

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

# MARCH 2026 NEWSLETTER

## A Postscript on Stewardship

### Contact Us

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### 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://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)

I hope you have had the opportunity to reflect on the teachings of your Lord and grow in the grace of giving through our stewardship program this year. That is always the goal-that YOU may be blessed as you grow in Jesus. However, as seems to always be the case, the blessings sought in Jesus overflow. St. John's as a congregation has been richly blessed, both in terms of the resources God has given us to do ministry, and in the people He has sent to serve among us.

Since we seek as a congregation to follow the same principles we encourage you to follow as an individual, I would like to share how once again the Lord has not only blessed us with enough, but has caused his blessings to overflow to others. The stewardship principle I would like to review (though it was not a point of focus this year) is that giving is more than the church. We are certainly called to support the mission of the gospel, and we ought to support the ministry of the church, but our giving should also include the community in which we live and the people we know.

Last year (fiscal year, that is) St. John's not only took in the funds to entirely pay for the HVAC project, but ended the year with a substantial cash surplus. In an effort to reflect the same generosity we have been shown, the Leadership Team chose to give the vast majority of those funds to needs outside of our congregation. In addition to a sizeable gift for international ministry, St. John's also gave to organizations that are doing good work right here in the Midland community. Organizations such as Gateway Health Care, His Hands Auto, The Open Door, Forgotten Man jail ministry, The Bridge food store, Hidden Harvest, Pivot Point, all received funding and encouragement from the overflow of our abundance.

Just to be clear, these are ministries that we are engaged in supporting, (and encourage you to support) at all times. St. John's has an active ministry in our community, helping individuals with needs directly, and also working with community organizations. If you were not aware of this, we encourage you to connect with St. John's as we seek to bless as we have been blessed in the Midland community. We even have a unique "niche" that was begin after the flood of 2020, helping to replace or repair furnaces for those in need. (We call it "Keep the Home Fires Burning!") If you would like to contribute to these efforts, simply label any contribution to St. John's "Social Ministry" or "Furnaces." If you would like to get involved as a volunteer, please reach out to me and I will connect you with our leaders.

Remember, God promises that He will always give MORE than enough, so that we have something to give. These opportunities are not only in the church, but also in the community. God is actively working, and opportunities abound.

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."

## Congregational Meetings

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

## Lenten Worship Services

St. John's will host Wednesday worship services at both 12:15 pm and 7:00 pm, with the SJL School children attending the 12:15 pm service. Only the 7:00 pm service will be live streamed on our Facebook page. Below is the schedule of sermon topics and rotation of pastors:

**March 4th:** Rich Lewis (St. John's Marion Springs/Brant), "Jesus, the Good Shepherd."

**March 11th:** Andrew Menz (Zion Beaver)  
"The Enthroned Lamb."

**March 18th:** Chris Vossler (St. Paul Sanford)  
"The Passover Lamb."

**March 25th:** Josh Parsons (St. John's)  
"The Sacrifice of Isaac."

## Lenten Suppers

Hosted by various SJL groups, serving food from 5:00 to 6:30 pm with a free-will donation at each.

**March 4:** hosted by St. John's Men's Group

**March 11:** hosted by St. John's Lydia Guild

**March 18:** TBD

**March 25:** TBD

## Holy Week Worship

### 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

## Director of Young Family Ministry

Our Director of Young Family Ministry, Stephanie Davis, moves to Midland March 2. She will start in the office the week after. We encourage you to drop by to meet her if you're able! Stephanie will share an office with Anna and Karen in Room 1. Details on a formal service of installation and welcome will be decided/shared soon.

## A Note From Pastor Parsons

### And the winner is...

Steph and I had a great time participating in the chili cookoff at St. John's. It was such an honor to win with my grandmother's recipe! I hope that you will enjoy it too, as my family has.

