

Pastor Sarah July 2022

Is it August already? It seems like we blinked, and July was gone! But what a wonderful month it was!

July was centered around Vacation Bible School – the prep, the week of, and the clean up. But it was a wonderful week of ministry! It was wonderful to be back in person with all these little ones that are so excited about how much God loves them and the stories they are learning. We could not have done VBS without all the wonderful volunteers we had – I counted 24 different people who helped during the week, plus all the snack donations and prep work. We were able to have a monumental week and kids are already asking when we can do it again!

I also started a book study this month that will end in August, a study of Luther's Small Catechism. It has been a good group looking at the catechism through a different lens of the book *by heart*. I hope that we are able to continue this study in different ways in the future.

July brought us the resignation of Stephanie as our youth director. This is a wonderful opportunity to look to the future and what we want in a person that is doing this ministry with our congregation. Pastor Elizabeth and I will be working with a group of St. John's members, including some youth, that will be look at that question – how do we see someone serving here at St. John's? Is there a way to do more than just youth ministry but instead work towards faith formation as a whole? How do we see youth ministry impacting and working within our mission statement? These are some of the questions we will be trying to answer and will report back to Executive and council.

What's coming up? Looking into September, we will be starting Sunday School and going back to our 'regular' worship schedule. I do have concerns about the state of Covid right now, though. Our school is getting hit very hard and a lot of people are reporting positive tests. For this reason, I would like to go back to our 'regular' times for worship (8 & 10:45) but I would like to keep 10:45 outside for at least September. We have to make the best decisions we can, and being outside is an easy one.

Also coming up and something to put on your calendar is the Fall Festival, which will be on October 16th. We are working on plans that include a chili cook-off, vendors, kids activities and other things. If you are able to help, that would be great!

Things to think about:

1. How do we see youth ministry changing into more faith formation?
2. Recently I gave a sermon about being radically welcoming to those around us. What does this mean to you? How does the church do this well right now and where are we falling short? How can we better communicate a welcome to others?

Pastoral Acts:

Baptisms:

4th – Melissa and Elena Kelly (daycare family)

9th – Elias Rollin Gregg (son of Christopher Witmer)

Funerals

9th – burial for Marian Logan

9th – Kimm Cooper

Continuing Education – CPR/AED training with daycare staff