

NEWS FROM ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN

FEBRUARY 2026

FROM THE PASTOR

"You Should Come With Us This Sunday"

On Word-of-Mouth Evangelism and the Power of Invitation

Whenever I discover a restaurant I enjoy I am usually keen on sharing my discovery. "Have you been to Olde Madrid? I really like the Marias Beef Stew, it doesn't sound exciting but it's great! You should come with us next time!"

In this example, which is true by the way, Olde Madrid paid nothing to gain my recommendation except provide quality food and a quaint ambiance. And if the hypothetical person I talked to actually went and became a loyal customer themselves, you can see how this place would likely grow organically. No need for billboards, mailers, or coupon gimmicks. No need for coercion, just an enthusiastic customer base who are keen to recommend their new favorite restaurant.

As another example, I remember years ago when I was a teenager enthusiastically convincing my family and friends to buy Apple products. I would answer their questions, and even guide them based on their use-case as to which products they should purchase. I even joked that Apple should pay me a commission for how many customers I brought their way. At the time, I was enthralled by how intuitive their products were and how beautiful they were designed. I even applied to work there, but competing with people in their twenties when I was seventeen meant I never made it to a second interview.

In both examples you can see how word-of-mouth growth works. And I'm sure you can come up with many more examples from your own life. The reality is that it is not only restaurants and trendy tech companies that grow by word-of-mouth. It is true also and perhaps more dramatically so for the church. We do not have billboards or fancy ad campaigns. We do not provide gimmicks to get people to come in, and we never will. We are not providing a product that people can buy and the service we provide is not for sale. We are the church. Which means we exist to heed the call of our Lord Jesus Christ — to preach and teach the faithful and to reach those in our

community who, whether they know it or not, are in desperate need of knowing their savior Jesus. We provide the healing balm of forgiveness wrought from the veins of our Lord Jesus Christ to all those who trust his name and desire his love and forgiveness. This is not something that can be bought or sold, nor is faith in Jesus something we can create. Remember what Martin Luther teaches us in his "Explanation to the Third Article of the Creed": "*I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him. But the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel...*"

What this means is that we cannot create or sustain faith in ourselves or in anyone else. We cannot convince someone to come to faith in Jesus. The Holy Spirit alone, as He is breathed out through the Word of God, can give and sustain faith. You cannot coerce someone to faith, nor will even the most powerful testimony cause them to believe. But you can gently invite a friend or loved one to church. You can bear witness to the things you love about your church with them. You can offer to sit in the pew with them, guide them through the service, and invite them to lunch afterwards. In so doing you can bring them to the one place that God promises to dwell every week, where the Holy Spirit speaks, and where faith is enlivened. This is not always an easy thing to do, and you may not always be successful. We Lutherans tend to be shy about these things and religion can be a touchy topic. But I feel confident that if everyone reading this makes a conscious effort to invite someone to church, we may very well see a few new faces, a few souls who by word-of-mouth evangelism are now hearing the consolation of the Gospel and the peace which surpasses all understanding. And perhaps all it took was a recommendation and a gentle invitation.

- Pastor Joshua DeYoung

OFFICIAL ACTS

Funerals:

Ron Enstrom
Kaleb Day

1-6-2026
1-22-2026

ABOUT THE “GESIMAS”

On February 1, we enter into a season of the church year before Lent called the season of Septuagesima or “Pre-Lent.” This is made up of the three Sundays (*Septuagesima*, *Sexagesima*, *Quinquagesima*) which come between the feast of Transfiguration and Ash Wednesday. The names are Latin for the number of days before Easter. Quinquagesima is exactly 50 days before Easter, Sexagesima 57 days, and Septuagesima is 64 days before Easter. This season serves as a transition between the celebratory season of Epiphany and the penitential season of Lent. During this time, we omit the *Gloria in Excelsis* and the *Alleluia* as we prepare ourselves for the penitential season of Lent.

