

December  
2023

## Pastor's Ponderings



### *A Year's Journey with Jesus in the Life of the Church*

On November 26<sup>th</sup> we celebrated *Christ the King* Sunday, the last Sunday of the "church year." The next week, December 3<sup>rd</sup>, is the beginning of Advent. Looking back over the past year, we've followed our Christ (Messiah) through all his days on earth from:

- **The season of Advent**, preparing for Jesus' birth,
- **Christmas**, his humble birth in a stable, celebrated by outcast shepherds,
- **Epiphany**, the coming of the **Wise Men** (Magi), which actually happened two years after his birth but is celebrated twelve days after Christmas,
- **the season of Epiphany**—the "shining forth," or revelation, of God himself in human form,
- **the baptism of Jesus** (because of the secular calendar, there are many years when we celebrate *either* the Epiphany of our Lord *or* his baptism),
- **the Transfiguration** of our Lord on the mountain, when he was revealed in shining white garb with Moses and Elijah,
- **Ash Wednesday** (three days after Transfiguration), beginning the season of
- **Lent**, commemorated rather than celebrated for five weeks until
- **Palm Sunday**, when Jesus enters Jerusalem on a donkey as "King,"
- **Maundy Thursday**, when Jesus celebrated his Last Supper with his disciples and gave them the gift of the "Eucharist," ("thanksgiving,") and washed their feet,
- **Good Friday**, the day God himself was crucified, died, and was buried,
- **EASTER**, when the whole world celebrates and PROCLAIMS the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ (Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!),
- **the season of Easter**, seven weeks, which brings us to . . .

*(Continued on next page)*

#### SUNDAY WORSHIP

9:00am

Sunday School  
9:15am—10:00am  
(during the school year)

Holy Communion  
1st & 3rd Sunday

#### PASTOR

Gail Sowell  
Office Hours: 9am-1pm  
Tuesday-Friday  
*(And by appointment)*

#### SECRETARY'S HOURS

Monday-Friday  
9:00-1:00

#### ADDRESS

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Items for print **MUST** be submitted by the 20th of the preceding month.

- **Pentecost** (a Jewish festival celebrating the first fruits of their harvest); Pentecost is considered **the “birthday of the Church”** (which is the body of Christ!) as the disciples in Jerusalem begin to speak in foreign languages so that all visitors in Jerusalem can understand the good news of God in Jesus Christ,
- **Holy Trinity Sunday**, the first Sunday after Pentecost, when we celebrate One God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
- **the “long green season”** (green altar cloths) **of Pentecost**, which lasts until
- **Reformation** (celebrated on the Sunday closest to October 31<sup>st</sup>),
- which is followed by **All Saints Sunday**,
- and then **the final Sundays of the Season of Pentecost**. An interesting note: the date for Ash Wednesday is set by the secular calendar, depending on when Easter will be celebrated. If Easter is early, the season of Pentecost will be longer; there are appointed readings for up to 33 Sundays in the season, which ends with **Christ the King Sunday**, which is five weeks before Christmas!

It’s been a long journey since we celebrated the advent (coming) of Jesus. May these days of preparation for his birth *and* his return as Messiah and Lord bring you joy and hope!

**We've got alot of catchin' up to do !**



**The Potato/Buttermilk Pancake Brunch** on October 8 was a delicious SUCCESS! Many thanks to ALL who donated supplies, pies, time and energy in making it happen. Many thanks to Dan Rosien for these (and MANY more) photo captures of the event.



## Confirmation Sunday was October 29 on Reformation Sunday



103 were in attendance as our 5 confirmands affirmed their baptismal vows. We celebrated with a special cake & coffee hour after the service.

### Our Confirmands (from Left-Right)

Kaden Bargender, parents: Josh & Nicole, his chosen scripture verse: Joshua 1:9

*This is my command—be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.*

Carson Nowak, parents: James (Jolene) his chosen Scripture verse: Jeremiah 29:11

*For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.*

Madelyn Schilling, parents: Amanda Weiland & Joe Schilling. Her chosen scripture verse: Isaiah 1:10

*Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God, I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.*

Alexis Wiesman, parents: Troy & Shae, her chosen scripture verse: Joshua 1:9

*Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.*

Greenly Treankler, parents: Shannon & Niaomi, her chosen verse: Jude 1:2

*Mercy unto you, and peace and love be multiplied.*

*God bless you young people, as you continue to walk with Him.*



### November 5 was All Saints Sunday.

We lovingly honored our loved ones with candles placed on the Altar in their memory. (left)

Many thanks to Mark Bargender who is a great help to our Acolytes in training! (Right)

The Altar Guild cares for all the special items needed in the worship setting. (candles, altar cloths, banners, etc.)

