

The Good News

A Publication of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church – Sayville, NY
October 2026

And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which make a penny.⁴³ And he called his disciples to him and said to them, "Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box.⁴⁴ For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on." (Mark 12:42-44).

As you are likely aware, I have been helping out at St. John Lutheran Church in Holbrook for the past year. As the Circuit Visitor for Western Suffolk County, it has been my responsibility to assist them in making sure there is someone to lead services on Sundays, attend meetings of the congregation, and take an active role in parish educational activities. Those at the 9:30 service may have noticed my sudden disappearance after church has wrapped up, as many weeks I will make my way to Holbrook to administer the Lord's Supper at their 11am service. The reason for this is because there are not any other pastors in the area available to help them. As such, they are having church every week like what we had in Sayville on September 20 when I was away – led by a deacon and without communion. They have not had every Sunday communion since May when Pastor Gajadhar, who had been filling in, moved away. I know some of you didn't like not having communion for one week...imagine going all summer that way and you will begin to understand what they are going through.

Naturally, the question that Holbrook has asked, and that some of you have asked, is how long will it take for them to get their own pastor. There are a number of factors that have impacted answering that straightforwardly, but of course the subject of money always comes into play. Can they afford a pastor? And, what does it take to afford a pastor? The short answer is that the Atlantic District offers guidelines for such things, and so coming up with how much is not difficult. The deeper question is: how many members of a congregation does it take to make that work through tithes and offerings?

To answer that, I would like to repost a portion of an article by one of our former vicars, Rev. Larry Peters, who discusses this. His answer provides something to think about for churches that are vacant, and who have a pastor. He addresses a bigger issue than just affording a pastor; he speaks of the future of the Church and how we cannot settle for the status quo and hope things will work out in the future. Otherwise, we will find ourselves at some point asking the same question: how can we afford and have a pastor of our own? Here's Pastor Peters:

"In our age of declining congregational size, one of the most practical questions is how many people do you need to pay for a pastor, a building, and minimal programs to keep the doors open? I often hear the number of 100 as a minimum to cover everything from pastor's compensation and benefits, building costs and utilities, a few other part-time folks, insurance, internet, and a minimal program of educational, social, and mercy work. Note that this does not include the costs of a mortgage or loan repayment and that this might also include income from things other than the offering plate (endowment, bequests, etc.). I suspect that this is probably not far from the bottom number but it occurs to me that this might be setting the bar rather low on the stewardship end of things.

Comparing the situation with state churches, there are certainly offerings collected but this money is usually for mission support, support for those in need, and other charitable work. Otherwise, the government (or, rather, the tax dollar from the populace) is the primary source of income for the church and covering the costs of clergy, building, and essential programs. To be sure, this funding with tax money is from the willing and the unwilling. There are automatically-collected "tithes" from those who agree to pay but there is money from

other taxes collected for property assets considered to belong to the state first and the congregation second. The German tax is 8% to a person's income tax bill. There are religions and churches which have chosen not to participate in this, including Muslims, Buddhists, Orthodox, free Lutherans, and other religious groups. Individual Germans can opt out of the church tax but that means publicly renouncing their religion and forsaking the privileges of church membership as they may be. It must be a significant cost greater than the money since about half of eligible taxpayers are still willing to pay it.

American statistics tell us that the typical Christian gives something around 2-2.5% of their income as their discounted "tithe" and this is probably responsible for that 100 person minimum number. So, my question is, how many people would we need to sustain a congregation if these same people contributed what the German church tax collected or four times the present average? I suspect that this would radically change the viability numbers and enable a much smaller group to still have all the accoutrements of church -- perhaps closer to the actual average size of 50 or less. Anecdotally, I heard one person in one of our saltwater districts say that 50 folks would be a mid-size parish in that district and compare this to the average for the Missouri Synod a few decades ago which had one pastor serving nearly 200 folks. Times have changed. But for all the crocodile tears about the gray clouds on our future with a rather consistent decline in size over many decades, why are we settling for 2-3% of income as the benchmark instead of trying to at least match what a government collects in our fatherland, Germany?