LENTEN DINNERS

We are looking forward to our traditional Lenten dinners again this year. The Board of Elders has offered to hold the first dinner on Ash Wednesday, February 18. We are looking for groups or groups of individuals that would be interested in hosting a dinner on the open dates. The Wednesday dates that are currently open are March 11 and March 25. If you have a group that is interested in hosting a Lenten dinner, or you have any questions in regards to hosting a Lenten dinner, please contact the church office as soon as possible at (262) 637-7011 or chapman@stjohnsracine.org. Thank you for your prayerful consideration in hosting a dinner.

LENTEN DINNERS 2026

Date	Group Serving	Menu	Group Singing
2/18/2026	Board of Elders	Sloppy Joe's	Senior/Handbell Choir
2/25/2026	None	Soup Supper	Handbell Choir
3/4/2026	Senior/Handbell Choir	Sloppy Joe's	Cherub Choir
3/11/2026			Children's Choir
3/18/2026	Board of Trustees	Pulled Pork Sandwiches	Vocal Solo
3/25/2026			Piano Solo

SOUP SUPPERS

Again this year on the weeks where no group is hosting a Lenten meal, we will be having “Soup Suppers.” *This Lenten tradition is common in many Lutheran parishes and is a simple meal of soup and crackers/bread.* Kimberly will have a sign-up online to bring a soup (you may also call the church office). *This meal will be self-serve; disposable bowls, plates, cups, utensils, and decaf coffee will be provided. There is no group assigned to clean up anything that isn't disposable. We ask that you take the vessel in which you brought your soup when you leave, along with whatever contents remain.* Feel free to bring your own beverages if you want to drink something other than water or coffee. If you have any questions, please contact Kimberly Chapman in the church office.

The link for the February 25 soup supper is listed here:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/9040B4AACA62EA3FB6-61543425-copy#/>

FELLOWSHIP FRIDAY

Just a note that we will not have a Fellowship Friday get together in February, March, and April due to Lent and Easter! Please join us at one of the Lenten dinners or soup suppers on Wednesdays during Lent instead.

VOTERS' MEETING

The next quarterly voters' meeting is scheduled for Sunday, February 1 at 9am in the sanctuary.

“BIBLE AND BREW” MEN'S STUDY

Our February Bible and Brew Men's Study will take place on Wednesday, February 25 at 8:30pm. This month's study will be held at Pastor Gilbert's house, 501 Augusta.

BLOOD DRIVE

St. John's Lutheran will be hosting an American Red Cross blood drive on Thursday, February 26 from 10-3 in the school's gymnasium. We are looking to fill up all of our available donation spots. There is also a flyer attached to the email version of this newsletter with more details.

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY RETREAT

MARCH 6 & 7, 2026

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Pleasant Prairie (4311 104th St.) is pleased to host the annual Marriage & Family Retreat! This retreat is for everyone: couples, families, and singles! Our keynote speaker is Rev. Dr. Brian German (professor at CUW) who will give multiple presentations on "Marriage & the Matriarchs." There are also multiple breakout sessions led by local pastors and professionals. The \$25 registration fee covers Friday dinner and Saturday breakfast and lunch. Childcare costs \$25/family, which includes meals. Presentations, discussions, fellowship, worship/preaching - all meant to strengthen Christian marriage and family. Visit goodshepherdluth.org for registration and details.

FEED MY STARVING CHILDREN TRIP

Please join the Stewardship Board on Saturday, April 25 for a spring service field trip to Feed My Starving Children, a Christian organization in Libertyville, Illinois that partners with volunteers to pack life-saving meals for children in need around the world.

Last September, our group packed 80 boxes of food, providing enough meals to feed 127 children for an entire year—that's 46,080 meals! This spring, we're hoping to build on that incredible impact and pack even more.

Our packing session will take place from 2:00–3:45pm. We will meet at the Highway 20 Park and Ride at 12:45pm and caravan together to Libertyville.

This is a meaningful and hands-on opportunity to give back, and we hope you and your family will consider joining us. *Please note: for safety reasons, Feed My Starving Children requires all participants to be at least 5 years old.*

Please sign up at <http://www.fmsc.org/join-group?joincode=8762ZB>

CRADLE ROLL PLAYDATE

Stay tuned for upcoming Cradle Roll playdates this month!

