St. John's Lutheran Church
monthly NEWS & INFORMATION
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
NOVEMBER 2026

FROM OUR PASTOR

What Makes Faith Relevant?

"I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth." 1 Corinthians 3:6

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.

Cont'd

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.**

I give thanks to God for the many ways that St. John's continues to live out your faith through worship, service, and friendships. I especially give thanks for the parents, leaders, and teachers of our Sunday school and confirmation classes, and for the seeds of faith they are planting and watering in our children and youth. I also give thinks to the Adult Sunday School and all the other Bible study programs and for all the ways St. John's nurtures the faith of one another. 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.*

Kherington Killey	11/01	Karen Mander	11/16
Diane Wold	11/02	Mary Bark	11/21
Rhea Lumsden	11/03	Mark Lee	11/29
Marian Larson	11/04	Patrick Eaton	11/30
Robin Raupp	11/04	Keelee Beal	11/30

Bob & Darla Fraley	11/06
Daniel & Renee Hallman	11/09

St. John's Lutheran Church Council Minutes - October 11, 2026

Members present: Bob Fraley, Connie Hamer, Mike Hamer, Scott Horsch, Joanne Robinson, Pastor Selena

* Mike Hamer read devotions. "Follow where I lead".
* In Wayne's absence Bob called the meeting to order at 11:02
* Connie made a motion to approve the consent agenda items. Mike seconded. Motion carried.
* Scott presented the treasurer's report.
  - Our bank account balance of $118,233.67 is higher than a year ago.
  - Our monthly revenue of $13,689.76 continues to be lower than needed.
  - Our contributions through September are negative $24,939.64 in meeting our budget.
  - Connie asked Scott if money was sent for K8 school supplies, last month's giving emphasis. He said yes.
* Committee reports
  - Fellowship – October is busy: Ivy Oaks Pumpkin workshop, Glory Way concert, Fellowship dinner
  - Outreach – None
  - Finance – Scott will have a preliminary budget by November
  - Missions/Stewardship – See report. It was decided to send out a letter to members in the Fall.
  - MOG – None
  - Parish Ed – Confirmation going well.
  - Property – Diane Wold requested the carpet be cleaned in the sanctuary and welcome center and that the new grease trap be checked. It was recommended to check it after the first three months. Council gave their approval. Bob will let Diane know.
  - Worship – The piano replacement issue was brought up again. Bob presented some figures and options Toni Lundeen had researched. Another option discussed was to look into the donated piano offer of one of our members. Bob will talk with Toni and Cindy.
  - Scott mentioned a hidden cost increase with the copier machine due to the number of copies/ month being produced.
* Pastor's report
  - Visiting is going well with more being scheduled.
  - There were some visitors this morning who Pastor and Maury welcomed.
* Council encouraged everyone to promote the upcoming Glory Way concert.
* Joanne made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Connie seconded. Meeting was adjourned at 11:40.

In God's service, Bob Fraley

Rebekah Circle

Date: Thursday, November 19, 2026	Time: 1:00 pm
Location: St. John's Fellowship Hall	Lesson: Hungry Hearts
Session #1, page 30	Hostess: Connie Hamer

Stewardship/Mission Minutes 10-7-26

The October Stewardship meeting began at 9:06 a.m. with Karol Grandgeorge and Connie Hamer present.

The September minutes were approved.

Michael's offering report for September was: General Fund - $13,516.59; Capital Fund - $1138.60; LWR Shipping Fund - $1148.72 (+ $1000 from Endowment); LWR School Kit Supplies - $100; LSSI Giving Tree - $1000 from Endowment.

CROP was held on Sunday, Oct. 4th sponsored by United Church of Sandwich. Mark Lee reported that $915 was collected +$1000 from the St. John's Endowment Fund which then totaled $1915.

Mark reported that we have not been called for assistance from Meals-on-Wheels so we are taking it off our task calendar.

