

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

## Contact Us

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Newsletter information may be submitted typed or emailed to [office@sjlmidland.org](mailto: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](http://www.sjlmidland.org)

# FEBRUARY 2026 NEWSLETTER

## An Epiphany Reflection

The Christmas season is now past us, and we are on to a season that is not for broad cultural consumption, but a season that is reserved for believers. "Epiphany" is the time that follows Christmas, and it is a season to reflect on what it means. You might say that the celebration of Christmas is the gift, and the reflection of Epiphany is an unwrapping of the gift. The gift is Jesus, and the wonder of that gift will only grow as we learn to know Him, for surely whatever you do know of Jesus is still only scratching the surface.

Epiphany begins with the story of the Magi. They are truly surrounded in mystery. The scripture doesn't tell us specifically who they were, where they were from, or even how many there were. We don't know when they arrived, or how they knew of the star that portended the birth of Jesus. We don't even know for sure if they had camels!

What we do know is that God wanted them there. God wanted them to be among the first to worship His Son in human flesh. He wanted them there so much that He used some pretty extraordinary means. Who did God want there? Not just the mysterious Magi, but Gentiles! Folks who were not Jewish. People from the outside. Guys who photo bombed the story in a way that could never have been anticipated. God wanted everyone, High and Low, King and Shepherd, faithful Israelite and Gentile sinner, worshipping the Savior of the world.

And God wants YOU there, too.

Well, that is something He has already accomplished. You ARE here. Not in a place, but in a posture of worship. That is the gift of Christmas, that the Jesus who came into the world is now YOUR Lord! He has made you holy and brought you close, and your future is now bound up with His promise.

But consider also the Epiphany truth: God did not send the Magi so that they would know Jesus. Technically, they already knew He had come. God sent them to MAKE KNOWN the King of the Jews, who is the Savior of the Gentiles.

It is part of a larger pattern. He sent shepherds to the manger. He sent Gentile kings to notify Jerusalem. He sent John the Baptist. He sent apostles. He continues to send people to make known the heart and mind of God to lost and fallen people.

Think about it. Ponder it. Whom did God send to you? Was it your parents? A friend? A stranger? Was there a time in your life when you needed to hear something important from God, and amazingly, someone was there? It is almost as though they were sent.

And when you catch on to the pattern, it is time to start pondering the next question. Whose Magi are you? Who is the person for whose sake God is sending you? It's your turn. Give the ultimate gift, and make known the wonderful truth of God's amazing love.

See you in Church!

-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



- March 22 Voter's Communication Meeting @ 2pm
- May 17 Voter's Meeting @ 2pm
- July 26 Voter's Communication Meeting @ 2pm

## SCRIP - Free Money For Our School

What is a SCRIP? 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 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays, or by appointment.

## Archives

With all the cooking activity in our St. John's kitchen in the past month, I thought it would be interesting to feature some of our historic cookbooks and photos from our archive area. Please take a few moments to enjoy the new materials featured in the Archive Display Case at the entrance to the Lounge.

We've chosen 3 cookbooks used in the past as well as the current Women of St. John's Cookbooks, spanning the years 1972 until the present. The last cookbook is a collection of favorite recipes from the moms of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade class of 1991. You'll see that the book is open to a page showing a recipe from mom Jill Schmidt, whose daughter Katrina Schmidt Berg is now a teacher here at St. John's and her 4 children are all St. John's alumni!

Please check the photo of the bakers in the middle of the case. Do you recognize a beloved mom, aunt or sister? Maybe a relative will be participating in the Holiday Roll Bake this year on the second weekend of December.

The Archive Team is very happy to accept donations of interest to the many ministry activities here at St. John's and hope you'll think of us when you come across items depicting them. If you'd like to be part of the team, please contact Karen Schultz (989 859 6181) or Brigitte Glaser (989 832 4417). Meeting times are Wednesday afternoons from 12-3 in the Multi Purpose Room, but hours are flexible.



## Cambodia Mission Team

*For You have been a stronghold for the poor, a stronghold for the needy in distress, a shelter from the storm and a shade from the heat. Isaiah 25:4*

Praise God!

