



# THE STORY

September 2023 St. John Lutheran Church

PO Box432 104 Central Avenue North Mapleton, MN 56065

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Sam the squirrel lived inside a hole in big old tree. He had a happy squirrel life, storing lots of acorns and scampering around the woods where his tree grew.

But every night, Sam struggled to rest. He feared that some forest creature would attack him while he slept.

To prevent that, he used to barricade the entrance to his little tree home with nuts. He didn't really think through the fact that nuts wouldn't keep out danger. Fear gripped his mind, keeping him from thinking straight.

One day, though, Sam befriended Ben the bear. Ben was big and strong. The two became good friends.

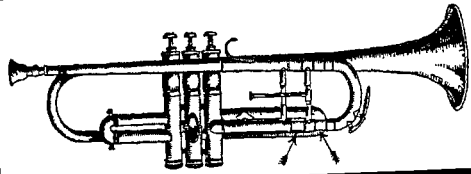
When Ben found out about Sam's nighttime fears, Ben offered to sleep outside Sam's tree.

That night, Sam curled up happily, no fear in his heart. He had a bear guarding the entrance to his tree house—he had nothing to fear.

“The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?” Psalm 27:1 (ESV)

Spread the love





# HEAR YE HEAR YE

**\*Please have all items in the office for the October newsletter by September 21th. PLEASE and Thank you!**

## Two Big Things Happening in September

We want you!!!! In September we will be having pictures taken for a new directory, We would like as many people as possible to participate. The last directory had a poor showing of the members here at St. John. Email or call the church office.

The dates will be September 21 and 22 from 2-8:30 pm and September 23 from 10am—4 pm. Please keep these dates in mind. Questions? Please call the church office. 524-3615

**Mark the Date:** WELCA will be having a luncheon and show on September 23, 2023 starting at 11:00am. The show will be Yvonne Cory Fiber Artist and comedian who will present , “Joys and Tears in the Apron Strings”. Which will include old and new textiles, sharing stories and humor. It will be a fun and interesting day. ALL are invited. Cost is \$15.

Sign up sheets have been placed in the Narthex and chapel lounge for Salads and breads for the WELCA event on September 23.

**ALL CALL FOR SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS.** Contact Julie Lux or the Church office.

If you have been sitting on the fence about teaching it is time to hop off and join in even if you are not available every Sunday, we want you. This is a important mission in our children's

**WE HOLD IN PRAYER:** Ashlyn Bennett, Larry Albrecht, Ron Swift , Dick & Ann Kuball, Michelle Birr Straumann, Ladonna Barr, Judy Pollei, Gloria Schuett and Bea Kunz

**HOMEBOUND MEMBERS:** David Treanor, Cheryl Bergemann, Betty Borsoski, Arlene Tolzman, Betty Aschlager, Orville Halverson and Audrey Annis

### Prayers

Open the eyes of my heart, God, that I may more clearly recognize the signs that you are near. Amen

Thank you, Holy One , for the love that forgives my sins and makes me whole. Amen

Bible verses to read, Psalms 2 and Exodus 6: 2-9

### September Liturgist

Mike & Annette Ward

### Church Council Members

#### September

Gary Denn

Cathy Pluym

#### October

Julie Lux

Aaron Annis

# PASTOR'S PAGE

**YOU can be an evangelist!**

Dear Friend of St. John's-

Evangelism is defined as: the spreading of the Christian gospel by public preaching or personal witness. And YOU have the opportunity to do that this month. Let me explain...

Every few years, a congregation chooses to produce a new picture directory, and St John's will be taking photographs to create a new directory on September 21-23. Many members will want to participate by calling to set up a time, but unfortunately, many will not – and the latter group is who this message is for.

I have heard many reasons (or excuses) for someone choosing not to make an appointment for a portrait sitting – too busy, don't like to have your picture taken, it seems like we just did that, don't want high pressure to buy expensive photos, don't want to.... There are probably other reasons, too, but did I hit one of yours?

Instead of worrying about the reasons NOT to have your picture taken, let me provide you a very good reason TO do it. **It is a very easy way to be an evangelist!** It won't require you to do any public preaching (I will continue to take care of that), but it will allow you to be a public witness for the Gospel. Your picture in the new directory will make it more complete, and the more complete the directory is, the better a tool for ministry it will become.

