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St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church *Serving the Lord for 116 Years*

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February 2021

### **Holy Absolution:**

#### **God's Means of Grace to Remove the Monkey off Your Back.**

For those who may not know, I enjoy learning about history. I want to understand the past cultures better and learn they still affect our modern day's culture. Knowing the root of phrases or idioms that we use even today is a lot of fun for me.

The other day I was in Walmart waiting in line to check out groceries, and an older couple ahead of me was growing tired of waiting. The gentleman began to get fidgety. After about two more minutes of waiting, he looked at whom I assumed was his wife and asked her to pay since he needed to go outside for a smoke because he needed to "get the monkey on his back." I understood that what he was trying to tell his wife is that his nicotine addiction told him he needed to resupply his nervous system with nicotine to calm the anxiety traveling through his nerves.

Curious about the origin of the idiom "a monkey on your back," later that day when I got home, I decided to research it... According to Professor Mark Lieberman at the University of Pennsylvania Languages department, the idiom "Monkey on their back" gained popularity in the United States following the first World War. If a troop returning from service earned the title of having a "Monkey on their back," it was a polite way of saying that the soldier was experiencing extreme addiction and psychological problems because of the war. Soldiers received this label due to addiction developed from morphine and lithium that was given to troops suffering from physical injuries, shell shock, or what is now commonly known today as (PTSD) Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

As the decades have passed, the term "monkey on their back" has also expanded to include anyone who has something in their life that is troubling them. In our modern context and what this idiom means today is that all of us could possibly be experiencing a "Monkey on our back." Biblically, we could call this "Monkey on our back" sin that is weighing heavy in our life. Certain sins in our life that gravely trouble us considerably often cannot be gotten rid of quickly, not by a smoke break, a stiff drink, or even a good night's sleep. These attempts to remedy the sin or "Monkey we have on our back" may help us to ignore the sins that trouble us most for a short time, but they do not remove this sin from us. Praise be to Christ because even though worldly remedies to removing sin may not last, Christ has given the Church the precious gift of Holy Absolution as a Holy Gospel Filled Key to release us from the grave sins locked in us that greatly troubles us.

Jesus said in John 20:23, "<sup>23</sup> If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld." And in Matthew 18:18, "<sup>18</sup> Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." In these two verses, Jesus is saying that when we repent whole heartily of these sins in private confession with a Pastor or in the time of public confession of sins at the beginning of our Church service, the Pastor is required to give the gift of Holy Absolution. Meaning that when the Pastor says, "Upon this confession, I, by virtue of my office, as a called and ordained servant of the Word, announce the grace of God unto all of you, and in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you of all your sins in the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

Christ forgives you of "**ALL**" your sins. In Holy Absolution, the Holy Spirit shoots that monkey right off your back, and your sins are destroyed, making the sin powerless over you and delivers the freedom to breathe and walk peacefully again.

This may be hard to believe and even blew away the Psalmist in Psalm 32:5 when he wrote, "I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," and you forgave the iniquity of my sin."

In February, we will be entering the Holy season of Lent. This season is a time of repentance and good for getting the sin or "Monkey on our back" that is troubling the most. I pray that rather than adding a job or giving up something for Lent that might not be all that helpful, I suggest that you take time to pray to God repentance of the sins that trouble you most. It would be beneficial to come throughout Lent, spending time praying in our Sanctuary or with me because that is why I, as a Pastor, am called to be here, to help you to get sins off your back, by speaking those wonderful and powerful words of Holy Absolution to you no matter how big the sin may be. A great late Lutheran Professor by the name of Norman Nagel, at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri, would frequently say in his lectures on Holy Absolution is that the Holy Absolution delivers the only real certainty in life, that when Christ's words of Forgiveness are declared to you, the deed is done! You are Forgiven!

In the coming season of Lent at St. John's, let us "Get the Monkey off our Back" and the sins that trouble us the most taken away. Through the forgiveness of sins given to us, by hearing the powerful words of Christ in Holy Absolution, we can live with the certainty, peace, and hope of Christ crucified and risen for you!

Peace to you in Christ Jesus our Lord!

Pastor Ben Hollingsead

St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church – LCMC

Church Council Minutes

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**Date:** 12/21/2020

**Present:** Sue Lein, Linda Dilts, Bethany Hardy, Derek Fitcher, Barb Peterson, Nicole Anderson, Pastor Ben, Linnea Kment, Jim Johnson, Roxann Berg

**Absent:** Hal Satter

Meeting called to order at 7:02 PM by Derek Fitcher.

Pastor Ben opened with devotion and prayer.

**Minutes Approved**

Nicole motioned to approve the minutes from 11/16/20, Sue seconded the motion. Motion carried.

**Financial Report**

November 2020 Financial Report was reviewed and discussed.

**Pastor's Report**

Baptism for Levi Dullum, older sister Olivia joined confirmation.

Pastor Ben was quarantined for 10 days in December

Christmas Eve service seems to be popular as there are many phone calls coming in to ask about safety precautions.

