



St. John's Journal

Volume 52, Issue 11

THANKSGIVING AS A WAY OF LIFE

The national holiday of Thanksgiving Day is November 26. This year we have planned a **joint Thanksgiving Eve service with Trinity Lutheran Church, Pekin** to be held at Trinity on Wednesday, November 25, **6:00 p.m.** We will join together in church that evening to receive the blessings of God's word, and to thank and praise Him for all His benefits. A Thanksgiving service, coupled with the rich bounty of harvest time, makes it easy for us to remember that God is the One who provides us with every good gift.

It is God who supplies the needs of His whole creation. "O Lord, You preserve both man and beast." *Psalm 35:6* The Bible also says, "O Lord, how manifold are Your works! In wisdom You have made them all. ...These all wait for You, that You may give them their food in due season. What You give them they gather in; You open Your hand, and they are filled with good." *Psalm 104:24,27-28*

This is why we confess in the Small Catechism that God "richly and daily provides me with all that I need to support this body and life. He defends me against all danger and guards and protects me from all evil. ...For all this it is my duty to thank and praise, serve and obey Him."

Since God freely and generously provides everything we need for our life, and grants us His protection, and especially because He graciously gives His gifts of forgiveness and salvation in Jesus Christ, it is entirely right and proper, indeed, it is our duty to respond with genuine thanksgiving. And a national Thanksgiving Day is a fine time to do so.

But what about every other day in the year? Is God good to us only on the fourth Thursday of each November? Obviously, we ought to be full of gratitude to the Lord every day, our whole lives. Simply put, **thanksgiving to God should be a way of life for us Christians!** God Himself guides us in the "lifestyle" of thanksgiving. Here are a few ways He teaches us in the Scriptures to make thanksgiving a way of life:

Humbly acknowledge God as the Giver in your daily prayers and praises. "I will extol You, my God, O King; and I will bless Your name forever and ever. ...The eyes of all look expectantly to You, and You give them their food in due season. You open Your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing." *Psalm 145:1,15-16* When thanksgiving is a way of life, we regularly give credit for every good thing where it is due: to God!

Pray for the Lord's blessing and with thanksgiving at every meal. God teaches us about His gift of food: "Everything God created is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving, for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer." *1 Timothy 4:4-5* And we all know this passage: "Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, and His mercy endures forever." *Psalm 118:1* Thanksgiving is a way of life when we ask the Lord's blessing on our food, and return thanks for it as a matter of regular godly practice.

Share the gifts God has given you with others who have need. God says, "Let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." *Hebrews 13:15-16* When we see our neighbor in need, and we share something from God's abundant provision as a matter of course, we are living with thanksgiving as our normal way.

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November Birthdays

Nov 01

Sheri McCann
Gabriel Page



Nov 02

Austin Lonergan

Nov 05

Sandy Ferguson
Zander Hopping
Nathaniel Thomas

Nov 07

Ethan Kesselmayr
Ethan Szadkowski

Nov 8

Daniel Leach

Nov 09

Lisa Pool
Trina Szadkowski

Nov 10

John Adkins II
Annette Ford
Timothy Gay
Lori Maass

Nov 11

John Wooden

Nov 12

Carter Britton
Kayla Walsh

Nov 13

Robert Williamson III

Nov 14

Allison Morris
Madison Morris

Nov 15

Hank Nance

Nov 17

Bayley Driskell
Ross Gould
Trent Hoover
Mae Houge

Nov 18

Amanda Ferguson

Nov 19

Shaun Ivey
Trey Ivey
Reva Oliverius

Nov 20

Zane Dobbelaire
Christian Tiona

Nov 21

Stefanie Wilson

Nov 22

Cheryl Ivey

Nov 23

Joyce Lonergan
Stephanie Morrison
Roran Snoble

Nov 24

Isabelle Terrell

Nov 25

Marcus Frankel

Nov 26

George Andrae
Ryan Rusk

Nov 27

Doris Smith

Nov 28

Jack Ferguson
Joseph Lappie

Nov 29

Megan Etter
Carol Goodin

Nov 30

Gavin Glass
Leah Sipka

TRUSTEES will be decorating the outside of the church on Saturday, Nov. 28 starting at 8:00 a.m. Volunteers are more than welcome to come and help decorate.

