

# St. John’s Lutheran Church

2025

Come worship with us:

Wednesdays at 6:30pm  
Sundays at 8:00am & 9:30am

Important dates this month:

- October 5th ~ Boys Scout Pancake breakfast
- October 5th ~ Blessing of the animals
- October 9th - 11th ~ Directory photos
- October 12th ~ new member Sunday
- October 14th - 18th ~ Directory photos
- October 26th ~ Trunk or Treat
- October 27th ~ All Team Meeting



148 S Chestnut St. Belle Plaine MN 56011  
Church office: 952-873-6492  
email: [office@stjohnbelleplaine.org](mailto:office@stjohnbelleplaine.org)



Staff:

Pastor:  
Sherri Otto  
Office:  
Amanda Schultz  
Accounting:  
Monica Braesch  
Treasurer:  
Jerold Stauffacher  
Custodian:  
  
Choir Director:  
Allison Vandermark  
Organist:  
Eileen Hanlon

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**Unapproved St. John Lutheran Church Council Minutes**

September 9th, 2025

President Jim Eggers called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m. Pastor Sherri led us in a devotion on mosaics. Control gives us the illusion of goals, perfection and predictability. In reality, life is unpredictable and full of change and we should trust in God's control; HE has proven his wisdom and strength. Pastor closed with Psalm 31:3.

**Present:**

X	Pastor Sherri Otto	X	Jim Eggers	X	Albert Koepp	X	Deanne Fogarty	X	Amy Franck
X	David Bungarden	X	Jan Effinger	X	Chris Zellman		Steve Kelm	X	Jerold Stauffacher
X	Tim Moonen	X	Rob Schultz	X	Jaime Petersen				

**Approval of Minutes**

Council reviewed the minutes of the August 12<sup>th</sup>, 2025 Council Meeting. Motion was made, seconded and carried to approve the meeting minutes.

A motion was made, seconded and carried to approve the current agenda for September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2025

**Staff Report:**

- A. Amanda's office report was reviewed by members of the council; the big accomplishments this month are planning for the church directory preparing for the connect and confirmation year.
- B. Pastor Sherri's report was also reviewed. She continues to meet members at church and their homes, is preparing the fall schedule with music, connect and confirmation classes, and is starting an adult bible study this month.

**Treasurer's Report:**

Jerold's treasurer report was reviewed by the council. For the month of August, we missed our budgeted amount for offerings by \$7,694 and we're \$9,754 below budget for the year. Expenses for the month were below the budgeted amount by \$4,381; for the month we did operate in the red (loss).

- A. Balances in accounts as of August 8th are as follows:

- a. Ameriprise Account (Stier) balance: \$117,592
- b. Property Improvement (Savings) balance: \$59,077 (plus a \$75,000 CD)
- c. Technology Fund balance: \$1,272
- d. Foundation Account (Interest from Foundation Investment) balance: \$22,655
- e. General Fund balance: \$14,415
- f. Youth Account balance: \$21,675
- g. Building Fund Checkbook balance: \$8,644
- h. Memorial Fund balance: \$19,657
- i. Jackson Account (Larry Kiewel) balance: \$72,182
- j. St. John Foundation Investment balance: \$186,386

- B. A motion was made, seconded and carried to approve Amy Franck as an authorized signer at the bank. Amy currently helps to count the offerings on Monday mornings and allowing her to be a signer would make the process more efficient while keeping the locked bags and keys separated until 2 people are working together.
- C. Monica Braesch, our accountant, has been researching different systems to replace our current accounting software (ICON). She presented her recommendation (APLOS) to the council citing better reporting, lower costs, no donation fees, and better employee interaction. The council made a motion, seconded and carried to approve this new system. Monica will continue with her work to get APLOS up and running and transition over the next few months. This will be a big undertaking, but we're confident it will be worth it. Thanks, Monica and Jerold, for your work on this!

**Transfers:**

No transfers this month.

