



inTouch

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



Twenty years of **HOPEDALE GROWING PROJECT**

WRITTEN BY DIANE HALLER

This year was the 20th anniversary of the partnership between Hopedale Mennonite Church and St. John's. Over a 20-year span, Hopedale Growing Project has raised nearly \$550,000 and has helped 10,000 people!

On September 24, a memorable celebration was held to commemorate the harvest and 20th anniversary. At the church service, Eric Mattson, regional director of Growing Hope Globally, gave the sermon. He spoke of Ugandan women supporting themselves through sustainable agriculture. He based his message on the verse Romans 12:12, "Rejoice in hope; be patient in affliction; persevere in prayer." Members and friends of both congregations gathered around tables of delicious food while having a joyful time of fellowship. A scenic hayrack ride was enjoyed by many attendees.

The proceeds of the soybean crop and the money donated by St. John's, estimated at \$35-40,000, will be sent to Growing Hope Globally in early 2024. For the last several years, proceeds from this project have been sent to the Zimbabwe Mwenezi program, and this project has now been fully funded! Proceeds from the Hopedale project will now be sent to the Peru Castrovirreyna program, teaching sustainable farming techniques to help grow lasting solutions to hunger. In its 20 years, the Hopedale Growing Project has supported programs in Zambia, Zimbabwe, Uganda, and now Peru. This project is a blessing of hope, faith, and love!

20
YEARS





STAFF SPOTLIGHT **Pastor Lyn Ahearn**

WRITTEN BY ROGER HELLMAN



*I will sing to the Lord as long as I live;
I will sing praise to my God while I have being.* PSALM 104:33

How blessed St. John's is to have newly ordained Pastor Lyn Ahearn installed as Associate Pastor of Community Care! Pastor Lyn's favorite Bible verse (above) serves as guidance for her action in response to each of us in ministry.

Pastor Lyn has always been active at her church. She grew up in Nevada, Iowa, and in her youth and throughout high school, she was a member of church choirs in the Methodist Church. She always felt involved, supported, and somewhat pulled into further action and commitment. She attended the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago from 2002-2005. Following graduation she pursued the Diaconal Ministry. While serving in this role at Luther Oaks, her spiritual journey was

enhanced as she was responsible for all aspects of spiritual care. Visiting with our new Pastor, I recognize that she took, and will take, this responsibility extremely seriously; she considers serving our God and loving all of God's people sacred business!

As then Deacon Lyn's spiritual journey matured, she began to explore the prospects of ordination. As Pastor Christine McNeal, former pastor at St. John's, stated in the ordination sermon, the ELCA treats ordination with great seriousness. We are very grateful that Lyn persevered and was able to fulfill all of the requirements of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America. Our church was blessed as she completed the internship requirement at St. John's, and we continue to be blessed as she is now our Pastor!

Pastor Lyn and I visited about how she sees her life changing following her ordination. Two important points were dominant in this discussion—she understands that God has called her, and she appreciates that the church and the people of St. John's have affirmed her calling and ordination. The outpouring of love was evident



as preparations for her ordination began and throughout the celebration. She fully realized this outpouring in a spiritual, emotional, and physical way as the twelve Pastors and the Bishop laid their hands on her and prayed for her. It was indeed a celebration of love and one of the highlights of my 35 years at St. John's. Many of us were in attendance to witness this celebration firsthand. If you did not have this opportunity, the broadcast is available on the church Facebook page or YouTube channel.

In his letter to Timothy, the unknown writer states that women are to study in silence and to lead only in moments



MISSION IMPACT

WRITTEN BY DIANE HALLER

St. John's has had so many opportunities to Worship, Love, Grow, and Give in the last quarter! In addition to an ALL Church Worship, there were Back-to-School Blessings and My Bible Stepping Stone, where more than 25 children received their Bible.

Music for Food

Performers from the Illinois Chamber Music Festival presented a free concert in the Worship Center. About 75 people attended and donated 146 food items and close to \$12,000 was raised to fight hunger. The musicians were fantastic!

Blood Drive

There was another strong showing for the October 7 drive, where 42 units of blood were collected.

Lutheran World Relief

St. John's was host to 82 churches, who delivered essential items for Lutheran World Relief. It took 1,723 boxes and one and a half semi-trucks to haul away all the contributions: 5,548 quilts (273 from St. John's); 3,933 school kits (630 from St. John's); 3,161 personal care kits (627 from St. John's); and \$15,379.53 in donations (\$2,000 from St. John's). St. John's totals were up from last year. Thank you to all who contributed time, muscle, supplies, and love.

The Big Give

Three gaylords (giant empty boxes) were filled with food donations for Thanksgiving boxes for members of our community in need.

Midwest Food Bank

This monthly opportunity to give back is well attended and afternoon opportunities to serve have been added.

