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Newsletter information may be submitted typed or emailed to office@sjlmidland.org by the due date on the calendar in the newsletter. Submissions may be edited.

Worship Times

Sunday at 8 & 10:45 am
Bible Study and Sunday
School at 9:30 am

Saturday at 5 pm

Live Stream:
[facebook.com/sjlmidland](https://www.facebook.com/sjlmidland)

St. John's Worship
Services on MCTV
Monday at 5:30 pm
Tuesday at 10 am
Channel 191

Church Phone:
(989) 835-5861

www.sjlmidland.org

The Theology of Lament

This year our Lenten midweek services will follow a series of penitential psalms, and we will have a chance to hear from some of the other pastors in our circuit as we once again participate in a "pulpit exchange" for these services. This series of sermons gives me the opportunity to comment on an aspect of theology that is mostly overlooked, if not completely ignored, and yet is very Biblical and can be vital to our spiritual survival. I am talking about the theology of lament.

Let me introduce the idea by taking a step back and sketching the typical landscape of our Christian thought: We are loved by God and claimed in Baptism. He has washed our sins away, and because of Jesus' promise we know we look forward to an eternity in His kingdom. We are called to discipleship and sent as His missionaries, knowing that He has a plan for our lives—a good plan to prosper us and not to harm us. We therefore rejoice in our fellowship together and value our community of worship, service, and friendship. This is all good.

But what do you do when something goes horribly wrong? What do you do when you face the injustice of being wronged or harmed? What happens when you have to deal with the emotional wound of a catastrophe that seems contrary to your expectations of God? What do you do when you are completely brought low and devastated?

Let's run through some of the real-life examples. Picture yourself as a person who has: Faced the death of a child. Been assaulted, physically or sexually. Seen their marriage come to an end. Been betrayed by someone in a fundamental way. Been shamed by the disgrace of someone close. Been wiped out financially. Experienced a life changing health diagnosis.

Wow, that's some heavy stuff. Some of you, I know, don't have to imagine one or more of these scenarios, because you can remember them very vividly. What do you do as a Christian, as a believer in Jesus, when it is NOT FAIR? What do you do with that voice on the inside that wants to say, "God, how could you do this to me?"

This is the realm of lament. There are things for which we do not have the answer, and sometimes those unanswered questions are at the center of our life and identity. When we see someone brought low by calamity, it is time for some basic, spiritual first-aid, and when we ourselves face these events that wound us on a fundamental level, it is time for lament.

Quite simply, lament means bringing our complaint to God. It might be the grief of our own failure, it might be the wound of human injustice, or it might be an act of God that has changed our life. Whatever the case, we should bring this lament to God, including the emotion that goes with it. It is false to think we need to protect God from our anger in these moments, and it is misguided to think that He will be angry with us or send us away for bringing our complaint to Him. The testimony of scripture is just too overwhelming. God wants us to not only include him in our sorrow, but He wants to be the primary source to which we turn for comfort. How, exactly, do you do this? I don't think there is a script. It can be written. It can be a prayer. It can be a song. It can be a scream or an ugly cry in a private place. The point is that we turn TO Him in our greatest need, rather than AWAY from Him.

(continued on page 2)

Our Mission Statement

"We are here to share the good news of salvation and make disciples of Jesus Christ, in accordance with the Scriptures (Matt. 28:18-20) and with the help of the Holy Spirit. This mission begins with our St. John's family and extends to the Midland Community and the world."



UPCOMING CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

- March 24 – Communications’ Meeting (2pm)
- May 19 – Voters’ Meeting (2pm)
- July 21 – Communications’ Meeting (2pm)

The Theology of Lament (cont’d)

As for the role of the Church when we see someone going through a trauma, the most supportive thing to do is not add to the burden with well-intended misconceptions. There can be a strong social pressure, for instance, to act happy and normal in a Church setting. We do certainly have reasons to be happy and to rejoice in God’s blessing, but Church, meaning not just the place but our relationship with one another, should not center on being HAPPY, but being HONEST. There is a time for everything. There is a time to rejoice, and there is a time to lament. Those who are in a season of lament have a right to bring a heavy heart to God in worship, and the best thing we can do is to see them and allow their emotional space without trying to change it or withdrawing from them. Remember Job’s friends sat in silence for seven days before they ever got to the words of his lament.

