



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

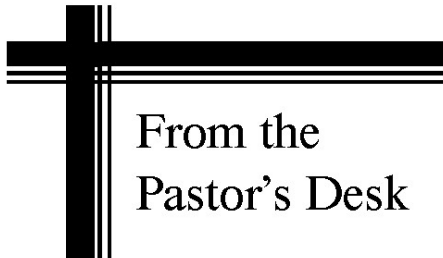
God's work. Our hands.

## The Salem *LIFE*

Newsletter of Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church  
Sandwich, Illinois

November 6, 2025

VOL. 52, NO. 11



From the  
Pastor's Desk

Dear Friends in Christ,

*If I understand that all I have is mine,  
then I'm going to amass as much of it as I can  
and cling tightly to it.*

*If I understand that everything I have really belongs to God  
and I'm entrusted to care for it,  
then there is a whole different attitude –  
a lot less clinging, a lot less concern about accumulating,  
a lot more concern about caring for.*

*Pastor Charles "Chick" Lane*

The quote above talks about the difference it makes in our lives when we recognize that everything we have ultimately comes from, and belongs to, God. That realization changes our priorities, our decision-making, how we see ourselves, and how we see our future.

God our Father created the beautiful world we live in, and gives us our life, our relationships, our talents, and all that we possess. Best of all, God gives us his only Son, Jesus, so that we can be forgiven and saved, and live now and forever in him.

Do you believe in that God, the God who gives you everything you have, and everything you are? If you do believe, how does that shape your life? ***Our stewardship is everything that we do after we say, "I Believe."*** If you believe in our generous God, how will you live your life in his image, as a glad and generous follower of our Lord? How will your life show forth the deep truth that you believe God with all your heart, and dedicate your life to walking alongside the Lord?

Over the next weeks, I invite you to think about the time, skills, and financial resources that God has placed in your care. How are you using them? Are you being a good steward, using all of those things in a way that best cares for your family, your neighbor, your church and the world? Are you using them as God wants you to use them?

We are looking at these questions through our Fall Stewardship Campaign. On Sunday, November 23<sup>rd</sup>, we will have our Stewardship Commitment Sunday, with the theme, "Confidence in God's Grace." We do live in God's grace every single day, and as we recognize the abundance of God's gifts in our lives, we are drawn to share those gifts freely.

*Continued on page 3*

# Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church

*Serving Christ!*

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Email: [SalemLC@comcast.net](mailto:SalemLC@comcast.net)

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## Pastor

Reverend John Rothfusz  
Phone: (779) 901-0803  
[pastorjohnrothfusz@gmail.com](mailto:pastorjohnrothfusz@gmail.com)

Administrative Assistant  
Financial Secretary, Etc.  
Bookkeeper  
Traditional Worship Coordinator  
Director of Contemporary Worship  
Organist/Pianist  
Organist/Pianist  
Maintenance

## Staff

Kelly Clason [salemLC@comcast.net](mailto:salemLC@comcast.net)  
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Gloria Gilbertson  
Connie Hanson  
Nancy Hayes

**Staff Office Hours: Tues.—Thurs., 9 am—2 pm; Fri, 9 am-12 noon**

## *Happening this week...*

Sunday, November 9

9:00 am Worship/Kids Church  
10:00 am Coffee Fellowship  
10:15 am Veterans Appreciation  
10:15 am Fellowship Committee

Monday, November 10

No Quilting today

Tuesday, November 11

No Quilting today  
5:30 pm Outreach Committee  
6:30 pm Finance Committee

Wednesday, November 12

10:00 am Methuselah Coffee Group  
11:30 am Lunch Bunch at Oaks Grille  
6:30 pm Confirmation at Salem

Thursday, November 13

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

Friday, November 14

7:30 pm AA

Sunday, November 16

9:00 am Worship/Kids Church  
10:00 am Coffee Fellowship  
10:15 am Adult Bible Study/Sunday School

## *In Our Church Family.....*

### PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER:

- ⇒ Buck Scents\*
- ⇒ Carol Kimmey\*
- ⇒ Alex Diab (*great-nephew of Laura Caupert*)
- ⇒ Pete K (*friend of Libby Welsch*)
- ⇒ Fred Staffeldt (*father of Fran Parkison*)
- ⇒ Donna Kimmey\*
- ⇒ Laverne Mattson\*
- ⇒ Nicholas Kulbartz (*son of Paul Kulbartz*)
- ⇒ Stan Benson\*



\*Indicates Salem member



Donna Kimmey sends her thanks for prayers and a meal from the Member Support Committee.

### SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR:

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 9: Job 19:23-27a;  
Psalm 17:1-9; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-5, 13-17;  
Luke 20:27-38

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 16: Isaiah 1:10-18;  
Psalm 32:1-8; 2 Thessalonians 1:2-4, 11-12;  
Luke 19:1-10

We will invite you to make a Stewardship Commitment during worship on November 23<sup>rd</sup>, showing your faith and trust in the God who gives you life, community, and all that you possess. A copy of the Estimate of Giving card is included in the newsletter, so that you can prayerfully consider ahead of time how you will fill it out on that day.

Ministry at Salem only happens because you and others like you share the gifts and time that you have. You make all the difference in the world when you touch the lives of others through the ministries that we share at Salem Lutheran. It is your faithful gifts that make this possible.

Thank you for your faithful stewardship of your time, talent, and money in the past. I look forward to the mission and ministry we will share together in the coming year.

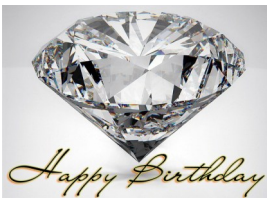
Yours in Christ,

Pastor John Rothfusz



**NOVEMBER "DIAMOND PLUS" BIRTHDAYS**

(A belated Happy Birthday to Becky whose birthday was not included in October).



10/30 Becky O'Halloran  
11/5 Steve Guyer  
11/15 Karen Gleason

**November 4, 2025 Salem Congregation Council Meeting Highlights**

The Congregation Council met at Salem on Tuesday, November 4, 2025, starting at 6:29 p.m. Council members Jacqueline Beverage, Ron Cunz, Alan Deaton, Walter Farley, Donna Fraley, Bonnie Guyer, Connie Hanson, Durk Hellinga, Sharon Wallis and Pastor John Rothfusz were present. Newly elected member Bryan Wernli was also present.

Bonnie led the devotion, on becoming good at trusting God. We can choose to focus on what is good, and not dwell on what is wrong. God will guide and bless us.

The council voted to accept the minutes of the October 7 Congregation Council meeting, as prepared by Alan Deaton.

The Financial reports for September were examined. These are the following balances as of the meeting. We continue to be challenged to catch up after a number of property expenses that were higher than expected. The proposed budget will be assembled as we know more.

General Fund:	\$ 2844.68	Sweep:	\$ 0
Designated Fund:	\$ 36,117.18	Outstanding Checks:	\$ 15,221.29
Capital Fund:	\$ 38,081.62		

Council members heard monthly reports from Pastor John Rothfusz and from council members representing Salem's committees. They reviewed the calendar to highlight events coming up and to look for conflicts.

Pastor John went to a synod celebration for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ELCA World Hunger Program. The Northern Illinois Synod put out a challenge to raise funds for this anniversary year, with a donor offering a matching gift of \$100,000. Our Synod raised more than any other synod ever has, raising \$300,000 for World Hunger at a time when it is needed so much. This is one of the ways that we make a difference and change lives around the world.

Nancy Rex was nominated for a spot on the Endowment/Memorial Committee.

Thanksgiving offerings will be sent to Our Sharing Pantry, and Christmas Offerings to the general budget.

The January Congregational Meeting will be January 25<sup>th</sup>, with a budget review on January 18.

The group heard council comments from each member.

The meeting was closed with the Lord's Prayer.

