

*St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church*  
Baroda, Michigan  
stjohnsbarodami.com



2014 Congregation Annual Meeting



**Evangelical Lutheran  
Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.

## Pastor's Report

Proposed Mission Statement for St. John's:

### *Building the family of God by spreading the Word of God to all people*

As we took on this journey of revising our mission statement this past year, we heard a constant refrain of family, but St. John's continues to show the family is beyond our congregation. We serve the entire family of God beyond the membership of St. John's. We minister to others through our food pantry donations to the Catholic Community Center, monetary donations to Lutheran Disaster Response (Ebola and natural disasters) and Relay for Life (auctions and rummage sales), as well as school kits and quilts for Lutheran World Relief, just to name a few. We participate in building up this family of God by helping people see Jesus at work in the world.

We also see our Lord and Savior at work in our youth, who last month delivered pumpkins to our homebound members. Obviously the reality is that the youth group is not the same in terms of numbers as it was under Pattie Neal, our former youth group director, who forever impacted young people in the last several years. And yet it is important to point out that of our five graduating confirmands from last year (Kayla Fleisher, Brianna Perrin, Allison Semanak, Zach Sieler, Isabel Widdis), all five are active in a youth group. When the national average is closer to 0-20% continued participation beyond Confirmation, we have 100%! That is a testament to their parents, to Pattie, to all of you who support them. Thanks be to God! The youth group will continue its emphasis on service including care packages to those serving in the armed forces, as well as craft and book drives for the Helen DeVos Children's Hospital in the coming months. Numerous surveys show that the number one complaint against the church from youth all over the country is the lack of faith in action. St. John's is providing a way for our amazingly talented young people to spread the Word of hope and new life to people in the congregation and beyond.

But now how do we make this a reality for those beyond the youth group age? How do we ensure that we take on our baptismal calling to live as disciples of Christ? How do we "build the family of God by spreading the Word of God to all people?" I have three goals in mind for 2015.

- Small Group Ministry (where we coordinate groups of interested participants, based on geographical location, to focus on Bible study or other faith-based materials on a monthly basis)
- Congregation-Made Photo Directory (we create our own photo directory by having individuals/families provide their own picture they like of themselves to provide more personality and allow people to better see a more real "us")
- After-School Tutoring for Reading and Writing (a solid foundation for outreach to our community, but going beyond service by establishing long-lasting relationships)

Now it's likely some of the aspects of the goals will not be smooth in making happen, but this is what's next for a congregation that supports ministries so well with our finances, food, and other donations. This is a first step we can take in following Jesus into a world crying for help, and we do so together! Thanks be to God for the opportunity to be a part of it!

In Christ,  
Pastor Brad

## **Altar Guild**

Our committee currently consists of 10 members – we are ALWAYS looking for new members to join!

Meetings take place twice a year (February and October.) Members select two months out of the year to help with two individuals assigned each month.

The Altar Guild is responsible for communion each week, maintenance of the candles, acolytes, robes, flowers, linens, banners, changing of the parament colors, ordering supplies, ordering holiday flowers, decorating the church for the Easter and Christmas seasons, and playing a role in baptism, wedding, funeral and confirmation events.

Main expenses to the church include wine, oil, candles and plastic communion cups. The committee members purchase the bread each week and grape juice is generously provided by the Jasper family. Altar expenses (for the most part) stay consistent year after year. If a larger (out of the ordinary) purchase is needed, we have (in the past) asked the congregation for donations which has proven to be successful.

## **Hickory Creek Learning Center**

For over thirty-five years, HCLC has been operated by our church as a non-profit service to local families and our community, offering a first class education to preschool age children in a safe, learning and loving Christian environment. Our school is registered with the State of Michigan Department of Human Services Bureau of Children and Adult Licensing.

In the early fall of each year we register children for the next school year. This year enrollment is down and we have had to take certain unusual directions. We have reduced our staff by one person and have combined classes, which along with student tuition, several fund raisers throughout the year and Thrivent Choice Dollars will keep us in breakeven position for 2014-2015.

Over the years we have moved through various stages with our school, competitors for our students have come and gone. We look forward to a successful school year and keeping up with the dynamics and needs of our community to assure our missions viability going forward.

