



End of Year Voice 2020

From Our Pastors

Dear Beloved of God:

As Governor Walz called for renewed restrictions to curb the uncontrolled spread of COVID-19, our state was in the “red” zone, and officials anticipated that the next several weeks would be difficult. Northfield School District has also moved to distance learning for all ages until at least January.

This news arrived as we your pastors have been hearing of church members and neighbors who are ill from the virus. We are deeply concerned for the physical, mental and spiritual health of our community.

During the late summer and early fall we enjoyed outdoor events with you, and as staff we have been dreaming about some options for our holiday celebrations as a congregation. Sadly, we had to shelve many of these ideas, but we remain committed to offering safe opportunities for connection, worship and prayer in the days ahead.

In this newsletter you will find the full schedule for worship for this Advent/Christmas season.

Until circumstances change, the restriction that we as a church need to attend to is this: indoor **and** outdoor social gatherings are now limited to 10 people from no more than 3 separate households. While these restrictions do not apply to religious worship **services**, they eliminate the possibility of in-person board meetings, circle meetings, or youth gatherings for the foreseeable future.

As your pastors we have heard many of you say “you must be so busy.” While it is true that our days have continued to be full during this pandemic, connecting with you continues to be the core of our work. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you need to talk, if you are struggling with mental health or practical needs, or if you want ideas about how to help our community during this time.

As Pastor Jonathan said in his children’s sermon on Sunday, November 8, it is vital that we as a church “**en-courage**” one another during this time. Give one another courage, lean on the courage of others when you need it, and know that as we enter the Advent season of hope, Christ will be our light.

Pastors Pam Fickenscher and Jonathan Davis





Events Happening in Our Church this Advent/Christmas Season and 2020 Updates



Advent Fair Drive-Thru at St. John's! Wednesday, December 2, 6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Celebrate the start of the Advent Season by joining us for St. John's Advent Fair Drive-Thru! From your car, enjoy the beautiful Christmas lights and luminaries placed around the church building, while stopping at different stations along the way. The event starts at the corner of Popular and Third Streets with a Welcome Greeting!

Stops along the way:

- **BINGO Hunt** – on your drive, find all the items on your BINGO card (anyone find the flamingo?)
- **Winter Clothing Drive for the CAC** - Donate new or clean gently used winter outerwear for children and adults - winter coats, mittens, scarves, gloves, snow boots, snow pants. No holes or stains and all items should have working zippers, snaps, and buttons.
- **Christmas Music**
- **Children's Nativity Craft** – a wooden nativity craft project, including paint and instructions. One per household. Please let Julie know if you'd like one by emailing Children@StJohnsNorthfield.org.
- **Christmas Card Project** - Send a Christmas card to a St. John's member who would enjoy knowing they are in someone's thoughts and prayers. Stop by and receive an addressed envelope, card, and instructions.
- **CAC Food Drive Donations** - Drop off items for the CAC/St. John's Blessing Box. Check out what items are needed most at: <https://communityactioncenter.org/files/CAC-5-Most-Wanted-Flyer.pdf>
- **Take-Home Christmas Craft**
- **Treat Bags**
- **Christmas Eve Service Candles/Glow Stick** – pick-up a candle/glow stick for the Christmas Eve Eucharist via Zoom.
- **Blessing and Sending/Advent Devotions**

Thank you for your monetary donations to Operation Joy this year! The CAC will use these funds to purchase \$50 gift cards to give to our Northfield families in need for Christmas.



Poinsettia Orders

A limited number of poinsettias are now available to sponsor. These will decorate the Sanctuary for the Christmas services. If you would like to order a poinsettia in honor or memory of someone, or in celebration of Christmas, please email Leah Garlie at office@StJohnsNorthfield.org or call 612-532-6863.

Intention for Giving 2021

If you would like to submit your intent to give to St. John's for 2021, please fill out the stewardship form found on the church website, or contact Lean Garlie at office@StJohnsNorthfield.org or call 612-532-6863.

Children's Ministry

Virtual Sunday school continues for grades K-5 in December.

Join us for Virtual Sunday school, Sunday mornings, 10:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m., December 6, 13, 20 for kids in grades K-5. Stop by the Advent Fair Drive-Thru to pick up the Sunday school packet for December. Contact Julie Brehmer at children@StJohnsNorthfield.org if you would like the Zoom link. All kids welcome!

