

From Pastor Dan

Christmas is over (that was quick) and the new year stretches before us in all its promising potential. Full of that promise, we often indulge in shiny new resolutions every year at this time only to frequently see those resolutions disappear into the fading luster of broken promises. “Thank you for that positive outlook, Pastor Dan.” Just trying to be realistic; but with that less-than-rapturous reality in mind, I have a few questions for you:

1. Is this year going to be any different?
2. If so, what are you going to do to make it different?
3. And, finally, will God help you in any way to do just that?

“Fine questions, Pastor Dan, let’s see.”

1. Is this year going to be any different? The answer to this one is pretty much up to you. For certain, circumstances can seemingly conspire to hem us in and try to bring us down. But how you respond to those circumstances is up to you. You may let the stream carry you wherever it wills as you just hang on for the ride. Or, you can use those paddles to start moving in the direction you desire; up to you.
2. If this year is going to be different, what are you going to do to make it so? I already began the answer to this question; i.e. use those paddles. Yet, picking up those paddles and rowing away is something many of us are not willing to do. (By the way, I am not pointing fingers at you, but rather at the chubby guy staring back at me from the mirror every morning.) And why don’t we pick up those paddles and start rowing? Basically, we are lazy. We could get up a half an hour earlier every morning to exercise, but..... “You don’t understand how hectic my life is...yada, yada,yada.” You see, the siren song of “que sera sera” is a powerful call. Yet despite Doris Day’s admonition to the contrary, I believe that accepting the notion of “what will be, will be” is bad life advice.
3. And, finally, will God help you to do make this year a different kind of year? Again, that one is pretty much up to you. As Christians, we trust that God as revealed to us in Jesus Christ is the presence of the creative power of love in

the universe. Thus, we understand; or at least I am convinced we ought to understand, that an honest and viable connection to the creative power of love will enable us to more successfully live in the promising potential which each New Year and even each new day provides. “Where do I begin,” you earnestly implore. Well, you can begin with the Bible, or Bible study, or prayer, or worship. The best advice is to simply begin. Allow me to share one of my favorite Bible verses which comes from Paul’s letter to the Philippians and shares some sound suggestions, “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. ⁵Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. ⁶Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. ⁸Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.” (Philippians 4:4-8)

Happy New Year and God Bless You,

Pastor Dan

“Council Corner” Fellowship – John Marquardt

This is the time of year we look forward to a new year to come, but let me first re-cap the year just past. Our weekly past worship fellowships are well-attended and allow for meeting and greeting fellow members and guests on a casual basis. Our Lenten soup meals were well-attended and we were able to support the youth group trip with our generous offerings. Easter breakfast went well and again we supported our parking lot project. Our Polka service/chili meal was another great success with support for the parking lot project, Maine School and Women’s Community. Our annual pie auction

was a very spirited event. With the addition of matching funds from Co-Vantage Credit Union we were able to support the Wausau Warming Center. I would again like to thank all of you who donated, worked, cooked, baked, made posters, purchased paper supplies, helped organize or any other thing to make our fellowship events successful this past year. I really don't do that much with so many wonderful people helping. This leads me to the year ahead – please consider strongly running for the Council position of Fellowship person. Just remember, you will have a lot of help – sometimes you just have to ask for it.

Have a wonderful 2019!

Worship Schedule

9:00 a.m. Sunday Mornings

Please join us as we worship our Lord!

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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; 715-571-40571 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

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.

New Council Members Needed!

We are looking for a trustee, vice president and fellowship chairperson. If you have any interest in any of these positions see Sue Cooley, Randy Knapp or Marilyn Grunenwald. Please consider this – it is fun and a needed part of our church!

Annual Meeting. Our Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday, February 10, following the 9:00 a.m. worship service. Annual report articles are due to the church office by January 7, 2019! The Cemetery Association meeting will be held following the annual meeting.

Cemetery Association Notice

I am writing this note to encourage active participation by all Cemetery Association members and stakeholders in the management of St. John’s Cemetery. First and foremost is attendance at the annual meeting on February 10, 2019 to give your input! There are several key issues that will need to be addressed at this meeting.

The main issue is the election of two new Trustees: Rose Rosenau (Secretary) and Lee Sillars’ terms will expire. Trustees need to be cemetery lot *owners*, and our pool of ‘younger’ lot owners has pretty much been exhausted. Finding candidates for these positions has become extremely challenging. However, since we have completed several significant projects in the past few years, current Trustees’ duties mainly amount to adding topsoil and seeding new graves, and of course staking out gravesites for burials or memorial placements. Aside from that, what we really need from Trustees is participation in one or two brief meetings a year to make informed decisions regarding the management of the cemetery and the perpetual care funds. Therefore, I would encourage even older lot owners to consider running for Trustee. A related topic we can

discuss at the annual meeting is whether or not we should amend the by-laws to reduce the number of Trustees (3 would be the minimum allowed). A full meeting agenda will appear in the February *Messenger*.

If you have any questions in advance of the annual meeting, or would volunteer to stand for election at that meeting, please contact me. Thank You.

