

St. John's Journal

Volume 52, Issue 4

CHRIST IS RISEN! – THE SEAL OF OUR FORGIVENESS

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Beginning with the Festival of the Resurrection of Our Lord, which is Sunday, April 5, and throughout the next seven weeks, we rejoice in the Easter season. The services of God's house are filled with a festive joy – in the Scripture readings, the hymns, the liturgy, the preaching – all because Christ is risen.

A big part of that joy lies in knowing that the resurrection of Jesus is the seal of our forgiveness. The fact that Christ rose from the dead certifies that His death was indeed good for saving the whole world. It is God the Father's seal of approval upon His Son's suffering and death on the cross, by which He atoned for our sins and earned everlasting salvation for us.

Christ's resurrection serves as a seal of our forgiveness a little bit like the way a meat inspector's stamp serves as a seal of quality and wholesomeness. When the Department of Agriculture inspector stamps a carcass, it is a visible verification that the meat is healthy and of a given quality. The stamp does not *make* the meat good and wholesome; it already was, even before the inspector put his seal of approval on it. The stamp simply certifies for everyone that the meat is good. Of course, if the inspector looks at the meat and does *not* put the stamp of approval on it, we know there's something wrong; the meat is not good, and we would not want to eat it.

Similarly, Jesus' resurrection from the dead did not *make* His death good; it already was, even before He rose again. When the sinless Son of God died on the cross, our forgiveness was complete. The sacrificial Lamb was already perfect, as was His atoning work. But rising from the dead sealed the fact! Jesus' resurrection certifies for everyone that the Lord's death was good – more than sufficient to obtain forgiveness and life for the whole world. Of course, if Jesus had *not* risen from the dead, we would know that something was wrong – that Jesus was just another dead man, not the Savior of the world. It's just as Paul wrote at 1 Corinthians 15:17, “If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.”

But Christ is indeed risen from the dead! What a great comfort for us! Jesus is alive! And His resurrection declares it was in fact the Son of God who died for our sins (*Romans 1:4*), and therefore our forgiveness is guaranteed. We know with certainty that His death gained a pardon for the whole world! His resurrection seals the fact! Jesus' death has undeniably reconciled us to God and has given us everlasting life! “If, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled through the death of His Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through His life!” *Romans 5:10*

Therefore, dear Christians, we need not fear anything in this life: no trouble, no pain, no sickness, no loss, not the devil, not even death! Christ is risen! Our Savior is living! Our forgiveness is sealed! Our salvation is certain! So give thanks to your risen Lord, and live in His resurrection joy!

- Pastor Bishop



Christian Education

Sunday School

Perfect Attendance

January 2026

1st/2nd/3rd Grades
Keturah Harley
Roman Harlety

February 2026

Nurse/Pre-School/Kindergarten
Collette Hill

4th/5th/6th Grades
Aiden Harms

APRIL ANNIVERSARIES

April 02

Jeff & Leslie Norman

April 05

Matt & Shelby Gruden
Joe & Trina Szadkowski

April 07

Jeff & Brenda Sayles

April 10

Greg & Wendy McDonald

April 13

Eric & Paula Jensen

April 17

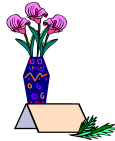
John & Althea Geiser

April 19

John & Ronda Adkins
Tim & Sandy Gay

April 25

Don & Valerie Dobbelaire



APRIL BIRTHDAYS



April 01

Randy Couch
Dan Rees

April 02

Brittany Allen
Randi Becker
Edward Gaitros
Collins Norman
Garry Slabaugh

April 03

Dave Drockelman
Iris Gaitros
Greg Hall

April 04

Lindsey Dixon
Carter Stevenson

April 07

Lilly Daniels

April 08

Darrell Hansen
Dan Watson

April 09

Edyn Kammeyer
Alicia Turner

April 11

Logan Schoch
Dane Watson

April 12

Larkin Hinkley

April 13

Jeff Norman

April 14

Shayla Kesselmayr

April 15

Bobby Gregory
Mark Scott
Mike Wagner

April 16

Dawn Bohannon



April 17

Alex Schmidgall

April 18

Dave Christy

April 19

Mike Dixon, Sr.
Ron Reising
Doug Vogel

April 20

Cathy Ashbaker

April 21

Dave Becker
Kevin Dupent
Addison Nelson

April 22

Jim Buster
Michelle Gregory

April 23

Dan Dobbelaire
Lisa Oller
Vanessa Watson

April 24

Ray Garber
Drew Jackson
Maxine Oliverius
Paul Tackmann

April 25

Josh Donovan
Kingston Hamlet
Kathy Heisel

April 26

William Wiker III

April 27

Chris Ashbaker

April 28

Elaine Hapke
Andrea Yergler

April 29

Chris Bitner
Mikayla Wilson

April 30

Diane Fornoff
Amy Swibold

If you know of someone in one of the Carle Health hospitals, please contact the church office. They are not able to tell us who is in the hospital unless we have a name to check on. Thank you.

