

## From Pastor Dan

At the synod assembly I attended back in May, I overheard a conversation between two pastors who were lamenting the decline in worship attendance at their respective congregations. After lots of questions with no apparent answers, one of the pastors out of obvious resignation sighed, “Well, at least we are not dead yet.” Wow, is that where we are as the Christian church in this country today, “. . .at least we are not dead yet?”

Now, please don't misunderstand, I don't think that is where we are at St. John. However, I must candidly confess, I thought by now we would be bigger than we are. Granted, we have maintained our worship attendance levels and even made some slight gains over the years. And I admit that my UPS background with its obsession on numbers probably doesn't help create an unbiased perspective on this situation. As a matter of fact, some claim that the number of people in attendance on any given Sunday morning is not what matters; what matters is the message being given. Yeah, that's all very nice, but if no-one is there to hear the message, the message isn't doing much good.

So, on the 11<sup>th</sup> anniversary of my call to this congregation, I have been pondering what more I could have done or what I could have done differently. In conversations with colleagues on the topic of church vitality (Which I unfortunately often turn into overly enthusiastic exhortations – apparently one of my vices), I frequently claim that a lack of church growth is akin to lack of success in any business. That is: either the product or service is no good; or if the product or service is a good one, then the company has done a poor job of selling it. It seems I find myself more frequently making this claim and it seems that my colleagues just as frequently decry my attempt to make “everything so black and white.” Yeah well, I'm right and they are wrong. Yet, if I am correct, then I am the one responsible for doing a poor job of selling our product. Because our product is a good one; believe me it is the best there is. You see, we accept the reality that there is a God; not some old man in the sky controlling our lives like a puppet on a string, but rather a creative force of love in the universe. And as Christians, we accept the reality that we are connected to this creative force of love in the universe in and through Jesus Christ. Finally, we accept the reality that in this whole process, and it is a process, we will be better off for it; significantly and measurably better off. Therefore, we have a marvelous product.

Unfortunately, the church, i.e. pastors, i.e. **me** are not doing an effective job in sharing this message with you. If I was, then folks would be beating down the door to get in. And

they are not. So, I am back to pondering what needs to be done. And that thinking seems to always bring me back to the point I just made that we have the best product in the world, but pastors are just not doing a good job of selling it. Now, we could take the easy way out and proclaim that God will make you healthier, happier, and richer (mostly richer) like Joel Osteen and Lakewood Church of Houston which has over 50,000 people in attendance every Sunday, millions of weekly TV viewers, and an annual budget of 90 million dollars! But Jesus never made a claim that following him would lead you to riches. Therefore, to proclaim so is a lie. Jesus did adamantly claim that you would have an abundant life, but not necessarily an abundance of stuff.

Okay, time to wrap this thing up. Bottom line, I need your input. Over the past 11 years, my ministry at St John has not produced the results I think we should have made. We have a great product which is “Your life is meaningfully and significantly better in connection to and relationship with the creative power of love in the universe through Jesus Christ.” I need your help in doing a better job of selling it.

God’s peace be with you all,

Pastor Dan

**Mid-Year Treasurer’s Report – Curt Cooley, Treasurer.** Our church financial health has changed significantly since the annual meeting in February, therefore I feel it necessary to inform everyone. I indicated during the meeting we were in very good financial health. Since January giving has dropped more than 10% when compared to the 2017 values. Giving this year is down more than \$8,000.00.

January 1, 2018 we had slightly over \$30,000.00 in the checking account, but July 1 we had slightly under \$19,000.00 in the checking account.

The budgeted expenses are \$13,600.00/month.

This church is excellent at always covering the expenses and I felt that it is important to keep everyone informed.

**Council Members.** Here is a list of Council Members. Please contact them with any concerns or issues you may have. Council meets once a month and welcomes input from the congregation.

President: Randy Trulen – 715-675-4091; rtrulen@gmail.com  
Vice President: Sue Cooley – 715-675-8566; 715-571-4057l cooley1512@outlook.com  
Treasurer: Curt Cooley – 715-675-8566; 715-571-4057; usfcool@gmail.com  
Secretary: Tammi Smith – 715-581-3892; tammism79@gmail.com;  
tammism@aspirus.org  
Trustees: Lee Sillars – 715-218-5041; lsillars@aol.com  
          Scott Oestreich – 715-675-4360; scottsmachinellc@gmail.com  
Evangelism: Erin Randall – 715-212-3720; emrandal@mtu.edu  
Fellowship: John Marquardt – 715-675-3300; johnnym54401@gmail.com  
Education: Connie Nowak – 715-675-1577; 715-432-3837; bcdenowak@gmail.com  
Worship: Heidi Teske – 715-551-4485; heidi.teske2007@gmail.com

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**Mission Statement:** “We are called to serve God; serve each other; serve the community; serve the wider church.”

**Serve God** through worship, prayer, and the dedication of our lives to His kingdom.  
**Serve Each Other** by mutual care and support to encourage everyone to fulfill their God-given potential. **Serve the Community** by making known the good news about Jesus and the love of God by word and deed. **Serve the Wider Church** through prayer and practical support to help spread the good news about Jesus throughout the world.

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*Worship Schedule*

9:00 a.m. Sunday Mornings

6:30 p.m. Wednesday Evenings (5/30 – 8/29)

*Please join us as we worship our Lord!*

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**Homebound Parishioners.** The following parishioners are no longer able to consistently attend worship services. I visit them to remind them that they are loved by God and loved by their community of faith, St. John. Sometimes it is helpful to hear those reminders from someone in addition to me.

