



The Journal Express, August, 2020

"...pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective."
James 5:16b

Dear St. John's Church members and friends,

Here is what I know: we're all in this together! There is a lot of beauty in remembering this. While the feelings of loneliness are real, none of us is alone and all of us are the community and family of faith that make up St. John's Lutheran Church as we travel together through this pandemic. I truly hope you are praying for your church friends and staying in touch with them over the phone and email. With an uncertain end-date to a global pandemic we are going through at this time in history, this is how we will stay together and strong as a community of faith most effectively and faithfully. #OneStJohns

I want to share some key perspectives with you this month.

One, please know we are mindful of the many people who want to get back to doing things in-person as a church. I hear you and honor you when you say, "I sure wish we could be back in church" or "Can't our ministry team or quilting group start meeting again?" Friends, I wish we could just as much as you do! But, we're just not there yet. The data on COVID prevents us from doing this safely.

Our Return Team is working smartly on creating protocols and timelines for this. I ask you to put your trust and confidence in this wise, intelligent, and caring group of leaders here at church. Their mission, above all else, is to keep us as a whole congregation as safe as is warranted by the conditions of COVID in our local area. Right now, cases are still on the rise in Minnesota, especially in Dakota County. In fact, Dakota County is one of the key hot spots, unfortunately. We cannot let down our guard, especially now. In order to get us back to regular things most quickly, please wear a mask at all times outside of your home, wash your hands frequently, don't go to restaurants, bars, and other places where groups of people congregate, and read news from trusted sources and experts so you are up on current information and projections about COVID. We all have to do our part, otherwise what we do will be for naught. Thank you, and stay strong in your care for your neighbors and for yourself.

Two, in just a week or so, our Office Manager, Jill Fiereck's, 22-year tenure here at St. John's will come to an end and she will join the ranks of the retired. Jill, we can't tell you how much we appreciate the good years and good work you have shared at St. John's. You have been a delightful person greeting folks at church for two decades. We wish you nothing but the best in your retirement! And, we will miss you.

With Jill's retirement, we are happy to announce that we have hired Candy Nordine as our new Office Manager. Candy comes with a great deal of church office experience and will be a terrific addition to our staff team. Candy starts her work on Mon., Aug. 24, but, of course, will be doing the vast majority of it electronically and virtually. We will find a suitable time and way to celebrate Jill's tenure here at church (watch your upcoming e-blasts for more information), as well as a suitable time to welcome Candy publicly. Either way, welcome, Candy, to St. John's and to our staff team!

Finally, our fall season is nearly upon us. We are re-imagining everything. Read this Journal Express and upcoming e-blasts for updated information. We will continue to worship Sundays via drive-in parking lot worship and will do this as far into the fall as is feasible. Thank you for not only bearing with us but for continuing to participate as vigorously as you can, staying faithful with your offerings, and praying for our world, our nation, our community, and our church. Thank you, friends, for being the family of faith at St. John's in Lakeville. We love you, we miss our in-person time together, we care about you, and we long for the day we can be back together. It will happen! So, let our prayers in these weeks and months be that "the prayers of the righteous are powerful and effective." #OneStJohns

In God's love,

Pastor Andy



Candy Nordine

Return Team update:

The Return Team continues to meet weekly to discuss and establish protocol for St. John's ministry activity. Currently, the team continues to provide protocol for several outdoor activities but no indoor activities (with the exception of funerals, weddings, and the public primary election voting that took place on Aug. 11, based both on St. John's internal protocol and election precinct protocol).

The team has established protocols for Children, Youth, and Family (CYF) summer and fall outdoor activities, including sidewalk Sunday School, youth group bonfires, the early weeks of Affirm/confirmation (6th-9th grade) and Ablaze (5th grade), and even Confirmation Sunday and First Communion Sunday. The aforementioned funeral and wedding protocols address both indoor and outdoor services for these mission-critical pastoral care events.

The team continues to address current local conditions and is working on worship protocol for when conditions allow for safe in-person, indoor weekly worship to happen again.

