


THE PULSE BEAT



Volume 51, Number 1

January 2026

A Word from the Pastor

New Year, New Beginnings

A new year brings thoughts of living in a new way. We make resolutions: to eat better, to exercise more, to have better financial habits, to be a better friend, neighbor, mother, grandfather, daughter, son.

What all of this has in common is becoming new. Putting the old in the past with the year gone by and becoming a new person. To become a completely new person, is, of course, impossible.

Here is an amazing thing about our life in Christ. Jesus makes us new in baptism. Our Christian faith promises us that we are always being made new through Christ.

In Martin Luther's Small Catechism, he asks and answers the question: "What does baptism mean for daily life?"

It means that the old person within us, with all her or his sins and evil desires, is drowned through daily sorrow for sin, and through repentance daily a new person will arise to live with God in righteousness and purity forever."

The water of baptism washes the old away, and brings in the new. A new beginning for our lives with each other and our life with God. God gives us the sacrament of Baptism so that we may always be reminded that a new start is always possible, and that in Christ, we become new people.

Our identity is not our habits, faults or foibles—or even our virtues; but our identity is in Christ, as children of God. We are given this gift through baptism and I encourage you to hold onto these promises every day.

Hopes for a happy, healthy and faith-filled 2026!

Pastor Sara Gillespie

THOUGHTS FROM THE PRESIDENT

Welcome 2026! I cannot believe that another year has gone by so fast!

In one of her recent sermons, Pastor Sara had included some thoughts about “What would Jesus do?” As we leap into the new year, I thought there could be some interesting thoughts on that for 2026 (thanks, Pastor Sara!), and started doing a little bit of research. Even though Jesus lived over 2,000 years ago, asking “What would Jesus do?” helps us figure out how to live like Him in 2026 – with technology, social media, stress and big world problems.

Jesus cared about truth and kindness. He teaches that *“the truth will set you free”* in John 8:32, which suggests that he would encourage responsible and truthful online communication. His warning that *“everyone will have to give account on the day of judgment for every empty word they have spoken”* (Matthew 12:36) certainly applies to interactions on social media and elsewhere. Jesus used the tools of His time, stories, conversation and public teaching, to reach people. His mission was to bring good news, healing and hope.

Jesus’ ministry was one of reconciliation and peacemaking, and he consistently brought people together who normally avoided each other. He welcomed everyone – even people that society rejected. In Matthew 5:9, He calls peacemakers *“children of God”* and He taught about loving your neighbor, even enemies. In today’s divided world, Jesus would push for understanding, forgiveness and unity instead of anger and hate. He didn’t stay silent when He saw injustice, but confronted unfair leaders and systems. I’m sure that in 2026 He would still speak up for people being treated unfairly and challenge systems that harm others.

When Jesus saw people hurting, He responded with compassion. He healed the sick and comforted the grieving (Matthew 14:14; John 11:35). He fed the hungry (Mark 6:34-44). In today’s world, His example could lead us to care for the sick and struggling, support humanitarian relief efforts and offer emotional and spiritual comfort.

Jesus summed up His teaching with love – *“Love one another as I have loved you.”* (John 13:34). In 2026, He would call for love in families, workplaces, communities and encourage us to apply this to how we treat friends, family, strangers and even people we disagree with. He called for His followers to live differently, and taught humility, forgiveness and self-control. That means trying to do the right thing even when it’s hard – both offline and online.

We can’t know exactly what Jesus would do in 2026, but the Bible clearly shows the principles He lived by. He would act with love, truth, compassion, justice, and humility. His teachings offer timeless guidance for us to navigate the complexities of contemporary life, and how to go forward as He would teach us to. Following Him means choosing kindness, standing up for others, and living in a way that reflects His love every day.

Ultimately, the question “What would Jesus do?” isn’t just about imagining His actions, but it’s about choosing to live like Him every day.

Blessings and wishes to all of you for a happy and healthy Christmas season and Happy New Year!

Hugs and prayers to you all!

