



St. John's Lutheran Church

Mission Statement:

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

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

Church News-Calendar

Christmas Article-Bishop Laurie

Letter from Pastor Halom

Youth & Preschool News

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Letter from Pastor Halom	1
Prayers	2
Calendar	3
Christmas Article-Bishop Laurie	4
Church News	3,8
Council Minutes, Financial Info	5,7
Youth & Family Announcements	6
Preschool News	7

WHY THE WHOLENESS WHEEL Physical Health

Over the next seven months, I will be writing about six aspects of our lives that are all interconnected by a seventh. The six aspects are physical, emotional, social, intellectual, vocational, and financial wellbeing - all aspects that are a part of our lives and impact our overall health. The seventh aspect is one that informs each and every aspect, our spiritual life. The purpose of this series is to help us identify what habits and actions are going well and which ones we may need to pay more attention to in order to be the healthy and whole person that God intends us to be. I hope that you will find something in these articles that will help you be that child of God!

It seemed fitting that we start the new year with the physical aspect of ourselves as so many people do in the month of January! When I was once a member at Midwest Physical, I remember seeing all of these new people enter the workout area, interrupting my routine by using my equipment disrupting my flow! Then it dawned on me that this was a community gym, not the personal Halom workout area! In retrospect, I give those folk a lot of credit for starting a new routine filled with hope and drive because new habits are hard to start and harder to maintain. Unfortunately, for too many of us, maintaining those new habits is hard enough, especially when things like Covid-19 throws a wrench into our plans.

At the time when exercise was a regular part of my life, people would ask me what was motivating me. After giving that all important question some deep thought, the answer became simple - I want to live a long life to enjoy the many blessings that could lie in my future. I want to be with Melinda as long as possible in good physical condition. I want to be able to be helpful to the boys as they navigate young adulthood and beyond. I want to be able to keep doing the fun things of life with friends that God has blessed me with. I want to serve as pastor for many years to come.

When we take care of our physical body with a proper balance of sleep, exercise, and diet, we are then tending to a holy temple, a sacred sanctuary. Have you ever thought about your body as a sacred sanctuary? It's true! Consider the camp song we've learned together over the years:

Lord prepare me to be a sanctuary, pure and holy, tried and true.
And with thanksgiving I'll be a living sanctuary for you.

When I first realized the importance of those words, I realized that God does indeed reside inside of me. Our physical bodies do indeed house God Almighty! When we honor the physical aspect of our lives and truly care for it, we honor God, the one who gifted us with the one and only body we get!

So as we enter this new year, my prayer is that we will all do something to take better care of our bodies. Whether you try something subtle or something significant, try something. Get the sleep that you need. Find a healthy diet and enjoy every bite knowing you are caring for you and perhaps becoming less of a burden on others. Go for a walk or pursue strenuous exercise! Do something. Our bodies are a tremendous gift!

Pastor Martin

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 January 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

Art Klingenberg; Nancy Zogleman (Amanda Larson's grandmother); Emmett Larson; Millie Hensel (Mother of Marcy Trubshaw); Wayne Zogleman (Amanda Larson's Grandfather); Kollin Hebert (friend of Eric & Jenn Larson); Pat Prill; Renee Grambo; Arlene Christianson; 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 Jan 7th: Greg, Tasha, Trey, Ava, Brodie and Dylan Baker; Bruce and Karen Barlow; Jerome, Kristie, Alicia and Ryan Benson; Carolyn Bergh; Jill, Mark, Karsten and Madi Bergh; Matthew, Melissa, Claire and Tyler Berlin.

Prayers for the week of Jan 14th: Dale and Rita Bitney; Albert and Merlene Blaha; Lydia, Steven, Chase and Reagan Blaha; Annie and Bill Bleskacek; Brian, Laura, Jake, John, Jonah and Leah Bleskacek.

Prayers for the week of Jan 21st: Joselyn, Nathan, Lauren and Ryan Bleskacek; Alice Boese; Annie and Larry Boese; Bryan, Mary, Blake and Tenley Boese; Nicole Boese; Patricia Boettcher; Terri, Zach, Aubrie and Kaitlyn Bohl.

Prayers for the week of Jan. 28th: Alicia, Andrew, Alexis, Colton and Kiley Bonczyk; Dalton, Joselyn and Katie Bowe; Jay, Kari, Cody and Kiley Braun; Tom Buchner; Brianna Buske; Janelle and Raymond Buske; RyanBuske.