Oct 30

Olivia Driskell

Oct 31

Bonnie Guengerich
Robert Whitlatch

November Anniversaries



Nov 04

Jeffrey & Victoria Plack

Nov 11

Lyle & Doris Smith

Nov 12

Gregory & Susan Swibold

Nov 20

John & Beverly Wieland

Nov 21

Ron & Sue Reising

Nov 23

Delmar & Katheen Deiss
John & Ann Wilson

IN NEED OF USHERS

We are in need of ushers, especially at the 10:30 service.

Ushers hand out bulletins, greet members and visitors, answer questions, collect offerings, direct communicants during communion and give directions to facilities as necessary.

If you are interested please let Jim Lonergan (309-202-7183) know.

Thank you.

WORSHIP COMMITTEE will be decorating the inside of the church on Saturday, Nov. 28 at 8:00 p.m. Volunteers are more than welcome to come and help decorate.

If it is in the bible, it is SO!



Church Attendance

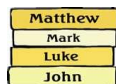
September 2026 **442** 12 services
 September 2025 **445** 12 services
 September 2024 **538** 15 services

Y-T-D Sunday School Attendance

September 2026 **1174**
 September 2025 **1117**
 September 2024 **1164**

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION **SUNDAY SCHOOL** **PERFECT ATTENDANCE**

September 2026
 Collette Hill





HOLY BAPTISM was administered to Kase Kesselmayer, son of Noah and Cloe on September 26. We thank God for the washing of water and Spirit, and pray His richest blessing for this family.

SHUT-INS of the MONTH: Even though some of our members cannot attend church, we want to keep them in our thoughts and prayers and let them know they are not forgotten. Please send a card or pay a visit to these shut-ins this month.

Shut ins for November are: Sharon Parry, 1721 Valle Vista, Pekin; Janine Persefeld, Gateway at River City, 518 W. Romeo B. Garret Ave. #302, Peoria, 61605; Sheryl Riley, UAW Apartments #1212, Pekin

Thank you from your St. John's Ladies Guild.

ST. JOHN'S SERVICE VOLUNTEERS

November Elders Communion Assistance

11/1 8:00 Vince Tennell
 10:30 Brian Ford

11/15 8:00 Dan Dobbelaire
 10:30 Jon Bolt

11/29 8:00 Vince Tennell
 10:30 Jon Bolt

November Videographer

Jim Lonergan

November Worship Chairman

Diane Gould

November Ushers

8:00
 Jerry Bohannan
 Randy Couch
 Zane Dobbelaire
 Steve Kesselmayer

10:30
 Ross Gould
 Jacob Gould

November Acolytes

11/1 10:30 Larkin Hinkley

11/8 10:30 Makenzie Abatie

11/15 10:30 Aiden Harms

11/22 10:30 Larkin Hinkley

11/26 7:00 Makenzie Abatie
 (Thanksgiving Eve)

11/29 10:30 Aiden Harms

LIBRARY CORNER

By Eileen Tiona



"The gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come."

Matthew 24:14

I haven't any new books to report on this month, but you are welcome to come into the library and check out all the other wonderful books that are available for your enjoyment.

IN OUR PRAYERS

If you know of anyone who needs to be added, please let the church office know.

All our shut-ins	
Pastor Niemann	Sandy Morgan
Robert Rilea	Bob Hurst
Peggy Farlin	Debbie Miller
Addie Burling	Julie Rilea
Keith Gleason	Gabriella Kesselmayer
Kellen Norman	Joyce Barnes
Lee Morgan	Roy Dagit
John Durdle	Bobby Gregory
Megan Gould	Marlana Montgomery
Rosetta Turner	Pam Woolsey
Don Dobbelaire	Bryan McGrath
Jeff Sayles	Melvyn Gentry
Tom Lappie	Donna Hansen
Cameron Conway	Marcille Frevert
Tina Williams	Sandy Tennell
Bob Watson	Melody Aristy
Julia Taylor	Janet Lawson
Melanie Tiona	Linda Smith



**ST. JOHN'S
VOTERS ASSEMBLY MINUTES
October 12, 2026**

Ross Gould called the meeting to order. A quorum was present. Pastor Bishop opened with devotions.

