



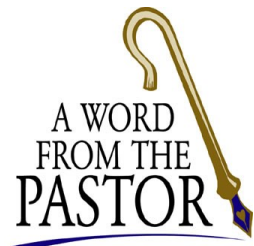
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

The Salem Life

Newsletter of Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church
Sandwich, Illinois

August 6, 2026

VOL. 53, NO. 8



Dear Friends in Christ,

Go make disciples! (Matthew 28:19)

That is a foundational Word of God for us at Salem Lutheran. God sends us out to share the good news of Jesus, to touch lives by serving, and to lead people into God's new way of life.

Our calling is to *Evangelism*. Many of us shudder at the thought. But we don't need to fear. Evangelism is not a program or a committee – it is a lifestyle for all who follow Christ. Relationships are the key. When those who know us well see how we live, it sets the stage for sharing faith. When someone asks...

Why?

Why do you go to church?

Why do you have hope in the midst of death and despair?

Why does 'stuff' happen?

That gives us the opportunity to share our faith – to tell how we see God working in our life. We can't wait until we are comfortable to speak. We can't wait until we have all of our answers neatly lined up on index cards before us. Ready or not, at that moment, the time has come to be an evangelist, one who shares the good news of Jesus, and what our Lord means in our lives. When someone comes to ask questions like these, God has sent them to us. God is preparing their hearts to receive the seed of faith, which we can share. When God gives us these divine appointments, we need to recognize and seize them.

What can we say? What can we do, when faced with questions like these? How can we be ready?

Tell the truth as you have experienced it. How has God touched your life? How has God given you strength and comfort in times of need? How has God used others to bless your life?

Tell the truth as you learn it in the Bible. God promises us that he will be our Good Shepherd, leading us beside green pastures and still waters, and even through the valley of the shadow of death. God promises that nothing in all creation can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. We know the simple story of Jesus, who dies to take away our sins and give us new life and hope. We can share that hope with others, like a seed of faith, and pray that God will let it take root in their lives.

If others see that you care about them, and honestly tell the truth of your faith, chances are good that they will listen and receive the good news you offer them. You can pray with them, and invite them to come to church with you. If you walk the journey with them, they will be much more ready to step out in faith.

Many of us still say, I couldn't possibly do that. Yet there are people starving for the good news of Jesus, because no one is bold enough to share the food that will give them life. There are people that you encounter each day who hunger for something that they can't even identify.

We know what they need, because it is what we need as well. Faith in Jesus fills our lives with meaning and hope. It gives us the assurance of forgiveness, new life, and salvation. We really can be evangelists, without any fancy words or elaborate testimony. God will help us to speak the words that they need to hear. We just need to share the hope that gives us life – Jesus our Lord – and invite them to come and see.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor John



Happening this week...

Sunday, August 9

- 9:00 am Worship/Kids Church
- 10:00 am Coffee Fellowship
- 10:15 am Adult Bible Study
- 10:15 am Fellowship Committee

Monday, August 10

- 9 am - noon Quilting

Tuesday, August 11

- 9 am - noon Quilting
- 5:30 pm Outreach Committee
- 6:30 pm Finance Committee

Wednesday, August 12

- 10:00 am Methuselah Coffee Group
- 11:30 am Lunch Bunch @ Serena Cafe

Thursday, August 13

- 8:30 -10:30 am Our Sharing Pantry Distribution
- 5:00 pm Praise Team
- 6:00 pm Handchimes
- 7:00 pm AA

Friday, August 14

- 7:30 pm AA

Sunday, August 16 Back to School Celebration

- 9:00 am Worship/Kids Church
- Photo for America250 Time Capsule
- 10:00 am Sundaes on Sunday
- 10:15 am Water Games

In Our Church Family.....

PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER:

- ⇒ Doug Fraley*
- ⇒ Bill Bohn (*brother of Mary Farwell-Uragallo*)
- ⇒ Sarah Ellis*
- ⇒ Stan Benson*

***Indicates Salem member**

AUGUST "DIAMOND PLUS" BIRTHDAYS



- 8/07 Jean Hanson
- 8/07 Donna Kimmey
- 8/13 Linda Benson
- 8/16 Ron Cunz
- 8/26 Shelly Heiden
- 8/27 Ron Gengler

Scripture Readings for:

Sunday, August 9: Genesis 2:4b-9; 15-22;
Psalm 96; Acts 10:34-42; John 3:11-17

Sunday, August 16: Genesis 3:14-19, 4:8-16;
Psalm 139:1-18; Romans 5:12-17;
Matthew 12:38-40

Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee is beginning its work, praying and considering who God wants to have us call forth as leaders for the ministry of Salem Lutheran. Please pray with them that God will raise up the right people to energize and strengthen our ministry, and have an open heart to respond joyfully if you are called to serve among us.

