

**St. John  
Lutheran Church**  
Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod  
290 7th Street  
Idaho Falls, ID 83401  
[www.stjohnministries.net](http://www.stjohnministries.net)

**Office Hours:**  
Mon.-Thurs. 9:00am-3:00pm  
Phone: (208) 522-5650  
[office@stjohnministries.net](mailto:office@stjohnministries.net)

**Pastor**

Stephen Weems  
[pastorstephen83401@gmail.com](mailto:pastorstephen83401@gmail.com)

**Director of  
Christian Education**

Jacob Pralle  
[Jcpralle.DCE@gmail.com](mailto:Jcpralle.DCE@gmail.com)

**Licensed Lay Deacon**

Paul Petersen

**St. John Officers**

Bruce Mincher  
Chair, Board of Directors

Jim Werner  
Head Elder



**Sunday**

**In-Person Worship**  
9:30am

**9:30am Live-Stream:**

<https://www.facebook.com/stjohnidahofalls>

**or:**

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCqfTbbuM5U7-IFB7bVslQaQ>  
(click on "LIVE" tab)

Communion every  
1st & 3rd Sunday

**10:30am** - Fellowship

**10:45am**

- Sunday School
- Confirmation
- Youth Study
- Adult Bible Class

**Wednesday**

**Bible Study - 10:00am**

**Save the Date!!  
Rally Day will be  
September 8th!!**

# The Gospel Gazette

A Publication of St. John Lutheran Church, Idaho Falls, Idaho

July - August,  
2024

## Burden Lifted—Freedom Given

*For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep and was laid with his fathers and saw corruption, but he whom God raised up did not see corruption. Let it be known to you therefore, brothers, that through this man [Jesus] forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and by him everyone who believes is freed from everything from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses. [Acts 13:36-39]*

On Independence Day Americans celebrate our freedom from other powers that would rule us. Perhaps you have heard guests on Dave Ramsey's radio show who are given airtime to celebrate their freedom from indebtedness by shouting excitedly, "We're debt freeeee!!!" It is energizing to hear their exhilaration.

God's word uses different words to describe how we have failed to live out His will which brings condemnation upon us.

One such word is iniquity, a word that is rarely used today.

What is iniquity?

In Hebrew iniquity is *avon* and is related to the Hebrew word *avah*. These words describe poetically the bent, twisty and crooked results of our sin. Punishment in Scripture literally means that God lets one sit under the weighty consequences of his own iniquity (*avon*) and sin.

BUT God also reacts by choosing to carry upon Himself the *avon* of his people as an act of pure mercy. King David writes, *I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord," and you forgave the iniquity of my sin. [Psalm 32:5]* God didn't carry the iniquity or *avon* of His people and place it in some huge landfill; no, God placed our crushing iniquity on his Son who bore it all for us that it would no longer crush us.

How heavy was the iniquity of the world? Isaiah says that the suffering servant to come "was crushed" by it. *But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.*

[Isaiah 53:5]

Author Thomas Watson writes, To forgive sin, is to take away iniquity. 'Why dost thou not take away mine iniquity?' [Job 7:21]. The Hebrew, says 'lift off.' It is a metaphor taken from a man that carries a heavy burden which is ready to sink him, and another comes, and lifts it off, so when the heavy burden of sin is on us, God in pardoning, lifts it off from the conscience, and lays it upon Christ. 'He has laid on him the iniquity of us all'. [Isaiah 53:6]



In Acts 13 we are given the account of Paul and Barnabas being invited to speak in the synagogue of Antioch in Pisidia following Scripture readings from the Law of Moses and the Prophets.

Paul takes the invitation to tell Jews and gentile proselytes to Judaism that Jesus is the prophesied descendant of King David who is the fulfillment of promises given to the king. And this king, Jesus, will reign for eternity. And his reign is a gracious one that gives us everlasting freedom from what held us down.

