

At the very great risk of driving you away from this post before you get past the first sentence, I'd like to ask a grammar related question. ...

Still there?

Okay, got that out of the way. Here it is, then. When you consider God, do you think of him in the second person or in the third person? Is God a "you" or a "he"? I ask this question because I've recently realized something about my own relationship with God and I think this makes a big difference.

Pastor confession time: I think of God in the third person, as a "he" all of the time. And there's a reason for that. I am always talking about God to other people. I talk about him in sermons, in newsletter articles, when I'm answering questions, and so on. What I do far less, is talk TO him as a "you."

What I am admitting to is that I talk about God more than I talk to God. What about you?

After God brings his people out of Egypt, his people build a tabernacle, a special tent-like structure which defines the space of worship for Israel. Outside of it is normal space, but inside of it the space becomes progressively more holy until one goes, or rather, does NOT go, into the Holy of Holies. Later on, under King Solomon, Israel builds a temple which fulfills the same purpose, defining the space of worship. In both, there was a curtain which shielded the Holy of Holies from the outside. Or, more accurately, it shielded the outside from the Holy of Holies. Both the tabernacle and the temple provided a barrier between God and his people. At the end of the Gospel of Mark, as Jesus dies, this curtain is torn in two. The tearing of the

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curtain symbolizes what the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus has accomplished. The barrier between God and his people has been destroyed.

What this means, practically, is expressed in Hebrews 4:16, "Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

We get to go to God, face to face, just as Jesus does and speak to him with no barrier between us at all. We can speak to God intimately, child to father, as "you." "Dad, I am having a hard day. Would you please help?" "Dad, you are so good. Thank you for walking with me." "Dad, tragedy has come crashing into my life. Why didn't you stop it?"

But sometimes we can still feel a barrier there, even if God has torn it up and thrown it away. For instance, we might say, "I know that I can speak to God, but I don't want to bother him with the little things." There is nothing too small or mundane. Go to him with all of your life and speak to him.

Or we might say, "I'm not worthy to speak to him this way." God is the judge of that, not us. And he has broken the barrier down. Go speak with him.

Or we might perhaps say, "I'm not sure that I want to speak to him like this. Because if we are face to face, if I say something, he might say something back to me. He might expect something of me. I might feel convicted and I'd rather avoid that." That's true. When we speak to God face to face, there is every possibility that he'll say something too. And he does expect something of us. He sees right through us, to our very core.

When I speak to other people about God, I can tell them of his graciousness. But when I speak to him, I think that I'm worried that I won't be able to hide who I really am. A part of me wants to keep the barrier so that I can hide behind it.

Maybe that resonates with you, maybe not. But if it does, let me tell you what I need to hear. There is no hiding from God. There are no barriers. He sees you, knows you, and wants to speak with you face to face. Not so that he can let you know how disappointed he is that you still aren't better than you are, but so that he can tell you that you are forgiven, that he is at work in you, that the problems and the sin and the garbage that still fill your life have already been buried with Christ. Stop holding onto them and go speak to your father, face to face, you to you.

Rev. Ben Worley
Emanuel-St. John, Lytton, IA
(712) 541-4785 (cell phone)



Emanuel-St John Lutheran Church Council Meeting Minutes February 12, 2023

Present were Cindy Souder, Dar Lake, Jean Matter, Candace Booth, LaVerne Arndt, Randy Souder, Kari Lantz, LeRoy Johnson, Faith Worley, Dennis Hinrichs, Pastor Ben, Rhonda Johnson, and Pauline Lange. Motion by Kari Lantz, second by Randy Souder to appoint Dar Lake as chairperson pro temp in absence of president and vice president. Motion passed. Dar Lake called the meeting to order. Pastor Ben gave devotions. Motion by Randy Souder, second by Candace Booth to approve the agenda with the addition of two new items. Motion passed. Motion by LeRoy Johnson, second by Kari Lantz to approve January minutes. Motion passed. Motion by Dennis Hinrichs, second by Randy Souder to approve Treasurers Report with a balance of \$15,028.28. Motion passed.

Old Business: None.

President's Report: None

Pastor's Report: Pastor Ben informed the Council that a member from the Ingham-Okoboji Bible Camp will be coming on February 19th to give a presentation on the camp. Pastor Ben explained that the camp has camps for children but also for families.

Worship and Music Committee: Candace Booth gave a report that they are reviewing and updating the binders for committee members.

Parish Education Committee: Faith Worley gave a report that committee binders are being updated.

Outreach Committee: Kari Lantz reported they will be meeting with Pastor Ben to go over the Outreach constitution expectations.

