



**Newsletter
2024**

**ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH
P.O. Box 763 – 206 N. Court Street
Au Gres, MI 48703-0763**



**1-989-876-8910
e-mail address – office@stjohnaugres.com
web site – www.stjohnaugres.org**

“This is love, not that we love God, but that He loved us and sent us His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sin” (1 John 4:10)

Dear brothers and sisters in Jesus. On February 14, we celebrate Valentines Day, a day when many love letters and gifts are exchanged. It’s a good thing to let people know that you love and care for them.

I wanted to remind you of another Valentine, one from God, that He has sent to us. You really can think of the Bible as God’s valentine, His love letter to us.

In His Holy Word, He speaks His loving words of guidance, giving us His Holy Law to warn us of sin and unbelief and their consequence, death. He tells us these things because He loves us, and does not want us to despair and perish eternally.

In that same Holy Word, He brings us the comfort of the blessed Gospel, telling us of His love in sending His only Son to be our Savior, who sacrificed Himself for us at the Cross.

When God wanted to let us know that He loves us, He did more than just send a card, flowers, or candy . We will remember that during the season of Lent, which begins on Ash Wednesday, February 14. He put His love into action, sending us Himself in Jesus, His Son. The love that Jesus gave us when He died for us forgives our sins. The love which He proved by His resurrection is so strong that no trouble, sickness, or sorrow will be able to separate us from Him. During the Lenten season, we will gather for worship on Wednesday evenings at 7:30 and on Sunday mornings at 9 a.m. to receive God’s gifts of forgiveness and peace.

Think of the Bible as God’s lifelong Valentine. Open it up to read about Jesus, God’s gift of true love. There is power in that Word of God to guide and guard us. Led by His Spirit, let’s love one another.

“Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so!”

Sincerely, in Him, Pastor Ted Voll

Mission of the Month for February 2024



LUTHERAN HOUR MINISTRIES

The first program was broadcast October 2, 1930 and continues to this day as they share God's changeless Word and offer comfort and hope to millions of people. The Lutheran Hour is broadcast in the Tawas and AuGres areas on WSAM, 1400 AM Sundays at 8:30am or online at: www.lutheranhour.org.

A portion of these offerings for February will go to help pay for the cost of local broadcasts in partnership with our sister churches Hale, Oscoda and Tawas. The balance will go directly to The Lutheran Hour in support of their various ministries.

ELECTION OF CHURCH OFFICERS – 2024

		TERM ENDING END OF YEAR
PRESIDENT (1 yr term - 2 consecutive)		
Roger Huber	989-646-2187	2025
SECRETARY (2 yr term - unlimited terms)		
Jessica Bender	989-305-1164	2025
TREASURER (2 yr term - limit 2 terms)		
Chris Caulfield	876-4910	2025
ELDERS (3 yr term)		
Bob Britt	876-7940	2024
Denny Klein (Head Elder)	876-0005	2026
Eric Schwiderson	989-646-2148	2026
Bob Colby	269-757-6713	2026
TRUSTEES (2 yr term - unlimited terms)		
Sharon VanLandeghem	989-889-1189	2024
Jim Hiveley (Head Trustee)	876-7516	2025
Jim Fica	989-756-2406	2025
Duane Pendred	876-7992	2025
Greg Easterle	989-646-1721	2025
SYSTEMS ADMINISTRATOR (1 yr term – unlimited terms)		
Matt Dewyer	989-903-5171	2024
FINANCIAL SECRETARY (2 yr term - unlimited terms)		
Sheri Colby	248-953-0034	2025
Carol Britt (assistant)	876-7940	2025
Karen Huber (assistant)	989-254-7586	2025

Installation of newly elected officers will be during worship on **Sunday, January 7, 2024**

UPDATED 1/23/24

prolife update

It's time to pass the baton! On December 31, after 43 years, I officially stepped down as President of Right to Life of Michigan.

