St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church **THE VISITOR**

Prairie du Sac, WI November 2026

"Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers, the night is far gone, the day is near."
- Romans 13:11–12

The first Sunday in Advent is November 29, marking the beginning of a new church year. Advent is traditionally a quiet, reflective time as we prepare for the birth of Jesus. Yet Christmas decorations and music appear in stores long before Thanksgiving, and I admit that I start listening to Christmas music early, too! The familiar songs bring me joy and help keep me centered.

Even as we enjoy the early celebration of Christmas, Advent invites us to pause and reflect. We remember the birth of Jesus and the fulfillment of God's promises, look forward to Christ's coming again when all that is broken will be made whole, and recognize Christ's presence among us today through the gospel, Holy Communion, baptism, and our work for justice.

As we enter this season of Advent, I invite you to make room for quiet, reflection, and hope amid the busyness of the holidays. Watch for Christ in the familiar stories, in the bread and wine of Holy Communion, in acts of kindness and justice, and in the people around you. As we remember Jesus' birth and look forward to his coming again, may we discover the promise of God's presence with us, today and always.





Advent Worship Service
St. John's Lutheran church will host an Advent worship service on the evening of Thursday, December 3rd at 7:00 pm. We will celebrate the journey of Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem and the approaching birthday of our Lord Jesus. This is an event that the community is invited to. All are welcome.



Congregational Meeting

St. John's Congregational Meeting to approve the 2026 Budget and approve the nominated members to the Parish Planning Council is Sunday, November 8th at 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 and vote are needed!

You can find more information about this further back in the Visitor.

Ecumenical Thanksgiving Service



We are excited to gather at First United Church of Christ again on Wednesday, November 25th (time TBD – look for future information in bulletins) to praise God with thanksgiving for all we have been given and for all we have to share with others.

Christmas Eve and Christmas Morning Service Times



Christmas Eve Candlelight services take place at 1:00, 3:00, 5:00 and 7:30pm. The 1:00pm and 5:00pm services will be available live on Zoom.

Christmas Day we will celebrate with **one** morning worship service at 9:00am. This service will also be available on Zoom.

On December 28, we will have worship services at 8:00am and 10:30am as usual. There will NOT be Sunday School or Adult Education that day.

Wednesday Night Meals

We are so blessed to have Donna Nelson head up our Wednesday night meals each week. We also often have parents setting and cleaning up and providing desserts. It's a big job and we're looking for more people to help so it doesn't fall on the same shoulders each week.

Are you able to help put out dishes and serving utensils, slice bread, or do other kitchen tasks? Perhaps you enjoy loading the dishwasher or doing some dishes in the sink or wiping down tables? You don't have to make a weekly commitment, even if we had a handful of people sign up for just 1-2 Wednesdays it would be extremely helpful!

Please contact Penny Johnson or Pastor Sally if you are willing to try it out. You get a free, delicious meal out of the deal!



Parish Planning Council Members:

Executive Director	Nancy Passehl
Assistant Exec Director	Marv Hupp
Secretary	Audrey Luetscher
Treasurer	John Brennan
Evangelism Board	Gwen Ringelstetter
Fellowship Board	Cathy McAlexander
Lay Ministry Board	Josie Fentress
Member-at-Large	Mary Weeks
Parish Education Board	James Newman
Properties Board	John Ballweg
PR and Social Concerns	Melani Wheeler
Stewardship Board	Anne Klinkner
Women of ELCA	Marian DeGiovanni
Youth Board	Charlie Kruchten
Youth Member-at-Large	Kendra Frey

The Staff:
Please call the church office first when possible **(608) 643-2439**
Pastor: Tom Kreis tom@stjohnssaukprairie.org
(608) 577-4851
Pastor: Sally Williams sally@stjohnssaukprairie.org
(608) 643-7810
Intern: Roger Boettcher roger@stjohnssaukprairie.org
(608) 553-1454
Director of Music: Ruellene Seymour
ruellene@stjohnssaukprairie.org
Youth Director: Penny Johnson penny@stjohnssaukprairie.org
Custodian: John Hines john@stjohnssaukprairie.org
Office Administrator: Angie Updike office@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

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 23
Prairie du Sac,
Wisconsin 53578

Christ,
our strength
and refuge,
calling us
to serve



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
- Laundry and dish soap (smaller bottles of dish soap, please)
- Condiments (especially ketchup and mayonnaise, jelly)
- Canned vegetables and fruits
- Baby food and formula
- Box meals (e.g., Hamburger Helper)
- Canned meals (e.g., spaghetti, ravioli, etc.)
- Baking supplies (white and brown sugar, flour, oil)
- Canned Meats, Pastas, Pork & Beans, Chili, Sloppy Joes, or similar
- Diapers – sizes 5 and 6

Thank you for sharing with others.

