

THE MESSENGER

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

March 2026

Journeying To The Cross Together



"Many women were also there, looking on from a distance; they had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to him. Among them were Mary

Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee." (Matthew 27:55-56, NRSVue)

In Matthew's account of Jesus' crucifixion, the disciples keep their distance after Jesus is arrested. As it says in Matthew 26:56, "Then all the disciples deserted him and fled." For those closest to Jesus, the journey to the cross was one filled with fear, uncertainty, and desperation.

When crowd comes to arrest Jesus, one of his disciples draws a sword striking the slave of the high priest (Matthew 26:51). In the heat of the moment, there were those quick acts of violence, assuming such acts would be needed. Yet in the following verse Jesus says, put your sword away.

When Peter sat outside the courtyard as Jesus was questioned by the religious leaders, he felt that fear creep up within him too. Peter ends up denying he knew Jesus three times that evening (Matthew 26:69-75). This

experience leads to Peter then run off weeping bitterly.

When Judas sees that Jesus has been condemned, we read in Matthew 27:3 that he "... repented and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders." Overwhelmed by all that had taken place and his own role in these things, Judas ends his life.

The journey to the cross is indeed full of pain and sorrow. It forces the disciples to recognize the gravity of what Jesus takes on for the sake of humanity. And as Jesus breathes his last on the cross those who remain watch on from a distance. It is these same women who witness Jesus' death that will then bear witness to his resurrection.

To what are we being called to bear witness this Lenten Season? Will we walk in this season in the way of the cross knowing where it leads? Or will we try to skip over the uncomfortable stuff and jump straight for the joy at the end?



There is no Easter morning without the cross. For to know Christ crucified is to know the fullness of the resurrection. As the women who remain can teach us, this discipline of Lent is not something we can do alone. Only together can we walk to the cross and then to the empty tomb.

By grace we can journey together and by faith Christ is with us each step of the journey.

Yours in Christ,

Rev. Jacob M. Gaudin

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St. John's
Evangelical Lutheran Church

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Youth & Family Ministries News

WATCH FOR EGG BINS

Be on the lookout for the egg bins to help pack easter eggs for the Easter Sunday Egg Hunt following worship.

BUDDY BAG PACKING RESCHEDULED

March 11 Buddy Bag packing has been rescheduled for April 1. While April 1 may be April Fools Day, hunger is no laughing matter.

DONATE ITEMS FOR YOUTH GARAGE SALE

In May there will once again be the community wide Sterling & Rock Falls Garage Sale Days. Do you have items you would like to donate to help the youth rummage sale? Items donated will temporarily be stored and organized in the Luther Chapel. Tables will be set up in the main parking lot for times during the sale. Those wishing to help participate in the fundraiser by donating items for sale please remember that items may be new or gently used. Please do not donate car seats, beds, cribs or furniture.

SAVE THE DATES FOR VBS

Save the date for CommUNITY VBS! July 12-16 at Bethel Reformed Church. CommUNITY VBS Worship at Grandon on July 19 at 9:30 am. If you would like to help the planning team the next meeting dates are March 5th and April 9th both at 4pm.

2027 YOUTH GATHERING

Save the date for the 2027 Youth Gathering: June 28-July 2, 2027 in Minneapolis, Minnesota!

PALM SUNDAY BREAKFAST COORDINATOR NEEDED

Hello St. John's youth and families,

It's time to be preparing for the Palm Sunday Breakfast.

In the years since Gerad left the staff, Michelle and I have done our best to coordinate the breakfast and try to maintain the eggs and pancakes breakfast we've all come to know.

We are now looking for those who will take on coordinating this event. It doesn't have to try to replicate what has happened in the past and can become something very different.

The heart of this event has always been an opportunity to help raise funds for youth activities our congregation provides and by extension an opportunity for our youth to serve, share, and grow together.

I ask that you please prayerfully consider taking on this role.

As always, I'm here for each of you, and I do wish to be of support and guidance for what may come next. If you have any questions or would like to talk more about this possibility, please feel free to contact me.

