

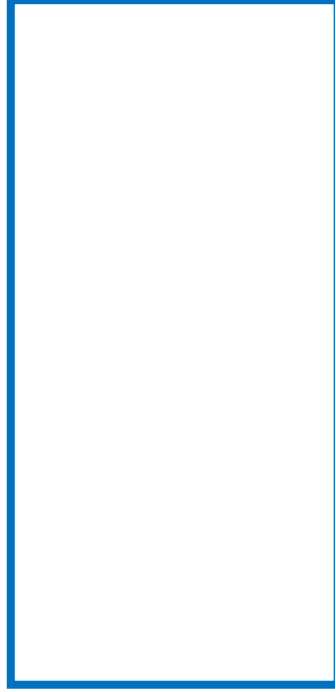
St. John Lutheran Church  
203 E. Church Street  
P.O. Box 36  
Royal, Illinois 61871

*Return Service Requested*

Josh Frerichs, Council President, Property,  
Bryce Frerichs, Council Vice-President, Hunger-Stewardship  
Debbie Ackerman, Council Secretary, Worship  
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  
Tracy Mathis, Assistant S.S. Superintendent, Parish Ed  
Church Office Secretaries:  
Valerie Birge, Tammy Olson,  
Custodian: Kathy Waller



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PERMIT NO. 2



# ROYAL CHURCH NEWS

## St. John's Newsletter

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

# APRIL 2026



### St. John Lutheran Church

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

**(217) 583-3295 or 583-3805**

*Ryan Sage, Pastor*

*Emil Blobaum, Visitation Pastor*

email: [churchoffice@stjohnroyal.org](mailto:churchoffice@stjohnroyal.org)  
church website: <https://stjohnroyal.org>

## From Bryce Frerichs –

Romans 6:23: *“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

As we close in on another celebration of Jesus’ resurrection and victory over death for mankind, a promise fulfilled from God, foreshadowed even back to the early times of the Book of Genesis, we give thanks to God.

We give thanks for the teachings and miracles of Jesus Christ we have heard during our Lenten season here at St. John.

Josh preached during Sunday Lent 3 about Christ clenching our thirst eternally. **John 4:14** *“Whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”* The Samaritan woman at the well, whom Jesus knew all about, was a first-hand witness of the Messiah who has come. Jesus knows all that has passed in our lives, yet offers living water, the path to eternal life. Little is known of her after her encounter and proclamation of Jesus to the townspeople. Perhaps the woman was filled with the Holy Spirit, transformed her life and became committed in her personal relationship and spiritually to Jesus Christ the Savior.

Pastor Baderschneider preached on Sunday Lent 4 about the miracle of Jesus healing the blind man. It was a miracle in physical nature for sure, but more so for the metaphorical meaning of our spiritual blindness. Life and sin can blind us, but we can be awakened through faith. John 9:25 ... *“One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!”*

There were many personal accounts from witnesses from the living Jesus, that two-thousand years later, we must live on faith from those witnesses. The Bible tells us so. Yes, it would be easier to say, “I’ll believe it when I see it.” As humans, it is easy to be filled with doubt. So was Thomas. A very impactful witness account that we study after Christ’s resurrection is the account of Thomas the Apostle. He was absent when Jesus first appeared to the other disciples. The other eleven told Thomas,



## ONGOING PRAYER LIST

Dave Christians	Mitch Fruhling ( <i>son of Kay Fiscus</i> )
Pastor Emil Blobaum	Delmar Habben
Kay Fiscus	Camille Wissmann
Dan Frerichs	Jennie Uken
Sandie Osterbur	Chloe Birdsell ( <i>friend of Hilary Whitt</i> )
Mike Heidle	Hannah Worley ( <i>daughter of Doug &amp; Miki Wesley</i> )
Bryce Frerichs	Abby Lundquist ( <i>friend of Ray Manselle</i> )
Kendra Manselle	Peyton McDonnaugh ( <i>friend of Marsha Osterbur</i> )
Belva Osterbur	Hannah Nirider ( <i>friend of Parker Poole</i> )
Betty Huls	Amy Dufelmeier ( <i>sister of Hilary Whitt</i> )
Chris Huls	Aleyah Carley ( <i>daughter of Teresa Thornton Carley</i> )
Anna Wentzloff	Darrel Jacobs ( <i>friend of Tracy Wahlfeldt</i> )
	Samantha Hutchinson ( <i>cousin of Hilary Whitt</i> )
Rhonda Miller, Jane Cress ( <i>friend of Hilary Whitt</i> ), Janey Huls ( <i>sister of Susie Schleuter</i> ), Eva Brunken ( <i>friend of Anita Leib</i> )	
Lois Henderson, Mary Crider, Carol Doman ( <i>friends of Ray and Kendra Manselle</i> )	
Stoney Wireman, Frank and Mary Kay Kimell, Kerry Blankenbegher ( <i>friends of Gloria Grant</i> )	



