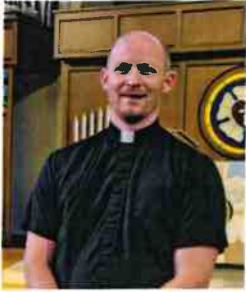




The Caller

Saint John Lutheran Church 2026



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

Happy Spring, Saint John! There is such joy this time of year – joy brought on by longer days, more vivid and vibrant plant life, birds singing and critters scurrying, temperatures trending toward comfortable. We begin this April with a church season that celebrates life – Holy Week and the Great Three Days of Jesus crucifixion, death, and resurrection (a mini-season in the liturgical calendar known as the Triduum). Beginning on Maundy Thursday and going through Easter Sunday, these three days are the core of the Christian faith. I hope you'll be able to join us for worship as we experience the story of Christ's life-giving passion. Here's a quick reminder of the worship schedule:

On **Maundy Thursday** (April 2nd) we have the last of our combined mid-week worship services with Ours Savior's and Emanuel. We will gather at Emanuel to share a meal at 6:00 pm and worship at 7:00. The worship will include the celebration of first communion for several youth from both other congregations. We will be providing the bread for communion, using the remaining loaves our own first communion class made in November. It has been a great pleasure to join with OSLC and ELC for worship these past weeks, sharing in fellowship, song, prayer, and worship as we build relationships with our brothers and sisters in Christ across our three Council Bluffs ELCA congregations.

Good Friday Worship (no meal) will take place April 3rd at 7:00 pm here at Saint John. We will begin with the stripping of the altar and move into a reflection on the Gospel of John's account of Jesus' passion in a service of song, symbols, and prayer.

Holy Saturday and Easter Sunday will be our celebrations of the Resurrection of Our Lord, with worship at our normal times (5:30pm Saturday, April 4th, 8:30 and 11:00am Sunday, April 5th) plus an early morning Easter service at 7:00am on Sunday.

Our celebration of the Resurrection doesn't end on Easter Sunday, however! The Easter Season lasts 49 days (7 weeks) until Pentecost, and every Sunday throughout the year is a celebration of Christ's resurrection! New life and joy continue to come to us through God's Word and God's people. In April, we have a couple more upcoming occasions to celebrate God's gifts.

The **Western Iowa Synod Assembly** will be held April 17-18th at the Sergeant Bluff Community Center. This year's theme is "We Are Here", which acknowledges our present reality—both challenges and opportunities—as we face this moment as part of the entire church and the Western Iowa Synod.

Wednesday, April 22nd will be the Confirmation students' **Lenten Project Presentations** – efforts to tie spiritual disciplines into our lives as followers of Christ who seek to Hear the Word, Live the Word, and Share the Word. Confirmation families and Mentors are invited to attend at support our youth by hearing about their Lenten journey. Presentations begin at 6:00.

The following Wednesday, April 29th, is our **Confirmation Banquet and Rehearsal** for our 8th grade students preparing for their Affirmation of Faith in worship on May 3

New life and joy and hope abound in this Spring season. I pray that God's promise of new life comes to you, as well.

Peace ><>, Pastor Luke



At Emanuel - Maundy Thursday Dinner - 6:00pm; Service - 7:00pm

Good Friday, April 3, 7:00pm

EASTER SERVICES (April 4 & 5)

Saturday 5:30pm

Sunday 7:00am / 8:30am / 11:00am



April Book: *Little Fires Everywhere* by Celeste Ng

Meeting date:
April 23 at 9:15am

The next book selection:
May: *The Book of Charlie*
by David Von Drehle



**Confirmation
NEWS**

Students should be finishing their Confirmation projects and ready to present on April 22.

The 8th Grade Banquet and rehearsal will be on April 29 at 6:00pm.

8th Grade Confirmation is **May 3 at 11:00am**



Free Little Pantry

A heartfelt **THANK YOU** to our church congregation for your incredible participation in the "Pot of Gold" Fill the Blessing Box project!

Your generosity continues to make a meaningful difference in our community.

From January through March, the Blessing Box was filled 27 times—and completely emptied 15 times—showing just how many lives are being touched. A wonderful variety of items such as canned fruits, vegetables, soups, hygiene products, clothing, diapers, wipes, and more have been used to stock The Blessing Box.

One note: please check your **EXPIRATION** dates before donating to the Blessings Box and Care & Share. **Expired items can not be used.**

We are so grateful for your ongoing support of the Service/Learning Committee and your commitment to serving others.

Please continue to watch Facebook, the Caller, and weekly bulletins for upcoming projects, volunteer opportunities, and learning experiences.

Together, we are making an impact!

With sincere appreciation, The Service/Learning Committee



**CHECK OUT OUR
WOMEN'S GROUPS**

Come and see what our Women's groups are all about. The Esther Group meets the second Tuesday of the month at 9:30am (**April 14**). The Mary Group meets the second Thursday of the month at 9:00am (**April 9**).



