

St John News

October 2026

Worship this month:

Sundays 8:00am & 9:30am

Events this month:

October 4th: NEW MEMBER CLASS!

October 4th: Blessing of the animals

October 6th: W/ELCA meeting

October 11th: New member Sunday

October 11th: Screamtown for preregistered 9th - 12th grade

October 25th: Trunk or treat

October 28th: All committee meeting

Staff:

Pastor:

Sherri Otto

Office:

Amanda Schultz

Accounting:

Kendra Hilk

Treasurer:

Jerold Stauffacher

Custodian:

Jen Scott

Choir Director:

Allison Vandermark

Accompanist:

Tara Larson

Organist:

Eileen Hanlon

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148 S Chestnut St. Belle Plaine MN 56011

Church office: 952-873-6492

email: office@stjohnbelleplaine.org

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

Unapproved St. John Lutheran Church Council Minutes

September 8th, 2026

President Jim Eggers called the meeting to order at 6:06pm. Pastor led us in a devotion, "Bless the Lord, oh my soul."

Present:

X	Pastor Sherri Otto	X	Jim Eggers	X	Rob Schultz	X	Deanne Fogarty
X	Jerold Stauffacher		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 August Council Meeting. 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 September agenda.

Staff Reports:

A. Amanda's office report was reviewed by members of the council. As summer winds down, she has begun work for fall, including connect and confirmation class. She continues working on the church history in between all of the daily items to keep our church running smoothly.

B. Pastors report was reviewed by the council. As summer comes to a close and Wednesday evening campfire services have ended, we will have Wednesday evening service on the 1 st Wednesday of every month. Pastor will continue to lead connect and confirmation lessons in addition to regular bible study, Sunday services, home visits, and guiding our smaller ministry teams.

Treasurer's Reports:

Jerold's treasurer report was reviewed by the council. For the month of August we missed our budgeted offerings by \$900. Expenses for the month were \$25,816, which is \$3,218 below budget. For the month, August came out ahead by \$3,512. It was noted that we paid 2025 back taxes that were not remitted in 2025. Those are NOT reflected in the ICON statement, but are reflected in the change in the general fund balances between August and September.

The council also began the first pass at our 2027 Annual Budget and will continue to update in the coming months.

Balances in accounts as of September 4 th are as follows:

- a. Ameriprise Account (Stier) balance: \$133,497, with a cash balance of \$18,793
- b. Property Improvement (Savings) balance: \$196,351.28
- c. Foundation Account (Interest from Foundation Investment) balance: \$20,322
- d. General Fund balance: \$9,636
- e. Youth Account balance: \$14,811
- f. Building Fund Checkbook balance: \$6,751
- g. Memorial Fund balance: \$11,558 with a \$25,000 CD due Sept. 11
- h. Jackson Annuity balance: \$80,433
- i. St. John Foundation Investment balance (Charles Schwab): \$206,805

Transfers:

- A. No transfers in.
- B. No transfers out.

Ongoing Business:

A. Building and Grounds Updates:

- a. The parking lot continues to make progress.
- b. We have switched to Verizon Wireless to improve our wifi signal and mitigate issues with live streaming.
- c. A permit has been submitted to the city for the new LED sign.
- d. The old school building being used by AA is in need of new windows. The cost will be approximately \$7500. The council made a motion, seconded and carried to use \$5000 from the memorial fund and the remainder from the Property Improvement fund.
- e. With all of the updates, Building and Grounds will need to pull funds from the Earl Stier account. The council made a motion, seconded and carried to approve using the cash value of \$18,793 for the property improvements discussed above.

B. Rally Sunday is September 13th , we are hoping for a great turnout to do great work as a congregation.

New Business:

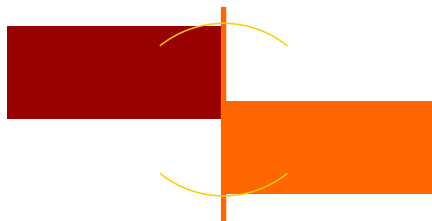
- A. A Special Congregational Meeting will be held on Sunday, September 20 th at 10:30am to discuss the changes to our financial processes.
- B. Mark your calendars! The WELCA group has confirmed a polka service has been planned for next year – October 3, 2027.
- C. Next year is a milestone anniversary for St. John church and we want to start planning early. Whether its helping with the church history or planning events, we could use your help. Our next all committee meeting is on Wednesday, October 28th @ 7pm. This meeting will begin the planning stages and is open to ALL. Please come if you're willing to give your time and talents to help us celebrate!