**Family of:** Marvin Duitsman

### **Nursing Home, Assisted Living Residents:**

Mary Lou Ackerman, Berniece Aden, Sharon Ault, Regina Gronewald, Betty Huls, Harold and Darlene Hovel, Janis Loschen, Dorene Pflugmacher, Myron Sage, Norma Sherfey

**Homebound:** Dorothy Buhr, Eldred Cornelius, Alice Duitsman, Florence Frerichs, Lois Frerichs, 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, Marge Clingan, Ron Duitsman, Gloria Ehmen, Kay Fiscus, Carolyn Frerichs, Rita Frerichs, Barbara Fruhling, Bernice Fruhling-Cash, Janis Loschen, JoAnn Lynch, Betty Osterbur, Ella Osterbur, Gene Osterbur, June Osterbur, Kenny Osterbur, Marvin and Belva Osterbur, Rodney Osterbur, Sandie Osterbur, Denver Phelps, Linda Post, JoAnn Rademaker, Roxie Sage, Aleta Schlueter, John and Donna Thompson, Judy White

## From Pastor Sage

As I write this newsletter, we have recovered from what I hope was winter's last attempt to freeze us out. The sun is shining, the robins are singing in the trees, the grass is beginning to green, and Isaiah 43:19 comes to my mind. "Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert." When God spoke these words to Jacob, He was telling Jacob of what was, and of what was to come. He was also telling all of Israel that He would be faithful to them always, despite them thinking they knew better than God, that they really didn't need Him, or that when they could no longer deny that God was almighty, they were sure He had abandoned them. How true is that for our lives? When things are going well, do we remember to thank God for all of our blessings? Or, are we thankful to ourselves that we worked hard, and muscled our way to success, never needing help from anyone? And what about when things are bad? When we are on our knees and crying out to God for mercy, do we remember that He is faithful to us always? Or are we sure He has forsaken us? Praise be to God that my salvation doesn't hinge on my being faithful to Him! While some days I do ok, some days I couldn't do worse if I tried. So, as we conclude this somber season of Lent and enter this joyous season of Easter, remember that God has done, and is doing, a new thing! And just as the newness of spring comes to us in our cold, gray, overcast world, so comes Jesus to redeem us from our sins, and raise us to new everlasting life!

God bless you all,

Pastor Ryan Sage

Pastor Sage can be reached by email at  
[rsage217@gmail.com](mailto:rsage217@gmail.com)



## From Bryce –

John 20:24-25 *"We have seen the Lord," but Thomas replied, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe."* A week later Jesus appeared to all of them with Thomas present, *Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."* (John 20: 27), *"Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."* (John 20: 29).

All that Jesus did in his living life was a gift, but Jesus' life was The gift. His teachings and miracles performed that those have witnessed for us have truly transformed our lives. Ephesians 2:8 *"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God."*

As Easter approaches and we celebrate the new beginning that Easter brings, the time is very fitting for a new beginning in our church. We welcome a new voice in Ryan Sage as he will serve the following year as our student pastor. We pray for his continued development in seminary, and we support him as our shepherd this year in God's design for St. John Lutheran Church. Jeremiah 3:15 *"Then I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will lead you with knowledge and understanding."*

Blessings to you and your families this Easter. He is risen. He is risen indeed!

Bryce Frerichs



## DESIGNATED BENEVOLENCE



During the month of April, the designated benevolence is for Local Benevolences to help those in need. Lent offerings are designated for NALC Seminaries. Easter offerings are designated for Country Health Care and Rehab, Gifford.

Please use the center portion of the offering envelopes for your gifts. Local Benevolences are Seek & Find, Daily Bread Soup Kitchen, and Jesus Is The Way Prison Ministries.




