



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

**March 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.

# Grapevine



**Palm Sunday  
March 28<sup>th</sup>**



**FRIENDS**



New Facebook Page – March 1

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



*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](http://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  
PO Box 283  
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

## March Celebrations

- 2 Eric Perrin
- 4 Barb Kinnison
- 4 Keith McClintock
- 8 Lilly Tollas
- 10 Cheryl Tollas
- 11 Carmen Hora
- 12 Roslyn Barrett
- 13 Kristi Wall
- 16 Darlene Crawford
- 18 Wes Barker
- 20 Dody Hafer



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

- 2 Elaine Lochner
- 4 Kelly Stout
- 10 Steve Nitz
- 11 Allison Semenak
- 15 Kim Perrin
- 16 Luke Tollas
- 17 Sandy McClintock
- 29 Bruce Nitz
- 30 Judy Nitz



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

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



## March 2021 – Pastor’s Letter

Pastor’s Page for March:

I want to share a brief story with you this month. It comes from Kathryn M. Schifferdecker who teaches at Luther Seminary. It is about an encounter she had with one of her students named Katie. --

Katie came to Luther Seminary several years ago as a student. She was unusual among our students in that she was raised in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (The Mormons) and had joined the Lutheran church only a short time before entering seminary.

Eventually, over the course of many conversations, Katie realized that she needed to be baptized again. (The LDS Church baptizes explicitly into the LDS Church, not into the holy catholic Church, the global body of Christ.)

It was a simple ceremony with Katie’s husband, Lanny, and a group of her friends, including fellow students and the campus pastor, Justin.

And when the time came for the anointing with oil, I described its symbolism this way: “In marking the sign of the cross on your forehead, I am branding you, in a sense. The sign is there, invisible, but there to remind you for all your coming days who you are and whose you are. God will never, ever let you go, Katie, and God will never abandon you.” And then, of course, the words of the baptismal liturgy, as I marked the sign of the cross on her forehead: “Katie, child of God, you have been sealed by the Holy Spirit, and marked with the cross of Christ forever.” Tears welled in her eyes.

The next day, Katie sent me a letter, and in it, she wrote this:

In the Mormon temple ceremony, there’s a film with the characters of the heavenly Father, Jesus Christ, Peter, James, and John, and Satan. Each of these characters interacts with Adam and Eve (who we are to understand represent us) along the way. There is a part in the film when Satan looks directly into the camera and says, “I have a word to say concerning these people. If they do not live up to every covenant they make at these altars in this temple on this day, they shall be in my power.”

I have carried the fear that I am in Satan’s power for a long time. Last night, the entire baptism ceremony—but particularly the moment when you anointed me with the sign of the cross and

talked about how God would never, ever let me go—did something. The darkness left. I feel noticeably different today than

I did yesterday. Something that had been broken inside me for a very long time was put back together. (End of story.)

+ + +

This really works. This Gospel message of God’s love and mercy in Jesus Christ, God’s forgiveness of sinners, God’s resurrection power that defeats the forces of sin, death, and Satan; God’s children being claimed in the waters of baptism — this really works!

I hope you know that. I hope you have experienced it yourself. But if you haven’t, if the forces of sin and death seem all too powerful these days, I hope this story might serve as encouragement for you.

Remember this: The Holy Spirit, working through the Gospel of Jesus Christ has power over “all the forces of evil, the Devil, and all his empty promises.” We are participants in God’s in-breaking kingdom where prisoners are set free, where wounds are healed, and where God’s children are named, “Beloved.” What an immense privilege.

Thank you for your faithfulness and for allowing me, your interim pastor, to proclaiming that life-changing Gospel. Please join us for worship Sunday morning or on-line -- to hear the good news each and every week. Join us, your church family, for this journey to new life we call the season of Lent.

Pastor Jim Morgan



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



## FRIENDS

Many of you know that I really enjoy hunting and fishing. What you may not know is that I have enjoyed these activities with essentially the same group of 10-13 men for over fifty years. How does that happen? Over the years there have been hundreds of conversations (sometimes over a beer and a shot or two of Schnapps) about a whole host of issues ranging from family life, religion and yes...even politics. As one might imagine there are always differences in opinion regarding these subjects and many others between that many people, generally this is what spawns a lively conversation as people share their thoughts on a subject. On some occasions, these conversations have moved towards the argumentative side. However, let it be said...after all is said we remain life-long friends and family who love each other deeply.

It is no new discovery that the older we get the shorter our list of friends become. Friends and family that we love so dearly sometimes pass before we do, leaving a void that is difficult if not impossible to fill. I would encourage anyone that has a friend to consider the following; they do not have to believe or think just like you do to be a loved and cherished friend. If it were so, we could all simply have conversations and share our thoughts with a mirror instead of others. Certainly, we would not have a problem getting the person standing in front of us to agree with everything we thought.

