

Pastor Luke Kuenzli

Interims -  
Pastor Sharon  
Worthington

and

Pastor Celeste  
Waymire

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

Saturday - 5:30pm

Sunday - 8:30am  
& 11:00am

Sunday School  
9:45am



## Lenten Meals & Worship Service

Ash Wednesday - February 18  
6:00pm Confirmation Chili Feed  
7:00pm Service

Wednesdays during Lent, join us as we will once again rotate locations with our ELCA neighbors for a Wednesday night meal and worship service:

February 25 at Our Savior's

March 4, Saint John

March 11 at Emanuel

March 18 at Our Savior's

March 25, Saint John

\* Meal and service times will be announced as details get finalized. Watch the weekly bulletin for updates with more details.



Support the Youth at the

**Prime Rib Dinner  
February 14 at 6:30pm**

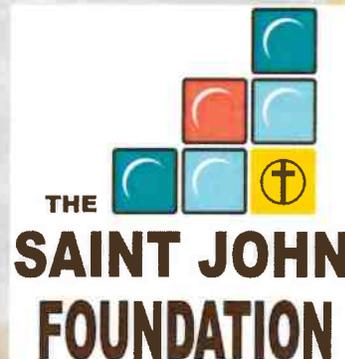
Tickets are on sale now!

Cost is \$30.00/ticket

Deadline to buy tickets  
is February 8.

**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 the Foundation was able to grant awards to 13 individuals / groups.



**TEAM SAINT JOHN - Are you ready for the Super Bowl? Get ready for Some Sunday Fun! Good food; Great Faith!**

On February 8 in the Faith & Life Center, between worship services,

we will get a jump start on the Big Game. There will be snack materials available for you to create your own specialized tray to take home and eat as you enjoy the big game. There will also be trivia, scripture and laughs! Grab some snacks from 9:30-11:00; come and go as you please.

**Help tackle hunger! \*Please bring a can(s) of soup** that will be used as a ballot to vote for the team you think will win. The soup will be donated. The standing record from 2025 - 107 cans! Wear your team jersey (of any kind) if you think it will help with a victory! Bring a friend!

Dear Church Family,  
From the bottom of our hearts, **thank you** to everyone who helped stock and supply the Blessing Box. Your generosity, time, and willingness to serve have made a meaningful difference for those in need, and it truly shows the heart of our congregation.



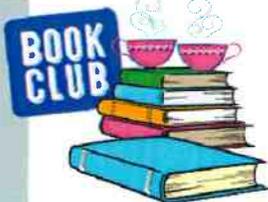
Free Little Pantry

Every item placed in the Blessing Box is a reflection of love in action. Your support demonstrates a deep desire to serve the Lord by caring for our community in a very real and tangible way. *"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms"* (1 Peter 4:10).

It is inspiring to see how God works through each of you to meet the needs of others. I am incredibly grateful for the kindness and compassion that has been shown, and I pray that we can continue this momentum. Together, we can keep the Blessing Box filled and continue being a light and a blessing to those who need it most.

Thank you again for your faith, generosity, and servant hearts. May God bless you for all that you do.

With gratitude,  
The Learning and Service Committee

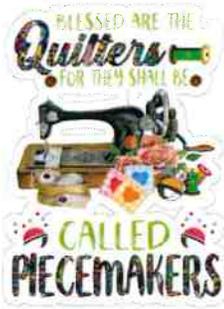


**February Book: *The Frozen River* by Ariel Lawhon**

Meeting dates:  
February 15 at 4:00pm  
February 26 at 9:15am

Here is a look ahead at the next book selection:  
March: *The Ride - Paul Revere and the Night That Saved America* by Kostya Kennedy

**\* All the book selections for 2026 are printed on the table. Thank you to everyone who voted!**



“Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.” ~ Isaiah 40. This is exactly why we make quilts. 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 in need.

All are 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 facing exposure right here in town, delivering warmth and comfort. “And I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then I said, ‘Here I am; send me.” ~ Isaiah 6:8

Come as you are able; experience is definitely not required! The Saint John Quilting Group family wishes to welcome you! If you are thinking about it, please know we will make you feel very much at home as we tie quilts for comforting donations locally through the “*Takin’ It To The Streets*” ministry in Council Bluffs, which serves meals and the Word to the homeless! In our ministry of serving we also set aside time to enjoy fellowship with one another with devotions and snacks! If you’ve read this far, thank you!

