



THE PULSE BEAT



Volume 51, Number 8

September 2026

A Word from the Pastor

“When you [O God] send forth your spirit [all of your creatures] are made; and you renew the face of the earth.” (Psalm 104:30)

As we move into autumn, the gentle breezes of September signal change. I find them refreshing and connect that with the spirit of God renewing the face of the earth.

We are all preparing for change this September. You are in the process of calling a new pastor, and I am in the process of preparing for a new interim at Cross Lutheran Church in Burlington.

As an interim pastor who has served over a dozen churches, I can say with certainty that there are a lot of different ways to do things and still be the church.

We will all be learning new things this fall: meeting new people, understanding new ways of doing things, new ways of what it means to “be the church.” We may find ourselves challenged to grow and expand our understanding of what it means to be the church through the changes that are happening.

Always being open to learn new things means we are open to God’s spirit remaking us, and being refreshed as God renews the face of the earth.

That is God’s spirit blowing through our lives and makes all things new.

God’s Blessings on the journey,
Pastor Sara Gillespie

THOUGHTS FROM THE PRESIDENT

As we look back over the last couple years, I think there is a lot for us at St. John to be thankful for. We went through a time of waiting and uncertainty as we searched for a new pastor. Waiting isn't always easy, especially when we don't know exactly what the future is going to look like.

But now we can look back and see that God was with us throughout that entire process. We have called Pastor Sarah Micheel to serve among us, and we can be thankful for the way God guided St. John and brought us to this point.

There is a familiar saying, **“Good things come to those who wait.”** While those exact words aren't found in Scripture, the Bible certainly teaches us about the importance of waiting on God. Psalm 27:14 says, *“Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord.”* We waited, we prayed, we talked, and we trusted that God would guide us. And now we can see the blessing that came from that waiting.

I also want to take a moment to say a special thank you to Pastor Sara Gillespie, our interim pastor, for the guidance and leadership she provided during this time of waiting. She helped us navigate the transition, encouraged us when the process seemed long, and helped keep us focused on God's work and on the future of St. John. Pastor Sara's ministry among us was an important part of our journey. Sometimes an interim pastor's role can be difficult because they are helping a congregation through a period of change and uncertainty. We are very thankful for the wisdom, patience, and care she shared with us while we waited for God to lead us to our next pastor.

Now we have reached a new chapter at St. John. Calling Pastor Sarah is not the end of the journey—it is the beginning of something new. There will be opportunities, challenges, and new ways for us to grow together in faith and ministry. As we welcome her, let's remember that ministry is something we do together. A pastor cannot do it alone, and we shouldn't expect her to. We are called to pray for one another, encourage one another, and support one another as we serve Christ and our community.

Ecclesiastes 4:9 tells us, *“Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor.”* That seems especially appropriate as we begin this new chapter. We have an opportunity to work together with Pastor Sarah and continue building on the faith, fellowship, and ministry that are already part of St. John.

So today, let's be thankful—not only that we have called Pastor Sarah, but also for everything God taught us during our time of waiting. We learned patience. We learned to trust. We learned the importance of prayer and of working together. And we are thankful for Pastor Sara, who helped guide us through that time.

Let's welcome Pastor Sarah with open hearts. Let's give her our prayers, our encouragement, our support, and our willingness to work together. Most importantly, let's remember that this is God's church. We may not have known exactly where our search would lead us, but God knew. He was with us in the waiting, He was with us through Pastor Sara's guidance, He was with us in the calling of Pastor Sarah, and He will be with us as we move forward.

St. John has much to be thankful for. We can be thankful for Pastor Sara and the guidance she gave us, thankful for Pastor Sarah and the ministry she is beginning with us, and most of all, thankful that God was with us every step of the way. We are one small vote away, and I'm pretty sure I know what the results of that vote will be. I believe God has many good things in store for St. John as we begin this new chapter together.

Hugs and blessings 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

Call Committee: Dale Allen, Bob Butt, Fritz
Dowe, Jim Litvinoff, Judy McMullin, Jean
Verber, Roger Wendorf

Organist

St. John Choir Director

Glory Ringers Director

Flutist

Paula Juedes

Sharlene Sandquist

Dale Allen

Sandy Allen

Newsletter staff:

Robin Fatla & Borgne McClelland

Newsletter deadline:

Articles due by the 3rd Sunday of each
month.