A Church directory serves members (and pastors) well for many purposes (recalling names, finding addresses, looking for ministry partners, and much more. More importantly, a Church directory serves as a tool for inviting new members to join the congregation and as a resource for helping new members feel more welcome. And most importantly, a full directory helps us to live out and live in the blessing declared by the Psalmist:

*How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity! (Ps.133:1)*

Details for how you can set up an appointment for your portrait can be found elsewhere in The Story, on the church website or FaceBook page, on posters at church, or by calling the church office. And if you absolutely cannot have your picture taken, please consider submitting one you already have. Just so you know, the directory will not be complete without you and this is your chance to be an evangelist!

See you at St. John's!

Pastor Steve



# St. John Information

## CONTACT/CONNECT

Email: [stjohnslutheran.mapletonmn@gmail.com](mailto:stjohnslutheran.mapletonmn@gmail.com)

[Berkeland.stjohnslutheran@gmail.com](mailto:Berkeland.stjohnslutheran@gmail.com)

Website: [www.stjohnlutheranelca.com](http://www.stjohnlutheranelca.com)

Streaming: Go to [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) (type in St. John's Mapleton in the search box). From there you will find all the services.

Items for the newsletter can be emailed to: [thestory.stjohnlutheran@gmail.com](mailto:thestory.stjohnlutheran@gmail.com)

## Spiritually Speaking

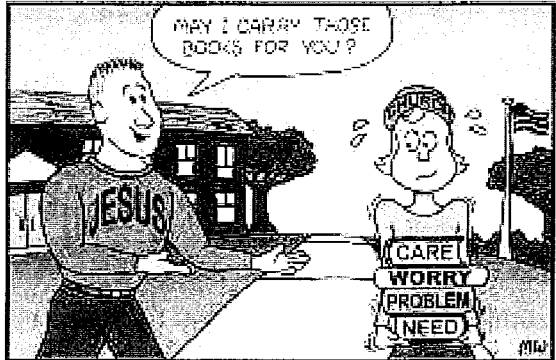
Please check out our congregation's Facebook page and "like" us. Check us out every few days and "like" some of the inspirational and encouraging pictures and share announcements about events with your friends.



This is one easy way to share information about our church and God's Word with others.

### CARRY YOUR BOOKS?

A Jokeful cartoon by Mike Warren



Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. - 1 Peter 5:7

To all students:

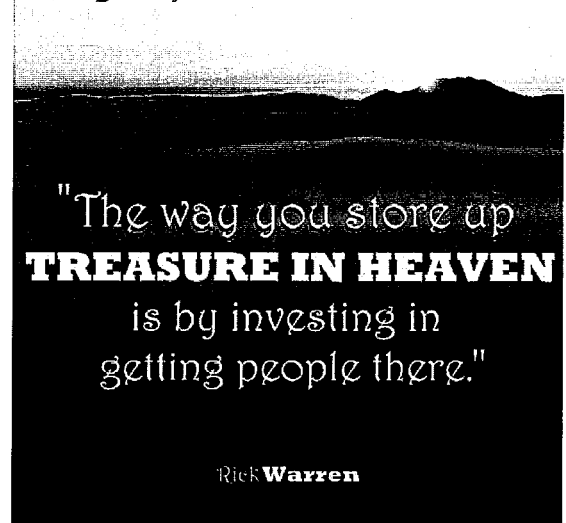
Have a great 2023—2024 School year!

God is with you where ever you are, trust in Him.