### **Ongoing Business:**

- A. Rally Sunday was a success! Approximately 85 people were served after volunteer activities were completed. Thank you to all who helped make this a successful start to the school year!
- B. Universal Church Directory will be here October 9-11 and October 14-18. Many families have already signed up and we are hoping to have everyone's smiling faces included. Please check your calendars and confirm your time. We are still seeking volunteers to help if you are able.
- C. We are thinking about how our church can help families in need in our community; such as gift cards to those struggling with unplanned life events (medical, tragedy, etc). Pastor Sherri will discuss with local clergy to see if they would be interested or if other congregations are already doing this. She will also discuss with the Foundation Committee for additional inputs.
- D. After much discussion, we will not be doing pledge cards this year. While they would help us set a budget, not all who donate would submit pledge cards and still would not get a clear revenue number to build a budget. Our congregation has always supported and met the needs of this church with donations and we hope that will continue as we look to 2026. Please be sure to attend our annual meeting in January when we'll commit to a final budget, including revenue needed.
- E. Name Tags are available in the gathering space! With the excitement of Sunday School, Connect and Confirmation, and Coffee Hour, wearing name tags will help connect faces and names for many – including Pastor Sherri. Please grab a name tag as you enter.

### **New Business:**

- A. Pastor Sherri is planning a new member class for October 12<sup>th</sup>. If you or someone you know is interested in attending, please contact the office. We'd love to have you join!
- B. Hanna Tharaldson has resigned as our custodian. We will be looking to fill that position, please reach out to the office if you're interested!
- C. Building and Grounds updates:
  - a. New screens will also be added to the gathering space and likely the meeting room. This would eliminate the need for an overhead projector and make viewing more clear. The quote was costly from the company that installed screens in the sanctuary, so B&G will purchase separately and do the installs to save money on this much needed upgrade.
  - b. The coffee maker has been broken and is leaking water, resulting in damage to the counter top as well. They are researching and gathering quotes for replacements for both.
  - c. We are also in need of a large fireproof safe for the church office. This has been discussed previously but we haven't decided on a size to meet our needs.
  - d. The council made a motion, seconded and carried to approve the spend items a, b, and c as discussed above.
  - e. The Hayden house will be vacated by September 15<sup>th</sup>. They are hoping to begin work on the demolition this fall.
  - f. Building and Grounds also attended the Planning and Zoning meeting with the city and the merge of the lots was approved. There are several more steps to approval, but we're getting closer.
- D. In light of recent events, we also discussed the security of the church and keeping everyone safe. Building and Grounds will meet and discuss the best approach to execute in the near future.
- E. Employee reviews are in the process of being completed. They will be reviewed by the Executive Committee and then the council next month.

### **Ministry Team Updates:**

- A. Children, Youth and Families have been busy planning for the upcoming year and Rally Sunday. It was a big undertaking and we are so appreciative of the work to keep our kids and our church family engaged.
  - B. The Personnel Committee has also been meeting to finish reviews and work on the handbook. The employee handbook is getting closer to completion.
- Motion was made, seconded, and carried to adjourn the meeting at 7:47p.m. We closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Deanne Fogarty, Secretary

## It's All About Care

Growing up, there was a ritual in our home on a Sunday morning. As we were getting ready for church, our mom would ask one of us to get the church envelope out for that particular Sunday. We would go to our buffet and pull out the small box of envelopes from the 2<sup>nd</sup> drawer down, on the left side. I actually loved doing this, pulling out the right envelope with the right date on it. I remember asking my mom what the number on the envelope was for and she explained to me that it was a special number given to our family so that they would know who the money came from. I never gave much thought about where this money went or what it was used for. I never thought about the maintenance of the building, the related programs or the salary of the pastor.

Once we were at church, we were each given some change right before the offering plate was passed around, so we could put money into it. There were times that my parents did not have any change, so a one-dollar bill would be given to the kid sitting closest to them. As I left home and went to college, I did not always go to church every Sunday. But when I did, I would try to remember to have money with me to put in the offering plate. Sometimes I had money but most times, I did not. I felt embarrassed when I would forget, having the plate pass in front of me and having nothing to put in it.