LWR update: 5 vehicles went to the ingathering at Zion Lutheran Church in Rockford on Saturday, Oct. 3rd. We delivered 507 school kits, 82 quilts, and 90 baby care kits (60 boxes). Drivers were Ward Hearn, Karol Grandgeorge, Wayne Karp, Connie Hamer, and Mike Hamer.

Robin Raupp continues with plans for the Fellowship Feast (Tuesday, Oct. 27th). Pulled pork sandwiches with cole slaw will be made by St. John's. The other churches will provide desserts and hot dishes. Two Thrivent cards were received to use for food and supplies. Sign-up sheets for working, both on the 26th and 27th, were put out.

Karol will do the LSSI Giving Tree (LSSI Holiday Hope Chest) article for the November newsletter. We requested 22 names: 5 adults and 17 teens and children with 3 requests per person and the gift card list. Diane Wold will put up the tree on Nov. 1st and Karol will make the 66 tags. All gifts and cards must be returned by Nov. 29th. Gifts will be picked up by Dec. 4th.

Connie will do the Safe Passage article for December as well as the annual report, task calendar, and emphasis calendar.

November has traditionally been commitment month for St. John's. Last year, we sent a letter to parishioners, but no pledge cards. We will talk with council about this year's ideas.

The next Stewardship/Mission meeting is Wednesday, November 4th at 8:45 a.m. We adjourned at 10:00 by praying The Lord's Prayer.

Worship Committee Minutes 10-7-26

Present: Pastor Selena, Julie Horsch, Toni Lundeen

Toni received price options for new and used pianos from Cordogan's Pianoland in Geneva. Julie will get more info on the status of the baby grand piano that Brad Haas is willing to donate.

Advent Season is just around the corner. Advent Morning Prayer services will take place on Tuesday mornings during Advent. Pastor Selena will lead. We will again use "Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah" for the lighting of the Advent candles each week.

Christmas Eve Worship will be at 4:00pm. It was too late to change the time as it is difficult to find a musician. Brad Haas will be our accompanist this year. Council will talk about doing a congregational poll for next year's service time.

Twice a month during Sunday morning worship, Nancy Miller or Pastor Selena will lead a "Lesson for All Ages" between the reading of the Gospel and the sermon. They will be on the first and third Sundays of each month.

We adjourned at 1:57pm

Next meeting will be Wednesday, November 4th at 1:00pm.

United Church
of Sandwich is hosting the
Community Thanksgiving Service
on Sunday, November 22nd at 6:00pm
A community choir is being put together that is open to anyone interested. There will be one rehearsal one hour before the service on the 22nd. Please let Julie or Pastor know if you'd like to sing so enough music can be arranged.

LWR Lutheran World Relief Work Days

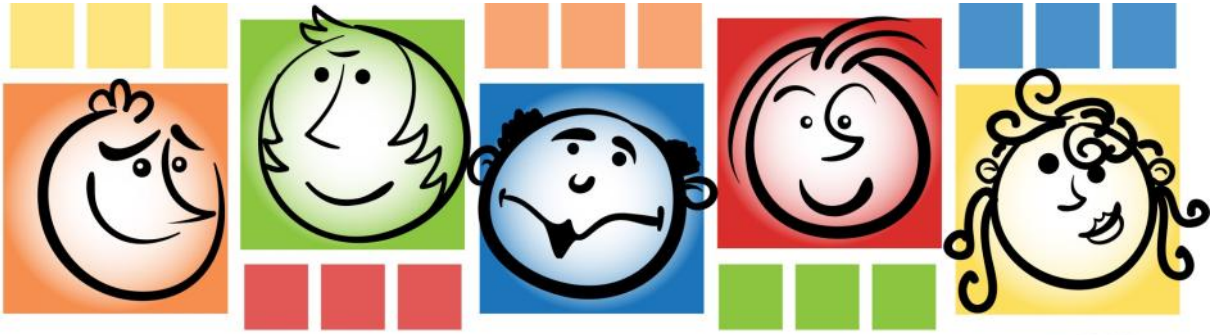
November 10th **9:00 am to 3:00 pm Bring a Lunch**

