



COME AND SEE!

Sunday School is in session.

Confirmation is meeting.

Bible studies are underway.

Fall worship is ongoing.

Music is being played, bells are being rung, and hymns are being sung.

Baptisms, funerals, and weddings are happening.

Advent is around the corner. Christmas is coming, and the excitement is building.

There is fellowship after worship.

You can watch our services online.

Support for the food pantry continues.

Worship services are held at Maplewood and The Pines.

Quilts are being made.

And so much more.

COME AND SEE!

In the Gospel of John, chapter one, Jesus tells his new followers, "Come and see" (John 1:39). This simple phrase is still the invitation Jesus gives to us today. Jesus isn't just announcing the kingdom of God—he's building a community and inviting us to be part of it. That invitation calls us to live into our baptisms. We are baptized into Christ's life, death, and resurrection, and we live that out in community.

Here at St. John's, we are the body of Christ in the world. We worship, pray, sing, learn, laugh, and cry together.

A loving community also invites others to come and see—to surround visitors with good cheer and a warm welcome. But this community doesn't just gather; it also goes out—to watch, to serve, and to help. As Christians, we are called to action, not complacency.

As I write this letter, Karen and I have been part of the St. John's community for six weeks. There are so many wonderful ministries here, serving all ages and reaching beyond our walls. It's a beautiful reflection of Jesus' command to love our neighbors as ourselves. I am truly honored and humbled to be part of a church that is making a difference.

Some years ago, a former bishop asked a church I belonged to if the community would miss it if it disappeared. When I think about that question for St. John's, I can confidently say that the community would notice our absence. You are making a difference.

We continue to accept God's invitation to partner with Him in building the kingdom—here and now. Our faith keeps us moving. Our works, freely given out of love, are exactly what the world needs.

Jesus still invites us to come and see. So, we come to worship, our faith grows, and our love for neighbor takes action. This is what a community that walks with God looks like. And that, friends, is worth seeing. **Peace,**



ANNUAL
MEETING

St. John's Congregational Meeting to approve the 2026 Budget and approve the nominated members to the Parish Planning Council is Sunday, November 9th immediately following the 8:00am worship service (approximately 9:00am). A more itemized listing of the various board budgets is available in the church office.

Plan to attend this important meeting. Your voice counts!



Parish Planning Council Members:

Executive Director	Nancy Passehl	(608) 219-1936
Assistant Exec Director	Marv Hupp	(608) 370-2657
Secretary	Cathy Yanke	(608) 434-4869
Treasurer	John Brennan	(608) 469-8786
Evangelism Board	Gwen Ringelstetter	(608) 643-6922
Fellowship Board	Cathy McAlexander	(402) 689-5196
Lay Ministry Board	Gina Varley	(608) 963-0325
Member-at-Large	Roger Seymour	(608) 588-3198
Parish Education Board	James Newman	(608) 512-7623
Properties Board	John Ballweg	(608) 220-3894
PR and Social Concerns	Melani Wheeler	(608) 963-9540
Stewardship Board	Todd Wyttenbach	(608) 513-9797
Women of ELCA	Eunice Yanke	(608) 643-8289
Youth Board	Tracy Pape	(608) 574-0577
Youth Member-at-Large	Sean Jager	(608) 643-2439

The Staff:

Please call the church office first when possible **(608) 643-2439**

Pastor: Tom Kreis tom@stjohnssaukprairie.org

Pastor: Sally Williams sally@stjohnssaukprairie.org

608-643-7810 **(home)**

Director of Music: Ruellene Seymour

ruellene@stjohnssaukprairie.org

Youth Director: Penny Johnson penny@stjohnssaukprairie.org

Custodian: John Hines john@stjohnssaukprairie.org

Office Administrator: Aletha Ballweg aletha@stjohnssaukprairie.org

Financial Secretary: Bruce Fritsch bruce@stjohnssaukprairie.org

Sunday School Superintendent: Dale Clason

sundayschool@stjohnssaukprairie.org

St. John's Lutheran Church: (608) 643-2439

www.stjohnssaukprairie.org

Like us on Facebook at St Johns Lutheran Sauk Prairie

*Mission Statement: Christ, our strength and refuge,
calling us to serve*

St. John's Lutheran Church
100 Oak Street
Prairie du Sac, Wisconsin 53578



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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our strength
and refuge,
calling us
to serve

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Sauk Prairie Area Food Pantry

Food, paper products and cleaning supplies may be brought to the table in the gathering area at any time. These items are distributed to many families in the Sauk Prairie community. The food pantry always needs:

- Toilet paper
- Condiments (especially ketchup and mayonnaise, jelly)
- Baking mixes (such as muffins and pancakes)
- Box meals (e.g., Hamburger Helper)
- Canned meals (e.g., spaghetti, ravioli, etc.)
- Baking supplies (white and brown sugar, flour, oil)
- Diapers – sizes 4, 5 and 6

Thank you for helping others in our community.