The Cambodia Mission Trip Team 2026 is pleased to announce that sufficient funds have been raised to support our trip to Stronghold Cambodia. We wish to thank both SJL and Zion Auburn congregations for all of the support and for joining us in this mission.

We ask for your continued prayers, that the Lord continues to bless the students, families, and missionaries at SHC. Please pray that the Lord allows our team to go and shine His light in Christ, and keep us safe and healthy while we serve.

In His Service,  
Cambodia Mission  
Team 2026 -  
Amy Browning  
Bruce Siebert  
Lilly Steelmon  
Chris Townley

Danielle Browning  
Josh Burkhard  
Julie List  
Molly Riker

## Bible Study Groups

*Oasis Bible Study* meets every **Tuesday mornings at 10:30am**, in Room 3. This is a time to pause, be refreshed by God's Word and enjoy fellowship with one another. All are welcome – bring your Bible and bring a friend.

*Wednesday Morning Bible Study at Grand Traverse Pie Company* meets at **8am every week**. Come join us for fellowship and breakfast as we study the book of Matthew. Currently embracing “rather than worry, trust in God's direction and follow it.” For questions, please see Mike & Deb Stark and Steve Kamin. All are welcome!

## Handbell Choir

The Joyful sound of bells ringing together is a beautiful way to praise the Lord and add richness to the worship services. Rehearsals will be held on **Wednesday evenings from 6:00-7:00pm**, in the sanctuary.

## General Announcements

### Message from Ann Tolly

I, Ann Tolly, would like to thank ALL my brothers and sisters in Christ who have blessed me on my 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. Each of you are indeed my family and our Lord has bonded us through our Savior, Jesus Christ. I shall never forget your kind, encouraging words and prayers for me. Truly, I am so very blessed and thank our gracious Lord for you making and taking time to help me celebrate my 90th. I am indeed a BLESSED WOMAN.

In Christ, Ann Tolly

### Prayer Team

Please send PRAYER REQUESTS to [prayers@sjlmidland.org](mailto:prayers@sjlmidland.org)



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

**WHAT IS LYDIA GUILD?** Lydia Guild is a women's organization designed to foster individual **spiritual growth**, provide **fellowship** with other women, to **serve** the church in allegiance with Jesus Christ, and to support the Lutheran Women in Mission organization (LWML) by providing opportunities to learn about and serve charitable groups.

**The February meeting of LYDIA GUILD is on Monday, February 23 at 6:30 pm in the lounge.** Our focus for this meeting will be on the non-profit

"Sleep in Heavenly Peace", a local group who provides beds for children in need. Brian Rueger, leader of the mid-Michigan chapter, will be the featured speaker. Light refreshments will be served.

## Lenten Worship



### LENTEN WORSHIP SERVICE SCHEDULE

**Ash Wednesday is February 18 and officially begins the 6 weeks of Lent** leading up to Holy Week and death and resurrection of our Savior Jesus Christ. St. John's will host Wednesday worship services on each of the 6 Wednesdays at both 12:15 pm and 7:00 pm, with the SJL School children attending the 12:15 service. Only the 7pm service will be live streamed on our Facebook page. Below is the schedule of sermon topics and rotation of pastors:

- February 18<sup>th</sup>:** Ash Wednesday, Pastor Kempin; includes imposition of ashes
- February 25<sup>th</sup>:** Gary Lavere, (Our Savior, Midland), "The Baptist and the Lamb"
- March 4<sup>th</sup>:** Rich Lewis (St. John's Marion Springs/ Brant), -"Jesus, the Good Shepherd."
- March 11<sup>th</sup>:** Andrew Menz (Zion Beaver), "The Enthroned Lamb."
- March 18<sup>th</sup>:** Chris Vossler (St. Paul Sanford), - "The Passover Lamb."
- March 25<sup>th</sup>:** Josh Parsons (St. John's), "The Sacrifice of Isaac."

**There will also be a Lenten Supper on each of the Wednesdays** hosted by various SJL groups, serving food from 5:00 to 6:30 pm with a free-will donation at each.

