St. John's Lutheran School
Alumni News

Newsletter 18

The Principal's Perspective

The 2022 portion of the school year has come and gone. It has been a time of learning for students, staff, teachers, and especially me. We have accomplished some of our goals of returning to pre COVID activities and hope to fulfill many more during the 2023 portion of the school year. Our enrollment has slightly increased upon returning to school in January due to students joining our preschool program and day school. This is a blessing and an opportunity to reach even more children with the message of Christ Crucified. This is the same message the children have so proudly shared with our many guests during our Christmas Advent Services. Our 3rd through 5th grade students started the Advent Season off with their service "Behold the Child" on November 30th. The kindergarten through 2nd grade spread the message via "The Shapes of Christmas" on December 6th. Daycare and Preschool students shared the birth of Jesus with a service entitled "Silent Night Holy Night". Then finally on December 20th, our 6th through 8th grade students were actors and readers in the "Road to Bethlehem" service. We were so delighted to welcome guests back to these services and enjoyed the ambiance of fellowship that came with it. The return of the Fall Festival and Wurstmarkt were more fellowship opportunities offered here at school. The Fall Festival was overwhelmingly successful and all were happy to see it return. We wish farewell to one of the long-time leaders of this event, Heather Voss, and look to replace her in the upcoming year; talk to the school office if interested. The Wurstmarkt saw more in person dining which helped people connect with one another. These events were a blessing, and we can't wait to offer more. Speaking of blessings, we all are very blessed to have everything the Lord has entrusted to us. We have been blessed in this way and are working to be a blessing to others in our community. This has been done in part as the 5th grade class put together birthday kits for students who may not always get that opportunity. Diapers, bottles, and wipes are being offered to the Life Network of Southern Illinios via the efforts of 2nd grade. And our school as a whole has been decorating a "Warming Tree" in the lobby near our school entrance. The coats, scarves, hats, gloves, socks, and blankets will go to support students in need of these items. Thank you to Sara and Leslie for beginning this tradition at St. John's Lutheran. As we returned to school in January, we hit the ground running with Lutheran Schools week January 22 - 28. As always, there was fun, fellowship, and outreach with dress up days and Christ Our Savior Lutheran High School visiting as well and collecting donations of hygiene products that will support those in need. Further into February, we will look to celebrate Heart Challenge formerly known as Jump Rope or Hoops for Heart. The class jump will be exciting to have back. Then as we move farther into spring, the musical will again take place. Finally, I have to give thanks for all the staff, teacher, and volunteers that have helped this year to run so smoothly. They are the greatest and help this school to be so wonderful and shine so brightly. When you see one of them, please thank them for the extra time, energy, expertise, or many other talents they bring to St. John's Lutheran School. We could not be what we are without them. Praise and glory be to God for Him bringing them to St. John's.



May the Lord bless and strengthen you,
Justin Palm



From K to 8th grade all our students love reminiscing with Mrs. Schmitz about the 100th day of school!



Mrs. Liefer and Pastor Nebel worked together to start a new tradition during Lutheran Schools Week this year; The Bible Bee! Each grade had three participants. Pictured are the 1st Grade participants: Ellie Stellhorn, Blakelynn Grohmann, and Elaina Uffelmann.

A Visit With Alumnus: Mike DeRousse

Warm greetings from another alumni of St. John's, Mike DeRousse. I was born in 1968 to Don and Sharon (Liefer) DeRousse and lived in Red Bud up until I left to attend college in Chicago. I have one sister, Melissa Henry, who also attended and graduated from St. John's in 1985. She's married to Brian Henry, and they have 2 children, Megan and Blake, who have also attended and graduated from St. John's. After graduating from Red Bud High School, I