Birthday Greetings

We hope you take a moment to send greetings to the following people who have birthdays in November. The day is in parentheses.

Shirley Uttech (9)
3125 Smith Road, Apt 315
Fairlawn, OH 44333

Macel Magnussen (10)
1050 Prairie St.
Prairie du Sac, WI 53578

Vi Bohler (12)
N750 Golf Road #3
Prairie du Sac, WI 53578

John Laughnan (19)
930 Prairie St, Apt 215
Prairie du Sac, WI 53578

Janis Klaetsch (22)
886 Prairie Street
Prairie du Sac, WI 53578

Dale Haroldson (23)
930 Prairie St., Apt 211
Prairie du Sac, WI 53578

	Women of the Church News	
	<u>Lydia Circle</u> Thursday, November 13, Carol Mallon's House, 1617 Fjord Circle, PdS	1:00pm
	<u>Martha Circle</u> Thursday, November 6, at St. John's library, Marilyn Herschleb, Hostess	9:30am
	<u>Ruth Circle</u> Monday, November 10, at St. John's library, Marian DeGiovanni, Hostess	9:00am
	<u>Sarah/Mary Circle</u> Tuesday, November 4, at St John's library	9:30am

In October there were 21 ladies who attended Circle Meetings. Darlene Holl Mary Weeks, Marian DeGiovanni, and Kathy Lester led the study. The third lesson on money, stewardship and generosity will be "Generosity: There's a Wideness in God's Mercy." Darlene Holl, Patty Barritt, Marian DeGiovanni, and Kathy Lester will lead this lesson.

Kathy Lester, Darlene Holl, Marian DeGiovanni, Gloria Moles and Ruth Dresser attended the South-Central of Wisconsin Synodical Women's Organization ELCA at New Heights Lutheran Church in Mazomanie on Saturday, October 4th, 2025. Kathy Lester attended the early voter's meeting at 7:00 a.m. We are grateful to Kathy for attending the early meeting.

Kathy's report is as follows: "I would like to thank the St. John's Women's Organization for electing me to be the voting member at the business meeting held on October 4th in Mazomanie prior to the Biennial Convention and Gathering. From a total of 133 congregations in the Synod, there were 14 congregation representatives and 10 board members who attended the meeting as voting members. Donna Peterson, from Dodgeville, the current president called the meeting to order. The main order of business was to elect the new board to serve for two years. Those elected were Leslie Oldenburg from Whitewater, President, Diane Ehrke Luginbuhl from Cambridge, Vice President and Elizabeth Boxel from Watertown, Secretary. There was no one who came forward to be Treasurer so they will continue looking for someone. Meanwhile Sandy Seffrood, the current Treasurer, will carry on and offered to work with a new candidate. The board members elected were Leah Klotz from Watertown, Janean Hill from Mazomanie, Pat Nicholson from Sun Prairie and Alene Olson from Wisconsin Dells. Alene is from the Sauk-Columbia Conference that St. John's is a member of and will be a good connection when our conference has our annual gathering next April right here at St. John's. There will also be a student from Platteville who will be part of the Campus Ambassador

Pilot Program as a member of the board. She will also attend the Triennial Convention next summer in Iowa representing the organization. The officers and board will meet regularly to conduct the business of the organization and report back to the congregations. After approving some resolutions recommended by churchwide the meeting was adjourned."

The rest of us got there before 9:00 and enjoyed coffee and refreshments before the meeting started at 9:30, which started with a worship service. Our Rev. Kathy Matthews-Risley welcomed us with an opening prayer. Rev. Peter Beeson brought greetings from the Bishop's Office. Kathy Risley gave a short sermon on what Jesus said in Luke: 17:5-10. "If you have faith the size of a mustard seed....." We are living in a world of upheaval and change. It is so important to support each other in prayer and find the time to get together and laugh. Then there was a blessing on the in-kind offerings that all of the churches brought in and also the regular offering. WE STAND WITH YOU IN LOVE was the theme of the day. Bible Verse: Prov. 4:20-22: My child pay attention to what I say. Listen carefully to my words. Don't lose sight of them. Let them penetrate deep into your heart for they bring life to those who find them and healing to the whole body."

The Keynote Speaker was Kathleen Jensen, who is the founder and creator of the "The Little Heart Project." The project's Mission Statement is "Preventing suicide one heart at a time through serendipitous words of encouragement." Prevention of Suicide was the main topic of her talk. One of her two daughters (who were both wonderful in every way) started dating a guy who abused her. She came home with bruises on her face....and she told the police that her father had done it. The father was put in jail, and this went on for a long time, and it was all so devastating for the speaker that she had thoughts of suicide all the time. This is when she started the "Little Heart" project. We had all received a bag of crocheted hearts along with the other materials we received for our meeting. Each heart had a tag which has a phone number (988) that you can call if you have thoughts of suicide. Every tag also has a saying on it, such as "it's okay if it takes time for this mountain to be climbed", "Kindness is free", "Value those you love: What if you really knew how special you are?" Many people have been helping her with making the hearts and her project quickly spread across Wisconsin and the U.S. and around the world. Things are better now with her daughter and her husband and by helping others, things are better for her too. For more information, the website is <https://www.the.littleheartproject.org/>

There was also a salt shaker in our bag of meeting materials. WELCA's fundraising team has launched a new appeal for last year's fundraising gap. We are not just called to give our "first fruits" but to offer them with seasoning. We define salt as a verb: Share Abundance, Love and Thanks (SALT). Consider adding a little SALT TO OUR DONATION TO WELCA. Donate by check to WELCA, Gift Processing Center, PO Box 1809, Merrifield VA 22116-8009. Put SALT in memo line.

