

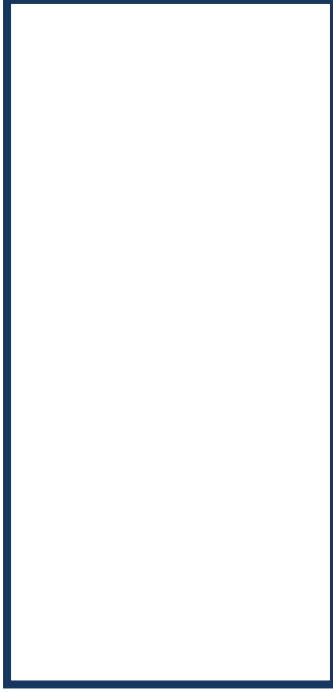
St. John Lutheran Church
203 E. Church Street
P.O. Box 36
Royal, Illinois 61871

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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



ROYAL CHURCH NEWS

St. John's Newsletter

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

JUNE 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
Emil Blobaum, Visitation Pastor

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

A Devotion from Pastor Sage....

In my newsletter articles in the coming months, I would like to share with you some of what has been eye-opening for me during seminary. This month I would like to discuss hymns. As a member in the pews, I grew up with the green Lutheran Book of Worship (the LBW), that most are familiar with. As far as I was concerned, this hymnal was basically a companion book to the Bible, and with these two texts, we had all we needed for a Christian life. Yet in the recent past, at Flatville, two hymnals were added to our pews, a blue one, With One Voice, and a white hymnal, the name of which escapes me. I could not understand why anyone would want or need these. The LBW has 569 hymns to choose from; who needs more? Singing in general, even hymns that are known and loved, always seemed to create a sort of uneasiness in many congregants, and I don't think the issue was a lack of variety. As a matter of fact, singing hymns that are unknown would only further complicate the situation, so I thought.

That was until I entered worship class. In class we were asked what the worship service was in our eyes. I replied that "worship," by Webster's definition, meant "showing profound adoration and honor to a divine being, deity, or sacred object." So, in our "worship" we were giving thanks to God. The seminary professors agreed that my answer was part of the service, but not the main reason we were gathered together. The main reason for gathering together is to hear again and again the promise made by Christ, that in His death and resurrection your sins are forgiven, and you are promised eternal life. Again, the main reason for gathering together is to hear God's proclamation of forgiveness. Giving thanks is wonderful, but God does not need our thanks and praise; we need His forgiveness. So, with that in mind, what function do hymns serve in the worship service? If I am not singing my favorite hymns to glorify God, why am I singing at all? The answer is proclamation. In singing hymns, we are proclaiming God's good news to those around us.

This changes everything! No longer am I singing to give thanks to God; I am singing to proclaim to the family in front of me that their sins are forgiven, to the old woman across from me that Christ is for her, and to the young I



ONGOING PRAYER LIST

Pastor Jay Johnson	Sue Johnson (<i>cousin of Pastor Jay</i>)
Nathan Buhr	Mitch Fruhling (<i>son of Kay Fiscus</i>)
Dave Christians	Chloe Birdsell (<i>friend of Hilary Whitt</i>)
Kay Fiscus	Abby Lundquist (<i>friend of Ray Manselle</i>)
Dan Frerichs	Peyton McDonnaugh (<i>friend of Marsha Osterbur</i>)
Hannah Worley	Hannah Nirider (<i>friend of Parker Poole</i>)
Sandie Osterbur	Amy Dufelmeier (<i>sister of Hilary Whitt</i>)
Bryce Frerichs	Aleyah Carley (<i>daughter of Teresa Thornton Carley</i>)
Kendra Manselle	Darrel Jacobs (<i>friend of Tracy Wahlfeldt</i>)
Belva Osterbur	Samantha Hutchinson (<i>cousin of Hilary Whitt</i>)
Betty Huls	Rhonda Miller (<i>friend of Hilary Whitt</i>)
Chris Huls	Jane Cress (<i>friend of Hilary Whitt</i>)
Anna Wentzloff	Eva Brunken (<i>friend of Anita Leib</i>)
Janey Huls (<i>sister of Susie Schlueter</i>)	
Lois Henderson, Mary Crider, Carol Doman (<i>friends of Ray and Kendra Manselle</i>) Stoney Wireman, Frank and Mary Kay Kimell and Kerry Blankenbegher (<i>friends of Gloria Grant</i>)	