## November 23 – Stewardship Commitment Sunday

Our stewardship program is the time when we celebrate the ministry that we are given to share at Salem Lutheran. We can each see how the ministry of Salem Lutheran has positive impacts on people in our church and community.

As we plan for our Commitment Sunday on November 23, please pray about how God might be calling you to give to support the ministry that we share together in Jesus' name. Your faithful giving makes a world of difference as we build up the church, grow in community, and serve our neighbors in need around us.

At the close of worship that day, we will invite you to come forward and offer your Intent cards to the Lord before the altar. We are inviting you to pray about that, and to plan now how you can respond to God's call.

We really hope that you will participate in our Stewardship Commitment Sunday, sharing in the joy that we find together as God's people in common purpose. We have a mission together at Salem Lutheran, and you are an essential part of it.

### *Why Intent Cards?*

Our stewardship team has been learning from some experts in giving. They tell us that they have learned that people give more, and give more often if they fill out an intent card. The act of putting your intentions in writing and offering it to the Lord is a powerful tool to shape your generosity. You can make up your mind, and you can carry out what you intend to do.

We try not to use the language of pledge cards, however. This is not a legal commitment. We are asking for your prayerful intents that you offer to God. No one will come after you or shame you if your income, health, or other circumstances change and you can't do what you intended. Likewise no one will stop you if you feel able to give even more than you wrote down from God's blessings in your life.

Please do help us by filling out an intent card and sharing it as a part of our annual Stewardship drive. It will make a difference to you, to God, to the church, and to all those that we can bless together.

### Stewardship Sunday – Sample Intent for Giving Card

On November 23<sup>rd</sup>, for our Stewardship Commitment Sunday, we will gather in worship to give thanks to God for all the ways that he blesses our lives. As a part of our worship, we will offer to God our Intent for Giving Cards for the next year. We ask that you be in prayer about what God is calling you to give to support the ministry that we share here at Salem Lutheran Church. Below is a copy of the Intent for Giving Card that will be handed out in worship, so that you can be prepared to respond prayerfully and faithfully. This copy is for planning, and you don't need to turn it in, but we want you to be prepared for your commitment time on that day.

### *Salem Lutheran Church – 2026 Statement of Intent*

In gratitude to God and in thanksgiving for the on-going ministry of Salem Lutheran Church, I/we intend to give the following offering:

#### GENERAL FUND

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ to be given weekly **OR**  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_ to be given monthly **OR**  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_ to be given annually.

#### CAPITAL FUND

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ to be given weekly **OR**  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_ to be given monthly **OR**  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_ to be given annually.

*I/we understand that this offering may be adjusted if necessary by notifying the church office.*

- I/we will begin this new level of generosity starting now.
- I/we have included the congregation in my estate plans.
- I am/we are interested in including the congregation in my estate plans.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

**Please include your name, or we can't count your commitment!**

SAMPLE for Preparation

## Strategies to Grow in Generosity

How can I grow my giving for Christ's ministry? Money is often tight, no matter how much our income grows. But we can each shape our giving in thanks for God's gifts to us.

Here are some ideas:

1. Live simply. This is good advice for all of us. If we set our lifestyle so that our spending is well below our income, it gives us more choices. We have the opportunity to save, and the choice to give generously. When we spend all that we make, we don't have those opportunities. I recognize that this is easier said than done, but it can transform your life if you can learn to live simply, and save more.
2. Give as a percentage of your income, and grow that percentage over time. You can start small, perhaps two percent of what you earn, and grow each year. Some choose to grow a percent a year in their giving, and find that they can make it work. Many faithful people set a goal of a biblical tithe (10 percent), and some find that they can joyfully grow their giving even beyond that.
3. Grow by a small amount each week or month. What if you were to increase your giving to God by the cost of a Scooters coffee every week? What if you were to grow by \$10, \$50, or \$100 each month? Is there some level that you can grow in generosity, and feel like you can manage it?
4. Give an extra month's offering at one or two points of the year. One man committed to double that month's giving in February and August.