God's peace to you,
Pastor Jacob

(GREAT BIG Family PRODUCTIONS)
AN ACOUSTIC EVENING
with
SIDEWALK PROPHETS
APRIL 9, 2026
ALLELUIA! LUTHERAN CHURCH
NAPERVILLE, IL
SHOWTIME @ 7PM
CURB RECORDS

Popular Christian Band To Play In Naperville

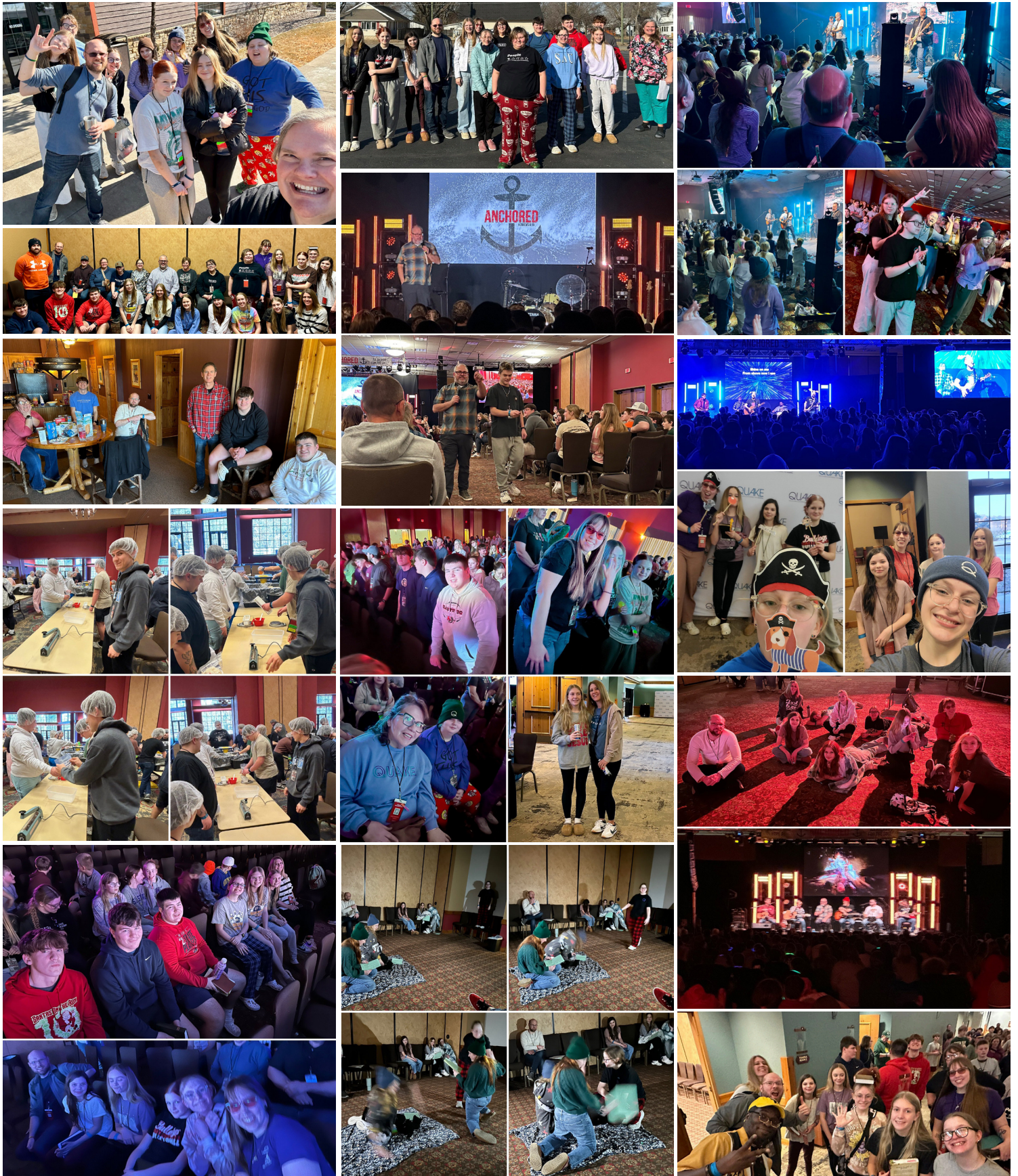
The Sidewalk Prophets will be in Naperville in April for "An Acoustic Evening with Sidewalk Prophets." With 900 million streams and 588,000 monthly listeners, this will be an evening you won't want to miss. The Sidewalk Prophets have played at Red Rocks, K-Love Cruise, Ryman Auditorium and the Grand Ole Opry; performed the National Anthem at Wrigley Field; and have five chart-topping Christian hits.

