St. John Lutheran Church
May 2026 Newsletter

As a community of believers in Jesus Christ, inspired by the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit, the mission of St. John Lutheran Church is to:
WORSHIP, WITNESS, LEARN, SERVE and SUPPORT.

Teri Talk May 2026

New Journeys

Life is a beautiful journey filled with lessons, hardships, heartaches, joys, celebrations and special moments that will ultimately lead us to our destination, our purpose in life. The road will not always be smooth in fact, throughout our travels, we will encounter many challenges. Some of these challenges will test our courage, strengths, weaknesses, and faith. Along the way, obstacles may come up that cause us to stumble but we trust God will help us figure out how to overcome these obstacles and follow the right path. Sometimes these obstacles are really blessings in disguise, only we don't realize that at the time.[1]

The people that we meet on our journey, may be people God sends our way just when we need them. Some may stay for a lifetime; others may only stay for a short while. It is often the people who stay for only a short time that end up making a lasting impression not only in our lives, but in our hearts as well. Although we may not realize it at the time, they will make a difference and change our lives in a way we never could imagine. To think that one person can have such a profound effect on your life forever is truly a blessing. It is because of these encounters that we learn some of life's best lessons and sometimes we even learn a little bit about ourselves.[4]

Our Youth Group chose their own name for how they refer to themselves. 425 Youth Group takes the church's street address and pairs it with scripture: Proverbs 4:25, "*Look straight ahead, and fix your eyes on what lies before you*" (New Living Translation). They chose this guiding scripture to remind them that Jesus Christ walks with them and leads them, that they have chosen to walk in the footsteps of being his disciples with their eyes trained on God. Walking in the way of their faith keeps them on the right road, even when they are uncertain where that road will take them, they trust in the one leading them.

Our lives are a journey rather than a destination. Every choice we make and every action we take has a huge effect on our lives and tends to change the direction of our journey. Life is a journey because as we continue to move through life there is always something new in front of us. There is always a decision for us to make, there is always a choice, and it is up to us to choose the better way and that's when our journey changes its direction.[2] Along our journey we will be confronted with many situations, some will be filled with joy, and some will be filled with heartache. How we react to what we are faced with determines what kind of outcome the rest of our journey through life will be like.[1]

Every choice we make opens a new pathway for us on our road of life. During life's journey we all

make mistakes and no matter how big they are we give them the name “experience.” Those mistakes, or “experiences” offer us the opportunity to learn from them and through learning we grow as individuals. If life is not a journey, why are there different opportunities thrown in front of us? We are meant to take advantage of the time we have; we make choices and mistakes and learn from them so that tomorrow we will be able to make better choices and enjoy life more. [2]

Things don't always go our way, and we have two choices in dealing with the situations.
We can focus on the fact that things didn't go how we had hoped they would and let life pass us by, or we can make the best out of the situation and know that these are only temporary setbacks and find the lessons that are to be learned.[3] New life journeys are a constant navigating and negotiating through uncertainty and at the same time having the courage to take the first step. Staying stuck in the past can keep you from the new thing God wants to do in your life. New journeys rarely come with a map, but they do come with a compass[1], our trust in and relationship with God. We trust and believe that we do not walk alone knowing God is always with us.

Through prayer and reading scripture God reveals how you fit into God’s plan and how your story is part of God’s story. God is always doing something new in our lives: Isaiah 43:19 is God’s Word, “*See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?*” and Revelation 21:5 “*See, I am making all things new*.” In 2 Corinthians 5:15,17 the Apostle Paul writes, “***15****And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again….****17****Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!*”

“*Paul is saying that, "God has done something new in my life. All that went before, I can let go because now, as I enter into this new experience of God in Jesus, everything becomes new." Paul goes on: "I just want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection." He is opening himself to the Spirit, and God is working in new ways now. Paul is ready to be open to that, and God transforms his life. New things really begin to happen, and he can't wait until, as he says, "Forgetting what lies behind and streaming forward to what lies ahead, I press on towards the goal for the prize of the Heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus." Through the Spirit, God has transformed Paul, and Paul, being open to that Spirit, finds himself ready to act in new ways to relate to God*.”[5]

We are *Resurrection People* the ones who are focused on God’s promises of New Life that were revealed to us through Jesus Christ. Our lives have been and are continually being transformed and empowered by believing in and living as ones who follow Jesus in our daily lives. We are a community acting as the body of Christ on earth, embodying hope, love, and renewal. Walking together to support, love, and serve each other. Living out our baptismal vows by “*proclaiming Christ through word and deed, care for others and the world God made, and work for justice and peace*.”

