

# Connect April 2021

## Services of Worship

- Spencer in-person 9am Sunday
- Riplinger in-person 11am Sunday
- Facebook Live 9am Sunday or when it works for you after that time.
- Online @ [www.stjohnsspencer.com/onlineworship](http://www.stjohnsspencer.com/onlineworship)

## Church Office

210167 State Hwy 13  
Spencer, WI 54479  
715-659-5158  
Email: [sjlcoffice@frontier.com](mailto:sjlcoffice@frontier.com)

## Website

[www.stjohnsspencer.com](http://www.stjohnsspencer.com)

## Facebook

Spencer  
[www.facebook.com/sjlcSpencer/](http://www.facebook.com/sjlcSpencer/)  
[Riplinger  
www.facebook.com/Riplingerchurch/](http://www.facebook.com/Riplingerchurch/)

## Interim Pastor

Lowell Bolstad  
Email: [interimpastor1953@gmail.com](mailto:interimpastor1953@gmail.com)  
Cell: 715-226-0163

## Minister of Faith Formation

Jenny Nieman  
Email: [jennyfaith659@gmail.com](mailto:jennyfaith659@gmail.com)  
Cell: 715-613-3636

## Parish Secretary

Amanda Schjoneman

## Deadlines

- Weekly email  
**Tuesdays 9am**
- Sunday bulletin announcements  
**Thursdays 9am**
- Monthly newsletter  
**20th of each month**

**Thank you** for your participation in and support of the life and mission of this parish.

**Invite others to services of worship** and pray that those who do not know Jesus may come to know him. The risen Christ commands his followers to share the good news.

**Maundy Thursday Service of Holy Communion on April 1, at 7 pm, at Spencer**—Come to this service of worship as we remember how our Lord broke bread with his disciples and gave the commandment to love one another. At the Lord's table, we remember Jesus' sacrifice of his life, even as we are called to offer ourselves in love for the life of the world. A prayer of dedication will be offered for the new communion ware given by Marsha Martens in memory of her mother Evelyn Lynn.

**Good Friday Ecumenical Service on April 2, 7pm, at Riplinger**—Good Friday reminds the faithful of our Lord's life-giving passion and to find strength and hope in the tree of life.

**Celebrate the Resurrection of Our Lord on Easter Sunday April 4**—On this day, the Lord has acted! Jesus Christ is raised from the dead. Be sure to bring family and relatives to these festival services 7am or 9am at Spencer, 11am at Riplinger. Filled with hope we go forth to share the good news that Christ is risen!

## Hands of Risen Christ Sunday on April 11

19 When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.' 20After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. (John 20:19-20)

The service of worship on the Second Sunday of Easter will focus on the hands of the risen Christ. Put your hands in the hands of the one who died and was raised for you!

**Good Shepherd Sunday on April 25**—Come to the services of worship on Good Shepherd Sunday on the Fourth Sunday of Easter. The name derives from the gospel reading on this day taken from John 10 in which Jesus is described as the Good Shepherd who, by dying on the cross, lays down his life for his sheep. In language that recalls the twenty-third psalm, Jesus describes himself as the shepherd who cares for his sheep. He is willing to die for them, and he is able to overcome death for them.

## Looking Ahead

May 9 Blessing of Mothers

May 16 Recognition of Graduates

May 30 Memorial Day Weekend Emphasis

## From the Pastor

I recall that the first guideline in 2020 to slow the spread of the virus recommended no gatherings over 250 people. I breathed a sigh of relief because none of the 3 congregations I was serving at the time involved that many people. The next guideline to come out recommended no gatherings over 50 people. I breathed a sigh of relief because none of the 3 congregations I was serving at the time normally involved that many people. The next guideline 15 Days to Slow the Spread | The White House recommended no gatherings over 10 people. Because the congregations I served at the time averaged between 10 and 50, I could no longer breathe a sigh of relief. On Sunday, March 15 the congregations dispensed with the sharing of the peace, but one woman said, “When this is all over, I want to give you a big hug.” I never saw her again. On Saint Patrick’s Day, March 17, the parish president and a Congregation Council secretary informed me that the congregation presidents determined to follow the President’s Coronavirus Guidelines for America: 15 Days to Slow the Spread by foregoing services of worship on Sundays, March 22 and 29, and midweek Lenten services on March 25 and 29. The plan at that time was to gather on April 5 Palm Sunday. The children at one congregation were going to take a hunger offering, a mother was to present herself and 3 children for baptism, and the Parish Council was going to host a farewell potluck for me. My assignment ended on April 15 and I ended up on leave from call until starting a new assignment in this parish on November 16.

