

# St. John's Lutheran Church Newsletter

2026

May

**Interim Pastor**



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Dear friends in Christ,

***"I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another." John 13:34***

Here as mother earth arises from the depths of winter, green surrounds us and new buds and blossoms are beginning to form and soon will explode with color, delightful aroma and variety that stimulates our senses. Truly, spring renews our bodies, our minds and our spirits!

Yes, spring brings a fresh start, a new beginning and a time to consider the workings of our God. As I was listening to music this week in the shop, an old song (1999) from Martina McBride came over the air waves. In it she sang; "love's the only house big enough for all the pain in the world." Her message struck me as I thought about all of the current problems throughout the world. So many conflicts between people with the result of harmful actions making for destruction that destroys both human life and the creation that supports it.

Jesus' words in the new commandment he gives are so simple and yet so profound. Martina's song captures the essence of Jesus' message. What kind of houses are we building? As God gives humans life each day, how are we doing with the miracle we are given each day, each week, each month, each year and each new spring?

Jesus' words given to the disciples, to you and me and to the world are timeless. There is great simplicity and wisdom in his words for us. As we ponder the miracle unfolding all around us this spring while the earth brings forth new life, may we drink deeply from the well of wisdom that God gives us in Jesus the Christ! May we, each one of us, with whatever abilities God has given, participate in building a house of love- "the only house big enough for all the pain of the world."

Grace and peace to one and all,

May you find yourselves immersed in God's beautiful creation as you consider Jesus' commandment to love one another in a world that needs some work on the house.

Grace and peace,  
Pastor Mark Oehlert



**Office Hours:** Mondays following the first and third Sundays from **9:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.**, with adjustments as needed. Appointments at other times—at church, in homes, or at other mutually agreed-upon locations—are always welcome. You may call the church office 563-568-3623 to schedule a time.

**Contact Information:** Pastor Mark Oehlert | [pmsoth@gmail.com](mailto:pmsoth@gmail.com) |

## **Circle News**

Sarah Circle will meet May 12 at 9:15 am in the lounge. Host Gloria Payne.  
Dorcas Circle will meet virtually at 7 pm on Tuesday, May 12 .  
All are welcome—come grow in faith and fellowship with us!



## **LYO Youth Ministry Team**

We will be honoring our seniors during Senior Sunday and Baccalaureate Service on Sunday, May 17 at 8:30 am. LYO invites the congregation to attend the senior reception following the service in the fellowship hall.



## **Youth News!**

We joyfully honored our First Communion students on April 19 and May 3.

Last day of Sunday School will be Sunday, May 3 at 9:30 am—enjoy your summer break! Come and attend church with us.

Last Call for **Camperships**—If you are planning on attending summer camp, please let the church office know as soon as possible as there are funds available to help offset the cost for families!

## **Quilting**

Love quilting or want to learn? Join us on Wednesdays from 8:45 am to noon in the parish hall for a morning of stitching and fellowship. Whether you're experienced or just curious, we'd love to have you—bring a friend!

Thank you to everyone who has been helping with our quilts—they are turning out beautifully. Your thoughtfulness and generosity are truly appreciated.

## **St. John's Website**

Have you checked out our St. John's Lutheran Church website? Stay connected with all that's happening—Bible study, bulletins, newsletters, weekly devotions, and more! We'd love for you to pause your scrolling and check us out today. Visit us here: <https://stjohnswaukon.net/>

## **To Receive the Word**

Sunday morning worship services are on the local radio station. Dial in 103.5 FM (KNEI) at 8:30 am or log into [www.kneiradio.com](http://www.kneiradio.com) to worship with St. John's.

We also are video streaming on Facebook Live. <https://www.facebook.com/stjohnswaukon/>

Bulletins for the service can be found on our web page [www.stjohnswaukon.net](http://www.stjohnswaukon.net)

You may now receive the newsletter via email as a PDF document. Contact the church office if you would like to be on this email list.

St. John's is on the web at [www.stjohnswaukon.net](http://www.stjohnswaukon.net) and Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/stjohnswaukon/>

Please inform the church office of any interruptions to the radio broadcast or Facebook Live stream. We have been making adjustments and updating our sound equipment to better share the Word. Thank you for your patience and assistance.