Family of: Dorothy Buhr

Nursing Home, Assisted Living Residents:

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

Homebound: 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.

COUNCIL MEETING NOTES

1. The Council met on Monday, May 18, at 7:00. Pastor Ryan led the council in devotion over. There was a discussion and then Pastor led the council in prayer.
2. Council members present were Josh Frerichs, Debbie Ackerman, Bryce Frerichs, Tracy Britt, Rick Aden, Laura Ketchum, Stacy Smith, Sarah Wolken, Tracey Mathis, and Mike Heidle. Absent were Melinda Huls and Whitney Highfill. Guests were Valerie Birge and Chuck Carl.
3. Council discussed switching the church internet to Starlink.
4. There was discussion about electronic giving.
5. The Sunday School students will no longer be Greeters on Sunday.
6. Sarah Wolken, Melinda Huls, and Debbie Ackerman will be council for the month of June.
7. Next council meeting is Monday, June 15, 2026, at 7:00 p.m.



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



Pastor Sage continued...

them and need for them to hear Christ's word for them. All of a sudden the hymn isn't about me. If it is a more contemporary hymn (still hard for me to love!), I have joy knowing that I am sharing the good news of Christ with those young people or newer members that have ears to hear those types of hymns. And if it is an old favorite, I have joy knowing that those who need to hear the word delivered that way, are hearing it! Whether the hymnal is green, blue, or pink with spots, it has a place if it faithfully proclaims Christ to someone! This also gives the reason to sing in the first place. When you sing, you proclaim Christ, and when pride keeps you from singing, you rob your neighbor of that promise. Now, as always, Christ forgives all our sins, especially a thing so small as not singing, but it is worth noting that simply singing along fulfills the great commission of "Go and make disciples of all nations."

So, to sum up, what are we gathered together for on a Sunday morning, as the people of God, if not to free those bound in sin and to be freed ourselves? So, we come to hear God's word of absolution, we hear God's word in the readings, we hear God's word in the sermon, and we hear God's word in the hymns. All these ways speak God's grace to those who are bound, and in faith are turning to God for salvation. Thank you God for using us in this way! God bless you all, make a joyful noise as the Psalmist says, and keep me in your prayers as I keep you all in mine!

God bless you all,

Pastor Sage

**Pastor Sage can be reached
 by email at rsage217@gmail.com**



Pastor Sage will be out of the office June 6-15.
 Pastor Richard Lewis will be at the pulpit on
 Sunday, June 7th.
 Josh Frerichs will be at the pulpit on
 Sunday, June 14th.
SOME OF "THIS AND THAT"



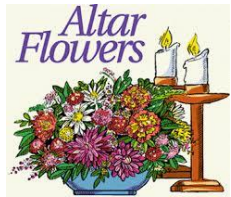
Flock Group Shepherd for July is **Joellyn Pedro**. *Thank you to all that volunteer!*



The Flock Group Shepherd for **August** is **Kathy Alblinger** and **September** is **Loretta Aden**.



Women's Bible Study will meet on **June 11th**, at 1:30 here in the church basement for study and **Debbie Suits** will host.



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.**



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.

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!



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 any information. Our email is: [https://churchoffice@stjohnroyal.org](mailto:churchoffice@stjohnroyal.org)

Newsletter Deadline for **July** is **Friday, June 12th!**



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>



The **Church Office** will be **closed** on **Friday, July 3rd** in observance of July 4th.