2026 FLOWER CALENDAR

The flower calendar for 2026 has been posted in the church narthex. To sign up to provide altar flowers, simply write your name and contact information next to any available Sunday.

CALLING ALL MEN OF ST. JOHN'S

Join Pastor DeYoung and hundreds of men across our Synod in the Memento 70 challenge. This is a call to bodily and spiritual discipline, devotion in the Word of God, and brotherly encouragement. You can find out more about Memento by visiting their website [memento70.com]. You can also scan the QR code attached to the church emails, and on flyers posted in the narthex.

SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER NEEDED

We are still looking for someone willing to teach our 6-8th grade Sunday School or someone who would be willing to trade off teaching every other week. The material used for the class can be provided by St. John's through Concordia Publishing House. If you'd like to learn more about it, please contact the church office or one of the pastors.

USHERS NEEDED

The Board of Elders is in need of individuals interested in ushering during worship services. Thank you for your prayerful consideration in helping out as an usher. If you would be interested in ushering, please contact an elder or Kimberly in the church office at chapman@stjohnsracine.org; (262) 637-7011.

SERMONS ON YOUTUBE

We are now streaming live content through YouTube. The easiest way to watch the sermons live is to subscribe to the channel and turn the notifications on. Our channel can be found by searching "St. John's Lutheran Church and School Racine, WI." Every time a live video is being broadcast, you will get an update and will be able to watch it. The sermons are also archived on the channel, but are now accessible through the tab that says "Live" rather than the "Videos" tab.

TACKLING TOUGH TOPICS

We have an online educational opportunity for you! It is called "Tackling Tough Topics" and will be focused primarily on addressing issues related to the Christian morality, parenting, and marriage from a scriptural perspective. You can find my new page on Substack and on YouTube by searching "Tackling Tough Topics" and following the link or scanning the QR code found on the attached flyer. (A flyer can also be picked up at the back of the sanctuary.) I encourage anyone who is interested to subscribe. If you have any suggestions on topics that you would like to be tackled, please reach out to Pastor DeYoung. This is a different way to address relevant topics that I pray will be a blessing to St. John's and the wider church.

FROM YOUR DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

The season of Lent is upon us and seems so quickly! Lent is a season in the church year that is focused on solemn reflection, [repentance](#), and [preparation](#) for Christ's resurrection. Emphasizing His suffering, death, and victory over sin and death. It's a penitential period to meditate on God's sacrificial love through Jesus. And true repentance begins and ends with the work of God's Word on our hearts.

A beautiful hymn that we will sing during the Lenten Season is LSB 418 O Lord, throughout these Forty Days. The hymn tells the story of when Jesus was tempted in the wilderness, connecting His 40 days of fasting and prayer to our observance of Lent. We are encouraged to 'parallel' what Jesus experienced those 40 days in the wilderness by denying ourselves and focusing on God's love for us leading us to Easter Praise.

Our Choirs are also preparing for this season ahead focusing their hearts and attention to the love Jesus has shown to us when he suffered and died on the cross for our sins.

Repent therefore, and 'turn back' that your sins may be blotted out Acts 3:19

NEWS FROM OUR SEMINARIAN

Dear St. John's,

I trust you all have had a blessed Christmas and Epiphany. All is well here in Fort Wayne! Over Christmas break, we were able to visit Abby's family in Florida for a few days, which was a nice escape from the colder weather. I am pleased to say that I passed my theological interview in December, which is essentially an oral exam each seminary student needs to pass before becoming a pastor. It is hard to believe that we will know where I will be called to serve as a pastor in three months' time. This quarter, I am taking the following classes: Psalms, Pastoral Theology II, Theological Ethics, and Lutheran Confessions III.

Our daughter, Eden, will be a year old on February 1st! We will give her some strawberry cake for the first time on her birthday. She is always trying to say new words, and she should be walking soon. This first year with her has gone too quickly. Oliver has been enjoying learning to build with his magnetic tiles he received on Christmas.

As always, thank you for your continued prayers and support.

