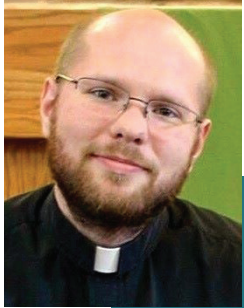


THE MESSENGER

A Monthly Publication of St. John's Lutheran Church, Sterling, IL

October 2025

God in the under-expected



"Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these." (Luke 12:27, NRSVue)

One of the deepest and most powerful question in Spiritual Direction is often a variation of four words so many of us have asked at one point or another – Where's God in that?

More often than not, the variations of these four words come among

times of personal crisis or despair, a type of bitter lament, something like, "Well, where's God in that?!" Other times the variations of these words we avoid as if they are words of challenge by some impious person or from an atheist demanding a satisfactory answer to the witnessed suffering in this world – "Tell me, where's your God in that?"

Perhaps avoidance or unwillingness to wrestle with such questions is why it is so difficult to notice the Holy Spirit in our world. It's painfully difficult to listen to the Divine when our daily routines are inundated with fight or flight nervous system responses to the stimuli of 24-hour news cycles, divisive social media,

not to mention the bitterness that consumes those who feel they've been delt some personal slight. As Brené Brown so eloquently says, "when emotions are high, thinking is low."

When listening for the Holy Spirit at work we need our whole selves, our hearts, minds, guts and everything in-between. By making intentional time for reflection rather than stewing or brooding we start to recenter and realign our whole self once again. I can't count the number of times I've heard folks say that something was unexpected, yet when do we pause to acknowledge the under-expected, those things (or people) that we give such little

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

Save These Important Budget Hearing & Annual Meeting Dates

In our effort to keep everyone duly informed, we will have several opportunities to discuss our ongoing financial struggles before we vote on the 2026 budget at our Annual Meeting. There will be a temple talk on this issue at worship on October 5th. Our Budget Hearing is scheduled for October 12th, and we will vote on the 2026 budget on October 26th. The Finance Committee and Congregation Council are working diligently on this critical piece and plan to have the Council-approved budget available for your review well ahead of the Budget Hearing.

As we walk in prayerful consideration on our journey together,
Your Congregation Council members

WHAT'S IN THIS ISSUE

Branches News Briefs	2
Council Highlights	4
Special Offerings	5
Financial Update	6
Nurse Notes	6
Birthdays & Anniversaries	6
Calendar of Events	7
Birthday Buddy Bowling	7
About St. John's	9
Parish Register	9
Announcements	11



St. John's
Evangelical Lutheran Church

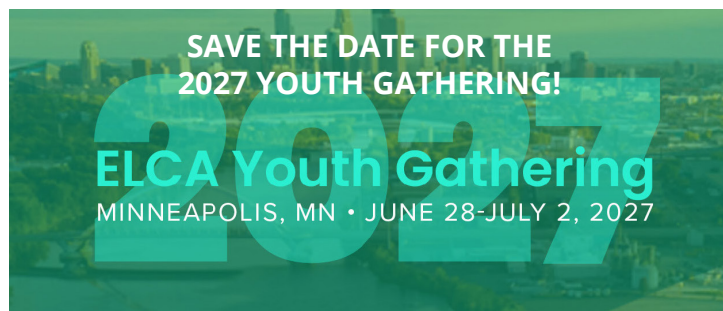
ADDRESS: 703 Third Avenue, Sterling, IL 61081

PHONE: 815.625.2634 • **EMAIL:** office@stjohnsonthird.org

WEBSITE: StJohnsSterling.org • **FACEBOOK:** [@SterlingStJohns](https://www.facebook.com/@SterlingStJohns)

Youth & Family Ministries News

Confirmation SCHEDULE		2025-2026
OCT	1 st 7:00pm Assemble School Kits 5 th 11:00am-2:00pm Class @St. Paul 28 th 4:00pm Selmi's trip	
NOV	19 th 7:00-8:00pm Buddy Bag Packing @Wesley United 23 rd 11:00am-2:00pm Class @Immanuel	
DEC	7 th 11:00am-2:00pm Class @St. John's	
JAN	11 th 11:00am-2:00pm Class @St. Paul	
FEB	1 st 11:00am-2:00pm Class @Immanuel 13 th -15 th (TBD)Quake	
MAR	1 st 11:00-2:00 Class @St. John's 11 th 7:00-8:00pm Buddy Bag Packing @Wesley United	
APR	19 th 11:00-2:00 Class @St. Paul	
MAY	3 rd 11:00-2:00 Class @Immanuel 13 th 7:00-8:00pm Buddy Bag Packing @Wesley United	



YOU MAKE YOUTH MINISTRY POSSIBLE

With the start and end of every school year the start and end of another youth ministry program year also arrives. To keep providing meaningful experiences for youth within our congregation and community we need your help.