Also, check out the Preschool Sunday School videos on St. John's website, www.StJohnsNorthfield.org. A special thank you to Arielle Loy for creating the videos.

Youth Ministry

Middle school and High school youth have continued to meet virtually for Confirmation class and Sunday Youth Group. Additionally, small backyard bonfire gatherings were enjoyed throughout the fall, until the new COVID-19 guidelines halted them until further notice. Below is the schedule for the Advent/Christmas season:

- **November** - TORCH Project care packages service project
- **December 9** - Confirmation Class via Zoom -Topic: Money; The Joy of Sharing
- **December 29** - No Sunday Youth Group gathering
- **January** - Virtual January Term Confirmation (*More info to come!*)

There may also be opportunities for our youth to serve at the CAC during this winter season. We ask parents to continue to follow our e-mails for more updates. Contact Emmanuel Kaghondi at youth@StJohnsNorthfield.org with any questions.



From Stephen Ministry

Holiday Mental Health: Comfort and joy . . . or anxiety?

These are _____ times that make me feel _____.

How would you fill in those blanks? Uncertain...uncomfortable? Challenging... worried? Scary... anxious? Desperate...panicky?

All of those responses may be appropriate; recognizing and acknowledging each of them as legitimate may be helpful as we find our way through 2020's dark holidays. Measures of physical health, of recovery and death, are the headlines every day, and our mental health shapes how we manage that information, as well as our own possible COVID-19 experiences.

Stephen Ministers have invited Naomi Bartley, a licensed professional clinical counselor (<http://naomibartley.com>), to be our guest for a virtual gathering on **Tuesday, December 15, at 7:00 p.m.** She will host a conversation around handling the losses and fears that characterize daily life as we now know it. Sally Lindell, our Parish Nurse, will also be involved.

Everyone is welcome to join the meeting! Check early December E-Voice notices for the Zoom link.

Annual Meeting Will Be Held Remotely On January 31, 2021

During its October meeting, the Church Council, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, passed a motion to hold the 2021 annual meeting of the Congregation remotely via Zoom on Sunday, January 31, at 10:30 a.m. The Executive Committee is working on the logistics of how to implement the meeting, including use of the polling feature of Zoom for voting on motions and electing a slate of Board and Church Council members. Attendance via telephone dial-in will be possible, so having an internet connection is not required. Formal announcement of the meeting, including instructions for attending, will be made in mid-January.



Deaths

September 19, 2020
David Halvorson

September 26, 2020
Jacquelyn Detlie

October 5, 2020
Gloria Kiester

October 16,2020
Berta Diem

October 19, 2020
Mary Beth Bremer

October 30, 2020
Kathryn Haugen

November 11, 2020
Maxine Petrick

November 15, 2020
Dick Beckman

November 18 ,2020
Jon Rondestvedt



From St. John's Women

During 2020, St. John's Women have continued working on a number of projects that provide items for those in need both locally and globally. As a result of these efforts, they are responsible for making and donating the following this past year:

- 40 quilts to Lutheran World Relief and Community Action Center
- 46 sweaters, 116 caps, and two baby blankets to World Vision's Knit for Kids
- 20 caps and 10 quilted baby blankets to Community Action Center
- 18 sweaters with matching hats and baby blankets with matching hats to Ruth's House
- 110 Personal Care Kits to Lutheran World Relief
- As soon as able, they will compile and deliver 50+ Baby Care Kits to LWR

Thank you to all who have given your time, donations, efforts, and generosity for the completion of these projects!

October Red Cross Blood Drive Update

On October 28 and 29, St. John's hosted the Red Cross Blood Drive for Carleton College in our spacious St. John's Hall, as the college was unable to host on its campus due to COVID-19 restrictions. During the drive we safely welcomed 88 donors and collected 85 pints of blood – a complete success and a vital service, especially considering the increased need in the community for blood during this time.

Property and Grounds

On Saturday, October 31, several volunteers assisted in the annual fall clean-up at St. John's. The weather was mild that day, and a lot of good work was accomplished in a small amount of time. Leaves and debris were cleared from the parking lots, and the gardens were cut back and tidied up. **Thank you** to all who helped with keeping the grounds of our church clean and presentable!

Holden Village 2021?

