St. John's Lutheran School Alumni News

Newsletter 23

The Principal's Perspective

School is off to a good start! It is great to be back in our routine with classes being in full swing, chapel on Wednesdays for 3rd through 8th grades at 9:00 am and on Friday at 8:30 am for Daycare through 2nd grade.

We welcome new families into our school along with all returning students. We have always recognized our Preschool and Kindergarten students but also welcome five new students this year. The list of students is as follows: Three-Year-old Preschool: Emerson Burmester, August Guebert, Alexandria Kempfer, Dallin Liefer, Sylvie Mastrantuono, Jamesson Nehrt, Olivia Prange, June Russell, Jacob Schrader, Colette Shepherd, Finn Voss, and Olive Westcott. Four-Year-old Preschool: Vivian Breier, Avery Buch, Cooper Buch, Charlotte Evancich, Logan Gramenz, Cash Grohmann, Oliver Grohmann, Cruz Hewtty, Roman Kern, Kullen Liefer, Henry Roy, Attlee Thien, and Crew Wilson. Three & Four Preschool - Maddox Cory, Brynlee Durbin, Riley Okunola, Mason Salger, Peyton Salger, Sophia Uffelmann. Kindergarten - Kylie Barrett, Cohen Eggemeyer, Kolton Florreich, Eve Guebert, Lillian Guebert, Brie Kern, Harper Kennedy, Theodore Koerber, Nolan Liefer, Liam Mastrantuono, Noah Mueth, Magnus Payne, Lane Pollard, Rose Sachtleben, Hailey Schlueter, Emmett Schoenbeck, Clark Thein, Henry Veath, and Kolby Young. 1st Grade: Maverick Sicka and 4th Grade: Kayden Sicka (*pictured at top right*). 4th grade: Evelyn Williams, 5th Grade: Gavin Williams, and 6th Grade: Bryson Williams (*pictured at bottom right*). The breakdown by grade is as follows: PreK 3-12, PreK 4-13, PreK ¾-6, K-19, 1st-12, 2nd-7, 3rd-16, 4th-13, 5th-22, 6th-14, 7th-21, and 8th-23. Our enrollment for PreK-8th is 178 and K-8 is 147. Our Daycare has 106 more students that are not included in our Preschool number so we have a total of 284 students hearing the good news of Jesus Christ on a daily basis! We give thanks for all of our children and pray for God's blessings to be upon them throughout our year.





Before school even started, the staff was able to join together in fellowship during our August meetings and especially August 7 for the Day of Spiritual Renewal celebrated at Zion Belleville. All of these Lutheran School workers in one place for worship and fellowship was amazing. We were able to successfully prepare for the early start by being strengthened by the Holy Spirit at this event.

On August 10, the congregation of St. John's Lutheran recognized workers for years of service to St. John's Lutheran Church and School. The following people were given a certificate and gift certificate from the congregation presented by head elder, Stuart Langrehr: Bethany Williams - 5 years of service to St. John's Lutheran Daycare, me, Justin Palm, - 15 years of service to St. John's Lutheran School, and Pam Henry - 25 years of service to St. John's Lutheran Daycare (*Pam and I are pictured at right.*)



We had a busy month with softball, baseball, and cross country. Our 6th grade class enjoyed "Outdoor Education" at Camp Wartburg on September 15 and 16. The 8th grade class visited Career Center of Southern Illinois for a Technical Career Day on September 19. September 26 was Grandparents Day, and enjoyed by all.

Our school will be hosting our Fall Festival, Christmas Services, and many more activities. Our teachers have already been working hard to ensure that Grandparents Day will be wonderful and we look forward to having many volunteers in our school during the day and at events. Our "Parent Teacher League" (PTL) which allows so many opportunities for our students and staff is looking for volunteers. If you have any interest in volunteering, please contact the school office at 618-282-3873.

A big thank you to our Board of Trustees and all the volunteers who helped complete projects at school this summer. The waxing of the entire building was a big under

taking, but the floors look great. Other jobs that were completed to beautify the school were leveling of baseball and softball fields (thank you, Scott), the replacement of foul poles on the softball and baseball fields, the removal and dispersal of mulch, organized care of landscaping at the school, and the painting of the lines on the parking lot at school. We are thankful to all the workers who have given of their time to see the jobs through to completion.

Staffing for our school looks different this year as Mr. Becker will teach 4th grade religion, 6th grade religion, and take over the Epistle. Mrs. Monica Snyder joins St. John's as our 4th grade teacher, joining Mrs. Valleroy, Ms. Ruhmann, and Mr. Becker in the middle grades. She has already proved to be a great asset to our school, and we are very blessed to have her at St. John's. Monica (*pictured at right*) is married to Joshua Snyder (St. John's Class of 2010), and they have three children, Micah, age 4, and twin girls, Mia and Maya, 11 months old.