This king would take the cumulative weight of our crushing iniquity and lift it from our shoulders forever. *Through this man [Jesus] forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and by him everyone who believes is freed from everything from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses.*

[Acts 13:38-39]

The Law of Moses could not acquit, declare innocent, or clear sinners of a single charge against them. It could not justify, but only press charges, demonstrate our guilt, and condemn us. [Peoples Bible Commentary: Acts]

No, the Son acquits, declares innocent, clears sinners, lifts our iniquity onto himself and makes us eternally right with God the Father.

*In His Grace, Pastor Stephen*



## St. John Friends & Family Night!

**You are invited to a community fun-night** filled with all the big summer bash essentials!

We will have a "weenie" roast and ice cream social paired with lawn games and friendly competition! Invite all your friends and family to come spend a night getting to know the fine folks of St. John better on

**Tuesday, July 16<sup>th</sup>**, beginning at 6pm.

**Bring Your Own Lawn Chairs (B.Y.O.L.C.) and/or a blanket** for seating and join us for a fun memory making event!



## Women's Fall Bible Study!

*Meant For Good: A Study of Joseph* by Donna Snow

"In this study, we will look closely at Joseph's character, faithfulness, patience, and forgiveness. His life reflected the Gospel themes of goodness, provision, and God's covenant promise for the faithful. God gave Joseph's life a purpose beyond his circumstances, and he does the same for us."

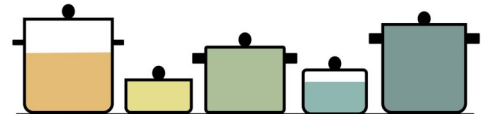
**Please join us for this exciting study!!**

**Time:** Wednesdays, 1:00pm, starting on September 11, in the Fellowship Hall of St. John, lasting for 8 weeks.

**Book:** *Meant For Good, A Study of Joseph*, by Donna Snow

**Cost:** \$11 (books will be available mid-July)

**Contact:** Linda H. to sign-up (call the office if you need her contact information), or with any questions.



The next Potluck will be held  
**September 25<sup>th</sup>**.

*Enjoy your summer!!*



Saying "Thank you" is not nearly enough to express the appreciation we have for all who volunteered with VBS this year.

We are incredibly grateful to each of you that helped teach kids & their families about the love of Jesus!! Thanks for being part of the St. John outreach team!!!

# 2024 May Voter Meeting Minutes

Congregational Voters' Meeting: In attendance: 52 Opening Prayer: Pastor Stephen

## Committee Reports:

**Pastors Report:** Thank you to BOD and BOE for your service. Thank you for all giving and donations. Thank you for Jacob and the efforts to expand childhood education program. Thank you to donors who allowed us to hire Morgan

**DCE Report:** Thank you for helping lead and build our parish. Thank you to BOE And BOE for years of service. Thanks for investing in our youth! Thanks for giving to Comm. Food Basket (CFB) Thanks for your willingness to serve as a team to reach others for Jesus!

**Elder's report:** Thanks to Dan V. who is stepping down from BOE. Thanks to Braille, Stephen Ministers, Hope House, Praise Team, AV team, CFB, and those who help with Addictions anon, Oktoberfest, Advent by Candlelight, Family and friends night. Thanks to BOD for helping with finances. Thanks to Carolyn for serving as leader of BOD. If you know someone who you haven't seen recently, please reach out to check in!

**Treasurer's Report:** New expenses: 1) Elevator certification 2) Youth room remodel 3) A/V upgrade 4) Boiler report 5) Acceptance into NHR and accompanying plaque. Upcoming items: 1) Mural at Fielding Cemetery to be restored with First Lutheran 2) Thrivent Investment fund started. Other business: 1) Went through every line item and consolidated unused funds 2) Maintenance and all-around price increases are contributing to budget increase 25k increase—separate items include NYG and pastor's office.

**Properties Report:** 1) Rededication of building will include speech by mayor at a VBS BBQ. 2) Working on youth room finishes. 3) Mostly general maintenance ahead. 4) Carpet replacement in future.

**Social Ministries:** 1) Easter brunch went well. 2) Advent service ~90 people attended. 3) Hosted going well 4) Thanks to coffee and treats team!