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)
100 Brookmont Rd., Apt 143
Akron, OH 4433-3091

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 St.
Prairie du Sac, WI 53578

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

	Women of the Church News	
	Hannah Circle Wednesday, November 18, St. John's Library	6:00pm
	Lydia Circle Thursday, November 12 at Darlene Holl's, 418 Lueders Rd., Apt. 9 Sauk City	1:00pm
	Martha Circle Thursday, November 5, The Pines, Front door Activity room	9:30am
	Ruth Circle Monday, November 9, St. John's Library	9:00am
	Sarah/Mary Circle Tuesday, November 3, St. John's Library	9:30am

Nineteen ladies attended Circle Meetings in October. (Ruth Circle did not meet in October because of illness and busy schedules.) Darlene Holl, Mary Weeks and Kathy Lester led the Bible Study.

Pastor Sally is reactivating the Hannah Circle and that Circle will be meeting the 3rd Wednesday of every month at 6:00-7:00pm in St. John's Library. It is intended for women not already in a Circle and would like to be involved in a Bible Study.

In November we will be studying the third lesson on the Bold Faith on an Unexpected Journey, "Proclaiming Resurrection in Hope." (Martha Circle will be doing the second lesson: "Love and Loyalty".)

Our Thank Offering will be on November 15. This is a special opportunity to thank God for all He has done for us. The money for this offering goes to the National ELCA organization and provides funds for World Hunger, global ministries and other important programs so we should give as generously as we can. Just put your money in an envelope marked THANK OFFERING and put it in a marked basket outside the sanctuary. If you don't give your offering on November 15, the time you can give is extended to December 13 and you can either put it in the offering plate or give it to Angie in the office.

Martha Circle visited Special Friends in August and September. Sarah/Mary Circle will visit them in October and November.

The Bible Study Leaders Meeting for November will be on October 27 at 9:00am. The meeting for December will be on November 24 at 9:00am.

Baptisms



We conferred the Sacrament of Holy Baptism on the following:

- Anita Marie Carlson and Jori Jayne Carlson, daughters of Jamin and Amelia Carlson. Their sponsors are Jarod and Jaclyn Bormann. Laurie Carlson is their congregational sponsor.
- Waverly Johana Wernsing, daughter of Craig and Audrey Wernsing. Her sponsors are Cayden Wernsing and Grace Maier.
- Ivana Lynn Wankerl, daughter of Brandon Wankerl and Samara Wankerl-Estrada. Her sponsors are Benjamin and Alexis Wankerl.
- Daphne June Carlson, daughter of Joah and Angeli Carlson. Her sponsors are Jamin Carlson and Kristy Locke.
- Wesley Jordan Robertson, son of Jordan and Alecia Robertson. His sponsors are Joel and Katie Crane and his congregational sponsors are Sam and Bianca Paque.

First Communion Instruction

A First Communion class will be held on Wednesday, November 11th from 6-7pm. If you would like to explore the possibilities of first communion for your children, no matter what their age, please sign up by calling the church office. Taking the class does not obligate anyone to begin communing, nor is it a requirement for communion. The class is simply a time to explore what this gift of God might mean for you. A second class will be offered in the spring.

We will celebrate those receiving their First Communion as a group on Sunday, November 15th at either service, but if it does not work for your family on that day, we can make other arrangements to celebrate your student! Please contact Pastoral Intern Roger (roger@stjohnssaukprairie.org) with any questions or concerns.

Hannah Circle

Hannah Circle (women's Bible Study) will meet on the third Wednesday of the month from 6:00-7:00pm in the church library. This circle is intended for women who are not already in a circle and want to participate in a Bible study. We will gather on November 18.

JUST BAKERY
A JustDane Initiative

Just Bakery baked goods will be available for purchase on Sunday, November 15 between our worship services. A great way to add some special treats to your Thanksgiving feast!

MOBILE MEALS
God's love in action

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

Dan Lovell
Kim Langer
Holly Kindschi
Mary Hallweg
Kathy Lovell
Mike Langer
Steve Kindschi

Stock the Schools

In cooperation with the Sauk Prairie community, St. John's is collecting items to be given to Sauk Prairie students in need. Each month we will have different items to collect that will help our local students. November's items **New or Gently Used Clothing:** Sweatshirts/Hoodies-Adult/child sizes, Leggings-Girls/Women's sizes and Sweatpants-Adult/child sizes. Look for the display in the gathering area to drop off your donations. Thank you.



Note: This is an updated day. The next meal is November 8.



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 15th. Thank you.

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 6.

H.E.L.P.—Red Sled Project



Help **E**xcite **L**ittle **P**eople 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 doors of the church and placed in the bins inside the door. The collection will run through Saturday, December 12.

