



## St. John's Lutheran Community

Spring/Summer 2024

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### Mission Statement

St. John's mission is to provide physical, emotional, social and Christian care for all people, with dignity and respect, in an environment of God's grace.

You'll find a *home* in our community.

St. John's Lutheran Community  
 901 Luther Place, Albert Lea, MN 56007  
 Phone (507)373-8226 • Fax (507)379-9506  
[www.stjohnsofalbertlea.org](http://www.stjohnsofalbertlea.org)



# Caring Times



## A Year of Reflection

Shanna Eckberg, NHA, MHA  
 CEO/Administrator

As I look back on my first year at St. John's Lutheran Community, I've seen many wonderful things happen. There have been transitions, improvements, challenges, and growth. As a firm believer in kindness and positivity, everything our team, residents, and families have experienced in the last 13 months is immense and was necessary to move forward.

We've solidified our commitment to our team members by focusing on a positive culture, retaining, recruiting, and engagement. We appreciate our team for their never wavering efforts for our residents, families, and each other. We have many initiatives that have been put in place, and more to come, to show our appreciation to everyone who comes to St. John's to serve.

In our residents' homes, we saw many transition to their new home at Fountain Lake while we look at ways of utilizing our Luther Place campus to serve a larger group of seniors throughout Freeborn County and the surrounding area. We've been able to offer temporary homes to our fellow community members when they have been in need and in turn, they remind us to have fun and live in the moment. 2024 has brought another annual survey

for our nursing home and we've seen our overall 5-star rating improve. We will continue to focus on this effort to ensure quality care occurs.

St. John's has been able to make some needed capital improvements at both the Luther Place and Fountain Lake campuses. We've added our Eagle Camera, with the never-ending support of our residents, the community, and families. New flooring, heating, and cooling, smooth walking paths, and other projects have aided in on-going resident satisfaction.

Looking forward to the coming months, St. John's is focusing on a strategic plan that will be a roadmap to guide us into the future. We are blessed to have an engaged board, community partners, friendships in the senior living community, and supportive families that will help us with these endeavors to continue to make us even better equipped to serve our residents.

Words cannot express my gratitude to our team, our residents, our families, and others for their love and support of St. John's Mission "to provide physical, emotional, social, and Christian Care for all people, with dignity and respect in an environment of God's grace."

**St. John's Lutheran  
Community  
Board Of Directors**

- Shane Koepke, *Chairman*
- Camilla Kolker-Sparks, *Vice  
Chairman*
- Mark Anderson, *Secretary*
- Jerry Noland, *Treasurer*
- Mark Light
- Brenda Wichmann
- John Holt
- Jim Munyer
- Rick Loberg
- Steve Schulz

**St. John's  
Foundation Board**

- Charles Reindal
- Joel Erickson
- Jerry Vogt
- Randy Nichol
- Corrine Tims

- Ascension Lutheran
- Bear Lake Lutheran
- Bethlehem Lutheran
- Central Freeborn Lutheran
- Community Lutheran
- Concordia Pickerel
- Lake Lutheran
- Cross of Glory Lutheran
- East Freeborn Lutheran
- Emmons Lutheran
- First Lutheran of Albert Lea
- First Lutheran of Ellendale
- First Lutheran of Glenville
- Grace Lutheran
- Hayward Lutheran
- Lunder Lutheran
- Mansfield Lutheran
- Moscow Lutheran
- Oakland Lutheran
- Round Prairie Lutheran
- St. Paul Lutheran
- Salem Lutheran
- Trinity Lutheran
- Trondhjem Lutheran
- West Freeborn Lutheran

# Serving Our Community

*Pastor Shane Koepke, St. John's Lutheran Community Board Chair*



Hello! My name is Shane Koepke and I am the Chairperson for the St. John's Board of Directors. I am proud to serve as we work with the administration and staff to provide the variety of care vital to Albert Lea. I joined the board a couple years ago and have learned so much about what it means to serve our community.

As I look out on the future of serving this community, I know that St. John's stays committed to upholding our mission statement: "... to provide physical, emotional, social and Christian care for all people, with dignity and respect, in an environment of God's grace." That last part, 'an environment of God's grace' is striking to me. God's grace, as I understand it, is a free and undeserved gift from God.