GENERAL INTEREST NEWS

We keep in our prayers: Christy Abt, Ignacia Arriago, Anna Bullio, Craig (friend of Wendorf's), Amanda Combs, Lorna Friedlein, Henry Frier, Terri & Joe Gassert, Rick Gonzalez, Pat & Sandy Granrath, Merry Lou Green, Chris Hegenbarth, Jeanne Immekus, Dennis Jaeger, Sharon Kaddatz, Krista Krueger, Anita Lucht, Scott Maronde, Ken Matthews, Borgne McClelland, Chuck & Cary Mueller, Kevin Petersen, Sugeily Pineiro-Garcia, Joe Porth, Karen Rautenberg, Allan & Chris Reinke, Tom & Jackie Rogahn, Bill Sackett, Glenn Sievers, Melanie Smith, Evie Tetzlaff, Jeff Watter, Wendy Werner **Military personnel:** Kyle Christenson
"Home away from home" members: Jeanine Burhop- Lasata, Tim McClosky – Mequon group home



Continuing education scholarships of \$500 each were awarded to **Rebecca Schauer**, pursuing a Master's degree in nursing at Carroll University; and **Joshua Pritzlaff** pursuing a Certification of Ford Assist at MATC.

Support Our



SEMINARIANS

A \$500 scholarship was also presented to **Thomas Schoofs**, an ELCA seminarian who is a member of Faith Church in Cedarburg.



QUILTING DATES:

Monday

September 14 & 28

9:00 - noon

Outreach



On Sunday, August 23rd, we enjoyed the music of Carol and The Keynotes at a community gathering at St. John.

Over 40 friends enjoyed the music and refreshments which were sold.

A portion of the proceeds from the sale of the refreshments - added to collected donations which equaled a total of \$290, were donated to the Ozaukee Baby Bank, a program sponsored by the Ozaukee Non-Profit Center in Grafton.

The Baby Bank distributes, free of charge, diapers, wipes, formula, and other items needed for infants and toddlers to families in need of help.



- ◆ On Sunday September 20th, we will entertain a presentation from Bob Burmeister of Mr. Bob's Under the Bridge Ministry. This is a look at another one of our community mission partners.
- ◆ We welcomed Sammy, a participant at Portal, Inc., to do some gardening work for us a couple times a week for 4 weeks. He did a great job of cleaning up the Peace Garden and we look forward to his help again next year.



"God's work. Our hands." Sunday
September 13th

Take time today or ANY day, even if it's just an hour, to show another person God's love through service.

STEWARDSHIP CORNER

Recently, I received the latest issue of Boundless from the ELCA. In it are many articles of the church at work in the world. On the first page, was a letter from Yehiel Curry, Presiding Bishop of the ELCA. I would like to share It with you.

“Dear friends,

Generosity is at the heart of who we are as a church. Even longer than we have been calling ourselves Lutherans, we have been answering Jesus’ call to share what we have with our neighbors. Back in 1523, Luther proposed a community-funded “common chest” to care for the poor in his town. Together we have carried that legacy forward into the present day as we continue to find innovative ways to share God’s abundance with all our siblings in Christ.

The idea that faith and generosity are intertwined probably isn’t new to you. It wasn’t new to me before I became presiding bishop of the ELCA - but I have understood it in different ways in my first few months in this role, as I have witnessed your generosity at work across our church and our world. I have had the privilege of watching your gifts grow and multiply, impacting lives and whole communities.

Your contributions to ELCA ministries are so much more than simple donations - they are part of a cycle of generosity that is strengthening our entire fellowship.

This issue of “Boundless” offers examples of just a few ways the gifts flowing from you are making new things possible. In Virginia you created a stage where neurodivergent performers can share their unique talents with their community. In Brazil, you helped provide a few simple materials for a market stall - awning, a skirt, a table - that has created a more stable future for one fisherwoman’s family. In Philadelphia, you are creating space where people experiencing homelessness can bring forward their own faith-ful offerings. And through the Horizon International Internship program, you are walking alongside emerging leaders as they venture into

the world to learn and to strengthen our global fellowship.

