

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

I hope your observance of the nativity of our Lord is ongoing and joyous! "The Word became flesh and lived among us and we saw his glory..." (John 1:14) The great German theologian Friedrich Schleiermacher said that all Christian teaching and faith are contained in this one sentence of the New Testament. And that is true! But, of course, it must be unpacked, interpreted, made plain, believed, lived and proclaimed. That is one of the main reasons God has called the Christian Church to exist in the world: To do that work and carry on that mission.

We are a mission, first and foremost and from beginning to end. We are a people on a mission, called into a mission. Only in a secondary and ancillary sense are we an "institution," or an "organization." And to the degree we are either of these, it is only to serve the mission. When we relate to the church as if it were a voluntary club, or a religious PTA, or a society for the promotion of general cultural norms and values, we badly misunderstand the church's being and purpose.

Near the end of 1932, on the eve of the Nazi (short for "Nationalist") party coming to power in Germany, a violent confrontation took place between Nazi supporters and local communists in Altona (near Hamburg). In the days following the violence the Nazi party demanded in the press that the German churches step in "on behalf of the German people" and speak to defend "our people and our values." Local Lutheran pastors met together, and under the leadership of pastor Hans Assmussen they issued the **Altona Confession**. It was the first act of Christian resistance to the Nazis.

Article I of that Confession deals with the Christian Church. Those Lutheran pastors noted that the church is the mission of God and has a particular Word from God that it must proclaim and preach. This Word cannot be co-opted or watered down by other realities, they said. Then, they continued, and I quote: "If anyone wants to celebrate military, governmental/national, or political and party observances in the church—they misuse and abuse the Christian Church." Consequently, the Lutheran pastors of Altona/Hamburg refused to speak for Germans against others or to take sides in the party dispute. It was their duty—they said—to proclaim God's judgment against all human pretensions, plans and political arrangements, nations and organizations and set over against the totality of them the kingly rule of God that is for all people, for all sinners, regardless of race, language, nation, social class, etc., who come to God in Jesus Christ for grace and salvation.

Sisters and brothers in Christ, we are a mission. We are the living extension of that same mission that sent Paul of Tarsus out along the roads of the Eastern Roman empire in the first century to take the Word of Jesus to the Gentiles. We are the living embodiment in the present of the very same mission that sent Wynnfrith (whom we know as Saint Boniface—whom St. Boni, MN is named after!) across northern Germany and through Scandinavia in the eighth century of the Common Era establishing churches among the northern pagans, teaching them Jesus and his way. We are the existence right here and now of exactly the same mission that those pastors in Altona carried on at the risk of personal safety and of their very lives. Indeed, a number of them did not survive the Nazi era. They gave their lives and blood for the sake of this mission and this Gospel.

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When we think about the church, then, we think in the wrong way if we identify it with a person other than Jesus. If we determine our participation or giving based on our likes or dislikes of some detail at a particular moment of the church's life, we are not carrying on the mission. When we give, we are giving to God's mission to redeem, cleanse and sanctify the world. When we participate, we are honoring God in the ways God wills for us to do that. But when we respond to a council member, a bishop, a decision on a particular matter we think is wrong (whether churchwide, synodical or congregational) or a pastor as though that one person or decision equals the "church," we make a grave mistake. We are called to give our gifts, strength and lives to God's mission in Jesus Christ, to take up a cross and follow Jesus, to do the words and way of Jesus, having been forgiven and saved from sin and death by him. And it doesn't matter who the bishop is, how many decisions are wrong (the church is God's, and God will take care of it over the long haul of history), who the pastor is or who is on the council: God has acted and is at work, NOW. And the church needs your prayers, your living presence, your witness, your discipleship, your worship and your tithes. If you do not tithe, you should think about taking it up as a spiritual practice. If we want to carry on the mission, we need your monetary gifts, your offerings of response to God's grace. Without your offerings, our ministry will shrink. Our mission here will dwindle. The question is not: do I like St. John's Lutheran and the things that happen there? The question really is: Am I a partner in God's great mission of world salvation and transformation? Or am I standing on the sidelines? Am I giving all I can to God's mission? Or am I holding back, or not giving at all? Poised to begin a new year, it is worth a moment of thoughtful consideration.