We should enjoy life and take advantage of every moment we have. We know life has two defined endpoints, the beginning and the end. What matters is the living we do in between them. By living in today, the present, the *now*, we are able to notice and appreciate all the things we have in our lives and look forward with joy and excitement to what comes next. Every second counts and because life is a journey, every second can teach us a lesson that adds an enriching experience and personal growth to our journey. "*Your journey never ends. Life has a way of changing things in incredible ways.*"[2]

May the LORD bless all your new journeys and the path you walk.

Blessings,
Pastor Teri

References: [1]Aleena Chuhdary, September 22, 2021, https://medium.com/@201520095
[2]Alexander Volkov, https://thisibelieve.org
[3]Katrina Kaif, https://thisibelieve.org
[4]Caroline Myss, https://thisibelieve.org
[5]https://www.ncronline.org/blogs/peace-pulpit/god-doing-new-things-we-must-be-open-his-will#:~:text=Paul%20is%20saying%20that%2C%20%22God,numbers%20and%20with%20such%20enthusiasm.

Speaking of "*New Things*"…The Worship & Music Committee has recommended to the Church Council that we try an experiment during the summer months and it was approved.

This experiment will be reducing the size of our worship bulletins by using the hymnals for the worship liturgy as well as the hymns and service music. At this time, we only have a limited number (50) of the newest hymnals (2006), the Evangelical Lutheran Worship (ELW) cranberry hymnals. Part of this experiment is deciding if we should invest in purchasing more of these. During worship we will be using either the green hymnals, Lutheran Book of Worship (LBW, 1978) or the cranberry hymnals, depending on the liturgy for that day. You will not have to negotiate using two hymnals in one service. The Worship & Music Committee is still working out the process for reintegrating the hymnals into our worship.

We will continue to offer a limited number of large print, comprehensive bulletins for those who need them and to be sent to the care homes. This will take some getting used to as any change does, and your feedback during this experiment is welcomed.

The worship weekend of June 6 & 7, 2026 is the targeted "begin date" for this experiment and we will continue it through the summer months.