SPECIAL PRAYER

We invite you to pray for peace on the 20th day of each month. On November 20, please repeat the following prayer:

Dear Lord,
Our world feels divided, angry, and uncertain. Please soften hearts, calm hatred, and help people choose compassion over conflict. Let Your peach reach every corner of this world.
Amen

Dear Friends in Christ,



October is Pastor Appreciation Month, and I want to take a moment to say thank you! I am especially grateful for the prayers you offer for me, not just this month, but all throughout the year. Knowing that you are praying for me is a gift that means more than you might realize. Walking by the table with the calendar of people praying for me each day of the month has been a tangible reminder of the power of prayer in our faith community.

Paul writes in **Philippians 1:3–4**, “I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you.”

I think these words say it perfectly. I am thankful for this congregation and the opportunity to be your pastor. We get to celebrate the good times together, walk through the difficult times together, laugh together, and sometimes even cry together. That is what being a community of faith is all about!

Being a pastor is a wonderful blessing, but it also comes with its share of challenges. Your prayers, encouragement, and support remind me that I am not doing this ministry alone. We are in this together, and God is at work through all of us in ways both big and small.

So, thank you for thinking of me during Pastor Appreciation Month, but even more, thank you for being the congregation you are. I feel blessed to serve alongside you, and I am grateful for each of you. May God continue to bless us as we learn, grow, laugh, serve, and share God's love together!

With gratitude,



A Time for Thanksgiving – Maybe?



As we look forward to Thanksgiving—turkey, stuffing, and pumpkin pie, I don't know about you, but I am dealing with many thoughts this time of year. Is the house ready for winter? Am I ready for Thanksgiving? Is there time for everything I want to do? Christmas is soon to come. I have family and friends who are ill. How are they, and their caregivers, coping?

Maybe you're dealing with other concerns. Kids' grades, sports, or other events. Can I afford this year's Christmas gifts. Can I ever fill that empty place in my heart made by the loss of a loved one? Will I be healthy enough to do all the extra things expected during the holiday season?

It doesn't always seem like the right time to give thanks. Maybe It would be better to give thanks some other time; maybe sometime next year. If only I could get through this difficult time…

God promises to be with you. Jesus said "...remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." God doesn't promise that bad things won't happen. But God is with you through it all.

And remember, Jesus was no stranger to suffering. He was born to a poor family, out of wedlock, and in a barn—because they did not have enough money or influence to find lodging in a nicer place. Imagine that you are a young teenage girl explaining to your friends and family that; I'm about to have a child, but it's OK, the Holy Spirit is the father.

Through his life Jesus was persecuted. He worked on the Sabbath, hung around with prostitutes, tax collectors, and touched lepers. All forbidden by Jewish law. This got him in trouble with the church leaders. The political leaders didn't like him either; he stirred up trouble by saying things like, "the meek shall inherit the earth." He was persecuted, tortured, and murdered. Jesus knows what you are going through.

This year, I give thanks that God sent Jesus, his only Son, to die and rise again, that whoever believes in him, will have everlasting life.

God be with you,
Roger Boettcher, Pastoral Intern



Congregational Meeting

On November 8, at 9am, we will have a congregational meeting to approve our 2027 budget, elect members to our Parish Planning Council (PPC), elect three voting members to attend the Synod Assembly in 2027 and to elect three congregational members to serve on our Nomination Committee for 2027.

We will be voting to fill the open positions on our PPC. Our nominees are: Assistant Executive Director – Rob Richard, Properties Board –Lon Kaderavek. The rest of our PPC agreed to continue their terms.

We will also vote on congregational members to attend our Synod Assembly in May. 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.

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 9, 2025 Congregational Meeting, the minutes are listed here. Please take the time to read through them before attending the meeting on November 8, 2026. You will have an opportunity to ask questions and/or make corrections at that meeting.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING November 8, 2025

(In building and via Zoom platform)

PPC Executive Director, Nancy Passehl, confirmed at least 50 members were present and called the meeting to order at 9:06 am. The purpose of the meeting is to approve the 2026 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 November 2024, Congregational meeting were published in the November Visitor as well as in the October 26 and November 2, 2025 Sunday bulletins in lieu of reading them at the meeting. Motion to approve the minutes as provided was made by Janelle Hupp and 2nd by Donna Nelson. Motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Nancy described the 2026 budget changes that were printed and available for review in the bulletin. She pointed out the salary budgeted follows the synod guidelines for salary which is based on years of experience. There is a difference in the budget this year due to Pastor Tom and Karen living in the parsonage. There is also not a youth trip in 2025 so we do not have that budget concern. Our intent is to continue with an intern in June 2026 and therefore we budgeted for 1/2yr salary and ½ yr living expenses if needed for the intern. he total budget is down by 8%. John Brennan is here if you have specific questions. A motion to approve the budget was made by Bob Nelson and 2nd by Melani Wheeler. Motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Nancy thanked our outgoing board chairs (Tracy Pape, Sean Jager, Gina Varley, Roger Seymour, Todd Wyttenbach, and Cathy Yanke) for their years of service. She then moved on to list nominees of Audrey Luetscher--Secretary, Anne Klinkner—Stewardship, Mary Weeks--Member at large, Josie Fentress--Lay Ministry, Charlie Kruchten—Youth Board. Jerry Kaufmann made a motion to approve Kendra Frey as Youth Member at Large. A motion to approve the nominees was made by Cathy McAlexander and 2nd by Alice Chenoweth. Motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Third, we approved the nominating committee to recruit members for additional PPC members that includes the Lead Pastor, three congregational members (self-nominated) that include Kathy Lovell, Dianne Brice, and Lon Kaderavek. Three PPC members will be determined. A motion to approve the nominees was made by Marv Hupp and 2nd by Mary Weeks. Motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Our final topic was to accept nominations for attendees to the Synod Assembly in May 2026. 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. Diane Bryce self-nominated as well as Susan Heide and James Newman. The under 30 category person will be determined. Nancy Passehl will find an additional person to attend. A motion to approve the nominees was made by Darlene Holl and 2nd by Tom Varley. If any adult under 30 or a high school youth is interested, please contact Aletha Ballweg or Jackie Frosch in the church office. Other news: Nancy acknowledged that we had a very busy and active year and thanked our TNT and the call team for their work.