## **Radio Ministry**

Our May radio ministry broadcast is generously sponsored by Church Fund and May 10 a family donation. Thank you for your support! We are thankful for the opportunity to share God's Word through this ministry. If you would like to sponsor a future broadcast in honor or memory of someone, or simply to support the ministry, we would love to hear from you. Please contact the church office at **563-568-3623** or email [stjohnswaukon@gmail.com](mailto:stjohnswaukon@gmail.com).

When you sponsor a broadcast, you are invited to choose a favorite hymn to be included in that service — a meaningful way to share a song that is special to you.

## **Trustee Meeting** \*\*SEE NARTHEX BULLETIN BOARD for details\*\*

The Trustee's and Council met Monday, April 20 and the full minutes are posted.

Key updates: IRS Energy Credit has been received, security video updated and running, spring clean up day, internet/phone provider change, pastoral candidate visitation cost, second service committee meeting survey. Pastor Oehlert contract renewal to the end of 2026. Next meeting May 18 @ 5:30, Full Council @ 7:00 pm.

## **Call Committee Update**

As we continue moving forward in the process, it may seem slow, but important work is happening. We have been working closely with the Northeastern Iowa Synod, ELCA as we proceed through the next steps.

## **St. John's Women Serving and Socializing**

Thank you so much to all who have donated to the baby kits this year. Your response has been great! There has been some confusion with the baby kits so I First of all, we want to say thanks to everyone who donated food/money, worked at setting up, serving and cleaning up at the Meatball Supper! Our Meatball Supper wouldn't be possible without everyone pitching in. Also, thanks to the people from the committee who organize this big event every year. All of your hard work and dedication is so appreciated!

Quilting continues on Wednesday mornings. I do believe that we have some new members that have been coming to help out with the quilting. It's not too late to join in the fun on Wednesday mornings. Watch for an announcement of the final Wednesday morning to quilt.

Our WELCA has decided to offer \$25 camperships for kids from our congregation to help offset the cost of going to Bible Camp. Please submit your name to the church office. Those camperships will be distributed in May. It is a fun time where you can learn more about God and make some great new friends.

The WELCA yearly booklets have been mailed. If you did not pick yours up.

Just a reminder that we are still collecting items for the baby kits. Please see the WELCA booklets for items that are needed. I will add the comment from last month's newsletter here for you to refer to. The two long or short sleeved sleepers can be with or without feet. We have someone who is able to cut off the feet and finish the hems. Each kit also needs two blankets. One blanket should be a receiving blanket and the other should be a larger one (36 x 52 inches). The bigger blanket is used to wrap the entire kit before it is shipped off. If you have any questions, please reach out to Nona Sawyer or Cindy Wuebker.

*Respectfully, Karen Stamper*

## **Keep Your Cups Filled—The Mental Fitness Approach**

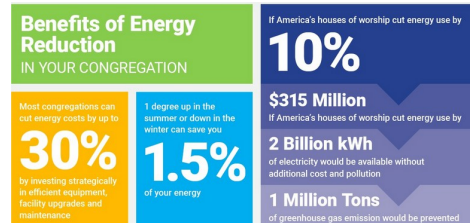
Proactively supporting the wellbeing of our congregation, staff and volunteers helps them keep pouring into others. We call that "mental fitness." Mental fitness is about building resilience, emotional strength, and well-being *before* challenges arise.

- **Encourage Self-Care Habits:** Promote regular, small acts of self-care—such as taking short breaks, exercising, or walking—to help staff and volunteers reset throughout the day.
- **Practice Mindfulness:** Encourage 5–10 minutes of daily mindfulness, such as meditation, breathing exercises, or journaling to help manage stress.
- **Establish Boundaries:** Encourage setting clear, healthy work-life boundaries, such as not checking emails after hours and taking scheduled time off to recharge.
- **Foster a Growth Mindset:** Teach staff and volunteers to view challenges as opportunities for growth, breaking larger, overwhelming tasks into smaller, manageable ones.

By prioritizing mental fitness, we ensure our team can sustain their dedication and continue to "pour into others" without sacrificing their own health. Don't forget to take care of yourself and encourage others to do so!

# Solar Panels

Data credit: [Interfaith Power and Light](#)



We have received our registration number with the IRS Energy Credit and are currently working with Hacker Nelson on the next steps. This process will take some additional time, and we appreciate your patience.

