

ST. JOHN NEWS

July 2026

Worship this month:

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

Events this month:

July 18th: BBQ days parade
July 19th-22nd: Summer festival camp for Confirmation students
July 23rd & 24th: Retreat for Confirmation students
July 26th-31st: Mission Trip

Note: the office will be closed on July 5th

Note: there is NO Bible study on July 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

Staff:

Pastor:

Sherri Otto

Office:

Amanda Schultz

Accounting:

Kendra Hilk

Custodian:

Jen Scott

Choir Director:

Allison Vandermark

Accompanist:

Tara Larson

Organist:

Eileen Hanlon

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Unapproved St. John Lutheran Church Council Minutes

June 9th, 2026

President Jim Eggers called the meeting to order at 6:30pm and Pastor led us in a devotion

Present:

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

Approval of Minutes:

Council reviewed the minutes of the May Council Meeting. Motion was made, seconded and carried to approve the meeting minutes.

The council reviewed the current agenda. After adding an agenda item to review the Wednesday Worship Pianist job description, 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. In addition to the daily tasks to keep our church running smoothly, Amanda has been working on the history of our church. They're also trying to reduce printing waste by 60% with a different Sunday bulletin format. Please reach out to the office if you have suggestions or concerns.

B. Pastors report was reviewed by the council. In addition to her traditional roles within the church, Pastor represented St. John church by participating in the Memorial Day service at Veterans Park. Summer highlights include confirmation camp at Gustavus and Vacation Bible School.

Treasurer's Reports:

Jerold's treasurer report was reviewed by the council. For the month of May we missed our budgeted offerings by \$9,041. Year to Date, we're behind budget by \$12,864 and behind last year by \$6,446 for offerings. The good news for the month is that our Actual expenses for the month were under our budgeted by \$1,467. Overall, we came up short in May by \$6,446 (its not a typo, we came up short the same amount we're down in offerings YTD)

Kenda Hilke has been brought on as our new Accountant. Amy Franck has handed things off to her. Paperwork is being finalized for the bank accounts and online access.

Balances in accounts as of June 6th are as follows:

- a. Ameriprise Account (Stier) balance: \$128,149 (this account saw a decline on Friday the 5th)
- b. Property Improvement (Savings) balance: \$225,144
- c. Foundation Account (Interest from Foundation Investment) balance: \$20,320
- d. General Fund balance: \$19,589.48
- e. Youth Account balance: \$24,180
- f. Building Fund Checkbook balance: \$3,400
- g. Memorial Fund balance: \$11,582 with a \$25,000 CD due Sept. 11
- h. Jackson Annuity balance: \$78,898
- i. St. John Foundation Investment balance (Charles Schwab): \$207,601

Transfers:

A. No transfers in or out

Ongoing Business:

- A. The Summer worship schedule has begun! Wednesday evening services begin at 6pm and Sunday services are at 9am.
- B. Our Confirmation students entering 8th grade will be joining Pastor at the Gustavus Summer Festival Camp from July 19 to July 22. Then they'll have a 2 day retreat at the church (not overnight) on July 23 and 24 to talk about what it means to confirm their faith, along with games, food and fun!
- C. VBS planning is underway! It will be August 3rd – 6th . The google form to sign up has been emailed and is on our Facebook page. Please be sure to register.
- D. Please join us for Lutheran night at the Twins Game on August 11th . The bus is nearly full and there are a handful of tickets remaining if you'd prefer to drive yourself. Please reach out to the office ASAP if you'd still like to attend.

New Business:

- A. St. John will be participating in the BBQ Days parade again this year. This year's theme is America. We're looking for donations of decorations and candy, float decorators, and parade walkers. Please reach out to the office to donate supplies, time or talents!
- B. The kitchen freezer needed to be replaced. The cost of the new freezer will be split between the WELCA and property improvement funds.
- C. Three trees on the south side of the church have died. Replacements will be paid for by the Property Improvement fund and will be planted by a nursery which comes with a warranty.
- D. The sign in the Southeast corner of church needs a few updates; new letters and plexiglass would give it a fresh look. The building and grounds team will look into those updates.
- E. The council reviewed the job description for the Wednesday Worship Pianist position provided by the personnel committee. The council made a motion, seconded and carried to approve the description.

