



Monthly Newsletter

ANCHORED IN CHRIST
through every season

CELEBRATING 100 YEARS TOGETHER

JUNE 2026

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THE DOCTRINE OF VOCATION AND GOOD ORDER IN CHRIST'S CHURCH

In our day, the word vocation is often reduced merely to employment or career choice. Yet in the Christian faith, vocation is much richer and deeper. The word comes from the Latin *vocatio*, meaning "calling." A vocation is any station, office, or responsibility God gives a person in life for the service of the neighbor.

A husband and wife have vocations toward one another. Parents have vocations toward their children. Children have responsibilities toward their parents. Citizens have duties toward governing authorities. Christians serve one another in the congregation through various offices and responsibilities. Pastors serve the Church through the ministry of Word and Sacrament.

The doctrine of vocation teaches us that God is not a God of chaos or confusion. Rather, He orders human life for the good of His creation and the care of His people.

Christ Is the Source of All Authority.

All authority ultimately belongs to Christ.

Our Lord Jesus says: *"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me."* — Matthew 28:18

Because all authority belongs to Christ, every earthly office exists under Him and remains accountable to Him. Whether in the home, society, or the Church, authority is never self-created. It is entrusted by God as stewardship.

St. Paul writes: *"There is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God."* — Romans 13:1

This means that parents, pastors, presidents, teachers, church officers, employers, and civil rulers are not free to use authority selfishly or carelessly. God will hold them accountable for how they exercise the responsibilities entrusted to them.

At the same time, Christians are called to honor and respect those whom God has placed into offices of service and responsibility.

The Fourth Commandment and Vocation

The Fourth Commandment teaches us much about vocation and authority.

"Honor your father and your mother."

In the Small Catechism, Luther explains:

“We should fear and love God so that we do not despise or anger our parents and other authorities, but honor them, serve and obey them, love and cherish them.”

Notice that Luther broadens the commandment beyond parents to include “other authorities.” God establishes order within human life through various offices and vocations.

The Fourth Commandment teaches humility. Christians are not autonomous individuals who simply do whatever seems right in their own eyes. Rather, God calls us to live together in ordered relationships marked by love, honor, patience, repentance, and mutual service.

This does not mean authorities are above correction or incapable of sin. All people remain sinners in need of repentance and forgiveness. Yet God still establishes offices for the good ordering of life together. Christians therefore seek to address problems properly, peacefully, and according to God’s Word rather than through rebellion, gossip, or disorder.

Why the Church Has Structure and Offices

Some people view constitutions, bylaws, and church offices as merely “human rules.” Certainly, human traditions become dangerous whenever they contradict God’s Word. Yet good order in the congregation is not contrary to Scripture.

St. Paul writes: *“But all things should be done decently and in order.”* — 1 Corinthians 14:40

For this reason, congregations establish constitutions, bylaws, and clearly defined offices. These structures help preserve peace, clarify responsibilities, and prevent confusion and unnecessary conflict.

When responsibilities are undefined, people often begin stepping into one another’s roles. Hurt feelings, resentment, disorder, and power struggles quickly follow.

The congregation therefore establishes offices such as:

- Church President
- Trustees
- Elders or Deacons
- Financial Secretary
- Treasurer
- Sunday School leadership
- Committee leaders
- Other supporting offices

These offices are not given so individuals may seek prestige or personal power. Rather, they exist so the congregation may function together faithfully and peacefully.

Healthy boundaries and clearly defined responsibilities help protect both the congregation and those serving within it.

God Gives Boundaries for Our Good

God's created order is not burdensome or oppressive. It is good.

From the beginning, God established order within creation itself. He created marriage, family, work, and structures of authority for the blessing and protection of His people.

When people reject God's order or ignore proper vocations, confusion and harm often follow. Scripture repeatedly warns against selfish ambition, quarrels, and disorder within the Church.

For this reason, Christians should avoid:

- Taking authority not given to them
- Undermining those serving in office
- Public gossip and slander
- Treating the Church as a place of competing personal agendas
- Ignoring proper channels for addressing concerns

Instead, Christians are called to patience, humility, repentance, and loving correction.

