



## History of St. John's Lutheran Church Baroda, Michigan

On April 21, 1930 ...	fifty-four of the eighty members gathered in a hall in Baroda, Michigan to form a congregation. Church services were held in the Lodge Hall of Baroda.
On May 11, 1930 ...	a constitution was accepted and resolved to have the congregation incorporated as an independent congregation, named St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church.
In May, 1930 ...	the Ladies Aid Society had its first meeting in the home of Mr. and Mrs. August Schultz with about forty attending.
On July 11, 1930 ...	an agreement was signed by Schlutt Brothers to build a frame church.
In August of 1930 ...	the celebration of the laying of the cornerstone with church services held in the basement until completion.
On November 9, 1930 ...	in addition to the congregation, more than 1,000 persons visited St. John's for dedication services. The Ladies Aid sold dinner tickets for less than \$1.00 and raised \$200.00. The offering was over \$500.00, which went toward the construction of the new church which cost about \$12,000.00.
	A parlor organ was donated by Mr. And Mrs. Rudolph Spitzke.
	St. John's Male Quartet was organized. It included Harry Nitz, Edwin Zordell, Edward Nitz, and Herman Nitz.
In 1931 ...	a Church choir was started.
	Worship services were held: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• German - 10:30 AM</li> <li>• English - First and third Sunday at 9:15 AM</li> </ul>
On March 12, 1933 ...	the dedication of the new pipe organ with chimes built by Wicks of Highland, Illinois, especially for St. John's was held. This completed the building program.
On July 23, 1933 ...	Mrs. Paul Rennhack became the first organist.
In 1935 ...	a bell was installed and Ed Nitz was the first to ring it. On July 3, 1938 the first baptismal font was purchased.

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On January 3, 1943 ...	it was decided that all the minutes of the church should be kept in English.
On January 23, 1945 ...	the first paid janitor, Len Nitz, was hired and he received \$300.00 per year. His duties were: Be present at all regular and special services, take care of the furnace, ring the bell, be present one half hour before services, prepare the altar for communion and communion sets, attend font when there was to be a baptism, clean the church basement and the rooms the first week, take care of the lawns, winter the sidewalks and steps, and close the windows.
On April 8, 1945 ...	a fund was started for veneering the church.
On January 6, 1946 ...	Pastor Seidenberg's retirement resignation was accepted.
On May 13, 1946 ...	Pastor Hackbarth was installed as the new minister of St. John's.
On December 2, 1946 ...	women finally had the power to vote providing they were of age and had qualifications as provided by the constitution.
On January 4, 1948 ...	the church was covered with lannon stone, and the German service was discontinued.
On January 16, 1950 ...	Pastor Hackbarth resigned. He had decided to move to Belmont, Wisconsin.
On February 5, 1950 ...	it was decided that the minutes of the board and the congregational meetings which were written in German would be translated into English.
In 1950 ...	the Mortgage was Burned.
In June of 1950 ...	Pastor Pfeiffer was installed.
On February 23, 1951 ...	Joyce Livengood became the leader of the first Junior Choir.
On July 8, 1952 ...	St. John's bought their first heating system for \$4,585.00.
On October 4, 1953 ...	the common communion cup was replaced by the individual cups.
In 1954 ...	Dennis (Sam) Schultz was installed as organist.
On September 26, 1954 ...	the fall rally of the Southwest district of the Michigan Luther League was hosted by St. Johns. The largest attendance ever recorded was recorded on this day.
On January 9, 1955 ...	the Sunday School Department was given the approval to use the Revised Standard Version of the Bible.
On May 27, 1955 ...	St. John's joined the Wartburg Synod United Lutheran Church of America.
On January 6, 1957 ...	the "Think" building program began, and the congregation voted to secure the property of R. H. Mischke consisting of 8 acres at \$1,000 per acre.
On January 11, 1959 ...	St. John's started using the new red hymnals.

