



inTouch

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

Welcome to *inTouch!* / PASTOR DAVID GLESNE

Welcome to the inaugural issue of *inTouch!* When this idea was first broached, I was thrilled. So much ministry happens in and through St. John's every day that it is sometimes hard to remember it all. We strive to keep you informed of ministry opportunities in education, service, outreach, or worship, but with this publication, we hope to tell the stories of faith generated by these events and ministries so that we may all grow and be blessed by the many ways St. John's lives out the love of God in Christ Jesus.

I hope and pray that you will find inspiration, hope, and ways to connect to God and your family at St. John's through these stories, photos, links, and videos. This first issue is jam-packed; in fact,

we already have lots of ideas lined up for our next edition! We are richly blessed at St. John's to minister in so many ways, and you are a big part of that blessing! With *inTouch*, we now have a way to share this good news with all of you and others as together we seek to live out our mission to engage and equip people to embrace Jesus Christ.

Keep inTouch!
Pastor David



Got feedback?

We want to hear from you! Please let us know how we are doing and what you would like to learn in future issues. You can receive this publication electronically or as a printed copy. If you prefer to change the method you receive inTouch, please let us know! Let's keep *inTouch!*

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Housing Coalition Impact / ELIZABETH HAINES

You may recall St. John's engaged in a collaborative effort with other local churches to secure funding to assist people with housing relief during/after Covid. We committed \$30,000 to the effort and asked our congregation to pitch in. You gave \$12,600 toward the \$30,000 pledge. Thank you!

The Housing Coalition takes care of the people who have no other local, state, or federal agency to turn to. The need is continuing and we have been able to help with direct assistance of \$3,453.06 and another gift to PATH of \$5,000 to cover housing during the excessive cold snaps this past winter. We have \$21,546.04 remaining from our pledge and it will be used. There continue to be people who are months behind on their rent or utilities, so the coalition will be called upon more now than during the height of the pandemic.

To support St. John's efforts to serve the most vulnerable in our community, visit the church website, www.stjohnsbloomington.org, and click the GIVE button. Select the "Special" Fund and the "Local Emergency Relief" Subfund.



Dear Mary & Martha

In the spirit of “Dear Abby,” this advice and answer feature will be based on Biblical accounts in Luke 10:38-42 and John 12:2, giving the reader two different perspectives. Mary and Martha were sisters, who, along with their brother Lazarus, were close friends of Jesus. They had different perspectives as to how to serve and show their faith in God.

Mary sat at the feet of Jesus and put Him first before her other obligations. Martha opened her house to Jesus but was distracted by all of the preparations that needed to be done. Mary reminds us to be prepared for what God needs us to do—put our faith in God, and live our lives as servants of Lord. Martha reminds us to be humble, keep our priorities straight, and to not worry as God will provide. We are all unique and valuable members of God’s family with different priorities, and they all matter.

Dear Mary and Martha,
Why are we building a new shared worship space?—*Dawn in Illinois*

**Dear Dawn,
We need to be prepared and united for what God’s plans are for the members of St. John’s and how he needs us to have faith as to when and why he calls us to be his servants.—Mary**

**Dear Dawn,
God has guided us through this decision and building process. When we left the decision in God’s hands, he spoke through our congregation to have faith and not worry so much and as he has provided guidance and resources needed for this project.—Martha**



In May I met with Fred Render, and what began as a conversation about renovations quickly became a discussion of the recent changes in practices to focus on reusing and recycling to do our part to protect our planet.

Keeping alive the stained glass cross is a blessing we will continue to enjoy. Another blessing is the fact some of the marble from the altar will become a moveable altar table. Some of the pews, office desks, cabinets, and carpet squares found new homes instead of becoming part of a landfill.

With strong encouragement from Pastor Christine McNeal to “go green,” St. John’s started a recycling program. Prior to that everything went into the trash. Numerous energy-saving projects, have also been implemented:

- Converted all lighting to LED with a grant from Ameren.
- Replaced all doors and windows on the south side of the building and added air locks to the Atrium and Noah’s Ark entryways.
- Switched air handling units from pneumatic to digital and added special controls to slowly ramp up and down the blowers.

Living Out Our Faith / ROGER HELLMAN

Committed to expanding the reach of our congregation through ministry by connecting intentionally and learning together, I witnessed a Pentecostal experience on May 12 when a small group of St. John’s members re-emerged from the year-long pandemic. Recognizing that we were safely together with all members being fully vaccinated, we removed our face masks and breathed a sigh of relief and, once again, enjoyed seeing the faces of our friends. I couldn’t help but feel that this sense of relief was similar to the peace and security that the early Christians experienced that we read about in the Book of Acts. Like them, we each felt the warmth and security of being around fellow Christians. As they were enlightened and gifted with dedicated leaders, so were we. As they were facing incredible challenges and personal struggles, so were we. And as they felt the power of the Holy Spirit, so did each one of us.

