

**St. John
Lutheran Church**
Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod
290 7th Street
Idaho Falls, ID 83401
www.stjohnministries.net

Office Hours:
Mon.-Thurs. 9:00am-3:00pm
Phone: (208) 522-5650
office@stjohnministries.net

Pastor

Stephen Weems
pastorstephen83401@gmail.com

**Director of
Christian Education**

Jacob Pralle
Jcpralle.DCE@gmail.com

Licensed Lay Deacon

Paul Petersen

St. John Officers

Bruce Mincher
Chair, Board of Directors

Jim Werner
Head Elder



Sunday

In-Person Worship
9:30am

9:30am Live-Stream:

<https://www.facebook.com/stjohnidahofalls>

or:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCqfTbbuM5U7-IFB7bMslQaQ>
(click on "LIVE" tab)

Communion every
1st & 3rd Sunday

10:30am - Fellowship

10:45am

- Sunday School
- Confirmation
- Youth Study
- Adult Bible Class

Wednesday

Bible Study - 10:00am

**Children's Christmas
Program &
Christmas Brunch**
December 15th

The *Gospel Gazette*

A Publication of St. John Lutheran Church, Idaho Falls, Idaho

December,
2024 -
January 2025

Gift Return

What gift might you bring Jesus not just this holiday season ahead but day after day in 2025?

Isn't it interesting how simply God presented His gift to the world? Luke 2:7 tells us, **And she [Mary] gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.**

As with so many things about Jesus, those who waited on the promised Messiah would be underwhelmed by a birth so remarkably plain. Sounds like something we might say about one of our family members: "I'm told my great-grandfather was born in the barn because there had been a recent fire in the farmhouse."

First to come to Jesus were the shepherds moved by an angel of the Lord: **"Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."** [Luke 2:11-12]

This is Christ? The Messiah?

Then came wisemen from the east guided by a star. **They rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.** [Matthew 2:10-11]

What gift might you bring Jesus?

Let's keep with simple as the theme. Yes, even the ordinary can be complex, I get it. But try this on for size.

God names the simple gift He desires

in Psalm 37:4, **Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart.**

The babe born in Bethlehem, was the gift of God Himself. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son." And what a promise was given when "an angel of the Lord" spoke to Joseph in a dream. "She [Mary] will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."



You and I have every reason to delight in the Lord all our days.

David Gusik encourages: King David advised the man or woman of God to replace worry and envy with a conscious delight in the LORD. This means to [daily] cheer one's heart and mind by considering and by faith receiving the multiple blessings of God.

Erin Davis writes: No one made it into the Christmas story by giving Jesus something He needed. They simply surrendered themselves to the One who came to save them. Give Him your wholehearted devotion today. Tell Him you're His, through and through. Your heart is the gift He came for. This Christmas, receive the gift of Jesus and offer yourself in return. *In Him, Pastor Stephen*

Bunco will be held
 Tuesday, December
 17th, and January 21st
 at 6:30pm.



Bring \$5 and a snack to
 share for “half-time”!

Dear St. John Family,

Jim and I would like to thank you for your many prayers over the past several months and update you on his current status. His stem cell transplant was on Sept. 24 and he was hospitalized for two weeks following the transplant at Huntsman Cancer Institute. He experienced pretty much all the effects of the chemotherapy and no immune system, as well as some complications, and was quite ill for some time.

He recovered to the point we could return to Idaho Falls at the end of October. He still has quite a bit of recovery that needs to happen. His bone marrow and his immune system are all brand new—essentially like that of a newborn. His ability to fight and prevent infections are quite limited and his blood cell counts are very, very slowly increasing. But they are increasing and we’re so very thankful!! He does have to restrict his exposure to crowds and large groups of people for a while, especially since we’re now in the midst of cold & flu season.