Our year with Intern Elise shows St John's is a teaching congregation and we are very proud of it.

Thanks to our entire staff for working so hard this year to keep us up and running and even more importantly thriving. Our PPC is great and had a great year of volunteering over and over. We are very happy to have Pastor Tom aboard. Especially Pastor Sally who took the lead. In recognition of all Pastor Sally has done she will be taking an extended vacation time January 20th for four weeks, to renew and rev up for the coming year. She is not leaving, not on sabbatical, just using some very much earned time away in combination with her vacation.

Properties- A huge thank you to John Ballweg and committee for overseeing our updates to the parsonage and the entire building inside and out. The Properties budget went up by almost $14,000 over last year. While that is a very large increase, costs like natural gas, utilities, and insurance are just a few things that are more expensive. We are very grateful for the contributions this year to refurbish the parsonage to make this a comfortable home for Pastor Tom and Karen.

Looking further ahead with Properties, other projects include replacing/rewiring the sanctuary light fixtures, sealing and re-striping the parking lot, replacing blinds on the windows in the educational wing, and replacing the rubber membrane roof on the Fellowship Hall. We are doing advance planning for some of those projects now and will share additional information when we feel it's time to move forward.

Nancy then thanked everyone for the support and appreciation shown to all of us and your willingness to continue to be involved, volunteer, give in time, talents and finances. We are an amazing St John's. The chosen word for 2025 was "transparency" and I feel we did a great job at being open, honest, and forthcoming. Our word for 2026. It is "VISIONARY". Let's look above and beyond, reach for the stars and dream and we will achieve our dreams with everyone's help.

At 9:23 am, Bob Nelson made the motion to adjourn the meeting and was 2nd by Donna Nelson. Director Nancy Passehl asked if there were any objections and after receiving none, she adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted, Cathy Yanke

St. John's Budget for 2027 We will be voting on the 2027 Budget at our Congregational meeting on November 8. A more itemized listing of the various board budgets will be available in the church office once approved by the PPC.

PROGRAM	BUDGETED 2026	BUDGETED 2027	% CHANGE
Administration	$426,666.00	$435,013.00	1.48%
Lay Ministry	$9,350.00	$10,000.00	6.95%
Evangelism	$500.00	$600.00	20.00%
Stewardship	$2,400.00	2,300.00	-4.10%
PR & Social Concerns	$3,000.00	3,300.00	10.00%
Parish Education	$12,070.00	$11,995.00	-0.62%
Youth Board	$4,800.00	$29,000.00	504.17%
Fellowship	$2,400.00	$2,400.00	0.00%
Properties	$63,800.00	$88,875.00	39.30%
Lutheran Church Women	$2,250.00	$2,750.00	22.22%
Benevolence	$45,400.00	$53,900.00	18.72%
Total	$574,636.00	$640,133.00	11.40%

Update and Organization Structure of the Parish Planning Boards

As you know we finished our brainstorming sessions asking for input on what you as members see the present and the future of St John's. We had great attendance and interest so thank you. So we are taking those ideas and developing a Strategic Plan that will be easy to understand and filled with hope for the future.

During these sessions, we were asked to do temple talks informing our Congregation how we operate as a church and why they would want to consider being on our boards and volunteering their time and efforts needed to attend meetings and participate in events.

So the plan today is to give you a brief overview of the organizational structure of St John's which is defined in our bylaws. (I tried to find a way to make this exciting for all of you but unless I can do a song and dance it will just be a "useful" talk.

