

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



NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
ROYAL, ILLINOIS 61871
PERMIT NO. 2

Return Service Requested

Josh Frerichs, Council President, Property,
Bryce Frerichs, Council Vice-President, Hunger-Stewardship
Debbie Ackerman, Council Secretary, Worship
Tracy Britt, Council Treasurer, Hunger-Stewardship
Mike Heidle, Worship
Whitney Highfill, Parish Life/Evangelism
Rick Aden, Property
Melinda Huls, Parish Life/Evangelism
Stacy Smith, Youth
Laura Ketchum, Youth
Sarah Wolken, S.S. Superintendent, Parish Ed
Tracey Mathis, Assistant S.S. Superintendent, Parish Ed
Church Office Secretaries:
Valerie Birge, Tammy Olson,
Custodian: Kathy Waller



ROYAL CHURCH NEWS

St. John's Newsletter

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

OCTOBER 2026



St. John Lutheran Church
203 E. Church Street, P.O. Box 36
Royal, Illinois 61871
(217) 583-3295 or (217) 583-3805
Ryan Sage, Student Pastor
email: churchoffice@stjohnroyal.org
church website: <https://stjohnroyal.org>

Devotion from Pastor Ryan ...

What Do We Mean When We Say “Sin”?

As the fields begin to turn from green to gold and combines start making their way across the fields, fall gives us plenty of reminders that we live by things we cannot control. A farmer can prepare the ground, plant the seed, tend the crop, and harvest it—but no farmer can make a kernel of corn grow. There is a point where we simply have to trust that God gives the growth. That can help us understand something important about sin.

When we hear the word “sin,” we often think of things we have done wrong: lying, losing our temper, gossiping, holding a grudge, mistreating our neighbor, or breaking one of God’s commandments. And those things certainly are sin. But the Lutheran understanding of sin goes deeper than simply making a list of bad behaviors. At its root, sin is unbelief. It is the failure to trust God and His Word. Lutherans understand the first sin in the Garden of Eden this way. God had spoken a promise, but Adam and Eve began to doubt that God’s Word was enough. They wanted to decide for themselves what was good, what was necessary, and what they could have apart from God’s Word. The first sin wasn’t taking the bite of the fruit; it was listening when the serpent said, “Did God really say...” and then doubting God’s word to them. That is to say, unbelief is the root, the source, of all sin. Sin is our refusal to trust God’s unconditional grace and our constant tendency to fall back upon ourselves—to take control, justify ourselves, and make ourselves right. In other words, sin is not merely doing something bad. It is our deep desire to be our own savior.

And let me explain why this matters for ordinary Christians. Luther’s explanation of the Third Article says, “I believe that I cannot by my own understanding or effort believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to him.” The problem is not simply that we occasionally make bad choices. The problem is that we are unable to rescue ourselves. Faith itself must be given to us by God.

This is why the Law is so important. God’s Law does not simply give us a list of things to improve. It exposes the truth about us. It shows us our sin and our inability to make ourselves right with God. What I mean

ONGOING PRAYER LIST



Hannah Worley
Kendra Manselle
Kay Fiscus
Anna Wentzloff
Bryce Frerichs
Sandie Osterbur
Dan Frerichs
Chris Huls

Holly Hoffschneider
Evelyn Frost
Jerrick Olson (*grandson of Norma Sherfey*)
Mitch Fruhling (*son of Kay Fiscus*)
Janey Huls (*sister to Susie Schlueter*)
Stoney Wireman (*friends of Gloria Grant*)
Frank & Mary Kay Kimell (*friends of Gloria Grant*)
Kerry Blankenbegher (*friends of Gloria Grant*)
Peyton McDonnaugh (*friend of Marsha Osterbur*)
Amy Dufelmeier (*sister of Hilary Whitt*)
Chloe Birdsell (*friend of Hilary Whitt*)

Family of: Lois Frerichs

Nursing Home, Assisted Living Residents:

Mary Lou Ackerman, Berniece Aden, Sharon Ault, Eldred Cornelius, Florence Frerichs, Regina Gronewald, Betty Huls, Harold and Darlene Hoveln, Janis Loschen, Myron Sage, Norma Sherfey

Homebound: Alice Duitsman, Marilyn Frerichs, Herb Thompson.

