

December 2026

Office hours: Mon-Thurs 9am-2pm Office Phone: 715-423-7788

Head Elder: Jeff Zimmeraman
Altar Guild: Cindy Johnson

Birthdays	Anniversaries	Elder Schedule
2nd Marley Harper	2nd Mitchell & Shirley Zimmerman	Wed 2nd
3rd Jerry Schimke		Sat 5th
3rd Todd Eberhardt		Sun 6th
6th Doug Ross		Wed 9th Lew Porter
6th Raelyn Timm		Sat 12th Jeff Gellerman
7th Abraham Torres		Sun 13th
8th James Eberhardt		Wed 16th
8th Cathy Timm		Sat 19th
10th Isabella Braun		Sun 20th Jeff Gellerman
11th Nora Dobratz	2:00 PM	Thurs 24th Jeff Zimmerman
12th Khalil Khang	6:00 PM	Thurs 24th
12th Kristin Ashenberg	9:30 AM	Fri 25th
15th Griffin Holberg		Sat 26th No Service
15th Rylie Onesti		Sun 27th Jeff Zimmerman
16th Caroline Vukosich		Wed 30th
16th Kaleigh Rosenthal		
21st Lydia Greening		
22nd Joshua Twinn		
22nd Kathy Kertis		
22nd Teagan Polansky		
23rd Owen Porter		
26th Jonah McConaghy		
29th Dean Rosenthal		

St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church

December 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.

LIBRARY COMMITTEE DONATION: All proceeds from our 2026 and previous book sales, totaling $570.00, have been donated to the church's organ fund.

CHANGES IN THE LIBRARY: There will still be children's and resource books available on the honor system. Anyone can take books to read without signing them out and when you are done, we are asking that you bring them back so others can enjoy them too!

December Wednesday Evening Following Meals. Please join us between 5 & 6 for a meal, followed by church from 6 to 630 and weekday school following the service.

December Organ Fund Update

Thank you to everyone who has given so generously to the Organ Fund! Our new organ cost $78,700.00. Gifts from many members and from organizations within St. John paid for most of it up front, and we borrowed about $30,000 to cover the rest. Since then, your continued giving has been paying down that loan and its interest. To date, the Organ Fund has received more than $75,800, and only $2,856.43 remains on the loan.

You can give in several ways. Use an Organ Fund envelope from the thermometer board, put your gift in the offering plate, or use your own envelope marked "Organ Fund" with your name. You can also drop off gifts at the church office or mail them to St. John Ev. Lutheran Church, 8020 Southpark Rd., Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54494.

We are getting closer to the goal, and we can almost hear the music! Thank you again to all who have given.

Give Faithfully with Joyful Response

St. John now offers Vanco Joyful Response, a free automatic giving program. You choose an amount and how often you want to give, and your offering goes directly from your bank account to the church. There's nothing to remember on a busy Sunday and no checks to write. Your gift is set aside first, before anything else, and it keeps supporting the Lord's work here when you're traveling, sick, or snowed in. Forms are in the narthex. Fill one out and return it to the church office or the offering plate.

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.

December 2026

December 6th
"December Gives You Wings (results may vary)"
Lutheran Hour Speaker: Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler
December's festivities can provide a temporary boost but cannot satisfy our deeper longings. The words of Isaiah point to God's enduring promises, fulfilled in Christ.
(Isaiah 40:4)

December 20, 2026
"Messiah Sing-Along"
Lutheran Hour Speaker: Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler
Dr. Michael Zeigler shares the surprising backstory of Handel's "Messiah."
(2 Samuel 7:16)

December 13th
"He Will Be Our Peace"
Guest Speaker: Rev. Dr. Chad Lakies
Christians are a 'waiting' people, waiting for the King to return, waiting for His promises to be completely fulfilled.
(Micah 5:2-5)

December 27th
"Redeemed at the Right Time"
Guest Speaker: Rev. Dr. Glenn Nielsen
At just the right time, God kept His promises by sending His Son, Jesus, to meet our deepest need.
(Galatians 4:4-7)

We Would See Jesus

December is always a busy month, both at home and in the church. There are greens to hang and poinsettias to order, cookies to bake, programs to rehearse, a year-end budget to close, and a council already looking ahead to the next one. All of it is good work, and much of it is done in love by people who give their time without being asked twice.

