St. John's Lutheran School
Alumni News

Newsletter Volume 2 No. 3

Greetings!

St. John's Lutheran School looks like a new school! It is so exciting to see the changes that have been made. The school does not look the same!

We have had a wonderful start to the new school year! Lots of anticipation and excitement surrounded the new addition. Many "home visits" took place in the classrooms to see where the students would need to go on the first day of school!

Our theme this year is "Listen To His Voice, Walk His Way" taken from Isaiah 30:21, "And your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, "This is the way, walk in it,"



Students gathered on the first day. With a new entrance, the school also has a new address of 808 South Main St.

when you turn to the right or when you turn to the left." We will study the words of God given to us and learn to follow Him. Our enrollment is 181 in K-8, Preschool-38, and Daycare-65. Our total is 284! This enrollment is the same as last year! We are thankful and blessed with all the children we have to hear God's word each and every day!

Thank you to the many hands that helped get the school ready for the start of school. Two weeks before school started, it did not look like we could possibly have everything ready. Construction dirt and dust were everywhere, and the gym was still full of stuff from everywhere else! As the floors were being finished, little by little, we were able to start moving classrooms back into place. The parking lot was completed after a short concrete strike. The kitchen basically was finished, but we had to clean and move everything back in place. The offices were moved and the new lock and security system was tested and implemented. The phones were reconnected as well as the security cameras. Activity in the building and outside was in a constant state of motion! And, with everyone's help, the job was completed!

The students are excited to be in the new building addition. The Jr. High students are happy in their new classrooms. The new lockers and the new desks make the Jr. High students feel special. Our younger students, grades 3 and 5, got to move into classrooms with lockers! This was a new experience for them! Mrs. Schmitz and Mrs. Letcher have newly painted walls, and our Preschool moved back to the Early Childhood wing with an updated classroom as well. The east door of the school has a new ramp and steps to enter the playground area. The library looks wonderful and now we have moved to an electronic digital system for checking out the books! Mr. Becker had a very dedicated group of people help him get the library ready for the new school year. Our before and after school care now has a room situated by the cafeteria for their use. The gym flooring is complete with basketball goals ready and bleachers installed. New landscaping makes the project look complete from the outside. The building looks wonderful and is being used to the Glory of God!



The new Jr. High wing.

What still needs to be done? The music area is being remodeled from our old office space. The playground plan is complete and all the equipment will be reinstalled in October. I know the students are really looking forward to having their playground back! A design and plan for the Donation Wall is being worked out, and it will not be long before this project is complete. Of course, there are other odds and ends but we are so happy to be as far as we are with the expansion project!

A dedication for the building expansion project is being planned for October 18 following the late service. The dedication will take place in the new gym at noon, with tours and refreshments to follow. Everyone is welcome! The building will be open to the public from 1-3 p.m. that day for tours. Additional information will be published in the paper, Epistle, and bulletin.

We give thanks to everyone for all of your support. This project was only possible with the help of so many people who gave their support in time, prayers, talents, and treasures. We are truly blessed!

In His service,
Deitt Schneider

A Visit With Alumni

Poetic Detachment

We were out of town, on a walk, when someone from the U.S. tried to explain to the kids that if you listen closely you can hear what kind of trees are present when the wind blows. He went on talking about how much he loved the sound of the wind. The kids looked a bit detached, so I released them to run on up ahead.

I proceeded to tell this friend that the wind sounds differently where we live. It doesn't sound like maple leaves or fir trees or… like trees at all. It sounds like tumbleweed trash moving down our street and bouncing off a brick wall, like flapping saris on the balconies, and like the crescendo of sand against our windows as it is swept up from a rooftop and flung our way.

It sounds like slamming doors as wind races through one end of our flat and out the other, and like sheets of corrugated tin slapping on the neighbor's roof.

It sounds like children squealing as they run home in the streets below, and like scratchy-screechy aluminum doors being rolled down to protect the shopkeeper's wares.

You can learn a lot by listening to the wind. That's true in my town too, but what you learn may be quite different.

You will not learn what trees are nearby.

But you will learn how dirty the street is, what your neighbor has recently worn, and if it's a sunny enough day to hang out the wash.

You will learn that cement for the apartment building next door is made with a lot of sand…and that the construction project has not gone anywhere for a long time.

You will learn that people here live with lots of doors open: to the hallway, to the bedroom, to this balcony and to that.

You will learn that some of your neighbors don't live in tall apartment buildings but in one-story rooms that aren't made very well.

You will learn that children in school uniforms with books in their hands aren't supposed to get wet, but that these children are giddy at the thought of a good rain.

