

Dec.
2022

ST. JOHN'S CONGREGATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Matt Cote
president

CJ Ullrich
vice president | personnel

Lee Dryden
secretary | mutual ministry

Ellen Pancoe
treasurer

Ginny Hohl
financial secretary

Rick Bosch
building & grounds

Rev. Marsha Irmer
stewardship

Rev. Don Reidell
christian education

Shirleen Besch
social ministry

Brian Hirschey
finance

THE PASTOR'S NOTE...

I was in a bad mood. I'll admit it.

I had a headache. I was tired. I felt drained emotionally and physically and spiritually. It was snowing. It was cold. Matthew was home with a fever. Our household was stressed beyond belief.

And... in the midst of it all, I had to run Molly to swimming at the High School and John to wrestling at the Middle School.

Like I said, I'll admit it... I was in a bad mood.

While sitting in the parking lot waiting for one kid so I could go get the other, I thought to myself: *Isn't this great?! Isn't this fun?! Isn't this an absolute honor and joy?!* I was being sarcastic, of course. I was miserable. Internally, I threw a pity party that would make Times Square on New Year's Eve seem benign. (Please don't read more into this than there really is. I love that my kids are into things. It's just sometimes when you feel lousy and the weather stinks and it's dark at 5PM you want to be home on a couch with cocoa.)

Child #1 was late (*naturally*) and so the universe gave me ample time to complain. My ongoing problem was that with each lament I felt worse and not better than before. Complaining didn't take my headache away. It didn't take the snow away. It didn't take Matthew's fever away. And it didn't take my responsibilities away. It just left me feeling even sorrier for myself than before.

That is when I started to say things differently – out loud this time. First, I said, *Isn't this great?!* sarcastically. And then I said it like I meant it. *Isn't. This. Great?!* Then I said it like I was a 5-year-old at Disney World... *ISN'T THIS GREAT?!* And then I said it like I did on my honeymoon at dinner sitting across the table from my wife... *isn't this great?!* After that I kept repeating it a bunch of different ways.

Then, the strangest thing happened. For a moment, I entertained the possibility that this entire experience was actually 'great'. I know it sounds cheesy (*like is your cup half full or half empty*) but it worked. (*Which is why I'm writing about it now.*) It was great. It's wasn't easy or fun. But it was great in the sort of ways you don't expect.

In the New Testament, the concept of repentance is less about saying sorry and more about changing your perspective. It is not about lamenting the past. It is all about orienting yourself for the present and the future. In fact, the Greek word for repentance actually just means: to change your mind's eye. Sometimes that means looking in a **different** direction, but sometimes that means looking at things **differently**.



HAPPY
ADVENT

As we begin another church year in this holy season of Advent, that is ultimately what we are called to do. We are called to sit here in the darkness, in the cold, in the snow, with our headaches, and hurts and fears and troubles, and change our perspective. We are called to see blessings in the midst of ailments, to see gifts in the midst of burdens, and we are called to see responsibility as a holy and awesome opportunity. St. Paul says: Give thanks in all circumstances. Which on this night meant for me shout, *isn't this great?!*, even when I was in a bad mood.

My guess is at some point over these next few weeks you're going to be in a bad mood... Waiting in line. Frantically seeking the perfect gift. Panicking over weather. Worried about a loved one. Running errands that aren't nearly as important as they seem. Carrying out mundane tasks when all you want to do is call it quits. Stressing over finances. Irritated at the universe. In disbelief at the lack of common sense in the world.

In those moments may you shout: **isn't this great?!** Try it a few different ways. And keep going until you laugh or cry. Don't quit until you reach that moment where you entertain the possibility that it is. Because it is. Our savior assured us of that when he made death the gate to eternal life. Give thanks in all circumstances.

Life is never so good it's not bad and never so bad it's not good. So, let's repent and change our perspective on those dark days and seek out the light.

Your Sometimes-Moody Pastor,
PSDH

Altar Flowers

This Advent Season we are reintroducing Altar Flowers to our worship. We encourage members to sponsor the altar flowers each week in honor, memory, or celebration of loved ones and events.

Looking ahead a sign-up sheet will be posted in the narthex. Until then, please contact the church office at office@sjlcamherst.com and we will confirm availability.

There are two arrangements and they cost \$30 each (\$60 total). (Yes, that is more than it was before COVID. We hope the cost of eggs, gasoline, and altar flowers will decrease under a healthier economy.)

Sundays 12.11 & 12.18 are still available to sponsor these arrangements that bring light, color, and life to the altar as we worship.

DECEMBER WORSHIP

O COME LET US
ADORE HIM.

**SUNDAY,
12/4/22**

Worship at 8:30 & 10:30AM.
Pageant Rehearsal @ 9:30AM.

**SUNDAY,
12/11/22**

Worship at 8:30 & 10:30AM.
Pageant Rehearsal @ 9:30AM (sanctuary).
Congregational Meeting @ 9:30AM (gathering area).

**SUNDAY,
12/18/22**

ONE SERVICE @ 9:30AM
featuring the Christmas Pageant -
It's Never Too Late by John Reich.

**SATURDAY,
12/24/22**

Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship
@ 3PM & 5PM.

**SUNDAYS,
12/25/22
& 1/1/23**

No worship on Christmas Day (12.25).
ONE SERVICE of Lessons & Carols @ 9:30
on New Year's Day (1.1).



ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

12.11.22 @ 9:30 AM

COUNCIL UPDATE - NOVEMBER

The November council meeting was held on the 15th and was called to order at 7:04PM. The meeting began with devotions after which the agenda and previous month's minutes were approved.

Pastor reported on pastoral acts including a baptism, confirmations, and a funeral. Pastor thanked the volunteers that have been assisting in the office and those who continue to help out around the church during the week.