We are living in unprecedented times—with economic uncertainty and unresolved racism. There is much that we cannot control, but we can control our choices of behavior. Now is the time to intentionally choose healthy patterns to offset the grief and lament related to these times. Healthy choices includes faith practices. The Affirmation of Baptism provides five faith practices to integrate into our daily life. Receive each as a gift from God:

- \*live among God's faithful people
- \*hear the word of God and share in the Lord's supper
- \* proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed
- \* serve all people following the example of Jesus
- \* strive for justice and peace in all the earth

ChristianQuotes.info



Rick Warren

# September

## 2023

**Sun**

**Mon**

**Tue**

**Wed**

**Thu**

**Fri**

**Sat**

Join us for Coffee Hour following Worship The Stories are					1	2
<b>3</b> 8:30 Worship Choir practice	<b>4</b> Labor Day	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> Worship Committee 6:00pm	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>10</b> 8:30 Worship Choir practice 9:30am Worship Blessing of the backpacks. Rally Sunday	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> Confirmation Orientation with 7th, 8th and 9th grade confirmands and Parents	<b>14</b> Church Council 6:30pm	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>17</b> 8:30 Worship Choir practice 9:30am Worship / communion 2nd graders receive Bibles	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> Confirmation starts at 6:00pm sharp News Letter	<b>21</b> Church directory 2-8:30pm	<b>22</b> Church directory 2-8:30pm	<b>23</b> Church directory 10-4pm WELCA event in the church basement luncheon at 11:00am
<b>24</b> 8:30 Worship Choir practice 9:30am Worship Sunday school and-Coffee served	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> Confirmation starts at 6:00pm sharp	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>
		Save the date October 15th. Turkey dinner for everyone !				

# ***ST JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH—Council Minutes***

Congregation Council Meeting - August 3, 2023

St John Lutheran Church The meeting was called to order by President Julie Lux at 6:35pm. Council Members Present: Aaron Annis (Secretary), Julie Lux (President), Bev Raimann, Cathy Pluym, Al Albrecht (Vice President), Josh Isebrand, Gary Denn, Royce Woitas, Rita Caron, Mike Ward (non-member)  
Absent: Gabe Duncanson, Patti Krengel, Paul Osmundson.

Opening Prayer by Pastor Steve.

Secretary's Report: Motion to approve June minutes by Rita Caron, 2nd by Josh Isebrand - Motion Approved

Use of building: Next Sunday, there has been a building use request for a meeting for host families of foreign exchange students.

Committee reports & Council representation:

Parish Ed/Youth Committee: Vacation bible school has had approximately 25-30 students each time. Themes is water (Noah's Ark, Jonah and the Big Fish, Jesus walking on water). Parish Ed is looking for more teachers for the upcoming year, 2023-2024, those interested can connect with Parish Ed members. Rally Sunday will be September 10th for Sunday School. Youth group went to the Boundary Waters, July 20-23rd. Kids had a great time with great weather. Next year is the big youth gathering down in New Orleans. Plan to have a few fundraisers throughout the year for the trip. Kids are already excited about it.

Mutual Ministry Committee: No meeting

Endowment Committee: Scholarship applications are being processed. are Council needs to approve their Endowment Fund committee's request distribution. Motion to approve distribution of \$13,500 from endowment fund, Rita Caron, Gary Denn second. Motion carried.

Worship Committee: August 20th we will have a recognition of quilters for being Sertoma Service to Mankind recipients for 2023. Steve Breiter will be asked to speak on August 27 as Pastor Steve will be gone. They talked about needing 2 more people to join the technology team and perhaps including compensation for their work.

Church Life Committee: New directory in September. Last time we updated was about 4 years ago.

Stewardship Committee: No meeting.

Trustees Committee: Caryl was asking about wanting new water keys, mentioned to use vice grips to turn the water on the outside for the flowers outside the church, trustees will follow up with Caryl. Another TV needs to be removed from the Chair Room. Big heavy tables downstairs to be removed. Requested by Caryl - council will evaluate the amount of tables and remove extra as needed, potentially to be sold to member of the church. The extra piano (from the back of the basement) was given a new home. Several carpet squares need to be replaced due to stains. \$250 would be the cost to replace the squares from a professional. Aaron will work to get those done. Gary will reach out again regarding the leak in the Narthex.

Deacons: Everything has been running smoothly. Things will be a little tight this coming Sunday with communion and additional Council duties. Supplies are still good for the year.

WELCA Committee: On September 23rd they are bringing in The Apron Lady for a luncheon and a program. The cost will be \$15 a person for the lunch. Apron Lady is a comedian and painter. Sign up sheet will be available for the salad luncheon.