Sincerely,  
Pastor Josh

### "Southern Sweet Chili"

#### Ingredients:

1 can (27oz) kidney beans

1 can (15 oz) lima beans

2 small or 1 large can pork and beans

1 can baked beans (30 oz)

1 C chopped onion

1 C chopped green pepper

1/2 C brown sugar

1/4 C white vinegar

1 C Heinz catsup or tomato sauce

salt and pepper to taste

1 large smoked sausage (polish) cut into bite size pieces

1 lb. hamburger

1/2 lb. ground pork sausage

#### Directions

Brown hamburger and sausage. Sauté onion and green pepper. Combine all ingredients and cook on low (crock pot) approximately six hours. For best flavor refrigerate overnight, reheat and serve.

## School News

The students of St. John's Lutheran School will be presenting the operetta, "Giddyup, Giddalong, Gideon". The musical is based on the account of Gideon from Judges 6-8 in the Bible. The play will be performed on Friday, March 13th at 1:30 pm & 7:00 pm in the school gymnasium. All are welcome to come. A freewill offering will be taken at the door.

### Open House Saturday March 7, 10-12

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!

**If you count all of your blessings,  
you'll always be in the black.**

## Prayer Team

We thank the many members of St. John's that gave 28 prayer shawls away during the month of December. People received shawls for various reasons including loneliness, cancers, death of a loved one and illnesses. While we still have some shawls available, please consider knitting or crocheting a shawl or two for this ministry. You can use your own pattern or take one from the Prayer Ministry Closet (3C).

The Prayer Ministry has partnered with other Midland churches to provide prayer shawls to Midland Cancer Services at the Midland Hospital for people undergoing cancer treatments.

## Lydia Guild

**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. Lydia Guild is open to all ladies at St. Johns.

**The MARCH meeting of LYDIA GUILD is on Monday, March 23, at 6:30 pm in the lounge.** Our focus for this meeting will be on the St. John's Board of Elders as we learn about their various roles and responsibilities within our congregation. St. John's Chairman for the Board of Elders, Dan Theimer, will be the featured speaker. Light refreshments will be served.

## Bible Studies

**Oasis Bible Study** meets every **Tuesday morning at 10:30am, in Rm 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!

**LifeLight Bible Study** meets every **Wednesday morning at 10am, in Rm 3.** Join us for a multi-week study of the book of Mark.

**Wednesday Morning Bible Study Group at Grand Traverse Pie Company** meets every week at 8am. Come and join us for fellowship and breakfast as we study the book of Matthew. Currently embracing Matthew 7:11, "strengthen and enlarge your heart by exercise of the Golden Rule." For questions, please see Mike & Deb Stark and Steve Kamin. All are welcome!

## SCRIP

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 Wednesday 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.

## SJL Youth

February was a busy month for SJL Youth! Confirmation students enjoyed competing in the 7th annual Bake Off & Board Games event with their prayer mentors. Congratulations to the winning team: 7th grader Cora and her mentors Mr. and Mrs. Heinrich! Please keep these students in your prayers as they head to The Springs camp in Gladwin for a retreat with Zion Lutheran of Auburn Friday, February 27- Saturday, February 28.

Sr. High students attending this summer's MI District Gathering and Appalachian Servant Event hosted a Chili Cook-Off fundraiser. The event was a big success on all fronts: 15 chili cooks provided a delicious array of chilis, attendees enjoyed fun, fellowship, and a good meal, and \$4,292.00 was raised. THANK YOU for your continued and generous support of our students.

## Women of St. John's

**What is Women of St. John's?** This is the umbrella group for many of the ministries at St. John's. We meet in September, November, January, March, and May. Most times you hear about the group when an event is taking place. Our group has many members who are wonderful cooks. Our biggest event is Harvest Dinner held in October. This event provides the funding to help other ministries throughout the year.

While those meals are great, there is much more to the Women of St. John's. We also provide the leadership for Advent and Lenten dinners, funeral luncheons for families and friends, Quilters (who make blankets for missions throughout the area), cleaning days for the kitchen and sanctuary (for the extra deep cleaning beyond the daily cleaning), and decorating the church for Christmas.