After college, I floated from church to church, in search of where I felt I could fit in. I remember the first time I “joined” a church, and they handed me a Pledge Card. I looked at it and thought, what is this? What does a Pledge card do and what does the word Pledge even mean? I was having a hard enough time paying my bills let alone “pledging” money on a regular basis! It was a turn-off. I didn’t want to make a pledge, do a pledge or have to pledge anything! That not only scared me but made me feel guilty that I wouldn’t always be able to do it.

This memory got me thinking, what does the word Pledge really mean and how is it portrayed by others? We’ve heard it used many different ways. “I pledge my allegiance”, “I pledge my love” and don’t forget Pledge, the furniture polish for wood! Wait...what?? As you can imagine, I now have a different understanding of what this all means than I did in my younger days. But that doesn’t mean that my feelings about this word Pledge are not valid for I believe a lot of us still feel this way today. And so, I want to make things easy, guilt-free and accessible.

Pledging is simply this...To care. To care for people, places and things around you...those who are close to you, those in your community and those who are strangers. To do as much as you can with what God has given you.

It's up to each person and/or families as to what you can care for at St. John and in the surrounding community. There is no magic number, there is no comparison to what others are giving, there is no guilt associated with this kind of care.

Troy and I just set up a designated amount to give each month through the St. John website and it comes out of our checking account monthly. I honestly have no idea if it's a lot or a little. What I do know is this is something that we prayed about, discussed and agreed upon, something that makes sense to us in our lives, and it feels good to do this as a couple.

Talking it over is the first step. Praying about how you will care for St. John is your second step. Acting about this care is your third step. And I promise you, it will feel good in the end! Please join me in the care of St. John and this community!

Peace,  
Pastor Sherri

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### **You're invited:**

All are welcome to join Pastor Sherri Thursday mornings at 10:00am for a small group bible study!



We packed September full of fun here at St. John's and it was AWESOME! We kicked off Sunday School with backpack blessings and service projects, followed by a delicious meal. The 1st and 5th grade students received their bibles and our Connect and Confirmation students are back into the swing of things! The worship choir started practicing every Wednesday night and Pastor Sherri started hosting a bible study every Thursday morning.

And of course, Fall means the return of coffee hour! We love to see the gathering area full between our 8:00 and 9:30am services!!

So as we say good-bye to the good ole days of September, we enter the brisk days of October, with so much promise ahead!

See ya at church,  
Amanda

### Mark your calendar:

- **October 5th:** 8:00am and 9:30 services, with the boy scouts pancake breakfast in between ●

Following the 9:30 service, we will have our new member class!

And at 1:00pm we will have the blessing of the animals, please bring your pets to receive a special blessing from Pastor Sherri. This event is open to all! Stuffed animals are welcome too!

**October 12th:** On this day we will officially welcome our new members at both the 8:00am and 9:30am services

**October 26th:** Our trunk or treat event will be held after our 9:30am service, as Sunday School is being dismissed. If you would like to participate by decorating your tailgate or trunk, please let the office know so we can reserve enough spots outside.

**October 27th:** join us Monday evening at 7:00pm for our all team meeting.



## Picture Directory information:

You can sign up at church or online at: [www.ucdir.com](http://www.ucdir.com)

Code: mn598

Password: photos

\* Each slot (or sign-up) is 12 mins, please be courteous and arrive 5 mins before your appointment to ensure you are checked in and ready for your time slot

\*If we have less than 12 families signed up on a particular day, the photographers will have to cancel for that day - as I type this, it looks like Friday October 10th needs a few more families.

\*If you have a family or group of more than 5, please sign up for 2 consecutive slots

\*We need **table workers** to help with check-in each day, please sign up at the church or let the office know if you are able to help

We are looking forward to a successful {{updated}} church directory -- and we have all our wonderful members to thank for it!

