



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

The Salem Life

Newsletter of Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church
Sandwich, Illinois

July 9, 2026

VOL. 53, NO. 7



Dear Friends in Christ,

Thank you for your support of our youth mission trip to Louisville, Kentucky. Brandon Beverage and I went, alongside Pastor Elise and two girls and a boy from St. John's Lutheran Church in Mendota. The trip was organized by YouthWorks, and was a great experience.

We left early from worship on Sunday, June 21, and got into the van in the pouring rain. We drove six hours down to Louisville, landing at Beulah Presbyterian Church, which was our home base for the week. The boys and I were assigned a Sunday School classroom to sleep, so we set up air mattresses and were thankful for AC units in the window.

There were about 50 people in the group, representing our group from Illinois, a group from Green Bay, Wisconsin, and a group from Boynton Beach, Florida. We shared meals, community building activities, and worship times each day. We had chores each day preparing and cleaning up meals and living spaces.

The two boys from our group were paired with a group of four girls from Green Bay for our work projects. They were a fun and lively bunch who sought to draw out our quieter boys. But they were all there to work and to meet and learn about the people of Louisville.

We had 4 service days, and a good variety of different ways to serve. The first day we worked with SOS International, sorting donated medical supplies which will be shipped overseas. That afternoon we packed food with Love the Hungry, which sends bags of prepared food overseas, much like Feed My Starving Children.

On Tuesday, we worked to put on a celebration for World Refugee Day. We helped set up, serve food, and clean up as about 300 refugees from many countries around the world came for a festival with food, games, and many booths. It was fascinating to see many people from Africa, Asia, and South America, often in their native dress, having a relaxed meal and day together.

On Wednesday, we worked again with refugees at the Catholic Charities center. They provided English as a Second Language (ESL) classes for refugees. Most of our youth helped in these classes, speaking with refugees in simple sentences. From their stories, they were forming 3 letter words using Scrabble tiles. A couple of the girls and I were sent to the child care to watch the kids while the parents were learning. So I got to spend that day playing with little kids and holding a few babies.

Our final service day was Friday. We were sent to help an older lady with her home. We scraped and painted her front steps, mowed her lawn and cut back brush and bushes. It was a pretty warm day to be outside, but we could see that we made a visible difference.

Continued on page 3



Happening this week...

Sunday, July 12

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

Monday, July 13

- 9 am - noon Quilting
- 6:15 pm Mid-Year Audit

Tuesday, July 14

- 9 am - noon Quilting
- 9:00 am Christian Education Committee
- 5:30 pm Outreach Committee
- 6:30 pm Finance Committee

Wednesday, July 15

- 10:00 am Methuselah Coffee Group
- 10:00 am Member Support

Thursday, July 16

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

Friday, July 17

- 7:30 pm AA

Saturday, July 18

Sunday, July 19

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

In Our Church Family.....

PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER:

- ⇒ Leslie Trettenero (*mother of Gina Carlson*)
- ⇒ Brett Hanmer (*friend of Carlson family*)
- ⇒ Tanya Kimmey (*family of Mick & Donna Kimmey*)
- ⇒ Jeff Urban (*brother of Michele Farley*)
- ⇒ Paula Mueller
- ⇒ Stan Benson*

*Indicates Salem member

JULY "DIAMOND PLUS" BIRTHDAYS



- 7/6 Debra Haag
- 7/8 Mick Kimmey

Scripture Readings for:

Sunday, July 12: Isaiah 55:10-13; Psalm 65:1-13;
Romans 8:1-11; Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

Sunday, July 19: Isaiah 44:6-8; Psalm 86:11-17;
Romans 8:12-25; Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

Pastor Elise and the other half of our Illinois team spent a couple of days working with the homeless in Louisville by serving meals at a soup kitchen. They got to meet and talk with a variety of people and hear their stories.

Louisville is a spread out city, and the roads are not great. So we spent a lot of time on the road each day, driving to our service sites, and also to a YMCA where we were able to shower each afternoon or evening. But despite all the hassles, we felt like we were able to meet interesting people and serve in meaningful ways. God blessed us, and blessed the people of Louisville through this service trip.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor John Rothfusz



July 7, 2026 Salem Congregation Council Meeting Highlights

The Congregation Council met at Salem on Tuesday, July 7, 2026, starting at 6:30. Council members Jacqueline Beverage, Alan Deaton, Walter Farley, Bonnie Guyer, Connie Hanson, Durk Hellinga, Sharon Wallis, Bryan Wernli, and Pastor John Rothfusz were present. Ron Cunz was absent.

