

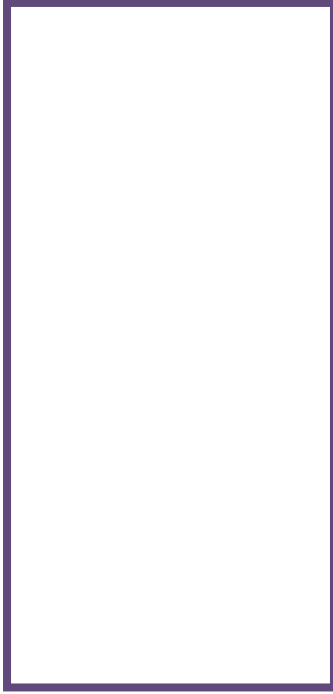
St. John Lutheran Church
203 E. Church Street
P.O. Box 36
Royal, Illinois 61871

Return Service Requested

Josh Frerichs, Council President, Property
Bryce Frerichs, Council Vice-President, Hunger-Stewardship
Debbie Ackerman, Council Secretary, Worship
Marsha Osterbur, Treasurer, Hunger-Stewardship
Whitney Highfill, Parish Life/Evangelism
Kris Francisco, Youth
Gene Osterbur, Property
Melinda Huls, Parish Life/Evangelism
Chelsey Philips, Worship
Mike Heidle, Youth, Parish-Ed
Emily Johnson/Allie Maul, S.S. Superintendents, Parish Ed
Church Office Secretaries:
Valerie Birge, Tammy Olson
Custodian: Kathy Waller



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ROYAL CHURCH NEWS

St. John's Newsletter

That all may know Christ and the power of his resurrection.
based on Philippians 3:10

MARCH 2025



St. John Lutheran Church

203 E. Church Street, P.O. Box 36
Royal, Illinois 61871

(217) 583-3295 or 583-3805

Emil Blobaum, Visitation Pastor

email: churchoffice@stjohnroyal.org
church website: stjohnroyal.org

From Josh Frerichs

As we approach the upcoming Lent season just imagine that this Lent is going to be different from every other Lent we've experienced. Imagine that there will be many graces offered to us this year. Let's even imagine that God is going to help transform our lives, with greater freedom, greater joy, greater love and greater answers.

Greater answers....hmmmm answer....

We often hear "Jesus is the answer." It seems to be a very popular slogan these days. And actually, it's the correct answer. But, missing is the question. Jesus is the answer to what?

This made me think of the song Jesus Does by We the Kingdom. If you listen to WBGL I am sure you have heard it...

Who tells the Sun to rise every morning? Colors the sky with the shades of His glory? Wakes us with mercy and love? Jesus does. Who holds the orphan, comforts the widow? Cries for injustice, feels every sorrow? Carries the pain of His children? Jesus does.

So we sing praise to the Father who gave us the Son
Praise to the Spirit who's livin' in us.
When I was a sinner, He saved me from who I was
'Cause that's what Jesus does.

Who understands the heart of a sinner?
Showers His grace over all our mistakes?
Washes us clean with His blood? Jesus does, I believe that He does.
Who sings a song of sweet forgiveness?
Who stole the keys to hell and the grave?
Who has the power to save? Jesus does, yes, He does.

Jesus alone is God's answer to our disappointment, doubt, desires, despair, darkness, and death.

Jesus came to this earth to rescue us from a world full of sin, obstacles and suffering. Essentially, He was God's answer to all the questions we deal with. Since He is holy and all knowing, Jesus can see the future when we can't. Whatever we're facing, whatever the issue is, He already knows and can guide us through it.