JANUARY 2024 CALENDAR

Church News Items

JANUARY 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
31 <small>9:00am Worship Service</small>	1 HAPPY NEW YEAR!! <small>No Preschool Office Closed</small> 	2 <small>No Preschool 1:00pm Staff Meeting</small>	3 <small>Preschool Resumes Classes 10:30am Bloomer Clergy Association Mtg 2:00pm Bible Study 4:45pm Wednesday Meals 5:30pm - 6:30pm Faith Formation</small>	4 <small>5:30pm Preschool Committee Meeting</small>	5	6
7 <small>9:00am Worship Service Rite of Confirmation</small>	8 <small>8:00am Bible Study 5:00pm Youth Committee Meeting</small>	9	10 <small>2:00pm Bible Study 4:45pm Wednesday Meals 5:30pm - 6:30pm Faith Formation 6:45pm Worship Service</small>	11 <small>9:30am Pastor's Conference</small>	12	13
14 <small>9:00am Worship Service 10:00am Fellowship Committee Meeting 5:30pm Youth In Action</small>	15 <small>8:00am Bible Study 1:00pm Staff Meeting 6:00pm Church Council Meeting</small>	16 <small>1:00pm - 4:00pm Quilting Group</small>	17 <small>2:00pm Bible Study 4:45pm Wednesday Meals 5:30pm - 6:30pm Faith Formation 6:45pm Worship Service</small>	18	19 <small>First Communion Retreat at Luther Park No Preschool</small>	20
21 <small>9:00am Worship Service 10:00am Annual Meeting - Brunch to Follow</small>	22 <small>8:00am Bible Study</small>	23	24 <small>2:00pm Bible Study 4:45pm Wednesday Meals 5:30pm - 6:30pm Faith Formation 6:45pm Worship Service</small>	25	26 <small>7:00pm Confirmation Lock-In</small>	27
28 <small>9:00am Worship Service 10:00am Worship Committee/Music Mission Meeting</small>	29 <small>8:00am Bible Study</small>	30 <small>1:00pm Staff Meeting</small>	31 <small>2:00pm Bible Study 4:45pm Wednesday Meals 5:30pm - 6:30pm Faith Formation 6:45pm Worship Service</small>	1	2	3

Deadline for February 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 **January 25th**
Thank You!!

The Northwest Synod of Wisconsin is starting the Reconciling in Christ process. We need volunteers for the team that will guide the synod through the process to publicly guide, practice & teach particularly for LGBTQIA+, racial identity, and neurodiversity. If you think this is important enough to spend some time on Zoom each month, and maybe an in-person meeting or two, please email us at synod-advocate@nswwi.org. We need eight more people, and if you represent one of these identified groups, we need you! *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

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!

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

Christmas Article Part 2

Bishop Laurie

Christmas is celebrating Jesus as the gift we didn't know we needed because our human brain can't imagine God's generosity.

AN UNPRECEDENTED GIFT

Advent and Christmas Greetings from Bishop Laurie Skow-Anderson.

Jesus is God's **unprecedented gift** of love for a world in great need. Friends, we live in unprecedented times. The word "unprecedented" means never done or known before. In recent years we've heard of the unprecedented effects of climate change causing more powerful hurricanes and devastating wild fires. We lived through an unprecedented pandemic, and we lament the unprecedented death toll from mass shootings in our country. We worry about the stability of our democracy after an unprecedented political insurrection at our own capital. At times it feels as though we are reeling from one unprecedented disaster to the next. How do we live as people of faith in this time and place? How do we put our Christian faith into action? What if we countered with **unprecedented goodness**?

*This is a true story of **unprecedented goodness**.*

On March 23, 1847, at a meeting in Skullyville, Indian Territory (Oklahoma), a group of tribal members from the Choctaw Nation, missionaries, and traders heard the news about what was happening far away across the Atlantic in Ireland, the Great Famine. The result was an unlikely, **unprecedented friendship between the Choctaw and the Irish**. Historians estimate that more than a million Irish people died between 1845-1851 from hunger and hunger related diseases. The Choctaw, deeply moved by this story of people they have never met, collected \$174, an incredibly amount of money considering the Choctaw's own poverty due to the fact that they had been forcibly removed from their land by the U.S. government by an unprecedented act of cruelty just a little over ten years earlier. At the time of the donation many Choctaw were living in poverty with inadequate house and food. One historian writes, "It is difficult to imagine a

people less well-positioned to act philanthropically." Records show that the donation was sent to New York City to buy grain and food that was shipped across the Atlantic. Seven Irish newspapers published an account of the generous Choctaw. Why were the Choctaw so compassionate and generous? Why are we so surprised by their generous gift? Perhaps the Choctaw and the Irish were connected by their common experience of coloniza-

Jesus also saw a poor widow put in two small copper coins. ³ He said, "I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put in more than all of them. ⁴ For they all offered their gifts out of their wealth. But she, out of her poverty, put in everything she had to live on. Luke 21:2-4

tion, mistreatment and suffering.