Pastor's report: Starting to gear up for confirmation. Picture director will be coming out. Songs on the Lawn will be going on next Thursday the 10th. Our church singers will be singing first.

Treasurers Report: Updates on financials, where the expenses are in comparison to donations/offering. Piano moving was over the estimating price to \$602, but there was a donation to the memorial fund to offset the moving expense. Motioned to approve the June and July financials. Motion by Cathy Plum and Royce Woitas seconded. Motion carried.

Other:

Narthex - Gary and Aaron are working to get in touch with contact for potential repairs.

Prayer Garden

The garden is nearly done. Should be finishing up this week. The rock is being finished this week.

Gary Denn will be stepping down as a council member at the end of this year. His term was up last year, but stayed on for an extra year.

Reminder to turn off lights after church service is completed.

Council Members Contact Information: (Please let me know if you have any changes)

Board Members	Officers	Phone:	Email:
Royce Woitas		507-380-9203	Royce.woitas@gmail.com
Bev Raimann		507-327-2112	Braimann@yahoo.com
Gary Denn		507-380-8704	dennwell@hotmail.com
Gabe Duncanson		507-381-8245	gabeduncanson@gmail.com
Patti Krengel		507-995-2112	NO EMAIL
Paul Osmundson		507-317-6492	ozmen4@yahoo.com
Alan Albrecht	Vice President	507-327-3615	laa4280@hickorytech.net
Cathy Pluym		507-420-3840	NO EMAIL
Julie Lux	President	507-384-2488	jules_1125@msn.com
Aaron Annis	Secretary	507- 327-3508	Aaronannis14@gmail.com
Josh Isebrand		507-420-5547	joshisebrand@yahoo.com
Rita Caron		507-317-6761	lrcaron@hickorytech.net
Mike Ward		507-340-9804	mikeandanetteward@gmail.com
Pastor Steve Berkeland		507-399-1842	berkeland.stjohnslutheran@gmail.com

Adjourn: With no further business from Josh Isebrand, seconded by Gary Denn. Motion carried.

Lord's Prayer:

Next meeting will be Thursday, September 14th, 6:30pm

Respectfully Submitted: Aaron Annis (Council Secretary)

## *Just a Little Humor*

*If you are not allowed to laugh in heaven, I don't want to go there. Martin Luther*

read, "The man named Lot was warned to take his wife and flee out of the city, but his wife looked back and was turned to salt." His son asked, "What happened to the flea?"

Attending a wedding for the first time, a little girl whispered to her mother, "Why is the bride dressed in white?" "Because white is the color of happiness and today is the happiest day of her life," her mother tried to explain, keeping it simple. The child thought about this for a moment, then said, "So, why's the groom wearing black?"

When a mother saw a thunderstorm forming in mid-afternoon, she worried about her seven-year-old daughter who would be walking the three blocks from school to home. Deciding to meet her, the mother saw her daughter walking nonchalantly along, stopping to smile whenever lightning flashed. Seeing her mother, the little girl ran to her, explaining happily, "All the way home, God's been taking my picture!"

A Sunday School teacher decided to have her young class memorize one of the most quoted passages in the Bible -- Psalm 23. She gave the youngsters a month to learn the verse. Little Bobby was excited about the task, but he just couldn't remember the Psalm. After much practice, he could barely get past the first line. On the day that the kids were scheduled to recite Psalm 23 in front of the congregation, Bobby was so nervous. When it was his turn, he stepped up to the microphone and said proudly, "The Lord is my shepherd . . . and that's all I need to know!"

## So There

When Queen Victoria reigned in England, she occasionally would visit some of the humble cottages of her subjects.

One time she entered the home of a widow and stayed to enjoy a brief period of Christian fellowship.

Later on, the poor woman was taunted by her worldly neighbors. "Granny," they said, "who's the most honored guest you've ever entertained in your home?" They expected her to say it was Jesus, for despite their constant ridicule of her Christian witness, they recognized her deep spirituality.

But to their surprise she answered, "The most honored guest I've entertained is Her Majesty the Queen."

"Did you say the Queen? Ah, we caught you this time! How about this Jesus you're always talking about? Isn't He your most honored guest?"