We are fortunate that our St. John's family as a committed group of volunteers who assist in teaching Sunday School and setup and clean up for many of the events offered during the year. If you have access to Thrivent Action Teams (TAT) you can help provide the funding to help keep making these events happen.

Below you will find a list of two annual events, their dates and when you can apply for a TAT to make them not only possible but successful.

Event Name	Event Date	Apply for TAT
Halloween Trunk-or-Treat	10/31/2025	9/30/2025
Palm Sunday Breakfast	3/29/2026	2/29/2026

If you would like to assist by providing a TAT for any of these events, please contact Pastor Jacob and then make sure you apply early for the TAT before the event. Together we can help grow a culture of generosity that supports the work of ministry within our congregation and community.

BUTCHER SHOP FUNDRAISER

In connection with The Butcher Shop, a fundraiser for youth activities will be starting October 12th. Order forms will be on the table across from the sanctuary entrance. Please put completed order forms along with cash or checks made out to St. John's Lutheran Church in the manila envelope on the same table by Sunday, October 26th. Orders will be available for pickup on November 14th at 4pm. Monies raised will go toward St. John's youth activities.

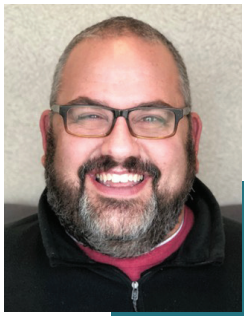
TRICK OR TREAT FOR UNICEF

The Sunday School children will be collecting donations for Trick or Treat for UNICEF on October 19th after the church service. Children, please wear your Halloween costume that day!

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

WISCONSIN DELLS QUAKE PLANNED FOR FEBRUARY

Save the dates for the Wisconsin Dells Quake: February 13-15. St. John's youth grades 6-12 are encouraged to attend the Quake as either part of Confirmation Class or for ongoing faith formation. **If you would like to go, a \$20 deposit is due November 2.** Please contact Pastor Jacob for more information or if you'd like to attend. St. John's will once again be partnering with other community congregations for this event. Sign-up, come out, build relationships, and grow in faith, together.



Speaker "Packer" Dave Gunnlaugsson has been involved with Quake events for several years as a speaker, staff member and

team member with Cross Fire to East Africa. Currently Dave works with Feed My Starving Children in Minnesota. Prior to FMSC Dave served as a youth



pastor and church planter and spent several years at Rainbow Trail Lutheran Camp in Colorado.

Musicians The Junker Georges are an acoustic-based rock/folk duo/tri/quartet, depending on who actually shows up. Founding member Ryan and Todd have been playing music coast to coast since 2003. As primary songwriter and guitarist, Todd is a Level-12 Disney trivia master, coffee connoisseur, and was voted "Most Likely to be Killed by a Pirate." Ryan (drums/muscle) would much rather be playing for the Flyers, Eagles, or Phillies. He is serving a record 23rd consecutive term as President of the West Roebeling Aerosmith fan club. They love Jesus, eating, and

hanging out. What else is there? Be on the lookout for special "Mystery Band Members" this weekend for extra bonus points! More information is available on Facebook: @TheJunkerGeorges.

Quake Director Jennifer Miller discovered her love of youth ministry while traveling as a member of Captive Free, a music ministry team



sponsored by Youth Encounter. She then received a call to serve as an Event Director at Youth Encounter, where she remained for nineteen years, planning and managing weekend youth events. She feels blessed to now be working for Life Promotions and to be able to continue serving in the role of event planner as a Quake Coordinator. Jennifer works from her home near Fredericksburg, VA, where she lives with her husband, Todd, their two children and their dog. She enjoys traveling, watching movies, spending time in the sun, scrapbooking, all things Disney and spending time with her family!