Pastor Teri's Calendar

2026 CALENDAR YEAR

MAY CALENDAR MONTH

SUNDAY FIRST DAY OF WEEK

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26 Worship 8:15 & 10:30 am, Care Home Worship 2-4 PM	27 Pastor's Day Off- day of rest & renewal,	28 Sewing Group 1:30-4:00 PM	29 Payroll, 425 Youth Group 6:30 PM, Agape Choir 7:30 PM	30 PayDay, Bible Study 1:30 PM	01 Pastor's Sermon Writing Day	02 No Saturday Worship Service 6:00 PM
03 We Gather As One Worship Service 10:30 AM Communion, Choir, Graduates, Sunday Funday VBS 12:45-3:15 PM	04 Pastor's Day Off- day of rest & renewal	05 Appointment 2:00 PM, Sewing Group 2:30-4:00 PM	06 Appt 1:30- 3:00 PM, Worship and Music Committee 5:00 PM, 425 6:30 PM	07 Life Together Zoom 12-12:45, Bible Study 1:30 PM, Civil Air Patrol 7-9 PM	08 Pastor's Sermon Writing Day.	09 RHS Graduation 10:00 AM, Pastor not available 11:00 AM-3:00 PM, Worship Service 6:00 PM Communion
10 Worship Service 8:15 AM & 10:30 AM, Mother's Day, No Communion, Care Home Worship 2-4 PM	11 Pastor's Day Off- day of rest & renewal	12 Sewing Group 1:30-4:00 PM, Exec Comm 5:30 PM	13 Pastoral Care/ Home Visitation Day. 425 Youth Group Trip to Hays	14 Payroll, Women's Bible Study 10:00 AM, Life Together Zoom 12-12:45, Bible Study 1:30, RCACC Meeting 5:30 PM Milberger/or St John	15 PayDay, Pastor's Sermon Writing Day.	16 Worship Service 6:00 PM
17 8:15 & 10:30 worship, Communion	18 Pastor's Day Off- day of rest & renewal	19 Sewing Group 1:30-4:00 PM, Church Council 6:30	20 9 am- 12 pm Western Kansas Regional Meeting Hays	21 Life Together Zoom 12-12:45, Bible Study 1:30 PM, Civil Air Patrol 7-9 PM	22 Pastor's Sermon Writing Day.	23 Worship Service 6 PM Communion, Pentecost
24 Worship Service 8:15 & 10:30 AM, Pentecost, Memorial Day Weekend	25 Pastor's Day Off- day of rest & renewal	26 Sewing Group 1:30-4:00 PM, Record Clergy Comments	27	28 Payroll, Bible Study 1:30 PM, Civil Air Patrol 7-9 PM	29 PayDay, Pastor's Sermon Writing Day.	30 Western KS Conf Gathering, Wakeeny 10:00 am- 3:00 PM, Worship Service 6:00 PM, Holy Trinity
31 Worship Service 8:15 & 10:30 AM, Holy Trinity, No Communion						

Prayer Shawl Group: Mondays at 10:00 AM
Sewing Group: Tuesdays 1:30 – 4:00 PM
Bible Study with Pastor: Thursdays 1:30 PM in Parish Hall

Worship & Music Committee: Wednesday, May 6, 2026, at 5:30 PM

Executive Committee: Tuesday, May 12, 2026, at 5:30 PM

425 Youth Group: Wednesday, May 13, 2026, the 425 Youth Group will have their final meeting for the school year. They will meet at 6:00 PM to travel to Hays to play Mini-Golf and go out to eat. The Mini-Golf will be covered, but youth will need to bring dinner/snack money with them.

Women's Group: Thursday, May 14, 2026, at 10:00AM in Parish Hall.

Church Council: Tuesday, May 19, 2026, 6:30 PM

In May the 10:30 Worship Services on 2nd, 4th, and 5th Sundays will be broadcast on KRSL (990 AM and 98.1 FM).
Sunday Services are streamed live at www.stjohnrussell.com
This outreach is made possible as a ministry of St. John Lutheran Church.

425 Youth Group
Easter Breakfast

A great big THANK YOU to the 425 Youth Group and sponsors Jason & Sara Krug for getting up super early to prepare such a wonderful Easter morning breakfast. It was delicious! They served 86 people and raised $550.00 before food costs. Thank you to those who donated food, came and enjoyed the meal, and for your generous donations. It's not too late to donate.

Becky Hartman is turning 80 on May 31, 2026! For her birthday her family is putting together a card shower! She would love to hear from you! Please send all cards filled with celebration, love and joy to:

Becky Hartman
2804 Dickens Drive
Hutchison KS 67502

Nicole and Joel Zeiner are blessed parents, and Lee and Brenda Keffer are blessed grandparents to a beautiful baby girl! Her name is Zoey Noelle Zeiner. She was born April 24, 2026. Congratulations on your new blessing!

April 2026 Worship Assistants

6:00 Sat	Greeter/Usher	Reader	Musician
May 9th	Darold and Corine Gideon	Galen Niedenthal	TBA
May 16th	Jaden Nuss and Kelvie Reeves	Kelvie Reeves	TBA
May 23rd	Mary and John Boxberger	John Dumler	TBA
May 30th	Allen and Betty Funk	Elaine Voos	TBA

8:15 Sun	Greeter/Usher	Lector	Musician
May 10th	Katrine Kolder	Katrine Kolder	TBA
May 17th	Dick and Georganna McCrary	Georganna McCrary	TBA
May 24th	Gordon and Cheryl Kraich	Cheryl Kraich	TBA
May 31st	Katrine Kolder	Georganna McCrary	TBA