Thank you for the moments, days and gifts you have freely and faithfully given. Your generosity is flowing ceaselessly into communities all around us, creating joy, new life and even more faithful giving. I am honored to do this work with you.

With you in Christ’s service,

YEHIEL CURRY

Presiding Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

In the coming months, I will share some of these stories in more detail.

Sharlene Sandquist

Stewardship Chair

EDUCATION & YOUTH

VBS 2026

*This year’s VBS week was August 3rd – 7th at Faith Lutheran Church in Cedarburg and the theme was “Who is my Neighbor?” **Edyn Allen & Lucas Fatla**, confirmation youth from St. John, were group helpers. The kids had a great week learning about other cultures around the world, including sampling snacks, fun activities and collecting items for “Grace bags.” Approximately 80 bags were made that included items such as sunscreen, clean socks and snacks to be provided to those in need in our community.*

Sunday School

It’s time to start the Sunday School year! The class date for September is the 27th from 10:30-11:15. Join us for a short lesson and a fun craft! Ages 3 – 5th grade are welcome. Contact Sue Dowe (sadowe1966@gmail.com) with questions.

Confirmation

*Classes are held at Advent in Cedarburg on Wednesday evening. ***Please note the location change***. Advent’s address is W63N642 Washington Avenue. Dinner begins at 5:15 and class follows until 7:15. Lisa Wegner (lisa@adventchurch.org) can be contacted with any questions.*



9/1 Sandy Granrath
 9/3 Andy Porth
 9/7 Adam Fatla
 9/8 Joshua Pritzlaff
 9/8 JoAnn Dowe
 9/10 Edyn Allen
 9/11 Jeff Kapke
 9/14 Dinah Tetzlaff
 9/14 Fritz Dowe
 9/19 Joe Schauer
 9/23 Mirabelle Christenson

9/6/2014 Kyle & Laura Christenson
 9/18/1999 Mark & MaryEllen Levra

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

Pastor
APPRECIATION

Pastor Sara's last day with us at St. John will be September 9th. She will be taking another Interim call at Cross Lutheran Church in Burlington.

In her honor and in gratitude for her service here, you are invited to a pot-luck brunch on Sunday, September 6th immediately following the worship service.

If you have not signed up at church, please call the office if you plan to attend.

WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

Assisting Minister:

September 6 - Gary Haas
 13 - Bob Butt
 20 - Robin Fatla
 27 - Dennis Jaeger

Lector:

September 6 - Robert McClelland
 13 - Judy McMullin
 20 - Florence Van Cleave
 27 - Edyn Allen

Usher:

September 6 - Roger Wendorf
 13 - Joe Porth
 20 - Sue Dowe
 27 - Fritz Dowe

Altar bouquets:

September 6 - Robin Fatla
 13 - **OPEN**
 20 - **OPEN**
 27 - **OPEN**

Communion Gifts:

September 6 - **OPEN**
 13 - **OPEN**
 20 - **OPEN**
 27 - **OPEN**

Fellowship hour:

September 6 - Pot-luck brunch
 13 - **OPEN**
 20 - **OPEN**
 27 - **OPEN**

Counting Team:

September 6 - Peter Viesselmann Team
 13 - Borgne McClelland Team
 20 - Dennis Jaeger Team
 27 - Jim Litvinoff Team

SEPTEMBER 2026




Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2 Pastor Sara in the office: 10:30 - noon 2:00 - 5:00	3	4	5
6 9:30 am - Holy Communion 10:30 am - Fellowship hour - Pot luck Appreciation lunch for Pastor Sara	7 Labor Day - Office is closed 2:00 pm - Vicar Sarah Micheel's Ordination at United L.C., Racine	8 10:00 am - Prime Horizon Cooking Club	9 Pastor Sara in the office: 10:30 - noon 2:00 - 5:00 5:15 pm - Confirmation Class at St. John	10 11:00 am - Prime Horizon Adult Group	11 	12
13 9:30 am - Holy Communion 10:30 am - Fellowship hour "God's work. Our hands." Sunday	14 9:00 am - Quilting	15 11:00 am - Prime Horizon Adult Group	16 10:00 am - Prime Horizon Cooking Club 11:00 am - Worship Committee 5:15 pm - Confirmation Class at Advent	17	18	19
20 9:30 am - Holy Communion 10:30 am - Fellowship hour - Mr. Bob's Under the Bridge presentation 11:00 am - Church Council	21	22	23 5:15 pm - Confirmation Class at Advent	24 11:00 am - Prime Horizon Adult Group	25	26
27 9:30 am - Holy Communion 10:30 am - Fellowship hour	28 9:00 am - Quilting	29 11:00 am - Prime Horizon Adult Group	30 5:15 pm - Confirmation Class at Advent			

