



OCTOBER 2026

What Makes Faith Relevant?



FROM OUR
PASTOR

Lately I have had a few conversations with some of the members of St. John's about the experience of attending confirmation class in their youth. I then ran across this article called "Why Do Some Americans Leave Their Religion While Others Stay?" The article was published by the Pew Research Center.*

If you want the full article, contact me and I will gladly send you the link. Here is an excerpt that I found particularly interesting and relevant:

This Pew Research Center report looks at the choices behind these decisions: why some people continue to identify with their childhood religion, why others have decided to leave it, and why others don't identify with any religion at all.

The findings about how many people switch religions come from our U.S. Religious Landscape Study (RLS) conducted in 2023-24. But to dig deeper into the reasons people give for switching or staying, we conducted a follow-up survey in May 2025.

The follow-up survey shows that most U.S. adults who still identify with their childhood religion credit the following as *extremely* or *very important* reasons:

- They believe the religion's teachings (64% of adults who identify with their childhood religion say this).
- Their religion fulfills their spiritual needs (61%).

Their religion gives their life meaning (56%).

Fewer say that other reasons – such as a sense of community (44%), familiarity (39%), traditions (39%), or the religion's teachings on social and political issues (32%) – are extremely or very important reasons why they continue to identify with their childhood religion as adults.

Among Protestants who have held onto their religious identities, 70% cite belief in their religion's teachings as a key reason why they are Protestant today. **Most lifelong Protestants also say they are Protestants today because their faith meets their spiritual needs and gives their life meaning.**

(cont'd)

May God continue to deepen our faith and as we— the children, youth, and adults—at St. John's continue to worship, study, and fellowship together.

Pastor Selena

** The Pew Research Center (also simply known as Pew) is a nonpartisan American think tank based in Washington, D.C. It conducts polls and data gathering research and analysis and provides information on social issues, public opinion, and demographic trends shaping the United States and the world. It states it does not take policy stances. It is a subsidiary of the Pew Charitable Trusts and a charter member of the American Association of Public Opinion Research's Transparency Initiative.*



Cheyanne Palmer	10/02
Curtis Moody	10/04
Susan Thomas	10/06
Cara Killey	10/10
Lucas Hallman	10/14
Dave Gottlieb	10/15
Mary Carlson	10/22
Cheryl Hearn	10/24
Reese Christopher	10/26
Gerry Gehrke	10/28



Adam & Amy Killey	10/01
Jackie & Brad Eade	10/05
Wayne & Cindy Karp	10/07
Doug & Linda Stahl	10/08
John & Sue Weber	10/08
Tom & Jackie Harmon	10/21

St. John's Lutheran Church Council Minutes - September 14, 2026

Members present: Bob Fraley, Connie Hamer, Mike Hamer, Cindy Karp, Wayne Karp, Joann Robinson, Pastor Selena Blackwell

- Bob read devotions on generosity based on Proverbs 13: 18-22
- Wayne called the meeting to order at 6:10 P.M.
- Connie made a motion to approve the consent agenda items. Cindy seconded. Motion carried.
- Bob asked why the fire extinguisher maintenance line item had doubled from the year previous. We will need to ask Scott.
- Mike pointed out that the line item for Lutheran World Relief Service Trip is no longer needed since the gathering and shipping facility is no longer operating.
- It was also noted that the line items for Church Intern Endowment and Seminary Scholarship Endowment Fund should be revisited.
- In Scott's absence Wayne pointed out items from the Treasurer's report based on off notes Scott had provided him.
 - ◆ Check Detail Report – No unusual or high expenditures
 - ◆ Statement of Financial Condition – Checking account balance \$114,145.90
 - ◆ Budget (January – August contributions) - \$127,865.74 which is 58% of targeted budget
 - ◆ Monthly contributions for August were \$13,157
- Committee Reports
 - ◆ Fellowship/Hospitality: There will be fellowship the first Sunday in October. A pumpkin workshop sponsored by Ivy Oaks is scheduled for October 11th. October 25th is Glory Way gospel quartet. It was decided to replace the Christmas dinner in December with reserving a room at the Village Courtyard.
 - ◆ Finance: Scott has begun working on a budget for next year.
 - ◆ Mission/Stewardship: See report
 - ◆ MOG: Total funds \$601,438.77. Funds available in the money market \$87,366.40
 - ◆ Parish Education: September 20th Sunday School begins. Confirmation begins September 16th with four students.
 - ◆ Property: The washing machine at the parsonage needs replacing. Joanne made a motion to purchase a new one. Mike seconded. Motion carried.
 - ◆ Worship: See report. Much discussion as to whether to keep the worship time at 9:45 all year round. The council will discuss with congregation members their thoughts.
 - ◆ Tech: Mike was able to recycle the old desktop computer which was under his desk by taking it to Best Buy.
 - ◆ Endowment Fund: The committee met recently and approved paying out \$10,000 to many recipients.
- Pastor's report
 - ◆ The Synod has asked pastors to consider attending a professional leadership conference.
 - ◆ Pastor has been invited to speak at a Women's workshop in Michigan
 - ◆ Planning for Advent has begun.
 - ◆ Council and Pastor agreed to begin including children's sermons beginning in October.
- Connie moved to adjourn the meeting. Joanne seconded. Meeting was adjourned at 7:52 P.M.

