



Grapevine

Building the family of God by spreading
the Word of God to all people.

February 2021

**St. John's Evangelical Lutheran
Church**

Address:

9193 Cleveland Avenue
P.O. Box 67
Baroda, MI 49101

Phone: 269-422-1449

Website: stjohsbaroda.com

E-mail: stjohsbaroda@hotmail.com

Office Hours: Monday - Thursday
9AM-12PM

Sunday Schedule:
Worship 9AM

James Morgan, Interim Pastor
Ministers - All People
Council President – Bruce Nitz
Administrative Assistant- Amy Semenak
Accountant - Bonnie Hodge
Webmaster - Alan Anderson



Find us on Facebook!

Page: **St. John's Evangelical Lutheran
Church in Baroda**



**Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.



**In-House Worship Resumes
February 7th at 9AM**



**GIVE BLOOD
SAVE LIFE**

Blood Drive February 9th



**Transfiguration of
Our Lord
February 14th**



**Ash Wednesday
February 17th**



Need a Ride? Transportation is available for all our worship services and events throughout the week. If you would prefer not driving yourself, especially amid weather conditions and darkness, we still want you to come and join us at St. John's! Transportation is available on an individual basis. So please call the church office 269-422-1449 for details or to schedule a ride.

Unsure about coming in, you can join us on YouTube by clicking the website tab at www.stjohnsbaroda.com or subscribe to the St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church Facebook page for the weekly worship service.

Our Homebound Members:

Elaine Lochner
Woodland Terrace
8850 Red Arrow Hwy
Apt. 29
Bridgman, MI 49106

Ray Mak
1123 W. Marquette Woods Rd
St. Joseph, MI 49085

Carmen Hora
2700 Lake Pine Path, Apt. 104
St. Joseph, MI 49085

Ruth Heimbuch
15977 W. Clear Lake Road
Buchanan, MI 49107

Val Nitz
Petronas Country Home
8948 2nd Street
Baroda, MI 49101

Ken Mattner
8821 Cleveland Avenue
Baroda, MI 49101

Memorial Funds

Memorial funds may be designated to:

- Altar/Worship Enhancement Fund
- General Memorial Fund
- Sound for Sanctuary
- Kitchen Improvement Fund
- Parsonage Renovations



Our Church Leaders:

Rev. Elizabeth Eaton
Presiding Bishop, ELCA

Rev. Craig Satterlee
Bishop of the North/West Lower Michigan Synod, ELCA

Our Companion Synods:

Christian Lutheran Church of Honduras
Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea
Lutheran Church of Latvia

February Celebrations

- 4 Elaine Lochner
- 11 Steve Nitz
- 12 Allison Semenak
- 15 Kelly Stout
- 17 Bruce Nitz
- 17 Mike Semenak
- 19 Sandy McClintock
- 26 Heidi Krueger
- 26 Caroline Widdis



If a birthday, anniversary and/or baptism is listed incorrectly, please call the church office so that we can correct our records.

- 17 Paul Kasten
- 21 Amber Owen
- 22 Jane Krueger
- 26 Ken Nitz
- 28 Emma Stout



- Sunday, February 14
- Wednesday, February 17
- Sunday, March 28
- Thursday, April 1
- Friday, April 2
- Sunday, April 4
- Sunday, May 23
- Sunday, May 30
- Sunday, October 31
- Sunday, November 7
- Sunday, November 21
- Sunday, November 28
- Friday, December 24
- Saturday, December 25

- Transfiguration of Our Lord
- Ash Wednesday
- Palm Sunday
- Maundy Thursday
- Good Friday
- Easter
- Day of Pentecost
- Holy Trinity Sunday
- Reformation Sunday
- All Saints Sunday
- Christ the King
- First Sunday of Advent
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day



If you need emergency pastoral care, for situations such as hospital admissions or a death in the family, you may contact:

Pastor Jim Morgan – 269-365-0571 or cell 269-779-5358



In-House Worship Resuming February 7th

We are all wondering when we might be able to gather again in person as a congregation. Your council has met to discuss this at our recent meeting. We concluded on a number of measures that we believe would keep our members safe during worship with a reopen date of February 7th.