Property Management: Dennis Hinrichs and LeRoy Johnson present. Working on small jobs around the church. The committee still needs one more volunteer.

Stewardship and Finances: Randy Souder present. No report.

WELCA: Candace Booth reported that Do-Days will continue through the second Monday in March.

New Business: Candace talked about the information on recruiting organ and piano players for the church. She will put information in the bulletin and the newsletter. Motion by LeRoy Johnson, second by Candace Booth to use the money from the Mission Festival Dinner of 2019 in the amount of \$295.00 to start the Music Lessons Fund. Motion passed. Kari Lantz talked to the council about moving the EPIC fund money into the Sunday School Treasurers account. Motion by Kari Lantz, second by Randy Souder to move the EPIC fund money to the Sunday School Treasurers account in the amount of \$1000.00. Motion passed. Motion by LeRoy Johnson, second by Kari Lantz to adjourn. Motion passed. Lord's Prayer



ATTENTION POTENTIAL PIANO STUDENTS

ESJ is looking to the future for piano musicians. After positive comments at the annual meeting and the February Council meeting, it was decided to set up a Piano Lesson Fund. The church will offer financial assistance to anyone who desires to take piano lessons. It is hoped that as a pianist becomes more accomplished, he/she will share their talent with ESJ. The piano lessons could be a basis for future organists to play the beautiful ESJ organ. Now is the time to invest and encourage any future musicians. Anyone may contribute to the fund but expect the contribution to be beyond the regular church offering. Make note if you want your contribution to be directed to the piano lesson fund. The sooner the fund shows any adequate amount, the sooner the lessons will begin.

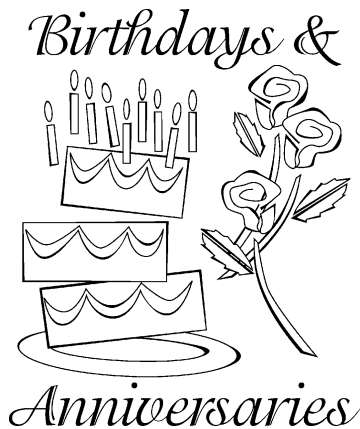
Piano students of any age who are committed to this opportunity may contact Candace Booth for details.

Candace Booth (future retired organist)



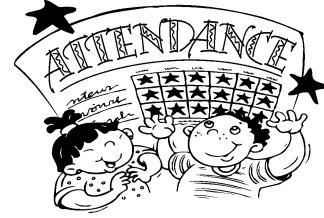
HAPPY BIRTHDAY

- Mar 1 Canon Albright, Heidi Hammen, Betty Kral,
Colten Riley
 Mar 11 Pamela Meyer
 Mar 12 Stephanie Andreasen, Molly Ringgenberg,
Lexie Rosado
 Mar 14 Brenda Lawson
 Mar 15 Amy Carlson-Hammen, Madison Macrunnel
Jewel Talbott
 Mar 16 Jennifer Wagener
 Mar 17 Autumn Purdie
 Mar 18 LaVerne Arndt, **Mildred Purdie**
 Mar 19 Michael Carlson, Kimberlee Taylor
 Mar 20 Robin Lowrey, **James Willis**
 Mar 21 Wesley Twyman
 Mar 22 Troy Hillmer
 Mar 23 Laurie Glasnapp, Daniel Lange,
B. J. Musselman
 Mar 26 Douglas Schultz
 Mar 27 Clayton Fjerstad, Matthew Haden
 Mar 28 Nathan Leer, Madison Schultz
 Mar 29 Teresa VanHulzen
 Mar 30 Tim Huddleson, Colton Mohr
 Mar 31 Jesse Ross



- Mar 1, 1986 Darwin & Debbie Otto
Mar 2, 1968 LaVerne & Colleen Arndt
Mar 6, 1965 Darrell & Carol Ross
 Mar 7, 1987 Kenneth & Pamela Meyer
 Mar 14, 1998 Ricky & Marilyn Dettmann
 Mar 18, 2006 Brett & Jessica Meyer
Mar 24, 1973 Greg & Tammy Williams
 Mar 26, 2004 Anthony & Vanessa Althiser
 Mar 26, 1988 Doug & Barb Riley
 Mar 31, 1984 Alan & Carol Meyer

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!



Perfect SS Attendance January 2023

Sunday School students present all Sundays in January:

- ☆ Nursery-Pre-Kindergarten: Earl Bartels and Kacen Waller
- ☆ Kindergarten & First Grade: Teddy Albright, Jack Bartels, Canon Albright and Kylee Betten;
- ☆ Grades 2, 3 & 4: Myla Albright, Lily Bartels, Adelaide Worley and Elin Albright;
- ☆ Grades 5 & 6: Abby Worley;

Class winner for best attendance in January was the Kindergarten and First Grade class taught by Kari Lantz.