Those who know me will know that I defend my Boomer generation to younger pastors and remind them that we are still in church and supporting financially the work of the congregation in greater proportion than our numbers. That is great. But what will happen after the Boomers are spending all their money on nursing homes or they are gone? Those in the pews need to step up. If the Church is to continue, it will only happen because we support the Church with our time, skills, prayers, and dollars. If we do that, we will find that smaller congregations will survive and perhaps even flourish without spending all their attention to finding the \$\$ to pay the pastor and fix the building. It is wonderful when a former generation provides generous gifts to sustain things long after they have joined the church triumphant but it cannot and dare not replace raising our expectation of ourselves and providing the support to keep even small congregations viable."

Certainly, we continue to pray for congregations like St. John – Holbrook that the Lord would supply them a pastor soon. But in addition, I would encourage you to consider your own giving to this congregation, especially as we begin to consider the budget for the coming year once again. While Pastor Peters is suggesting that we seek to quadruple our giving percentage, in truth, it wouldn't even take that much. God calls us to tithe (a 10% giving). But even if your 1, 2, 3 percent went to 4 or 5, it would make a huge impact for the future of St. John's in Sayville, and for the work we could be doing in this community and beyond. And there is work to be done. People need the Gospel of Jesus Christ, especially in the world today which can, at times, seem hopeless. But we have something precious to share, an eternal hope in Christ, and life in the kingdom of God that endures forever.

Lord, help us all, with You, to yield
Whatever love demands
And freely give, as you have giv'n,
With open hearts and hands (LSB #787, st. 5).

~ Pastor Noack

Confirmation – Confirmation classes for 7th and 8th graders will begin on **Wednesday, October 7 at 6pm**. This will be our orientation class, and a parent is expected to attend. Classes will meet on subsequent Wednesdays from 6-6:50pm. If you have any questions, please speak to Pastor.

Faith Renewal – This class is an introduction, or reintroduction, to the Lutheran Christian faith, seeking to explain what we believe and why we do the things we do. We will meet beginning on **Sunday, October 4**. If you

are new to St. John's, or would like a refresher, please join us on Sundays after the 9:30am service. Classes will meet on Sundays from 11am-12 noon. Please contact the church office to register to attend.

Wednesday Bible Study – Our midweek, daytime study will begin again on ***Wednesday, October 7 at 11am*** and will meet on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of each month. The topic is on the Proverbs 31 woman, but this has been a fun group, and we welcome more to join us as we grow in our understanding of God's Word.

Lutheran Institute of Theology – This popular series will be offered once again here at St. John's, this time on ***Wednesdays from 7:30-8:30pm beginning on October 7***. Another change this go around is that the class will be offered on consecutive weeks through Thanksgiving. Our course this time will be on the topic *Ethics & The Christian Life*. A sign up sheet will be posted to register. Invite and friend, and join us!

Official Acts at Saint John's (thru Oct 1):

Baptisms:

Isla Rae Erath

Sept 27

Atlantic District Lutheran Women's Missionary League (AD LWML) – Join the ladies of the AD LWML for their annual fall retreat at Tuscarora Inn in Mount Bethel, Pennsylvania, on October 16-18. Don't miss this opportunity to share a weekend filled with love, laughter, fellowship, and most importantly, a time when we can all grow closer to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Registration is currently being accepted and can only be done online. Should you want to attend, see Pam Kennard for more information.

Think October in the Lutheran Church and the Reformation comes to mind.

Think Reformation and the hymn *A Mighty Fortress* leaps forward. It is likely the most widely sung and best known of Martin Luther's hymns, written in the late teens or early twenties of the 16th century, and was included in Luther's congregational hymn book *Geistliche Lieder*, likely in its first printing in 1529, and confirmed in the 2nd edition (Wittenberg, 1533).

Luther sought ways to grant people access to scripture in their native language. Singing the Psalms in German was a goal, yet singing German translations to the plainsong psalm tones seems to have not been as successful as he'd hoped, and he set about writing psalms in a strophic, rhymed poetry. He also wrote and encouraged the writing of new tunes. Based on Psalm 46, EIN FESTE BURG was among the early metrical psalm paraphrases.

