

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 - 9:30am

Already, the summer break has nearly passed us by! In just a few weeks, kids and educators will be in school again, Sunday School and Confirmation will be resuming along with our other program-year ministry opportunities. There are a couple of big things happening – unfortunately, neither is the call of a new pastor. We're at square one in the process; the call committee has had a couple of profiles to review and a conversation with one candidate, but we have not yet found the right match of ministry skills, passions, and vision to meet our congregation's stated needs for youth and family ministry. Continue to pray for God to prepare us for the right leader for our youth and family ministry, and to prepare them for us. All will happen as it should in good time (meaning in God's time!).

In part because we are still without a full-time Youth and Family pastor or director and in part because it simply makes good sense for us at this time, our Confirmation ministry will be taking a slightly different shape this year. Our ministry partners at Emanuel Lutheran Church and Our Savior's Lutheran Church will be sharing with us in faith formation for our middle school youth on Wednesday evenings. Confirmation families will receive a full description of the program in the next couple of weeks by mail. The biggest changes will be that Pastor Doug, Pastor Cara, and I will share in teaching lessons twice a month at Saint John, leading monthly fellowship events at Emanuel and leading monthly service events based at Our Savior's. I'm very excited about this collaborative approach, which is a win-win situation for all! I have teaching/planning help with the curriculum, and our two neighbor congregations get the benefit of a larger group for their confirmation students! I am still asking for mentors for our Confirmation youth, but the mentoring will also look different – joining the youth for service projects and having conversation around those events. The first event will be a Kick-Off Cook-Off at Emanuel on Wednesday, September 2nd, with food, games, and an introduction to our Confirmation program.

The other major move in the congregation's life is the end of our years-long Capital Campaign! To make things official, we do need to have a special meeting of the congregation. As part of our "Capital Campaign Debt Retirement Celebration Committee," Congregational President Mary Jensen and I as senior pastor are informing you of this meeting to be held after worship on Saturday, October 10th, 2026, in conjunction with a meal and celebration of this major milestone. Details are still being finalized, so look for more information in next month's Caller.

Last year, I tried a weekly Adult Sunday school, which fizzled shortly after it began. This year, I am planning to have a once-monthly Sunday Adult forum in the FLC during the program year. To that end, I would love to hear from you! What are your most pressing faith questions, theological interests, or church topics? These can be related to personal spirituality, congregational practices, Church teaching, or social engagement. If you have ideas for conversations to be had, please email them to me, talk to me directly, or write them down on your worship attendance sheet and place them in the offering plate.

That also brings up the Sunday schedule. After reviewing survey responses and prayerfully considering the insights offered there, the general consensus with Council and Staff has been to retain the 8:30 and 11:00 Sunday service schedule for the time being. The fellowship and Sunday school time between services remains a cherished opportunity to connect with other members and friends, and we feel that would be a great loss with a move to a single Sunday service. As a congregation poised for new opportunities now that the capital campaign has ended, we're looking toward growth and renewed engagement in the community. Thank you for the thoughtful replies to the survey questions – you brought you're A-game to those questions!

Peace and Blessings to you all as the summer months come to a close and we prepare for all that the upcoming program year will bring! *Pastor Luke*



Let's help our neighbors!

The Service & Learning Committee will be collecting school supplies for the children & teachers at **Bloomer & Roosevelt Elementary Schools** through **August**. Please see the list below for some requested items, and return them to the **marked** bin in the lobby. If you prefer not to shop for listed items and wish to donate a scrip card for teachers to purchase items, please return those gift cards to Joyce Mlynarik, Kristy Harm or Toni Wilson and they will be added to the donations.

Thank you for your generosity!

Crayons (24 ct.)	Yellow highlighter	Colored highlighters
Kleenex	Gallon / Sandwich bags	Glue sticks
Washable markers	Composition notebooks	Colored pencils
Two-pocket folders	#2 yellow pencils	Sticky note pads
Large, pink eraser	12oz. hand sanitizer	Pencil topper erasers
Rounded-tip scissors	Expo dry erase markers & dry erasers	

*Roosevelt would also like healthy snacks for the teacher to have on hand

Debt Retirement Party!!



**Saturday, October 10
after worship (6:30pm)**

**JOIN US
for a BIG CELEBRATION DINNER!**
Including a congregational meeting with a vote
to retire our debt.

Sunday, October 11 there will also
be a reception in between
services to celebrate!



