

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

Contact Us

Rev. Dan Kempin
Senior Pastor (ext. 1201)
dkempin@sjlmidland.org

Rev. Josh Parsons
Associate Pastor (ext. 1202)
jparsons@sjlmidland.org

Kris Zastrow
Business Manager (ext. 1206)
kzastrow@sjlmidland.org

Jeff Sopcak
Admin Assistant (ext. 1203)
jsopcak@sjlmidland.org

Brad Massey
School Principal (ext. 1300)
bmassey@sjlmidland.org

Sarah Graham
School Secretary (ext. 1301)
sgraham@sjlmidland.org

Anna Kruger
Dir. of Family Life (ext. 1204)
akruger@sjlmidland.org

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

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

“A Fruit Basket for Christmas”

By the time you read this, we will be past “black friday” and into the Christmas season. I’m sure by now you will have seen Christmas decorations in stores, and begun to hear Christmas music emanating from everywhere. You might have even treated yourself to a peppermint mocha--it IS the most wonderful time of the year, after all.

And with the cheer comes the stress (for some at least) of completing the shopping. Did I leave anyone out? Did I get an appropriate gift? Perhaps in some cases you are looking for that perfect gift that will really “wow” someone, just like on the commercials, or looking to find that clever gift idea that no one else has thought of yet.

Well, I have an idea for you. Why not think of giving a fruit basket this year?

No, I’m not pitching a youth fund raiser. I am talking about Galatians 5, where the scripture says that the FRUITS of the spirit are: *Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, and Self Control.*

Bear with me here: What if this year, in the midst of the season, we focused on BEING the gift that God has in mind for us to be? What if we didn’t wait until Christmas morning, but in the midst of the shopping, shoveling, hosting, cooking, and sweater-wearing-small-talk, we resolve to do so with patience and kindness, with love and self control? What if the gift we are prepared to bring to any party or situation is a readiness to contribute to an atmosphere of peace and joy?

I think that would be pretty cool, and probably a lot closer to the “Christmas Spirit” than gifts and decorations. It is really and truly a gift that people will love to receive, and unlike the latest technology, it will not go out of date.

But don’t wait! This is one gift that you can give early, give generously, and give with confidence that it comes from a list that ranks even higher than “Santa’s,” for this gift list comes from the Bible.

See you in Church, and Merry Christmas!

-Pastor Kempin

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

- New dates have not been set yet.

ADVENT

Welcome to this year's Advent Suppers

Once again, some of St. John's Ministry teams will serve a hearty meal before the mid-week Advent Services. Beginning on Wednesday, Dec.4, 2024, let them prepare a meal for you and your family as you prepare your heart for the true meaning of Christmas. The schedule for 2024 features 3 meals as follows:

Dec. 4, 2024: The Men's Ministry will host the first meal and use the proceeds for their men's ministry projects. The menu: to be determined.

Dec. 11, 2024: Taco/nacho Bar and side dishes served by the Youth Teams for the benefit of their summer Youth Trip.

Dec. 18, 2024: Kid friendly menu includes hotdogs, macaroni and cheese, turkey noodle soup, veggie and pickle trays, Jello salads and desserts. Proceeds from the meal will be donated to our St. Louis Seminary Student, Nathan Bublitz. Please check this newsletter issue to see the most recent letter from Nathan and hear his good news.

CHRISTMAS FUNDRAISER



Christmas Wreath and Christmas Centerpiece Sale



Decorate your home for Christmas by stopping by our Annual Christmas Wreath and Centerpiece Sale.

We will be selling wreaths, centerpieces, and porch pots.

Vouchers are available for purchase after both Sunday church services in the lounge on November 3, 10, 17, 24, December 1, 8, and 15 2024 and at St. John's Holiday Bazaar on November 9, 2024 from 9:00-3:00 in the gym and via the website.

Purchases support the 7th and 8th grade fundraising efforts for the 8th grade dinner and class trips!!

Thank you for your support!!

