



Building the family of God by spreading
the Word of God to all people.

September 2025

St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church

Address:

9193 Cleveland Avenue

P.O. Box 67

Baroda, MI 49101

Phone: 269-422-1449

Website: stjohsbaroda.com

E-mail: stjohsbaroda@hotmail.com

**Office Hours: Monday - Thursday
3PM-6PM**

Friday 9AM-1PM

**Sunday Schedule:
Worship 10 AM**

Rev. Kenneth Babcock - Pastor
Jill Resendiz, Council President
Amy Semenak, Office Manager



Find us on **Facebook!**

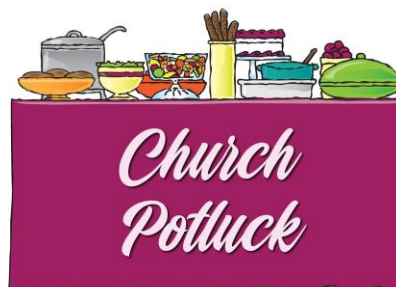
Page: **St. John's Evangelical Lutheran
Church in Baroda**



**Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.

Grapevine



**Church Potluck
Sunday, September 7th**



**Confirmation Class II
Begins Sunday, September 7th**



**Mission Endowment Speakers
September 7, 14, and 28**



**Ladies Breakfast
Saturday, September 20th at 9:30am
at Roma's in Bridgman**



Need a Ride? Transportation is available for all our worship services and events throughout the week. If you would prefer not driving yourself, especially amid weather conditions and darkness, we still want you to come and join us at St. John's! Transportation is available on an individual basis. So please call the church office 269-422-1449 for details or to schedule a ride.

Our Homebound Members:

Elaine Lochner
Woodland Terrace
8850 Red Arrow Hwy
Apt. 29
Bridgman, MI 49106

Jean Jasper
10370 Gast Road
Bridgman, MI 49106

Fran Konya
Royalton Manor
288 Peace Blvd
St. Joseph, MI 49085

Ginger Nitz
207 W. Spring Road
Baroda, MI 49101

Bob Schroeder
9452 Cleveland Avenue
Baroda, MI 49101

Pat Mattner
8821 Cleveland Avenue
Baroda, MI 49101

Barb Kinnison
8445 Hollywood Road
Berrien Springs, MI 49103

Charles Krueger
11032 Lange Road
Bridgman, MI 49106

Darlene Crawford
11415 Baldwin Road
Bridgman, MI 49106

Memorial Funds

Memorial funds may be
designated to:

Altar/Worship Enhancement Fund
Music Equipment Fund



Our Church Leaders:

Rev. Yehiel Curry
Presiding Bishop, ELCA

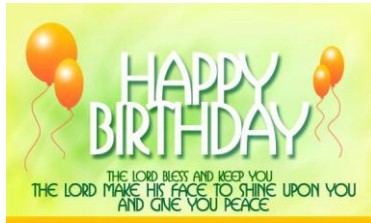
Rev. Julie Schneider-Thomas
Bishop of the North/West Lower Michigan Synod, ELCA
PO Box 67, Holt, MI 48842-0067

Our Companion Synods:

Christian Lutheran Church of Honduras
Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea
Lutheran Church of Latvia

September Celebrations

2 Landon Cerecke
 11 Lori Davis
 13 Lee Green Jr
 13 Tim Hicks
 21 Pastor Ken Babcock
 21 Tyler Cramton
 21 Charles Krueger
 28 Bobbi Betts
 29 Austin Barker



2 Ella Barker
 5 Abby Frantz
 5 Isla Frantz
 5 Kelton Frantz
 7 Matt Tollas
 13 Donna Tober
 23 Jenna Cramton

If a birthday, anniversary and/or baptism is listed incorrectly, please call the church office so that we can correct our records.



4	Steve and Joie Nitz	43 Years
9	Tyler and Lexy Villwock	3 Years
11	Keith and Sandy McClintock	32 Years
13	Eric and Kim Perrin	28 Years
20	Dave and Tina Cramton	17 Years



If you need emergency pastoral care, for situations such as hospital admissions or a death in the family, you may contact:

Pastor Ken Babcock 231-719-7741



Our service is being recorded and posted online to bring the Word of God to our church family who are unable to be here in person. View on St John's Lutheran Baroda, MI YouTube page or St John's Lutheran Church Facebook page.

Pastor's Message



Dear Parish Family:

First, Sue and I open our hearts to all of you for your kind thoughts, prayers and cards sent during my shoulder surgery and recovery.