Our Lord teaches in Matthew 18 that when conflict arises, Christians should address matters directly and orderly rather than stirring division within the body of Christ.

The Unique Office of the Holy Ministry

While all Christians have vocations and callings, Scripture also teaches that Christ instituted the pastoral office for particular purposes within His Church.

St. Paul writes to Timothy: "*Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching.*" — 1 Timothy 4:13

Again he writes: "*Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.*" — 2 Timothy 4:2

The pastor's primary duties therefore include:

- Preaching God's Word
- Publicly reading Scripture
- Teaching sound doctrine
- Administering Holy Baptism
- Consecrating and distributing the Lord's Supper
- Pronouncing Absolution
- Prayer and spiritual care
- Conducting the Divine Service faithfully according to God's Word

This is why the apostles in Acts 6 appointed others to assist with works of mercy so they could remain devoted to "*prayer and to the ministry of the Word.*"

The pastoral office is therefore not merely another committee position or administrative role. It is a divinely instituted office centered upon Word and Sacrament ministry.

Our Lutheran Confessions state clearly in Augsburg Confession Article XIV:

“Our churches teach that no one should publicly teach in the Church or administer the Sacraments unless he be regularly called.”

This article protects both the Church and the Office of the Ministry by maintaining good order concerning who is responsible for publicly preaching, teaching, and administering Christ’s Sacraments.

A Call to Unity and Thanksgiving

As your pastor, I want to express my gratitude to God for the privilege of serving here at St. John’s Lutheran Church. It is a joy and blessing to serve alongside the many faithful men and women who give of their time and energy in the various vocations and offices of our congregation.

I am thankful for our Church President, Deacons, Trustees, Sunday School teachers, Communion setup volunteers, The Women’s Circles, committee members, financial officers, Offering Counters, musicians, volunteers, and all who quietly serve behind the scenes in ways often unnoticed. These vocations matter. Through them, God cares for His people and strengthens the life of this congregation.

None of us serves perfectly. We are all sinners redeemed by Christ alone. We each have strengths, weaknesses, struggles, and limitations.

As many of you know, reading publicly has its moments of not being perfect. At times I stumble over words and become frustrated with myself. Yet I remain committed to continuing to work diligently so that the Scriptures, preaching, and liturgy are conducted as clearly and faithfully as possible for the benefit of Christ’s people.

I ask for your prayers, patience, and encouragement, just as I continue praying for and encouraging you in your own vocations and callings.

Above all, let us remain united in Christ and centered upon His Word and Sacraments. The Church is not held together by personalities, preferences, or perfection, but by the mercy of God given to sinners through Jesus Christ.

May the Lord continue to bless St. John’s Lutheran Church with faithfulness, humility, peace, and love as we serve together under Christ our Lord.

Pastor Ben Hollingsead

As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace.

1 Peter 4:10



ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

YOUTH NEWS



THAT'S A WRAP

Sunday School wrapped up the year with a fun and memorable final day! During worship, the children shared two songs with the congregation, including one alongside the adult choir. Participation awards were presented for Bell Choir and attendance, students graduating to 3rd grade were recognized along with new students with personalized Bibles.



Following worship, the kids split into teams for "The Great Disciple Escape Room Challenge," working together to solve twelve different clues. The first team to escape earned the opportunity to choose a prize! Afterwards, the children and members of the congregation enjoyed a delicious meal and fellowship together.

Thank you to everyone who joined us and helped make the day so special and thank you to our wonderful teachers. We look forward to seeing you all again next year!



Kids are invited to

St. John's VBS

Answers 2025

EMERALD CROSSING

An Irish Adventure Through Psalm 23

JULY 27-31

9:00 am to Noon

Ages 4 yrs to 6th grade in fall 2026

Register at www.stjohnnaitkin.org

VBS COMING SOON - SIGN UP TODAY!

