St. John's Ministry Program

St. John's Congregation Council

Our Council provides visionary, fiduciary and strategic leadership for the Congregation. Together with the Congregation, the Council discerns God's vision, monitors the budget, guides the financial well-being of the congregation, and oversees the Senior Pastor's administration of the mission of the Congregation.

The voting membership of the Congregation Council consists of the Senior Pastor and twelve lay members of the congregation. Any voting member of the congregation is eligible to serve on the
Council, subject to term limits specified in the Church Constitution. In addition to the requirements listed above, the following five guidelines are also used in selecting candidates for all elected positions:

- Commitment to regular worship attendance.
- Commitment to a daily devotional and prayer life.
- Commitment to growth as a Christian.
- Commitment to growth giving with the tithe as a benchmark.
- Commitment to sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ with others.

The Council meets on the third Tuesday of each month at 6:30pm in Oehler Hall.

Current members of the Church Council as of January 2026 are:

- Jerry Kilbert
- Chris Dawson
- Joan Slabaugh
- John Bailey
- Rita Blomster
- Bridget Malme
- Karen Olson
- Micah Metts-Houston
- Nicole Oehmk
- Melanie Schindell
- Mike Long
- Bonnie Lindgren

St. John's Staff

Pastor Amy Kienzle
Senior Pastor, Director of Mission
Pastor Paul Baglyos
Interim Associate Pastor
Steven Johnson
Director of Worship & Music
Catherine Slabaugh
Director of Communications & Community Engagement
Katherine Thorp
Director of Administration + HR
Jeremy Kaetzel
Director of Youth & Family Ministry

Joel Barkel
Associate Director of Volunteer Management
Eliseo Paniagua
Associate Director of Worship & Music
Matt Balara, Nathan McQueen, Joe Allen, Julius Turner
Property Staff
Suzi Taylor, RN, Parish Nurse
Congregational Care Coordinator
Tim Reese, Melody Struckmann
Video Technician
John Bologni
Audio Technician
Helen Disho, Lauren Kelley, Lora Rodriguez
Nursery Attendant

St. John's Constitutional Committees

Audit Committee – Kim Hendricks
The Audit Committee is a constitutionally required committee that oversees Financial Audits, working closely with the Finance Committee, Senior Pastor, and Director of Administration.

Call Committee – Chris Dawson
With the retirement of Senior Pastor Frank Espegren, the Congregational Council has appointed a Call Committee. Members of the Call Committee to fill that pastoral vacancy. Members of the Call Committee are Chris Dawson, Kim Hendricks, Lynne Gilbertson, Joel Kimmelshue, Piper Brostrom, Pam Roberts, Gary Ely-Grisham, Bridget Malme, and Karen Ross. Their terms will conclude upon the call of our next Senior Pastor.

Executive Committee – Jerry Kilbert
Comprised of the Senior Pastor, President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer of the Church Council to run the business of the Council in-between monthly meetings.

Nominating Committee – Nick Zylstra
The Nominating Committee works alongside the Senior Pastor to nominate leaders to serve on Church Council and the Nominating Committee.

St. John's Ministries

Adult Faith Formation Ministry

Sunday Morning Education Hour – Susan Scott
In-between worship services at 10:15am every Sunday, adults are invited to gather in Oehler Hall for faith formation bible studies, presentations, explorations, and much more. Our Education Hour often focuses on a theme or scriptural text for a season, but there are always new opportunities sprouting up.

Wednesday Bible Study – Susan Scott
All are invited to join the mid-week bible study where we look at the readings for the coming Sunday's worship, following the style of Lectio Divina. Together, we wonder, wish and notice how these ancient words still speak to us. Some days we even look for what might be "shimmering" for us!

Luminaria New Member Class – Steve Schoff + Mary Robinson
Luminaria is our entry program into St. John's—it is how someone becomes a member of St. John's. If you are interested in knowing more about St. John's and this community of faith, joining Luminaria is the right choice for you. This involves so much more than a brief course on Reformation history, discovering where the bathrooms are and giving newcomers offering envelopes. Luminaria is a journey that intentionally seeks to open one's mind and heart into the life of faith as people make their way into our congregation. We believe it is how the church is supposed to be there for those new to the faith, or new to St. John's Members of Luminaria are called Lumens and are accompanied by Companions on their journey through the program. There are also several leaders that guide the journey and offer extra support. If you are interested in learning more about St. John's and this community of faith, find out more about Luminaria – the light of Christ that shines brightly in our midst.