The point is that every day is not the same and the church is not a happy factory. We are in the time of cross bearing, and we are in a spiritual war. God gives encouragement and promises to be with us and give us all we need, but in the course of this journey we will fall, and we will be brought low. When this happens, we don’t turn away—from God or from each other—but instead we lift each other up and bear each other’s burdens. Perhaps this is summarized most succinctly in Romans 12:15, “Rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who weep.” We are in this together, and God is in our midst.

See you in Church,

-Pastor Kempin

SCRIP - FREE MONEY FOR OUR SCHOOL

What is a SCRIP Program? You can buy gift cards at their normal price that you would buy them at ANY store, and a small rebate would be given to our school. This rebate could be given to the school for the scholarship program, it can be designated for a student’s tuition, OR it could be designated for the STEM Program OR the Kitchen Upkeep account.



We have over 750 cards available through the SCRIP Program including Ace Hardware, Amazon, Applebee’s, Arby’s, Barnes & Nobles, Bath & Body Works, Bob Evans, Buffalo Wild Wings, Burger King, Cracker Barrel, Dairy Queen, Domino’s, Exxon/Mobile, Family Fare, Gordon Food Service, Home Depot, iTunes, Jo-Ann’s, Kohl’s, Kroger’s, Little Caesar’s, Lowe’s, Marathon, Marshall’s, Meijer, Menards, Michaels, Olive Garden, Panera, Papa John’s, Pi’s, Pizza Hut, Qdoba, Shell, Speedway, Staples, Starbucks, Subway, Supercuts, Taco Bell, Target, Tim Hortons, Ulta, Walgreens, Walmart / SAMS, Wendy’s and many others that can be ordered. We can also order American Express cards, Visa gift cards, and SCRIP Gift Cards.

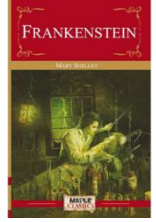
See the SCRIP display on the table in the lounge or call/text Cheryl Zastrow, St. John’s Scrip Coordinator, at 989-239-3919. SCRIP cards are sold on Thursday mornings during the school year 8:00a-10:00a. Also Sunday mornings following both church services on the 2nd & 4th Sundays, or by appointment.

OASIS BIBLE STUDY GROUP

The Oasis Bible study group (led by Karen Kempin) meets on Tuesdays at 10:30am. We will meet weekly for study, discussion, fellowship and fun in ROOM #3! **Hope to see you there!**

Book Club

St. John's Book Club meets on Monday, March 11. Join us from 6:30-8:00pm in Room 3 to discuss this month's selection, *Frankenstein* by Mary W Shelley. Check the Family Life bulletin board across from the Church Office for a complete list of meeting dates and books.



Easter Egg Hunt

We're EGGcited to invite you to SJL's Easter Egg Hunt happening on Saturday, March 30 at 10:00am. Bring a basket or bag and meet at St. John's main entrance. From there, volunteers will lead families to the outdoor hunting grounds. Areas will be set up for children ages 0-4, 5-7, and 8-10. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Check out our Sign Up Genius (physical sign up available in Lounge) if you'd like to volunteer. Donations of individually wrapped candy can be dropped off in Anna's office and are greatly appreciated!

SJL Youth

In February, sr. high youth continued their study of *Mere Christianity* by CS Lewis and enjoyed Guys' Day/Girls' Day events. Jr. high students competed in the 5th annual Bake Off & Board Games with their prayer mentors. Check out the photos below for a glimpse of the fun.

