

**St. John
Lutheran Church**
Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod
290 7th Street
Idaho Falls, ID 83401
www.stjohnministries.net

Office Hours:
Mon.-Thurs. 9:00am-3:00pm
Phone: (208) 522-5650
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Pastor
Stephen Weems
pastorstephen83401@gmail.com

**Director of
Christian Education**
Jacob Pralle
Jcpralle.DCE@gmail.com

Licensed Lay Deacon
Paul Petersen

St. John Officers
Mike Shirts
Chair, Board of Directors
Todd Mary
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

The Gospel Gazette

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

October
2025

The Holy Spirit's Desire In and Through Us



What happens inside you when someone points their finger at you to assign blame or judgment? This can be a literal finger-pointing or one done with accusatory words. What about when one brings judgment on your children? Your spouse? Your church? Your friends?

For most people, the defenses go up immediately like a Patriot Missile System ready to shoot out any incoming bombs meant to single us out in some negative light. It is very common that we begin loading our own offensive projectiles. Listening for understanding is severely hampered if it happens at all.

In the letter of James recorded in the New Testament, God tells us, **Let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger** [James 1:19].

In our humanity we struggle with living this out.

In Romans 12:2 Paul writes, **Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.**

Jesus and Paul use the word "world" to encapsulate human life and society that is opposed to God and his will and ways. In this instance it points to life that is motivated by sin, evil desires and our spiritual enemy.

People tend to conform to what they spend valuable time with—what we view, listen to or interact with online. And algorithms in multimedia and social media make sure we are fed a buffet of what we want to hear, see and read about. And a banquet is served of

the ills of those we oppose. In our human nature we are easily conformed or imprinted by these things we give our attention to. And soon we are far from the daily good that God desires to bring to others through us.



In his book, *Love over Fear: Facing Monsters, Befriending Enemies, and Healing Our Polarized World*, Pastor Dan White, Jr., writes:

When you live in a Culture War Mode there's always a battle to fight, a side to take, and people to fear.

When you live in God's kingdom there's always a stranger to welcome, a neighbor to defend, and an enemy to love.

Be confident of this, the Holy Spirit can easily renew the image of God within us, pour out the fruit of the Spirit, and transform our hearts, lives and actions to more and more resemble Jesus. We place ourselves in a place that the Holy Spirit works when we worship together, listen for his voice in regularly taking in his Word, and when we engage God in prayer.

These are ongoing blessings
God desires to pass to us.

Paul tells us: **God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control** [2 Tim. 1:7]. We are given grace upon grace and gift upon gift in Jesus.

In Him, Pastor Stephen

August 2025 Board of Elders' Minutes

(in order to allow time for minutes to be reviewed for accuracy, the minutes are published with a one-month delay.)

- Todd Mary accepted the position of Head Elder with full support of the BOE.
- Discussion and approval of the use policy for Alan M. approved a Bible-Study-Fellowship on Wednesday nights, ensuring it doesn't impact other activities. Concerns raised about facility usage and member responsibility for any damages during the Bible study.

Care visits: Reports on visits to other members. Discussion on coordinating visits and providing support to members who are homebound or in care facilities. **Financial Matters:** Discussion about an inactive account that is at risk of being closed and potential solutions to keep it open. The need for Jim to address the letter regarding the Hope House account inactivity. **Children and Youth Ministry Initiatives:** Excitement for the new academic year with plans to expand classes and engage more families. Seeking volunteers to support the growing children's ministry and prevent burnout among current leaders. Plans for a joint youth and family event, a high school retreat, and continued involvement with the National Youth Gathering. **Adult Bible Studies and Engagement:** Report on the adult Bible studies, including the book of Jonah. Plans for a bowling event to engage both youth and their parents. Highlighting the impact & importance of the Youth Gathering. **Technical Support and Worship Enhancements:** Discussion about the need for dedicated technical support for worship services and related equipment. Consideration of creating a position to manage technical aspects of worship. Review of current AV equipment and potential upgrades. **Upcoming Events and Activities:** Announcements for upcoming events, including St. John campout, Oktoberfest, and Friends and Family events. Discussion about scheduling an installation Sunday for new officers. Coordination of dates and details for various events on the master calendar. **Care Unit Membership and Support:** Review of care unit assignments and the need to finalize the distribution of members. Discussion about providing support and visitations to members in need. Exploration of elders' role in providing communion during visitations.