PASTOR'S LETTER CONT. FROM PAGE 1

attention to that we don't just undervalue them, or underappreciate them, but we give little or no thought to at all.

When Jesus asked his disciples to consider the lilies, he wasn't just talking about flowers. Our world is filled with so many people and things that are capable of such wonder if we took just the most basic moment to notice. And rather than dreading the question "Where's God in that?" perhaps we can find the boldness the

Spirit provides to see God is already in all of it.

For the sake of this whole world our God took on flesh to dwell within it. As an act of mercy our Lord offered up life itself to dwell fully within each and every one of us. So, when we struggle with "Where's God in that?" a good look in the mirror reveals much more than flesh and bone. It displays the very body and blood broken and shed for this world. It provides an opportunity to take a

deep breath, let the Spirit enter in, and see that indeed our hands have been equipped to do God's work. Not just for ourselves, but for the whole of the world. For indeed our creator made us to be whole people for this whole world.

Lord, you work your wonders in every time and place, draw us into our whole self that we may know our center in you and indeed you in us. Amen.

Rev. Jacob M. Lawler

COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

PASTOR'S REPORT

- Lois Anderson-Rowzee died August 29, 2025. Service was held Saturday, September 6, 2025
- August 22 - 23 St. John's hosted the Northern Illinois Synod event Finding Vitality in Scrappy, Small Congregations. The event was exceptionally well attended, with 64 registered participants. Many thanks to the members of St. John's and our partners at Tri-Church for helping to prepare and organize the hospitality for the event. Thanks also to those who were able to attend and participate in the event. The insights and affirmations gleaned from this time can certainly become inspiration for thinking outside the box and listening for the Holy Spirit at work within and around us.
- Sunday, August 24, was the Sunday School Rally Day. There are currently nine students participating this year.
- September 7, new Confirmation Students received Bibles and Small Catechisms for class. Four students are participating in Confirmation Classes this year; two students will complete their courses in the Spring and affirm their Baptism on June 7. Grateful for the continued collaboration with Immanuel and St. Paul for the shared Tri-Church Confirmation Classes. This sharing continues to provide experiences for students to get to know each other better and delve deeper into conversations about faith life with others in their age group.
- Staff reviews are nearing completion. The last review has been scheduled and will be completed before October.
- I wish to express thanks to our Church Council and our St. John's as a whole for your support, grace, and generosity while I'm beginning my DMin studies in Spiritual Direction. I'm thrilled to share that I have completed my first course

in the program and that I achieved straight A's on the first three papers I've submitted. It is your continued support and investment in me that allows me to continue to develop skills for our shared ministry together.

- October 1 - School kit assembly packing party
- October 11 - Sterling Halloween Town Parade. Starts at 6:30 pm. Participants start and end at the church parking lot.
- October 31 - Halloween Trunk-or-Treat
- November 2 - Deposit due for those intending to participate in the Wisconsin Dells Quake, February 13-15

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Approval of Minutes

- Larry Kradle moved to approve the August 19, 2025, minutes of the Congregation Council as corrected. The meeting date was incorrect. Marci Fisher seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Communications

- The United Way sent a thank you for our support of the Let's Feed Our Children Program.

Finance Report

- The committee met on September 8th. They reviewed the August financial statements and approved them as presented.
- Jack Flick moved to approve the August financials as approved by the Finance Committee. Larry Kradle seconded the motion, which carried.
- The Committee completed its work on the 2026 Proposed Budget and submitted it to the Congregation Council for review and approval. It is noted that the new Portico Benefits options for Pastor Jacob have been reviewed, but pricing is not yet available. Pastor Jacob stated

that the Select Option is the closest option to his current benefit option.

- Jack Flick provided the Financial Update as it will appear in the October Messenger and the bulletin insert.

MINISTRY TEAM REPORTS

Social Ministry

- The committee met on Saturday, September 13th, to decorate the "Christmas in September" tree in the East Room. This collection will continue through October 26th.
- The "packing party" for the school kits will be held in the fellowship hall on October 1st.
- The Birthday Buddies bowling party took place on Friday, September 12th. A pizza party followed the bowling.
- Discussion continues on funding the distribution of personal care kits from our facility.

