St. John's Lutheran School
Alumni News

Newsletter 15

The Principal's Perspective



The 2021-2022 school year has started out well. Our enrollment is down a little, but we are happy for the numbers we have. With Daycare, Preschool and Dayschool, our total enrollment is 262 students. We have K-8 enrollment at 161; Preschool enrollment is 30, and 65 in Daycare not enrolled in Preschool. We at St. John's are thankful we can share the good news of Jesus each and every day with these children and students.

The 2021-2022 school year marks the beginning of my 46th year in education. I do not know how so many years could have passed by! I have been in school continually every year since the fall of 1960 as I entered 1st grade at the Venedy School. Grades 4-8 were completed at Johannisburg Grade School. Both of these schools have closed and were absorbed into the Okawville unit district where I attended Okawville High School. Four years spent at Concordia Teachers College in River Forest, Illinois, prepared me for my teaching career with a certificate in both Elementary and Secondary Education. All of my teaching years have been in the Red Bud district. My first seven years were at Trinity Lutheran School in Prairie and the last 39 have been here at St. John's. I have to say that all of my school experiences have been a blessing to me, not only as a student but also as an educator! Each school experience has taught me valuable life lessons along with academic lessons as a student and teacher. This 46th year will be my last year as an educator but not as a student. I believe you need to be a lifelong learner, and so I will continue to learn new things, even though I will be away from school. I know my husband, Bruce, wants to make good use of my time helping on the farm! I did many farm chores growing up and in our early years of marriage, so I am not opposed to this, I just have to relearn how things have changed over the years. I also look forward to opportunities to do new things and plan to volunteer in ways I was not able to do while in school. I am sure this future new life experience will be rewarding in many ways.

Our school year will keep all of us busy as we have our State Recognition visit and will again go through our National Lutheran School Accreditation process. These processes affirm that we are doing what we need to do to academically prepare our students for the future and give them a firm foundation in knowing Jesus as their loving Savior.



God's continued blessings to you,
Deitt Schneider

Faculty and Staff Recognition



St. John's Lutheran Church and School, Red Bud, recognized faculty and staff who served the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod or St. John's Lutheran School in increments of 5 year spans. The following people were given a certificate and gift certificate from the congregation by staff affairs elder, Adam Guebert: Deitt Schneider- 45 years to the LC-MS, Lisa Quinn-10 years to St. John's Lutheran Daycare, Nicole Kadlec-10 years to St. John's Lutheran Daycare, Darlene Letcher-35 years in teaching, Doreen Schnepel-15 year to St. John's Lutheran School and the LC-MS, Justin Palm-15 years to the LC-MS. Missing from the picture is Melissa Schilling-5 years to St. John's Lutheran Daycare.

A Visit With an Alumna: Paula Wiley



Greetings from a returned Red Bud resident after living in Missouri and Ohio (college), 17 years of living in West Virginia and 24 years on the Gulf Coast of Texas. I was a graduate of St. John's Lutheran School in the class of 1971. My name is Paula Wiley, but some may remember me as the oldest daughter of Ronald Snyder, a former SJLS principal and teacher. Others may better relate to the fact that I am also the (much) older sister of our excellent 1st grade teacher, Mrs. Rachel Miller.

My husband, Dean Heller Wiley, and I have been married for 38 years. We have four children; Christopher (temporarily working/living in Germany); Anne (married to Aaron Goldsmith and currently working/living in Madison, Wisconsin); Andrew (working/living in Redmond, Washington area); and Kyle (married to Eugenia and working/living in San Francisco Bay Area of California). We have one grandchild but are still hopeful for more.



Dean and I are both engineers that worked in the petrochemical industry. Dean is from New York, although is careful to say he is from "upstate" New York and NOT from New York City. We are happy to be back up north even though many of our friends in Friendswood, Texas, informed us that we must be "crazy" to move where it got so cold and actually snowed.

I attended St. John's for 1st through 8th grade. In those days, SJL had no kindergarten so we walked across town to the public school for ½ day kindergarten that met in the basement of an old building on East Market Street. Many children did not attend kindergarten at all, and this did not seem to have any long-term detrimental effect on their progress in school.