The group also sponsors a seminary student to help him financially in his studies. These projects take many hands, and we appreciate the women (and men) of the congregation giving of their time and talents to help keep these projects going.

How can you help? If you are able to join us at our business meetings, we value input. If you are able to volunteer to help at an event, we have wonderful fellowship while working for a few hours.

If you have questions about Women of St. John's, please do not hesitate to ask us. Officers for Women of St. John's are Cynthia Benner (989.600.9463), Joyce Battjes (989.430.7166), and Joy Miller (989.600-5437).

**Friend to Friend** is a ministry that provides a healthy meal for families experiencing life events that make food preparation a challenge. Volunteers will provide safe, nutritious meals on a short-term basis to help you get back on your feet. Kristin will need to know when you would like to start meals, how long you need meals and food allergies/preferences. If you (or someone you know) could benefit from our help, contact Kristin Martin at 989.928-2880 (leave a message) or k-mart6@hotmail.com.

## Bell 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 **Tuesday evenings from 6:00-7:00pm**, in the sanctuary.

## Visual Faith 2026

**Journey Through When From Death I'm Free Hymn Journal for Holy Week This Lent**  
Monday, March 16th, Lounge, 6:30 to 8:30

You're invited to explore the hymn **When I Survey the Wondrous Cross** through scripture, music/lyrics, devotion and adding color to illustrations by Visual Faith artists.

**No Expertise Required** — Research has shown the benefit of drawing or coloring as a learning activity. If you don't consider yourself particularly creative, you may be surprised what the Holy Spirit will do if you allow yourself a bit of grace and opportunity.

Enroll today by adding your name and email to the sign-up sheet located in the office, or e-mail Linda Bebeau at [llsmb@chartermi.net](mailto:llsmb@chartermi.net). All materials will be supplied for in-class use.

## Choir News

**Make Music a Part of Your Life!**  
Now Is The Time!

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly...singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God." (Colossians 3:16)

A new and exciting season of singing in the Chancel Choir at St. John's is fast approaching! The choir (ages High School-Adult) will have rehearsals on Thursday evenings in March, beginning on March 5th at 7pm in the sanctuary. We will be preparing music for the season of Lent and Holy Week. Please join us for a FUN time!

Contact Karen Kempin (835-5861 x.1205) for more information, encouragement, or a gentle nudge to participate in this beautiful and fun music ministry!

## Book Club

St. John's Book Club meets on **Monday, March 9**. Join us from 6:30-8:00pm in Room 2 to discuss this month's selection: *Small Things like These* by C. Keegan. Check the Family Life bulletin board across from the Church Office for a complete list of meeting dates and books.

## Easter Lilies

It's that time of year again! As we journey through the Lenten season, we eagerly look forward to Easter Sunday on April 5th. If you so desire, we warmly invite you to purchase an Easter lily to celebrate the resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ! Lilies may be purchased in honor of loved ones, and a dedication page will be included in the worship folder on Easter Sunday. The lilies will be placed in the sanctuary for our Easter morning worship services! The Easter lilies may be taken home after the final service on Easter Sunday, or on Monday, April 6th. All lilies that remain on Tuesday will be delivered to our housebound brothers and sisters in Christ.

There are two lily sizes available from which you can select: A single stem lily with multiple blooms is \$16, and a double stem lily with multiple blooms is \$29.

Order forms can be found outside of the church office on the bulletin board. The order forms and respective payment are due back to the church office by Wednesday, March 18th. If you choose to pay by check, please make checks payable to St. John's Lutheran Church.

If you have questions, please contact Robin Steinke at 989.859.7148. Please feel free to text or call.

We look forward to a joyful celebration together, and all proclaiming in unison, "Christ is risen!"

## Community Ministry

St. John's Lutheran Church has a Social Ministry team that is called to do God's Work in a Complex World. The mission of this team is to ensure that the "organizing and doing" of this critical ministry occurs and is woven throughout our congregation to ensure the inclusion of a variety of our members to act through service and through the prayer and worship of our church. The committee consists of Joyce Battjes and Dennis Hitzeman and reports to Pastor Kempin.