**St John Evangelical Lutheran Church
Financial Summary For July 2026**

	July 2026			Year To Date 2026		
	<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	\$ 6,989	\$ 11,000	\$ (4,011)	\$ 62,964	\$ 77,100	\$ (14,136)
<u>Expense Summary:</u>						
Education	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 230	\$ 150	\$ 80
Outreach	\$ -	\$ 25	\$ (25)	\$ -	\$ 175	\$ (175)
Worship	\$ 617	\$ 1,403	\$ (786)	\$ 4,843	\$ 7,668	\$ (2,825)
Youth	\$ -	\$ 130	\$ (130)	\$ -	\$ 910	\$ (910)
Stewardship	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 192	\$ 200	\$ (8)
Public Relations	\$ 20	\$ -	\$ 20	\$ 101	\$ 200	\$ (99)
Property	\$ 1,283	\$ 1,804	\$ (521)	\$ 16,088	\$ 15,809	\$ 279
Finance (incl.Mission Support)	\$ 6,555	\$ 6,383	\$ 172	\$ 62,571	\$ 60,509	\$ 2,062
Total Expenses	\$ 8,475	\$ 9,746	\$ (1,271)	\$ 84,025	\$ 85,622	\$ (1,597)
Net Income (Deficit)	\$ (1,486)	\$ 1,254	\$ (2,740)	\$ (21,061)	\$ (8,522)	\$ (12,539)

<u>Comparative 2025 Figures:</u>	<u>@ 7/31/2025</u>
Unified Income	\$ 65,476
Total Expenses	\$ (72,824)
Net Income (Deficit)	\$ (7,347)

Major Differences 2026 vs. 2025: Income for the year 2026 is \$2,500 less than last year.
Expenses for the year 2026 are \$11,200 more than last year.
Major year-to-date expense item differences:
-- Gas Utility expense \$1,200 more than last year.
-- Guest Preachers \$1,500 less than last year.
-- Wages and benefits net expense \$10,100 more than last year.

Thrivent Choice Gifts Rec. 2026: \$2,219
Memorial Gifts Received 2026: \$2,034 Memorials received for: Richard Viesselmann, Rosemary Schmit, Marian Witte & Barbara Eichmann
Budgeted Mission Support 2026: \$9,130 (All paid February 2026)
Added Mission Support 2026: \$4,250
(Family Promise Special Appeal (\$500) + Tithe of 2025 Memorials (\$1,710) + Memorials directed to mission per families (\$2,040)

	<u>@ 7/31/2026</u>	Comparative <u>@ 7/31/2025</u>
Assets At End Of Month	\$ 175,859	\$ 179,835
<u>Assets Are Needed to Support The Following Funds:</u>		
Audio Fund (formerly Cassette)	\$ -	\$ -
Contingency Fund	\$ 39,816	\$ 26,200
Family Promise Fund	\$ 287	\$ 484
Fully Funded	\$ 208	\$ 206
Library Fund	\$ 505	\$ 505
Memorial Fund	\$ 140,974 <(incl. \$5,956 restricted)	\$ 142,577 <(incl. \$6,761 restricted)
Mercy Fund	\$ 1,958	\$ 1,458
Music Fund	\$ 114	\$ 114
Organ Repair Fund	\$ -	\$ -
Outreach Fund & Garden Beds	\$ 1,526	\$ 1,006
Pastoral Education Fund	\$ 2,176	\$ 2,176
Property Fund	\$ 4,782	\$ 8,013
Scholarship Fund	\$ 2,639	\$ 2,639
Youth Fund	\$ 1,935	\$ 1,804
Total Fund Requirements	\$ 196,920	\$ 187,183
= Asset Excess (Shortage)	\$ (21,061)	\$ (7,347)
(Excess = budget surplus; Shortage = budget deficit)		