In Luther's summaries of the Psalms (1531-33), he writes the following about Ps. 46:

This is a psalm of thanksgiving which the people of Israel sang at that time in response to the miracles of God, who had defended and sustained the city of Jerusalem, where they lived, against the rantings and ravings of all kings and nations, and preserved it in peace against all war and conflict. Then speaking after the manner of scripture, the essence of the city is portrayed as a little spring, a small rivulet, that will not run dry, in contrast to the great rivers and oceans of the nations (that is, the great kingdoms, principalities and estates) that will dry up and disappear.

But we sing in praise to God because he is with us – God who miraculously preserves his Word and Christendom against the gates of hell, against the ravings of all devils, fanatical spirits, the world, the flesh, sin, death, etc., so that our little spring remains a living fountain, while foul and stinking drains, puddles and cisterns will run dry.

Psalm 46:1 reads *God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble*. The hymn begins similarly:

*A mighty fortress is our God, A trusty shield and weapon;
He helps us free from ev'ry need That hath us now o'er taken.*

Then comes a shift to the "evil foe" (LSB 656), or in LSB 657, "*the old satanic foe sworn to work us woe. With craft and dreadful might He arms himself to fight – on earth he has no equal.*" That evil one is never actually mentioned in the Psalm 46 text.

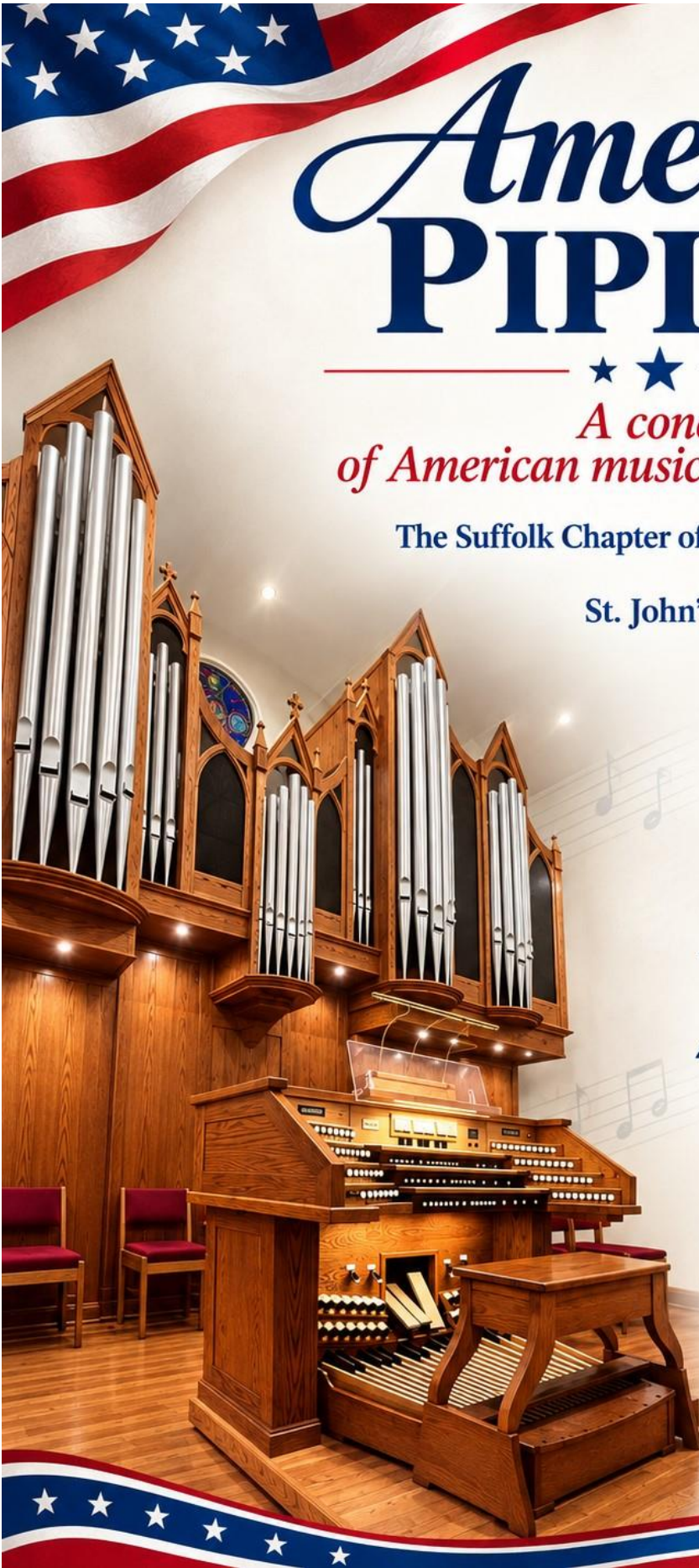
In response (stz two), *The Lord of hosts, Christ Jesus, mighty Lord, God's only Son* is set forth as the one coming to fight for His people; holding the field "forever" and "victorious". Nowhere does the Psalm name Christ who at the time the psalm was written had not yet made himself known in the flesh, yet Luther's rendering fills in the blank, naming the Lord of hosts; God's only Son who defeated even death on our behalf.