As I reflect on the last twelve months and look to the future, I wonder about the long-term consequences.

The dangers of social distancing: How COVID-19 can reshape our social experience

US National Library of Medicine National Institutes of Health

To society, social distancing presents the dangers of increasing social rejection, growing impersonality and individualism, and the loss of a sense of community. It negatively affects learning and growth, and it prevents people from effectively socializing, which is a fundamental human need. First and foremost, the measures carried a strong psychological message, which is the fear of others, along with the idea that others are potential carriers of deadly germs and life-threatening diseases. The alarming rate of contamination and death from the virus contributed to establishing more panic, and even paranoia among many. What is particularly concerning is the fact that this psychological effect could potentially remain in our communities, even long after the pandemic. Whether this is at work, in restaurants, or in public spaces, our society has long been characterized by physical interactions between people. We are used to working in groups, going places, meeting new people, and making conversations with them on a daily basis. As we navigate through life, much of what fulfills us are the bonds we create with other people, and more often than not, those bonds materialize through physical interactions. “Social interactions are proposed to be a basic human need, analogous to other fundamental needs such as food consumption or sleep. Indeed, feeling insufficiently connected to others is associated with profound and lasting negative consequences on physical and mental health, even leading to increased mortality” Orben, Tomova, and Blakemore (2020). Physical interactions are an essential part of human social experience, and they are particularly important for the social development of young people. By closing schools, the pandemic is preventing many children and adolescents from socializing with others. This affects their ability to make quality connections, which impacts their personal growth. Indeed, youth flourishes socially through connections and fulfilling relationships, which are also an integral part of their learning. Long-term isolation leaves these basic human needs unsatisfied and ultimately affects mental health. As Orben et al. (2020) puts it, “Human adolescents are hypersensitive to social stimuli and to the negative effects of social exclusion.”

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7461541/>

The challenge for the church is to recover a sense of connection and community. May God help us.

Pastor Lowell Bolstad

**Pray for God’s direction during this transition**—Earnest prayer is requested for this transition between installed pastorates. Special prayer is requested for congregation leadership, pastor and staff, bishop and synod staff. Pray that God will provide an installed pastor who will faithfully serve and lead this parish.

**Pastor Bolstad to use allotted vacation April 19-25**—In matters of some urgency contact Interim Pastor Nancy Amacher at Faith Lutheran Church in Marshfield at 715.223.5316 (cell) or [revnia10@gmail.com](mailto:revnia10@gmail.com). Minister of Faith Formation Jenny Nieman will lead a Service of the Word services of worship at Spencer and Ripplinger on Sunday, April 25.

## Crosses We Don't Choose

*Then Jesus told them, "... take up their cross and follow me." Matthew 16:24b*

Dear Members and Friends of the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin,

My friend Julie's mom had dementia. Julie picked up that cross and carried it as her beloved mother faded away. Paul was in second grade when he was diagnosed with diabetes. It was a cross he would carry for the rest of his life. Erica's drug addiction was a cross she and her family carried for years until she found sobriety. They were all crosses they didn't choose.

Jesus carried his cross on the road to his crucifixion. Along the way he falls, and a man named Simon of Cyrene is forced to pick up Jesus' cross and carry it the rest of the way to Calvary. Simon was most likely a reluctant cross bearer. Most of us are reluctant cross bearers. We don't choose the pain or suffering we've been dealt, and yet we carry the load. We don't choose to carry another person's cross when they are too weak to carry it themselves, but we are at times compelled by love to do so.

This month marks the one year anniversary of the pandemic. It is a cross that we've all carried to one degree or another. For some it has been an inconvenience and for others a heavy burden of suffering and profound grief. Theologically there is no way to put a positive spin on the coronavirus or 2020. It has been a cross we didn't choose. The strain of carrying this cross is evident in our country and congregations. We are all weary of it.

On Palm/Passion Sunday and Good Friday we are drawn into the story of Jesus' arrest, trial, and death. We walk alongside him in the crowd as he carries his cross, our cross, compelled by love. We walk with a suffering Jesus straining under the weight of this cross, stumbling, falling, getting back up and finally letting go, letting another carry it. Jesus knew pain in his human body, and so Jesus knows our every weakness. Jesus himself was beaten, knew suffering and was unable to carry the weight this cross. He falls to the ground under the weight of his love for us.