There were workshops before and after lunch. Climate Justice: We can all make a difference in doing everything we can to save the planet. Chair yoga; The Little Heart Project; Making Bookmarks to trade/swap at the 2026 Triennial convention in Des Moines, Iowa, July 16-19.

As we have said many times, the PENNIES FOR POVERTY Jar on the name tag table is in connection with this meeting. We are allowed to give to a charity in our own community. We will keep the jar there for the remainder of the year. This money will go to 6:8 and we are hoping that we will be able to reach an amount as much or more than we collected in the jar last year (\$503.) This is a very worthy cause and 6:8 does a lot for our community.

The Thankoffering Service will be on Sunday, November 23rd. This is as special opportunity to honor God by thanking Him for all He has done for us. Put your donation in an envelope marked THANKOFFERING. There will be a marked basket outside the sanctuary for this purpose. The offering goes to the National WELCA organization and provides funds for World Hunger, global ministries, and other important programs.

Ruth Circle is visiting Special Friends during October and November.

The Bible Study Leaders Meeting for December will be on Tuesday, November 25th at 9:00 a.m.

Remember to read the Special Prayer found in this Visitor on November 20th.

WELCA Pennies for Poverty Jar

We remind you to look for the Penny Jar on the name tag table each Sunday and donate! Little coins can add up to big amounts! The offering will be given to 6:8 in conjunction with the WELCA 2025 Biennial Synodical Convention and will be out for the remainder of the year.





Thank You, LORD!

Thanksgiving Eve Worship Service

First United Church of Christ will be hosting an ecumenical Thanksgiving Eve. service this year on Wednesday, November 26th. We will share details as they are made available.



Thanksgiving Community Meal

The Sauk Prairie Community will host a free Thanksgiving Meal on Thursday, November 27 at St. Al's school gym. All are welcome!

St. John's has been asked to help provide pies for this meal. We have been asked not to provide pumpkin pies since they contain eggs and are a health risk. Fruit pies are a big hit and are highly encouraged. If you are able to donate a pie (or two) please bring your pie to St. Al's gym by 3:30pm on Wednesday, November 26.



Fellowship Committee

Thank you to everyone who has contributed goodies for our Sunday coffee time. If you want to add to what is being served, feel free to bring your item and add it to what is being served. If you would like to donate all of the treats for a Sunday(whether homemade or purchased) please contact Cathy McAlexander (402-689-5196) so that we can plan accordingly.

Please continue to volunteer and sign up to serve coffee to your church family. It's fun, it's easy and we are here to help. You can find the sign-up sheet posted on the kiosk in the foyer.

Since the last submission, the Fellowship Committee decorated the serving table with bright colors in recognition of Sunday School Rally Day, celebrated Hank Elsing's birthday with cake and ice cream provided by Hank, honored Pastor Tom and Karen at a Welcome Reception, placed Pastoral prayer calendars in the foyer for church members to pray for our pastors during Pastor Appreciation Month, and honored our church members who are 90 years of age and older on October 26.



A huge thank you to the Mobile Meal volunteers for again sharing your time and kindness with our neighbors!

Dan Lovell
Kim Langer
Steve Barritt
Rich Frey
Bryce Lauer

Kathy Lovell
Mike Langer
Patty Barritt
Kris Frey
Nadine Lauer

Deb Corrao
Jane Calenzo
Holly Kindschi
Deb Treinen



H.E.L.P.—Red Sled Project

Help Excite Little People will be collecting gently, used toys and items for teens this holiday season. The program is based out of the First United Church of Christ, Sauk City, but has become a community-wide project. All items donated are distributed to children/teens that are in need in the Sauk Prairie area. Donations should be taken to the Washington Avenue entrance of First United and placed in the bins inside the door. The collection will run through Sunday, December 7.



Sauk Prairie Area Caring Tree

St. John's is part of the Caring Tree community-wide effort to reach out to those in need during the Christmas season. You may pick a tag from the Caring Tree set up in the gathering area. Most tags have ideas for hoped-for gifts for a particular child identified only by a number, age, gender, and size. You purchase the gift and return it unwrapped with the tag attached and leave it under the tree.

Other tags ask for gift cards for local restaurants or more general "stocking stuffer" items that are appropriate for children, teens, or adults.