Sandy

CHURCH LEADERSHIP

Interim Pastor - Sara Gillespie

Office hours: Wednesday 10:30am – noon;
2:00 – 5:00pm
Call any time Wed. through Sun.
920 214-3132

Office Manager: Robin Fatla

Church office hours: Monday – Friday,
9:00 am – Noon
262-377-0410

E-mail: stjohnsecretary@hotmail.com

Website: stjohngraffton.org

FaceBook: St. John Lutheran Church-
Grafton,WI

Congregation President – Sandy Allen

Vice President – Dale Allen

Secretary – Judy McMullin

Treasurer – Peter Viesselmann

Church Council:

Sharlene Sandquist – Worship

Sue Dowe – Education/ Youth

Sharlene Sandquist – Stewardship

Robin Fatla - Outreach

Roger Wendorf - Finance

Dale Allen – Property & Grounds

Bob Butt - Public Relations

Jane Turowski - Financial Secretary

Organist

Paula Juedes

St. John Choir Director

Sharlene Sandquist

Glory Ringers Director

Dale Allen

Flutist

Sandy Allen

Call Committee - Dale Alen, Jean Verber,

Judy McMullin, Fritz Dowe, Bob Butt, Jim

Litvinoff, Roger Wendorf

Newsletter staff:

Robin Fatla & Borgne McClelland

Newspaper Deadline:

Articles due by the 3rd Sunday of each
month.

Church Phone Numbers:

Office: 262-377-0410

E-Mail: (office) stjohnsecretary@hotmail.com

GENERAL INTEREST NEWS

We keep in our prayers: Christy Abt,

Ignacia Arriago, Anna Bullio , Baldwin Clasen,
Amanda Combs, Audrey Fischer, Henry Frier, Rick
Gonzalez, Pat & Sandy Granrath, Merry Lou Green,
Oswald Hegenbarth , Dennis Jaeger, Sharon Kaddatz,
Krista Krueger, Anita Lucht, Scott Maronde, Ken
Matthews, Borgne McClelland, Chuck & Cary Mueller,
Alice Murphy, Erin & Thomas Peterson, Kevin Petersen,
Sugeily Pineiro-Garcia, Joe Porth, Patricia Rand, Karen
Rautenberg , Becka Rogahn, Tim Rogahn, Tom & Jackie
Rogahn, Bill Sackett, Sharlene Sandquist, Glenn Sievers,
Melanie Smith, Pat Stifter, Doris Tetzlaff, Jeff Watter

Military personnel: Kyle Christenson **“Home away from
home” members:** Jeanine Burhop– Lasata (Rm. 136), Tim
McClosky – Mequon group home



“...I am the resurrection and
the life.
He who believes in Me,
though he may die,
he shall live.”
John 11:25

Richard William Viesselmann
August 21, 1941 - December 16, 2025

Annual Congregational Meeting

Sunday, January 25th

10:45 am

Annual reports will be available on January 11th.
There will be anniversary cake and coffee to help
get you through!

There is one council position to fill. Please
prayerfully consider filling this role.



STEWARDSHIP CORNER

As we begin this new year, I would like to share an article I recently read. With the uncertainties and struggles that we, personally and our country, are facing, I thought it might be helpful to you, as it is to me.

Two men moved down the main boulevard of a town. Both men were blind.

One of the men groped along, his face twisted in dread, hand outstretched in wild motions of search, his feet shuffling, and his white cane tapping in wild motions of exploration. The other blind man strode along, his white cane tapped lightly before him as he went. His head was high.

One walker and one groper.

It is true, the walker may stumble and may get bruised. He may carry a scar from having bumped into a table a day or so ago. He may do so again-but he will stand up and keep on going. If he trips on a broken sidewalk, he will stand up and go on. The groper, afraid of the unknown, with so many questions and reservations, will not move far. He sees only disaster and can at best shuffle along. For both of them, the darkness is alike. Neither can see what lies ahead. But the difference is in the lives they lead - oh, what a difference.

All of us in this world, believers and unbelievers alike, are blind. None of us knows what is in front of us and what tomorrow will bring.

But some of us, with Jesus as our Savior, are able to live life rather than just endure it. Christians don't know what the future holds, but we do know our Lord holds the future. We know a God who loves us so much, a God who was willing to sacrifice God's only Son for our salvation, is not going to walk away from us.

God is not going to desert us. God is not going to play cruel and nasty jokes on us. God is not going to change God's mind and one morning decide to hate us and make our existence as miserable as possible.

