



Pastor Jon Benson

*Coffee Break*

*I used to think  
that coffee breaks  
were trivia time,  
pleasant interruptions,  
harmless parentheses -  
zeros, totaling nothing.*

*I see them now  
as times for reaching out,  
moments when "people  
who need people"  
may lean their fears  
and hopes on one another -  
pit stops for God's journeying  
people.*

Gerhard E. Frost

This has long been one of my favorite poems, reminding me to look more deeply at things we often take for granted – in this case, a “coffee break.” There is something precious, even “sacred,” about talking with one another over a cup of coffee and eating a donut; and, by “sacred,” I mean that God is at work among us, just beneath the surface of our everyday lives, especially our lives in community. As my teacher, James Nestingen once observed: “The Holy Spirit loves company.” Truth be told: I love company, too; and, my guess is, so do you!

The two words in this poem that catch my attention most are “one another.” In Greek, the original language of the New Testament, it is just one word, “*allelon*,” and it occurs there over 100 times: “Love one another;” “Forgive one another;” “Bear one another’s burdens;” “Sing to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs” – only to name a few. It is this word and our devotional, “Gathered Into One,” that will provide the focus for our 2024 Lenten season.

This year, Ash Wednesday falls on February 14. At 5:30 that evening, there will be a youth-sponsored chili supper, followed by worship at 7:00 (communion and the imposition of ashes). That same evening, the devotional, “Gathered Into One,” will be distributed to all in attendance. That pattern of a meal at 5:30 and worship at 7:00 will continue for the next 5 Wednesdays (February 21, 28, March 6, 13 & 20). As usual, various members from Saint John will offer “meditations” on a particular “one another” from the New Testament. Please join us as we gather with “one another” and look more deeply into the oneness we share in Christ.

Pastor Jon

*Followers of  
Christ  
who seek to  
HEAR  
the Word,  
LIVE  
the Word  
and  
SHARE  
the Word.*

Saturday - 5:30pm

Sunday - 8:30 am  
& 11:00am

Sunday school -  
9:45am



Feb. 4 - Class 9:45am

Feb. 11 - Class 9:45am

Feb. 18 - Class 9:45am  
COF sings at 11:00am

Feb. 25 - Class 9:45am



Choir on Fire will sing at the 11:00 service on February 18.



Feb. 7 - Large Group 6:30pm

Feb. 10 - Service project  
Prime Rib Dinner 5:30pm

Feb. 14 - Serve meal before Ash Wednesday service 5:00pm; service 7:00pm

Feb. 21 - Lent project meeting with parents and students 6:30pm; Lent service 7:00pm

Feb. 28 - Lent service 7:00pm



Feb. 7 - Plan for Prime Rib Dinner

Feb. 10 - Prime Rib Dinner; 9:00am setup & 5:00pm prep & serve

Feb. 14 - Ash Wednesday 7:00pm

Feb. 21 - Lent service 7:00pm

Feb. 28 - Lent service 7:00pm



Support the Youth at the

**Prime Rib Dinner  
February 10**

Deadline to buy tickets will be February 4.

Cost is \$25.00/ticket



Come and join us for a Family Fun Night!

Friday, February 23  
7:00—9:00pm

\* Watch the bulletin for more details.



## Lenten Meals & Worship Service

Wednesdays during Lent, join us for:

**5:30pm Meal**

**7:00pm Service**

Starts on Ash Wednesday, February 14, and continues on the following Wednesday nights: February 21, 28 and March 6, 13, 20

### FOUNDATION GRANT AWARDS

Please see the insert to learn more about the outreach the foundation grants provide in their mission to Hear the Word, Live the Word, and Share the Word. This year 13 people / organizations were impacted by these grants.

To learn more about the Foundation, contact Ross Jensen.



“Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.” ~ Isaiah 40. This is why we make quilts for comfort. We make them from the repurposed scraps of fabric that people give us! But quilts are made up of more than just small scraps of material. Quilt makers place their heart and soul into creating comfort for those who are distressed and in need of shelter and comfort. *“I am here, Lord. Send me!”* Let us respond as we are able. *“[Let us] be there for one another as fellow members of humanity, in the finest sense of [God’s word].”* ~ Goran Persson

You’re welcome to come and lend a hand! When we make quilts, we do good work on many levels. It brings us together in service and fellowship, it creates a tangible message of love and caring to strangers in a far off land, and it delivers warmth and comfort to those who need it most.