attended DeVry Institute of Technology to study electronics engineering. Towards the end of my time there, I developed more of an interest in computer science. Upon graduation in 1989, I took a job with AT&T Bell Laboratories in Naperville, IL, where my interest in computer programming was well suited. Midway through my undergraduate degree, I was blessed to be able to marry a hometown girl, Shawn Seibold, whom I met in Algebra 2 class at Red Bud High School. While working for AT&T, the company funded my education at Illinois Institute of Technology which culminated in a master's degree in computer science in 1989. Shawn and I resided and worked in the Chicago area for around 10 years, moving between various towns in the area, including Chicago, Bloomingdale, Glendale Heights, and Carol Stream. In 1996, after patiently waiting for several years, God finally blessed us with our first son, Joshua. He had a very large impact on our lives, as I suppose most first-born children do. It soon became obvious to us that living our lives away from family was not ideal and the very frequent trips up and down Interstate 55 quickly grew tiresome. I had a very strong desire to raise my family in the way I was raised, around grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins, and a life in the church. Once again, God proved that he had a plan for us, and thanks in part to a fellow member of St. John's, Gene Liefer, I was given the opportunity to transfer to another job with AT&T in the St. Louis area. We moved back to Red Bud in the fall of 1996, and have been here ever since. In 1997, we were blessed with our second son Nathaniel, and then again with our third son, Benjamin, in 2003. All three of our sons followed in my footsteps by attending and graduating from St. John's. As such, our school has now been a part of three generations in our family since my mother also attended there, graduating in 1963. I've come to realize that there's really nothing more important than bringing your children up in the faith, and St. John's has been such a huge blessing in our lives by helping us do that very thing. I'm so thankful that God, through the actions of my great-great-great-grandparents and the generations since then, kept my family on the path that resulted in them sharing in their Lutheran heritage and ultimately enabled me to share that with my wife and children. I always enjoy paging through family genealogy books that mention family memberships in many of the Lutheran churches in our area, including Ruma, Prairie, and our very own St. John's. It always makes me think of Proverbs 22:6, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."

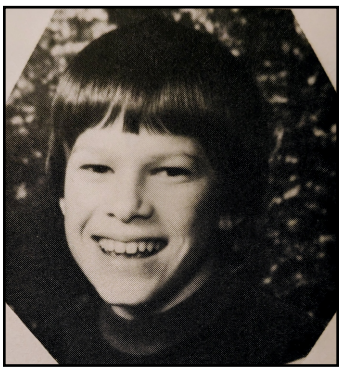
I'm also very happy that my wife has had the opportunity to be a part of our school, even though she didn't attend there as a child. As a full-time mother and homemaker, she had the opportunity to do a lot of volunteering in the classrooms while our children were attending. She's also served as an aid to both Mrs. Steele and Mrs. Schmitz and is back again this year as a part-time aide to Mrs. Schmitz.



Since our sons graduated from St. John's and Red Bud High School, they've been very blessed and fortunate in their own endeavors. Josh graduated from the Missouri University of Science and Technology in 2018 with a bachelor's degree in aerospace engineering and is currently employed as an engineer for Navair in Ridgecrest, California. Nathan graduated from Southern Illinois University in Edwardsville in 2020 and 2021 with bachelor's and master's degrees in mathematics and is currently employed as an actuarial analyst for Madison Mutual Insurance. He married our beautiful daughter-in-law,

Alex, in 2020 and they recently purchased a historic home in Prairie du Rocher where they now reside. And finally, Benjamin is currently studying geography with minors in history and urban studies as a Sophomore at Southern Illinois University in Edwardsville. As you might imagine, we're very proud of the accomplishments of all of our sons and thankful for the many blessings they've received.