The concert will be at 7pm Thursday, April 9th at Alleluia! Lutheran Church, 4055 S. Book Road, Naperville. Tickets are on sale now and expected to sell fast. Tickets are \$20 each, plus fees, with options for early entry and VIP access. Visit sidewalkprophets.com for tickets.

PLEASE NOTE: there have been third party ticket scamming attempts for Sidewalk Prophet tickets. All tickets should be purchased through EVENTBRITE or through the SIDEWALK PROPHETS OFFICIAL WEBSITE.

Wisconsin Dells Quake 2026: Jesus Is Our Anchor!

Many thanks to all who prayed for and supported us, and to all leaders, musicians and participants at 2026 Wisconsin Dells Quake! The event involved over 600 youth! We are thankful for our friends at St. Paul, Immanuel and Bethel Reformed!



COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

REPORT OF THE PASTOR

- Howard Janssen died January 20, 2026. His service was held January 26, 2026, at St. John's.
- Reminder that appointments are available for those interested in pursuing guided Spiritual Direction conversations. Thank you to those who have already participated in these conversations. A reminder that these can become ongoing conversations if the participant desires. These conversations are typically an hour in length and can focus on the topic of choice that those seeking Spiritual Direction bring with them. I encourage each council member to prayerfully consider creating an opportunity for these one-on-one conversations.
- An update on the Doctoral Program: The On-Site Advisory Team (OSAT) had its first meeting on January 28. The meeting recapped the first term of the program and discussed an early-stage idea for the future DMin project after the coursework phase is completed.
- Over the past few weeks, there have been multiple meetings to prepare for the upcoming Midweek Lenten Services. Remember that this year services will be held at 12:15 p.m. at Immanuel and 6:30 p.m. at St. Paul in Sterling. Cookies/ dessert and fellowship will follow each service. This year's theme, Walking Wet, is designed as an invitation to live our baptismal promises in daily life.
- With the season of Lent and Easter quickly approaching, the on-site staff met on February 12 to plan and prepare for all the things coming up.
- March 7 is the Congregational Resourcing Event (CRE). The event is once again at Sauk Valley Community College. I strongly encourage all council members and

- the congregation to make use of this opportunity. Visit nisynod.org to get registered.
- March 29 is Palm Sunday. Service at 9:30 a.m. at St. John's.
 - April 2 is Maundy Thursday. Service at 6:30 p.m. at St. John's.
 - April 3 is Good Friday. Service at 6:30 p.m. at St. John's.
 - April 5 is Easter Sunday. Service at 9:30 a.m. at St. John's.
 - April 6-12 - I will be on vacation with my family. A list of emergency pastoral contacts will be available in the church office. Shawn Wolfe will provide pulpit supply on April 8. Heide Gallagher will provide pulpit supply on April 12.
 - May 24 is Pentecost.
 - June 7 is Confirmation Sunday.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY

- A thank you was received from the YWCA for our contribution and support.
- The 2026 Council Directory was shared for updates.
- The Open/Close Schedule was shared for completion.

FINANCE REPORT

- The committee met on February 8th. They reviewed the January financial statements and approved them as presented. Discussion points included:
 - There continues to be a discrepancy between the budgeted amount and the actual paid amount for the position of the office manager. As a salaried employee, payments should be made in 24 equal installments throughout the year. The committee recommended a meeting with Berge to review the QuickBooks line item. Note: After an email exchange among Mike Doughty, Nina Peters, and Nancy Breed, the under budget situation has been clarified, and the January salary is correct.
 - The 2026 insurance rates are

approximately \$2,000 under budget.

- Larry Kradle moved to approve the January financials as approved by the Finance Committee. Jan Klocke seconded the motion, which carried.
- Aislinn O'Connell provided the monthly performance update.
- It was noted that the interest in the Memorial Accounts was not transferred to the general fund at the end of fiscal year 2025. This requirement is stated in the Memorials, Bequests, Thrivent Choice Dollars, and Non-Monetary Gifts Policy.
- Randy Davis moved to ask the Finance Committee to consolidate similar asset-side accounts on the balance sheet. Larry Kradle seconded the motion, which carried.