We are grateful for the congregation's prayers and patience. We continue to rely on the Holy Spirit's guidance and do our work in the context of prayer, faith, and the best information available to us from the science and epidemiology community. Thank you, St. John's congregation.

For the most up-to-date information, go to the St. John's website (www.sjlcl.org) to watch our weekly update video and to go to the Return Team page.

The St. John's Return Team

CYF Updates from Amanda Boe:

Hello St. John's Families!

I hope this letter finds you and your families well! This education year is one like none of us have ever faced. Receiving the email from our school district's announcement recently, some of us may feel relieved, nervous, or disappointed. Most of our kids will only be attending school two days a week and some will be at home doing online learning. We have many parents who are teachers in our school districts and many families who are struggling to figure out how to work from home and be a teacher three days a week. As this new reality sinks in and we all try to navigate our new future ahead let me share with you what our High School youth group talked about this past week then when things feel uncertain it is good to be reminded of what is certain! We are LOVED (John 3:16), We are FORGIVEN (Matthew 26:27-28), God is our HELP (Psalm 121) and God will give us DIRECTION (Psalm 119:05) As a staff, we have spent many weeks discerning what to do for our Fall Faith programming and our hope is that amidst the uncertainty we can provide solid faith programs that will weather any type of COVID climate this fall.

A Return Team <https://www.sjlcl.org/return-team-2020> was put in place to create COVID protocols for church programs and our eventual return to indoor events. All of the following programs have been approved by their very careful work and diligence. I am very appreciative of the collaboration between staff, the Children Youth and Family Team, and the Return Team to assure that all programs met CDC guidelines.

It is with a joyful and thankful heart that I share with you our plans for fall programming, you will find summaries of each program and registration information will be on the website. Registration will be very important this year as we will need to make sure we have two current emails for each student.

Sunday School: Preschool-4th Grade

Overview of Family Sidewalk Sunday School: We will begin Sunday School September 13 with our new Family Sidewalk Sunday School format. Family SideWalk Sunday School will be at 8:30 am or 9:45 am, before and after our 9:00 am parking lot worship. Families will sign up ahead and find their "reserved" spot on the sidewalk, distanced 6 feet from other family groups. Then they will have leaders come by with story time, puppets, science and all sorts of faithful fun for the whole family. Families will act as their children's teachers for this format. We hope to continue this format outside for 6 weeks, we will evaluate it with our Return Team and come up with a new plan that will begin November 1. Please reach out to Amanda with any questions or concerns amanda@sjlcl.org

More details for Family Sidewalk Sunday School:

Outdoor Family Sidewalk Sunday School for first 6 Sundays. Sept.13, 20, 27, October 4, 11, 18.
General Format Information:

- Family Sunday School will be 8:30-9:00 am and also 9:45-10:15am with parking lot worship at 9:00am.
- Families with children pre-k-4th grade will be invited to join us.
- Families will sign up on a sign up genius to indicate what time slot and reserve a spot on the sidewalk. <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/9040f4badaf22a6f58-sidewalk>
- Families will bring their own chairs, wear masks and be seated on the sidewalk facing the parking lot. There will be two sections of families: East side and West side. Each section will have families spread out at least 6 feet apart.

- Station leaders will move to the two sections in rotations.
- Live Facebook or Youtube options will be available each day if you prefer to stay home and do an online format.
- We will evaluate in October to determine what program style we will use in November and December.

Ablaze: 5th grade

Where? This group will be part of our Outdoor Camp Classroom at St. John's. Refer to the chart, found on the homepage at www.sjlcl.org, in the Covid Program Procedures to find your drop off location and campfire location.

When? They will meet outside for the first three Wednesdays at 6:30-7:15 pm, September 16, 23, and 30.