Stewardship

- The committee is working on a stewardship letter and expects to mail the letter in the first week of November. Discussion centered on the possibilities of including a "time and talents" portion in the letter and/or commitment card.

Partners in Prayer and Care:

- The committee met on August 28th. During the month, members made eight nursing home visits and contacted eight shut-ins. Thirty more notes will be sent to inactive members, welcoming them back to worship. To date, no responses have been received from the first mailing. The committee will meet again on September 25th.

OLD BUSINESS

Property Line Survey

- The property lines on the east side of Third Avenue have been surveyed to determine if the tree is on the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

church's property. It has been determined that only eight inches of the base of the tree lies on our property. The city has sent a letter to the resident stating that the tree needs to be removed. Dave Geil, of the Property Committee, feels it is in our best interests to have the survey recorded with the deed to our property in Morrison. The cost for the recording will be an additional \$99.

- Denise Norman moved to approve the additional expenditure of \$99 to record the survey with the deed to our property at the courthouse in Morrison. Paul Wolfe seconded the motion, which carried.

Congregation Council Seats and Synod Assembly Voting Members

- Two three-year terms and one two-year term will need to be filled for the 2026 Congregation Council. Several names were mentioned as possible names for the ballot.
- Two voting members to the 2026 Synod Assembly will need to be filled. We are also entitled to send one youth to the Assembly. Shawn Wolfe has agreed to have his name considered as a voting member of the 2026 Synod Assembly. Denise Norman is willing to serve if no other female is willing to serve.

NEW BUSINESS

Approval of July Transfers

- In August, transfers totaling \$10,500.00 were made from the Undesignated Account #8005 to SVB checking.
- Larry Kradle moved to approve the transfers totaling \$10,500.00. Jack Flick seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Visitation Pastor Position

- During the July 15, 2025, executive session of the Congregation Council, the discussion centered around the elimination of the congregation's Visitation Pastor position. The Personnel Committee

made this recommendation. This recommendation was based solely on the congregation's financial picture. The discussion celebrated the years of faithful service of Pastor Leo Patterson. A celebration will be held at a later date, with the hope that his family can join us for the event. The annual performance review of Pastor Patterson has been completed, and he is aware of the decision.

- Larry Kradle moved to document the decision to eliminate the Visitation Pastor position. Rhonda Stutzke seconded the motion, which passed.

2026 Budget

- The Finance Committee has completed and presented the proposed 2026. It was noted that the majority of the decrease in the deficit from the previous year is a result of the elimination of the Visitation Pastor position and the part-time status of the Office Manager. It was also noted that the recommendation from the Personnel Committee had been for a 2.5% across-the-board salary increase for all staff. The proposed budget includes a 1.5% salary increase for staff.
- Jack Flick moved to approve the budget as presented. Paul Wolfe seconded the motion, which carried.
- Copies of the proposed budget will be made available to the congregation on Sunday, September 21st.

Temple Talk October 5th:

- Jack Flick will present a temple talk during worship on Sunday, October 5th.. The topic will center around the presentation of the proposed budget.

Basement AC Unit:

- The air conditioning unit in the fellowship hall is not working correctly. The unit is approximately thirty years old. Central Heating and Cooling installed a condenser motor, but the issue remained. The estimated cost for replacing the unit is \$4,500.

- Jack Flick moved to have the unit replaced by Central Heating & Cooling, with the funds being taken from the ELCA Parish Nurse investment account. Larry Kradle seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Women of the ELCA

- Karen Wolfe asked to address the Council concerning a project she has been involved in with ladies from our Tri-Church family. A group of five ladies recently attended a presentation at LOMC about WELCA and how to organize a chapter. WELCA has a long tradition here at St John's. Recently, in conjunction with Immanuel and St. Paul's, there is a Tri-Church effort to re-establish WELCA as a thriving part of both our church and the Tri-Church. We hope that by acting as a larger group, we will be able to function more strongly and dynamically than as stand-alone churches. We intend that this group will be self-sustaining and not rely on church funding. An informational meeting has been planned for Tuesday, October 14, at 5:30 pm at the Sterling Public Library.

Special Offerings:

- An updated listing of Special Offering recipients (2009-2025) was provided. Jack Flick moved to designate the October 2025 Special Offerings to First United Methodist Loaves and Fishes, the November Special Offerings to LSSI Holiday Hope Chest, and the December Special Offerings to Sterling Buddy Bags, Wesley United Methodist. Marci Fisher seconded the motion. Motion carried.
- Denise Norman will submit the special offering information for the Messenger and the bulletin insert.