Save the date! Next meeting is Wednesday, February 18, 2026! You’re most welcome to join us. We will meet between 9:00 A.M. and Noon at Saint John, in the Faith and Life Center. See you then! For more information, please call Sue Pagan at 712-325-0257.



Card Club will meet on February 5 & 19 at 6:00pm  
Come and play!

Jan. 31 & Feb. 1  
Feb. 28 & Mar. 1  
Mary Lou Burke  
Norma Jones  
Joyce Mlynarik  
Alan Meilike

February 7 & 8  
Carolyn Clark  
Sandy Cerveny  
Ruby Runte



February 14 & 15  
February 18  
Patricia Minchin  
Elaine von Gillern  
Carol Wood  
Andrea Hill

February 21 & 22  
Cookie Johnson  
Becky Taylor  
Kim Pace  
Diane Hartman



\* Esther Group—  
Feb. 10 at 9:30am  
\* Mary Group—  
Feb. 12 at 9:00am

THANK YOU ALTAR GUILD TEAMS  
FOR BEING READY FOR WORSHIP  
EACH WEEK ♥



The Men's Club meets every 3rd Thursday of the month at 11:30am at The Dock Bar & Grill. Men of all ages are welcome to join us for lunch and great conversation. Next date is February 19, 2026

**MEN'S GROUP**



The Good Time Group will meet at the Prime Rib Dinner on February 14 at 6:30pm. Buy your tickets and meet us there!

\* IF anyone in the Good Time or Players need a ride contact Andrea Hill at 402.990.3395



Players group will meet at the Prime Rib Dinner on February 14 at 6:30pm. Buy your tickets and meet us there!



We are requesting donations of **hygiene items** ex. travel size deodorant, body wash, shampoo, lotion



Below is the story of Megan\*, a young woman whose journey through foster care led her to a loving, permanent home with the Johnson\* family in Sioux City. Now, six years later, Megan is thriving, confidently sharing her story, and living proof of what is possible when a young person is given stability, encouragement, and someone who believes in them.

I entered foster care at just 17 days old. From the very beginning, my life was shaped by change, uncertainty, and trauma. Though I was adopted at age five, the years that followed were filled with strict rules and isolation. By age ten, I was told I was “too much” and was sent away, carrying unhealed wounds I didn’t yet have the words to explain.

I spent the next several years moving through treatment facilities and foster placements. While those years were difficult, they also became a turning point. For the first time, I began to see my own potential. I discovered things I loved, committed myself to school, and watched my grades improve. Education became the one constant in my life, something I could rely on no matter where I was living.

At fourteen, I entered high school and moved into a foster home with people I barely knew. I arrived guarded and afraid to hope, but slowly, I began to open up. I joined cheer, choir, and theater, finding confidence and belonging through school activities. Even after everything I had been through, school never gave up on me, and I refused to give up on myself.

When I was fifteen, I began searching for a permanent home. After countless interviews, visits, and conversations, I met a family in April 2020. In the middle of an incredibly uncertain time, they took a chance on me, and changed my life. What started as a weekend visit turned into the place I finally called home.

They believed in my dream of becoming a teacher. When I nervously asked if I could take college courses during high school, they didn’t hesitate. Their belief in me made all the difference. Six years later, I am still student teaching at a local elementary school, a dream made possible because someone said, “Yes, you can do this.”

College wasn’t easy. There were tears, late-night phone calls, and moments when I feared losing the home I had waited so long to find. But I never lost their support. Hearing the words “We are proud of you” reminded me how far I had come and gave me the strength to keep going. To foster youth and foster families alike: don’t give up. Fight for yourself. Let your voice be heard. Be who you are - the right family will love you for it.

And to my mom and dad: thank you for giving me the chance to be myself and helping me discover who I am. You gave me the opportunity of a lifetime, and I couldn’t have done this without you.



# LUNCH & LEARN AT BETHANY HEIGHTS

Empowering Your Future with Knowledge & Care

Date: February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2026

Time: 12PM - 1PM

Location:  
Bethany Heights  
Assisted Living  
11 Elliott St  
Council Bluffs, IA

Bonus:  
All attendees receive a  
complimentary lunch and a  
free resource packet!

RSVP by: January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2026

Call: 712-328-8228

Email: [activitiesbh@blhs.care](mailto:activitiesbh@blhs.care)



Join us as Cindy from  
ServiceMaster of South  
Central Omaha presents on:

Learn effective strategies  
for downsizing and  
organizing your home. This  
Lunch & Learn will cover  
how to get started, make  
decisions with confidence,  
and create a more  
manageable living space.