Ireland had been colonized by England and forced into a land tenure system that enabled English landlords to gain profit from the Irish tenants farmers while leaving the farmers destitute. Tenant farmers raised crops to pay the landlord's rent and to feed their own families they grew potatoes. A disease, blight, to the potato plant caused the famine. The English refused to help and often blocked aid to the Irish.

"We are never too poor to give or too rich to receive." ² a favorite proverb of Bishop Joseph Bvumbwe, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Malawi

The Choctaw were forced from their tribal territory by the U.S. government when President Andrew Jackson signed the Indian Removal Act in 1830. The Choctaw were tricked and threatened into ceding 25,000 square miles of their land in Mississippi and were forced to walk 500 miles to Indian Territory now Oklahoma. Thousands of Choctaw died during that winter's blizzards from disease, and starvation walking what is now called the Trail of Tears and Death. With that memory still in their lived experience, the Choctaw had compassion and collected money (\$174) to be sent to those who were also suffering a great injustice 4,000 miles away in Ireland. It was truly a gift of unprecedented goodness, unprecedented generosity.

This story was largely forgotten until 1990 when an Irish writer uncovered it and began to connect with the Choctaw in Oklahoma. It began by Irish citizens joining members of the Choctaw to walk the Trail of Tears and members of Choctaw traveling to Ireland to join in a commemorative Famine Walk. Later there was a visit by the Irish prime minister to Oklahoma and in gratitude for the earlier gift offers of scholarships to pay for Choctaw students to study in Ireland.

God sent Jesus into our broken, fallen world. Jesus is God's gift of unprecedented love. Jesus is a gift we desperately needed and did nothing to deserve, a gift we could never repay, a gift that transforms our despair and gives us hope. Advent/Christmas 2023: May this season inspire us to give generously to those who have experienced injustice and live with great need in response to God's unprecedented gift of generosity to us.

In Jesus' name, AMEN

Bishop Laurie Skow-Anderson

Grant, R. (2023, Sept/Oct). On Common Ground, Smithsonian, pg. 56-65.

² Attributed to Pope John Paul II

For more information about the Choctaw gift see: The Choctaw Nation's Gift to the Irish | Smithsonian Voices | National Museum of the American Indian Smithsonian Magazine
The Irish are sending relief to Native Americans, inspired by a donation from a tribe during the Great Famine | CNN

Looking for ways respond in faith with unprecedented goodness? Consider giving a Christmas gift to our companion synod in Malawi for a well that will provide clean water for an entire village and enables girls to attend school rather than carry waters from rivers and streams miles away from their homes. Northwest Synod of Wisconsin | Giving (nswi.org)
Scroll to Bishop's "Water is Life" Malawi Well Fund.

Church Council Minutes

December 18, 2023

Call to Order - meeting was called to order at 6:06 pm by Dorene Turner, Council President.

Opening Devotion – Council reflected on their favorite Christmas traditions at church.

Approval of the Agenda -A motion was made by Janelle Yeakey to approve the agenda with flexibility, seconded by Barb Ross. Motion carried.

Approval of last Council Minutes - A motion was made Terri Smith to approve the minutes from the November 20, 2023 meeting, seconded by Kaitlyn Bohl. Motion carried.

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

	Year to Date(Jan-Nov 2023) (w/estate gift of \$349,201.25)	Year to Date(Jan-Nov 2023) (w/o estate gift \$349,201.25)
Income	\$ 554,973.02	\$205,771.77
Expenses	\$ 233,552.69	\$233,552.69
Difference	\$ 321,420.33	- \$ 27,780.92

Note: Transfer of funds Nov 28th of \$1500 to cover expenses

Barb was contacted by Security Financial Bank, the paperwork for the \$50,000 CD was never completed via a bank error. Due to the error on the banks part, we will not be penalized if money is needed to be removed from the CD in the spring.

CD's	\$100,000	\$200,000
Location	Security Financial Bank	Security Financial Bank
% APR	5.25	5.25
Timeframe	12 months	12 months
Expires	8-8-24	8-3-24

All money is insured through FDIC

A motion was made by Barb Ross to accept the financial report. Seconded by Dorene Turner. Motion carried.

Old Business-

Appreciation Days: Council will be in charge of organizing staff appreciation for 2024

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

Donations: On December 12th a **motion was made** by Dorene Turner via email and seconded by Sara Wittrock and to disperse donated gifts given by the congregation to the families in need. Motion carried. A total of 4 families were gifted with the donated money.

New Business –

Budget- A **motion was made** by Janelle Yeakey to adopt the current budget with the addition of an income line item of Good Samaritan fund with a value of zero. Second by Sarah Wittrock. Motion carried.

Volunteer Appreciation celebration- Council was given information on cost of having a brunch catered in, decision was made to use main street café, \$10/person(sausage, eggs, French toast, pastries and orange juice).