As a church we invite others to walk in the way of Jesus knowing that they are carrying crosses they didn't choose for themselves. We invite others to walk in the way of Jesus because as a community of faith we shoulder the burden and carry it all together. We help another carry their cross out of love. We are Simon of Cyrene.

Maybe that is what this past year has taught us; that we need each other; we aren't alone. We've been isolated, quarantined, but not alone. We can't take our congregations for granted. We need our faith communities and the relationships with other believers because we can't carry our own crosses. We follow the way of Jesus together bearing our neighbor's crosses out of love.

It is in the cross that Jesus carried and on which he was crucified that we can know the love of God and salvation. This is Luther's Theology of the Cross. It is in the crosses that we as a community of faith carry together as we follow in the way of Jesus that we too see and know the love God.

Dear friends of the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin, I am grateful for you, that during the pandemic, we were able to walk in the way of Jesus together. May you each know the joy of Easter! Christ is Risen. He is risen indeed.

Bishop Laurie Skow-Anderson

Inspired by an article titled Crosses we don't choose in March 10, 2021 Christian Century by Debie Thomas

Simon of Cyrene Matthew 27:32

# Faith Formation

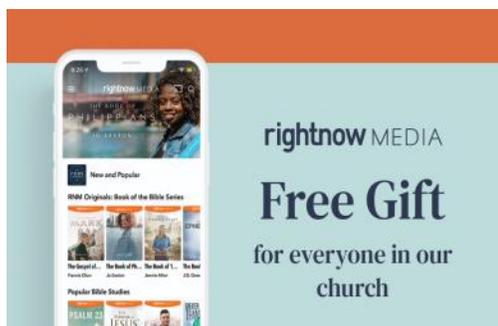


**Mission Trip Basket Raffle** The Basket raffle began February 17. Thank you SO much to everyone who donated a basket this year. We truly appreciate your extreme generosity! There are approximately 30 baskets this year.

The drawing will be on March 28, following worship.

**ButterBraid Sale** Middle Schoolers sold 332 Butter Braids. Approximate profit is \$1700 to go to the Bible Camp Scholarship Fund.

ButterBraid orders are in, if need to pick up your order please contact Jenny Nieman 715-613-3636.



## RightNow Media

Several years ago, St. John's tried out Right Now Media as a resource for Bible Studies, video messages, and materials to provide to families to help them in their faith journeys. This resource has proven itself to be invaluable! Each of you has online access to over 14,000 Bible Study videos several years ago for adults and tons of kid's videos and it's all available to you for FREE. If you haven't yet checked it out, please do so. There's a couple of ways for you to gain access to this resource: you can text Rightnow SJLCS to 41411, and you will automatically be prompted to create your FREE login; you can find the link to it on our

website: [www.stjohnsspencer.com/right-now-media](http://www.stjohnsspencer.com/right-now-media); OR if you're on Facebook you will see some things highlighted. Take a look at the resources that Right Now Media provides and then let us know what you think. Feel free to share it with friends too!



Bible Camp is ON! Are you ready for Summer Bible Camp? Luther Park Bible Camp, Chetek and Forest Springs, Westboro have made adjustments to their programming to safely host Bible Camp this summer. Jenny has done a little research and here's the highlights:

### Luther Park-

Will require masks to be worn any time that campers are not with their cabin mates.

Ask that each camper bring personal disinfectant wipes and hand sanitizer

### Forest Springs-

Campers are required to bring a mask along, but can choose when to wear it when outside of their cabins.

St. John's will again offer scholarships to all youth who attend Bible Camp this summer, see Jenny Nieman for registration and scholarship details.

# Faith Formation

## **Baptism Classes**

The next set of Baptism classes for expectant parents and those with children who need to be baptized yet will be Monday nights: April 12, 19, 26, May 3 6:30 pm

Crossing the Bridge into Middle School This event is scheduled for May 2, 11 am for current 5th graders (soon to be 6th graders) and their parents to learn and ask questions about Cross Training. St. John's is committed to partnering with families, so our goal for this event is to clearly explain the next steps in the youth's faith journey and to help families with the transition.

## **Mission Trip Fundraisers:**

### **Rummage Sale**

The Mission Trip participants will be holding the Rummage Sale this year on April 22 & 23. They would greatly appreciate donations of gently used items. Items can be placed in the trailer in the back of church beginning April 1. Reminder- we do not take large appliances, TVs or exercise equipment. If you have any questions about items you'd like to donate, please check with Jenny (715-613-3636) before you drop it off.