Ministry Team Updates:

- A. The Children, Youth and Family Report was reviewed by the council. Highlights include VBS coming up and planning for the 26-27 year. Alicia Shutes provided an update on their work in creating a policy for children and vulnerable adults.
- B. The council also reviewed the Personnel Committees Report. They've worked to hire Tara Larson, the choir accompanist and Wednesday pianist, and Kendra Hilke, the new accountant. They are working on documenting the hiring process to better define roles between the council and the personnel committee.

Motion was made, seconded, and carried to adjourn the meeting at 7:22pm.

We closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully Submitted,

Deanne Fogarty, Secretary

The Gift of Generations

In the dictionary, a milestone is defined as 1. a stone functioning as a milepost or 2. a significant event or stage in the life, progress, development, or the like of a person, nation, etc.

This year, 2026, is a milestone for both our country and my mom. My mom, Carol (Dolly) will be turning 90 on July 9th and we will be celebrating her birthday on Sunday, July 12th. I will be taking a vacation day from St. John so that I can go to worship with her in Goodhue and then onto her party. It will be quite a celebration, not with red, white and blue colors but purple and white! (Goodhue Wildcat colors!!)

As I consider three generations—my mom, myself, and my daughter Emily, who just turned 24—I can't help but wonder what wisdom I would share with my 24-year-old self. These are some of the lessons that come to mind, and I know they are lessons my mom has passed on and that Emily will one day embrace as well:

- Be yourself. Authenticity is needed in this world today.
- Don't worry so much about your appearance. The people that love you, love you for who you are, not for how you look.
- Be kind. No if's, ands or buts about this.
- Be brave. It's okay to fail and try again and again and again. Making mistakes and how we handle them are what makes us who we are.
- Love unconditionally.
- Tell people you love them. You never know when it will be the last time you see them.
- Ask for help. God did not create us to do this life alone. It's okay and it's worth it.
- When you least expect it, you will find what you are looking for.
- Own up to your mistakes and say you are sorry.
- Stand up and speak up for others less fortunate.
- Find your passion and never let that go.
- Change is hard but often needed.
- Remember, God is always with you. Quit searching for love, acceptance and forgiveness from other sources.

I know none of these ideas are new. They have been shared by parents, grandparents, teachers, pastors, and friends for generations. Yet as we grow older and reflect on our lives, we begin to see just how true they are. The lessons we learn through joy, hardship, success, and failure become gifts we can pass on to those who come after us. They may not always be ready to hear them today, but someday those words may become exactly what they need.

Today, I invite you to take on a simple but meaningful assignment. Write down ten things you would want future generations—or those you love most—to know. What lessons, values, hopes, or pieces of wisdom would you want to pass along?

And if you are younger than 30, think about the conversations you would like to have with your parents, grandparents, siblings, or friends. What would you ask? What stories would you want to hear? What truths have you already learned that others might need to hear?

Every generation has something to teach and something to learn. Sharing our stories and our wisdom is one way we leave a legacy of faith, love, and hope. It is also one of the ways God works through us to encourage one another.

I look forward to hearing from you on how your assignment went!

Happy July to each of you and I hope this summer is filled with milestones and wonderful events in your life! May God bless you all!!

Pastor Sherri

Summer is in full swing! This past month we started the Wednesday evening outdoor services and I encourage you to check it out if you haven't already. We have a little picnic starting at 5:30 and a service around the fire on the patio at 6:00.

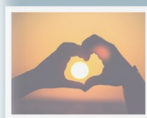


This month we will be participating in the BBQ days parade, so if you have any red, white and blue items to donate for our 'AMERICA' themed float feel free to drop them by the office! We will also be accepting candy donations to throw to the crowd!