The committees offered the following reports:

Social Ministry: The executive director of Family Promise will address St. John this month. Our Advent Project will support their shelter for homeless families.

Fellowship: The ladies' lunch bunch continues to meet. Men's breakfast is the first Monday of the month. Men's ministry meets on Saturdays at 9AM.

Personnel: We are preparing to post the Administrative Assistant position. Klaus Schonrank is working out very well as sexton.

Christian Education: Attendance is stable. Pageant practice begins on 11.27. Pageant on 12.18. Winter/Spring Sunday School resumes 1.8.2023.

Building and Grounds: Walls have been repaired and the lawnmower has been serviced. We continue to experience trouble with the boilers. A fix approximating \$3,000 is anticipated.

Mutual Ministry: The committee met with Pastor and discussed current and anticipated ministry considerations. The committee excused Pastor Hannon and discussed a salary increase. New figures will be finalized & presented to the congregation at the annual meeting on December 11th.

Stewardship: A stewardship letter was mailed out. Pledges are encouraged from all contributing members.

Finance: We are building a budget for 2023. We are currently in the black. Our building rental income is helping. We raised over \$1,800 for ELCA World Hunger.

During the business portion of the meeting we discussed our outgoing benevolence. The council decided to support GiGi's Playhouse, Danceability, Inc., Heritage Christian Services, the Kloppenberg Family, LCLC, and the Way Program at OLV.

Looking ahead, President Cote and Pastor Irmer's council terms end this year. Lee Dryden will serve another term. Two council seats will be filled at the December annual meeting.

Thank You

Dear Bobbie & Klaus,

I just wanted to send along a THANK YOU for your help and hospitality when Carol and I stopped by to look at family church records. We really appreciate what you did for us! The information was terrific. We hope you both have a wonderful Thanksgiving season.

Best regards, Chuck & Carol Lempke

Dear [St. John], Please accept our sincere thanks for your recent donation of gift bags. On behalf of the residents, Board of Directors, Trustees, and the staff of Niagara Lutheran Health System, we extend our sincere appreciation to you. We are truly blessed to have friends such as you who remember the needs of our residents. Thank you so much for your support of our mission and vision! Sincerely, David McMullen

Amazon Smile

If you use Amazon for your shopping needs, please consider changing it to Smile.Amazon. It is the same as the Amazon or Amazon Prime that you use now only they will donate .5% of your total order to a charity of your choice. You could choose St. John. We currently have members that are doing this and we receive a check every few months. Just go into Amazon and you will find the opportunity to sign into Smile.Amazon. If you are not sure what to do contact jeandelamere@yahoo.com



Our angel tree ministry this year has a new focus as we collaborate with Family Promise of Western New York to warm up the holidays and New Year; by providing household items for a family transitioning to a home from shelter. Beginning Sunday, December 4th, ornaments on our Christmas tree will be available to select which household item you would like to gift. A member of our social ministry will be available after each service to assist with any questions, mark down your item, and to receive your gift. Gifts will be received through January 8th, the epiphany season when we remember the pilgrimage of the Magi who brought gifts to Jesus."

ANGEL TREE



**we are officially building. @ the moment...
the foundation has been excavated
& is in the process of being poured.**



ST. JOHN PRAYER LIST

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Hospitalized and Homebound
Colleen Gunning, Ann Henry

Loss and Bereavement
Family and Friends of Ellen Manthey
Family and Friends of Eleanor Scott, mother of Laura Kachelmeyer
Family and Friends of Edward Long, friend of Marsha Irmer

Healing, Comfort & Special Concerns
Joni Cote, Bobbie Traina, Rick Bosch, Bob Tiffany, Wayne Yendall, Gayle Bosch,
Jerry Szykowny, Ed Utz, Jennifer Ekberg, Judy Yendall, John Sivak, Ethel Semrau
Joanna Graser, niece of Jean Delamere
Sandy Fritschi, friend of Pam & Ken Figel
Paula Artieri, friend of Iris Reese
John Bacon, uncle of Walter & Sue Hadala
Rick George, nephew of Deni Kranz
Mattie Hanna (13y/o) & Family, friends of Marsha Irmer
Rev. Gene Ferguson, father of Lori Schonrank
Mary Mussel, family of Susan Hadala
Michelle Newman, friend of Susan Hadala
Peggy Warfield, friend of Marsha Irmer
John Senn, uncle of Rich Bosch
Rick & Jan Vincent, sister of Deb Francis
Elaine and Syd Small, friends of Marsha Irmer

For wise governing dealing with world tension, suffering, and war in Ukraine.

Healing, comfort and strength for those seeking refuge from climate change & natural disasters.

For all suffering after mass shootings.

Those victimized by any form of violence, racism, abuse, coercion, and addiction.

Military

Matt Newman, Drew Steinhilber, John Wendelin, Nicholas Ford, Ben Hoyt

Names will be kept on the prayer list for 4 weeks, if you need your loved one on for longer please let the office know and we will be glad to keep them on.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Judy Swanson 12.1	Midge Davis 12.13
David Schmude 12.2	Ellen Lohead 12.14
Don Reidell 12.4	Vincent Tobia 12.14
Chuck Rojek 12.4	Rebecca Roll 12.21
William Lawniczak 12.4	Chuck Platzer 12.24
Nancy James 12.5	Jared Kachelmeyer 12.25
Nicole Favale 12.5	Andrew Ekberg 12.27
Scott Lawniczak 12.9	Danielle May 12.27
Delaney Hannon 12.10	

STAFF

Rev. Dr. Scott D. Hannon, *Pastor* | Rev. Charlie Greene, *Visitation Pastor*
Cindy Lin, *Traditional Music Leader* | Elena Erokhina, *Contemporary Music Leader*
Klaus Schonrank, *Sexton*



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