Volunteers Needed- if you would be willing to help the youth run the rummage sale during the school day, please sign up on the bulletin board or find the online sign up on our website. Thank you in advance!

### **Clark Pizza Sale**

Mission Trip participants are selling Clark Pizzas, Sandwiches, Pies, Wild Bird Cakes, Soy Candles, Tarts and Firestarters. You can place an order with someone in the entry at church on Sundays or contact Jenny Nieman 715-613-3636.

# Food, Fellowship, & Fun



## **Charcoal Chicken Dinner**

Our Saviors Lutheran Church, 110 W Begley St. in Greenwood, is hosting a Charcoal Chicken dinner Sunday May 2nd from 11 am - 2 pm. This will be drive through only located on the lower level. Included in the dinner is a half chicken for \$10, or a quarter chicken for \$8, along with potato salad, baked beans, dinner rolls and a dessert.

**Update on Shared Ministry Overture**—Two representatives Spencer, Unity, and Riplinger met on March 2 at Unity. The Riplinger president presented a report to the congregation during announcements at the service of worship on March 7. Spencer representatives presented a report to the March 9 meeting of the Congregation Council. The decision was made at the Spencer council meeting to wait for Unity to discuss the matter at their March 16 meeting and wait to hear back. Trinity of Unity decided at this time they are no longer interested in pursuing conversation with St. John’s in Spencer and Riplinger.

**Special Congregation Meetings on March 21 elect a joint Call Committee**—Spencer: Lori Cook, Travis Hardrath, Amanda Knecht, Heather Miller, Rudy Nieman, Mary Seefeld. Riplinger: Wayne Hendrickson, LeRoy Dommer, Joan Miller. Pray that this committee will be given wisdom and discernment and that God will provide an installed pastor who will faithfully serve and lead.

**Update on Transition**—The Transition Task Force at Spencer met February 9 to work on the Ministry Site Profile and presented the document to the Congregation Council at the March 9 meeting for approval. The Congregation Council at Riplinger met February 28 after the service of worship to compile the profile. These documents have been submitted to the synod office for review so that a synod minister may provide an orientation. A copy is posted on the bulletin board at Spencer.

**New Parish Secretary**—The Spencer Congregation Council decided on March 9 to extend an offer to Amanda Schjoneman. She accepted the offer, took training the week of the 15th, and started on the 22nd. Make her feel welcomed and appreciated in her new position.

**Pastor Bolstad to hold staff meetings** on Mondays at 1pm with the Parish Secretary Amanda Schjoneman. and Minister of Faith Formation Jenny Nieman. Pray for our staff.

**February Financial Information at Spencer**

Revenue	\$ 9,905.46
Expenses	\$ 9,537.47
Difference	\$ 367.99
Checking Account Balance	\$15,547.33

**About the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**—The ELCA is one of the largest Christian denominations in the United States, with nearly 3.3 million members in more than 8,900 worshiping communities across the 50 states and in the Caribbean region. Known as the church of “God’s work. Our hands.,” the ELCA emphasizes the saving grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ, unity among Christians and service in the world. The ELCA’s roots are in the writings of the German church reformer Martin Luther.

**Thankyou from Lutheran Social Services**—Your Investment Makes a Difference. Because of you, LSS ended the year with a 20% increase over the 2019 year-end campaign. And if that weren’t enough, through your generosity and dedication, we were able to complete our \$1.7 million capital campaign to fund LSS Aspen Center. In a year of unprecedented challenges, you demonstrated your commitment to the LSS mission and confidence in our work.

**Luther Park Bible Camp - Where Faith Is Nurtured through Holy Play**—The camp is open year round for retreats and conferences located on a 100 acre site, covered with towering pines and surrounded by beautiful views of Prairie Lake. It offers a Christ-centered camping experience for people of all ages. Staff is trained to help campers understand God’s message of love and grace and to provide positive Christian role models. All children and youth are encouraged to participate in Luther Park’s summer programs

**Remembering those who are homebound or in care facilities**

Cyndi Ackerman P.O. Box 691 Black River Fall, WI 54615	Dorothy Neuman 510 W. Wausau St. Colby, WI 54421	Corrine Kettleborough P.O. Box 93 Spencer, WI 54479	Linda Marchinek 1804 N. Hume Ave Apt. 3 Marshfield, WI 54449
Pat Miller N9934 Groveside Ave Spencer, WI 54479	LaVilla Schilling W143 Cloverdale Rd Colby, WI 54421	Dick Berger 1021 Rocky Ridge Rd Mosinee, WI 54455	Jean Mellenthin 209 Wilderness View Dr. Marshfield, WI 54449
	Dennis Schorer W1328 Kington Rd Unity, WI 54488		

# Notes from the Spencer Council Chair

**Council Meetings** The church council meetings will be held the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of each month at 6:30pm, to allow directors time to prepare their monthly report.