Grab your shepherd's crook and join the fun! Our Irish-themed VBS kicks off July 27th through July 31st and you're invited. From 9:00 am to 12:00 pm daily we'll explore the green pastures of Psalm 23. Come discover the heart of the Good Shepherd and the lesson David lived by, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want."

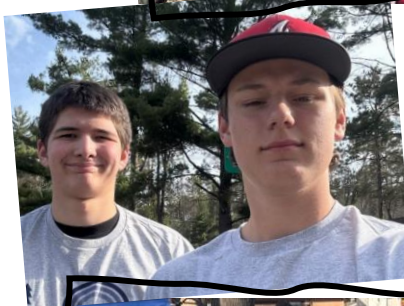
Register at www.stjohnnaitkin.org today! All lads and lassies age 4 through 6th grade are invited on our Emerald Crossing Adventure through Psalm 23. **Sign up today to help us plan.** See you there!

St. John Active Christian Teens has continued studying from the Bible on our weekly meetings. We have talked about Joshua, Zechariah, and Balaam.

Teens and adults helped on a *Run For The Lakes* Fundraiser in Brainerd. Money raised is going towards a youth trip to *Higher Things* in the summer of 2027. ACT plans to host a garage sale at the church on June 11th and 12th from 8am to 5pm both days.

The last day for ACT regular meetings was May 27th this year. We won't meet each Wednesday like during the school year. Hopefully, we'll make time to get together inside or outside of the church property to encourage each other in faith and have fun.

Continue to encourage the youth of our church. We are blessed to have responsibility over our children to teach them the Christian faith. God help us to do so.



SEVEN TEENS AFFIRM THEIR FAITH

On May 3, we rejoiced with seven confirmands as they affirmed their faith into which they were baptized. Congratulations to Paityn Hawkins, Isabel Spicer, Evelyn Olson, Henry Nicko, James Flerlage, Parker Espeseth and Finn Nelson.

The Lord who has called them by the Gospel continues to strengthen them through His Word and Sacraments, equipping them to live each day in His grace. As they grow in faith, may they take courage in knowing that God Himself is with them, guiding their steps and holding them firmly in His promises.





Celebrating our Graduates

BRADEN



We celebrate our high school graduates, Braden Bartel-Wagner, Noah Rose, and Hannah Backstrom. We give thanks for their hard work, growth, and the many gifts they have shared with our church family over the years. As they prepare for new adventures we send them forward with our prayers, encouragement, and love.

One special tradition we cherish is gifting each graduate a handmade quilt from the congregation. Every stitch represents care, support, and the reminder that they are always wrapped in the love of this church family. We hope these warm quilts bring comfort during late-night studying, new beginnings, and moments when home feels far away. Noah and Hannah were not able to attend worship on the day quilts were distributed, so their grandmas stepped in to receive their quilts.

Congratulations, graduates! May God guide your steps, bless your future, and remind you always that you are deeply loved.

NOAH



HANNAH



St. John's Quilters distribute quilts to grads after our Sunday School children blessed them with a prayer from Pastor Hollingsead.



Threads of Hope

Strengthening Our Community Together



Recently, we welcomed a visit from the Aitkin Chamber of Commerce. During our conversation, we reflected on the many things going well in our community, the areas where growth is still needed, and our hopes for the future. One thing became especially clear: building a stronger sense of community pride begins with working together. It means recognizing and supporting the ways churches, organizations, and neighbors each serve our community in unique and meaningful ways.



One ministry that St. John's is especially grateful to share is the gift of handmade quilts for community members facing difficult times.



Each year, a dedicated group of St. John's members gathers to create these beautiful quilts. While the quilting itself is meaningful, just as special are the fellowship, laughter, and friendships that grow as they work side by side. This season, the group completed 50 quilts.



On Sunday, May 17, the quilts were displayed across the church pews as the congregation gathered in prayer, asking that each quilt would bring comfort, hope, and care to those who receive them.



