St. John's Lutheran School
Alumni News

Newsletter 22

The Principal's Perspective

St. John's Lutheran School has had a very active fall and moved into winter with the same busyness. There have been sporting events, fellowship events, and opportunities for us to serve the community. As I think back to these events remembering what a blessing St. John's Lutheran Church and School are to everyone, the fun and the excitement returns here in 2025.

A kickoff for the fall season started with some newly created history by our baseball and softball teams. Our girls' softball team earned the number 1 seed in the Regional Tournament. Their performance this season helped them earn a bye in the first round. In the second round, the girls faced and beat St. John's the Baptist Red Bud/St.Mary's Chester/Prairie du Rocher Co-op. In the Regional Championship, the girls were victorious over Evansville. We thank God for the abilities and talents that allowed these ladies to accomplish these feats.

Congratulations are also due to the boys' baseball team, who received the number 1 seed in their region. They earned a bye in the first round. During the second round of the tournament, the boys faced and beat Marissa. In the Regional Championship, the boys were victorious over Steeleville.

The young men and women of St. John's Lutheran School's baseball and softball teams made it to the SIJHSAA state tournament. Having both teams at state was the first time in school history. Each team played their first State game on Saturday, October 4, in Coulterville and combined, they made school history again as both teams were victorious with the softball team beating Carrier-Mills-Stonefort Coop 9-1 and the baseball team beating Galatia 12-3. This allowed both teams to return to state competition on October 8th and 10th. Neither team was able to win another game, but their first round victories allowed them both to finish fourth in the SIJHSAA state competition. Fan buses brought many students and teachers both days, and we saw much team spirit. We thank God for the blessings He brought each team this year.

While we had many victories in our fall sports, we recognized an amazing blessing of Omer and Neva Liefer who celebrated 70 years of marriage. In honor and remembrance of this event, they donated the bench pictured below to the school. This bench helps the school by providing seating to students waiting for pick-up or for parents waiting for students to come down from class. Thank you, Omer and Neva!



Another event to be thankful for was our Cougar Prowl Fun Run which was held on October 14th, at the baseball field and was a great success. So many students ran soooo many laps and helped raise so much money, $7917! This event has become the PTL's largest fundraiser, aside from the dinner auction, and is a great help in providing the funds for technology, guest presenters, field trips, and so much more. Thank you to our PTL officers for running the event which allows us to keep 95% to 100% of the proceeds donated to the school.

For some of our students, running at the Cougar Prowl was not enough; students on the cross country team competed in the Okaw Valley Conference Meet during that week as well. This event was a great chance for the runners to compete and compete well!! The boys team consisting







of, Lucas Summer (7), Cooper Wingerter (6), Lane Cowell (7), Brewer Krick (4), and Henry Schnepel (5) placed 2nd in the OVC meet. We congratulate the boys, but the girls outdid them by one place and finished 1st in the OVC Conference. The young ladies who scored for the team are Ella Birch (6), Roxy Markotay (6), Kelly Pollard (5), Jozlynn Palm (7), and Liza Wagner (4). Medaling in the girls' race were Ella Birch who finished first overall, Roxy Markotay who finished fourth, and Kelly Pollard who finished fifth.

A great night to celebrate all the blessings God has bestowed upon us as a Church and School happened at the **"Family of Faith Fall Fellowship Fair"** and was a great way for families to reconnect with each other, discover or be reminded of the many groups and organizations the Church has to offer to its parishioners and school families, and to hear the children sing worship songs. Thank you to all who attended, and I hope to see you again next year.

As October came to a close, we were so glad to have the Fall Festival. We thank Tracy Proctor, Kristin Sachtleben, and Trevor Stellhorn who headed up the main committees and those who prepared for and worked the event. It was a blessing to see all the kids enjoying the event! The costume parade was a blast with some very creative ideas on display. The junior high students helped to run the carnival games and were great helpers during the cleanup process. The food was a highlight of the event and people left looking forward to coming back in 2025.

On the last day of October, we were happy to host a "trunk or treating" in the new gym lobby from 5:00 to 7:00 pm. Thank you to Cindy Steele for putting together the event, and thank you to Dietrich Bank, Buena Vista Bank, Christ Our Savior Lutheran High School, St. John's Junior Youth, St. John's Senior Youth, Faye Reinhardt, Carolyn Cooper, St. John's Lutheran Church and School, and individuals from the congregation who attended or supported our event!

