

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](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

A Different Kind of "Christmas List"

When we think of "Christmas lists," we tend to think of presents and shopping and things to do. It is a part of the busyness that leads up to Christmas day--and I hope you have had a great season, by the way. But as this newsletter will most likely get to you during that time between Christmas day and the New Year, I'd like you to take a moment and consider.

Consider that while the rest of the world is busy taking down their decorations, this is technically the Christmas season. I used to resent the fact that the world moved on so quickly after December 25, but now I just enjoy it. For one thing, I understand why Christmas ends so abruptly for many--A month and a half of hectic bustling, shopping, entertaining, and spending is exhausting. But now that the bustle is over, this is a perfect time to reflect on the true meaning of Christmas. In fact, I'd like to give you a different kind of "Christmas list." This one is not for shopping or entertaining, but for prayer and reflection. Take this quiet time to consider and pray about the following, in no particular order:

1) Ponder that God became like you

That is really a mind-blowing concept. We are not like God. He is the Creator. He is righteous. He can do things that are simply beyond us. Yet He did not send word for us to become like Him. He sent His Son to become like us. Without ceasing to be like He is. God joined Himself to your humanity, and Christ joined Himself to you. Ponder that.

2) Pray for staff and leadership of St. John's

We have been richly blessed with godly staff members and lay leaders. Please ask God to watch over them and provide for all their needs. Please consider their families, their health and well-being, their joys and struggles, and pray that God will be present in their homes and in their work at St. John's.

3) Pray for the community of Midland

Remember the other churches of our circuit and in the community. Pray for our local leaders. Ask God to uphold the police officers and other emergency workers, and to work through them for the good of the community. Remember the poor, the hurting, the lost, and the vulnerable. Ask that God will not only open your eyes, but that He will make use of you.

4) Ponder that God has a plan for you

Really. The God of creation knows you. He has a plan for you. He has a plan for you today. Open your eyes and look for what He might do today. There are things that God prepared in advance for you to do. This is not your righteousness, it is His beautiful plan. It is not your personal goodness, it is your spiritual worship of the One who is truly good.

I won't give you one for each of the twelve days of Christmas, but you get the idea. Feel free to add your own items to this Christmas list. And then take advantage of this peaceful time to ponder and pray.

See you in church,

-Pastor K

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

- January 26 – Voters’ Meeting
- March 23 – Communications Meeting
- May 18 – Voters’ Meeting

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.

WOMEN OF ST. JOHN’S

New Year Blessings From the Women of St. John’s Group

Many thanks again for your generous support for the three Advent Suppers held this past year. It was especially heartwarming to have a record -breaking crowd for the Christmas Program Supper and we give a standing ovation to the school children and their outstanding leadership by Mr. Massey and the teachers. Well done! The turnout surpassed our estimate of attendees and for that we apologize again and will certainly prepare for that next year!

Like last year, the proceeds from the meal, more than \$700, will go to the educational costs of our seminary student Nathan Bublitz who is hard at work at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, MO. He sends his greetings to his friends here at St. John’s in his most recent letter, which can be found posted on the bulletin board outside the Office door. He’s very involved with his local church and enjoys spending free time with his fiancé, Rachel.

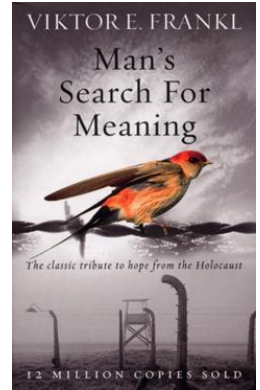
The next Women of St. John’s regular meeting will be on Monday, Jan. 6, 2025 at 12:30 in Room 2. The agenda includes recaps of the fall’s events, discussion of funds to be disbursed for 2025, the February Variety Show, and the Lenten Soup Suppers. All ladies of the congregation are invited and may call Brigitte Glaser (989 832 4417) if more information is needed.



2025 Contribution Statements Will be Available January 19, 2025, between and after services until the end of the month and from the office during regular hours of 9-2pm. until the end of April.

Book Club

St. John's Book Club meets on Monday, January 13. Join us from 6:30-8:00pm in Room 2 to discuss this month's selection, *Man's Search for Meaning* by Viktor Frankl. Check the Family Life bulletin board across from the Church Office for a complete list of meeting dates and books.



