

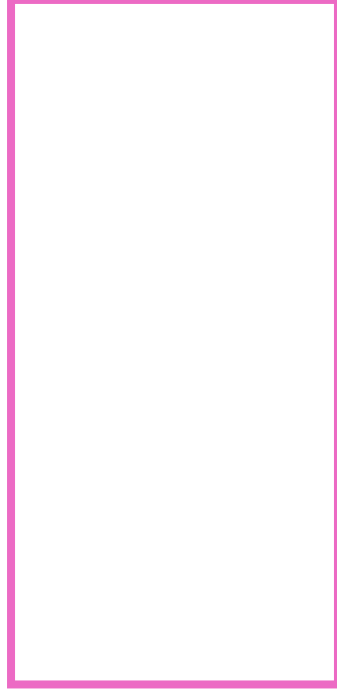
St. John Lutheran Church
203 E. Church Street
P.O. Box 36
Royal, Illinois 61871

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
Tracey Mathis, Assistant S.S. Superintendent, 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

May 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, Pastor

Emil Blobaum, Visitation Pastor

email: churchoffice@stjohnroyal.org
church website: <https://stjohnroyal.org>

Devotional from Pastor Sage

Ecclesiastes 7:14 NIV

14 When times are good, be happy; but when times are bad, consider this: God has made the one as well as the other. Therefore, no one can discover anything about their future.

Alleluia! He is risen!!!

What a joy it is to celebrate our risen Lord throughout the Easter season. As we sat in the cold, gray days of Lent, with our hearts burdened by our sins, awaiting the sad crucifixion of our Lord, we could not wait for the relief that we know is to come. Then, all of a sudden, it is as if the whole earth rejoices in the risen Christ! The birds return to the trees, the grass greens, flowers begin to bloom, and days begin to warm. How can anyone not rejoice in days like these? But, as I turn to the verse of the day, seen above, I am faced with a question. While I rejoice in the sunshine, where is my joy in the gloom? That is to say, how easy it is to be joyful when all is well by the measures of men. In times of plenty, we have no reason to experience anything but peace and joy. But when life's difficulties come, do we still rejoice in the Lord? God tells us throughout the scriptures that *"We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose," Rom. 8:28*, as well as *"Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds! Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life? Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest? Luke 12:24-26*. It is well that we remember that the Lord our God has created all things. He loves us and provides for us. So it is then, that we should constantly turn to the scriptures to remember that even in the bad times, God is with us; He provides for us; and it may only be when we look back at our lives that we may see the way that God was working in us and through us the whole time. For that, all thanks be to God!

God bless you all,

Pastor Sage



ONGOING PRAYER LIST

Ella Osterbur	Mitch Fruhling (<i>son of Kay Fiscus</i>)
Dave Christians	Jennie Uken
Kay Fiscus	Chloe Birdsell (<i>friend of Hilary Whitt</i>)
Dan Frerichs	Hannah Worley (<i>daughter of Doug & Miki Wesley</i>)
Sandie Osterbur	Abby Lundquist (<i>friend of Ray Manselle</i>)
Mike Heidle	Peyton McDonnaugh (<i>friend of Marsha Osterbur</i>)
Bryce Frerichs	Hannah Nirider (<i>friend of Parker Poole</i>)
Kendra Manselle	Amy Dufelmeier (<i>sister of Hilary Whitt</i>)
Belva Osterbur	Aleyah Carley (<i>daughter of Teresa Thornton Carley</i>)
Betty Huls	Darrel Jacobs (<i>friend of Tracy Wahlfeldt</i>)
Chris Huls	Samantha Hutchinson (<i>cousin of Hilary Whitt</i>)

Anna Wentzloff

Rhonda Miller, Jane Cress (*friend of Hilary Whitt*), Janey Huls (*sister of Susie Schleuter*), Eva Brunken (*friend of Anita Leib*)

Lois Henderson, Mary Crider, Carol Doman (*friends of Ray and Kendra Manselle*)

Stoney Wireman, Frank and Mary Kay Kimell, Kerry Blankenbegher (*friends of Gloria Grant*)

Family of:

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 Thompsen.

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, Dan 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 Thompsen, Judy White

Hello everyone,

As we enter into a new season together, I would like to update our Ongoing Prayer List in two ways. First, to make sure we are praying intentionally, and keeping our list current, please share any new requests, or continuations on previous requests, to the office by the last Friday of the month. We will then list these requests for the following month alone. If continued prayers are needed, please just let the office know monthly. This will allow us to celebrate the answered prayers we receive and focus on current areas for God's grace. Secondly, I would like to celebrate our members aged 80 and above as their birthdays approach. Members 80+ will be listed on their birthday week in the bulletin and in the newsletter. Birth year will not be listed. If those members have specific areas of prayer, please let the office know, and we will be glad to include them in the prayer list! Ultimately the hope is that our Church family will be all the more intentional in our prayers and also that we see all that God does for us. These changes will take effect at the end of May. Lastly, for any that are anxious, we can rest peacefully knowing that God knows all our needs, even before we ask them!

