



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

April 2024

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 3PM – 6PM
Friday 9AM – 1PM

**Sunday Schedule:
Worship 10AM**

Rev. Kenneth Babcock - Pastor
Council President – Jeff Starbuck
Office Manager- Amy Semenk
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



Blood Drive!

Versiti Blood Drive – April 9th
Enter to win a pontoon boat by being a donor



Adopt a Road
PROGRAM

Adopt A Road
Saturday, April 13th



St. John's Capital Improvements Campaign



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 or subscribe to the St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Baroda Facebook page for the weekly worship service.

Our Homebound Members:

Elaine Lochner
Woodland Terrace
8850 Red Arrow Hwy
Apt. 29
Bridgman, MI 49106

Marguerite Mohn
Woodlawn Terrace of Niles
#102
13 Longmeadow Village Drive
Niles, MI 49120

Jean Jasper
10370 Gast Road
Bridgman, MI 49106

Barb Kinnison
8445 Hollywood Road
Berrien Springs, MI 49103

Fran Konya
Royalton Manor
288 Peace Blvd
St. Joseph, MI 49085

Eldon Nitz
345 W. Lemon Creek Road
Baroda, MI 49101

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

Memorial Funds

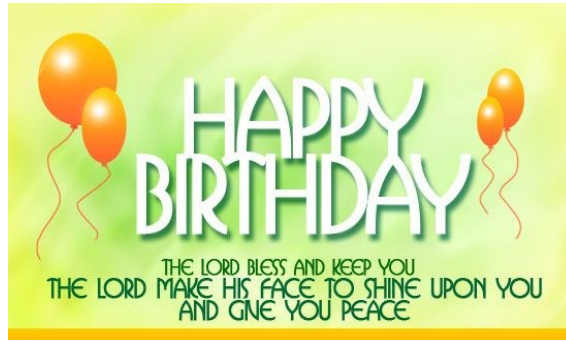
Memorial funds may be designated to:

Altar/Worship Enhancement Fund
General Memorial Fund
Sound for Sanctuary
Kitchen Improvement Fund
Church Property Improvements Fund



April Celebrations

- 5 Amy Semenak
- 9 Kim Perrin
- 12 Lorelai Hansen
- 13 Marianna Cerecke
- 19 Matt Fleisher
- 19 Erik Hansen
- 22 Janis Guckenberger
- 23 Andy Semenak
- 25 Cindy Schroeder
- 27 Mia Barker
- 28 Fran Richards
- 29 Kasie Hicks
- 29 Kathy McCumber



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

- 2 Cheryl Tollas
- 3 Betty Maier
- 9 Nancy Kasten
- 11 Heidi Krueger
- 16 Caroline Widdis
- 18 Sue Babcock
- 22 Darlene Crawford
- 23 Dody Hafer
- 29 Mia Barker
- 30 Wes Barker



If you need emergency pastoral care, for situations such as hospital admissions or a death in the family, you may contact:

Pastor Ken Babcock 231-719-7741

Pastor's Message



Dear Parish Family:

He is Risen! He is Risen indeed!

Our path to this April day was desolate, forlorn, sad, and yet, here we are! We are not looking back at the Lenten journey, but forward to the Glorious Victory won by the death and resurrection of our Savior Jesus Christ. It is officially Spring.

The snow is blowing horizontally as I sit at the kitchen table preparing this Grapevine, but do not despair – Spring is here. Look at the Daffodils, Crocus and Forsythia! They know the truth! The Robins and other migrating birds know the truth! It is officially Spring!

Spring brings forth planning – vacation trips, garden preparations, yard cleanup, and church grounds cleanup. Soon, the sound and smell of the diesel lawnmower will be filling the morning air with the aroma of freshly mowed grass. All part of the evolution of the seasons. I look forward to all of those seasonal delights.