Ministry Team Updates:

- A. Children, Youth, and Family have been working on our Policy for Youth and Vulnerable Adults Protection. The council walked through the highlights and will review over the coming month for discussion in October.

Motion was made, seconded, and carried to adjourn the meeting at 9:12pm. We closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully Submitted,
Deanne Fogarty, Secretary



Where Do We Go From Here?

At our special congregational meeting, I was asked the question of where our congregation goes from here—not only emotionally and financially, but spiritually as well. And I'd like to address that here.

It has been uncanny—or perhaps I should say, “a God thing”—that our past three Gospel readings have been about accountability, forgiveness, and not keeping score or holding grudges.

In all of these, I have personally struggled. For when someone has betrayed your trust, it is really hard to find forgiveness and not hold a grudge against them.

But then I look at all of the things in my life that I have been given by God. My family, friends, a job, a home, this congregation—and it makes me thankful to God, but also humbled as well. For who am I to receive any of this?

And then I remember that I am a sinner too. I have made mistakes. I have hurt people. I have said things I wish I could take back. I have needed forgiveness from others, and more importantly, I have needed forgiveness from God.

We all have. That is where our faith comes in.

Jesus tells Peter that we are not to forgive someone just seven times, but “seventy-seven times” (Matthew 18:22). In other words, forgiveness is not about keeping score. It is not something we do once and check off a list. Forgiveness is something we may have to return to again and again.

And I think that is especially important for us right now.

We can hold someone accountable for their actions and still choose **not** to let anger, resentment and bitterness take up permanent residence in our hearts.

That is the part I am still working on myself.

I have been honest with you that I am not there yet. I am still angry. I still struggle with the betrayal of trust. And I suspect that some of you are struggling with those same feelings.

But I also know that I do not want to stay there.

Because when we hold on to anger and resentment, we can sometimes feel as though we are holding something against the person who hurt us. But in reality, we are often the ones carrying the weight of it.

Forgiveness does not mean saying that what happened was okay. It does not mean forgetting. It does not mean that there should be no consequences. And it does not mean that trust is automatically restored.

Forgiveness means that we begin to let go of the desire to keep carrying the hurt.

Paul writes in Ephesians, “Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you” (Ephesians 4:32).

That last part is what gets me: **as God in Christ has forgiven you.**

Jesus forgave people who betrayed him. He forgave those who mocked him, rejected him and put him on a cross. And from the cross, Jesus prayed, “Father, forgive them” (Luke 23:34).

Jesus has forgiven me. Jesus has forgiven you. So who am I, then, to say that forgiveness is not possible?

That does not mean it is easy. It does not mean it happens overnight. And it does not mean that we will all move through this at the same pace. But I believe forgiveness is part of how we heal. And I believe healing is what God wants for us as a congregation.

So where do we go from here?

We move forward together. We continue to be accountable. We continue to strengthen the way we handle our finances. We continue to ask questions and make sure that we are being good stewards of what God has entrusted to us.

But spiritually, we also begin the work of letting go by praying for those who have been hurt, by praying for our congregation and by praying for the person who caused the harm.

Because ultimately, this congregation does not belong to any one of us. It belongs to Christ. And Christ calls us not to live in anger and division, but to live in grace, mercy and forgiveness.

I don't know exactly what the road ahead will look like. But I do know that we do not walk it alone. We walk it together, and we walk it with Christ. Thanks be to God!

Peace, Pastor Sherri

“Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you” (Ephesians 4:32).

Growing through change

If you were to ask me what my favorite season is, I would probably say “Fall” but I would really be thinking: “my favorite season is not technically a season, but instead is the changing of seasons”. From the heat of summer days to the chill of Fall, from the cold winter days to the gentle spring breeze, I love the promise of something new, the promise of change and growth. And like the seasons continue to change, so do the seasons of our lives. It seems we are continually in that season of change and growth. So as the leaves begin to change and fall to the ground, shedding the foliage of the old season, let us embrace the gift of change and the promise of something new. Let us grow in faith, grow through the challenges in our lives and pray through it all.

