

St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church

March 2026

Mission Statement: Our mission is to proclaim Christ crucified and worship the Holy Trinity.

Purpose Statement: By the work of the Holy Spirit we are gathered together in Christ to proclaim the good news of Jesus and mercy of God to all people in our community. We do this through historical, biblical, Christ-centered worship and teaching.

Lutheran Women in Mission

The Lutheran in Mission meeting will be on March 26th at 1:00 PM

March Wednesday Evening Following Meals. Please join us between 5 & 6 for a meal, followed by church from 6 to 6:30 and weekday school following the service.

March Organ Fund Update

Thank You! Thank You! to all who have so generously donated to the Organ Fund. The total received to date is over \$48,000.00 with a balance of approximately \$ 31,000.00.

Donations have been received from MANY individuals along with donations from ORGANIZATIONS within St. John Church.

Donations may be made by using the "Organ Fund" envelopes on the Thermometer board, placing your donation in the Offering Plate or you may use your own envelope— (PLEASE note "ORGAN FUND" and your name on the envelope). Donations may also be placed in the Church Office or mailed to

St. John Ev. Lutheran, 8020 South Park Road, Wisconsin Rapids, WI. 54494.

We are getting closer to the goal...we can almost hear the music!

Thank You again to ALL who have made Organ Fund donations!

Lutheran Hour Broadcast

The Lutheran Hour can be heard on the following radio stations on Sunday Morning: WAXX 104.5 FM at 6:30 a.m.; WDLB 1450 AM at 8 a.m.; WDUX 92.7 FM at 8 a.m.; WSAU 99.9 FM at 8:30 a.m.; and WRVM 91.3 FM, 94.3 FM or 101.3 FM at 10 a.m.

March 2026

March 1st

"A Little Light, Reading"

Lutheran Hour Speaker: Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler

The Book of Job is not light reading, but Christians read it in the Light of Christ.
(Job 1:8)

March 8th

"Fearless and Endless Growing"

Guest Speaker: Rev. Dr. Daniel Paavola

God's Word grows like a perfect garden, bearing fruit in every season.
(Colossians 1:1-14)

March 15th

"God's Plan = Jesus"

Lutheran Hour Speaker: Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler

God's plans for us are not me-centered; they are Christ-centered. Dr. Zeigler talks with "Soul Surfer" author, Bethany Hamilton.
(John 16:33)

March 22nd

"Getting the Talk Started"

Lutheran Hour Speaker: Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler

God's Law-talk prepares us for God's Gospel-talk. Author Tim Carter (The Executioner's Redemption) is featured.
(Luke 11:1)

Stewardship Under the Cross

Luther on Tithing and Stewardship

Martin Luther had much to say about being a good steward of God's gifts. Below are a series of quotations from the great Reformer about faithful, Biblical stewards.

On Vowing to Support the Church with Tithes

Thus it is said (Prov. 3:9): "Honor the Lord with your substance." This must be understood not only of words and of the worship of the mouth or genuflection but of the deed itself.... Gal. 6:6: "Let him who is taught in the Word share all good things with him who teaches." Therefore when God wants to be honored, then He wants sacrifices to be offered, not only sacrifices of the mouth but also the reverence of the heart, yes, the deed itself. He wants us to help the ministry, and He wants everyone to contribute for the purpose of supporting the studies of the pupils and of propagating the doctrine. Then God is truly praised and glorified there. Make a vow there, and say: "I promise that I am willing to contribute something for the assistance of the churches." That is St. Jacob's vow. Therefore this example should be diligently inculcated, namely, that Jacob vows tithes, not in order that God Himself may eat or be enriched; but he gives them to the poor ministers and to those who are always the least of the brethren or disciples of Christ on earth. For all other arts are gainful and have their profits. This profession alone is in need of bountiful giving. We must live from the altar, as Paul says (1 Cor. 9:13). Accordingly, he who is godly and loves the Word of God contributes something. He who hates the doctrine along with those who teach and learn it robs and despoils.

