

THE EAGLE
OCTOBER 2026
FROM PASTOR'S DESK



Reformation 2026

October brings many delightful sights, sounds, and smells of the season. The brilliant red, yellow, and orange transitions to the foliage of Illinois' landscape. The rich and robust flavors of soups and stews warm both the kitchen, stomach, and soul. Ecclesiastically, however, the month recounts the historic events of the Reformation.

As many of us recall, the Reformation began on October 31, 1517, when Martin Luther posted his Ninety-five Theses on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany (shown above). These events formed the distinctive characterizes of our Lutheran theology, affirming both the paradox and polarities of stalwart truths such as: Law and Gospel; Christ as both God and man; the Christian as simultaneously saint and sinner; justification by grace through faith and baptismal regeneration; the real presence of Christ in the Holy Supper, Body (bread) and Blood (wine). These are the truths of Holy Scripture which “set us free” (John 8:32).

God's love and grace are amazing! As the Apostle Paul tells us in the first chapter of Ephesians; our salvation is accomplished in Christ alone without giving us anything to brag about.

Paul writes that God the Father “chose us in Him (*Christ*) before the foundation of the world” and “predestined us for adoption to Himself as sons through Jesus Christ” (Eph.

4–5). Notice who is doing the choosing. God is. Notice when He did it: before the foundation of the world. Before you were born. Before you could speak. Before you could believe. Before you could make a decision for Jesus, God chose you in Christ.

That turns decision theology completely on its head. Christianity is not ultimately the story of sinful people deciding to give their hearts to Jesus. It is the story of a gracious God who gives Jesus to sinners.

Jesus Himself says, “You did not choose me, but I chose you” (John 15:16a). Faith certainly believes, receives, trusts, and confesses Christ. But faith is not the cause of our salvation. Faith itself is God’s gift. Dead people do not decide to become alive. God raises the dead.

And that is why Paul’s words are so comforting. If salvation finally depended upon your decision, then you would always have to wonder whether your decision was sincere enough, strong enough, or faithful enough. But Paul directs you away from yourself and into the eternal heart of God: “He chose us in Him.” Your salvation begins not with your will, but with His grace.

And God has not left His choice hidden somewhere in eternity for you to discover. He has brought it to you in Christ. You have redemption through His blood and the forgiveness of your trespasses. You have heard “the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation,” and having believed, you have been “sealed with the promised Holy Spirit” (Eph. 1:13).

This is the great comfort of the Reformation and the doctrine of election: God wanted you before you ever knew to want Him. He sought you before you sought Him. He loved you before you loved Him. He chose you in Christ before the foundation of the world.

So, when doubts arise, do not look inward and ask, “Did I choose Jesus sincerely enough?” Look to Christ crucified and risen and hear something infinitely better: He chose you! That is what the Reformation is all about.

With Much Love,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jason Shaw". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'J' and a stylized 'S'.



For the families of **Jerral Fox, Jim Fernstaedt, and Bonnie Broge**. Jerral passed 9-6-26 with Christian services held here on 9-13-26. Jim Fernstaedt's service was held 10-1-26 also here at St. John's. Bonnie Broge's service is graveside on October 3 with a luncheon following at St. John's fellowship Hall. Our heartfelt sympathies to these families.

BAPTISMS

Baptized into God's family on September 20, Kylie Grace Calow. We pray for their continued growth in faith in our Lord, Jesus Christ and all the blessings that accompany being part of God's family.



MAKE-A-SMILE CARDS FOR LENA LIVING CENTER

We are hoping to have October Cards, using a fall harvest theme, pumpkins, harvest moon, etc. donated next. If you are creative and are a card maker, please be a part of this wonderful venture and **please include a sentiment inside the card**. A basket will be placed on the table, outside the office, for your beautiful

creations and we will get the cards to Good Shepherd Church who in turn will get them to the Activity Director at the Living Center **around the 10th of each month**. Thank you in advance for your willingness in being part of this venture. For questions, please contact the church office.