## **New Business:**

Board of Elders candidate: Bob B. Motioned and approved.

Board of Director candidates: Vice Chair: Mike S. Member at large: Lee M. Member at large: Sandy T. All candidates motioned and approved.

Meeting closed with prayer.

(Full minutes on file in Church office)

(edited for space)



**It's almost back-to-school time!** FISH (Friends in Service Here) is asking for donations of school supplies. Needed items include; spiral notebooks, #2 pencils, colored pencils, crayons, rulers, backpacks, etc. Please place donations in the Food Basket shopping cart and volunteers will get the supplies to those who need them. Thank you!!



## St. John offers care-giving through the Stephen Ministry Program



**Stephen Ministers** are congregation members trained by Stephen Leaders to offer confidential, high-quality, one-to-one Christian care to people going through tough times. A Stephen Minister usually provides care to one person at a time, meeting with them once a week for about an hour.

**Care Receivers** are people - congregation members **and others** in the community - who receive care from a Stephen Minister. A person does not need to be a member at St. John (or of any faith community) to receive care. Care receivers are people struggling through a difficult time in life - experiencing grief, divorce, job loss, chronic or terminal illness, or any other type of life crisis.

**If you, or someone you know, could benefit from meeting with a Stephen Minister, please let them know that this care is available for them.**

Contact the office to be put in touch with a care coordinator.



**Coffee & Conversation** time after Worship is a great time to meet new friends & strengthen bonds in our St. John family! If you haven't hosted in the last six months, please sign-up to serve. You can host a Sunday by yourself, or share the fun & ask a friend to help! The sign-up calendar is located on the counter where coffee is served.



***Treats are optional, and can be homemade or purchased. Thank you!***



## **Young Adult Fellowship**

Young adults (single, married, all are welcome!) are invited to join us each month for **"No-Host Brunch"**.

Early child care is available!!

Join us for brunch at:

**NOON on July 14<sup>th</sup>,**

**@ Dixie's Diner on Channing Way**

**~&~**

**NOON on August 11<sup>th</sup>,**

**@ Black Bear Diner on 17<sup>th</sup> St.**

**BRaille UPDATE:** Thanks to the generosity of members and friends of St. John and Hope, \$2,000 was collected on Braille Sunday. We also are thankful for a Thrivent Action Team Grant of \$250.

The money will be used for supplies for printing and shipping of Braille materials by our ministry center.

*Thank you for helping people touch the promises of Jesus.*



WHATEVER IS TRUE.  
WHATEVER IS NOBLE  
WHATEVER IS RIGHT.  
WHATEVER IS PURE.  
WHATEVER IS LOVELY.  
WHATEVER IS ADMIRABLE.  
IF ANYTHING IS EXCELLENT  
OR PRAISEWORTHY.  
THINK ABOUT SUCH THINGS.

## **August Church Camp-out!!**



This year we will be at Fall Creek Campground: at Forest Rd 076, Swan Valley (about 45 minutes from Idaho Falls!! AND *only a few minutes to square ice cream!!*)

*Everyone plans and brings their own food / meals, but on Saturday evening we gather for a group potluck!*

**Group camping will start Thursday afternoon, August 15<sup>th</sup>, & end Sunday morning (11:00am check-out), August 18<sup>th</sup>.**

All are welcome. Invite friends and family to camp with us!

**Cost per family / tent site / RV is \$15 per night.**

**Join us for fun & fellowship!**

*Philippians 4:8*

# Youth News & Events

For more information on anything listed here, call or email Jacob at: [Jcpralle.DCE@gmail.com](mailto:Jcpralle.DCE@gmail.com) or 208-522-5650

**SUNDAY SUMMER BIBLE CLASS:** Jesus' "Stories" – SUMMER IS FINALLY HERE!! Summer means camping, & camping means campfires! NOTHING makes a good ole' time around the campfire like stories! Jesus was the master storyteller! Join us for an 8-week summer study where we will dive deep into Jesus' parables and get to the TRUTH behind those captivating stories! We will discover how the parables had multiple levels of meaning for His original listeners and still prove relevant for us as his followers today!