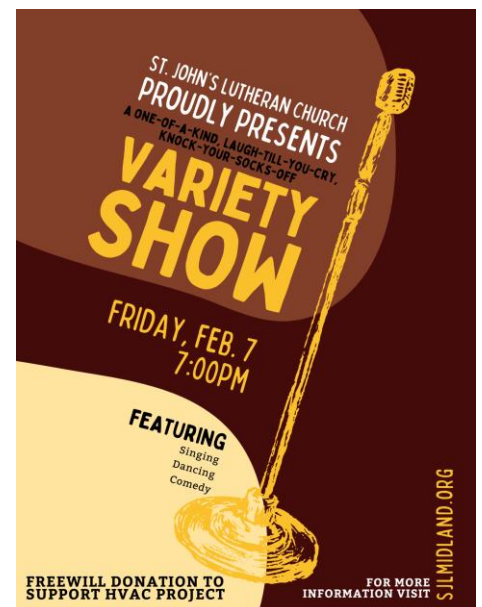
SJL Youth

- December Recap
 - SJL sr. highers enjoyed hosting a soup supper (\$537.00 raised for youth events/trips— thank you for your generosity!), hearing from guest speaker and former SJL Youth Josiah Burkhard about his experience in the Navy, and a festive Progressive Dinner this month. Check out the fun in the photos below!
- 2025 National Youth Gathering
 - A group of 15 students and 4 adult leaders from St. John's are registered for the 2025 National Youth Gathering in New Orleans, Louisiana happening July 19-23. Please join us in prayer over attendees and trip preparations.
 - Our next NYG Youth Night for participating students and leaders is Sunday, January 5 from 6:00-7:30pm in the BRICK



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!



Confirmation Prayer Mentor Service Project

Confirmation students and their prayer mentors enjoyed serving together last month. They worked together to make 100 Share-a-Smile kits that included chocolate drizzled pretzels, a homemade Christmas card, and ornament. Kits were taken by congregation members to be shared with neighbors, coworkers, shut-ins, friends—anyone who could use a reminder of the hope of the Gospel during the Christmas season.

Our next event is the sixth annual Bake Off & Board Games happening Sunday, February 2 following the 10:45am service in the Lounge.



LYDIA GUILD

LYDIA GUILD IS OPEN TO ALL LADIES AT ST. JOHN'S



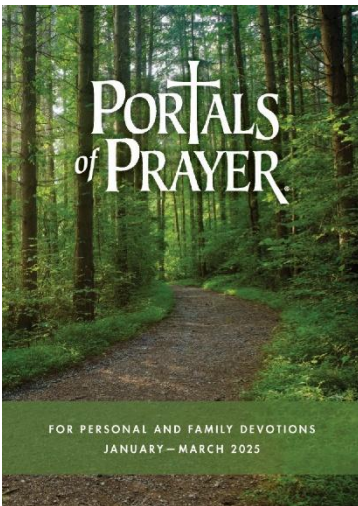
Our JANUARY 2025 MEETING for LYDIA GUILD is on Monday, January 27 at 6:30 pm in the lounge. Please join us as we hear from the St. John's Board of Education as well as the Parent Teacher Society. They will discuss their major responsibilities and programs, all designed to benefit the students of St. John's Lutheran School. Light refreshments will be provided.

ALTAR / PULPIT FLOWERS

- Alter/Pulpit flower charts are available on the bulletin board across from the Church Office.
- Price increases are:
 - **\$70 for Altar flowers (2)**
 - **\$35 for Pulpit flowers (1)**
- Sorry, no flowers during Advent.



PORTALS OF PRAYER



January – March 2025 Portals of Prayer are currently available and distributed throughout the Sanctuary along the hallway and entry shelves. Copies can also be picked up in the Church Office.

Loneliness Can Harm Your Health

The holidays are over, the company has left, and the house is empty. Loneliness may set in now that you are alone, although some people are happy on their own, and they can get back to their routines. Loneliness is not how many people you know or how often you see them. It is a feeling of not being connected to anyone.

Those who do tend to have strong relationships with people seem to be happier, healthier, and more productive. But those who don't have strong relationships with others may feel isolated, misunderstood, depressed, and lonely. It can take a physical and mental toll on your health. Here are some ways loneliness can affect you:

Depression. If you're lonely, you may start to feel bad about your life and get depressed. If you have symptoms that are severe or last more than two weeks -- including feeling down or hopeless, less interest in things you usually enjoy, low energy, sleep problems, or appetite changes, get help. Talk to your doctor or call a counselor.



Immune System. If you're lonely for a long time, it may make it harder for your body to fight sickness. Part of the reason for this may be that loneliness triggers some of the hormones your body makes when you're under stress, which slows how well your immune system works and how well your body defends itself.

Sleep and Mental Sharpness. You may have a hard time falling asleep. This will make it difficult to focus, solve problems, or remember things, and as you age sleep and mental sharpness are likely to be affected if you feel lonely.



Smoking, Drinking, or Drugs. You're more likely to light up a cigarette when you're lonely or stressed. Smoking is linked to diabetes, heart disease, and lung illnesses, and it affects nearly every organ in your body. You may be more likely to abuse drugs or alcohol if you're lonely. It may give you a false sense of feeling better, but it doesn't last and will backfire on you. Over time, it can seriously damage your body, family, work life, and relationships. If that's you, talk with your doctor about how to quit. Even if it takes more than one try to kick the habit, it's worth it!

Poor Heart Health. The lonelier you've been over your life, the more likely you are to have conditions that affect your heart health, like obesity, high blood pressure, and bad cholesterol levels.



Take Action. You can take steps to overcome loneliness. Look for ways to connect. Are you interested in chess, hiking, tennis, bridge, crafts, or books? Join a club, go to Senior Citizens activities and get to know others with the same interests. Make plans with friends and family to exercise or take a walk in the mall. Talk to them about how you feel, or if you find it hard to connect with people it may help to talk with a pastor or therapist.