The Caring Tree also accepts financial gifts to allow volunteer shoppers to purchase gifts. Watch for the marked envelopes on the tree. The deadline for returning gifts to St. John's is Sunday, December 7.



Dear Friends in Christ,

Not long ago we had around 40 youth and chaperones board a bus to Treinen Corn Maze for an evening of getting lost! As I proudly shared upon return, “We came back with the same number as when we left the church. I’m not sure if they’re the same people but we got the same number!” (My tween often reminds me I’m not as funny as I think I am.)

Walking through a corn maze in the fall can be both fun and frustrating. The paths twist and turn. Sometimes we hit dead ends. Other times, we think we’re making progress only to find ourselves back where we started.

Life can feel the same way.

We make plans, only to face unexpected turns—illness, loss, doubt, or change. We wonder if we’re lost. Sometimes we really are lost. But with faith, we trust in a God who doesn’t just watch from above—God walks with us.

Even when we can’t see the full path, God’s Word gives us enough light for the next step. And through Jesus Christ, we know the path ultimately leads to grace, not because we navigated life perfectly, but because He already has.

In baptism, God has claimed us. In Holy Communion, God nourishes us. And in every twist and turn of life’s maze, God remains our faithful guide.

I invite you to take some time to reflect on times when you have felt lost in your life. How did God show you the way? Who did God use to bring you comfort and hope?

You never know when you go around another bend how God might show up - as a neighbor, a kind stranger, a prayer, a smile, a rambunctious teenager. In those mazes in life, look for how God shows up to guide you so you can keep going.

As the Psalmist says:

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”
(Psalm 119:105)

Blessings,

With Sincere Sympathy



We offer our condolences to Doug and Donna Nelson on the death of Donna's mother, Gloria Nolden. We also offer our condolences to her grand- and great-grandchildren: Brian and Miranda Nelson; Kevin, Kia, Eldin and Rosalind Nelson; Nicole Nelson; and Jason Nelson.

Please keep these families in your prayers.



BAPTISM

We welcomed a sister into the family of Christ through baptism during the month of October.

Brinley Irene Fuchs, daughter of Adam and Bailey Fuchs was baptized on October 19, 2025. Braelyn's sponsors are Mackenzie Leister and Travis Henn.

Please keep her in your prayers as she begins her journey in faith.



Just Bakery baked goods will be available for purchase on Sunday, November 16 between our worship services. A great way to add some special treats to your Thanksgiving feast!



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Thank you to all who helped at the funeral for Almay Nelson. The pastors, organist, custodian, kitchen help, and office coordinator. All made our loss less stressful. God bless you all.
~ The family of Almay Nelson

Dear St. John's Family,

A belated note of thanks for all the prayers, cards, flowers & visits during & after our recent hospitalizations & return home. Tony is now having extra support from SSM Hospice at home, & Marian hopes her knee replacement on 11/26 will add some increased speed to caregiving! We have been uplifted & blessed by your kindness!

~ Marian & Tony DeGiovanni

A huge thank you to the many you have supported and comforted us through the loss of Gloria Nolden (Donna's mom) and Almay Nelson (Doug's mom). We are blessed to be a part of this church family and our family so appreciates the many kind words and gestures.

~ The Nelson family: Doug & Donna, Brian, Nicole, Kevin & Kia, and Jason.

A sincere thank you from me to all of you at St. John's, the Sauk Prairie Community Club, along with the Sauk Prairie Kiwanis, Sauk Prairie Lions, and Sauk Prairie Optimists for being one of the Sauk Prairie Community Service Award recipients. What a beautiful program and party that night at the Dorf Haus.

~ Eunice Yanke

We are grateful for the wonderful work all our PPC members have done this past year. Some of those leaders will be leaving the council this year. Gina Varley, Todd Wyttenbach, Roger Seymour, Cathy Yanke and Tracy Pape have all finished their terms on the Council and will step aside.



MEETING

Congregational Meeting

On November 9, after the first service, we will have a congregational meeting to approve our 2026 budget, elect members to our Parish Planning Council (PPC), elect three voting members to attend the Synod Assembly in 2026 and to elect three congregational members to serve on our Nomination Committee for 2026.

We will be voting to fill the open positions on our PPC. Our nominees are: Stewardship Board – Anne Klinkner, Member-at-Large – Mary Weeks, Secretary – Audrey Luetscher, Lay Ministry Board – Josie Fentress, and Youth Board – Charlie Kruchten. Current PPC members who are eligible and interested in a second two-year term include: Evangelism Board – Gwen Ringelstetter, Fellowship Board – Cathy McAlexander, Parish Education – James Newman, and Youth Member-at-Large – Sean Jager.

We will also vote on congregational members to attend our Synod Assembly next spring/summer. We need three adults and can have one youth member. Our nominees for Synod Assembly Voting Members and nominees for the Nomination Committee will be taken from the floor on the day of the meeting.