**Financial Updates** A financial snapshot including the tithes and offerings received, money spent and the monthly ending balance will be included in the newsletter and the weekly bulletin when it is available. January end of month financial report: income of \$9,923.56; expenses of \$10,547.68 for a net difference of \$624.12 for the month. The General Fund balance is \$15,124.34. If you have additional questions, feel free to contact Roxie Wetterau at [sjlcbooks@gmail.com](mailto:sjlcbooks@gmail.com)

**Time & Talents Sheets** Everyone is encouraged to fill out a Time and Talents sheet. Paper copies can be found in the brochure rack and returned in the We are the church basket or online on sign up genius. In order to have successful worship and fellowship opportunities, we need you! Please prayerfully consider where you can volunteer. Thanks!

**The Transition Task Force** is almost finished with the Ministry Site Profile. We will be seeking the approval of the council at the meeting on March 9. A copy will be available for congregation members to review when it is completed. Next step! Establishing a call committee.

**Partnership Conversation** Pam Hardrath contacted Trinity Lutheran Church to set up a meeting to further discuss a merger. They are electing their council February 21 and will not be ready to meet for a discussion until mid March.

**Thermostats in the building:** It has been noticed that the thermostats in the building have been set to an extremely high temperature. We want folks to be able to stay warm when they are using the building, however the thermostats have been reprogrammed 80 to 90 degrees on a number of occasions. Please do not set them higher than 70 degrees and only turn up the thermostat in the area you are using. DO NOT reprogram them, you can hit the up button until you reach the desired temperature and they will automatically reset to the programmed temperature after 2 hours. If you have questions about how to use the thermostats contact Travis Hardrath.

**Thank You!** A huge shout out to Marsha Martens and Heather Vogel. Thank-you so much for taking care of vacuuming and cleaning our church building and bathrooms. We appreciate walking in and finding it well taken care of and sparkly clean. THANK-YOU!!



**Warmer Weather is approaching** and soon it will be time to mow the church lawn. We are looking for volunteers. It usually takes about 4 hours, using the church lawn mower. If needed, we can train you! For more information or to volunteer, contact Travis Hardrath.

**Volunteers needed to help keep our church clean!** We would like a few more volunteers to help clean our church. Jobs include, vacuuming, cleaning the bathrooms, emptying garbage and recyclables, etc. If you have time to help out, please let Travis know.



# February Council Minutes

## St. John's Lutheran Church Leadership Minutes for February 2, 2021 (Approved)

Pastor Lowell Bolstad, Chair - Pam Hardrath, Secretary - Nadine Willett, Treasurer -Roxie Wetterau, Worship Director -Luanne Schwarze, Minister of Faith Formation - Jenny Nieman, Beyond Our Doors Director -Position vacant, Food, Fellowship & Fun Director -Heather Vogel, Congregation Care Director -Teri Schorer, Buildings & Grounds Director -Travis Hardrath

Absent: Vice Chair -Nick Wash

Member Guest: Marsha Martens

Call to order: At 6:30 PM by Chair Pam Hardrath

Opening prayer and message led by Pastor Bolstad.

### Non-agenda disc. topics raised by Marsha Martens:

Memorial for Evelyn Lynn: Marsha informed the council that a memorial donation of new communion ware is planned in memory of her mother, Evelyn Lynn.

Memorial for Pastor David Ault: Marsha raised for discussion the interest from Barb Ault for landscaping at the St. John's cemetery sign and flag pole area as a memorial for Pastor Ault. The council supported this plan that includes a plaque that records Pastor Ault's many years of serving St. John's as Pastor. Additionally, Pam Hardrath offered the idea that this may be a collaborative project with one or more of the Eagle Scouts. Discussion will continue between Marsha, Barb, and Pam regarding the plans for this memorial landscaping project.