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

The council reviewed the giving opportunities for June and upcoming months. No changes were made.

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

General Fund:	\$ 5,386.60	Designated Fund:	\$ 31,962.83
Capital Fund:	\$ 48,487.11	Loan balance:	\$343,549

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. They reviewed the calendar to highlight events coming up and to look for conflicts.

Pastor John reported on a very good youth mission trip to Louisville, Kentucky. We had great kids who worked hard, and meaningful ways we were given to serve.

The outdoor sign has made good progress, and we hope to see the brickwork come together this week.

The project reglazing windows and painting windows and doors is complete. It looks very good.

The Outreach team made an impressive float for the Freedom Days parade, with Fruit of the Spirit artwork.

Alan made a proposal to ask the Property team to dispose of the old choir room chairs and the old metal edged tables in the storage room. These have not been used in years, and we do not foresee a use for them again. The council agreed unanimously. If anyone has a use for these they are welcome to claim them.

The group heard council comments from each member.

The meeting was closed at 7:23 p.m. with the Lord's

Fruit of the Spirit Float

Salem participated in the Sandwich Park District's Freedom Days Parade with a Fruit of the Spirit float.

The Outreach Committee thanks the sign holders and walkers who passed out pencils to the crowds.





God's Barnyard

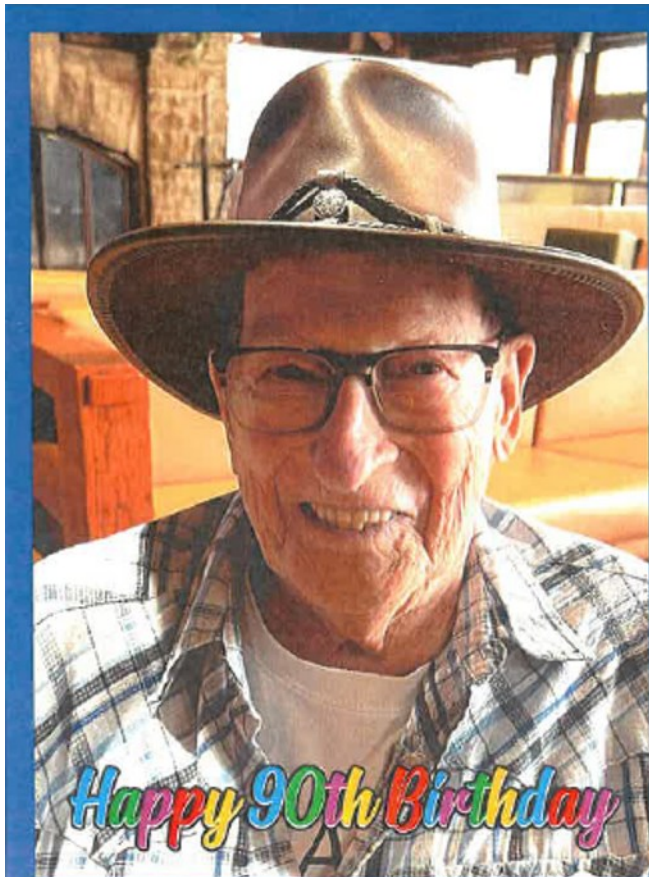
Vacation Bible School will be July 20-23 in partnership with St John Lutheran, Somonauk. VBS goes from 9:00 to 11:30 am on Monday through Thursday. Pick up a registration form or call the office and it can be emailed to you. VBS is available for children 3-years-old (must be potty trained) and on up to those completing 5th grade.

VBS helpers are needed. Anyone 6th grade or older may volunteer by calling the church office (815-786-9308), talking to Bonnie Guyer, Salem (815-970-4753) or Nancy Miller, St. Johns (815-970-3085).

Adopt-s-Road

We may have been slowed down by the flooded ditches, but never stopped—not even the heat!

We had 9 walkers & a driver on Mon, June 29 trying to beat the heat. Three separate pictures because people were coming and going at different times.



In Celebration of
Michael (Mick) Kimmey Jr's

90th Birthday

The family is honoring him
with an open house.

July 11th, 2026
12 noon to 3pm

Sandwich Fairgrounds
Gate 3

Suydam Rd
Sandwich, IL 60548

Your presence is the only gift we need!

Follow the birthday signs to find the celebration.
Contact Matt Sr. for more information (815) 791-0077

School Kits

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

The stores will soon 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. The Sunday School classes will put the kits together into cloth bags after Rally Day.

2027 National Youth Gathering in Minneapolis

The 3N1 Youth Group has gone together for the last several ELCA National Youth Gatherings. The next one will be in Minneapolis in Summer, 2027.