God's grace, then, comes to us in ways that are both without cost and undeserved. God's grace goes above and beyond. It is not satisfied with the status quo. Consistently, I hear residents say that they value the relationship with those who work at St. John's. Those who work at St. John's say something similar, that they value the time they get to spend with residents. It's a two ways street.

God's grace seldom stays with one, but radiates out to the whole community. From the ways you live, eat, socialize and make life happen, God's grace is a component of all that we do at St. John's.

We are, then, a community of grace-givers. People who know the value of being seen and heard, of being cared for and trusted. As the Easter season washes over you with newness of life, I pray that you keep watch for God's grace revealed in your part of the St. John's story. When you see it, speak up.

Find the abundance of God's grace freely given at St. John's.

***Peace in Christ,  
Pastor Shane Koepke***

## FEATURED EMPLOYEE

**Name:** Dixie Yost

**Position/title at St John's:** RN - Registered Nurse

**Years at St John's:** 24.5 years

**What makes you unique:** I have always wanted to work with the elderly. That started after I saw my Grandma Weckwerth take care of her mom and us at the same time.

**Tell us about your family members:** I am married; my husband's name is Chris. He is a stay-at-home dad due to a disability to our two ½-year-old



daughter, Amelia. Ameilia loves to be outdoors.

Sometimes, I can get her to nap when I lie to sleep for work.

**What are your hobbies or interests outside of work:**

My husband and I have a craft business, Gunther Farms, which is named after our dog. I knit and crochet, and he does the sewing.

**What do you like most about working at St. John's:** We work together and care for each other during and outside work.



# We're All In This Together

*Kathy Woodside, Director of Public Relations,  
Fund Development, and Volunteers*

"We are all in this together" is a powerful statement that reminds us that we are not alone in facing life's challenges. It encourages us to support and care for each other and to work towards a common goal. Our goal at St. John's Lutheran Community is to fulfill our mission: to provide physical, emotional, social, and Christian care for all people, with dignity and respect, in an environment of God's grace.

I've seen firsthand how we can help make our communities thrive individually and as groups. One recent example is during the Lenten season, we were in between chaplains. Pastors from some of the 24 sponsoring churches and retired area pastors stepped up and assisted with weekly services and bible studies. We are so grateful and proud of everyone who assisted and volunteered their time and talents with our

beautiful community. Another example of coming together to help our community thrive is when youth groups bless our seniors with homemade and thoughtful cards and visits. These little acts of kindness shared with our community are beyond meaningful and can make someone's entire day and even week better.

Another recent example was during our Eagle camera fundraiser, when we had individuals and groups donate to make this project come to fruition.

Together, we can achieve anything and have opportunities to make lives better in the process. Whether it's your unique skills, your time, or a financial contribution, your involvement can make a significant difference in the lives of our community members. Please consider this opportunity to contribute to our community!

Let's continue to stand together and help and support one another each day!

**Kathy Woodside**

**For more information regarding the St. John's Foundation please contact:**

Kathy Woodside at 507-473-1013 or Shanna Eckberg at 507-473-1011.

To make a gift to the St. John's Foundation, please send your tax deductible donation to:

St. John's Lutheran Community  
Attn: Kathy Woodside  
901 Luther Place  
Albert Lea, MN 56007

**Giving Options:**  
St. John's Foundation

St. John's on Luther Place

Knutson Place

St. John's on Fountain Lake

There are many different funds in which to donate, including but not limited to:

- Activity Fund
- Building Fund
- Chapel Fund
- Garden Fund
- Dietary Fund
- Maintenance Fund
- Specific Neighborhoods & Households

## SENIOR SPOTLIGHT

Joyce Halvorson is a long-time resident of Albert Lea. She resides at St. John's Lutheran Community, Fountain Lake Campus, Water's Edge apartments and loves living there. Joyce enjoys the company of other residents and staff and all the activities offered to her. She particularly enjoys exercise and music programs, as well as playing bingo.

Joyce likes to keep herself busy to stay out of trouble. Joyce will be turning 88 this year. Her family includes her late husband, Burton, of 66 1/2 years, three daughters (Cindy, Connie, and Joni), and seven grandchildren. It's interesting to note that four of Joyce's grandchildren are graduating from high school this year.