Come as you are able. The Saint John Quilting Group wants to welcome you! If you are thinking about it, please know we will make you feel welcome as we tie quilts for Lutheran World Relief! Experience not required. In this ministry of serving, we set aside time each time we meet to enjoy fellowship, devotions, and snacks!

Next meeting is Wednesday, February 21, 2024! You’re most welcome to join in. We will meet between 9:00am and Noon at St. John, in the Faith and Life Center. All ages are welcome! See you then! Blessings to all this Happy New Year! For more information, please call Sue Pagan at 712-325-0257.



Good Times Group

The Good Time and Players Groups encourage you to come and support the kids at the Prime Rib Dinner on February 10 at 6:30pm.



Players Group

Cost is \$25.00 / ticket. All proceeds will benefit the high school youth attending the National Youth Gathering in New Orleans.

Please plan to attend!



| <u>February 3 &amp; 4</u> | <u>February 10 -14</u> | <u>February 17 &amp; 18</u> | <u>February 24 &amp; 25</u> |
|---------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Cookie Johnson            | Mary Lou Burke         | Marlys Lien                 | Patricia Minchin            |
| Becky Taylor              | Norma Jones            | Mary Jensen                 | Elaine von Gillern          |
| Kim Pace                  | Joyce Mlynarik         | Debbie Plugge               | Carol Wood                  |
| Diane Hartman             | Alan Meilike           | Sandy Cerveny               | Andrea Hill                 |

\* Next Altar Guild meeting February 26 at 9:30am

\* Esther Group—February 13 at 9:30am

\* Mary Group—February 8 at 9:00am



\* Next Women’s board meeting—February 27 at 9:30am



MEN’S GROUP

The Men’s Club meets every 3rd Thursday of the month at 11:30am at The Dock Bar & Grill, 401 Veteran’s Memorial Highway. Men of all ages are welcome to join us for a good lunch and great conversation. Next lunch is February 15.



We are requesting donations of cereal, soup, and canned/boxed dinners.



February 2024,  
LSI Newsletter Article

### Happy Valentine's Day from LSI!

"We love because he first loved us." 1 John 4:19

The idea behind Lutheran Services in Iowa's (LSI) mission is centered around love: responding to the love of Jesus Christ through compassionate service.

We give thanks to all our ministry partners, both individuals and congregations, who help share this love for Iowa children, adults, and families.

At LSI, we see this love in newly adopted children and their families, in teens who are overcoming years of trauma and building brighter futures, in Iowans with disabilities who are growing their independence and confidence, in new parents who are raising strong and healthy families, and in so many other joyous moments.

You can help carry out LSI's mission of hope and healing by giving a gift and showing love to the Iowa families we serve.

Thank you for the love you share and create through LSI. Happy Valentine's Day!

For more information, please contact Deb Whitford, LSI's Director of Philanthropy and Church Relations, at [Deborah.Whitford@LSIowa.org](mailto:Deborah.Whitford@LSIowa.org) or 563-676-2065.

Our Mission: Lutheran Services in Iowa responds to the love of Jesus Christ through compassionate service. LSI is an affiliated social ministry partner of the Iowa congregations of the ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) and a member of LSA (Lutheran Services in America). Learn more at [LSIowa.org](http://LSIowa.org) and [facebook.com/LSI.iowa](https://facebook.com/LSI.iowa).



January 2024

What's happening in January at Bethany Lutheran Home? Covid cases remain at the Home. A new director has been hired for Bethany Lutheran Health Services. Chandra Gustafson. Attached is her letter of introduction. She told us, "we need volunteers that would ride along with residents that have appointments that don't have family that are able to go with them. It would be nice to get our volunteers back. They would only need a background check and a training."

If you know of anyone in your congregations that would help with this need contact Cece Mickells, Spiritual Advisor at the Home. 712-328-9500. [mickells@blhs.care](mailto:mickells@blhs.care).

