

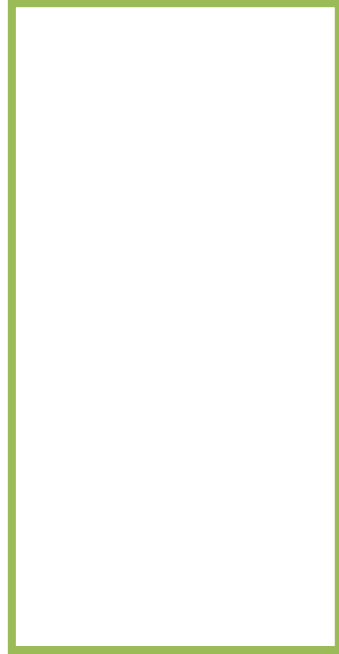
St. John Lutheran Church
203 E. Church Street
P.O. Box 36
Royal, Illinois 61871

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*

SEPTEMBER 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>

Devotion from Pastor Ryan ...

This month's newsletter is a little more interactive. I am asking for your input on a very central piece of our worship service. The Lord's Supper. The Lord's Supper is at the heart of Christian worship because it is at the heart of the Gospel: **Jesus Christ gives Himself to sinners.**

As Lutherans, we confess that the Lord's Supper is more than a symbol or a memorial. In this Sacrament, Christ truly gives us His body and blood, together with His promise: **"Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins."**

We come to the Table not because we have earned God's favor, but because we need Christ. We bring our sins, failures, doubts, and burdens, and Christ meets us with a gift: Himself, for the forgiveness of sins.

As I continue my formation as a pastor, I have found myself thinking carefully about the traditions surrounding our worship. This is not because I believe our traditions are unimportant. Quite the opposite! Many of our practices are so very special to us because they carry memories of parents and grandparents, connect us with generations of faithful Christians in years gone by, and remind us that we have received a faith that we did not create.

Those things are worth cherishing.

At the same time, part of my responsibility as a pastor-in-training is learning to distinguish between **what we have received as tradition and what Christ has given as promise.**

That distinction can sometimes lead to uncomfortable conversations.

A particular hymn, order of service, or detail of worship may be deeply meaningful to us. We may have practiced it for decades. We may even believe that changing it would diminish something important. And those concerns deserve to be heard and respected.

That said, it is important to remember our traditions are not what make Holy Communion a Sacrament.

Christ's promise does.

This gives us both a reason to treasure our traditions and the freedom to examine them. We can ask whether a particular practice continues to serve the Gospel, helps people receive Christ's promise, and strengthens the congregation in faith.

ONGOING PRAYER LIST

Jill Henderson	Mitch Fruhling (<i>son of Kay Fiscus</i>)
Lois Frerichs	Janey Huls (<i>sister of Susie Schlueter</i>)
Kay Fiscus	Stoney Wireman (<i>friends of Gloria Grant</i>)
Kendra Manselle	Frank & Mary Kay Kimell (<i>friends of Gloria Grant</i>)
Hannah Worley	Kerry Blankenbegher (<i>friends of Gloria Grant</i>)
Bryce Frerichs	Peyton McDonough (<i>friend of Marsha Osterbur</i>)
Sandie Osterbur	Amy Dufelmeier (<i>sister of Hilary Whitt</i>)
Dan Frerichs	Chloe Birdsell (<i>friend of Hilary Whitt</i>)
Chris Huls	

Family of: Helen (Bluhm) Comnick

Nursing Home, Assisted Living Residents:

Mary Lou Ackerman, Berniece Aden, Sharon Ault, Eldred Cornelius, Florence Frerichs, Lois Frerichs, Regina Gronewald, Betty Huls, Harold and Darlene Hovel, 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.



EXPRESSIONS OF THANKS



Dear St. John's Lutheran Church,

Thank you so for the generous support you've provided the North American Lutheran Church! Your donation expands the witness of our church body. As you know, our vision is to be a disciple-making church body committed to renewing congregation, equipping people, and transforming communities, as we respond and live to our calling and commission in Christ Jesus. Thank you for helping make this a reality. We are grateful for your partnership in the Gospel.

In Christ,

Madeline C. Benson

Director of Development

Dear Pastor Lewis and St. John Lutheran Church of Royal,

The Dwelling Place sends our deepest appreciation for the two mats you made and donated to The Dwelling Place Day Center. We will make sure these mats are given to two neighbors in need.

Our day center sees 75-105 homeless or near homeless individuals each Monday and Friday. Thank you for helping us share the love of God to those in need.

Gracious appreciation,

The Dwelling Place Board of Directors



DESIGNATED BENEVOLENCE

During the month of September, the designated benevolence is for the Global Missionaries through World Mission Prayer League, Lutheran World Relief for St. John Women project supplies. Please use the center portion of the offering envelopes for your special contributions.

(Pastor Ryan's Devotion continued)

Sometimes the answer will be yes, and we should preserve it with gratitude. Sometimes the answer may be that a change could also serve the congregation well.