1. February 18 – hosted by Women of St. John's
2. February 25 – hosted by St. John's Senior Youth
3. March 4 – hosted by St. John's Men's Group
4. March 11 – hosted by St. John's Lydia Guild
5. March 18 – TBD
6. March 25 – TBD

### HOLY WEEK WORSHIP SCHEDULE

**Maundy Thursday, April 2 – services at 12:15 and 7:00 pm**

**Good Friday, April 3 – services at 12:15 and 7:00 pm**

**Easter Sunday – services at 7am, 9am, and 11am**

### Confirmation Prayer Mentor Bake Off & Board Games

Confirmation students and their prayer mentors will gather in the Lounge from **12:00-1:30pm on Sunday, February 1** for the (highly anticipated!) Bake Off & Board Games event.

Students and mentors will work in teams to make their favorite cake. While cakes are in the oven, they'll play classic board games, then taste the creations. The winning team will be awarded a golden whisk by a distinguished panel of judges!

### Chili Cook-Off: Friday, February 6



Two exciting trips are on the horizon for our SJL Youth! Eleven students will attend the triennial MI District Youth Gathering on Mackinac Island in June, and four will head to Asheville for the Appalachian Servant Event in July. We're hosting a chili cook-off to help get them there. Plan to join us on Friday, February 6 at 6:00pm for a cozy meal, friendly competition, and one great grand prize!

Interested in being a chili cook? Sign up in the Lounge OR by emailing Anna at [akruger@sjlmidland.org](mailto:akruger@sjlmidland.org).

This will be the main fundraiser for the trips. The goal is to raise \$5,000.00, roughly 50% of total costs. Opportunities to give beyond ticket price will be available at the event (and after for those unable to attend!) if you're interested in donating "above and beyond."

Save the date, plan to join us, and invite a friend!

### Call Process Update

We are excited to announce that Stephanie Davis has accepted the call to serve as Director of Young Family Ministry here at St. John's! Stephanie will work alongside Anna with a specific focus on ministry to children age 0- grade 5 and their families. Please join us in prayer over Stephanie as she moves to Midland and becomes part of our family of faith.

More details to come on an installation service and start date!

**SCHOOL**  
Open House  
St John's Lutheran School

February 7  
March 7  
10am-12 noon

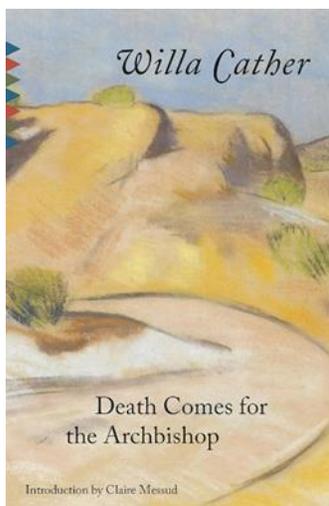
St John's Lutheran  
505 E. Carpenter  
Midland, MI 48640  
989.835.7041