10:30 Sun	Greeter/Usher	Lector
May 3rd	425 Youth Group Members (N) & (S)	425 Youth Group Members
May 10th	Morris and Barbara Krug (N); Margaret Finkbeiner(S)	Deb Kreutzer
May 17th	Mike and Diane Waymaster(N); Deloris Janne(S)	Susan Krug
May 24th	Ron and Ginger Tittel(N); Laura Biles(S)	Judy Holmes
May 31st	Steve Masden(N); Carol Fritz(S)	Ruth Keil

	Acolytes	Musician
May 3rd	Reece Peck and Elsie Jefferson **(10:30am)**	Glenda Phillips
May 10th	Sasha Robbins and Campbell Lofland **(10:30am)**	TBA
May 17th	Rogan and Collins Dumler **(8:15 am)**	Alex and Noah Krug **(10:30)** TBA
May 24th	None	TBA
May 31st	Hadlee and Rush Brown **(10:30)**	TBA

Bulletin Delivery

May 1st : John Boxberger
May 8th: Denise Guth
May 15th: Teresa Hilbrink
May 22nd: Carol Fritz
May 29th: Margaret Finkbeiner

Altar Guild:

Chair: Carol Fritz
Saturday: Katrina Woelk
Connie Dumler, Carol Krug,
Janet Peerman and Danielle Ewers

If you cannot assist with the week you are listed, please try to find someone to take your place that weekend.

St. John Ringers Bell Choir and Agape Choir Schedules

Practices	**Date**	**St. John Ringers**	**Agape Choir**
None	None	None	None

Performances

Agape Choir:……***10:30 am May 3rd*** ……. meet in the Sanctuary at 9:45 am

St. John Ringers:……***10:30 am May 3rd*** **..**….meet in Sanctuary at 10:00 am
The St. John Ringers will meet Wednesday May 6, 2026, at 6:30 PM to work together to put away the bells for this season.

OUR CHURCH RECORDS

Worship Attendance

Date	Sat	Early	Late	Total
April 4th and 5th	41	45	156	242
April 11th and 12th	25	25	45	95
April 18th and 19th	25	19	46	90
April 25th and 26th	18	19	40	77

Offering

April 4th and 5th …….8203.00
April 11th and 12th …….4761.00
April 18th and 19th …… 2419.00
April 25th and 26th …….1213.00

~Vacation Bible School May 03, 2026~

Theme: "*This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it*!" Psalm 118:24
Following our We Gather As One worship service and meal, the children will gather at 12:45 PM to be divided into their groups and our day of fun and rejoicing will begin. Children are encouraged to invite a friend to church and VBS that day. VBS will end at 3:15 PM.

We Gather As One

May is a 5th Sunday month, but rather than gathering as one worshipping body on the last day of the month, we will have one service the first weekend in May. We will have one service on May 3, 2026, at 10:30 AM. We will be celebrating our 2026 graduates during this service. Following worship we will share a meal: Tony Bay will be grilling hamburgers and hot dogs, and the congregation is asked to share in the meal by bringing sides and desserts. We are hoping for an outdoor picnic – weather permitting – behind the church, or we will share a meal in the Parish Hall.
There will be **NO** worship services on Saturday May 2, 2026, at 6:00 PM or Sunday May 3, 2026, at 8:15 AM.

Congratulations 2026 High School Graduates!!!

Alex Krug who is the son of Jason & Sara Krug, Dominick Hernandez who is the son of Donnie & Kalena Coleman and Mitchell Olson who is the son of Michael & Brooke Olson.

Blessings and Celebrations

Baker Rainey Straub is the son of Chantel and Jordan Straub was baptized Saturday April 18, 2026. Bakers' siblings Carter, Cole and Emeryn joined their parents in promising to help Baker live in the promise of baptism and grow in the Christian faith and life. Blessings to Baker and his family.

Prayer Shawl Ministry

Our Prayer Shawl Ministry provides crocheted and knitted blankets to bring comfort to people in times of illness, recovery and grief. Anyone who enjoys knitting or crocheting can participate in this ministry even if you are unable to attend the group gathering time on Mondays at 10:00 am. Yarn is supplied by this ministry and the making of the prayer shawls can be done at home.