Cemetery-related request: Marsha requested that the two piles of dirt that are in the small parking area at the cemetery be moved both to better facilitate parking and for esthetics. The piles would be better located behind the garage building again as had been the location in the past. The cemetery committee will be asked to follow-up on this request in spring. Pam will discuss this request with Allen Jicinsky who is a member of the cemetery committee.

Parking at the Cemetery: It was noted that visitors to the cemetery, including for funerals, should not park in the area across Century Road as that is not church or cemetery property. To help with managing this, funeral directors should be informed of the appropriate parking areas in the small parking area and along the road. Nadine Willett and Jenny Nieman will collaborate on a letter, usually sent annually, that informs the area funeral directors of the current sexton (Allen Jicinsky) and other funeral practices for St. John's; this will also include a notation regarding parking at the cemetery.

Communication requested: Marsha requested that

more communication be forthcoming from council to members, especially as it relates to financial information. Discussion included a review of current communication forums and it is also encouraged that members ask anytime if there is an open question or concern. Roxie and Pam will further discuss ways to share financial highlights in addition to current communication practices.

### New Business:

Director approval for related bills: The question was raised about whether directors need to sign off on bills for their ministry areas. The treasurer will seek approval or ask for clarification from a director if the expense is outside the parameters of the budget, or if a request for reimbursements comes from a team member rather than the director.

Thermostat issue: There are five thermostats in the church building. There have been multiple occurrences recently of temps adjusted to high levels. Signage by each thermostat will be added as it is much preferred that we do not lock down the thermostat controls.

Soup supper serving: Discussion proceeded about how to best apply the CDC recommendations for safe meal serving and seating. February 17th is the first soup supper for Lent and the servers, hosts, and other recommended practices will be in place.

Hospitality: Hospitality following in-person worship will resume when there are hospitality hosts available. Some adjustments to tables and serving flow will help to meet safe practices.

Council meeting date: The council meetings will be shifted to the second Tuesday of the month rather than the first Tuesday.

Evaluation of January worship attendance: A review of attendance numbers and family groups was discussed, and this included an awareness of mask wearing for some and spaced seating in pews. There is a positive response to the resumption of singing in worship.

Transition Task Force: At the January 25th meeting, three areas of focus for the future were identified as 1) children, youth, and families; 2) men; and 3) community.

Discussion about worship services and times: Various possibilities for worship styles and times were discussed including the possibility of a worship service during the week. It was determined that a survey will go out to get input regarding current needs and preferences from members. It is understood that there may need to be different combinations of worship services over time with future transitions.

# February Council Minutes

## New Business: (Continued)

Shared ministry with Trinity of Unity: This topic was reviewed briefly and then tabled noting that it would be helpful to review the worship service needs survey results. Two members of the executive committee will meet with Trinity in Unity.

Call process: A special meeting of the congregation is scheduled for March 21 to elect a call committee for St. John's in Spencer. Self-study work continues as a part of the call process preparation.

## Old Business:

Church Secretary Position: There is a meeting on February 8th of the executive committee to review the approximately 22 applications.

## Secretary Report: Nadine Willett

Minutes from the council meeting on January 5, 2021 were reviewed and approved with corrections noted.

## Treasurer Report: Roxie Wetterau

January Report: Income of \$9,923. 56 was reported with expenses of \$10,547.68 for a net difference of negative \$624.12 for the month. The General Fund balance is \$15,124.34. Report approved.

There may need to be an adjustment to instrument repair within the Worship budget; follow-up will be planned once the actual bill for repair is available.

## Pastor's Report: Pastor Lowell Bolstad

Pastor responsibilities include: Worship and Preaching, Administration, Visitation, Faith Formation, and Wider Church

Pastor commended the council and members for their commitment and for stepping up to be involved in the life of St. John's.

Transition dynamics: The sermon series continues regarding the heritage, identity, vision, mission, leadership, and connections of St. John's congregation. Work continues with the transition team in determining focus areas for the future of children, youth, and families; men; and community.

Guidance is ongoing regarding the call process, shared ministry discussion, and worship service needs.

## Minister of Faith Formation Report: Jenny Nieman

JAM (Jesus and Me): New series called "Kids Choice" started.

Cross training (6th to 8th Grade students): New series called "Moods" started. Also worked with Pastor to help plan the Lent series.

LIVE (9th to 12th Grade students): Kristen Engevold, Rich Wilke, and Jenny team up to

provide curriculum and devotions.

2021 Mission trip: The trip to Charleston, South Carolina is planned for July 11-16. Basket raffle begins on February 17th as a fund raiser.