OLD BUSINESS

Open Council Seat

- It appears that the open council seat will not be filled. Because we are having trouble filling the nine council positions, we will discuss lowering the number of council seats when the constitution is updated later in the year.

Property Committee Vacancy

- Dave Geil resigned from the Property Committee effective January 1st. A chairperson is needed for this committee. Randy Davis will speak with Dave to determine his interest in the position.

Active Shooter Policy

- We are attempting to coordinate a time that is acceptable to the committee for a meeting.

Ad Hoc Committee to Plan for our Future:

- A meeting is planned following worship on Sunday, February 22, to begin organizing this committee

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with interested parties. Karen Wolfe is spearheading this effort. Paul provided a document that he put together outlining the possible focus of the committee, and what it can and can't do. Denise also provided a printout of a portion of the December 2025 minutes detailing items the Council thought might help define the committee's focus. The committee is welcome to use these two items as they see fit.

NEW BUSINESS

January Transfers/Withdrawals

- In January, transfers and withdrawals totaling \$67,843.12 were made.
 - \$5,500.00 transferred from the Undesignated Account #8005 to the SVB checking account to cover payroll and taxes.
 - \$1,500.00 withdrawal from the ELCA Grewe/Steinke Seminary Fund for Pastor Jacob's second semester scholarship.
 - \$1,500.00 transferred from the Undesignated Account #8005 to SVB checking to Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary.
 - \$19,343.12 transferred from the Contingency Account to the Undesignated Account #8005. This is a portion of the Lowrie death benefit.
 - \$40,000.00 transferred from the Contingency Account to the SVB checking to send to the ELCA for deposit in the Morris/Lowrie investment account.
- Jan Klocke moved to approve the transfers totaling \$67,843.12. Larry Kradle seconded the motion. Motion carried.

New Phone System

- A quote was received from KLMnetworks, LLC, for \$1,838.97 to replace the church's existing phone system. This quote also addresses the console issue identified by Kyle Morgan. Approximately

\$9,200.00 remains in the Building Repair Tiered Savings from the roof campaign and could be used for the upgrade. If we opt not to use the roof money, there is Technology/Streaming and Undesignated Memorial money that could be used.

- Jan Klocke moved to use \$1,838.97 from the Building Repair Tiered Savings to accept the KLMnetworks quote and proceed with the installation of the upgraded phone system. Larry Kradle seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Phone Tree Subscription

- Andrew Stutzke researched and presented options for an upgraded phone tree system. The current system is problematic and no longer supported or maintained. The new system is cloud-based and requires no hardware. It involves a monthly fee with a set number of contacts. Three pricing options were presented; Andrew recommends the \$378/year (\$31.50/month) option based on our situation. Funds remaining from the roof campaign, held in the Building Repair Tiered Savings, could be used for this year's subscription. It will undoubtedly require a line item in the 2027 budget.
- Jan Klocke moved to accept the \$378/year option for the phone tree replacement, with funds from the Building Repair Tiered Savings used for the 2026 subscription. Randy Davis seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Sanctuary Wing Water Heater

- The water heater that supplies the sanctuary wing is working only sporadically and should be replaced. A quote for two different types of systems was received from Lance's Plumbing. A 75-gallon gas water heater, installed, was quoted at \$3,200.00; a tankless water heater, installed, was quoted at

\$5,600.00. The gas water heater will provide a constant supply of hot water, while the non-gas tankless water heater will provide hot water on demand. There is sufficient money in the Building Repair Tiered Savings account at the Sauk Valley Bank to cover the cost of the replacement.