August Book: *Educated*
by Tara Westover

Discussion date:
August 27 at 9:15am

The book selection for September
will be *The Dressmakers of London*
by Julia Kelly



Students, teachers,
administration &
associates bring
your backpacks or
bags for a special
back to school blessing on the
weekend of **August 22 & 23**.

**PRAYING OVER
a new
school year**

♥

**Confirmation
Kick-Off Cook-Off**
at Emanuel Lutheran on
Wednesday, September 2,
with food, games, and an
introduction to our
Confirmation program.





"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 more than just small scraps of material. Quilt makers place their heart and soul into creating comfort on cold nights 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 is a 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 welcomes you! We will make you feel 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, August 19, 2026. Won't you join us? We 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.

Card Club will meet on
August 13 & 27 at 6:30pm
Join us!

August 1 & 2
August 29 & 30
Patricia Minchin
Elaine von Gillern
Carol Wood
Andrea Hill

August 8 & 9
Cookie Johnson
Becky Taylor
Kim Pace
Diane Hartman

ALTAR GUILD
SCHEDULE

August 15 & 16
Joyce Mlynarik
Becky Smith
Alan Meilike
Margaret Schneider
Mary Lou Burke
Norma Jones

August 22 & 23
Carolyn Clark
Sandy Cerveney
Ruby Runte
Sue Coe
Barby James

Women of the **ELCA**
* Esther Group—
Aug. 11 at 9:30am
* Mary Group—
Aug. 13 at 9:00am



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.
Next date is August 20

Life
Groups
Better
Together



We are requesting
donations of
canned peas





August is Make-A-Will Month, an ideal time to create or update one of the most important documents you'll ever sign. Many adults put off making a will, believing they have plenty of time or that they don't have enough assets to need one. In reality, a will is important for nearly everyone. It gives you the opportunity to clearly express your wishes, provide for loved ones, appoint guardians for minor children, and simplify the administration of your estate. Without a will, state law determines how your assets are distributed, which may not reflect your intentions.

A will is also an opportunity to leave a legacy that reflects your faith and generosity. After providing for family and friends, many people choose to include a charitable gift to a church or nonprofit that has touched their lives. These gifts—often called **legacy gifts** or **planned gifts**—can be made as a percentage of your estate, a specific dollar amount, or the remainder of your estate after loved ones have been provided for. While every gift is unique, together charitable bequests provide billions of dollars each year to strengthen nonprofit organizations/ministries.

A legacy gift to your congregation or to **Lutheran Services in Iowa** is a meaningful way to continue sharing Christ's love long into the future. Your gift can help children find safe, loving families, empower people with disabilities to live more independently, welcome refugees as they build new lives, and provide hope and support to families facing life's challenges.

One of the greatest advantages of a charitable bequest is its flexibility. You can care for your family first while also making a lasting investment in the ministries and causes that have shaped your life and faith. Even a modest gift can have a lasting impact.

Make-A-Will Month is the perfect time to review your current estate plan or create your first will. Your will is more than a legal document—it is a reflection of your life's values, your generosity, and your commitment to the people and organizations that matter most.

If you have already included Lutheran Services in Iowa in your estate plans, thank you for your vision and generosity. If you are considering a legacy gift, we would be honored to answer your questions and help you explore options that align with your wishes and charitable goals. There is never any obligation—only the opportunity to create a lasting legacy of hope. You can reach out to us at 866-584-5293 or philanthropy@lsiowa.org.



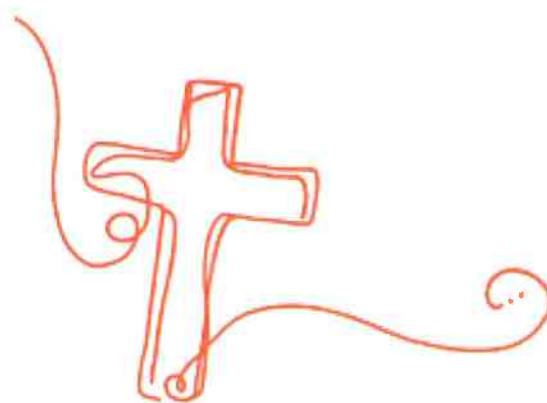


CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

WE NEED YOU—JOIN OUR MISSION TODAY! TOGETHER, WE CAN DO MORE!