What a privilege and an honor it has been for me to serve in this noble cause...to serve not only the unborn child and women in crisis...but to serve you!

Words simply cannot express my deep respect and admiration for the prolife community in Michigan:

- Our Board of Directors
- Our dedicated affiliates
- Countless volunteers
- And loyal staff

But you have a very special place in my heart...and you always will! What would we do without your prayer support and financial backing? There simply would be no prolife movement in Michigan without you!

Together, we are over **500,000** households strong representing every inch of this great state. Before I sign off for the last time, let's look back—let's look back at the race we have run thus far:

- Legislation: We have passed more significant prolife legislation than any other state.
- Political arena: Despite major disappointments along the way, we have made more endorsements and won more races than anyone else involved in Michigan politics.
- Abortion clinics: In the late 1980's there were **72** abortion clinics. Today there are only **26** left. Together we have closed **46** abortion clinics in Michigan.
- Planned Parenthood: In their heyday, there were **36** Planned Parenthood locations in Michigan. Today there are only **15** left.
- Minor abortions: Minor/teen abortions are down by more than **75%** since the mid-1990s.
- Abortions performed: Overall, abortions performed are down by more than **38%** since 1987.
- Lives saved: Together, we have saved an estimated **300,000** children!

(over)

That's a track record without equal! It is the best you will find from coast-to-coast. Again—let me be clear—we couldn't have done it without you! Our teamwork is second to none nationwide.

Even though I have retired as state President, my passion will never subside. I will remain on the state governing board and will be available as a consultant when needed. Yet, it's time for someone else to take the baton. One who is ready and willing to lead the charge in the next leg of the race.

I am so very pleased to introduce to you **Amber Roseboom**, your new Right to Life of Michigan President. Amber comes to you with not only a heart full of passion and commitment but with a fabulous skill set as well.

Amber joined us in a leadership role more than a year ago as Vice President of Operations. She has already proven herself over and over. I have complete peace as I hand off the baton to my dear friend and colleague.

Two requests before I close:

- Pray: We have now flipped the calendar to a historic election year. Please pray that God will move upon our fellow citizens to join us at the polls. I assure you that I will stay engaged on our state board, as a consultant, in addition to working by your side as we get out the prolife vote.
- Donate: We will need a huge war chest in the critical days and weeks just ahead. Please let Amber know that you are not just cheering from the stands, but you are in the race! I hope you will help me celebrate my retirement by remaining faithful to the prolife cause in the new year. Your steadfast support is critical as we launch full speed ahead into 2024.

Thank you! Thank you from the bottom of my heart. Thank you for running this race with me...the race for the human race.

You're the greatest!

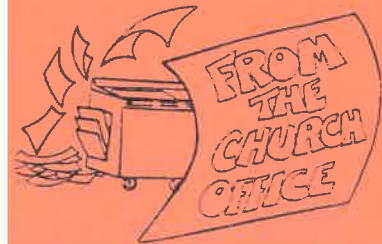


With deepest appreciation,

Barbara

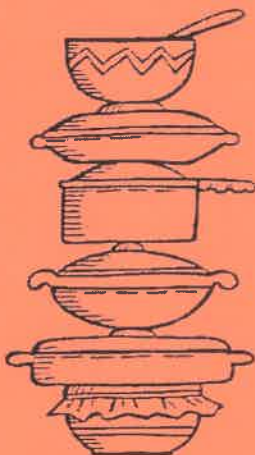
Barbara Listing
Pro-lifer at Large

P.S. Please go to our website, RTL.org, to read a short bio on Amber. While there, you'll find news you can use in the next leg of our race together.



St. John Lutheran Church, AuGres is looking to hire a new church secretary. We are hoping to fill this position before we bring our new Pastor on board. Cheryl Appold, our current secretary, plans to continue in her position through the transition to a new Pastor. It is our hope that the new secretary will have shared time with Cheryl before and during the transition to our new Pastor. Anyone interested in the church secretary position can obtain a copy of the Position Posting/Description in the office of the church.

