

The Encourager

Spurring one another to love and good deeds

What Happens When Women Say Yes to God?

Starting **January 30th** a six week Friday night **Women's Bible Study** will be facilitated by **Melanie Schauer** using **Lysa TerKeurst's (Proverbs 31 Ministries)** popular book. The book shares inspiring stories and compelling insights about what it means to partner with God in all decisions and actions. This adventure leads you to discern the voice of God and say yes to His call; experience the deep joy of wholehearted obedience; and let God affect the lives around you in remarkable ways. This is your invitation to embark on the transforming journey of faithfulness as you seek God and boldly ask for and expect more from the Christian life. The book and Study Guide are available for \$12 or Study Guide for \$8. E-books and audio versions are also available.

Where: St. Johns Library, 6-8pm
IT'S NOT TOO LATE! Please join us for session two on **Feb 6th** when we begin the first section.



Where did The Connections Go?

What you have before you is St. John's new quarterly newsletter, The Encourager. When Paul Hoban, the editor, talked to me about a new name for our newsletter, I was partial to The Encourager with the subtitle, spurring one another to love and good deeds. The subtitle is based on Hebrews 10:24-26a, "*And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another...*" Isn't that what we are all about here at St. John's.

Yes, we are called to be connected to God and to one another, but aren't those connections for a purpose? According to Hebrews, we get connected with God and we get connected with other people for the purpose of encouraging them and spurring them on to love and good works. We encourage them to connect with God in worship and live each day in His grace. We encourage them to grow each day as his disciples. And we encourage them to live out



Little Blessings

Important Dates:

- 2/13 School Closed - Teacher In Service
- 2/16 School Closed - Presidents Day
- Spring Break will be from March 23rd through March 27th
- School will be closed for Good Friday on April 3rd & April 6th for Easter Monday

Do you need a Date Night? Mark your calendars for **February 14th from 4pm - 8pm;** a certified staff member from Little Blessings and volunteers from St. John's will watch your little ones at no cost while you have a nice evening out. Dinner and fun filled activities will be provided. To register look for the sign-up sheet in the lobby or for questions please call (815) 923-2910 no later than Feb 6th.

FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT WORD OF THE MONTH:

February: Love

March: Gentleness

April: Peace

their faith missionally; intentionally helping others to know the Love of Jesus Christ. So where did The Connections go? Although we don't have our monthly Connections newsletter, we still are connected to God and one another so that we encourage them in love and good deeds.

So let me be the first to encourage you, because you have been an encouragement to me! Thank you St. John's for being a wonderful congregation to serve with; I am so blessed to be your Pastor. Thank you for having servant hearts and willing hands. I appreciate all that you do for God's Kingdom in this place. I appreciate the Monday Quilters and Tuesday Prayer Shawl Groups who make beautiful pieces of cloth for people who need them. I appreciate the Elders who help keep our worship running smoothly and our Trustees who keep our facilities in tip top shape. I am thankful for the musicians and sound/tech team that contribute so noteworthy (yes pun intended) to our Weekend worship services. I am grateful for the Ladies of the Church - the Ladies' Aid who serve our funeral luncheons, and our WinGS group that looks outward for mission opportunities. I am appreciative of the History committee that looks to preserve St. John's past events; and I love our R.O.C.K Sunday School program and our Little Blessings Learning Center that are focused on bringing the little children come to Jesus. I am grateful for the many people who serve the homeless or the fireman dinners, and the groups who collect and distribute to those in need.

And the list goes on and on. There are too many to name. But what it comes down to is that, I am thankful for you, and the ways that you have touched my life and the lives of many other people. The heart and love of Jesus shines through you. All of St. John's, keep up the God work! May this encouragement spur you on in love and good deeds. May you live out your faith as you see God at work around you and you join him in His work. And may the Love of Christ always be in You!



The Best Yes

Are you living with the stress of an overwhelmed schedule and aching with the sadness of an underwhelmed soul? Escape the guilt of disappointing others by learning the secret of the small no. Overcome the agony of hard choices by embracing a wisdom based decision-making process. **Women and High School Girls - Intergenerational Study Group** will be facilitated by Deaconess Lauren using the book **The Best Yes: Making Wise Decisions in the midst of Endless Demands** by Lysa TerKeurst (Proverbs 31 Ministries). It will be held on **Sunday mornings at 9:15am** in Deaconess Lauren's office beginning on February 1st. Cost is \$15 for book and Study Guide or \$8 for Study Guide. E-books and audio versions are also available.