In the grace of Jesus,

Pastor Gary

From the Lutheran Spiritual Classic ***On True Christianity*** by Johann Arndt, translated by pastor Gary

"St. Paul says, (Galatians 6:14), '*Through Christ the world is crucified to me and I to the world.*' That is, I have died to the world and the world is dead to me. Therefore, a Christian is surely in the world, but not of the world. A Christian lives in the world, but does not love the world. The magnificence, honor, reputation, glory, the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life that comes from the world is to the Christian like a dead thing, a shadow, to which the Christian pays no attention. In other words, the world is crucified to the Christians and they are crucified and dead to the world. They have no desire whatsoever for worldly honor, wealth, pleasure and joy." The Christian's joy, glory, desire, wealth and pleasure is Jesus Christ.

Rev. Gary Kinkel, Senior Pastor
Rev. Jerod Freeberg, Associate Pastor
Sean Vander Veen, Worship Music Accompanist
Karen Van Sickle, Choir Director
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From Pastor Jerod Freeberg...

Now there was a disciple in Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias." He answered, "Here I am, Lord." The Lord said to him, "Get up and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul. At this moment he is praying, and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight." But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints in Jerusalem; and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who invoke your name." But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before Gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel; I myself will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name." So Ananias went and entered the house. He laid his hands on Saul and said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on your way here, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and his sight was restored. Then he got up and was baptized, and after taking some food, he regained his strength. Acts 9:10-19

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus the Christ, Amen.

A man by the name of Saul was traveling to the city of Damascus when suddenly he was struck by the glory of the risen Lord. Saul fell to the ground, and was rendered blind. After three days the Lord sent a man named Ananias to Saul so that he might be healed. Ananias protested saying, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints in Jerusalem; and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who invoke your name." The Lord insisted that Ananias follow his instructions because Saul had seen a vision and would be made new. So, Ananias went, found Saul, and baptized him.

Renewed in his baptism Saul becomes a disciple of the Lord and sets off to proclaim the Good News. Saul has been made new just as we are made new, and while we only need one baptism for the forgiveness of sins we often need renewal. We often wander from the path, and need to be found by God again, and again. So where will God find you? On the road to Damascus, urging you to turn from your old ways? On the road to Emmaus, walking beside you? On the road to Jericho, beaten, half-dead, and helpless? Or, on the road to Tarshish, running away from God?

The New Year is a great opportunity for us to reflect on the past year, and to prepare ourselves for the year ahead. The clock resets and we are given a second chance. In our Gospel lesson we are reminded that no matter where God finds us, we can always be made new. Just as Saul is baptized by Ananias and made new, so too is God always working for our redemption. As Christians the New Year is a daily occurrence because we constantly find ourselves in need of a second chance. The second chance we are given through our baptisms and the life, death, and resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus, the Christ. Thanks, be to God. Amen.

Pastor Jerod



OWLS
(St. John's
Older, Wiser,
Lutheran Seniors)

OWLS – January Meeting

Wednesday, January 2nd @ 10:00 am

The new year is approaching, and it is time again for the seniors at St. John's to meet for their OWLS gathering. Ray and Mary Hawes of Savage will be our guest speakers. They have been married for 47 years and are the proud and happy parents of three African-American children. They also have six grandchildren! They met at the University of Minnesota where Ray was a star football player for the U of M Gophers.

Please invite any friends, neighbors, or family to come as well. For further information please call Del at 952-412-4917. *OWL are welcome!*

Confirmation News!

January Confirmation schedule:

1/02: NO Confirmation (*Christmas break*)

1/09: Give Us This Day

1/16: Forgiveness

1/23: Temptation and Trial

1/30: Deliverance

Simple Supper Helper schedule:

1/02: NO Confirmation (*Christmas break*)

1/09: 9th Grade families

1/16: 8th Grade families

1/23: 7th Grade families

1/30: 6th Grade families

Below is the schedule for worship helpers. Everyone will be helping once every couple of months.

**If you cannot be at your scheduled time, please reach out to your classmates to see if they will switch with you.*

	6-Jan	13-Jan	20-Jan	27-Jan
8:15 Service				
<i>Cross Bearer</i>	Kaylin Anderson	Maddie Eslinger	Edie Schmidt	Colby Hahn
<i>Acolyte</i>	Jordyn Blenkush	Garrett Hayer	Holly Schmidt	Kylie Hahn
<i>Communion Server</i>	Ella Doty	Jenna Koehn	Abigail Swenhaugen	Daniel Eckers
10:30 Service				
<i>Cross Bearer</i>	Brock Koivisto	Madison McGraw	Emma Swenson	Molly Anderson
<i>Acolyte</i>	Martin Koivisto	Lindsay Schmidt	Luke Wilts	Nicholas Briggs
<i>Communion Server</i>	Olivia McCall	Emily Stadler	Lillian Allen	Gabby Anderson



The Annual Meeting will be Sunday, January 27th immediately following the 10:30 a.m. worship service. Please mark your calendars.