Please join our church family & visitors alike after worship on Sundays for coffee hour, fellowship and snacks. If you wish to donate/help serve for the month of February, please sign up in the fellowship hall or contact our February hostess, Cheryl Appold 989-876-8401 or 989-254-0164.



Voter's Meeting & Potbless

Sunday, February 11, after worship/coffee hour,
approximately 10:15am.

Bring a favorite dish to share with your church family.
See YOU there!



Join us as we gather with Pastor & Linda Cordts and the residents for
Hymn Sing-along
with Bible Lesson & Prayer
at Eden Fields Assisted Living in Standish
(front lobby - sitting area)
Sunday, February 18, 2024, at 1:00pm.

They love music so come and sing unto our Lord with them.
All are invited to share the love of Christ with the residents.



Quilting will take place on
Thursday, February 15, from 1-3pm.
Come and help us assemble quilts.
NO experience necessary.
You may bring a lunch if you wish.
Many hands make light work.
Come when you can and leave when you must.





What is The Closet Exchange?

We carry clothing of all sizes for kids age 18 and under.

There is no charge for any of the items.

There are no financial qualifications to utilize The Closet Exchange.

We are funded by community and corporate donations.

For more information, follow us on Facebook or contact us via email:

<https://www.facebook.com/TheClosetExchangeArenac>
ittakesavillagearenac@gmail.com

They are located behind H & H Restaurant.

Days & hours of operation: Thursday, Friday & Saturday 9-1.

2023 Closet Exchange annual report highlights

- * We served 2,526 customers in 2023, a 419 increase compared to 2022, up 19.8%
- * August was the busiest month with 274 customers
- * Distributed 5,701 diapers to 447 children
- * Supported 2 families that were victims of fire
- * Distributed 12 filled duffel bags
- * Co-hosted a community picnic
- * Participated in the Community Connect event
- * Participated in The Tree in the Park: distributing hats, gloves and scarves

CHRIST FOR KIDS

**Needs volunteers to help with this program
from 1-3pm.**

The dates are as follows:

February 10, March 9, April 13 & May 18.

If interested please call

Sheri Colby 248-953-0034.





Ladies Card Party

This will be the last card party
until after Easter.

Come for fun, fellowship and competition
Friday, February 9, from 1-4pm.
Snacks provided.

We welcome our newest member to St. John
by rite of Holy Baptism.

Landon Hayes Koenig

son of John & Jarah (Hargitt) Koenig

was baptized on January 21, 2024

by Rev. William Winter.

His sponsors are Eric & Emily Schwiderson.

Welcome Landon!



American Red Cross Blood Drive



Thursday, February 22, in the fellowship hall

from noon - 4:45pm.

To schedule an appointment, log on to RedCrossBlood.org (sponsor code: Augres) or call 1-800-Red Cross (1-800-733-2767).

Come to donate and be entered in a drawing for a sweetheart basket courtesy of Rev. & Mrs. Linda Cordts.



Do we have your e-mail address?

The church is updating our ICON System and phone directory.

Please let the office know of any additions and/or changes to your family.

The symbolism of ashes

On the first day of Lent, pastors in many churches dip a finger in ashes (often made by burning palm branches from the previous year's Palm Sunday) and make a cross on parishioners' foreheads.

God's people have used ashes as a sign of mourning, humiliation and penitence. In the Old Testament, ashes were used as a purification offering. The New Testament speaks of repenting in "sackcloth and ashes" (Luke 10:13, NRSV).

On Ash Wednesday, Christians are pained because our sins — private and public — led to Jesus' death. With repentant hearts, we begin the season of Lent, knowing it leads to resurrection on Easter Sunday.



British evangelist Alan Redpath suggested these five helpful questions to ask yourself before you speak:

- T — Is it True?
- H — Is it Helpful?
- I — Is it Inspiring?
- N — Is it Necessary?
- K — Is it Kind?