God bless,

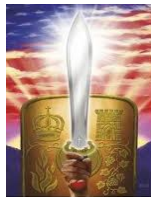
Pastor Sage

**Pastor Sage can be reached by phone at (217) 202-4864
and by email at rsage217@gmail.com**

NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER



Please participate in this year's National Day of Prayer on Thursday, May 7th. Lift up your prayers to God in thanksgiving for individuals,



families, communities, our country, and the world.

Pastor Sage will lead services for the National Day of Prayer Worship, on Thursday, May 7, at 7:00 pm., here at St. John.

From Council Member Whitney Highfill

Spring reminds us that there is New Life All Around Us

Most of us are thankful when the days grow longer and the cold of winter starts to fade, and we start to notice signs of new life everywhere. Trees begin to bud, flowers push their way through the ground, and the world slowly turns green again. Spring is a reminder to us that renewal is always possible.

This season also draws our hearts back to the hope we celebrate at Easter. In **John 11:25**, Jesus reminds us, *"I am the resurrection and the life."* His resurrection is the ultimate reminder that even after the darkest moments, new life can emerge.

Sometimes our own lives can feel like winter—heavy, uncertain, or weary. We all carry worries, struggles, or situations that seem slow to change. But just like the earth in spring, God is always at work bringing renewal to our hearts and our circumstances.

The beauty of spring is a quiet reminder that growth often happens below the surface before we can see it. God is doing the same in our lives—nurturing faith, strengthening hope, and preparing us for what lies ahead.

This spring, take time to notice the small signs of life around you. Let them remind you that God is still creating, restoring, and renewing.

Lord, thank You for the reminder of new life that surrounds. Help us trust that You are always at work in our lives, even when we cannot yet see the results. Renew our hearts with hope and help us share Your love with those around us.

AMEN



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**, 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



... **Newsletter Deadline for June is Friday, May 15th!**



...The **Church Office** will be **closed** on Monday, May 25th in observance of Memorial Day.

...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 our church and the village of Royal! Check it out at: <https://stjohnroyal.org>



"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.

... **St. Joseph Methodist Church** Food Pantry's next date is May 28th. There will not be any dates in June. The dates of July are July 2nd and July 30th.



GREAT RIVERS MISSION DISTRICT ANNUAL RETREAT

The annual retreat for pastors and congregational members of the Great Rivers Mission District will be held midday Thursday, May 14 to midday Friday, May 15, in Magnolia, IL. Contact Pastor Sage or the office for more information.

CONFIRMATION REUNION for 2026



This year's celebration will be held on Sunday, June 7th. The Confirmation Classes of 1951, 1976, and 2001 will be honored with 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.



"this and that continued"

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!*



...**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.



...**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)



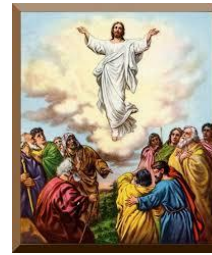
... **The water and pop** in the refrigerator in the kitchen are each \$1.00. Please, make sure that if you are getting one that you are paying. Thank you!



... **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!

OUTDOOR WORSHIP SERVICES

There **will not** be any Outdoor Worship Services during the summer months. The **ONLY** outdoor service will be for Rally Day on Sunday, September 13th.



ASCENSION DAY

Ascension Day worship service is Thursday, May 14th, here, at St. John at 7:00 p.m..

DESIGNATED BENEVOLENCE

During the month of **May**, the designated benevolence is for **Disaster Relief** to help those in need. Please use the center portion of the offering envelopes for your gifts.



A special thank you to all those that contribute.

HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY!

During worship on Sunday, May 10th, all mothers will be given a special surprise and recognition. Our thanks and God's blessings upon our mothers!

*"Honor her for all that her hands have done,
and let her works bring her praise at the city
gate."*

- Proverbs 31:31



OFFICIAL ACTS



Orion Zev Elzey
was baptized into the family of Christ
here at St. John on Saturday, April 18, 2026.

Orion is the son of Dr. Griffin and Tenneal (Frerichs) Elzey.
His sponsors are Timbra Hilton, Thea Frerichs, and
Callahan Elzey.

EXPRESSIONS OF THANKS



We would like to express our sincere,
heartfelt gratitude for the words of hope and
encouragement, the concerning texts and outreach, the monetary
gifts and abundant prayers over the last few months as our
daughter, Hannah Worley, was diagnosed with triple negative
breast cancer in July 2025.