Grades Pre 3 -8th  
Now taking  
applications for the  
2026-27 school year

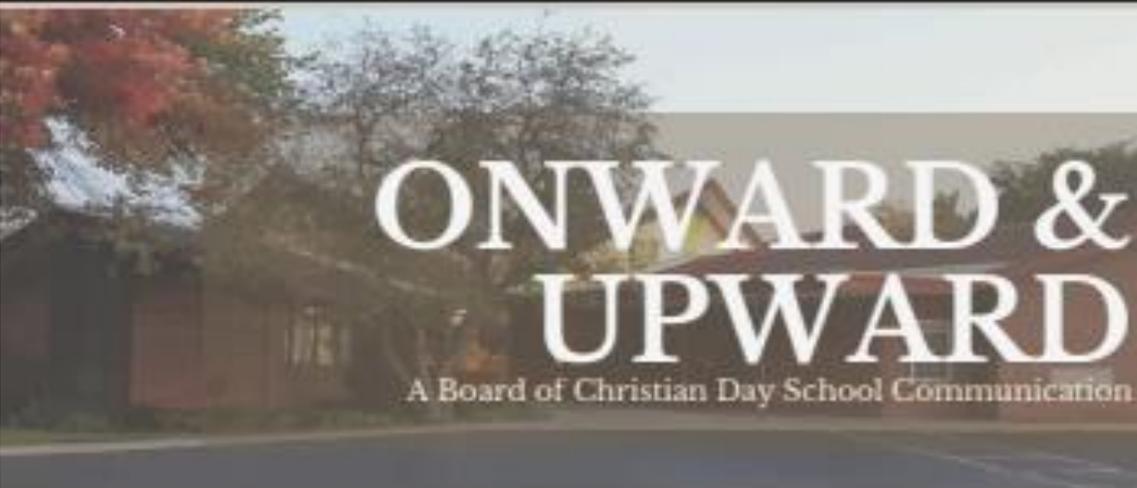
**Come explore our offerings!**

Pass along the news – The SJL Eagles WANT YOU! Come check out our excellent school, meet the staff, and see what being a SJL Eagle is all about!

Book Club



St. John's Book Club meets on Monday, February 9. Join us from 6:30-8:00pm in Room 2 to discuss this month's selection: *Death Comes for the Archbishop* by W. Cather. Check the Family Life bulletin board across from the Church Office for a complete list of meeting dates and books.



# ONWARD & UPWARD

A Board of Christian Day School Communication

Dear St. John's Parents & Families,

At St. John's Lutheran School, we are deeply grateful for the trust you place in us to partner with you in your child's education. We believe that strong relationships are built on clarity, honesty, and shared purpose. In that spirit, we want to provide transparent insight into the true cost of educating a child at St. John's, how tuition is structured, and how our church and school work together to make Christ-centered education accessible to families.

## EDUCATION COST AT ST. JOHN'S

The cost to educate one child at St. John's is approximately \$10,500 today and rising. This figure reflects the real operational cost of delivering a high-quality Christian education and is not directly related to student headcount (meaning, this cost does not decrease if our school headcount increases or vice versa). It includes, but is not limited to:

- Instructional supplies and classroom resources
- Salaries and benefits for faculty and staff
- Facilities maintenance and improvements
- Technology and infrastructure
- Utilities, licensing, and compliance requirements
- Textbooks, furnishings, and educational equipment

These expenses support both the academic excellence and the safe, well-resourced, educational environment that our families expect and that our students deserve.

## HOW ST. JOHN'S EDUCATION IS FUNDED

St. John's Lutheran School is a ministry and mission of St. John's Lutheran Church. The congregation is deeply committed to Christian education and to making Lutheran schooling affordable for both church and community families.

- The congregation covers approximately 60% of the cost to educate each child.
- The remaining 40% is supported through church-funded scholarships and/or out-of-pocket tuition paid by families.
- Church member families pay approximately 30% of the true cost to educate their child.
- Community families pay approximately 50% of the true cost to educate their child.

This model reflects the church's commitment to stewardship, outreach, and partnership with families who desire an education grounded in Christian faith.

## BOARD OF CHRISTIAN DAY SCHOOL

*Alyssa Nett - Board Chair*

*Abbie McGuire - Secretary*

*Darlene Jones*

*Steve Keinath*

*Kristin Martin*

*Harry Smith*

*Amy Browning - Ex Officio*

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# ONWARD & UPWARD

A Board of Christian Day School Communication

## TUITION PLANNING & FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

As educational and operational costs have continued to rise nationwide, St. John's completed a comprehensive tuition study in 2022. That study determined that a structured plan of a 15% tuition increase each year over five years would best support responsible stewardship of church resources while also assisting families by providing predictable, long-term financial commitment expectations.

At the conclusion of the current five-year plan, another tuition study will be conducted, and a new tuition rate plan will be prayerfully developed based on the church's giving then and the future needs of the school.

## QUESTIONS & SUPPORT

We recognize that tuition is a significant and personal consideration for every family. We welcome open communication and we are here to support you.

- For questions about school policy or tuition rates, please contact the Board of Christian Day School.
- For questions about tuition affordability or scholarships, please contact Principal Brad Massey.