Then members of the St. John's Quilters distributed quilts throughout the community: five to HOPE, two to the Sheriff's Office, four to residents at Golden Horizon, five to the First Lutheran Food Shelf, five to Riverwood Health Care hospice care, and six for dialysis patients. In addition, the quilters will continue their tradition of sharing quilts at the St. John's booth giveaway at the Aitkin County Fair.

Thank you to this dedicated group for the time, care, and compassion they pour into every stitch. Through these quilts, they are not only providing warmth but also sharing hope and strengthening our community together one quilt at a time.




Celebrating 100 years together

UPDATES / NEEDS

We invite you to join us for the

St. John's LUTHERAN CHURCH

Centennial Celebration



September 13, 2026

The Program

9:00 AM Sunday Worship

10:30 AM Fellowship outside
Fellowship, treats and drink, games, memorabilia for sale in Narthex

12:00 PM Lunch in Fellowship Hall

2:00 PM Special Ceremony Service
Special guest speakers and music

Cake & Ice Cream

Please join us for the whole day or just part of it as we celebrate 100 years together in Christ. From our founding families to today's disciples, each generation has cast Christ's net into the community with faith, service and love. As we celebrate a century of God's faithfulness, we look ahead with confidence, knowing the same Lord who called the first fishermen continues calling us today.



St. John's Lutheran Church
324 3rd Street NW
Aitkin, MN 56431

Phone: 218-927-3170
www.stjohnaitkin.org



WE INVITE ALL TO THE CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13

What once felt far away is now just around the corner! We are excited to celebrate the Centennial Celebration of St. John's Lutheran Church on Sunday, September 13. It promises to be a day filled with fellowship, special memories, and meaningful activities as we honor 100 years of faith and community together. Please join us for this very special occasion.

As we prepare for the celebration, we are looking for creative individuals who would enjoy helping document St. John's history through a photo slideshow presentation. Please contact Debbie or Joy if interested.

CENTENNIAL COMMITTEE MEETS SUNDAY, JUNE 7 FOLLOWING WORSHIP.



Baptized into Christ, Resting in Christ



We welcome Chase Born and Alaina Redmann into our church family through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism on May 10, 2026. May God continue to bless and guide them as they grow in faith and in the love of Christ.



Chase Joseph Born

Son of Derek and Alyssa Bom

Sponsors are Matthew and Nicole Born

Born February 4, 2026

Alaina Rose Redmann

Daughter of Jon and Krysta Redmann

Sponsors are Bryan & Brianna Haugly, and Bryce Haugly

Born March 25, 2026

We grieve the passing of **Lois DuChane** who went home to the Lord on April 30, 2026. May Lois now be surrounded by the eternal love and peace of our Lord. While we grieve her passing, we give thanks for her life, her faith, and the many ways she touched those around her. May God surround her family and loved ones with comfort and peace and may the promise of eternal life through Christ bring hope in this time of sorrow.



LUTHERAN
**ISLAND
CAMP**

CAMPERSHIPS AVAILABLE

St. John's is providing \$100.00 or one half of the cost of camp (whichever is greater) for any of our children that would like to attend a summer program at Lutheran Island Camp. You can go online to the camp website (www.islandcamp.org) to check on the summer camp possibilities. If you have any questions, you can call Debbie Schultz, 218-839-4322.

If you would like to donate toward this, please place your gift in an envelope marked: "LIC Camperships" and place the envelope in the offering plate.



UPCOMING EVENTS

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

We Need Your Help!

St. John's Lutheran Church
RUMMAGE
AND BAKE SALE

JUNE
11 & 12
8^{AM} - 5^{PM}

BAKED GOODS & TREASURES IN ONE PLACE!

Sponsored by
ACT
1 TIMOTHY 4:12

Money raised goes towards
Higher Things 2027 Youth Trip

ACT LOOKING FOR DONATIONS

ACT is seeking donations of gently used items and bake sale goods for an upcoming fundraiser! Please do not donate old electronics or medical equipment, as these items cannot be accepted. If you need assistance hauling items to the church or have any questions, please contact Lisa Flerlage or Kara Crowther. Any unsold items will be donated unless other arrangements have been made. All proceeds will go toward our *Higher Things* Summer 2027 youth trip. Thank you for your support!

