

St. James Newsletter

July 2026

From the Pastor

A few years ago, while my doctor was reviewing my bloodwork as a part of my annual physical, she became concerned about my elevated A1C number. With diabetes in my family history, she advised me to lose weight and cut down on carbohydrates. My chart now listed me as “pre-diabetic.” She asked if I thought I could do it without other help. I confidently said yes. A year later, with the A1C number still elevated, she repeated the advice and prescribed metformin. With renewed commitment to improve my diet and exercise more, I was confident I could get my A1C under control. The next year, with still elevated A1C, she doubled my metformin and told me if the A1C went up any higher, she would have to put the label “diabetic” in my chart.

I have since kept the A1C number below the diabetic range, but not by much. In truth, my effort to exercise more and change my diet has been half-hearted at best. (After all, there are potato chips and donuts in the world.) I have been living in the delusion that things will get better even without real change. But that is not how things work. Without adapting my lifestyle, without change, diabetes will be a part of my future and all the consequences thereof.

Our congregations find themselves in a similar situation. We are, currently, getting by. And even though St. James is currently in a stronger financial situation, I still would not call the long-term prognosis for either congregation exactly rosy. Our worship attendance is low. Our offerings are keeping us just out of the red – usually. But we may be just one unexpected negative event from tipping the scale. It is delusional to believe that we can keep on going and doing things as we currently are, and that things will get better. They won’t get better and likely will get worse.

And so, we are faced with a choice. Do we continue as we have been and suffer the consequences (like closing), or do we seek real change in order to continue the mission to which we have been called? Certainly, change is uncomfortable. But it can also be life-giving.

What are some of the possible changes?

- ☐ Perhaps we embrace the “evangelical” part of our name and reach out to the people around us with the good news of God’s love and invite them to be part of the ministry. (Historically, as Lutherans that does not seem likely.)
- ☐ Perhaps more of us are inspired by God’s call to be generous givers and make significant increases in our financial support of the ministry. But even that is probably only a temporary solution.

- Or perhaps we embrace real change in the way we see ourselves. Maybe it's time to stop identifying ourselves as "Calvary" or "St. James" or any other name, and see ourselves as parts of the one body of Christ, utilizing our unique gifts for the benefit of the whole body.

There are significant decisions ahead for us. Our willingness to take seriously the need to change may be the only thing that allows us to not only survive, but thrive, as God's people in Rock Island and Moline.

I'll conclude with a real-life example.

Last summer, as you may recall, I had the opportunity to officiate at a wedding at one of the congregations from my first call. That congregation, Mt. Calvary, was part of two-point parish. A few years ago, the other congregation left the ELCA, leaving Mt. Calvary in a precarious position and without a pastor. At the same time, another congregation in the area closed. Geographically between those two congregations was a three-point parish (Samuel's, Messiah and St. Paul) that was also struggling and unable to support a full-time pastor.

Recognizing that things could not continue as is, the leaders of those congregations sought creative ways to change. The result was a cooperative ministry between all four congregations under the gifted leadership of a part-time synodically authorized minister (SAM) who is also a full-time elementary school principal. These four congregations continue to worship each Sunday, but not in each building each week. Instead, they alternate between buildings, two each week. Certainly, it was painful for many people to not be worshiping in their own sanctuary weekly. But the result of this arrangement is fuller (from a range of 15-40 worshipers in four buildings to 50-60 worshipers in each building), more inspired worship together than they had separately. These collaborating congregations are thriving in their worship and mission because they were willing to embrace real change.

As you are aware, I will be retiring soon. Decisions will need to be made about the future of our congregations. This will be an opportune time to consider real changes that will bring new life and vitality to our ministry.

In Christ,
Pastor Knowles

Pastor Knowles on Vacation
July 27-August 2

Rescue Mission Meal

Christian Care Center on Wednesday, July 8.

We will buy the ham and needed supplies. If you would like to help, we need volunteers to serve and prepare crockpot beans and cheesy potatoes.

A sign-up sheet is on the info table in the narthex. Meet in the church kitchen on July 8 at 5:30 pm or bring prepared items before that time.