St. John's Lutheran School

The Students of St. John's Lutheran School will present

Christmas Messiah

by

G. F. Handel

Wednesday, December 18, 2024

12:15 pm & 7:00 pm

St. John's Lutheran Church sanctuary

WOMEN OF ST. JOHN'S

News from Our Seminary Student

The Women of St. John's have been sending financial support to Nathan Bublitz who is studying to become a LCMS pastor at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis. He earned his undergraduate degree at Central Michigan University and hails from mid-Michigan. Here is an excerpt from his recent letter to us:

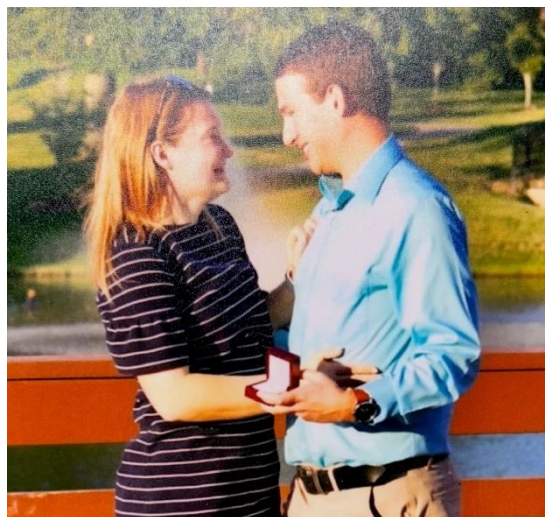
Greetings and Happy Fall from Concordia Seminary! As the weather starts to turn cooler and the leaves begin to change, I am reminded to give thanks for you and the countless blessings you have showered upon me. I am encouraged each and every day knowing that you and others like you are dedicated to Lutheran education and the future of our church in more ways than one. Thank you!

I have some exciting updates to share with you since I last wrote. I got engaged over the summer!!! Her name is Rachel and we met through a mutual friend this past winter. She teaches 4th grade at a nearby Lutheran school and is an all-around amazing gift of God to me! I could not be happier or more blessed! Each night we do a short devotion over the phone, saying a Psalm and then praying for each other and those around us. I ask for your prayers for both of us that our future marriage be grounded in the love that Jesus Christ has shown to each of us and that His Word be the foundation of our lifelong union. The big day is June 14th, 2025 in St. Louis. I included a picture of us from the day we got engaged (July 18th). I hope you enjoy it!

In addition to the excitement of getting engaged and looking forward to the future with my bride-to-be, I also have been devoting a significant amount of time to my practical formation at my field work congregation. I am still at Trinity Lutheran in Millstadt, IL and loving every minute of it! As a second-year seminarian I feel I know the congregation a lot better and am getting comfortable preaching and teaching. I have preached three times over the summer and fall (including once in front of the District President of the Southern Illinois District!) and I am in the middle of teaching an adult Bible study on the book of James. Furthermore, I have been visiting two shut-ins twice a month. I have loved getting involved at Trinity and sharing the love of God for His people to them in various ways.

I hope you are doing well, and I wish you all God's blessings throughout this fall.

In Christ, Nathan Bublitz



Please pray for Nathan and Rachel in their future life together and in their work of teaching God's Word. Also, please join us for an Advent Supper on Wednesday, Dec. 18, 2024 before the Advent Children's Program. Proceeds from the meal will be donated to Nathan's education. If you'd like to send him a note at school, his address is: **Nathan Bublitz, 801 Seminary Place, St. Louis, MO 63105.**



MUSIC OPPORTUNITY!

Calling Singers, High School Students and Adults!!! Please join us on Thursday evening, December 19th, at 7:00pm for a choir rehearsal! We will be singing at the 7pm service on Christmas Eve. You read that correctly—ONE easy rehearsal, then READY TO SING! This is a joyful group and we have a lot of fun together in fellowship and in song! This choir is led by Karen Kempin. If you are interested in participating, contact Karen at kkempin@sjlmidland.org.

Book Club

Book Club will not meet in December. Look forward to seeing all our readers back on Monday, January 13! Check the Youth & Family Life bulletin board (across from Church Office) for a complete list of meeting dates and book selections.

SJL Youth

Some exciting things are scheduled for sr. highers this month. Read all about it below!

- Sunday, December 8- NYG Youth Night
- Wednesday, December 11- Youth Soup Supper
- Sunday, December 15- Progressive Dinner & Gift Exchange
Meet at church at 5:00pm to carpool from place to place for each course of a four-course meal hosted by youth families, reflecting on an advent devotion at each stop! End the evening with a white elephant gift exchange at Anna's
- Sunday, December 22- NO Sunday School or Sr. High Youth Night
- Sunday, December 29- NO Sunday School or Sr. High Youth Night



Confirmation Prayer Mentor Service Project

Calling all confirmation students and prayer mentors! Our next event is happening Sunday, December 8. Meet in the Lounge following the 10:45am worship service to serve together by making Christmas “Share a Smile” kits for distribution to our community.