ONGOING PRAYER LIST

Nathan Buhr	Holly Hoffschneider
Sandie Osterbur	Allen Davis (<i>friend of Stan Duitsman</i>)
Ray Manselle	Abby Lundquist (<i>friend of Ray Manselle</i>)
Ella Frerichs	Mike Potter (<i>nephew of Linda Post</i>)
Curt Blair	Peyton McDonough (<i>friend of Marsha Osterbur</i>)
Lois Frerichs	Hannah Nirider (<i>friend of Parker Poole</i>)
Stan Duitsman	Amy Dufelmeier (<i>sister of Hilary Whitt</i>)
Betty Huls	Barbara Carter (<i>daughter of Betty Huls</i>)
Chris Huls	Aleyah Carley (<i>daughter of Teresa Thornton Carley</i>)
Mandi Ramm	Darrel Jacobs (<i>friend of Tracy Wahlfeldt</i>)
Nick Christians	Samantha Hutchinson (<i>cousin of Hilary Whitt</i>)
Anna Wentzloff	Rhonda Miller, Jane Cress (<i>friends of Hilary Whitt</i>)
Camille Wissmann	Janey Huls (<i>sisters of Susie Schlueter</i>)
Harold Miles, Landon Potter	(<i>brother and great-great nephew of Linda Post</i>)
Lois Henderson, Mary Crider, Carol Doman	(<i>friends of Ray and Kendra Manselle</i>)
Stoney Wireman, Frank and Mary Kay Kimell, Kerry Blankenbeger	(<i>friends of Gloria Grant</i>)

Families of: Sharon Hoveln (*sister of Susie Schlueter*)

Nursing Home, Assisted Living Residents:

Janis Loschen Mary Lou Ackerman, Berniece Aden, Sharon Ault, Floyd Bohlen, Dorothy Bruns, Regina Gronewald, Elizabeth Hafermann, Harold and Darlene Hoveln
Gerry Osterbur, Robert and Dorene Pflugmacher, Myron Sage
Homebound: Dorothy Buhr, Marvin and Alice Duitsman, Florence Frerichs, Lois Frerichs, Marilyn Frerichs, Herb and Bev Thompsen

Our Members (80+): Ray and Loretta Aden, Brenda Alsip, Erna Amerman, Carl Beard, Dale Behrens, Emil and Carolyn Blobaum, Vernon and Wilma Buhr, Billie Busboom, Chuck Carl, Eldred Cornelius, Gloria Ehmen, Kay Fiscus, Carolyn Frerichs, Rita Frerichs, Barbara Fruhling, Bernice Fruhling-Cash, Janis Loschen, JoAnn Lynch, Betty Osterbur, Ella Osterbur, June Osterbur, Kenny Osterbur, Marvin and Belva Osterbur, Sandie Osterbur, Denver Phelps, Linda Post, Ed and JoAnn Rademaker, Roxie Sage, Aleta Schlueter, Norma Sherfey, John and Donna Thompsen



Happy Birthday and Anniversary to...



Birthday Celebrations in March (members 80+ years):

Dorothy Bruns celebrates her 102nd birthday on the 3rd.
Gerry Osterbur celebrates her 97th birthday on the 14th.
Ella Osterbur celebrates her 96th birthday on the 27th.

Wedding Anniversaries in March (members 50+ years):

Vernon and Wilma Buhr celebrate 62 years on the 17th.

Remember all who celebrate March birthdays and anniversaries with greetings and in your prayers.

REFOCUS FOR LENT

Give up complaining – focus on gratitude.
Give up harsh judgments – think kind thoughts.
Give up worry – trust God to provide.
Give up discouragement – be full of hope.
Give up bitterness – turn to forgiveness.
Give up hatred – return good for evil.
Give up anger – be more patient.
Give up pettiness – become mature.
Give up jealousy – pray for trust.
Give up gossiping – control your tongue.
Give up sin – turn to virtue.
Give up giving up – persevere.

- Author Unknown

St. Patrick used the shamrock to teach people about the Godhead.



**Holding up a shamrock, he challenged them,
“Is this one leaf, or three?”**



**Inevitably, people replied that it was both,
prompting St. Patrick to draw the analogy that so, too, is God:
one God in three Persons—the Holy Trinity.**

from Josh (cont.)

Jesus is the answer to our broken relationship with God. Yes, humanity’s relationship with God is broken. Oh, but the Good News is, God provided a Redeemer for us who would defeat Satan and reconcile God and man. The Old Testament narrative gradually reveals God’s plan to save people. The New Testament shows us that Jesus is the promised Redeemer. Jesus atoned for our sin and restored the possibility of a relationship with God.