The September Parish Report was reviewed. A motion was made by Julie Wagner, seconded by Jennifer Kesselmayer, to approve the report. Motion carried.

The September meeting minutes were reviewed. A motion was made by Dodie Sheckler, seconded by Dave Kesselmayer, to approve the minutes. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report – Rod Bollinger reviewed the September Treasurer's Report. For the month of September, the report shows a net gain of \$15,152.54 but several expenses, including the monthly payment to Good Shepherd, were not included. Once those expenses are considered, there would be a loss for the month. Overall, so far this year, we are sitting at a deficit of almost \$73,000.00. A motion was made by Nancy Drockelman, seconded by John Neumann, to approve the September Treasurer's Report. Motion carried.

Board of Trustees – Dave Kesselmayer reported that the Trustees renewed the lawn care agreement with Spring Green lawn care. The Trustees will also have a workday later this month to clean out the window wells. Dave thanked Dan and Dane Watson, along with Brock Benson, for the extra work they have done at the cemetery property. A question was asked as to the status of the sewer project and Dave reported that it is still pending.

Board of Elders – Dave Drockelman reported that the Elders are still working on contacting members who have not been to church for a while. Also, the Elders helped someone with paying their water bill.

Board of Finance – Rod Bollinger reported that the budget worksheets have been given to the committee heads to fill out for next year. Rod would like the worksheets back prior to next month's meeting so he can go over them.

Board of Christian Education – Laura Dobbelaire reported that there is another game night this coming Friday, October 16th. Dane Watson will join the rotation of Sunday School teachers starting in November. Last month there were 11 people that attended the youth group's volleyball activity. Next month the youth activity will be helping senior members of the congregation with yard work on November 22nd.

No report was given this month for Good Shepherd School.

Board of Worship – Diane Gould reported that the committee met last Thursday but had no updates to report.

Board of Evangelism – Tracy Glass reported that the direct mail project is underway. The first of 4 postcards will be mailed soon. Friendship Sunday is in a couple of weeks. A potluck will take place on the same day. The next board meeting will take place tomorrow.

Board of Stewardship – No report was given for this month, but it was noted that last month discussion took place about sending a letter regarding the funds shortfall we are experiencing. The committee had to reschedule this month's meeting.

Long Range Planning Committee – No report.

Educational Grant Fund Committee – No report.

East Bluff Property Committee – No report.

Constitution By-laws Committee – No report.

Unfinished business – Ross Gould started the discussion on finding Pastor Bishop's replacement. The normal process can take an average of 2 years to get a new pastor. Several options are available: we can try to bring on a new pastor who would then become the sole pastor once Pastor Bishop retires, or we can try to get a student from the seminary. It was noted that the chances of getting a seminary student are only around 50% due to the number of students versus the number of positions that need to be filled. A 3rd option would be to put a call out for a pastor in addition to having our church added to the list to get a student from the seminary, hopefully increasing the likelihood of getting a new pastor. Pastor Bishop weighed in with some thoughts and some information on how the process would work. Discussion took place and Pastor clarified that there are ministers that could come in and handle the weekly services and other duties like weddings and funerals if a replacement is not found before he retires. The Elders need guidance before we can contact the district to get the process started. Bob Oliverius motioned, seconded by Joe Szadkowski, to put a call out for a pastor as well as seek out a seminary student so we can have Pastor Eddy attend a Voters Meeting to get the process started. Motion carried.

It was noted that the workshops for strategic planning have started. If you missed the first workshop, you can still participate in future workshops. Val Ferguson will put a summary in the bulletin.

