

**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
office@stjohnministries.net

Pastor
Stephen Weems
pastorstephen83401@gmail.com

**Director of
Christian Education**
Jacob Pralle
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-IFB7bMslQaQ>
(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

Hawaiian BBQ
Friday, Feb. 7th
Get your tickets now!

The Gospel Gazette

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

February 2025

You are always assigning some kind of identity to yourself. Who do you think you are?

This month we share a guest devotional from Paul David Tripp's latest book, **Everyday Gospel: A Daily Devotional Connecting Scripture to All of Life**. I highly recommend this book as Tripp has a wonderful way of bringing us back to the grace of God in Jesus everyday. Men & Coffee will be reading through this book in 2025.

~Pastor Stephen

December 26 (Revelation 1–3)

God designed human beings to think, interpret, and look for meaning and identity. Whether you are a theologian, philosopher, plumber, or chef, you assign yourself some kind of identity. Most people search for identity horizontally. We look for identity in marriage, putting a heavy burden on our spouses that they were not created to carry. Or we look for identity in our children, living through them and asking them to do things for us that they have no ability or desire to do. We look for our identity in a job or career, in our pile of material things, in the size of our bank account, or in our record of successes. None of these things will deliver the rest of heart, the lasting sense of self, or the meaning and purpose that we seek. So, we keep searching.

All of the big identity statements in Scripture root identity not in something you can do, but in something that has been done for you. When I root my identity in the eternal grace and love of God rather than in an ever-changing world, temporary situations, relationships, or achievements, I can live with peace and security of heart, no matter how my circumstances might change. I know that I am an object of divine love, that God will never abandon me, that he looks at me with affection and not with disgust, that he will never turn his back on me but will hold me in his arms eternally. This is how I find rest of heart.

When I think about identity, my mind goes to Revelation 1:4–6: *John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, and from Jesus Christ the faithful*

witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth.

To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Revelation 1:1-9 (ESV)

To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

If you are God's child, then you are blessed to be able to say that this doxology is your identity. You are not your relationships. You are not your possessions. You are not your achievements. You are not your money. You are the son or daughter of the God of glory and grace. Your father is the King of kings. You are a citizen of his kingdom, one of his priests. You have been freed from sin by the shed blood of his Son. The one who has showered you with such love reigns now and forever in glory and dominion. When you get up in the morning, remind yourself that you are eternally loved, that your Father reigns in power and glory, that sin will never have the final victory over you, and that you have been welcomed into a kingdom that will never end. By grace, your search for identity has ended.

For further study and encouragement:
1 Peter 2:4–12

Tripp, Paul David. *Everyday Gospel: A Daily Devotional Connecting Scripture to All of Life* (pp. 734-735). Crossway. Kindle Edition.

In Him, Pastor Stephen

Bunco will be held
Tuesday, February
18th, at 6:30pm.

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



St. John offers care 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 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 to them.

Please contact the office to be put in-touch
with a care coordinator.

Thank you to all who contribute to "1st Sunday Food Offering". Many in our community are struggling to feed their families.



High need :

*cereal, canned pasta, peanut butter, chili,
canned stew, canned tuna or chicken*

****monetary donations!**

Generic brands are welcome.

****Since donations have been lower and the number of patrons needing help has 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



Please continue to be aware of "scammers" that pretend to be Pastor or other church leaders in texts or emails to try to get you to send them money or gift cards.

**PLEASE, DO NOT respond to them.
DELETE and BLOCK them if possible!!**



Give



Serve



Attend



Grow

Stewardship

December 2024 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.)

Dec. 8th, 2024 In attendance: Mark P, Jacob & Morgan P, Pastor Stephen, Bruce M, Jeff P, Lynn W, Mike S, Sandy T, & Lee M. Opening Prayer: Pastor Stephen. Committee Reports: **Pastor's Report:** see below. **DCE's Report:** see below. **Elder's Report:** Jeff P. **1)** Continuing to support Jacob and Pastor. **2)** Addressing the facility use policy. **Treasurer's Report:** Absent. **Properties Report:** Mark P. **1)** Elevator passed inspection. **2)** Contract in place for snow removal. **3)** Jeff P. maintaining boiler. **4)** Working with Dan K. on sound system: organ produces a loud "hum". Wheeler Electric has visited, still trouble shooting. Audio expert says it may be a grounding issue. **5)** Surge protectors for the entire building being looked into. **Social Ministry:** Lynn W. **1)** Finished Advent By Candlelight, 85 in attendance. Moving back to St John made efforts easier. Venue may need to be addressed for next year. **2)** Luncheon coming up on December 15th. **Old Business:** **1)** Facility use policy revised & reviewed. **2)** Distinction of responsibilities of wedding sponsor/coordinator unclear as worded. Bruce M. will rework this section and BOD will review changes next month. **3)** Revision made to security deposits for facility use forms; will include possibility for deposit to be waved. **4)** Benevolent fund policy draft discussed and to be revised by Bruce M. **5)** Billed by contractor at Fielding Memorial; has been paid. Work is in progress. **New Business:** **1)** Thanks to Beth & Penny for work on policy revisions. **2)** Approval of new contract for Morgan P. Closing Prayer: Jeff P