If you are interested in filling any of our open positions or would like to attend the Synod Assembly as a voting member representing St. John's, please see one of the pastors, Nancy Passehl or Nancy Kaufman. All active members of St. John's are invited to attend this important meeting (the ELCA defines "active members" as those who have both given of record and communed at least one time in the previous year.)

Reading of the Congregational Meeting Minutes

In lieu of the reading of the minutes from the November 17, 2024 Congregational Meeting, the minutes are listed here. Please take the time to read through them before attending the meeting on November 9, 2025. You will have an opportunity to ask questions and/or make corrections at that meeting.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING November 17, 2024

(In building and via Zoom platform)

PPC Executive Director, Nancy Kaufman, confirmed at least 50 members were present and called the meeting to order 8:58 am. The purpose of the meeting is to approve the 2025 budget, vote on nominees for the Parish Planning Council, approve nominating committee members for PPC recruiting, and approve Synod Assembly volunteers.

The minutes of the October 2023, Congregational meeting were published in the November Visitor as well as in the November 3 and 10, 2024 Sunday bulletins in lieu of reading them at the meeting. Motion to approve the minutes as provided was made by Donna Nelson and 2nd by Brian Weeks. Motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Nancy described the 2025 budget changes that were printed and available for review in the bulletin. She pointed out those most significant changes including the administration budget that include salary expectations for a new senior pastor. The salary budgeted follows the synod's guidelines for salary which is based on years of experience. Health insurance premiums increase each year, and the youth trip was in 2024, so there will not be that expense in 2025. A motion to approve the budget was made by Janelle Hupp and 2nd by Tracy Pape. Motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Nancy thanked our outgoing board chairs (Lon Kaderavek, Ellen Jorgenson, Anne Klinkner, Donna Nelson and Nancy Kaufman) for their years of service. She then moved on to list nominees of Nancy Passehl to Executive Director, Marv Hupp as Assistant Director, John Brennan as Treasurer, John Ballweg for Properties, Melanie Wheeler for PR and Social Concerns. There is an opening for the Stewardship Board Chair. A motion to approve the nominees was made by Jayne Carlson and 2nd by Marilyn Herschleb. Motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Third, we approved the nominating committee to recruit members for additional PPC members that includes the Lead Pastor, Nancy Kaufman as the outgoing PPC Director, three congregational members (self-nominated) that include Mary Weeks, Dale Haroldson, and Donna Nelson. Three PPC members will be determined. A motion to approve the nominees was made by Marv Hupp and 2nd by Melanie Wheeler. Motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Our final topic was to accept nominations for attendees to the Synod Assembly in May 2025. We can send 3 adults (either 2 males and 1 female or 2 females and 1 male), 1 young adult (under 30 years old) and 1 high school youth. Our Lead Pastor and Pastor Sally are both voting members. Alice Chenoweth self-nominated and nominated her husband, Joe. Jordan Small self-nominated for the under 30 category. Nancy Kaufman will find an additional person to attend. A motion to approve the nominees was made by Megan Tarnutzer and 2nd by Alexi Suchla. If any adult over 30 or a high school youth is interested, please contact Linda Hines in the church office.

An update on the call committee progress by Nancy included Interim Pastor Jason will be with us through the end of January. The last two years have been busy and included building issues including heat and AC, new roof, carpeting, and intern/not an intern/intern again, hired a financial secretary, and Pastor Fred retired. We look forward to the next years that will include a new pastor as well as our future and changes that will happen in the transition. Jerry Kaufman made the motion to adjourn the meeting and was 2nd by Donna Nelson. Director Nancy Kaufman asked if there were any objections and after receiving none, she adjourned the meeting at 9:11 am.

Respectfully submitted, Cathy Yanke

PROPOSED BUDGET

PROGRAM	APPROVED 2025	BUDGETED 2026	% CHANGE
Administration	\$481,750.00	\$428,666.00	-11.02%
Lay Ministry	12,200.00	9,350.00	-23.36%
Evangelism	600.00	500.00	-16.67%
Stewardship	2,700.00	2,400.00	-11.11%
PR & Social Concerns	3,350.00	3,000.00	-10.45%
Parish Education	13,710.00	12,070.00	-11.96%
Youth Board	5,700.00	4,800.00	-15.79%
Fellowship	3,000.00	2,400.00	-20.00%
Properties	49,450.00	63,800.00	29.02%
Lutheran Church Women	2,500.00	2,250.00	-10.00%
Benevolence	52,250.00	45,400.00	-13.11%
Total	\$627,210.00	\$574,636.00	-8.38%

Adult Education

This month we will shift our focus from gun violence prevention (we will return to it!) and look at some different topics. Sunday, November 9 we will talk about the use of pronouns. Why do you see the 'she/her/hers' in the Zoom boxes? What's up with 'they/them'? What does it mean and why is it important? Please note that this class is not debating the use of pronouns, but instead striving to grow in understanding and respect.

Sunday, November 16 & 23 we will talk about how to have hard conversations with family and friends who have opposing viewpoints. Politics, religion, and money are only some of those topics that can ruin a good Thanksgiving meal. Let's talk more about this together!