Good Samaritan fund – Current practice will be to use misc. charity line to track withdrawals. Suggestion made to have a second offering every other month to collect for our benevolence funds.

Annual Meeting: January 21st, 2024. A **motion was made** by Barb Ross to have the annual meeting on January 21st, 2024 at 10 am with a backup date of January 28th, 2024. Seconded by Terri Smith. Motion carried.

(Continued on page 7)

Youth & Family News

Church Council Minutes (continued)

Quake

Middle and high school students, save the following dates: February 16-18. Quake will be happening in Wisconsin Dells at the Wilderness Lodge. We are excited about this opportunity for our youth, as it has been a success before! We are thrilled with the list of students we have going and have enough chaperone support. If your student hasn't signed up yet and is interested, please contact Amanda Larson or Pastor Martin as soon as possible.

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

On Wednesday, December 20th our JAM and Confirmation students joined together for our 2023 Christmas Pageant. We want to take the time to thank all our students, families, and congregation members who made it all possible this year.

Confirmation Sunday

Confirmation will take place on Sunday, January 7th during service. Pictures will be taken after service around 10:20 AM by Curtie Photography Services. If you want to purchase an 8x10 group picture of your student, the cost is \$17 per copy. More information will be shared with the confirmation students and their families in the coming weeks. Don't hesitate to get in touch with Pastor Martin or Amanda Larson with any questions you may have.

Full Night Lock-In: 6th grade +

On Friday, January 26th we will be hosting an all-night lock-in for our confirmation students. High school students can attend to help lead activities alongside the Luther Park camp counselors. Students will engage in fun games, worship, and memories that will last a lifetime. Friends are welcome to join (6th grade – 8th grade, or high school) and snacks are encouraged! The lock-in will begin at 7:00PM and pick-up if promptly scheduled at 7:00AM. If your child would like to attend and cannot stay the entire night, that is acceptable as well! If you have any questions regarding the lock-in, please contact Pastor Martin or Amanda Larson.

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

Butterbraid Fundraiser

We are grateful for all who participated and supported our youth with the Butter Braid fundraiser. Because of your generosity and support, we raised

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 January. As we start the new year, our various themes that will be explored are Snow, "I Have a Dream," and Dental Health.

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

On Tuesday, December 12th we hosted our Christmas party for all our families to come together. The children sang Jingle Bells, Snowflakes, and We Wish You a Merry Christmas. To follow their carols, the children and their families were able to dec-

orate and enjoy some sugar cookies, along with some hot chocolate. There were also ornaments and other fun activities for everyone to enjoy!

Important Dates to Save

Classes start back up on Wednesday, January 3rd and Thursday, January 4th as we return from Christmas Break. Also, on Friday, January 19th, there will be NO school, as we follow the Bloomer School District's calendar.

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.

(Council Minutes Continued)

Committee Reports

[Appreciation Days](#)

[Pastor's Report](#) A motion was made to declare the pastors housing allowance to \$32,000 for 2024 by Terri Smith. Seconded by Barb Ross. Motion carried.

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

[Fellowship Minutes](#) - looking for more members to join to help with the 'fun' planning

[Preschool Minutes](#) –

Social Ministry Minutes - none

[Property Minutes](#) –

[Worship & Music Minutes](#) –

[Youth Minutes](#) –

Additional Items and Announcements

Next Meeting: Monday January 15th at 6 pm

Adjournment - a motion was made at 7:25 pm by Janelle Yeakey to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Terri Smith. Motion carried.

Members Present: Pastor Martin, Janelle Yeakey, Barb Ross, Dorene Turner, Jamie Keller (zoom), Terri Smith, Kaitlyn Bohl, Sarah Wittrock (zoom) Others Present: NA Members Absent: Kyle Prill, Jeff Cole, Alicia Bonczyk, Minutes submitted by Janelle Yeakey, Secretary





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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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

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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



**SYNOD-WIDE
 CREATION CARE
 ZOOM MEETING**

SATURDAY, JANUARY 6TH @ 11AM

Does your Church have a Green Team or is interested in starting one? Connect with other Synod Churches as they share what they have done and their ideas for the future. We are also excited to share information about our Synod Creation Care Team. Please join us!

PLEASE SIGN UP TO RECEIVE ZOOM LINK:
[HTTPS://FORMS.GLE/FY1SPP8XJS4KZTIL9](https://forms.gle/FY1SPP8XJS4KZTIL9)



Join us for St. John's Annual Meeting

Brunch to follow!



**2024
 January
 21**

10:00 a.m.

Volunteers needed...

...for brunch on January 21st following St. John's Annual Meeting.



Set up, cooks, and clean up help needed.

Please sign up on sheets in narthex. **Questions?**

contact Janelle Yeakey
 715-933-0816