**There is a need for an additional Altar guild member, and a coordinator.**



On **November 12th** we honored our Veterans during the service.

We also had a “Blessing of the Hunters” in view of the upcoming deer season.

The Sunday School, under the direction of Marianne Mueller, blessed us ALL with a bell choir presentation of “He’s Got the Whole World in His Hands.”



Of course, we’re ALL looking forward to the **Sunday School Christmas program** which will be presented on **Sunday, December 17th** during the service.

They’ve already been practicing and want to encourage parents to make every effort to have their kiddos here for these last practices.

*There will be a special practice AFTER the service on Dec. 10th .*



**Cookies for Cause** (formerly *Cookie Walk and Bake Sale*) will follow the service on December 17th. The Women invite ALL to bake/bring and buy for a delightful assortment of holiday treats to enjoy in your home. **Help would also be appreciated with setting up and overseeing this much anticipated annual event!** *All proceeds this year will go to The Women’s Community*

# Elves Workshop

Sunday,  
November 26  
2023



Here's a peek into our Sunday School "ELVES WORKSHOP". They've been talking about the gift of Jesus, and decided they wanted to share their gifts with others! Way to go Sunday School Students!



# Advent Anticipation . . .



The Advent Windows are looking FABULOUS!  
Many thanks to those of you who have shared  
your Christmas joy in this way!

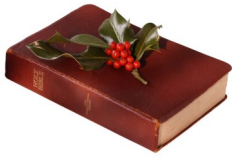


During our Advent Worship we have a special song we'll be singing each week. We are blessed to have Paxton Mueller (clarinet) and Paige Strasser (flute) leading us. Thanks for sharing your talents!

*Thanks to Dan Rosien for these photo captures*

**OPERATION CHRISTMAS GIFTS must be in by December 10th.**  
Thanks for your generosity. And thanks to those who researched the needs and wishes in our community that we are able to help come true! *Blessed to be a blessing*





**LADIES you are invited!** to a Special Christmas Tea that begins at NOON at St. Stephen on Tuesday, December 12th. Please bring a dish to pass if you're able. BIBLE STUDY begins around 1pm (after lunch).

## Christmas JOY !

The **Christmas Eve** services will be at  
4:30pm—Candlelight Worship  
at St. John

6:30pm—Musical Prelude  
7:00pm—Candlelight Worship  
At St. Stephen



**Christmas Day COMBINED Worship** will be at  
10:00 at St. John.



### Reflections from Rose



Advent Candles, Christmas lights...they all remind me that Jesus is the Light of the world. Sometimes things here can seem so dark. It's then we can let the psalmist remind us;

*If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light about me be night," even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is bright as the day, for darkness is as light with you. (Psalms 139: 11-12).* The God who loves us is a God whose light is never obscured by the darkest night. Whenever our eyes are unable to see, God sees with undimmed clarity. Light a candle, go out and enjoy the Christmas lights some night, and live in the truth of God's unextinguishable light! Have a BRIGHT and merry Christmas!



A NEW YEAR is right around the corner.  
The **Annual Meeting** is on January 28th .

**Annual Reports** from Ministry leaders will be  
**due** to the secretary on **January 15th.**

Blessed CHRISTmas  
JOY to ALL !



**FYI**—St. John Lutheran Church, ELCA is part of WAOW's automated CLOSINGS and DE-LAYS information network. If there is a need to cancel worship services due to weather, keep your eyes on **channel 9** to receive confirmation of cancellation.



**The 2024 COUNCIL will be installed January 7th, 2024.**

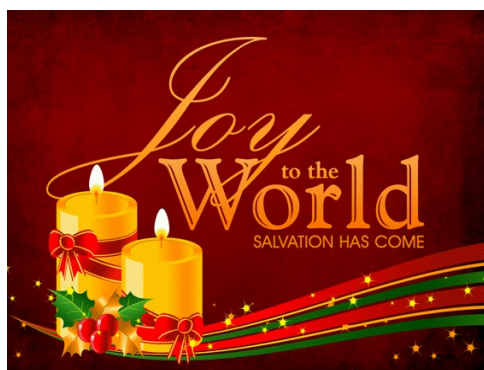


## **GOOD NEWS**

St. John Lutheran Church ELCA  
120500 County Road N  
Edgar, WI 54426

We're on the Web  
[www.stjohnelcaedgar.org](http://www.stjohnelcaedgar.org)

## **December 2023**



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### **Deadline for Jan./Feb. 2024 News**



### **January 7th**

Joint Mission Statement of St. John/St. Stephen Lutheran Parish, ELCA:

*"Saints united to be the body of Christ in the world, freed by grace  
to live faithfully, witness boldly, and serve joyfully."*