Our Members (80+): Ray and Loretta Aden, Brenda Alsip, Erna Amerman, Carl Beard, Dale and Virginia Behrens, Emil and Carolyn Blobaum, Wilma Buhr, Billie Busboom, Chuck & Judy Carl, Jim & Marge Clingan, Ron Duitsman, Gloria Ehmen, Kay Fiscus, Carolyn Frerichs, Dan Frerichs, Rita Frerichs, Barbara Fruhling, Bernice Fruhling-Cash, Janis Loschen, JoAnn Lynch, Betty Osterbur, Darlene Osterbur, Ella Osterbur, Gene Osterbur, June Osterbur, Kenny Osterbur, Marvin and Belva Osterbur, Rodney and Sandie Osterbur, Denver Phelps, Linda Post, JoAnn Rademaker, Roxie Sage, Aleta Schlueter, Robert Schmidt, John and Donna Thompson, Judy White.





Holland Elizabeth Aden

was baptized into the family of Christ
here at St. John on Saturday, September 12,
2026.

Holland is the daughter of
Jared and Sydney (Rueck) Aden.
Her sponsors are
Wade and Colie Rueck.

Sympathy is extended to the family of
Helen (Bluhm) Cornick.

Helen passed to her eternal home on
Saturday, August 8, 2026.

Funeral worship was held here at
St. John on Saturday, August 29, 2026.

*With Deepest
Sympathy*



Sympathy is extended to the family of
Lois (Hunter) Frerichs.

Lois passed to her eternal home on
Saturday, September 12, 2026.

Funeral worship was held here at
St. John on Wednesday,
September 16, 2026.

DESIGNATED BENEVOLENCE



During the month of October, the designated
benevolence is for NALC Mission Congregations.
Please use the center portion of the offering
envelopes for your special contributions.

A special thank you to all of you who contribute!

(Pastor Ryan's Devotion continued)

is, the Law functions like a mirror: it shows us our sin and then, in our despair, drives us toward Christ. And here is where the Gospel changes everything.

The Gospel does not say, "Try harder." It says, "**Christ has done for you what you could never do for yourself. You are forgiven. You are Christ's.**"

That is especially important because we Christians are still sinners. We still doubt. We still worry. We still try to control things that belong in God's hands. We still hurt our neighbors and then find ways to explain why we were justified in doing it. Yet at the same time, we are justified sinners—people who live by Christ's promise rather than our own performance.

So perhaps as we watch the harvest come in this fall, we can remember this: we are not saved by how good a crop we can produce in our own lives. We are saved because Christ has acted for us.

The farmer receives the harvest as a gift from God. The Christian receives Christ the same way—as a gift.

And because Christ has already given Himself for us, we are finally free to stop worrying about proving ourselves to God and get back to the work He has actually given us, loving and serving our neighbors.

That is the freedom of the Gospel. Not "Look what I have done for God." But "Look what God has done for me in Jesus Christ!"

Pastor Ryan

Pastor Ryan can be reached by phone at

(217) 202-4864 and by email at
rsage217@gmail.com



WORSHIP SERVICES

Worship is at **9:45 a.m.** Holy Communion is celebrated on the first and third Sundays of the month.



UPCOMING SERVICES

Thanksgiving Eve service Wednesday, November 25th.

Hanging of the Greens will be on **Sunday, November 29th.**

Children's Christmas Program will be held during worship service on **Sunday, December 13th.**

Christmas Eve services Thursday, December 24th,
at 5:00 pm & 10:00 pm.

Christmas Day service Friday, December 25th at 10 am.

Devotional from Council member Melinda Huls

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."
Philippians 4:13

The strength of every worker will be found in truthful dependence upon God, in earnest prayer to Him for help, and in obedience to His word.

How do we respond when you face challenges and hardships in life? Paul was in prison, but he was at peace with his circumstances because he did not rest his hope on them but on God! This applies to all of us, all the time.

It is also humbling and reminds us that we are not in control, God is!

God Bless,

Melinda



(parish ed/youth continued)

2026-2027 CONFIRMATION CLASS



Pastor Sage will be leading confirmation classes this year. Classes will be held on Sunday evenings from 6:30 to 8:00 here at St. John.

Cardboard Campout for all in the 7-12 grades will be held on Saturday, October 3rd, starting at 6:00 pm. At 7:00 pm there will be a weiner roast followed by games & campfire at 9:00 pm. Please bring a canned good, your own pillow, blankets, and fresh clothes for church the following morning. If you have any questions, please contact Laura Ketchum.