Thank you also to everyone who has donated a cake, brownies, or cookies for dessert.



- ◆ Terri Warren
- ◆ Brad Hubbard



Meetings

- Welcoming Team
July 1 at 6:00 pm
- Vision Team
July 15 at 3:00 pm
meets at Calvary



Recognition Ceremony for Trish Myers



At our worship service on Sunday, July 12, our former Office Administrator Trish Myers will be honored for her

nearly nine years of outstanding service at St. James. She retired in May. A reception will follow.

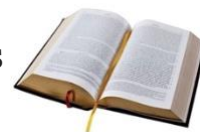
Trish began work at St. James on July 1, 2017, as a hire from a staffing agency; and was later hired as a St. James employee.

Group greeting cards are available for signing in the narthex and downstairs chapel area. You may wish to bring your own card as well.

No Bible Studies During Summer

Both the Monday morning and Tuesday night Bible Studies led by Pastor Knowles will not be held during July or August.

They will resume in September.



Women's Circle and Café Women's Bible Study

These groups will not be meeting during the summer but will resume in September.

Quilters

Tentatively, the St. James Quilters will meet on Saturday, July 18, at 1:00 pm. Watch the Sunday announcements for further updates.



Joint worship with Calvary - July 19

To begin our journey as a joint parish with Calvary Lutheran Church, Moline, we will worship together at Calvary on Sunday, July 19, at 10:30 am.



We will worship jointly on the third Sunday of each month, in alternating locations, with St. James hosting on August 16 at 8:30 am.

PUT GOOD INTO THE WORLD

BLOOD DRIVE



Salem Lutheran Church & Calvary Lutheran Church

Tuesday, July 14th

3:00 PM - 6:00 PM

**1724 15th Street (parking on 16th St side) -
Auditorium, 2nd Floor**



Group code: 004

Last date to donate elsewhere: 05/19/2026

To book your appointment, contact Rita
Gustafson at (309) 721-4363,
Pam Gross at gdgross144@gmail.com
or scan the QR code

Registration is now open!
Scan the QR Code, or forms
are available on Facebook or
website: salemmoline.org



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

July 20 - 24, 2026

Salem Lutheran Church

1724 15th Street Moline

9:00AM - 12:00Noon

Ages 3 - 7th Grade

New Pictorial Directory

Get your smile ready! The Welcoming Team is laying plans for a new pictorial directory, joint with Calvary. Our last one was published in 2019. Photo sessions will likely start in September. Watch future newsletters, emails, and announcements as plans develop.



Adopt-A-Highway

The next cleanup date will be Saturday, July 25, from 8:45 am to 10:00 am. All are welcome.



Please meet at the eastern entrance of Mel McKay Park in South Rock Island.

Safety vests gloves, grabbers, garbage bags, and garbage bag holders will be provided.

Vespers at Jenny Lind Chapel in Andover



June 7, 2026

Two more Vespers services remain at the [Jenny Lind Chapel](#) in Andover, IL. These Sunday evening worship services start at 7:00 pm and are conducted by area pastors and congregations. There is a variety of music, typically accompanied by someone playing the Chapel's electronic keyboard.

July 26 – Pr. Liz Kuster, Augustana Lutheran, Andover
August 30 – Pr. Randy Willers

Rummage Sale 2026

St. James will be hosting a Rummage and Bake Sale again this year, scheduled for September 18-19. Start cleaning out those closets, drawers, and storage rooms for items to give away. We especially need items other than clothing.

Watch future newsletters, bulletins, and emails as plans develop.

Thank you!



We've Been Thanked!

St. James has recently received three cards with handwritten thank-you notes. The senders are listed below. The cards are displayed on the bulletin board just inside the upper door.

- Habitat for Humanity: For the dedicated work of Bill and Jo Kempf on the Sullivan, IL, build; and, implied, for our \$500 Endowment Fund grant this year.

- Junior Board of Rock Island: For the use of our building.

- 2026 LSTC Scholarship Winner Megan Mong: Read on...

