

THE VOICE

St. John is called by Christ to be a Sanctuary That Welcomes and Serves All

Pastor Marks' Reflection

March 2023

We are all Artists?

I love to go to art museums although, I rarely do. They are places where one can feel alone while, at the same time, being near many others. Quiet. My stress at the moment can be swept away as I venture into the past, present or future that the art depicts. Looking at art I sometimes read the description of the piece but often prefer to just gaze and imagine the stories within and behind the work.

I believe, I have read or heard somewhere that we are all artists creating something special within the Kingdom of God experience. I suppose that is true recognizing that the term artist is used loosely and that is ok with me.

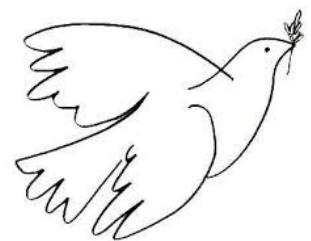
At St. John we are a community that attempts to make art through life and living, using the colors of compassion, mercy, forgiveness, justice and grace. In our art we learn about those colors and their combinations to produce a peace that is shared with each other, ourselves and the world around us.

We have begun a new fiscal year of ministry with an outline of what we plan to do and hope to accomplish. It is good that our new year always starts around Lent creating the opportunity to reflect in a more personal way about how do we, you and I individually examine our life with the hopes of becoming more useful artists in the creation and sharing of peace.

As we become more intentional about co-creating with God and our role as artists in sharing the peace, I believe the Wednesday evening soup gathering at 5:30pm can establish a good context to create community here at St. John. We will share a simple meal, visit, and reflect on various aspects of The Peace, along with prayer and finally the Lord's Supper. The more we get to know each other the more vibrant our mission will be!

May you always walk in his foot- steps!

Pastor Mark



LENTEN SOUP SUPPERS

Wednesdays, March 1—March 29 5:30pm
All are invited to dig deeper into the community here at St. John. We will share soup, conversation, and Holy Communion as we explore different aspects of the faith that connects us.



**St John and Antioch Lutheran Churches
present:**

A Musical Offering

As the Winter Days Grow Longer

Joanna Percy, soprano

with

Sean Michael Jackman, organ/piano

**Sunday March 5 @ 2 pm
Freewill Offering**

All are invited

33360 W. Thirteen Mile Road
(Corner of 13 Mile and Farmington)
Farmington Hills, MI 48334

Fundamentally Sacred—Education

Months ago, when I started this series delving into the sacredness of life and the sacredness of the things that sustain life, I started with something I learned in third grade—our needs for existence are FSAW: food, shelter, air, and water. The concept I was taught by Mrs. Christie made an impression. It stuck with me all these years later and shaped the way I see the world.

Third grade, in general, was a memorable year in terms of my education. We learned about the United States Postal Service, the water cycle and types of clouds. I learned to make a bed with my fists and thumbs to tell B's from D's. I dipped my own candle. The list goes on.

Expanding on the lesson taught to me all those years ago, I have come to the conclusion that FSAW, while certainly accurate to a point, is not fully inclusive of the things we need. At the start of this series, I had three additions to the list: healthcare, education, and rest. The Pathways in Compassion ministry opened my eyes to a need I had overlooked, connection. I imagine that my list is done growing, but I thought the same back in August. Such is the way of learning, when we are open to it, our minds and ways can change.

Perhaps the strongest case I can make for the sacredness of education and learning is Jesus himself. Among the many names and titles we have given him is “teacher”. Part of our lives as Christians is learning to live as he taught us. There are so many types of knowledge and so much to know, but not one bit of it is separate from God. We can get into debates about ethics and morality in how we use that which we know, but the essence of all of knowledge is rooted in the divine. And when knowledge as simple as how to wash our hands can alleviate suffering

and protect us from avoidable death, how can we not include education in our necessities for life?

It is easy for me to get tripped up in talking about education as I quickly find myself swimming in the ocean of things that are known or can be known that stretches into the depths of the unknown. I don't necessarily believe in a prescriptive form of education that enumerates all the things one ought to know. Where we are in life and what we do with ourselves certainly has an impact on the knowledge we will seek out.

