



# News from St. John's

September

2025

Come worship with us:

Wednesdays at 6:30pm  
Sundays at 8:00am & 9:30am  
(STARTING 9/14)

## Important dates this month:

September 7th ~ Rally Sunday --WORSHIP IS AT 9:00

September 7th ~ Lunch at 11:00

September 10th ~ Connect/Confirmation open house

September 14th ~ Bible Sunday

## Staff:

Pastor:

Sherri Otto

Office:

Amanda Schultz

Accounting:

Monica Braesch

Custodian:

Hanna Tharaldson

Choir Director:

Allison Vandermark

Organist:

Eileen Hanlon

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

August 12th, 2025

President Jim Eggers called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m. Pastor Sherri led us in a devotion on mosaics. They are all different, unique pieces and when they come together, its great! Similarly, all members of the council are bringing different views to work together for something great - St. John Church!

**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	X	Steve Kelm	X	Jerold Stauffacher
	Tim Moonen	X	Rob Schultz		Jaime Petersen				

**Approval of Minutes & Agenda:**

Council reviewed the minutes from the July 8 th , 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 August 12 th , 2025.

**Staff Report:**

**A.** Amanda's office report was reviewed by members of the council; July was busy with BBQ Days, VBS, compiling a history of St. John and getting ready for a church directory.

**B.** Pastor Sherri's report was also reviewed. She has been visiting members, meeting the other clergy in Belle Plaine and conducting worship at Kingsway. It was also discussed that we would look into a screen to hang from the balcony for those at the altar to see while they face the congregation. This would help Pastor Sherri and service helpers to know what the congregation is viewing on the screens.

**Treasurer's Report:**

**A.** Jerold's treasurer report was reviewed by the council. For the month of July we met our Budgeted Offering Revenue. For the year we currently short \$2,150 for the year. Compared to last year we ahead of what was given. The monthly expenses were over budget; but revenues still exceeded expenses by \$700 for the month.

**B.** Balances in accounts as of July 4th are as follows:

- a. Ameriprise Account (Stier) balance: \$115,991
- b. Property Improvement (Savings) balance: \$56,581 (plus a \$75,000 CD)
- c. Technology Fund balance: \$1,242
- d. Foundation Account (Interest from Foundation Investment) balance: \$22,653
- e. General Fund balance: \$12,600
- f. Youth Account balance: \$21,891
- g. Building Fund Checkbook balance: \$7,219
- h. Memorial Fund balance: \$19,456.74
- i. Jackson Account (Larry Kiewel) balance: \$72,182
- j. St. John Foundation Investment balance: \$181,897

**C.** A motion was made, seconded and carried to approve Treasurer, Jerold Stauffacher, and Council President, Jim Eggers, as the authorized checking account signers. A motion was also made, seconded and carried to get Pastor Sherri a debit card to use if needed.

**Transfers:**

No transfers this month.

### **Ongoing Business:**

A. The MN Twins game has 30 people signed up to attend.

B. Sara Bungarden spoke with the council about Rally Sunday. The Theme for the year will be “God’s Work, Our Hands” and she would like to have service projects/activities for the congregation to participate in. Her recommendation for Rally Sunday: 9am Service, 10am “God’s Work, Our Hands” activities and coffee hour. It was previously planned at the All Committee meeting that we would have Sloppy joes and yard games at 11am and that could remain as planned. Teacher Installation would be September 14th with the start of the fall schedule and Sunday School. The council made a motion, seconded, and carried to approve the Rally Sunday schedule that was proposed.

C. Universal Church Directory will be here October 9-11 and October 14-18. Please mark your calendars! They have confirmed there will be “no pressure” for additional sales. Volunteers will be needed to help with scheduling appointments and help with check-ins on picture day. Please keep an eye out for further communication.

D. An All Committee meeting was held on July 28th . Several groups talked of the work they are doing, and all other highlights have been covered in other agenda items.

### **New Business:**

A. Havyn Moonen has been collecting book donations for the last several years and delivering them to Children’s Hospital and HCMC. She will be attending college in the fall and the Girl Scouts will assist her in these efforts going forward. She asked the council for permission to have a book drop box at the church. The council made a motion, seconded and carried to approve a drop box for book donations. If you have books to donate, please consider dropping them at church for this cause.

B. The Women’s ELCA group is planning a Polka Service for May 3rd, 2026. Mark your calendars!

C. Next Years Mission trip will be to South Dakota. All teens who would like to remain active in church through mission trips, activities and projects are encouraged to meet the First Wednesday of the month.

D. The Stewardship Committee met and are discussing pledge cards to be able to anticipate revenues and establish a better budget for our church.