Jesus said, “*I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me*” (John 14:6).

Jesus is the answer, the only answer, to our broken relationship with God. Apart from Him there is no salvation. It is Jesus who makes it possible for our sins to be forgiven and for us to be children of God. It is Jesus who mends our relationship with God so that we can be in fellowship with Him during our lifetimes as well as eventually live with Him for eternity.

Jesus is the answer to our worries and doubts. You see, life involves hardship, and with hardship come worries, fears, and doubts. Jesus told His followers, “*I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world*” (John 16:33).

Jesus understands us. He knows life is hard and that it is often filled with physical and emotional pain and even life and death struggles. Jesus reminds us of God’s love and care for us. Jesus also gave us the Holy Spirit to live with us forever and Jesus is the reason we are not alone.

Jesus is the answer to our fears and heartaches. He is able to sympathize with us because He has lived a human life in this broken world. Jesus gives us peace and equips us to endure, and even rejoice in, the hardships of this life.

Some of you might have heard the story about the pastor giving the children's message during church who asked the kids for the name of the little creature that lives in trees (pause – no response) and eats nuts (pause – no response). The pastor went on...“It’s gray (pause) and has a long bushy tail (pause) and it jumps from branch to branch (pause) and chatters and flips its tail when it’s excited (pause – still no response).

from Josh (cont.)

Finally, one little boy tentatively raised his hand. The pastor breathed a sigh of relief and called on him. "Well," said the boy, "it sure sounds like a squirrel, but I know the answer must be Jesus!" As funny as that story is, when it comes to responding to difficult times, difficult relationships and difficult questions...the answer is always Jesus.

Jesus is ALWAYS the answer for All things. He's the answer before and during and after our problems. He will do everything the Word says He will do. And He does not change. The bible tells us that in Hebrews 13:8 - *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.*

As questions race through our heads today, we must keep our focus on Jesus Christ, who is God in human flesh. No matter what our individual needs, Jesus is and will always be the ultimate answer for our lives today, and He promises a better future to come. This means that He doesn't just have the answer, He IS the answer. He is our mighty GOD, forever and ever.

Blessings,

Josh



DESIGNATED BENEVOLENCE

During the month of **March**, the designated benevolence is for **Local Benevolences** to help those in need. **Lent offerings** are designated for NALC Seminaries. Please use the center portion of the offering envelopes for your gifts.

The Hunger – Stewardship Committee would like to highlight the organizations we are donating to with our monthly benevolences. For the month of March, the three Local Benevolences the committees have chosen to contribute to are: Empty Tomb, Restoration Urban Ministries, and Salt and Light. The following is



Lent Dinner Menus for March

Mar 5 – Midweek Lent

Dinner: Parish Life – Chicken Pot pie, salad, desserts, and drinks

Mar 12 – Midweek Lent

Dinner: Hunger-Stewardship – Chili, grilled cheese, dessert, drinks

Mar 19 – Midweek Lent

Dinner: Council – Pizza, desserts, drinks

Mar 26 – Midweek Lent

Supper: Property – Chicken Noodle Soup, sliders, desserts, drinks



OFFICIAL ACTS

Annaliese Kay Moews

was baptized into the family of Christ here at St. John on Sunday, February 2, 2025.

Annaliese is the daughter of Tyler & Erika (Sieberns) Moews.

Her sponsor is Angela Sauder.

EXPRESSIONS OF THANKS

To St. John's,

Thank you for all the prayers, texts, and cards. It is definitely the reason that I am doing well today.

Donna and Darrell Uken



St. John Church Family,

Thank you to everyone who has sent cards, flowers, and prayers.

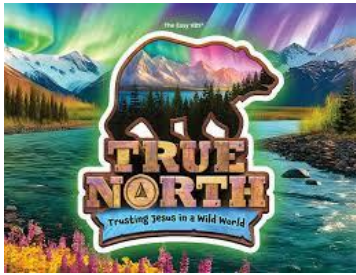
I'm recuperating at Accolade Healthcare of Paxton on Pells and it seems I may be here for some time.

