

Aug
2026

News from St. John

Staff:

Pastor:

Sherri Otto

Office:

Amanda Schultz

Accounting:

Kendra Hilk

Custodian:

Jen Scott

Choir Director:

Allison Vandermark

Accompanist:

Tara Larson

Organist:

Eileen Hanlon

Worship this month:

Sunday mornings at 9:00am
(Outdoor) Wednesday evenings at 6:00pm

Events this month:

August 3-6: Vacation Bible school

August 11: Twins game

August 30: Blessing of the backpacks

*5th - 8th grade parent meeting after service

Note: there is NO Bible study on August 6th or 20th

Note: Pastor Sherri will be on vacation from August 17th-23rd

148 S Chestnut St. Belle Plaine MN 56011

Church office: 952-873-6492

email: office@stjohnbelleplaine.org

Office hours: M-Th 9:00-3:00,

Fri 9:00-12:00

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Unapproved St. John Lutheran Church Council Minutes

July 14, 2026

The meeting was called to order at 6:30pm and Pastor led us in a devotion

Present:

X	Pastor Sherri Otto		Jim Eggers	X	Rob Schultz	X	Deanne Fogarty
	Jerold Stauffacher	X	David Bungarden	X	Tim Moonen	X	Amy Franck
X	Alicia Shutes	X	Patty Laabs	X	Cody Schultz		

Approval of Minutes:

Council reviewed the minutes of the June Council Meeting. After review, it was noted that New Business item B regarding the new freezer cost was split between WELCA, Youth and Property funds, not just WELCA and Property as originally noted. After this correction, a motion was made, seconded and carried to approve the meeting minutes.

The council reviewed the current agenda. A motion was made, seconded and carried to approve the June agenda.

Staff Reports:

A. Amanda's office report was reviewed by members of the council. Amanda is still working on the church history in between daily tasks and helping to coordinate all of the summer events.

B. Pastors report was reviewed by the council. She'll be participating in BBQ Days, Summer Camp at Gustavus (with a "retreat" back at St. John after), Vacation Bible School, the Twins Game, and everything in between.

Treasurer's Reports:

Jerold's treasurer report was reviewed by the council. For the month of June we missed our budgeted offerings by \$7,139. Year to Date, we're behind budget by \$20,363 and behind last year by \$10,206 for offerings. The good news is that our Actual expenses for the month were under our budget by \$2,396. Overall in the month of June, we still came up short \$3,408; for the year we are still operating in the black by \$1,020. It was also noted that the contract workers checks were written in last day of June and were included in June expenses, we should see lighter expenses for them in July.

Balances in accounts as of July 7th are as follows:

- a. Ameriprise Account (Stier) balance: \$131,538
- b. Property Improvement (Savings) balance: \$222,608
- c. Foundation Account (Interest from Foundation Investment) balance: \$20,320
- d. General Fund balance: \$21,170
- e. Youth Account balance: \$24,000
- f. Building Fund Checkbook balance: \$3,600
- g. Memorial Fund balance: \$11,558 with a \$25,000 CD due Sept. 11
- h. Jackson Annuity balance: \$80,332
- i. St. John Foundation Investment balance (Charles Schwab): \$206,920

Transfers:

A. Darlene Ruehling was approved by the council as a new member this month. Welcome, Darlene!

B. No transfers out.

Ongoing Business:

A. VBS is still in need of volunteers to help – especially adults! Please consider donating some time to our youth if you're able.

B. Building and Grounds is getting quotes to replace our sign on the front corner to LED.

C. Parking Lot Update: Concrete work is scheduled to begin July 22nd .

New Business:

A. We're halfway through summer and many have been asking about fall services. Pastor and the council agree that fall services will remain as they were last year, with services at 8am and 9:30am.

B. During VBS, for the safety of our children, the church doors will be locked. If you need to visit the church at this time, you'll be able to call the office to get access into the building.

Ministry Team Updates:

A. Many Buildings and Grounds updates were covered in the business items above. Their final update for this month is that the new hearing system is up and running. We appreciate all their hard work throughout the Church and the property.

Motion was made, seconded, and carried to adjourn the meeting at 7:11pm. We closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully Submitted,
Deanne Fogarty, Secretary





Kids Make Us Smile



This morning, as I let Bella and Sage outside, the July air was already thick with heat. My calendar has been just as full as the weather has been warm. Between Summer Festival Camp, Wednesday evening worship, planning for VBS, and getting ready for fall ministry, it's been a busy season.

As I sat down to write this newsletter, my eyes wandered to a picture on my bookshelf of my dad holding Emily when she was just two months old. The joy on his face made me smile.

My dad loved kids—especially his grandkids. He loved making them laugh, helping them, and simply spending time with them. He had a gentle spirit, a wonderful sense of humor, and a way of making every child feel seen. Looking at that picture reminded me how much he taught me about relationships: listening well, treating others with kindness and respect, and finding joy in children.