Otherwise God has so ordained that we should live from the vows, sacrifices, and alms that are owed to us by divine right. When the godly see the poverty and need of the ministers of the church and the school, they make vows and obligate themselves to give tithes, as Jacob gave them. (LW v.5)

On Tithing to Support God's Work in the Church

Therefore this text shows that Jacob did not make such a foolish and godless vow, but that it was a vow of thanksgiving. For he says: "If I come again, etc." It is as though he were saying: "I shall now obligate myself to pay a debt, and I shall make satisfactory reparation when I return. What? I shall build a school and a church here, and I shall give a tithe of bulls and goats and fruits for its establishment and upkeep, likewise a tenth part of the milk and the butter." Of course, God does not need these things. For He does not eat bread or drink wine, as He says in Ps. 50:13: "Do I eat the flesh of bulls?" What, then, are you doing? I answer that Jacob is already righteous. Accordingly, he does not make a vow to placate God by making it; but he wants to do this to give thanks, to glorify God, in order that He may conduct him and bring him back according to the promise. Who will receive these tithes? Not the angels, not the sun, not the moon. But he will perform that extraordinary and glorious work for the purpose of preserving the ministry and founding churches and schools. . . . This is how Moses should be understood when he says (Deut. 23:21): "When you make a vow to the Lord your God, you shall not be slack to pay it." What does it mean to make a vow to God, or whom is Moses addressing when he says: "The Lord your God"? It means to give tithes to the disciples, sons, and wives of the prophets, to the poor and needy. These are the ones who are to be supported by the tithes offered to God, and through these tithes God is supported. For God says: "Whatever you give to the children of the priests and prophets through whom the doctrine is propagated you must regard as given to Me, not that I may justify you through this work, but it should be a thanksgiving and a sacrifice of praise because I have justified you and have also blessed you in temporal matters. In addition, I shall bless you even more if you give ear to, support, and cherish the poor sons of the prophets." (Luther's Works, vol. 5)

On Abraham's Stewardship

This was not the first time that Abraham gave tithes of these to the priest Melchizedek; he did so every year. Even before that victory Abraham conducted himself humbly, acknowledged Shem as a priest of the Most High, and gave him tithes, as did Lot and the other fathers who lived at that time. (LW vol. 2)... To be sure, Abraham had property; but he did not love it, since he showed that he was a manager and knew that by God's will he had been appointed a steward of his goods. (LW vol. 30).

Summary

In these selections, Martin Luther presents stewardship not as a way to earn God's favor, but as a faithful and grateful response to God's grace. Drawing on the examples of Jacob and Abraham, Luther emphasizes that honoring the Lord involves concrete action—not merely words or outward piety—especially in supporting the ministry of the Word, the education of pastors and students, and the care of the poor. Tithes and vows are acts of thanksgiving offered by those already justified, directed not to God's own need but to the preservation of churches, schools, and the proclamation of the Gospel. Abraham's generosity likewise reveals a steward's heart: possessing goods without clinging to them, recognizing that all property is entrusted by God and meant to be managed for His purposes and the good of others.

Reflection

1. According to Luther, why is financial support of the church and its ministry an expression of thanksgiving rather than a means of earning God's favor?
2. How does Luther's emphasis on deeds challenge a purely "spiritual" understanding of honoring God?
3. What does it mean, practically, to see ourselves as stewards rather than owners of our possessions, as Abraham did?
4. Luther insists that tithes are directed toward people—ministers, students, and the poor—rather than toward God directly. How does this shape the way we think about generosity?
5. In what ways might faithful stewardship today (both individually and as a congregation) include support for churches, schools, and the teaching of the Word in your own context?

St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church

A member Congregation Of The Lutheran Church- Missouri Synod

8020 South Park Road. Wisconsin Rapids, I. 54494

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Church Council Meeting, February 19, 2026

Call to Order by Chairman Craig Timm at 7:05 p.m. with 11 members present.

Additional Agenda Items: Elders by Jeff Zimmerman and Trustees by Jerry Swen.

Opening Devotions: All shared in the Lord's Prayer.

