



May 2020 Newsletter

From Our Pastors

Dear People of God:

Over the past 2 months, our lives have been upended. All of us have grieved losses large and small, and we face futures we could not have imagined at the beginning of 2020.

Yet in this time, we have seen some of the greatest truths of our faith lived out more powerfully:

The church is people. While our building has been closed, you, the people of God, have knit prayer shawls and sewn masks and called the vulnerable and delivered gifts and written words of love, showing over and over again that God's love is proclaimed by every action of God's people.

We are one body. When one part of the body rejoices, we all rejoice. When one part suffers loss, so do all of us. You have found many ways to embrace each other through Easter, Mother's Day, anniversaries, births, surgeries, landmark birthdays, and deaths of loved ones. The creativity and intention it takes to do these things differently makes them all the more profound.

Our time is in God's hands. Never before has it been so difficult to plan for the future, but even so you have given faithfully to ministry and to those in need. Your church leadership has continued to meet and to pray for our community as we are in this moment, trusting that God will walk with us in the future too.

As we write this, we are continuing to dream of what might be possible for ministry in the weeks and months ahead. In this mini-newsletter you will hear about some of what has already happened. We invite you to be part of the journey ahead as we lean creatively into being God's people in this time.

– Pastor Pam Fickenscher and Pastor Jonathan Davis

Events Happening in our Church During the Stay At Home Order

Children's Ministry



May Day Delivery! May Day baskets were hand delivered to St. John's Sunday school children on May 1st. They contained a seed pod, soil and sunflower seeds to grow at home. Thank you for supporting the Blessing Box! We've received many food and hygiene donations over the past two months. Keep the donations coming! - Julie Brehmer, Director of Children's Ministry

Youth Ministry

Youth groups continue to connect weekly via Zoom for confirmation, faith talk, music reflections, and hang out games. We delivered TORCH packages to 10 college students this



month. Many thanks to the youth and families who helped put together the packages! We are planning to continue reaching out to the community as the situation allows. - Emmanuel Kaghondi, Director of Ministry with Youth & Families

COVID-19 Calling Team



Since the rules of physical distancing began mid-March, a group of St. John's members has stepped up to reach out by phone to the congregation. Pastor Fickenscher provides updates and a prayer each week, and Angie Gehring serves to answer questions and provide resources when needed. 24 individuals have called to check in on members and pray with them. Each of these people has continued to call some of these households

weekly. The calling team had its own Zoom meeting on April 30th. One caller said, "I've made a new friend!" Another said, "I didn't know some of the people on my list, but now I can't wait until we can sit down and have coffee together." Thanks to this fabulous team for their ministry of care! - Pastor Pam Fickenscher

St. John's Blood Drive

Our blood drive on May 14th was a complete success! With COVID-19 precautions in place, we accepted donors only by appointment. Even so, we exceeded our goal by 5 units collecting a total of 32 units of blood! Considering each unit of blood can help up to 3 patients, that is potentially 96 people that will be positively impacted by our blood drive. A big thank you to our volunteers: Andrea Hoff, Amy McBroom, Siri Lindell, and Peder Lindell in addition to all of our generous donors!

-Sally Lindell, Parish Nurse



May 2020

Mask-Maker Supplies Pick-Up and Drop-Off in St. John's Parking Lot

During the past several weeks, the St. John's parking lot has been used Monday evenings 4 – 5 p.m. for the pick-up of mask making materials and the drop-off of newly sewn masks. So far, 80 + people have made over 10,000 of these specially designed masks containing a protective surgical wrap lining. The masks go to the hospital and long-term care providers. This effort has been spearheaded and coordinated by St. John's member and nurse, Lynette Marks, working with other community volunteers. If you would like to assist in making masks or in donating 100% cotton fabric (more is needed), please contact her. The pick-up is now taking place every other week, with the next date being May 25th.

Properties and Grounds Update



During the shut-down, Doug Child has completed painting projects that would have taken longer if not for being “closed for business.” These include work done at the entrances of Doors #1 and #2, and along the stairway outside of the Sanctuary up to the second floor. The sidewalk outside Door #10 is also being replaced, as there were multiple tripping hazards there. Each spring this area floods, so a trench drain is being installed to empty into the street storm sewer. Since the city of Northfield is already replacing the curb and sidewalk on this

corner, it saves our church from having to replace it. All should drive by to check out the “Common Garden” outside of Door #2. It is especially pretty these days with the flowers that Pat and Herb Fick and Leif Knecht have planted there. Thanks to all who help maintain and beautify our church grounds. - Tim Byers, Facility Manager

Finances Update

Dear Members of St. Johns,

We are writing with an update on St. John's finances as of April 30th. Our expenses YTD are \$313,700, which is about \$6,000 less than anticipated in the 2020 budget.

Our income YTD is \$302,200, or about \$11,500 less than expenses. A shortfall of this magnitude is not unusual at this point in the year, so we are glad to be able to report that, due to your conscientiousness, our financial situation two months into the COVID-19 pandemic is sound.

Nevertheless, we are cautious as we look forward, knowing that we are in a period of financial uncertainty for many. To this end, the Church Council has instructed our Boards to limit spending to the most essential items for the time being. Furthermore, the Council, as encouraged by the ELCA and the SE Minnesota Synod, has applied for and received funding under the federal government's Paycheck Protection Program in the amount of \$113,000. These dollars will cover 2 months of our payroll expenses for the year and free up some congregational support for other aspects of our ministry.

We are grateful for the congregation's dedication and generosity in supporting the mission of St. John's and encourage you to continue to give as you are able in the weeks and months ahead.

– David Nitz, Congregation President and Martha Erickson, Treasurer

Welcome to St. John's!

Here are the members of the Accompany Newcomer Gatherings. Welcomers & Newcomers initially gathered in person, and now gather through Zoom meetings. – Christy Hall-Holt, Welcome Ministry Coordinator



**Stephanie & Brian Bennett
Madelynn and James (J.R.)**



**Amy & Chris Tacheny
Andrew and Noah**



**Carol
Hollen**



**Regina & Terrence Hassanally
Micah, Jude, Solomon, and
Caleb**



**Amy Kraushaar &
Scott Barvir, and
Wesley**

Deaths

March 11, 2020
Sid Olson

April 16, 2020
Craig Breimhorst

April 29, 2020
Marvis Canon

May 9, 2020
Wally Wegner
Carol Carlson
Sigrid Gronning

May 18, 2020
Myron Dack

Radio, TV, and Online Worship Continues

Radio broadcast of worship can be heard on KYMN at 95.1 FM and 1080 AM at 8:30 a.m. on Sunday mornings. The stream can also be heard live online at www.kymnradio.net. Services can be viewed on Northfield TV cable channel 187 on Mondays 7:30 p.m., Tuesdays 12 a.m. and 9 a.m., Wednesdays 2 p.m., and Fridays 7 p.m. Worship from previous Sundays are linked at the top of the St. John's website home page at www.StJohnsNorthfield.org

A Zoom Communion Service will be held on Pentecost Sunday, May 31 at 11 a.m. Find the Zoom link for the meeting on the church website calendar.