Jim Custer; Richard Anderson; Pat Prill; Kari Skaar; Betty Enyeart; Arlene Christianson; Deanna Stuckert; Rebecca Alman; Jason Rihn; Wayne & Nancy Zogleman (Amanda's grandparents); Stella; Edith Fleming; Steve Trubshaw; Carson (family friend of Kristine Mickelson); Kristi Swartz; Julie Wittrock; Sarah Wittrock; Art Klingenberg; Dohna Kerckhove (Pat Prill's daughter); Renee Grambo.

Prayers For the Saints

Prayers for the week of Dec. 1st: Terri, Zach, Aubrie and Kaitlyn Bohl; Alicia, Andrew, Alexis, Colton and Kiley Bonczyk; Brenda and Randy Bowe; Dalton, Katie, Joselyn and Kendel Bowe; Jay, Kari, Cody and Kiley Braun.

Prayers for the week of Dec. 8th: Joe, Kelly, Kendall, Kolten Burgess; Brianna Buske; Janelle and Raymond Buske; Ryan Buske; Brian, Cathy, Mitch, Tylor Calkins; Marsha Callstrom; Ben Carlson; Kyle, Stephanie and Karter Chevrier.









Prayers for the week of Dec. 15th: Arlene and Harley Christianson; Josh, Malia, Colt and Huck Clements; Jeffrey Cole; Thomas and Kylie Culver; Kelly, Laken and Tavyn Custer; Jacqueline and Jay Dachel; Pamela and Russ Dachel; Payton Dachel.

Prayers for the week of Dec. 22nd: Keenan, Samantha, Ivy and Jennings Dahl; Steven Durch; Judy and Teena Ellison; Adam, Tracia, Connor and Mason Ewings; Jackie and Thomas Ewings; Daniel and Kathleen Faschingbauer; Evelyn Ferstenou.

Prayers for the week of Dec. 29th: Jackie, Monty, Addison and Brycen Fetting; Edith Fleming; Sara, Connor and Gavin Gehrig; Don and Kathlyn Geissler; Jill, Steve, Lauren, Stephanie and Jessica Gengler; Debra and Jerry Gillette.

DECEMBER 2024 CALENDAR

Church News

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 9:00am Worship Service-Advent Week 1	2 8:30am Bible Study	3	4 2:00pm Bible Study 4:45pm Wednesday Meals 5:15pm - 6:15pm Faith Formation 6:30pm Worship Service-Holden Prayer	5	6 	7
8 9:00am Worship Service 5:30pm Youth In Action	9 8:30am Bible Study 5:45pm Youth Committee Meeting	10 6:15pm Preschool Committee Meeting	11 Confirmation Christmas Caroling, 5:30-6:30 pm 10:30am Bloomer Clergy Association Mtg 2:00pm Bible Study 4:45pm Wednesday Meals 5:15pm - 6:15pm Faith Formation 6:30pm Worship Service	12 9:30am Pastor's Conference	13 6:00pm - 7:00pm Preschool Christmas Party 	14
15 9:00am Worship Service	16 8:30am Bible Study 6:00pm Church Council Meeting	17 1:00pm - 4:00pm Quilting Group 	18 2:00pm Bible Study 5:15pm Wednesday Meals 6:30pm Worship Service-Christmas Pageant, cookies after svc 	19	20 Poinsettia Orders Due 	21
22 9:00am Worship Service	23 Newsletter Submission Due Preschool Christmas Vacation Begins 8:30am Bible Study	24 4:00pm Christmas Eve Worship 7:00pm Christmas Eve Worship	25 9:00am Christmas Day Worship  	26	27	28
29 9:00am Worship Service	30	31	1 Happy 2025!!! 	2 Preschool classes resume	3	4



The Altar Guild is looking for members who might be interested in serving St. John's on the **Altar Guild Committee**. Duties consist of setting up and cleaning up for communion and decorating the church for holidays. If you are interested, please contact Sue Nehring. Cell: 715-933-0181 Email: SueNehring@bloomer.net

Do you enjoy planning social events for all ages?
Do you enjoy brainstorming fun events?
Fellowship Committee Needs You!
Meetings approximately every other month for 45 min.
Interested or have questions?
Contact Pastor Martin or Janelle Yeakey



Pointsettia order forms are now available.
Pick them up in the Narthex or outside of the church office. Please return no later than Dec. 20th with payment to the church office or drop into the safe outside of the office.
Cost is \$12 per plant.