To be **included** in the **June Newsletter**, information must be submitted no later than **Wednesday May 20, 2026.**

The Mai Family Scholarship and Earlin Nuss Memorial Scholarship

The Mai Family Scholarship is a scholarship established by the Mai family in honor and memory of Rich Mai. Confirmed students who are members of St. John Lutheran Church may apply for the scholarship to help offset the expense of pursuing higher education. This scholarship may be renewed for four years. The Earlin Nuss Memorial Scholarship is available for high school graduates who are confirmed members of St. John Lutheran Church entering college. This is a one-time scholarship.

The application link for the Mai Family Scholarship and the Earlin Nuss Memorial Scholarship will soon be available at stjohnrussell.com. Paper applications are available now in the church office. Applications must be submitted no later than Wednesday July 1, 2026.

Award notifications will be made by writing to each recipient (awards will be presented directly to the education institutions). All scholarship recipients (or their representative) must be present at the 10:30 service on Scholarship recognition Sunday July 26, 2026. If you have any problems with the application, please contact the church office at 785-483-5358 (Monday through Friday, 1:30pm – 5:00pm).

The 2026 St. John Lutheran Church Back-to-School Giveaway

It is that time of year that we begin gearing up for our Back-to-School Giveaway. This year we will be doing the giveaway on Thursday and Friday July 30 and 31, 2026. **Please do not bring any donations before June 1, 2026.**

Donated Clothing should be school ready (no stains or tears). Gently worn shoes, jackets, and athletic wear are also appreciated. Donations in all sizes for all grades are needed. A box for gently used clothing and shoes is in the basement hallway under the coat rack. New socks and undergarments, school supplies, and monetary donations may be brought to the church office.

Donations of new, full-size personal hygiene items are also needed. Products with neutral scents are preferred. Items may include, but are not limited to: toothbrushes, toothpaste, floss, bar/shower soap, shampoo, conditioner, body lotion, deodorant, combs, brushes, lip balm, nail clippers, foot powder, feminine products, and hand sanitizer.

The Back-to-School Giveaway is for students (preschool through high school) who reside in the Russell County Area. Each student chooses gently used (and new) clothing and receives a new package of socks and undergarments. A limited number of school supplies are available for students in junior and senior high.

Thank you for your generosity and support of the congregation and community, these ministries allow St. John to help many students as they prepare for the new school year. If you would like to **volunteer** for the Back-to-School Giveaway, **help is needed** to sort as donations arrive, set up before the giveaway, assist during the giveaway, and sort items remaining after the giveaway. For more information, please contact the church office.

A Willingness to Serve

<u>If you have any interest in the following please contact St. John Lutheran Church Council President Lee Keffer at</u> **<u>(785-483-7793). Your willingness is greatly appreciated!</u>**

-Anyone willing or wanting to finish out a one-year term on St. John Lutheran Church Council

-Any congregation members willing to take part in the Pastor Evaluation Committee (We need at least one congregation member to join this committee).

-Any two voting congregation members (one female and one male) to take part in voting at the Annual Synod Meeting. This meeting will take place on livestream in St. John Lutheran Church Parish Hall on June 6, 2026. Anyone who wants to watch the livestream can also attend.

At the 10:30 service on Sunday April 12, 2026, the installation of leaders in the congregation blessed and honored the following individuals: Council Officers Lee Keffer, Gaylon Walter, Mark Johnson and Amber Ruggels; and Council Members Afton Brown, Hadlee Brown, D.J. Klema, Alex Krug, Melinda Olson and Heather Pohlman.