Mike Kluetz, President

St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Cemetery Association

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
1347 Crystal Avenue
Room 236-1
Naperville, IL 60563

Ellen Kruit
1821 N. 4th Avenue
Room 215
Wausau, WI 54401

Harriet Wanner
1240 Merrill Ave.
Apt. 2
Wausau, WI 54401

Treasurer Report November 2018. Our financial status is not the same as it was in January 2018. Expenses have stayed close to the budget passed in February but giving has been down by 12% from a year ago. This lower income has drastically affected our checking account. The checking account balance is now half as big \$14,800 as it was in this January (2018). Our checking account balance has been steadily dropping throughout the year, an average of -\$1400 per month. If things don't improve we will be out of money by next fall.

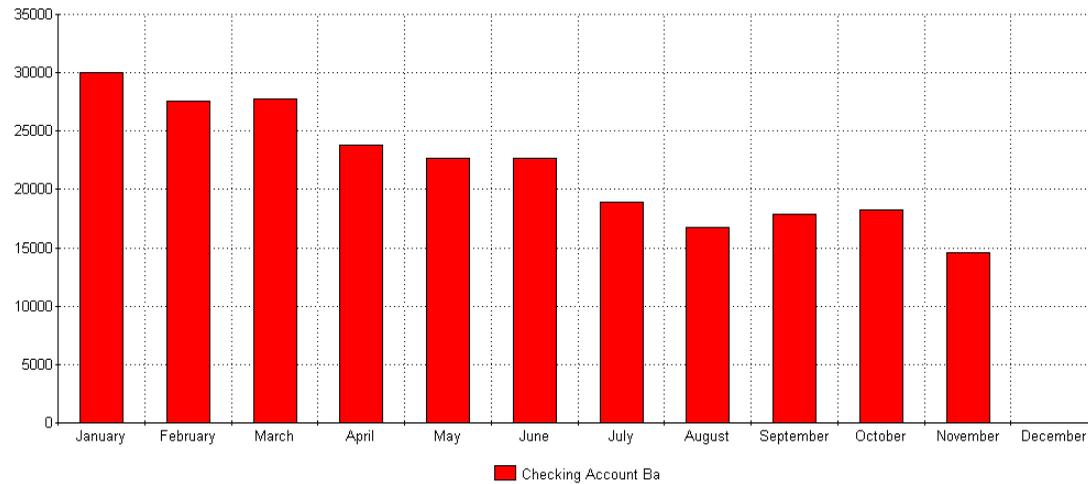
Our current budget is ~\$13600 per month. The proposed budget for 2019 is \$500/month lower at ~\$13100 per month.

Raising money now and paying off the parking lot debt (\$4000) will reduce our expenses by \$200 per month. Thus a total of \$700 expense savings per month.

The expense reductions will reduce the gap in half but giving will still need to be increased to meet our budget.

We have great programs which include Sunday school & VBS. Activities including quilting, choir, Sisterhood and Brotherhood. We also have significant community outreach and wonderful weekly worship. Please consider increasing your weekly giving. Remember that we do have electronic giving for those who prefer not to write checks.

St. John's Checking Account Balance



Respectfully, Curtis Cooley, Treasurer

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.

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.

January Birthdays

1-4 Miranda Clausen
1-4 Heidi Teske
1-6 Florian Kolbe
1-8 Isaac Hoffman
1-8 Justin Zahn
1-9 Jim Klinger
1-9 Molly Lubecke
1-9 Matthew Nass
1-9 Jack Saari
1-10 Randy Knapp
1-12 Emmie Steinagel
1-14 Kelly Dehnel
1-14 Jerome Klug
1-15 Lane Bahr
1-15 Jamie Kickbusch
1-16 John Borth
1-16 Jackson Hein
1-16 Tammy Schoepke
1-17 Thomas Anderson
1-18 Pastor Dan Sire
1-20 Maxwell Nass
1-21 Thomas Leduc
1-22 Patsy Askew
1-23 Elise Gallenberg
1-25 Jason Tesch
1-26 Karen Kolbe
1-26 Kelly Rosenau
1-26 Dorothy Westfall
1-27 Robin Hein
1-28 Michelle Bolz
1-29 Pat Rogalla
1-31 Amber Eno

January Anniversaries

1-6 Clark & Jennifer Bronsteatter
1-19 Curt & Sue Cooley
1-24 David & Alene Howe

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.

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. 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.

A Prayer for New Beginnings

In his book *Awed to Heaven, Rooted in Earth* (Fortress Press), Walter Brueggemann writes in an Epiphany poem:

...this is a time to be born.
So we turn to you, God of our life
God of all our years,
God of our beginning ...
We dare pray that you will do for us
And among us and through us
What is needful for our newness.
Give us the power to be receptive,
To take the newness you give ...
There is a time to be born, and it is now.
We sense the pangs and groans of your newness.
Come here now in the name of Jesus. Amen.

How fitting that the Epiphany season and the new year coincide! Epiphany reveals a new King, the beginning of his ministry, his new disciples, his first healings, his "new teaching – with authority" (Mark 1:27). We, too, experience newness, now and year-round. But newness can be tough. So we trust that God, who "(makes) all things new" while banishing "mourning and crying and pain" (Revelation 21:4-5), walks with us in this new year – and always.