Bethany Lutheran Home: 712.328.9500  
Bethany Heights Assisted Living: 712.328.8228



Our Lunch & Learn series each month has been created to provide helpful information and connection to individuals and families of all ages within our Bethany community and beyond. Lunch is provided and attendees are welcome to simply come, learn, and socialize.

Saint John Lutheran Church



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>1 Communion 8:30am Worship 9:45am Sunday School 11:00am Worship</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3 7:00pm Praise Team</p>	<p>4 9:00am Bible Study 6:30pm Bell Choir 6:30pm Confirmation Class 6:30pm High school Youth 7:30pm Chancel Choir</p>	<p>5 6:30pm Card Club 7:30pm CMA Meeting</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>7 5:30pm Worship</p>
<p>8 8:30am Worship 9:30am Super Bowl Snacks in the FLC 9:45am Sunday School 11:00am Worship</p>	<p>9</p>	<p>10 9:30am Esther Group 7:00pm Praise Team</p>	<p>11 9:00am Bible Study 6:30pm Bell Choir 6:30pm Confirmation Class 6:30pm High school Youth 7:30pm Chancel Choir</p>	<p>12 9:00am Mary Group 7:30pm CMA Meeting</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14 Communion 5:30pm Worship 6:30pm PRIME RIB DINNER!</p>
<p>15 Communion 8:30am Worship 9:45am Sunday School 11:00am Worship 4:00pm Book Club</p>	<p>16</p>	<p>17 7:00pm Praise Team</p>	<p>18 <b>Ash Wednesday</b> 9:00am Bible Study 9:00am Quilting Group 6:00pm Confirmation Chili Feed 7:00pm Ash Wednesday Worship 7:45pm Chancel Choir</p>	<p>19 11:30am Men's Club 6:30pm Card Club 7:30pm CMA Meeting</p>	<p>20</p>	<p>21 5:30pm Worship</p>
<p>22 8:30am Worship 9:45am Sunday School 11:00am Worship</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>24 7:00pm Church Council 7:00pm Praise Team</p>	<p>25 9:00am Bible Study 6:00pm Bell Choir 6:00pm Lenten Meal at Our Savior's 7:00pm Lenten Worship at Our Savior's 7:45pm Chancel Choir</p>	<p>26 7:30pm CMA Meeting</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28 Communion 5:30pm Worship</p>

<b>Sunday</b>	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>	<b>Saturday</b>
<b>1</b> Elsie Schwallier Neil Wilson	<b>2</b> Tatum Swenson	<b>3</b> Michelle Burianek Aubrey Nano Caden Nepple Macy Olson	<b>4</b> Luke Meyer	<b>5</b> Angelina Arnold Alyce Hassay	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> Brody Phillips
<b>8</b> Jeanne Bryan Sarah Burianek Autumn Mauch	<b>9</b> Carla Hartenhoff Daniel Mauch Jordyn Mauch Janet Perrone Becky Vander Helm Lisa Williams	<b>10</b> Don Doebelin	<b>11</b> Christian Hennessy Mary Zink	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> Tim Chew Todd Frush Jenni Roane	<b>14</b> Sarah Arnold
<b>15</b> Amelia Velasco	<b>16</b> Rory Johnson	<b>17</b> Michael Ives	<b>18</b> Charles Senkbile	<b>19</b> Phyllis Damgaard Wayne Jacobsen Liviana Riggs	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>22</b> Jake Hansen Marci Phillips Wyatt Urbanek	<b>23</b> Dan Boggs Quinn Meyer	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> Jenn Campbell Mark Jensen Levi Nelson Derek Townsend	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> Kim Pace	<b>28</b> Paylyn Bingham Peregrin Steck Casey Walters Debbie Whitney





*Celebrating  
-WITH-  
you*

**98th Birthday**  
Alyce Hassay (Feb. 5)

**55th Anniversary**  
Terry & Jan Moxley (Feb. 5)



If you would like to provide altar flowers in memory of, or in honor of someone or something, please call or email the church office, 323-7173.