Education can and should be a lifelong endeavor. While this society tends to focus our investments in education towards children, I know my need for learning didn't stop when I reached the age of 18. As I write this very piece, I have found some questions that I hope to dig into to gain better understanding of our perspective on education in general.

If we are fundamentally sacred, and the things that sustain life are sacred; then the education that keeps us safe from disease, nourished and fed, water and air clean, that provides healing when we are sick—this too is sacred. Beyond that, the things that enrich our lives, like art, do not come without education in some form. Music, literature, dance - all of it requires the passing on of knowledge. And so I wonder, if education is sacred, what does it look like to live this belief?

These questions typically lead me to assess the systems we build, as their reach is far greater than my own. Some years ago I had the honor of spending some time learning from Hubert Price. He was a civil rights activist and state representative who guided me as I began to dip my toe into community involvement. Many of our

conversations centered around schools and our education system. He directed me toward a fact of our system here in Michigan—the way per pupil funding works. In our state, each district is given an amount of money per pupil, per year.

There are different ways we can know something. I got a high-level understanding of this funding system from Hubert. This pushed me to learn further, so I researched what these per pupil amounts were for districts across the state.

Around the time these conversations with Hubert were taking place, the difference between per pupil funding for Pontiac, where I live, and Rochester, where I grew up, was \$842 (using 2014 figures). This per pupil number may feel insignificant, until it is expanded out by enrollment for each district. In 2014 the Pontiac City School District enrolled 4250 students. Their per pupil funding from the state was \$7,080, or \$30,090,000 for the whole of enrollment. If they had received the level of funding from the state that Rochester Community Schools received per pupil, their total funding from the state for 2014 would have been \$33,665,500—a difference of over \$3,500,000. I had focused on Rochester because I grew up there and I knew that we had a very good school system. Of course, there are those districts, like Farmington or Bloomfield Hills, that receive even more state funding (\$9,925 and \$11,884 per pupil for 2014, respectively). At Farmington per pupil funding levels, Pontiac schools would have had an additional \$12 million for their 2014 budget, or \$20 million at Bloomfield Hills funding levels.

A few years ago, I had an opportunity to understand this imbalance in funding in another way. I attended a presentation on the Underground Railroad in Michigan, put on by a former mayor of Pontiac at the auditorium of

Pontiac's only high school. It was my first time in one of the Pontiac schools and it was eye opening and unsettling. The first thing I noticed was the lack of signs of life. When I was in school, the halls were filled with posters and flyers, things happening with different sports, clubs, theater, and such. The whole way to the auditorium I searched for evidence of what life was like for these students, and I found none. Areas clearly designed for furniture sat empty. Most striking, however, was the auditorium itself. At first glance, it was unremarkable. As we tried to find a seat, that assessment changed. The number of seats broken and in some state of disrepair was enough that we couldn't just simply sit down in any open seat. Upon finding some that appeared in good working order on the surface, we learned otherwise when seated.

The numbers of the budget can feel so abstract, but they are concrete. They are auditoriums filled with working seats. They are sports and clubs and extracurricular activities. They are teachers and books and computers and so many things that make up our education. Are the kids in Bloomfield or Farmington just fundamentally more sacred than those who live in Pontiac, or any of the other districts on the low end of the funding spectrum? I don't have the perfect answer to questions on funding our schools, but I do think it is worth asking when we see disparities of millions of dollars depending on your zip code.

Something as massive and important as our public education system can't, and shouldn't, be influenced by just one person. There are, of course, more intimate ways to be involved in honoring the sacredness of education that can happen on a more individual level. Perhaps you are willing to tutor or host a book or supply drive. Here at St. John, we collect supplies and then

build school kits for Lutheran World Relief every year. Many community organizations are happy to host guest teachers or lecturers that fit their area of focus. If you have an area of expertise that you would be willing to share with others, seek out a fitting organization and see what might develop. Groups like time banks and mutual aid

frequently host these sorts of informal learning opportunities. Of course, if you feel the call to support access to education, but don't feel comfortable in the role of teacher or tutor, financial support is always welcome. Here are some specific organizations to get you started.