Plans for installing a fence/barrier around the solar equipment are underway and are expected to be completed this spring.

We're already seeing cost savings for our church and look forward to even greater savings in the summer months ahead! Plus we are starting to 'bank' energy; store excess electricity generated by solar panels during the day for use at night or on cloudy days. Our new camera system now provides coverage of both the parking lot and the solar panels, helping ensure safety and security.

Thank you for your continued support as we move forward with this project.

## St. John's Hymns

### May 3 Fifth Sunday of Easter

No. 645 Christ is Made the Sure Foundation

First Reading: [Acts 7:55-60](#)

Psalm: [Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16](#)

Second Reading: [1 Peter 2:2-10](#)

Gospel: [John 14:1-14](#)

No. 758 You Are The Way

Communion: 480, 487

No. 389 Christ Is Alive

### May 10 Sixth Sunday of Easter

No. 481 Come, Thou Almighty King

First Reading: [Acts 17:22-31](#)

Psalm: [Psalm 66:8-20](#)

Second Reading: [1 Peter 3:13-22](#)

Gospel: [John 14:15-21](#)

No. 781 Children of the Heavenly Father

No. 449 We Know that Christ is Raised

### May 17 Seventh Sunday of Easter

No. 526 God Is Here vs. 1, 3, 4

First Reading: [Acts 1:6-14](#)

Psalm: [Psalm 68:1-10, 32-35](#)

Second Reading: [1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11](#)

Gospel: [John 17:1-11](#)

No. 815 I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light

Communion: 471, 482

No. 545 Lord Dismiss Us

### May 24 Day of Pentecost

No. 627 O Day Full of Grace vs. 1, 3, 4

First Reading: [Acts 2:1-21](#)

Psalm: [Psalm 104:24-34, 35b](#)

Second Reading: [1 Corinthians 12:3b-13](#)

Gospel: [John 20:19-23](#)

No. 398 Holy Spirit, Truth Divine

No. 628 Jerusalem My Happy Home

### May 31 The Holy Trinity

No. 413 Holy, Holy, Holy

First Reading: [Genesis](#)

[1:1—2:4a](#)

Psalm: [Psalm 8](#)

Second Reading: [2 Corin-](#)

[thians 13:11-13](#)

Gospel: [Matthew 28:16-20](#)

No. 412 Come Join the Dance of Trinity

Communion: 820, 816



## Music Ministry

Thank you to the Senior Choir, Youth and Senior Bell Choirs, and the Men's Choir for a very busy Holy Week filled with additional services and preparations. The week culminated with the Youth Bell Choir continuing their tradition of performing at all three Easter Sunday services.

Each Sunday in May will feature special end-of-the-church-year musical activities:

**May 3** – The Youth Bell Choir and Senior Choir will perform.

**May 10** – Choir Recognition Sunday: The Senior Bell Choir and Senior Choir will perform, and we will recognize all choirs who have faithfully served the congregation throughout the year. Johnathan Marti will be presented with a brass engraved graduation bell in honor of his participation in both the Youth and Senior Bell Choirs. Sarah Bieber Sweeney will also be recognized with a commemorative 10-year anniversary bell for her dedicated service in the Senior Bell Choir.

**May 17** – Senior/Baccalaureate Service: The Senior Bell Choir and Senior Choir will provide music for the service and senior member Johnathan Marti will deliver one of the senior sermonettes.

Plans for May 24 and May 31 are still being finalized.

As we look ahead, the summer special music season is quickly approaching. Anyone interested in singing or playing an instrument is encouraged to contact Jim Bieber at 563-380-5355.

*Jim Bieber*



# Dates & Events

## May at a Glance

### Sun, May 3—Pastor Mark Oehlert

8:30am Service W/Comm \*Noisy Offering  
 9:30am Sunday School (Last Day), Sr Choir, Bible Study  
 10:30am Service W/Comm \*Noisy Offering  
 7:00pm Men's Choir

### Wed, May 6

8:45am-noon Quilting Fellowship Hall  
 6pm Youth Bells (Tentative Last Day, Pizza Party)  
 7pm Sr Bells

### Sun, May 10 Mother's Day—Pastor Waldemar Gies

8:30am Service- Choir & Sunday School Teacher Recognition  
 9:30am Sr Choir, Bible Study  
 10:30am Service  
 7pm Sr Bells