Dear Co-Sponsoring Churches, I am excited to be at Bethany where we have the opportunity to provide faith-based care to those we serve. I come to Bethany with over 25 years of management experience 17 years of which was in higher education and 8 years in long term care/assisted living. I made the change in careers as I felt I could make a positive impact on those that work and reside in long term care facilities. I hold a bachelor's and master's degree in accounting from Texas State University. I look forward to meeting all of you in the future and having you as engaged members/volunteers at Bethany. If you are in the building please stop in and introduce yourselves. If you have any questions, please feel free to give me a call.  
Sincerely,

Chandra Gustafson LNHA, MACy  
Administrator Email: [gustafson@blhs.care](mailto:gustafson@blhs.care)  
Phone: 712-328-9500

# FEBRUARY



| Sun  | Mon  | Tue  | Wed  | Thu   | Fri       | Sat   |
|--|--|--|--|---|-----------|---|
| <p>4 - Communion -</p> <p>8:30am Worship</p> <p>9:45am Sunday School</p> <p>11:00am Worship</p>                    | <p>5</p>   | <p>6</p> <p>7:00pm Praise Team</p>   | <p>7</p> <p>9:00am Bible Study</p> <p>6:30pm Bell Choir</p> <p>6:30pm Bible Study</p> <p>6:30pm Confirmation</p> <p>6:30pm High school youth</p> <p>7:30pm Chancel Choir</p>   | <p>8</p> <p>9:00am Mary Group</p>   | <p>9</p>  | <p>10</p> <p>5:30pm Worship</p> <p><b>6:30pm Prime Rib Dinner</b></p> |
| <p>11</p> <p>8:30am Worship</p> <p>9:45am Sunday School</p> <p>11:00am Worship</p>                                 | <p>12</p> <p>6:45pm Seekers<br/>ChristCare</p>                           | <p>13</p> <p>9:30am Esther Group</p> <p>7:00pm Praise Team</p>                             | <p>14</p> <p>9:00am Bible Study</p> <p>5:00pm Confirmation<br/>(Prepare &amp; Serve meal)</p> <p>5:30pm Lenten meal</p> <p>6:00pm Bell Choir</p> <p>6:00pm Bible Study</p> <p><b>7:00pm Ash Wednesday</b></p> <p>7:45pm Chancel Choir</p>                              | <p>15</p> <p>11:30am Men's Club</p>   | <p>16</p> | <p>17 - Communion -</p> <p>5:30pm Worship</p>                         |
| <p>18 - Communion -</p> <p>8:30am Worship</p> <p>9:45am Sunday School</p> <p>11:00am Worship<br/>Choir on Fire</p> | <p>19</p>  | <p>20</p> <p>7:00pm Praise Team</p>  | <p>21</p> <p>9:00am Quilting Group</p> <p>9:00am Bible Study</p> <p>5:30pm Lenten meal</p> <p>6:00pm Bell Choir</p> <p>6:00pm Bible Study</p> <p><b>6:30pm Confirmation<br/>Parent &amp; Student Mtg.</b></p> <p>7:00pm Lenten Service</p> <p>7:45pm Chancel Choir</p> | <p>22</p>   | <p>23</p> | <p>24</p> <p>5:30pm Worship</p>                                       |
| <p>25</p> <p>8:30am Worship</p> <p>9:45am Sunday School</p> <p>11:00am Worship</p>                                 | <p>26</p> <p>9:30am Altar Guild</p> <p>6:45pm Seekers<br/>ChristCare</p> | <p>27</p> <p>9:30am Women's Board</p> <p>7:00pm Council Mtg.</p> <p>7:00pm Praise Team</p> | <p>28</p> <p>9:00am Bible Study</p> <p>5:30pm Lenten meal</p> <p>6:00pm Bell Choir</p> <p>6:00pm Bible Study</p> <p>7:00pm Lenten Service</p> <p>7:45pm Chancel Choir</p>  | <p>29</p>  |           |   |