Hannah has finished her 16 chemo infusions and will undergo a
double mastectomy April 16. Please continue to keep Hannah and
her husband, Tyler, and their 17mos. toddler, Lucas, in your
prayers as they go through these next steps.

We appreciate all of you and your loving thoughts.

God's blessings,

Miki & Doug Wesley
Hannah, Tyler, Lucas Worley

Dear St. John Church Family,

I want to thank you to all so much for celebrating my 97th birthday
with me. I greatly appreciated the cards, gifts and kind words. The
cake was delicious and beautiful! Also thank you for all the
prayers while I was ill. It is so good to know you have a wonderful
church family!

God's Blessing to all,

Ella Osterbur



SOME OF "THIS AND THAT"



...Flock Group Shepherd for **JUNE** is
Judy Carl. *Thank you to all that volunteer!*

The Flock Group Shepherd for **JULY** is
Joelyn Pedro and **AUGUST** Flock Group
Shepherd is **Kathie Ablinger**.



... **St. John's Women's Bible Study** will
NOT meet in the month of **May**. They are
planning to meet on **June 11th**, at 1:30 here
in the church basement for study and
fellowship. Debbie Suits 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.

COUNCIL MEETING NOTES



1. Council met on Monday, April 20, at 7:00. Bryce Frerichs led the devotion over Matthew 18:3-4. After the discussion of the scriptures, Bryce led the council in prayer.
2. Council members present at the meeting were: Josh Frerichs, Bryce Frerichs, Tracy Britt, Rick Aden, Melinda Huls, Mike Heidle, Stacey Smith, Laura Ketchum, Sarah Wolken, and Tracey Mathis. Absent council members were Debbie Ackerman and Whitney Highfill. Guests were Keith Cunningham, Valerie Birge, and Chuck Carl.
3. The confirmation class is preparing for their graduation. Seven students will be confirmed on Sunday, May 3rd.
4. Property is working on scheduling a church clean-up day. They are still working on bids for the handicap parking area.
5. The council had a guest speaker. Mark Bluhm with Lutheran Foundation Legacy Endowment Fund.
6. The council is putting together a Ministerial Maintenance and Mentor Committee to assist Pastor Sage in his growth as a new pastor. If you are interested in being on this committee, please, reach out to one of the council members. The council will put together the committee at the May 18th meeting.
7. The next council meeting will be on Monday, May 18th, at 7:00 pm.

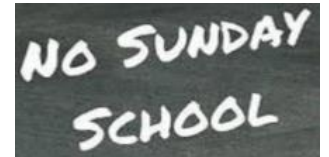
Council members for 2026:

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



PARISH ED / YOUTH NEWS
Sunday School – Sundays at 8:30 a.m.
Confirmation Sunday will take place May 3rd at 9:45 a.m.
Sunday School Students will sing on Mother's Day, Sunday, May 10th. They **will continue** to be **greeters** during worship services for the summer.

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



Confirmation Sunday will be May 3, 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. Our confirmation students are Blair Mathis, Ben Loschen, Brady Ramm, Blake Lackey, Jeremiah Bohlen, Devin Loschen and Lincoln Meier.

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE RECOGNITION SUNDAY



On Sunday, May 17th, our high school seniors will be graduating from St. Joseph-Ogden High School, at 3:00 pm. They will be recognized in worship here at St. John that day, during the 9:45 a.m. service. Graduates are encouraged to wear their cap and gown for worship. Please keep **Mackenzie Loschen, Allison Ochs, Gracyn Sjoken, Emma Wells, Caroline Aden, Cade Crozier, and Jeffery Gossett** in your prayers, as they prepare to take this next step in life's journey.

It's **graduation** time again! Please inform the church office of all grade school, high school, and college graduates (including their degree) so that we can include their names in the **June Newsletter**. Our congratulations to all of our graduates!



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.



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL 2026

Monday, July 6th through Friday, July 10th,
the program will be on Sunday, July 12th.

It is time to start getting excited about **Vacation Bible School!** This year the theme will be **RAINFORST FALLS**. There will be a meal each night, served before the activities begin. If you have any questions, please, reach out to Sarah Wolken, Jodi Bohlen, or Chelsey Phillips.

FUN FACT COLORING: ANIMALS IN THE AMAZON RAINFOREST!

Our creative God made every animal unique and full of amazing abilities! Whether it's a monkey who can jump 9 feet



to catch the next branch or an anteater with a 2-foot tongue, each creature shows God's creativity and wisdom in a special way. Isn't it exciting to know the same God who made these incredible animals made you too?

WOW, GOD!

"O Lord, what a variety of things you have made! In wisdom you have made them all. The earth is full of your creatures."
(Psalm 104:24 - NLT)