Donations may be dropped off in the 3rd/4th grade classroom between May 18 and June 10.

Drop off Times:

Church hours – Sunday mornings

Office hours – MWF 8:30 am to 12:30 pm – may want to call church office first (218-927-3170).

Thank you for your continued support.



UPCOMING EVENTS

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Your Participation
is Requested

FISHERMEN WANTED: CAST A NET AT THE AITKIN COUNTY FAIR!

“Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.” (Matthew 4:19). Just as Jesus called the first disciples, we are called to share the Gospel with our neighbors. **We’re looking for volunteers to help man our church booth at the Aitkin County Fair from July 8th–11th.** We need friendly faces to share a smile, hand out information, and invite the community to our Sunday services and upcoming Centennial Celebration in September. Please sign up in the Narthex. If you have questions, contact Luke & Brea Hamdorf.



ST. JOHN'S BAZAAR & BAKE SALE – COMING SOON!

Mark your calendars! St. John’s Church is excited to announce our Annual Bazaar & Bake Sale, happening on **Saturday, October 3**. This beloved event is more than just a fundraiser, it’s a celebration of community, generosity, and fellowship. Whether you’re looking for hidden treasures, delicious homemade treats, or a chance to catch up with friends and neighbors, there’s something for everyone!



How You Can Help at this Time:

- Donate** – start gathering items for the Grandma & Grandpa’s Attic (no clothing or large electronics)
- Crafts** – start those creative juices flowing and share your projects
- Plant** – plant some extra seeds in your garden to share

LET’S MAKE THIS AN EVENT TO REMEMBER!



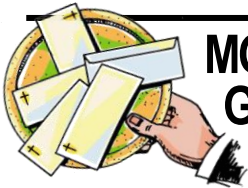


JUNE BIRTHDAYS

Blessings on your special day!

Finley Larson	01	Hannah Backstrom	13	Lydia Novotny	17
Ty Novotny	01	Hattie Crowther	14	John Holder	19
Trevor Torgerson	02	Cathy Wilke	14	Cynthia Plekkenpol	20
Roland Hill	04	Pastor Becker	15	Bruce Schultz	21
Lois Peysar	09	Ruth Ferguson	15	Brita Williams	21
Chad Bartel	10	Robert Blume	16	Jerry Ruschmeier	24
Tom Hawkins	10	Janice Hawkins	16	MaryAnn Holder	25
Devin Larson	10	Karen Marsh	16	Samantha Cox	30
Natalie Crowther	12				

**The birthdays listed are from our church records. Any mistakes are unintentional. Please notify the office of any mistakes, deletions, or if you do not want your birthday listed.*



MONTHLY GIVING UPDATE

As part of our commitment to transparency, we want to share that our giving has recently fallen below our monthly operating budget. Thanks to years of faithful stewardship and generosity, we remain on solid footing, but this is an important season for us to be attentive and united.

If you consider this church your home, we encourage you to prayerfully support the ministry through regular giving and prayer. Every contribution helps sustain the work God is doing through our church and community outreach.

We are deeply thankful for the faithfulness of this congregation and confident in God's continued provision.

APRIL 2026 GIVING

GENERAL FUND

Offerings	\$19,406.00
Other	\$284.03
Improvement Fund	\$3,855.60
Together in Missions	--
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	\$23,545.63

DESIGNATED FUND

Centennial Anniversary Fund	--
ACT	\$4,330.24
Choir	\$200.00
Endowment Fund Interest	--
Evening Circle	--
Memorials	--
Mission	\$55.00
Sunday School Offering	\$28.75
Sunday School/VBS Special Fund	\$325.55
Thrivent	\$137.00
	<hr/>
	\$28,622.17

GENERAL FUND BUDGET COMPARISON

	Monthly	YTD
Budget	\$23,408.00	\$93,632.00
Actual	\$23,545.63	\$80,369.23
OVER (UNDER) BUDGET	\$137.63	(\$13,262.77)