We congratulate Mr. William Becker for being selected as the VFW Smart/Maher National Citizenship Education Award Winner. We are proud to recognize him for representing our school and community. He is pictured with VFW member, Larry Ehlers. Bill received the award for his focus on community service and outreach. We are very blessed to have staff members that go above and beyond the call of duty.



We are very thankful for and very proud of the men and women who we remembered and honored during our Veteran's Day Program on November 8th. We would like to thank Maureen Liefer for speaking at our assembly. Naval Commander Liefer talked about how her confirmation verse Psalms 23:1 was the guiding force in her military career and after. She challenged the students to keep their faith throughout their life even giving Calin Wilson (pictured at right) a Military Challenge coin. We were happy to see so many former Veterans and their families in attendance!



Both our boys and girls are busy with regular-season basketball games and our cheerleaders get our home crowd pumped up during every game. The boys' varsity team competed in the 16-team tournament hosted by Good Shepherd Lutheran School in Collinsville. They had a school-best finish this year in the tournament, 2nd Place! The girls' team competed in the 6-team tournament hosted by Trinity St. John's Nashville. They also set school history by winning the tournament for the first time ever! Aside from the heat of competition, both teams were able to enjoy some Lutheran fellowship with church services, as both tournaments had only Lutheran Schools participate and offered church services after the competition on Saturday evening.





The junior high school students are in the midst of their second-quarter service project. They have visited Garden Place four times and will soon visit five more times. On these visits, the students play a dice game, "Farkle", with the residents. During the visits, many genuine conversations have taken place and what appears to be a whole lot of fun. It is a blessing to both the students, who learn to converse with people face to face, and the residents who can find some companionship and enjoy the vigor of the youth from St. John's Lutheran School.



The month of December went by quickly as we held many Christmas services. Our 3rd through 5th grade students started the Advent Season off with their service "The Gifts of Advent" on December 4th.



The Kindergarten through 2nd grade spread the message via "Angel Angel" on December 11th.



Our service from our Daycare and Preschool students who shared the birth of Jesus was entitled "Let's Light the Christmas Tree."



The final service for the holiday season was put on by the 6th through 8th grade students who were actors and readers in the "Road to Bethlehem" service on December 20th.



We were so delighted to welcome guests to these services and enjoyed the ambiance of fellowship that came with it and the opportunity for the children to so proudly share the miracle of Christ's birth.

Also, during December, our "Ducting Out of Debt" campaign was a huge success. Thank you for your support. All the grades brought in over $300 dollars with many having much more than that. At the end of our challenge, 1st grade and 5th grade had the highest average brought in per child. These two classes will duct tape Mrs. Jill Gross and me to the wall in the next few weeks. On a side note, Mrs. Nancy Whelan challenged her 7th grade class and they rose to the occasion; she will also join in getting taped to the wall. This was a fun way to involve the school in the debt-matching project; we are delighted to let you know that the school donations totaled nearly $32,000.

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 was done by our school as a whole during the month of December. We decorated a "Warming Tree" in the lobby near our school entrance. The coats, scarves, hats, gloves, socks, and blankets went to support students in need of these items. Thank you to Sara Shepherd and Cynthia Wilson for continuing this tradition at St. John's Lutheran. In addition, Mr. Becker, the Daycare, and each classroom collected donations and then shopped for a Lutheran Child and Family Services sponsored child. A final visit to Garden Place by the 3rd through 5th grades to sing for the residents was arranged by Mr. Becker and enjoyed very much by the residents.



