News from St. John

November 2026

Staff
Pastor Sherri Otto

Office:
Amanda Schultz

Accounting:
Kendra Hilk

Treasurer:
Jerold Stauffacher

Custodian:
Jen Scott

Organist:
Eileen Hanlon

Choir director:
Allison Vandermark

Accompanist:
Tara Larson



Events this month:

November 1st ~ All Saints Day
November 3rd ~ Kingsway service
November 23rd ~ Ecumenical Service
November 26th ~ Thanksgiving

Church is more than a building, it's a place to gather together in worship and fellowship with people who become like family.

Treats and refreshments are served Sunday mornings between services. This month's hosts are:
Nov 1: 3rd grade families
Nov 8: Theis & Henning families
Nov 15: 7th grade families
Nov 22: Chris Swanson's 6th grade group
Nov 29: Coffee hour team



St. John Lutheran Church
148 S Chesnut St
Belle Plaine MN 56011

Inside this edition:

Council minutes
from the Pastor
special news
calendars
Sunday helpers
Financial report

Unapproved St. John Lutheran Church Council Minutes

October 13, 2026

President Jim Eggers called the meeting to order at 6:01pm. Pastor led us in a devotion, "Come as you are."

Members Present:

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

Approval of Minutes:

Council reviewed the minutes of the September Council Meeting. A motion was made, seconded and carried to approve the meeting minutes.

Council reviewed the minutes from the September 20, 2026 Special meeting regarding the church finances. A motion was made, seconded and carried to approve the minutes.

The council reviewed the current agenda; a request was made to add bulletins and the Chamber of Commerce Trunk or Treat event as agenda items. A motion was made, seconded and carried to approve the September agenda.

Staff Report:

A. Amanda's office report was reviewed by members of the council. She is working on implementing a few processes to have better insights into the groups and people in the church for better visibility and safety, especially Wednesday night connect and confirmation groups.

She is still working on the church history as we prepare for our 150th anniversary.

B. Pastors report was reviewed by the council. As we hit the busyness of fall and all things happening at St. John, Pastor noted that there is a new Vespers service that will be hosted by Jeff Scott on Wednesdays at 6pm. She also praised the Visitation/Care team for all of their efforts!

Treasurer's Report:

Jerold's treasurer report was reviewed by the council. September offerings revenue were $20,932 which is $8,023 below the budgeted offerings of $28,955; year-to-date, we are behind last year's offerings by $21,692. The expenses for the month of September were $24,203 which was $5,622 below our budgeted amount of $29,825. Overall, our expenses for the year are $28,905 below budget. Expenses for this year compared to last year at the same time are down $9,522 so that is a positive. The bank account continues to hold steady. A check from Ameriprise came and was deposited into the Property Improvement account. Parking lot striping, concrete and labor has been paid for out of Property Improvement, that is why the account balance dropped so much. The council reviewed the payroll and approved proposed increases to be included in the 2027 budget.

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

a. Ameriprise Account (Stier) balance: $111,442 with a cash balance of $117. The cash balance was withdrawn to assist with additional property improvement updates.
b. Property Improvement (Savings) balance: $88,826
c. Foundation Account (Interest from Foundation Investment) balance: $20,325
d. General Fund balance: $17,780
e. Youth Account balance: $14,837
f. Building Fund Checkbook balance: $21,296 (this still includes the Ameriprise cash)
g. Memorial Fund balance: $17,020 with a $20,000 CD due March 11,2027
h. Jackson Annuity balance: $79,342.18
i. St. John Foundation Investment balance (Charles Schwab): $204,603

Transfers:

A. The Council Approved new members: Quinn, Morgan and Cooper Frisell; Dave and Kim Frisell; Nick, Rita, Lucy and Cora Bartyzal; David, Shannon and Shelby Peterson; and Laurie Fogarty. Welcome to St. John!

B. The council also accepted the Transfer Out of Marlene Anderley.

Ongoing Business:

A. Building and grounds continues to work on the internet in the building. Verizon was tested but is not going to work.

B. Mark your calendars for October 28th @ 7pm for the All Committee Meeting. This will include a discussion on the 150th Anniversary Celebration. Please plan to attend if you're willing to share your time and talents with any of our committees!

New Business:

A. The Chamber of Commerce hosts a "Witches on Main" event and are looking for donations. The council made a motion, seconded and carried to donate $50 for a basket for their event.

B. We received a notification from the "Welcome Neighbor" service. This was a brochure that was given to new residents of Belle Plaine and has churches listed. The cost for the year is $195. After discussion, the council agreed that we are getting out in the community with our involvement in the BP Chamber of Commerce and agreed to decline participation in their brochure.