Our group at St. John's works closely with the Midland Community Assistance Group of Midland County. It is comprised of 19 churches and 56+ non-profit agencies all working together to meet the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of individuals Jesus referred to as "the least of these." Some examples include addressing the needs of the poor, the homeless, the hungry, orphans, widows, the handicapped, sick, and the outcast.

Individuals requesting assistance must follow the process we have established by coming into the church office and filling out the applications and having appropriate paperwork such as leases, utility bills, or invoices of a bill for repair such as car, etc. This is then passed on to the committee to review and a call is usually made to the applicant to clarify any questions that the committee might have. Calls may be made to the other churches that the individual may have listed as providing funding. We have on average 5-10 inquiries for assistance per week. We also have a furnace program in which we work with Wild's Plumbing and Heating (since the dam failures) and we are noted as the furnace church, which is a good thing as we have helped three with new furnaces and said yes to all three. We work with Wild's also to have them go out and inspect furnaces that may not be working to get heat returned to homes. Many of our requests may come from Senior Services and other churches.

Category of Assistance for 2025*	Spent on Assistance for Category	Number of Requests
Rent	\$6,368.20	52 (35 Yes/17 Denied)
Utility-Consumers, Propane	\$1,370.26	23 (9 Yes/14 Denied)
Car Repairs	\$786.00	8 (6 Yes/2 No)
Furnace & Inspection	\$10,755	3 (3 Yes)

Bear in mind that this community ministry relies heavily on individual donations over and above the budget. Please consider giving additional support for this ministry. Your contribution to Social Ministry here at St. John's will help to ensure that individuals that are most vulnerable are responded to with care and compassion and that we are ready to serve and love our neighbor. Joyce Battjes (989-430-7166)

## Health News March Edition

### Testing Your Nutrition Knowledge

1. Cardiovascular disease increases risk for what?
  - a. Heart attack, stroke, and heart failure
  - b. Kidney problems
  - c. Dementia
  - d. All of them
2. All processed foods are bad for you. True or False?
3. The BEST way to improve the healthfulness of your dietary intake is to what?
  - a. Add more vegetables to every meal
  - b. Stop eating junk food
  - c. Swap less healthy items for healthier ones
  - d. Avoid sweet fruits like bananas
4. Diets rich in natural sources of fiber are good for what?
  - a. Regularity
  - b. Preventing and treating diverticular disease
  - c. Preventing cardiovascular disease
  - d. All of them
5. It is possible to overdose on vitamin D. True or False
6. To support bone health, you should what?
  - a. Consume adequate calcium
  - b. Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables
  - c. Strengthen muscles
  - d. All of them
7. What is the highest your systolic blood pressure (the first number) should be to still be considered "normal"?
  - a. 120
  - b. 139
  - c. 144
  - d. 164
8. What is the highest your diastolic blood pressure (the second number) should be to be considered "normal"?
  - a. 80
  - b. 60
  - c. 94
  - d. 89

