




inTouch

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

Embody the Word

Our Relationship with the Larger Church

WRITTEN BY JULIE KNUTSON



us had been calling Synod Bishops to see, what are the real needs in your synods



ELCA

Moving to Bloomington in 1989, our family searched for an ELCA church, which were plentiful in Minneapolis.

Seeing the ELCA symbol on signage led us attend St. John's for the first time. Now, 33 years later, it is still important to us. The support and vision of the ELCA has been one that we embrace.

The 2022 ELCA Churchwide Assembly, Embody the Word, was held in Columbus, Ohio, in August. Led by Presiding Bishop Rev. Elizabeth Eaton, the Assembly gathered representatives from 65 Synods throughout America. More than 800 members participated this year in worship, singing from the new *All Creations Sings* hymnal supplement with joy, lament, and praise. This Assembly is held every three years. It revitalizes us and keeps the ELCA moving forward.

Reports were shared about Lutheran Disaster Response, Global Missions, Lutheran World Relief, AMMPARO, racism, violence, immigration, hunger, and discrimination in order to better understand our place as a church in caring for human beings.

New recommendations for updating the 2009 Human Sexuality and Trust statement were considered along with legislative business such as a study of salary equity

for women, minorities, and persons of color in the ELCA clergy. There was also a declaration and apology to the American Indian and Native Alaskan people, continuing our dedication to loving our neighbor.

The Assembly elected lay Vice President, Imran Siddiqui for a six-year term. He served on the Atlanta, Georgia, Synod Council. In Siddiqui's acceptance speech he spoke on the value of trusting each other to find a common place in a world full of many views. "When we listened to each other, we found that we made room for the Holy Spirit, allowing God's grace to work to provide holy consensus on our decisions. What a model for the world."

I have great confidence in the ELCA for all their work supporting St. John's in caring for each other, worshipping God, and helping us to Embody the Word.

I am so grateful there was an ELCA emblem on the sign in front of St. John's thirty-three years ago. We walked in the door and knew we were home.



Read more about the Churchwide Assembly

Scan the QR code with the camera on your smartphone.





Dear Mary & Martha

Dear Martha, What is ShelbyNext and how do I access it?—Rachel

Dear Rachel,
ShelbyNext is St. John's membership database. It is helpful to manage member contact information and connect with others. All members can access their own detailed information and access the directory to connect with other members.

Everyone has a unique secure login and can access it on a desktop computer and on the go with the ShelbyNext app.

The more members of the church that use this great tool the more we can be connected. It is very simple to access. To get connected, first use your computer to go to the church website at www.stjohnsbloomington.org, scroll to the bottom of the page and click on 'login.'

If you haven't yet logged on, click "forgot password" and you will be sent an e-mail with instructions. If that doesn't work, call the church office, (309) 827-6121, and Shari or Gudrun can help you get logged in.

Once you have logged in, go to your account and set up a user name and password of your choosing. I suggest you write them down as that will be the same login information for the app. The app on your phone gives you phone numbers, e-mails, and addresses of church members at the touch of a finger.

Go to your App Store and download **ShelbyNext Membership** app. Open the app and it will ask you for a domain name. Type in **stjohnsbloomington**. Log in with the user name and password that you set up in your account. Once you have logged in you will not ever have to log in again.



Log in from either your **computer or smartphone** for the following options:

- **Attendance**—Record your worship attendance
- **Calendar**—View upcoming events
- **Directory**—Contact information for members
- **Giving**—View your giving history and pledges, add a one-time gift, or set up a recurring gift
- **Your profile**—Update your contact information—change of address, phone number or e-mail

Log in from your **computer only** for the following available options:

- **Groups**—Group information and leader; join a group
- **Schedule**—Your schedule reminder

I feel blessed having this information so easily accessible. It saves me time in my busy life. We can demonstrate our love for Christ and others with our actions. What other ShelbyNext questions do you have? Send all your questions about ShelbyNext or other St. John's questions to intouch@stjohnsbloomington.org, and we will respond.