Take Care of Yourself

Regular exercise, good sleep, and eating for wellness can boost your mood. Aim for at least 2.5 hours of activity per week. If you have health problems, check with your doctor first.



Find Some 'Me' Time. Everyone is different. You may need more time on your own to recharge, compared with someone who's more of an extrovert. That can be healthy and normal. It's only a problem if you feel too disconnected from other people. This can happen if you stay on your own too much.

For more information:

[Don't Let Loneliness Harm Your Health](https://www.webmd.com/mental-health/what-to-know-about-loneliness-during-the-holidays)

<https://www.webmd.com/mental-health/what-to-know-about-loneliness-during-the-holidays>

JANUARY 2025 – St. John’s Lutheran Church & School, 505 E. Carpenter, Midland (989-835-5861)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	<p>Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.</p> <p>- 2 Corinthians 5:17</p>		<p>1 New Year’s Day Church Office Closed</p>	<p>2 5:30-Joyful Praise Rehearsal</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>4 8-Men’s Bible Study 9-Visit with Pastor, Communion 10-Joyful Praise Rehearsal 5-Worship (c)</p>
<p>5 8-Worship (c) 9:15-Prayer in Weller Chapel 9:30-Bible Study & Sunday Sch. 10:45-Joyful Praise (c) 6-NYG Youth Night</p>	<p>6 5:30-Worship on MCTV (Ch. 191) 6:30-Board of Ops</p>	<p>7 8:30-Joyful Praise Rehearsal 10-Worship on MCTV (Ch. 191) 10:30-Oasis Bible Study 12-Prayer Warriors 7-Board of Ed.</p>	<p>8 9:30-Backpack Buddies 10-Stratford Pines service 10-LifeLight 3-Girls Sm. Group 5:30-Confirmation 6-Hand Bell Choir</p>	<p>9 5:30-Joyful Praise Rehearsal 5:30-Int’l Friends Dinner</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>11 8-Men’s Bible Study 9-Visit with Pastor, Communion 10-Joyful Praise Rehearsal 5-Worship</p>
<p>12 8-Worship 9:15-Prayer in Weller Chapel 9:30-Bible Study & Sunday Sch. 9:30-MomCo Sm. Group 10:45-Joyful Praise 6-Sr. High YG</p>	<p>13 12:30-WSJ 5:30-Worship on MCTV (Ch. 191) 6:30-Book Club</p>	<p>14 8:30-Joyful Praise Rehearsal 10-Worship on MCTV (Ch. 191) 10:30-Oasis Bible Study 12-Prayer Warriors 7-Board of Elders</p>	<p>15 9:30-Backpack Buddies 10-LifeLight 3-Girls Sm. Group 5:30-Confirmation 6-Hand Bell Choir</p>	<p>16 1:30-King’s Daughters service 5:30-Joyful Praise Rehearsal</p>	<p>17</p>	<p>18 8-Men’s Bible Study 9-Visit with Pastor, Communion 10-Joyful Praise Rehearsal 5-Worship (c)</p>
<p>19 8-Worship (c) 9:15-Prayer in Weller Chapel 9:30-Bible Study & Sunday Sch. 10:45-Joyful Praise (c) 2-Voters’ Mtg 6-Sr. High YG</p>	<p>20 Martin Luther King Jr. Day Newsletter Submissions Due 5:30-Worship on MCTV (Ch. 191)</p>	<p>21 8:30-Joyful Praise Rehearsal 10-Worship on MCTV (Ch. 191) 10:30-Oasis Bible Study 12-Prayer Warriors 6:30-Leadership Team</p>	<p>22 9:30-Backpack Buddies 10-LifeLight 10:30-Washington Woods service 1:30-Story Point 3-Girls Sm. Group 5:30-Confirmation 6-Hand Bell Choir</p>	<p>23 1-Newsletter Assy 1:30-Brittany Manor service 3-Riverside Bible Study 5:30-Joyful Praise Rehearsal</p>	<p>24</p>	<p>25 8-Men’s Bible Study 9-Visit with Pastor, Communion 10-Joyful Praise Rehearsal 5-Worship</p>
<p>26 8-Worship 9:15-Prayer in Weller Chapel 9:30-Bible Study & Sunday Sch. 9:30-MomCo Sm. Group 10:45-Joyful Praise 6-Sr. High YG</p>	<p>27 5:30-Worship on MCTV (Ch. 191) 6:30-Lydia Guild</p>	<p>28 8:30-Joyful Praise Rehearsal 10-Worship on MCTV (Ch. 191) 10:30-Oasis Bible Study 12-Prayer Warriors</p>	<p>29 9:30-Backpack Buddies 10-LifeLight 3-Girls Sm. Group 5:30-Confirmation 6-Hand Bell Choir</p>	<p>30 5:30-Joyful Praise Rehearsal</p>	<p>31</p>	

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



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

NON-PROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Midland, MI
Permit No. 137



January