“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! Our next meeting is Wednesday, April 15, 2026. Won’t you join us? We will meet between 9:00 A.M. and Noon at Saint John, in the Faith and Life Center. We’d love to see you then! For more information, please call Sue Pagan at 712-325-0257.



April 4 & 5

Carolyn Clark
Sandy Cerveny
Ruby Runte

April 11 & 12

Patricia Minchin
Elaine von Gillern
Carol Wood
Andrea Hill



April 18 & 19

Cookie Johnson
Becky Taylor
Kim Pace
Diane Hartman

April 25 & 26

Mary Lou Burke
Norma Jones
Joyce Mlynarik
Becky Smith
Alan Meilike



* Esther Group—
April 14 at 9:30am
* Mary Group—
April 9 at 9:00am



The Men’s Club meets every 3rd Thursday of the month at

MEN’S GROUP

11:30am at The Dock Bar & Grill. Men of all ages are welcome to join us. Next date is April 16, 2026



It’s time to get together!

Good Times Group

Good Time Group will meet on **Saturday, April 25** at 6:00pm at Tobey Jack’s Mineola Steakhouse. Please RSVP by April 22 to Cheryl Heininger at 402-689-2319 or cherylheininger@gmail.com



Players will meet at **NAPOLI’s** for lunch on **Wednesday, April 8 at Noon.** Please RSVP by Monday, April 6th to Andrea & Art Hill - 402-990-3395.



We are requesting donations of **Spaghetti**

BROKEN to BEAUTIFUL Women’s Conference. Learning to “Push Thru.” Saturday, April 18, 8:30 –12:00 at First Church of the Nazarene. Light breakfast included, no cost to attend! Please register by email hopenet.office@gmail.com or call 402-321-1313.



Growing Hope: LSI's Spring Plant Sale

Spring is an exciting season at LSI, and this year brings an especially meaningful milestone for our Global Greens program. After many years of renting space, we are grateful to share that LSI has purchased our local greenhouse in Des Moines, IA. This step allows us to expand our work and continue creating opportunities for the refugees and immigrants we serve.

Our Global Greens program brings together individuals and families from many different countries who are building new lives in our communities. In the greenhouse, participants grow flowers, vegetables, and hanging baskets while learning valuable job skills, practicing English, and forming friendships. It is a place where people from around the world work side by side, gaining confidence and experience as they move forward in their new home.

The **Spring Plant Sale** is an important part of making this program possible. The plants sold during the sale are grown and cared for by the refugees and immigrants in our program. Every purchase helps support training, supplies, and the ongoing work of LSI as we walk alongside newcomers adjusting to life in Iowa.

For our participants, the greenhouse represents more than a place to grow plants, it is a place to grow opportunity, community, and hope.

We invite you and your congregation to support this ministry by visiting the greenhouse during the plant sale, sharing the event with friends and neighbors, and keeping the families we serve in your prayers. When you purchase plants from LSI, you are not only preparing your garden for spring you are helping cultivate new beginnings for our newest neighbors.

Located at: 4600 NW 51st Street Des Moines, IA 50310

Thank you for your continued partnership in this important work.

2026 Lutheran Day on the Hill

What a meaningful day we shared at this year's Lutheran Day on the Hill. More than 285 people registered for the event, with over 220 participants gathering at the Capitol to lift their voices in faithful advocacy for a better Iowa. Together we engaged in thoughtful conversations with elected officials and shared the importance of policies that reflect our shared values of care, justice, and compassion.

We are deeply grateful to everyone who took time to participate, as well as to the staff and partners who helped organize and lead such an impactful day. Your presence and commitment make a difference. Thank you for standing with us as we continue this mission-driven work across our state.



**LUNCH & LEARN
AT BETHANY HEIGHTS**

Empowering Your Future with Knowledge & Care



Next Lunch & Learn

**April 1, 2026 from 12:00 - 1:00pm
at Bethany Heights**

Join us as Cindy from ServiceMaster presents on 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.

Please RSVP to 712-328-8228 or email activitiesbh@blhs.care



Come Support Our
Auxiliary Board

Bake Sale



Treat yourself while helping a good cause.

Come buy delicious homemade baked goods. All proceeds will go to supporting the needs of the tenants and residents of Bethany Lutheran Health Services.