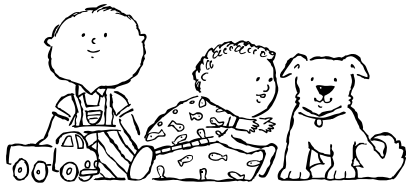


Our 5th grade students (and parents) are asked to attend a class session **Sunday, March 19th at 2:00 p.m.** to prepare to attend their First Communion on Maundy Thursday, April 6th. The 5th grade students are: Lille Greene, Abigail Lankford, Elodie Mentzer, Case Picard, Brinley Riley and Sophie Twyman.

We look forward to welcoming them at the Lord's Table!



SAVE THE DATE! Emanuel-St. John will again be having VBS this summer. Calling on all sorts of detectives to uncover truths!! Mark your calendars!!



IT'S A BOY! or rather Boys!

Nick and Krista Albright became the parents of a baby boy, **Cooper Nicholas**, on Friday, February 10, 2023. Cooper weighed 8 lbs. 1 ½ oz and measured 20 inches long at the time of his birth. Cooper was welcomed home by brother and sisters, Elin, Canon and Toryn.

Alan and Lisa Albright and Brian and Dianne Betten are his grandparents. Althea Betten is his great-grandmother.

Grant and Megan Grodahl became the parents of a baby boy, **Casen Keith**, on Friday, February 10 at Stewart Memorial Hospital, Lake City. Casen weighed 7 lb. 5 oz and was 21.5 inches long at the time of his birth. Casen was welcomed home by big sister, Camryn and big brother, Carver.

Rodney and Joleen Grodahl are his grandparents.

Congratulations to the Albright and Grodahl Families!



Reminder to Thrivent members

- deadline to direct 2022 Choice Dollars March 31, 2023

Cheryl and Ron Haden would like to remind Thrivent members who have Choice Dollars to direct that they have two options do so:

1. Go to:

www.thrivent.com/making-a-difference/living-generously/thrivent-choice/.

2. Talk with a Thrivent representative by calling **800-847-4836** and saying "Thrivent Choice" when prompted.

Members can direct their accumulated Choice Dollars throughout the year. A minimum of \$5 in Choice Dollars is required. Members have until March 31 of the following year to make their selection(s). This means members can direct 2022 Choice dollars through March 31, 2023.

We continue to encourage you to direct your Choice Dollars to Emanuel-St. John Lutheran Church to help with the upkeep and ministry of the church. **If you need any help in the process of directing your funds, please contact Ron or Cheryl at 1-712-660-1557.** They will be glad to walk you through the process or answer any questions you may have.

Important Dates for March & April 2023

Daylight Savings Time Begins

Sunday, March 12, 2023

Lenten Service each Wednesday evening in March at 7 p.m. Soup served beginning at 6 p.m. prior to Lenten service. Confirmation students are to attend Lenten Services each week

Maundy Thursday Holy Communion Services

April 6th at 7 p.m.

with First Communion for 5th grade students

Good Friday Service April 7th at 3 p.m.



Emanuel-St. John Lutheran Church 2023 Church Council Officers and Committee Members

PRESIDENT: Doug Bartels

VICE-PRESIDENT: Jeff Ellerbrock

SECRETARY: Cindy Souder

TREASURER: Rhonda Johnson

FINANCIAL TREASURER: Bette Lohff

PARISH ED COMMITTEE

(3 members-3-year term)

Sara Nattress (24) and Faith Worley (25)

FINANCE & STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

(3 members-3-year term)

Dennis Dettmann (24), Darwin Lake (25)
and LaVerne Arndt (26)

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

(3 members-3-year term)

Dennis Hinrichs (24), LeRoy Johnson (25)
and Randy Souder (26)

OUTREACH

(3 members-3-year term)

Carol Meyer (24), Kari Lantz (25)
and Cheryl Haden (26)

WORSHIP & MUSIC

(committee of 6-3-year terms)

Scott Greene (24), Candace Booth (24)
Sara Pibal (25) and Barb Riley (25)
Ben & Susan Albright (26) and Ron Haden (26)

ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE

(5 members-3-year term)

Dennis Hinrichs (2nd term Dec 2025)
Colten Riley (1st term Dec 2023)
Jo Grodahl (1st term Dec 2024)
Cheryl Haden (2nd term Dec 2024)

SYNOD ASSEMBLY DELEGATES

Jeff and Jo Ellerbrock

(Committee Members serve until Jan of year listed except Endowment members whose term ends in Dec)