- Jan Klocke moved to accept the Lance's Plumbing quote for the A.O. Smith 75 Gallon Gas Water Heater, installed, at a cost of \$3200.00, with the funds coming from the Building Repair tiered savings account. Randy Davis seconded the motion. Motion carried

Funeral Pall Linen Cleaning

- The funeral pall was taken to Sauk Valley Cleaners in Dixon. The Memorial Committee has approved using funds from the Altar Linens, Clothes & Kitchen Dishes memorial category to cover the cleaning costs. The cost of the cleaning was \$31.00.
- Larry Kradle moved to use memorial funds for the cleaning of the funeral pall. Rhonda Stutzke seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Brotherhood Mutual Coverage

- The 2026 invoice was received from Brotherhood Mutual Insurance Company. The Worker's Compensation portion of the coverage will cost \$1,412.52 annually (\$117.71/month), and the Ministry First (Multi-Peril) portion will cost \$13,586.04 annually (\$1,132.17/month). The Worker's Compensation coverage did not see an increase; the Multi-Peril coverage increased \$915.12 annually (\$76.26/month). The 2026 coverage costs will be approximately \$2,000.00 under budget.
- Denise Norman moved to approve the Brotherhood Mutual Insurance costs for the 2026 calendar year. Paul Wolfe seconded the motion.

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Congregational Resourcing Event

- The Northern Illinois Synod Congregational Resourcing Event (CRE) will be held at Sauk Valley Community College on Saturday, March 7th. Registration closes on February 20th. This is a worthwhile event for all lay and rostered leaders.

Service Agreement with KLMnetworks

- The Personnel Committee has been working with Kyle Morgan to develop a contract for the continuation of Kyle's services to the church. Kyle and the committee have agreed on a format and have submitted it to the Congregation Council for approval.
- Rhonda Stutzke moved to approve

the contract as submitted. Larry Kradle seconded the motion. Motion carried. The contract will become active once signed by all parties.

NEXT MEETINGS

- Executive Committee, Thursday, March 12, 2026, 5:00 pm
- Congregation Council, Tuesday, March 17, 2026, 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. Any questions should be directed to the members of the Finance Committee.

Report prepared by Aislinn O'Connell.

St. John's Operating Performance	January 2026	Year-To-Date 2026	Year-To-Date Budget
Total Offerings	\$16,089.00	\$16,089.00	\$14,033.48
Total Expenses	\$24,009.92	\$24,009.92	\$23,125.68
Operating Surplus/(Deficit)	(\$7,920.92)	(\$7,920.92)	(\$9,092.20)
Transfers* to cover operating deficits	\$5,500 ^a \$1,500 ^b	\$5,500 ^a \$1,500 ^b	
Surplus/(Deficit)	(\$920.92)	(\$920.92)	

*Transfers primarily from the Behrens and Morris accounts, as well as others, to cover operating deficits.

^aFrom the Behrens account. ^bFrom the Grewe/Steinke account.

Included in January 2026's expenses: payroll expenses, operating expenses and other miscellaneous expenses, detailed here:

In December 2025, the Congregation Council voted to use \$1,500.00 from the Grewe/Steinke Seminary Account as a scholarship for Pastor Jacob's doctorate. The Grewe/Steinke Seminary Account is intended to be used for such scholarships, and is not intended to be used for other expenses like payroll or operating expenses.

NURSE NOTES

Easy Ways To Eat More Plants

Fitting more plants into your diet can be easy. You might simply adjust a recipe adding some spinach, carrots, cashews, or pumpkin seeds to an entree or salad.

Or you might swap out a snack. "Replace one daily processed snack like cookies with fresh fruit and a small handful of nuts or raw veggies — like bell pepper strips or grape tomatoes dipped in hummus or plain yogurt," suggests Nancy Oliveira, a registered dietitian at Harvard-affiliated Brigham and Women's Hospital.

Boost your efforts further by replacing one or two meat meals a week with a plant dish. "Beans, lentils, and

tempeh have a hearty texture," Oliveira says. "Or make a meatless chilli with beans, or a bean and vegetable stew. Add firm diced tofu to either dish to make it even heartier."

If you're craving something meaty, think umami. "That's the deeply rich sensation you get from meat." Oliveira says. "One dish that might give you that umami feeling is a stew of lentils, sauteed mushrooms, onions, tomatoes, and chopped sweet potatoes. Add spices that appeal to you."