LLL Book Club – Shelly Brassil
The Book Club meets on the 3rd Thursday of the month at 11:00am in the church library. Check out the Events page on the St. John's website to see what book the small group is reading and discussing this month. Everyone is welcome!

Congregational Care – Suzi Taylor
Congregational Care is a ministry that strives to provide compassionate caring for our members by nurturing body, mind and spirit. At St. John's, we hope to foster the health, healing, and wholeness of individuals, families, and the community. Congregational Care does not duplicate available services, such as nursing care, medical or community health services. It works as a collaborative partnership with these disciplines to offer resources, education and a communication network.

Eucharistic Ministers to Homebound – Suzi Taylor
The practice of carrying communion to the sick and homebound has been encouraged in the Lutheran tradition since 1978. St. John's Eucharistic Ministers receive training so that they may serve those who are absent from worship.

Parish Nurse – Suzi Taylor
Parish nursing, or the more recent term "faith community nursing," has a long and successful history in its connection to the health and well-being of members in faith communities across the country. It is a professional nursing role and provides physical, spiritual, emotional and social support. Our parish nurse is an advocate for health, healing and wholeness. She is available to listen to health concerns; to make referrals to congregational and community resources; to provide support when making health care decisions; and is available just to listen.

Outreach Ministry – Catherine Slabaugh catherine.slabaugh@stjohnslc.org
Joel Barkel joel.barkel@stjohnslc.org

Direct Services

Snack Stop – Linda Eytcheson
Every Wednesday and Thursday, and every second and fourth Monday of the month, from 2:00 - 4:00pm, the St. John's community offers a grab-and-go snack bag for anyone in need. These snack bags are prepared throughout the week and distributed in the afternoons by a group of volunteers. The Afternoon Snack Stop welcomes regular donations of: ritz fresh stack crackers, chewy fruit snacks, diced fruit cups, fruit and grain cereal bars, peanut butter packs, soft and chewy granola bars, and chicken salad. You can bring your donations to the St. John's office. You can shop for donations through our Amazon WishList, located on our website.

Pilgrimage Meal – Gail Graff-Blaha
On every first, third, and fifth Monday of the month from 2:00-4:00pm, the St. John's community hosts a hot meal for anyone in need. Meal preparations take place Monday mornings, and volunteers help set-up tables, serve food, and mingle with guests.

Midtown HART Respite – Karen Olson
Every Tuesday from 9:30am-12:30pm, Midtown HART, of which St. John's is a member of, hosts Respite Care in the Gathering Place of St. John's. This respite provides a safe space for our guests to rest, to recharge, to receive hospitality and connect with potential resources. We offer guests essential hygiene items and survival necessities like sleeping bags and mats. Also available are shoes, clothing, and at times bicycles. We invite you to learn more about Midtown HART, the Respite Care we offer, and how to support this life-giving work on our website.

Thanksgiving Meal – Terri Moore + Rita Blomster
The beloved St. John's Community Thanksgiving Meal is held on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving in The Gathering Place. This community-wide meal serves hundreds of our neighbors each year thanks to the generous spirit of volunteers from St. John's and beyond.

Mission Partners
We are in relationship with the following organizations - through volunteer service, financial support, or other various offerings. We invite you to learn more about them.

- California Lutheran University
- Central Downtown Food Basket
- ELCA World Hunger
- Global Refuge
- Lutheran Disaster Relief
- Lutheran Office of Public Policy - California
- Lutheran Social Services of Northern California
- Lutheran World Federation
- Mt. Cross Ministries
- My Sister's House
- Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary (PLTS)
- Rwanda School Project
- Sacramento Area Congregations Together (ACT)
- Saint John's Program for Real Change

Justice Making – Jenny Mohler
The Justice Making group has a mission of selecting and planning speakers, education/events, and book reads that intersect the areas of LGBTQ+, the unhoused, racial justice, and care for creation to help deepen understanding of how this work ties to our faith and the Mission, Vision and Values of St. John's.

Community Engagement Ministry – Catherine Slabaugh catherine.slabaugh@stjohnslc.org
Joel Barkel joel.barkel@stjohnslc.org

85+ Luncheon – Jo Hoffmeier
The 85+ Luncheon is an annual spring-time gathering that welcomes all St. John's members over 85 years of age, with a companion of choice, to a day-time luncheon - complete with Holy Communion, fun songs, birthday celebrations, and a group photo. The Community Engagement Committee hosts this event!