No, Christians know we are in the hands of a loving God. We may not always understand why God allows things to happen to us. We may not always be able to figure out where God is leading us. But we know God's hand is a loving hand. When we are afraid, God's arms are the place to which we run. When things seem dark, God's presence is what we seek. When we are sad, God may not take away our cause for sadness, but God will comfort us by sharing our pain.

The knowledge that "God is love" makes all the difference in how Christians approach our unknown tomorrows.

My prayer for us, as a congregation, and as individuals, is that we may be able to step out boldly and in faith, into the future that God has in store for us.

Sharlene Sandquist
Stewardship Chairperson

"An Unknown Future" is adapted from Lutheran Hour Ministries' Daily Devotions for August 29, 2015.

COMMUNITY NEWS



Immanuel Church
Saturday
January 10th
Doors open at noon and play
begins at 1:00

Holden Evening Prayer Service
Saturday, January 10th
5:00 pm
Trinity Lutheran
Cedarburg

**St John Evangelical Lutheran Church
Financial Summary For November 2025**

	November 2025			Year To Date 2025		
	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual Over (under) Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual Over (under) Budget</u>
Unified Income	\$ 13,850	\$ 11,000	\$ 2,850	\$ 104,800	\$ 104,000	\$ 800
Expense Summary:						
Education	\$ -	\$ 25	\$ (25)	\$ 11	\$ 200	\$ (189)
Outreach	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 71	\$ 300	\$ (229)
Worship	\$ 663	\$ 756	\$ (93)	\$ 9,786	\$ 9,225	\$ 561
Youth	\$ -	\$ 125	\$ (125)	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,375	\$ 125
Stewardship	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 191	\$ 230	\$ (39)
Public Relations	\$ 16	\$ 83	\$ (67)	\$ 245	\$ 913	\$ (668)
Property	\$ 1,468	\$ 2,207	\$ (739)	\$ 22,120	\$ 24,063	\$ (1,943)
Finance (incl.Mission Support)	\$ 6,546	\$ 5,389	\$ 1,157	\$ 80,512	\$ 80,713	\$ (201)
Total Expenses	\$ 8,693	\$ 8,585	\$ 108	\$ 114,435	\$ 117,019	\$ (2,584)
Net Income (Deficit)	\$ 5,157	\$ 2,415	\$ 2,742	\$ (9,636)	\$ (13,019)	\$ 3,383

Comparative 2024 Figures:	@ 11/30/2024
Unified Income	\$ 102,631
Total Expenses	\$ (114,818)
Net Income (Deficit)	\$ (12,187)

Major Differences 2025 vs. 2024: Income so far for 2025 is \$2,200 less than last year.
Expenses so far for 2025 are \$400 less than last year.
Major year-to-date expense item differences:
-- Gas Utility expense \$1,900 more than last year.
-- Property Maintenance expense \$2,800 less than last year.
-- Wages and benefits net expense \$900 less than last year.
-- Property & Liability insurance \$3,900 more than last year.

Thrivent Choice Gifts Rec. 2025: \$1,335

Memorial Gifts Received 2025: \$17,050 Memorials received for Dick Juedes, Peter Becker, Doreen Viesselmann, Donna Dowe, Joanne Levenick and bequest from Sheila Kapke

Budgeted Mission Support 2025: \$9,490 (All paid in February 2025)

Added Mission Support 2025: \$155 (Boy Scout Camp -from tithe of 2024 memorials received)
\$490 (Ozaukee Food Alliance - from proceeds of chili drive-thru)
\$230 (ELCA Good Gifts Community Garden - from offerings)
\$225 (Greater Milwaukee Synod Flood Relief - from offerings)
\$175 (Bears for hospital patients - from donations)

Assets At End Of Month	@ 11/30/2025	Comparative @ 11/30/2024
	\$ 181,255	\$ 147,504

Assets Are Needed to Support The Following Funds:

Audio Fund (formerly Cassette)	\$ -	\$ -
Contingency Fund	\$ 29,512	\$ 9,475
Family Promise Fund	\$ 674	\$ 484
Fully Funded	\$ 176	\$ 313
Library Fund	\$ 505	\$ 505
Memorial Fund	\$ 144,397 <(incl. \$6,761 restricted)	\$ 136,266 <(incl. \$6,761 restricted)
Mercy Fund	\$ 1,458	\$ (42)
Music Fund	\$ 114	\$ 114
Organ Repair Fund	\$ -	\$ -
Outreach Fund & Garden Beds	\$ 1,326	\$ 936
Pastoral Education Fund	\$ 2,176	\$ 2,176
Property Fund	\$ 8,013	\$ 6,983
Scholarship Fund	\$ 639	\$ 539
Youth Fund	\$ 1,901	\$ 1,942