Adult Ed will not meet November 2 or 30.

Even with the focus shift, with gun deer hunting season just around the corner, there is a great education opportunity for new (and seasoned) hunters presented by the Wisconsin DNR. Classes on hunter safety are offered both online (free) and in person (\$10). For more information, visit [Safety Education | Sign up for a safety education course | Wisconsin DNR](#).

A prayer for hunters as they enter the hunting season (from the East Central Synod of Wisconsin/ELCA):

*O God, thank you for your creation,
for the land that sustains us,
the game that feeds us,
and the hunt that blesses us.
Grant us wisdom to be safe.
Grant us the patience for a clean shot,
so that we might be good stewards of
every life you give. Amen.*

Sunday School News

Christmas Program

Our annual Sunday School Christmas Program will look a little different this year! It will be on Sunday, December 14th **during the 10:30am worship service**. Students will have dress rehearsal during the normal Sunday School hour, then move into the program.

Please rsvp your students' involvement asap! We look forward to celebrating the birth of Christ together through scripture and song!

Thank you to our Singspiraton leader Dave Sweeney, JoAnnah Sorg, and our Parish Education Board for their work in creating and coordinating the program.

Sunday School Schedule

There will not be Sunday School classes on Sunday, November 2nd or 30th due to Fall break and the Thanksgiving holiday.

Offering

We invite our Sunday School students and families to bring donations for the food pantry as their offering each week. Items can be placed on or under the table by the nursery in the Sunday School wing.

Middle and High School News

Confirmation Classes and Fellowship Meal

Prior to each confirmation class, all are welcome to join us for a delicious meal, and we ask for a \$2 contribution per person. We also need folks to help with the work: The Set-Up Crew works 4:45-5:45PM, Clean-Up Crew works 5:45-6:45PM, and we also seek desserts. The sign-up sheet is in the kitchen at church. This month, there will be no class on Nov. 19 (Second Mentor Night) and no class on Nov. 26 (Thanksgiving Eve Service). You can find the full confirmation calendar at <https://tinyurl.com/ConfirmCal>

Potato Peeling for Sauk Prairie Thanksgiving Meal

Is your student looking for a fun volunteer activity? St. John's is gathering a team of helpers to contribute to the Sauk Prairie Thanksgiving Meal. We need 25 students to help peel potatoes, from 12 Noon-1:00pm on Wednesday, November 26. Even if your kiddo doesn't need an activity, please consider helping a good cause in our community. Many chaperones are needed too! There is no better way to feel the blessings of God than to help others. Register at <https://tinyurl.com/popeeling> and bring your own peeler.

Mentor Night

St. John's confirmation students will have their next Mentor Night on Wednesday, November 19, 2025. Students and their mentors can find all lessons at <https://tinyurl.com/StJohnsMentor>. You may meet at any location or have an online meeting. If you cannot meet on the date above, please arrange for alternative date during this same week. We are deeply grateful to all adults serving as mentors to our Youth! It is a great way to share God's love and experience God's blessings together.

Ninth Grade Community Outreach

The ninth-grade students will have their next community outreach activity in place of class on Wednesday, November 12. We'll meet at Maplewood Village at 6:00pm to play Bunco with the residents. Please plan to drop-off and pick-up your student at Maplewood Village. Penny will be there at 5:45pm if you need to arrive early. We are so proud of students for doing this outreach and modelling the life that Jesus showed us – to love one another. Email Penny if you have any questions.



Coats for Kids

St. John's is working with Concordia United Methodist Church to collect winter wear for children in need in the Sauk Prairie School District. Please keep this in mind as you clean out your closets this fall. Bring your gently used coats, boots, hats, mittens, scarves and gloves to the back area of the coat room. We need all sizes. Items will be picked up on November 16th. Thank you.

SPECIAL PRAYER

We invite you to repeat the following prayer on November 20th:

Almighty God,
from whom all thoughts of truth and peace proceed,
kindle in the hearts of all men the true love of peace,
and guide with Your pure and peaceable wisdom
those who make decisions for the nations of the earth;
that in tranquility Your kingdom may go forward,
till the earth be filled with the knowledge of Your love;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

- Christian Prayer

PARISH PLANNING COUNCIL MINUTES

DATE: October 7, 2025

Present: Nancy Passehl, Tom Kreis, Sally Williams, Gwen Ringelstetter, Marv Hupp, Eunice Yanke, Tracy Pape, James Newman, John Brennan, Cathy McAlexander, Todd Wyttenbach, Sean Jager, Cathy Yanke

Absent: John Ballweg, Roger Seymour, Gina Varley, Melani Wheeler

Call to Order/Opening Remarks:

Meeting was called to order at 6:07 p.m. by Nancy Passehl. Nancy P asked for approval of the agenda. Motion to approve was made by Eunice and 2nd by Tracy. Motion carried. A devotion/prayer was then given by Pastor Tom.