Reverse Advent Calendar

We hope you'll participate once again in a fun St. John's Christmas tradition: the Reverse Advent Calendar! Here's how it works...

1. Pick up a wrapped box or bag and Advent devotional at St. John's
2. Set aside time as a family to read and discuss the daily devotion together
3. Add a nonperishable food item to your box/bag
4. Bring your filled box/bag back on Christmas Eve to be donated to the bonus section at The Bridge Food Center

Instead of opening a gift each day of Advent, give the gift of nutritious meals to families in our community for months to come! We pray this is a blessing to your family and our community this Christmas season.

MomCo Small Group

Our new MomCo small group is up and running! Leaders Alyssa Nett and Kayla Chartier invite other moms of young children to gather on second and fourth Sundays between worship services (9:30-10:30am) to grow in faith and friendship. Sunday School is available for children PreK+, and volunteers provide childcare for children 0-3. **The group will take one week off for Christmas break on Sunday, December 22.**

Variety Show

Save the date and plan to join us on Friday, February 7 for a Variety Show to benefit the HVAC project. Dinner provided by the Women of St. John's ahead of 7:00pm showtime. More details to come!



ROLL BAKE

Place Your Orders for Christmas Holiday Rolls Now!

Let the Women of St. John's help you with your holiday baking this year. They are resuming their holiday roll bake on Sat., Dec. 14th with scrumptious Pecan Rolls, Cinnamon Rolls (frosted or unfrosted-your choice!), yeast dough dinner rolls and our famous Tea Rings. All you need to do is pick them up and enjoy them with your family or perhaps give as gifts to someone else.

*As in the past, these items all **MUST BE PREORDERED** by using the forms located at the back of the Upper Lounge. Please return the order forms by Thursday, Dec. 12th at the latest to the lounge or to the Women of St. John's mail drawer in the church office. You may also email your order to June Eastman at eastmidland@charter.net. Rolls may be picked up on Saturday, Dec. 14th from noon until 2pm or after church on Sunday, Dec. 15. The proceeds from this Holiday Roll Bake will benefit various mission projects that the Women of St. John's support.*

Costs are as follows and may be paid at the time of pick-up:

<i>Tea Rings (serves 10-12)</i>	<i>\$15.00</i>
<i>Pecan Rolls (serves 7-8)</i>	<i>\$14.00</i>
<i>Cinnamon Rolls (serves 7-8)</i>	<i>\$12.00</i>
<i>Frosted or plain</i>	
<i>Dinner rolls (approx. 1.5 doz.)</i>	<i>\$10.00</i>

Be sure to order plenty as they make wonderful gifts and are delicious to have any time throughout the Christmas season. Also, they freeze well if you'd like to wait before serving them. If you have questions, please contact June Eastman at 989-385-2058, Cheryl Zastrow at 989-239-3919 or Brigitte Glaser at 989-832-4417.



ADVENT AT ST. JOHN'S

- **Wednesday, December 4 & 11:** Advent services at 12:15 and 7:00 pm
- **Wednesday, December 18:** the students of SJL Day school will present the music of "Handel's Messiah" at both 12:15 & 7:00 pm
- *NOTE: only the 7:00 pm services will be live streamed during Advent*
- **Saturday, December 7:** the SJL Preschool students will present a celebration of Christmas at 3:00 pm in the sanctuary
- **"Advent Donation Boxes"** will be available for pickup at church beginning on Sunday, Dec. 1; add one non-perishable food item for each day in Advent and return to SJL between Dec. 22 & 25 for donation to The Bridge Food Center
- **Advent Suppers** will take place in the lounge on all 3 Wed. from 5 to 6:30 pm:
 - Dec. 4 is being hosted by SJL Men's Group
 - Dec. 11 is being hosted by SJL Youth and features a taco bar with all the fixings and delicious desserts
 - Dec. 18 is being hosted by the Women of St. John's and includes hot dogs, mac n cheese, turkey noodle soup, jello salads, & desserts

CHRISTMAS WORSHIP AT ST. JOHN'S



CHRISTMAS EVE on Tuesday, December 24:

- 5:00 pm service features the Joyful Praise Band
- 7:00 pm service has blended musical selections
- 11:00 pm service features traditional hymnal music
- *NOTE: only the 7:00 pm services will be live streamed on Christmas Eve*
- All services will include congregational Candle-lighting during the hymn "Silent Night"

CHRISTMAS DAY on Wednesday, December 25:

- 10:00 am traditional worship service

CHURCH VOLUNTEERS



Advent Blessings to you all!