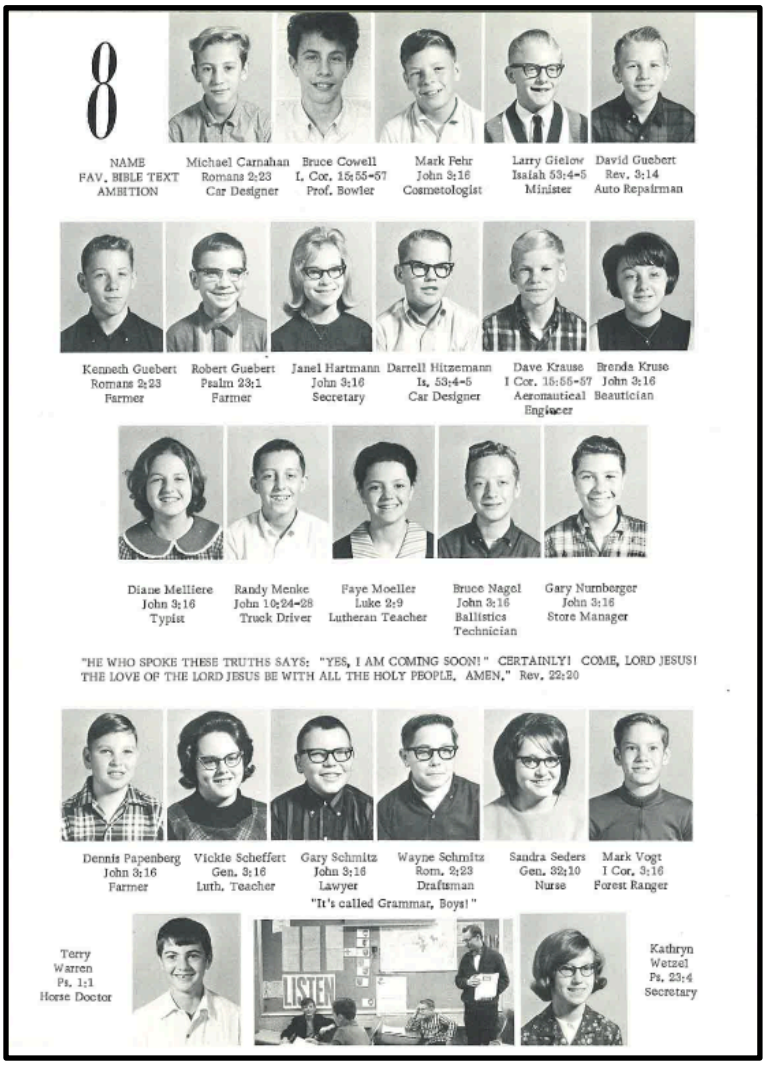
We look forward to serving the Lord as a Church and School this New Year!

God's Blessings throughout 2025, Justin Palm

A Visit With an Alumna: Kathryn Wetzel Rowold

St. John's Lutheran Church and St. John's Lutheran School have been the roots of not only my childhood but also my adult life. I have always lived within a five-mile radius of both. Larry Gielow lived next to us on Third Street and would accompany me to school —my request not his—since I was afraid I didn't know the way. We didn't have GPS back then, but one could clearly see the school once you passed the church. I'll never forget the day he asked me, "you think you know the way now?" I was confirmed in 1967 from St. John's Lutheran School along with 23 classmates—one of the largest classes at that time. During those eight years at St. John's, I was instructed by the greats such as Mrs. Lester Kirsch, Mr. James Rhiver, Mrs. Odes Stellhorn, Mrs. Kuring, and the all-time great, Mr. Ronald Snyder.

Our faith was put to the test when my father, Walter Wetzel, along with two neighbor children, were tragically killed in 1963 at a railroad crossing by Red Bud Industries.



Being ten years old with my younger brother Kenneth four years old, I did not fully understand the gravity of the situation. I knew our life would be different without a father, but now my mother, Ruth Wetzel, was both mother and father. My mother was in the prime of her life, with two small children living in the house our dad had just built. And it wasn't just a house which we could have left, it was the family farm where my grandfather Herman Wetzel raised his family. So, leaving the farm was never an option my mother considered. She bought a Massey Ferguson tractor and was in the fields plowing and planting along with the help of family and friends. With her strong faith in God, she believed she could and did manage to raise two small children and keep the family farm in the family where my brother now lives. I was blessed to have mother in my life until she reached the age of 92, all the while living in her own home again within blocks of St. John's Lutheran Church. I truly believe God kept her in our lives for that length of time in place of taking our father at an early age.



I received an Associates Degree from Belleville Area College and a Bachelor's Degree from SIU-Carbondale. I was employed by Belleville Area College for 15 years and after 25 years retired from Price Waterhouse Coopers in St. Louis. On October 5, 1974, I married the love of my life—Clyde Rowold. We celebrated our 50th wedding anniversary with family and friends. We enjoy traveling and cruising with family and friends. As a result of Clyde and his father, Paul Rowold, serving in the military, Clyde and I are both active with the VFW and Auxiliary.