That discernment should never be driven by novelty or a desire to change things simply for the sake of change. Neither should it be driven by fear that change somehow threatens our faith.

The question is always: **Does this help us hear and receive Christ's promise?**

With that in mind, I am proposing a discussion on how we use bread in Holy Communion. This is not a suggestion I make lightly, nor is it a rejection of the tradition we have received.

What I am asking is whether communion wafers might better serve our congregation in several practical and pastoral ways.

First, consider our ministry to those who are unable to worship with us in person. When we visit shut-ins, part of the liturgy we use says that we have gathered together as a congregation for Holy Communion and now bring them "the same bread of life and cup of blessing." When we use loaves of bread in worship but wafers when visiting shut-ins, I wonder whether something of that connection is lost. Using the same bread for both could better express our congregational unity around Christ's Table.

Second, loaves of bread are more difficult to handle without dropping or crumbing. Of course, God's grace is not undone by an accident. Still, because we believe Christ is truly present in the Sacrament, I would feel better knowing that we had done what we reasonably could to avoid accidentally dropping Christ's precious body.

Related to this issue is the matter of leftover bread. When pieces of a loaf remain after Communion, it is my understanding that we are rightly careful to treat them with reverence.

But wafers, by design, largely avoid these concerns. They do not crumb or break apart in the same way, and there are no leftover crusts or portions of a loaf leftover. Any blessed Sacrament that remains is stored respectfully in the altar guild room and used again.

(Pastor Ryan's Devotion continued)

There are also some smaller, practical considerations. Wafers are easier to portion, reducing the anxiety I have occasionally about running out when attendance is up. They have a longer shelf life, are easier to store and transport, and are consistently available. From time to time, we have had difficulty finding suitable loaves and have received rolls instead. We also already use wafers for shut-in Communion and gluten-free wafers for those who need them.

None of these practical matters is the Gospel itself. But they are part of the responsibility of caring for the Sacrament and serving the congregation well.

Most importantly, I would never want to make a change that would prevent someone from hearing and receiving the promise of Christ's forgiveness. **If you believe this change would do that for you, please reach out to the Mutual Ministry Internship Committee and let them know.** On the other hand, if a change such as this is easily acceptable, please let them know. Your perspective is genuinely valued by me and by this congregation.

Our traditions can point us toward Christ. They teach us, shape us, and connect us with those who came before us. We should be grateful for them. But they remain traditions. The Gospel is something greater.

Whether everything at the Lord's Table looks exactly as it has for generations or whether some things change, the promise remains the same:

Christ is here. Christ is for you. Christ gives Himself for the forgiveness of your sins.

That is what I am learning to guard most carefully—not every tradition, but the Gospel to which our traditions are meant to point. And wherever our traditions faithfully serve that Gospel, I hope we will treasure them deeply.



Pastor Ryan

Pastor Ryan can be reached
by email at

rsage217@gmail.com

MUSIC REHEARSALS RESUME



Adult Choir will resume rehearsals on Wednesday, September 23rd, at 7:00. **Bells** will only practice on the Wednesday before they play during a worship service. There is a need of more choir members, bell ringers and an accompanist. Contact Tonya Ayers with any questions, at (217) 202-7730 or email her at tayers152@yahoo.com.



Come and join in!



WAYS TO SERVE IN THE CHURCH

It's Nominating Season Again!



The Nominating Committee will be calling members of the congregation in this coming month to fill positions on the church council and certain committees for Council and Committees for 2027. 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.



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) 2643331.

(parish ed/youth news continued)



2026-2027 CONFIRMATION CLASS

Pastor Sage will be leading Confirmation classes this year. Confirmation classes will be held on Sunday mornings during Sunday school and Sunday evening at 6:30, here at St. John. A survey will be conducted to determine which day of the week will work the best for the students. The first class begins the morning of Sunday, September 13th (Rally Day) with a parent and student orientation and meets most weeks through late April.

MARK YOUR CALANDERS



Mission Festival is set for Sunday, September 27th, at our 9:45 a.m. worship. Celebrating Mission Festival a fellowship potluck meal will be provided and served by the Parish Life—Evangelism Committee, Property Committee, Worship Committee, Hunger-Stewardship, and Parish Ed.

BLANKET DAY

We only have a couple of workdays before Mission Festival which is held on Sunday, September 27. We plan to meet on Friday, September 25, at 9am to display the blankets in the sanctuary. We will meet on Tuesday, September 29, at 9am to take down blankets, fold, and pack them for Lutheran World Relief. If you'd like to join us, we'd love to have the support.



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

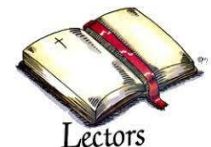
Have you ever had a chance to visit our church website? If not, you should! It has some useful information! On the website you will find the monthly newsletter and calendar, ways to contact the church, pictures, and a cool video of our church and the village of Royal! Check it out at: <https://stjohnroyal.org>



DEADLINE: Newsletter Articles

Newsletter Deadline for October is Friday, September 18th! Please, have any information in by that date that you want in the October newsletter. Council member Melinda Huls will share a devotion.