God's blessings through Jesus!

Justin Palm, Principal

The Pastor's Perspective: Rev. Mark Winkelman

The More Things Change…

…The more they stay the same. The age-old saying is tried and true. The writer of Ecclesiastes 1:10 put it this way: "Is there a thing of which it is said, 'See, this is new'? It has been already in the ages before us." Such thoughts remain in my mind as the new pastor here at St. John's. I am not called to do a new thing but rather to continue to do the age-old thing of proclaiming God's Word to the next generation precisely because there is nothing new under the sun. Ever since the days of Adam and Eve, we humans have been sinners under the attack of Satan, in need of God's grace and mercy. My call is to carry the torch forward, to announce God's forgiveness in Christ, to strengthen the weak in faith, to baptize, catechize…to bring God's Word and Sacrament to those in need (which is everyone for we all continually sin and fall short of the glory of God).

However, even though I am not doing a new thing, I myself am a new face here in Red Bud. It is my goal to get to know the members and the community and for them to get to know me. I was born in Jacksonville, IL, raised first in Arenzeville and then in Morrison, IL. I graduated high school in 1998 and enrolled at Rockford University to play baseball. I transferred to Northern Illinois University, but my injured arm prevented me from continuing down the baseball path. While at NIU, I received a B.A. in Psychology but had come to the realization that to truly help people, I needed to bring God into their lives. So, I decided to go to Seminary.

Having grown up in Central Illinois as a St. Louis Cardinals fan in the 1980's and having gone to St. Louis on mini vacations, the choice was obvious to attend Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. While there, I quickly became interested in Deaf ministry and began learning sign language. I also met Rebekah Moody at Holy Cross Deaf Lutheran Church where her dad was the pastor. She and I married in 2006. In 2009, I graduated with my Masters of Divinity and was called back to my home church in Morrison, IL, to serve as Associate Pastor with my dad who had taken the call to Morrison when I was in 3rd grade. I remained there until January 2018, when I accepted a call to Immanuel Lutheran Church & School, Freeport, IL.

My wife and I raised our four children together until June 2022, when she left and filed for divorce. It was not my desire, but reconciliation requires both parties. So, I requested and received a peaceful release from my call in Freeport and moved down to St. Louis where she had taken the kids and moved in with her parents. Once everything was settled, I waited for a new call and am overjoyed to have been called to serve the wonderful people of Red Bud. My oldest son is living on his own in Iowa, my next oldest son has chosen to live with me in Red Bud, and my daughter and youngest son split time between me and their mother as they attend Lutheran South High School in St. Louis (Affton).



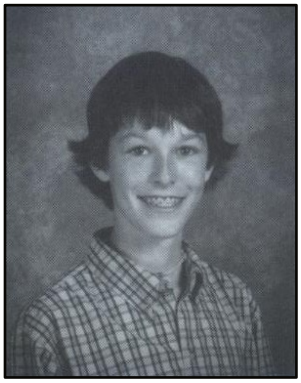
David, Adam, Pastor Mark, and Lydia

So yes, my life has experienced immense changes, but it's nothing new in this fallen world, and I rejoice to know my Lord has been with me throughout and has now brought me into a new home and given me an amazing new family at St. John's. I am excited to be here, to get to know everyone, and to bring them the gifts of God because the more things change, the more they stay the same - we need His love and forgiveness in this sin-filled world as we journey onward to our eternal home.

I pray this finds you well and continuing to hear God's Word and receive His gifts wherever you may be. One day, our Lord will return and bring us to be with Him in paradise. It is for that reason that He continually calls, gathers, and enlightens us with His gifts just as He has done from the beginning of time up to today. If you are still in the area and would like to get together, you can schedule a time to meet with me at the following link:
https://calendly.com/pastormark808/30min