Sandwich Fair Worship

During the Sandwich Fair, Community Worship will be at the Ag Land Stage on Sunday, September 13 at 8:30 a.m. Pastor Selena Blackwell from St. John Lutheran in Somonauk will preach and area pastors will share in that.

Worship at Salem Lutheran will be at 10:30 a.m. that day. It is good to make time for worship whatever may be happening.



Fellowship Committee Plans Cougar Game Outing Make Plans to Join Us!

We ordered 20 tickets for the Cougars Game on Friday, August 21st. Tickets are \$9.50 each and reduced parking passes are \$12 for preferred parking and \$7.00 for regular parking.

Fireworks and running the bases are included after the game. See Marilyn or Durk to buy your tickets and passes soon!



August 4, 2026 Salem Congregation Council Meeting Highlights

The Congregation Council met at Salem on Tuesday, August 4, 2026, starting at 6:30 p.m. Council members Jacqueline Beverage, Ron Cunz, Alan Deaton, Walter Farley, Bonnie Guyer, Connie Hanson, Durk Hellinga, Sharon Wallis, Bryan Wernli, and Pastor John Rothfusz were present.

The council voted to accept the minutes of the July Congregation Council meeting, as prepared by Alan Deaton.

The council reviewed the giving opportunities for August and upcoming months. No changes were made. Crop Walk and School Kits extend over several months.

The treasurer's reports for April were examined. These are the current balances as of the meeting:

General Fund:	\$ 9,092.28	Designated Fund:	\$ 32,138.66
Capital Fund:	\$ 35,033.69	Loan balance:	\$338,310.96

We have an existing sweep of \$8000 because general funds are low.

Council members heard monthly reports from Pastor John Rothfusz and from council members representing Salem's committees.

Giving continues below budget expectations. We will have to make up the sweep from capital funds.

We will take a picture of the congregation by the new sign on August 16 after worship. This picture will go into the City of Sandwich Time Capsule as a part of the 250th Anniversary celebration.

We will have a Fall Ministry Fair on September 20, kicking off our fall activities. We invite ministries to tell their story and highlight what they do. Members and friends are welcome to join with us in any of these ministries.

The group heard council comments from each member.

The meeting was closed at 7:06 p.m. with the Lord's Prayer.



Salem Garden Walk a Success!
Thank you to the Fellowship Committee for planning an interesting afternoon to visit Lori & John Carey's restored barn, Oak Ridge Cemetery, and gardens. Thanks to the Pescitelli's for providing their home to enjoy a pot luck meal—always a good time.

thrivent®

Choice Dollars for Thrivent Members

If you have insurance or investments with Thrivent Financial, they allow members to direct Choice Dollars to organizations, including Salem Lutheran. You can log into your account, and choose Salem Lutheran Church, Thrivent ID 504751815.

Action Team Grants

Most Thrivent members are also able to register for Action Team grants of up to \$250 twice a year for projects at the church. We can work with you in the church office to find ways to claim those.

These are both simple ways to direct some money for church projects. Please ask Pastor John if you have questions about either of these.

Ruth Unit

The Ruth Unit annual luncheon is Wednesday, August 26th at the Pancake House in Somonauk at 11:30 am. All women of Salem are invited to join us. Please let Ruth White or Joanne VanPelt know by Tuesday, August 25th if you plan to attend.

Monthly meetings are typically the fourth Wednesday of the month at 1:00 pm at the church. We spend time in Bible Study and grow in friendship and support.

Let's go to the Serena Cafe!

Lunch Bunch meets Wednesday, August 12 at 11:30 am at the Serena Café. The address is 2274 US-52 E, Serena. Please sign up in the narthex if you are free to dine with us. Those who would like to car pool can meet at the Salem parking lot at 11:00 am.

The pictures below were from Lunch Bunch in July. We enjoyed lunch while sitting outside at Shabbona Lake



School Kits



We can all help children around the world continue their education by providing school supplies. Salem has donated an average of 55 School Kits each year within the last five years!

The stores have sales on school supplies and the list below is what each kit provides:

- Four 70-sheet notebooks (wide- or college-ruled, 8" x 10½")
- One 30-centimeter ruler (or a ruler with inches and centimeters)
- One pencil sharpener
- One pair of blunt scissors
- Five unsharpened #2 pencils
- Five ballpoint pens (blue or black ink)
- One box of 16 or 24 crayons
- One 2½" eraser



Sewing Help Needed

The Christian Education Committee would appreciate volunteers who are willing to sew the bags. Talk to Cheryl Carls to get started.

Sunday School students typically put the kits together into cloth bags on their first day of Sunday School. This fall, Sunday School will start on September 27.

YOU'RE WARMLY INVITED TO A

Lutheran Global Mission Presentation

Pastor Bob and Lynn Hansen have participated in 2 ELCA mission trips to visit Indonesia, South Africa and Zimbabwe. Come to hear their experiences.