Zambia Education Fund

At the first meeting since the pandemic struck, ELCZambia pastors met where they re-elected Pr. Geoffrey Njapau as their head pastor and ordained 12 new pastors! Pr. Njapau is also a successful farmer. All the children in the program have graduated from high school and some continue to college.



WRITTEN BY DIANE HALLER

Dear Mary and Martha,
How is St. John's reducing utility costs?

Mary: St. John's is doing it's best to manage costs through conservation and long-term supplier contracts.

St. John's has installed:

- More efficient lighting fixtures
- Digital controls for heating and cooling resulting in better usage control
- Geo-thermal units in the 2008 addition and remodel
- High efficiency systems in the recent addition

Martha: Since St. John's is a large commercial user of power, we have the opportunity to contract for our gas and electricity energy supply at a fixed rate. Distribution rates and peak capacity charges have decreased since June 2022. In addition, our contract with Voltus, which costs nothing to participate, helps decrease electricity usage during peak weather events. Our power usage would be reduced to minimum if called upon by our grid operator. If able to comply, there is a small compensation as well as saving on our energy bill. To date we have not been called upon to participate in this program.



when a man is not available. When asked how this message speaks to her, Pastor Lyn replied that scripture interprets scripture. As we understand

the important roles that women played in the early church, and we see Jesus promoting women throughout his ministry, we affirm our church's stance that women must be involved in every role of ministry.

Mental health and homelessness are challenges in our world that Pastor Lyn would like to see more attention given, and her dreams for St. John's include a loving church family where every member is valued and recognized as a precious child of God.





All Creation Sings

SONG AND PRAYER COLLECTION

WRITTEN BY JULIE KNUTSON

**“The Christian Assembly... worships
in the midst of an ever-changing world.”**

—*Evangelical Lutheran Worship* Hymnal 2006

Ten years after the release of *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, (cranberry colored) hymnal, a conversation began in the ELCA to see how we could support the renewal of worship since society and church life is constantly changing.

Research from a 2018 church-wide survey revealed a need for more material around four major areas: creation care, lament in times of crisis, healing and wholeness, and justice and peace. The work began in May 2019 to create a new worship supplement led by John Weit, ELCA executive for worship.

All Creation Sings was released in November 2020. Selections of prayers, thanksgivings, and laments were included along with two additional settings of liturgy. Prayers and services for concerns that are impacting our daily lives were written about topics such as civic life and faith, the well-being of the Earth, society, justice, life's passage, service after a violent event, racism, divorce, healing, and diversity in community.

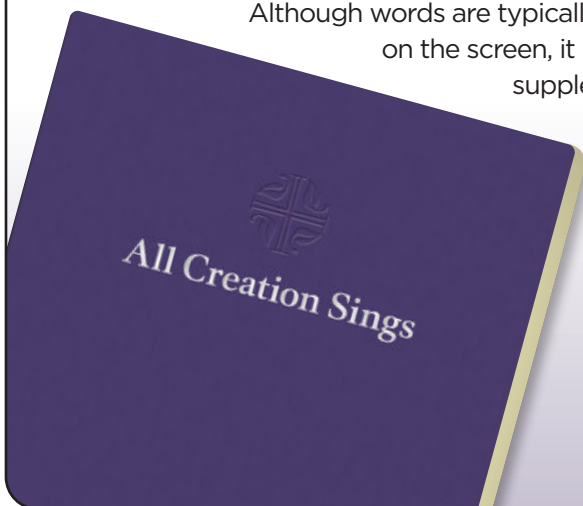
Walter Stout, St. John's worship ministries, along with Pastor David and Pastor Lyn, have been selecting pieces from *All Creation Sings* (ACS) over the last year.

Although words are typically projected on the screen, it is the purple supplement in the

pew. It is interesting to thumb through the edition and read some of the prayers, laments, thanksgivings, and the beautiful texts and music scores to the songs. Some of the melodies are familiar with new words and sometimes the text is familiar with new music. Oftentimes it is all new and takes us to a place that we have not been before. It doesn't matter which service you attend; this supplement is there to help you in the contemplative words and songs. Take a look at ACS for healing, wholeness, and lament as you sit in the pews at worship. You may find words and melodies that speak to you.

This past year the worship team has chosen various pieces with text and music written from many centuries ago to the present. We practiced parts of a new liturgy with the help of worship leaders until it became natural. They also introduced selections such as *We Are Waiting for Jesus* during Advent and then a wonderful rendition of *Jesus, the Light of the World* that was combined with *Hark the Herald Angels Sing*. A contemporary hymn called *Beautiful Things*, (925) is from the Gungor Music Group.

Throughout ACS we are reminded how we are an integral part of God's marvelous creation, and how our impact is not only for the care of the Earth but also the care for all human life.



**“Then I heard every creature in heaven
and on earth and under the earth and in the sea,
and all that is in them singing.”** PSALM 96