

Associate Pastor Elizabeth Eckman
September Council Report
Submitted: October 4, 2023

September flew by as we began the new program year. I am teaching Adult Sunday School again this year as well as confirmation classes. This certainly keeps me busy searching for content, figuring out the best way to teach it. I really enjoy engaging both our adults and our youth each week. We have four 9th graders and one 10th grader in confirmation this year. You'll begin to see them serving in worship services more regularly and will hear their names in worship to be prayed over during their final confirmation year.

Final prep for essence of joy concert on October 7th. We are very excited that 2 pews were removed during property work day that will give us more space for the concert, for our new piano and for worship leaders. Thank you to everyone who worked hard to move those!

After months of planning we had our ALIVE middle school retreat weekend at the end of september. There were 175 middle schoolers present with adult advisors, pastors, and youth who served as small group leaders. I had the pleasure of being the chaplain for the weekend to lead worship but also serve as a safe person for conversation with any youth who needed to talk. As one of the few associate pastors in the synod, I had the privilege to be present all weekend and usher in a lively worship service with out youth and I am so thankful I could be there for the whole time. St. John's sent 2 youth participants, 2 high school LT's, and 3 adults. We made new friends and learned about following the Jesus Way! This is one of two events that I help to plan for the synod.

With only a 24hr break I hopped on a plane to Arizona and headed to my final continuing education week with Leadership on the way. I concluded my time with this group in Arizona. It was a great experience where I met for three in person meetings, and monthly over zoom with my cohort. I appreciated having a new group of colleagues from all over the country to learn with and learn from. I look forward to seeking out similar continuing education with cohort groups and coaches, this is definitely one of the ways I learn best.

I continue to meet with prospective church members to get to know them for meals. I have greatly enjoyed this opportunity to connect with them and understand what they seek in a faith community. It has been nice to hear that people are excited for our renovation. A few of the guests have communicated that this means that we are growing and not dying.

Grace and I spent time at the Childrens garden open house for parents to see us and get to know us. There were a few families that made it a point to engage in conversation with us and have come to worship and sunday school!

Funeral: 1
Home visit/Hospital: 3