Ann Kieckhafer	Ellen Kruit	Harriet Wanner
1347 Crystal Avenue	1821 N. 4 <sup>th</sup> Avenue	1240 Merrill Ave.
Room 236-1	Room 215	Apt. 2
Naperville, IL 60563	Wausau, WI 54401	Wausau, WI 54401

**The Sisterhood Picnic – August 16!** All women are invited to gather at Sue Harris’ home for a “Sisterhood Summer Shindig” (also known as a picnic) on Thursday, August 16th at 6:00 p.m.. It’s okay if you’re a bit late...come anyway!! We will come together to regroup and discuss our meetings for the rest of 2018 and on into 2019. We already have an idea for September..thank you Patsy!! Bring lots of creative ideas along with a snack, salad, dessert or anything your heart so desires to share. Beverages will be provided. Also, please bring a donation for the Women’s Community to help those in need.

A bit of trivia! How many of you remember when a group of women at St. John decided to organize a new ladies group? We had our first meeting in September 2008 and named the new group “The Sisterhood.” Happy 10 year anniversary!!

**Food Pantry.** The food items collected for the food pantry will be donated to Maine School. Your donations are appreciated. If you are able to help out with delivering these items to the school, please contact the church office.

**Council Meeting Minutes.** Copies of the minutes from the most recently held Council meeting are by the mailboxes. Please feel free to pick up a copy. If more are needed, please contact the church office.

**Financial Report for June, 2018**

<b>Income Received</b>	<b>Expenses Paid</b>	<b>Difference</b>	<b>Budget</b>
<b>\$9,118.07</b>	<b>\$11,077.41</b>	<b>(\$1,959.34)</b>	<b>\$13,600</b>

**Year-to-Date**

<b>Income Received</b>	<b>Expenses Paid</b>	<b>Difference</b>	<b>Budget</b>
<b>\$72,432.72</b>	<b>\$83,095.26</b>	<b>(\$10,662.54)</b>	<b>\$81,600</b>

***Attendance Report***

***2018***      ***2017***

***Average Weekly/June***

***93***      ***91***

***Average Weekly/Year-to-Date***

***99***      ***97***

**Announcements.** If you would like to have an announcement included in our weekly bulletin or newsletter, please submit the information in writing and put it in either Pastor Dan's mailbox or the administrative assistant's mailbox located in the narthex. If it is more convenient for you, you can submit your announcements via e-mail to [stjohnwausau@msn.com](mailto:stjohnwausau@msn.com). The deadline for submitting announcements for the Sunday bulletin is the Thursday before by 9:00 a.m. The deadline for the newsletter is indicated on the monthly calendar.

### “Rally Sunday” and “Blessing of the Backpacks”



Please join the education team here at St. John’s as we celebrate the kick-off to our “school” year on Rally Sunday! On Sunday, September 9<sup>th</sup>, kids of all ages are welcome to bring their backpacks to the worship service for a “Blessing of the Backpacks.” After worship, we will celebrate the start of St. John’s educational season with games and treats! All are welcome!

### **POLKA SERVICE – CHILI DINNER/RAFFLE**

**September 23, 2018 – 10:00 a.m.**

It’s early this year and will be here before you know it!! The polka worship service with Gene Lettau & the II Edition Band will be on September 23<sup>rd</sup> at 10:00 a.m. (note time change!), followed immediately by our annual Chili Dinner and Raffle. Chili tickets will be \$6 for adults, \$3 for children 4 through 10, with those 3 and younger free. The designation for proceeds from chili sales will be determined.

Watch for the sign-up sheet in the narthex to donate items for the chili dinner. We need people to help set up, serve and clean up. Sign up or call John Marquardt at 715-675-3300.

We also need donations of large and small raffle items. The designation for proceeds from raffle ticket sales will be determined. Raffle sales will begin on September 9<sup>th</sup>. Please bring items **by September 8<sup>th</sup>** to Pastor Dan’s office. For questions regarding the raffle, contact Linda Graveen at 715-675-7739.

**Reminder!** If you are in the hospital and would like Pastor Dan to visit, **PLEASE CALL** and let him know. Because of privacy issues, the hospital will not notify him or the church that you are there.

**August Birthdays**

8-1 Skip Hoenisch  
8-2 Kaitlin Bronsteatter  
8-3 Mike Poeske  
8-3 Kyle Rosenau  
8-5 Dawson Hein  
8-6 Tammy Landrath  
8-7 Devin Bahr  
8-7 Carol Fitzke  
8-7 Hannah Kudronowicz  
8-7 Phyllis Seubert  
8-9 Nancy Voelker  
8-10 Shawn Bahr  
8-10 Nick Maley  
8-11 Julie LaVake  
8-11 Lynn Tesch  
8-12 Christine Doede  
8-15 Sheila Gumz  
8-16 Pam Zahn  
8-17 Abigail Kufahl  
8-17 Chris Ohrmundt  
8-17 Scott Treu  
8-18 Terry Ugoretz  
8-20 Anne Ohrmundt  
8-20 Marlene Stubbe  
8-21 Bailey Frostman  
8-22 Georgia Koenig  
8-22 Diane Trulen  
8-24 Bryce Eno  
8-25 Eugene Dehnel  
8-25 Kooper Guralski  
8-27 Pamela LeDuc  
8-29 Kay Berens

**August Anniversaries**

8-9 Eric & Barb Paulsen  
8-14 Larry & Kay Berens  
8-15 Mike & Michelle Bolz  
8-15 Justin & Madeline Grueneberg  
8-15 Craig & Kari Heil  
8-18 Nick & Heidi Teske  
8-19 Mitch & Tammy Landrath  
8-19 Brian & Connie Nowak  
8-21 Mike & Heather Gallenberg