Our community is blessed to have St. John's Lutheran School. Thankfully, my niece, Sarah Wetzel, nephew, Brian Wetzel, and now great nephew, Hayden, walk those same hallways and have been taught the same principles. The teachers have changed at St. John's Lutheran School, but the building and foundation of belief in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior have not. Thanks be to God!

We are looking for writers for our next newsletter which will be printed this fall. Please consider sharing your fond experiences of St. John's and the Christian impact that our beloved school has had on your life. If you are interested, please send an email to alumni.stjohn@gmail.com.



1967 Confirmation Class: Left to Right 1st Row: Dennis Papenberg, Randy Menke, Gary Schmitz, Michael Carnahan, Dave Krause, Mark Fehr, Robert Guebert, Darrell Hitzemann, Bruce Cowell. 2nd Row: Faye Moeller, Janel Hartmann, Kathryn Wetzel, Vickie Scheffert, Sandra Seders, Brenda Kruse, Diane Melliere. 3rd Row: Dave Guebert, Terry Warren, Gary Nurnberger, Kenneth Guebert, Rev. Henry Kuring, Mr. Ron Snyder, Larry Gielow, Bruce Nagel, Mark Vogt, Wayne Schmitz.

News From Your DCE

Sunday, January 12, was an exciting day here at St. John's. The annual Voter's Meeting was held with election of new church officers and other reports from the various boards were given. A Call meeting was also held on this day. The purpose of this Call meeting was to begin the process for extending a Divine Call to the next Senior Pastor of St. John's. The constitution and bylaws of the congregation require that the Board of Elders submit three names to the Voting assembly. These names included; Rev. Mark Phillip Winkelman, Rev. Thomas Schlund, and Rev. Jerod Koenig.

A Divine Call was extended to Rev. Winkelman. He has experience as a signer in Deaf ministry and is excited to serve a congregation with a school. His District President ranked him as very good in all areas of ministry. He has a traditional but flexible approach to liturgy and is evangelical in his theological position. He is currently serving as one of the vacancy pastors for St. John's.

Please pray with us as Pastor Winkelman is in deliberations over this Call in the next few weeks. We also granted a peaceful release to teacher, Cindy Fay Nebel, at this meeting. Mrs. Nebel has joined her husband, Rev. Mark Nebel, in Concordia, Missouri where he is teaching at St. Paul's Lutheran High School. Various staff have assumed Mrs. Nebel's teaching duties. I have assumed homeroom responsibilities for the fourth grade class for the remainder of the school year.

While there are changes that are occurring at St. John's, it is good to remember that God's love does not change. We thank God for the opportunities He provides to continue to serve Him and His family of faith through Word and Sacrament Ministry.



Wishing you a Blessed New Year,

Mr. William Becker
Director of Christian Education (DCE)



St. John's Lutheran School's 15th Dinner Auction

Saturday, March 15, 2025
Hecker Community Center

The Dinner Auction has become the largest fundraiser for St. John's Lutheran School, and your support is greatly appreciated. We recommend purchasing your tickets early in order to accommodate your seating requests.

For further ticket or donation information, please contact
Erin Krick, 618-615-3821,
erin.krick@gmail.com

Tickets are $40/per person
(until February 28th)
($45/per person at the door)
and includes:
Dinner & Dessert
Unlimited refills on soft drinks, draft beer & the specialty drink of the evening.
Doors open at 5:00pm
Silent Auction 5:00-8:30pm
Dinner served promptly at 6:00pm
Live Auction begins at 7:30pm

Make checks payable to:
St. John's Lutheran PTL

Enclosed is my payment for $ _____.
Total number of attendees _____.

I will not be able to attend.
Please accept my donation of $ _____.

(All donations will be recognized in the dinner auction program.)

To reserve your seats, please send this form and payment to:
St. John's Lutheran School
Attn: Dinner Auction
808 S. Main Street
Red Bud, IL 62278

Each couple or individual attending receives special auction material that must be prepared in advance. Please enter complete information for ALL those in which you are purchasing tickets for.

Name (s) _____
Address_____
Phone _____

Name (s) _____
Address_____
Phone _____

Name (s) _____
Address_____
Phone _____

I would like to be seated with:
_____
_____

Tickets WILL NOT be distributed. Once payment is received, your name will be placed on an attendance list and you will be checked in at the door the evening of the auction.