Please submit your reports for the Annual Meeting as soon as possible to the church office. You can email your reports to the church office at info@stjohns-shakopee.com. *Thank you!*

St John's Evangelical Lutheran Church Council Meeting Minutes - November 20, 2018

Council Members Present: Pastor Gary Kinkel, Pastor Jerod Freeberg, Erik Allen, Jenny Pudwill, Scott Wilts, Melody Hime, Aimee Johnson

Council Members Absent: Nancy Berndt (resigned), Renee Lea

I. Gathering

- A. Meeting called to order: Pastor Gary Kinkel @ 7:07
- B. Assign Time Keeper: Scott Wilts
- C. *Motion to approve agenda: Erik Allen / Scott Wilts Carried*
- D. Scripture and prayer: The Council in the Word Acts 8:14-25

II. Discernment (New Business) (50)

- A. Chris Anderson would like a few minutes
 - a. Spoke to the women who count the money each Sunday. The computer is really slow and is running Microsoft XP. Need an update?
 - b. Chris wanted to know if he is considered a "staff member". Referred to the minutes from April. There were performance reviews of staff at that time. Should Chris also receive a performance review?
 - c. Update the sound board. Chris reached out to a company in EP. They gave him an estimate for a "scope" \$15,000 – 35,000. Update speakers too - \$24,000 (for a building our size). The sound board and speaker are both quite old and outdated.
 - Discussion: is this a capital campaign funds raiser?
 - Would there be something used available for purchase?
- B. Church Council discussion (Scott- from last month)
 - a. Two resignations and now a third. Nancy Berndt, President, has resigned for health reasons. We do have a Vice President who will step in now to be an interim and carry over into the new year: Jesse Riens. Council will officially install him next month.
 - Are there reasons that we need to discuss the recent resignations? To figure out why they have happened? Pastor Gary shared that he feels he was called to St. John's to help our congregation to grow. Change takes time. There seems to be some old wounds that are not

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- b. healed. Communication needs to improve too. Maybe we need to ask ourselves where our focus is currently and where it needs to be.
- c. Contemporary Service – revisit from a previous council meeting. Aimee shared her thoughts and feelings. Wednesday night worship. Pastor Jerod would like the Wednesday night worship to serve more than just Confirmation students/youth. In the future – a task force?
- d. Leadership – Jenny shared some info from a leadership training.

III. Decisions (Old Business) (15)

A. *Motion to approve October council minutes* Jenny Pudwil / Aimee Johnson *Carried*

B. Reports – any questions?

a. Pastor's Report –

Pastor Gary – a scheduled wedding at St. John's is coming up. Fee of \$800 that is designed for using the Fellowship Hall space as well. The wedding party are not members, but do worship here. They will not be using the fellowship hall. Should the fee be less? Agree to \$200.

Mission development, Spanish speaking ELCA church. Looking for a financial agent for the money that goes from the synod to the Pastor. The person is Pastor Stephanie's (Cross of Peace) husband. This would not cost our congregation any money. Would need some office administration.

Motion for St. John's to be the financial agent for Spanish speaking ELCA mission development in our area. Erik Allen / Jenny Pudwill – subject to satisfactory review of Synod documents by Erik Allen – Pastor Gary to provide *Carried.*

b. Pastor Jerod – Middle School lock in – 30 students attended. Spoken Word Service on a Wednesday night went well. Thanksgiving service – he will preside over that.

c. President's Report – Nancy Berndt has resigned as Council President. Church council will keep her in our prayers.

d. Team Reports

i. Aimee Johnson - Christmas pageant program for Sunday School students on Dec. 9th at the 10:30 service. It is going well.

ii. Scott Wilts – sign is up for Spanish service. We approved the addition of 10 hours per month for Pastor Jose Luiz to focus on special maintenance projects. This has begun. Cleaned the walls in sanctuary – will paint next. Walls were painted at the back of the sanctuary and the south walls of the narthex.

iii. Events for Sunday School socializing. Sledding will be in the near future.