From the Harvard Health Letter. Submitted by Nancy Rasmussen, Parish Nurse

SPECIAL OFFERINGS & COLLECTIONS

MARCH SPECIAL OFFERINGS & LENTEN SELF-DENIAL OFFERINGS

First United Methodist Loaves & Fishes Program

The special offerings for March and the Lenten Self-Denial Offerings have once again been designated by the Congregation Council for donation 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 making a generous donation to support this ministry and the growing need for families in our community. *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. ~ Matthew 25:35*



MARCH CHILDREN'S NOISY OFFERING

ELCA World Hunger



ELCA
World Hunger

Nearly 1-in-10 people – 733 million – in our world are hungry. As members of the ELCA, we are called to respond. We are a church that rolls up our sleeves and gets to work. In the U.S., 37.9 million people live in poverty. 18 million people are food insecure, an increase of 1 million between 2022 and 2023. Today, over 22 million households must spend at least 30% of their income on housing, mainly because the U.S. lacks enough affordable apartments. Working with and through our congregations, in the United States, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands Lutheran churches overseas and other partners, ELCA World Hunger is uniquely positioned to reach communities in need. From health clinics to microloans, water wells to animal husbandry, community meals to advocacy, your gifts to ELCA World Hunger make it possible for the ELCA to respond, supporting sustainable solutions that get at the root causes of hunger and poverty. Learn more about ELCA World Hunger by visiting <https://www.elca.org/our-work/relief-and-development/elca-world-hunger/our-approach>.

MARCH & APRIL SOCIAL MINISTRY COMMITTEE COLLECTION

Personal Care Kits

The Social Ministry Committee will be collecting personal care kits March 1st through April 12th. Once again, we will donate the kits to the First United Methodist Church in Sterling for distribution at their Food Bank and in conjunction with their Free Breakfast Program. The folks at First Methodist appreciate our desire to minister with them by supplying these kits!

Donations for this purpose are welcome if you prefer that the committee shop and assemble on your behalf. Please include these items in each of the kits:

- One nail file/emery board
- One sturdy comb
- One adult-size toothbrush in its original packaging*
- Two bath-size bars of soap in the original wrapping
- One small bottle of shampoo
- One full-size tube of toothpaste
- One light-weight bath-size towel (we recommend a dark color)
- One washcloth (again, we recommend a dark color)

**Toothbrush multi-packs may be used by sealing each toothbrush in a business-size envelope*

Assembly instructions: Fold the towel in half. Place the remaining items in the towel, fold and roll so nothing falls out, and secure them with yarn, ribbon, string, or rubber bands.



MARCH ACTIVITIES, BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1 <i>FISH Collection</i> 9:30-Worship <i>Acolyte: Logan W</i> <i>Asst: Denise C</i> 10:45-Sunday Sch 11:00-Confirm class Wayne Moore*	2 <i>Offering Count:</i> <i>Dave/Pat</i> 6:00-Menz Group Edward & Patricia Loos* Elly Redfield	3 9:30-Text Study	4 12:15p-Lenten Worship @ Immanuel 4:00-VBS planning mtg 6:30p-Lenten Worship @ St. Paul David & Julie LeFevre Doug & Charlene O'Connell	5 7:00-Al-Anon	6 Gary Smith Douglas Zientara*	7
8 9:30-Worship <i>Acolyte: Sarah D</i> <i>Asst: Denise N</i> 10:45-Sunday Sch	9 <i>Offering Count:</i> <i>Shari/Dave</i> 6:00-Finance Committee mtg	10 9:30-Text Study	11 12:15p-Lenten Worship @ Immanuel 6:30p-Lenten Worship @ St. Paul	12 5:00-Executive Council mtg 7:00-Al-Anon Olivia Barton Stanley & Nancy Rasmussen*	13 Marlene Green* Brian Luebke Jarrett & Kelli Vilmont	14 10:00-Social Ministry mtg
15 9:30-Worship <i>Acolyte: Brynna C</i> <i>Asst: Denise N</i> 10:45-Sunday Sch	16 <i>Offering Count:</i> <i>Jamie/Jackie</i>	17 9:00-WELCA Bible Study @ Immanuel 9:30-Text Study 6:00-Church Council mtg Ronald McCord	18 <i>Newsletter items due</i> 9:00-WELCA Quilting @ Immanuel 12:15p-Lenten Worship @ Immanuel 1:30-Parkway HC 2:30-Heritage Woods HC 3:30- Morningside HC 6:30p-Lenten Worship @ St. Paul Charlene O'Connell Virgle Onnen*	19 2:30-Allure of Sterling HC 3:30-Citadel HC 7:00-Al-Anon	20	21
22 9:30-Worship <i>Acolyte: Catie P</i> <i>Asst: Chris R</i> 10:45-Sunday Sch	23 <i>Offering Count:</i> <i>Denise/Pat</i> 5:30-WELCA CLEO 6:00-Tri Church mtg @ Immanuel	24 9:30-Text Study 6:30-NAMI	25 12:15p-Lenten Worship @ Immanuel 6:30p-Lenten Worship @ St. Paul Amanda Smith	26 1:30-Partners in Prayer & Care 7:00-Al-Anon Michelle Gawlik	27	28
29 <i>Palm Sunday</i> 9:30-Worship <i>Acolyte: Caylie W & Elly R</i> <i>Asst: Mike D</i> 10:45-Palm Sunday Breakfast	30 <i>Offering Count:</i> <i>Shari/Jamie</i>	31 9:30-Text Study	SAVE THE DATES THURSDAY, APRIL 2ND Maundy Thursday Worship at St. John's at 6:30pm. FRIDAY, APRIL 3RD Good Friday Worship at St. John's at 6:30pm.		SUNDAY, APRIL 5TH Easter Sunday Worship at St. John's at 9:30am, followed by our annual Easter Egg Hunt. SATURDAY, APRIL 11TH Property Spring Cleanup at 1pm. Rain date: April 18th.	