Our class met in the "new school" at SJLS which was next to the still standing, but abandoned old brick two story school building. It was an event when the old school was torn down and demolished in a manner to cause no damage to the current school.

My first-grade teacher was Mrs. Erna Kuring. Mrs. Kuring was very good at challenging every student with learning materials suitable to their progress since for many, this was their first experience in a structured classroom. I remember her as being very strict, but it's possible that the impressions of a then six-year-old may be faulty.

Our class was one of the largest to go through the school, having 27 to 28 children in the class depending on the year. Even with so many children, I do not remember that there was a lot of disorder in the classroom; there was a lot of respect for the teacher's authority and knowledge.

My teachers in the following years were Mr. William Tetting, Mrs. Lester Kirch, Mr. James Rhiver, Mrs. Odes Stellhorn and, of course, my father, Mr. Ronald Snyder. Every classroom was equipped with a piano, and I remember that we sang songs in each class, either hymns or old favorites from a red music book. Mr. Rhiver played the guitar so sometimes we sang with that. After 50 years, I do not have a lot of detailed memories of each class but certain things still stand out. For example, Mr. Tetting, who was also the church music director, played "boogie woogie" on the piano and shook his leg at the end, sometimes out the classroom door that was right next to the piano. I also have detailed memories diagramming sentences in Mrs. Stellhorn's class so that we learned all the different types of verb tenses, phrases, prepositions, etc., and how to put together sentences that made sense. There are also memories of reading, writing, arithmetic of increasing intensity each year; add to that spelling, Bible verse memorization, music, physical science, art, geography, US history. In 7th and 8th grade, subjects were even more difficult. We learned something of beginning basics of physics, chemistry, and biology; about the US Constitution; and even more details of geography and history, including the history and events of the Protestant Reformation.

We also had classes on Luther's catechism in preparation for Confirmation. There was still time for physical education and school was (and is) fortunate to have extensive grounds for playgrounds and softball fields. Even though the academics were important, there was still time to have fun.



Paula's father, Ron Synder

The school must have been going through another expansion by the time I was in 8th grade (or at least a revision) because our 8th grade class spent part of the year with our classroom on the stage.

Because my father was both a teacher/school principal and this was such a time-consuming job, the school life was very intertwined with our family life. I remember being in the office working on my homework or reading while he was preparing teaching materials or adult bible class materials; with him rotating the handle on the mimeograph machine. Sometimes we (that is the Snyder siblings) would help set up chairs and take down chairs in the gym for big events. On weekends, we would sometimes help grade science tests (multiple choice or true/false vs. a key).



The Synder Family

The curriculum and teaching methods at St. John's seemed to be very successful and often students from the school went on to do very well at Red Bud High School. I feel blessed to have attended school there and believe that the school continues to be a great asset for the community. In particular, I appreciate the support the church gives to the school so that members have access to a quality Christian education for their children with no high tuition costs.



Confirmation Class of 1971

A Visit With an Alumna: Amanda Helmkamp

A St. John's education is more than just a Christian education, it's an education that changes lives. My parents' choice to send me to St. John's as a first grader started me on a path of Lutheran education that now stretches into adulthood.

I started school at St. John's in 1990. I have many fond memories of school and my teachers as they helped me grow and develop a love of learning that has led me to be a teacher myself. Many teachers have influenced me and made an impression and guided me into my teaching career. My third-grade teacher, Miss Perr, is one of those teachers. In her classroom, we each felt loved and special. She made learning fun by having special class celebrations like our "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory" party after finishing the book with chocolate bars and golden tickets included!



My career at St. John's ended on a very special note as well. My graduating class of 1998 was Mr. Ron Snyder's last class. I think our class may have enjoyed a bit more relaxed teacher as he ended his long teaching career. Having a massive paper fight with our spelling books was not something we expected him to agree on. Mr. Snyder exemplified a life dedicated to Lutheran education filling many roles at St. John's throughout his career; it helped remind me that teaching is about more than what happens in the classroom. St. John's offered us opportunities to participate in not only academic endeavors but also athletic, musical, and artistic.