In her free time, Joyce enjoys listening to country and Christian music, reading her daily devotions, and reminiscing with old photographs. She also likes spending time with her family and having coffee and good conversations with her neighbors and friends at St. John's Water's Edge. Joyce's advice to everyone is to always live by the golden rule,

"Treat others the way YOU want to be treated."

Joyce is a wonderful tenant and neighbor. She always has a warm smile and is kind to everyone she meets. We feel blessed and honored to have her living in our community.

# SIGN ON BONUSES!

**RN's**  
**\$7,500**

**LPN's**  
**\$5,000**

**CNA's**  
**\$2,500**

**Referral Bonus**  
**\$1,000!**  
(Both new hire & employee)

**Interested in joining our team?**

**Contact St. John's at 507-373-8226 for information about job or volunteering opportunities!**

# Join our Caring Team!

*MaChar Kingstrom, Human Resources Director*



Hello, my name is MaChar Kingstrom and I have worked at St. John's for a very long time, 43 years! My last 20 years have been in the Human Resources department and

what an exciting 20 years! So many law changes and ups and downs from covid, we certainly have to stay on our feet.

What I have always admired about

St. Johns is how we promote staff within. Many employees working here have experienced starting in one department, maybe dietary, housekeeping or being a C.N.A and then given the opportunity to get more education through the scholarships that are offered and finding their way to a different career like LPN, RN, Dietary Manager and in my own case Director of Human Resources.

This last year we awarded over \$10,000 worth of scholarships to our staff that are finding a fulfilling career path in long-term care careers.

We recently reviewed and updated our wages, making them very competitive and honoring the hard work everyone does every day. We will continue to review this annually, determined to keep the great staff we have and encourage other great people to work here.

This past year it has been an honor to work with new additions to the leadership team that is very conscientious and forward thinking for the future of St. John's, making it, what I believe the best place to work in Albert Lea.

**MaChar Kingstrom**

# Welcome to Spring!

*Christina Farris, Activities Director*



Spring WAS in the air! Mother nature was teasing us this year and getting us in the Spring, or even

summer mood in February. We

have been testing out some new activities here at St.John's so far in 2024 and look

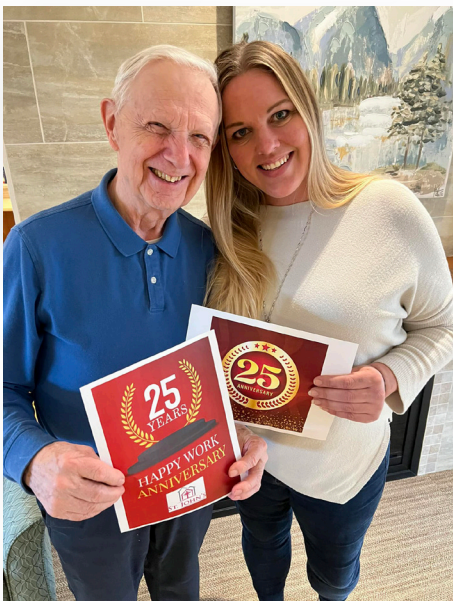
forward to more to come.

The residents and tenants of St.John's are being provided with regular entertainment, exercise, card games, happy hour, and yes...BINGO! We are excited for getting back in the garden, getting lots of fresh air, and hopefully seeing the flowers bloom soon! It is always such a day brightener when the sun is shining and people are getting outside, the smiles are contagious.

The activities and wellness staff are working hard as a team to make sure the residents and tenants get plenty

of time outside once the weather allows. We have already been hearing from local groups that want to enjoy the outdoors and the gardens with those living at St.John's.

We are praying that the change of season will bring a new chaplain for St.John's. In the meantime we are beyond blessed to have some local Pastors and community members help spiritually feed the residents of St.John's. It is great to see the community come together to worship the one who brought us all here. We wish you all a very Happy Spring!



Congratulations to Quin on celebrating her 25th Anniversary at St. John's Lutheran Community! Quin has served the St. John's community as a CNA, and TMA, and is currently working as an HUC. We are honored and proud to have you on our team of caring professionals. Thank you for your dedication and for the caring service you provide our senior community. Pictured here is Quin with her Father, Elmer!

*Cheers to*  
**25**  
*years!*

# Memorials & Gifts

## MEMORIALS & GIFTS

Designated memorials & gifts - Totaling \$47,899.35

### LIBRARY

**In Memory of Lavaun Houg**  
Given by Vickie Olsen

### CHAPEL

**In Memory of Fern Possin**  
Given by Jeanette Schoenfeld  
**In Memory of Harriet & Gilbert Larson**  
Given by Larry Larson  
**In Memory of Barb Sanderson**  
Given by Julie Gilbertson  
Given by Mark & Karen Sanderson  
Given by Roger & Kristy Paul

### GARDEN

**In Memory of Marlys Jensen**  
Given by Brandy Boettcher  
**In Memory of Marlys Jensen**  
Given by Carrie Seath  
**In Memory of Barb Sanderson**  
Given by Kevin & Patty Peek  
Given by Mary Ann Peterson  
Given by Charlotte & Thomas Madson  
Given by Linda & Randy Madson  
**In Memory of Hazel Senske**  
Given by Brandy & Michael Boettcher  
Given by Michael Dahnert  
Given by Diane & Gary Madsen  
Given by Scott & Sue Takekawd  
Given by Michael & Ariene Kelly  
Given by Dann & Barbara Heilman  
Given by David Christenson  
Given by Joe & Marcia Sczublewski

### WATERS EDGE

#### BIRDS/FISH

#### Special Gift

Given by Norm Fredin  
Given by Kathryn Knudson  
Given by Dave & Lorraine Horning  
Given by Gwen & Jerome Wuerflein  
Given by Gretchen Claussen

### WATERS EDGE

**In Memory of Mavis Abbe**  
Given by Norm Fredin  
**In Memory of Robert Pectorious**  
Given by Norm Fredin  
**In Memory of Doug Wichmann**  
Given by Norm & Joyce Fredin  
**In Memory of Wilma Pectorious**  
Given by Norm & Joyce Fredin  
**In Memory of Barb Sanderson**  
Given by Norm Fredin  
**In Memory of Hazel Senske**  
Given by Alice Jensen  
Given by Marion Martinson  
**In Memory of Al Stoa**  
Given by Mary Ann Martinson  
Given by Doug & Diane Wichmann  
**In Memory of Mavis Abbe**  
Given by Sharon Seidel

### WATERS EDGE

#### SPECIAL GIFT

Given by Anonymous

### MEADOWS MEMORY CARE

**In Memory of Robert Pectorious**  
Given by Jean Collins  
Given by Curt & Lorelei Guenther  
Given by Karen Olsen  
Given by Robert & Suzanne Nelson  
Given by Shirley & Laverne Strand  
Given by Fountain Lake  
Condominium Assoc.  
Given by Georgia Freidel  
Given by Dennis & Naoma Morrison  
Given by Frontier Family Farms  
Given by Craig, Tamyra & Stacy  
Williams  
**In Memory of Wilma Pectorious**  
Given by Charles & Julie Reindal

### ACTIVITY FUND

#### Special Gift

Given by Anonymous  
Given by Norm & Joyce Fredin  
**In Memory of Fern Possin**  
Given by Jeanette Schoenfeld  
**In Memory of Louise Pederson**  
Given by Rex & Lois Stotts  
**In Memory of Helen Knapp**  
Given by Gail Thurnau  
Given by Family & Friends  
**In Memory of Mavis Abbe**  
Given by Doug & Diane Wichmann  
**In Memory of Ray Ewing**  
Given by Doug & Diane Wichmann  
Given by Brandy & Michael Boettcher  
Given by Richard & Michele Harves  
Given by Virginia Loberg  
Given by Perry & Katleen Kuznar  
Given by Carol Ewing

### ACTIVITIES SPECIAL GIFT

Given by Harp Performers  
Given by Holiday Bazaar Proceeds  
Given by Bear Lake Lutheran  
Church WELC  
Given by Concordia Lutheran  
WELC  
Given by Trondhjem Lutheran  
Church WELC

### KNUTSON PLACE

**In Memory of Jon Nelson**  
Given by Don & Mary Ann Petron  
**In Memory of Marlene McDonald**  
Given by Alice Jensen  
Given by Daryl & Karen Flim  
Given by Paul's Guardian Service  
**In Memory of Marlene McDonald**  
Given by Kristina Drescher