Please continue to pray for his ongoing recovery and for his new bone marrow to develop and grow all the new blood cells his body needs. Words cannot sufficiently express our gratitude for your love, support, prayers and messages during this journey, as well as the love & support and prayers for our family! ~ Ann & Jim W.

Thank you to all who contribute to “1st Sunday Food Offering”. Many in our community are struggling to feed their families.



**High need for
 December and January:**

cereal, canned pasta, peanut butter, chili,
 canned stew, canned tuna or chicken
 **monetary donations!

Generic brands are welcome.

Since donations have been lower and the number of patrons needing help has greatly increased, the **Food Basket is spending considerably more than in years past.

All donations are very appreciated!

***For every \$1 given, the IFCFB can
 provide \$4.80 worth of food!!

PLEASE MAIL financial contributions to:
 IFCFB, P.O. Box 2236, Idaho Falls, ID 83403

**October 2024 Board of
 Elders’ Minutes**

*(in order to allow time for minutes to be reviewed for accuracy,
 the minutes are published with a one-month delay.)*

The minutes are not available this month.

(Full minutes on file in Church office)

(edited for space)



October 2024 Board of Directors' Minutes

(in order to allow time for minutes to be reviewed for accuracy, the minutes are published with a one-month delay.)

Meeting minutes are not available this month.

(Full minutes on file in Church office)

(edited for space)



October 2024 ~ Pastor's Report

(in order to allow time for minutes to be reviewed for accuracy, reports are published with a one-month delay.)

1) Vacation: Pastor & Laurie are thankful for vacation time away with family in California in September! **Many thanks** to Paul P. and Jacob P. who led so well while Pastor was away on vacation. **2) Hope House Update:** Melissa is learning new marketable skills. Our Hope House Partners, Yellowstone Plastics & Pearl Health Clinic contributed \$1500 toward childcare as a help to Melissa. **3) The Red Letter Challenge:** We had a great kick off Sunday, Oct. 6! We had ordered additional books and those are gone, too. More will arrive before Sunday. Jacob has a Pdf. out of the 1st 8 Days of reading to tide people over. **MANY thanks** to hosts: Pralles, Warrens, Stultzs, J & K Petersen, R. Kelsch, Zoom, Muellers, S. Taylor, and a Sunday morning group! **4) Oktoberfest 2024:** Increase in attendees. Morgan and Jabob brought together a fantastic team. Special thanks to Zak & Sarah W. for loaning us the wonderful gathering space at Pearl Health Center! **5) Visits:** I visited with Justin B. Sept 11. Nice gentleman. **6) Hosted: A Welcoming Time Together** was Friday, Oct. 11., 6:30-8pm **7) Friends & Family Pumpkin Carving** is Tuesday, Oct. 22, 6-8pm. **8) November Congregational Mtg. :** Elders will help with finding a St. John Lay Representative and an alternate for the District Convention in June, 2025. This required congregational approval. Meeting Date: November 3, 2024. During the Bible Study Hour. **9) The Board of Directors approved designated funds (Previously Donated)** for a St. John Team to participate in Vision Bridge provided by PLi (Pastoral Leadership Institute)

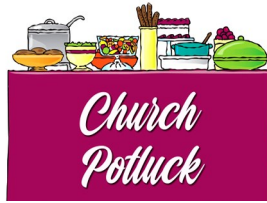


October 2024 ~ DCE Report

(in order to allow time for minutes to be reviewed for accuracy, reports are published with a one-month delay.)