### Council members for 2026:

**Josh Frerichs, Council President**  
**Bryce Frerichs, Council Vice-President**  
**Debbie Ackerman, Council Secretary**  
**Tracy Britt, Council Treasurer**  
**Mike Heidle, Council member**  
**Melinda Huls, Council member**  
**Whitney Highfill, Council member**  
**Rick Aden, Council member**  
**Laura Ketchum, Council member**  
**Stacy Smith, Council member**  
**Sarah Wolken, Sunday School Superintendent**  
**Tracey Mathis, Assistant Sunday School Sup**



## FEBRUARY COUNCIL MEETING NOTES

1. The Council met on **Monday, February 23**, at 7:00. Josh Frerichs led the devotion over **1 John 3:18**. The members present were Josh Frerichs, Bryce Frerichs, Debbie Ackerman, Mike Heidle, Melinda Huls, Laura Ketchum, Tracy Britt, Sarah Wolken, and Rick Aden. Absent members were Whitney Highfill, Stacy Smith. The guests were: Valerie Birge, Tracy Mathis, Derek Sieberns.   
**Meeting Minutes**
2. Ryan Sage's compensation package was discussed. It was planned to have two informational meetings after church. The first on March 1<sup>st</sup> and the second on March 8<sup>th</sup>. A Congregational Meeting will be held after church to vote for Ryan Sage to a one-year intern with our church.
3. Next council meeting is planned for Monday, March 16, 2026, at 7:00 p.m.



### **MARCH COUNCIL MEETING NOTES**

1. The Council met on Monday, **March 16**, at 7:00 p.m. Mike Hiedle led the devotion over **Deuteronomy 6:5-9**.
2. The council members present were Josh Frerichs, Bryce Frerichs, Tracy Britt, Whitney Highfill, Laura Ketchum, Stacy Smith, and Mike Hiedle. The members absent were Sarah Wolken, Tracey Mathis, Rick Aden, and Melinda Huls. Guest were Pastor Ryan Sage, Keith Cunningham, Valerie Birge, Tammy Olson, and Les Olson.
3. Pastor Sage will be at the pulpit for Maudy Thursday, Good Friday, both Easter morning services, and will begin as our new Pastor.
4. The Worship Committee will hold a meeting on Sunday, April 12<sup>th</sup> following worship.
5. The Property Committee will be seeking bids for redoing the handicap parking area. They have been working on the Pastor's office and will continue to work on the church office, north office and Sunday School office, as well as painting in the narthex.
6. The next council meeting is Monday, April 20<sup>th</sup>, at 7:00 p.m.

parish ed / youth news" (continued)



Support our summer mission trip by dining at **Monical's Pizza (St. Joseph or Urbana)** on **Monday, April 6!** A portion of the day's sales will be donated to help fund our mission team. Enjoy a great meal, invite friends and

family, and help make a difference through your support. **Be sure to provide the Community Day flyer when you order. The flyers are available in the narthex or at the table at the east entrance. Thank you for supporting our mission efforts!**

**Confirmation Sunday** will be May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2026. Please mark your calendars to be there to help support these students who are affirming their Christian belief and becoming full members of St. John Lutheran Church.



**Confirmation Reunion** will be held on Sunday, June 7<sup>th</sup>. The Confirmation Classes of 1951, 1976, and 2001 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.



**BIBLE SCHOOL** will be Monday, July 6th through Friday, July 10th, with the program on Sunday, July 12th. There will be a meal followed by activities. The theme for **VBS 2026** will be **Rainforest Falls**. More information to come.

## SOME OF "THIS AND THAT"



...**The Flock Group Shepherd** for **May** is **Shelley Breymeyer** She will be contacting her flock group for volunteers. *Thank you to all that volunteer!*

...**The June Flock Group Shepherd** is **Judy Carl**.



...**Monthly Women of St. John Bible Study** will meet on the third Thursday afternoon of this month at 1:30 here in the church basement for study and fellowship. This month they will meet on **April 9<sup>th</sup>**. **June Osterbur** will host.



...**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!



...**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.



...**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 Ron Duitsman.



some of "this and that" (continued)



...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](mailto:StJohnRoyal61871@gmail.com)



... 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. 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's next date is April 2<sup>nd</sup> and April 30<sup>th</sup>.



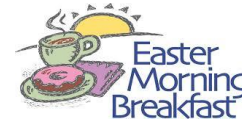
...Education Trust Fund is set up in the Multiple Funds account. Donations may be given to this fund through your offerings marked "Education Trust" (divided equally between the Gossett and Ramm families or you may give specifically to one family). These funds are used to help with their school fees,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

## PARISH ED / YOUTH NEWS



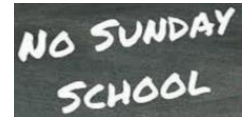
Sunday School – Sundays at 8:30 a.m.

There **will not** be Sunday School for the youth on **April 5, Easter Sunday.**



The Youth will be serving Easter Breakfast following Sunrise service Easter morning.

