ROYAL CHURCH NEWS

St. John's Newsletter

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

FEBRUARY 2026

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

(217) 583-3295 or 583-3805

Emil Blobaum, Visitation Pastor

email: churchoffice@stjohnroyal.org
church website: stjohnroyal.org

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

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

FROM JOSH –

"Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth." - 1 John 3:18

We've all heard the saying, "talk is cheap." It reminds us how easy it is to speak good intentions and how difficult it can be to live them out. This is true in our faith as well. We promise faithfulness, forgiveness, and care for others, yet often fall short when love requires sacrifice or inconvenience.

In the last half of 1 John chapter 3, we see the difference between love and hate. John urges believers to recall the message we have heard from the beginning of time, ***"to love one another"*** (1 John: 3:11). He then points us to the true measure of love, not our effort, but Christ's. ***"By this we know love, that He laid down His life for us"*** (1 John 3:16). Before John ever calls us to action, he directs our eyes to the cross.

Numerous times Scripture shares that a mark of a true believer is the spiritual fruit that is produced in their lives. John is calling attention to the fact that as Christ's followers, we cannot simply say we love people; how we live our lives will be a walking testimony of God's love. Those who are born again don't live by the "do as I say, not as I do" mantra; instead, they invite others to ***"imitate me as I imitate Christ***" (1 Corinthians 11:1).

There are moments when words alone are appropriate. When prayer, encouragement, or presence is enough. But often, love calls for more. A meal prepared, a gift given, time sacrificed, or simply sitting quietly with someone who is hurting. In a world that glorifies busyness, choosing to be present can itself be an act of profound love.

God did not merely declare His love for the world; He gave His only Son (John 3:16). That gift stands at the center of our faith. As we receive again Christ's mercy and forgiveness, we are freed, not burdened, to love our neighbor in tangible ways.

ONGOING PRAYER LIST

Tammy Olson
Mike Heidle
Bryce Frerichs
Kendra Manselle
Belva Osterbur

Betty Huls
Ella Frerichs
Chris Huls
Anna Wentzloff

Michelle Sjuts *(daughter in law of Jan Sjuts)*
Camille Wissmann
Jennie Uken
Chloe Birdsell *(friend of Hilary Whitt)*
Ryan Gernentz *(son of Jim Gernentz brother to Casey Ganentz)*
Hannah Worley *(daughter of Doug & Miki Wesley)*
Abby Lundquist *(friend of Ray Manselle)*
Peyton McDonnaugh *(friend of Marsha Osterbur)*
Hannah Nirider *(friend of Parker Poole)*
Amy Dufelmeier *(sister of Hilary Whitt)*
Aleyah Carley *(daughter of Teresa Thornton Carley)*
Darrel Jacobs *(friend of Tracy Wahlfeldt)*
Samantha Hutchinson *(cousin of Hilary Whitt)*
Rhonda Miller, Jane Cress *(friend of Hilary Whitt)*
Janey Huls *(sister of Susie Schlueter)*

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: Elizabeth Hafermann
Nursing Home, Assisted Living Residents:
Mary Lou Ackerman, Berniece Aden, Sharon Ault, Regina Gronewald, Betty Huls, Elizabeth Hafermann, Harold and Darlene Hoveln, Janis Loschen, Dorene Pflugmacher, Myron Sage, Norma Sherfey
Homebound: Dorothy Buhr, Eldred Cornelius, Marvin and 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, 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, Sandie Osterbur, Denver Phelps, Linda Post, JoAnn Rademaker, Roxie Sage, Aleta Schlueter, John and Donna Thompsen, Judy White

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 any information to the office. The email address is: **churchoffice@stjohnroyal.org**

…The deadline for the March Newsletter is **Friday, February 13th.** Information needs to be in the office by the deadline to be printed in the newsletter.

…The office has been working on the church directory for **2026,** and it is printed. You can pick up your copy in the **Map Room,** at the church.

The pulpit has been filled for the February services.

February 1 – Pastor Emil Blobaum
February 8 – Pastor Greg Smith
February 15 – Pastor Vic Baderschneider
February 18 – ASH WEDNESDAY – Pastor Emil Blobaum
February 22 – Pastor Richard Lewis
February 25 – Lenten Service -

from Josh *(continued)*

What **W**ould **J**esus **D**o? (W.W.J.D.)
He **W**ould **L**ove **F**irst! (H.W.L.F.)

So, reflect on your life. Where has love remained only in words? Where might God be calling you to act? When the opportunity arises to help someone in need, trust that Christ is already at work in you.