Thank you to all who have continued faithful giving even though we have not been able to gather during this time. The expenses of the church continue even though we have not been able to attend for some time. For those not on the automatic giving program, please give prayerful consideration to providing your church with your offerings by mail until this situation passes.

A very special thank you to Pastor Jim and Alan Anderson who have been working diligently to provide services online for us each week. This is no small task. We all greatly appreciate the message each week.

Bruce Nitz
Council Chairperson



February 2021 – Pastor’s Letter

(This is a personal statement from your Interim Pastor and does not necessarily reflect the thoughts and feelings of our local church members, nor members of its council.)

Those of us who are called and ordained clergy are called to leadership in the church, in our communities, and in our country. In recent days, with all the world, we witnessed events we never thought we would see in our lifetime as the Capitol of the United States of America suffered a domestic terror attack instigated by American political leaders and the President of the United States. These acts of violence were fueled by the white supremacy and Christian Nationalism fostered for years in our country – evils antithetical to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Our first reactions were anger, fear, and grief. Beyond that, we feel the weight of our failure to live up to the sacred responsibilities bestowed upon us. We are faced with the evidence of our inaction, and even worse, our complicity that made this violent attempt to overthrow our government possible. We have stood silent as violent rhetoric was espoused, as lies were perpetuated, as hatred was stoked. We recall the moments we witnessed deception and evil and did little to challenge its power and principality. We bear witness to our own shame.

We repent for our timidity. We repent our inaction. We repent that our inability to challenge every wave and surge of mistruths from our leaders amounted to a tacit endorsement of deceit. We had hoped that patient listening would bring about changed hearts and minds in the due course of time, but our patience only made room for deception to flourish and take root. We forgot the words of our baptismal vows, wherein we pledged to resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves. By refusing to withdraw consent to the lies and deception, we neglected the words of our Redeemer: “Only the truth can set us free.”

In this moment, we are offered another chance to live up to the sacred responsibility given to us. And so we bear witness to the truth of Jesus Christ. In so doing we resolve to redouble our effort to be witnesses of all truth, which is the truth of God. We must no longer aid and abet the toxic tempers of our time. We repent of our silence and renew our commitment to justice and building an anti-racist Church and world.

Clergy and civic leaders, including our elected leaders from all political parties, bear a responsibility to be unflinchingly truthful at this moment. The denunciation of violence and sedition should be non-partisan, but some of our state’s elected leaders have encouraged the transmission of misinformation that has contributed to the climate that has spawned these violent actions.

Therefore, we call upon our elected leaders, especially those who have explicitly supported the President up until this time, to join us in the repudiation of dishonesty, violence, and its perpetrators. The soul of our nation is at stake.

We must be clear: Joe Biden won the election and is the duly elected President of the United States. This is not about politics; it is about truth.

We are praying for the United States of America. We are praying for Michigan. We are praying for our governor and our elected leaders. We are bearing witness again. . . now in the presence of God, to the redemption which may be at hand, if we with humility turn from our wickedness and commit to the care of our neighbors and nation with both love and also truth once again.

Pastor James Morgan, Interim Pastor

(This is inspired by and taken from a letter by members of the clergy published in the Lafayette (IN) Journal Courier. I have rephrased it slightly in places to suit our local situation.)



Versiti will be at St. Johns, February 9th from 2pm – 6:30pm. Please set up at appointment time by calling 800-MIBLOOD or visit their website versiti.org/miblood. Many blood drives have been cancelled due to Covid-19 and the blood banks are desperate for donors to replenish the supply. Please consider being a donor. Donors are asked to wear a mask. Thank you!



Christian Ed News

If you know a child who would enjoy a monthly Sunday School packet, please call the church office 422-1449 with name and address. *Thank you!*



New Facebook Page – Check it Out!!!

