

As a farming community we’re all aware of the seasons. How they determine every part of our life’s calendar. The cycle of planting and harvest rolls along like clockwork. A key part of the growth process is pruning; as with fruit trees and the production of a better fruit. You and I are such “fruit” that results.

*“My Father prunes every branch that produces fruit
so that it produces more fruit.” – John 15*

My wife Jackie and I have been talking with a number of you about God’s plans for growth of our church. We are discerning a season change for us, and thus, necessarily for our Church as well. Pruning is always hard, both on the branch that is removed and for the plant losing a limb. As we are “pruned” from Royal, a number of leadership positions are filled with energetic younger members, who together with experienced senior members, healthy growth is ahead.

For Jackie and I, as the branch to be pruned, we will be grafted into a community where our gifts may be used. As I am not formally retiring, I will not seek a full-time pastoral call, rather as active members in another congregation I plan to focus on discipleship, Bible Study and prayer. Jackie will continue with her business “Motif” and her ministry in Bangladesh.

As God called us to be together for this season of life our focus is on the unity of the Body. Each individual in our church has a key role in building up the Body of Christ. The world is getting frayed on the edges and our Biblical savvy has slipped. In past eras Bible knowledge was a priority. Prayer is the lifeblood not only of the church but of the nation. Prayer was the ‘Go-to’ when Jesus needed time with the Father: It is the same with us. All the functions of the church hinge on a knowledge of the Word. Without a conversational understanding of the Bible, we simply beat the air. With Scripture, the Holy Spirit moves each heart. Hallelujah!!



from pastor jay (cont.)

This past decade+, our life and work here at St. John has been an unexpected pleasure for me, a veritable “homecoming”; of stepping into an Ostfriesian farming community and seeing the remnants of my forebearers culture. All of my ancestors, Ostfriesian stock, arrived on the muddy flats along the Illinois River in 6/1871. To see the current “fruit” in Royal, from branches grafted into America 150 ago has been a gift received. We are thankful to this Community.

You have truly made us feel like family, especially important for Jackie as she has been far away from both previous homes in the UK and Bangladesh. Jackie is thankful for the encouragement and support of her ministry in Bangladesh, and the warm welcoming smiles and hugs when she returns to Royal. Our continual parade of guests from the US and around the world troop to our door and are always grateful for your warm welcomes. Our parsonage is aptly nicknamed “The International B&B!” giving us the chance to brag on our church fellowship and gaining Royal international admirers.

We trust the blessings of our years together has been mutual. The Lord has given us the profound privilege of being invited into your lives, sharing several seasons with you. We have laughed, cried, prayed, been consoled, known love, and of course have made mistakes along the way. We are grateful for your forgiving spirit.

Of course, there is yet more to be done. There always is. It is time now for me to pass the baton as you prepare to welcome the next pastor our loving Father has for you. That one will be grafted into this fellowship at just the right time, with the necessary gifts to help strengthen you for the next season of growth, that you eagerly await.

The church Council is taking the initial steps to provide future pastoral leadership. The process is always a timely one. The protocol is designed to help congregations to be matched with the best candidates available in the NALC. The most important step is, as always, to be a people invested in prayer. As you have been faithful to pray for us in our role here in Royal, may those same prayers be offered on behalf of the Royal community and the new leadership that will arrive at God’s chosen time.

from pastor jay (cont.)

Jackie and I will be here for some months yet and will continue to serve the Church and community with glad hearts and a joy that comes from Living in the Light of the Savior.

Blessings to you as we look to the Season of Pentecost!!



Pastor Jay

DESIGNATED BENEVOLENCE



During the month of **May**, the designated benevolence is for **Disaster Relief** to help those in need. Please use the center portion of the offering envelopes for your gifts.

A special thank you to all those that contribute

COUNCIL MEETING NOTES



1. Council met on Monday, April 17, at 7:00. Pastor Jay led Bible Study on Forgiveness. (John 20:23 and Jeremiah 7:5,7-8)
2. The monthly designated benevolence for May is Disaster Relief.
3. Property – Youth Garage Roof is complete. Classroom remodels upstairs are also complete. *Thank you to Ray, Marc, and the Sieberns for their work on these projects.*
4. Recognition is being planned for Jerry, Kathleen, and Darlene on May 28th as they step away from teaching Sunday School. The kids will be singing that day as well.
5. Call and Transition Committees are being formed. Sign-up sheets will be outside sanctuary for those interested.
6. Next council meeting is Monday, May 15, 2023, at 7:00 p.m.



NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER

Please participate in this year's National Day of Prayer on Thursday, May 4. Lift up your prayers to God in thanksgiving for individuals, families, communities, our country, and the world.

Members of St. John are invited to a prayer breakfast at 6:30 am at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Gifford, and also a Prayer/Worship Gathering held there as well at 6:30 pm. All are welcome to attend.

ASCENSION DAY



Ascension Day is Thursday, May 18. A worship service will be held at 7:30 a.m.

Do you wonder what it was like as disciples when Jesus ascended into heaven? He gave them the monumental task of making disciples of all the world. Plus, they'd have to do it without relying on Jesus' physical presence.

Were those disciples overwhelmed, uncertain, afraid? Maybe, yet they went on to spread the gospel throughout the world. They rose to the challenge because they fixed their gaze above as they watched Jesus disappear into the clouds.

When we follow that example, offering ourselves as willing servants and keeping our eyes trained on Jesus instead of our circumstances, there's no limit to what God can accomplish through us.

¹⁹After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them,
he was taken up into heaven and he sat at the right hand of God.
²⁰Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere,
and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word
by the signs that accompanied it. — Mark 16:19-20 (NIV)

OUTDOOR WORSHIP SERVICES

Plans are being made for Outdoor worship services during the summer months. The first outdoor service is being planned for Sunday, May 14th (Mother's Day). The schedule will follow in June – September with the 2nd and 4th Sundays as outdoor worship services. The 4th Sundays in June and July, we will plan to have special music.
*These dates are all weather permitting.



HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY!



During worship on Sunday, May 14, all mothers will be given special honor and recognition. A token of appreciation will be given to them.

Our thanks and God's blessings upon our mothers!

*"Honor her for all that her hands have done,
and let her works bring her praise at the city gate."
- Proverbs 31:31*

CALL AND TRANSITION COMMITTEES

Committees are being formed as our congregation begins the search for a new pastor.



The Call Committee will work on the process of hiring a new pastor, while the Transition Committee will work with Pastor Jay and a new pastor as the transition is made here at St. John.

If you are interested in being on either committee, please add your name to one of the sign-up sheets located in the entry ways.



GREAT RIVERS MISSION DISTRICT RETREAT

This year's retreat will begin at 1:00 pm on Thursday, May 18, 2023, and conclude with lunch on Friday, May 19. It will be held at Sacre Coeur Retreat Center, 8508 County Road 100 N., Magnolia, IL, along the Illinois River. This retreat is for pastors and congregational members of the district.

The retreat will focus on building relationships with others in the district, and how we can be more involved in the life of the Church in our area.

Let Pastor Jay or the church office know if you are interested in attending this retreat on behalf of our congregation.



MAY BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

Birthday Celebrations in May (members 80+ years):

Barbara Fruhling celebrates her 86th birthday on the 14th.

Wilma Buhr celebrates her 84th birthday on the 24th.

JoAnn Lynch celebrates her 83rd birthday on the 24th.

Wedding Anniversaries in May (members 50+ years):

Dale and Virginia Behrens celebrate 57 years on the 8th.

Remember all of them in your prayers,
and with birthday and anniversary greetings!

³*I thank my God every time I remember you.*

⁴*In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy
because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now,
being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you
will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.*

– Philipians 1:3-6



REMINDER LIST

COUNCIL SERVICE:

Anita Lieb
Debbie Ackerman
Daniele Frerichs

ALTAR GUILD:

Bruce Frerichs
Diane Frerichs
Ed and JoAnn Rademaker

SOUND SYSTEM: Wes Grussing

ORGANISTS/PIANISTS:

Susi Huls, Loretta Aden

DATE: COFFEE HOST:

May 7	Stacy Smith	LECTORS:	Teresa Aden
May 14	Parish Life-Evangelism		Debbie Ackerman
May 21	Rodney Moorhous		Sarah Wolken
May 28	Parish Ed		Debbie Ackerman

DATE: COMMUNION HOST:

May 7	Provide Bread and Wine:	John and Stacy Ehmen
	Provide Grape Juice:	Kathleen Weckel
May 21	Provide Bread and Wine:	Larry and Nancy Anders