### **Ministry Team Updates:**

A. The council reviewed the Worship and Music Committee report. They met on July 22nd to introduce themselves to Pastor Sherri and discussed ideas and goals for upcoming services.

Motion was made, seconded, and carried to adjourn the meeting at 7:44p.m. We closed with the Lord’s Prayer.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Deanne Fogarty, Secretary

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Church council meets on the second Tuesday of the month at 6:00pm

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Greetings!

First of all, I want to say thank you to all who have introduced themselves to me, have visited with me over coffee or just stopped into the office to say hi. I feel incredibly blessed by the spirit of this community and for the kindness and patience you've shown as I continue to learn about St. John and the community.

As we approach the fall season, I'm especially excited about all that lies ahead for our congregation. This time of year is full of energy and renewal, and I look forward to jumping into many beloved traditions and new beginnings together. Here are just a few things I'm eagerly anticipating:

- **Rally Sunday** – A joyful time to gather, reconnect, and kick off a new season of faith formation for all ages.
- **God's Work, Our Hands Sunday** – A beautiful expression of our call to serve others and live out our faith in the world.
- **Meeting More Families & Children** – I look forward to continuing to get to know you, especially the youngest members of our church. Your stories, questions, and laughter bring life to our ministry.
- **Confirmation (Grades 5–8)** – It's a privilege to walk with our youth as they explore their faith and grow in their relationship with God and the church.
- **Adult Bible Study** – I'm excited to dig deeper into Scripture with you, to learn and grow together as we explore what God is saying to us today.
- **Three Worship Services**– Having multiple opportunities to gather in worship is a gift. I look forward to seeing you on Sunday mornings and Wednesday evenings as we praise God and receive grace through Word and Sacrament.
- **Coffee Hour** – Never underestimate the ministry of good coffee and good conversation! I hope to share many meaningful (and joy-filled) chats with you over a cup in the weeks to come

Whether you're a longtime member or new to St. John, I hope this fall you'll find ways to connect, grow, and serve. Please don't hesitate to introduce yourself (again!) or invite me into conversation—I truly want to know your stories, your hopes for our church, and how we can walk together in faith.



Peace,  
Pastor Sherri



Greetings from the office!

How quickly the summer has flown by here at St. John's! August disappeared as quickly as it arrived. We loved all the visitors and conversations throughout the month and are looking forward to a great Fall! Rally Sunday is right around the corner - I love backpack blessing Sunday!! And be sure to stick around to grab a donut, check out the fun service projects AND enjoy a hearty lunch at 11:00am.....I can't wait to see everyone there!!

Our Fall schedule at church will be as follows:

Wednesday

5:30pm - pizza with connect and confirmation

6:00pm - lesson with Pastor Sherri

6:30pm - small groups

6:30pm - worship service (**time change from 6:00**)

\*students will stay for service & communion once a month

7:00 pm - choir practice

Thursday

10:00am - bible study (starts 9/18)

Sunday

8:00am - worship

Coffee hour

9:30am - worship

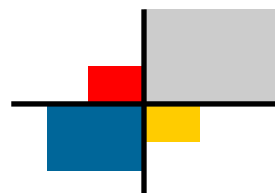
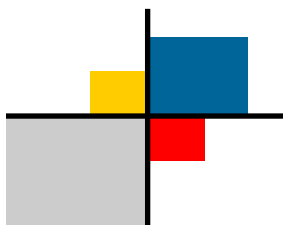
\*Sunday School (preK-4th grade) students will start in church and head to the basement for lesson after the children's sermon

\*\*\*\*And don't forget to sign up for the directory\*\*\*

Sincerely,  
Amanda

*"How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!"*

Psalm 133:1





# STJ Youth

## **Rally Sunday & blessing of the backpacks is on September 7th!**

We will be hosting Rally Sunday a little differently than we have in the past. We will still be blessing backpacks during our service but this year are joining the ELCA in the "God's work, our Hands" project. Following the service there will be various stations set up designed to encourage helping others in our community.

Some of the stations include: rock painting, tie blankets, making placemats, walk in faith bags of encouragement, bookmarks and so much more!

God's work, our hands is designed to put our hands to work as a congregation to go out into the community and spread God's work so the projects made today will be donated around Belle Plaine and local communities.

There will also be donation drops for the following items: tin cans, books (new and gently used books of all types) shoe boxes and food shelf items.

We are so excited to come together and celebrate 'God's work' as a congregation, please join us for worship at 9:00am followed by donuts & coffee and our service project stations.

**ALL are WELCOME:** Everyone is invited to come together and share a meal at 11:00am! This is a great chance to meet Pastor Sherri if you haven't already!!