Youth Sunday School will take a break this summer. The last day of Sunday school will be Sunday, May 24<sup>th</sup>. Classes will start again on Rally Day, Sunday, September 13<sup>th</sup>.



The Sunday School Students will continue to be greeters on the second Sunday throughout the summer months.

Mission Trip 2026 – Mission Trip 2026 – We will once again partner with Prince of Peace and travel to Wausau, WI, July 12–18. In a world filled with pressure from school, social media, and division, this year's theme, *Illuminate*, invites us to discover Jesus as the unstoppable Light (John 1:1–18). Join us this summer to grow in faith, build real community, and shine Jesus' brilliance in a world that needs it. Participants must be graduating 8th grade or older. Please contact Laura Ketchum for more information.



Cooking Class for Pre-K - Junior High Students Students are invited to learn cooking skills from members of our congregation on **Sunday, April 19<sup>th</sup>**. Adults: If you are interested in teaching a no-bake recipe, please contact Sarah Wolken.

## EXPRESSIONS OF THANKS



Dear St. John Lutheran Church,  
Thank you for the generous support you have provided the North American Lutheran Church! Your donation expands the witness of our church body.

In Christ,  
Madeline Benson  
Director of Development

St. John Lutheran Church,  
Seek and Find Ministries thanks you for your financial contributions that helped us serve so many people in the Rantoul and surrounding communities. We also thank you for your prayer support! We believe God has truly blessed this ministry.

Thanks again for your generous donation to Seek and Find Ministries. We are truly grateful for you! May the Lord bless you as you have blessed us!

Mike Roberts  
Executive Director



### Birthday Celebrations in April (members 80+ years):

Dan Frerichs celebrates his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday on April 1<sup>st</sup>.

★ Mary Lou Ackerman celebrates her 95<sup>th</sup> birthday on the 7<sup>th</sup>.

Marvin Osterbur celebrates his 88<sup>th</sup> birthday on the 23<sup>rd</sup>.

### Wedding Anniversaries in April (members 50+ years):

Mitch and Debbie Frerichs celebrate 52 years on the 6<sup>th</sup>.

John and Donna Thompsen celebrate 61 years on the 24<sup>th</sup>.



## 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. Our email is: [churchoffice@stjohnroyal.org](mailto:churchoffice@stjohnroyal.org)

...**Newsletter Deadline** for May is Wednesday, **April 17<sup>th</sup>**. Information needs to be in the office by the deadline to be printed in the newsletter.



...**The office has completed the 2026 church directory**, and it is printed. Copies can be picked up in the narthex.

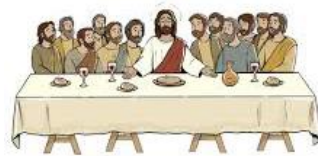
... **Have you ever had a chance to visit our church website?** If not, you should! It has some useful information! On the website you will find the monthly newsletter and calendar, ways to contact the church, pictures, and a cool video of church and the village of Royal! Check it out at: <https://stjohnroyal.org>





**Palm Sunday** is March 29th.  
Worship begins at 9:45 a.m.  
with Procession of Palms.

**Maundy Thursday**  
is April 2<sup>nd</sup>.  
Worship with Holy Communion  
and altar stripping,  
begins at 7:00.



**Good Friday** is April 3<sup>rd</sup>.  
Worship begins at 7:00

**Easter Sunday** is April 5<sup>th</sup>.  
A Sunrise Worship begins at 6:30 a.m. with the  
procession of altar furnishings and Holy Communion,  
followed by breakfast.  
Easter Festival Worship with Holy Communion  
begins at 9:45 a.m.



**OFFICIAL ACTS**

On March 5, Holy Communion was celebrated for the first time for four of our fifth-grade youths: Levi Mathis, Emerson Meier, Claire Flessner, and Wesley Whitlow. Pray that throughout their lives these youth continue to come to the Lord's Table and cherish its meaning of Jesus' sacrifice for us.



Sympathy is extended to the family of **Stanley Osterbur.**  
Stan passed to his eternal home on Monday, February 16, 2026.  
Funeral worship was held here at St. John on Saturday, February 21, 2026.

Sympathy is extended to the family of **Marvin Duitsman.**  
Marvin passed to his eternal home on Thursday, March 5, 2026.  
Funeral worship was held here at St. John on Friday, March 13, 2026.



**Haley Brooke Rodriguez**  
was baptized into the family of Christ here at St. John on Saturday, March 7, 2026.  
Haley is the daughter of Alejandro and Katie (Kurtz) Rodriguez.  
Her sponsors are Kristen Blakley and Adriana Rodriguez.

