



ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH

"All God's Children Joyfully Celebrating God's Transforming Grace"

Established 1852

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Renewing Congregations

The Rev. Craig A. Satterlee, Ph.D., Bishop

As stated in our mission statement, we “prayerfully participate in Christ’s own work of reconciling the world God’s very Self” by renewing congregations. Renewing is different from restoring. To restore is to bring back what was previous to return to a former state or condition. To renew is to begin again. I have come to think of renewing congregations as helping begin again at the earliest stage of their life cycle.

Yes, like all living things, congregations have life cycles – they are born, they grow, and they die. William Bridges describes an organization’s life cycle as consisting of seven stages (Managing Transitions, p. 77).

- The first life stage, dreaming, is the time of organization and planning. A congregation works to articulate its vision and to get people to bring that vision into existence.
- Congregations start launching their vision in their second life stage, a process marked by improvisation rather than formal systems and policies.
- In its third life stage, congregations get organized. They start to slow down in order to rein in the chaos and bring order. Roles often become specialized and formally defined and experience becomes more important.
- As they enter the fourth stage, making it, the congregation has the resources to do significant ministry. In this stage, congregations can expand and grow for a long time. As they have become solidly established, congregations begin to reap the rewards of their efforts and have a basis for expansion. Making it often leads congregations to feel that they should continue moving and become an institution.
- When a congregation becomes an institution, the fifth life stage, its priority shifts from the ministry it accomplishes to the impression it makes. In this life stage, the congregation’s reputation is established. People emphasize what is appropriate for the congregation and in terms of membership and staffing, the concern is less about talent and more about fit.
- In its sixth life stage, the congregation starts closing in on itself and losing vital connections to the outside world, whether that is its immediate neighborhood, the greater church, or contemporary culture.

- Once a congregation starts closing in, they start down the path to dying, the final life stage. As a rule, congregations come to the end of their life in ways that make death less obvious.

In understanding the different stages in a congregation’s life cycle, we can better recognize and support these transitions. Whenever there is a painful, troubled time in the congregation and the cause of it is not readily identifiable, a developmental transition from one life stage to the next is probably occurring. In the first half of the life cycle, not making a transition when the time is ripe for one can also lead to a troubled time as it causes a “retardation” in the organization that threatens its future development and very existence. In many cases, people who were most at home in one stage are most likely to experience the next stage as a personal setback.

One such transition a congregation must face occurs after they become an institution. While in this phase, congregations must either choose the path of renewal or choose to die. Renewal, or claiming a new vision, means redreaming the dream on which the congregation is based, recapturing the style natural to a young and just launched congregation, and cultivating a new climate and style of leadership. Transitions such as this one can be traumatic because in choosing renewal, congregations must let go of the very things that got them this far – their sense of identity, ways of doing ministry, and ways of living together as a Christian community.

No one can do renewal for a congregation – not a Bishop, a book or a program, or a charismatic leader. But when congregations are ready to renew, we are eager to help. Our work in this area includes the call process, teaching and equipping leaders with resources for community engagement, providing pastoral care, and helping congregations obtain additional resources to aid with their renewal. For congregations who do not choose the path of renewal, we are also here to work with and support them in coming to terms with death in a graceful and meaningful manner and with confidence that in Christ, death – even the death of the congregation – is the gate to new life.

St. John Lutheran Numbers

Date	Attend.	Deposit
1/8/17	44	\$5,130.00
1/15/17	77	\$1,621.00
1/22/17	46	\$757.00

Memorials/Gifts Received

January 1 – January 22, 2017

Altar Flowers	\$	
Breakfast for the Hungry	\$	
Camp Lu-Wix-E Gifts	\$	50.00
Congregational Life	\$	
Evangelism	\$	
General Fund	\$	140.00
Heating Fund	\$	
Music & Worship	\$	
Summer Day Camp Gifts	\$	50.00
TOTAL	\$	240.00

Year-to-Date Offering Income:	\$5,240.00
Year-to-Date Rental Income:	\$1,480.00
Year-to-Date from Trust Income:	\$20,000.00



Please Remember Care Facility Members:

Please Remember At Home Members:

They would love a card or visit from you!



Birthdays

February 2 Tara Alverson, Aubrey Aven
 February 3 Gary Roenicke
 February 4 Todd Wendland
 February 5 Rose King
 February 6 Ashlee Glave, Jack Temple
 February 7 Shannan Waters
 February 9 Pamela Aven
 February 11 Matthew Oswald
 February 13 Robert Blohm
 February 14 Linda McInerney
 February 15 Jerry Lemmer
 February 16 Yvonne Miree
 February 17 Andrew Bell, Wayne Marcet, Jr.
 February 19 John Balderas
 February 20 Marie Laeding
 February 21 Alice Morgan
 February 23 Robert Brown, Susan Young
 February 24 Ashley Cooper, Dennis Vollmer
 February 25 Eric Crane
 February 27 Ginger Reed
 February 28 Elizabeth Quackenbush



Anniversaries

none



Church Updates

Donations: Roger & Pauline Winterstein (Summer Day Camp), Larry & Lorelei Roenicke (Thrivent Choice Dollars).

Memorials: In memory of **Evelyn Schulz:** Jean Kahl (Camp Lu-Wix-E), John & Mary Booms (General Fund).