Lent and repentance

Lent is a season of repentance. But for many of us, "repentance" is an offensive word. It sounds so remorseful.

In reality, it isn't remorseful at all. The root word for "repentance" is the Greek word *metanoia*, from which our word "metamorphosis" comes. The great image of this is the butterfly emerging from its cocoon: the caterpillar being transformed into new life.

No one is remorseful about that! Nor should we be with repentance, which involves leaving the past and emerging into new life.

HEALTHY CONGREGATIONS

Community of Health

by Rev. David A. Davis

How do you describe your congregation? Small, medium, large, mega? What about conservative, liberal, confessional, liturgical, contemporary? Is it dying, surviving, thriving?

Would you describe it as a community of health? Whether you are a lay person or a pastor, let me encourage you to consider your congregation as a community of health. Is it one? What would it take for it to be so?

Focus on the following five points.

continued

HEALTHY CONGREGATIONS

continued from page 1

First, help your congregation be a gathering of individual persons. See each person not as a part of a group or some sort of “identity.” Rather, see each person as an individual who bears, admittedly in a broken way, the image of God.

Groups drive the discussion these days. This person is a _____ or a _____ or a _____. You fill in the blank. Identifying an individual by the group to which that person belongs nullifies individual personhood. Remember, God did more than create humanity; he created Adam and Eve, two individual persons. Each person is an individual for whom Christ died.

Why is this important? It is easy to write off or devalue whole groups of people; it is hard to ignore an individual person. My mother used to say, “Be nice to that person, that is someone’s little boy or girl.” Years ago I read a study about motels that had policies against renting to certain groups of people. It turns out that when an individual of that group asked for a room, often the policy was not enforced. The difference lay in the individual as a person. Human dignity derives from individual personhood.

Second, help your congregation build on the premise of shared weakness and brokenness. The common denominator is our need for Christ. Don’t look first or foremost to the assets that people bring to the table, but rather the areas of hurt, brokenness, and need. Jesus does not build upon our strengths but on our weaknesses. He told Paul, “*My power is made perfect in weakness*” (2 Corinthians 12:9). A congregation is a community of health when it receives and cares for the weak, the “useless,” the hurting, the needy.

Third, help your congregation become devoted to the regular habit of thorough Bible reading. Jesus said, “*If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free*” (John 8:31–32). We meet Jesus in His Word. We experience truth and freedom in His Word. We receive power and direction through His Word. So much of life is lived without or even contrary to the words of the Bible. We should not be surprised that loneliness, purposelessness, addiction, sexual immorality, and many self-destructive behaviors are prevalent in a seemingly affluent and prosperous time. Across the landscape we too often are a people unmoored from truth and enslaved by mammon and the flesh. The path to health runs through the Bible.

Fourth, help your congregation invest in a vigorous

small group ministry. Many have said people need a “Cheers” in their lives, a place where everyone knows each other’s names and, very importantly, notices when someone is missing. In such settings we care for one another, share burdens, celebrate joys, and experience the consolation of the saints.

The Church speaks much about the real presence of Christ in Holy Communion. We probably should also think more about Jesus being really present in His Word. But let us never forget the promise of Jesus to be present wherever two or three are gathered in His name. Small group settings within a congregation provide a great path to health because the Great Physician Himself is present.

And **fifth**, help your congregation develop an ethos and reputation of serving others within your community. Too often the Church is accused of looking in judgment or with disdain toward others in the world. As Christ followers we can have the eyes of Jesus who looked at the hurting and harried world with compassion. He saw individual persons as sheep without a shepherd.

As we freely receive, we freely give. As we experience greater health (body, soul, mind), we extend it to others. Certainly, we want others to have what we have in Christ. When we engage our communities with humble service, they will be drawn to Jesus and ask us to give an account of the hope that we have within. This spirit grew the Church in the beginning and through the years. It is what will grow the Church now.