Hearts at Home

Do you want to be refreshed, revitalized, challenged and educated to grow in your marriage, mothering, friendships and faith? Come to a Hearts at Home conference and join thousands of moms who share the same desire. With a mission to “encourage, educate and equip every mom in every season of motherhood using Christian values to strengthen families.”



Hearts at Home is here for you. On **March 13-14, 2015** the National Conference is being held at Illinois State University in Bloomington, IL. This year's

theme is WOW MOM: Unleash Your Superpower. Workshops by seventeen different speakers are offered highlighted by Lysa TerKeurst and Dr. Gary Chapman. This is an opportunity to focus on you! Select your workshops based on your life and what you need. Please visit their website www.heartsathome.org for details and registration. Enjoy a fun, getaway weekend with friends and experience a sense of encouragement and camaraderie with other moms. A sign-up sheet in the lobby is available for Hotel and Carpool arrangements.

Church History: Ladies Aid

Please take a moment to enjoy the Display Case as it features the history of the Ladies Aid program. Established in 1923 under Pastor Linnemeier, the Ladies Aid mission was to serve within the church. In that capacity, a popular event was to cook and serve chicken dinners. Check out the huge potato mashers they used for those dinners.

The History Committee is also working on a display of our Pastors, Vicars and Deaconess which will be part of the Display Racks installed by Keith Dalhke.

Wednesday Night Bible Study

We are finishing up our study of Ephesians and will be starting a new series on the New Testament with the Community Bible Experience, facilitated by Barbara Weidner. When it comes to spiritual growth, nothing has more impact than the Bible. But we all need help getting into the scriptures. Community Bible Experience offers a new model for reading the Bible, allowing our group to experience God's Word together.

Read Big - Our 40 day reading plan takes you through the entire New Testament in just 30 minutes a day, five days a week. Reading big will help you understand the whole story of the Bible like never before.

Read Real - You will read from a groundbreaking NIV Bible, one designed to be more like the original. No verse numbers, no chapter numbers, no cross-references, no red letters. Community Bible Experience brings you as close to the original Scriptures as you can get without learning Greek.

Read Together - Each week, the group will meet to discuss five simple questions around their Bible reading.

- What's something you noticed for the first time?
- What questions do you have?
- Was there anything that bothered you?
- What did you learn about loving God?
- What did you learn about loving others?

But this isn't just another Bible Study; it's more like a book club that anyone can enjoy, no matter where they are in their spiritual journey. The group is excited to be in the Community Bible Experience during the season of Lent. Imagine the power of God's Word changing lives as the group **READS BIG, REAL & TOGETHER!**

On **February 4th & 11th, the group will meet at 7pm. During Lent the group will meet at 6:30pm** at Joe's Place for dinner followed by a discussion of our reading. Books of the Bible New Testament cost is \$7.99. E-books are available for your Nook or Kindle for \$4.99. Audio versions are also available online. There is also a FREE e-version that uses the Google reader app, if you would like the free version please speak with Deaconess Lauren.

Painting Party

New member, Lani Murray will facilitate a painting party on February 10th at 6:30pm. The host will choose a picture and then provide instructions to participants as you create your own oil painting.

Cost depends on canvas size: 8x10 is \$20, 9x12 is \$24 or 11x14 is \$28. Event will take place at the GloBowl Community Room. Participants will pay for their painting and you will be able to order food from the Trio Grill menu. Limited to 16 participants.

LWML Spring Rally

The Lutheran Women’s Missionary League Zone 6 & 7 Spring Rally will be held on **Saturday April 25th** at St. John’s Lutheran Church.

- Theme - Bountiful Sow - Nourish - Reap
- Scripture: 2 Corinthians 9:8 “And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

8:30 - 9:00am Registration/Coffee
 9:00am Bible Study-Zone Counselor
 9:50am Break
 10:00am Hymn Sing
 10:20am Mike Mast
 11:00am Break
 11:15am Lunch*
 11:30am District and Zone Reports
 *Please bring your own lunch. Desserts and drinks will be provided.

Proverbs 19:17

Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will reward them for what they have done.

LWML Lenten Breakfast

In support of the Lutheran Child and Family Services, the Lutheran Women’s Missionary League Zone 6 & 7 will host a breakfast on **Saturday February 28th** at St. John’s Lutheran Church.

Program is by the Lutheran Child and Family Services and breakfast will be served by the St. John’s Men’s Club.