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 \$7 per person OR \$20 per family



Quilting Group
Will be meeting on **Dec. 17th** at 1:00-4:00 p.m.
Everyone is welcome!!



If you are interested in making communion bread for the communion on the first Sunday of the month, there is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board in the narthex and recipes in the altar guild room.



Church Council Meeting Minutes November 18th, 2024

Call to Order - Meeting was called to order at 6:08 pm by Jeff Cole, Council Vice President.

Opening Devotion – Led by Jeff Cole using Christ in Our Home .

Approval of the Agenda -A motion was made by Alicia Bonczyk to approve the agenda with flexibility; seconded by Janell Yeakey . Motion carried.

Approval of last Council Minutes - A motion was made by Alicia Bonczyk to approve the minutes from the October 22nd, 2024 meeting; seconded by Kyle Prill. Motion carried.

Financial Report -

	Year to Date (Jan-Oct 2024)
Income	\$ 189,959.27
Expenses	\$ 184,242.27
Difference	\$ 5,717.00

Transfers: none

Note: Due to no Portico payments (benefits for a pastor) needed at this time, we are able to cover expenses. If Portico payments were necessary, our expenses would be higher than income.

CD's	\$76,000	\$200,000
Location	Security Financial Bank	Security Financial Bank
% APR	5.0	5.25
Timeframe	12 months	15 months
Expires	8-8-25	11-6-25

All money is insured through FDIC

A motion was made by Alicia Bonczyk to accept the financial report. Seconded by Jamie Keller. Motion carried.

Old Business-

Update on Budget Committee: A motion was made to increase salaries by 3% by Jamie Keller, seconded by Jeff Cole. Motion carried.

Update on Nominating Committee: A motion was made by Janelle Yeakey to have the annual meeting on January 19th, 2025 with a make up weather date of January 26th. Seconded by Jeff Cole. Motion Carried.

New Business –

Bulletin Order of Worship Suggestion – sample bulletins from other churches were shared, this option will continue to be explored and experiment to include will begin in December.

Committee Reports

- **Appreciation Days:** musicians were acknowledged in November
- **Pastor’s Report** - A motion was made by Janelle Yeakey to welcome Westly Misener through baptism, and to transfer membership to the church triumphant for Arnold Windsor. Seconded by Alicia Bonczyk. Motion carried.
- **Discipleship** – needs to be started again, council brainstormed potential members.
- **Fellowship Minutes**—A motion was made by Alicia Bonczyk to sponsor a family through Bloomer Chamber, seconded by Janelle Yeakey. Motion Carried.

Minutes continued on page 5

Nov. 18th Church Council Minutes *(Continued)* Christmas Letter from Bishop Martin

(council meeting minutes continued)

Committee Reports Continued

- Preschool—
- Social Ministry Minutes –
- Property Minutes –
- Worship & Music Minutes –
- Youth Minutes –

Additional Items and Announcements

Next Meeting: Monday December 16th at 6 pm

Adjournment - 8:01 pm by Janelle Yeakey to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Jeff Cole . Motion carried.

Members Present: Janelle Yeakey, Jamie Keller, Jeff Cole, Alicia Bonczyk, Kyle Prill, Aubrie Bohl. Others Present: Gary Hedding, Victoria Prince-Silvas. Members Absent: Kay Anderson, Dorene Turner, Sarah Wittrock, Jason Graski.

Letter from Bishop Martin Halom

THE GIFT THAT IS YOU! 2024 Christmas Message

As I reflect on my time in Malawi back in early November, I had so many experiences that merit being shared. As I write this letter, perhaps the most important lesson I can offer was that of my new reality as a guest overseas.