Registration opens in October, so we will want to make our plans early, and register right away for the best housing options. All students who will be entering High School grades and those who will have just graduated are welcome to take part.

Pastor John will be very involved in the planning. Please talk with him if you have any questions.

3N1 ST. JOHN'S, SOMONAUK BETHANY IN LELAND SALEM IN SANDWICH	ELCA YOUTH GATHERING	INFO SESSION
For youth going into 8th – 12th Grade and their grown-ups To Learn More about attending the ELCA Youth Gathering in Minneapolis June 28 – July 2, 2027	ELCA YOUTH GATHERING IMAGINE more JUNE 28 – JULY 2, 2027 MINNEAPOLIS, MN	SUNDAY JUNE 28 4:00PM BETHANY

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.
nissynod.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



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
nissynod.org/assembly

Northern Illinois Synod Assembly

Pastor John attended the Northern Illinois Synod Assembly along with Durk and Marilyn and Nancy Rex on June 12-13. They joined in the work of the larger church, making connections, supporting our synod committees, and supporting the work of the larger church. We also voted to approve the proposed budget, approved a new constitution for the synod, and approved a resolution on the Season of Creation.

The Synod constitution changes included many adjustments to make smaller committees, and an effort to make them as diverse as possible. The most significant change for us is moving the Sandwich and Plano Lutheran Churches to the South Conference from the East Conference. This means that we will no longer meet with the suburban churches to our east, but instead with the more rural churches like Somonauk, Leland, Earlville, and Mendota. This makes more sense given our long confirmation partnership with Somonauk, and our 3N1 Youth Group partnership.

The Season of Creation resolution encourages us to take 4 weeks in August or September to focus on the wonder and beauty of the creation that God gives us. God cares for the creation, and calls us to share as caretakers of all that God has made for us to enjoy.

A Visit with Ly Santiago

While they were on the mission trip, Pastor John got a phone call from Ly Santiago. She and her mother were hosted by Salem Lutheran as refugees about 1976, with Pastor Arne Peterson. She set up a time to come visit at Salem on July 1. When she arrived with her husband, David, she sat down with Pastor John, Mickey and Walt Farley, Nancy Rex, and Dale White. They spent a couple of hours catching up on her life and the people she knew from Salem.

Ly, or Maly Vue as many at Salem would remember her, was about 5 when she arrived in Illinois from a refugee camp in Thailand. She came originally from Laos, as a part of the Hmong people, who had to flee after helping US soldiers fight in the Vietnam conflict. She lived here for several years, and has clear memories of many from Salem who shared with her family and made them welcome. Later they moved to LaCrosse, WI, and Rochelle, IL, where she graduated from High School. She joined the military, served several years, then worked as a Federal employee in Georgia. She has recently retired and is taking a trip to connect with old friends.

We give thanks for those times when we get to see how the seeds that we plant bear fruit in the world. Many of you welcomed Ly and her family when they needed it most, and now we see how they have thrived and built good lives here in America. It is a rare blessing when we can see how our lives and serving have made such a difference. Thanks be to God!

PHOTO: Dale White, Mickey Farley, Ly Santiago, Nancy Rex, and Pastor John visited together on Ly's trip from her home in Georgia to Sandwich.





God's Work. Our Hands.

Northern IL Food Bank volunteers made a trip to Geneva in June to pack food for our hungry neighbors. We packed 7970 pounds of apples! which represented 1594 bags!

Those who have signed up already will pack again on July 21. The next date is August 18.

Let's go to the Serena Cafe!

Lunch Bunch meets Wednesday, August 12 at 11:30 am. The restaurant, Serena Cafe, is at 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.



DECLUTTERING

Every once in a while, homes go through a decluttering time. Churches do too! If you would like to take home a chair (formerly used as choir chairs) or wooden tables which are shown below, let the office know by July 31. Call (815) 786-9308.



Thank you for coming to our book signing. We greatly appreciate all the support from our church family.

~Gina Carlson and Libby Welsch



PROGRESS - HERE, THERE, AND EVERYWHERE!



The masons are here finishing up the brick job. It won't be long now.



Elevator Update: They are working on the circuit boards and it will take some time yet. Stay tuned.....

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. We will leave after Coffee Fellowship and car pool or meet up at the adventure location. Mark your calendars!

- ♦ Sunday, July 26th - We will head to Hinckley to see goats raised at Kurt & Kelsey Mattson's Farm. Maps will be handed out on the Sunday we go.
- ♦ 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!