I miss worshiping with all of you on Sunday mornings. Pastor Emil's visits are much appreciated.

Sincerely,

Janet Loschen

“Parish Ed / Youth News” (continued)



BIBLE SCHOOL will be Sunday, July 6th through Thursday, July 10th, with the program on Sunday, July 13th. There will be a meal followed by activities. The theme will be True North. More information to come.

ASH WEDNESDAY

March 5 – Ash Wednesday Worship with Imposition of Ashes and Holy Communion



March Sunday services:

March 2nd – Pastor Emil Blobaum

March 9th – Pastor Greg Smith

March 16th – Pastor Vic Baderschneider

March 23rd – Pastor Richard Lewis

March 30th – Brian Carpenter



During Lent the pulpit will be filled by:

March 5th - ASH WEDNESDAY - Pastor Emil Blobaum

March 12th – Brett Trefren

March 19th – Josh Frerichs

March 26th – Brett Trefren



Lent



2025 LENTEN SEASON

Our Midweek Lenten services will be held **each Wednesday** evening at **7:00** with supper served in the church basement at **6:00** by our committees and council.

information about what these organizations offer to the community. Please consider donating to help those in our communities.

EMPTY TOMB

Christian Health Services

Christian Health Services work helps meet the health needs of financially poorer people by providing limited funds for medical needs, primarily prescriptions; also, layettes and other items are provided to needy families, generally the mothers.

Clothing Work

Clothing can be dropped off, and then is sorted and made available free in Jesus’ name. Now accepting Fall-Winter clothes through March 15. Help is needed in sorting clothes and greeting people. Hours are Monday – Friday, 9 AM to 4:30 PM, and Saturdays, 9 AM to 1 PM. Closed on posted holidays.

Free Food Work

Congregations receive calls from empty tomb and then deliver groceries provided by the church to the family or individual in need. More congregations who are able to deliver food are needed.

designated benevolence (cont.)

Furniture Work

Donated furniture is picked up and delivered to households that have expressed a need in the Champaign, Urbana, and Savoy area. Volunteers are needed both to pick up and deliver the furniture in empty tomb’s furniture truck.

Helping Work

Helping Appointments: Mondays, 9 AM for up to 10 callers. Up to \$30 is available for various needs, such as rent, power bills, bus tokens, and automobile gasoline. Call (217) 356-2262. Helping Referrals: Agencies can refer a need for an individual for larger amounts. Funds available through donations.

RESTORATION MINISTRIES

Providing a loving and safe Christian environment for homeless or nearly homeless individuals and families

Our Transitional Housing Program provides restorative classes such as:

- *GED (if needed)
- *Financial management
- *Employment counseling
- *Parenting skills (if needed)
- *Emotional healing and spiritual guidance

In addition, we freely provide for friends in the community.

- *Food Pantry
- *Clothing Room
- *Men’s/Women’s groups
- *Bible Study groups
- *Substance Abuse Recovery groups

*Household goods and small appliances (as available from our donors)

SALT AND LIGHT

At Salt & Light, we help community members gain access to food, clothing, and household goods, despite any financial obstacles. More importantly, we offer a COMMUNITY of people to empower, affirm, and encourage those we serve. As our Executive Director, Nathan Montgomery, says, "We don't want to make the condition of poverty more bearable for those suffering in it; we want to help them overcome it. We believe that people struggling with poverty are not projects. As a relational ministry, we invite you to partner with us by shopping in our stores, volunteering your time, and donating your goods and finances."

At Salt & Light, we help community members gain access to food, clothing, and household goods, in spite of financial obstacles. More importantly, we offer a COMMUNITY of people to empower, affirm, and encourage. Together, we are changing lives and transforming our community.