(Full minutes on file in Church office)

(edited for space)

December 2024 ~ Pastor's Report

1) Resident at the Hope House completed dental assistant program. **2)** Red Letter went well. Two groups are looking to continue their small group studies. Paul preached on the 17th of Nov. and will preach again on 22nd of Dec. **3)** Delegates approved for district convention. **4)** Dan K, Jacob P, Linda H, and Pastor Stephen completed first Vision Bridge (PLI) on Nov. 14th & 15th.

December 2024 ~ DCE Report

1) Early Childhood Program has started (18 month-3 yrs). **2)** Post Confirmation Age Youth Bible Study – "Born!" **3)** The Chosen series continues. **4)** Red Letter received good feedback. **5)** TNC is back on schedule & is meeting on Sunday nights from 5:30-7:30, will meet on Dec. 8th, 15th & Jan. 5th, 12th, and 19th. **6)** High School Fall Retreat Recap (Nov. 8th-10th). **7)** Youth planning to attend National Youth Gathering is up to 12 individuals!!

December 2024 Board of Elders' Minutes

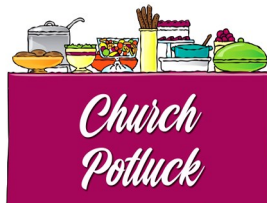
(in order to allow time for minutes to be reviewed for accuracy, the minutes are published with a one-month delay.)

6:30 pm, Dec. 10th, 2024. Opening devotion from "Everyday Gospel" by P. Tripp. **Pastor's Report:** See above. **DCE Report:** See above. **Worship Services and Spiritual Life:** **1)** Jim W. to work with Jacob to review and update care units and perhaps include frequent attending visitors. It was decided to postpone until January. **2)** Jim W. to work with the office manager to have individual families notified via email or letter as to who is their Elder. **New business:** **1)** Advent / Christmas. Advent Services are going well. Children's Program is on Dec. 15th and Christmas Eve services will be at 7pm on Dec. 24th. **2)** A status on the hope house residence was provided. With Melissa's completion of classes, we will begin to plan next steps regarding her employment and housing to make the Hope House available for our next guest. Pastor will begin the discussions with her. **3)** An updated Ministerial Support contract was developed and coordinated with the Board of Directors. The BOD will vote to approve/disapprove in their Dec. meeting. **4)** A review of the Facility Use and Benevolent Policies were discussed. **5)** Jim W. to provide feedback to Bruce M. on the Facility Use. Scott S. will communicate the BOE comments on the Benevolent Policy. **6)** Due to the increased need for food for Idaho Falls and surrounding community this Christmas season, it was approved that St John would hold a special food drive between Dec. 15th and Dec 25th. We will do this in partnership with Thrivent Financial. **Old business:** **1)** A New Member Class will be starting on January 5th and continue through Feb 2nd. Pastor and Paul will work on more details. **2)** Hosting AV support team meeting was discussed. The Elders would like to assess our successes and potential areas of improvement for this new on-line ministry at St John. Currently the AV support team is working on electrical issues related to electrical grounding and electrical shorts within the facility which is causing some of the issues with the AV system. Jim W to work with Jacob P, Dan K, Greg H, and volunteers supporting the AV and members from the BOE and BOD to set a date, time & agenda when these issues are resolved. The Meeting was closed with a prayer by Pastor Stephen.

(Full minutes on file in Church office)

(edited for space)

We look forward to seeing you at the Potluck on February 23rd! Bring a dish to share!



Hosted!

Join us **Friday, February 21st** for an adult evening of fellowship at City Bagels (369 Shoup Ave.) Invite friends and bring an appetizer / dessert to share. Beverages are provided.

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 really need 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 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!!

In February, we meet at Dixie's Diner. Plan to join us!!

Dear St. John Family, Thank you so much for the generous gift you blessed me with at Christmas. Each of you bless me tremendously throughout the year. I am so grateful to work alongside you and to serve as a part of the ministry team with Pastor Stephen and Jacob. Thank you for making my job such a joy! ~Love, Cheryl



Laurie's Cajun family often says "merci" when thanking someone. I love that! For me it also reminds me of God's mercy for us in Jesus. We receive the unexpected and not what we deserve. I love that we share in the unlimited mercy of God in our Savior.