NEXT MEETINGS

- Executive Committee, Thursday, October 16, 2025, 5:00 pm
- Congregation Council, Tuesday, October 21, 2025, 6:00 pm

FINANCIAL UPDATE

With guidance from the Finance Committee and approval by the Congregation Council, the following is the financial operating situation for St. John's. The following information will be published each month for the remainder of 2025. Any questions should be directed to the members of the Finance Committee. *Report prepared by Jack Flick.*

St. John's Operating Performance	August 2025	Year-to-Date 2025
Total Offerings	\$13,396.10	\$101,995.51
Operating Expenses	\$26,491.04	\$218,963.58
Operating Deficit	(\$13,094.94)	(\$116,968.07)
Transfer of money from the Behrens account to cover expenses	\$10,500.00	\$101,247.08
Net Surplus/(Deficit)	(\$2,594.94)	(\$15,720.99)

NURSE NOTES

Cold Sore Care

A cold sore is a fluid-filled blister — or a group of blisters — that typically develops around the lips. It's caused by the herpes simplex virus, which is typically passed from skin-to-skin contact. To manage cold sores:

Stop the spread — Avoid touching the sore, as that can make it worse and lead to spread. Refrain from kissing or other direct contact. Wash your hands regularly. Don't share food, beverages, towels, lip balms or razors with others. Throw away toothbrushes you used while you had the cold sore.

Treat it early — The nonprescription antiviral cream docosanol (Abreva) may reduce symptoms and shorten recovery time. Docosanol is most effective if used when you first notice tingling or other early signs that indicate a cold sore is forming.

Control the pain — A pain reliever such as acetaminophen (Tylenol, others) or ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin IB, others) may help. Nonprescription cold sore gels or ointments containing

benzocaine, lidocaine or benzyl alcohol also can relieve symptoms. Applying a cool compress or sucking on ice chips may help minimize burning or itching. Dabbing petroleum jelly on the sore and surrounding skin helps reduce dryness and cracking.

Get a prescription — See your primary care physician or a dermatologist if a cold sore lasts for two weeks or keeps recurring. You may be eligible for treatment with an antiviral cream or pill. Antiviral drugs may take hours or even days off your recovery time.

Know the causes — Triggers that may “wake up” the herpes virus to cause cold sores include stress, becoming ill with a cold or the flu, exposure to sunlight or strong winds, changes in the immune system, or hormonal changes.

From Mayo Health
Submitted by Nancy Rasmussen, Parish Nurse

OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
<i>*Indicates 80-plus-year birthdays and 50-plus-year anniversaries</i>			1 Tom Breed	2	3 Marcia Keime*	4 Jeff Fisher
5 Julie McCord	6 James Eshleman*	7 Eugene & Sarah LeFevre* Gary & Amanda Smith	8 William & Erica Grim	9	10 Stanley Rasmussen*	11 Randal Davis Linda Geil
12	13	14	15	16	17 Kennedie Vilmont	18
19 Ruth Ramirez*	20 Gerald Baker* Aislin O'Connell Ruth Dietz*	21	22 Patrice Redfield Emily Taylor	23	24 Shari Baker	25 Leo Patterson*
26	27 Noah Rucker JD Sanders	28	29	30	31	