**Picture dates - October 9th & 10th  
(2:00-8:30pm)**

October 11th (10:00am - 4:00pm)

October 14th - 17th (2:00-8:30pm)

October 18th (10:00am - 4:00pm)

**\*sign up now ~ pictures are quick and  
easy ~ every family will receive a free  
8X10\***

# October birthdays!

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
			Jim Eggers Brenda Schultz	David Latzke Ethel Beuch Wyatt Schrot	Jeffrey Hanson Wanda Overline Kelsey Schroeder Caden Vycital	Genise Aretz Ron Gerres Jay Schmit Marie Stier Hanna Tharaldson
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Jeremy Nagorski Kennedy Koch	Austin Eyrich Brenda Nyblom Carson Herrmann	Justin Doebbeling Chelsea Hutchison Lillianne Kahle Adrianna Sammons	Jaelyn Borresen Charles Davidson Tessa Menke		Kolin Stier	Mike Herrmann Greg Schwichtenberg
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Ezden Henning Austyn Holm	Brandon Legg Lois Schmidt Jason Schoenbauer	Brenden Eyrich	Jason Braesch Jonathan Schmidt Alicia Meuleners	Marc Chevalier Derrick Graff Mikkel Schmidt Lori Wolff Steve Hermann	Melissa Davidson McKenzie Koepp Richard Rickaby Scott Ruud	Andrew Winterfeldt Holden Kelm
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Laura Schaefer Beckett Larson	Sara Fahey Michael Nagel Carol Rodriguez Emma Stringer	Dale Meterbachtol	Hunter Olson	Mark Swenson	Jeff Eppen Elizabeth Nagel	Scott Koepp Trena Williamson Audrey Zellman Elizabeth Jackels
26	27	28	29	30	31	
Tori Schroeder	Ellie Oldenburg	Bruce Arola	Mandy Posthumus Shane Theas Easton Cecka Desmond Tupy	Wayne Koepp	Michell Melheim Tristan Holbrook	



# October schedule

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
			6:00pm connect/ confirmation 6:30pm service 7:00pm choir practice	10:00am bible study 5:00pm TOPS		
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
8:00am service *Pancake breakfast 9:30am service Choir sings Blessing of the animals	6:30pm boy scouts	11:00am Lutheran Home service 1:30pm Kingsway Service	6:00pm connect/ confirmation 6:30pm service 7:00pm choir practice	10:00am bible study 5:00pm TOPS 2:00-8:30pm *directory pictures	2:00-8:30pm *directory pictures	10:00an-4:00pm *directory pictures
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
8:00am service Coffee hour 9:30am service Sunday school sings *new member Sunday	6:30pm boy scouts	6:00pm church council 2:00-8:30pm *directory pictures	6:30pm service 7:00pm choir practice 2:00-8:30pm *directory pictures	10:00am bible study 5:00pm TOPS 2:00-8:30pm *directory pictures	2:00-8:30pm *directory pictures	10:00an-4:00pm *directory pictures
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
8:00am service Coffee hour 9:30am service	6:30pm boy scouts	4:30pm stewardship	6:00pm connect/confirmation 6:30pm service 7:00pm choir practice	10:00am Bible Study 5:00pm TOPS		
26	27	28	29	30		
8:00am service Coffee hour 9:30am service noisy offering *Trunk or Treat	6:30pm boy scouts 7:00pm all team mtg			NO bible study, Pastor will be out 5:00pm TOPS		

## ~ OCTOBER SUNDAY SERVICE ASSISTANTS~

Alter guild: Lana Hanson

October 5th

8:00am

9:30am

<b>Greeter</b>	Greg & Linda Schwichtenberg	Ken & Wendy Theis
<b>Lay Reader</b>	Albert Koepp	Steve Schroeder
<b>Communion</b>	Jerold & Kathi Stauffacher, Terry Siemon	Steve Schroeder, Monica & Jason Braesch
<b>Ushers</b>	Brent Schwichtenberg, Peyton Schwichtenberg, Greg Schwichtenberg, Bruce Schmidt, Richard Laabs	Chris & Annette Moylan, Steve Schroeder, Lee Sauter

October 12th

8:00am

9:30am

<b>Greeter</b>	Brent, Margaret & Peyton Schwichtenberg	Chris & Annette Moylan
<b>Lay Reader</b>	Cade Eggers	Janah Heckers
<b>Communion</b>	Jodi Savage, Kirk Franck, Albert Koepp	Cheryl Flynn, Brent Koepp, Dave Bungarden
<b>Ushers</b>	Brent Schwichtenberg, Peyton Schwichtenberg, Greg Schwichtenberg, Bruce Schmidt, Richard Laabs	Chris & Annette Moylan, Steve Schroeder, Lee Sauter