Everywhere I turned, I truly felt like I was the most important person present. Yes, there were times where I was the honored guest as a bishop. I was granted the best seats in the church, in the van, on the stage. When I walked the grounds at the Lutheran Compound in my purple clerical, EVERYONE immediately stopped what they were doing to greet me, even if that was their first encounter with me. I was fed better than most and I never had to carry my own luggage. I had women pour water over my hands before certain meals (including communion) much like Christ did during the Last Supper in washing the disciples' feet. And despite my innermost desires to remind them that I was just another guy, I simply could not insult them in that manner. The way in which they treated me was at the core of their faith practice.

Thankfully, Deacon Laura taught me a valuable insight that helped my understanding more clearly. They didn't treat only bishops that way, they treat all guests that way! Having been to Malawi five times before she took me, Laura has experienced that generous hospitality time and time again. And now that I'm a few weeks removed from their genuine welcome, I still firmly believe that their faith has taught them to love their neighbor and lift them up no matter how far away we may come.

What if we all treated our neighbor as though they are the most important person present at that time? What if we lifted the spirits of the people God places in our lives each and every day? As we prepare for the Christmas story once again this year, we emphasize the gift that comes in the Christ child, God made flesh to live among us mortals. Just think about the lives that the Christ child touched! It started with Mary and Joseph, continued to the shepherds in the fields, and even gave the heavenly host something to praise!

Of course, Jesus went on to touch so many lives - people in need of healing, children in need of welcoming, outcasts in need of community, sinners in need of redeeming. Jesus became the gift who helped them all feel that they were the most important person present at the time, people worthy of his unconditional love, people whose spirits were uplifted.

As we march through the season of Advent toward the birth of God Emmanuel, Jesus the savior of the world, remember the gift of God's presence in your lives. Recognize that God is even present within you and that you are a gift as well! And much like my new friends in Malawi, be that gift for others. Reveal Christ's presence to others through your continued faithfulness and dedication to the God of love because that love can overcome division. You are a gift to this synod and to God's church when you let God's light shine in and through you! May this Christmas also reveal to you the light of Christ through others.

Bishop Martin

See Bishop in Malawi photo on page 8

Church, Youth & Family News

Save the Date: YOUTH IN ACTION

Our next Youth in Action night will take place on Sunday, December 8th, from 5:30 to 7:30PM. We will begin at the church and then head out to grab a bite to eat at Casa Margarita 3 in Bloomer. Our fun activity of the night will be a White Elephant gift exchange—you won't want to miss out! If you have any questions, please reach out to Amanda Larson (715-279-6962 mobile or email: amanda_stjohnspreschool@aol.com).

Substitutes Still Needed for JAM

We are looking for people who would be interested in substituting or teaching 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.

Youth Ministry Pictures

We are looking for pictures that anyone may have taken this 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. We can forward you a link to a Google Drive. Otherwise, photos can get emailed to: stjohnslutheran.bloomer@gmail.com

Pizza Coupons

Coupons from our pizza fundraiser are still available for purchase. Although the fundraiser is over, you can contact Amanda Larson if you are interested in purchasing any pizzas from Fat Boys, Valley Tavern, or Harm's Way.

Christmas Caroling

The confirmation students are going to be going next door to the apartments to sing Christmas carols on Wednesday, December 11th from 5:30-6:30 p.m. High School students are welcome to join! Music books will be provided.



Christmas Pageant

This year's Christmas pageant will be on Wednesday, December 18th. If your child has received a part, please make sure they bring their script each week. Dinner will be held from 4:45 to 5:45PM prior to the pageant beginning, and we will be serving Christmas cookies after the pageant. If you have any questions, please contact Amanda Larson.

Important Dates to Notice

There will be **NO faith formation on Wednesday, December 25th and Wednesday, January 1st**, due to Christmas/winter break. We hope that all our students and their families have a wonderful Christmas and New Year! Safe travels to all those who will be traveling. We look forward to seeing everyone again on Wednesday, January 8th.