In Christ,

Seminarian Jacob Stefanec



SCHOOL NEWS CORNER

FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Every January, we celebrate National Lutheran Schools Week, along with over 2,500 LCMS early childhood centers, grade schools, and high schools around the country. It is a week to embrace what makes our Lutheran schools special- the faith in Christ that is taught and lived in our classrooms and community. This year our theme is "Make a Joyful Noise"- as you can imagine, we are never short on 'noise' in our school hallways, but this week is full of special activities, dress-up days, a PTL-sponsored field trip, assemblies- even theme music in the morning to kick off each day! We look forward to spreading the "joyful noise" of the Gospel message in our school and church community. Our connection to our congregation is an especially unique and important part of who we are- it is through the love, support, and prayers of our members that St. John's continues to thrive. Thank you for all you do for our school!

DINING OUT NIGHT

Join us for our next Dining Out Night at Texas Roadhouse, 6228 Durand Avenue, on Tuesday, February 10 from 4-9pm. Please see the flyer attached to this emailed newsletter or pick up a copy in the back of the sanctuary for all the details.

BOX TOPS FOR EDUCATION

We have an account with Box Tops for Education. If you would like to help raise funds for our school, please follow the steps below.

- Download the Box Tops for Education app on your phone and create an account.
- You scan your store receipt from the app and submit it. You can also upload a digital receipt. The program will automatically find products that are Box Top eligible.
- You can also link your Walmart account to the Box Tops for Education app, and it will automatically redeem Box Tops points when you shop at Walmart.
- There is a list of eligible products on the app.

Miss Pesch has put an envelope/box by her classroom for store receipts if you are unable to scan your receipts. She'd be happy to scan them for you. If you have any other questions, please let Miss Pesch know.

VANCO MOBILE AND ONLINE GIVING

Giving is easier than ever through St. John's Vanco online or the Vanco Faith mobile app. You can access **Vanco online giving** by going to the St. John's Church and School website; stjohnsracine.org.

Under the church heading, click online giving. This page allows you to give to different church funds. You can choose a one-time contribution or set up recurring contributions through this site. Giving is also available through the **Vanco mobile app**. Vanco, our eGiving provider, has launched an updated mobile app called Vanco Mobile Faith. Downloading the new Vanco Mobile is easy! Head over to the App Store or Google Play to download Vanco Mobile for free.

To use Vanco Mobile, follow these easy steps:

1. Search for our church by entering St Johns Lutheran. Do not use any punctuation, and it is case sensitive
2. Create a new account or login
3. Select your gift amount, fund, and frequency
4. Enter your payment method and click submit to complete your donation.

Please contact Kimberly in the church office if you have any questions about or need assistance with the Vanco online or mobile app giving. chapman@stjohnsracine.org or (262) 637-7011

You can also scan the QR code below to set up electronic giving or make a one-time gift through our church/school website giving page.



FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

1-Feb	Steven Matter	15-Feb	Cheryl Holewinski
2-Feb	Johanna Pringle	17-Feb	Arlene Hugdahl
3-Feb	Jordan Nolte	18-Feb	Julie Hagen
4-Feb	Joani Miller	18-Feb	Jordyn Radtke
5-Feb	Stephen Bernhardt	19-Feb	Ann Rosenquist
5-Feb	Mary Parrish	19-Feb	Andrew Schaefer
5-Feb	Kristine Reisdorf	19-Feb	Cynthia Seils
6-Feb	Joshua Radtke	20-Feb	Loralyn Schalinske
7-Feb	Mary Preuss	21-Feb	Dale Ruth Raboldt
7-Feb	Laura Van Schyndel	21-Feb	Tyler Yohn
8-Feb	Shannon Liebenow	22-Feb	Gail Gotch
8-Feb	Al Smith	22-Feb	Tamara Marini
9-Feb	Sharon Bartel	22-Feb	Fred Rose
9-Feb	Taylor Blaesing	23-Feb	Frank Allesxandro
9-Feb	Kelly Glassen	23-Feb	Oscar Garcia
9-Feb	Kara Kading	23-Feb	Aimee Marweg
10-Feb	David Jaeck	24-Feb	Tucker Krewal
11-Feb	Jennifer Jozwiak	24-Feb	Mary Luepkes
12-Feb	David Gall	24-Feb	Kathleen Patzman
13-Feb	Samuel Duchac	26-Feb	Jill Harings
13-Feb	Charlotte Fernandez	26-Feb	Richard Witek
13-Feb	Roy Hagen	28-Feb	Carrie Messersmith
14-Feb	Edward Maresh	28-Feb	Yvonne Raetzke
14-Feb	Sebastian Miller	29-Feb	Lilian Grant