Oktoberfest
Launching in full robustness in 2024, the Community Oktoberfest partners with neighboring businesses to celebrate Oktoberfest. We welcome breweries, wineries, restaurants, and musical groups for an outdoor festival in late October.

Sunday Brunches – Jo Hoffmeier
About every three months, the Community Engagement Committee hosts a Community Brunch in the Gathering Place. These brunches typically help launch a new season or semester and offer unique themes as the entire congregation gathers in-between worship services at the 10:15am hour.

Library – Phyllis Ehlert
The Library team prepares new books and DVDs for our library, removes old ones, and keeps files up to date.

Worship Ministry – Steven Johnson steven.johnson@stjohnslc.org
Eliseo Paniagua eliseo.paniagua@stjohnslc.org

Altar Guild
The Altar Guild's work focuses on three major actions of corporate worship: proclamation of the Word, celebration of Holy Baptism, and Holy Communion. This ministry involves preparing the worship with appropriate appointments, vessels, elements, linens and paraments used in the service; preparing the altar for communion; changing the paraments to reflect the proper color for the day or season; laundering the altar linens; caring for the silver, brass, candles, and banners; and preparing for baptisms.

Greeters
Join a hospitable team of people who look for visitors and newcomers, welcoming them and helping them to feel at home.

Ushers
You can help provide a warm and hospitable welcome to all who worship to be disciples in fellowship. Ushers help hand out bulletins as people walk into the church, direct the congregation during communion and special activities, facilitate the collection of offerings, and direct worshipers if they have questions on Sunday mornings.

Lectors
Enrich the worship service by presenting the scripture lessons. Reading the Good News is a rewarding experience.

Eucharistic Servers
Eucharistic servers assist the pastoral staff in the sharing of the bread, wine, and grape juice during the Lord's Supper, a meal done in the remembrance of Christ at every worship service.

Assisting Ministers
Assisting ministers aid the leadership in worship. The group meets weekly via zoom to study texts and to write the prayers of the people.

Music Ministry – Steven Johnson steven.johnson@stjohnslc.org
Eliseo Paniagua eliseo.paniagua@stjohnslc.org

Sanctuary Choir
Our Sanctuary Choir performs a variety of sacred choral works and festival hymns that reflect the lectionary and occasional sacred anthems, providing the essence of our high worship service. Rehearsals are held on Wednesdays at 1:30pm.

Handbell Choir
The handbells have been ringing beautifully at St. John's for two decades. The handbell choir plays at least once each month, enriching our worship services and special events. Rehearsals are held on Monday nights at 6:30pm.

Cantors
If you have a desire to lead worship with your singing voice, this is a wonderful opportunity. This is an auditioned role and requires a meeting with the Director of Worship and Music for a vocal assessment.

Celebration Singers
Comprised of about 20 voices, Celebration Singers specialize in providing contemporary and classical settings of sacred choral music in four- and eight-part harmonies during worship. This group is an auditioned choir and requires a meeting with Steven Johnson for a vocal assessment. Rehearsals are held on Wednesday nights at 6:00pm.

Children, Youth + Family Ministry – Jeremy Kaetzel

Advent Festival
The St. John's community kicks-off the Advent season with the annual Advent Festival. Hosted by the Director of Youth and Family Ministries and a plethora of volunteers, the congregation gathers at the 10:15am hour in The Gathering Place to make beloved yule log advent wreaths, fun Christmasy crafts, shop at a Fair Trade Marketplace, and welcome the Christmas season.

Holy Week Day Camp – Elyssa Lakich
As many children and youth at St. John's are on Spring Break during Holy Week, we offer a Holy Week day camp - similar to Vacation Bible School. A three-day camp, Holy Week day camp incorporates a mix of Holy Week themed bible stories and activities, fun outings around Midtown, unique games and crafts, and uniquely fun time with St. John's staff. Holy Week day camp is run by the Director of Youth and Family Ministries and a plethora of volunteers.