You will learn that no shop on your street has ever seen a can of WD-40.

On a good day I can describe these differences in poetic form, enlarging the worldview of my hearer and taking pride in our unique learning and the relativity of it all.

On a bad day I just miss trees.

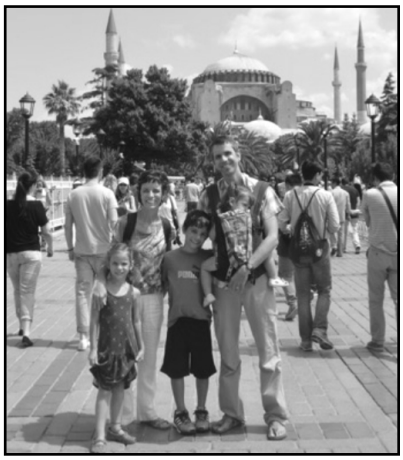


(right) Lindsey and daughter, Caroline, with some of their neighbor friends.



(left) Lindsey's daughter Elisabeth (here just less than 1 year old) making friends and breaking down barriers in their neighborhood.

Lindsey (Hamer) Newton (pictured at right with her family) joined Mrs. Schneider's 5th grade class at St. John's in 1991. Now she and her family are literally half a world away from Red Bud in a densely populated South Asian megacity where they have been living for the past three years. It is here that they aim to understand and also to love their neighbors, all of whom are Muslim. She knows what it is like to be misunderstood (*Oh! "Lindsey" like Lindsay Lohan?* Or *Oh, American. You're with the CIA?*) and tries to let people see the truth about her values by living with the doors open and having lots of simple conversations over tea and spicy curry.



The Newton family, Ben, Lindsey, Samuel, Caroline, and Elisabeth, on a layover in Istanbul with Hagia Sophia, one of the most ancient cathedrals-turned-mosques, in the background.

Today, Lindsey would like to ask the alumni community, "Have you listened to the sounds of your community lately? Is there a poor person, an immigrant or a person of another religion that you could have a conversation with? What misunderstandings could maybe be cleared up by a genuine friendship?"

This is what the LORD says: Do what is just and right… Do no wrong or violence to the foreigner, the fatherless or the widow...Jeremiah 22:3



Walther League Convention held at St. John's Lutheran School in 1936

A Visit With Alumni

Marvin Rosenberg, age 98, is believed to be the oldest living alumni of St. John's Lutheran School. He was born in the Ames area on December 8, 1916. He was baptized and confirmed at St. John's Lutheran Church by Pastor Hartenberger. He graduated along with his twin sister, Marvella (Rosenberg) Koch from St. John's Lutheran School in 1931.



Marvin Rosenburg, in 1931, at the time of his 8th grade graduation.

Marvin graduated from Red Bud High School in 1935. After graduation, he worked on the family farm with his father, Henry Rosenberg. He was then drafted and entered the United States Army Air Corps on January 20, 1942, at Camp Grant, IL. He was trained as a medic in Savannah, Georgia and Barksdale, Louisiana. He sailed on the Susan B. Anthony from New York City with the 17th Bomb Group, 432nd Bomb Squadron landing 13 days later at Casablanca on Christmas Eve, 1942. He relates that he was sea sick for 11 of the 13 days sailing to North Africa.

His squadron was in Tunisian Sicilian, Naples, Foggia, Rome, Arno, Southern and Northern France, Rhineland and finally to Zemlee, Austria for "R and R" before returning stateside for discharge on October 7, 1945, from Ft. Sheridan, IL.

The next month he married Eunice Voss from Baldwin, IL on November 25, 1945 at St. John's Lutheran Church in Baldwin, IL. They were blessed with four children; Ronald, Karen, Bonita (Roscow), and Rita (Gummersheimer). Eunice went to be with her Lord on November 8, 2004, after nearly 50 years of marriage. They have been blessed by the Lord with 4 grandsons and 7 great grandsons.



Marvin Rosenburg in uniform during WWII.

A few years after their marriage, Marvin and Eunice moved off of the family farm in Ames to the rural Sparta area. They remained there on a rented farm and attended St. John's Lutheran Church in Sparta until 1952 when they purchased a farm on Stringtown Road near Baldwin, IL. At that time, they joined St. John's Lutheran Church in Baldwin. Marvin has held many offices in the congregation throughout the years – including chairman of the congregation, elder, trustee, and school board member. He also was active in the Lutheran Laymen's League. He still faithfully attends St. John's in Baldwin. Marvin spent all of his working life farming and seeing the miracles each season of the year.