Laurie and I thank you all for the wonderful Christmas gift you shared with us at Christmas. We experience your love and care all year, and this gift is received as yet another example of the same. Your generosity is a true blessing.

Merci! ~Pastor Stephen & Laurie Weems

Morgan and I know the blessing of a gift as we received our Parker Louise just days ago! We also thank all of you for your generous Christmas gift and are ever grateful for the friendships and partnerships we have with you. Grateful for all of you! ~ Jacob

Youth News & Events

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



YOUTH SUNDAY BIBLE CLASS: TNC CHOICE – Per our namesake, we recognize that like Peter and Paul, we too are challenged to be a part of The Next Chapter of Christ's Church. Starting in February, we will dig into a variety of topics as we carve out this new era of the church! Post-confirmation age Youth will get to explore, challenge, and choose from a wide variety of dilemmas that followers of Christ face in the 21st Century! Come with your grandest ideas, eager and ready to discover what is in store for The Next Chapter!

Youth, grades 6th ~ 12th, are invited to join **The Next Chapter (TNC)** – The MOMENT. IS. HERE. The St. John, Hope, & Crown of Life Youth are in the midst of a life-changing Year 4 as TNC! Our Theme for 24-25 is "**FOLLOW²**" We are embarking on a discipleship journey for Jesus! BE. A. PART. of this special movement as we continue to grow as followers of Christ! *We will be meeting on SUNDAY nights from 5:30-7:30pm! We will meet in February on the 2nd, 7th & 23rd.*



We are excited to continue our special 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!



SENIOR HIGH SNOWJAM - What on earth could there be to do at Camp Perkins in the middle of winter? You should ask our Junior High youth!

They asked & oh boy, they received! Now it's your turn! How does tubing, broomball on the frozen lake, snowshoeing, cross country skiing, bonding with friends, and an amazing time with Jesus sound?! This what to expect of Camp Perkins – *Winter style!* We'll be shuttled over the snow two miles into camp in a fully equipped van with tracks and skis. Spend our time worshiping, studying God's Word, sitting by a warm fire, and playing in the snow! We will be bringing youth, 9th-12th grade, for this weekend getaway on February 28th – March 2nd. **Registration is now open until February 7th.** If interested, and for more details, contact Jacob



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!

Memos from Morgan!

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



JOIN US FOR "WHAT CAN YOU FONDUE?" NIGHT on Tuesday, February 11th, from 6pm-8pm, join us for a night of fun, love, food, and fondue! We will be having a soup supper, making valentines, and finding cool combinations of foods to dip in chocolate fondue! ALL ages are welcome! Please bring something for all to dip in the fondue! (i.e. crackers, strawberries, oreos, rice krispies, pretzels, potato chips, etc.) This is a **FREE** event sponsored by the F&F Night Team.

STILL SEARCHING! St. John is looking for people interested in working in the nursery during worship to help serve young families. We would love to find one or more individuals who want to serve in this position! If you know of anyone who may be interested, please send them our way! Background check required.

This will be an hourly PAID position.



Hawaiian BBQ Fundraiser!!

Join us for a "sun-soaked" event filled with fun, fellowship, and island vibes! Come ready to relax and unwind!

Friday, February 7th ~ at Pearl Hall

Cocktail hour starting at 5pm. Dinner to follow.

RSVP by February 2nd (call or email the office)

Dessert auction, silent auction & raffle prizes!!

Tickets

Adults (12 & over) = \$20 each

11 & under = \$10 each

Family (5 or more {2 adults}) = \$60

Sign-up (in the Narthex) or contact Kellie P. if you would like to donate items for the auctions and raffle!

H A P P E N I N G I N F E B R U A R Y

2nd No Host Brunch @ Dixie's Diner
TNC Youth Night - St. John

4th Board of Elders Meeting 6:30pm

7th **Hawaiian BBQ @ Pearl Hall**
~Hosted by TNC Youth~

9th Super Bowl Sunday (No TNC Youth)

11th **Friends & Family Fondue-a-thon** 6-8pm

14th Valentine's Day
Men & Coffee @ City Bagels 7:00am

16th Board of Directors Mtg
President's Day Weekend (No TNC Youth)

17th Newsletter Deadline!
President's Day

18th BUNCO!

21st **Hosted!** Adult fellowship @ City Bagels 6:30pm

23rd Sunday Potluck
TNC Youth Night - HOPE

28th Men & Coffee @ Starbucks (by Cabela's) 7:00am

For God so lo**V**ed the world
that he g**A**ve
His on**L**y begotten Son
that who**E**ver
believes **I**N him
shall no**T**
per**I**sh but have
everlasti**N**g
lif**E**.

John 3:16