C. The council discussed the use of the red pew pads for service attendees to sign in. These are specifically used to track communion attendance as one of the requirements for membership, however, aren't being used regularly by all attending. We will table this for next month and Pastor Sherri will talk to fellow clergy to see how their congregations handle this.

D. A discussion was had on the simplification of bulletins. We will continue to look into the cost of printing and time associated with more detailed bulletins; perhaps the order of service would be rotated weekly, while announcements could be less frequent.

E. The Chamber of Commerce is hosting their annual trick or treat event. For businesses that are not downtown, trunk-or-treat will be in the Berger Interior parking lot. The council made a motion, seconded and carried to spend up to $200 from the memorial fund to have a truck set up. Pastor, Patty Laabs and Deanne Fogarty will plan to organize this (with assistance from Amanda as needed).

Ministry Team Updates:

A. Personnel Committee: The council reviewed the hiring process that was detailed by the personnel committee. This is a well thought out process to clearly define the roles and responsibilities between the council and the personnel committee. The council is in agreement with this process.

With the new members on the committee, they will also be reviewing the personnel files to ensure we have all of the proper documentation for all.

Motion was made, seconded, and carried to adjourn the meeting at 8:25pm. We closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully Submitted,

Deanne Fogarty, Secretary

Did You Know?

Did you know that the clergy from the Belle Plaine area meet once a month for lunch at Our Lady of the Prairie?

It's a time for us to sit together, share what's happening in our congregations and our community, ask questions, and offer advice and encouragement to one another. And, of course, there is plenty of laughter! I am thankful for this group of colleagues who support one another, share in one another's joys and challenges, and remind me that we are not doing ministry alone.

Did you know that this same group of clergy comes together each year for a Thanksgiving Ecumenical Service?

This year, the service will be held here at St. John on November 23 at 7:00 p.m., with East Union hosting. All the money collected that evening will go toward a fund that helps community members in need. The funds are given to our local police department, which uses them to purchase gas and grocery gift cards for people who need a little extra help.

I am thankful for everyone who comes together to worship, give, and care for our neighbors through this ministry. It is a wonderful reminder that when we work together, we can make a difference in the lives of others.

Did you know that in December we will offer a service called Hope in the Darkness? Pastor Wayne from the Presbyterian Church, Pastor Nathan from River Rock, and I will come together to offer a word of comfort and hope to those who have experienced loss. The holidays can be especially difficult for those who are grieving, and we want to provide a space where people can come as they are, remember those they love, and hear a message of hope.

I am thankful for this partnership and for the opportunity to walk alongside others, especially during difficult seasons of life.

And finally, did you know that I am thankful for each and every one of you?

As we enter this season of Thanksgiving, I am reminded that gratitude comes in many forms. It is found in the friendships we share, the ways we care for our neighbors, the people who walk alongside us, and the faith that brings us together. Sometimes we see God at work in the big things, and sometimes it is in the simple moments of laughter, a helping hand, or a word of encouragement.

I am grateful to be part of this congregation and this community, and I give thanks for the many ways you share God's love with others.

May this Thanksgiving season remind us of how much we have to be thankful for, and may we continue to share that gratitude through the ways we love and care for one another.

With a grateful heart,
Pastor Sherri

October was full of hustle and bustle here at St. John! Sunday School is in full swing, Connect and Confirmation classes have begun and we started a new Wednesday evening prayer service. The Vespers prayer service is led by congregation member Jeff Scott every Wednesday at 6:00pm. While there is no communion during this service, it is a great midweek opportunity to come together in prayer. It has a Lenten service familiarity and I encourage you to come check it out for yourself.

Along with our usual activities, we had a wonderful group of pets (and owners) for our 2nd annual blessing of the animals AND a beautiful day to celebrate. We welcomed new faces to our congregation on New Member Sunday and we filled the parking lot with our trunk or treat festivities.

We rounded out the month with our all team meeting, with the primary focus on our 150th celebration next year! We are so blessed!

~Amanda



Save the Date:

The Annual W/ELCA Christmas Dinner for all Congregation and Community members, family and friends will be held on Tuesday, December 8th in our Gathering area here at St. John.

Social hour will begin at 6 pm and dinner served at 6:30. The meal will be catered and include: Chicken, Meatballs in Mushroom sauce, Mashed Potatoes, Gravy, Stuffing, Corn, and Cole Slaw, buns and butter. Ticket price is $20 for adults, $10 for students and children 5 and under free. Entertainment following the meal will be provided by the Grace Notes Trio.

Tickets will be available for purchase during the month of November in the Church office Monday through Friday and between Church services during Coffee hour for the month of November.

LAST DAY to purchase tickets = November 30th.



150 years

St. John Lutheran Church, est. 1877

We look forward to celebrating together in 2027! We have some pretty great volunteers who are putting together spectuclar activites and special events throughout next year, with our official '150th anniversary' celebration in December of 2027.

