



inTouch

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



Celebration WORSHIP

SARA WHITE & DAWN CONWAY

The February 27 opening of the new worship space was a spectacular day! Members, friends, and guests were anxious to worship in the long-awaited and much anticipated Worship Center, which holds 588 people. The crowd barely fit!

The celebration began in the Parish Life Center, to give thanks for the space in which all worship services were held for more than a year. The congregation transitioned upstairs, through the new Gathering area, and into the newly completed Worship Center with beautiful pews and padded seats. Precious items used in worship—the altar Bible, Christ candle, and Paschal cross—were re-homed to the new space.

It was a blessing to host our Synod's Bishop S. John Roth for this special day—a living example of all worship styles in ONE place.

The former Sanctuary—a cornerstone for many members—will continue to be important as the new Gathering space and Chapel. The Gathering space, welcoming and open, provides

opportunities to be in fellowship, build new relationships, or gather information. The beautiful stained glass cross from the former Sanctuary was retained and is at the front of the new Chapel. The old blended with the new to create a new vibrancy.

Pastor David pointed out several items from the previous Sanctuary that were incorporated into the Worship Center. Wood from the lectern helped create the new altar, along with a beautiful square of marble, from the former altar. Another piece of marble from the altar was repurposed for the altar in the new Chapel. The organ, once at the back of the Sanctuary, is now at the front of the worship space.

We thank God for guiding our leaders and staff through logistics; for inspiring

the architects and construction/technical crews for their vision and work; for everyone who gave their time, talents, and tithes. This project represents 40 years of discussion and planning and three years of focused work.

We now have an even more welcoming presence at the corner of Towanda and Emerson—a wonderful resource for worship and praise but also for continued mission and outreach. The Parish Life Center is now available for other purposes—missions, growth opportunities, and open to the community. We have an even greater opportunity to engage and equip people to embrace Jesus Christ and be a growing Christ-centered, Spirit-led community. We are truly blessed!

See more photos on the back page.



Dear Mary & Martha

How has St. John's supported the many needs of our local community and surrounding area? There seems to be an increasing number of people who are struggling.—Sarah

Dear Sarah,
I am so glad you asked, as we are all called to love and serve others through our gifts of our time, our talents, and our treasures. St. John's works in partnership with a variety of local agencies, and has faithfully and consistently supported those in need throughout our community and surrounding area. A few of the current agencies we partner with:

- Center for Hope
- Faith in Action
- Home Sweet Home Mission
- Hopedale Growing Project
- Midwest Food Bank
- PATH
- American Red Cross
- Safe Harbor

Ways that we assist people directly:

- **Emergency Relief Fund: support of rent, utilities, transportation, and other emergency needs directly to individuals/families**
- **Giving Tree: gifts to those in need at Christmas**
- **St. John's Annual Garage Sale: assist the community with needed items and allows youth to serve through mission trips**

Blessings, Martha

Dear Sarah,
Martha has provided a wonderful listing of the many ways St. John's members honor Jesus and His directive that we love and serve others (Matthew 25:40). He will continue to provide opportunities for us to share our blessings. Scan the QR code (at right) with your smart phone camera for a prayer and reflection on Matthew 25. In Jesus name, Mary



Faith

Meaningful Relationships

God continues to richly bless us at St. John's and his Spirit is alive and making a difference in our lives. Let us praise him and remain in close relationship with our Savior.

A wonderful opportunity exists every Sunday morning that I am so excited to endorse and suggest that you try. It's called Faith 45 and meets between the two Sunday worship services, approximately 9:30-10:15 AM.

Our vision—to be a growing, Christ-centered and Spirit-led congregation is being constantly challenged. Our staff leadership recognizes these threats and have devoted hours of time to plan and prepare curriculum for every age—kids, junior and senior high, and adults.

Leaders/discussion coordinators are gifted and passionately committed to our church. There are numerous ideas for future studies that could include forums on current events, book studies, ministry presentations and Christian fellowship. If you are concerned that we do not connect with the larger church or if you have issues that you'd like to see people meet to understand how others justify

a stance, let's get together in healthy, mature Christian fellowship. This is our church, let's step up and make our Father proud!

In my youth, I accepted the fact that I was required to sacrifice an hour of my time on Sunday morning and what happened throughout the remainder of the week was little influenced by it.

As I grew older, life became cluttered with busy things; however, my attitude about Sunday mornings began to change as I recognized a time for refreshment and recharge. I am now a senior citizen and my priorities seem to have dramatically changed.