Students and their families look forward to hosting the annual Easter breakfast between the 7:00 and 9:00am services this month (Sunday, March 31). We hope you plan to join us!



Men's Softball Team

Play ball! Jon Steinke is putting together a team to participate in a semi-competitive slow pitch league through the Midland Softball Association. The league has a higher and lower division and is made up of teams of men from local churches. Season runs from May through July, sometimes pushing into early August. Practice will begin a couple weeks before the season opener and will continue while there is interest.

- Who: Men of St. John's, friends, and family
- Where: Red Coat fields off Poseyville Rd.
- When: Mondays at 6:30/7:45/9:00pm starting May 12
- Why: To fellowship with and minister to men and their families while enjoying God's creation!

Contact Jon at (989) 430-4817 or jonathansteinke@gmail.com to sign up!

SJL CHOIR

CALLING ALL SINGERS!

Become a member of the St. John's "Holy Week" Choir!

If you have a spirit of praise
and a song in your heart,
The St. John's "Holy Week" Choir
is looking for you.



**Rehearsals are on
Thursdays, March 7, 14, 21
From 7:00-8:30pm**

For more information contact
kkempin@sjlmidland.org

EASTER LILIES

Order your Easter lilies today!

Order forms are available outside the church
office on the table across from the bulletin boards.

Orders due by Friday, March 22, 2024.



Order form for Easter Sunday, March 31, 2024

- Single stem with multiple blooms are \$15.00
- Double stems with multiple blooms are \$29.00

**** Please order by Friday, March 22, 2024 ****

Return this order form with your payment to the church office
or call Lauren Dahlbeck at (989) 316-5711.

Name: _____ Phone: _____

No. of Single Lily plants _____ @ \$15 for total: _____

No. of Double Lily plants _____ @ \$29 for total: _____

In loving memory of (please print names): _____

Lilies may be taken home after Easter Sunday's second service or on
Monday, April 1st. All plants remaining on Tuesday will be delivered to
our shut-in brothers and sisters.



WOMEN OF ST. JOHN'S

For ladies of the congregation and especially new members, don't forget to join us at the March 11, 2024 meeting of Women of St. John's for a good discussion of upcoming events. Our topics will include the ongoing Lenten Soup Suppers, and will be making plans for the Confirmation Dinner for this year's class and their parents as well as the Graduate Breakfast for the 2023 grads and families. Our group of enthusiastic women serve with love and devotion in so many aspects of the church and enjoy warm fellowship while participating. For example, our outstanding Lenten Suppers, our delicious meals delivered to shut-ins and new mothers, our lovely church decorations, altar decorations and banners- and so much more, are facilitated by the Women of St. John's. We meet in Room 3 at 12:30 and hope to see you there.



LYDIA GUILD



*Join Us for Lydia Guild Meeting
March 25th @ 6:30 in Upper Lounge
Open Door Women & Children's Shelter
Director of Women & Childrens Open*

The Lydia Guild of St. John's would like to invite you to our March 25th meeting where our guest speaker, will be the Director of the Women & Childrens Open Door Facility. This facility serves homeless single women and homeless women with children in this home. The women and children served are from Midland County with services also provided to those in our neighboring counties of Isabella, Clare and Gladwin if space and circumstances permit. In 2022 after hearing about the increased shelter needs for women and children in our community, the Reece Endeavor approached the Open Door about their property at 1610 W. Carpenter Street and in January 2023, Midlands's Open Door signed a purchase agreement for the property with the intention of moving Open Door's women and children's shelter from its location that was in Homer Township to this current location and this was accomplished.

Please join us as we learn how this ministry is committed to meeting people in their moment of need and transitioning them from a point of crisis to a time of Hope through proclamation of the Gospel and by meeting the basic needs through the practice of biblical hospitality and what we can do to help.