In God's service,
Bob Fraley

Community Fellowship Feast

October 27, 2026 · 4:30-6:00pm

St. John's Lutheran Church

235 S. Green Street · Somonauk, IL 60552

815-498-3667 · office@elcastjohns.org



**Free meal to anyone from
surrounding communities!**

All Are Welcome!

Volunteers are needed for:

Food preparation and table setting

Serving and cleanup

Sign up sheets are in the Welcome Center.

WORSHIP COMMITTEE MINUTES 9-6-26

Present: Pastor Selena, Toni Lundeen, Julie Horsch and Cindy Karp. Started our meeting at 10:00 am.

Rally Day is on 9-20-26. Sunday School will be at 8:30am and Service Time changes to 9:45am. We are interested in Council's opinion on leaving Service time at 9:45am permanently year round.

Recently a question came up about Christmas Eve service being changed to a later time so that people who work can attend. We thought what we can do is let the congregation vote. Have it at 4:00 pm like we've been doing for quite a while now or change it to 6 or 7:00pm.

It was decided we will continue having a church picnic the first Sunday in August.

The piano has been put on the back burner for a while now. Maybe it's time to start thinking about it again, it's not sounding too good. It could be tuned again if we could find someone who would do it, but nobody knows how long that would last. Not sure if Brad or Doris Miller still have the pianos they wanted to donate, we would have to find out. A new piano would be very costly.

Community Feast is on Tuesday, 10-27-26.

Christmas Eve is Thursday 12-24-26 with a service. Christmas Day, 12-25-26 there will be no service.

We ended our meeting at 11:00am.

In God's service, Cindy Karp

Rebekah Circle

Date: Thursday, October 15, 2026

Time: 1:00 pm

Location: St. John's Fellowship Hall

Lesson: Encounters with Christ

Session #3, page 40

Hostess: Nancy Maroscia

LWR Lutheran World Relief Work Days

October 13th

9:00 am to 3:00 pm Bring a Lunch

October 14th

9:00am to 3:00 pm Bring a Lunch

We wish to thank everyone who has contributed to the Lutheran World Relief Shipping Fund. The monies from this fund get the quilts and kits from the warehouse to the needy people all over the world including in the United States. It cost approximately \$4.00 to get a quilt or kit to where it is needed. St. John's crew will be delivering the quilts and kits that we have completed to Zion Lutheran Church in Rockford on October 3, 2026, to load the LWR truck there. You can still add your offering to your regular envelope or use a blue envelope. Whichever you use, be sure to mark it **Shipping Fund.**

The workdays of October will be busy as it seems people are donating items from their house cleanouts. We always need good, clean sheets(any size). We will also use blankets and mattress pads. Remember clean and pet-hair free! After sorting the donations, many of the items need to be taken apart in some way. Then they are sized as backs or centers to complete the 3-piece set to be tied. After tieing, they are stitched around and put in the box for the next Ingathering. School bags and blocks need to be cut and Baby Care Kits need to be assembled. Many jobs for many people. Please come join the crew for some good fellowship and a sense of helping our neighbors less fortunate!

GOD'S WORK, OUR HANDS!



MEETING

Stewardship Committee

8:45am Wednesday, October 7



Worship Committee

1:00pm Wednesday, October 7



Church Council

10:45am Sunday, October 11



Rebekah Circle Meeting

1:00pm Thursday, October 15



Endowment Committee

6:30 pm Thursday, November 19



Wednesday, Sept. 30th

Wednesday, Oct. 28th

Friday, Nov. 20th

Tuesday, Dec. 15th



**Look for the sign up sheets each
month in the Welcome Center**

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
October 2026				
4 8:30 Sunday School & Adult Forum 9:45am Worship CROP Walk—2pm Registration @ 1:15pm United Church of Sandwich	5	6	7 8:45am Stewardship 1:00pm Worship Mtg. 6:30pm Confirmation @ Salem	
11 8:30 Sunday School & Adult Forum 9:45am Worship 10:45am Church Council Meeting	12	13 LWR Workday 9:00am-3pm	14 LWR Workday 9:00am-3pm 6:30pm Confirmation @ Salem	
18 8:30 Sunday School & Adult Forum 9:45am Worship	19	20	21 6:30pm Confirmation @ Salem	
25 8:30 Sunday School & Adult Forum 9:45am Worship 6:00PM GLORY WAY CONCERT	26	27 COMMUNITY FEAST AT ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN 4:30-6:00 PM	28 10:00am Reading Buddies 6:30pm Confirmation @ Salem	

	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3 5:00pm Worship
	8	9	10 5:00pm Worship
	15 1:00pm Rebekah Circle	16	17 5:00pm Worship
	22	23	24 5:00pm Worship
	29	30	31 5:00pm Worship

GLORYWAY

MUSIC



A MESSAGE THAT MATTERS.