God's peace be with you, Rev. Mark Winkelman
mwinkelman@stjohnsredbud.org

A Visit With an Alumnus: Luke Hamer



When I look back on my childhood, it is easy to see how God has used St. John's Lutheran School to bring people into my life that would have an impact on my life forever. I would like to say that in the 90's, the Hamer family had a bit of lineage at St. John's Lutheran School. My sister, Lindsey, graduated in 1995, my brother, Drew, in 1999, and myself in 2004. It was a great time to be a part of the school. Mr. Ron Snyder was handing the reins to Mrs. Deitt Schneider, I had Mrs. Betty Schmitz in kindergarten, Mrs. Rachel Miller for 1st grade, and my class was Mr. Bill Becker's *(pictured below)* first introduction to life at St. John's Lutheran. Mrs. Alice Kastens was absent for 4th grade so Mr. Ryan Duvall became our full time substitute teacher. Rev. Rory Seeger took over after the unfortunate passing of Rev. Donald Schultz, and soon Rev. Russell Koen came. In my memory, the playground and back field behind the school may have been endless acreage. It seemed as though at recess we had unlimited space to play as long as we were within hearing distance of the whistle, signaling it was time to line up and go back to class. It went without question that we had the best school lunches. Mrs. Muench had some incredible recipes, and I would take one of her homemade doughnuts over a box of Krispy Kremes, of which we had to sell so many to go to Washington D.C. There are important historical times in which you remember exactly where you were when the event happened. On 9/11, I was in the 6th grade when Mrs. Grohmann told us the news of what was happening. I could probably find my way back to the exact spot I was sitting in the classroom. Not only was the Lutheran School a great place to go, with friendly, familiar faces, it was a place that I also grew spiritually. My family did not attend St. John's Lutheran Church. Instead, we attended Marissa Presbyterian Church. I heard the Gospel message through both churches and gave my life to Christ at a young age. No doubt, the Lord used my friends and teachers at St. John's Lutheran to draw me close to him. I graduated in 2004 and then attended Red Bud High School. In the Fall of 2008, I began my studies at Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia, trying to earn a degree in Aeronautical Science. During my time there, the Lord started to turn my heart towards missionary aviation. Soon, I met my bride-to-be, Tracy, who was also in the aviation department. We were married in 2011 and soon graduated with our degrees, pilot certificates and a willingness to go where the Lord would send us. The Lord knew we needed some more time building experience, so we found our way





Luke and Tracy on a Samaritan Aviation flight.

to Ketchikan, Alaska, where we started flying the mail routes in floatplanes. Soon, we discovered a missionary organization called "Samaritan Aviation", and we joined the organization in 2017. Samaritan Aviation operates in Papua New Guinea flying floatplanes to access remote areas. They provide free medivac transport for the people living along the vast Sepik River. For some people, they may be days away from medical help and even further from the hospital. The floatplane can drastically reduce the travel time for victims that are suffering from pregnancy complications, leprosy, or even arrow wounds from a tribal attack. Papua New Guinea is a developing country where subsistence living, animism, witch-hunts, and tribal warfare are a part of everyday life. After we fly a patient in and take them to the hospital, we run a hospital ministry team that presents the Gospel to our patients. We have lived in Papua New Guinea now for 8 years. It has taken a while to learn the culture and language so we can be effective at presenting the Gospel to our patients. Along the way, we started a family and now have three daughters. Looking back, it is easy for me to see the sovereignty of God in bringing people into my life who would not only help guide me but help me see there are many people who do not know the love of Christ. My time at St. John's Lutheran was extremely impactful in a positive way and I would encourage the faculty and staff that your influence on a young student's life is very effective. May the Lord continue to bless St. John's Lutheran School as it raises up students who will carry Christ's love into every corner of the world.

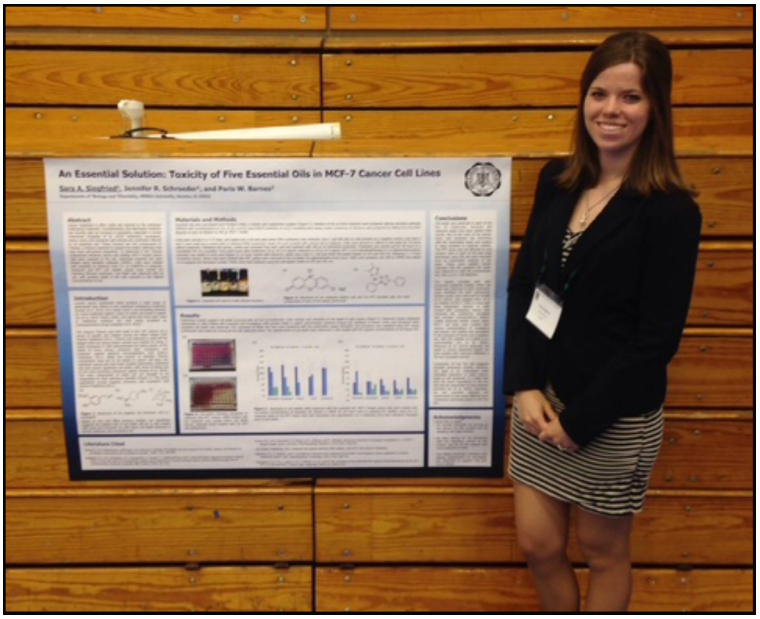


Luke with his wife Tracy and daughters, Lorelai (oldest),Emory (middle), and Alaina (youngest)

A Visit With an Alumna: Sara Siegfried Shepherd

Hello! My name is Sara (Siegfried) Shepherd. Many of you may know me as the school's Chaos Coordinator and/or Ms. Sara, the Science Teacher.