COUNCIL NOTES

1. The Council met on Monday, September 21st, at 7:00 pm., in the church basement. Rick Aden began the meeting with a devotion from Luke 12:48.
2. Council members present were Bryce Frerichs, Debbie Ackerman, Whitney Highfill, Stacy Smith, Laura Ketchum, Tracy Britt, and Rick Aden. Absent members were Josh Frerichs, Melinda Huls, Sarah Wolken, and Mike Heidle. Guests present were Pastor Ryan, Keith Cunningham and Valerie Birge, Tracey Mathis, and Chuck Carl.
3. Youth have been invited to participate in Trunk or Treat with St. Paul's. It will be held Sunday, October 25, from 3 to 4:30, at St. Paul's in Gifford. Any questions contact St. Paul Lutheran Church.
4. Property is working on putting up signs for people with limited mobility in the new spots.
5. The Historic Member Policy has been updated and approved.
6. Next council meeting is Monday, October 19th, at 7:00 pm.

PARISH ED/YOUTH NEWS



Sarah Wolken, Sunday School Superintendent
Tracey Mathis, Assistant Sunday School Superintendent

Sunday School is held each Sunday morning at **8:30 a.m.**
Listed in this newsletter are the classes for the 2026-2027 Sunday School year.

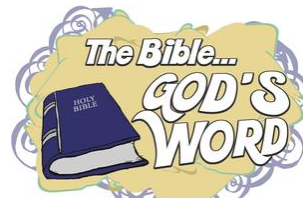
During Rally Day, Sunday, September 13th, this year the following Sunday School students received Bibles.

Nursery Bibles:

Brody Breymeyer
Waylon Clark
Atlas Elzey
Kendall Greene
Cecelia Heyden
Adalynn Sauder
Adey Frerichs
Harvey Wright
Michaela Wright

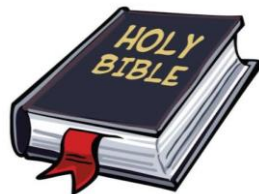
1st grade Bibles

Emarie Mohr
Sawyer Wolken
Jace Crozier
Carson Greene
Edison Patzwith
Wyatt Johnson



7th grade Bibles

Olson Bohlen
Lauren Frerichs
Makenzie Huls
Carson Sjoken
Jackson Sjoken
Shane Harris
Amya Osterbur



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** is a **cell phone** and can receive/send texts, please feel free to use this number if it is easier for you to send a message to the office.



The deadline for the November Newsletter is **Friday, October 16th**. Please, have the information to the office by that date.

Have you had a chance to visit our church website? If not, you should! It has some useful information! On the website you will find the

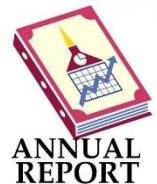
monthly newsletter and calendar, ways to contact the church, pictures, and a cool video of our church and the village of Royal! Check it out at: <https://stjohnroyal.org>



The office is working on the church directory for 2027. If you have any changes to phone numbers, addresses, and/or emails, please, let the office know as soon as possible.

Annual Reports for 2026

As you know, our church calendar year ends on September 30th, and the new year begins October 1st. Committees should begin working on completing their yearly reports and getting them into the church office by **October 11th**. These are needed to complete the Annual Report that is presented at the Annual Meeting to be held on **Sunday, November 8th**. If the reports are not in by the deadline they may not make it into the Annual Report and they will be marked as "not available". Thank you to all who serve on those committees for their time and dedication. You are appreciated!



GREAT RIVERS MISSION DISTRICT CONVOCATION



Our annual Great Rivers Mission District Convocation will be held on Saturday, October 24th, from 9:00 to 3:00, at American Lutheran Church, 500 Church Dr, Rantoul. The cost of the meal will be \$10. Registration will start at 9:00 a.m. The convocation will open at 9:30 with worship. If you would like to attend, please contact the church office or Pastor Sage.

Birthday Celebrations in October (members 80+ years):



Bernice Fruhling-Cash celebrates her 83rd birthday on the 1st.

Donna Thompson celebrates her 82nd birthday on the 2nd.

Billie Busboom celebrates her 98th birthday on the 9th.

Erna Amerman celebrates her 90th birthday on the 18th.

Alice Duitsman celebrates her 90th birthday on the 27th.

*Remember all of them in your prayers,
and with birthday greetings!*



PASTOR APPRECIATION



October is Pastor Appreciation Month. A time set aside each year to honor and give thanks to our pastors who give, care, and serve us and our communities in remarkable ways. We will honor our pastors on Sunday, October 18th.

Remember to show the pastors your appreciation with notes, cards, words of encouragement, etc. this month. Most of all remember that while October is set aside as Pastor Appreciation Month, our pastors and church leaders should be encouraged, celebrated, and graciously thanked all year long. So, shower them with love, understanding, and support every day of the year.