Santa Lucia – Karen Bruce + Dagny Starn
Held mid-December, the Santa Lucia worship service and festival celebrates St. Lucy of Scandinavia and the light she brought to her community. A female high school youth applies each year to be the Santa Lucia, and a committee selects one individual who exemplifies the St. John's mission of "Living God's Love in the World" to serve in this role. Other female high schoolers join the Santa Lucia and serve in her court, and younger youth of all genders dress-up as Cookie Elves to help during the festival. The worship service is predominately youth led, and the Santa Lucia typically preaches the sermon. As the congregation follows the Santa Lucia outside, lit with a crown of candles, they travel to The Gathering Place for an hour-long festival centered around FUN! Santa Lucia, her court, and the young cookie elves deliver plates of homemade cookies to a beautifully decorated hall, we sing Christmas carols and hear Scandinavian-themed jokes, and we conclude with everyone's favorite tradition of dancing around the Christmas tree. This event is hosted by a sub-group of the Community Engagement Committee.

SPSYC
The Sierra Pacific Synod Youth Committee (SPSYC) is a synod-wide youth committee that many St. John's youth have served with throughout the past 15 years. SPSYC is a committee for high school aged youth who plan and lead retreats for Elementary-High School youth at Mt. Cross, serve as voting members at every Synod Assembly, and serve in other leadership roles throughout the synod. This year, four St. John's youth serve on SPSYC and youth have attended each Mt. Cross retreat they've hosted!

St. John's Nursery – Helen Disho
The St. John's Nursery is open for children under 5 years of age every Sunday during the 9:00am service, 10:15am education hour, and 11:30am service. Our highly qualified Nursery Attendants are in the Nursery every Sunday to welcome children into the space.

Kids' Worship Spaces
We offer a variety of worship spaces for children of all ages. The Kinderraum is located in the front right side of the sanctuary - our hope is that this space will allow kids to become engaged with worship. The Nursing Room is located next door to the Nursery, outside of the sanctuary, and is available at all times to nursing parents, complete with a private changing table.

Confirmation – Scott Mohler
The Confirmation Class is led by Pastor Jon Haug and longtime Sunday School teacher Scott Mohler, and is primarily for youth in grades 6-8th. They will invite youth to think more deeply about their individual faith lives, beyond just what their parents brought them up in. We do this through asking deep and meaningful questions related to a life of faith, and explore them together with their connection to scripture, tradition, and their own thoughts. In the Lutheran tradition, Confirmation serves as a "first act" of adulthood. Youth will experience fun activities, deep questions, prayer, time with each of our pastors, and community building while in Confirmation this fall. The Confirmation class meets on Sundays from 10:15-11:15am in the loft of The Gathering Place.

Scholarship – Ahnie Mosle
Each year, St. John's awards scholarships to deserving students who apply and are chosen by the Scholarship Committee. The scholarship program exists to assist qualified students who are members of St. John's Lutheran Church, Sacramento, CA. Two St. John's scholarships, each in the amount of $3,000, and one Lawson scholarship of $1,200, for those entering an education career, will be awarded.

Vacation Bible School
Vacation Bible School happens every summer at St. John's and is a 5-day, full-day summer camp for youth in Kindergarten-High School. The Middle and High School youth step into various leadership roles and are given opportunities to earn service hours and help lead some of the programming, but we often also welcome the staff of Mt. Cross Ministries to lead programming! Vacation Bible School is run by Mt. Cross staff, the Director of Youth and Family Ministries and a plethora of volunteers.

Sunday School – Elyssa Lakich
Sunday School at St. John's is divided into two classrooms. Kim Hendricks helps lead the Pre-K - 3rd grade class. In this class, Kim hopes that students will have fun learning about the Bible and develop a curiosity about their faith, and know that they are a vital part of the church family at St. John's. Elyssa Lakich, mother of elementary-aged twins and Sunday School Superintendent, will lead the 4th & 5th grade class as students dive deeper into biblical stories and prepare for Confirmation in the coming years. Eliseo Paniagua, Associate Director of Worship and Music, will continue to lead music during the Sunday School hour, as students will learn to sing and play fun musical instruments.

Order of St. John (Acolytes) – Betsy Long
Teenagers are invited to use their gifts and talents to serve at the altar of God by serving in the Order of St. John. They ring the bells, light the candles, lead processions, assist with communion, present the banners, hold altar books, lead the children to music practice and perform countless other tasks to assist the pastors each Sunday. The Order of St. John is open to anyone ages 10-18, and is a long-standing, beloved tradition here at St. John's. Youth serve on acolyte teams once a month and are an integral part of the worship leadership team. Joining the Order of St. John is a wonderful leadership opportunity that centers our young people in every worship service, as we continually strive to witness the diverse, unique body of Christ in all that we do.