DATE: Sunday, October 25th

TIME: 6:00 PM

LOCATION: St. John's Lutheran Church
Somonauk, IL Free will donation appreciated



glorywaymusic.com



@glorywaymusic



glorywaymusic@aol.com

Church Staff

A. Administration

- i. Office Secretary: Julie Horsch

b. Business

- i. Financial Recorder: Mike Hamer
- ii. Treasurer: Scott Horsch

c. Facilities

- i. Building Superintendent: Diane Wold

d. Worship

- i. Accompanists: Jessica Ortega, Toni Lundeen,
Becky Stephens, Margaret Page

Church Council

President: Wayne Karp
Vice-President:
Secretary: Bob Fraley

Congregation Council

Mary Carlson
Mike Hamer
Connie Hamer
Cindy Karp
Joanne Robinson

Lutherdale Bible Camp Representatives-2026

Karol Grandgeorge, Nancy Miller

Synod Assembly Representatives-2026

Wayne & Cindy Karp

Cemetery Ministry Team

Bob Fraley, Glen Reuter, Doug Stahl

Endowment Ministry Team

Marion Gaffney, Dan Denault, Ward Hearn, Cara Killey, Wendy Merkel

Finance Ministry Team

Chuck Hoepe,
Bob Mueller, Joanne Robinson

Memorial and Other Gifts Fund Team

Kathy Anderson, Connie Hamer, Linda Johnson, Adam Killey
Jerry Lundeen, Nancy Miller, Anita Milligan

Church Ministries & Organizations Contacts

Altar Guild

CROP Walk: Mark Lee & Mike Hamer

Growing Hope: Jerry & Toni Lundeen

Global Missions: *In need of leadership*

Habitat for Humanity: Karol Grandgeorge

Hearts & Hands:

LSSI Christmas Hope Chest: Karol Grandgeorge & Julie Horsch

LWR Projects (Mission Quilts, Baby Care Kits, School Kits,

Personal Care Kits, Sewing Kits): Karol Grandgeorge

Meals on Wheels: Mark Lee

Midwest Shelter for Homeless Veterans: *In need of leadership*

Our Sharing Pantry: Jerry Lundeen

Prayer Chain: Karol Grandgeorge

Parish Education

Confirmation

- a. Primary Instructor—Scott Horsch, Maury Killey
- b. St. John's Congregational Council

3N1: 7—12 gr. Youth Ministry:

Coordinators:

Youth Ministry Connection from St. John's—Julie Horsch

Esther Circle:

Rebekah Circle: Connie Hamer

Sunday School Coordinator: Nancy Miller

Chairpersons/Ministry Summaries

(Listed alphabetically by ministry)

Cemetery Ministry: Bob Fraley

Oversees the care of the church cemetery, maintenance and improvements.

Communications Ministry: Bob Fraley

Seeks to improve communication with members and the community.

Fellowship & Hospitality Ministry

Plans activities and recreational outings to promote friendship and fellowship in our congregation and community.

Finance Ministry: Scott Horsch

Proposes the budget and administers incoming and outgoing funds.

Outreach Ministry:

Reach out to the community by welcoming new neighbors with bread, hosting/participating in community events, following up with visitors, and bringing God's love to St John's 'special members' from cradle roll through the homebound.

Parish Education Ministry:

Oversees Sunday School Program, Summer Bible Day Camp, and youth related activities.

Property Ministry:

Oversees the care of the church facilities and grounds, maintenance and improvements.

Stewardship /Missions Ministry:

Provides opportunities for members of our congregation to use their gifts and resources, which includes raising funds for special projects. Provides a variety of opportunities to do God's Work with Our Hands. Organizes activities, publicize events and coordinate participation. Please join us in any way that works for you.

Worship Ministry: Cindy Karp

Striving to provide Spirit filled worship opportunities in an atmosphere of hospitality.

Newsletter of St. John's Lutheran Church October 2026

Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America
God's work. Our hands.



We're on the Web:
www.elcastjohns.org

235 South Green Street
P.O. Box 245
Somonauk, Illinois 60552

Church Office 815-498-3667
office@elcastjohns.org

Follow and like us on Facebook

*[www.facebook.com/stjohnslutheran
churchsomonauk/](https://www.facebook.com/stjohnslutheranchurchsomonauk/)*