- The Parish Planning Council has specific descriptions spelled out in the constitution and by-laws for each board that they must follow. I was specifically asked "Who has the power of this Congregation. The answer is "you", the members of the congregation. For example, we recently had a congregational meeting to hire Pastor Tom, we will have another in November to nominate folks for the nomination committee, attend Synod meetings, vote in new PPC members and approve the budget.
- The structure of the PPC consists of the Executive Chairperson who serves a 2-year term, the Asst Executive Director who also serves a 2-year term and then serves the following 2 years as the Executive Director.
- The Executive Committee consists of the Pastors, Exec Director, Asst Exec Director , the Secretary and the Treasurer. This team guides the PPC and leads the Congregation. (Marv Hupp, Audrey Luetscher, John Brennan and myself along with Pastors Sally and Tom))

The boards are as follows: Each board serves 2 yrs and can serve up to 3 terms, with the exception of the Exec Board. PPC meets the first Tuesday of every month at 6pm. The boards meet monthly but can do via email sparingly if needed.

- Lay Ministry Board– Josie Fentress—Works closely with the music director and pastors to coordinate all facets of the worship service. (liturgies, choirs, ushers, greeters, readers)
- Fellowship– Cathy McAlexander—All social events, coffee, welcome and good byes. Also, the Palm Sunday breakfast is organized and handled by this board. They also keep the kitchen stocked.
- Stewardship– Anne Klinkner—members of this board conduct an annual Stewardship Response Program. Assemble the annual congregational budget and more.
- Evangelism– Gwen Ringelstetter—Board members contact people regarding membership via letters or contacts to visitors, new members, college students.
- Buildings and Properties– John Ballweg—caring for the grounds and the facility.

- PR & Social Concerns– Melani Wheeler—Works as our public relations affiliate with the community, other churches, provides services such as “Just Bakery”.
- Parish Education Board– James Newman—Works to define Christian education for both youth and adults.
- Women of the ELCA– Marian DeGiovanni—works with the women of the church, bible studies, the circles and more.
- Youth Board – Charlie Kruchten—Promotes events designed to increase participation of the youth from 6th- post high school. Goals include increasing public service and church service participation.
- Member at Large– Mary Weeks—This person is the ears and eyes for the PPC- in other words the link to the Congregation and make themselves available for communication.
- Youth Member at Large– Kendra Frey—link to the youth – brings reports monthly of events and issues that are happening.

I could go on and on about each of these boards. First of all, thank you to our present PPC members. They have been phenomenal and very supportive.

We need and would love to have more members on our teams and members to lead our teams. So in order to help you understand these boards we will be available on Rally Sunday. Each of our boards and the Executive Team will have a table explaining what we do and a sign-up sheet for anyone interested in leading these boards or members of their boards. In the next few months, each board will do a short temple talk explaining what they do in hope of gaining understanding and interest.

When I was asked four years ago to take on the Assistant Executive position, I really had no idea on what to do or how to do it. But today, I would say it is easy, (not all of the time) but it can be easy only because I have great support.

We need your talents, your interest and “new blood” as they say. New folks make us think deeper and outside of the box we are used to operating the same old way because it works.

Please ask any of us, any questions, someone in our sessions said “we just need to be asked”. We are asking and would love you to join us.

Nancy Passehl
Executive Director

Adult Education News

Sunday, November 8: Do miracles happen today? In your life? What are some definitions of miracles, signs and wonders in the Bible? How does God use miracles? **Sunday, November 15**: Miracles in the Old Testament. What are some of your favorite miracle stories? **Sunday, November 22**: New Testament miracles. Who, besides Jesus, performs miracles in the New Testament? **Sunday, December 6**: The miracles performed by Jesus. What are some of the most well-known miracles of Jesus? How does Jesus include miracles in his ministry?

Sunday School News

Christmas Program

Our annual Sunday School Christmas Program will be on Sunday, December 13th **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 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 1st or 29th due to Fall break and the Thanksgiving holiday.

Offering

We invite our Sunday School students and families to bring donations for the baby kits (listed below). Items can be placed in the baskets by the children's library in the Sunday School wing.

Here are the donations we are taking:

- 1 bath-sized towel (not longer than 48 inches preferred, dark color recommended)
- 2 bath-sized bars of wrapped soap
- 2 cotton-blend t-shirts
- 2 gowns/sleepers without feet or 2 cotton-knit pants and 2 t-shirts
- 2 receiving blankets
- 4 cloth diapers (especially needed)
- 1 hand towel, dark color recommended
- 1 sweater, sweatshirt, or jacket with a hood, or include a baby cap

- 2 pairs of baby socks
- 2 bath-size bars of gentle soap, in its original wrapping

Middle and High School News

Confirmation Classes and Fellowship Meal
All are welcome to join us for Wednesday night fellowship meal - 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. 18 (Second Mentor Night) and no class on Nov. 25 (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, Noon-1:00pm on Wed 11/25/25. Even if your kiddo doesn't need an activity, please consider helping a good cause in our community and we need many chaperones 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 18, 2026. 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 11. All ninth-grade students will meet at The Pines Assisted Living at 6:00pm to play Bunco with the residents. Please plan to drop-off and pick-up your student at The Pines. 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.