1) Sunday Ed.: a) Children's Sunday School (w/ Morgan) b) Early Childhood Sunday School Program! 18months – 3 year olds!!! c) Post-Confirmation Age Youth Bible Study: Red Letter Challenge! d) Adult Bible Study: Red Letter Challenge (Pastor Stephen) **2) Youth:** a) We will meet in October on the 6th, 13th, & 29th. b) 9 Youth got to experience God's love and gifts through the talents of Jason Gray for the I.F.R.M Benefit Concert on Thursday, September 26th! c) Wild Adventure Corn Maze (FUN NIGHT) – Tues., Oct. 29th d) Highschool Fall Retreat 2024 – St. John & Hope are hosting the 2024 S. Id. Highschool Fall Retreat this year on November 8th-10th e) TNC Flash Servant Event @ I.F. Comm. Food Basket! According to Dan K., our service continues to assist the food basket at a time where there are record numbers in need! Next Event: Sunday, December 29th. **3) No Host Brunch** is on hiatus for November for Fall Voters Meeting (11/3) & High School Retreat (11/10) **4) 2025 National Youth Gathering – New Orleans:** a) Fundraisers are ROLLING!!! Dine 2 Donate Events will continue to take place once a month leading up to NYG in July! b) National Youth Gathering COMMITMENT Meeting – THIS Sunday, October 13th @ 4:00pm

The potluck is on hiatus for December . We look forward to seeing you on January 26th!



Hosted!

Join us Friday, December 13th, and January 10th for an adult evening of fellowship at City Bagels (369 Shoup Ave.) Invite friends & bring an appetizer / dessert to share. Beverages are provided.



Coffee & Conversation time after Worship is a great time to meet new friends and strengthen bonds in our St. John family! **In order to offer this time of fellowship, we really need a host each week. Please sign-up if you haven't hosted recently.** You can host a Sunday by yourself, or share the fun & ask a friend to help! The sign-up calendar is located on the counter where coffee is served.

Treats are optional, and can be homemade or purchased. Thank you!

"Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift."

2 Corinthians 9:15



LET THERE BE
Brunch

Young Adult Fellowship

Young adults (single, married, all are welcome!) are invited to join us each month for "No-Host Brunch".

Early child care is available!!

In December, we meet at North Hi-Way Café.

In January, we meet at Smitty's.

Plan to join us!!

Have you been looking for a way to finally get control of your finances? **This. Is. Your. Time.** St. John Lutheran Church will be hosting a Financial Peace University class starting Monday, January 13, 2025.



This is a 9-week course meeting on Monday's at 6:30pm. Each class is around two hours. Cost of the course is \$60 which includes *lifetime access* to the classes if you ever need a "refresher" course! Make today the day you decide to own your money—not the other way around. You've got this!

Contact Dan V. for more info or to register.

Please register by January 6th.

Youth News & Events

For more information on anything listed here, call or email Jacob at: Jcpralle.DCE@gmail.com or 208-522-5650

BORN



YOUTH SUNDAY BIBLE CLASS! – BORN – We are FRESH off the 40 Day Red Letter Challenge of unveiling the life Jesus has made us for! Now, what's next?! We know what it's like to live in a world filled with tradition and resistance to change. Join us as we dive head-first into this 4-week Christmas series where we see the many promises that Jesus birth brings! We will discover how His promises are kept here and now, upset the traditions our world holds fast to, and reveal the kingdom work we are privileged to join together in! Come and see how the child BORN in Bethlehem, is birthing a movement in our world still today!

Youth, grades 6th ~ 12th, are invited to join **The Next Chapter (TNC)** – The MOMENT. IS. HERE. The St. John, Hope, & Crown of Life Youth are in the midst of a life-changing Year 4 as TNC! Our Theme for 24-25 is “**FOLLOW²**” We are embarking on a discipleship journey for Jesus! BE. A. PART. of this special movement as we continue to grow as followers of Christ! *We will be meeting on SUNDAY nights from 5:30-7:30pm! We will meet in December on the 8th & 15th. We will meet in January on the 5th, 12th, & 19th. We are excited to continue our special TNC Youth “AT YOUR PLACE” events! Let us know if you're interested in hosting or sponsoring a meal for a TNC Youth Night! BIG THANKS to the families who have hosted thus far!*



JUNIOR HIGH SNOWJAM - What on earth could there be to do at Camp Perkins in the middle of winter? How does tubing, broomball on the frozen lake, snowshoeing, cross country skiing, bonding with friends, and an amazing time with Jesus sound?! This what to expect of Camp Perkins – Winter style! We'll be shuttled over the snow two miles into camp in a fully equipped van with tracks and skis. Spend our time worshipping, studying God's Word, sitting by a warm fire, and playing in the snow! We will be bringing youth, 6th-9th grade, for this weekend getaway on January 24th-26th! Registration is now open until January 2nd If interested, and for more details, contact Jacob.