Also this month (July 19-22), our 8th grade students will get away from real life, hang out with people from all across the Midwest, deepen friendships, and talk about God at Gustavus Summer Festival Camp. Everyday speakers come to share inspiring and challenging stories about real life, God, and where the two intertwine. The days are packed with fun surprises of all kinds. From the music, the movies, the games, the speakers, and club – all with laughter to tears – Summer Festival Camp really has something for everybody. Following the 3 days at camp, our Confirmands will spend a few hours each day on Thursday and Friday deepening their understanding of confirmation with Pastor Sherri.

Finishing out July we will be sending off the Mission Trip group as they head to South Dakota! We are so proud of their hard work and dedication with fundraising and meetings over the last year! We can't wait to hear about the trip when they get back!

2026 Mission Trip



The next trip will be to Lake Traverse, SD
~July 26-31

The mission trip group meets on the first Wednesday of the month, after worship service for a quick 30 minute meeting to discuss local community service projects, as well as the upcoming trip!

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. They will come to realize that with the strength God provides, they can share their gifts, be brave, give their all, pray, and hope. Your kids will be guided daily by the energetic Activities Director and the lovable Ollie the Arctic Seal puppet, who is reporting on the events. Challengers aren't just playing games.

Using their Challenge Companion (the Bible), they learn to draw strength from their faith through powerful stories, while connecting the learnings to Bible Stories and Lift Lessons (Key Learnings). With a unique winter theme and solid theology at its core, *Snowball Mountain Challenge* VBS delivers joy and meaning in equal measure, teaching kids that "I can do all things through him who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13, NRSV).

Our area will be transformed into a mountaintop experience filled with laughter, life lessons, and lasting faith. As children face their challenges and discover their strength in God, you'll hear them say, "Challenge accepted – with God I am strong."

Each day will open with music and a bible story, then we will break out into small groups for our stations: science, snack, craft and activity.

Be a part of the Snowball Mountain Challenge!

We are looking for adult volunteers and helpers to join Pastor Sherri and Amanda to help with each station and small group. Please contact the office or Sara Bungarden if you are interested in accepting the snowball challenge.

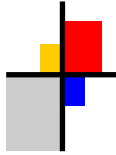
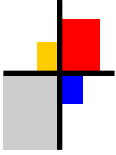
We are looking for a few donations to make the transformation complete! IF you have sleds, skis, snowboards, etc. that you would like to donate or borrow to us, please drop them off in the office or conference room (don't forget to label the items you want back). Lastly, clear plastic milk/water jugs! We are looking for A LOT of these to make an igloo!

Registration link:

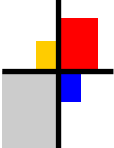
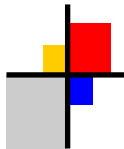


See you on the slopes!

Happy Birthday!

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
			Vayda Borresen		Ardith Bristlin Wesley Pankonin Tricia Ruud	Bruce Gruetzmacher Curtis Latzke
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Marlys Koepp Abby Kubes Romyn Malecha Luke Siemon	Jim Bergs Corey Johnson Lori Thaves	Erin Carlson Renee Eyrich Hannah Heckers Emma Luskey	Bev Delgehausen Suzanne Hillstrom Jayden Koonst	Allison Bristlin Niklas Tharaldson		Emily Wermerskirchen Susana Rosario
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Patrick Lawler Senjah Peterson	Emily Fogarty Brynlee Koch Brianna Swenson	Emma Davis	Meredith Carstens Carter Doebebling Julie Oldenburg	Cullen Davidson Anne Herrmann Barbara Koepp	Jenn Nagorski Megan Fahey Jodi Fahey Sara Bungarden	Judy Wolf Tonya Smith Caleb Smith Greyson Hardel
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Olivia Smith Jackson Schroeder Stephanie Paulson	Olivia Paulson Lucille St. Germain	Tim Stier Sydney Meyer Remi Meyer	Tyler Stier Melanie Eggers	Ashley Pankonin Roger Delgehausen	Ryan Cecka Kayla Buszmann	Ashton Pankonin Matthew Fogarty Joe Lindahl
26	27	28	29	30	31	
Merlin Stier Cami Schultz Steve Schmidt Nicole Koepp Thomas Carstens	Holly Potter	Emma Liebbhard Betty Kosse Jacob Koenig Scott Hornaman Bennett Aust	Lisa Holbrook Noah Hanson Gerald Bratsch	Hunter Meyer Greg Meyer	Gene Stier Issac Hanson Cade Eggers Marlene Anderley	

July Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
					*office closed	
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
9am - Worship	6pm - personnel		5:30pm - picnic 6:00pm - worship	10am - bible study 5pm - TOPS		
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
9am - Worship		6pm - worship	5:30pm - picnic 6:00pm - worship	10am - bible study 5pm - TOPS		BBQ days parade
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
9am - Worship *baptism			5:30pm - picnic 6:00pm - worship	5pm - TOPS		
Summer festival ---- -	-----camp ----- --	----- --	----- --	8th grade retreat--- --	9-12 -----	
26	27	28	29	30	31	
9am - Worship			5:30pm - picnic 6:00pm - worship	10am - bible study 5pm - TOPS		
Mission trip ----- -	----- --	----- --	----- --	----- -	-----	

~ JULY SUNDAY SERVICE ASSISTANTS~

Alter guild: Lynne Juerissen

July 5

Greeters: Greg & Linda Schwichtenberg

Lay Readers: Jan Effinger

Communion Assistants: Greg & Linda Schwichtenberg,
Jan Effinger

Ushers: Albert Koepp, Dorothy Koepp, Kevin Koepp,
Matt Stier, Bruce Volek, Tim Carlson, Josh Koepp

July 12

Greeters: Ron & Diane Rasmussen

Lay Readers: Amy Franck

Communion Assistants: Kirk Franck, Peg Longhenry,
Cindy Schoenbauer

Ushers: Albert Koepp, Dorothy Koepp, Kevin Koepp,
Matt Stier, Bruce Volek, Tim Carlson, Josh Koepp

July 19

Greeters: Jerold & Kathi Stauffacher

Lay Readers: Renee Meuleners

Communion Assistants: Renee Meuleners,
Jerold & Kathi Stauffacher

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

July 28

Greeters: Angela Faucette

Lay Readers: Peyton Schwichtenberg

Communion Assistants: Patty Laabs, Sandi Wolpern, Abby Kubes

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 Activites		
General Fund	05/01/26-05/31/26	05/01/25-05/31/25
Revenues		
Total Offering Revenues	19,915.40	22,297.38
Coffee Hour Income	77.00	60.00
Confirmation Income	337.15	561.83
Investment Income	500.00	
Sunday School Offering	50.00	50.14
Vacation Bible School	41.10	51.38
Total Other Revenue (Rental Income-	350.00	
Total Revenues	21,270.65	23,020.73
Expenditures		
Total Benevolence Expense	800.00	1,510.00
Total Church/Grounds Mainte-	521.65	511.94
Total Education Expense - Youth	503.52	111.20
Total Insurance	1,577.41	0.00
Total Office Expenses	2,398.47	1,301.94
Total Other Expenses	353.70	1,612.25
Total Staff Benefits	2,947.80	67.04
Total Staff Salaries	15,829.58	14,248.06
Total Utilities	1,851.43	1,641.45
Total Worship Music & Arts Ex-	786.47	86.21
Transfers Out-Raffle Tickets	(146.65)	0.00
Total Expenditures	27,423.38	21,090.09
Net Revenue	(6,446.03)	1,038.14
Property Improvement / Build-	05/01/26-05/31/26	05/01/25-05/31/25
Income (Donations, Rent, Invest-	3,048.89	73,796.63
Total Expenditures	2,161.30	17,442.20
Net Receipts / Disbursments	887.59	56,354.43
Offerings	General Fund	Property Improvment
05/01/2026-05/09/2026	6,177.18	843.38
05/10/2026-05/16/2026	5,395.57	1,401.38
05/17/2026-05/23/2026	5,272.92	415.00
05/24/2026-05/31/2026	5,834.07	505.51

To schedule a *recurring electronic contribution* via Vanco:

Visit our website: www.stjohnbelleplaine.org

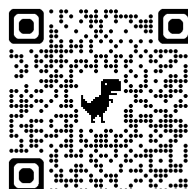
Select the green 'online giving'

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