PARISH NOTES



Church Attendance

Feb 2026 467 14 services
 Feb 2025 420 12 services
 Feb 2024 615 15 services

Sunday School Attendance

Feb 2026: 256
 Feb 2025: 219
 Feb 2024: 252

Videographers - April

Team Daniels/Harms

Worship Committee - April

Diane Gould

April Communion Assistance

April 2

7:00 p.m. Ross Gould

April 5

7:00 a.m. Dave Drockelman
 10:30 a.m. Ross Gould

April 19

8:00 a.m. Vince Tennell
 10:30 a.m. Brian Ford

Ushers - April

8:00

Jim Lonergan
 Scott Stalter
 Merle Wiseman

10:30

Brian Ford
 Trent Hoover
 Brian Umbach

Congratulations! In 2025, St John Lutheran Church received \$516 through the Thrivent Choice® program — and that's worth celebrating!

Acolytes—April

April 2

7:00 p.m. Aiden Harms

April 5

10:30 a.m. Silas Gould

April 12

10:30 Aiden Harms

April 19

10:30 a.m. Kenna Donovan

April 26

10:30 a.m. Silas Gould

LENT AND HOLY WEEK

Preaching Series:

“Symbols of Jesus’ Suffering”

Apr 2: Maundy Thursday

Sermon: “The Cup Jesus Drank; The Cup Jesus Gave” Matthew 26:27-28, 39

Apr 3: Good Friday

Sermon: “This Is Jesus, the King of the Jews” Matthew 27:37

Scriptures associated with the seven carved wooden symbols on our altar reredos, which is the decorative wooden panel right behind the altar – all of which are symbols of our Lord’s Passion; and then also the single symbol of our Lord Jesus carved into the front of the altar itself. These symbols all remind us of Jesus and His suffering and death for our salvation.

Because the symbols are fairly small, and they blend in with the rest of the woodwork, they are not easy to see unless one views them up close, from within the chancel. So we have included renderings of these carvings on the front of the service folder. *We thank Shayla Kesselmayr for this artwork.*

TREASURER’S REPORT

February 2025

	<u>February</u>	<u>Y-T-D</u>
INCOME	24,627.40	49,373.77
EXPENSES	39,489.70	77,092.49
INCOME-EXPENSES	\$(14,962/30)	\$(27,718.73)
General Fund		3,718.27
General Fund CD #1192280		40,000.00
General Fund Schwab		198,898.64
General Fund Total		242,616.91
Ed Grant Fund Checking		1,948.56
Ed Grant CD LCMS 715 03/26		51,863.96
Ed Grant CD LCMS 717 03/26		51,835.93
Ed Grant Fund #2-Vanguard		65,214.11
Educational Fund Total		170,862.56
East Bluff Property-Vanguard		39,705.98
East Bluff CD LCMS 716 03/26		53,741.35
East Bluff CD LCMS 714 03/26		53,770.40
Cat Stock at FMV		211,389.03
East Bluff Property Fund		358,606.76
Memorial Fund Checking		22,079.62
Memorial Vanguard		97,598.38
Memorial—Busey CD		20,000.00
Memorial Fund Total		139,678.00
Building Fund Checking		30,063.33
S S Fund Checking		8,890.43
TOTAL ASSETS		\$950,717.99
Checking Account Balance		66,700.21
TOTAL		66,700.21
LIABILITIES		
Payroll Liabilities		2,972.00
Misc LCMS Orgs Fund		649.50
TOTAL LIABILITIES		3,621.50
FUND BALANCE		
Net Income (Loss)		(24,569.63)
Capital Accounts		971,666.12
TOTAL FUND BALANCE		947,096.49
TOTAL LIABILITIES & FUND BALANCE		\$950,717.99

JOINT SERVICE AT GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN SCHOOL,

MAY 17, 2026 — On Sunday, May 17, 10:00 a.m., we will join together with our brothers and sisters from Trinity, Pekin and St. John’s, Sand Prairie for a service of thanksgiving to God for the retirement of our school’s capital debt. The service will be held at Good Shepherd Lutheran School, and will take the place of our regular morning services. So we will **not** have the 8:00 and 10:30 services or Sunday School and Bible Class here at St. John’s that morning. We will conduct the 7:00 p.m. service in our chapel as usual.