Total Fund Requirements	\$ 190,891	\$ 159,691
= Asset Excess (Shortage)	\$ (9,636)	\$ (12,187)

(Excess = budget surplus; Shortage = budget deficit)



- 1/5 Lincoln Porth
- 1/5 Shamir Garcia
- 1/5 Asher Christenson
- 1/19 Kathie Viesselmann
- 1/19 Cara McMullin
- 1/20 Bob Schmidt
- 1/22 Maren Foti
- 1/22 Carol Butt
- 1/23 Roan Christenson
- 1/29 Cole Granrath

- 1/20/2001 Steven & Latasha Reindl
- 1/26/1972 Tom & Jackie Rogahn

Please notify Church Office if we have missed someone. Thank you!

**ST. JOHN WILL CELEBRATE IT'S
160TH ANNIVERSARY ON
JANUARY 28, 2026!
JOIN US ON SUNDAY, JANUARY 25TH
TO COMMEMORATE OUR CONTINUING
MINISTRY.**

WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

Assisting Minister:

- January 4 - Bob Butt
- 11 - Gary Haas
- 18 - Robin Fatla
- 25 - Dennis Jaeger

Lector:

- January 4 - Bob Butt
- 11 - Carol Butt
- 18 - Sue Dowe
- 25 - Robin Fatla

Usher:

- January 4 - Roger Wendorf
- 11 - Joe Porth
- 18 - Sue Dowe
- 25 - Fritz Dowe

Communion gifts:

- January 4 - **OPEN**
- 11 - Sue Haas & Robin Fatla
- 18 - **OPEN**
- 25 - **OPEN**

Altar bouquets:

- January 4 - **OPEN**
- 11 - **OPEN**
- 18 - **OPEN**
- 25 - **OPEN**

Fellowship hour:

- January 4 - **OPEN**
- 11 - **OPEN**
- 18 - **OPEN**
- 25 - Robin Fatla

Counting Team:

- January 4 - Borgne McClelland Team
- 11 - Dennis Jaeger Team
- 18 - Jim Litvinoff Team
- 25 - Peter Viesselmann Team

JANUARY 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4 8:45 am - Choir rehearsal 9:30 am - Holy Communion 10:30 am - Fellowship hour	5	6 Epiphany Dinner and Worship at Faith Lutheran 5-7 pm	7 Pastor Sara in the office: 10:30 - noon 2:00 - 5:00 5:15 pm - Confirmation class at Trinity	8	9	10 9:00 am - take down Christmas decorations 12:00 pm - Bingo at Immanuel 5:00 pm - Holden Evening service at Trinity
11 8:45 am - Choir rehearsal 9:30 am - Holy Communion 10:30 am - Fellowship hour	12 9:00 am - Quilting	13	14 Pastor Sara in the office: 10:30 - noon 2:00 - 5:00 5:15 pm - Confirmation class at Trinity	15	16	17
18 End Hunger Sunday 8:45 am - Choir rehearsal 9:30 am - Holy Communion 10:30 am - Fellowship hour 11:00 am - Church Council	19	20	21 Pastor Sara in the office: 10:30 - noon 2:00 - 5:00 5:15 pm - Confirmation class at Trinity	22	23	24
25 8:45 am - Choir rehearsal 9:30 am - Holy Communion 10:30 am - Fellowship hour 10:45 am - Annual Congregational meeting	26 9:00 am - Quilting	27	28 St. John 160th anniversary Pastor Sara in the office: 10:30 - noon 2:00 - 5:00 5:15 pm - Confirmation class at Trinity	29	30	31

Sunday School and Youth News

January 2026 Sunday School –
The Baptism of the Lord

January 11, 2026 10:45 – 11:30

What does it mean to be baptized? We will talk about the baptism of Jesus and will look at the baptismal font used for all baptisms at St. John. Contact Sue Dowe with questions (sadowe1966@gmail.com)

EPIC Youth Save The Date

The confirmation group is scheduled for a retreat March 6-8, 2026. Why I am mentioning that now you are probably wondering. First, put this on your family calendars for 2026. You will have this weekend marked off so you don't schedule something else, and you can let coaches, directors, etc. know that your child will not be available this weekend.