The golden hues of September are upon us—a time when the world quietly shifts from the lush greens of summer toward the burnished tones of autumn. In this season of subtle change, we are reminded of God's faithfulness and His gentle hand guiding us through life's many transitions. Whether you are returning from summer travels, preparing children for a new school year, or simply savoring the cooler mornings, I pray you feel God's presence walking beside you every step of the way.

King Solomon the Teacher, reminds us that change is woven into the very fabric of creation. In Ecclesiastes 3:1 he tells us, "To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven." As we watch the leaves begin their transformation, let us consider the transformations God is working in our own hearts and lives. Change can bring uncertainty, but it also brings opportunity—opportunity to trust God more deeply and to see His faithfulness at work.

This September, I encourage you to reflect on the ways God may be inviting you into something new. Is He calling you to serve in a new ministry? To reach out to a neighbor you haven't met? To deepen your commitment to prayer, study, or service? Let us be open and attentive to His gentle invitations.

As schools reopen and children fill their backpacks with books and hopes, we lift up our students, teachers, staff, and parents in prayer. The start of a new academic year is a time of excitement and adjustment. May God grant wisdom, patience, and protection to all who are embarking on this journey. Let us remember that education is a gift and a calling, and that our support and encouragement can make all the difference in the lives of young people.

- Pray for our students as they navigate new classrooms and friendships.
- Encourage teachers and staff, whose work shapes minds and hearts.
- Support parents as they balance schedules and responsibilities.

We held a special “Back to School Backpack Blessing” during our Sunday service on August 24th. All students and educators were invited to come forward for a prayer of encouragement and commissioning. May this be a year of growth, discovery, and joy for all.

September 7th is a season of renewed activity here at St. John’s. As vacations wind down and routines resume, we invite you to reconnect with your church family and discover ways to serve. Bring a dish to pass and an appetite to savor the feast!

Preparations are underway for our Annual Celebration of the Harvest and Harvester on Sunday, October 5th. On October 6th at 9am volunteers are needed for the CHH Sorting Event. Please prayerfully consider how you might take part in these joyful events that bring our congregation and community together.

Service Opportunities

- Food Pantry: Sharing your bounty with Redbud Area Ministries and our Migrant Worker pantries.
- Music Ministry: Interested in starting a Choir or singing group? Play a guitar?
- Children’s Church: Teachers and helpers needed to begin a Sunday morning class.

If God is stirring your heart towards any of these ministries, we welcome you to reach out and get involved. Together, let us be the hands and feet of Christ in our community.

Christ calls us to love one another as He has loved us. If you know of someone in need—a meal delivered, a ride to the doctor, or simply a phone call of encouragement—please let our FIT (First Impression Team) team know. We are here to support one another, especially during times of challenge or transition.

- If you are struggling, please do not hesitate to reach out. We are a family in Christ, and you are not alone.
- If you would like to join our **FIT (First Impression Team)** team, there are many ways to serve—no act of kindness is too small. See **Dody Hafer!**

If you have a special occasion to share, please contact the church office so we may rejoice with you.

As we move into Fall, let us remember God’s call to give generously and joyfully. Your tithes and offerings support the ministries of our church and extend Christ’s love to those in need. Thank you for your ongoing faithfulness, especially in uncertain times.

If you would like to learn more about stewardship or set up recurring giving, please visit Amy Semenak or Judy Nitz or speak with a member of our Council.

The coming months are filled with promises and possibilities. As we journey together into this new season, may we be attentive to God's presence, open to change, and united in love. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, "the author and finisher of our faith" (Hebrews 12:2), trusting that He will guide us in all things.

Gracious God, thank You for the gift of this new season. Open our hearts to Your leading, strengthen our bonds of community, and fill us with the fruits of Your Spirit. May we serve You with gladness and share Your love with all whom we meet. In Jesus' name, Amen.

With love and blessings,

Pastor Ken & Sue



Yehiel Curry elected presiding bishop of the ELCA

***ELCA Presiding Bishop
Welcome Rev. Yehiel Curry***

The Rev. Yehiel Curry, bishop of the ELCA's Metropolitan Chicago Synod since 2019, will serve a six-year term as the denomination's presiding bishop, the top leadership role. He succeeds Elizabeth Eaton, who has served two terms as presiding bishop.



***ELCA Bishop of the North/West Lower Michigan Synod
Welcome Rev. Julie Schneider-Thomas***

At the 2025 Synod Assembly, held May 18-20, 2025 in Mt. Pleasant, The Rev. Julie Schneider-Thomas was elected to serve as the next bishop of the North/West Lower Michigan Synod. She succeeds Bishop Craig Alan Satterlee, who has served faithfully for the past twelve years.