~ Amanda

Invitation to use your Time and Talent



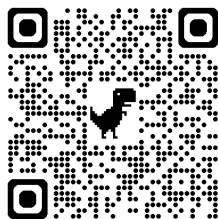
Our church community thrives because of the incredible people of all ages who give their time and talents here at St. John. On Sunday mornings there are many opportunities to participate in different roles to help make our services run smoothly. Whether you enjoy welcoming familiar faces as greeters or ushers, or you are interested in reading scripture, assisting with communion or helping behind the scenes with

audio visual or altar guild, we would LOVE to hear from you with your interest and availability. Volunteering your time is not only about filling a need - it is a wonderful way to grow your faith, build lasting friendships, and directly impact lives. No prior experience is required and we will train you for these Sunday morning roles that you choose.

We are so incredibly thankful for those that are involved in these roles already! And we look forward to adding to our teams.

Please pray about it and contact Pastor Sherri or Amanda if you are interested.

OR scan the code to fill out the form:



"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



Our next new member class will be held on October 4th following second service (approximately 10:30am), please reach out to the office or Pastor Sherri if you are interested in attending.

New member Sunday will be the following week, October 11th at both services.

Other important dates:

October 4th ~ blessing of the animals at 1:00pm

Bring your best pet or your favorite stuffie to be blessed for the year ahead!

October 6th ~ W/ELCA meeting at 5:15pm

October 15th & 16th ~ MEA

No Wednesday night classes on the 14th and no Sunday School on the 18th

October 25th ~ Trunk or treat at 10:30am

Decorate your trunk to hand out candy to Sunday School kids (after 2nd service) This year we look forward to having our new parking lot for this event!

October 28th ~ All team meeting

All are welcome to come see what our wonderful teams have been working on and discuss the upcoming 150th anniversary of St. John



Worship choir practice is every **Wednesday nights at 6:00pm** ~ if you love to sing and would like to join the choir, please reach out to Amanda in the office OR just come check out a rehearsal or two!

Birthdays to CELEBRATE!

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
				Jim Eggers Brenda Schultz	David Latzke Wyatt Schrot	Jeff Hanson Wanda Overline Miller Stier
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Genis e Aretz Ron Gerres	Kennedy Koch Jeremy Nagorski	Carson Herrmann Brenda Nyblom Austin Eyrich	Justin Doebbeling Chelsea Hutchison Lillie Kahle Adrianna Sammons	Jaelyn Borresen Charlie Davidson Tessa Menke		Kolin Stier
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Michael Herrmann Greg Schwichtenberg	Ezden Henning Austyn Holm	Brandon Legg Lois Schmidt Jason Schoenbauer	Brenden Eyrich	Jason Braesch Alecia Mueleners Jonathan Schmidt Steve Herrmann	Mindy Chevalier Zack Costello Hailee Sammons	Melissa Davidson McKenzie Koepp Scott Ruud
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Holden Kelm	Beckett Larson	Mike Nagel Sara Fahey Emma Stringer	Dale Meierbachtol			Jeff Eppen Elizabeth Nagel
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
Tianna Sammons Audrey Zellman		Ellie Oldenburg	Bruce Arola	Easton Cecka Mandy Posthumus	Wayne Koepp	Michelle Melheim

St. John Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
				10am - bible study 5pm - No TOPS		
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
8am - worship 9:30am - worship Sunday School 10:30am - new member class 1:00pm - Blessing of the animals		1:30pm Kingsway service 6:00pm Council meeting 6:15pm W/ELCA mtg	6:00pm - connect/ Confirmation 6:00pm - Worship choir	10am - bible study 5pm - TOPS		
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
*New member Sunday 8am - worship 9:30am - worship Sunday School	6pm - personnel		6:00pm - Worship choir	10am - bible study 5pm - TOPS MEA	BREAK	
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
8am - worship 9:30am - worship			6:00pm - connect/ Confirmation 6:00pm - Worship choir	10am - bible study 5pm - TOPS		
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
8am - worship 9:30am - worship <i>*noisy offering</i> Sunday School Trunk or treat			6:00pm - connect/ Confirmation 6:00pm - Worship choir 7:00pm - all team meeting	10am - bible study 5pm - TOPS		

Sunday Service Volunteers

Altar guild: Renee Meuleners

8:00am

9:30am

October 4

Greeter	Mindy Chevalier	Brent & Wendy Koepp
Lay Reader	Bonnie Vinkemeier	Steve Schroeder
Communion	Angela Faucette, Jerold & Kathi Stauffacher	Phobe Einertson, Cindy Schoenbauer, Peg Longhenry
Ushers	Marc & Mindy Chevalier, Abby Kubes, Andy Steinhagen *Wes Hilgers, Zander Fahey	Brent Koepp, Mitchell Koepp, Tim Moonen, Jusin Stauffacher, Aaron Leonard *Kinley Brabec, Piper Potter