Growing in generosity is the work of a lifetime, but we can begin with small steps. Please pray about what God is calling you to give for Christ's ministry at Salem Lutheran. God will know and value every step of generosity that you make. We have been enormously blessed by faithful saints who have grown into these patterns of faithful giving, providing an example of faithful giving for all of us.

### How Else Can I Give – Other ways to show Generosity

**Do you have an IRA?** Many retired members are required to take a MRD (minimum required distribution) from your IRA each year. You can make a "QCD", a qualified charitable deduction to the church. This can often reduce your taxes, because you can both take the standard deduction, and deduct the amount transferred; it reduces the amount of the distribution that is reported as income. If you act in this year, you can benefit from the taxes you would pay for this year. The custodian of your IRA, (and every IRA has one,) can help you do this, if you request it. Allow plenty of time; it won't happen overnight, and it must be completed by year's end. Should their paperwork require the church's federal I.D. number, Gina can give it to you. This can be a significant savings for you, and a strong support for the church.

**Do you have a will?** Have you considered including the church in your will as a part of your final stewardship? It is appropriate for our wills to reflect what we value most in life, including our faith. I hope that you will consider including a gift to Salem Lutheran Church in your will, for your final stewardship. This can demonstrate the faith that you lived all your life by, and give a witness to those left behind.

What is an appropriate gift to the Lord? I would recommend a percentage gift of your estate, such as a tithe (10%). Another way that people have thought about it is to treat the church equally as another child would be treated in the estate. This makes sense especially when children are grown and well-established, and don't really need a significant inheritance.

If you wish to consider a gift to the church, you may direct it without a designation, direct it toward the Capital Fund, or to the Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church Endowment Fund. Your gift planning can make a significant difference to the health and vitality of Salem Lutheran for the future. We include a question about estate plans on the intent card. If it would be helpful, our ELCA gift planner, would be very willing to come meet with you to answer questions and help.

**Do you have life insurance policies?** One of the simplest ways to make a gift with your final stewardship is to make the church a beneficiary on a life insurance policy. Many of us purchased life insurance to support family if we died earlier than expected. If that need is no longer so pressing, you can choose to give to God from that asset. Simply fill out a change of beneficiary form, and include Salem Lutheran Church in whatever amount feels right to you. None of us will benefit from our life insurance ourselves, so consider where you most want that asset to go.

# Helping Local and World Hunger Efforts

## CROP WALK REPORT

The Crop Hunger Walk leaders met recently to review 2025 efforts.

Ten churches with 72 walkers participated this year. Although that number of participants was a bit smaller than last year, the total amount raised was \$20,257.23! It is an incredible effort in our fight to end hunger. Of this total, Salem brought in \$4,151.31 with help from Sunday School students who turned in \$320.



Kudos to everyone who walked, raised funds and prayed with us through this year's campaign.

Salem and our entire Community Interfaith CROP Walkers rock! - Co-chair Jan Dunn

## 3N1 Upcoming Gathering

The youth from Bethany, Salem, St. Johns will be doing community service at Feed My Starving Children in Sycamore on 11/15/2025 from 3:00 - 5:00 pm with Pastor Hope Johnson, Bethany Lutheran Church, Leland.



It was onion day for Northern Illinois Food Bank volunteers from Salem. Volunteers packed 1,451 bags of onions in October. We packed 7,255 lbs of onions providing 6,045 meals. Those who have already signed up will be packing food on November 18.



# Trunk or Treat at Salem



See more trunks on the bulletin board or website. Thank you for all who participated in this annual fun day!

Salem Lutheran Church

P.O. Box 105

Sandwich, IL 60548

# *Community Fellowship Feast*

**November 23rd, 2025 ★ 4:30-6:00pm**

**St. John's Lutheran Church**

**235 S. Green Street ★ Somonauk, IL 60552**

**815-498-3667 ★ [office@elcastjohns.org](mailto:office@elcastjohns.org)**

**Free meal to anyone from  
surrounding communities!**

**Thanksgiving Worship to follow at 6:00 p.m.**