LSTC Scholarship Fund

St. James Lutheran Church Rock Island has a Scholarship Fund at the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago (LSTC). In 2021 funds were provided by generous members' gifts which were matched from the Eleanor Blomberg bequest, memorials and a bequest for Don Peterson, and a distribution amount from St. James church endowment.

The scholarship was endowed at \$28,000. The balance in this fund in 2025 was \$37,361. This year additional funds of \$2,500 from St. James Endowed Memorial Fund were added. Special thanks to St. James members for their gifts



The recipient of the endowed pastoral scholarship this year was Megan M. Mong, a Master of Divinity student at LSTC from Salina, Kansas. Megan attended Wittenberg University in Springfield, Ohio, for her undergraduate work.

She completed her studies at LSTC in May and has been serving as an intern at the Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd in Billings, Montana. She has also spent half days serving at St. John's United retirement home and day care for children in a multigenerational setting.

Megan plans to do a further internship when she returns home to Kansas this summer. We hope that she might be able to visit St. James when she returns to the Chicago area in October.

Dedication of Ron Peterson Memorial Garden – June 7, 2026



The Chapel flagpole was moved to the garden. Pr. Liz Kuster is holding the green folder. Here is the 12 min [video](#) of the dedication ceremony.

Synod Assembly Highlights

June 12-13, 2026 • Augustana College, Rock Island

What is to prevent us from going deeper in our faith, going deeper in the waters of baptism, and going out into the world with those baptized eyes and heart every day?

We don't expect it. The world certainly doesn't expect it. And it's hard to explain it when it happens. What is to prevent you – and me – from coming out of the waters of our baptism every day with eyes that see the beautiful, beloved neighbor that God calls us to love?



ANNOUNCED Crossroads



A program designed to help congregations as they discern their next faithful steps for ministry. Information Webinar is on August 4 at 6:30 p.m. nisynod.org/crossroads

KEYNOTE

Rev. Laurie Skow-Anderson

"A future focused church is living our baptismal promises in daily life. A future focused church is humbler, simpler, and bolder. A future focused church is wondering about God's will, hopeful about the future, courageous, and curious about God's will."

OFFERING

Festival Worship

Supported our Synod Authorized Worshipping Communities: Iglesia San José Obrero and Becoming

In-Kind Offering

Supported Lutheran Social Services of Illinois with gift cards and wish list items

APPROVED



R-1: Walking with Creation as Neighbor through Worship and Action

APPROVED

- FY28 Synod Budget
- 2027 Rostered Minister Compensation Guidelines
- New Synod Constitution

WORSHIP

- Festival Worship
- Service of Remembrance and Recognition
- Service of Sending

ELECTED

22 LAY LEADERS AND ROSTERED MINISTERS TO SYNOD COMMITTEES AND SYNOD COUNCIL

Synod Council Vice President

Mr. Bill Wescott

Synod Council

Mrs. Rhonda Copeland, Mr. Brandon Graves, Mrs. Christina King-Secor, Ms. Taylor Robshaw, Mx. Finley Snyder, Rev. Bree Truax

Congregational Life Committee

Rev. Bill Callister, Mr. Danny Gaddis, Ms. Kelly Van Fleet

Global Mission Committee

Mrs. Jeanne Berg, Rev. Rachel Perkins-Gama, Mr. David Schumann

Ministry Support Committee

Dr. Randy Mullin, Rev. Tom Rogers Jr., Deacon Shari Simon

Outreach Committee

Rev. Hope Johnson, Mrs. Lynn Zalon

Social Ministry Committee

Mr. Larry Cording, Rev. Jeff Greathouse, Ms. Donna Kelly, Rev. JoAnna Patterson



Northern
Illinois
Synod

Learn more at
nisynod.org/assembly

Assisting on Sunday – July 2026

Sunday	Lector	Counters	Sound Booth
July 5	Chip Johnson	Stacy Miles Tina Wieland	Bob Ryden
July 12	Dale Farmer	Todd Gann Abbi Wieland	Mike Olinski
July 19 10:00 am	(Joint service at Calvary)	Dave Renneke Rhea Frank-Cottingham	(Joint service at Calvary)
July 26	Judy Johansen	Ruth Anne Hartman Gary Wolber	Jerry Johansen