Bruce Nitz  
Director, HCLC

## **Community Life Ministry Team**

Some people think this stands for cake loving committee (because we order the cakes for all occasions) but in reality it stands for: COMMUNITY LIFE COMMITTEE.

Our group is very active with ministry outreach, food pantry, thanksgiving and Christmas food baskets, angel tree gifts, blood drives, seasonal church activities, i.e.: chili cook off, Easter egg hunt, 4<sup>th</sup> of July, Harvest of Joy, church clean up, Rally day, bingo, cook outs, youth group, Easter breakfast, super books, Christmas in the village. Whew, and on top of all this we have a church team called the Holy Roadies. We've placed 1<sup>st</sup> in church teams to raise the most money for past 5 years!!

We're always looking for new members and we have a lot of fun! So feel free to join us or contact Christine Hein or Pattie Neal for more info.

## Worship & Music

This past year we tried a contemporary service twice a month at 11:30 am, after bible class and Sunday school. Service attendance ran anywhere from 10-40. Due to lack of attendance and difficulty for band members to get together and practice, we decided to drop that service for the time being and do contemporary music at least once a month during the regular morning service. We would like to start a regular contemporary service again if people are really interested. This is my goal – to reach out to the younger couples and youth with their type of music – to see our congregation grow. They are the future of our church.

We have tried different days for choir practices this past year which just has not worked out due to conflicts with work and school schedules. So I'm trying to have one good practice one day a month, then sing that following Sunday. Other Sundays would be used with men singing, youth, contemporary band and soloists. I am at a loss as to what to do to make things work with everyone's busy schedules and conflicting events. So I plan on trying this to see how it works out.

I always use traditional music along with contemporary type on Sundays. Song ideas come from our Sundays & Seasons book (which go along with the lessons), and other music hymnals. Pastor picks the sermon hymn to go along with his sermon. Hopefully in this way, there will be music to please everyone.

I do what I can for music, but I need participation from people in the congregation to make it happen. We are blessed in our congregation with so many wonderful voices. I hope in the future those voices will join to make one large choir. These are my goals and dreams.

Sincerely,

Cindy Schroeder,

Music Director

**Property &  
Grounds Ministry  
Team**

Just like your home, there's always something to be fixed, checked, or repaired/replaced here at our church home. If you see something that we missed please leave a note with Bonnie (our church administrative assistant) or call Pattie Neal @ 757-1943. Thank you to the special people we see come up here and do stuff on their own for the many tasks that need done. If anyone would like to be part of this, or offer their expertise in this area, please let Dave and I know.

Sincerely,  
Dave & Pattie Neal

**Finance Ministry  
Team**

For three years our finance committee has done a tremendous job of watching budgets and future expenses. Every dollar we donate is accounted for and used wisely towards God's greater works.

As with changing times – i.e., gas prices, economy, snow removal (it is Michigan ;) ), upkeep, etc., we ask you to prayerfully consider increasing your giving to care for our continued growth of St John's. Thank you for all your loving support of your home church – St. John's!

Your Finance Committee

**Mutual Ministry  
Team**

Several years ago the ELCA initiated a program called, "Mutual Ministry," as a way to not only care for pastors, music directors, youth directors and other full-time and part-time personnel, but to also improve communications amongst congregation and the staff. And so St. John's began its own Mutual Ministry Team a couple years ago as a sound board for ideas as well as to check-in on the staff. We encourage you to take advantage of this ministry team if you have ideas for ministry and beyond for "building up the family of God." The members are:

Heather Fitzpatrick  
Janis Fleisher  
Pattie Neal  
Rick Widdis

**St. John's  
Evangelical  
Lutheran Church  
Notes**

Funerals: Alice Schinkel (11/28/2013)  
Sam Schultz (2/2/2014)  
Chester Mischke (5/5/2014)  
Joyce Skiver (6/25/2014)  
Ray Heimbuch (9/28/2014)

Confirmed: Kayla Fleisher (6/8/2014)  
Brianna Perrin  
Allison Semenak  
Zach Sieler  
Isabel Widdis

Baptisms: Jonah Nitz (1/2/2014)  
Lexi Wall (7/13/2014)  
Amalia Santiago-Cronk (9/14/2014)  
Connor Hawkins (10/12/2014)

Baptized Membership: 281  
Confirmed Membership: 239  
Voting Membership: 152