A list of ideas on how the church can celebrate the 100th anniversary of the dedication of our church building was distributed. Feel free to check off, highlight or circle your favorites ideas as well as add others. Please return the sheet to Tracy Glass or drop it off at the church office. If we want to do something next February, we will probably need to vote on it during the November meeting.

Voters Meeting Notes continued:

New business – Bob Oliverius asked about an update on the school. The new principal has indicated a willingness to come talk to the Voters Assembly. Ross Gould will pursue this. Pastor Bishop noted that he and Pastor Drews from Trinity have discussed possibly having combined services for both churches for services like Thanksgiving Eve and Ascension Day since they fall on non-Sundays. Services could alternate between the churches with both pastors taking part. Hopefully this will increase the number of people participating in these services. The Voters Assembly was agreeable to this plan. A reminder was given that the Music for Missions will take place in November. Our choir and handbells will be joining together with the choir and handbells from Trinity Lutheran. Once again, hopefully this will help to increase the number of people attending this event. Ross also reminded the committee heads that they will need to have their candidates for the committees for next year by the next meeting.

A motion was made by Bob Oliverius, seconded by Diane Gould to close the meeting. Motion carried.

The meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Wagner

Pastor's Message continued from page 1...

Bring generous and sacrificial offerings to the Lord. The Bible says, "Let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency for all things, have an abundance for every good work." *2 Corinthians 9:7-8* Thanksgiving is a way of life when we know God gives us an abundance, and therefore give offerings cheerfully and in proportion to the way He has blessed us as our ordinary way of doing things.

Live in godliness to the glory of God. We learn from the Scriptures: "Whatever you do in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him." *Colossians 3:17* It is a life of thanksgiving when we strive to glorify God in all we do, living the good and holy way He teaches us, out of gratitude for all His gifts.

May God work in us so that thanksgiving is not an empty, once-a-year holiday, but a sincere way of life every day, because His mercy truly does endure forever!

- Pastor Bishop



TREASURER'S REPORT

September 2026



	September	Y-T-D
<u>INCOME</u>	37,597.06	261,868.93
<u>EXPENSES</u>	22,444.52	334,498.59
<u>INCOME—</u>	15,152.54	(72,629.66)
<u>EXPENSE</u>		

General Fund Accounts

General Fund	12,263.35
General Fund Schwab	202,866.47
General Fund Total	215,129.82

Educational Fund Accounts

Educ. Grant Fund Checking	784.49
Ed Grant CD LCMS 02/27	51,863.96
Ed Grant CD Busey	40,000.00
Ed Grant Fund #2 Vanguard	75,725.11
Educational Fund Total	168,373.56

East Bluff Property

East Bluff Property – Checking	671.75
East Bluff Property - Vanguard	113,454.26
Cat Stock at FMV	299,181.51
East Bluff Property Fund	413,307.52

Memorial

Memorial Fund Checking	26,363.49
Memorial Vanguard	118,874.26
Memorial Busey CD	20,000.00
Memorial Fund Total	165,237.75

Building Fund Checking	37,423.33
Sunday School Fund Checking	9,719.62

TOTAL ASSETS **\$1,009,191.60**

Checking Acct Balance	87,226.03
TOTAL	<u>186,270.84</u>

LIABILITIES

Payroll Liabilities	3,128.86
Misc. LCMS Orgs Fund	484.50
Total Liabilities	3,912.49

Fund Balance

Net Income (Loss)	33,912.12
Capital Accounts	971,666.12
Total Fund Balance	1,005,578.24

TOTAL LIABILITIES & FUND BALANCE **\$1,009,191.60**

WOMEN IN FAITH – LWML will meet Saturday, November 7 at 9:00 am in the church basement. With the holidays approaching, they are collecting items for St. John's Share Program. Items needed:

Tomato Soup	Wheat Chex	Dish Detergent
Canned Pasta	Cereal	32 oz. Laundry Detergent
Mac & Cheese	Apple Sauce	Toilet Paper
Canned Tuna	Pudding Cups	Paper Towels
Canned Chicken	Jello Cups	
Hamburger Helper	Spaghetti Sauce	
Canned Vegetables		

\$25 Aldi Gift Cards
\$25 Kroger Gift Cards

There will be boxes on the bench inside the new addition as well as on the stage.