Please bring school supply donations for the Lutheran Child & Family Services including the following:

- Box of Markers
- Colored Pencils
- Glue/Glue Sticks
- Dry Erase Markers
- Post-It Notes
- Tissues
- Clorox Wipes
- Box of Crayons
- Erasable Pens
- Water Soluble Markers
- Wireless wide-ruled notebooks
- Mechanical pencils & refills
- Drawing Pads

Upward Soccer: Spring Registration

Exciting news for this year is that we are adding a High School Division! Registration is Tuesday **March 17th between 7 - 8pm**. Cost per player is \$66; Fall players who do not need a Jersey may register for \$25. Shorts are available for an additional cost of \$16.

First Practice: Week of April 6th.
First Game: Saturday, April 25

Only By Grace

Mike Rancharan is the worship leader for Only by Grace. He joined the group in February of 2014 and is currently a Senior at Judson University where he is majoring in Worship Arts and plans for a career in Leading Worship. Mike has also been instrumental in helping start the St. John's Youth Band.

The Youth Band was showcased on Sunday January 25th and plans to perform on the 4th Sunday of every month as part of the Family Worship Service. The next scheduled Family Worship is February 22nd so come enjoy the musical talents, service and enthusiasm that God has given to our youth. The Youth Band is comprised of Ariana Sauder (Vocals), Meghan Long (Vocals), Hannah Schauer (Vocals), Malachi Schauer (Piano), Landon Pfeiffer (Drums), Yarl Kowalski (Bass Guitar) & Hope Kowalski (Accessory Instruments).



R.O.C.K. Sunday School

Sunday school meets every Sunday morning at 9am.

The fourth Sunday of every month is **Servant Sunday** where the kids participate in events such as filling shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child, putting together Care-packages or decorating the Christmas Jars.

Servant Sunday joins with the Family Worship Service and Youth Band where the kids participate in the church service through song.

DO SOMETHING!

Governing Board

The Governing Board and the Pastor will strive to make ourselves more visible and available regarding your concerns and suggestions on how we can better do God’s work at St. John’s

We learned a lot from the September 2014 Congregational Survey; it seemed to indicate that we understood the direction of the churches mission of **Connecting, Growing, Living** but there is always room for growth. The Governing Board is going to focus on this missional statement and expound on it’s meaning and purpose in the upcoming year.

Thank you for your prayers and continued support of God’s work at St. John’s. God continues to bless us all as we seek to serve him.

St. John’s Governing Board 2015

| | | |
|--------------|------------------|----------------|
| Chairperson | Wayne D. Gehring | (815) 923-4366 |
| Vice-Chair | Paul Hill | (815) 923-2705 |
| Secretary | Nancy Modrich | (847) 659-1103 |
| Board Member | Lori Borhart | (815) 568-5799 |
| Board Member | Mark Manninen | (815) 923-7675 |
| Board Member | Lanny Brasile | (815) 923-4165 |
| Board Member | Beth Reineking | (815) 923-2725 |

Financial Advisory Council

- Beth Reineking
- Jenny Arevalo
- Pastor Schauer

Pastoral Oversight Committee

- Wayne Gehring
- Lanny Brasile
- Paul Hill

We have heard you...

As Stewards of St. John’s, these are some of the efforts we will be doing to better communicate what is happening at St. Johns:

- On a monthly basis, the Board will provide updates to the congregation, at all three services.
- Written minutes of the Governing Board meetings will be made available.
- The Board reviews the financial status of St. John’s at each meeting; perhaps a summary can be provided in The Encourager on a quarterly basis.
- Under the current Governing Policy we only have one congregation voting assembly in which we vote for new Board members and for the budget.
- We will explore new methods of informing the congregation of staffing changes, deaths and special events.

Men's Bible Study

The Men's Bible Study group has started again and meets **every Saturday from 7:30am - 9:00am.**

Each week, the study topic is taken from one of the Bible scripture readings for that weekend's Worship Service; allowing us to better prepare when attending the service.

Please join us for fellowship and growing of your understanding of Scripture.

Feeding of the Homeless

For the past few years, over 40 individuals from St. John's have participated in serving breakfast to between 40-60 homeless people that meet at the Vineyard Church in Elgin.

The third Wednesday of every month, a group of up to 6 people prepare and serve a breakfast. They meet at St. John's at 6am and return around 9am. The meals consist of hot foods like casseroles or soups; plus fruit, juice, milk, bread, cookies and cakes. Hot meals are served during the winter months and sandwiches are served during the summer.