THE CHURCH GROUNDS

We've had several people working very hard at keeping up our church grounds all summer and the work doesn't end there as we head into fall. We appreciate their time and talents—as they continue to mow, and trim the lawn, trim the shrubs, and keep up with repairs and maintenance. These folks are awesome and much appreciated. If they see them doing their thing, remember to stop and say, "Thank You!"



ST. JOHN'S ON THE MOVE

Worship Folders have been received from---

Steve and Kathie Levan—Dewey Community Church, Dewey, IL
St. Paul Lutheran Church, Addison, IL

Mike and Val Rice—Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church, Crossville, TN
Steve & Sonya Stich, Rick & Alice Bader—Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Springfield, IL

Rob & Laura Cobine—St. John's Lutheran Church, Wheaton, IL

FLOWER CHART 2026:

The 2026 Flower Chart is posted in the Narthex. When you visit the church, please take a minute to sign your name on an open weekend of your choice to provide altar flowers for the worship services. We sincerely appreciate your help in adding the beauty of altar flowers to our worship services. Thank you.



St. John's Women's Society Quilt Raffle

This year we are raffling a Queen size quilt that was donated to the Women's Society by Mary Tessendorf. This beautiful quilt is called Farmhouse Cross. Our second prize is a lap quilt called Card Trick that came to us through the Thrift Shop. (Some great items come into the Thrift Shop - if you haven't stopped by lately - check it out.) These items are on display in the hallway near the office. Special thanks go to Mary Tessendorf for piecing and machine quilting the quilt for us. Tickets are available for a \$2.00 donation per ticket OR 3 tickets for \$5.00 on the table by the quilts. Drawing will be held on election day, Tuesday, November 3, 2026. Thanks for supporting the Women's Society and all the mission projects, high school scholarships and other projects they support.



ST. JOHN'S ANNUAL BAZAAR AND BEEF & NOODLE DINNER:

Please plan to attend this event on November 3rd, 2026. The Bazaar will open at 8:30 a.m. and will feature a variety of homemade products: baked goods, noodles, candy, and crafts. The Bazaar will again feature a Hospitality Room with coffee and baked goods. Dinner will be served from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Dine-in meals will include beef and noodles, mashed potatoes and gravy, green beans, Jell-O salads, relishes, dinner rolls, dessert, coffee, or milk—all for \$15. Drive-thru carry-outs will also be available. The carry-out meals will vary slightly and include applesauce instead of Jello. We also will raffle a beautiful quilt and a wall hanging (tickets \$2 each). Flu shots and blood pressure screenings will not be available. Hope to see you there!

CRADLE ROLL NOTES

This month we have only one member celebrating a birthday-- Chloe Calow 10-6-2024 We wish Chloe all God's richest blessings!



FROM THE BOARD OF STEWARDSHIP

Everything Belongs to God- Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above.” James 1:17

Stewardship begins with recognizing that everything we have is a gift from God. Our homes, families, abilities, possessions, time, and resources are blessings He has entrusted to us. We are not owners in the ultimate sense; we are caretakers of what God has placed in our hands. As we give back to Him through our offerings, service and daily lives, we do so not because God needs our gifts, but because He has first given so generously to us. May we live each day with grateful hearts, remembering that all we have comes from our gracious God.



The 2026 Bazaar is coming soon!! We are looking for our church community (including individuals, bible study groups, Blast, Kings Kids, etc.) to consider how they can help with making candy, crafts, or baked goods to donate to this event. We look forward to seeing the unique crafts and the talent of our church family. **Candy Room** - all your sweet treats are welcome! Examples and favorites include fudge (with and/or without nuts), barks, brittles, buckeyes, caramels, etc. **Baked Goods Room** – examples include breads, cookies, pies, cakes/cupcakes, snack mixes and anything else yummy. (If you are able, please package your items for sale and list any “food allergy sensitive” ingredients). **Craft Room** – Fall stuff, Christmas stuff, knitted/crocheted stuff, sewn stuff... be creative! Let’s see how many great things we can have at our event for people to take home! Craft items can be dropped off at the church any time prior to the Bazaar. Candy and Baked Goods can be dropped off starting Sunday Nov 1.