November Worship Jobs
We have 2 unfilled Worship Jobs in November, and more in Dec/Jan. Each student is required to complete 4 worship jobs this session: Register for Oct thru Jan Worship Jobs at https://signup.com/go/xVpRSQQ.

Date	Task	Who
11/1/2026	8:00 Acolyte	Olivia Stephan
11/1/2026	8:00 Usher	Jaelyn Sorg
11/1/2026	8:00 Usher	Emma Gilchrist
11/1/2026	10:30 Acolyte	Briggs Ludowitz
11/1/2026	10:30 Usher	Landon Pape
11/1/2026	10:30 Usher	Brantley Dean
11/8/2026	8:00 Acolyte	Lucas Muehrer
11/8/2026	8:00 Usher	Lillianna Weittenhiller
11/8/2026	8:00 Usher	Sam Philo
11/8/2026	10:30 Acolyte	Lyle Opie
11/8/2026	10:30 Usher	Eloise Nelson
11/8/2026	10:30 Usher	Claire Hansen
11/15/2026	8:00 Greeter Front Door	Reid Hart
11/15/2026	8:00 Greeter Side Door	Lucas Muehrer
11/15/2026	Communion Set Up	Molly Williams
11/15/2026	8:00 Acolyte	Sam Krueger
11/15/2026	8:00 Usher	Jaelyn Sorg
11/15/2026	8:00 Usher	Lyle Opie
11/15/2026	8:00 Communion Assistant	
11/15/2026	10:30 Greeter Front Door	Nellie Kaderavek
11/15/2026	10:30 Greeter Side Door	Sam Krueger
11/15/2026	10:30 Acolyte	Avery Jorgenson
11/15/2026	10:30 Usher	Haylee and Gavin Goetsch
11/15/2026	10:30 Communion Assistant	Nellie Kaderavek
11/15/2026	Communion Clean Up	
11/22/2026	8:00 Acolyte	Kate Endres

11/22/2026	8:00 Usher	Lillianna Weittenhiller
11/22/2026	8:00 Usher	Andrew Ryan
11/22/2026	10:30 Acolyte	Natalie Nurkala
11/22/2026	10:30 Usher	Reid Hart
11/22/2026	10:30 Usher	Brantley Dean
11/29/2026	8:00 Acolyte	Mylee Schultz
11/29/2026	8:00 Usher	Jace Schultz
11/29/2026	8:00 Usher	Lyle Opie
11/29/2026	10:30 Acolyte	Carly Jorgenson
11/29/2026	10:30 Usher	Cooper Rennicke
11/29/2026	10:30 Usher	Myla Steinmetz

PARISH PLANNING COUNCIL MINUTES
DATE: October 6 2026

Present: Nancy Passehl, Marv Hupp, Pastor Tom, Pastor Sally, Audrey Luetscher, Anne Klinkner, Charlie Kruchten, James Newman, John Balllweg, John Brennan, Marian DeGiovanni, Josie Fentress, Mary Weeks, Melani Wheeler, Kendra Frey

Absent: Cathy McAlexander, Intern Roger Boettcher

Call to Order/Opening remarks:
Devotion was given by Audrey Luetscher. Meeting was called to order at 6:08pm by Nancy Passehl. Nancy asked for approval of the agenda. Motion to approve the agenda was made by Melani Wheeler, 2nd by Josie Fentress, motion carried.

Secretary Minutes:
The September 1, 2026, minutes were submitted online by Audrey Luetscher. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Anne Klinkner and 2nd by John Ballweg. Motion carried.

Treasurer's report: John Brennan

Current Month Revenue	Current Month Expenses	Current Month Balance	Year-to-Date Revenue	Year-to-Date Expenses	Year-to-Date Budget
$39,000	$54,636	$(15,636)	$394,500	$378,500	$430,974

YTD Revenue: $394,500 Last year YTD: %(9,000)
We had an expensive month, but accomplished & solved a lot. Bats have been exited and cleaned up after. New door closers completed. Rooms have been painted and carpets cleaned.
$40,000 catch up to the synod.

Sunday School donated $2,000 to the food pantry from their fundraisers and Sunday collections.

John Brennan reviewed the Treasurer's report. A motion to approve the report was made by Marv Hupp, 2nd by Mary Weeks. Motion carried.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Evangelism: Gwen Ringlestetter

- The pet blessing will be photographed this Sunday, Oct. 11.
- Need to obtain names and addresses of the 2026 graduates to send them a care package.

Fellowship: Cathy McAlexander

- We served 52 people for the Volunteer Appreciation brunch. Next year we will try to hold this during the summer to maximize the attendees who we are honoring.
- October is Pastor Appreciation month. We have placed calendar pages for dates church members can pray for them and there will be cards provided to be signed.
- 90 year and older members will be honored during October with cards signed by church members. Kim Diehl has made fingerless mitts for each person. Our pastors will deliver these to the recipients as they call upon that member.