Contact Angel or Sarah (712) 328-9500
or activitiesbh@blihs.care





Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 Communion 5:30pm Worship
2 Communion 9:30am Worship	3	4	5 9:00am Bible Study	6 7:30pm CMA Meeting	7	8 5:30pm Worship
9 9:30am Worship	10	11 9:30am Esther Group	12 9:00am Bible Study	13 9:00am Mary Group 6:30pm Card Club 7:30pm CMA Meeting	14	15 Communion 5:30pm Worship
16 Communion 9:30am Worship 10:45am Clean Sweep	17	18	19 9:00am Bible Study 9:00am Quilting Group	20 11:30am Men's Club 7:30pm CMA Meeting	21	22 Blessing of the Backpacks 5:30pm Worship
23 Blessing of the Backpacks  9:30am Worship	24	25 7:00pm Church Council	26 Caller Mailed 9:00am Bible Study	27 9:15am Book Club 6:30pm Card Club 7:30pm CMA Meeting	28	29 5:30pm Worship
30 9:30am Worship	31					

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 Meela Alderton Ren Hamm Pam Jensen Tom Pagan
2 Carlie Heinrichs Lexie Nelson	3	4 Barbara Paulson Marlee Waddell	5 Robert Hansen Mary Mauch Don Reed	6 Gary Matters Thaddeus Riggs Rich Sorensen	7 Linda Hansen	8 Kolbe Upson
9 Earl Myers	10 Roger Burmeister Waverly Riggs Mary Stellish	11 Sandie Smith Nancy Walker	12 Diane Ernsick Joel Nelson	13 Audie Alderton Randy Mowery Grace Warner	14 Paige Messenger Leah Wilson	15 Joni Anderson
16 Audrey Schneider Nathan Taylor	17 Hannah Hansen Pat Nepple Pat Thompson	18 Jennifer Hayes Tim Wegner	19 Chad Andersen Nate Hamm	20 Sue Haven	21 Kari Means	22 Reid Johnson Beth Townsend
23 Chris Olson	24 Steve Nelson	25 Bob Knauss Adam Moon Emery Whitney	26 Lois Adams Rozan Weigel	27 Joshua Wultz	28 Jay Bramman Mianna Thornton	29 Terry Moxley
30 Linda Hahn Blake Sadr	31 Barbara Richardson					





92nd Birthday

Earl Myers (August 9)

92nd Birthday

Mianna Thornton (August 28)

97th Birthday

Lois Adams (August 26)

50th Anniversary

Steve & Becky VanderHelm
(August 7)

50th Anniversary

Richard & Margaret Schneider
(August 21)

50th Anniversary

Bruce & Joni Rasmussen
(August 28)

68th Anniversary

Dale & Sue Haven
(August 3)

☺ **A BIG THANK YOU!** ☺

Let's give a huge round of applause to some very special people who helped make our Garden Talk such a wonderful success!

☺ **Karen** – Thank you for generously sharing your incredible knowledge of all things plants! From explaining when to plant and transplant, to showing us how and when to remove seed pods, and even sharing seeds and plants with everyone—you truly inspired us to get our hands dirty and grow something beautiful.

☺ **Grant** – Thank you for teaching us about the amazing world beneath our feet! Your presentation on worms, worm castings, and the important role they play in creating healthy soil and thriving plants was both educational and fascinating. We all walked away with a greater appreciation for these little garden helpers!

☺ **Mackenzie** – Thank you for preparing the AMAZING meal for all of us! Your delicious food made our time together even more enjoyable and helped create a warm, welcoming atmosphere for everyone.

☺ **Congratulations to Our Raffle Winner!**

A big congratulations to **Louis Urlaub**, our lucky raffle winner! We hope you enjoy your prize! We are so grateful for each of you and for the time, talent, and heart you shared with us. Events like these are successful because of wonderful people like you. **Thank you for making our Garden Talk such a memorable experience!**

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
AV Control Center: 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/Saint
JohnCouncilBluffs

thank you

Saint John Lutheran Church

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Zip Plus Four

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



Regular Worship
RETURNS

September 13

Sunday worship
8:30am & 11:00am

Sunday school
9:45am

what's
coming up



August 22 & 23

* Watch for fall
programming
start dates in the
bulletin and
September Caller