October 11

Greeter	Matt & Kristin Stier	Chris & Annette Moylan
Lay Reader	Michelle Melheim	Kinley Brabec
Communion	Michelle Melheim, Rob & Sandy Schultz	Teresa Latzke, Lynne Jeurissen, Brent Koepp
Ushers	Albert Koepp, Dorothy Koepp, Kevin Koepp, Tim Carlson, Josh Koepp, Matt & Kolin Stier	Chris & Annette Moylan, Steve Schroeder, Lee Sauter, James Fogarty *Kinley Brabec, Piper Potter
Acolytes	*Lacy Schultz, Lucy Luhman	Nicole Walker, Kennedy Larson

October 18

Greeter	Jerold & Kathi Stauffacher
Lay Reader	Angie Kahle
Communion	Matt & Kristin Stier, Terry Siemon
Ushers	Albert Koepp, Dorothy Koepp, Kevin Koepp, Tim Carlson, Josh Koepp, Matt & Kolin Stier *Blair & Jayce Henke
Acolytes	Josalyn Henning

9:00am

MEA Weekend
ONE SERVICE

October 25

Greeter	Greg & Linda Schwichtenberg	Ron & Diane Rasmussen
Lay Reader	Nicole Walker	Amy Franck
Communion	Greg & Linda Schwichtenberg, Amanda Schultz	Brent Koepp, Linda Rueben, Mindy Chevalier
Ushers	Brent & Peyton Schwichtenberg, Greg Schwichtenberg, Bruce Schmidt, Richard Laabs *Lacy Schultz, Lucy Luhman	Dave, Sara & Mason Bungarden, Ron & Diane Rasmussen *Kendall Hutchison, Clara Crosby

Coffee hour hosts:

Oct 4: 8th grade - Melanie's group

Oct 11: 6th grade - Shara, Aimee & Bryn's group

Oct 18: Schultz family

Oct 25: OPEN



St. John Lutheran Church		
Statement of Activities		
General Fund	08/01/26-08/31/26	08/01/25-08/31/25
Revenues		
Offering Revenues	\$ 29,298.99	\$ 25,056.38
Confirmation Income	\$ -	\$ 51.38
Memorial Fund Revenue	\$ 50.00	\$ -
Sunday School Offering	\$ 45.00	\$ 10.00
Vacation Bible School	\$ 185.00	\$ 355.51
Miscellaneous Income	\$ 273.00	\$ -
Rental Income-Sanctuary & Gathering	\$ 125.00	\$ -
Total Revenues	\$ 29,976.99	\$ 25,473.27
Expenditures		
Total Benevolence Expense	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,350.00
Total Church/Grounds Maintenance	\$ 1,167.69	\$ 113.11
Total Education Expense - Youth	\$ 1,078.16	\$ 3,897.03
Total Insurance	\$ 1,577.41	\$ -
Total Office Expenses	\$ 1,566.72	\$ 625.57
Total Other Expenses	\$ 786.63	\$ 203.66
Total Professional Fees	\$ 265.80	\$ -
Total Staff Benefits	\$ 1,619.32	\$ 67.04
Total Staff Salaries	\$ 14,494.25	\$ 13,532.62
Total Utilities	\$ 2,266.98	\$ 2,641.49
Total Worship Music & Arts Expenses	\$ 520.39	\$ 681.02
Total Expenditures	\$ 26,143.35	\$ 23,111.54
Net Revenue	\$ 3,833.64	\$ 2,361.73
Property Improvement / Building		
Income (Donations, Rent, Invest-	\$ 2,893.01	\$ 3,801.99
Total Expenditures	\$ 2,289.04	\$ -
Net Receipts / Disbursements	\$ 603.97	\$ 3,801.99
Offerings	General Fund	Property Improvment
08/01/2026-08/08/2026	\$ 14,545.21	\$ 1,078.38
08/09/2026-08/15/2026	\$ 3,992.80	\$ 745.00
08/16/2026-08/22/2026	\$ 3,979.04	\$ 531.88
08/23/2026-08/31/2026	\$ 7,129.00	\$ 510.50

To schedule a *recurring electronic contribution* via Vanco:

Visit our website: www.stjohnbelleplaine.org

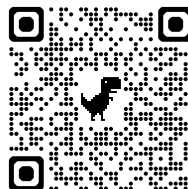
Select the green 'online giving'

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

St. John Lutheran Church
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Belle Plaine 56011

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Change Service Requested