Ten Years of Per Pupil Funding at Four Districts

School Year Ending	Pontiac City School District	Rochester Community Schools	Farmington Public Schools	Bloomfield Hills Schools
2012	7,021	7,878	9,895	11,854
2013	7,021	7,878	9,895	11,854
2014	7,080	7,922	9,925	11,884
2015	7,251	7,972	9,975	11,934
2016	7,391	8,076	10,045	12,004
2017	7,511	8,164	10,105	12,064
2018	7,631	8,251	10,165	12,124
2019	7,871	8,409	10,285	12,244
2020	7,936	8,354	10,230	12,189
2021	8,111	8,529	10,405	12,364
2022	8,700	8,700	10,576	12,535
Total:	\$83,515	\$90,133	\$111,501	\$133,050

Enrollment rates are different year to year and from district to district. Using the 2014 enrollment number for Pontiac Schools, 4250 students, as a reference, here is the amount of state funding a each district would have received over a ten year period.
 Pontiac: \$354,938,750
 Rochester: \$383,065,250
 Farmington: \$473,879,250
 Bloomfield Hills: \$565,162,500

For 4250

Students: \$354 million \$383 million \$473 million \$565 million

Difference between Pontiac and Bloomfield Hills for 4250 students over 10 years: \$210,523,750

Source: Michigan Senate https://www.senate.michigan.gov/sfa/departments/datacharts/dck12_foundationhistory.pdf

Oakland Literacy Council - <https://www.oaklandliteracy.com/>

The Oakland Literacy Council believes that all people have a fundamental right to literacy. With support from our funders, we pair trained, compassionate tutors with adult learners until they become proficient readers, writers, and communicators. As literate adults, they make our communities and our democracy stronger. They contribute to our economy, exercise their voice in their communities, and give their children a solid educational foundation. The Oakland Literacy Council is the only organization dedicated solely to ending adult illiteracy in Oakland County, a large metro Detroit community of 1.25 million people.

Visit their website to learn about the impact the organization has made in people's lives, make a donation, and get started in the process to become a tutor with the organization.

Maybury Farm - <https://www.mayburyfarm.org/>
 Maybury Farm is a working farm that educates

thousands of children about the sources of their food and fiber with a focus on appreciate and respect for the animals and the land. Contributions of time, knowledge, and money all help the programs at the farm run. If you have an interest in teaching, a volunteer docent position may be for you. Trained docents educate the public at their assigned station. Additional training is available for those interested in providing complete farm tours.

Bound Together - <https://boundtogetherpontiac.squarespace.com/>

Started in 1994 by the members of All Saints Episcopal Church, Bound Together provides tutoring, a hot evening meal, as well as enrichment programming in the arts and healthy lifestyles to elementary and middle school students. Volunteer options for the organization go beyond just tutoring and include set up and supervision before the program begins, help with preparing and serving the meal, as well as behind the scenes type work with the website or administrative assistance.

Mardi Gras at St. John

Before we begin our 40 days of Lent, much of the world takes part in a day (or period) of festivities. Perhaps most widely known as Mardi Gras or Carnival, central to the celebration is the eating of rich, fatty, and indulgent foods. Made with butter and fat that were given up during the Lenten season, pancakes were one of the traditional meals of this pre-Lent party. It is this heritage that was the backdrop of the Mardi Gras party here at St. John, Tuesday, February 21st.



The two boxes of Mardi Gras decorations found in the gym storage were just enough to give the MPR a festive feel. Gold, green, and purple lights, programmed by Chris Fischer and set up by Elaine Pearson, gave the room a festive glow. Ashleigh put together a playlist, with the help of WDET's This Island Earth program, of music from New Orleans along with international offerings from places like Trinidad and Tobago and the Netherlands, to bring in a smattering of some other cultures that were also partaking in the merrymaking that evening.



We began our evening with a little mixer to get talking with each other, and learn a bit about the different ways the holiday is celebrated across the globe. Name tags, filled out by Laverne Pearson and Pastor Mark, boasted either a



name for the day in some culture or the place from which the name hails. The person with the Iceland nametag was on the hunt for the person wearing the Sprengidagur (Bursting Day) tag. The Fastnachtsdienstag wearer sought out the person wearing Germany.