Christ promises to always be with you...and He will. Towards the end of your life, human wise, what you will have left is your family and friends. Nothing much else will have any meaning. Love and cherish your family and friends to the end...it is more than alright if they don't always agree with you.

God is good, all the time.....

Council Chairperson

Bruce Nitz





We had a great turnout for the February 9<sup>th</sup> Blood Drive. 12 donors came out - all being able to donate. Thank you for helping to save a life by donating! **Next blood drive will be April 6<sup>th</sup>.**

### *Pennies for Patients – May 13<sup>th</sup>*



## BCCS Bulletin Board



Join us for PENNIES FOR PATIENTS DAY on Thursday, May 13!

Last year, COVID-19 sent us online but this year if virus transmission stays low, we will be planning a drive-by collection. **So, keep adding to those jars of coins and remember, we also will accept paper money, checks, and online donations for Pennies for Patients Day.** Watch for more information in the upcoming newsletters and on our website: [www.bccancerservice.org](http://www.bccancerservice.org)



### *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



Dear Community of St John's Baroda,

On behalf of Interfaith Action of SW Michigan, I want to thank you for your very generous contribution towards our work and our witness in 2021.

We are grateful for your commitment to ecumenical and interfaith collaboration - and to our shared expression of faith-based values of love, justice, peace, inclusion and compassion.

Your ongoing support is an inspiration - and I look forward to a coffee hour or worship service opportunity to report on our work.

With gratitude for your faithful presence in our community,

Rev Dr Sid Mohn  
Director, Interfaith Action of SW Michigan





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.

## MARCH

### **Interfaith Action Migration and Refugee Educational Series 2021**

**Wednesday, March 3rd at 6:30pm via Zoom**

#### **Book Discussion: *We Crossed A Bridge & It Trembled: Voices from Syria*, with author, Dr. Wendy Pearlman**

Participate in a book discussion with author, Dr. Wendy Pearlman. Dr. Pearlman is the Charles Deering McCormick Professor of Teaching Excellence & Director of Undergraduate Studies in the Department of Political Science at Northwestern University. Her book is a collection of stories from hundreds of ordinary Syrians, now refugees, that she obtained from interviews across the Middle East & Europe over four years. It features first-hand testimonials from the Syrian Civil War, some several pages long like short stories; others are only a few sentences, succinct and poetic. Her book was on the 2018 Longlist for the Carnegie Literary Medal for Excellence (Nonfiction). It received a Goodreads Rating 4.63. Also of note, Dr. Pearlman's current book project returns to interviews with displaced Syrians, which she continues to conduct. She plans to focus on the meaning of home, exile, belonging, and identity in a context of protracted war and indefinite displacement.

The book is available from Amazon, Kindle, at local libraries through Michigan ELibrary, and for order through Forever Books in Saint Joseph.

**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.

#### **Interfaith Action 2021 Award for Michigan Leadership for the Common Good**

Interfaith Action of SW Michigan will be awarding a 2021 **Award for Michigan Leadership for the Common Good**. You can nominate a local leader you know now!

Interfaith Action is eager to receive nominations for this award up until March 19th, 2021. An easy to complete nomination form is attached, along with the selection criteria. This is an opportunity to recognize someone for

values based leadership, an individual who has spoken up or acted out to promote change that results in the betterment of the lives of Michiganders.

Nomination form: <https://forms.gle/EGe4D3NFt8Y5n2VF6>

### **SW Michigan Food Pantry List-- Working Team**

As part of the Common Good working group, one of the 2021 initiatives is to have a working team committed to collecting updated, accurate information about the faith-based food pantries in our local SW Michigan area, with hopes of capturing a more comprehensive report of hunger relief related needs, concerns, and action steps.

The team has been hard at work creating an initial list, but could use a representative from Cass, Saint Joseph, and/or Allegan counties to help reach out to pantries/organizations in these areas. If you would be interested, please email Carly Hubers at [carly@fcstjoseph.org](mailto:carly@fcstjoseph.org).

If you are connected to a pantry somewhere in SW Michigan and want to make sure our team has your pantry on our list, please email Rev. Jeffrey Dick at [revjdsd@gmail.com](mailto:revjdsd@gmail.com).

### **Michigan Governor's Office Releases Poverty Commission's Report**

The Michigan Governor's Office released its Poverty Commission's recommendation report to reduce poverty in Michigan.

Read the report here: [https://dehayf5mhw1h7.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/sites/757/2021/02/17150814/LEO-Poverty\\_Task\\_Force\\_Report\\_716585\\_7.pdf](https://dehayf5mhw1h7.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/sites/757/2021/02/17150814/LEO-Poverty_Task_Force_Report_716585_7.pdf)

Also to note, Interfaith Action's director, Sid Mohn, was one of 4 individuals selected from SW Michigan to question Michigan's Lt. Governor on the proposed state budget.