It is time for Christians in America to quit worrying about and wringing our hands over “what’s going on these days.” We should quit obsessing over categorizing our congregations with labels like dying or thriving or liturgical or contemporary or any of a dozen other appellations. Here’s what our time and every time needs of the Church: that local congregations are communities of health.* ■



Rev. David A. Davis serves as President of the Michigan District, LCMS.

*For more (and deeper) thoughts on this, see Andy Crouch’s *The Life We’re Looking For*. This article grows out of that work.

Davis, David. “Community of Health.” *Toward Significance*, June 16, 2023. towardsignificance.com/community-of-health/ All rights reserved. Used with permission.

LENTEN MIDWEEK SERIES 2024

St. John Lutheran Church, Au Gres

St. John Passion

This Lenten season in our Wednesday midweek services here at St. John, we will give close consideration to the Passion of our Lord Jesus from the Gospel of John. We will hear John 18–19, Jesus' betrayal and arrest, Jesus facing Annas and Caiaphas, Jesus before Pilate, Jesus delivered, Jesus crucified, and Jesus' death and burial. We'll especially consider the divine majesty and glory of Jesus that's hidden under his suffering and death. We pray that God the Holy Spirit would, by these meditations, imprint the image of Christ crucified in our minds and hearts and on our consciences.

This year we will be conducting our Lenten series differently than many, if any, of you ever have before ... four pastors from Circuit #4, the Gladwin Circuit, will be preaching 'round robin' style for the Wednesday midweek Lenten services.

Here is your schedule ...

Ash Wednesday - February 14

“The Powerless ‘I Am’” John 18:1–11

Pastor Bill Winter – St. John Lutheran Church, Au Gres

Lenten Midweek 2 - February 21

“Wisdom Has a Friend on the Cross” John 19:16b–27

Pastor Ed Meyer – Faith Lutheran Church, Prescott

Lenten Midweek 3 - February 28

“Whom Do We Follow?” John 19:1–16a

Pastor Winter

Lenten Midweek 4 – March 06

“Two Interrogations” John 18:12–27

Pastor Paul Kruse – St. John Lutheran Church, Houghton Lake

Lenten Midweek 5 – March 13

“What Kind of King Is This?” John 18:28–40

Pastor Adam Flanick – Our Savior Lutheran Church, Gladwin

Lenten Midweek 6 – March 20

“Jesus Finishes the Battle for Your Salvation” John 19:28–42

Pastor Winter

WEDNESDAY SOUP SUPPERS & WORSHIP

serving at 5:00pm / worship at 6:30pm

starting Ash Wednesday all throughout Lent, six weeks.

Ladies Aid will host Ash Wednesday supper.

*If you wish to host a soup supper, a sign-up sheet
is on the table in the multi-purpose room.*

Be a praying parent

Prayer is the saucer into which parental fears are poured to cool. ... Each time a parent prays, Christ responds. His big message to moms and dads? Bring your children to me.

—Max Lucado, *Fearless*



Be the reason
someone
believes in the
goodness of
God.

Call Committee:

The committee continued its work. The candidate list from District was narrowed from 11 to 6 who were contacted to confirm they were willing to engage in the call process with St. John. Three have confirmed their willingness to engage and video calls with each will occur the week of January 29. The committee will then form a call recommendation for the Voters.

The Vacancy Pastors (Rev. Voll and Rev. Winter) continue to do a great job supporting our worship, congregation care and confirmation instruction needs.

Please keep the committee in your prayers as we seek the Holy Spirit's guidance in the call process.

Submitted by Denny Klein



JUST WONDERING – 719

Just wondering about good friends.

I believe that true friendship is a gift from God. I made another road trip this week to have lunch and a conversation with an old friend. He is retired Bishop Gary Hansen. We are the same age and were ordained on the same day, June 21, 1970, and shared ministry together in Michigan for 40 yrs.