Many people have donated food, time, money and prayers to this caring outreach program; including donations from Thrivent. If you are interested in helping by shopping, preparing food, baking, providing transportation, serving these meals or donating financially to this effort please contact Mitzie Gehring (815 923-4366) or Sue Ziller (815 923-2733)

Lenten/Easter Worship Schedule

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|----------------------------------|---|------------------|
| Ash Wednesday | February 18th | 9:30am & 7:00pm |
| Lenten Worship (following dates) | | 9:30am & 7:00pm |
| ♦ | February 18th, March 4th, 11th, 18th & 25th | |
| Palm Sunday | March 28th | 6:00pm Saturday |
| | March 29th | 7:45am & 10:30am |
| Maundy Thursday | April 2nd | 7:00pm |
| Good Friday | April 3rd | 8:00pm |
| Easter Vigil | April 4th | 6:00pm |
| Easter Sunrise | April 5th | 6:30am |
| Easter Breakfast | April 5th | 7:45am |
| Easter Festival | April 5th | 9:30am |

JOY Group: Malta Adventure

On Monday **February 23rd at 11:45am** the JOY Group is sponsoring a potluck. Following the potluck, Linda Zumpf will share her travel experience to Malta.

Please bring a dish to share; you are even welcome to bring a Greek-themed dish to add to the occasion.

St. John's Christian Tuition Education

The Lutheran Tuition Education program was designed to assist families of St. John's Church who need help offering their children a Christian education by providing financial assistance. Assistance will be available for students attending Little Blessings, Zion Lutheran School in Marengo (Grades 1-8), Faith Lutheran High School and any Lutheran College. (degree must be leading to a church worker) Other Lutheran schools need approval by the Tuition Committee.

Applications are available at the church office or can be downloaded from our website stjohnsluth.org. **The deadline for applications for Lutheran Tuition Education is April 1st.** Applications are to be submitted into the church office. Those families approved for tuition assistance will be notified by April 15th.

Please visit stjohnsluth.org for more information or contact Peggy Reinacher 815/568-8169 or Tamara Kowalski 815/568-4033.

Mission: We will pray and work in unity for the purpose to discover new ways to reach out and support parents and families by implementing vibrant, growing ministries for our youth through the Christian education of children.

Men's Breakfast

You are cordially invited to the Men's Breakfast on **February 21st at 7:30am.**

Breathing Life into our Men's ministry will be a main topic of the morning.

We will also be discussing the 2015 Men's Retreat which is scheduled for April 17-19 at Camp LuWiSoMo in Wisconsin and sponsored by Immanuel Lutheran Church in Belvidere.

Firemen Dinners

Thank you to everyone who has already been part of this community outreach program. We have had four awesome teams of people that have prepared and served meals thus far and are gearing up for the final four dinners.

If you are interested in volunteering; we are serving the Union Fire Department on the 2nd Tuesday of each month. The dates are as follows: **February 10th, March 10th, April 14th and May 12th.** Please contact Melanie Schauer at (815) 923-4394 or by email mschauer@att.net.

IL Railroad Meeting

Is scheduled for Saturday, April 18th at St. John's Gym.

Setting up tables and chairs for 150-200 guests and providing coffee and donuts for their morning session is needed; youth group participation as a fundraising activity is recommended.

SCRIP

SCRIP is a gift card program that benefits our St. John's Tuition Education Program. It is **incredibly EASY!** All you do is purchase gift cards at their face value, and those companies give back a portion of the sale to our Tuition Education Program.

Coffee on your way to work? How about Starbuck's or Dunkin Donuts. Going out to lunch? We have Panera Bread, Olive Garden or Dairy Queen. Buying Clothes? How about a Kohl's card or Dick's Sporting Goods. Need to fill up on Gas? Need a birthday gift? The choices are endless.

And it doesn't cost you a penny more than the actual gift card and it **GREATLY BENEFITS** our church.

Please stop by the SCRIP table after church to see what's in stock. We have gas cards, groceries, restaurants, shopping and much, much more. Need it during the week; call the church office to see what's in stock. If you want a specific company; we can get it for you. Ask for a list of companies that participate at the SCRIP table; HUNDREDS of companies are available!

This program has the potential of earning thousands of dollars for our church. Thank you for supporting Lutheran education.

Informed Choices

Informed Choices (formerly Tri-County P&PS) is a ministry dedicated to providing compassion and hope to women and men facing pregnancy decisions.

Informed Choices connects their clients to the information and support that will encourage them to choose life for their babies through the grace and love of Jesus Christ.

St. John's is supporting the work of Informed Choices by participating in the Baby Bottle Campaign. This easy and effective campaign takes only 3 steps:

1. Pick up a baby bottle
2. Take the bottle home and fill it with change, dollar bills or checks
- 3. Return the bottle to your church on Feb 15th.**

In Case We Missed You...

The Encourager will be published quarterly; our next issue will be in May. If you have an event or information happening in May, June or July please email me details at paulhoban@sbcqlobal.net.