Then our feast began. John Dresden and Beth Fisher assisted with the pancakes,





Elaine provided the bacon. For a touch of health, Barb Dresden contributed a lovely salad to balance the plate of indulgence. We had just enough to feed the crowd, not one pancake or piece of bacon left over, and none hungry for more. After the meal, Ashleigh broke the party people into teams and



led them in a series of games based on the Minute to Win It model. Chuck Marshall proved a master at shooting dixie cups with rubber bands. Barb Dresden was champion forehead cookie eater. In the end, there was a tie for first place. The teams were awarded their prize of wildflower seed packets.

Easter Dinners for Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

Last year, St. John and Thrivent provided over 50 Easter dinners to needy families in Oakland, Macomb and Livingston Counties. These families, primarily comprised of children being raised by their grandparents, were financially strapped and having difficulty providing so many of the things we take for granted. An Easter dinner wasn't even on their radar. Their surprise and gratitude in receiving one was heartfelt.

Together with Thrivent, we would like to repeat what was done last year. Our shopping list includes the following items as the basis for an Easter dinner:

- 2 boxes of dried scalloped potatoes
- 2 cans of green beans or vegetables
- 2 cans of fruit
- 1 box cake mix
- 1 container of cake frosting

Thrivent will be providing the frozen hams and a stick of butter along with a carrying bag.

If you are able to and interested in helping these families, a food donation container and sign can be found in the narthex. Shopping lists of items can be picked up there as well serving as a handy reminder during your next shopping trip. These bags of food will be delivered to the families on March 24 in Pontiac. We will be transferring what food is collected at St. John to Thrivent on March 20 to meet this schedule. Your generosity can make others happy and is very much appreciated.