What? Our 5th graders will blaze their own new trail as the first Ablaze group that will be a 5th grade only group! Our 6th graders will be moving on to Affirm. We surveyed our Ablaze families and they still want to continue the tradition of moving out of Sunday School at the end of 4th grade and into a Wednesday night program. This is a fun, active group of kids that are excited to return to faith programming! Ablaze will be a transitional year from Sunday School to Affirm. We will cover the entire Bible using the Action Bible and teach kids how to use the Bible Gateway App on their phones to encourage them to be fluent daily readers of the Bible. On Maundy Thursday that will receive their First Communion and participate in the beloved tradition at St. John's of cup making and bread making to prepare for this faith milestone.

Action Steps!

- Register your child for this program.
- Read and Review the Covid procedures for this event.
- Bring your own Bible, mask and chair.
- Please reach out to Amanda with any questions at amanda@sjlcl.org Thank you!

Affirm: 6th-9th grade

Where? This group will be part of our Outdoor Camp Classroom at St. John's. Refer to the chart, found on the homepage at www.sjlcl.org, in the Covid Program Procedures to find your drop off location and campfire location.

When? The first three Wednesdays at 6:30-7:15 pm, September 16, 23, and 30 with an online option from 7:30-8:00 pm.

What? Affirm is moving towards a four year model with 6th-8th graders in one large group with small groups (which reflects a middle school model) and 9th graders (who are in high school) into something called Affirm Plus, which will concentrate on building leadership skills in faith.

Action Steps!

- Save the date!

Affirm students and their families are invited to a **Zoom Affirm Expectations Meeting**. We will go through the calendar to learn about the new nuts and bolts of confirmation ministry. There are two options available:

- **Wednesday, September 9 at 6:00 pm or 7:00 pm**
- **Sunday, September 13 at 10:30 am**

If you have any questions, please ask Pastor Heather pastorheather@sjlcl.org. Thank you!

Affirm Plus, 9th grade

Where? This group will be part of our Outdoor Camp Classroom at St. John's. Refer to the chart, found on the homepage at www.sjlcl.org, in the Covid Program Procedures to find your drop off location and campfire location.

When? The first three Wednesdays at 6:30-7:15 pm, September 16, 23, and 30 with an online option from 7:30-8:00 pm.

What? St. John's 9th grade this year will be the first to move into our new model of Affirm. They will celebrate their Affirmation of Baptism in the spring. During this transitional year of Affirm Plus we will guide and encourage them to be strong leaders and active in youth ministry service projects, mission trips and fun fellowship activities! They will do many activities with the High School Youth Group including a new mentor program! Each 9th grader will have a Senior High School mentor that will invite them to events and serve as role models in faith leadership!

Action Steps!

- Register for this program.
- Read and Review the Covid procedures for this event.
- Bring your own Bible, mask and chair.
- Attend **Zoom Affirm Expectations Meeting**. There are two options available:
- **Wednesday, September 9 at 6:00 pm or 7:00 pm**
- **Sunday, September 13 at 10:30 am**

Please reach out to Amanda with any questions at amanda@sjlcl.org Thank you!

Youth Group! 10th-12th grade

Where? This group will be part of our Outdoor Camp Classroom at St. John's. Refer to the chart, found on the homepage at www.sjlcl.org, in the Covid Program Procedures to find your drop off location and campfire location.

When? This group will meet outside for the first three Wednesdays at 6:30-7:15 pm, September 16, 23, and 30 with an online option from 7:30-8:00 pm.

What? We will continue to focus on equipping this group with the skills to have a long and growing relationship with God. We will focus on building relationships with each other, service for others and leadership skills. We will have many opportunities for service projects, mission trips and fun fellowship activities! We will do this with daily check-ins, ice-breaker games, Bible verse and a devotional using the Bible Gateway App and Lutheran Study Bible. Our Senior High School Students will serve as 9th grade mentors solidifying their faith leadership skills!

Action Steps!