Her answer was definite and scriptural, "NO, indeed! He's not a guest. HE LIVES HERE!"

Her hecklers were put to silence!



# Daily Discipleship

What a mess, Julia thought as she walked into the kitchen and saw all the dishes. Then she remembered the special computerized glasses her dad had given her and told her to wear.

"They'll help you see life differently," he'd told her.

She pulled them out of her pocket and put them on. The words "opportunity to serve" flashed across the screen. Were these dishes really an opportunity for her to serve her family?

Julia blinked back the tears. Her friend's words stung. Julia felt anger at the injustice rising in her heart. She pulled out her glasses. "Opportunity to love" flashed across the screen. Could her friend's insensitivity and lies actually be an opportunity for her to grow in love?

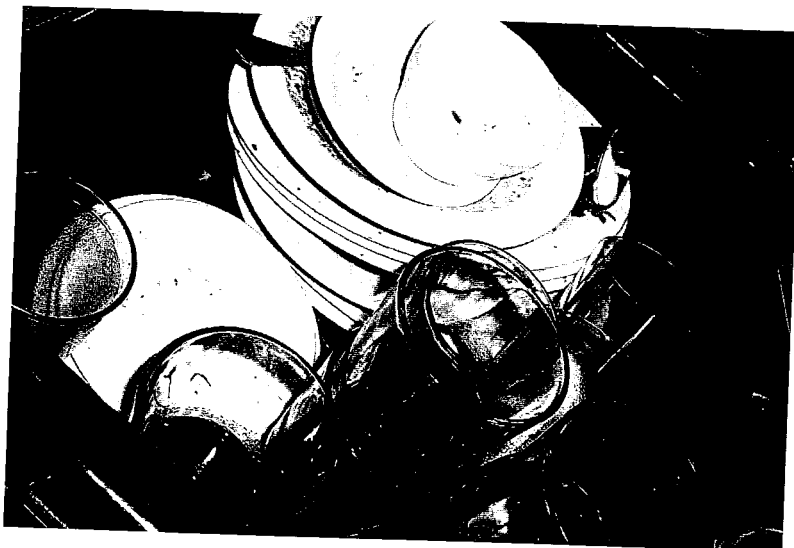
For the third time that day, Julia rolled the bandage around her ankle. This sprained ankle had totally ruined all of her plans. She had a tennis practice and a game Saturday—or at least she did before this. The game meant so much to her, but now she wouldn't be able to go.

Julia moped around the house for a day before she remembered her glasses. When she put them on and looked at her ankle, the words "opportunity to trust" flashed across the screen. Could even this ankle be an opportunity rather than an obstacle?

Little by little, Julia's glasses changed how she saw the world and how she lived. She discovered that the very things she often complained about were really opportunities in disguise.

"For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal."

2 Corinthians 4:17-18 (ESV)



# FAITHFULNESS

DAILY DISCIPLESHIP -

## The Gift of the Spirit – The Gift of Hope!

### word of life

“Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words.” Romans 8:26 (NRSV)

Read Romans 8:22-27

How would you describe the Holy Spirit?

How have you experienced the presence of the Holy Spirit in your life?

The lesson for today is a part of a longer treatise by Paul on the gift of the Spirit and the hope of believers of Christ. The verses assigned on this birthday of the Church begin with an image of childbirth: “We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now.” (vs. 22) The brokenness and suffering of the world includes all creation. For Paul, the struggle is universal; all of creation is in travail.

Is it comforting or troubling to think that struggle involves all creation?

But there is, as in childbirth, an anticipation of a new life to come – a life where pain and struggle will cease. The promised new life provides the faithful with a wonderful gift – the gift of hope. (vs. 24) For Paul, hope is seen in the context of struggle. It is not a pie-in-the-sky, one-day-by-and-by illusion. The groans and the pain still are present in the life of a follower of Christ. Hope is grounded in the painful realities of the world, yet hope is what sustains the follower in the midst of this reality. Paul encourages the church in Rome to wait with patience in anticipation of something greater yet to come.

How do we experience hope in our lives?

Are there times when it is hard to have hope?

How does this passage address such times?