Bishop-Elect Schneider-Thomas will begin serving a six-year term as bishop on September 1, 2025.



Church Office will be closed Monday, September 1 in observance of Labor Day.

Amy will be in Wisconsin September 20th – 21st.

Confirmation Class

Confirmation Class *Begins September 7th at 9am – 9:45am*

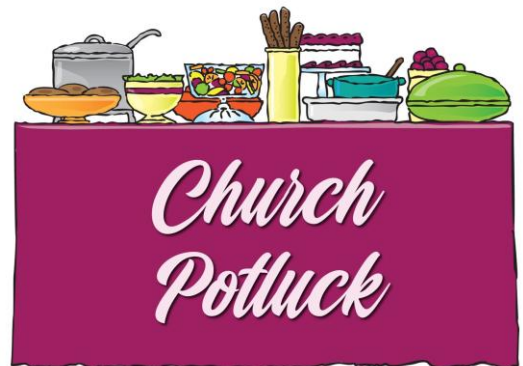
- One Year
- No Homework
- A Parent Must Attend with Student
- 9AM on Sunday Mornings

Please contact Pastor Ken at 231-719-7741 with any questions.

Church Potluck (*after worship*) September 7th

Everyone is invited to come and enjoy a time of great food and fellowship. Please bring a guest or guests. If you aren't able to cook that day come anyway, there will be lots of food to share. Drinks, dishes, and silverware will be provided.

Patience will be needed as coffee is started and food is set out after worship.



St. John's Mission Endowment Fund Speaker Series

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| • September 7 th | Samaritan Counseling Center | Bruce Nitz, Board President |
| • September 14 | Redbud Area Ministries | Jan Nowak-Walter, Executive Director |
| • September 28 | Reach the Forgotten | Chaplain Dan and Shay Bennett |

CELEBRATION *of* THE HARVEST AND HARVESTERS



Each year, Interfaith Action of Southwest Michigan celebrates the Celebration of the Harvest and Harvesters—an annual event honoring the invaluable contributions of migrant workers. This year's celebration will be held on Saturday, October 5 at 3:00 p.m. at the Tabor Hill Estate Tent in Baroda, MI.

In the lead-up to this event, we invite you and your faith community to launch a September collection drive for items most needed by migrant workers. **This year's requested donations include:**

✧

Dry pinto beans	Shampoo (<i>no conditioner</i>)
Dry black beans	Sunscreen
White rice	Men's t-shirts (sizes S, M, L)
Bar soap	Men's long-sleeve shirts
Toothbrushes	Hooded sweatshirts
Toothpaste	Towels
Sunglasses	Blankets
	Baseball caps

✧

Volunteers Needed!



Celebration of the Harvest and Harvesters Sorting Event @ St. John's

Volunteers Needed – Lunch provided.
Many hands make light work

Monday, October 6th at 9AM



Ladies Breakfast

Saturday, September 20th at 9:30am at
Roma's, 9673 Red Arrow Highway, Bridgman

Youth and Adult Event

Adopt A Road Saturday, September 13th at 9AM

One mile stretch of Cleveland Avenue from Lemon Creek Road to Hinchman Road. Should take an hour to complete. Donuts and coffee will be served.



We are looking for members to organize and oversee some of the yearly activities held here at St. John's. Please contact the church office if something interests you. This is not an all-inclusive list. If you would like to see other events and chair them, please coordinate with Paul Kasten or Tina Cramton.

Remaining 2025 Activities

- Church Picnic/Rally Day (Sept 7)
- Adopt A Road (St. John's 1 mile section)
- Chili and Pie Bake off(October)
- Baroda Trail or Treat (public)
- Thanksgiving Meal
- Angel Tree

Chairperson(s)

Need a Volunteer
Amy Semenak (September 13 @9am)
Amanda Barker
Elaine Starbuck/Judy Nitz
Need a Volunteer
Paul and Nancy Kasten



Sunday, October 26
Sunday, November 2
Sunday, November 23
Sunday, November 30
Wednesday, December 24
Thursday, December 25

Reformation Sunday
All Saints Sunday
Christ the King
First Sunday of Advent
Christmas Eve
Christmas Day



VancoPayments.com/eGiving
Enjoy the Convenience of Electronic Giving!

St. John's wants to remind you that we offer electronic giving as a way to automate your regular weekly offering. Electronic giving offers convenience for individual congregation members and provides much-needed donation consistency for our congregation.

Direct Debit Giving is used to automatically transfer funds from your checking or savings account to the church's bank account.