Some of you may have known a long-

time member, Elsa Laesch, who passed away in 2015, shortly after celebrating her century birthday. It was a cold and icy Wednesday evening that I provided an arm to Elsa to assure that she did not fall on her way into a midweek Lenten service. I was surprised she would venture out in such weather and she enlightened me, "I simply can't get enough of what he has to offer." This is meaningful relationship, indeed!

“**In your hearts enthrone Him.**

There let Him subdue all that is not holy, all that is not true.

Crown Him as your captain in temptations hour.

Let His will enfold you in its light and power.”

At The Name of Jesus, ELW Hymnal #416

This message from Pastor David's sermon on April 2/3 focused on Pilate's question "what is truth?"

**“Are you discouraged by a world no longer interested in the truth?
Are you disappointed by political leaders engaged in truthiness?
Search for the truth, and you will find Jesus. As you immerse yourself in the word, you begin to sort through the confusion of this world.”**

Mission Impact



Hopedale Growing Project / ELIZABETH HAINES



Hopedale Growing Project is an ecumenical partnership between the Hopedale Mennonite Church and St. John's Lutheran Church to help fight world hunger. The project was a great success again in 2021! The project, including proceeds from the soybean harvest and \$7,215 in support from St. John's members, generated \$29,868 to support conservation agriculture for more than 200+ families in Mwenezi, Zimbabwe through Growing Hope Globally, a Christian non-profit organization that works with Lutheran World Relief and other organizations to help grow lasting solutions to hunger with programs to diversify crops and livestock, use conservation farming methods to increase yields, adopt better storage techniques, and learn financial resource, water management, and basic health education. St. John's, through Hopedale, has helped to fully fund the project over the last three years.

Last September, 12-15 St. John's members joined our friends in Hopedale for a fall Harvest Celebration to give thanks for the harvest and celebrate the blessings of this ministry. The day included sunshine, wind, pork sandwiches, all kinds of delicious dishes, and a hayride.

Each May, St. John's members have the opportunity to raise \$4,760 to rent 34 acres of prime farmland in Hopedale to make this important mission successful. Through Hopedale, you help to feed the world.



Scan the QR code with the camera on your phone for more information about the impact of your stewardship dollars through these missions projects.



Center for Hope Food Pantry

The Center For Hope Food Pantry Network applies biblically-based principles to help families and individuals break and avoid cycles of poverty through food distribution, education, and referral networking. The pantry serves McLean County by helping families and individuals break and avoid cycles of poverty. In addition to its food and toiletry distribution, the program offers educational training, such as financial courses, nutrition education, and job readiness workshops.

Thank you to all who donated items for the Center for Hope collection during Lent. It's not often one can see so much toilet paper, diapers, baby wipes and other items collected in one space. And that space kept being emptied and more essentials were dropped off. Through Lent, we collected 6,835 items to help others! Shopping—and who doesn't love shopping—became even more purposeful just by purchasing toiletries. Thank you for your generosity!



STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Kerri Cordray
 Director of
 Junior High Ministries

Scan the QR codes below with the camera on your phone to watch short video highlights from Kerri and volunteer, Cindy Musick.

You may well wonder how someone like Kerri Cordray gets bitten by the service bug. She attended VBS and work camps as a child and she taught Sunday school as soon as she could. Then she answered several calls and chose to dedicate her professional life to serving in the church.

Kerri and her husband Brian have been married 24 years and have three children—son Mason (21) and twin daughters Brooke and Bree (18).

Kerri's mission is "Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it." (Proverbs 22:6). This verse is foundational to her ministry calling; baptism is the church's response to raise God's children in the

community of life and faith in Christ Jesus.

When Mason was nine months old, Kerri accepted her first staff ministry post at First Presbyterian in LeRoy, serving for 12 years. She took another opportunity at Calvary United Methodist after that for five years and joined the staff of St. John's in 2019. She commits her life and work to serving Christ through prayerful discernment and a desire to live out the commandment to love God and his children.

Her program style includes creative, exciting games, relationship-building opportunities, and intentional mission-oriented activities. She has organized special themed events such as Flannel Fest, tie dye, Nerf wars, and beach night. The moments that touch her heart most are the evenings of a mission trip and service to others; examples include students preparing kits for Lutheran World Relief, packaging food at Midwest Food Bank, or simply taking a moment to care for a neighbor or a stranger.



Camp MIX



Confirmation



Volunteering



Thrive/CHAOS



Local Work Camp