ALTAR GUILD: DENISE NORMAN (FILL); DOTTY FREY

OPEN/CLOSE: AISLINN O'CONNELL

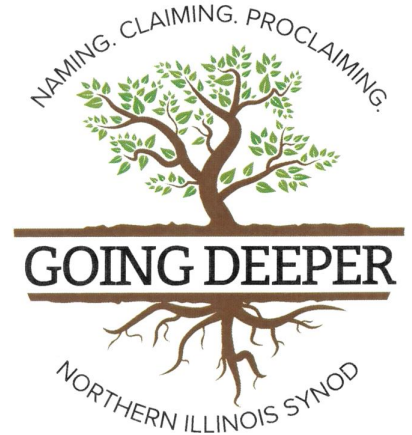
HC=Holy Communion *=80+ Birthdays & 50+ Anniversaries

CONGREGATIONAL RESOURCING EVENT 2026

March 7, 2026 • 8:30 AM - 3:45 PM
Sauk Valley Community College, Dixon

Join us as we gather for a day of learning and networking as we explore ways to go deeper in faith in our congregations and communities.

Cost is \$40 per person and includes programming, lunch and coffee.



www.nisynod.org/cre



Northern Illinois Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



"Whoever speaks must do so as one speaking the very words of God, so that God may be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ." ~ 1 Peter 4:11

WELCA SPRING RETREAT 2026

Raising Our Voices: Proclaiming the Gospel When the World Is Loud

Proclamation isn't shouting louder than hate. It's speaking, living and standing in love, truth, and justice as people claimed in Christ.

Program and Worship led by Pr. Laurie Hensley, Bethany ELCA, Woodhull, IL

April 25, 2026 • 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM
LOMC, Oregon, IL • \$30 per person

Scholarships available



Northern Illinois Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

GIVING MADE EASY

3 SECURE WAYS TO MAKE YOUR DONATION



ONLINE
StJohnsOnThird.org



MOBILE
Tithe.ly app



IN-PERSON
Check or Cash

All donations will be included on your yearly contribution statement.