CONGRATULATIONS, GRADUATES!



Graduating from eighth grade—
at Prairieview-Ogden:

*Blair Mathis, Blake Lackey, Devin Loschen,
Ben Loschen, Lincoln Meier, and Brady Ramm*

at Armstrong-Ellis Grade School:
Jeremiah Bohlen



Graduating from high school—

at St. Joseph-Ogden:

*Emma Wells, Allison Ochs, Gracyn Sjoken,
Mackenzie Loschen, Jeffery Gossett,
Cade Crozier*

At Mahomet-Seymour:

Caroline Aden



Graduating from college—

Lacey Kaiser is graduating from Elmhurst University with a Master of Occupational Therapy.

Cole Pruitt is graduating from Parkland with an Associates in Ag Business: Precision Technology.

Taylor Wells is graduating from Mount Mercy University with a bachelor's degree in secondary education and English.

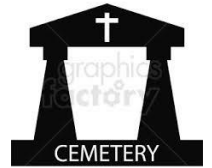
Lili Wentzloff is graduation from Parkland with a degree in Art Education.

Lindsey Aden is graduation from the University of Illinois College of Law.

Elaine Grant is graduating from the University of Illinois Springfield with a degree in Business Administration.

some of "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 John R. Thompsen, Chuck Carl, or Ron Duitsman.



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 will **not** have any dates for the month of **June**. The **next** dates are **July 2nd & 30th**.



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

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**.

DESIGNATED BENEVOLENCE

During the month of **June**, the designated benevolence is for **LWR Projects** 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 FATHER'S DAY!

Father's Day is Sunday, **June 21st**. Special honor and recognition will be given to our fathers. Our thanks and God's blessings to all fathers.

*The righteous man walks in his integrity; His children are blessed after him.
Proverbs 20:7*

PLARN SLEEPING MATS

Is there anyone interested in helping us make Plarn Sleeping Mats? Plarn is plastic yarn made from plastic grocery bags. The Sleeping Mats are sent internationally and locally. They are great for those who need a barrier between them and the hard, wet ground. They have been sent for disaster relief, for the homeless, and for those who need temporary sleeping arrangements. We will have the loom and a finished mat set up in the church on Sunday, June 14th. You can help by donating your plastic grocery bags, cutting the bags, and/or weaving the mats. A marked container for your bags will be placed on the ground floor, next to the elevator. Let us know if you are willing to help! Thank you!

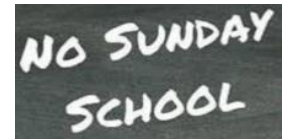
Any questions, please contact Richard and Kathy Lewis.



PARISH ED / YOUTH NEWS



Youth Sunday School will take a break this summer. Classes will resume on Rally Day, **Sunday, September 13th**.



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL 2026
SAVE THE DATE!

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

Vacation Bible School is July 6–10, and we're so excited to explore the nature of God through our *Rainforest Falls* theme! To help make this week a success, we are looking for donations. Any contribution, big or small, is greatly appreciated! Keep an eye out for a list of items needed if you're interested in helping. You can also reach out to Whitney or Jen with any questions or to donate. Thank you for supporting our VBS program and helping make this a fun and meaningful week for the kids!



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.

OFFICIAL ACTS



Seven of our eighth-grade youth:
**Jeremiah Bohlen, Blake Lackey,
Devin Loschen, Ben Loschen, Blair Mathis,
Lincoln Meier, and Brady Ramm**
made public affirmation of their baptismal
covenant in the Rite of Confirmation on
Sunday, May 3rd.

*May God's Word always be their source for direction and comfort
through life's journey.*



Brielle Michael Crozier
was baptized into the family of Christ here at
St. John on, Saturday, April 25, 2026.
She is the daughter of Braydon and Peyton
(Fransico) Crozier.
Her sponsors are Tegen & Parker Poole.