Signup sheets will be posted soon! There are several ways you can help with this year’s Bazaar and Beef & Noodle Dinner. Could you make a Jello salad or brownies for the dinner? Or maybe you could make items for the Bazaar. This event gives us an opportunity to

connect with a lot of people in our local communities. To do this large project, we require many helping hands. We need volunteers for various tasks on Saturday (10/31), Sunday (11/1) and Tuesday (11/3) if you are available to help. Your time and talent are essential to the success of this fundraiser. Everyone has been blessed with something to give. If you would like to help or have any questions, please contact one of the bazaar chairpersons: Anita Mau 815-541-9062 or Steve Levan 815-275-3606. Look for the sign-up sheet which will be in the Narthex.



Noodle making returns to St. John's!

In preparation for our November 3rd bazaar, we began making noodles again on Monday, September 14th and is ongoing on Monday nights through October 19. To involve more individuals, we start at 4:00 PM, but come whenever you can, and we will find

a job for you. Help is needed for set-up, mixing the dough, turning the cranks on the machines, laying out the noodles on tables to dry, and clean-up. Everyone is welcome (male, female, child, or adult) and no previous experience making noodles is necessary. A light meal will be provided when the kitchen crew has completed the dough, and we will be done by 8:00 or earlier.

On Wednesday afternoons we could use help bagging, weighing, and packaging noodles after they have dried. This only takes about an hour starting at 3:00 PM. If you helped last year, we are looking forward to working with you again. If not, please consider joining us for some excellent fellowship. Bring your children, your spouse, or a friend! Questions? Ask Kathie or Steve Levan.

NEEDED! Volunteer Drivers

We are looking for volunteers who would be willing to drive people who need a ride for **doctor appointments**. Typically, the appointments are in Lena, Freeport, or Monroe. You can use the church van or your personal vehicle. Please let the office know if we can add your name to the list. Your help is very much appreciated!!



We are also in need of van drivers for the **Friendship Center**, especially until the end of October. If you can fill in and help out please call Michelle at the church office or Jenny or Denise at the Friendship Center @ 815-369-2690.

SHUT-INS: We currently have 9 members of St. John's who visit with our shut ins both in their home or in local facilities. Would you please pray about becoming a part of this ministry? We rotate and each volunteer's turn comes up about once every other month. Please contact the church office if you have any questions. If you have a heart for our shut-ins and would like to get to know them a little better and brighten their day with a visit, please consider joining our team.



MY FRIEND'S CLOSET

My Friend's Closet is our Thrift Shop. It is a ministry that helps people and organizations near and far with a primary focus of bringing the Good News of Jesus Christ to people who don't know Jesus as their Lord and Savior.



We are in need of volunteers to help staff this ministry. There are a variety of tasks from sorting items that come in, to placing items on the floor, to working with customers, etc. The shifts are morning or afternoon M-S or Wednesday evenings 4-8. You can volunteer for one shift a week or more. It's a great opportunity to meet new people, make new friends, and make a difference because we are a ministry and mission arm of Christ helping others in need and those who don't know Christ. Our manager is Chris Winter, and she is available to answer questions about our ministry and what it takes to be a volunteer. If you would like to talk to Chris about being a volunteer, call her at 815.369.4035 (St. John's Office) or 815-291-6994.



THE FRIENDSHIP CENTER

The Friendship Center is our Adult Day Care! It is a part of our ministry to support Caregivers by caring for their loved ones for part of a day or an entire day. We provide not only care, but nutritional meals, health checks, activities, and entertainment. When the weather cooperates we try to go on field trips to various locations in the area and often travel across the street to the Thrift Store to see what's new over ther.