Online Giving lets you go to **stjohnsbaroda.com** at any time to set up an automatic donation plan, change your donation plan, make a one-time donation or view your online donation history.

Vanco is trusted by more than 22,000 churches to provide eGiving solutions that allow members and visitors to give how and when they want. Our suite of eGiving tools include online, mobile, text, card reader and kiosk options. Vanco also maintains the highest level of PCI-compliance to ensure the security of donations and payments processed through any of our eGiving tools.

Financials*	Attendance
July 2025 Beginning Balance: \$ 41,350.95	August 3: 43
July 2025 Contributions: 13,702.75	August 10: 35
July 2025 Expenses: (16,706.15)	August 17: 28
July 2025 Ending Balance: \$ 38,347.55	August 24: 41
Variance: \$(3,003.40)	August 31: 31

*Beginning January 2025 – Beginning and Ending Balances will be as they appear on the Honor Bank Statement. These numbers are unreconciled numbers. The ending balance will include outstanding checks that haven't been cashed yet.

CHURCH FINANCES

*2025 Church Budget as approved by the congregation \$156,059 divided by 12 = \$13,005				
	Monthly Contributions	*Monthly amount needed to support the budget	Variance +/-	YTD Variance
January	9,976.00	13,005	-3,029.00	-3,029.00
February	10,449.39	13,005	-2,555.61	-5,585.61
March	16,682.84	13,005	+3,677.84	-1,907.77
April	15,264.57	13,005	+2,259.57	+ 351.80
May	8,034.99	13,005	-4,970.01	-4,618.21
June	8,936.49	13,005	-4,068.51	-9,038.52
July	13,702.75	13,005	+697.75	-8,340.77



**St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church
Council Meeting Minutes
August 21, 2025**

8/21/25 called to order at 7:08 pm

Council Present: Amanda Barker, Jill Resendiz, Tina Cramton, Steve Nitz, Paul Kasten, and Bruce Nitz
Also Present: Pastor Ken Babcock

Opened with Prayer: Pastor Ken

Finance/Treasurers Report

- July Financial reports reviewed
- Variances noticed with Tri County Bookkeeping vs St. John's Quick Books.
- Judy and Amy to discuss an audit with Tri County
- Discussed separate line item in the report regarding the income from Imagine Learning Lab, so that this is shown separately from contributions - we are asking this to start being added to the Grapevine

Pastors Report

- Reviewed

Church Life

- Sept 7th - Rally Day - still looking for volunteer to lead. Sign-up sheet has been passed around for potluck donations.
- Sept 7th - Kim Forsey from Samaritan Counseling Center; Sept 14th, Jan Nowak from Redbud Area Ministries and Sept 28, Chaplain Dan Bennett and his wife Shay from Reach the Forgotten will speak to the congregation as part of the Mission Endowment Series.
- Sept 13th - Adopt a Road cleanup, Starts at 9am.
- Ladies Breakfast is Saturday, Sept. 20th at Roma's in Bridgman
- Paul suggested that we order donuts, coffee cakes, etc. to have volunteers to pick up (paid for by church) and bring to coffee hour
- Oct 5th - Celebration of the Harvest and Harvester at Tabor Hill
- Oct 6th - Celebration of the Harvest and Harvester Sorting Event at 9am
- Oct 26th - Chili and Pie Cookoff / Bakeoff - Amanda Barker to lead and would like a sign-up sheet to pass around

Property and Grounds

- Murdock's will come last week of Sept to complete the stain glass window project
- Church garage service door needs to be replaced (per Steve Nitz), he will repair this Fall

New Business

- Church budget will be finalized in September for Council's approval in October - discussion around how to message to the congregation that we are not meeting this year's expenses
- Fax line should be discontinued
- Church internet - unlimited? Amy, please find out the cost difference from what we pay today

Old Business

- Imagine Learning Lab – Facilities Use Agreement was signed July 31, 2025. Fai gave \$1500 towards the deposit. Speaking with Bruce that day, the ILL monies will be put in the St. John's Honor Savings Acct. This account has only been used to hold \$5 needed by Honor to open an account there. When monies need to be transferred over to checking, please let Amy know what should be stated in the memo line.
- Rooms have been cleared out for ILL. Elaine, Amy, Greg, Matt and Kristi helped tremendously to get that task done in a week. The nursery is relatively back to order for kids to use. Bedding has all been freshly laundered.
- Employee reviews have been completed by Jill

Meeting adjourned at 8:58 PM with the Lord's Prayer

Submitted by:
Amanda Barker

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