Blessings,
Martha

WRITTEN BY DIANE HALLER

Mission Impact

WRITTEN BY ELIZABETH HAINES

Hopedale Growing Project

The harvest celebration was held in September at Hopedale Mennonite Church. The project boasted a bumper crop of 236 bushels/acre with crop proceeds at \$52,000. Along with St. John's donations last Spring of \$7,650, the total raised was \$59,650 to be sent to Mwenezi, Zimbabwe to support sustainable agriculture. In 2023, the Hopedale Growing Project will celebrate 20 years!

St. John's Youth in Action

- In June 20 students and adults traveled to Port Huron, Michigan, for Work Camp to repair homes for people in need.
- In July 12 youth and three adult leaders traveled to Indiana Wesleyan University for Junior High Camp Mix to dive into Jesus' parables.
- Almost 35 junior and senior high youth and adults packed more than 100 health care kits and 400 school kits for Lutheran World Relief in October.

Stewardship Mailing Team

An impressive number of St. John's members gathered to get the Stewardship pledge cards and narrative budget sent to our congregation.



LWR Ingathering

60 volunteers helped load boxes onto two semi trucks and welcome and feed guests from more than 90 churches.

St. John's 2022 donations

- 246 quilts
- 515 school kits
- 408 personal care kits
- \$1,500 donation

Total donations packed onto trucks

- 3,698 personal care kits
- 3,683 school kits
- 5,764 quilts
- \$14,786 in donations (a record)

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

WRITTEN BY ROGER HELLMAN

Walter Stout

**“Shout for joy to the Lord all the earth.
Worship the Lord with gladness; come before
Him with joyful songs. Know that the Lord is God.
It is He who made us, and we are His; we are His people,
the sheep of his pasture. Enter the gates with thanksgiving
and His courts with praise; give thanks to Him and praise
His name. For the Lord is good and His love endures forever.
His faithfulness continues through all generations.”**



Psalm 100 is highlighted in my Bible as “Rollie’s Psalm” in memory of my dear friend and tenor choir compadre, Rollie Hill. How comforting for me to learn that it is our current choir director and organist, Walter Stout’s directive as well. As one visits with Walter and as anyone who witnesses his compassion and love for God and music will understand, making a joyful noise unto the Lord can dominate one’s life.

Walter joined our St. John’s staff one year ago. While he interviewed for the organist and choir director position, our instrument was scattered in hundreds of pieces, under dust in the basement. He marveled at a congregation that would step out in faith to launch such a building project at the start of a global

pandemic amidst so much uncertainty and knew he wanted to become a part in leading that faith community. He marvels at our progress in just one year and looks forward with excitement, considering our growth potential and musical enhancement opportunities.

Considering Walter’s background, one can describe him as ecumenical. He was baptized and confirmed in the Methodist Church. During an important part of his life while working on his master’s in Tulsa Oklahoma, he credits the organist at the First Presbyterian Church, Ron Pearson, for teaching him organ techniques and worship leadership skills. Many musicians have played important roles in Walter’s life. These include his mother, whom inspired him at an early age with her love of music and skill on

the keyboard and church organ. Walter has served six different denominations in Texas, Oklahoma, and Illinois and has 45 years as a church musician under his belt!

Walter is single, which allows him to concentrate on two things—organ and music. He sees music as playing such an important part of our everyday lives. Outside worship, “music permeates our being.” Inside worship, “it reflects who we are and our love for God.” Walter is proud to be doing something that so few people can do and considers himself fortunate to be able to do something that has been done for so long.

God blessed us one year ago when he sent his servant, Walter to his church in Bloomington, Illinois, and he looks upon us with favor as we continue to make a joyful noise in his glory and honor!



**Watch Walter’s Organ
Recital, recorded on
Sunday, October 30**

**Scan the QR code with the
camera on your smartphone.**