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In 1960 ...	Pastor Pfeiffer submitted his resignation which was accepted.
On April 8, 1960 ...	the old parsonage was converted to an Educational Unit.
On August 28, 1960 ...	Pastor Henry Rowoldt was installed.
On January 15, 1961 ...	the church approved the building of a new parsonage.
On February 5, 1961 ...	Reverend Curt Seidenberg was designated Pastor Emeritus of St. John's.
On August 20, 1961 ...	the corner lot was purchased on Cleveland Avenue and Church Street for \$1,500.
On August 31, 1961 ...	the \$28,671.95 bid for a new parsonage was accepted.
In January of 1962 ...	the congregation voted to join the Lutheran Church of America.
On June 3, 1962 ...	a great celebration was held for the dedication of the parsonage.
In 1965 ...	Mellierose Schultz was installed as organist.
In October 1966 ...	a special building fund was set up as a separate fund for monies to be used for the new church building on the Cleveland Avenue site.
In August of 1967 ...	a sign was erected designating the new church site. In June of 1968 choir robes were purchased.
In May of 1971 ...	St. John's officially transferred from the Lutheran Church in America, Michigan Synod to the American Lutheran Church, Illinois District.
On February 16, 1972 ...	Rev. Henry Rowoldt gave his farewell sermon. He had served the church for eleven and a half years.
On April 6, 1972 ...	Rev. Roland Belanger was installed.
On April 28, 1974 ...	at the Congregational Meeting it was voted to begin building a new church on the Cleveland Avenue site. Robert Rogien of Eau Claire, Michigan was chosen as the builder and the estimated cost was \$383,404.00.
On November 3, 1974 ...	dedication services were held for the laying of the cornerstone.
In March of 1975 ...	the Seidenberg Memorial Chapel was dedicated.
On June 15, 1975 ...	St. John's celebrated the dedication of the new church.
In October of 1975 ...	the Wicks organ was moved, refinished, and reassembled in the new church building.
In September of 1976 ...	St. John's began its first Intern Program with Vicar Kenneth Schaub as the first Intern.
In September of 1977 ...	Vicar Greg Uthus became our second Intern.

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In March of 1977 ...	an invitation was given to all the children to accompany their parents to the communion table for a blessing.
In May of 1977 ...	the rental of the building for the Lakeside Mission Church was approved.
On April 9, 1978 ...	Pastor Roland Belanger died unexpectedly.
On August 23, 1978 ...	Rev. Ronald Johnson was installed as the new pastor.
In September 1978 ...	our third Intern, Vicar Mark Nelson arrived.
In January 1979 ...	The Lutheran Book of Worship (green book) was initiated into our Sunday services.
In June, 1979 ...	St. John's Annex at Lakeside was terminated.
In June of 1979 ...	mid-week services were added to the summer schedule.
In the Fall of 1979 ...	Hickory Creek Learning Center opened its doors.
September of 1979 ...	brought our first woman intern, Kathy Hobson.
In February 1980 ...	the congregation received the resignation of Rev. Ronald Johnson.
February 24, 1980 ...	saw the farewell sermon of Vicar Hobson. On August 13, 1980 Rev. James Kegel was installed.
In September of 1981 ...	the congregation voted to return to two services, and early communion began.
On October 23, 1983 ...	the congregation voted to approve the construction of a 24' x 32' storage building on the property.
In July of 1984 ...	the congregation received the resignation of Pastor James Kegel.
In July of 1984 ...	Rev. Harold E. Oelschlager was hired to serve as interim pastor. On January 1, 1985 Rev. Milt Johnson was installed.
In June of 1985 ...	the parsonage was re-roofed.
On January 1, 1987 ...	St. John's officially joined the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA).
On January 15, 1988 ...	the church mortgage was paid off.
In January of 1989 ...	Rev. Milt Johnson resigned.
In April of 1989 ...	Rev. Ned Elsass was installed as pastor.
In September of 1989 ...	Cindy Schroeder was hired as the choir director.