Lay Ministry: Josie Fentress
No meeting in September

Member at Large: Mary Weeks-no report

Parish Education: James Newman

- Rally Day prep; QR codes for registration, paper copies for those who are not comfortable with online registration, additional table for other boards.
- Discussion of refining safety policies regarding:
  1. 2 non-related adults or a 3rd party present and door open when possible. Off-site **need** at least 2 non-related adults.
  2. No adult in restroom with child
  3. First aid regarding kids
  4. Weather closure
  5. Permission for off-site activities
  6. Fire Drill

Properties: John Ballweg
We met Sept. 21st for a "working" meeting. Items addressed include:

- Replaced several light bulbs in the Educational wing hallway
- Replace of number of water damaged ceiling tiles
- Discussed the actions begin taken to address bats in the building
- Confirmed that Mother Nature is again responsible for delivering snow and Justin Frosch will remove it from the parking lot & sidewalks
- Based on three bids, we agreed Frosch Tree Service will take down two trees, grind stumps and prune other trees this winter

Updates on the above items:

- Bohmz Pest Services completed the exclusion work around the exterior of the building on Sept. 25
- We received two bids to clean and sanitize the affected classrooms, and AAC Wildlife Removal completed the sanitizing on October 1.
- Strander Roofing inspected the roof near the memorial garden and patched one split/tear on Sept. 29
- Additional rain last week revealed leaks in the coat room and the gathering area near the sink. Strander Roofing and Baybrookes Heating met at the church and fixed a potential leak through one of the HVAC units, and patched a split/tear above the coat room. We'll continue to monitor for leaks in those (and other) areas.

PR & Social Concerns: Melani Wheeler-no report

Stewardship Board: Anne Klinkner

- The August 2026 financial statement was reviewed still showing a strong cash position.
- Some of the larger expenditures have been bat removal, door air lock repairs and Synod catch-up

Monthly Themes-October 2026

- The monthly theme of Media & Technology Ministry was reviewed & approved by the board. Information will be forwarded to Angie to include in the October Visitor.

Budget Approval

- Total budgeted expenses for 2027 are $640,133 (11.4% increase). The 2027 budget includes an estimate of $25,000 for the Youth Trip as well as $21,300 for parking lot repaving & additional expenses for bat removal in the building

- John Brennan made a motion to approve the 2027 budget, second by Roger Seymour. Motion passed.
- The budget will be sent to the Parish Planning Council for their approval. It will be presented at the November 8, 2026 congregational meeting for final approval.

Stewardship Campaign

- Stewardship Sunday is October 18, 2026. A letter of information will be written for the Visitor, bulletins & weekly mailings in the weeks before.
- We will attach the pledge card to the weekly emails & USPS mailing, but we will not be using the Time & Talent survey.
- The Adult Education Theme starts September 27, 2026 & ends October 18, 2026
  - 9/27/26—What does Stewardship mean?
  - 10/4/26—Other forms of Stewardship
  - 10/11/26—Come learn about using Vanco for current giving
  - 10/18/26—Legacy Giving Now & Later
- Pastor Tom will lead the first three sessions. John Brennan will assist Pastor Tom with the October 11, 2026 session. Hannah Wellisch, ELCA rep, will lead the Legacy Giving session with a Temple Talk at the 8:00 & 10:30 services on 10/18/26.
- John Brennan will have a table in the Narthex with information about Vanco, our electronic giving platform.
- On September 20, Rally Sunday, John Brennan & Cathy Yanke will be available to discuss Vanco & have information about signing up.
- The board will discuss the 2027 Year-Round Stewardship Campaign at the October meeting.

Administrative Manual Review

- Review is complete with no changes needed. Cathy Yanke made a motion to approve the Admin Manual with a second by Todd Wyttenbach. Motion carried.

Women of the ELCA: Marian DeGiovanni

- All the LWR kits & quilts were completed & delivered to Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Madison on September 12. Thank you to all who participated by donating items, assembling kits and securing Thrivent Action team funds! For grand totals please see the October Visitor.
- Also thanks to Lon Kaderavek, Jackie Frosch, Kris Frey, Angie Updike & Pastor Sally for loading all the boxes into the trailer & to John Ballweg for delivering to Madison.

- Also special thanks to Donna & Nicole Nelson for year around ministry of assembling quilts for the quilters to finish by tying & sewing every Wednesday. Watch the sewing room closet fill up once again!