VISIT US APRIL 13TH

1:30PM - 2:30PM

BETHANY HEIGHTS
11 ELLIOTT ST. COUNCIL BLUFFS, IA 51503
BETHANY LUTHERAN HOME
7 ELLIOTT ST. COUNCIL BLUFFS, IA 51503





Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>5</p> <p>Easter Sunday 7:00am EASTER Worship 8:30am EASTER Worship 11:00am EASTER Worship</p> 	<p>6</p>	<p>7</p> <p>7:00pm Praise Team</p>	<p>8</p> <p>9:00am Bible Study 12:00pm Players Group 6:30pm Bell Choir 6:30pm Confirmation Class 6:30pm High school Youth</p>	<p>9</p> <p>9:00am Mary Group 6:30pm Card Club 7:30pm CMA Meeting</p>	<p>10</p> <p>Good Friday 7:00pm Good Friday Worship Service</p> 	<p>11</p> <p>5:30pm Worship</p> <p>5:30pm Easter Saturday Worship</p>
<p>12</p> <p>8:30am Worship 9:45am Sunday School 11:00am Worship</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14</p> <p>9:30am Esther Group 7:00pm Praise Team</p>	<p>15</p> <p>9:00am Bible Study 9:00am Quilting Group 6:30pm Bell Choir 6:30pm Confirmation Class 6:30pm High school Youth 7:30pm Chancel Choir</p>	<p>16</p> <p>11:30am Men's Club 7:30pm CMA Meeting</p>	<p>17</p> <p>Western Iowa Synod Assembly</p>	<p>18</p> <p>Western Iowa Synod Assembly Communion 5:30pm Worship</p>
<p>19</p> <p>Communion 8:30am Worship 9:45am Sunday School 11:00am Worship</p>	<p>20</p>	<p>21</p> <p>7:00pm Praise Team</p>	<p>22</p> <p>9:00am Bible Study 6:00pm Confirmation Presentations 6:30pm Bell Choir 6:30pm High school Youth</p>	<p>23</p> <p>9:15am Book Club 6:30pm Card Club 7:30pm CMA Meeting</p>	<p>24</p>	<p>25</p> <p>5:30pm Worship 6:00pm Good Time Group</p>
<p>26</p> <p>8:30am Worship 9:45am Sunday School 11:00am Worship</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28</p> <p>7:00pm Church Council 7:00pm Praise Team</p>	<p>29</p> <p>9:00am Bible Study 6:00pm 8th Grade Confirmation Banquet 6:30pm Bell Choir 6:30pm High school Youth 7:30pm Chancel Choir</p>	<p>30</p> <p>7:30pm CMA Meeting</p>		

Birthdays

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 Madi Carstens Alan Meilke	2 Dale Dorris Sophia Weltz	3 Elizabeth Hansen Jordan Hirt	4 Cookie Johnson
5 Nicki McIntosh	6 Heather Thompson	7 Debby Michael	8 Kimberly Steck	9	10 Jonah Harris	11 Amanda Clanton Eli Petersen
12	13 Andraea Nebel Laurie Stogdill Kim Townsend	14	15 Connie Brougham	16 Leighthryn Hirt Matt Perrone	17	18 Leslie Hansen Edwin Thomas
19 Barbara Kricsfeld	20 Norma Jones	21 Emma McCool Gracen Steck	22 Olivia Simpson	23 Heather Nano	24	25 Bonnie Dunkelberger
26 Karen Bramman	27 Lou Dettloff August Johnson	28	29 Kris Anderson Dana Hansen	30 Sharon Worthington		





Thank you to the Pastors for their prayers and visits. Also, for the many prayers, cards, calls and visits from members of Saint John. Your kindness meant a lot to me and really helped keep my spirits up during my surgeries, my stay at Midlands, and since returning home. God Bless each and every one of you!

Sincerely,
Norma Jones

Thank you to everyone who has called, or sent cards or texts following my shoulder surgery. A special “shout-out” to the Confirmation kids who brought me delicious food—it’s great! Saint John is so full of love.

Blessings to all,
Eddie Goodwin

Thank you to our Saint John family for the prayers, visits, calls, cards and Memorials for our Dear Andy. A special thanks to Pastor Luke, you are amazing.

The Besco Family



HOW CAN WE
Thank
God
ENOUGH FOR YOU?
© The Good and Beautiful Co.

 IN OUR
Thoughts and Prayers

Sympathy to the families of...

Andy Besco

Mary Charles, sister of Earl Myers



Baptism

Andrew Hansen was baptized on March 8.
Son of Dana and Nick Hansen

Morgyn Besco was baptized on March 22.
Daughter of Josh Besco and Laura Besco

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

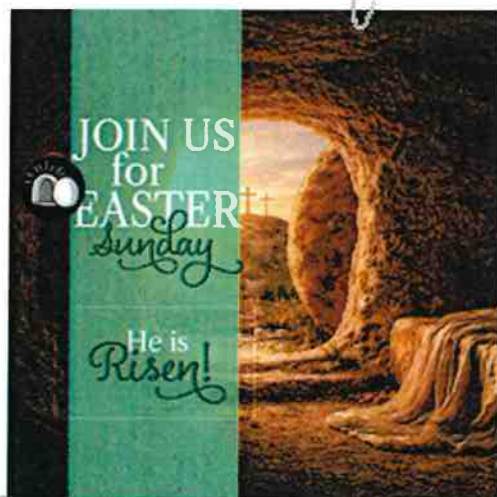
633 Willow Avenue
Council Bluffs, IA 51501-4242

Non Profit Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
Council Bluffs, IA
Permit No. 68
Zip Plus Four

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



A lot can happen in
seven days.



At Emanuel, Maundy Thursday
6:00pm Meal; 7:00pm Service

Good Friday, April 3
7:00pm Worship

EASTER SERVICES :

April 4, Saturday 5:30pm

April 5, Sunday 7:00am

8:30am

11:00am