Lydia Guild offers our women opportunities for service, fellowship, education and devotional Bible study, with a variety of speakers and activities throughout the year. At this meeting we will also be taking nominations of the 2024-2025 officers (V.P. and Treasurer in even years) and Program Chairpersons. Our hostesses for the evening will be Megan White and Joyce Battjes and devotions will be given by a member yet to be determined. We hope to see you there. Joyce Battjes (989-430-7166 or jbattjes@sbcglobal.net) or Janet Thompson (989-859-8524 or jkthom5303@hotmail.com).



How Sugar Savvy Are You?

Where Sugar Likes to Hide

It's a good idea to keep an eye on the amount of sugar in your diet. Natural sugar, the kind found in apples or potatoes, is better for you than added sugar, which is in soft drinks and baked goods. For most women, the American Heart Association recommends no more than 6 teaspoons (25 grams) of added sugar a day, and no more than 9 teaspoons for most men. Food labels list the amount of total sugar, but check the ingredients to see if sugar was added. (Look for words like "fructose," "sucrose," or "corn sweetener.") Below are a series of food pair challenges. See if you can choose the one with the most sugar.

Soft Drink or Bottled Apple Juice?

Bottled Apple Juice. There are 42 grams of sugar in a 12-ounce serving, compared with 39 grams for a typical soft drink. But the sugar in a soft drink is added -- not from a natural source like apples. If you crave that apple, it's alright once in a while. Or better yet, eat an apple. A medium-sized apple has lots of fiber and nutrients and 18 grams of natural sugar.



Dried Cranberries or Gummy Bears?

Dried Cranberries have 60 grams of sugar per half cup. Surprise! This dried fruit has 50% more sugar than the same amount of gummy bears. But before you make gummies your new go-to snack, please take note that cranberries and other dried fruit pack far more nutritional value and fiber into each bite.

Cream-Filled Doughnut or a Mocha Frappuccino?

Mocha Frappuccino has 61 grams of sugar per 16 oz. If you really have to decide, this has more than 3 times the sugar than does an indulgent, chocolate-covered cream-filled doughnut. Instead, have a plain cup of coffee and a square or two of dark chocolate -- you'll get your caffeine fix and satisfy your sweet tooth without too much sugar or too many calories.



Raisin Bran or Blueberry Waffle?

Raisin Bran has 18 grams of sugar per half cup. Compare that to the 3 grams of sugar in a blueberry waffle or 15 grams with a tablespoon of maple syrup added. But keep in mind that some of the sugar in the cereal comes from naturally sweet raisins.

Canned Peaches or Chocolate Chip Cookies?

Canned Peaches in a single serving (in light syrup) has about 16 grams of sugar, compared with about 11 grams in 3 chocolate chip cookies. But fruit is good for you with more nutrients. Try eating fresh fruit if you want to keep your sugar intake to a minimum.



Instant Oatmeal with Apples and Cinnamon or 3-4 inch Pancakes

Instant Oatmeal has more than double the amount of sugar; however it does have more fiber. Three 4-inch pancakes have just 5 grams of sugar. Of course, that's before you pour syrup on your pancakes -- a tablespoon of syrup adds another 12 grams of sugar.

Beverages such as soft drinks and fruit drinks are a major source of added sugar in the typical U.S. diet. Surprisingly, a candy bar can have the same amount of sugar as a granola bar. Be conscious of added sugar in your foods that contributes calories but no essential nutrients to your diet. You may be surprised when you start to look at labels. Look for food labels that have 5 grams or less of sugar per serving.