Receiving more calls for gas help

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**Committee Updates**

**Old Business**

Water usage from last month

A toilet was running and creating a high water bill. The meter was monitored after it was fixed and the meter does appear to be in good working order.

Reach Out to Members

Pastor Ben, Derek, and Nicole compiled a list of people that we have not seen in a while. Council reviewed the list to update the information.

Names were given out to council members, phone calls will be made after the new year to check in on them and update the council at the next meeting.

**New Business**

Outreach

16 families received food gift cards

LAP

9 students on TTh, 10 on MWF

School Age Care program is still trying to find a teacher.

Creating DIY baking kits for fundraising for the furnace fund.

Property

The stove in the kitchen has a problem with the gas line.

The budget will be higher than in the past as the Wednesday Crew has used their personal money for church repairs, creating an inaccurate account of expenses.

The belltower floor has been fixed to be up to code.

Furnace Fund is currently at \$4,700 as of 11/30/20

Hiring Protocol

Need job descriptions for the following positions: organist, financial secretary, choir director, custodian, secretary, pastor.

At the January meeting, we will review the secretary and custodian positions.

Wage Theft Law Review

A form will be updated by Derek and brought to the January meeting.

Derek will contact the personnel committee to clarify expectations.

Financial Secretary

Patha Vue turned in her resignation as the Financial Secretary on 11/27/20 via text message to Derek Fitcher. She turned in her keys.

Sue Lein motioned to approve the resignation of Patha Vue effective 11/27/2020, Jim Johnson seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Linda Dilts is taking over the position on a volunteer basis.

Budget

Sue Lein motioned to transfer the frescos dedicated account of \$4,647. 43 to the general fund, Linda seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Combined Elvis Fund and Craft Fair accounts into Christian Outreach dedicated fund.

Nicole motioned to transfer \$23,340 from the Special Offerings dedicated account to the furnace fund, Sue seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Discussion and adjustments on 2021 budget

Bethany motioned to approve the 2021 budget, Jim seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Annual Meeting

Each committee creates an annual report to Lisa Loso, by January 18th.

Nicole motioned to extend the meeting by 15 minutes, Linda seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Sue motioned to extend the meeting until the budget is completed, Linda seconded the motion. Motion carried.

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Sue motioned to adjourn at 9:59 pm, Jim seconded, motion carried.

The meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Bethany Hardy, Council Secretary

## St John's Lutheran Church Financial Report

December 2020

Budget Offerings ( 4 Sundays)	\$14,071.76
Actual Offerings Received	\$24,485.13
<i>Offering Budget Shortage</i>	\$10,413.37 Positive!!!!
Postage	\$165.00
Phone	\$81.84
Advertising/Evangelism	\$22.00
Worship Supplies	\$205.83
Confirmation	\$0.00
Building Liability Insurance	\$0.00
Pastor's Discretion Exp. Acct.	\$742.51
Computer Operations	\$125.00
Office Expense	\$641.50
Vanco Payment	\$117.40
Payroll Service Fees	\$50.20
Worship and Music Flowers	\$0.00
Worship & Music	\$16.92
Sunday School	\$0.00
<b>Administrative Expenses</b>	<b>\$2,168.20</b>
Excel Electric	\$338.22
Gas	\$267.34
City Water & Trash	\$253.73
Custodial Supplies-Misc.	\$350.69
Building Repair & Maint.	\$281.02
<b>Building Expenses</b>	<b>\$1,491.00</b>
Employee Salaries	\$9,351.68
LAP Salaries & Tax	(\$31.80)
Payroll Tax	\$205.41
Visiting Pastors	\$150.00
Work Comp. Ins.	\$0.00
<b>Total Salaries</b>	<b>\$9,675.29</b>
<b>Christian Outreach</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$13,334.49</b>
End of Month Total	\$11,150.64 Positive!!!
(offerings minus expenses)	
Check Book Balance	\$92,723.00
Liabilities	\$14150.00
<i>Actual Cash Balance</i>	\$78,573.00
Dedicated accounts balance:	\$95,617.82
Church Account Balance:	(\$17,044.82)
General Offering Balance: Year to Date:	(\$1,489.63)

If you have any question regarding this report please see the church council.

## Lenten Services

### Ash Wednesday

February 17th—11:00 AM and 7:00 PM

no confirmation Ash Wednesday

### Wednesday Services

February 24—11:00 AM and 6:00 PM

March 3rd—**ONLINE SERVICES ONLY**

March 10th—11:00 AM and 6:00PM

March 17th—11:00 AM and 6:00 PM

March 24th—11:00 AM and 6:00PM

### Maundy Thursday

April 1st—11:00 AM and 7:00 PM

### Good Friday

April 2nd—7:00 PM

### Easter Vigil

April 3rd—**5:00 PM**

### Easter Sunday

April 4th—9:00 AM

*The  
Season  
of  
Lent*



**Confirmation classes will still meet on Wednesdays at 7:00 PM**

## MONTHLY MEETINGS/EVENTS:

- **Christian Outreach**  
February 8th, 2:00 PM
- **Little Angel Preschool Board**  
February 9th, 6:30 PM
- **Church Council**  
February 15th, 7:00 PM
- **Worship & Music**  
February 22nd, 10:00 AM
- **Property/Work Crew**  
Meets every Tuesday at 9:00 AM  
Note day change
- **Confirmation Class**  
Meets every  
Wednesday at 7:00 PM



## February Greeters

**February 7 –**

Lisa Loso & girls

**February 14 –**

Cindy, Jeanne, and Bella Johnson

**February 21 –**

Clark Kubat and Nancy Antonson

**February 28 –**

Jim and Karan Murphy

Would you like to be a greeter?