Baptism class: A new series of classes starts on February 7th and meets for three more Sunday sessions.

A tubing/skiing/skating trip was planned and organized to Forest Springs with 43 people attending on January 31.

## Worship Report: Luanne Schwarze

Lenten worship and fellowship: Lenten soup suppers and Lenten worship will begin on Ash Wednesday, February 17th. The process for ordering Easter lilies was discussed.

New time and talent updates are continuing, and those people involved in serving for worship will be scheduled.

Christmas Eve and Christmas Day worship times and attendance were reviewed.

Congregational singing will resume on January 31 in a blended worship service. The needs for additional worship service changes will be reviewed over the next couple of months.

## Buildings and Grounds Report: Travis Hardrath

Kitchen sink and water: The faucet was replaced and water tested safe.

Other building and grounds needs are being addressed.

## Food, Fellowship, and Fun Report: Heather Vogel

Lenten soup suppers: Sign-up genius is set up to engage people in the necessary roles for these suppers.

## Congregational Care Report: Teri Schorer

Formation of a team continues with two people on board so far.

Beyond Our Doors Report: Director position is vacant for 2021. No report.

## Chairperson Report: Pam Hardrath

The Transition Team is working to complete the Ministry Site Profile.

The Time and Talent sheets were put into play for paper forms and sign-up genius. As sign-ups progress, the list of names will be provided to each director.

Business meeting adjourned at 8:51 PM.

Next Council Meeting: Tuesday, March 9, 2021 at 6:30 PM.

Council gathering time closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted by Nadine Willett, Council Secretary

## Birthdays & Anniversaries



3 Levi Dommer  
Larry Labrensz  
4 Jerome Ackman  
Linda Marchinek  
5 Dawson Bruesewitz  
6 Brittney Sebold  
Jordan Vogel

7 Bryan Helsten  
Ronald Seefeldt  
Juleen Vogel  
8 Sawyer Kilty  
11 Elijah Wash  
14 Kristin Ovans  
15 Randal Matter  
16 Cheryl Bruesewitz  
17 Kristin Engvold  
Tammie Lehman  
18 Nathan Kieffer  
Tara Nigon  
April Smazal  
19 Douglas Ackman

23 Payton Weiler  
24 Lillyan Kildahl  
25 Nicole Buse  
Brayden Hansford  
Ryan Hardrath  
Hunter Reynolds  
Alex Tremelling  
27 Aliyah Anderson  
28 Conner Kildahl  
Bobbi Schaefer

30

*If your birthday or anniversary is missing, please contact the office so we can update our records.*



4 Joseph & Jody Scidmore 40 years  
5 Brad & Bobbi Suckow 28 years  
10 Ralph & Peggy Ottum 50 years  
12 Larry & Peggy Labrensz 35 years  
Ronald & Karen Seefeldt 52 years  
14 James & Sharon Schiszik 37 years

17 Tom & Dawn Pagenkopf 39 years  
18 Gary & Karen Grieser 51 years  
20 Corrie & Duane Bauer 30 years  
21 Allen & Gail Jicinsky 42 years  
26 Edward & Marilyn Bruger Jr. 46 years  
Norbert & Marnay Schultz 18 years  
27 Gerald & Jane Neumann 53 years  
Nick & Abby Wash 2 years

## Remembering in Prayer

Those who are homebound, hospitalized, or in care facilities—Cyndi Ackerman, Alice Brandt, Grace Maines, Linda Marchinek, Jean Mellenthin, Pat Miller, Dorothy Neuman, Phyllis Premau, LaVilla Schilling, Earl Schiszik

Those with ongoing health concerns—Dylan Maki, Lois Block, Dick Berger, Todd Frahm, Audrey Heldt, Audrey Helsten, Michael Howe, Jodi Krause, Scott Kollmansberger, Betty Muehlbauer, Becca Raczek (Cindy Weiler's niece), Dylan Rottscheit, Tammi Schiferl, Joanne Seefeldt, Jon Soderberg, Jean Steiner, Kimberly Tate, Darin Thompson, Michael Weigel, Lenore Williams, Richard Zugier.

Those with cancer—Judi Andrew, Linda Bauer,, Brenda Gardner, Dean Hanson, Sue Johnson, Mark Kilty, Parker Klimmer, Dennis Krause, Jeff Miller, Michelle Oelke, Kris Ovans, Kathy Pieper, Tom Steiner, Barb Wachsmuth, Francis Wash, Mark Zimmerman, Emily Weiler.