Quake

Middle and high school students, save the following dates. This year's Quake event will be held in Wisconsin Dells from **February 14 to 16**. We are excited about this opportunity for our youth, as it has historically been a success. Standard rates go through January 9th, so contact Amanda Larson for more information today!

The YOUTH are running a Hygiene Drive for the Hawks Corner.

A full list of needs can be found at the donation box in the narthex and includes items **such as:**

Soap **Deodorant**
Brushes **Chapstick**

If you have any further questions, please contact Amanda Larson at 715-568-5446
amanda_stjohnspreschool@aol.com, or
Jean Rihn (715-933-4161).



NEWS FROM PRESCHOOL STAFF!

Amanda



Registration for 2024-25

Enrollment for the 2024-25 academic year is still open. There are 4 spaces open in our Monday/Wednesday/Friday class. Our enrollment is at capacity for our Tuesday/Thursday class. Please consider getting on our waitlist if you want your child to become a part of our program.

It has already been a fantastic start to the school year!

If you want a high-quality preschool program, please consider enrolling your child with us this Fall. Students can register for our morning program if they are between the ages of 3 and 5. This program is a great option if your child is not old enough to enroll in 4K, but you want them to work on certain skills, if they will be attending 4K in the afternoon, or if you are waiting for them to go to school until kindergarten. For more information, you can message us on Facebook, call us at 715-568-5446 ext. 14, or email: amanda_stjohnspreschool@aol.com

Classroom Wishlist

We have an Amazon Wishlist set up if anyone is interested in supporting the preschool program with some additional supplies we could benefit from. Our link is: <https://a.co/7G4BmXD> - Please reach out to Amanda Larson if you have any questions about this opportunity. As always, we appreciate your continued support.

Sneak Peek into the Program

Mrs. Larson has a lot packed into December. During this spooktacular month, our themes explored will include Arctic Animals & Habits and Christmas. The children follow weekly focus walls that teach them letters, shapes, colors, and numbers. As their teacher, I try to integrate these subject areas into the curriculum plans and daily activities the children can choose from. It's going to be a busy and festive month! Follow our Facebook page to see what our students are up to.

Thanksgiving Family Feast Recap

Our Thanksgiving feasts were a resounding success, providing a delightful experience for all our students and their loved ones who could attend. We are immensely grateful for the active participation of our students and their families. The success of these feasts is a testament to the strong community we have built, and we are truly blessed to have this program in our community.

Important Dates to Save

Monday, December 25th through Wednesday, January 1st 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 2nd and 3rd.

Calendar Fundraiser

We have exciting news to share! Our calendar fundraiser pre-orders are now open, offering you the chance to own a piece of our students' incredible talent. By purchasing a calendar, you are not only supporting the preschool but also showcasing the artistic skills of our students. We value your contribution and look forward to your support.

The calendars are being sold for \$15. If you want to purchase during our pre-order, please message us on Facebook Messenger, email amanda_stjohnspreschool@aol.com, or call 715-568-5446. Get ready to grab your calendars before the Christmas break!

Family Christmas Party

On Friday, December 13th, we will host our Christmas party for all our preschool families. 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

On Wednesday, December 18th, and Thursday, December 19th, we will have our class Christmas parties for our students to enjoy. We are looking forward to enjoying some holiday cheer before we leave for break with a book change and a PJ/movie day.





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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

715-568-5446
 Email: stjohnsl-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: Deacon Martha Libersky or Pastor Gary Hedding
 Church: 715-568-5446, extension 11
 Home (Martha): 715-568-4653
 Cell (Martha): 715-829-4653
 Email: fmlibers@bloomer.net (Deacon Martha)
paddlegh@gmail.com (Pastor Gary)

Bishop Martin in Malawi



**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!



Christmas Service Schedule

**Christmas Eve: 4:00 p.m.
 7:00 p.m.**

Christmas Day: 9:00 a.m.