Saint John Lutheran Church  
*Birthdays*

February 2024

| Sunday   | Monday   | Tuesday  | Wednesday                                    | Thursday   | Friday   | Saturday                  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|---------------------------|
| <b>4</b><br>Luke Meyer   | <b>5</b><br>Angelina Arnold<br>Alyce Hassay                      | <b>6</b>   | <b>7</b><br>Lexi Konfrst<br>Brody Phillips   | <b>8</b><br>Jeanne Bryan<br>Sarah Burianek<br>Bergan Fox<br>Autumn Mauch | <b>9</b><br>Carla Hartenhoff<br>Daniel Mauch<br>Jordyn Mauch<br>Becky Vander Helm<br>Lisa Williams | <b>10</b><br>Don Doebelin |
| <b>11</b><br>Christian Hennessy<br>Mary Zink                               | <b>12</b>  | <b>13</b><br>Tim Chew<br>Todd Frush<br>Jenni Roane | <b>14</b><br>Sarah Arnold                    | <b>15</b>  | <b>16</b><br>Rory Johnson<br>Riley Wilken  | <b>17</b><br>Michael Ives |
| <b>18</b>  | <b>19</b><br>Phyllis Damgaard<br>Wayne Jacobsen<br>Liviana Riggs | <b>20</b><br>Helen Larson<br>Miles Novotny         | <b>21</b><br>Grace Ruzicka                   | <b>22</b><br>Jake Hansen<br>Marci Phillips<br>Wyatt Urbanek              | <b>23</b><br>Dan Boggs<br>Emily Meador<br>Quinn Meyer  | <b>24</b>                 |
| <b>25</b><br>Jenn Campbell<br>Mark Jensen<br>Levi Nelson<br>Derek Townsend | <b>26</b>  | <b>27</b><br>Kim Pace                              | <b>28</b><br>Paytyn Bingham<br>Casey Walters | <b>29</b><br>Debbie Whitney  |  |                           |





*Celebrating  
-WITH-  
you*

**80th Birthday**

Tim Chew (Feb. 13)

**92nd Birthday**

Helen Larson (Feb. 20)

**96th Birthday**

Alyce Hassay (Feb. 5)

Happy  
Valentine's  
Day!



**IT'S LEAP YEAR!**

Leap days keep our calendar in alignment with Earth's revolutions around the Sun.



Thank you to everyone for their prayers and cards as I was healing in the hospital. I am home now and hope to see you at church soon.

- Richard Claussen

On behalf of the principal and myself, as the new student Family Advocate for Bloomer Elem. I wanted to reach out and Thank You for your compassion and generosity. Your donation of winter apparel has made a significant difference for many of our students in need.

- Abbey Smith

Thank you to this years out going Council members; Council President, Becky Henkel and Kristin Nelson. We thank you for your leadership, support and guidance.

*Sympathy to the families of....*

~ Walter Sherman

~ Dennis Heimgartner,  
brother of Diane Hartman

~ Harold Peters,  
uncle of Carol Brigandi



**Saint John Lutheran Church Staff**

- Senior Pastor: Rev. E. Jon Benson (JonBenson@SaintJohnELCA.org)
- Interim Pastor: Rev. Sharon Worthington (interimpastorsjlc@gmail.com)
- Parish Ministry Coordinator: Patricia S. Minchin
- Sound Booth volunteers: Mack Bertelsen, Paul Schmidt
- Chancel Choir Director: Elmer Ellefson
- Bell Choir Director: Laura Nelson
- Pianist / Organist: Joan Ebersold
- Foundation Board President: Ross Jensen (402-681-1383)
- Nursery Attendant: Susan Stellish
- Stephen Minister Leaders: Alan Meilike (328-1671) Debbie Plugge (256-5310) Pastor Jon Benson (323-7173)
- Office Manager: Kim Malskeit (712-323-7173) Info@SaintJohnELCA.org
- Custodian: Debbie Baird

**Church 712-323-7173**

**Email: Info@SaintJohnELCA.org ~ Website: www.SaintJohnELCA.org**

**Facebook: www.facebook.com/SaintJohnCouncilBluffs**

# Saint John Lutheran Church

633 Willow Avenue  
Council Bluffs, IA 51501-4242

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SAVE A TREE

Please call us  
(712-323-7173)  
if you no longer wish to  
receive this newsletter.  
Thank you.

## February

10<sup>th</sup> 6:30 Prime Rib Dinner  
14<sup>th</sup> 5:30 Lenten Meal  
7:00 Ash Wednesday

21<sup>st</sup> { 5:30 Lenten Meal  
& { 7:00 Lenten service  
28<sup>th</sup> }



## March

6<sup>th</sup> { 5:30 Lenten meal  
13<sup>th</sup> { 7:00 Lenten service  
20<sup>th</sup> {  
28<sup>th</sup> 7:00 Maundy Thursday  
29<sup>th</sup> 7:00 Good Friday  
30<sup>th</sup> 5:30 Holy Saturday  
31<sup>st</sup> Easter Sunday  
6:30 - 8:00 - 9:30 - 11:00