And you may have noticed the history display in the gathering area?! Compiled from various sources, we would love to put it all in a booklet! The information we have collected is wonderful, but it is not complete quite yet. So if you have any history tidbits to fill in or would like to share your St. John story, please reach out to Amanda.

Established

December 26th, 1877



Did you know? The first Ecumenical Service was held at St. John on October 16th, 1966!
Belle Plaine area congregations have been working together since then to provide space for all to worship, pray and celebate a shared faith. AND this year service will be held at St. John and hosted by East Union.
This year service will be held on Monday, November 23rd at 7:00 in the evening, please mark the date on your calendar!

Thank you!

With the 2026 growing season coming to an end, this is a good time to recognize and give a big THANK YOU to our team of volunteers who cared for our church grounds this summer. Weekly these members took turns mowing, spraying and pulling weeds and kept our property looking well-manicured for Sunday services and events held during the week. Thank you to John Busse, Nick Davis, Matt Stier, Matt Hanson, Jamie Karl, Tim Moonen, and Bruce Volek for coordinating this service team.

Thank you also to the ladies of the congregation who planted and cared for the lovely flowers and arrangements at the entrance to our church.

Just a gentle reminder too, as the gardening season ends, we ask that all those who had garden space clear off their plot and dispose of any vegetation so that the final fall mowing can be completed soon. Thank you.

Thank you to all those who dedicated hours of their time to make the parking lot project a success!



And thank you to Countryside Concrete and Ken Theis and Sons!



Parking Lot







November *birthdays*

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2 Andrea Kerber Lillan Kerber Colt Oldenburg Charlie Reinsma Josh Koepp	3 John Hilgers Logan Schultz Elisa Theis	4 Gilbert Bristlin Albert Koepp Anita Lambrecth Mav Borresen	5 Adriane Nelson Rob Schultz	6 Nicole Bauleke Angie Hoff Marcy Ritsch Sam Schultz	7
8 Annette Moylan Lincoln Kelm Carson Morrison	9 Elise Davidson	10 John Koepp Ellie Martin Olivia Petersen Val Peterson Mike Sirek Claire Schrot	11 Troy Shackle Elliot Letterman Cora Bartyzal Austin Mohlin	12 Shannon LaGare Gavin Theis Chris Herrmann	13 Brady Peterson Ari Hiles Brian Grant	14 Shelly Trost Liam Carter Josalyn Henning
15 Chris Potter	16 Carol Stoppelmann Elsie Wolff	17 Richard Koepp	18 Dave Bungarden Skylar Jonason Logan Anderson	19 Sue Koenig	20 Paul Traxler	21
22 Kristine Koniarski	23	24 Jim Lange Jack & Tom Nagel	25 Monica Braesch Amy Rettig Lela Stier	26 Shara Hiles Sawyer Kelm Macy Leonard Mike Kurvers	27 David Otto Jon Schoenbauer Laurie Fogarty	28 Blakely Buszman April Westerfield Caleb Eppen
29 Virginia Bessel Cole Eggers	30 Kohen Hutchison					

calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 8:00am service coffee hour 9:30am service	2	3 1:30pm Kingsway service	4 6:00pm - Connect & Confirmation 6:00pm - Worship choir practice 6:30pm - service	5 10am - Bible Study 5pm - TOPS	6	7
8 8:00am service coffee hour 9:30am service	9	10 6:00pm council meeting	11 6:00pm - Connect & Confirmation 6:00pm - Worship choir practice	12 10am - Bible Study 5pm - TOPS	13	14
15 8:00am service coffee hour 9:30am service	16	17	18 6:00pm - Connect & Confirmation 6:00pm - Worship choir practice	19 10am - Bible Study 5pm - TOPS	20	21
22 8:00am service coffee hour 9:30am service	23 7:00pm Ecumenical service	24	25 6:00pm - Connect & Confirmation 6:00pm - Worship choir practice	26 10am - Bible Study 5pm - TOPS	27	28
29 8:00am service coffee hour 9:30am service	30					