COUNCIL MEETING NOTES



1. The council met on Monday, February 24th, at 7:00pm. Acts 3:19 *"Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord."*
2. Council in attendance: Josh Frerichs, Bryce Frerichs, Debbie Ackerman, Marsha Osterbur, Gene Osterbur, Melinda Huls, Chelsey Phillips, Allie Maul, Mike Heidle, Kris Francisco, and Whitney Highfill. Guest: Valerie Birge, Keith Cunningham, Tammy Olson.
3. Parish Ed – First Communion – classes will be held in March.
4. Youth – Will have an Easter Egg on April 12th. They need candy.
5. An Easter Breakfast will be held between the services on Easter morning. Congregation members are being asked to sign up to bring casseroles/pastries. More information to come. If you have any questions or would like to help, please, contact Kris Francisco.
6. New Members classes are being held, with 4-5 potential new members in attendance.
7. Next council meeting is Monday, March 17, 2025, at 7:00 p.m.

“Parish Ed / Youth News” (*continued*)



The 8th Grade Confirmation Students invite the congregation to join them during Lenten season on Wednesdays at 6:30pm in the church library for a brief, 15-minute discussion about their individual scripture verses. Like last year, each student will present their chosen verse and engage the group by asking thought-provoking questions. The goal is to deepen their understanding of the scripture by exploring different perspectives and the part the scripture plays in their journey of faith.

March 12: Madison Huls

Old Testament Verse- Deuteronomy 31:6

“Be strong and courageous: don’t be terrified or afraid of them. For it is the Lord your God who goes with you; He will not leave you or forsake you.”

New Testament Verse- Philippians 4:13

“I am able to do all things through Him who strengthens me.

March 19: James Ketchum

Old Testament Verse- Genesis 12:3

“I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse: and all people on earth will be blessed through you.”

New Testament Verse- Romans 5:8

“But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”



Mission Trip 2025 – We will again be partnering with Prince of Peace and traveling to Pewaukee, WI on July 20-26. The 2025 theme is “Equipped” The only requirement is that you must be graduating 8th grade or older. Any questions contact Laura Ketchum.

New Member Classes are being taught by Mike Heidle. The March classes are on Tuesday, March 4th, 11th, 18th, 25th. Mike Heidle is a lifelong Lutheran. Mike served as a Lutheran Pastor in the LCMS for 30 years and resigned from active ministry in 2019.



PARISH ED / YOUTH NEWS

Sunday School Kids will be singing and helping with greeting, and ushering during worship on Sunday, March 9th.



Summer Sunday School needs teachers. If you are interested in teaching a great group of students about the love of Jesus this summer, please, see Allie Maul.



First Communion classes will be held on Sunday, March 23rd & 30th, at 2:00 pm, for those students who are ready and want to participate in the Holy Sacrament. The First Communion Sunday is scheduled for Sunday, April 6th. Please, keep these students and their families in your prayers. Contact Josh Frerichs with any questions.



The Annual Easter Egg Hunt will be held on Saturday, April 12th. If you can donate, please, drop off the candy in the Sunday School office by March 30th. It is greatly appreciated!

The **Confirmation** class, as part of fulfilling their community service requirement, is thrilled to support the Champaign County Humane Society and St. Jude Children's Research Hospital by collecting your spare changes. Together, we can "make a change" and make a meaningful difference in the lives of those in need. You'll find two "Make a Change" donation bottles in the narthex and the map room. Thank you for helping us make this effort a success!"



SOME OF "THIS AND THAT"

...**Flock Group Shepherd for April** is Joellyn Pedro. She will be contacting her flock group for volunteers. *Thank you to all that volunteer!*



FRIENDLY REMINDER ...**Reminder List**, printed in this newsletter, lists those who are assigned to help with various tasks and responsibilities during the month. **If a conflict arises, please find your own replacement and inform the church office of the changes.** *A big thank you for volunteering to help!*

...**Altar Flowers** are provided each weekend by donations from members of the congregation. House of Flowers in Rantoul provides and delivers them. You can sign up on the chart posted on the north office door for one or both vases and indicate whether it's for a special occasion. **The cost per vase is \$20.00. Payment is to be made to the church and earmarked for flowers.**



Offering Envelopes ...**Offering envelopes** for 2025 are still available to be picked up. **PLEASE, pick them up from the MAP ROOM.** If you cannot find your boxed set and would like to use the envelopes, please contact the church office. If your boxed set is there but you **do not use the envelopes**, also **contact the church office**, or leave your boxed set in the office with a note, "do not use". **PLEASE throw away old envelopes!**



...**Education Trust Fund** is set up in the Multiple Funds account. Donations may be given to this fund through your offerings marked "Education Trust" (divided equally between the Gossett and Ramm families or you may give specifically to one family). These funds are used to help with their

school fees, supplies and expenses.