As we prepare to celebrate the birth of our Savior, Jesus, we can't help but enjoy the beautiful decorations of the season. Once again, the many volunteers have transformed our church with the lovely reminders of why we use the items we do.

The evergreen trees symbolize the eternal life Jesus has won for us and are the background for the tiny white lights and remind us He is the Light of the World. Our trees are decorated with handcrafted ornaments lovingly created by men and women over more than 50 years. They feature embroidery, crocheting, counted cross stitch and tatted lace. The collection dates back to the late 1970's and has been added to since then.



The **Chrismons** (CHRIST + MONogram) on the small "pillow" ornaments are copies of symbols of Christianity from its earliest days. The white symbolizes the innocence, purity and perfection of our Savior and the gold represents the precious gifts brought by the Wisemen who traveled long distances to honor His birth. Our first Chrismons were stitched in the early 1980's and have been added to in recent years by more dedicated volunteers.

Our Nativity Tree Skirts tell the story foretold centuries before, of Jesus' birth and the visits by shepherds and Wisemen. The pattern also has historical significance for us, as it was donated by Haroldine Witto, wife of our first Assistant Pastor, called from seminary in 1963 and who returned in 2007 from his retirement to serve as Interim Pastor. She first used the pattern in 1973, and six different ladies created the lovely skirts you see today.



The wreaths hanging in the lounge feature themes of Bible Study, Missions, Prayer, Music, Nativity, and our German heritage. Look above the fireplace and appreciate the large banner made by members of the Banner Team, announcing the birth of the long-awaited Redeemer.

So, thank you again to the large team of decorators who spent their morning climbing ladders, hanging decorations, adding ornaments to our twelve trees, hanging eight wreaths, six garlands, three banners and, last but not least, cleaning up in preparation for the evening worship service. We enjoyed the morning's fellowship and home baked cookies and cider in between tasks.



Please call Brigitte Glaser (989 832 4417) or Jenny Butler (989 274-9154) if you'd like to help with Take Down after Epiphany. Cookies will be available then as well!

Pneumonia and Pertussis (Whooping Cough) Can Be Life-threatening

Pneumonia and pertussis are becoming prevalent, according to the Midland County Department of Public Health. A person needs to be aware of their symptoms so treatment can be provided before it becomes a life-threatening situation from complications. In Michigan there has been a four-fold increase in the diagnosis of pneumonia in children and adolescents ages 5-19 years old from August through October this year, compared to the same time period in 2023.

Pneumonia is an infection that inflames the air sacs in one or both lungs. The air sacs fill with fluid or pus, causing cough with phlegm, fever, chills, and difficulty breathing. A variety of organisms can cause pneumonia, including bacteria, viruses, or fungi. The symptoms vary depending on the type of germ causing the infection. A common cold can progress into "walking pneumonia," because it rarely requires hospitalization. However, more severe cases of pneumonia can occur.



Pertussis (whooping cough) is also increasing in Michigan. To give an example, On October 22, 2024, there were 723 confirmed cases reported, compared to 596 cases last year. A total of 75% of the pertussis cases have occurred in those under the age of 18.

Early symptoms of pertussis can look like a common cold. Whooping cough is known for the "whoop" noise when someone gasps for air after a coughing fit. These coughing fits usually last from one to six weeks. The cough generally gets worse and becomes more common as the illness continues.



Babies and young children may not cough but may have difficulty breathing instead. They may have pauses in breathing (called apnea), which can cause cyanosis (turning blue) from not getting enough oxygen.

It's especially important to see a doctor quickly if you have any of these risk factors:

- ❖ Over 65 or younger than 2
- ❖ Have an underlying health condition, e.g., asthma, heart disease, or COPD.
- ❖ Have a weakened immune system, receiving chemotherapy, or on long-term steroids.
- ❖ You are a smoker



There may be complications, such as fluid accumulation (called pleural effusion) in the lungs. If the fluid becomes infected, you may need to have it drained through a chest tube. An abscess can also occur in the lung cavity, so if there is pain on your side or chest, see your doctor. Difficulty breathing can cause you to not get enough oxygen and the need to be hospitalized or use a breathing machine (ventilator) while your lung heals.

Another complication may include bacteria in the bloodstream (bacteremia). Bacteria from your lungs can spread through your blood to other organs, potentially causing organ failure.