OCTOBER 2025 ACTIVITIES

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
OPEN/CLOSE: PAUL WOLFE ALTAR GUILD: DRUANN BUSHMAN (FILL); DOTTY FREY			1 6:00-Worship 7:00-Confirmation assembling school kits	2 7:00-Al-Anon	3	4
5 <i>FISH Collection</i> 9:30-Worship <i>Acolyte: Kennedie V.</i> <i>Asst.: Teri H.</i> 10:45-Sunday Sch 11:00-Conf class	6 <i>Offering Count:</i> <i>Sheri & Jackie</i> 6:00-Menz Group	7 9:30-Text Study	8 6:00-Worship	9 7:00-Al-Anon	10	11 10:00-Social Ministry mtg.
12 <i>Youth Fundraiser</i> <i>Begins</i> 9:30-Worship <i>Acolyte: Logan W.</i> <i>Asst.: Shawn W.</i> 10:45-Budget hearing 10:45-Sunday Sch	13 6:00-Finance Committee mtg.	14 <i>Offering Count:</i> <i>Denise & Jamie</i> 9:30-Text Study	15 1:30-Parkway HC 2:30-Heritage Woods HC 3:30-Morningside HC 6:00-Worship	16 2:30-Allure of Sterling HC 3:30-Citadel HC 5:00-Executive Committee mtg. 7:00-Al-Anon	17 <i>Annual Report</i> <i>Items Due to</i> <i>Church Office</i>	18
19 9:30-Worship <i>Acolyte: Sarah D.</i> <i>Asst.: Denise N.</i> 10:45-Trick or Treat for UNICEF 10:45-Sunday Sch	20 <i>Offering Count:</i> <i>Jackie & Pat</i>	21 <i>Nwsltr items due</i> 9:30-Text Study 6:00-Council mtg.	22 6:00-Worship	23 1:30-Partners in Prayer & Care 6:30-Moving Beyond the Page 7:00-Al-Anon	24	25
26 <i>Youth Fundraiser</i> <i>Ends</i> 9:30-Worship <i>Acolyte: Brynna C.</i> <i>Asst.: Denise C.</i> 10:45-Annual mtg. 10:45-Sunday Sch	27 <i>Offering Count:</i> <i>Dave & Jamie</i> 6:00-Tri Church mtg.	28 9:30-Text Study 4:00-Confirmation field trip to Selmi's 6:30-NAMI group	29 6:00-Worship	30 7:00-Al-Anon	31 4:30-Trunk or Treat	*HC=Holy Communion

OCTOBER SPECIAL OFFERINGS



UMC Loaves & Fishes Program

The special offerings for October have once again been designated by the Congregation Council to be donated to the First United Methodist Church Loaves and Fishes program. This program, located at 501 Broadway, relies solely on contributions to host a free community breakfast and serve more than 400 breakfasts per week. Volunteers have shared that for many people, this might be the only meal they get during the day. Many of the guests are homeless in our community, and so naturally have food insecurities. This program depends on donations to continue, so please consider a generous donation to support this ministry and the growing need for families in our community.

Matthew 25: 35 For I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger, and you invited me in.

Tri Church Corner: Cledy's House of Hope



This past spring and summer, Cledy's House of Hope in Rock Falls, a sober living

facility for women, was a God's Work Our Hands project for Tri Church. Some members painted at the facility, while others donated items. In June, Ashley, a staff member from Cledy's, shared her story in a Sunday morning temple talk. Tri Church has committed to continuing its partnership with Cledy's.

There is so much to learn about Cledy's. The plan moving forward is to have bi-monthly information about Cledy's in a question & answer format.

Who can live at Cledy's?

- Women 18 years of age and older who are serious about finding long-term recovery from substance abuse (for example – alcohol, drugs, prescription medication).

How long can a woman live at Cledy's?

- The program is structured to last around a year but may take an individual less or more time depending on their personal situation. Together with their recovery coach, a personalized recovery plan is developed.

How does a woman get into Cledy's House of Hope to benefit from its program?

- Staff recommend that a woman transition from the completion of an inpatient program or graduate/

transition from another sober living facility. A woman currently involved in an intensive outpatient program or other recovery program may also be eligible. A letter of recommendation is required from their counselor or caseworker followed by a completed application and a \$50 application fee that covers their background check and drug test upon entrance to Cledy's.

In the December newsletter, you will learn more about the structure and programming at

Cledy's. You can also find more information at the Sauk Valley Voices of Recovery website www.swor.org.