March 2023

3/2 Andy Kurmas

3/4 Joe Casaroll

3/10 Amada Blaker

3/11 Nancy Musat

3/13 Marlou Grudt

3/14 John Dresden III

Linda Marshall

3/15 Jackson Ward

3/21 Pat Gransee

3/22 Chris Fischer

Larry Urevig

3/23 Mary Galloway

3/24 Barbara Eskelinen

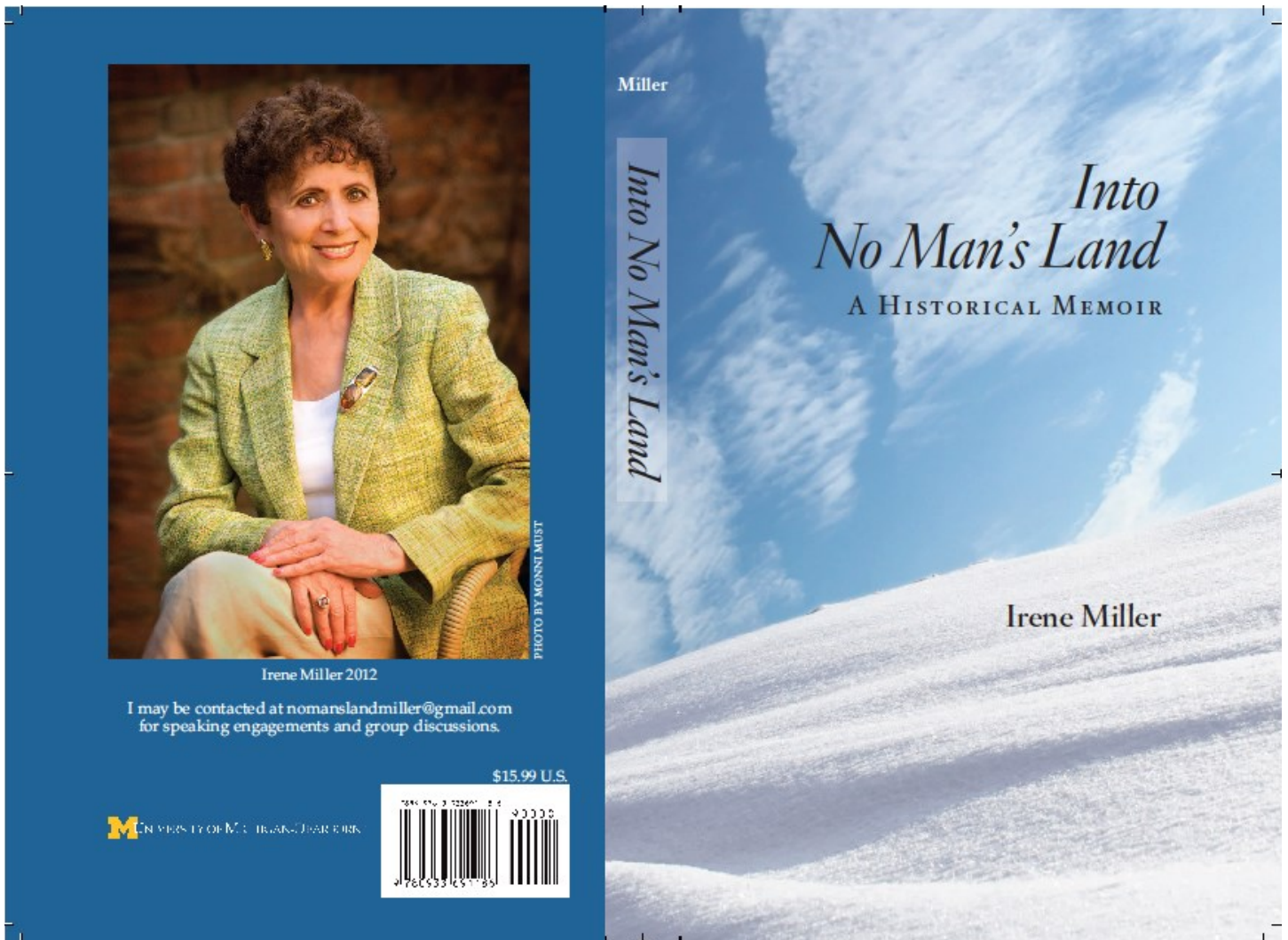
Maria Gilligan

3/31 Virginia Moore



I would like to thank all the helpers that made making nisu and pasties so much easier. Several new people joined us to help support the church. Thank you to Lorna, Brenda & Terry, Dave, Julie and Eric, Andy, Bill and Sandy, Tom T, Art, Pam and Ruth, Harold, Janet and Wolfgang, Diane and Douglas, Darlene, Marshall, Jessie, Daisy and MJ, Nancy and Chris, Gail, Wayne, Nancy L. and Tom B. Without the help of these people, we would not have been able to make 265 pasties and 76 nisu. More hands make less work.

Thank you again everyone.
Donna Bosanko



IRENE MILLER, HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR

We are pleased to present Irene Miller, Holocaust survivor and author of "Into No Man's Land", at St. John on Saturday, April 29, at 3:00 p.m. Irene is a retired healthcare executive, a speaker at the Holocaust Center in Farmington Hills, a docent for the Detroit Institute of Arts, a family court mediator and serves on the Board of Directors of the American Jewish Committee. She continues to be in demand as a speaker in libraries, schools, universities and churches throughout Michigan and the Midwest. Join us as Irene shares her remarkable story of courage, determination, perseverance and the power of the human spirit. A book sale and refreshments will be available following the presentation.



Members:

Pat Gransee	Marlou Grudt
Karen Brosch	Chris Janik
Denny Mahle	Diana Canup
Bill Davis	Ward Varns
Dave Rowe	Dick Rudorffer
Fran Copp	Ellen Zatolokin
Larry Urevig	Delores Winquist
Gene Kohli	Carol Sterling
Toni Lewis	Eunice Gould
Diane Stanton	Eva Paulson
Lois Makee	Tammy Kilpatrick
Earl Hagen	Jodi Oulette
Mary Galloway	



**Serving in the
Military including
overseas:**

Michael Jamieson (Nader)
Collin Doolan (Fisher)
Tommy Waller (Rowe)

Family and Friends

Jean Nelson	George Austin
Steve Keller	Jim Frattini
Mary & Bill Burgin	Susan Pearlman
Barbara Kaiser,	Val Burkhardt
Greg Santavy,	Bob Niesyto
Max McColl	Kristin Stoneback
Colleen Davis	Lloyd Borsvold,
Jaden Henkel	Jane Borsvold
Ole Hagen	Erin Cameron
Richard Charlton	Patty & Pete Herman
Barbara Camp	Cheryl Cottongin
Leeanne Stenson	Mardee Thomas
Ken Sandberg	Rosalind McLendan
Karen & Roy Juntunen	Mary Rellinger
Barbara Trager	Carol Collins
Brent Canup Jr.	Jeffrey Wetzel
Brent Canup Sr.	
Pat Holland	

