



inTouch

Engaging and re-engaging members & friends of St. John's

More of Him ELIZABETH HAINES

Our church is called St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church. Our name exemplifies Jesus' work on earth. The Great Commission in Matthew 28:16-20, Jesus calls on his followers from a mountain in Galilee to make disciples and baptize all nations in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This is **our** charge.

There are a multitude of examples in the Bible where Jesus sought out the ignored and cast away. What would Jesus do (WWJD) at St. John's before or after worship? Would he attend the service, grab a cup of coffee, eat a baked good, and go sit with his buddies? No! Jesus would seek out the newcomer, offer them coffee and a donut, and then converse with them.

Our core values are WORSHIP, LOVE, GROW, and GIVE. When we see a new person at St. John's and welcome them, aren't we doing what Jesus would do? Showing Jesus' LOVE, helps us GROW in our faith, as we are GIVE of our time and talents. Welcoming a newcomer it is a form of WORSHIP to God.

Roger and Sharon Hellman are wonderful examples of how to do this. Both serve in many capacities at St. John's, and one of their most rewarding ways to serve is as welcomers. When they see a new face, they take the initiative and extend a warm welcome. Doing so extends More of Him to the visitor.

Having been married for 45 years, they are a well-oiled, welcoming machine. According to Roger, welcoming people comes naturally for Sharon, but he needed to work at it. So, instead of gathering with his usual coffee companions, Roger intentionally seeks out new people. Roger and Sharon both let the visitor know, there are no strings attached, and they're not going to pressure them to sign up for anything.

They can do this because they've been in the spot of the stranger. Haven't we all? It can be traumatic. We can all probably identify—feeling uncomfortable or alone when visiting a new church. The Hellmans ask, "WWJD?" With Jesus' example and the Holy Spirit's help, everyone can be inviting and welcoming.

For many of us, it means stepping outside of our comfort zones, just as Jesus' first disciples did. They paved a path for us by following Jesus' example.

In many ways, we have it much easier than early Christians. And even today, there are many countries where Christians are persecuted just for declaring God's love. As blessed as we are here and now, we can take a risk and invite someone to church or extend a welcoming hand and smile to a newcomer. It accomplishes the one thing we need—More of Him.



“What would Jesus do at St. John's before or after worship?”



Through the Eyes of Nicodemus

Greetings and peace to you on this day. I am Nicodemus. I am a Pharisee and a member of the Sanhedrin. I am privileged to visit with you this month as I provide a well deserved break for my friends, Martha and Mary.

I was honored to sit and visit with Jesus, the Nazarene, one night. I heard his teachings and I know first hand, that if one opens their heart to him you will experience a peace beyond understanding. I truly desire that for each one of you today.

One of my principle beliefs is also a requirement of The Law; it requires that a person be heard before being judged. John reports on this requirement in his Gospel in Chapter 7. Jesus instructed us, "stop judging by mere appearance and make a right judgement." I defended Jesus and spoke up to the temple guards, "Does our law condemn anyone without first hearing him to find out what he is doing?"

My dear people, this is so important, listen before judging. Do not be afraid to listen to others, especially those with differing opinions and ideas. When we become so entrenched in one mind, progress and betterment can not occur. Are you satisfied and do you think your beliefs are perfect? Challenge yourself to growth and open your minds. As you listen, truly open your hearts to understand the other side of issues that you now struggle with. Open your heart and mind to what others are thinking. Let us propagate the mind of Christ in every way possible. You are so fortunate to belong to a community of believers where this can safely occur.

Peace be with you always,
Nicodemus

PREPARED BY ROGER HELLMAN



Summer CELEBRATION

In honor of St. John's 150th Anniversary, one celebration worship service was held at 10 AM in the Worship Center on Sunday, June 12. Following worship members and friends enjoyed lunch from food trucks, ice cream, games and activities, a community Lego build, and more! It was a wonderful afternoon of fellowship and fun for all ages!



More photo on the back page!

Mission Impact

ELIZABETH HAINES



Rocky Railway Vacation Bible School

Vacation Bible School met in person for the first time since the pandemic. Rocky Railway was the theme and 65 children learned about the power of Jesus in our lives. We were blessed to have more than 100 volunteers to make the week wonderful! Children and adults collected offerings each day for the Zambia Education Fund. A goal of \$1,500 was set, and together they exceeded the goal, collecting more than \$2,700!

Zambia Education Fund

Each year, St. John's sponsors this fund to help pastors in Zambia pay for their childrens' education expenses. Videos, which explained why the campaign is crucial, were shown during worship services for a couple of weeks. As in the past, we reached the requested \$12,000 goal; in fact, we exceeded it! Thank you for helping the pastors in Zambia fund the education of their children.

Hopedale Harvest Project

St. John's endeavored to raise \$4,760 to rent the land in Hopedale, Illinois, for a corn crop to be planted. In the fall, the harvest will be celebrated. This mission transforms our donation into a crop that typically sells for up to \$30,000. The proceeds then go toward a project in Zimbabwe to teach sustainable farming techniques. Thank you for your contributions which exceeded our goal—more than \$7,000!

Camp Mix

Junior High Camp Mix took place the week of July 11-15 at Indiana Wesleyan University in Marion, Indiana. A group of 14 students and three adults from St. John's attended. The theme for the week was "Broadcast." Students and leaders engaged in biblical studies of the parables of Jesus and took a deep dive into the broadcasting power of His gospel message. Daily worship, relationship building activities, and small group time were just a few snippets of the experiences these young people engaged in.



Midwest Food Bank

St. John's had 20 volunteers in July who completed 1,330 bags of cheese crackers (133 big boxes) in roughly 2 hours. Deacon Lyn completed the obligatory taste test and declared the crackers good for consumption!



Scan the QR code with the camera on your phone for more information about Midwest Food Bank.



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

For the first year of *inTouch*, we've been spotlighting St. John's staff. A common theme among our talented staff is that as good as they are, so much more is possible with the help of willing volunteers. Therefore, we are adding faithful St. John's volunteers to our spotlight. We begin with volunteer Vern Veal.

Vern Veal

Vern was raised on a farm in Kearney, Nebraska. He and his family had a dryland farm and produced a healthy corn crop. He worked on the farm while simultaneously attending college at University of Nebraska at Kearney. During his last year in college, he was recruited into the Air Force for a brief time. After graduation, he landed in Chicago and worked at Liberty Mutual and later joined State Farm in Greeley, Colorado.

Vern retired from State Farm in 2004 and decided to volunteer at St. John's. He was aware the Columbarium was dedicated in 1994 and chose to work on that. He assisted people in a couple of ways. Some came to Vern after a loved one passed. Some seized the opportunity to organize the process for their loved ones before they passed. At first, only St. John's members were allowed in the Columbarium but now, it is open to others.

Vern has been a help for those who have to go through this process. He explained the process and shared what to expect. He coordinated the financial aspects and worked with engravers for the name plates. He also alerted us to maintenance needs in the Columbarium as it is exposed to the elements.

Recently, Vern has transitioned to a new role as our inaugural historian to help preserve our history for future generations. He is helping us as we celebrate our 150th anniversary. He works with other volunteers to record activities. He has also been working to organize the many artifacts in our vault. There are many boxes in the vault that contain our history, and organizing the artifacts in our vault is a big job. Vern is accustomed to doing the big job as he continues to serve at St. John's.



Q&A

Favorite holiday?
Christmas!

Favorite vacation spot?
Colorado Mountains—if he milked the cows super early a couple of mornings, he could afford a couple of days in the Colorado mountains.

Summer CELEBRATION