<u>St. John Lutheran Church Offices will be closed Monday May 25, 2026, for Memorial Day</u>

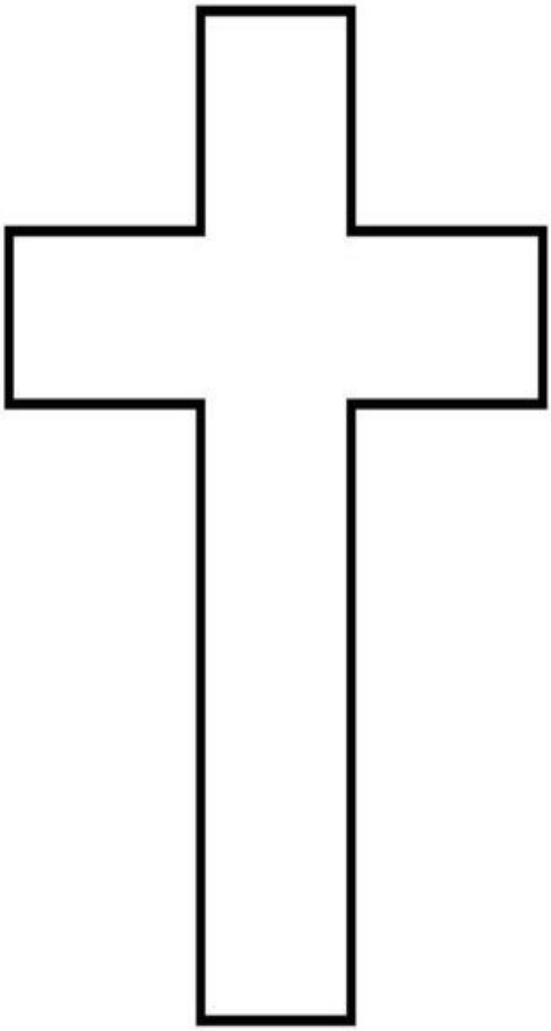
St John Lutheran Cemetery Mowing Season

A Reminder: During Mowing Season there are restrictions on can be placed around the plots. Maintenance needs to be able to mow the between the rows without obstacles and weed-eat around the memorial markers. Shepherds' hooks, solar lights, statuary, vases, etc. are not permitted during the mowing season.

If you wish to keep your decorations or flowers after Memorial Day, please remove all items from the St. John Cemetery no later than Sunday, June 7, 2026; items remaining after June 14, 2026, will be discarded.

Many items were picked up last year and have gone unclaimed. These decorations have been stored at the church. If you think they might be yours, please come claim them.

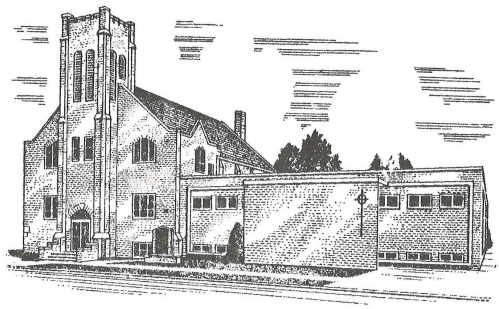
Apologies! In the April Newsletter missed listing a Lily & Candle sponsorship and a birthday.
Lily in Memory of Melvin Janne by Deloris Janne & Family; Candle in Memory of Peter & Lydia Michel and Willliam & Anna Janne by Deloris Janne & Family.
Brooke Olson's Birthday, April 12. Sincere apologies for the oversight.



Blessed

JESUS LOVES you

St. John Lutheran Church
425 N. Main Street
Russell, KS 67665



May 2026 Newsletter

St. John Lutheran Church
Pastor Teri Sutherlin
785-483-5358
stjohn@ruraltel.net
stjohnrussell.com

Worship Services
6:00 pm Saturday
8:15 and 10:30 am Sunday

****NEW Office Hours****
Monday through Friday
****1:30 pm to 5:00 pm****

St. John Lutheran Church
Clergy and Staff
Pastor Teri Sutherlin (pastor@ruraltel.net)
Kelvie Reeves, Administrative Assistant
Shayla Peck, Bookkeeper
John Kreutzer, Custodian

Church Council
President: Lee Keffer
Vice President:Gaylon Walter
Secretary: Mark Johnson
Treasurer:Amber Ruggels

Members:
Afton Brown, Hadlee Brown,
D.J. Klema, Melinda Olson,
Paul Phillips, Heather Pohlman, and
Pastor Teri Sutherlin

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America