Blessing,

Josh

Council members for 2026

Josh Frerichs, Council President
Bryce Frerichs, Council Vice-President
Debbie Ackerman, Council Secretary
Tract 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 Superintendent

Next council meeting is Monday, February 23, 2026, at 7:00 p.m., in the church basement.
*Note this is not the normal 3rd Monday due to Presidents' Day.

PARISH ED / YOUTH NEWS

Sunday School Kids will be singing during worship on Sunday, February 8th.

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.

The Confirmation Class is planning a Souper Bowl Fundraiser on February 8th, Super Bowl Sunday, following worship. Come join them for soup, salad, and breadsticks! This is a fundraising event to benefit the youth summer mission trip and confirmation activities. Contact Laura Ketchum with any questions.

Confirmation Scripture Discussions – Beginning February 25, the 8th grade confirmation students invite the congregation to join them on Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. in the church library for a brief, 20-minute discussion of their individual scripture verses. These discussions will help students deepen their understanding of their verses and their personal journey of faith.

DESIGNATED BENEVOLENCE

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

2026 LENTEN SEASON

Our Midweek Lenten services will be held **each Wednesday** evening at **7:00** with supper served, in the church basement, at **6:00** by our committees and council.

ASH WEDNESDAY

February 18th – Ash Wednesday Worship *with Imposition of Ashes and Holy Communion*
Parish Life/Evangelism will serve the lent meal on Ash Wednesday. The menu is lasagna, salad, breadsticks, and cookies.
Hungary/Stewardship will be serving the meal on February 25th.
Watch the Sunday bulletins for the menu.
*The March Lent Supper Menus will be available in the March Newsletter.

Gene Osterbur will celebrate his 81st birthday on the 2nd.

"this and that" (*continued)*

…**St. Joseph Methodist Church** Food Pantry date for this month, is **Thursday, February 26th**. The line starts at 4:30 on the west side of the church. There **will not** be a date in **March**. The **next date** will be **April 2nd & 30th.**

…Kogudus Men's Retreat – February 27th – March 1st, at Camp Griesheim (rural Atlanta, IL). Contact Josh Frerichs for more information at 217-722-3538.

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

… 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!

OFFICIAL ACTS

Sympathy is extended to the family of
Elizabeth Haferman.
Elizabeth passed to her eternal home on
Wednesday, December 24, 2025.
Funeral worship was held here at St. John
on Tuesday, December 30, 2025.

EXPRESSIONS OF THANKS

The family of Beverley Thompsen would like to extend our gratitude for the outpouring of love and support. A special thank you to Pastor Lewis for the heartfelt sermon and guidance; to church staff who prepared to receive our family; to the organist for the beautiful hymns; and to all the ladies that prepared the wonderful lunch. Thank you for prayers, sympathy, food, flowers, and attendance. Your faith-filled support meant so much to us in our time of loss.

Sincerely,
The family of Beverley Thompsen

The St. John Lutheran Choir would like to thank council for the use of memorial funds to purchase new robes in Royal blue with silver stoles. We received much positive feedback after the Christmas Eve service. Since they are lighter weight than the old robes, the choir plans to wear them a little more often. Thanks again for your support!

Tonya Ayers
Music Director

Thank you for the thoughts of kindness and financial gifts throughout the past year and especially during the recent holidays. We are truly blessed with your friendships and generosity.

Emil and Carolyn Blobaum

A big thank you to all who helped decorate the church for Christmas.
It is greatly appreciated!

SOME OF "THIS AND THAT"

…Flock Group Shepherd for March is **Myrna Craig**. She will be contacting her flock group for volunteers. *Thank you to all that volunteer!*

…The Flock Group Shepherd for **April** is **Susie Schlueter.** The month of **May** is **Shelley Breymeyer.**

…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 **February 12th**. **Joellyn Pedro** will host.

…Altar Flowers are provided each weekend by donations from members of the congregation. House of Flowers in Rantoul provides and delivers them. You can sign up on the chart posted on the north office door for one or both vases and indicate whether it's for a special occasion. **The cost per vase is $20.00.**
Payment is to be made to the church and earmarked for flowers.

…Offering envelopes for **2026** are available. **PLEASE**, pick them up from the **MAP ROOM**. If you cannot find your boxed set and would like to use the envelopes, please contact the church office. If your boxed set is there but you **do not use the envelopes**, also **contact the church office**, or leave your boxed set in the office with a note, "do not use". **PLEASE throw away old envelopes!**

"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.

…The Fair-Trade cabinet is stocked with coffee, English Breakfast tea, and milk chocolate bars! The price is as marked. All proceeds will go to Pay It Forward.

…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.

…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 Ron Duitsman, John R. Thompsen, or Chuck Carl**.

…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**