**HI-LITES OF ST. JOHN'S VOTERS ASSEMBLY
March 9, 2026**

Ross Gould called the meeting to order. A quorum was not present so all motions will be voted on at the April meeting. Pastor Bishop opened with devotions.

The February Parish Report was reviewed.

The February meeting minutes were reviewed.

Treasurer's Report – Rod Bollinger reviewed the February Treasurer's Report. For the month of February, expenses exceeded income by \$14,862.30. For the year so far, we are showing a deficit of \$27,718.72. Expenses were on target for what is budgeted. Rod moved \$20,000.00 from a Schwab account to the checking account so it shows a positive balance. There is a CD coming due in August that Rod will move at that time. Giving versus expenses is following the same trend that was noted at the end of the year. There was nothing out of the ordinary on the check register.

Board of Trustees – Dave Kesselmayer reported that the proceeds of \$160.00 from the Trustee sponsored dinner were donated to the Share program. Gary Pool will oversee coordinating a workshop at the church on cemetery repairs. An expert on the subject will be giving a PowerPoint presentation at the church and then attendees will go out to the cemetery for some hands-on training. Attendance is not limited to members from our church. It is recommended that about 4 members of our church volunteer to attend. The presentation will be on June 20th, with June 27th as a rain date. The class teaches the right and wrong ways to repair cemeteries. There is no cost to the church. Dave provided an update on the status of the quotes for the sewer line repairs. One quote came in at \$25,000.00 and the other at \$33,000.00 for just the kitchen line. These quotes would be for cleaning out and lining the sewer lines. Dave indicated that the Trustees have contacted another company to get an additional quote. The Trustees also contacted Maquet Plumbing and got a quote for just running a new line from the kitchen. The quote was \$5,550.00. The Trustees are waiting on the final quote but are in favor of having the new line installed. Repairs on the other line are more proactive and are not in need of immediate repair. In May the Trustees will be advertising in the bulletin for a new church secretary as Sandy Ferguson is retiring at the end of the year. The Trustees are opening the position to members first. Ideally, a replacement can be hired so they can shadow Sandy for several months.

Board of Elders – Brian Ford reported that Valerie Ferguson talked with them about the results of the church revitalization survey. They will discuss this at their next meeting. The board has elected Dave Drockelman as the new chairman.

Board of Finance – Rod Bollinger reported that there is a motion to be voted on to remove Nancy Drockelman from the Vanguard accounts and add Rod and Ross Gould as people authorized to act on behalf of the church. Rod provided a summary of where the church's funds are invested and the return on investment as of the end of last year. We continue to discuss how to possibly invest some of the money and whether to put some of the funds into riskier investments to gain a higher return. Rod also indicated that the committee has received quotes from 2 people to actively manage the funds, but the committee preference is to continue to manage the funds ourselves. Daryl Dagit is willing to meet with the committee to look at some options. Bob Oliverius inquired as to what happens with the dividends received from the CAT stock that we hold. Rod indicated that he would need to confirm but believes the money is put into the General Fund as opposed to being reinvested. Bob also noted that if we are getting the dividends that those funds are not noted on the financial records. Bob also inquired about putting all the money from the funds into the same bucket to see if we can get a better rate.

Board of Christian Education – Laura Dobbelaire reported the board has recently met and they have welcomed Matt Gruden as a new member. The board is still looking for a Sunday School teacher to help with grades 1 – 2. The last youth group event went well and was attended by 11 youths. Their next event will be in April. Good Shepherd's school musical will be coming up and the auction will take place on March 21st. We have ordered some Pickleball equipment.

John Neumann reported for Good Shepherd School. The board meeting will take place tomorrow night. The board has a budget preparation session coming up.

Board of Worship – Diane Gould reported that the board met last Thursday. They have 2 new members, Dodie Sheckler and Tori Hill. They will need to be voted on at the next meeting.

Board of Evangelism – Jennifer Kesselmayer reported that the committee is still working on ways to do outreach within the community. There will be a spring potluck on April 26th.