Second, registration is open. Lutherdale would like our final numbers two months prior to the retreat so they can open spaces to others if we don't use our reserved slots. If you register now, you don't have to think about it during holiday busyness. Plus, I won't have to keep sending reminder emails. If you register now, it is off your to do list.

To register go here: <https://www.lutherdale.org/youth-retreats> **Our group is Epic Youth, Cedarburg.** The registration has changed from last year so it is easier. You will need to have medical insurance information to complete the registration.

The kids who went last year thought it was great! We would like to have the whole group at the retreat this time.

One last note for the dads--our group this year is boy heavy, but our group of pastors and leaders is not. We will need male chaperones!! If you are interested or would like to know more, get in touch with me.

Peace,
Lisa Wegner (she/her)
EPIC Youth Ministry Director
414-315-3104



QUILTING DATES:

**Monday
January 12 & 26
9:00 - noon**



Epiphany Worship

**January 6
5:00-7:00 p.m.**

Faith Lutheran Church, Cedarburg

Join us for dinner followed by a procession with the Wise Men through the prairie, weather permitting, following the star into the sanctuary for a house blessing and brief worship service.

End Hunger Sunday

In 2026, the third Sunday of each month will be "End Hunger Sunday".

The Outreach Team will be collecting either monetary donations or non-perishable food items for local pantries.

On Sunday, January 11th, there will be envelopes included in the bulletins for a monetary collection for **ELCA World Hunger**. The collection will be the following Sunday.

Let's join together to see that no person goes hungry.

January 2026 Pulse Beat



1193 Lakefield Road
Grafton, WI 53024

"In God's Word, Serving You and the World"

Worship Schedule

- Sunday Morning - 9:30 a.m.

IT IS OUR MISSION as people called by God into the Congregation of St. John Lutheran Church to:

- Proclaim the Gospel in worship and daily life.
- Study and teach God's Word.
- Fellowship among people of this congregation.
- Serve people in our surrounding community.

This is the **MISSION** and **MINISTRY** that we accept as fellow Christians at St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church of Lakefield.

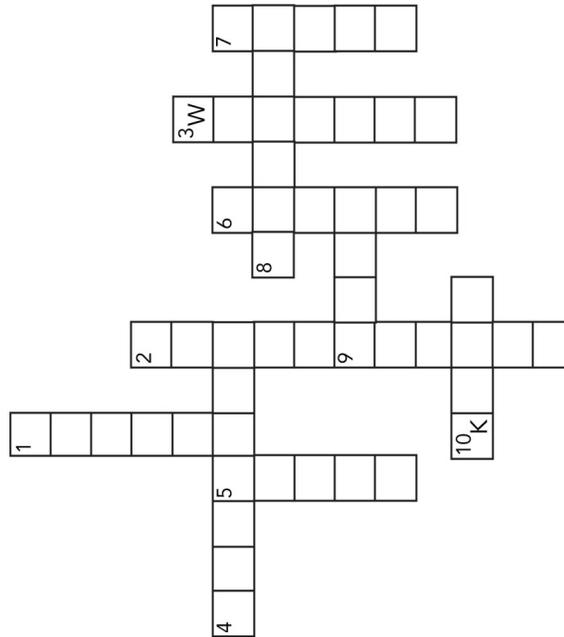
"Faithfully Serving Christ Since 1866"

PUZZLE

THE WONDER OF STARS

The heavens display evidence of God's great power.
What else does the Bible say about the sky?

Directions: Use the clues and Bible references (all NIV) to complete the crossword.



DOWN

1. The sun, moon and stars do this to God. (Psalm 148:3)
2. God made these as numerous as the stars. (Genesis 26:4)
3. Don't do this to the stars and sky. (Deuteronomy 4:19)
5. What do the heavens declare? (Psalm 19:1)
6. The moon and the stars do this at night. (Psalm 136:9)
7. When we're pure, we do this like the stars. (Philippians 2:15)

ACROSS

4. The heavens are the work of these. (Psalm 8:3)
8. On what day did God create the stars? (Genesis 1:14-19)
9. God calls each star by this. (Isaiah 40:26)
10. A star announced the arrival of him. (Matthew 2:2)