On July 3, 2001 (at the age of 84), Marvin had a near death experience at his farm and experienced one of the greatest miracles of his life. On that afternoon, he parked his tractor in the drive, got off it, and went around to the front of it. The tractor began to roll forward. He jumped on it again and tried to grab the steering wheel. His foot slipped and he fell under the rear tire and it ran over his ribs, left arm, and side of his face. Miraculously, he was able to walk to the door of his house and yell to his wife, Eunice, to call 911. Then he passed out. He was taken to Sparta Hospital and transferred to St. Louis University Hospital. After spending time in a rehabilitation home, he returned home on September 20, 2001.



Marvin Rosenburg with his grandson Jeff Roscow.

On September 29, 2015, Marvin went on the Honor Flight to Washington D.C. His guardian that accompanied him was his grandson, Jeff Roscow, who is also an alumni – Class of 1985. Marvin enjoyed seeing the WWII Memorial along with other sites in our Nation's Capital.

To honor Mr. Rosenberg on his 99th birthday on December 8th, please send him a card at his address, 9782 Stringtown Road, Baldwin, IL 62217 . He would be surprised to receive so many birthday cards.

A Word From Pastor

This year St. John's has celebrated 160 years of Christian ministry under God's love, grace and mercy. We welcomed back former members, Rev. Todd Liefer and Rev. Jeremy Schultz, as guest preachers. We also highlighted the history of St. John's in decade-long increments over a period of 16 weeks. I found it very interesting that the more things change the more they stay the same. Some of what was done in the first ten years we have repeated now in our 16th decade of existence (like constructing a building that costs six times the operating debt load we are carrying!).

Another way we highlighted our anniversary was to recognize everyone who experienced the Rite of Confirmation here at St. John's in our congregation's history. We did that over a period of ten weeks, listing everyone in the years ending in 0 one week, then years ending in 1 the next week, and so forth and so on. Those who were with us on the weekend their confirmation class was recognized stood up and told us their class year during the announcements after worship.

Wow, did that become more of a project than what I had thought it would be! I am thankful that Lisa Kloepper went through the record books and helped me by writing down the names in alphabetical order. I was amazed at the years such as 1876 where there were 40 confirmation students. How did Pastor Schaller handle them all?! Then there were certain class years where the students must have been a handful for other reasons. I know them as characters in their adult years, what must have they been like in junior high? What patience their pastor must have had!

Some last names that appeared quite often in the early years of St. John's history are not around anymore. Others that are very familiar to us now did not show up right at first in the confirmation lists. I particularly wonder what ever happened to those who were confirmed at St. John's over the last forty years or so? Where are they now? Some are still here and are faithful members of our family of faith. Some I know of but they are not active in worship with us or have chosen a different congregation, either within our Lutheran fellowship or outside of it. Others I just do not recognize at all.

I take comfort in that while they were here at St. John's they received a quality Christian education from their pastor in confirmation instruction and from their teachers in our day school. They learned of our Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. They were taught to know God's Son living in our human flesh, Jesus Christ, to be the Lord of their life and their Savior from sin. They were guided by God's Word, both its law showing us our sin and its gospel showing us our Savior. They were given the sacraments of Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper through which the Holy Spirit created faith and strengthened life within them as God's chosen and forgiven children.

Whether St. John's Word and Sacrament ministry served you only earlier in your life or you still are active in our worshipping fellowship here at St. John's, I pray that you have been very blessed in Christian faith and life by this family of faith through the dedicated service of its pastors, teachers, and staff and through the generous support of its lay leaders and other members. Thank you for your time in reading this article and the entire Alumni newsletter.

In Jesus' Name,
Rev. Mark Alan Nebel
Senior Pastor



Expansion Project Update

We are in the homestretch of the expansion project at church and school. The church sanctuary has been beautifully redecorated. There are 284 K-8 students, Daycare children, and Preschool students now enrolled at St. John's. Our newly expanded Daycare is already at capacity. These are excellent facilities to use to spread the Word of God. As stated in Proverbs 22:6, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." There has been a remarkable number of volunteers which have helped make this project possible. We thank God for all those whose gifts to the Capital Campaign have made this expansion a reality.

We are beginning the third year of our three year Capital Campaign and have received $2.8 million dollars in total contributions to date. Our construction and operating debt is $1 million dollars. Please continue to fulfill the pledge that you have made. If you are waiting to see whether this would really happen before making a gift or if you can add to the pledge you have already made or if you have joined the congregation after the Capital Campaign began, this is the time we could use your support to cover our final costs. Please use the enclosed envelope for your gift.