Youth Committee: Charlie Kruchten-no report

Youth Member: Kendra Frey

- This past week of September 28 was the high school homecoming week. We had dress-up days all week. Monday-neon, Tuesday-tropical, Wednesday-jersey day, Thursday-duos & trios day and Friday-spirit day
- Friday we had a pep rally where we played many fun games like human hungry hippos, tic tac toe and family feud!
- After that we had the homecoming parade and the dance on Saturday
- This week Friday is our first midterms of the year

Pastor Tom's report:

- TDS update: Training was postponed due to internet issues, but on September 17 the staff was trained & the phones seem to be working well.
- Internship: Intern Roger has continued to do a good job with worship & visitation. Roger & I will be doing his 3 month evaluation in the next couple of week
- Adult Education: Sunday, September 27 & October 4 I led adult education hour on the topic of Stewardship. I really appreciated John Brennan's help on October 4. Stewardship will continue over the next couple of Sundays, then the last week in October, I have invited Peter Heide to speak about the upcoming election and, in particular, the referendums that are being voted on in WI in November.
- Memorial Committee: I need to follow-up on this. In early July, I met with the Memorial committee and the Stewardship Team to discuss how to move forward with the Memorial Committee's work. Those conversations were put on hold because of personal circumstances affecting several members. I plan to resume those discussions in August after I return from vacation
- Additional Bible Study: I am working on plans to begin a new weekly or bi-weekly Bible Study that would take place in the mornings, either Tuesdays or Thursday. I will be seeking people's input before starting.

Pastor Sally's report:

- September was a HUGE month for our volunteers and education staff. Please be sure to take time to wander around the building during the Sunday School hour & Confirmation on Wednesdays to share our appreciation. I also encourage you to eat with our youth on Wednesday evenings at 5:30pm. We're also always looking for volunteers to assist with the meal either before or after. Let me know if you are able and I'll get you on the calendar.
- One of the expectations of pastors is to complete continuing education each year. I will be out of the office October 12-16 attending the Synod's Fall Theological Event and finishing up an online series on mental health and the brain (including it's relationship to music & spirituality)
- I am starting up Hannah Circle again & we will meet on the third Wednesday of each month starting October 21. This is open to all women in the church who aren't already members of a circle & will use the Gather magazine for curriculum (though we'll be a month behind).

Intern Report: Roger Boettcher

- Meeting weekly with Pastor Tom
- Led worship and preached at the Pastor's conference meeting on September 3
- Filled in as pastor at the Pines & Maplewood on September 10
- The Lay Internship Committee met September 16
- Fellowship with quilters on Wednesdays
- Assisted with a funeral September 16
- Participating with the ukulele group
- Have been practicing with the Senior Choir
- Text Study on Zoom every Tuesday at noon
- I have been making pastoral visits to the homebound
- Confirmation welcome back & orientation meeting with parents & students was on September 30
- Monthly Internship Support Group Zoom with my Seminary colleagues
- Attended adult education meeting
- Led WELCA Leader's Bible Study
- Other meetings h ave included: Parish Planning, Stewardship, Parish Education, Lay Leadership & Staff

Old Business:

- RIC update from James
- Bat update-Completed

- Visionary update/Strategic Plan—Nancy has completed an outline summarizing the thoughts, ideas and perspectives regarding the current and future ministries of St. John's Lutheran Church. This information was collected during open forums held in August. The plan is ultimately about bridging the gap between where we are today & where God is calling us tomorrow. This plan is set up in two phases, over the next three years, and will be called The Way Forward.

New Business:

- Stewards for November/December are completed.
- Nominations for PPC update-Pastor Sally discussed nomination process. Working to get candidates for positions. We will need volunteers for the Synod Assembly.
- Temple talks-for each board. An opportunity to discuss how the different boards work & their objectives.
- Encourage new people to try one of the positions. We need to have an experienced member, "mentor" new people on these boards to help welcome them & update them to current work being done.
- Annual report—Meeting November 8, 2026

Motion to adjourn was made by Marian DeGiovanni and 2nd by James Newman. Motion carried. Meeting ended at 7:05pm. Closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Next meeting will be November 3, 2026, at 6:00pm.

Respectfully submitted by Audrey Luetscher



Happy November Birthday!

The day is in parenthesis

Our Sunday School Students:

Kohen Chetwood (3)
Evelyn Muehrer (5)
Emmett Fuchs (8)
Lainey Keller (15)
Winnie Gustafson (18)
Maddie Bischoff (22)
Finn Paque (27)
Theo Nelson (30)
Eralyn Greene (5)
Olive Nelson (6)
Emersyn Katzman (8)
Kinley Chetwood (17)
Kendall Koenig (20)
Mia Perry (22)
Barrett Larson (28)

Our Youth:

Clara Duren (1)
Emma Gilchrist (4)
Myla Steinmetz (8)
Ryan Jorgenson (18)
Caden Argall (19)
Andrew Ryan (26)
Carly Jorgenson (2)
Nadya Khodakivska (7)
Henry Dean (13)
Tyler Jorgenson (18)
Kenzie Sawyer (23)

College and Career-age Young People:

Conner Evert (12)
Kaleb Chetwood (14)