October 19th

8:00am

9:30am

<b>Greeter</b>	Angela Faucette	Ron & Diane Rasmussen
<b>Lay Reader</b>	Amy Franck	Beth Beuch
<b>Communion</b>	Bonnie Vinkemeier, Dave Latzke, Renee Meuleners	Sara Bungarden, Beth Beuch, Lynne Jeurissen
<b>Ushers</b>	Chris Schultz, Luke & Logan Schultz, Rob Schultz, Mark Schultz, Wayne Koepp	Dave & Sara Bungarden, Mason Bungarden, Ron & Diane Rasmussen

October 26th

8:00am

9:30am

<b>Greeter</b>	Sharon Adelman	Brent & Wendy Koepp
<b>Lay Reader</b>	Susie Steinhagen	Annette Moylan
<b>Communion</b>	Susie Stenhagen, Rob & Sandy Schultz	Mindy Chevalier, Sandi Wolpern, Abby Kubes
<b>Ushers</b>	Chris Schultz, Luke & Logan Schultz, Rob Schultz, Mark Schultz, Wayne Koepp	Dave & Sara Bungarden, Mason Bungarden, Ron & Diane Rasmussen



October coffee hour hosts:

5th ~ Boy Scouts

12th ~ Diane Gerres & Susie Volek

19th ~

26th ~ connect/confirmation families

## St. John Lutheran Church

### All Funds: Statement of Activities Previous Year Comparison

August 1, 2025 - August 31, 2025

	8/1/2025 - 8/31/2025	8/1/2024 - 8/31/2024
<b>Revenues</b>		
Total Offering Revenues	28,190.01	33,777.67
Total Other Fund Raising Projects	0.00	0.00
Total Major Revenues	0.00	975.00
Total Product Revenues	0.00	9.56
Total Miscellaneous Revenues	1,425.00	3,100.00
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>29,615.01</b>	<b>37,862.23</b>
Total Cost of Product Sales	201.60	330.00
Total Benevolence Expense	1,350.00	1,350.00
Total Church/Grounds Maintenance Expense	113.11	17,905.93
Total Insurance	0.00	233.83
Total Office Expenses	625.57	1,480.13
Other Expenses	203.66	376.18
Total Professional Fees	0.00	0.00
Total Staff Benefits	67.04	2,397.62
Total Staff Salaries	13,532.62	14,179.54
Total Utilities	2,641.49	1,359.37
Mission Trip Expenses	0.00	375.40
Total Worship Music & Arts Expenses	681.02	345.20
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>23,261.29</b>	<b>45,424.69</b>
<b>Net Revenue</b>	<b>6,152.12</b>	<b>-7,907.33</b>

Property Improvement / Building Fund	8/1/2025 - 8/31/2025	8/1/2024 - 8/31/2024
Income (Donations, Rent, Investments)	\$3,776.74	\$6,868.76
Total Expenditures	\$0.00	\$17,862.25
Interest Expense	0	\$435.46
<b>Net Receipts / Disbursements</b>	<b>\$3,776.74</b>	<b>(\$11,428.95)</b>

Offerings	General Fund	Property Improvement
8/1/25 - 8/2/25	\$1,272.96	\$572.50
8/3/25 - 8/9/25	\$2,036.20	\$80.00
8/10/25 - 8/16/25	\$8,264.02	\$841.23
8/17/25 - 8/23/25	\$4,098.05	\$1,050.00
8/24/25 - 8/31/25	\$11,440.00	\$380.51

*There are many ways to give back, one way is giving back financially.*

To schedule a recurring electronic contribution via Vanco:

Visit our website: [www.stjohnbelleplaine.org](http://www.stjohnbelleplaine.org)

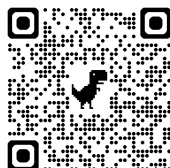
Select the green 'online giving'

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:



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

Non-Profit Organization  
U.S. Postage Paid  
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Belle Plaine, MN 56011

Change Service Requested

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## Attention!!

We have been working on updating our mailing list, please contact the office if you would like to continue receiving the newsletter via mail.

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