Our prayer is that we look at each morning sunrise and exclaim, “Look at this day. I have never seen it before, and I will never see it again.” Look at and grasp the wonder of God’s awesome creation. Made for our pleasure, as a reminder of His love for us.

The stone is now rolled back, and the tomb is empty, but God’s promise is eternal. Enjoy every Spring Day with enthusiasm and gratitude—we are forgiven and like the seasons, we are privileged to rise again.

In Jesus precious name!

Pastor Ken and Sue



**Versiti Blood Drive
Tuesday, April 9th
2PM – 6:30PM**

Appointments Preferred

Enter for a chance to win a pontoon boat

Versiti will be at St. Johns, April 9th from 2pm – 6:30pm. Please set up at appointment time by calling 866-642-5663. Blood is in low supply. There is no substitute for the gift of life.

Remember all blood donated with Versiti stays in your area. Please consider being a donor.

Thank you!

Easter Plants

The Easter plants you purchased may be taken home after Easter service on March 31st. Thank you for supporting Altar Guild and for beautifying our sanctuary.

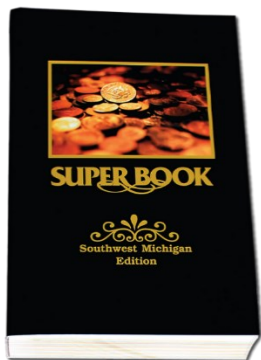


Youth and Adult Event

Save the Date: Adopt A Road, Saturday, April 13th at 10AM. We will be picking up trash along Cleveland Avenue from Lemon Creek Road to Hinchman.

Thank you to Thrivent Financial for their generous grant to purchase food to feed the volunteers.

Look for the sign-up sheet to volunteer. **THANK YOU!!**



2024 Super Book coupon books will be available soon. Waiting to get the books back from the printers. Cost is \$40/book.

\$8 from every sale is returned to St. John's to support the Building Improvements!!



St. John's Capital Improvements Campaign

The list of property improvements/repairs projects that will be happening in 2024.

Driveway resurface, seal and reline
Repair and re-side the East side of Sunday School/Office building
Refurbish shed on creek lot
Crash bars installed on church doors
Repair stained glass windows in Narthex and entry

Projects underway:

Boiler repairs
Buy and install two stair chair lifts
Smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors installed



Project: Faith in Action

Proyecto: Fe en Acción

Faith in Action is a collaborative ministry between San Gabriel Catholic Church, St. Joseph Catholic Migrant Ministry, Interfaith Action, and St. John's Lutheran Church. The ministry started 20 years ago to work with the migrant camps in Berrien County. It's time to plant....celebrate Spring by providing a welcome to migrant agricultural workers.

This month we are asking the congregation to donate CAN OPENERS for the Migrant Ministry.



FOOD PANTRY DONATIONS Redbud Area Ministries

Redbud Area Ministries (R.A.M.) is located in Buchanan and their mission is “to demonstrate the love of Christ by distributing food....to those in need...” Redbud Area Ministries is an interdenominational and interracial ministry center started to organize the churches in the Buchanan and Galien School Districts to respond to individual and family needs. The food that is donated is distributed to those in the surrounding communities. **R.A.M. would appreciate staples. Specific suggestions are as follows: Cereal, Peanut butter, Jelly, Shampoo, Conditioner, Laundry soap, and Dish soap.** Monetary donations are also greatly appreciated. RAM offers limited financial assistance to homes (roughly \$225/annually) to stave off utility disconnects or evictions.

“Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the Lord and he will repay him for his deed”.
Proverbs 19 :17



Sunday, May 19
Sunday, May 26
Sunday, October 27
Sunday, November 3
Sunday, November 24
Sunday, December 1
Tuesday, December 24
Wednesday, December 25

Day of Pentecost
Holy Trinity Sunday
Reformation Sunday
All Saints Sunday
Christ the King
First Sunday of Advent
Christmas Eve
Christmas Day


Interfaith Action
SW Michigan Peace & Justice Collaborative



March and April – a Season of Religious Celebrations

During the next two months, Muslims celebrate Ramadan, Jews celebrate Passover and Christians celebrate Lent and Easter. Here are accounts of the importance of each of these holidays.