In stanza three Luther returns to the battle with a scowling Satan, which, though fierce and painful, cannot harm those who are in Christ. *One little word (Almighty Word) can fell/subdue the devil.*

In stz. four we sing again of Christ, The Word become flesh from John 1: *God's Word forever shall abide*. No matter what loss we may suffer, in Christ, *the Kingdom's ours forever!*

This hymn falls in the *Church Militant* section of our hymnal. It has been hailed as "the battle hymn of the reformation", yet on a broadsheet from Augsburg in 1529, the text is the sub-titled "A Hymn of Comfort."

Yes, there is an unmistakable battle underway. In Christ, the battle is won, and our souls are safe in his keeping. In that there *is* much comfort and every reason to live confidently in hope and joyfully join our voices in this Psalm-hymn of proclamation, praise and thanksgiving.



American PIPING

★ ★ ★
*A concert
of American music in honor of the 250th*

The Suffolk Chapter of the American Guild of Organists
and
St. John's Lutheran Church
present

— ∞ —
works by
American composers, patriotic
favorites, spirituals, and beloved
music for organ on the Peragallo
pipe organ, Opus 729
— ∞ —

**Sunday, October 18
at 3:00 PM**

St. John's Lutheran Church
48 Greene Avenue, Sayville,
NY 11782

★
Suggested Donation

Light reception following
the concert

— ∞ —
*Join us for a wonderful afternoon
of music performed by talented
Long Island organists.*



Operation Christmas Child - The Mary Martha Guild will distribute Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes on **Sunday, October 18th**. Each box will include a brochure, a Bible tract, and a list of suggested gift items. We encourage you to take a box home and fill it for a child in need. Please do not include candy, toothpaste, war-related items, breakable items, or anything containing liquid, as they are prohibited. For additional guidance, visit the website listed in the brochure. A \$10 check is to be enclosed with the box to cover shipping, payable to Samaritan's Purse. You are also welcome to include a personalized message for the child receiving your gift.

National Collection Week is **November 16–23, 2026**. Additional drop-off details regarding dates/times and location will follow. Thank you for participating and sharing God's love! Please contact the church office with any questions.

PACK A SHOEBOX

Scan or visit samaritanspurse.org/occ to learn more about how God can use a gift-filled shoebox given in Jesus' Name to transform a child, their family, and their community.



 **Samaritan's Purse®**
Helping in Jesus' Name®

Operation Christmas Child® is a project of Samaritan's Purse®.
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ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH CHURCH DIRECTORY UPDATE

Helping us stay connected

MEMBER ACTION NEEDED



We are updating our Church Directory!

Many of us remember our pictorial directories from **1983, 1997, 2005, and 2018**. In 2022, we moved to **Instant Church Directory**. In 2023, our church database was upgraded to **Church 360**, with records migrated from Shepherd's Staff.

OUR GOAL

Establish **Church 360** as our **authoritative source of member information**, while using **Instant Church Directory** as the member-facing directory.

1 CLEAN

Reconcile existing information.

2 VERIFY

Let every household confirm its information.

3 UPDATE

Keep both systems consistent.

4 MAINTAIN

Create a process that stays current.