Regarding my time in St. John's Lutheran School, let me share a brief summary of my formative years there. After attending Kindergarten at the public school (long before we had one at St. John's), I entered the 1st grade in 1974 with Miss Laufer as our teacher. To be honest, I don't remember much from those early years, but I do remember being somewhat afraid of Miss Laufer as she was known for being pretty strict. Of course, with a classroom full of 23 1st graders and no classroom aides in those days, I suppose strictness can be a necessity. In 2nd grade, we had Mrs. Polnick, and in the 3rd and 4th grades, I fondly remember the years with the Boettchers. I especially remember the focus on music during those years and taking up guitar lessons with Mr. Boettcher. Sadly, I didn't have the self-discipline to stick with it which I came to regret in later years. The next couple of years we had Mr. Grass in 5th and Mr. Dressler in 6th. By this time, my cousin Keith Liefer had moved to Red Bud from Florida, and we quickly became good friends. For 7th grade, we had Ms. Larrabee, and then came 8th grade with Mr. Snyder. This year was by far my favorite as I really enjoyed the time spent with Mr. Snyder. It was always fun to get him off on some tangent during his lectures, not just because it was a break from the lessons, but also because he always had something interesting to talk about. To this day, every time we sing "Lord Dismiss Us with Your Blessing" in worship, I flash back to that year with Mr. Snyder and the memories that were made there. His faithfulness and unique character have been a lifelong inspiration to me ever since, and for these reasons, in later years, I jumped at the opportunity to attend his Bible classes. Naturally, the bulk of the memories I have of St. John's are from that 8th grade year. These include having a broken leg (there seemed to be an epidemic as my classmates Mary Snyder and Stephanie Althoff also had leg injuries that year which can be seen in one of our yearbook photos), our trips to Altenburg and Springfield, and the great blizzard of 1982. Apart from the classwork at St. John's, I also played a little softball and basketball (I wasn't very good at either of them), participated in the youth group, and helped with the Discipulog (another opportunity to work with Mr. Snyder). For my 8th grade year, our church gained a new pastor, Reverend Donald Schultz. I, along with 26 of my classmates, were confirmed and graduated from St. John's Lutheran School in 1982. Looking back at my time spent in our school, I'm so thankful for all of the great teachers and friendships that I had over all of those years. Most of all, I'm thankful for the work of the Holy Spirit in my life throughout that time and the many years since.



Since moving back to Red Bud, I've had many opportunities to serve the church in various capacities including as a member of the Board of Parish Education, Board of Elders, and technology advisor. And I'm now serving as Vice-Chairman of the congregation. It's been my pleasure to serve the Lord and our congregation as a way of showing my appreciation for the many blessings that our church and school have been in my life.



1963 Confirmation Class: Left to Right 1st Row: Darrell Schrader, Dale Hartmann, Vernita Voss, Carol Dannenberg, Peggy Deterding, Nancy Cozean, Danny Schmitz, Marc Loesche. 2nd Row: Connie Kloepper, Richard Warren, Joyce Heller, Colleen Lowry, Paul Schrieber, Rev. M. H. Gross, Carol Schrader, Dennis Kalmer, Gloria Koester, Charlotte Uffelmann, Michael Vogt, Sharon Liefer.



1982 Confirmation Class: Left to Right 1st Row: Kevin Mehring, Keith Liefer, Stephanie Althoff, Kristi Graper, Nancy Buss, Ruth Clark, Angela Weber, Angela Stellhorn, Cynthia Ruwald, Timothy Voss, Michael DeRousse. 2nd Row: Timothy Kueker, Renee Roehrkasse, Randy Burgdorf, Chris Luttman, Erin Hartmann, Jacqueline Rahn, Thomas Voges. 3rd Row: Vicar Robert Wagner, Todd Birkner, Mark Schnepel, Timothy Roy, Jonathan Schultz, Rev. Donald Schultz, June Guebert, Pamela Guebert, Kim Clark, Mary Snyder, Mr. Ron Snyder.



2010 Confirmation Class: Left to Right 1st Row: Allister Gunter, Samantha Moeller, Joshua DeRousse, Brittany Mehner, Kody Schoenbeck. 2nd Row: Rev. Russell Koen, Rachel Renner, Shawn Nichols, Lucas Hartmann, Mallory Van Dorn. 3rd Row: Maria Miller, Joshua Snyder, Sarah Roy, Michael Nebel, Alexandra Kueker, Rev. Mark Nebel.