Special Recognition and Appreciation will be extended to Pastor Emil Blobaum on Sunday, October 18th. Pastor Blobaum has served in the ministry for 63 years and served our congregation faithfully for many years. Pastor Blobaum's retirement began on September 30, 2026. Please remember Pastor Blobaum in your prayers as he begins this new chapter.



MUSIC APPRECIATION

October is also Music Appreciation Month. We will celebrate on Sunday, October 18th.

A very special thank you to the musicians whose hands and voices God uses to touch our hearts.

SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER APPRECIATION

We will celebrate Sunday School Teacher Appreciation on Sunday, October 18th this year!

This is a great time to let the Sunday school teachers in your life, and your child's life, know how much they are appreciated!



REFORMATION October 31, 1517



It was 509 years ago when Martin Luther posted his 95 theses on the church door at Wittenberg making his statement to the world, thus giving birth to the Reformation. The three main ideas that are central to Luther's theology are that salvation comes from God's grace (Sola Gratia) through faith alone (Sola Fide) in Jesus Christ, and that the Bible is the highest source of authority (Sola Scriptura).

Come as we celebrate the Reformation on Sunday, October 25th.



PLARN PROJECT

Save Your Plastic Grocery Bags!

Drop off your plastic grocery bags in the marked container on the ground floor, next to the elevator. These bags will be used for those who need temporary sleeping arrangements. If you would like to help, make the sleeping mats we meet on Mondays at 2:00 in the parsonage. NO experience is necessary. For more information, call or text Kathy Lewis at (217) 264-0751 or Richard Lewis at (217) 264-3331.

THE MUTUAL/MENTOR COMMITTEE

A mutual/mentor committee has been formed to give support, encouragement and provide constructive feedback to Pastor Ryan as he works through his internship. If you have any thoughts, comments or feedback that you would like to share with the committee please contact one of the members. Teresa Aden, Tracy Britt, Daniele Frerichs, Ray Manselle, or Stacy Smith,



SOME OF "THIS AND THAT"



Flock Group Shepherd for November is Gloria Schmidt.
Thank you to all that volunteer!

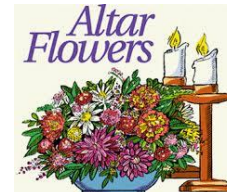


The Flock Group Shepherd for **December is Teresa Aden.**

St. John's Women's Bible Study will meet **September 8th** with Debbie Frerichs hosting. Debbie Suits will host the November 12th meeting.



SPECIAL NOTE: During the October meeting on the 8th, the ladies will not hold Bible study but instead will meet to put together personal kits. They welcome help from anyone who is interested.



Altar Flowers are provided and delivered each weekend by House of Flowers, in Rantoul. The cost to the church is \$40.00 per vase each week. You can sponsor a vase or both by signing up on the chart posted on the north office door for one or both vases and indicate whether it's for a special occasion. **Sponsors are asked to donate \$20.00 per vase.** Donations are to be made to the church and earmarked for flowers. **Please, write who is sponsoring the flowers along with the special occasion when signing up to sponsor.**

Prayer Requests for the Prayer Chain begin by calling the church office at 217-583-3295, texting 217-583-3805, or emailing the church office. Please call the church office, Pastor Sage, or our council members when one of our members or a loved one is hospitalized and continue to share updates with us here at the church.



(some “this and that” continued)

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.



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 John R. Thompsen, Chuck Carl or Dan Henderson.

The water and pop in the refrigerator in the kitchen are each **\$1.00**. Please, make sure that if you are getting one that you are paying. There is a marked container in the refrigerator to place your money. This is not for any profit but for the convenience of having water and pop here at the church. Thank you!



A Pictorial directory committee is being organized. If you are interested in helping with this project, please contact Laura Ketchum. The last pictorial directory was done in 2014!

St. Joseph Methodist Church Food Pantry dates are October 1st and 29th.



The Nominating Committee is still working on filling spots. Please pray for wisdom in ways where you can help. If you are interested, you can contact one of the committee members. They are Derek Sieberns, Shannon Christians, Merissa Wright, Diane Frerichs, and Chelsey Phillips. For committee descriptions, please see the church website www.stjohnroyal.org.

If you are interested in becoming a member of St. John, please, reach out to Pastor Sage or let the church office know. We would love to have you!



(expression of thanks continued)

To St. John Lutheran Church,



Thank you for opening your church doors and allowing us to use your beautiful church for mom's celebration of life service.

It was a full circle moment to have the service in the same church that mom and dad were married.