Page: **St. John’s Evangelical Lutheran Church in Baroda**
“in Baroda” is the change – same information, new name
Old Facebook page will be closed in a few weeks.



Thank you from one of the Angel Tree Families

The children holding up a thank you sign for the angels from St John’s who made their Christmas happy through the Angel Tree program. Thank you, Sid Mohn, for passing this photo along. We are so happy the family enjoyed a great Christmas.



St. John’s Mission Endowment Fund

“Let a man so account of us, as the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required in stewards, that a person be found faithful”. I Corinthians 4:1-2

These powerful words are found in a brochure put together over twenty years ago when our Mission Endowment Fund was first established. Pastor Emeritus, Ned Elsass, provided an explanation of what these words mean; “God is the giver of all good gifts of which we partake; our church and families, food, shelter, clothing and our talents and treasures. In addition to all of this, we have been blessed with countless opportunities to experience the grandeurs of God’s creation. All provided by God’s grace”.

Over twenty years ago, one of the members of St John’s, in gratitude to God, established the St. John’s Mission Endowment Fund. The concept was that the monies contributed would serve as the principal of the fund and would never be spent. Interest generated by the fund would be reinvested to help grow the fund and a portion would be gifted to local missions. These funds are not used for the operation of Saint John’s Lutheran Church. Since its establishment, others have made contribution to the fund. In time, the fund has grown to over \$224,000. Over time, the fund has provided nearly \$100,000 to local charitable organizations. Most of these charities are located right here in Southwest Michigan. Some of the recipients have been Centered on Wellness, Safe Shelter, Benton Harbor Soup Kitchen, Link Crisis Center, Catholic Community Food Pantry, Hospice at Home and countless others. This year, funds are being directed to the following charitable organizations.

Girls on the Run-Program for young girls that promotes empowerment by teaching life skills through lessons and running. (This group is headquartered at our church).

InterFaith Action-A coalition of various faith communities seeking to advance justice especially for those on the margins of community life.

Centered on Wellness- Professional Faith based individual, couples and group counseling for mental wellness and addiction recovery.

Forgotten Man Ministries-Biblically based, chaplain led, volunteer ministry to Michigan jails providing teaching and preaching the love of Jesus Christ to inmates and those recently released.

Safe Shelter-Emergency shelter providing housing, food and clothing for women and children that suffer domestic abuse.

Catholic Community Center Food Bank- food pantry for those in need, also provides free Christmas meals and toys to Berrien county children. (Our church members provide food donations to the pantry all year long).

Please contact the church offices should you wish to share information on a local charitable cause in need of financial assistance or if you wish to make a contribution to this mission.

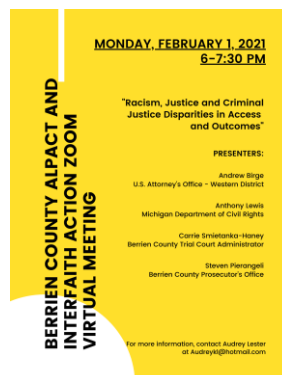


Due to COVID-19, many events have been postponed or moved to virtual meetings for the time being. Please continue to check out our [Facebook page](#) or [subscribe](#) to our bulletin list for more up-to-date information.

FEBRUARY

February 1st - 6pm-7:30pm - **ALPACT/Interfaith Forum: *Racism, Justice, and Criminal Justice Disparities in Access and Outcomes.***

Join ALPACT and Interfaith Action for a virtual panel discussion focused on our criminal justice system. For login information, register at <https://swmichinterfaith.org/upcoming-events>.



February 23rd- 6pm - *Syria: A Case Study on the Crisis of Refugees* : A conversation with Shadi Martini, the Director of the Michigan headquartered Interfaith Alliance for Syria. More details to come soon.

MARCH

March 18th - 6pm - via Zoom - *The Beauty of Your Face* book discussion with author, Sahar Mustafah. The book provides an insight into Islamic social and religious culture and the horrors of anti-Islamic terrorism.