November 11th **9:00am to 3:00 pm Bring a Lunch**

On October 3, five vehicles left St. John's parking lot about 8:00 am to travel to Zion Lutheran church in Rockford. We delivered boxes of Quilts, School Backpacks and Baby Care Kits to the Semi truck for Lutheran World Relief. Even though we were there shortly after they opened, we waited for quite some time to be unloaded. Some vehicles ahead of us had a few boxes, others were trucks pulling trailers that were full of boxes. We pray all of these items get to a needed destination!

The workdays of November will be busy with sorting, cutting schoolbags, tying quilts and making Baby Care Kits. Remember we always need good, clean sheets(any size). We will also use blankets and mattress pads. They need to be clean and pet-hair free! Check local thrift stores and rummage sales for sheets! 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. School bags and blocks need to be cut and Baby Care Kits need to be assembled. We wish to thank the sewers at home who make many of the quilt tops. Your work is much appreciated! Many jobs for many people. Please come join the group for some good fellowship and a sense helping our neighbors who are living through a disaster!

GOD'S WORK, OUR HANDS!



MEETING

Stewardship Committee
8:45am Wednesday, November 4

Worship Committee
1:00pm Wednesday, November 4

Church Council
10:45am Sunday, November 8

Rebekah Circle Meeting
1:00pm Thursday, November 19

Endowment Committee
6:30 pm Thursday, November 19

Friday, Nov. 20th
Tuesday, Dec. 15th

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

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	
1	**2**	**3**	**4** 8:45am Stewardship 1:00pm Worship Mtg. 6:30pm Confirmation @ St. John's	
8 **8:30 Sunday School & Adult Forum** **9:45am Worship** 10:45am Church Council Meeting	**9**	**10** LWR Workday 9:00am-3pm	**11** LWR Workday 9:00am-3pm 6:30pm Confirmation @ St. John's	
15 **8:30 Sunday School & Adult Forum** **9:45am Worship**	**16**	**17**	**18** 6:30pm Confirmation @ St. John's	
22 **8:30 Sunday School & Adult Forum** **9:45am Worship** **Community Thanksgiving Service—United Church of Sandwich—6:00pm**	**23**	**24**	**25** 6:30pm Confirmation @ St. John's	
29 **8:30 Sunday School & Adult Forum** **9:45am Worship**	**30**			

	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	5	**6**	**7** 5:00pm Worship
	12	**13**	**14** 5:00pm Worship
	19 1:00pm Rebekah Circle 6:30 Endowment Committee Meeting	**20** 10:00am Reading Buddies	**21** 5:00pm Worship
	26	**27**	**28** 5:00pm Worship
			November 2026

LSSI GIVING TREE

We will be doing the LSSI Giving Tree again this year as in the past during the month of November. We will be hanging paper ornaments on a tree in the Welcome Center. On the back of each ornament will be a person's name, age and desired gift. We have asked for 12 children's names, 5 teenager's name and 5 adult's names. The names are to be delivered to us before November 1st, so hopefully the tree will be up by that weekend. We ask that you pick a name and go shopping for that gift and return it to the large box near the tree. Please DO-NOT wrap the gift and be sure to securely attach the tag to the gift. All of the gifts must be returned by the **last weekend in November**. We will also be getting a list of gift cards that are needed and we will make that list available on the tree. The gift cards should be placed in a plain, white envelope and placed in the box. They will not have names on them. Gift wrap and ribbon donations are also accepted. If you would like to help, but cannot shop, you may place a donation in a blue envelope and mark it LSSI Giving Tree. The money will be used to purchase some extra gift cards. Thanks in advance for your help. You may contact the Connie Hamer at 815-739-6207 or Karol Grandgeorge at 815-370-0883 with questions. Let's make this year a huge success like last year was!!!

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—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
November 2026

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

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