We especially wanted to call out Valerie's assistance (and patience) in answering our questions and offering suggestions. In addition, the funeral committee ladies put on a stellar luncheon. They were gracious and professional. The family appreciated their kindness and commitment.

Enclosed in a donation to St. John's in honor of mom.

*Kind regards,
Jeanne Connick-Clay
And the Family of Helen (Bluhm)Connick*



Dear Pastor Ryan and St. John's Lutheran family,

Thank you for the beautiful funeral service, the meaningful music, and meal you provided, and the many people who came to support us. Your care and presence brought real comfort during a very difficult time, and we are deeply grateful for everything the church did in honor of our mother and grandmother, Lois.

With sincere appreciation,
The Lois Frerichs Family

EXPRESSIONS OF THANKS

Dear Church Youth Committee,

Thank you so much for the generous scholarship as I begin my freshman year of college. I truly appreciate your support and kindness as I take this exciting next step in my education.

Your generosity will help me as I start college, and I am very grateful to have the encouragement of our church community behind me. Thank you for investing in my future and for believing in me.

Blessings,
Emma Wells



*Dear St. John Church,
Thank you for granting me the church scholarship. Your recognition of my commitment to serve and spread God's light does not go unnoticed or unappreciated. I am excited to continue my walk with the Lord in this next chapter.*

Thank you for your support!

*Sincerely,
Allison Ochs*

Dear St. John Church,

A thank you to all the people who funded, planned and helped to make the disabled parking are so great!

Love & Prayers for all,
Wilma Buhr



SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS ROSTER 2026-2027

S.S Superintendent – Sarah Wolken

Music: Susi Huls, Tracey Mathis

Nursery Teachers:

*Dawn & Morgan Huls
Paula Armstong*

Nursery

Waylon Clark
Atlas Elzey
Edey Frerichs
Kendall Greene
Ceceila Heyden
Adalynn Sauder
Harvey Wright
Michaela Wright



1st & 2nd Grade Teachers

Merissa Wright & Amanda Bohlen

First Grade

Wyatt Johnson
Carson Greene
Emarie Mohr
Sawyer Wolken
Jace Crozier
Eddie Patzwith



Second Grade

Arnold Loschen
Ronald Loschen
Lucas Sieberns
Brooks Whitt

Pre-K &

Kindergarten Teachers:

*Shelley Breymeyer,
Jodi Bohlen, & Austin Maul*

Pre-K

Ford Wright
Kaylee Mohr
Wesley Aden
Annistyn Anderson
Emma Moews
Finley Crozier
Madelyn Sieberns
Garrett Duitsman
Emily Frizzo

Kindergarten

Collins Whitt
Caden Ehmen
Ellie Whitlow
Allie Frick

SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS ROSTER 2026-2027

3rd & 4th Grade Teachers:
Daniele Frerichs & April Grant

Third Grade

Kate Frerichs
Finley Hendrick
Macy Huls

Fourth Grade

Annaston Bohlen
Brecken Highfill
Myles Wolken
Tucker Wolken

5th & 6th Teachers:
Tracey Mathis & Stacy Smith

Fifth Grade

Emilia Bohlen
Carter Ehmen
Ainsley Hendrick
Camden Highfill
Ellie Loschen
Harrison Patzwith
Jillian Harris

Sixth Grade

Claire Flessner
Levi Mathis
Emerson Meier
Wesley Whitlow

7th & 8th Grade Teacher:
Laura Ketchum

Seventh Grade

Olson Bohlen
Lauren Frerichs
Makenzie Huls
Amya Osterbur
Carson Sjoken
Jackson Sjoken

Eight Grade

Campbell Flessner
Aubree Johnson
Shane Harris



SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS ROSTER 2026-2027

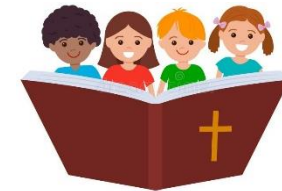
High School

Freshman

Jeremiah Bohlen
Johnathan Gossett
Blake Lackey
Benjamin Loschen
Devin Loschen
Blair Mathis
Lincoln Meier
Brady Ramm
Lyli Vilven
Emma Whitlow

Sophomore

Ella Bromley
Madison Huls
James Ketchum
Jacob Wells



Junior

Isabella Frerichs
Lillian Hedrick
Royce Loschen
Alyssa Osterbur
Leah Pruitt

Senior

Alex Bromley
Morgan Huls
Garrett Loschen
Gage Ramm
Cameron Wagner

Adult S

Teacher: Teresa Aden

Sunday School is Cool