LECTORS: For those who volunteer to lector, the office will email you the scriptures **no later than Friday afternoon**. A copy will also be left for you on the desk in the north office. If you do not have an email, a copy may be printed for you to pick up in the church office on Friday. The office will email and print the scriptures once the bulletins are approved by the pastor for that Sunday.



SOME OF "THIS AND THAT"

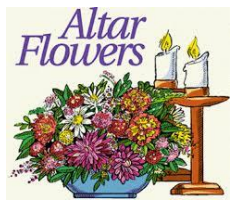


Flock Group Shepherd for October is Deanna Loschen.
Thank you to all that volunteer!



The Flock Group Shepherd for **November is Gloria Schmidt** and **December is Teresa Aden.**

St. John's Women's Bible Study will meet **September 10th** with Carolyn Blobaum hosting. Debbie Frerichs will host the October 8th meeting.



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.**

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!



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.

PARISH ED / YOUTH NEWS



Sarah Wolken, Sunday School Superintendent (217) 304-0231
Tracey Mathis, Assistant Sunday School Superintendent (217) 519-8447

RALLY DAY

On Sunday, September 13th, our new Sunday School Year will kick off with Rally Day! Sunday school begins at 8:30 a.m. Our new nursery class students will be welcomed, and current students will move to their new classes. During worship, Bibles will be given to the nursery class.



Worship will be held outside that day at 9:45 a.m., so please bring your lawn chairs! Marvin Lee will lead us in music.



A congregational picnic will follow the service. So, plan now to come for this special day to worship our Lord and Savior, share in good fellowship, food and fun!

WORSHIP SERVICES

Sunday School will be held at **8:30 a.m.** Worship is at **9:45 a.m.** Holy Communion is celebrated on the first and third Sundays of the month.



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 16th**. These are needed to complete the Annual Report that is presented at the Annual Meeting to be held in November. 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!



COUNCIL MEMBERS with PHONE NUMBERS:

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

COUNCIL NOTES



1. The Council met on Monday, August 17th, at 7:00. Laura Ketchum led the devotion and opened with prayer.
2. Council members present were Josh Frerichs, Bryce Frerichs, Melinda Huls, Stacy Smith, Rick Aden, Sarah Wolken, Laura Ketchum, and Mike Heidle. Absent were Debbie Ackerman, Whitney Highfill, and Tracy Britt. Guest were Pastor Ryan, Chuck Carl, Tammy Olson, Tracey Mathis, and Keith Cunningham.
3. Committees are busy preparing for Rally Day and Mission Festival.
4. Next council meeting is September 21st, at 7:00 pm.

(“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.



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 [**StJohnRoval61871@gmail.com**](mailto:StJohnRoval61871@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!

ST. JOSEPH METHODIST CHURCH Food Pantry date for September is **Thursday, September 3rd**. The dates in October will be October 1st and 29th.



this and that continued...



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!



THE MUTUAL/MENTOR COMMITTEE

has been formed to support, encourage 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

Stacy Smith

Devotion from Council Member – Rick Aden

What are your gifts? How do you use them? Are you willing to share?

Luke 12:48 tells us, “. . . From everyone who has been given much; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.”

This verse comes after Jesus had just told a parable about being ready for His return. His disciple Peter asked if the parable was for just them or for everyone. Jesus replied with another parable in which He defines the “faithful and wise manager” as one who gives out food and other allowances “at the proper time.” When the master returns and finds the faithful servant managing his resources well, he “put him in charge of all his possessions” We have been entrusted with certain things, and faithfulness requires that we manage those things wisely and unselfishly.

We are held responsible for the talents God has blessed us with. God gives us resources such as finances, time, talents such as

devotion from council member – Rick Aden continued...

culinary skills or musical ability and spiritual gifts such as encouragement or teaching. The more resources, talents, and understanding we have, the more we are required to use these things effectively. We should ask God for wisdom on how to use those resources and commit ourselves to expending them according to His will so that He may be glorified.

1 Peter 4:10 tells us, “Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.” God gives us unique abilities, talents or spiritual gifts to every person. These gifts are meant for service. We should use our abilities to help and lift up other people, not for selfish pride. We are stewards of these talents – our talents belong to God. We are entrusted to manage and share His grace with the world. Find out what you are good at or what you love doing to help others.

In Romans 12:6-8, Paul tells us, “We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, and give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully”

It does not matter how much or how little you have, as long as you use what God has given you to help those around you. Even if all you have is a smile to give someone that is sad, or a welcoming embrace to show them they are loved, God has given us all things to use to help others.

Our responsibility matches our privilege. Today this principle applies to personal wealth, education, influence and spiritual access, holding us accountable to use our advantages to help others rather than just ourselves. God desires us to use what He has given to further his Kingdom and proclaim His glory. We need to be willing to share our talents and invest our blessings back into our family, church and community.