Lent February 14 - March 28

From The Rev Joan Oleson

Lent, in the Christian tradition, is that holy season of 40 days - from Ash Wednesday to Good Friday - when Christians pay particular attention to our need for repentance and for God's mercy. It is a time devoted to self-examination, prayer and fasting, sacrificial giving and works of love. It is also a time to recognize all that separates us from God, our neighbor, and creation. Traditionally, it is also a time for candidates to prepare for baptism on the great festival of Easter, as they learn what it means to be a follower of Jesus, joined to him in his death and resurrection.

Individual Christians and communities of faith live out this season in a variety of ways – whether refraining from (a favorite food, a bad habit), taking on (an act of service, a meditative practice), a cleaning out (spiritually, or physically), as the word "Lent" means "springtime." How many of us think of spring and associate with it the task of "spring cleaning?" For many communities of faith, and individual households, including our own, there is attention given to an additional time of worship (usually midweek) that leads us on a journey of contemplating what Christ's sacrifice on the cross means for us and the world, how our life in Christ is renewed, and how we can be agents of God's reconciling work in the world.

Ramadan March 10 - April 9

From Nevine Khalil

Once the moon sighting is confirmed, this year Ramadan will likely begin on March 10 and end on April 9. The ninth month of the Muslim lunar (*Hijri*) calendar, Ramadan is a month of worship and community. It marks the month when the Quran began to be revealed to Prophet Mohamed (Peace Be Upon Him).

Muslims observe it by reading the Quran (cover to cover, several times if possible), performing extra prayers, fasting, celebrating and giving thanks. Fasting is one of the five pillars (tenets) of Islam – along with the declaration of faith, prayer, almsgiving and pilgrimage to Mecca.

Muslims fast from dawn until sunset, abstaining from all food and drink during daylight hours while going about their daily routine. While fasting is an opportunity to experience the hardships of those less fortunate, it is also an exercise in spiritual, mental and emotional self-discipline. It is a time for more reflection on the prayer rug; cooking a feast but not craving a bite; not losing your temper when someone cuts you off in traffic.

After fasting from all temptations during the day, comes the feast. Family, friends and neighbors gather to break fast (*iftar*) together when the sun sets, enjoying special Ramadan desserts, community gatherings, and more worship.

In many Muslim countries, gorging on Ramadan television shows and commercials is also a key feature – not too dissimilar from the Super Bowl. And like Thanksgiving, anyone who is alone is also welcomed to the table.

On festively decorated streets, children play with Ramadan lanterns and sing traditional rhymes until the wee hours, as worshippers head to the mosque for very late night prayers (*taraweeh*). Activities and visits continue well into the night, sometimes until it is time for the pre-dawn meal (*suhur*), which is a lighter meal followed by plenty of water ahead of the next day's fast.

Ramadan is a celebration of faith, community and self.