Secretary Minutes:

The September minutes were submitted online by Cathy Yanke. A motion to approve minutes was made by Marv and 2nd by Cathy M. Motion carried.

Treasurer report:

The committee reviewed and discussed the September 2025, Treasurer Report submitted by John Brennan.

September report numbers

Current Month Income	Current Month Expenses	Current Month Balance	Year-to-Date Income	Year-to-Date Expenses	Year-to-Date Budget
\$42,079	\$41,505		\$422,818	\$404,753	\$468,907

Stewardship Sunday prep

-What do we do for the community? Celebrate our victories.

-What could we do?

-Between our people and our church we are wonderful citizens.

-Could we do our sound system? Does anyone have any connections that could help make this possible.

A motion to approve the financial report was made by Tracy and 2nd by Sean. Motion carried.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Evangelism:

Gwen Ringelstetter reported:

- No photographer has come forward yet for Pet Blessing, or New Member Installation.
- Will be working on getting 2025 senior class list & addresses. Then sending out Graduation Kits.

Fellowship:

Cathy McAlexander reported:

- We have celebrated birthdays at coffee time and are preparing to serve a welcome coffee on Oct12 for Pastor Tom's installation.
- Praying for pastor's sign up sheets are out

Lay Ministry:

Gina Varley reported:

- No report provided

Parish Education:

James Newman reported:

- September 21st was rally day for Sunday school
- October 5th was Bible Sunday
- October 5th was the hayride.
- This month we start preparing for the Sunday School Christmas program.

Properties:

John Ballweg reported:

- Mayberry Electric will replace the rheostat for the sanctuary ceiling fans along with the two light fixtures in the sacristy.
- Hellenbrand Glass visited the week of 9/22/25 and finished adjusting the panic bars and latches on a couple of the front doors. All exterior doors now seem to be in good shape.
- We went to the parsonage where Pastor Tom showed us a door and an exhaust fan that needs attention.
- Pastor Tom was shown the boiler room and the closet with all the controls for lights, fans, etc. in the sanctuary - and given a quick tour of how things worked.
- We identified several maintenance projects for which we should get bids and/or complete within the next year.
- The snow removal contract from Frosch Tree Service was accepted for this winter.

PR & Social Concerns:

Melani Wheeler reported:

- Connie Henry has been working with Sally and Jacki Frosch and a few others doing a wonderful job with our Gun Violence

Prevention. I have ordered the book Violence 101 if anyone wants to review/read.

- Just Bakery back in full swing!!

Stewardship Board:

(Anne Klinkner/Todd Wyttenbach) reported:

Introductions This was Pastor Tom's first stewardship meeting. Members introduced themselves and presented a short overview of what our board does.

Old Business

- **Budget follow-up and Congregational meeting date**

The Parish Planning Council approved the budget, and the annual meeting will be held on Sunday, November 9, 2025 after the 8:00 AM service.

New Business

Annual Financial Review Timing will take place on Wednesday, February 4, 2026 at 5:30 PM. All members of the Stewardship Board are invited to be present. Cathy and Anne will contact the review team members used for the 2024 Annual Financial Review.

- **Fall Stewardship Campaign.** Stewardship Sunday will be held October 19, 2025. John Brennan will prepare and deliver the Stewardship Sunday Temple Talk this year. The focus will highlight our local, national, and international mission work that is done by our congregation while still emphasizing the need for funds to keep our building open and the related administrative costs that allow us to fulfill our mission.
- The format for the Time and Talent Survey will remain the same as last year.
- The pledge card will not be used this year.
- The mailing/distribution plan is as follows: The letter and Time and Talent Survey will be mailed to those without email. For others emailed with the Friday Notes. Hard copies of the Time and Talent Survey will be placed on a table in the Narthex.

During 2026, our Stewardship Display in the Narthex will highlight our accomplishments and missions with the intent to educate people and encourage increased giving.

During our November meeting we will review the Administrative Manual for its annual review.

Women of ELCA:

Eunice Yanke reported:

- Lutheran World Relief kits were shipped in September. The numbers were as follows: 414 Quilts (438 total made), 32

Sewing kits, 77 Baby kits, 116 Personal Care kits, and 200 School kits

- Five ladies attended the WELCA Biennial Convention on October 4th at The Grove in Mazomanie
- Pennies for Poverty offering will be collected for the remainder of the year in connection with the convention, but sent to 6:8
- Thankoffering service will be Sunday, November 23rd
- St. John's will be hosting the Sauk/Columbia Conference meeting on April 26, 2026
- Ruth Circle will visit Special Friends in October and November.
- The Bible Study Leaders meeting for November will be on Tuesday, October 28th at 9:00 a.m.
- Please see detailed meeting minutes in the October Visitor.

Youth Committee:

Tracy Pape reported:

- At the September meeting, we took a few minutes to go over the August meeting notes again since attendance was low that month. This helped make sure everyone was up to speed. Looking forward to the October meeting.

Member at Large:

Roger Seymour reported:

- No report provided.