St. John's has been a part of my entire life. My mom and dad, Harold and Debbie (St. John's Class of 1971) Siegfried, enrolled me in four-year-old preschool in the fall of 1999. Little did I know, I was in the same class as my future husband, William Shepherd. Mrs. Steele, my Preschool Teacher, and I have a running joke that she is an amazing matchmaker! I continued my education at St. John's through 8th grade. Along the way, I was blessed to be instructed by amazing teachers, many of which are now my co-workers. In 8th grade, I was part of Pastor Nebel's first confirmation class, and I was honoured to be named Valedictorian. Following graduation, I attended Red Bud High School, where my quality Lutheran education set me up for success. In 2013, I began my college studies at Millikin University in Decatur, where I studied biology and chemistry. While in college, I completed an extensive grant funded research project where I studied the effects of



essential oil treatment on Breast Cancer Cells. My work was published in a peer-reviewed journal following my graduation in 2017. My project offered me many opportunities including a presentation on the National Level. I was able to travel to St. Paul, Minnesota where my project took home a 3rd place prize for scientific contributions to the cancer research field. I spent the next 18 months working toward my Masters of Science in Biology at University of Missouri St. Louis. This work allowed me to expand my classroom knowledge and prepare me for a role I never saw coming - teaching!

Will and I were married September 19, 2020. Planning a wedding AND building a home during COVID presented various challenges, but we faced them with many prayers and strong faith. In November 2021, I read in the church bulletin about an opening in the school office at St. John's. The next day I reached out to Principal Deitt Schneider and set up a time to meet with her and learn more about this position. By the end of the week, I had accepted the offer to work at a place I have always considered to be home.

My first day of work was a surreal experience. My former teachers were now my co-workers! I loved my job from the very first day. The work environment was wonderful and the interaction with the students has and always will be amazing!



In September 2022, Will and I welcomed our first daughter, Colette, and in February 2024, our second daughter, Gentry. Both girls attend St. John's Daycare where they grow in the love of Jesus each day.

In between the excitement of welcoming our daughters to the world, I decided to pursue a true passion - teaching. With the support and encouragement of Principal Justin Palm, Amanda Ruhmann, and Bill Becker, I enrolled in education courses. In the fall of 2024, I was able to begin teaching 6th and 7th grade science. I immediately fell in love with teaching. Together, my young scientists and I learned all about the earth and life. We studied hard but had so much fun learning. Five of my students qualified and attended the state science fair. I greatly enjoyed helping them prepare for their presentations and hearing about their experience. I always say "learning is fun" in my classroom. For the 25-26 school year, I will add 8th grade physical science to my agenda. I look forward to this new opportunity with great joy!

St. John's has been my faith home my entire life. I am forever grateful for the chance Deitt provided me that chilly November day. Will and I have built a life around this job. Together with our girls, we enjoy life on the farm with our dog - Ellie, cat - Minnie, cows, and chickens. The girls enjoy helping us in the garden, tending to our many fruit trees and bushes, and hanging laundry on the clothesline. If you know me, you know my passion for canning and preserving my own food. I am incredibly grateful to St. John's for providing me with the chance to pursue my passion for teaching, and I look forward to many memories to come!





2009 Confirmation Class: Left to Right 1st Row: 1st Row: Jacob Moll, Christian Collins, Mary Deterding, Jacob Miller, Cody Koch
2nd Row: Rev. Russel Koen, Jacob Cox, Andrew Quinn, Brooke Moses, Jordyn Lehr, Mackenzie Dilley, Andrew Meyer-Millmann, Travis Oettle, Rev. Mark Nebel
3rd Row: Casandra Liefer, Emily Harms, Hayden Beattie, Brandy Reinhardt, Alex Gunter, Jilliane Ostlund, Sara Siegfried



1971 Confirmation Class: Left to Right 1st Row: 1st Row: Michael Becker, William Hanebutt, Tom Schrieber, Mark Luttman, Steven Brand, Craig Althoff, Perry Guebert.
2nd Row: Kathleen Schnepel, Linda Matthews, Christine Renner.
3rd Row: Mr. Ron Snyder, Margaret Gross, Deborah Jacobs, Rodney Liefer, Ronald Moeller, Patricia Deterding, Cynthia Hinton, Rev. Robert Holstein.
4th Row: Linda Melliere, Kathleen Kalmer, Connie Neely, Kimberly Liefer, Gary Wolters, Karl Koester, Robert Gross, Brenda Guebert, Marcine Gerlach, Paula Snyder, Cindy Guebert.



If you would like to receive your newsletter by email only, please send your email address to alumni.stjohn@gmail.com.