**JOB  
OPENING**

**PAID POSITION AVAILABLE:** Have you ever babysat or just love to spend time with children?! If so, we have an opportunity for you! On the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of each month, (sometimes 2<sup>nd</sup> Sundays) young adults in our congregation get to know one another over brunch! Our goal is to make it easier for adults with young kids to attend this fellowship. This is a **PAID POSITION** that also is an opportunity to make connections with the littles of St. John! See Jacob for more details.

TNC Youth are in the "heat" (LITERALLY) of our summer schedule after an action-packed Year 3! TNC is now on our Summer Schedule. We will meet this month on **SATURDAY, July 13<sup>th</sup>**. We are excited to continue our special TNC "AT YOUR PLACE" events! Let us know if you're interested in hosting this summer or in the coming year! BIG THANK YOU'S to all the families who have hosted so far! We look forward to seeing you at TNC Youth!



**DINE 2 DONATE NIGHTS!** – Join the TNC Youth with Food, Fun, Fellowship & **FUNDRAISING!** Did you know that food can be a vital contributor to faith formation?! Calling all foodies, we are raising funds for our Highschool youth to attend the 2025 National Youth Gathering in New Orleans, LA! Throughout the coming year, we will hold multiple "Dine 2 Donate Nights" where local businesses will support our TNC Youth's trip to the NYG! **Join us (and invite friends!!) for our inaugural D2D night at Culver's (946 Pancheri Dr.) on July 23<sup>rd</sup> from 4pm-8pm.** Our second D2D Night will be at **Papa Murphy's (1600 E 17<sup>th</sup> St.) on August 29<sup>th</sup> from 11am-8pm! LETS EAT!**

**Who / what is "The Next Chapter"?** Our group (6<sup>th</sup>–12<sup>th</sup> grade) is based off Acts, chapter 29. Wait, there are only 28 chapters in Acts?! The book of Acts tasks us with understanding how we can be directed by the Holy Spirit and the role of Jesus' lessons in our lives. God's mission did not end after Jesus' ascension into heaven. Like Peter & Paul, we too are challenged to be a part of *The Next Chapter* of His Church. This doesn't end with chapter 28, it truly is just the beginning!

## Memos from Morgan!

For more information: please contact Morgan Pralle ([mepralle.dce@gmail.com](mailto:mepralle.dce@gmail.com) or 208-522-5650)



**CHILDREN'S MINISTRY TEAM:** We are creating a team of individuals that have a heart for our toddler age children at St. John! Come and be a part of little ones' lives and their faith walks with Jesus!

Join our Sunday School Team of Teachers starting in Fall of 2024! Teachers will be on a rotation schedule with all teaching materials provided so that YOU are set for success!



Our awesome website is still being tinkered with, but keep watch for new content that has been in the works! Stay tuned!! – Website: [www.stjohnministries.net](http://www.stjohnministries.net)

**WE WANT YOU!** During worship, some of our families would love to bring their children to our nursery. We are looking for individuals that love children and would enjoy helping younger families by providing this service. We would love to have enough people that we can have a rotation schedule. **Background check required. This is a paid position.**





**Thank you** to all who contribute to “1<sup>st</sup> Sunday Food Offering”. Many in our community are struggling to feed their families. **\*\*For every \$1 given, the IFCFB can provide \$4.20 worth of food!!**

**Needed in July / August:** Mac-n-cheese, cereal, **\*\*monetary donations!!**

**\*\*Since donations have been lower and the number of patrons has greatly increased, the Food Basket has spent more on food in the first half of 2024 than was spent in all of 2023.**