We are looking for volunteers to greet at the 9:00 AM service, greeters will need to be at church by 8:30 AM. Please call the church office or sign up at the “What’s Happening” table if you are interested.  
651-462-5115

**Great News!!!!****Furnace and Air Conditioning Project**

We are thankful to announce that after great efforts from the congregation to raise funds for the furnaces, we have raised enough to begin the replacement of our seven furnaces and two air conditioners.

We have received five estimates for this project and with the recommendation of the property committee, the church council has selected Aero-tek of Lindstrom, MN for this project.

They will begin work the week of March 15th and hope to complete 50% that week. They will then start again after Easter to finish the rest of the work.

We look forward to sharing more information about the progress of this project as it is available.

If you have question or concerns please contact the church office.  
651-462-5115

**AEROTEK**  
HVAC

***Old Mother Hubbard  
Went to the cupboard,  
To see what she could share,  
When she came there,  
The cupboard was bare,  
And so the congregation was  
called...***

This is just a reminder that St. John's has a food pantry that we use to help the community during these times of need. Unfortunately, our pantry is bare like old mother Hubbard's. If you would like to bring in donations for the pantry, we will make sure that it gets to those in need.

If you have any questions, please contact Christian Outreach.

**Blood Drive Information for the February Voice****Red Cross Blood Drive – March 30th**

***“Give Blood. Help Save Lives”***

An American Red Cross blood drive will be held at St. John's Lutheran on March 30th from 1:00 – 7:00 PM. Please look for more information at the Missions display in the church narthex.

Please call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or visit [redcrossblood.org](http://redcrossblood.org) and enter: Stacy to schedule an appointment.

Contact Harvey Berg at 651-462-1168 if you would like more information about this upcoming blood drive or if you would like to have him schedule an appointment for you



## Estimate of Giving and Willing Workers

Please remember to fill out your Estimate of Giving and Willing Workers forms that were sent out in the January Voice. If you need another copy please let the office know and they can send you another form. A special thank you to all of you that have already returned yours.

Our church can not do what it does without volunteers! .

**Stewardship Committee**



## 2021 Offering

### Envelopes are here!

The 2021 offering envelopes have arrived and are available to pick up in the Narthex next to the “What’s Happening” information booth.

If you have any questions, please contact the office.

Are you an AMAZON Shopper? Did you know that you can shop Amazon Smile and choose a Non-Profit that will get a percentage of your total sales? All you need to do is go to Amazon Smile (just like Amazon) and do your shopping. Just make sure that you choose St. John's as the non-profit company and the church will get the percentage automatically each month.



## Hymnal Check Out

We have Green Hymnals available for check out for those times when you are viewing Sunday services online. If you would like to check out a green hymnal, please contact the church or you can pick one up at the church. There is a sign out sheet for each hymnal.

If you have any questions please contact the office. 651-462-5115



# FEBRUARY 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7 Service—9:00 AM Educational Hour— 10:30 AM	8 Outreach 2PM	9 Property 9:00 AM  LAP Board 6:30 PM Property 9:00 AM	10 Confirmation 7 PM	11	12	13
14 Service—9:00 AM Educational Hour— 10:30 AM	15 Council 7PM	16 Property 9:00 AM	17 Ash Wednesday 11AM & 7 PM No Confirmation	18	19	20
21 Service—9:00 AM Educational Hour— 10:30 AM	22 Worship & Music 10 AM	23 Property 9:00 AM	24 Lenten Services 11 AM & 6 PM Confirmation 7 PM	25	26	27
28 Service—9:00 AM Education Hour— 10:30 AM	March 1	2 Property 9:00 AM	3 Lenten Services ONLINE ONLY	4	5	6
<div style="border: 2px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> <b>Pastor Ben on vacation all week</b> </div>						

**St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church  
will be holding Sunday service  
at 9:00 AM.**

**Education Hour on each Sunday  
is at 10:30 AM.**

**Please remember to wear a mask and  
practice social distancing.**

**WATCH YOUR STEP:**

Now that winter is here - please  
walk carefully on the sidewalk/  
parking lot.

**Be careful out there!!**



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*Office Secretary: Lisa Loso*

*Cell: 651-323-3293*

*Pastor Ben Hollingshead*

*Church Office: 651-462-5115*

**Return Service Requested**

**Stacy, MN 55079**

**1075 Genesis Ave.**

**PO Box 308**

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

**The Voice of St. John's**

Non-Profit Organization

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