You can protect yourself, along with your children from these respiratory illnesses by staying up to date on all the recommended vaccines, such as RSV, flu, DTap (young children 6 or younger), Tdap (over the age of 7 to adult) and Pneumococcal vaccine if you are eligible for your age.



If you have a cold or cough, be cautious, and consider wearing a mask in public where there are a lot of people around. Always cover your mouth when coughing, and wash your hands often to help limit the spread.

For more information:

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/pneumonia/symptoms-causes/syc-20354204>

<https://www.cdc.gov/pertussis/index.html> Whooping Cough Vaccination | Whooping Cough | CDC

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

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 8-Worship (c) 9:15-Prayer in Weller Chapel 9:30-Bible Study 10:45-Joyful Praise (c)	2 5:30-Worship on MCTV (Ch. 191) 6:30-Board of Ops	3 8:30-JP Rehearsal 10-Worship on MCTV (Ch. 191) 10:30-Oasis Bible Study 12-Prayer Warriors 6-Hand Bells 7-Board of Ed	4 9:30-Backpack Buddies 10-LifeLight 12:15-Advent Service 3-Girls Sm. Group 5-Soup Supper 5:30-Confirmation 7-Advent Service	5 5:30-Joyful Praise Rehearsal 6:15-PTS Meeting	6	7 8-Men’s Bible Study 9-Visit with Pastor, Communion 10-Joyful Praise Rehearsal 5-Worship
8 8-Worship 9:15-Prayer in Weller Chapel 9:30-Bible Study 9:30-MomCo Sm. Group 10:45-Joyful Praise 12-Conf. Prayer Mentor Service Proj 6-Sr. High YG	9 5:30-Worship on MCTV (Ch. 191)	10 8:30-JP Rehearsal 9-Winkel at SJL 10-Worship on MCTV (Ch. 191) 10:30-Oasis Bible Study 12-Prayer Warriors 7-Board of Elders	11 9:30-Backpack Buddies 10-Stratford Pines service 10-LifeLight 12:15-Advent Service 5-Soup Supper 5:30-Confirmation 7-Advent Service	12 5:30-Joyful Praise Rehearsal 7-Hand Bells	13	14 8-Men’s Bible Study 9-Visit with Pastor, Communion 10-Joyful Praise Rehearsal 5-Worship (c)
15 8-Worship (c) 9:15-Prayer in Weller Chapel 9:30-Bible Study 10:45-Joyful Praise (c) 6-Sr. High YG	16 12:30-WSJ 5:30-Worship on MCTV (Ch. 191) 6:30-Book Club	17 8:30-JP Rehearsal 10-Worship on MCTV (Ch. 191) 10:30-Oasis Bible Study 12-Prayer Warriors 6:30-Leadership Team	18 9:30-Backpack Buddies 10-LifeLight 10:30-Washington Woods service 12:15-Advent Service 1:30-Story Point 3-Girls Sm. Group 5-Soup Supper 5:30-Confirmation 7-Advent Service	19 9-Kitchen Cleaning Bee 1:30-King’s Daughters service 2:30-Brittany Manor service 5:30-Joyful Praise Rehearsal 7-Choir	20	21 8-Men’s Bible Study 9-Visit with Pastor, Communion 10-Joyful Praise Rehearsal 5-Worship
22 8-Worship 9:15-Prayer in Weller Chapel 9:30-Bible Study 9:30-MomCo Sm. Group 10:45-Joyful Praise	23 Newsletter Submissions Due 5:30-Worship on MCTV (Ch. 191)	24 Christmas Eve Church Office Closed 5-Worship* 7-Worship* 11-Worship* * Lighting of candles	25 Christmas Day Church Office Closed 10-Worship Service 11-Midland Comm. Christmas Dinner	26 3-Riverside service	27 1-Newsletter Assy	28 8-Men’s Bible Study 10-Joyful Praise Rehearsal 5-Worship (c)
			<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;"> Christmas Break No School </div>			
29 8-Worship (c) 9:15-Prayer in Weller Chapel 9:30-Bible Study 10:45-Joyful Praise (c)	30 5:30-Worship on MCTV (Ch. 191)	31 New Year’s Eve Church Office 5-Worship Service				
		<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;"> Christmas Break No School </div>	<p>And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us...</p> <p>- John 1:14</p>			

To view the calendar online: <https://sjlmidland.org/calendar>



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