Consent Agenda: Minutes from January 15, 2026 were reviewed. Motion made by Darleene Swen and seconded by Darwin Lamb to approve the Minutes. Motion carried. **Treasurer's Report:** Printed Reports were available. **Chairman's Report:** the Organ Balance is \$18,727.

Membership change: Robert (Bob) Hanneman ,age 97, passed away on February 1, 2026 with Funeral Service on February 5 and burial in St. John Parish Cemetery.

Old Business: Financial Review continues with Jeff Zimmerman, Craig Timm, Jerry Schimke and Dixie Richmond. Annual Report Membership List is being reviewed. Investment Group work on project continues. Focus: Neighborhood Table is scheduled for Thursday, August 16, 2026.

New Business: A person remains interested in the **Treasurer position**.

Memorial Committee: No report. **Coffee with Friends:** March 18th, 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Lenten Services: Wednesdays at 6:00 p.m.

Maundy Thursday at April 2 at 6:00 p.m.

Good Friday at 6:00 p.m.

Saturday Vigil at 4:00 p.m.

Easter Sunday at 9:30 a.m.

Trustees: Jerry Swen stated the automatic door needed repair and has been completed. Elders will have a training session on proper procedures of locking and unlocking the automatic doors

1st Choice Wealth Management sent letter dated January 27, 2026 regarding the Howard Hagen memorial that was sent to St. John- Kellner in error. The monies will be returned per a motion by Jeff Zimmerman with a second by Chuck Bossingham. Motion carried.

Office doors need to be closed and locked when staff leaves. Elders will check after each service.

Adjournment by Jeff Zimmerman, second by Jerry Swen. Motion carried.

Closing with Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith H. Shepard.

Congregational Secretary

What a beautiful February day...Sunday, February 15, 2026!

God reminded us that Spring is on its way...(maybe with little reminders that the snow and rain is not done yet!) The day warmed up to near 50 degrees!

Lutheran Women in Mission would like to thank the over 180 guests for their support of the homemade Spaghetti Supper dinner complete with yummy desserts all served by candlelight.

Lutheran Women in Mission ladies began preparing for the Annual Spaghetti Supper weeks ago and continued very diligently until all our guests were served. Assorted committees worked with the set-up, shopping, cooking, serving and clean up! All worked together to make this event a success!

A special **“Thank You”** to the young people for their assistance. We cannot forget to extend an additional **“Thank You”** to our **“Auxiliary”** and other volunteers (both members and non-members of St. John)!

A big **“Thank You”** is extended to our print media sponsor in the City Times, Herman Taylor Funeral Home. Thanks also to the many Businesses/Churches and Friends who displayed the Spaghetti Supper Flyer and added the information to their News Letters and Bulletins.

God's Blessings to You!

The Lutheran Women in Mission Spaghetti Supper Committee.

St. John Lutheran – March 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 9:30 AM – Sunday Morning Worship	2 1:00 PM – Adult Bible Study	3	4 5:00 PM – Community Meal 6:00 PM – Midweek Worship Service 6:30 PM – Wednesday School	5	6	7 4:00 PM – Saturday Worship Service
8 9:30 AM – Sunday Morning Worship	9 1:00 PM – Adult Bible Study	10	11 5:00 PM – Community Meal 6:00 PM – Midweek Worship Service 6:30 PM – Wednesday School	12	13	14 4:00 PM – Saturday Worship Service
15 9:30 AM – Sunday Morning Worship	16 1:00 PM – Adult Bible Study	17	18 6:00 PM – Midweek Worship Service	19 9:00 AM – Coffee with Friends 6:00 PM – Elders Meeting 7:00 PM – Council Meeting	20	21 4:00 PM – Saturday Worship Service
22 9:30 AM – Sunday Morning Worship	23 1:00 PM – Adult Bible Study	24	25 5:00 PM – Community Meal 6:00 PM – Midweek Worship Service 6:30 PM – Wednesday School	26 1:00 PM – Lutheran Women in Mission	27	28 4:00 PM – Saturday Worship Service
29 Palm Sunday 9:30 AM – Sunday Morning Worship	30 1:00 PM – Adult Bible Study	31				

The Lord's Supper is offered every Saturday and Sunday and, on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month.