For more information: <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/wellness-and-prevention/finding-the-hidden-sugar-in-the-foods-you-eat>
<https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/18-surprising-foods-high-in-sugar#9.-Flavored-coffees>

MARCH 2024 – St. John’s Lutheran Church & School, 505 E. Carpenter, Midland (989-835-5861)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
3 8-Worship (c) 9:30-Bible Study 9:30-Sunday Sch 10:45-Joyful Praise (c) 6-Sr Youth Group	4 5:30-Worship on MCTV (Ch. 191) 6-Who We Are 6:30-Board of Ops	5 8:30-Joyful Praise Rehearsal 10-Worship on MCTV (Ch. 191) 10:30-Oasis Bible Study 12-Prayer Warriors 6-Handbell Practice 7-Board of Ed	6 9-Quilters 10-Lifelight 12-Archives 12:15-Worship 3-Girls Sm. Group 5-Lenten Supper 7-Worship	7 8-SCRIP sales 4:30-Joyful Praise Band Rehearsal 5:30-Joyful Praise Choir Rehearsal 5:30-Confirmation	1/8	2(c)/9 8-Mens Bible Study 9-Visit with Pastor, Communion 10-Joyful Praise Rehearsal 5-Worship
8 & 9 – Men’s Retreat						
10 8-Worship 9-SCRIP sales 9:30-Bible Study 9:30-Sunday Sch 10:45-Joyful Praise 11:45-SCRIP sales 6-Sr Youth Group	11 12:30-WSJ 5:30-Worship on MCTV (Ch. 191) 6:15-PTS Meeting 6:30-Book Club	12 8:30-JP Rehearsal 10-Worship on MCTV (Ch. 191) 10:30-Oasis Bible Study 12-Prayer Warriors 6-Handbell Practice 6:30-Crafting for Christ 7-Board of Elders	13 9-Quilters 9-Backpack Buddies 10-Lifelight 12-Archives 12:15-Worship 3-Girls Sm. Group 5-Lenten Supper 7-Worship	14 8-SCRIP sales 10-Washington Woods service 1:30-King’s Daughters service 4:30-Joyful Praise Band Rehearsal 5:30-Joyful Praise Choir Rehearsal 5:30-Confirmation	15 5-Math Madness	16 8-Mens Bible Study 9-Visit with Pastor, Communion 10-Joyful Praise Rehearsal 5-Worship (c)
17 St. Patrick’s Day 8-Worship (c) 9:30-Bible Study 9:30-Sunday Sch 10:45-Joyful Praise (c) 6-Sr Youth Group	18 5:30-Worship on MCTV (Ch. 191)	19 8:30-JP Rehearsal 10-Worship on MCTV (Ch. 191) 10:30-Oasis Bible Study 12-Prayer Warriors 6-Handbell Practice 6:30-Leadership Team	20 9-Quilters 10-Lifelight 10:15-Medilodge 12-Archives 12:15-Worship 3-Girls Sm. Group 5-Lenten Supper 7-Worship	21 8-SCRIP sales 1-Newsletter Assy 4:30-Joyful Praise Band Rehearsal 5:30-Joyful Praise Choir Rehearsal 5:30-Confirmation	22	23 8-Mens Bible Study 9-Visit with Pastor, Communion 10-Joyful Praise Rehearsal 5-Worship
24 PALM SUNDAY 8-Worship 9-SCRIP sales 9:30-Bible Study 9:30-Sunday Sch 10:45-Joyful Praise 11:45-SCRIP sales 6-Sr Youth Group	25 5:30-Worship on MCTV (Ch. 191) 6:30-Lydia Guild	26 10-Worship on MCTV (Ch. 191) 10:30-Oasis Bible Study 12-Prayer Warriors 6-Handbell Practice 6:30-Women’s Gaming 7-Missions Board	27 9-Quilters 9-Backpack Buddies 10:30-Oasis Bible Study 1:30-StoryPoint	28 MAUNDY THURSDAY 12:15-Worship 1:30-Brittany Manor Service 3-Riverside Bible Study 7-Worship	29 GOOD FRIDAY Office & School CLOSED 12:15-Worship 7-Worship	30 10-Easter Egg Hunt 10-Joyful Praise Rehearsal

SPRING BREAK

31 EASTER 7-Worship 8-Easter Breakfast 9-Worship 11-Joyful Praise
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**Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God,
God abides in him, and he in God.**
(1 John 4:15)





St. John's Lutheran Church
505 E. Carpenter St.
Midland, MI 48640

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