Board of Stewardship – No report.

Long Range Planning Committee – No report.

Educational Grant Fund Committee – No report.

East Bluff Property Committee – Dave Kesselmayer indicated that they are meeting with a gentleman this Wednesday to discuss tree clean up on the property.

Constitution By-laws Committee – No report.

Unfinished business – Pastor Bishop indicated that he believes they may have a candidate willing to take over as Recording Secretary. The Lenten dinner sponsored by the Elders will be a fish fry.

New business – Gary Pool noted that the Trustees are always looking for volunteers to help at the cemetery. If interested, please let the Trustees know. Ross Gould indicated that the Elders are continuing to look at ways to perform mission events.

The meeting closed with the Lord’s Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Wagner



Lutherans for Life sent a thank you letter for our donation to them.

Thank you so much for your thoughtful gift of support For Concordia University Chicago. Our students are blessed by your assistance and prayers. Meg Busse, Senior Director, Concordia University Chicago Foundation

Received a thank you letter from Lutheran Heritage Foundation for our donation. Thank you and God bless you!. Rev. Heise

MARCH LIBRARY CORNER

By Eileen Tiona



"Jesus thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in Him." John 2:11.

I haven't any new books to report on this month, but would like to invite everyone to come into the library and check out all the wonderful books that are available.



In May the Youth Group will help senior members of the congregation with spring cleanup and other helpful chores. So watch for the date and contact us if you would like help with yard work, etc.

CEMETERY PRESERVATION WORKSHOP

St. John’s Lutheran Church will be the host for a cemetery preservation workshop to be held Saturday June 20, 2026 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The workshop will be presented in two parts by Dawn Cobb archaeologist with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and John and Geni Heider of Restoration in Progress (R.I.P).

Part one is a power point presentation from 9:00 a.m. to noon in the church’s lower level. The presentation will focus on why we preserve cemeteries, preservation laws, and basic methods used to do this. All members are welcome to attend this.

Part two is a hands- on workshop at St. John’s Lutheran Church Cemetery located on Veterans Dr. in Pekin. Participants will be learning how to put proper grave marker repair and cleaning into practice. Attendance on site is limited.

If you are interested in attending either of these events please contact Gary Pool at 309-208-0009.

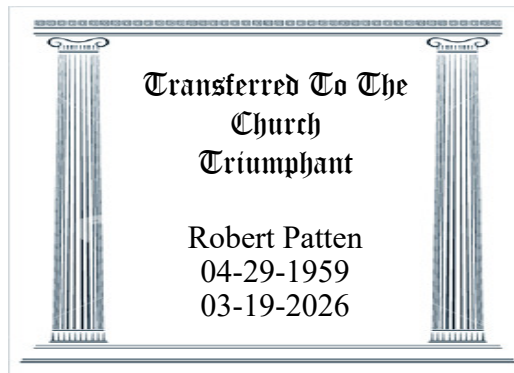


St. John’s Rummage Sale – The sale will be held April 10 & 11 from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. “Members Only” shopping day will be Thursday, April 9 from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. We are still taking donations. Please bring them to the church by Tuesday, March 31.

Other opportunities to support the Rummage Sale are: buy raffle tickets or shop the bake sale. We will be selling tickets for the raffle baskets today in between services. You will be able to see all of the raffle items.

Bake Sale: We will have a bake sale during the Rummage Sale to help raise funds for the next project. If you would like to donate bake goods, please contact Nancy Swearingen, 309-966-2131. Thank you.

GREETERS: It is always nice to have someone greet us as we come into church. So, we have placed sign-up sheets for April and May on the bulletin board in the Narthex. Please consider being a greeter.



IN OUR PRAYERS

If you know of anyone who needs to be added, please let the church office know.