Advent is a good season to stop and ask why we do any of it.

In our strategic planning work together, the congregation put into words what St. John is for. Everything else in the plan grows out of these two statements:

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

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

Look at what sits at the center. Not the building, not the treasury, not a favorite program or a favorite hymn. Jesus. Christ crucified, preached and given out in His Word and Sacraments. That is why a handful of German settlers organized this congregation on St. Nicholas Day in 1865, and it is the only reason we are still here.

A church can drift without meaning to. Usually not into anything scandalous, but into good things that slowly take the place of the main thing. The budget or attendance becomes the measure of whether we are faithful. The decorations become the thing we argue about. Fellowship becomes the reason people come, and when something changes, people stop coming. A ministry we love becomes something we defend rather than something we use to serve. Our own preferences about music, service times, and how things have always been done quietly become the standard everything else is held to.

None of these things are bad. A budget is stewardship of what God has entrusted to us. Beautiful decorations honor the King who comes. Fellowship is the joy of the body of Christ in one another's company. But they are fruit, not root. They exist because of Jesus and for the sake of Jesus, and when they start to stand in front of Him, they need to be moved back to where they belong.

Some old pulpits carry a line from John 12 where only the preacher can see it: "Sir, we would see Jesus." That is what the people who walk through our doors this Christmas are looking for, whether they would put it that way or not. Some are members we have not seen in a while. Some are guests invited by a neighbor. Some carry a grief the holidays make heavier. They are not looking for a well-run organization. They are looking for the Savior born in Bethlehem, laid in a manger, and nailed to a cross for them. Our calling is to make sure that is exactly whom they find.

So as you hang the greens and bake the cookies this month, and as the council closes out the year's books, keep asking the question our mission asks of us: does this point to Jesus? If it does, thank God for it and do it gladly. If it doesn't, it can wait, or it can change.

The Child in the manger is the reason there is a St. John at all. Let's keep Him at the center.

In Christ,

Pastor Matthew Lorfeld

St. John Lutheran – December 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 1:30 PM – Craft and Games	**2** 5:00 PM – Community Meal 6:00 PM – Midweek Worship Service 6:45 PM – Wednesday School – Camp Luther!	**3** 8:30 AM – Pray with Pastor	**4**	**5** 4:00 PM – Saturday Worship Service
6 9:30 AM – Sunday Morning Worship	**7** 1:00 PM – Adult Bible Study	**8**	**9** 5:00 PM – Community Meal 6:00 PM – Midweek Worship Service 6:45 PM – Wednesday School	**10** 8:30 AM – Pray with Pastor	**11**	**12** 9:00 AM – Cookie Walk 4:00 PM – Saturday Worship Service
13 9:30 AM – Sunday Morning Worship	**14** 1:00 PM – Adult Bible Study	**15**	**16** 5:00 PM – Community Meal 6:00 PM – Midweek Worship Service 6:45 PM – Wednesday School	**17** 5:00 PM – LWIM Christmas Dinner 8:30 AM – Pray with Pastor 9:00 AM – Coffee with Friends	**18**	**19** 4:00 PM – Saturday Worship Service
20 9:30 AM – Sunday Morning Worship	**21** 1:00 PM – Adult Bible Study	**22**	**23**	**24** 2:00 PM – Christmas Eve Service 6:00 PM – Christmas Eve Service	**25** 9:30 AM – Christmas Day Service	**26** **No Saturday Service**
27 9:30 AM – Sunday Morning Worship	**28** 1:00 PM – Adult Bible Study	**29**	**30** 6:00 PM – Midweek Worship Service	**31**		

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