We are really looking forward to a great year with our Sunday School and connect/confirmation programs. We are so thankful and blessed to have such a supportive congregation, leading and encouraging our youth!! If you are interested in being a Sunday School teacher or helper- reach out to [youthsjlc@gmail.com](mailto:youthsjlc@gmail.com) or contact the office.

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## **Connect and confirmation information night:**

What: OPEN HOUSE

Who: 5th - 8th grade students and parents

When: Wednesday, September 10th 5:30-7:00

Please plan to attend our open house info night if you have a student in grades 5-8! It will be FULL of information for the new year! Please also bring your calendar along!

## You're invited:

### Coffee hour:

Coffee hour is back!! It's truly a blessing to see the gathering area so full of conversation and connection on Sunday mornings. Coffee hour is a long-standing tradition here at St. John's and is served between two {{8:00am and 9:30am}} worship services.

If you would like to host one of our coffee hours, please feel free to contact Amanda or sign up on the bulletin board in the gathering area.

### Bible study:

All are welcome to join Pastor Sherri Thursday mornings at 10:00am for a small group bible study starting on September 18th.

## October at a glance:

Boy Scout pancake breakfast - October 5th

Blessing of the animals - October 5th

Directory pictures - 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 ~ everyone will receive a free 8X10\*

Trunk or treat - October 26th

All team meeting - October 27th @ 7:00pm

# September birthdays!

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Caren Grotberg	Madden Carlsson Jamey Jeurissen Kim Meierbachtol Derek Scheer Joseph Stoutland Todd Theis	Joshua Hanson Brenda Holtberg Avery Mohlin Terry Siemon	Chloe Oldenburg Cole Schwartz Allison Sinnamon Rachel Soller	Tricia Bauer Charlotte Koepp Wayne Nagel Karim Tolbert	Wyatt Borresen Mark Meierbachtol
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Sandra Wolpern	Austin Overline Sydney Pankonin Kris Schmidt	Landry Kelm Cayla Menke Charli Jo Stier	John Busse	Zoey Jonason Bruce Koepp Joshua Sparby Lydia Sparby	John Koenig	Jason Schmidt Esther Stoppelmann Brooklyn Theas
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Amy Franck	Cadence Bauer Cheryl Johnson Calihan Malecha Margaret Meierbachtol Jackson Stauffacher Linda Stier	Josh Henning Jill Martin Tony Roff	Harlie Bristlin Miranda Widmer	Elliana Kopesky Margaret Schwichtenberg Holly Stier James Stradcutter	Elliana Fahey Levi Schmidt Kristin Stier Carson Tester Jeffrey Wolff	Nora Andert Susie Koepp
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
Amanda Berg Jason Stier Jaydon Thaemert Emmett Wolff	Chase Hager Ashley Seaver Tiffany Stier	Maynard Schmidt Justin Stauffacher	Mallory Kelm Sheila Weldon	John Franck Steven Kelm Michael Schmidt	Jordan Johnson Jean Peterson	Matt Traxler
28	29	30				
Janet Effinger Kase Heinz Katie Klaverkamp Jeffrey Scott Wendy Theis Colin Weldon	Dan Herrmann Elizabeth Herrmann Corey Koepp Autumn Laue					



# September schedule

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Office closed ~Labor Day~		6:30pm service	5:00pm TOPS		
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
<b>Rally Sunday</b> 9:00am service 11:00am lunch	6:30pm boy scouts	11:00am Lutheran Home service 1:30pm Kingsway Service 5:00pm worship/music 6:00pm church council	5:30-7:00pm open house for 5th-8th grade 6:30pm service 7:00pm choir practice	5:00pm TOPS		
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
<b>Bible Sunday</b> 8:00am service 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		
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
8:00am service 9:30am service	6:30pm boy scouts		6:00pm connect/confirmation 6:30pm service 7:00pm choir practice	10:00am Bible Study 5:00pm TOPS		
28	29	30				
8:00am service 9:30am service	6:30pm boy scouts *Pastor Sherri will be attending a conference	*Pastor Sherri will be attending a conference				

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## ~ SEPTEMBER SUNDAY SERVICE ASSISTANTS~

Alter guild: Jan Effinger & Linda Reuben

September 7th

9:15am

<b>Greeter</b>	Mindy Chevalier
<b>Lay Reader</b>	Mindy Chevalier
<b>Communion</b>	Renee Meuleners, Angela Faucette, Amanda Schultz
<b>Ushers</b>	Marc & Mindy Chevalier, Abby Kubes, Andy Steinhagen, Josh & Lydia Sparby