We apologize if we have forgotten anyone.
Please contact the church office at 637-7011 to correct.
Thank You!

STEWARSHIP CORNER – FEBRUARY

February 1 – (Septuagesima)

Matthew 20:9 – “And when those hired about the eleventh hour came, each of them received a denarius.” Behold the generosity of God! He gives out of His grace, not what we deserve to receive. Living a godly life means living in imitation of God — and surely one of the foundations of God’s being is His generosity.

February 8 – (Sexagesima)

Luke 8:11 – “The seed is the word of God.” It all starts with the Word. “In the beginning...the Word was with God” (John 1:1). “He saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit” (Titus 3:5). “The word of our God will stand forever” (Isaiah 40:8). We never outgrow our need to hear the Word of God. We never achieve such greatness that we don’t need the blessings of God’s Word. Rather, the Christian life is one of always striving to conform our lives to God’s Word by living out the truth of our Baptism: that we are God’s children by the power of His Word.

February 15 – (Quinquagesima)

Luke 18:35 – “As he drew near to Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging.” The last known words of Martin Luther were found scratched on a slip of paper next to his death bed: “We are all beggars; this is true.” All that we have is a gift of God. We are all beggars before Him. Knowing this leaves us with nothing but thankfulness in our hearts.

February 22 – First Sunday in Lent (Invocabit)

Matthew 4:7 – “Jesus said to him, ‘Again it is written.’” Jesus defeats Satan in our place, not by using His power as God, but by His perfect obedience in His perfect humanity. Jesus defeats Satan not by miracles, but by quoting the Scriptures and living according to them. This should cause us great joy for two reasons. First, we see Jesus win the victory for us. Second, here Jesus shows us how to stand in that victory:

“SHUT-IN’S” NOT “SHUT-OUT’S”

I want to thank everyone who has reached out to our St. John’s shut-ins. Your efforts make them feel “not shut-out”.

Now, I appeal to everyone, please consider making a New Year’s resolution to reach out to one or more of our shut-ins each month. A cute card with a winter greeting would brighten their day. A phone call to say “hello” would warm their heart. A visit, even for 10 minutes, can carry them through a whole week in happiness. I encourage you to pray for all on the “Shut-In list”.

Never lose sight of the fact that old age needs so little, but that little means so much. I assure you, you will feel uplifted through your efforts.

Christmas Blessings to all and Happy New Year as we start 2026.

Julie Hagen 262-331-0052
Julie_hagen @hotmail.com

SHUT INS

Name	Address	Phone Number
Carol Busarow	5225 Douglas Avenue #104, Racine, WI 53402	
Pat Cole	6551 Mariner Drive, Unit 6, Racine, WI 53406	
Sue Erickson	2262 Loni Lane, Racine, WI 53406	
Gary & Shirley Filicetti	4710 N Main St, Racine, WI 53402	
Janet Fisa	Marion House 4105 Spring Street, #212, Mt. Pleasant, WI 53405	
Marcella Geyer	3139 Conrad Drive, Racine, WI 53404	
Gail Gotch	1916 Wisconsin Avenue, Apt. 359, Racine, WI 53403	
Susan Monson	418 Shoreland Drive, Racine, WI 53402	
Kathy Patzman	5404 Idlewood Drive, Racine, WI 53402	
Joanne Ruble	1108 N. Sunnyslope #104, Racine, WI 53406	
John Smith	1636 Raintree Lane, Racine, WI 53406	