2011 Confirmation Class: Left to Right 1st Row: Rev. Russell Koen, Elizabeth Moll, Rev. Mark Nebel. 2nd Row: Adam Quinn, Samantha Lee, Alex Wild, Nathaniel DeRousse, Meghan Mollet, Riley Foster. 3rd Row: Travis Henry, Kayla Thompson, Derek Voges, Jessica Langrehr, Tailor Neuhaus,



2017 Confirmation Class: Left to Right 1st Row: Rev. Russell Koen, Konnor Stellhorn, Dylan Roscow, Madilyn Hoock, Sara Hewitt, Kinley Bowles, Brendan Harms, Rev. Mark Nebel. 2nd Row: Annelise Quinn, Jenna Salger, Claire Grohmann, Ben DeRousse, Ethan Fritsche, Grace Schoenbeck, Jordyn Mulherin. 3rd Row: Makayla Whelan, Christian Stechmesser, Brandon Voss, Parker Van Dorn, Wyatt Cowell, Adam Kiefer, Kaleb Barriger, Avery Piel.

A Visit With an Alumnus: Jim Guebert

Jim Guebert: Class of 1956

I am thankful that my forefathers knew and believed in the importance of a Christian Education, thereby establishing St. John's Lutheran School. I have been able to be a part of several building expansions, serving on the building committee for the latest building project. The growth of the school is a blessing from God to keep educating the children of our congregation with the Good News of Jesus – it is our church's mission field. I am thankful to be a lifelong member of St. John's.



My four siblings also attended St. John's; my sister, Evelyn, taught a short time here, I even had her as a teacher. I spent my years at St. John's in the old school; the building was two stories with the kitchen and lunch room in the basement. I remember Mrs. Olinda Koenig being the cook. My 1st grade teacher was Ms. Neva Luebkemann, now Mrs. Neva Liefer and Mr. Ron Snyder was my 8th grade teacher. I was his first class at St. John's when he came to Red Bud in 1955. One day while in the 8th grade, Mr. Snyder came in wearing a stocking cap because his wife, Eunice, had cut his hair. Some of the other teachers I remember were Mrs. Odes Stellhorn, Mr. Lochhaas, and Mr. Sommerfeldt who also was principal. Mr. Otto Renner was the custodian. There was no gym to play in during bad weather, so we went to the large room on the 2nd floor for recess. When we played outside, I remember trying to see if we could hit the limbs of the large tree while swinging on the big swings. The year that my sister, Evelyn, was my teacher, several of us decided to color the steel radiators with crayons, not a good idea! Mr. Cliff Papenberg was our basketball coach; it seemed like I was the bench warmer. We had to use the public school gym on the northeast side of town.



I married my wife, Judy, in August of 1967, at St. John's. We are blessed with five children.

June, graduated in 1982, is a nurse at Anderson Hospital in Maryville, IL. Her son, Hunter, and daughter, Summer, attended and graduated from Trinity Lutheran School in Edwardsville, IL.

Janel graduated in 1984. She is a teacher at Abiding Savior Lutheran School in South County, MO. Her children are Eli, Skylar, and Ava and they attend school there.

Craig graduated in 1986. He and his wife, Lori, have two sons, Kyler and Drew. Craig works for GSI Equipment Co. in Assumption, IL.

Kevin graduated in 1993. He and his wife, Anna, have a son, Lucas, and daughters, Amelia and Emma, who attended/or are attending St. John's. Kevin is an agronomist for Growmark/FS and also farms. Kevin is also active on the Church Council.

Jill graduated in 1995. She and her husband, Sam, have two children, Austin and Makayla, who attended St. John's. She is also an active member of the Church Council. She is the beloved cook at St. John's; many kids miss her cooking when they go to high school.