We reminisced about those years and the joys and struggles we had as pastors, spouses and dads. We bemoaned the loss of mutual friends who have gone to glory. We wondered about the current state of affairs in our denomination. We expressed concern for colleagues who are struggling. We ended our time with a hug and a, “We need to do this again,” hope-filled wish. I pray that you have at least one such friend. They are truly gifts to us in so many ways.

Here is a reminder for those of us who have been baptized into this blessed community that we have a common friend who initiated this friendship bond. *“I have called you friends...you did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last.”* John 15

There it is and the old hymn reminds us, *What a Friend We Have in Jesus*. Yes, what a friend we have in Jesus who bears all our sins and griefs; who promises us a life beyond this one; who walks with us through the perils of this life; who understands us even when we don't understand ourselves. He forgives us with an unconditional love and grace that we also find in our cherished earthly friends.

To celebrate this friendship, he invites us to a meal in which he gives us his very self. This holy meal reminds us that he is available 24/7 to share our life's journey. Don't miss it.

Pastor Kirk Havel, Ret., September 17, 2023; havelkj@aol.com

Thanks to Rick & Jill Gehring for sharing the Just Wondering Word

+ St. John Lutheran Au Gres +

Church Activities for February 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 *** ***	2 *** ***	3 *** ***
4 Worship/HC Confirmation/Bible Study 10:15am	5 WOW Women's Bible Study 10am	6 *** ***	7 *** ***	8 *** ***	9 Ladies Card Party 1-4pm	10 Christ for Kids 1-3pm
11 Worship 9am Transfiguration Blood Pressure Clinic 10:15am Voter's Meeting Potlpass 10:15am	12 WOW Women's Bible Study 10am	13 *** ***	14 Soup Supper 5pm Ash Wednesday Worship/HC 6:30pm	15 Quilting 1-3pm Elder's Meeting 9pm Church Council 7pm	16 *** ***	17 *** ***
18 Worship/HC 9am Confirmation/Bible Study 10:15am Eden Fields 1pm	19 WOW Women's Bible Study 10am	20 Ladies Aid Meeting 1pm	21 Soup Supper 5pm Lent II Worship 6:30pm	22 Red Cross Blood Drive Noon-4:45pm	23 *** ***	24 *** ***
25 Worship 9am Confirmation/Bible Study 10:15am	26 WOW Women's Bible Study 10am	27 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	28 Soup Supper 5pm Lent III Worship 6:30pm	29 *** ***	30 *** ***	

by Cheryl Appold
St. John Lutheran Church Secretary

10 biblical ways to love

1. Listen without interrupting. "To answer before listening – that is folly and shame" (Proverbs 18:13).
2. Speak without accusing. "Be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry" (James 1:19).
3. Give without selfishness. "The righteous give without sparing" (Proverbs 21:26).
4. Pray without ceasing. "We have not stopped praying for you" (Colossians 1:9).
5. Answer without arguing. "Better a dry crust with peace and quiet than a house full of feasting, with strife" (Proverbs 17:1).
6. Share without pretending. "Speaking the truth in love, we will grow in every respect the mature body of ... Christ" (Ephesians 4:15).
7. Enjoy without complaining. "Do everything without grumbling or arguing" (Philippians 2:14).
8. Trust without wavering. "[Love] always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres" (1 Corinthians 13:7).
9. Forgive without punishing. "Forgive as the Lord forgave you" (Colossians 3:13).
10. Promise without forgetting. "A longing fulfilled is a tree of life" (Proverbs 13:12).

—From various websites; all Scriptures NIV

Loving Involved Growing Honoring Teaching

Mission Statement

"The mission of St. John Lutheran Church is to make the love of Christ known within the church, the community, and the world through preaching, teaching, reaching out to the community, and spreading the Word of God to all people."



Saturday Worship (Memorial Day – Labor Day)	4:00pm
Sunday Worship	9:00am
Sunday Bible Study	10:15am
Monday WOW (Women of the Word) Bible Study	10:00am



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