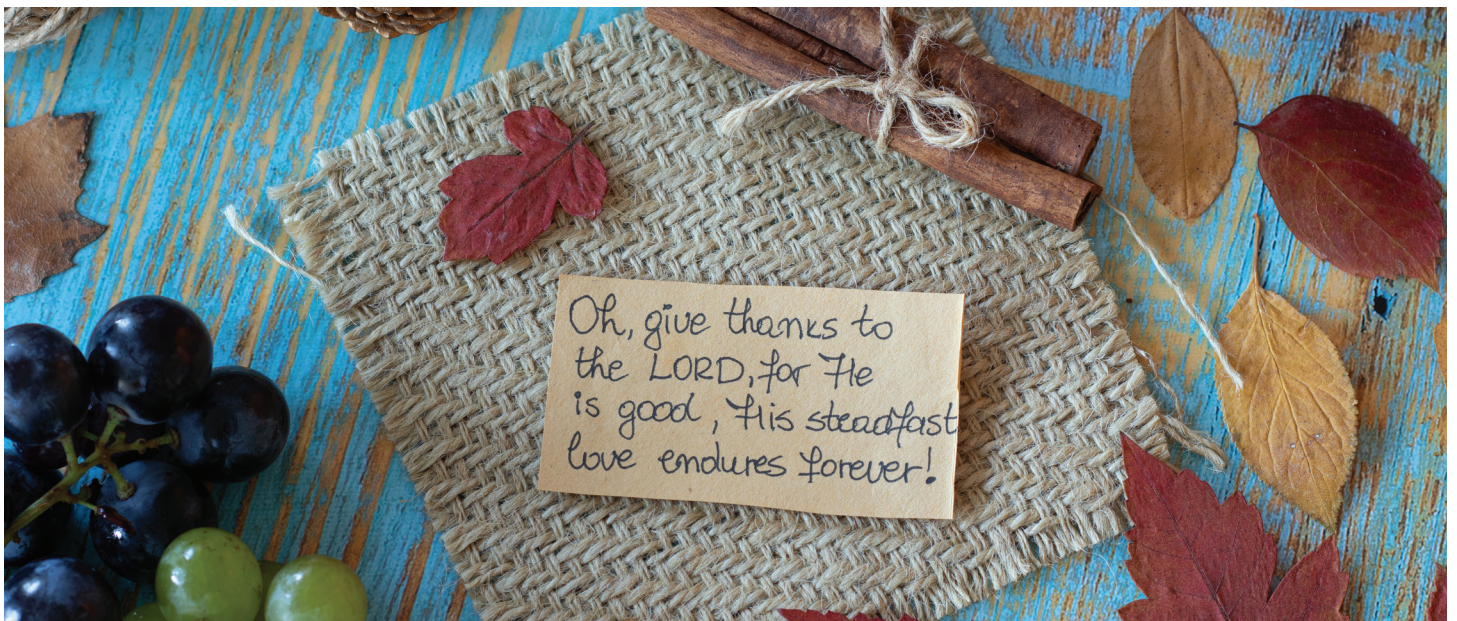
Deb Keaschall
Tri Church Convener

ANNOUNCEMENTS



MOVING BEYOND THE PAGE

Join us for faith, fellowship, and book study on October 23 at 6:30 pm in the church library. Please speak with Pastor Jacob to learn more.



WHAT WE BELIEVE

PURPOSE STATEMENT

St. John's is a Lutheran family striving to build relationships that will serve our community and God's World

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. Jesus is our Lord and Savior.
2. We make prayer, Bible study and dialog the center of our decision making.
3. We are willing to change as we discover God's mission for us.
4. We invite everyone. Jesus said, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations."
~ Matthew 28: 19a
5. We recognize and give thanks for our blessings.
6. We act for the discovery and fulfillment of God's mission.

COUNCIL AFFIRMATION STATEMENT

The Council affirms that ministry is a core tenant of our Mission and that established ministries will continue and the opportunity for expanding into additional ministries will be evaluated when presented. The Council fully understands the complex nature of ministry, but as long as God's people are willing to engage in good works, we will do everything in our power to support those ministries.