September 14th

8:00am

9:30am

<b>Greeter</b>	Lowell & Laurie Hiles	Cindy Schoenbauer
<b>Lay Reader</b>	Luke Schultz	Sara Bungarden
<b>Communion</b>	Matt & Kristin Stier, Patty Laabs	Cindy Schoenbauer, Peg Longhenry, Linda Reuben
<b>Ushers</b>	Marc & Mindy Chevalier, Abby Kubes, Andy Steinhagen, Josh & Lydia Sparby	Scott & Tricia Ruud, Monica & Jason Braesch, Mike Nagel

September 21st

8:00am

9:30am

<b>Greeter</b>	Matt & Kristin Stier	Anita Lambrecht
<b>Lay Reader</b>	Michelle Melheim	Brent Koepp
<b>Communion</b>	Michelle Melheim, Greg & Linda Schwichtenberg	Lynne Jeurissen, Chris & Annette Moylan
<b>Ushers</b>	Albert Koepp, Dorothy Koepp, Kevin Koepp, Matt Stier, Bruce Volek, Tim Carlson, Josh Koepp	Brent & Mitchell Koepp, Tim Moonen, Aaron Leonard, Justin Stauffacher

September 28th

8:00am

9:30am

<b>Greeter</b>	Bruce & Susie Volek	Sue Koenig
<b>Lay Reader</b>	Bryn Davis	Phoebe Einertson
<b>Communion</b>	Nick & Bryn Davis, Dorothy Koepp	Phoebe Einertson, Jan Effinger, Teresa Latzke
<b>Ushers</b>	Albert Koepp, Dorothy Koepp, Kevin Koepp, Matt Stier, Bruce Volek, Tim Carlson, Josh Koepp	Brent & Mitchell Koepp, Tim Moonen, Aaron Leonard, Justin Stauffacher



September coffee hour hosts:

7th ~ Rally Sunday

14th~ Bible Sunday

21st~

28th~ 4th grade families

**St. John Lutheran Church****All Funds: Statement of Activities Previous Year Comparison****July 1, 2025 - July 31, 2025****7/1/2025 - 7/31/2025****7/1/2024 - 7/31/2024****Revenues**

Total Offering Revenues	35,734.78	28,309.35
Total Other Fund Raising Projects	0.00	0.00
Total Sale of Books & Other Religious Items	0.00	0.00
Total Major Revenues	0.00	0.00
Product Revenues		
Total Product Revenues	0.00	45.25
Total Other Revenue	0.00	0.00
Total Miscellaneous Revenues	1,425.00	2,652.11
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>37,159.78</b>	<b>31,006.71</b>

Total Cost of Product Sales	686.52	150.00
Total Benevolence Expense	2,843.38	1,650.00
Total Church/Grounds Maintenance Expense	9,366.08	1,382.04
Total Insurance	0.00	1,323.81
Total Office Expenses	2,423.23	1,322.45
Other Expenses	77,584.98	291.09
Total Professional Fees	0.00	246.67
Total Staff Benefits	1,868.84	2,362.08
Total Staff Salaries	12,892.64	14,219.44
Total Utilities	1,042.05	1,048.30
Mission Trip Expenses	2,504.98	2,359.79
Total Worship Music & Arts Expenses	0.00	394.63
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>114,592.44</b>	<b>27,092.43</b>
<b>Net Revenue</b>	<b>-78,083.45</b>	<b>10,124.29</b>

**Property Imp/ Bldg Fund**

7/1/2025 - 7/31/2025

7/1/2024 - 7/31/2024

Income (Donations, Rent, Investments)	\$4,924.77	\$9,437.67
Total Expenditures	\$83,000.00	\$1,290.19
Interest Expense	0	\$397.32
<b>Net Receipts / Disbursements</b>	<b>(\$78,075.23)</b>	<b>\$7,750.16</b>

<b>Offerings</b>	<b>General Fund</b>	<b>Property Improvement</b>
7/1/25 - 7/5/25	\$6,735.86	\$948.01
7/6/25 - 7/12/25	\$2,973.65	\$385.00
7/13/25 - 7/19/25	\$5,793.39	\$465.00
7/20/25 - 7/26/25	\$6,093.94	\$650.00
7/27/25 - 7/31/25	\$9,322.58	\$466.89

*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)

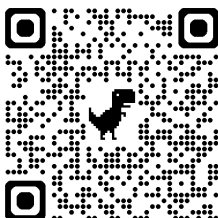
Select the green 'online giving'

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:



scan to give using venmo:



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148 S. Chestnut St.  
Belle Plaine 56011

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Change Service Requested

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## Attention!!

Please contact the office to continue receiving this newsletter via mail.  
Without contact, we will not be mailing out the next issue.  
Thank you for your cooperation and understanding.

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