*\*Generic brands are welcome.\**

**PLEASE MAIL financial contributions to: IFCFB, P.O. Box 2236, Idaho Falls, ID 83403**

Dear family and friends of St. John,

As we begin a new financial year (July 1<sup>st</sup>) we want to draw attention to ongoing increased costs of utilities, insurance and overall higher prices impacting our ministry. This fiscal year's budget reflects the increases we have had to absorb. We ask that you prayerfully consider increasing your regular contributions to help us stay fully funded in the coming year. We realize that everyone is feeling the effect of higher prices. *If you are in a season of financial challenges, we ask only that you continue to pray for the ministry of St. John.* **Thank you for all the time and treasure you already provide** to help St. John actively proclaim God's Grace and show the love of Jesus to our community! ~ In Christ, The St. John Board of Directors

**YOUR GIVING MATTERS!**

***\*\*\*Below are some reasons we as Christians are encouraged to give an offering as a part of our Worship to God, as well as options for ways to contribute. It is not the BOD's intention to offend anyone or cause guilt, just to share information.***

**The Reason for Tithes and Offerings:** “God wants our devotion. He wants our hearts. We need to give our tithes and offerings because through them we express our love and devotion and thanks to God for his love for us. The offering is an act of worship.”

*(Excerpt From: Lutheran Witness contributor Tom Raabe April 10, 2019)*

“Christ's love empowers his people to give generously. It flows freely from Christ “who loved us and gave himself up for us” (Ephesians 5:2). Our generous giving to God is a response to Christ's willing sacrifice for us. Finally, tithing serves New Testament Christians as a benchmark for proportionate giving. The Apostle Paul said, “...each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income” (1 Corinthians 16:2). As New Testament Christians, tithing is a practice to be engaged in freely rather than a requirement to be met legally.” *(Excerpt From: St. Paul's Ev. Lutheran, Stevensville, MI (<https://www.stpaulswels.org/page/10-for-10#:~:text=Our%20generous%20giving%20to%20God,1%20Corinthians%2016%3A2>))*

Some giving potential percentages include, but are not limited to: 1%, 3%, 5%, 7%, 10%, and 12%. Giving of time and talents are always welcome as well. If you haven't given an offering previously, but feel led by the Holy Spirit to begin, you may want to try the *One-Step-Up Method*. This method is where you choose to give a set dollar amount / percentage each week. You may eventually choose to increase your offering as God leads you.

## **Options for Giving at St. John**

**General Fund Giving:** Offerings may be placed in the plate during Worship, mailed to the office, or given electronically using VANCO. To use VANCO, simply go to the St. John web site: <https://www.stjohnministries.net> and click on the “Online Giving” button in the banner on the home page. You can also download the VANCO Mobile app for free from the App Store or Google Play. You can choose to give a one-time gift or set up a recurring gift as often as you like. If you have any questions, please call the office.

**Benevolence Fund:** St. John, in the exercise of it's religious and charitable purposes, has established a Benevolent Fund to assist persons in financial need. The church welcomes contributions to the fund. In order for donations to be tax deductible, donors may only designate use of their contributions to the Benevolent Fund, not individuals. The administration of the fund including all disbursements is subject to the control and discretion of the Benevolent Fund Committee and/or Board of Directors. Contribution to the Benevolent Fund should be made payable to St. John Lutheran Church with a notation that the funds are to be placed in the benevolent fund.

Benevolent funds are used to help with medical bills, shelter, utilities, etc. Since many Christian churches in our community have a Benevolent fund, we sometimes will partner with other churches to help people. In addition to our Benevolent fund, St. John contributes to FISH (Friends in Service Here) & The Soup Kitchen, so we avoid duplicating those services with funds from our benevolent fund.

The funds given to those in need are given directly to the landlord, doctor office, etc. and not made out to the person in need or made out to cash. The benevolent fund should always be used to help people in a way that does not contribute to a welfare mentality. To that end, assistance given from the Benevolent fund is to remain a gift, but people can be encouraged to give thanks and take pride in their own ability by helping others once their crisis has been relieved. *(From St. John Lutheran Church Policy 14, Contribution Policy)*

**Thrivent Investment Fund:** St. John Lutheran Church has established an investment fund for donations through Thrivent Financial. For more information on how to contribute to this fund / how this fund works, please contact Beth O. or Penny S.