Men's Gathering Ideas: Brainstorming ideas for a men's gathering, such as a breakfast or activity. Seeking a champion to lead and coordinate the men's group. Considering options for frequency and format of the gathering.

Prayer Requests and Closing

- Prayer requests for members facing health challenges and other difficulties.
- Prayers for the new head elder and the congregation.
- Closing prayer and adjournment of the meeting.

(Full minutes on file in Church office)

(edited for space)



August 2025 ~ Pastor's Report

20250803 Pastor's Report to the Board of Directors

- **"Jonah: You Can't Outrun Grace" Sunday mornings**— This is a 8-part study by Paul Tripp.
- **St. John Vision Bridge Team**— Dan K., Jacob P., Linda H. & Pastor Stephen continue in our work together as it intensifies with the promise of great blessings to St. John. We plan to expand the number of participants moving forward.
- **VBS June 22-26, 2026**— Mark your calendars. The last week of June is our week to love our community together!
- **Home Visits** —Wilma T. is strong again and will be returning to worship with us soon. Visits completed with Wilma and also Madeline S. & Family. Kent C. is ready for a visit.
- **National Youth Gathering** in New Orleans, July 18-25. Some of the youth will share their experience with those at St. John.
- **Quarterly Men's Gathering**— Gun range, Pancake Breakfast, Day on the Lake Fishing, etc... Who wants to help plan and champion some events to build up Men of St. John and their friends?!
- Thinking of getting a headcount, reserving a private space @ Dixie's Dinner for first event
- **Rededication of Good Shepherd Mural with Fielding Memorial Cemetery** along with 1st Lutheran, Idaho Falls, Pastor Mike K. Elders approved of a September 21, 2025 rededication.

UPCOMING DATES & EVENTS:

August 14-17 Church Camp Out

October 26 Reformation Day Observed

Nov 2 All Saints Day

Nov. 27 Thanksgiving

Nov. 30 First Sunday of Advent

Dec. 3, 10, 17 Lenten Family Friendly Dinner and Worship



Thank you to all who contribute to "1st Sunday Food Offering".

Many in our community are struggling to feed their families.

Always high-need items:

*Cereal, canned pasta, peanut butter, chili, canned stew, canned tuna or chicken, canned vegetables and **monetary donations! *Generic brands are welcome.**

Since donations have been lower and the number of patrons needing help have greatly increased, the **Food Basket is spending considerably more than in years past.

All donations are very appreciated! *For every \$1 given, the IFCFB can provide \$4.80 worth of food!!**

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





Coffee & Conversation
time after Worship is a great time to meet new friends and strengthen bonds in our St. John family!

In order to offer this time of fellowship, we need individuals to serve as a host each week. Please sign-up if you haven't

hosted recently. You can host a Sunday by yourself, or share the fun & ask a friend to help! The sign-up sheet is located on the counter where coffee is served.

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

**Join us for the
St. John potluck
on Sunday,
October 26th!**



The potluck is a great time to join in fellowship while enjoying a delicious meal. We ask that if your last name begins with A-H, please bring a main dish or casserole; I-Q, please bring a dessert; R-Z, please bring a side dish or salad. *If you have food intolerances, just bring a meal for yourself that you can safely enjoy.*

Hosted!

Join us **Friday, October 10th, at 6:30pm** for an adult evening of fellowship at City Bagels (369 Shoup Ave.)

Invite friends and bring an appetizer / dessert to share. Beverages will be provided. Hope to see you there!