*Sympathy to the families of...*

Georgia Lawton

Judy Hovinga



Thank you to our out going Council members for their leadership, support and guidance:  
Council President, Kim Townsend  
Council Members, Rose Hansen  
Alan Meilike  
Margaret Schneider

Thank you to Scott Hartman and Art Hill for preparing our 2026 budget and keeping track of our finances, along with our counters:  
Mary Burmeister, Cookie Johnson and Cal & Diane Hartman.



**Saint John Lutheran Church Staff**

- Senior Pastor: Rev. Luke Kuenzli (revluke@saintjohnelca.org)
- Interim Pastor: Rev. Sharon Worthington (pastorsharon88@gmail.com)
- Interim Pastor: Rev. Celeste Waymire (interimpastor.celeste@gmail.com)
- Parish Ministry Coordinator: Patricia S. Minchin
- Sound Booth volunteers: Mack Bertelsen, Paul Schmidt
- Chancel Choir Director: Elmer Ellefson (saintjohnchancelchoir@gmail.com)
- Bell Choir Director: Laura Nelson
- Pianist / Organist: Joan Hicks
- Foundation Board President: Ross Jensen (402-681-1383)
- Nursery Attendant: Susan Stellish
- Stephen Minister Leaders: Alan Meilike (328-1671) Debbie Plugge (256-5310)
- Office Manager: Kim Malskeit (712-323-7173) info@saintjohnelca.org
- Custodian: Alicia Pigsley

**Church 712-323-7173**

**Email: info@saintjohnelca.org ~ Website: www.SaintJohnELCA.org**

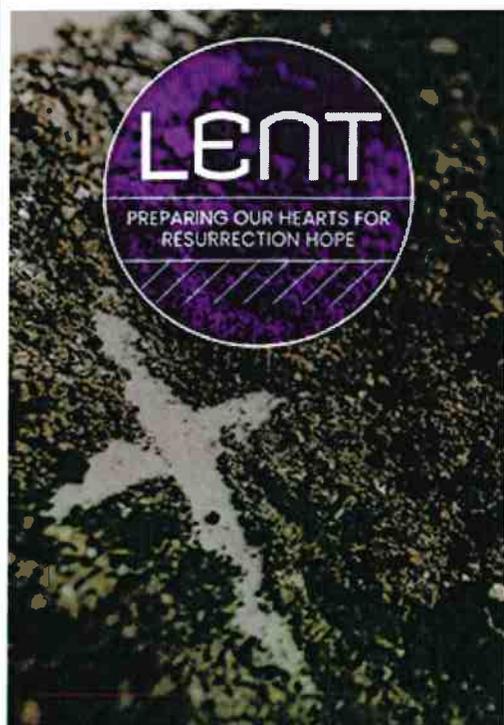
**Facebook: www.facebook.com/SaintJohnCouncilBluffs**

# Saint John Lutheran Church

633 Willow Avenue  
Council Bluffs, IA 51501-4242

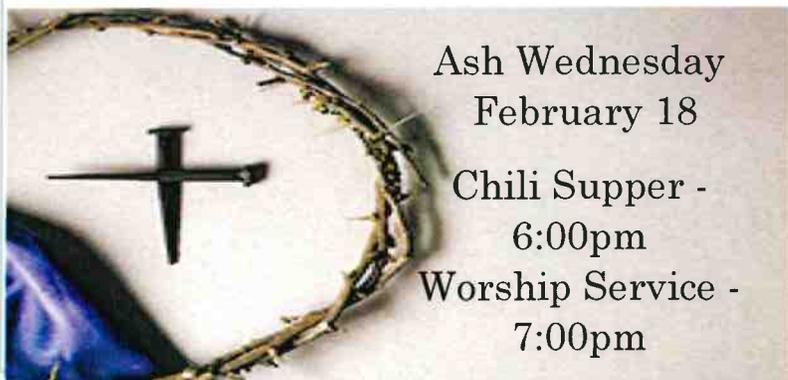
Non Profit Organization  
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Zip Plus Four  
Change Service Requested

Please email us  
([info@saintjohnelca.org](mailto:info@saintjohnelca.org))  
if you no longer wish to  
receive this newsletter.  
Thank you.



## February

- 8th - Super Bowl Snack Making 9:30am
- 14th - Prime Rib Dinner 6:30pm
- 15th - Book Club 4:00pm
- 18th - Ash Wednesday Meal & Service
- 25th - Lenten Meal & Service at  
Our Savior's Lutheran
- 26th - Book Club 9:15am



Ash Wednesday  
February 18

Chili Supper -  
6:00pm  
Worship Service -  
7:00pm