DATE: ALTAR FLOWERS:

May 7	Bruce Frerichs family; Doug Wesley family
May 14	Mike and Kris Francisco; Rodney and Debbie Suits
May 21	Doug and Lori Bluhm
May 28	James and Anita Lieb; Jim and Kathy Patten

DATE: SUNDAY USHERS:

May 7	Stacy Smith, Doug and Miki Wesley
May 14	Ray and Loretta Aden, Rodney and Debbie Suits
May 21	Ed and Jodi Bohlen family, Dwight and Patti Bohlen
May 28	Gene and Becky Miller, Jacob and Amanda Bohlen family

PARISH ED / YOUTH NEWS

Sunday School - Sundays at 8:30 a.m.

Confirmation Class - Wednesday, May 3, 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.
Confirmation Sunday will take place May 7th at 9:45 a.m.

Sunday School Students will sing on Sunday, May 28th.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL - SAVE THE DATE!



This year's VBS will launch kids on a cosmic quest where they'll have a blast shining Jesus' light to the world! STELLAR rockets kids on an out-of-this-world adventure that's light years of faith-building fun.

Sunday, July 9 - Thursday, July 13

Closing Program will be held during the worship service on Sunday, July 16.

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE RECOGNITION SUNDAY



On Sunday, May 21, our high school seniors will be graduating from St. Joseph-Ogden High School. They will be recognized in worship here at St. John that day. Graduates are encouraged to wear their cap and gown for worship, and tell the congregation about their plans for the future.

Please keep Joselyn Frerichs, Hunter Ketchum, Madeline Osterbur, Alayna Wagle and Lili Wentzloff in your prayers as they prepare to take this next step in life's journey.

Jeremiah 29:11 - *"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."*

EXPRESSIONS OF THANKS

I would like to thank all that took the time to send cards and wishes for my birthday.

Marvin Duilsman

thank
you!

Thank you for the cards, texts, phone calls and prayers to help comfort us during our time of sorrow and the 2.5yrs of my mom's battle with cancer. We appreciate the many acts of kindness. We are blessed to be a part of this congregation.

*The family of Jan Ziller—Miki,
Doug, Hannah & Sam Wesley*

We would like to thank you all for the Christmas gifts of homemade sugar, decorated cookies and cards for our mother who was a resident at the Gifford Nursing Home in December.

Your kindness means so much!

*Thank you,
The Lunde Family*

I want to thank you so much regarding the Pay It Forward program at your church. It got to me at a time when I was feeling overwhelmed with matters concerning the house! So I have decided to Pay It Forward to a friend who has MS and her husband who works in a grocery store in Winston-Salem. I know the gift will be appreciated by them too!

*Thanks again!
Regards,
Dor S., Venice, FL*

SOME OF "THIS AND THAT"

...**Video Messages** of Pastor Jay here at St. John continue and are posted to YouTube. Videos are also shared to our Facebook page and website or can be viewed by going directly to YouTube on the "St. John Lutheran Church Royal, IL" page.

...**Flock Group Shepherd for June** is Teresa Aden. *Thank you to all that volunteer!*

...**Education Trust Fund** is set up in the Multiple Funds account. Donations may be given to this fund through your offerings marked "Education Trust" (divided equally between the Gossett and Ramm families or you may give specifically to one family). These funds are used to help with their school fees, supplies and expenses.

...**Altar Flowers** are provided each weekend by donations from members of the congregation. House of Flowers in Rantoul provides and delivers them. The cost per vase is **\$20.00**. Payment is to be made to the church and earmarked for flowers. You can sign up on the chart posted on the north office door for one or both vases, and indicate whether it's for a special occasion.

...Monthly **Bible Study Circles**: Esther—Martha—Sarah are now one circle and meets on the second Thursday afternoon of each month at 1:30 here in the church basement for study and fellowship. This month they will meet on May 11, and Kay Fiscus will host.

...It's **graduation** time again! Please inform the church office of all grade school, high school, and college graduates (including their degree) so that we can include their names in the June Newsletter. Our congratulations to all of our graduates!

...The **Church Office** will be closed on Monday, May 29th in observance of Memorial Day.

...**Church Office Hours** are Monday-Friday, 9:00 - 3:00, lunch break typically between 12:00 - 1:00.