In memory of **John Funnell:** Herbert & Lorraine Schmidt (General Fund), William & Maureen Kottenko (General Fund).

In memory of **Warren Martin:**

Larry & Lorelei Roenicke (Summer Day Camp)

Kurt & Pam Aven (Camp Lu-Wix-E)

All for General Fund:

Robert & Karolyn Chicky

Max Foster

Brenda Berdella

Christine Collison

Steve & Pat Martin

Arnold Schoen

Wayne & Marcy Andersen

Charles & Ginger Reed

Robert & Alice Morgan

Jeff & Linda Deisig

Charles & Mabel McDougall

In memory of **Noreen Howell:** Robert & Alice Morgan (General Fund), Ludie Conley (General Fund), Sharon Hennigar (General Fund).

Our Dearly Departed: We extend our Christian love and sympathy to the family and friends of: **Warren Martin**, who died on January 10, 2017, and **Noreen Howell**, who died on January 14, 2017.

God bless all who mourn.



SMM Food Pantry



Thank you so much for helping us reach our goal for the Food Pantry to run through the holiday season. With help from your generous donations and Thanksgiving offering, we were able to help everyone that came to the giveaways. Please keep an eye out for our March Against Hunger Campaign next month. This is a great way to have your donation be matched 10% through the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan. Also, keep an eye out for a collection jar at your church – the winning church will receive an award! If you would like to join our fundraising efforts, contact Karen Luplow at : karenjoyluplow@yahoo.com.



Breakfast for the Hungry - Giveaways



The Evangelism Board has, with your help, been able to provide more than just meals. At our Breakfast for the Hungry, we have given away many needed items. Our biggest and probably most needed Giveaway has been for winter items.

We are asking for donations of new or gently used hats, gloves, socks, blankets, sweaters, or any other wearable winter items. Bring them to the church office or contact Marcy Andersen or Ginger Reed. Thank you for your generous contributions to help keep others warm!

Epiphany Prayer & Study Opportunity Wednesdays



1:00 p.m. & 7:00 p.m.
Jan. 11th – Feb. 15th, 2017



Beginning on January 11th and running through February 15th, you are invited to gather for study and prayer during the season of Epiphany. We will be focusing on the lectionary texts for the upcoming Sundays, and how they speak to us as the people of God who gather as St. John Lutheran Congregation. This study will be combined with a time of prayer, concentrating on seeking God's direction for St. John in the near - and not so near - future. This opportunity will be offered on Wednesdays at 1:00 p.m. and also at 7:00 p.m. at St. John. During January this will be led by Pr. Kathleen Basner, and in February leadership will be shared between Pr. Connie and Pr. Kathleen.

Free Community Dinners

Our **Free Community Dinners** are on the second Thursday of each month, with dinner served from 5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. Our next dinner is on **February 9th**. Contributions to fund the Free Community Dinners here at St. John can be made with checks payable to: Messiah Lutheran Church, "St. John Evening Dinners" and we can forward your check to them. If you have any questions about the dinners, please contact Dewey Burke at: dewburke@hotmail.com or at 989-971-4316.



Called to Invite

Rev. David E. Sprang, Assistant to Bishop, Director of Evangelical Mission



As part of the Missional Leader Training, a training for new congregations and redeveloping congregations in the ELCA, participants read the article: "We Will No Longer Be a Welcoming Church" (Living Lutheran, June 22, 2016). It's a catchy title to push its readers to think about inviting and not just welcoming.

In the Gospel Lesson for Epiphany 2, from John 1: 35, Jesus asked John's followers, "What are you looking for?" It's a simple question, but one that has profound significance for the church today. In most places where the church exists, we have stopped listening to what those outside of our church are looking for. Instead, we spend a great deal of time listening to those inside, asking what they need to be comfortable and cared for. Listening to those outside of our churches has often become a lost art. In his book, Autopsy of a Deceased Church, Thom Rainer says the single most common characteristic of a dead or dying church is becoming inward focused. Jesus asked, "What are you looking for?" What might your church discover if that question were posed in the community around your church? How could the church be transformed if the congregation listened and made changes to become more welcoming to what people outside were looking for?

The answer Jesus received was, "Where are you staying?" The translation is cumbersome. It seems to me that the people are saying, "We want to be where you are dwelling with God." And Jesus invited them saying, "Come and see." It seems to me that in the text, the people were looking to be close to God, and they perceived that Jesus knew the way.

When we ask people, "What are looking for?" we might hear the same response, "I want to be in a place where people dwell with God." I would hope, assume, that your worship service brings people closer to God. I would guess that is why you participate. The next question to ask is, "Would your service make outsiders feel closer to God?" Congregations may be satisfied with how the service meets their needs, but may not always ask the question of whether it meets the needs of outsiders.

For a congregation to be inviting, and not just welcoming, what we are inviting people to must be something open to them; something that meets their needs. Often, we are welcoming of the people we want to come in and be a part of the same thing we have always done. However, most people who are on the outside want to be part of something new; something they helped shape.

Jesus has called us to be inviting. Jesus has called us to listen to others and welcome their input. When we have listened, and adjusted to the needs of our neighbors, then we can be like Jesus and invite them to come and see. Come and meet Jesus with us.