PARISH REGISTER

DEATHS

Lois Anderson-Rowzee, August 29th

WEDDINGS

None

BAPTISMS

None

CONFIRMATION STUDENTS

None

MEMBERS RECEIVED

None

MEMBERS REMOVED/TRANSFERRED

None

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

None

STAFF BIRTHDAYS

Pastor Leo Patterson, October 25th

WHO'S WHO AT ST. JOHN'S

PERSONNEL

Rev. Jacob Gawlik, Senior Pastor

Rev. Leo Patterson, On Call/Visitation Pastor

Daudi & Kellen Msseemmaa, Missionaries to East Africa

Dawn Zeigler, Minister of Music & Bell Choir Director

Nina Peters, Office Manager

Andrew Stutzke, Systems Administrator

Kyle Morgan, Technical Director

Mont Cessna, Facility Maintenance

Stahr Media, Newsletter & Website

Nancy Rasmussen, Parish Nurse

Council Rep for Tri-Church, Paul Wolfe

CONG. COUNCIL

Paul Wolfe, president*

Jack Flick, vice president*

Denise Norman, secretary*

Larry Kradle

Marci Fisher

Rhonda Stutzke

Karen Wolfe

Aislinn O'Connell

Tammy Doughty

*Exec Committee member

CHRISTIAN ED

Michelle Gawlik

Chrissy Murphy

Jan Klocke

Denise Carl

Mont Cessna

STEWARDSHIP

Rhonda Stutzke

Aislinn O'Connell

PERSONNEL

Denise Norman, chair

Rev. Jacob Gawlik

Dave Geil

Nancy Rasmussen

FINANCE

Nancy Breed

Druann Bushman

Mike Doughty

Jack Flick

Dave Geil

FUNERAL

Dave Geil, chair

Linda Geil, chair

Druann Bushman, chair

MEMORIAL

Dave Geil, chair

Rev. Jacob Gawlik

Brian Luebke

Nancy Rasmussen

Jannet Taylor

PROPERTY

Dave Geil

Art Frey

Tom Leesman

Ken Smith

Mont Cessna

Doug Zientara

WORSHIP ARTS

Shawn Wolfe, chair

Dawn Zeigler

Denise Carl

Rev. Jacob Gawlik

Karen Wolfe

SOCIAL MINISTRY

Paul Wolfe

Shari Baker

Marsha Keime

Larry Kradle

Denise Norman

Amy Smith

Gary Smith

Sharon Zinanni

WORSHIP TECH

Dan Eads

Charlene O'Connell

PARTNERS IN PRAYER & CARE

Shari Baker

Stan Rasmussen

Nancy Rasmussen

Larry Kradle

Sharon Zinanni

Pat Redfield

Rev. Jacob Gawlik

THANK YOU NOTES

Dear Neighbor,

As summer winds down and we look toward a new school year, I find myself reflecting on what makes Whiteside County such a special place. It's you, our neighbors, friends, and community champions, who make this place feel like home for everyone.

This summer, I met Stacy, a local mom who told me what the Let's Feed Our Children program means to her family. "Not having to worry about my kids being hungry during the summer is a blessing." That sense of security? That's what we're really building here.

Your partnership with United Way goes far beyond writing a check. You're investing in the idea that when we take care of each other, everyone thrives. Whether it's ensuring kids have nutritious meals, helping families navigate tough times, or supporting our local nonprofits with the resources they need, you're making it happen.

This year, we've seen incredible collaboration across our 22 partner agencies. From mental health support to job training, from youth programs to senior services, we are addressing the problems and tackling the root causes.

The enclosed artwork comes from one of the young artists that received lunches from Let's Feed Our Children. These little masterpieces never fail to brighten my day. I hope it does the same for you.

Thank you for being the kind of neighbor who makes all the difference.

With gratitude,
Keri Olson, CEO
United Way of Whiteside County

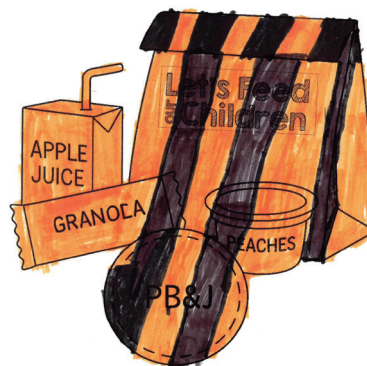
Dave and Linda,
Both of you and the funeral luncheon committee worked so hard and served a lovely meal enjoyed by all. We appreciate all the donations of salad's desserts and sides. There was too much to choose from- just as Lois would have wanted. :)

Thank you for your generous donation to Lois's memorial at St. John's. You have been dear and faithful friends to Lois and our family for so many decades. We love and appreciate all you have done for us.

Shelby, Kelly & Kraig



First Name: Huntley Koester Age: 11



THANK YOU!

Because of caring donors like you, no child goes hungry.
This artwork comes from one of the many children you've helped.

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ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

703 Third Avenue, Sterling, IL 61081

Join us for worship at 9:30am Sundays and 6:00pm Wednesdays.