Thank you for walking alongside us in this ministry. We are honored to partner with you in nurturing students who grow in faith, knowledge, excellence, and Christ-like character.

## 2026-2027 POLICY & HANDBOOK

The Board of Christian Day School is not expecting any major changes to be made to the existing Board of Christian Day School Policy Manual or the SJK Student Parent Handbook for the upcoming 2026/27 school year. Specifically, the current dress code policy will remain unchanged for the next school year.

Thank you for your cooperation and partnership in making this year's dress code policy adjustments successful.

*14 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it 15 and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.*

*2 Timothy 3:14-15 | ESV*

**February 2026 – St. John’s Lutheran Church & School, 505 E. Carpenter, Midland (989-835-5861)**

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>1</b> 8am Worship 9:30am Bible Study & Sunday School 10:45am Joyful Praise 12pm Confirmand-Prayer Mentor Bake-Off 6pm Sr. High YG	<b>2</b> 6:30pm Board of Operations, rm 3 4:30pm Home Basketball Game	<b>3</b> 10am Worship on MCTV (Ch. 191) 10:30am Oasis 12pm Prayer Warriors 1pm Joyful Praise Rehearsal 7pm Board of Education	<b>4</b> 8:15 Chapel 10am LifeLight 3pm Girls small group 5:30pm Confirmation 6pm Bell Choir	<b>5</b> 4:30pm Joyful Praise Rehearsal 6:30pm PTS meeting	<b>6</b> 6pm YOUTH Chili Cook-Off All are welcome!	<b>7</b> 8am Men’s Bible Study 9am Visit with Pastor 10am Joyful Praise 10am School Open House 5pm Worship
<b>8</b> 8am Worship 9:30am Bible Study & Sunday School 10:45am Joyful Praise	<b>9</b> 6:30pm Book Club	<b>10</b> 10am Worship on MCTV (Ch.191) 10:30 Oasis Bible Study 12pm Prayer Warriors 1pm Joyful Praise Rehearsal 7pm Board of Ed	<b>11</b> 8:15 Chapel 9:30 Backpack Buddies 10am LifeLight 3pm Girls Small Group 5:30pm Confirmation 6pm Bell Choir	<b>12</b> 4:30pm Joyful Praise Rehearsal	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> 8am Men’s Bible Study 9am Visit with Pastor 10am Joyful Praise Rehearsal 5pm Worship
<b>15</b> 8am Worship 9:30am Bible Study & Sunday School 10:45am Joyful Praise 6pm Sr. High YG LOYALTY SUNDAY	<b>16</b> No School – Presidents Day 6:30 Visual Faith Program RM 3	<b>17</b> 10am Worship on MCTV (Ch. 191) 10:30am Oasis Bible Study 12pm Prayer Warriors 1pm Joyful Praise Rehearsal 6:30pm Leadership Team	<b>18</b> 10am LifeLight 12:15pm Ash Wednesday Service 3pm Girls Sm Grp 5 Lenten Supper 5:30pm Confirmation 7pm Ash Wednesday Service	<b>19</b> 130pm King’s Daughter 4:30pm Joyful Praise Rehearsal	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> 8am Men’s Bible Study 9am Visit with Pastor 10am Joyful Praise Rehearsal 5pm Worship
<b>22</b> 8am Worship 9:30am Bible Study & Sunday School 10:45am Joyful Praise 6pm Sr. High YG	<b>23</b> 6:30 Lydia Guild Newsletter Submissions Due	<b>24</b> 10am Worship on MCTV (Ch. 191) 10:30 Oasis Bible Study 12pm Prayer Warriors 1pm Joyful Praise Rehearsal 6:30pm Missions Board	<b>25</b> 9:30 Backpack Buddies 10am LifeLight Bible Study 12:15 Lenten Service 3pm Girls Small Group 5pm Lenten Supper 5:30 Confirmation 7pm Lenten Service	<b>26</b> 4:30pm Joyful Praise Rehearsal	<b>27</b> Confirmation Students Retreat	<b>28</b> 8am Men’s Bible Study 9am Visit with Pastor 10am Joyful Praise Rehearsal 5pm Worship Confirmation Student Retreat
						

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



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