Those dealing with COVID-19 or anxiety related to the virus

Those serving in the health care field

Those serving in the military—Tyler Klement

Pastor Bolstad is available for home visits upon request. Contact the church office or the pastor.



# VOLUNTEERS are key!

Spencer Serving Schedule					
	April 4 (7am)	April 4 (9am)	April 11	April 18	April 25
<b>Greeter</b>	Pam Hardrath	Jan Ammons	Inez Fosberg	Doug & Jan Kops	Teri Schorer
<b>Technology</b>	Kyler Hardrath	Tracy Ackman	Teri Schorer	Kyler Hardrath	Bruce Luepke
<b>Sounds</b>	Kyler Hardrath	Tracy Ackman	Savana Weyer	Kyler Hardrath	Bruce Luepke
<b>Ushers</b>	Ryan Hardrath	Jan Ammons	Gail Jicinsky	Ryan Hardrath	Jan Ammons
	Travis Hardrath	Jim Christopherson	Teri Schorer	Travis Hardrath	Rudy Nieman
<b>Communion Assistant</b>	Teri Schorer	Jenny Nieman	Inez Fosberg	Lori Helsten	Janine Luepke
<b>Reader</b>	Bill Martens	Rudy Nieman	Gail Jicinsky	Jim Christopherson	Bill Martens
<b>Hospitality</b>	Pam Hardrath		Heather Vogel	Pam Hardrath	Teri Schorer

## Riplinger News

### Attendance:

February 7	13
February 14	—
February 17	13
February 21	14
February 28	10

### 2021 Elections:

#### Call Committee:

Lori Cook  
Heather Miller  
Amanda Knecht  
Mary Seefeld  
Rudy Nieman  
Travis Hardrath

### Readers

April 4	Brenda Newman
April 11	Trish Porter
April 18	Dave Newman
April 25	Joan Miller

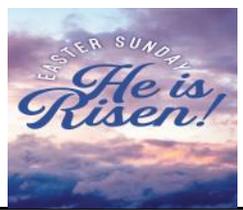
## Spencer Attendance

	Worship	Soup
February 21	44	
February 24	68	63
February 28	49	
March 3	64	55
March 7	42	
March 10	68	45
March 14	49	
March 17	65	46
March 21		





# April

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				<b>1</b> 7PM Worship Spencer 	<b>2</b> 7PM Worship Riplinger 	<b>3</b>
<b>4</b> 7AM Worship Spencer 9AM Worship Spencer 10AM JAM 11AM Worship Riplinger 6PM Cub Scouts 	<b>5</b> 1PM Staff	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>11</b> 9AM Worship Spencer 10AM JAM 11AM Worship Riplinger 12PM Via de Cristo Ultreya	<b>12</b> 1PM Staff	<b>13</b> 6:30pm Spencer Council	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b> 6:30PM Cub Scouts	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> 2PM Memorial Service for Darlene Dommer
<b>18</b> 9AM Worship Spencer 10AM JAM 11AM Worship Riplinger 6PM Cub Scouts	<b>19</b> 1PM Staff	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b> 	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>25</b> 9AM Worship Spencer 10AM JAM 11AM Worship Riplinger	<b>26</b> 1PM Staff  6PM Worship Committee	<b>27</b> 5PM COME Meal	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	



**Thanks to those who were able to make donations towards purchasing Easter Lilies**

Dorothy & Jerry Marten in memory of Jean Marten and Leon Dommer

Gayle, Douglas Dommer & Dawn Lett in memory of Milton & Darlene Dommer and Fred & Ida Dommer

Karen & Ronald Seefeldt in memory of Alfred & Freida Hendrickson, Arnold & Violet Seefeldt, Andy Hendrickson and Delores Buse

Inez Fosberg in memory of Don Fosberg and in honor of family

Allen & Gail Jicinsky in memory of our grandparents

Gary & Karen Grieser in memory of our parents, son, brothers and brother-in-law



**Name:**

Amanda Schjoneman

**Position on church council:**

Office Secretary

**Best thing about St. John's?**

The instant welcoming feeling and the feeling of being a part of a family.



**Complete this sentence:** *“God is calling this congregation to...”*

Create a family

**What is one thing you are passionate about?**

My family

**As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?**

A mom

**What is one thing you're looking forward to?**

Warm weather so I can get outside and work on my landscaping and my garden.