July

Birthdays

Kadin Each	7/2
Angela Rasmussen	7/2
Cole McGinnis	7/5
Michael Nessler	7/5
Virginia Pirch	7/6
JJ Vandygriff	7/7
Ben Cappaert	7/10
Alex Jones	7/10
Katlynn Ryden	7/10
Kyle Carstens	7/11
Deb Nesseler	7/12
Marsha Peterson	7/13
Ndereyimana Stire	7/13
Luanne Beinke	7/14
Martha Lestor	7/16
Meadow Weipert	7/16
Ruth Anne Hartman	7/18
DaShaun Lucas-Heinrich	7/18
Tim Warren	7/18
Michelle McKenzie	7/21
Daryl Empen	7/22
Larry Simmer	7/22
Rachel Petersen	7/25



Anniversary

Bill & Jo Kempf 7/6

“You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free.

But do not use your freedom to indulge in the flesh;

rather, serve one another humbly in love.”

Galatians 5:13



July 2026						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	June 29 10:00a Viewing of "Godspell" at Calvary	June 30 6:30p Viewing of "Godspell" at St. James	1 9:30a Worship Service (AS) 6:00p Welcoming Team 7:00p Bible Study (AS)	2	3 Office Closed	4 Fourth of July 
5 8:30a Worship (SJ) 9:30a Fellowship 10:30a Worship (AS)	6	7 6:30p Boy Scouts	8 9:30a Worship Service (AS) 5:30p Rescue Mission Meal 7:00p Bible Study (AS)	9	10 Office Closed	11
12 8:30a Worship (SJ) and Trish recognition 9:30a Fellowship and reception 10:30a Worship (AS)	13 10:30a Retired Pastors	14 6:30p Boy Scouts 3:00-6:00p Blood Drive at Salem Moline (page 4)	15 9:30a Worship Service (AS) 3:00p Vision Team at Calvary 7:00p Bible Study (AS)	16	17 Office Closed	18 1:00p Quilters 
19 10:30a Joint Worship at Calvary, then Fellowship 10:30a Worship (AS)	20 9a-noon VBS <i>Rainforest Falls</i> Salem, Moline (page 5)	21 6:30p Boy Scouts 9a-noon VBS	22 9:30a Worship Service (AS) 7:00p Bible Study (AS) 9a-noon VBS	23 9a-noon VBS	24 Office Closed 9a-noon VBS	25 8:45a Adopt-a-Highway 
26 8:30a Worship (SJ) 9:30a Fellowship 10:30a Worship (AS)	27 Pr. Knowles on Vacation July 27-Aug 2	28 6:30p Boy Scouts	29 9:30a Worship Service (AS) 7:00p Bible Study (AS)	30	31	



Let's gather to celebrate

250 YEARS

of

American Independence

SATURDAY, JULY 4, 2026 · 5:00 PM - ?

THE HILDRETH HOUSE
2800 - 35TH AVENUE · ROCK ISLAND

Your presence is all that is required

HOSTED BY JOHN* & CHRISTOPHER HILDRETH

SO THAT WE CAN PREPARE ADEQUATELY, KINDLY RSVP AT:

*309.269.1955 OR JOHNHILDRETH@AUGUSTANA.EDU

St. James on the Web

stjamesri.org



309-786-0503

saintjamesri@gmail.com

At our website you will find
single-click links to

[Facebook](#)

and St. James photos

[Flickr photos](#)

St. James is a Reconciling in Christ Congregation

In our awareness that we are all broken people, we rejoice in God's abundant grace. Therefore, we welcome all who are seeking God's love and forgiveness regardless of national origin or ancestry, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, abilities, beliefs, political views, financial resources, or family status.

There will always be a place for you at St. James.

For more information check out [Reconciling Works](#).



St. James Lutheran Church
3145 31st Ave
Rock Island, IL 61201

PLEASE
PLACE
STAMP
HERE