Youth member at Large:

Sean Jager reported:

- The marching band goes to state on the 18th.
- The music department has their fall concert on the 20th.
- Midterms are also this Friday.

Pastor Reports

Tom's Report:

- My integration into St. John's is progressing smoothly. I am deeply grateful for the exceptional guidance from Pastor Sally and the entire staff as I become oriented to St. John's. Pastor Sally and I have focused on job delegation, finalizing the preaching schedule, coordinating worship at the Pines and Maplewood care centers, and establishing a schedule for member visitations.
- I commend St. John's for its proactive educational work addressing the issue of gun violence in our broader community. I have committed to joining the team, currently exploring additional safety and security measures for our church. Given the priority of ensuring a welcoming and

secure environment for all who gather here, I believe this work is vital and should remain a top priority for the council.

- My deepest gratitude goes to all our paid and volunteer staff. Our educational ministries are thriving: Sunday School has launched with over 80 children enrolled, and the Confirmation program has a strong class of 16 ninth-graders. I have also been impressed by the excellence of our musicians and the genuine warmth of our post-worship fellowship time.
- In conversations with Nancy P. We are interested in kicking off a long-range strategy team early in 2026.

Sally's Report:

- Adult Ed focus on gun violence prevention (reminder this is not anti-gun ownership) and also a focus on some LGBTQ education and advocacy throughout the year. I'll also offer a class on having hard conversations with family and friends (such as politics, religion, etc.)
- Conversation at PPC is needed regarding the potential to host a safe surrender of firearms with the local police department in the spring.
- Worship highlights: Installation of Parish Ed staff, Bible Sunday & three upcoming baptisms.
- Pastor Tom and I continue to share and divide the pastoral ministry. We will continue leading worship at Maplewood, Maplewood Village, and The Pines monthly as usual. We will also be sharing the monthly communion visits.

Old Business:

- Nominating committee update
 - Audrey Luetscher Secretary
 - Anne Klinkner Stewardship
 - Mary Weeks Member at large
 - Josie Fentress Lay Ministry
 - Charlie Kruchten Youth
- Safety Team Update
 - Update meeting on Monday to discuss sanctuary safety
 - Gun Violence. This will be the adult ed topic sporadically throughout the year. Janelle and Marv presented at Adult Ed.
 - Sally is looking into a safe surrender event and will remind congregants that we are not against guns or owning guns. We are just providing an option if someone wants it.

- Oct 12th Installation Sunday
- Nov 9th Congregational Vote – Purpose: nominees and Budget approvals. See the Visitor for the last meetings' notes.

New Business:

- Welcoming and RIC Education – Welcoming and RIC Education – James encouraged us to revisit the idea of the congregation exploring the possibility of becoming a Reconciling in Christ (RIC) congregation. This means starting a journey of learning and reflection about how the church can be more intentionally welcoming and inclusive, especially toward LGBTQIA+ individuals. James acknowledged that this is a meaningful and spiritual process that may take time, as members of the congregation reflect, pray, and discuss together. The Parish Planning Council (PPC) believe that education is an important aspect of this journey. That means offering resources, conversations, and learning opportunities to help everyone understand what RIC is and why it matters.
- Strategic Plan. A task force will be working to develop a plan to look to the future of our church with a proactive plan.
- List of what needs to be done for adding new PPC and leaving PPC members
 - We want to improve the on-boarding and off-boarding process of new members on and those off. Nancy will send a document with ideas
 - Discussion regarding combining the Youth and Parish Ed boards to avoid overlap and work with Penny.

Parking Lot Items

- TNT – bucket list of items brought up by members that need additional discussion

Next meeting is Tuesday, November 4, 2025, at 6:00 pm.
Devotion will be given by Gwen.

Tracy made a motion to adjourn our meeting, and the motion was 2nd by Gwen. Motion carried.

Meeting Adjourned at 7:21 pm. with The Lord's Prayer lead by Nancy P.

Respectfully submitted by Cathy Yanke.



Happy November Birthday!

The day is in parenthesis

Our Youngest:

Emmett Fuchs (8)

Lainey Keller (15)

Winnie Gustafson (18)

Our Sunday School Students:

Clara Duren (1)

Evelyn Muehrer (3)

Kohen Chetwood (3)

Eralyn Greene (5)

Olive Nelson (6)

Emersyn Katzman (8)

Kinley Chetwood (17)

Kendall Koenig (20)

Mia Perry (22)

Maddie Bischoff (22)

Andrew Ryan (26)

Finn Paque (27)

Barrett Larson (28)

Theo Nelson (30)

Our Youth:

Carly Jorgenson (2)

Emma Gilchrist (4)

Nadya Khodakivska (7)

Myla Steinmetz (8)

Conner Evert (12)

Henry Dean (13)

Kaleb Chetwood (14)

Ryan Jorgenson (18)

Tyler Jorgenson (18)

Caden Argall (19)

Kenzie Sawyer (23)

College and Career-age Young People:

No Young Adult names to publish this month