Amanda pictured with Kristin (Liefer) Sachtleben during their time at Concordia University River Forest.

So many of my teachers are the reason I chose to attend Concordia University River Forest, RF, (now Chicago) to become a Lutheran school teacher. Our class of 17 students had 3 who went on to become Lutheran teachers. Kristin Sachtleben and I both went to RF where we continued to look for ways to serve as we had done in youth group during high school. We connected with a Hispanic church in Chicago volunteering to help on Sunday mornings. After graduation in 2006, I took a Call to Zion Lutheran in St. Charles, MO, as a full-time teacher in preschool. I have now been teaching at Zion for 15 years. My role has changed over time as I'm now the school technology coordinator, teaching computer science and taking care of the school's technology.

In my time at Zion, I have gotten the opportunity to attend several Missouri District teacher conferences and LEA national conferences. One of the reasons I love conferences is that I get to see some of my former teachers





Confirmation Class of 1998

who are now my colleagues. Teachers like Miss Perr, now Mrs. Cunningham, is teaching in the Missouri district so I get to see her at every conference. What a blessing it is to get to see her and thank her for being an amazing teacher and influencing me to be a Lutheran teacher as well! I get to see St. John's teachers yearly at the St. Louis Lutheran Elementary School Association in-services. It is great to now be a colleague with teachers who were at St. John's when I was there like Mrs. Schneider, Mrs. Miller, Mrs. Liefer, Mrs. Schmidt, Mr. Becker, and of course my mom, Mrs. Steele. So often I run into people at teachers' conferences, who knew someone who grew up at St. John's. I have gotten to collaborate with Sue Schultz when she was at CCLS teaching preschool. I got to spend a year teaching with Jenna Schultz while her husband, David, was at the Seminary. Since I have taken on the role of technology coordinator, I have been able to come back and serve the teachers at St. John's, helping them learn some new things about SMART boards and using Google Apps for Education. The impact that St. John's Lutheran has on education is substantial.

It is my prayer that St. John's continues to encourage students to consider a vocation in church work as they persist in educating the children of the congregation, not only in academics but also emotionally, physically, and spiritually. I am thankful for my Lutheran education and blessed that my husband, Travis, and I have the opportunity to provide a Lutheran education to our children as well.



Amanda with her husband, Travis, and their children, Joshua and Abby.

The Pastor's Perspective: Rev. Mark Nebel

I expect that I have written of this before for the Alumni News but whenever I hear someone talk about walking five miles to school and then again back home when they were younger (uphill both ways, through a foot of snow in the morning and 100 degree heat in the afternoon), I ask if that person went to school with my mother, because those are the kind of stories mom would tell about her education. Her school days were during the Great Depression and World War II.

I have long reached the point where I tell similar stories about the hardships of my school days, though they really weren't that tough. No air conditioning in a brick building where the second floor 7th and 8th grade rooms faced the south. The wearing of shorts was not allowed and there could be only one electric fan per classroom. By the end of the day in September and May, we were not just done, we were well done. On the other hand, we had a choir director whose practice at 7:30 a.m. during January included opening the windows when it was 10 degrees outside because we sang better in cold air.

We were sent out for recess to experience the dangers of an asphalt surface, a tall slide, teeter-totters, a jungle gym and the quite deadly merry-go-round. That is if we even qualified for recess after lunch, because when I did not eat the nasty mixed vegetables on my tray, I had to stay in the cafeteria and sit at the lunch table until recess was over.

What "horror" stories will our students have to tell about their school days at St. John's in 30 to 40 years? My hope is that they will tell their grandchildren about the two years they had to wear masks in school and keep them on all day while they were in the building. Why is this my hope? Because my fear is that this virus will hang around and our students still will be wearing those things in school from now until then! On the other hand, if mask-wearing is the only "woe-were-we" story that our students will have to tell decades from now, then we will have served them well.



God's blessings, Rev. Mark Alan Nebel

Attention!

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