Paul also points to another gift given to the faithful – the gift of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit aids in times of weakness (vs.26) and intercedes in prayer when there are no words.

Today’s reading from Romans is bracketed by two verses that are often read in times of struggle and pain. The section begins with a statement of hope: “I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us.” (Romans 8:18 NRSV) And the section continues with words of confident faith: “We know that all things work together for good for those who love God.” (Romans 8:28 NRSV) THANKS BE TO GOD!

Describe circumstances in which these verses would be particularly meaningful.

Are hope, waiting, and patience related? How so?

# FAITHFULNESS

DAILY DISCIPLESHIP — CONTINUED

## word among us

We as Christians live in an “in-between” time. Jesus, the Savior of the world, has already come and proclaimed the in breaking of the kingdom, yet we await the promised coming of God’s reign in all its fullness. We still face suffering and pain in the world, but we have hope for what is yet to come.

It is a “pregnant” moment, and Paul uses the imagery of the labor of childbirth to describe the life of a Christian. There is anticipation of a hoped-for life to come. That future hope of new life impacts the present reality. It changes the way life is viewed and lived. Relationships are changed, and priorities are re-ordered.

1. Do you find the imagery of childbirth meaningful? Why or why not?
2. How does life change when new life is expected?

But a great deal of pain and strain is endured before the birth occurs. Paul views the whole creation “groaning in labor pains” while awaiting the hoped-for, promised new life. He urges the church in Rome to hang on with patience to the hope of what is yet to come. The new life will be birthed, but labor pains are experienced first. Paul reminds the believers in every day and time that we are not alone in our labor pains. The Holy Spirit – like a faithful mid-wife – is with us through the delivery, comforts us, gives courage to face the struggle, and provides the gift of hope. The Spirit even intercedes on our behalf when the labor seems too much to bear and there are no words.

3. Describe a time when you experienced labor pains as God prepared something “new” in your Christian life.
4. How does the Spirit intercede for you?

## faith practice in daily life

### Proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed

We know about labor pains – literally and figuratively. We know the struggle of life and death, of hope for future life and the need for patience in the meantime. But hear the good news we can proclaim to a world aching for new life: We do not face the struggle alone. The Holy Spirit guides our every step and gives voice to our needs. The Spirit reminds us that there is One who endured the pain and suffering of the world, One who overcame death and suffering, One who ushered in new, resurrected life.

Our lives are forever changed because of this One. We are empowered to face the labor before us, for we have the hope of a new creation through the One – Jesus Christ.

5. Name someone who lives with suffering yet manifests hope in Christ.
6. What opportunities do you have to proclaim the good news of God’s Spirit working in your life?

## Prayer

Be with us, O God, in our times of struggle. Send your Holy Spirit to remind us that You are with us even then; through Christ our Lord. Amen

## last word

As you face the challenges of each day, trust that God is with you and knows your needs. [ELCA.com](http://ELCA.com)



Gods Work Our Hands.

Evangelical Lutheran Church of America

Presorted Standard  
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Permit No. 3



### **Bits and Pieces: In other words things to remember ;)**

- \*September 10th, \*Blessings of the backpacks , and Rally Sunday ( held at Heritage Park), following worship
- \*September 17th\*Sunday School starts on September 17th/ 2nd graders receive Bibles during worship
- \*September 13th at 6:30pm Confirmation orientation for parents and 7th –8th and 9th grade confirmands will be held in the dining room down stairs.
- \*September 20th at 6:00 pm sharp! \*Confirmation class starts Grades 7-9.
- \*September 23, 2023 starting at 11 am. WELCA women luncheon and show featuring Yvonne Cory Cost is \$15 See you there, **all are invited**. Doors will open at 10:30am

### **All Call for Sunday School Teachers**

Parish Education is in need of Sunday School teachers for the 2023-2024 school year.

Please contact Julie Lux, church office if you are able to help. If you have been sitting on the fence about teaching it is time to hop off and join in, even if you are not available every Sunday .

This is a important mission in our children's lives.

**\*We want you!!!!\*** In September we will be having pictures taken for a new directory, We would like as many people as possible to participate. If you need help finding an time please call the church office.

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