With a hopeful stance toward next summer, we are pondering a St. John's trip to Holden Village in 2021. If pandemic-possible, Holden would be open to cohorts for 5 night stays. An all-inclusive price would include the boat ticket, meals, room, and programming. Guests would be responsible for their own travels to and from Chelan Washington (Field's Point). If you are interested in being part of a group that could gather at Holden, contact Pastor Pam Fickenscher. Registration has not been opened, but we want to be ready when it is.



Community Action Center Update

As some of you might already know, the Community Action Center (CAC) in Northfield has been at the center of the COVID-19 crisis this year. Over the past 7 months, the CAC has been navigating a sky-rocketing need for assistance to families and individuals, as well as organizing a Northfield community taskforce of care, for when the virus surges in our community.

This spring, the CAC organized and mobilized so that community members could still access the food shelf and financial assistance services in a way that was safe, yet still relational. They created 3 teams out of their staff, who would rotate working remotely and working on-site, so that in the event of an outbreak among staff – two teams would still be available to provide services. In the midst of restricting how to provide these services, the CAC has had to navigate a staggering increase in need in our community.

Here are some quick facts: In May, the CAC was serving 315 families per month. By September, that number climbed to around 750 families per month. Historically, the CAC has provided about 50 nights of hotel shelter per year. By October, they had already provided over 400 nights of hotel shelter in just the past 6 months. Perhaps the most staggering statistic is this: By April the CAC had spent around \$10,000 on housing assistance. However, by October, the CAC was nearing \$140,000 spent on housing assistance. They are already on track to spend 17 year's worth of housing aid in 2020 alone.

In the midst of this, the CAC has continued to focus on the need for affordable housing in Northfield. As part of our 150th Anniversary, St. John's provided a grant to the CAC for an affordable housing project, now known as Hillcrest Village. Hillcrest Village will contain 17 housing units – 3 emergency housing, 6 transitional housing, and 8 affordable housing. This project is still developing, but the CAC hopes to break ground in the summer of 2021. Expect to hear more about how St. John's and you can invest in this need in our community.

Throughout this unprecedented year, the CAC has expanded to reflect the growing needs of the community. The CAC is one of our ministry partners and St. John's is committed to continuing to support them as they compassionately care for our community in these challenging times. **Thank you** for the support you have given and continue to give to the CAC through donations and volunteer hours!

Habitat for Humanity

In 2021, Habitat for Humanity of Rice County will launch new Faith Builds projects in Northfield. They are seeking members of local faith communities to surround this effort with 365 days of prayers from December 1, 2020 through November 30, 2021. **You can sign up to be one of the 365 people praying by going to <https://habitatricecounty.org/>**



Advent / Christmas Worship Schedule

Join us via livestream at www.StJohnsNorthfield.org or by radio at KYMN 95.1 FM / 1080 AM for the following services:

Sunday, November 22 – Christ the King Sunday

9:00 a.m. Worship via livestream and radio

10:30 a.m. Thanksgiving Eucharist via Zoom

Following worship, join us on Zoom for a communion service by remote connection. As we celebrate Christ the King and end the liturgical year together, we pause for a moment of thanksgiving, prayer, and communion. Prepare your own table for bread and wine and see the church website calendar for the Zoom link.

Sunday, November 29 – First Sunday of Advent

9:00 a.m. Worship via livestream and radio

Sunday, December 6 – Second Sunday of Advent

9:00 a.m. Worship via livestream and radio

Wednesday, December 9 – Advent Vespers service

6:30 p.m. Join the livestream to sing the beloved Holden Evening Vespers.

Sunday, December 13 – Third Sunday of Advent

9:00 a.m. Worship via livestream and radio

Wednesday, December 16 – Advent Vespers service

6:30 p.m. Join the livestream to sing the beloved Holden Evening Vespers.

Sunday, December 20 – Fourth Sunday of Advent

9:00 a.m. Worship via livestream and radio



Thursday, December 24 – Christmas Eve

5:00 p.m. Worship via livestream and radio

7:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Eucharist via Zoom

Following worship, join us on Zoom for a communion service by remote connection. On this holy night we gather together as a remote community for a time of prayer, candlelight, and communion. Prepare your own table for bread and wine and see the church website calendar for the Zoom link. Candles and glow sticks for this time together will be available to pick up outside the church beginning Sunday, December 20.

Friday, December 25 – Christmas Day

10:00 a.m. Worship via livestream and radio

Sunday, December 27 – First Sunday after Christmas

9:00 a.m. Worship via livestream and radio