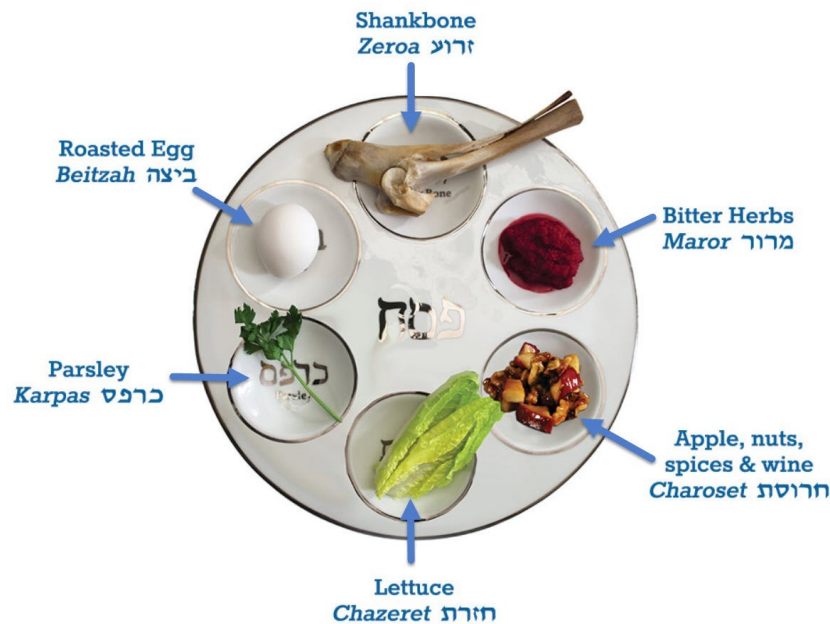
Passover April 22 - April 30

From Laura Kovnat

Passover, one of the three major pilgrimage festivals of ancient Israel, commemorates the Exodus from Egypt. This holiday takes place for eight days, the 15th-22nd of Nissan on the Hebrew calendar, which is sundown April 22nd through sundown April 30th this year. While its origins lie in ancient spring celebrations of the first grain harvest and lambs of the season, in the Jewish context, the main theme of this holiday is redemption. During Passover we celebrate G-d's redemptive act of leading the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt to freedom.

Jewish people celebrate and honor Passover by removing all leavened grains from their diets and homes for the extent of the holiday, and by retelling the story of the Exodus at a ceremonial meal called a Seder, using a book called a Haggadah. Most Jewish families use the impending arrival of Passover as an opportunity to do some spring cleaning, often making a game out of finding all traces of *hametz*, or leavened grain products, and removing them from their homes. Jews will hold Passover Seders on the first and/or second nights in their homes as a family, often with extended family and friends invited. Many Jews, my family included, also participate in a community Seder on one of those nights with other members of their synagogue. During these Seders, we use symbolic foods on the Seder plate and in the meal to represent elements of the story of Exodus. A major component of the entire eight days of Passover is matzah, which is eaten in place of traditional grain products and is symbolic of the hurriedly-made unleavened bread eaten by the Israelites fleeing Egypt. Matzah is eaten throughout the Seder meal and even becomes part of a game for the children in attendance. Part of one piece of matzah is wrapped and hidden in the home by the adults, and before the end of the meal the children seek it. Whoever finds this *affikomen* is rewarded with a small prize and everyone partakes of a small piece at the end of the Seder meal.

Passover is a time to connect with our Jewish ancestors as we put ourselves in their places, fleeing slavery in Egypt through G-d's redemptive power. During the Seder we also solemnly recall the plagues, and the suffering the Egyptians had to endure so that ours at their hands could end. We also use the Seder to acknowledge that not everyone is free, that slavery and oppression still pervade our world, and that while we can celebrate our historic freedom, we must still work toward the freedom of all people in our own time.



Michigan's new gun violence prevention laws went into effect mid-February

End Gun Violence Michigan: [Learn all about the laws on our updated website.](#)

There's a lot you can do to help support these new laws.

- Promote our public education content on social media by sharing it with your networks on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).
- [Sign up to become a community educator to spread the news about the laws.](#)

Environmental Commitments in Michigan's Budget

Among the budget recommendations released by the Whitmer administration is a \$40 million cut in public transit funding compared to the last fiscal year and only minimal investments into retrofitting Michigan's aging housing stock.

The Growing Michigan Together Council notes that, "since 2000, Michigan has spent substantially less than other states on capital investment in infrastructure." That includes housing - which just had the [third-highest rent increase](#) in the nation according to Rent.com - and transit - which scores a [2.1 out of 10](#) according to the Center for Neighborhood Technology.