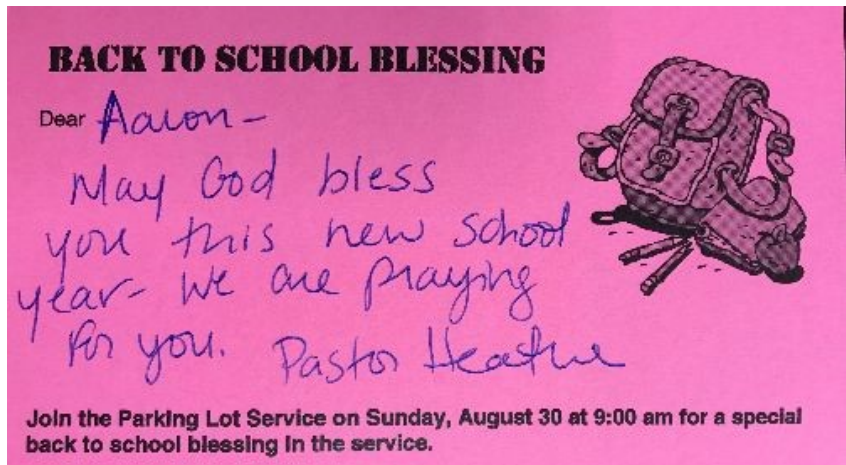
- Read and Review the Covid procedures for this event.
- Bring your own Bible, mask and chair.
- Youth should reach out to Amanda to update their contact information to become part of the St. John's youth group chat!

Contact Amanda Boe with any questions at amanda@sjlcl.org Thank you!

Back to School Blessing for students and educators is Sunday, August 30 at the 9:00 am Parking Lot service.

We are looking for people to write a special blessing to our students. Postcards are preaddressed and are provided. Pastors will be handing them out at the parking lot services on Sundays or you can pick up some too from church, just let Pastor Heather know. Here is what you do with the postcard:

1. Fill in "Dear" with either the student(s) name(s), or friend, or student.
2. Write them a blessing. Start with something like "May God bless you...." or "May God's love...." Or "This school year...."
3. Don't forget to sign your name.
4. Add a stamp and toss in the mail. It's that simple. For any questions, please contact Pastor Heather at pastorheather@sjlcl.org.



Scrip Card Sales: A Special Plea to SJLCL Members & Friends

Because of the current situation of having limited in-person contact, our Scrip card sales have nearly ground to a halt. At this time we would like to substantially reduce the number of cards that we have on hand. Most of them are for businesses that we use every day, including groceries, gas, home improvement, restaurants (think take-out), and coffee treats. **Our Global Missions Team is asking for your help, by purchasing some cards.** You receive the full value of the cards and they do not expire. You may send your request to Pastor Heather at pastorheather@sjlcl.org. She can deliver them to you after the Sunday morning parking lot service. If that method does not work for you, we will find a way that does. Please keep in mind that the profits from these sales help support the building of the medical dispensary in our partner village in Muhanga, Tanzania, where they now have to walk a number of hours in difficult mountainous terrain just to receive minimal services. When the clinic is completed the Tanzanian government will supply a doctor. **This will, no doubt, save lives!** Thank you for your support.

Available cards:

- **\$100** Kwik Trip
- **\$25** Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Bath & Body Works, Buffalo Wild Wings, Chili's, Chipotle, Cracker Barrel, Fleet Farm, Holiday Gas, Home Depot, I-Tunes/Apple, Kwik Trip, Old Navy/Gap, Olive Garden, Panera Bread, Red Lobster, Shutterfly, Speedway, Starbucks, Taco Bell, Target, TJ Maxx, Marshall's/Home Goods, Under Armour
- **\$20** Little Caesars Pizza
- **\$15** I-Tunes/Apple
- **\$10** Barnes & Noble, Bath & Body Works, Buffalo Wild Wings, Chipotle, Dairy Queen, Domino's, Dunkin Donuts, Great Harvest Bread, IHOP, Noodles & Company, Panera Bread, Papa John's, Papa Murphy's, Pizza Hut, Smashburger, Starbucks, Subway, Taco Bell, Target
- **\$5** Barnes and Noble, Panera Bread, Taco Bell