### Tues, May 12

9:15am Sarah Circle Lounge—Gloria Payne host  
 7pm Dorcas Circle Meet Virtually

### Wed, May 13

8:45am-noon Quilting Fellowship Hall  
 7pm Sr Bells (Tentative Last Day)

### Fri, May 15

Newsletter article deadline: All submissions are due to the office

### Sun, May 17—Pastor Mark Oehlert

8:30am Service W/Comm—Graduating Senior Recognition/Baccalaureate Service, \*Pennies for Presents  
 LYO-senior reception following 8:30 service in the fellowship hall.  
 9:30am Bible Study  
 10:30am Service W/Comm, \*Pennies for Presents

### Mon, May 18

5:30pm Board of Trustee Mtg  
 7pm Full Council Mtg

### Wed, May 20

8:45am-noon Quilting Fellowship Hall

### Sun, May 24—Second Service time changes to

#### 10:00 am—

8:30am Service  
 9:30am Bible Study  
 10:00am Service (*TIME CHANGES*)

### Mon, May 25—Memorial Day

Church Office CLOSED

### Tues, May 26—Nursing Home Visits

1pm Northgate Care Center  
 2pm Good Samaritan Society  
 2:45pm Evergreen Court

### Wed, May 27

8:45am-noon Quilting Fellowship Hall

### Thurs, May 28

WIC here

### Sat, May 30

9:00am St. John's Spring Clean Up Day

### Sun, May 31—Pastor Mark Oehlert

8:30am Service W/Comm  
 9:30am Bible Study  
 10:00am Service W/Comm

## Sundays in June Summer Begins

### Sun, June 7—Pastor Mark Oehlert

8:30am Service W/Comm \*Noisy Offering  
 9:30am Bible Study  
 10:00am Service W/Comm \*Noisy Offering

### Sun, June 14 -

8:30am Service-  
 9:30am Bible Study 10:00am Service

### Sun, June 21—Pastor Mark Oehlert

8:30am Service W/Comm, \*Pennies for Presents  
 9:30am Bible Study  
 10:30am Service W/Comm, \*Pennies for Presents

### Sun, June 28 -

8:30am Service-  
 9:30am Bible Study 10:00am Service

## St. John's Collection Counters

### MAY

4 Jane, Karen  
 11 Nona, Chris  
 18 Lori, Mary  
 26 Sue, Linda (Tues)

### JUNE

1 Jane, Karen  
 8 Nona, Chris  
 15 Lori, Mary  
 22 Sue, Linda  
 29 Jane, Karen



The names listed are those currently recorded as active members in the church CDM+ directory. If your name was inadvertently missed or any of your information is incorrect, please contact the church office at 563-568-3623 or [stjohnswaukon@gmail.com](mailto:stjohnswaukon@gmail.com)

## Happy Anniversary May Anniversaries

- |                        |                     |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| 2—Colin Jones          | 16—Michael Peterson |
| 3—Charles Larson       | 17—Brenda Houg      |
| 3—Zachary Lensing      | 17—Becky O’Neill    |
| 5— Kevin Leiran        | 19—Mary Rogers      |
| 7—Kelsey Jacobs Suarez | 20—Benjamin Gordon  |
| 8—Jamie Halse          | 20—Theodore Gordon  |
| 9—Stella Christen      | 21—Lane Treangen    |
| 10—Ashley Jones        | 23—Patricia Snitker |
| 10—Nona Sawyer         | 24—Donald Fruechte  |
| 11—Sue White           | 24—Marilyn Jahnke   |
| 12—Marshall Moe        | 25—Joan Moody       |
| 13—Randy Nordheim      | 26—Talin Hemann     |
| 14—Trudy Baxter        | 27—Lucas Treangen   |
| 14—Ronda hansen        | 28—Parker Yohe      |
| 14—Joan Leiran         | 29—Joyce Bosley     |
| 16—Rachel Knudtson     | 30—Drew Stock       |
|                        | 31—Lori Hesse       |

- |                          |                          |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Kevin & Judy Selberg     | David & Brenda Dougherty |
| Steve & Maxine Grotegut  | Kyle & Jamie Halse       |
| LaVern & Bonnie Roe      | Robert & Dawn Thorsten   |
| Richard & Evonne Kistler | Greg & Jean Bossom       |
| Greg & Jan Gordon        | Dennis & Sandra Deal     |