Bunco will be held
Tuesday, Oct. 21st,
at 6:30pm.

**Bring \$5 and a snack
to share for "half-time"!**



Young Adult Fellowship

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

Child care is available!!

Join us October 5th, at noon. We are meeting at Smitty's (W. Broadway)

Youth News & Events

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

ANXIETY & STRESS

YOUTH SUNDAY BIBLE CLASS: Anxiety & Stress Feeling overwhelmed? Like the weight of the world might just be upon your shoulders? You are not alone! These are normal feelings that we far too often try and tackle by ourselves. Join your fellow TNC Youth in this 4-week study as we explore how connecting with regularly and surrendering to God transforms our perspective on stress and anxiety! Come lay your burdens down and find that inner peace that comes from God's great promises for us!

Youth entering grades 6th - 12th, are invited to join The Next Chapter (TNC) –The St. John, Hope, & Crown of Life Youth are diving into a life-changing Year 5 as The Next Chapter!!! Join us this year as we raise the banner of our NEW Theme – “Tell the Story!” Paul tells us how we are “letters from Christ...written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God on tablets of human hearts!” (2 Corinthians 3:3) We can't wait to harness the power of OUR stories by bringing hearts together to grow further in our faith in Jesus! We are heading back into our School Year Schedule. We will be meeting in September on the 15th, 22nd, & 29th.

We are excited to continue our TNC Youth “AT YOUR PLACE” events! Let us know if you're interested in hosting or sponsoring a meal for a TNC Youth Night! **BIG THANKS** to the families who have hosted thus far!



SUNDAY BRUNCH

NO HOST BRUNCH CHILDCARE! – Calling all TNC Youth age 16 and older! On first Sundays of the month (occasionally second Sundays) young adults in our congregation get to know one another better over brunch! Some of our young adults have families with young children and are seeking your help to make this opportunity possible! We are seeking to fill a **paid position** for watching the littles of St. John while their parents are at brunch! See Jacob for more details!



16th D.J. N.



Who / what is “The Next Chapter”? Our group (6th–12th 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!



TNC HIGH SCHOOL FALL RETREAT! CALLING ALL HIGH SCHOOL TNC YOUTH!

Join us for this one-of-a-kind, never been seen before Halloween special High School Fall Retreat! We will make the trip over to Meridian/Boise, Idaho to join our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ throughout South Idaho for an action-packed weekend of Fun, Food, & Faith Growth! Where we don't get together often, these weekends make up for it with the never-ending stories! Dare to join us as we create more memories and celebrate our shared stories

of faith in Jesus! It is a frightfully packed weekend filled with Haunted World, Service Projects, Wahooz, Bible Study, and so much more! Join us with Grace, Friendship Celebration, and many other local Lutheran churches throughout Idaho for a spooktacular weekend where we celebrate the shocking truth of your story!!

Memos from Morgan!

For more information: please contact Morgan

(mepralle.dce@gmail.com or 208-522-5650)



THANK YOU, BRANDY! We are so grateful that a member of our own congregation, Brandy, has taken on the position of our Nursery Attendant. She will be available most Sundays downstairs in the Nursery (9:15am-12pm) in case there are any families that need this service for their children during worship and Sunday Bible classes. With a heart for Jesus and lots of experience with children, we are so blessed to have her!



Friends & Family Night - Pumpkin Carving Extravaganza! Calling all friends and families of St. John!! Come join the F&F team on Tuesday, October 28th (6pm-8pm) for a night of fun, food, & fellowship while we CARVE or PAINT pumpkins for spooky season! **Please bring your own pumpkins and tools for carving as we will have limited options.** Wear your costume! Let's have fun! *ALL ages are welcome!* Contact Morgan with any questions!

