

From Pastor Dan

Traditionally, seminaries have not done a stellar job of preparing pastors for the practical realities of parish ministry. However, I vividly recall one class from my senior year in which the professor told us, “When you are out in the parish, remember this. Twenty percent of the people will like you; but they won’t like you as much as you think they like you. Twenty percent of the people will not like you; however, they will not dislike you as much as you think they dislike you. And the rest of the folks really won’t care.”

In a typical parish setting it is often difficult to distinguish among these groups. Some folks are obvious, most are not. That is until the shit hits the fan; like when we are trying to cope with a global pandemic. Then the bright light of harsh reality can reveal true colors; both for good and ill. Even so, most folks live their lives out of heartfelt convictions even if they are misguided at times. And we all, including yours truly, have followed misguided convictions.

Yet, in the midst of it all, sincere disagreements can be dealt with as long as we are open and honest with one another. The health of genuine relationships depends upon openness and honesty. Without it there can be no trust. And without trust there can be no real relationships; with yourself, with each other, or with your God. We do not all agree on how worship ought to be handled during this pandemic. However, we cannot allow those differences to fracture our community of faith.

Please understand that the direction this congregation has taken over the last several months was not guided solely by an attempt to guard my health. Sure, I didn’t want to get sick. However, your council acted in an earnest attempt to keep you from getting sick. We did what we thought was best for everyone. Since we were making decisions in response to a health emergency, we deferred to health experts. We didn’t bend our ears to the siren song of distracting noise. Rather we bent our brains (The thing under your hat as my father constantly reminded me) ...we bent our brains to the advice of medical and scientific experts. It is true they did not all agree all the time. And it is true that they sometimes changed their minds. But overall, they said it was a bad idea to gather inside in big groups. Therefore, we decided inside worship was too great a risk.

But now the situation is changing. We have renewed hope in the availability of a vaccine. Nevertheless, we still understand that gathering for worship is not ideal. Yet we are moving forward. Let’s just be smart about it. (That thing under your hat again.)

I am not certain I agree with the assessment of my seminary professor all those years ago. But just in case...To those in the first group, I earnestly and genuinely appreciate your support. For those in the middle, thanks for hanging in there. And for those in the third group, I ask you to be patient. Please do not forsake your congregation. Be loyal to your church. You and I can keep our distance and, in a few short months, I'll be out of your lives.

In the meantime, God bless us all!

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: Sue Cooley – 715-675-8566; cooley1512@outlook.com

Vice President: Jan Mueller – 715-675-9558; dmjm5455.wau@gmail.com

Treasurer: Mike Kluetz – 715-218-1357; kluetz787@gmail.com

Secretary: Tammi Smith – 715-581-3892; tammism79@gmail.com;
tammism@aspirus.org

Trustees: Lee Sillars – 715-218-5041; rdfx1234@gmail.com

Scott Oestreich – 715-675-4360; scottsmachinellc@gmail.com

Evangelism: Lane Bahr – 715-297-0017; lucylane35@hotmail.com

Fellowship:

Education: Connie Nowak – 715-675-1577; 715-432-3837; bcdenowak@gmail.com

Worship: Sue Harris – 715-551-6282; smae53@gmail.com

Council. The church council nominating committee is looking for folks interested in serving on the church council. Positions that are up for election at our 2021 annual meeting are vice president, secretary, fellowship, parish education and trustee. We ask you to prayerfully consider serving your congregation on the church council. You are welcome to contact Jan Mueller at 715-675-9558 with questions on any of the council positions or if you would like to serve.

ANNUAL MEETING. I know some of you are wondering in this mixed up year, when we will have the annual meeting. Our constitution is quite specific about the when and how this is to happen. Normally we have to have it between the third Sunday in January and second Sunday in February. In the constitution C10.04 states, thirty voting members constitutes a quorum and C10.05 states Voting by proxy or by absentee ballot shall not be permitted. Also the bylaws state in part V “The President, Vice-President, Treasurer or Secretary shall have the power to postpone the annual meeting due to acts of God for two weeks or More.” Therefore the council as a whole has agreed to postpone our meeting to what we hope is the earliest possible time to meet safely in person. We are tentatively planning this meeting for **March 14, 2021**. The reports will be made available 2 weeks ahead of this- available at church. We have asked the outgoing council members to remain and they have agreed. We will also try to find people who are willing to take their positions. This is not ideal and we all wish we could do this sooner and safer, but we feel we cannot at this time. Any questions regarding this please call Sue Cooley.

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.

Pastoral Visits. If circumstances conspire to put you in the hospital or if you are directed to a temporary nursing home stay, please let Pastor Dan know by calling the church (715-675-6950), or Pastor Dan’s cell phone (715-212-7359), or sending Pastor Dan an email at dtsire@msn.com. However, because of current COVID-19 restrictions, pastoral visitations are limited. Yet, Pastor Dan can still maintain contact via phone or email.

VISION FOR ST JOHN

St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church, Village of Maine, Wausau, WI is a country church with an average Sunday worship attendance of about 100 folks. We are affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Yet, more than numbers or affiliations, we are a congregation which welcomes all who seek meaning and hope in their lives through all the possibilities of a connection to the love of God in Jesus Christ. At our core, we value and nurture relationships.

We Value and Nurture Relationships With our God

- “He (Jesus) said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’” (Matthew 22:37 NRSV)

We Value and Nurture Relationships with Each Other

- “I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.” (John 10:10 NRSV)

We Value and Nurture Relationships with our Community

- “I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.” (John 13:34 NRSV)

We Value and Nurture Relationships with Ourselves

- “For this reason...we have not ceased praying for you and asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of God’s will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding...” (Colossians 1:9 NRSV)

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.

Harriet Wanner	Carol Fitzke
3107 Westhill Drive	237227 N. 120 th Ave.
Wausau, WI 54401	Wausau, WI 54401

Harley Goetsch
 Rennes Health/Rehab Ctr.
 4810 Barbican Avenue
 Weston, WI 54476

Financial Report for December, 2020

	December	Year-to-Date
Income Received	\$17,959	\$159,820
Expenses Paid	\$12,436	\$136,809
Difference	\$ 5,523	\$ 23,011

Attendance Report

	2020	2019
Average Weekly/December	159	172
Average Weekly/Year-to-Date	104	120

February Birthdays

2-2 Nathan Fitzke
2-4 Dawson Nowak
2-5 Kyle Koenig
2-6 Lorie Anderson
2-6 Louie Reissman
2-6 Patricia Spangler
2-8 Brian Anderson
2-8 Matt Harris
2-9 Dylan Detert
2-9 Terry Kickbusch
2-10 David Ugoretz
2-11 Randy Graveen
2-11 Jessica Pierschalla
2-11 Sue Sann
2-12 Charles Zahn
2-13 Shawn Chadwick
2-13 Luke Harris
2-14 Madilynn Knoblock
2-14 Paul Linzmeyer
2-15 Robert Hoff
2-15 Josie Schoepke
2-17 Ron Schuster
2-18 Donna Treu
2-19 Briella Grueneberg
2-19 Katie Van Der Geest
2-21 Avery Lavake
2-24 Bob Rode
2-25 Paul Anderson
2-27 Tara Pasholk
2-27 Brooke Schindler
2-28 Susan Knight

February Anniversaries

2-2 James & Jeanne Klinger
2-14 Keith & Karen Kolbe
2-22 Dale & Barbara Nass