Sunday Helpers

Alter guild: Lana Hanson

	8:00	9:30
Nov 1	**Greeter:** Kim & Jason Thaemert & family **Lay reader:** Olivia Jeurissen **Communion**: Bonnie Vinkemeier, Dorothy Koepp, Dave Latzke **Ushers:** Brent & Peyton Schwichtenberg, Greg Schwichtenberg, Bruce Schmidt, Richard Laabs *Jaydon T, MJ K **Power Point:** Kristin Stier	**Greeter:** Chris & Katie Herrmann & family **Lay reader:** Amy Franck **Communion**: Jan Effinger, Kirk Franck, Teresa Latzke **Ushers:** Dave, Sara & Mason Bungarden, Ron & Diane Rasmussen *Owen H, Holden K **Power Point:** Deanne Fogarty
Nov 8	**Greeter:** Kim & Jason Thaemert & family **Lay reader:** Bryn Davis **Communion**: Nick & Bryn Davis, Patty Laabs **Ushers:** Chris, Luke & Logan Schultz, Rob Schultz, Mark Schultz, Wayne Koepp *Jaydon Thaemert **Power point:** Amy Franck	**Greeter:** Cindy Schoenbauer **Lay reader:** Jamie Lindahl **Communion**: Sara Bungarden, Renee Meuleners, Cindy Schoenbauer **Ushers:** Scott & Tricia Ruud, Mike Nagel, Amanda Frie *Nathan Jackels **Power Point:** Deanne Fogarty
Nov 15	**Greeter:** Ken & Sue Koenig **Lay reader:** Renee Meuleners **Communion**: Renee Meuleners, Jerold & Kathi Stauffacher **Ushers:** Chris, Luke & Logan Schultz, Rob Schultz, Mark Schultz, Wayne Koepp *Cami Schultz **Power Point:** Amy Franck	**Greeter:** Kevin & Sandi Wolpern **Lay reader:** Mindy Chevalier **Communion**: Sandi Wolpern, Dave Bungarden, Linda Schwichtenberg **Ushers:** Scott & Tricia Ruud, Mike Nagel, Amanda Frie *Blair Henke, Kenall Hutchison **Power Point:** Cindy Schoenbauer
Nov 22	**Greeter:** Lowell & Laurie Hiles **Lay reader:** Sue Steinhagen **Communion**: Matt & Kristin Stier, Sue Steinhagen **Ushers:** Myron Bratsch, Kirk Franck, Matt Kes *Cami Schultz **Power Point:** Kristin Stier	**Greeter:** Chris & Annette Moylan **Lay reader:** Caren Grotberg **Communion**: Chris & Annette Moylan, Dave Bungarden **Ushers:** Brent & Mitchell Koepp, Tim Moonen, Justin Stauffacher, Aaron Leonard *Nathan Jackels **Power Point:** Cindy Schoenbauer
Nov 29	**Greeter:** Angela Faucette **Lay reader:** Jessica Kurvers **Communion**: Kirk Franck, Angela Faucette, Terry Siemon **Ushers:** Myron Bratsch, Kirk Frank, Matt Kes **Power Point:** Schultz family	**Greeter:** Brent & Wendy Koepp **Lay reader:** Beth Beuch **Communion**: Beth Beuch, Brent Koepp, Steve Schroeder **Ushers:** Brent & Mitchell Koepp, Tim Moonen, Justin Stauffacher, Aaron Leonard **Power Point:** Jan Effinger

St. John Lutheran Church
Statement of Activities

General Fund	**09/01/26-09/30/26**	**09/01/25-09/30/25**
Revenues	$21,290.58	$25,131.79
Building Fund Income	$137.99	$ -
Camp Onomia Donations	$ -	$250.00
Coffee Hour Income	$ -	$52.00
Confirmation Income	$1,182.86	$1,167.00
Sunday School Offering	$45.00	$81.65
Vacation Bible School	$ -	$51.38
Total Revenues	$22,656.43	$26,733.82
Expenditures		
Total Benevolence Expense	$800.00	$1,350.00
Total Church/Grounds Maintenance Expense	$75.99	$1,786.89
Total Education Expense - Youth	$675.50	$2,169.84
Total Insurance	$1,577.41	$2,986.76
Total Office Expenses	$1,364.32	$1,090.51
Total Other Expenses	$471.07	$4,109.37
Total Professional Fees	$157.50	$ -
Total Staff Benefits	$1,628.23	$387.82
Total Utilities	$2,359.28	$3,345.68
Total Worship Music & Arts Expense	$692.70	$897.08
Total Expenditures	$24,436.58	$32,564.55
Net Revenue	($1,780.15)	($5,830.73)
Property Improvment/Building Fund		
Income (Donations, Rent, Investments)	$18,615.76	$2,216.89
Total Expenditures	$108,761.50	$2,574.40
Net Revenue	($90,145.74)	($357.51)

Offerings	**General Fund**	**Property Improvment**
09/01/2026-09/06/2026	$4,549.28	$818.38
09/07/2026-09/13/2026	$6,029.28	$320.00
09/14/2026-09/20/2026	$4,517.35	$721.88
09/21/2026-09/30/2026	$5,920.14	$305.50

St. John Giving

If you would like to make a donation using our online portal please scan the qr code:

If you would like to make a donation using venmo please scan the qr code:

venmo

St. John Lutheran Church
148 S Chestnut St
Belle Plaine Mn 56011

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
Permit No. 16
Belle Plaine MN 56011

Change Service Requested