### Answers:

1. d) Cardiovascular disease includes the build-up of plaque in veins and arteries that deliver blood to every organ. This process increases the risks for all the diseases mentioned above.
2. False) Cutting, cooking, freezing, and canning are forms of food processing. Other processes, such as pasteurization, make food safer, and therefore healthier. Ultra-processed foods tend to be high in sodium, added sugars, and/or saturated fat. Most ultra-processed foods are not the healthiest choices, but not all food processing is bad.
3. c) A healthy dietary pattern supplies all the nutrients your body needs without too much it doesn't need. Just adding vegetables on top of a junk-food rich diet does not make your dietary intake healthy. Reducing intake of unhealthy foods like junk foods can reduce calories, but replacing less healthy foods with healthier ones (within your calorie needs) is the best choice for optimal nutrition. And tasty fruits are all healthy choices.
4. d) Consuming adequate fiber avoids constipation and reduces the risk for diverticular disease. Additionally, dietary patterns high in naturally fiber-rich foods are associated with lower risk of cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes. Fiber also feeds the beneficial micro-organisms in our guts and can help you feel full, contributing to weight control.
5. True) Usually getting more than 4,000 IU of vitamin D a day could cause vomiting, increased thirst, and frequent urination. While vitamins are essential to health, too much of a good thing can be bad. It is impossible to overdose on vitamins through food intake. Always check with your physician about safe amounts if you choose to take vitamin supplements. Your physician can order a blood test to see where your level of vitamin D is and can advise you how much you should take.
6. d) Getting adequate calcium is essential to bone health, but nutrients plentiful in fruits and vegetables, e.g., potassium and magnesium, are important as well. When you use your muscles, by walking or lifting weights, it puts force on your bones, stimulating bone formation.
7. a) 120-129 is considered "normal", while 130-139 is defined as "Stage 1 hypertension (high blood pressure)".
8. a) Less than 80 is considered "normal" while 80-89 is defined as "Stage 1 (high blood pressure)".

## March 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 6pm Sr. High YG	<b>2</b> 5:30pm Worship on MCTV (Ch. 191) 6:30pm Board of Operations 6:30pm Visual Faith	<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> 10am LifeLight 12:15 Lenten Service 3pm Girls small group 5pm Lenten Supper 5:30pm Confirmation 7pm Lenten Service	<b>5</b> 4:30pm Joyful Praise Rehearsal 6:30pm PTS meeting	<b>6</b> Youth Retreat	<b>7</b> Youth Retreat 8am Men’s Bible Study 9am Visit with Pastor 10am Joyful Praise 10am School Open House 5pm Worship
<b>8</b> Youth Retreat 8am Worship 9:30am Bible Study & Sunday School 10:45am Joyful Praise  <b>Daylight Savings Time Begins</b>	<b>9</b> 12:30 Women of St. John’s 5:30pm Worship on MCTV (Ch. 191) 6:30pm Book Club 6:30pm Visual Faith	<b>10</b> 10am Worship on MCTV (Ch.191) 10:30 Oasis Bible Study 12pm Prayer Warriors 1pm Joyful Praise Rehearsal	<b>11</b> 9:30 Backpack Buddies 10am LifeLight 12:15 Lenten Service 3pm Girls Small Group 5pm Lenten Supper 5:30pm Confirmation 6pm Bell Choir 7pm Lenten Service	<b>12</b> 4:30pm Joyful Praise Rehearsal	<b>13</b> 1:30pm Operetta 7pm Operetta	<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	<b>16</b> 5:30pm Worship on MCTV (Ch. 191)	<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>St. Patrick’s Day</b>	<b>18</b> 10am LifeLight 12:15 Lenten Service 3pm Girls Sm Grp 5pm Lenten Supper 5:30pm Confirmation 7pm Lenten Service	<b>19</b> 1:30pm 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 2pm Communication Meeting 6pm Sr. High YG	<b>23</b> 5:30pm Worship on MCTV (Ch. 191) 6:30pm Lydia’s Guild  <b>Newsletter Submissions Due</b>	<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>	<b>28</b> 8am Men’s Bible Study 9am Visit with Pastor 10am Joyful Praise Rehearsal 5pm Worship
<b>29</b> <b>Palm Sunday</b>  8am Worship 9:30am Bible Study & Sunday School 10:45am Joyful Praise 6pm Sr. High YG	<b>30</b> 5:30pm Worship on MCTV (Ch. 191)  <b>No School Spring Break</b>	<b>31</b> 10am Worship on MCTV (Ch. 191) 10:30 Oasis Bible Study 12pm Prayer Warriors 1pm Joyful Praise Rehearsal  <b>No School</b>				<b>Today is the tomorrow you worried about yesterday.</b>

DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME begins on Sunday, March 8 ... SPRING AHEAD one hour at 2am on Sunday morning.



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

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