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On April 22, 1990 ...	St. John's celebrated their 60th anniversary. It was also the 100th anniversary of the village of Baroda. The church participated in the celebration by running both a dunk tank and a hot dog and pop stand. In the Summer of 1970 the parking lot was resurfaced by the members.
In 1992 ...	the following repairs were made: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The windows in the church were repaired.</li> <li>• A new furnace was installed replacing the boiler that heats the upstairs offices and the fireplace room.</li> <li>• A wall was constructed to create a separate school room.</li> </ul>
In 1993 ...	Samie Ledyard was hired as a Parish Assistant for youth.
In 1993 ...	two of the boiler blowers were replaced.
On June 26, 1994 ...	Rev. Ned Elsass retired.
In September of 1994 ...	the congregation began using 5th and 6th graders as acolytes.
On December 11, 1994 ...	Rev. Bill Michaels was installed as pastor.
. In 1995 ...	Rev. Ned Elsass was designated Pastor Emeritus.
In 1998 ...	St. John's dedicated the permanent walls built for the learning center.
In 2000 ...	the new entryway to the fellowship hall (Community Life Center) was dedicated.
In December of 2000 ...	Mellierose Schultz retired as organist. Cindy Schroeder, was hired to play the keyboard in her place.
On July 22, 2001 ...	Rev. Kenneth S. Babcock was installed.
In 2001 ...	the stained glass window in the new entryway was installed. the following repairs were done: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The church received a new roof.</li> <li>• New windows were installed in the parsonage.</li> <li>• Necessary repairs were made at the parsonage.</li> <li>• Exterior landscaping for the parsonage was done.</li> </ul>
In 2004 ...	Dennis Schultz celebrated 50 years as an organist at St. John's.
In September of 2004 ...	St. John's participated in its first Barodafest, which included selling "oodles of noodles" and youth helping with children's games.
In March of 2005 ...	Rev. Ned Elsass went home to live with his heavenly father.
In 2005 ...	St. John's began an annual craft fair lasting until 2011.

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In January of 2006 ...	Pattie Neal became our youth director beginning a year of many firsts for the youth: community-wide Easter Egg hunt, Fourth of July fireworks celebration, and semi-annual all youth services.
In January of 2008 ...	St. John's joined the Community Food Bank as well as started our first Blood Drive with Michigan Blood.
In February of 2008 ...	the youth group held its first annual Prime Rib Dinner.
In June of 2008 ...	our first Relay for Life team officially formed.
In February of 2011 ...	Rev. Ken Babcock retired.
On November 13, 2011 ...	Rev. Bradley A. Ross was installed as Pastor of St. John's.
In February of 2017 ...	Rev. Bradley A. Ross accepted a call to serve The Lutheran Church of the Covenant, Maple Heights, OH and Triune Lutheran Church, Broadview Heights, OH.
In October of 2017 ...	Rev. Jim Morgan was hired to serve as interim Pastor.
In June of 2018 ...	Rev. Nanette Dehnke was installed as Pastor of St. John's.
In October of 2019 ...	Rev. Nanette Dehnke accepted a call to serve Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Rose City, MI
In October of 2019 ...	Rev. Dennis Smith was hired to serve as interim pastor.

### Roster of Called Pastors

Curt Seidenberg .....1929 - 1946  
 Victor Hackbarth.....1946 - 1950  
 Eugene Pfeiffer .....1950 - 1960  
 Henry Rowoldt.....1960 - 1970  
 Roland Belanger.....1972 - 1978  
 Ronald Johnson.....1978 - 1980  
 James Kegel .....1980 - 1984  
 Milton Johnson.....1985 - 1989  
 Ned Elsass .....1989 - 1993  
 Bill Michaels.....1994 - 1999  
 Kenneth Babcock.....2001 - 2011  
 Bradley Ross .....2011 - 2017  
 Nanette Dehnke.....2018 - 2019

### Pastors Emeritus

Rev. Curt Seidenberg ... 1961  
 Rev. Ned Elsass..... 1995

### Interim Pastors

Fred Klawiter ..... 1980 - 1980  
 Harold Oelschlager..... 1984 - 1985  
 Ned Elsass ..... 1989 - 1989  
 Tom Zollman..... 1999 - 2001  
 Jim Morgan ..... 2017 - 2018  
 Dennis Smith..... 2019 -

### Vicars

Kathy Hobson, Mark Nelson, Kenneth Schaub,  
 Greg Uthus