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

None

WEDDINGS

None

BAPTISMS

None

CONFIRMATION STUDENTS

None

MEMBERS RECEIVED

None

MEMBERS REMOVED/TRANSFERRED

None

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

None

STAFF BIRTHDAYS

None

WHO'S WHO AT ST. JOHN'S

PERSONNEL

Rev. Jacob Gawlik, Senior Pastor

Daudi & Kellen Msseemaa, Missionaries to East Africa

Dawn Zeigler, Director of Music Ministries & Bell Choir Director

Nina Peters, Office Manager

Andrew Stutzke, Systems Administrator

Mont Cessna, Facility Maintenance

Stahr Media, Newsletter & Website

Nancy Rasmussen, Parish Nurse

Paul Wolfe, Council Rep for Tri-Church

CONG. COUNCIL

Paul Wolfe, president*

Denise Norman, secretary*

Karen Wolfe, vice president*

Randy Davis

Jan Klocke

Larry Kradle

Aislinn O'Connell

Rhonda Stutzke

*Exec Committee member

CHRISTIAN ED

Denise Carl

Mont Cessna

Michelle Gawlik

Jan Klocke

Chrissy Murphy

STEWARDSHIP

Aislinn O'Connell

Rhonda Stutzke

PERSONNEL

Denise Norman, chair

Rev. Jacob Gawlik

Dave Geil

Nancy Rasmussen

FINANCE

Druann Bushman

Mike Doughty

Dave Geil

Aislinn O'Connell

Karen Wolfe

FUNERAL

Dave Geil, chair

Linda Geil, chair

Druann Bushman, chair

MEMORIAL

Rev. Jacob Gawlik

Jan Klocke

Brian Luebke

Nancy Rasmussen

Jannet Taylor

PROPERTY

Leroy Baer

Mont Cessna

Art Frey

Rob Henson

Jan Klocke

Tom Leesman

Leanne Miller

Ken Smith

Doug Zientara

WORSHIP ARTS

Karen Wolfe, chair

Denise Carl

Rev. Jacob Gawlik

Dawn Zeigler

SOCIAL MINISTRY

Shari Baker

Marsha Keime

Larry Kradle

Denise Norman

Amy Smith

Gary Smith

Paul Wolfe

Sharon Zinanni

WORSHIP TECH

Dan Eads

Jeff & Marci Fisher

Andrew Stutzke

PARTNERS IN PRAYER & CARE

Shari Baker

Rev. Jacob Gawlik

Larry Kradle

Nancy Rasmussen

Stan Rasmussen

Pat Redfield

Sharon Zinanni

LILIES ARE WANTED to decorate the chancel for Easter. You can order on the group order or purchase your own. If you purchase your own lily and plan on picking it up, bring it to the church **no earlier than April 3** and please place a tag on it with your name. Plants can be picked up after the Easter morning service, Sunday, April 20. *Note: Payment should accompany the form. Make checks payable to St. John's Lutheran Church. Deadline to turn in this form is Monday, March 30.*



ORDER INFORMATION

___ (#) Lilies at \$13.00 per plant ___ Will purchase own and bring to church by April 3
All lilies should be white. Please return this slip whether you plan to purchase through the church or on your own.

BULLETIN INFORMATION

From _____	In memory of (deceased person(s)) _____
In honor of (living person(s) or special occasion) _____	As a gift: _____

Lenten Mid-Week Worship



We are again joining our Tri-Church partners

St. _____ (Immanuel, John's and St. Paul) for worship this Lenten season. All are welcome!

12:15pm worship at Immanuel in Rock Falls (501 8th Ave., Rock Falls). Cookies and fellowship after worship.

6:30pm worship at St. Paul in Sterling (1701 16th Ave., Sterling). Dessert and fellowship after worship.

During the five weeks of Lent 2026, we will learn what it means to be **"WALKING WET"** — living our

baptismal promises in daily life. The five baptismal promises, which are made when we are baptized, provide guidance as we live as a child of God in the world. These promises are meant to drench us daily in God's love and grace — promises for each day.

These are the "watchwords" and preaching texts for each week:

- February 25: "Community" John 13:31-35
- March 4: "Sacrament" Matthew 14:13-21
- March 11: "Story" Luke 18:35-43
- March 18: "Compassion" Mark 10:35-45
- March 25: "Witness" Jonah 3:10-4:11

Come! Allow yourself to be drenched in God's immense love!

Thank you

THANK YOU NOTES

Dear Friends at St. John's,

Thank you so very much for the prayers, cards, calls and concern during Dad's illness. We so appreciate the delicious meal served after his funeral service and the fellowship time it provided. Your caring efforts to make his service, it's music and all details special speak to the "Community" within St. John's.

With Grateful Hearts,
 The Family of Howard Janssen

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

703 Third Avenue, Sterling, IL 61081

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