“this and that” (continued)



...**Memorials and gifts** to St. John Lutheran Cemetery may be given by cash, or checks made out to **St. John Lutheran Cemetery**, and **given to Ron Duitsman, John R. Thompsen, or Chuck Carl.**

...**There are old cassette tapes and VCR recordings** that need to be disposed of. These recordings are from past years' sermons, funeral services, and programs. If you are interested in any of these recordings, please, let Josh Frerichs know.



...**The Call Committee** is asking for photos and videos from congregation members. Do you have photos or videos of St. John activities you are willing to share for St. John media? If so, please send them to StJohnRoyal61871@gmail.com



...**St. Joseph Methodist Church Food Pantry** does not have any dates for the month of March. Next date is April 3. Questions contact Marsha Osterbur.

...**The Fair-Trade** cabinet is stocked with coffee, English Breakfast tea, and milk chocolate bars! The price is as marked. All proceeds will go to Pay It Forward.



“this and that” (continued)



...**The Property Committee** has scheduled a workday to clean up around the church and parsonage, on Saturday, March 29th.

...**Monthly Bible Study Circles:** Esther—Martha—Sarah meets on the second Thursday afternoon of each month at 1:30 here in the church basement for study and fellowship. This month they will meet on March 13, and Kay Fiscus will host.



...**Confirmation Reunion** will be held on Sunday, June 1st. The Confirmation Classes of 1950, 1975, and 2000 will be honored for celebrating their 75, 50, and 25 years anniversary. If you are in these classes **SAVE THE DATE** and plan to attend church service that Sunday and stay afterwards for cake and refreshments in the church basement. More information to follow.



...**Dorothy Bruns will celebrate her 102nd Birthday on March 3.** She enjoys getting cards. She is at **County Health 2304 CR 3000 N Gifford, IL 61847**

CHURCH OFFICE NEWS

...**Church Office Hours** are Monday through Friday, **8:30 - 3:00**, lunch break typically between **12:00 - 1:00**.



...The **church office** second landline number **217-583-3805** has been changed to a **cell phone** and is able to

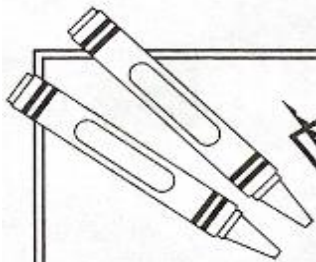
receive/send texts, so please feel free to use this number if it is easier for you to send a message to the office.

... The church email is a really good way to get the office information. It is email: **churchoffice@stjohnroyal.org**



...The deadline for the April Newsletter is **Friday, March 14th**. Information needs to be in the office by the deadline to be printed in the newsletter.





PUZZLE

SIGNS OF *Rebirth*

Isaiah 35 describes the rebirth of a dry land when Jesus returns, as well as the signs of God's beautiful creation at springtime.

Directions: Solve each math problem. Then write the words in order, from smaller numbers to larger numbers, in the spaces below.

bloom $6+1=$ ___ blossom $2 \times 2=$ ___ rejoice $4 \times 2=$ ___

burst $3+3=$ ___ wilderness $2+1=$ ___ joy $5+5=$ ___

crocus $3+2=$ ___ desert $1 \times 0=$ ___ parched $0+1=$ ___

glad $2 \times 1=$ ___ shout $10-1=$ ___



"The _____ and the _____ land will
be _____; the _____ will rejoice
and _____. Like the _____,
it will _____ into _____; it
will _____ greatly and _____ for _____."

Isaiah 35:1-2, NIV

Answers:
"The desert and the parched land will be glad; the wilderness will rejoice and blossom. Like the crocus, it will burst into bloom; it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy."