

Our Church

St. John Lutheran was organized on April 1, 1861. We are a located in rural town, 40 miles west of Milwaukee. Our membership consists of 307 baptized members and 243 communicant souls; we worship 121 families per weekend. Pastor Dean Zemple has been our senior pastor for 2 ½ years. He began serving as vacancy pastor in July of 2004 and accepted the call to become senior pastor just 3 months later.



Our Plan

The first step in our appeal at St. John was to ask 6 mission-minded members of our church to join our leadership team and to give a gift commensurate with their role in the appeal. After these initial gifts were collected for **Fan into Flame**, we personally visited 15 families who we identified as having a heart for giving toward missions. We educated our members through the use of pulpit announcements, bulletin inserts, newsletters and mailings. Additionally, we hosted 2 informative cottage meetings where our members were educated about *Ablaze!*, **Fan into Flame** and were invited to ask questions. Although we did not personally visit all 121 families who worship at St. John, every member was invited to participate on Commitment Sunday. Furthermore, we held a second Commitment Sunday the following weekend for those members who were unable to attend the first Commitment Sunday or who were still praying about their gift.

Our Results

Our members were truly inspired by the *Ablaze!* movement and responded by giving generously to **Fan into Flame**! Through the power of God's Spirit, we succeeded in surpassing our \$10,000 goal by 469%; raising a total of \$46,940 from 29 gifts! Our members gave an average gift of \$1,600! We feel truly blessed and are confident that new funds raised by our church will help to spread the Good News of Jesus throughout Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the Ends of the Earth!

Our Outreach Programs

Over the past few months we have generated several ideas for outreach efforts that we might fund with the \$6,337 dollars that we receive back from **Fan into Flame**. Recently, we have narrowed our focus for mission work to 2 possibilities. The first would be performing outreach at Mission of Christ Lutheran Church. Mission of Christ is a minority congregation located in downtown Milwaukee. It has a membership of 100 souls and an active social ministry. Our support would assist them in further developing and supporting their congregation. Our second option would be to assist in building a new church plant. The South Wisconsin District is contemplating implementing a new church plant north of Sullivan. We are considering designating the money that we get back from **Fan into Flame** toward this project. We will continue to prayerfully consider our options and will arrive at our decision shortly!

Dear Fellow Servants:

In November of 1838, 665 Lutherans left Bremen, Germany for America on five chartered ships. The local German newspapers viewed these Lutherans as “victims who were doomed to failure.” The German Lutherans settled in Missouri and became the founders of our church body. Were these Lutherans a failure? Hardly. By God’s grace that group has grown to 2.5 million members who worship in over 6000 congregations in the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod. In addition, we have 365 missionaries proclaiming the Gospel in 45 countries around the world.

Fan into Flame is our Synod’s campaign to collect offerings to expand our mission work within our local communities and around the world. Our congregation, St. John’s of Sullivan, had the privilege of participating in this campaign as a pilot congregation for the South Wisconsin District. We began a 12 week campaign for **Fan into Flame** in early August 2006.

By God’s grace our goal that we set for our member offerings was doubled by the 9th week of the campaign. As our member’s hearts were moved by God’s Word they saw the need for our church to reach lost people for Christ.

We recruited a committee of 6 people who had a heart for missions and the gift of giving. These individuals served as our leaders who set the tone within our congregation with their enthusiasm for **Fan into Flame**.

At St. John’s we used the **Fan into Flame** material to inform our members over and over again about our Synod’s mission work. We used worship services, newsletters, special mailings and small group gatherings to help our members grasp the importance of **Fan into Flame**.

Every member of St. John was given the opportunity to make a pledge for **Fan into Flame**. While not every member family was visited due to time, every member did receive a pledge card for their prayerful consideration.

We encouraged our fellow members to...

- Pray that God’s Word would reach the lost
- Participate in the small group *Ablaze!* gatherings of our congregation
- Provide a portion of their financial resources above their regular offerings

By God’s grace we were amazed to see our people respond. Not only did we double our original goal set for **Fan into Flame**, but we also saw our regular weekly giving increase. By the end of the campaign for **Fan into Flame**, our weekly offerings were ahead of our weekly needs for our ministry plan.

In 1517, Luther began the Reformation with his 95 Theses. May we continue the work of proclaiming the Gospel as we approach the 500th anniversary of the Reformation.

In His Service,

Dean Zemple