### April 2026

Baptisms: None  
 Weddings: None  
 Deaths: Lousie Ellingson (Memorial services will be held at a later date)

## MAY—St. John’s Volunteer Duty List

	Service	Greeters	Readers	Comm. Asst.	Comm. Prep.	Aco-lytes	Ushers
<b>3</b>	8:30AM	Nona Sawyer	Ann Rademaker	Nona Sawyer, Brenda Dougherty, Chris Stuckman	Chris Ellickson, Dawn Teslow	Ushers	Ron Dahlstrom, David & Wendy Sanderson
	10:30AM	-----	Wendy Bucheit	Wendy Bucheit	Linda Gore	-----	-----
<b>10</b>	8:30AM	Chris Engstrom	Blake Roe			Ushers	Same
	10:30AM	Ed & Karen Stamper	Karen Stamper			-----	-----
<b>17</b>	8:30AM	Bill & Sue Blagsvedt	Dave Sander-son	Randy & Lori Hesse, Cindy Barness	Linda DeBuhr, Nona Sawyer	Ushers	Same
	10:30AM	-----	Mary Jackson	Linda Groe	Mary Jackson	-----	-----
<b>24</b>	8:30AM	Virgil & Deb Thorstenson	Sarah Sweeney			Ushers	Same
	*10:00AM	-----	Jill Kistler			-----	-----
<b>31</b>	8:30AM	Gary & Marlene Houg	Carrie Niehaus	Jens & Jane Kallevang, Bonnie Roe	Altar Guild	Ushers	Same
	*10:00AM	-----	Linda Groe	Linda Groe	Altar Guild	-----	-----

# Video Security System

Church Security Upgrade Update We're excited to share that our new video security system is now installed! This upgraded system is in color, offers video playback, and provides expanded coverage throughout our church and parking lot—helping us create a safer environment for everyone.

The total cost of this improvement is approximately \$11,000. If you would like to support this important project, donations can be directed to the church office. We appreciate all that have contributed to our GOAL!

Please make checks payable to St. John's and note "Security System" in the memo line.

Thank you for helping us keep our church a safe and welcoming place for all.



## 2026 NE IA Synod C3 Conference: Abiding, Belonging, Creative, Collaborative Congregations (A/B/C3)

Dear Friends,

*Whoever loves a brother or sister abides in the light, and in it there is no cause for stumbling.* 1 John 2:10

What does it mean to belong to an ELCA congregation in Northeastern Iowa? While each of our 138 congregations has a unique story, we also share common challenges and opportunities, especially as many of our communities experience population decline.

The **2026 Northeastern Iowa Synod A/B/C3 (Abiding, Belonging, Creative, Collaborative Congregations)** will help congregations understand their local context and imagine new ways to be places of abiding and belonging. Participants will gain insight into demographic realities, learn how communities are responding creatively, and reflect on current trends in ELCA congregations.

Dr. Megen O'Toole of **Iowa Shrink Smart (ISU)** will share demographic data and teach how contracting communities can work together for the good of all. We will conclude with worship and recognition of the first cohort completing the synod's lay training program.

**What:** Abiding, Belonging, Creative, Collaborative Congregations (A/B/C3)

**When:** Saturday, June 6, 2026, 9:00 AM-3:00 PM, check-in starting at 8:30 AM

**Where:** St. Paul Lutheran Church and School, 301 1<sup>st</sup> Street NW, Waverly

**Who:** ELCA congregation members and rostered leaders

**Cost:** \$50 per person (including lunch). This event replaces a Synod Assembly. Congregations are encouraged to use budgeted Synod Assembly funds to cover the cost of participation. Registration deadline is May 22.

Our time together will conclude with worship and the recognition of the first cohort to complete the lay-training program.

**For registration and resources (poster and bulletin insert), please use the following link:** <https://neiasynod.org/2026/04/2026-c3-conference/>

The Northeastern Iowa Synod is blessed with gifted and caring people. Come and see how the Holy Spirit is shaping us to be communities of healing and hope.

With a Peace of the Spirit,

**Rev. Kevin T. Jones, Bishop**



# St. John's Spring Clean Up Day

Join us as we spruce up the church grounds for the season!