### EAGLE CAMERA

**In Memory of Donald Booen**  
Given by David & Kathy Fredrickson  
**In Memory of Al Stoa**  
Given by Advanced Family Dental Staff  
**In Memory of Samuel Tempel**  
Given by Brandy & Michael Boettcher  
**In Memory of Barbara Sanderson**  
Given by Sharon Seidel  
**In Memory of Ariel Lois Lucille Talbot**  
Given by David & Kathy Fredrickson  
**In Memory of Helen Knapp**  
Given by Laura Cunningham

### EAGLE CAMERA SPECIAL GIFT

Given by Cynthia Peterson  
Given by Norm & Joyce Fredin  
Given by Joyce Halvorson  
Given by Richard & Phyllis Tavis  
Given by Joan Wittmer  
Given by Joy Behr  
Given by Dave & Lorraine Horning  
Given by Ashley Hollenback  
Given by Donald & Mary Petran  
Given by Bonnie Trampel  
Given by Virgil & Arlene Thofson  
Given by Bob & Patricia Goldman

### BUILDING FUND

**In Memory of Harriet & Gilbert Larson**  
Given by Larry Larson

THANKS  
FOR YOUR



DONATIONS

## MEMORIALS & GIFTS

Undesignated memorials & gifts - Totaling \$374,898.67

### Thrivent Giving Plus

Given by Anita Helland

### SPECIAL GIFT

**In Memory of Adrian Jensen**  
Given by Barbara Tullberg  
**In Memory of Dorothy Hanson**  
Given by Alice Jensen

### In Memory of Al Stoa

Given by Virgil Nylander & DeAn Krey  
Given by Larry & Lisa Jamieson  
Given by Intercity State Bank

### In Memory of Hazel Senske

Given by Janet & Paul Overgaard  
Given by Gregory P. Abraham  
Given by Timm & Nancy Hammond  
Given by Loreena Hilton

### In Memory of Delaine Kjos

Given by Jennifer Cooper

### In Memory of Robert Pectorious

Given by Alice Ryba

### In Honor of Carl Grandstrand

Given by Kay Madson

### SPECIAL GIFT

Given by Trinity Lutheran Church  
Given by Round Prairie  
Lutheran Church  
Given by West Freeborn  
Lutheran Church  
Given by Salem Lutheran Church  
Given by Grace Lutheran Church  
Given by Ascension Lutheran  
Church

Donations Made October 2023 through March 2024

# Thank You/Events



St. John's campuses were full of love on Valentine's Day, thanks to a celebration featuring fun music from Michael Riddle and tasty treats.



Thank you to one of St. John's sponsoring churches for spreading love and kindness in our community! Bear Lake Lutheran Church Sunday school students created beautiful Valentine's Day cards for our residents!



Thank you to everyone who donated food for our March food drive. All donations will go to the Little Free Pantry at Salem Lutheran Church and the Salvation Army in Albert Lea!

**Thank  
you!**



It was “open season” for “Deer hunting” at St. John’s! St. John’s tenants enjoyed tons of fun and laughter as they took a “shot” at team members (the deer) with Nerf guns!



It was the perfect day for a delicious “Picnic-themed” Lunch! Knutson Place tenants enjoyed good food and fellowship with friends and neighbors!





**ST. JOHN'S**  
LUTHERAN COMMUNITY

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN COMMUNITY  
901 LUTHER PLACE  
ALBERT LEA, MN 56007

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

NON-PROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
U.S. POSTAGE  
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PERMIT NO. 6  
ALBERT LEA, MN 56007

**4TH Annual**

# Sponsor a Garden

Everyone is welcome to participate!  
Individuals • Families • Churches • Businesses

**\$125 to sponsor one raised flower/garden bed**  
**\$75 to sponsor one flower basket/pot**



To Donate, contact Kathy at: 507-473-1013 or [kwoodside@stjohnsofalbertlea.org](mailto:kwoodside@stjohnsofalbertlea.org)

Many people enjoy the paths throughout both St. John's campuses, and many also notice that there are many raised flower beds and planter pots. These flower beds bring so much joy and happiness to our residents, tenants and visitors. With your family and loved ones, consider sponsoring a flower bed/garden or basket.