Scholarships are available for those who need financial assistance. There are other possibilities as well. Come and visit with us to see what we are all about.

We are always thankful for more help. If you would be interested in driving the bus part-time, serving as a nurse part-time or as a sub, or a CNA part-time, or maybe you love to cook—check us out. We are also always happy for our volunteers to serve as bus aides and assistant cooks. Please call The Friendship Center and talk with Denise Seuring at 815.369.2690 or call the Church Office and talk with Michelle to find out more.



Veteran's Footlocker: (Stock is Very Low) Current needs for the Stephenson County VA Pantry:

Body Wash, Shampoo, Conditioner, cans of fruit, canned tuna, canned chicken, canned ham. We could also use a few pairs of men's jeans size 32 thru 38. We can also use some gas cards and food gift cards. These have become our most requested items. Donations can be brought to the Lena American Legion Home on Saturdays from 10:00 to 11:00 at 316 W Main St., Lena. This list is immediate needs; however other items will always be accepted. Questions call Deb Holmes at 815-233-5284 or Julia at 815-369-4684. vetsvan@stephensoncountyil.gov



NORTHERN ILLINOIS FOOD BANK TRUCK will be at St. John's parking lot, **October 6th**, 3-4:30 and **October 27th** at Orangeville, Jane Addams Trail Parking Lot, West High St. & Ewing Dr. (East of IL26)

DID YOU KNOW??? Whether you are gone for vacation or unable to make it to Church for service, you can still participate in worship each weekend and/or whenever it's convenient for you! Each service is LIVE STREAMED and then is available in the RECORDED SERVICES section on our website HOME PAGE (stjohnslena.org). You can also WATCH the CROSS TALK message each day from our website or on our Facebook Page (St John's Lena). Please stay connected!



Caregiver's Support Group (sponsored by the Friendship Center)

Please join us for our next Caregiver's Support Group meeting on **Tuesday, October 13th** at 1:00 PM at St. John's Lutheran Church. Our Caregiver's Support Group's goal is to provide emotional support, information, and resources to anyone who is a caregiver. If you know of anyone in this role, please share this information with them. You may be their only outlet to find out about this much needed support system. If you need someone to help watch your loved one, so that you can attend our meeting, contact The Friendship Center at 815-369-2690 and ask for Jenny or Denise. Please join us on the **2nd Tuesdays each month at 1:00 PM at St. John's Lutheran Church.**

CHURCH DIRECTORY APP AND PAPER COPY COMING!

If you have not downloaded the Universal Church Directory App yet, it's never too late. And if you are new to St. John's and haven't heard about our online Church Directory app, then this message is for you! If you or a family member are listed as a member here, you are included in the online Universal Church Directory. If you had your picture taken in 2025 or as a new member, your photo will be included in the directory. If you didn't have a photo submission, your contact information will still appear and you can submit a photo at any time by emailing your family or individual photo to office@stjohnslena.org. Everyone can change/update their photos as well by the same method. Download *My UCD* from your favorite app store. Once you've downloaded the app to your device, insert the unique identifier code that was emailed to you. If you missed that email, just email or call the church office and we'll resend the code or generate a new one for you. It takes only a couple of minutes to have access to church services, livestream, cross talks, a Bible, giving options and the whole church directory at your fingertips. It's also a great way to get to know our new members and for them to learn who people are in our congregation. Do it today! 😊

WALKING THROUGH GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP

Grief can be difficult. Sharing your journey with others facing a similar challenge may help you find peace. This six-week series is for adults (ages 18 and older) who have experienced the loss of a loved one. The group explores the grieving process and ideas for coping and healing, while providing a safe place to share your questions and experiences with others. Additional information can be found at ssmhealth.com/events.

September 2 – October 21, 2026
Wednesdays from 10:00am--11:30am

Location: Monroe Custom Engraving
1005 30th Street
Monroe, WI 53566

This is a free event but space is limited. Please register online at ssmhealth.com/events or call 608-324-1229 for more information.