WHAT WE NEED FROM YOU

We have pre-printed sheets for each congregation member **over age 18**, showing information currently in Church 360 and Instant Church Directory. **Please review every member of your household.**

1

OBTAIN YOUR HOUSEHOLD SHEET

Pick up your household sheet during Coffee Hour or contact **Karen Paul** via email at kmprse@aol.com or by phone **317-809-7941**.
Blank forms are also available.

2

REVIEW & CORRECT

If everything is correct, check **"No Changes Required."** Otherwise, write in any additions or corrections.

3

ENVELOPES

Verify your Envelope Number and indicate whether you need envelopes.

4

THRIVENT

Indicate whether you are a Thrivent Member or Associate Member. Interested in becoming an Associate Member? Please let us know!

5

PRINTED COPY REQUEST

Instant Church Directory is available on your smartphone or tablet. Please indicate whether you would also like a printed copy.

CHILDREN UNDER 18: Please provide the **name and birthdate** for each child in your household on a separate sheet.

COFFEE HOUR HELP & COLLECTION

Council members will be at Coffee Hour for the next few weeks to distribute and collect forms and answer your questions.

NOVEMBER GOAL

Reconcile the member database by our Congregation Meeting.



ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

CHURCH DIRECTORY UPDATE

Helping us stay connected

MEMBER ACTION NEEDED

FAQ

1. How do I access Instant Church Directory?



Instant Church Directory has been available since 2022. Go to www.instantchurchdirectory.com, or download the app from the App Store or Google Play Store to join our online church directory. As discussed, the information available currently may be out of date. Updates to this directory is part of the Member Reconciliation Process. If you do not already have access, we will be providing more information shortly!

2. Will we have a pictorial directory?



Yes! Instant Church Directory allows you to upload your own photo to the directory. We also plan to organize a "photo booth" during Coffee Hour for anyone who would like a photo taken of their family for publishing in the directory. In addition, if there is enough interest, we can look into having a professional photographer come to the church.

3. Can I be in the directory if I am not a member?



Yes! If you are currently attending St. John's, a spouse or family member of St. John's, or are interested in becoming a member, you may complete an "Information Record" form. Your contact information will be recorded in our database and can be made available in the Instant Church Directory.

WHO CAN BE INCLUDED?

You do not have to be a member to be included. If you attend St. John's, are a spouse or family member of someone at St. John's, or are interested in becoming a member, you may complete an **Information Record** form.

QUESTIONS?

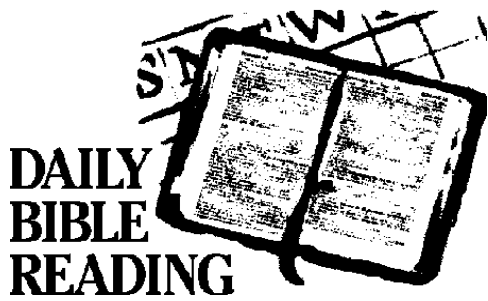
Council members will be available during Coffee Hour for the next few weeks. You may also contact **Karen Paul**:

kmprse@aol.com

317-809-7941

THANK YOU FOR HELPING US STAY CONNECTED!

Your careful review helps keep our church family information accurate and current.