HAPPENING IN OCTOBER

- **October 5th** – No-Host Brunch @ Smitty's
(W. Broadway)
- **October 6th** – TNC Youth Night – **St. John**
- **October 10th** – *Hosted!*
- **October 13th** – TNC Youth Night – **HOPE**
- **October 14th** – Board of Elder's Mtg.
- **October 19th** – Board of Directors Mtg.
- **October 20th** – NEWSLETTER DEADLINE!
TNC Youth Night — **St. John**
- **October 21st** – BUNCO!
- **October 26th** – Potluck (see pg. 4 for what to bring)
- **October 28th** – Friends & Family Night - Pumpkin Carving! (bring your own pumpkin and tools)
- **October 31st – November 2nd** — TNC High School Fall Retreat (Meridian)



August 2025 Board of Directors' Minutes

(in order to allow time for minutes to be reviewed for accuracy, the minutes are published with a one-month delay.)

St John BOD meeting, August 3th, 2025 (originally scheduled to be August 10th, 2025)

In Attendance: Pastor Stephen, Mike S., Lee M., Dan V.

1. Pre-email to approve June Minutes; All were in favor and approved
2. Opening Prayer: Pastor Stephen
3. Committee Reports
 - a. Pastor's Report
 - i. St. John Vision Bridge Team – currently learning how to train disciples
 - ii. VBS 2026 scheduled for June 22-26, 2026
 - iii. Rededication of Good Shepherd Mural at Fielding Cemetery scheduled for September 21st, 2026 along side Pastor Mike K. from 1st Lutheran Idaho Falls
 - iv. Looking for someone to take on and organize Quarterly Men's Gathering; potential events include Fishing, gun range, or pancake breakfast
 - b. DCE – (Jacob P. Absent; Pastor Stephen Reporting)
 - i. DCE Youth Gathering was a success, not just a meeting but a genuine experience for our youth
 - c. Board of Elders (Dan V.)
 - i. Nothing to report as Meeting is Scheduled for later in August, still deciding on who will be Head Elder.
 - d. Properties (Mark P. Absent; Mike S. Reporting)
 - i. No updates on the elevator, everything is working appropriately.
 - ii. Carpet is ordered and is planned to be installed (End of October)
 - e. Social (Lynn W. Absent; Dan V. Reporting)

Hosted will start again next month on the 12th of September
 - f. Treasurer Report (Penny S. Absent; Mike S. Reporting)

Waiting for financials; will not be ready until mid-August
- New Business: Motion to Approve Men's Bible Study Fellowship International with sponsor Alan M. from Lee M. (Dan V.) Seconded. All physically present were in favor. Sandy T., Beth O., Penny S. voted in favor online.
- Closing Prayer (Pastor Stephen) Motion to Adjourn Dan V. (2nd Lee M.)

(Full minutes on file in Church office)

(edited for space)

August 2025 ~ DCE Report

YOUTH: TNC Youth Group is concluding the last month of our summer schedule! We are continuing to meet monthly! Next Event: Monday, August 18th for TNC Youth & FAMILIES – BOWLING!!! TNC Flash Servant Event @ I.F. Comm. Food Basket! Had a nice turn-out with some new faces for our June 29th gathering! It was impactful for some young youth to see their service having a big impact for folks with food insecurities throughout our community! **Southern Idaho High School Fall Retreat** is coming up! Big emphasis on maintaining the growing momentum of this event! Special Edition of this annual event is happening in Boise (hosted by Friendship Celebration Lutheran Church). We will be there October 31st – November 2nd!

VBS REMINDER: VBS 2026 will once again be the last week of June (22nd-26th)!

2025 National Youth Gathering – New Orleans RECAP: Our group of 14 had the tremendous opportunity of uniting with 20,000+ Youth from throughout the country! The impact of our Youth being able to see witnesses to their faith of that magnitude cannot be stated enough! Youth hosted St. John Sharing Service this past Sunday, August 10th! Super proud of both Youth Leaders and Youth attendees for continuing to share the story of our trip with the entire congregation! Special thanks to Morgan for compiling the massive collection of pictures into a slideshow that accompanied the sharing service on Sunday!