EXPRESSIONS OF THANKS

*Thank you to everyone who called, expressed
concern, sent a card, brought food, and prayed
for me when I had my recent knee replacement.
The members of St. John do live out the command
of Christ that we are to love and care for one
another.*

Deanna Osterbur



*My special 'thank you' to everyone who
remembered me with prayers, visits, food, and
greetings during my medical care in recent
times. I am thankful too, for a speedy and
complete recovery.*

Emil Blobaum



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 75th, 50th, and 25th 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.

CONFIRMATION REUNION CLASSES for 2026 are:



Class of 2001 celebrating 25 years:

*Brett (Clark) Fulks, Kahlee (Clements) Jones,
Kyle Duitsman, Kiel DuVal, Whitney
Hickman, Maranda (Miller) Walker.*

Class of 1976 celebrating 50 years: *Dwight Bohlen, Julie
(Christians) Sibley, Kathy (Franzen) Winters, Rhonda (Frerichs)
Littlefield, Kathleen (Olson) Weckel, Michele (Sieberns) Zino,
Joyce (Wright) Kessler*

Class of 1951 celebrating 75 years: *Carol (Saathoff) Couffer,
Gary Hedge*

Class of 1950 – *Emilie L. (Osterbur) Steffey, Kay M. (Hunter)
Fruhling Fiscus* **Adult Confirmation:** *Billie Joyce (Stalter)
Busboom, Bonnie (Perkins) Frerichs*

Class of 1949 - *Berniece Aden, Marilyn Bluhm, Helen (Osterbur)
Jeffords, Herbert Thompsen.*

Class of 1948 – *Ellen (Hovel) Miller* Class of 1947 – *Darlene
(Albers) Hovel, Ann (Benting) Freeman, Lois (Hunter) Frerichs,
Adult Confirmation - Evelyn June (Bradley) Osterbur, Bernice
(Putnam) Poyner.*

Class of 1946 – *Lorraine (Meier) Chambliss.*

Class of 1945 – *Helen (Bluhm) Connick, Mary Lou (Habben)
Ackerman.*

Class of 1943 – *Ernest Benting.*

Class of 1941 – *Grace Helen (Sieberns)Hovel.*

From Council Member Stacy Smith

“Be still and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations. I will be exalted in the earth.” Psalm 46:10

Several years ago, while shopping in a Christian bookstore, I noticed a piece of art from across the room. It immediately caught my attention because of the peace it seemed to convey. The image was simple: a single tree standing in a snowy pasture, outlined by a black fence. As I walked closer, I noticed the verse written in the corner: Psalm 46:10 — *“Be still and know that I am God.”* Not long afterward, I received the piece as a birthday gift, and it has hung on my wall ever since.

Over time, this verse has become one of my favorites. Although it is widely known and often seen on coffee mugs or T-shirts, its meaning has become deeply personal to me. During difficult seasons, it has served as an anchor, reminding me to trust God and His plan. In stressful or chaotic moments, when I find myself caught up in the worries and distractions of this world, it gently redirects my focus to what truly matters and reminds me not to sweat the “small” stuff.

God’s command to “Be still” can be understood as a call to quietness and reflection—to pause, listen, and focus on what God may be saying. However, some translations phrase it as “Stop fighting,” which adds another interesting dimension. On a personal level, this can reflect the internal struggle of resisting God’s direction or trying to maintain control ourselves. Stop trying to control everything. Stop worrying. It doesn’t have to be perfect. Give it to God.

At the same time, the message of this verse extends far beyond personal encouragement, especially when read within the context of the psalm as a whole. It speaks to the turmoil facing our nation, the struggles within God’s kingdom, and the chaos throughout the world.

Martin Luther often relied on Psalm 46 as a source of strength and peace. Inspired by its message, he wrote the hymn *A Mighty Fortress Is Our God*. Both the psalm and the hymn remind us that God is our refuge and strength—an ever-present help in times of trouble. And for those reasons, we can be still.

Blessings,
Stacy