C. Treasurer's Report –

a. Budget Draft to approve at the December meeting.

b. Giving continues to trend downward. 4% lower than last year at the same time. We budgeted for a 4% increase, so we are currently at a deficit.

c. Stewardship – revisit pledge status from last year. Pastor Gary will inquire with Molly about this.

d. Total revenue: \$17,000 below budget.

e. Expense savings - \$10,000.

f. Net expenditures are \$7400 over budget as of October.

D. *Motion to approve treasurer's report* Jenny Pudwill / Aimee Johnson *Carried*

E. Reminder – newsletter article due – November 26th

a. Erik Allen will submit a stewardship letter.

IV. Sending (5)

A. Next council meeting date is **December 18, 2018.**

B. Closing Prayer

C. Adjournment at 8:54

Respectfully Submitted

Melody Hime, "Interim" Council Secretary

JANUARY 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 <i>Happy New Year!</i> <i>(office closed)</i>	2 10:00 AM OWLS 12:00 PM Bible Study <i>*No Confirmation</i> <i>(Christmas Break)</i>	3 6:30 PM Bible Study 7:00 PM AA*	4	5 9:00 AM AA * 6:00 PM Hispanic Church Band Rehearsal
6 8:15 AM Worship 9:25 AM Sunday School/ Adult Education 9:30 AM Bell Choir/Choir 10:30 AM Worship 12:30 PM MWAM Rehearsal 1:00 PM Hispanic Church	7 6:30 PM MWAM Rehearsal 7:00 PM AA* District Meeting 7:00 PM Gemeinschaft	8	9 12:00 PM Bible Study 1:00 PM Quilters 6:00 PM Simple Supper 6:30 PM Confirmation- Large/Small Group 6:30 PM Higher Ground 7:30 PM Worship 8:00 PM Choir	10 6:30 PM Bible Study 7:00 PM AA*	11	12 9:00 AM AA * 6:00 PM Hispanic Church Band Rehearsal
13 8:15 AM Worship 9:25 AM Sunday School/ Adult Education 9:30 AM Bell Choir/Choir 10:30 AM Worship 12:30 PM MWAM Rehearsal 1:00 PM Hispanic Church 5:30 PM Luther & Lager	14 6:30 PM MWAM Rehearsal	15 7:00 PM Church Council Meeting	16 12:00 PM Bible Study 6:00 PM Simple Supper 6:30 PM Confirmation- Large/Small Group 6:30 PM Higher Ground 7:30 PM Worship 8:00 PM Choir	17 1:00 PM Martha Circle 6:30 PM Bible Study 7:00 PM AA*	18	19 9:00 AM AA * 1:00 PM Piano Recital 6:00 PM Hispanic Church Band Rehearsal
20 8:15 AM Worship 9:25 AM Adult Education <i>(No Sunday School)</i> 9:30 AM Bell Choir/Choir 10:30 AM Worship 12:30 PM MWAM Rehearsal 1:00 PM Hispanic Church	21 6:30 PM MWAM Rehearsal 7:00 PM Gemeinschaft	22	23 12:00 PM Bible Study 6:00 PM Simple Supper 6:30 PM Confirmation- Large/Small Group 6:30 PM Higher Ground 7:30 PM Worship 8:00 PM Choir	24 6:30 PM Bible Study 7:00 PM AA*	25	26 9:00 AM AA * 6:00 PM Hispanic Church Band Rehearsal
27 8:15 AM Worship 9:25 AM Sunday School/ Adult Education 9:30 AM Bell Choir/Choir 10:30 AM Worship 1:00 PM Hispanic Church 3:00 PM MWAM Rehearsal	28 6:30 PM MWAM Rehearsal	29 6:30 PM MWAM Rehearsal	30 12:00 PM Bible Study 6:00 PM Simple Supper 6:30 PM Confirmation- Large/Small Group 6:30 PM Higher Ground 7:30 PM Worship 8:00 PM Choir	31 6:30 PM Bible Study 7:00 PM AA*		

* - "AA is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or institution..."

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The Eagle is a publication of St. John's Lutheran Church. It is published monthly and mailed to its members.

The Eagle welcomes news and features from its readers. We reserve the right to edit submitted material for content and length. All newsletter materials are due in the church office on the 20th day of the month preceding publication.

All addressing changes and mailing inquiries should be directed to the church office at 952-445-5666 or info@stjohns-shakopee.com.

The Mission of St. John's
Called as children of God
Comforted and **Challenged** by the Holy Spirit
Committed to serve **Christ** in the world