High School Youth Group – Jeremy Kaetzel
The High School Youth Group welcomes youth in 9-12th grade for weekly gatherings, service projects, peer ministry, and summer trips. In addition to the many ways our high schoolers hold leadership positions and volunteer in other capacities throughout the church, we strive to provide a space for them to gather with their peers, too! The Youth Group gathers every Sunday at 10:15am in the Youth Room.

Administrative Ministry – Katherine Thorp katherine.thorp@stjohnslc.org

Finance – Michael Brassil
The Finance Committee is responsible for recommending financial policies and budgets to the church council that support the mission of St. John's Lutheran Church. The committee also reviews the organization's financial performance and provides general fiscal council.

Personnel – Anne Boynton
The Personnel Committee works with the Senior Pastor to address HR matters, update the employee handbook and policies, and support any hiring and conflict resolution processes.

Property – Kent Craney
The Property Committee meets with the Property Manager on a monthly basis to discuss the property condition, maintenance, and projects.

Stewardship – Linda Eytcheson
The Stewardship Committee works with staff to present a yearly campaign for members to give of their time, talents, and treasure.

Safety Taskforce – Rita Blomster + Linda Eytcheson
The Emergency Planning team is tasked with putting together a comprehensive emergency plan to prepare the greater congregation, small groups, and the leadership team if a crisis arises in the attempt to keep our campus safe at all times.

Facility Development Taskforce – Gwynnae Byrd
This group is charged with "examining the full inventory of property" owned by St. John's, with strategic attention to the possibilties of our campus in aligment with our Mission, Vision and Values.

Document Taskforce – Jenny Mohler
This group is charged "with the goal of organizing and establishing agreed upon expectations for church documents to ensure access, clarity, and retention to support church activities."

Fellowship Small Groups

Young Adult Group – Elizabeth Kaetzel
Our Young Adult group is a space for people in their 20s and 30s to gather, be in community, and explore their faith with others. This group gathers on the second Thursday of every month at a various restaurant, brewery, or park to gather in community.

Deborah Circle – Barbara Battenberg
The Deborah Circle is a Women of the ELCA (WELCA) small group who gather on the second Monday of each month in Oehler Hall from 11:00am-1:30pm. Together, the group partakes in a bible study, shares a meal, and always enjoys a delicious dessert! This is a great space to build community and friendships.

Esther Circle – Shelly Brassil
The Esther Circle is a Women of the ELCA (WELCA) small group who gather on the second Thursday of each month in a group member's home in the evening. The group partakes in a bible study, shares snacks and treats, and regularly collects an offering for mission partner organizations! A wonderful small group for women to participate in.

Knitting Circle – Christina Espegren
On the third Tuesday of each month from 5:30-7:30pm and first Sunday of each month from 12:30-2:00pm, knitters, crocheters, and all crafters are invited to the St. John's Knitting Circle! No formal instruction is provided, this is simply a space to craft together, learn from each other, and enjoy company. The Knitting Circle gathers in Cana Room each month.

Gather Sacramento – Elizabeth & Jeremy Kaetzel
Gather Sacramento is a faith community of young adults (18-35) in the Sacramento region. This community extends beyond our home church at St Johns Lutheran to bring together people from all faith traditions. All young adults from across race, faith background, gender, sexuality, and perspective are welcome here to meet, to be, to gather.

Pub Theology – Jenny Mohler, & Rob Sawyer, Kara Haug & Allen Siverson

Our Pub Theology group gathers at local coffee shops and breweries for fellowship and conversation centered a monthly topic. All levels of experience understanding and skepticism are welcome and valued! Pub Theology gathers once a month - on either Sunday afternoons or Thursday evenings. Be sure to check out our events page for the details on this month's Pub Theology!

Starting Over Group – Lyla Hanson

The Starting Over group gathers monthly for coffee, pastries, and life-giving conversation; widows and widowers who strive to support one another in this season of life.

Dinner Groups

While St. John's is a downtown/midtown church, its members come from all over the Greater Sacramento area. Dinner groups help to bring together St. John's members and friends in their own neighborhoods to get to know each other, develop friendships, and support one another.

If you would like to get involved with any of the Ministries or Committees listed, please reach out to the appropriate Director!