October 2026

	1	Deuteronomy 2:16-37; Matthew 6:16-34
	2	Deuteronomy 3:1-29; Matthew 7:1-12
	3	Deuteronomy 4:1-20; Matthew 7:13-29
Sun	4	Deuteronomy 4:21-40; Matthew 8:1-17
	5	Deuteronomy 5:1-21; Matthew 8:18-34
	6	Deuteronomy 5:22-6:9; Matthew 9:1-17
	7	Deuteronomy 6:10-25; Matthew 9:18-38
	8	Deuteronomy 7:1-19; Matthew 10:1-23
	9	Deuteronomy 8:1-20; Matthew 10:24-42
	10	Deuteronomy 9:1-22; Matthew 11:1-19
Sun	11	Deuteronomy 9:23-10:22; Matthew 11:20-30
	12	Deuteronomy 11:1-25; Matthew 12:1-21
	13	Deuteronomy 11:26-12:12; Matthew 12:22-37
	14	Deuteronomy 12:13-32; Matthew 12:38-50
	15	Deuteronomy 13:1-18; Matthew 13:1-23
	16	Deuteronomy 14:1-2, 22-23, 14:28-15:15; Matthew 13:24-43
	17	Deuteronomy 15:19-16:22; Matthew 13:44-58
Sun	18	Deuteronomy 17:1-20; Matthew 14:1-21
	19	Deuteronomy 18:1-22; Matthew 14:22-36
	20	Deuteronomy 19:1-20; Matthew 15:1-20
	21	Deuteronomy 20:1-20; Matthew 15:21-39
	22	Deuteronomy 21:1-23; Matthew 16:1-12
	23	Deuteronomy 24:10-25:10; Matthew 16:13-28
	24	Deuteronomy 25:17-26:19; Matthew 17:1-13
	25	Deuteronomy 27:1-26; Matthew 17:14-27
	26	Deuteronomy 28:1-22; Matthew 18:1-20
Sun	27	Deuteronomy 29:1-29; Matthew 18:21-35
	28	Deuteronomy 30:1-20; Matthew 19:1-15
	29	Deuteronomy 31:1-29; Matthew 19:16-30
	30	Deuteronomy 31:30-32:27; Matthews 20:1-16
	31	Deuteronomy 32:28-52; Matthew 20:17-34

October Divine Service Assistant Schedule

October 4	Sunday 7:45am	Sunday 9:30am
Communion Stewards	Bill Audia	Leo Rigaud
Ushers	Charlie Erb *Christine Kirschenheiter	Jane Emmel & Kristin Noack
Reader	*Christine Kirschenheiter	Leo Rigaud
October 11	Sunday 7:45am	Sunday 9:30am
Communion Stewards	Robert Bayley	Al Coppola
Ushers	*Jim Farrell	Chuck & Judy Scott
Reader	*Jim Farrell	Treva Kopf
October 18	Sunday 7:45am	Sunday 9:30am
Communion Stewards	Greg Calvano	Paul Erath
Ushers	Marcus & Annie Habeeb	Pat Arrigo
Reader	Jim Farrell	Paul Erath
October 25	Sunday 7:45am	Sunday 9:30am
Communion Stewards	Charlie Erb	Al Coppola
Ushers	Steve & Janet Lindfors	Kevin Paul & Barbara Dahlgren
Reader	Pastor	Al Coppola

If you are unable to serve where assigned, please find someone you can switch with or someone who can take your place. Please let the Church Office know of any changes you make. Thank you.

October Readings

October 4: Isaiah 5:1-7; Philippians 3:4b-14 October 11: Isaiah 25:6-9; Philippians 4:4-13 October 18: Isaiah 35:5-8; 2 Timothy 4:5-18 October 25: Revelation 14:6-7; Romans 3:19-28
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Saint John's Evangelical Lutheran Church

48 Greene Avenue
Sayville, NY 11782
(631) 589-3202 – office
www.stjohnsayville.org

Facebook: Saint John's Evangelical Lutheran Church – Sayville NY

Rev. Brian Noack, Pastor
Cell Phone: (631) 806-7119
E-mail: pastor@stjohnsayville.org

Cindy Holden, Director of Music
E-mail: music@stjohnsayville.org

Whitney Dale, Office Administrator
E-mail: admin@stjohnsayville.org

Karen Paul, Bookkeeper
E-mail: bookkeeper@stjohnsayville.org

Tom Keller & Steve Lindfors, Facilities Management

Saint John's Divine Service Schedule

Sunday 7:45am & 9:30am
Wednesday 7:00pm

Church Office Hours:
Tuesday - Friday, 9:30am-2:30pm

Our Mission

Rejoice in God's grace. Live as disciples. Love one another.

Our Purpose

The family of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church, gathered around Word and Sacrament, enhanced by liturgy and music, exists to encourage its members in a life of discipleship in Christ Jesus and fellowship with one another. Utilizing the gifts that God has entrusted to us, we engage in acts of mercy, attending to the spiritual and physical needs within our congregation and community. We bear witness to the Grace of God through living in His Word thus demonstrating the love Christ has shown us.

A Congregation of
The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod

The *Good News* is published by the church office of Saint John's Evangelical Lutheran Church to keep its members and friends informed of church news and activities. The deadline for the November 2026 issue is October 15th.