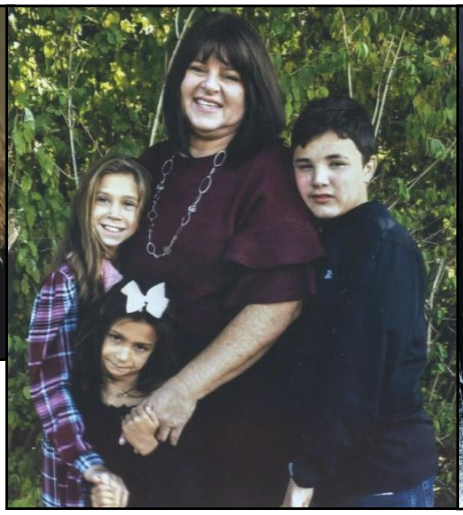
I have had the privilege of serving on the Church Council in several positions. I was in the Army reserves from 1964 to 1970. I have been farming most of my life; I love working the soil and watching the crops grow. I/We have been richly blessed.

May God continue to bless the school! Jim Guebert



1956 Confirmation Class: Left to Right 1st Row: Donald Liefer, Donald Kueker, Rose Voss, Kathryn Gross, Dorothy Fay Nelson, Joan Dannenberg, JoAnn Voss, Theodore Valentine, Allen Ronald Warren. 2nd Row: Harold Liefer, James Guebert, Rev. M. H. Gross, John Booth, Oliver Koester, John Guebert.







At left; June with Hunter and Summer. Center; Janel with Eli, Skylar, and Ava. At Right, Kevin and Anna with Lucas, Amelia, and Emma.



Craig and Lori with Kyler and Drew.



Jill and Sam with Austin and Makayla.

The Pastor's Perspective: Rev. Mark Nebel

Since I last wrote in this space, my wife Cindy and I have become grandparents! Our oldest daughter, Mary, and her husband, Mike, have been foster parents for a little girl named Cariana since September 8. She just turned one-year-old after Christmas. Our second daughter and her husband, Chelsea and Shane, had a son, Hudson, on December 8. I had the privilege of baptizing him on January 8 when the church celebrated The Baptism of Our Lord in worship. They are pictured when our family was together just before Christmas.

I have heard it said that grandchildren are God's reward for us not killing our children. Also, that if I had known how wonderful grandchildren were, I would have had them first. I definitely feel that it is my responsibility as "Papa" to spoil them and give them back to their parents. As grandparents, we pray that God will allow us to live long enough to see our grandchildren do to our children what our children did to us.

For now, I do a lot of holding, playing peek-a-boo, patting on the back, and giving them up before a diaper change is needed. We certainly are concerned about the physical well-being of our grandchildren. We want to make sure they have all the necessities of life as well as a few extras (candy, etc.) to spoil them. We also plan to set aside some money now that they will be able to use in the future for higher education. This was a good example that my parents did for us.

But as Christian grandparents, we most importantly have a concern for their spiritual well-being. Thus, it is not enough for us to provide for and support a quality Christian education just for our children. That support should continue on into the next generation. Let this article serve as a reminder, an encouragement and an affirmation for your ongoing support of our Lutheran school even though your children have graduated from it in the hope and expectation of your grandchildren, or even great-grandchildren, benefiting from it as well.

God's blessings,
Pastor Mark Alan Nebel





St. John's Lutheran Cougars Boys' Basketball Class S Region 7 Champions pictured left to right 1st row: Cason Birch, Easton Ruebusch, Liam Kilpatrick, Ian Moll, Brayden McCarthy, Sutton Jones, Lucas Summers, and Liam Quintin. 2nd row: Assistant Coach Quentin Stenzel, Carson Moll, Brayden Schlesinger, Landon Kilpatrick, Blayton Sutton, Landon Ruebusch, Lucas McCarthy, Brodie Stenzel, Coach Danny Moll, and Assistant Coach Nick Quintin.



Students participate in jersey day and get to show off their favorite teams to the rest of the school as we do morning devotions together during Lutheran Schools Week.



8th Graders enjoy "Anything but a Backpack" day during Lutheran Schools Week.