Maybe that's one of the reasons I love being with our students so much.

One of the highlights of this summer was spending time with our middle school students at Summer Festival Camp. Watching them worship, serve, laugh, ask questions, and grow in their faith reminded me that the church isn't just preparing for the future—the church is already alive in them today.

As we look ahead to Connect and Confirmation this fall, I can't wait to explore the New Testament and the life of Jesus together. I love their curiosity, their honest questions, and the unique perspective they bring.

And if you've ever worried that your child might be a little noisy during worship, please don't. Their voices don't distract me—they make me smile. They remind me that our church is filled with life, and there is no better sound than families worshipping together.

Peace,

Pastor Sherri

Amanda here!

Last Summer I started a 'fun little history project' here at St. John ~ can you believe we will be celebrating 150 years in 2027? As I was familiarizing myself with the office and digging through cabinets and drawers I found more and more newspaper articles, pictures and booklets. And I was captivated enough to dive right into the history of our beautiful congregation. I really lucked out when a couple of our members brought in binders full of great information, from big historical events to all the previous pastors! I have been having so much fun with it.

But what good is the information if it's not shared?! As my interest peaked and the information grew, so did this idea I had! I would love to share what I have gathered and collected so far (some from the archives and some from current members of the church) with you all!! So starting in August there will be display boards in the gathering area to share with you what I have come across thus far. And hopefully you will take a little look at it and see if there is anything you can add to our history books!

AND...if you would consider being interviewed about your years here at St. John, please reach out to me! I would love to sit for a visit and learn more!

150 years and growing is something to be proud of and I can't wait to celebrate our official anniversary in 2027! Be on the lookout for more information and events to come....



150 years in 2027

Ollie the Otter invites our pre-K thru 4th grade students to VBS!

August 3rd - 6th

9:00am - 12:00pm

Theme: Snowball Mountain



Snowball Mountain Challenge invites kids to an exciting winter sports event where they become Challengers, gearing up for frosty games, snowy surprises, and hands-on lessons about resilience and faith.

Thank you to everyone who donated to our milk jug igloo and winter wonderland materials!

*Be on the lookout for Sunday School registration
and Rally Sunday details!*

UPCOMING DATES:

Backpack blessings on Sunday August 30th

Rally Sunday September 13th

Bible Sunday/Teacher installation September 20th -- BACK to 2 services

Noisy offering September 27th

Connect and Confirmation!

We've got a few weeks left of this HOT and busy summer, but Fall is right around the corner!

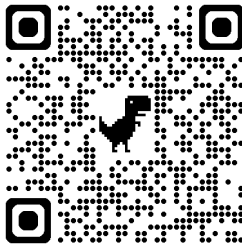
Which means we are starting to prepare
for our Wednesday Connect & Confirmation program!

*There are TWO parent dates to note:

August 30th @ 10:30am ~ NEW this year we will be having a parent meeting to look at the year ahead, expectations and discuss various events for 2026-2027. At least one parent or guardian is expected to attend.

September 9th ~ This will be our typical orientation night! (please note that there will be a leader meeting on Sept 2nd, please let the office know if you are interested in joining our Wednesday night team!)

*Please register your 5th - 8th grade student before August 24th



We have big goals here at St. John when it comes to our youth! Early in 2025 we conducted a survey of our top priorities and our youth came in at the top. We are always looking for new ways to engage our Sunday School students, the Wednesday night crew and those who have been confirmed. We look forward to supporting all students throughout their faith journey.

Happy Birthday!

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
						Sherri Dandurand
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Andi Ottig	Emmaleah Cecka Diane Koniarski Travis Zellman	Tyler Stolee		Jim Koonst	Jullian Koepp Brody Bessel	Jack Buerkle
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Michael Altringer	Lynn Johnson	Lila Bungarden Mindy Chevalier Emma Koepp Rozlyn Meierbachtol Justin Overline	Tea Smith Lucas Dandurand	Linda Jeurissen Karla Koepp Ken Theis	Rachel Kelm	Dale Tesch
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
Heather Hornaman Katelynn Swenson Susie Volek	Hailey Oestreich	Zachary Fogarty		Angela Faucette Trevor Hutchison Scarlette Nagorski Brennan Veerkamp	Lavonne Behnke Mason Bungarden Rae Fimon	Patty Laabs Mike Schoenbauer Jean Soller
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
	Cheryl Nagel	Jerold Stauffacher	Josephine Berg Margaret Lawson Sarah Vycital	Talia Anderson Vayda Anderson Nathan Korbel	Kellen Hornaman	
30	31					
Remington Korbel Theodore Korbel Leo Siekman						

August Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9am - Worship	6pm - personnel VBS-----	----- Twins game!	5:30pm - picnic 6:00pm - worship -----	NO bible study 5pm - TOPS -----		
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
9am - Worship			5:30pm - picnic 6:00pm - worship 6:30pm - council	10am - bible study 5pm - TOPS		
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
9am - Worship	Pastor Sherri ----	Vacation----	5:30pm - picnic 6:00pm - worship -----	NO bible study 5pm - TOPS -----		
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
9am - Worship -----			5:30pm - picnic 6:00pm - worship	10am - bible study 5pm - TOPS		
30	31					
9am - Worship * <i>blessing of the backpacks</i>						

~ AUGUST SUNDAY SERVICE ASSISTANTS ~

Alter guild: Bonnie Vinkemeier

August 2

Greeters: Terry & Angie Kahle

Lay Readers: Angie Kahle

Communion Assistants: Steve Schroeder, Terry Siemon,
Brent Koepp

Ushers: Chris, Luke & Logan Schultz, Rob Schultz, Mark Schultz,
Wayne Koepp

August 9

Greeters: Matt & Kristin Stier

Lay Readers: Susie Steinhagen

Communion Assistants: Angie Faucette, Matt & Kristin Stier

Ushers: Chris, Luke & Logan Schultz, Rob Schultz, Mark Schultz,
Wayne Koepp

August 16

Greeters: Bruce & Susie Volek

Lay Readers: Kalli Koepp

Communion Assistants: Michelle Melheim, Linda Rueben,
Brent Koepp

Ushers: Myron Bratsch, Kirk Franck, Matt Kes, Jeff Eppen

August 23

Greeters: Lowell & Laurie Hiles

Lay Readers: Jessica Kurvers

Communion Assistants: Lynne Jeurissen, Dorothy Koepp,
Teresa Latzke

Ushers: Myron Bratsch, Kirk Franck, Matt Kes, Jeff Eppen

August 30

Greeters: Ken & Sue Koenig

Lay Readers: Lacy Schultz

Communion Assistants: Rob & Sandy Schultz,
Bonnie Vinkemeier

Ushers: Brent & Peyton Schwichtenberg, Greg Schwichtenberg,
Bruce Schmidt, Richard Laabs

"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful
stewards of God's grace in its various forms."

~ 1 Peter: 4:10

St. John Lutheran Church		
Statement of Activities		
General Fund	06/01/26-06/30/26	06/01/25-06/30/25
Revenues		
Total Offering Revenues	\$ 21,507.53	\$ 25,217.20
Coffee Hour Income	\$ 70.00	\$ -
Sunday School Offering	\$ 45.00	\$ 50.14
Vacation Bible School	\$ 40.40	\$ 202.75
Miscellaneous Income	\$ 241.00	\$ 59.00
Rental Income-Sanctuary & Gathering Area	\$ 300.00	\$ -
Total Revenues	\$ 22,203.93	\$ 25,529.09
Expenditures		
Total Benevolence Expense	\$ 856.85	\$ 10,210.00
Total Church/Grounds Maintenance Expense	\$ 3,270.41	\$ 467.72
Total Education Expense - Youth	\$ 55.28	\$ -
Total Insurance	\$ 1,577.41	\$ -
Total Office Expenses	\$ 1,554.11	\$ 1,006.45
Total Other Expenses	\$ 428.79	\$ 104.45
Total Staff Benefits	\$ 2,922.33	\$ 67.04
Total Staff Salaries	\$ 14,534.16	\$ 8,350.44
Total Utilities	\$ 1,778.71	\$ 1,615.72
Total Expenditures	\$ 26,978.05	\$ 21,821.82
Net Revenue	\$ (4,370.80)	\$ 3,272.75
Property Improvement / Building		
Income (Donations, Rent, Investments)	\$ 2,571.14	\$ 4,902.39
Total Expenditures	\$ 10,427.84	\$ 9,037.84
Net Receipts / Disbursements	\$ (7,856.70)	\$ (4,135.45)
Offerings		
	General Fund	Property Improvement
06/01/2026-06/06/2026	\$ 2,936.21	\$ 622.00
06/07/2026-06/13/2026	\$ 3,796.92	\$ 591.38
06/14/2026-06/20/2026	\$ 6,966.59	\$ 685.00
06/21/2026-06/27/2026	\$ 2,975.71	\$ 406.38
06/28/2026-06/30/2026	\$ 2,149.93	\$ 150.00

To schedule a *recurring electronic contribution* via Vanco:

Visit our website: www.stjohnbelleplaine.org

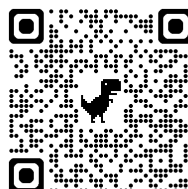
Select the green 'online giving'

Scroll to the bottom and select 'get started today'

Select where you would like the funds allocated

Follow the prompts to set up your account

Or scan the code:



Or give using venmo

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Change Service Requested