AUG 16

**First Lutheran
Social Hall
324 N Third st,
DeKalb**

2-4 PM

Light Refreshments will follow.

Season of Creation

Thank you for your photo submissions for the bulletin board as we celebrate Season of Creation!

Come worship at Salem and learn about the Season of Creation. Offer to bring a neighbor, friend or family member along and share in worshipping our Lord and all God has done for us.

- * Forest and Trees Sunday
- * Land and Prairie Sunday
- * Wilderness Sunday
- * River and Streams Sunday



Adopt a Road PROGRAM

On Monday, August 24 at 8:00 am we will meet at Prairie View Elementary School (near the soccer fields) to clean West Sandwich Road ditches. Remember to dress for the weather, bring garden or rubber gloves, and wear sturdy shoes or boots for the job. Vests and garbage bags will be distributed.

THANK YOU TO THOSE WHO HELP!



God's Work. Our Hands.

Northern IL Food Bank volunteers made a trip to Geneva in July to pack food for our hungry neighbors. We packed 1,066 pounds of macaroni which provides 889 meals.

Those who have signed up already will pack again on August 18. The next date is Tuesday, September 15.



Durk Hellinga is larger than life at the Northern Illinois Food Bank.



PROGRESS - HERE, THERE, AND EVERYWHERE!

The Property Committee has used 2026 to clean, paint, and brighten up Salem! We see you and appreciate you! Thank you to all volunteers and donors who have supported this work.

- ✓ The new sign is erected!
- ✓ Salem's name at the parking lot entrance is installed.
- ✓ Landscaping upgrades are completed with more to come.
- ✓ Grass has been seeded. Mulch was spread around trees.
- ✓ The new shed was delivered and anchored.
- ✓ A sturdy ramp was built.
- ✓ New tables are being ordered to replace old ones in the conference room where Council, Bible Study, and committees meet.
- ✓ Lawn mowers and gardeners have created beauty around us.
- ✓ Workers continue to repair the elevator circuit boards and it will take some time yet. Stay tuned.....

Thanks be to God!



Jan Dunn says that you will see how food is distributed with dignity and kindness to our hungry neighbors.

You will also see the new raised vegetable beds that sit outside St. John's Lutheran Church, Somonauk.

Donna Fraley, Jan Dunn, and Alan Deaton see how your financial support and food donations are greatly appreciated throughout the year!



Our Sharing Pantry



You are cordially invited to help us

Celebrate our 40th Anniversary!

1986 - 2026

SUNDAY, August 16, 2026

Ice cream social 2:00 – 4:00 PM

St. John's Lutheran Church

235 S. Green Street, Somonauk, IL 60552

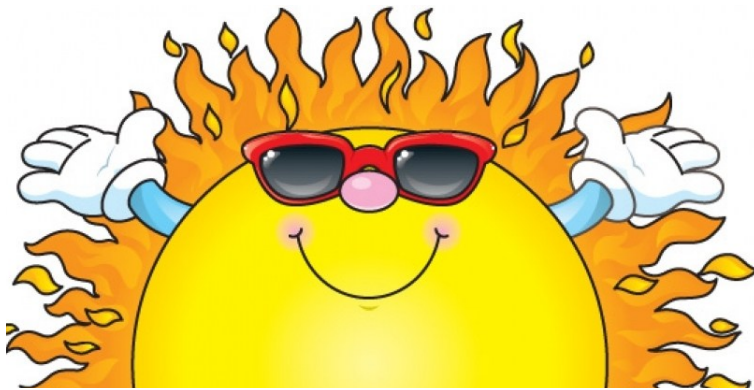
We look forward to seeing You and Your family!

Thank you for your support!

Salem Lutheran Church

P.O. Box 105

Sandwich, IL 60548



SUMMER ADVENTURES

Summer Adventures are planned for all ages to enjoy. It is good for our church family to share in activity together.

- ♦ Sunday, August 16th - Water Games on the church lawn and you know what that means!

Bonnie has supplies and great ideas for wet, fun games for kids and adults!



ALL ARE WELCOME!

What's Happening Sunday, August 16

Blessing of Students, Teachers, Backpacks

As our students and teachers prepare to head to school, we want to pray for them and encourage them. They are working hard and learning important things, and we rejoice to see them grow and mature. We will have a special blessing for them in worship on August 16.

Photo Opportunity for America250

Immediately following worship, we ask that all attendees gather around the new sign for a 2026 photograph. This photo will be part of an America250 Time Capsule prepared by the City of Sandwich.

Sundaes on Sunday and Water Games

We then will enjoy Sundaes on Sunday compliments of the Worship Committee. Lastly, we finish up with a special Water Fun Day for our kids and all who want to take part compliments of Christian Education.