We appreciate the congregation's support.

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FRIENDSHIP SUNDAY - We have another Friendship Sunday scheduled for Nov. 8. On this day St. John's members are encouraged to bring (or bring back) a friend to church. Pastor will have a sermon well suited for guests, and we will have coffee and donuts in the gym between services, with Christian literature available for adults and children. So please think of friends to invite and make arrangements to bring them with you.

BRATWURST DINNER - In connection with our Friendship Sunday, Nov. 8, we will have a homemade (all pork) Bratwurst dinner following the 10:30 service. This will be a potluck, with brats and buns, condiments, drinks, and table service provided. Please bring a side dish or dessert to share.

MUSIC FOR MISSIONS– St. John's Lutheran Church in Pekin is once again hosting a Sacred Music Concert and Hymn Sing, this year in support of University Lutheran Church, our LC-MS Central Illinois District Campus Ministry at the University of Illinois in Champaign, on Sunday, November 15, 2026 at 2:00 p.m.

We will join together in singing some hymns, and in listening to sacred organ, choir, vocal solo, and hand bell music, all under the theme, "Oh, Give Thanks to the Lord." Featured musicians will include guest organist Samuel Bishop, vocalist Allison Harley and the combined choirs and hand bell ensembles of St. John's and Trinity, Pekin.

A free will offering will be gathered to help support our University Lutheran Church in Champaign, which is served by Pastor Michael Schuermann. Refreshments will be served following the program.

NEED HELP WITH YARDWORK? – The youth group activity for November is to help church members with yard work on Sunday, November 22. If you are in need of assistance, please contact Pastor Bishop by November 11.

GRANT AWARD ANNOUNCED: St. John's has been awarded a Church Extension Fund grant from the Central Illinois District–LCMS. The grant is being used to fund a Fall 2026 Community Outreach Direct Mail Program. The program will focus on connecting and evangelizing to our local community, and uplifting individuals by encouraging them to receive the spiritual benefits of church-service attendance.



Received thank you letter from Lutherans For Life for being a priceless member of the Lutherans For Life Community and for our generosity.

Did You Know?

Recently, a dear friend from my church said she would like to know more about Lutherans For Life. In the busyness of that Sunday morning we didn't have much time to talk, but I'd like to at least begin to answer her questions this month. Hopefully, others of you reading this might also find it informative.

Lutherans For Life is one of the many RSO's (recognized service organizations) that help our Synod extend its mission outreach, education and social ministry. Other RSO's you might be familiar with are Lutheran Heritage Society, Lutheran Braille Workers, Lutheran Bible Translators, Ministry to the Armed Forces, and many, many others. Each RSO is an independent 501(c)(3) not-for-profit with its own focus, but whose programs are in harmony with the doctrine and practice of the LCMS. You can visit LCMS.org and search RSO's to see a directory. Next month I'll give you some information about Lutherans for Life in general and about our local Peoria Area Lutherans for Life Chapter #268, specifically. Until then, may God bless and keep you all.

Bob Wegner
Peoria Area Lutherans for Life

St. John's Lutheran Church
711 Court St.
Pekin, IL 61554

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Bible Wordsearch

Wordsearch 258

Matt. 12:13-28

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Kingdom of God

BRUISED	AWARE
CHOSEN	DAVID
DELIGHT	DRIVE
FELLOW	FULFILL
JUSTICE	HEALED
KINGDOM	JUDGES
NATIONS	HOPE
PLOTTED	ISAIAH
PROCLAIM	ITSELF
PROPHET	JESUS
QUARREL	LEADS
RESTORED	PEOPLE
SERVANT	PRINCE
STRETCH	RUINED
THOUGHTS	SOUND
WARNING	SPIRIT
VICTORY	VOICE

After you find all the hidden words the left over letters spell out a
Bible verse reading from the top left to the bottom right

MORE PUZZLES AT:
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