My dear friends, it is so powerful and provides me with so much confidence to experience his presence through this small group Bible study. You may have doubts and experience despair about what goes on in our world, but Christians encourage each other when we come together to study his Word, and we have had the privilege of doing this for more than 2,000 years! The core value of learning is essential and amazing. Consider making this a priority today. God blesses each of us with the amazing gifts of his Spirit and the precious gift of fellow Christians!

St. John’s is a congregation that cherishes and honors the past, loves its present, but most importantly, believes there is more to come! With the gift of the Holy Spirit enriching our lives daily, God’s church its people will thrive!



“Christians encourage each other when we come together to study his Word...”

Submit your questions to intouch@stjohnsbloomington.org.



To learn more about St. John’s Small Groups, contact Melissa Drobnak, melissa@stjohnsbloomington.org, or call the church office, (309) 827-6121.

Mission Impact

/ VICKIE ROBERTSON, MISSION OUTREACH MINISTRY TEAM

Zambia Education Fund

Each year, St. John's assists pastors of the ELC-Zambia synod by sending a financial gift to help with their children's education expenses. The pastors have called this their greatest need. This helps them to spend time building their congregations and spreading the Gospel in Zambia. St. John's has been helping the 20 pastors of this small synod in Zambia with funds to pay school fees for their children. As the children have grown older, the cost has increased. High schools are not near the children's homes, so students must pay for room and board during the week. St. John's is the only contributor to this fund. Our first contribution was in 2011, and the total given through 2020 has grown to \$84,750! The members of St. John's have been so generous!

The Mission Outreach team coordinates this effort under the leadership of Connie Moll. For more information about this mission, contact Connie, conniemoll2014@gmail.com.



Scan the QR code with the camera on your phone to watch a video about Zambia Education Fund.



Hopedale Growing Project

Hopedale Growing Project is an ecumenical, city/rural partnership between the Hopedale Mennonite Church and St. John's Lutheran Church to help fight world hunger. This project works through Growing Hope Globally, the Christian non-profit organization that encourages volunteer groups like the Hopedale Growing Project and 200 other growing projects across the country to raise money to fund projects in developing countries that help grow lasting solutions to hunger. The program offers training 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.

Each year the Hopedale farmers raise a crop on 34 acres near their church, dedicating the proceeds to an agricultural training project in Zimbabwe. St. John's raises money to offset the costs of raising the crop. Specifically, the money we raise goes toward the \$4,760 cost to rent the farmland. Local businesses donate the seed, fertilizer, chemicals, and other costs. Hopedale farmers contribute the labor, fuel, and equipment to plant and harvest the crop.

Since 2005, St. Johns has donated more than \$80,000 to the Hopedale Growing Project. We also enjoy the Fall Harvest Celebration each year on the grounds of Hopedale Mennonite Church where we get a chance to meet those who administer the program.

If you'd like more information, contact St. John's Mission Outreach team member Steve BeMiller, smbemiller@msn.com.



Scan the QR code with the camera on your phone to watch a video about Hopedale Growing Project.



STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Gudrun Dunt Member Care Coordinator

Gudrun considers it a privilege to serve the congregation in this role, which has evolved over time. Since 2008, when she began her focus on membership and new member classes, the leadership and staff identified that Gudrun possessed pastoral gifts. At that time Lee Hulsether was the office manager and a mentor who helped Gudrun develop her gifts.

Years later Pastor Christine McNeal encouraged Gudrun to enroll in the Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) internship. This opportunity was a community-based internship, with classes and other tasks over a nine month period. St. John's fully supported her in this endeavor. Gudrun believes this was a learning opportunity and tied well with her role as Befriender Ministry Coordinator.

Through the Caring Connections program created by Pastor Anne Christiansen, Gudrun rediscovered her love of writing. This program focused on checking in with members over the age of 70 with weekly letters. Gudrun matches up caregivers with those needing care by using her gifts of the Spirit.

Gudrun feels that one of the blessing that came out of the pandemic was with the weekly Prayer Gathering on Thursday mornings. Prior to the pandemic, the prayer gathering was held in person, sometimes small in number. By moving the gathering online via Zoom, the prayer group members could still be connected even though some had moved to Texas and Michigan!



Q&A

Will you tell us about your family?

I've been married to Scott for 39 years, and we have two adult children: Alex (married to Abby) Dunt and Emily (married to Bobby) Freitag. We are also proud grandparents to Cora, Ellie, Luke, and Gabe, with another grandbaby due in September, and they're all local!

Where did you grow up?

I was born in Germany and moved to the United States at age 8. I grew up in the suburbs of Chicago.

Favorite vacation spot?

Northern Wisconsin—we spend a few days at the Dells with the grandkids.

Favorite hobby?

Gardening, cooking, reading historical novels and biographies.

What was your first job?

I worked for an insurance agency near Chicago.