*Please send prayer list updates to the church office at om@stjohn-elca.org.
Many Thanks to Pat Gransee for sending out cards to the people on our prayer concerns list. If you have someone on the list to whom you would like a card sent, contact the office.
Thank you!*

M A R C H 2 0 2 3

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
For most to date calendar information see online calendar at http://www.stjohn-elca.org/calendar Calendar key: WNW = Wednesday Nights Wherever HHAV =Hearts, Hands, and Voices BAC= Bethlehem Activity Center PiC = Pathways in Compassion Bold Print= St John activities			1 8a Renaissance Academy 5:30 Lenten Soup Supper 6p WAZA Track 7p Succoth Church	2 8a Men's Breakfast 8a Renaissance Academy 10:30a Bible Academy 6p WAZA TC 7p Joint Choir @ St. John	3 8a Renaissance Academy 7p Succoth Church	4 7a Via de Cristo 8:45a Silver tree Yoga 9a WAZA TC 6:30 MPR Event
5 10a Worship 11a Coffee Hour 11:30a Confirmation 12:30p Succoth Church 4p AA	6 10a Quilters 6p WAZA TC 6:30p HHAV	7 8a Renaissance Academy 6p Farmington Soccer	8 8a Renaissance Academy 5:30 Lenten Soup Supper 6p WAZA TC 7p Succoth Church	9 8a Men's Breakfast 8a Renaissance Academy 10:30a Bible Academy 6p WAZA TC 7p Joint choir @ Antioch	10 8a Renaissance Academy 7p Succoth Church	11 8:45a Silver tree Yoga 9a WAZA TC
12 10a Worship 11a Coffee Hour 12:00p Succoth Church 4p AA	13 10a Quilters 6p WAZA 6:30p HHAV	14 8a Renaissance Academy 1p Prayer Shawl Ministry 6p Leadership Team Meeting 6p Farmington Soccer	15 8a Renaissance Academy 5:30 Lenten Soup Supper 6p WAZA TC 7p Succoth Church	16 8a Men's Breakfast 8a Renaissance Academy 10:30a Bible Academy 6p WAZA TC 7p Joint Choir @ St. John	17 8a Renaissance Academy 4:30 Pasties set up 7p Succoth Church	18 7a Pasties 9a WAZA TC
19 10a Worship 11a Coffee Hour 11:30a Confirmation 12:00p Succoth Church 4p AA	20 10a Quilters 6p WAZA	21 8a Renaissance Academy 6p Farmington Soccer	22 8a Renaissance Academy 5:30 Lenten Soup Supper 6p WAZA TC 7p Succoth Church	23 8a Men's Breakfast 8a Renaissance Academy 10:30a Bible Academy 6p WAZA TC 7p Joint Choir @ St John	24 8a Renaissance Academy 7p Succoth Church	25 7:30a Justice Conference 9a WAZA TC
26 10a Worship 11a Coffee Hour 11:30a Confirmation 12:00p Succoth Church 4p AA	27 10a Quilters 6p WAZA	28 6p Farmington Soccer	29 5:30 Lenten Soup Supper 6p WAZA TC 7p Succoth Church	30 8a Men's Breakfast 10:30a Bible Academy 6p WAZA TC 7p Joint Choir @ Antioch	31 7p Succoth Church	



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STAFF

Pastor
 Office Manager
 Director of Mission Advancement
 Director of Music

Rev. Dr. Mark Fisher
Marie Cook
Ashleigh Altemann
Sean Michael Jackman

BOARD MEMBERS

John Dresden

Chris Janik

Gilda Bingham

Tom Bosanko

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Worship and Music
 Spiritual Development and Outreach
 Mission Advancement
 Member Care
 Young Families and Children
 Stewardship Of Resources
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Janet Henkel
Kevin O'Brien
Ashleigh Altemann
Kris O'Brien
Karen Boczkaja
Dave Androvich
Elaine Pearson

The Staff at St. John is here to serve you. If you have questions or concerns, please give us a call; we will be happy to talk to you.

This issue was mailed on 3/2/23

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