HELM TRUCK AND EQUIPMENT

November 17, 9AM-1:30 PM

Benefiting Veterans and their families. Crafts, Cakes, Pies, Snacks, Breads, Brownies, Cupcakes, and much

more! All funds raised will be matched and donated to a deserving family. For more information, contact the Veteran's Pantry office at 815-235-7131.

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD: We are so grateful for your continued donations, love, and support for this ministry! We THANK YOU!



- In the month of **OCTOBER**, we are looking for **SMALL TOYS**: balloons, cars, card games, musical instruments/whistles, puzzles, jump ropes, balls, travel games, playdoh, stuffed animals, etc.
- Take a look at the thermometers for other needed supplies.
- Monetary donations can be labeled “OCC” and placed in the offering box or given to the church office.
- Check out our **OCC AMAZON WISH LIST** on our church website/Facebook!**SAVE THE DATE:** Our **Shoebox Packing Party** will be **Wednesday, November 11th** at 6pm during Week Day School. Join us in the fellowship hall as we pack the love of St. John’s! All are welcome!

SAVE THE DATE: HALLOWEEN PARTY AT SERENITY ESTATES

Sunday, October 18th, 1-3pm: All St. John’s kids are invited to Serenity Estates-Lena (Lena Nursing Home) for BINGO, fun, and treats with the residents. Wear your costume! There will be a costume contest!



SAVE THE DATE: ST. JOHN’S TRUNK OR TREAT

Join us for our annual community wide Trunk or Treat on **Sunday, October 27th**! Meet in the church fellowship hall at 3:30pm for a short devotion. Trunk or Treating starts at 4pm in our church parking lot. Bring your friends and family!

“TRUNKERS”: WE NEED YOU! We are looking for people who are willing to decorate their trunk for our treaters during our community Trunk or Treat! Please line up in the church parking lot by 3:30pm and the treating will begin at 4pm. Please sign-up on the church office window or by calling the church office if you would be willing to decorate your trunk!

The Lena American Legion Auxiliary will once again be putting up a window display of area veterans and currently serving military during the month of November. Pictures need to be submitted by October 20 and can be sent to PO Box 21, Lena, IL 61048 or dropped off at the Lena American Legion Home on Saturdays from 10 to 11 am. Pictures will not be returned. Make sure you stop at Klein’s Repair in Lena during November to see who has been added to the window this year.



REMEMBERING OUR COLLEGE STUDENTS

Our college students are off and running with a new year at college. They have been busy signing up for classes, packing and moving, and settling in to their new schedule. We want to send a welcome to them as soon as we get their new addresses letting them know we continue to pray for them, and miss having them around. You can help us do that. The yearly goal is to send encouraging notes and care packages on a regular basis. There is a collection container in the Narthex for you to place your love donations. If you would be so kind, the next time you are out shopping, please add a little something extra to share with our college students. This will be an ongoing project for the school year so all seasonal items will be appreciated. Remember it should be easy to ship. Below is a list of suggestions:

Goldfish Life Savers Reese's Cheetos Gum Pringles Mentos
M&M's Peanuts Gift Cards—McDonald's, Starbuck's, Subway and the likes
Candy Cookies Beef Sticks Cheese and cracker packets
Packets that just need water added like "to-go" drinks, mac & cheese, Ramen noodles
Individual packets of just about anything!!!

If you have any questions, please talk to Brenda Offermann or Fawn Nolan. Thank you in advance!

COLLEGE STUDENTS:

Don't forget to turn in your new college addresses, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses to the church office once you have them. We look forward to staying connected with you whether near or far, on campus or off, living at home or in a dorm. Thank you!!



CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING is October 22nd at 6:30 pm. All Board Chairman and Vice-Chairman are to be present and give a report as to past and present activity of their Board. Budgets will be presented and approved at this meeting as well.

VOTER'S MEETING is October 26th at 7:00 pm. There will be reports from our Staff and our Board Chairman. We will also be voting on our 2027 Budget.