Who / what is “The Next Chapter”? Our group (6th–12th grade) is based off Acts, chapter 29. Wait, there are only 28 chapters in Acts?! The book of Acts tasks us with understanding how we can be directed by the Holy Spirit and the role of Jesus' lessons in our lives. God's mission did not end after Jesus' ascension into heaven. Like Peter & Paul, we too are challenged to be a part of *The Next Chapter* of His Church. This doesn't end with chapter 28, it truly is just the beginning!

Memos from Morgan!

For more information: please contact Morgan (mepralle.dce@gmail.com or 208-522-5650)



St. John Sunday School Christmas Program: Join us on Sunday, December 15th, as the children of St. John take us on a journey to Bethlehem and remind us of the beautiful Christmas story of our Savior's birth. This will be held during our regular service time and is directed by our very own Abby S.

TOY-DRIVE DONATIONS: If you are clearing out older, gently used toys to make room for new, shiny toys due to the upcoming Christmas season, please consider donating them to be used by the children of St. John! Please drop them off in the spare Sunday School room downstairs on the right. Thank you!



STILL NEEDED! Interested in working in the nursery during worship to help serve young families? We would love to find some individuals who want to serve in this way! Background check required. **This is a paid position.**

DINE 2 DONATE NIGHT!!!



Join the TNC Youth with Food, Fun, Fellowship and FUNDRAISING! We are raising funds for our Highschool youth to attend the 2025 National

Youth Gathering in New Orleans, Louisiana!

Throughout the school year, we will continue hold multiple "Dine 2 Donate Nights" with local businesses support for our TNC Youth's trip to the NYG!

Join us for our 6th D2D! This month, we will be at MacKenzie River Pizza, Grill, & Pub

@ 1490 Milligan Rd. {in Snake River Landing}

date TBD between January 6th & 10th



Christmas Brunch

Join us December 15th, after the Children's Christmas Program for a delicious meal with your St. John family. The main meal will be provided.

We ask that everyone please bring a dessert to share.

H A P P E N I N G I N

D E C E M B E R A N D J A N U A R Y !

December

- 1st Advent begins
- 4th Mid-week Advent service (6:30pm)
- 5th Advent by Candlelight
- 8th BOD Meeting
No-Host Brunch @ N. Hi-Way Café
TNC Youth Night - St. John
- 10th BOE Meeting
- 11th Mid-week Advent service (6:30pm)
- 13th *Hosted!* @ City Bagels (6:30pm)
- 15th Sunday School Christmas Program
Christmas Brunch after Worship
TNC Youth Night - Hope
- 17th BUNCO!
- 24th Christmas Eve Worship (7:00pm)
- 25th Merry Christmas!!
- 29th TNC Youth Flash Servant Event @ IFCFB

January

- 5th TNC Youth Night - St. John
- 6th-10th TBD NYG Dine 2 Donate Night @ MacKenzie River Pizza, Grill & Pub
- 10th *Hosted!* @ City Bagels (6:30pm)
- 12th TNC Youth Night – HOPE
- 13th Dave Ramsey Financial Peace Classes Begin
- 14th Board of Elders Mtg
- 19th Board of Directors Mtg
TNC Youth Night - St. John
- 20th **NEWSLETTER DEADLINE!**
- 21st BUNCO!
- 24th-26th Junior High SnowJam @ Camp Perkins
- 26th Sunday Potluck
No TNC Youth (SnowJam)