There are several projects to tackle, including:

- Raking and general yard clean-up
- Removing volleyball posts
- Cleaning out leaves from the trash can area
- Painting exterior doors
- Removing sand from the parking lot
- Installing guard rails around the solar panels
- Painting parking lot lines
- Maintaining the flowering crab tree

**Date:** Saturday, May 30

**Time:** Starting at 9:00 AM

Many hands make light work—your help is greatly appreciated!

## Join Our Bible Study

We warmly invite you to be part of a meaningful Bible study focused on the lives of men and women in Scripture. Together, we'll explore their stories, challenges, faith, and the timeless lessons they offer for our lives today. Whether you're new to the Bible or have studied it for years, this is a welcoming space to grow in faith, build community, and deepen your understanding of God's Word.

### **What to Expect**

- Engaging discussions on biblical figures
- Practical insights for everyday life
- A supportive and encouraging community
- Opportunities for prayer and connection

### **Everyone Is Welcome**

Come as you are and feel free to bring a friend or family member. We look forward to growing together in faith. **Get Involved**—For more information, including meeting times and location, please contact us or check our [Bible Study Resources page](#) on our website.

**BIBLE STUDY**

**SUNDAYS 9:30 AM**

**STUDYING MEN AND WOMEN OF THE BIBLE**

4/5/26 THE FIRST WOMAN - A FAR REACHING CHOICE  
4/12/26 THE MEN JESUS CALLED: OUTSTANDINGLY ORDINARY  
4/19/26 SARAH & HAGAR - WAITING FOR GOD TO ACT  
4/26/26 PETER: THE UNLIKELY LEADER  
5/3/26 MIRIAM - A CRITICAL SPIRIT  
5/10/26 ANDREW: THE APOSTLE OF SMALL THINGS  
5/17/26 RAHAB - AN UNLIKELY ALLY  
5/24/26 JAMES: THE APOSTLE OF PASSION  
5/31/26 RUTH - THE COST OF LOYALTY  
6/7/26 JOHN: THE APOSTLE OF LOVE  
6/14/26 NAOMI - SADNESS SWALLOWED UP BY JOY  
6/21/26 PHILIP: THE BEAN COUNTER  
6/28/26 HANNAH - FROM MISERY TO PRAISE  
7/5/26 NATHANAEL: THE GUILILESS ONE  
7/12/26 ABIGAIL - A LEVEL-HEADED WOMAN  
7/19/26 MATTHEW AND THOMAS: THE TAX COLLECTOR AND THE TWIN  
7/26/26 THE SHUNAMMITE WOMAN - TAKING THE INITIATIVE  
8/2/26 JAMES (THE LESS), SIMON (THE ZEALOT), AND JUDAS (NOT ISCARIOT)  
8/9/26 ESTHER - CAPTIVE IN A STRANGE LAND  
8/16/26 JUDAS: THE TRAITOR  
8/23/26 ESTHER - COURAGE TO ACT  
8/30/26 THE MODEL WIFE - A PORTRAIT OF EXCELLENCE

**ST JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
8 5<sup>th</sup> St SW Waukon, IA

@ St John's Website - Bible Study Resources

The Church Services Committee is seeking input to better understand what the majority of our congregation values in worship services and programs. We ask that you keep an open mind to ALL options as cost is not the concern, but your input will guide future planning. We encourage everyone to participate as each voice is important in shaping the direction of our church community. Thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts and help guide our future.

These may be returned to the church office, or to the wooden box. Due Sunday, May 31.

**1. How many services would you prefer?**

- One service at 9:30
- Two services

**2. IF we choose to stay with two services, which schedule do you prefer?**

- Wednesday night and Sunday morning
- Saturday night and Sunday morning
- Both on Sunday - as it is

**3. When would you prefer to have Sunday School?**

- Wednesday - St. John's Ministry Night
- Keep it on Sunday

**4. When would you prefer to have Bible Study?**

- Sunday
- Wednesday - St. John's Ministry Night
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Would you like to have a meal at church on Wednesdays - St. John's Ministry Night?**

- Yes
- No

**6. Would you be willing to work or donate for a light Wednesday night meal? Select all that apply.**

- Work
- Donate
- Neither

**7. Other Suggestions:**