All our shut-ins

Pastor Niemann
 Robert Rilea
 Debbie Miller
 Julie Rilea
 Keith Gleason
 Gabriella Kesselmayr
 Kellen Norman
 Lee Morgan
 Roy Dagit
 Shirley Williamson
 Scott Ruschmeyer
 Megan Gould
 Melvyn Gentry
 Michelle Watson
 Shirley Gentry
 Cameron Conway
 Marcille Frevert
 Vicki McKinley
 Donna Hansen
 Marlana Montgomery
 Janet Lawson
 David Justi

Sandy Morgan
 Peggy Farlin
 Addie Burling
 Eileen Tiona
 Paula Jensen
 Suzanne Reising
 Joyce Barnes
 Ray Garber
 John Durdle
 Bobby Gregory
 Marilee Gregory
 Rosetta Turner
 Bob Hurst
 Pam Woolsey
 Tom Lappie
 Honor Deiss
 Tina Williams
 Sandy Tennell
 Bryan McGrath
 Bob Oliverius
 Don Dobbelaire
 Lori Burton

GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN SCHOOL

- April 7 Students return, Classes resume
- April 9 Spring Picture Day, K-8 & Pre K, Group Pictures
- April 10 Spring Pictures, Pre K
- April 17 School Improvement Day, Early Dismissal (Pre K @ 12N / K-8 @ 12:30 pm)

LUTHERAN YOUNG ADULT FELLOWSHIP (ages 20-35) will meet on Saturday, April 18. They meet at Trinity Lutheran Church, 135 NE Randolph Ave., Peoria from 6 to 9 p.m. Fellowship includes: Food, Games, Movies, etc. RSVP by emailing: Sam Bishop at sambish1995@gmail.com

Mother's Day Diaper Shower

Pencil In This Date: Peoria Area Lutherans for Life is sponsoring our annual diaper shower on Mother's Day, **May 10th**. More information to come in your May newsletters.

“Did You Know?”

by Peoria Area Lutherans for Life: Equipping Lutherans to be Gospel motivated voices for life.



- The DNA inside you can wrap around earth a couple million times.
 - If the DNA code in **one** human cell was written out in books and stacked up, it would be almost as tall as the great Pyramid of Giza.
 - If you printed all your DNA out in books, it is estimated that it would create enough books to fill the Grand Canyon 50 times.
 - Uncoiled DNA could reach the sun 400-500 times
- (compiled from Biblical Creation and Intelligent Design)

CAMP CILCA

April 12—Annual Banquet — Held at Camp CILCA's Dining Hall. Contact camp office to reserve your tickets.

April 17-19 — Spring Women's Scrapbooking Retreat

Camp CILCA exists to strengthen and foster faith in Jesus Christ and relationships with others in a unique outdoor setting. Find out more at 222.cilca.org.

PASTORAL MATTERS AND CONCERNS



If anyone is in need of visits from your Pastor, please let us know. Leave a message with the secretary and the Pastor will return your call.

If someone needs to be placed on the Shut-in list, please contact the office. Pastor Bishop visits our shut-ins monthly.

If you know of someone entering the hospital, please contact the office so Pastor will be able to visit the individual.

Help your pastor to serve you better! Keep him informed as to your needs. *“Ask and you shall receive!”*

St. John's Lutheran Church
711 Court St.
Pekin, IL 61554

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Bible Wordsearch

Wordsearch 259

Matt. 12:29-40

Sign of Jonah

S	S	S	E	L	E	R	A	C	H	H	A	N	O	J
B	T	O	G	S	S	E	L	N	U	E	V	E	R	Y
R	I	F	N	W	U	A	N	S	W	E	R	E	D	T
I	U	D	O	O	R	B	E	G	M	T	S	S	E	I
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S	V	I	S	D	H	I	O	O	T	Y	S	T	T	P
J	I	H	P	E	E	C	V	T	L	K	N	U	H	S
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D	E	Y	S	A	O	C	O	E	N	A	R	G	I	C
G	R	N	L	P	S	P	P	T	T	I	A	E	A	I
M	S	A	N	G	O	S	H	L	S	I	S	R	V	O
E	I	T	H	E	R	K	V	E	N	E	R	Y	O	O
N	L	T	P	E	C	X	E	S	T	Y	O	R	A	D
T	B	E	L	L	Y	S	T	N	W	I	C	K	E	D

BELLY	ACCOUNT
BRINGS	AGAINST
BROOD	ANSWERED
CARRY	ANYONE
DAYS	ANYTHING
EARTH	CARELESS
EITHER	FORGIVEN
EVERY	GATHER
EXCEPT	JUDGMENT
FRUIT	OVERFLOW
JONAH	PHARISEES
MOUTH	PROPHET
SPEAKS	SPOKEN
SPIRIT	STORED
UNLESS	STRONG
VIPERS	TEACHER
WICKED	SCATTERS

After you find all the hidden words the left over letters spell out a
Bible verse reading from the top left to the bottom right

MORE PUZZLES AT:
<http://biblewordgames.com>

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