"The Governor's budget recommendations have some great pieces, like major climate investments, increasing the waste disposal fee, and some water infrastructure investments," said **Charlotte Jameson**, chief policy officer for the **Environmental Council**. "Unfortunately, the budget ...underfunds critical housing retrofits; ... fails to clean up contaminated sediment from major rivers...we need decisionmakers to make it happen."

Contact your elected officials and ask them to support state budget commitments to transit funding, housing retrofits and river pollutant clean up. Click [here](#) to view a list of elected officials on our website.



Interfaith Efforts for Peace

There is something incredibly powerful about collective, multi-faith prayers for peace,” said Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley (MA). “I was proud to stand in solidarity with this diverse coalition of faith leaders to mourn the lives lost, turn our grief into action, and reiterate our calls for an indefinite, lasting ceasefire to save lives, release all hostages, and ensure the swift delivery of humanitarian aid. As God’s children and for the sake of our shared humanity, we must never be silent in the face of injustice.”

“From both Muslim and Jewish tradition, we learn just as one life lost is a whole world lost, one life saved is a whole world saved. We have lost over 25,000 worlds, and each day that goes on without a ceasefire, we will lose more and more,” said Rabbi Rebecca Hornstein, Executive Director of the Boston Workers Circle.

“The will of the people by our nature is toward peace and justice and hope. May God give us all the strength to move the discourse toward peace and resolution and hope. May our leaders feel the power of all of us behind them when they make these bold decisions,” said Tahirah Amatul-Wadud, Executive Director of the Council on American-Islamic Relations – Massachusetts.

“I still have hope because I believe in the Gospel of Matthew that says, blessed are the peacemakers because they shall be called the children of God. And we are the children of God. We have a moral obligation and a collective righteous mandate to save lives right now. Ceasefire now,” said Rev. Willie Bodrick II, Twelfth Baptist Church.



The Super Bowl and Religion?

A 60 second ad aired at the Super Bowl, produced by a Christian group called He Gets Us. The ad asks: “How did the story of a man who taught and practiced unconditional love become associated with hatred and oppression for so many people?”

The ad depicts a series of images of one person washing another person’s feet. An oil rig worker washes the feet of a climate activist. A cop washes the feet of a young Black man. An older woman washes the feet of a young woman outside an apparent abortion clinic. A priest washes the feet of a young gay man. As the commercial ends, words appear on the screen: “Jesus didn’t teach hate. He washed feet.”

According to one commentator: “the ad is not saying there’s no difference between the cop and the young Black man or between the oil rig worker and the climate activist - or that they shouldn’t speak about their differences. It’s saying something far more radical and valuable: I can love you and serve you *even when I disagree with you.*”

Consider making an annual gift to Interfaith Action to support its work in 2024.

Our work, and our witness, depend on your generosity. You can give online by clicking the blue "Donate Today" button below.

You can also send a check to Interfaith Action of SW Michigan, c/o St Augustine's Church, 1753 Union Ave, Benton Harbor, MI 49022.



VancoPayments.com/eGiving
Enjoy the Convenience of Electronic Giving!

St. John’s wants to remind you that we offer electronic giving as a way to automate your regular weekly offering. Electronic giving offers convenience for individual congregation members and provides much-needed donation consistency for our congregation.

Direct Debit Giving is used to automatically transfer funds from your checking or savings account to the church’s bank account.

Online Giving lets you go to **stjohnsbaroda.com** at any time to set up an automatic donation plan, change your donation plan, make a one-time donation or view your online donation history.

Vanco is trusted by more than 22,000 churches to provide eGiving solutions that allow members and visitors to give how and when they want. Our suite of eGiving tools include online, mobile, text, card reader and kiosk options. Vanco also maintains the highest level of PCI-compliance to ensure the security of donations and payments processed through any of our eGiving tools.

Photos from the Community Easter Egg Hunt held March 23rd
Thank you to our sponsors: Meijer, Silver Beach Pizza, and Thrivent Financial

